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Editor's Note:

SMEARING CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAM

On the initiative of Organization of Islamic Conference the Human Rights Commission of the United Nation has recently adopted a resolution against the character assassination of Islam. Though Secretary General of the UNO has been regularly condemning such action but no effective steps have ever been taken by the UNO to stop it. As such it is for the first time that an important wing of the UNO has come out openly against such nefarious and smearing campaign. Though 57 member OIC has been pressing UNO for a long time to initiate action in this direction but there had been no response from them. It is said that Human Rights Commission passed the resolution with a majority vote, supporting it by 21 members whereas 10 members voted against it. Strangely those who opposed the resolution included France, Germany and Britain. Whereas the fact is that Europe is the flag bearer of the smearing campaign against Islam. The government machinery of these countries and so also of USA treats Muslims indifferently and present them as terrorists. They accuse Islamic education responsible for spreading terrorism. The USA and European countries cause harassment to Muslims, detain them, put them to inhuman treatment. Their social cultural and educational organisations are branded as the breeding centres of terrorism. All these actions are taken in an organised way by the governments of these countries. Their main aim appears to be an effort to create Islamophobia and instil hatred against Islam in the hearts of non-Muslims. The Republican candidate of presidency in USA, Mc Cain has come out with a ridiculous statement. He says, "The USA needed a leadership to confront the transcendent challenge of our time: The threat of radical Islamic terrorism." If he succeeds the present incumbent of his party, George W. Bush then one can very well read the writings on the wall. Earlier it was Mitt Romney who wrote in Foreign Affairs that "radical Islam's threat is just as real as that posed before by the Nazis and the Soviet Union." The prominent columnist Jonathan Power while analysing the causes of anti Islamic propaganda has rightly observed that "Even in the most desperate of situations, if the Islamic masses are given the open choice they will often enough vote for moderates who abhor such violence." Power further writes that "Every time some outrageous act is committed by the fundamentalist supporters of an extreme version of Sharia law, the western press, and now some of its politicians, highlighted it. What they should do instead is to highlight the last 1400 years of Islamic behaviour. When confronted with Islam, the Christian nations have persecuted it. But the Islamic world, when confronted with Christians in their midst, preferred tolerance." We may recall that Pope Benedict XVI, the father of the Roman Catholic Church, had said on September 12, 2006 that while sura 2.256 of the holy Quran

mentions there is no compulsion in religion, in the later verses there is an incitement to Holy War. ;It is unfortunate that head of a particular sect makes such irrelevant observations. The Quran does not contain such incitement; there is no mention in it of any Holy War. The Pope should know that a Holy War was a purely Christian concept and the call of it was given by. the first Urban II who granted all those taking part in it, the soldiers of the Church, absolution from all their sins as a reward. Time and again Islamic seminaries and their Thinkers have denounced Terrorism as an un-Islamic. The growing tendency of attributing individual crimes to entire community is highly condemnable. There are many terrorist outfits world over which are quite active but to isolate only Muslims and target their youngmen is not justified.

It seems the fear of the growing influence of Islam in the world had perturbed the anti Islamic forces. Whereas Christian Missionaries and so called spiritual organizations of other communities have full freedom to fan their ideology and influence by all means, Muslims are looked at with suspicion. The worse aspect is that most of the governments calling themselves 'secular' are much deep in projecting Islam and Muslims in bad colour.

There is a need of confronting anti Islamic forces and it should be emphasis that Islam has come to spread peace on earth. The misconception of Islamic terrorism and Jihad etc are the tools, with which anti Islamic forces want to create a wave against it. We must come out to blunt their weapon by peaceful means and academic arguments. ■

SA

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UNIVERSAL CREED AND CULTURE

S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

A comprehensive unity of thought and culture, the like of which is not to be found in any other multi-national culture or society, was brought about, and still persists, among the followers of Islam, thanks, chiefly, to their belief in Oneness of God. This creed includes, besides conviction in divine Unity, faith in the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the finality of his apostleship and the accountability in the life-to-come. The mental process emanating from this creed evokes unity of approach in the observation and interpretation of natural phenomenon, ideas and values, purpose of universe and finite nature of earthly life and the world. These had been sunk deep into the hearts of the followers of Islam and were clearly visible in the lives of the holy Prophet, his companions and later generation in varying degrees consistent with their times, circumstances, edification and extraneous influences. But common cultural elements have uniformly been present in all Muslim societies irrespective of the time and space in which they were located. These elements of cultural unity have been deeper, more pronounced and of a distinctive character in comparison to similar traits in other cultures.

Some Distinguishing Features

Islamic cultural unity depends by and large, on the shariah and the moral norms prescribed by it, though the standards may vary in proportion to their compliance with the teachings of Islam. These apparent variations are inevitable, too, owing to the inherent variety in Muslim nations, countries, times and their political and social organizations, but each of these would be found to carry a distinctive stamp of Islam. The common features tracing their origin to Islam in all the Muslim societies can be seen in their unshaken faith in the Oneness of God, a sense of human dignity and equality, modesty and courtesy, hospitability to strangers, anxiety for hereafter, willingness to stake their lives for the cause of God, refraining from acts of cruelty even during warfare, toleration and, in their personal and family life, a consciousness for taharah-the ceremonial, ritual purity and purification-a concept deeper and wider

than that conveyed by the word cleanliness. Similarly, all Muslim peoples would be found meticulous about the things like permissible and forbidden flesh of certain animals which should also fulfil the requirement of Islamic law by being sacrificed in the name of God. Another special feature of Muslim communities transcending their linguistic differences is that they normally have Arabic names which exhibit their reverence for God and love of the Prophets, companions of the holy Prophet and his household members. Names like Muhammad and Ahmad are equally popular in all Muslim communities.

The religious and cultural unity of Muslim societies becomes even more distinct in religious observances and festivals. The five daily prayers are performed in all countries (according to their own timings of day and night) keeping in step with a set procedure. Anyone belonging to any country can participate in such congregational prayers, without any local guide or assistance, and can even lead the service. Friday is weekly day of special service. Quran is the only religious scripture memorised and recited in the original Arabic text everywhere.

The same is true of call to prayer which proclaims the time for prayer in the same words at all places. Ramadhan is the month of fasting no matter whether it is summer or winter in any particular country. The two common festivals universally observed are the two Ids which attract the largest crowds every where. Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca is yet another source of cultural unity for it has attracted large throngs from far off regions continuously during the long history of Islam. It has been singularly successful in obliteration all the barriers of race, colour, language and regional culture. In the same way, the usual words used for salutation throughout the world of Islam are Assalamu alaikum (peace be on you), while several Quranic expressions like 'Al-hamdu lillah (praise belongs to Allah), Masha' Allah (as God wills), Insha Allah (if God will) (Inna lillah wa inna ilaihi rajioon (to God we belong and to Him shall be return) are in common use everywhere.

Testimony of Western Scholars

Several scholars have noted this remarkable uniformity of Islamic culture. Here we will cite a few of their observations in this regard. Hamilton A. R. Gibb writes in the "Studies on the Civilisation of Islam" :

"Islam is a concept which, phenomenalized in a number of linked but diverse political, social and religious organisms, covers an immense area in space and time. In different regions and epochs it has presented differing features under the impact of and in response to local geographical, social and political forces. Western Islam for example, in north-west Africa and medieval Spain, though it was clearly related to the Muslim heartlands in Western Asia and its culture was an offshoot of their culture, yet it evolved several distinguishing characteristics, some of which in turn influenced Islam in Western Asia. In other large and self-contained geographical areas, such as the Indian sub-continent and Indonesia, or the steppe lands extending from southern Russia to the borders of China, parallel factors produced similarly distinguishing forms. Yet, each and all of these retain a certain easily recognizable common Islamic stamp."

Another student of contemporary Islam, Wilfred Cantwell Smith says about the cultural achievement of Islam :

"The Muslim achievement was seen as intrinsic to their faith. They were not only victorious on the battlefield and effective in many diverse departments of living, but they succeeded also and again in relatively short period of time, in integrating life into that wholeness that constitutes a culture. Many elements went into making the Islamic civilization : elements from Arabia, from Hellenism, from Semitic cultures of the ancient Near East, from Sasaki Iran, from India. The achievement of the Muslims was that they welded these into homogeneous way of life, and also carried it forward into new development. And it was Islam that provided the integration, as it provided too the drive and power to sustain it. Islamic form was given to almost every aspect of life, whatever its content. And it was an Islamic pattern that gave the society cohesion as well as vitality."

The Basic Ingredient

Islamic culture is dominated by its intense faith in God whose attributes serve as the ideal to be imbibed in the individual as well as social and cultural life of the Muslims. It is a culture hued in the colour of Allah which makes it difficult to conceive its institutions and organisation, nature and characteristics without its prime constituent. Whenever it has been contaminated by foreign influences like national or racial chauvinism, material greed, moral decadence or social anarchy such a deviation

has proved to be a temporary phase resulting from its negligence of the teachings of the Quran and the sunnah. Nevertheless, it always tries to maintain its universalism against external and internal challenges in order to return to its original source of power as well as to realise the widest possible measure of religious social and cultural unity throughout the Islamic world. It is for this reason that the revivalist endeavour Islam shows a remarkable continuity throughout its long history. These movements have also been very often successful in their efforts to get the community back to its moorings.

Islam and the West

We have reviewed, albeit briefly, the cultural gifts of Islam which have in the past arrested suicidal trends and put the human civilisation back on the road to progress. It would be worth-while to mention here that Islam can again exert a healthful influence on humanity but in order to repeat its performance again it must occasionally take stock of itself and get rid of the corrupting influences through a judicious intermingling of the old and the new.

Another fact that needs to be kept in mind is that Islamic culture cannot make any impact on others so long as it remains influenced by alien cultures. It can not claim the attention of others, let alone being able to act as their guide, unless it assures its own adherents of its distinctive character containing elements of divine guidance and that it is still most suitable for all times and climes. They have to realise that it is rooted in the solid ground of the Quran and sunnah. It prescribes a complete system of mandatory religious observances and social obligations covering a greater part of one's life and time with a set of stipulations and injunctions; for example, it does not equate purification and cultural refinement and decency with cleanliness and abstention from law-breaking but gives them a much deeper and wider content. It has nothing in common with the civilization of the West which has, owing to its peculiar historical development, been brought up in a materialistic, anti-religious and moral atmosphere. Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal who had studied the western culture at its own centres has described it in a verse which says that "the spirits of its culture lacks sanctity."

Islamic Revivalism

It would be worthwhile to give here a quotation from my own work, a biography

of the Prophet of Islam, depicting the character and morals of the people held as living models of Islamic culture, as this would be a fitting epilogue to this discussion.

"The prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) made a clean sweep of the existing order of things in the world. The longings and desires of man were now centered on a new objective ; the love of God took possession of his being ; the love of God because the immortal thirst of human heart ; mercy and kindness of God's creatures was recognised as the greatest virtue which became the sole object of man's endeavour. It was then, after the advent of Islam, that the leading feature of all the countries, Arabia and Iran, Syria and Egypt, Turkistan and Iraq, North Africa and Spain became the search for higher and tender virtues, in the pursuit of which we find thousands of love-lorn souls. During this period we see innumerable men of God preaching love of the Lord, kindness and compassion to every sentient being, merits of virtuous living, acquisition of knowledge for attaining the pleasure of God, revulsion to cruelty and indecency and emphasising the grace of humility and modesty. They taught the lesson of human dignity and brotherhood of man and made this earth a kingdom of God.

"If you peep into the interior of these elevated souls, you would witness unbelievable flight of imagination, purity of their innermost feelings and nimbleness of their perceptions. You would see how they were ever willing to put their own life at stake for others, how they made their own children and family suffer for the good of all and sundry, how they compelled the autocratic kings and potentates to do justice to the weak and the poor and how rightfull just they were even to their enemies. Of a fact it would have been difficult for us to believe today what a fine specimen of humanity, what a sublime soul were these men of God if the historians and biographers had not preserved a truthful record of their lives and doings.

"This striking change in the manner and morals of the people was indeed the greatest miracle worked by the holy Prophet of Islam.

"Verily God saith in truth : "We have sent thee not save as a mercy for the people." ■

Continued from Page - 40

mentioned the role of his mother and elder brother Dr. Abdul Ali in forming his personality. Eminent Islamic scholar Khalil Arab's teachings too had great effect on Maulana's life.

Throwing light on various aspects of the life of Maulana Ali Mian, Dr. S. Salman Nadwi, son of late Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, exhorted the audience to follow and practice the role model left behind by the late Maulana.

Dr. Masudul Hasan Usmani General Secretary of DTC said Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was a true patriot. He always talked about the preservation of the constitution and security of the nation. As Prime Minister when Atal Behari Vajpayee once called on Ali Mian he said, "Vajpayee ji try to save the country."

Highlighting the role of Maulana's movement 'Payame-Insaniyat' (Message of Humanity) Qazi Mushtaq Ali Nadwi of Bhopal stated that it is time we must come forward to foster Maulana's message all over the world.

Prominent among those who attended the function were Dr. Salman Nadwi from Durban, South Africa, Maulana Abdul Qadir from Iran, senior faculty members of Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow and delegates from other parts of the country. ■

(O.R. Nadwi)

Extinguishing of Fire by Good Speech

Adi bin Hatim reports that the Prophet (S) said, "Save yourself (by giving charity) from the fire of Hell even though the charity consists of a piece of date. But if you cannot afford even this much, speak sweet words so that you are saved from the fire of Hell (even by this charity).

TAQWA (GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS)

S. Sulaiman Nadwi

If we were to explain the sum and substance of all the Islamic teachings in one word, that proper word is taqwa (God-consciousness). Islam aims at infusing this spirit in every action of its followers. So in the very second surah of the Holy Qur'an it has been stated that only those who are muttaqin (those who possess taqwa) can benefit from the Holy Qur'an :

"This is the book, wherein there is no doubt, a guidance to the God-conscious."
(2:2)

The word muttaqin (God-conscious) means one who endeavours to ward off evil. The true meaning of this word has been beautifully explained by an eminent companion of the Holy Prophet Ubayy b. K'ab (Allah be pleased with him). It is narrated that once Hadrat 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) asked Hadrat Ubayy b. K'ab (Allah be pleased with him) to explain to him the true significance of taqwa. He said: Commander of the Faithful, have you ever had a chance to pass by a path surrounded by thorny bush ? Hadrat 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said: Of course many a time. Where upon he said: Then what care do you exercise while going along that path? I tuck up my clothes and walk carefully along the path, said: 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him), that no part of my clothes may be entangled in these thorns. It was upon this that Ubayy . K'ab (Allah be pleased with him) said: This is what the term taqwa implies. Muttaqi is in fact a person who has an earnest desire to avoid evil and do good and thus seek the pleasure of God.

The main purpose of Islamic Ibadat (acts of devotion) is to foster taqwa. It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

O Mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might remain conscious of him. (2:21)

And who so magnifieth the offering consecrated to Allah, it surely is from devotions of the hearts. (22:32)

Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you-reacheth Him. (22:37)

The foundation of the place wherein a Muslim bows his head and prostrate

before Allah for worship should be on taqwa:

A place of worship which was founded upon duty (to Allah) from the first day is more worthy that you should stand (to pray) therein, wherein are men who love to purify themselves, Allah loveth the purifiers. (9:108)

Is he who founded his building upon duty to Allah and His good pleasure better; or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, ever-changing precipice so that it toppled with him into the fire to hell? (9:109)

So make provision for the journey for verily the best provision is to ward off evil. Therefore keep your duty unto Me. O men of understanding. (2:197)

O children of Adam, verily we sent down on you garment to conceal your shame and to serve as an adornment, and the garment of piety that is the best. That is one of the Signs of Allah, so that they may remember Allah. (7:26)

The Qur'anic words are clearly indicative of the fact that modesty is ingrained in the human nature and nudity is a satanic feature.

The whole moral system of Islam is based on Taqwa. It has been stated in the Holy Qur'an:

To forgo is nearer to piety. (2:237)

O ye who believe Be steadfast witness for Allah, and not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to piety. (5:8)

Assuredly ye will be tried in your property and in your persons, and ye will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from the idolaters. But if ye persevere and ward off (evil) then that is of the steadfast heart of things. (3:186)

"And make not Allah, by your oaths, a hindrance to your being righteous and observing your duty to Him and setting things right between people." (2:224)

"And if you do good and are God-fearing, surely Allah is Aware of what you do." (4:128)

Those possessing taqwa will be fully rewarded in the Hereafter:

"The God-fearing will be in gardens and bliss." (52:17)

Successful are Those who Possess Taqwa

Although in the beginning the muttaqin have to face difficulties and hardships and abstain from many forbidden and abominable apparently enticing and attractive things and have to adopt illegal and unfair means to obtain them. It does not at all mean that wealth or high status is not in store for the Muttaqin. What we want to say is that the avaricious and hasty hankerers after wealth set aside all moral principles and resort to every fair or foul means to acquire wealth and popularity within the shortest possible time without any qualm of conscience and fear of Allah.

Those having wisdom and far-sightedness do not resort to dishonest means in order to derive immediate benefits therefrom in this transitory life at the cost of their eternal and enduring life of the Hereafter. They are never forgetful of it and in their endeavours to make their life worthy for the future life. Allah, the Gracious makes them successful in this world also and bestows His favours and rewards upon them. There is a glad tiding for such people in the Holy Qur'an :

"Lo! The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)." (11:49)

And the Hereafter with your Lord is for those who keep away from evil.(43:35)

Those who Possess Taqwa are Nearer to Allah

It has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Lo! Allah loveth those who keep their duty." (9:7)

Acceptance of our action will depend upon Taqwa.

A deed is done for different motives, but Allah will accept only those deeds which are done with sincerity and devotion for the sake of Allah as has been said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Allah accepteth only from those who ward off (evil)." (5:27)

So only those works or deeds are enduring and deserve approbation in this world and in the Hereafter which are done with sincerity and devotion to Allah and not for personal aggrandizement or selfish motive behind it.

The Definition of Muttaqin

Having understood the real signification of Taqwa that it is the essence of all Islamic teachings and that all the favours and blessings of Allah in this world and in the Hereafter are for those who possess this virtue, one may question: Who are these fortunate people? The answer to this question has also been given in the Holy Qur'an: It has been said in the surah Zumar:

"And whoso bringeth the truth and believeth therein-such are the dutiful."

"They shall have what they will of their Lord's bounty. This is the reward of the good." (39:34,35)

In the following verse of the Holy Qur'an the characteristic virtues of the muttaqin have been explained in detail:

"Virtue is not (this) that you turn your face to the east or west, but virtue is of him who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and he spends wealth, in spite of love for it, for the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars, and for ransoming the slaves, and establish prayer and pay Zakat (and truly virtuous are) they who keep their promise,

whenever they make a promise and are self-possessed in misfortune, hardship, and in hour of peril. It is they who are true (in faith) and it is they who are God-conscious."(2:177)

Taqwa is a vital attitude which a Muslim develops in time through constant endeavours and there grows within him an awareness of the fact that he is always before God (for, as the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said : If you do not see Him, He sees you) and a profound sense of personal responsibility, the habit of doing all matters by Islamic criteria, and love and devotion for God and His guidance. The companions of the Holy Prophet despite the fact that they had the power to take revenge from their enemy did not do so and accepted the truce of Hudaibiya. Allah, the Exalted, praised this attitude of theirs and termed it as Taqwa :

He and those who disbelieve had set up on thier heart zealotry, the zealotry of the age of ignorance, Allah sent down the peace of reassurance upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed on them the word of self-restraint, for they were worthy of it and meet for it. And Allah is Aware of All things. (48:26)

As a result of the importance which Islam attaches to taqwa, all the distinctions of caste, creed, colour, race, natinality, high and low, rich and poor became meaningless and only one standard was fixed to judge the worth and superiority of a person. The Holy Qur'an has stated:

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you as male and female and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is All-knowing. All-Aware." (49:13)

The muttaqin are those who spend (in God's way) in ease as well as in straitness, who restrain their anger and pardon men, for God loves those who do good; those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their own souls, remember God and ask for forgiveness for their sins-And who can forgive sins except Allah? And do not knowingly persist in what they have done. For these the reward will be forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens underneath where rivers flow, to abide therein, and (God's) favour, the reward of those who strive. (3 : 134 - 146)

Verily, the believers are those whose hearts feel fear when God is mentioned, and when His signs (or revelations) are recited to them they increase their *faith*, and who put trust in their Lord. (8:2)

Verily, those who live in awe for fear of their Lord, who believe in their Lords, signs (or revelations), who do not ascribe partner to their Lord, who give what they give in charity with their hearts full of fear because they are to return to their Lord; it is these who hasten in all good acts and they are foremost in them. (23:57-61) ■

THE IMPORTANCE AND NEED OF SOCIAL REFORM

S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Teachings of Quran and Hadith clearly imply the importance of adopting the Islamic Shariah and leading their lives according to its guidance. The Shariah guides Muslims in all aspects of life and resolves their problems. Ignoring Shariah is a sheer misfortune for them; rather it is displeasing to Allah. This deprives Muslims from the blessings and guidance of their Lord. In fact it leads to greater prospects of being seized in Allah's court. Allah has clearly stated in His book, The Holy Quran that He does not accept transgression from the limits of Shariah.

"And whoso seekth as religion other than the Surrender (to Allah) it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter." (Al Imran: verse 85)

"Is it a judgment of the time of (pagan) ignorance that they are seeking? Who is better than Allah for judgment to a people who have certainly (in their belief)?" (Al maida: verse 50)

Allah (swt) has sent His religion and Shariah to Muslims through His last Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and has declared that following His prophet's command is mandatory. A Muslim cannot remain a Muslim he does not agree with His decision.

"But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission." (An-Nisa: verse 65).

It is very unfortunate that Muslims are ignorant of their Shariah. Instead of following the Islamic commandments and traditions they are following the un-Islamic rituals, which on one hand is a source of inviting Allah's and his prophet's (pbuh) displeasure and on the other hand it has made it difficult for them to remain Muslims. Instead of following their natural religion, they have resorted to uncivilized, extravagant and useless ways of life.

Reasons for such a deplorable condition can be attributed to their negligence

in matters of faith, submission to desires and to the ignorance of Shariah. To remove this negligence and submission to desires, proper counseling and preaching is needed and ignorance can be cured by making them aware of the laws of Shariah.

Here in this country, the constitution is based on secularism. Moreover Muslims form a minority. Thus, nothing can be expected from the government. The members of Islamic community can only shoulder the responsibility, because the onus to work for the betterment of society lies on them only. In regards to the relation of Islamic Shariah with that of the constitution and the judiciary of the country, Thanks God, Muslim Personal Law Board has performed the responsibility of defending the Shariah and also removing the misconception regarding it. It has helped to change the laws that were contradictory to Islamic Shariah. It also ponders over complex matters and has been putting in tireless efforts to resolve them.

The other area of work is that of making the Muslims follow the Islamic Shariah, which in itself is a vast and important area of concern. The Board has started working in cooperation with various community organizations in the name of Social Reform, a widespread and tireless area of work. It is needed that meetings be held in different places to prevent common Muslims from breaking the laws of Shariah for their success in this world and also in the Hereafter.

Unimportant extravagance and pomposity in marriage ceremonies, reckless spending and uncivilized traditions displease Allah and His Prophet (pbuh) and at the same time those valuable resources are wasted which could have been used in building a better future for the couple and for more important works of the community. It is also a burden for the parents of the couple. It is needed that the people are preached for its rectification and they should be made to understand that for temporary fun and fame they are ruining their financial future. Apart from being unable to fulfil the genuine needs of the community they also displease Allah and His last Prophet, which is harmful for them in both the worlds.

By not following the useful and balanced way of Nikah and marriage set by Islamic Shariah, the relation between the couple sometimes turns sour. Because of some bitter and cruel system it after leads to separation, divorce and even the loss of life. It is true that sometimes even by following the right path, separation takes place

and thus, Shariah has provided with the option of Talaq and has also informed about its proper way of execution, i.e. firstly close relatives should try to resolve the issue between the couple and if it does not succeed then divorce should be pronounced once a month for three months. Different schools of thought in extreme need allow pronouncing talaq thrice in one go for final separation. Though there are reasons for it but still it is detested. After deciding for complete separation, it is advised to act with mutual respect and also to present gifts at the time of separation as a token of generosity. Many Muslims by neglecting these commands create a wrong impression where they pronounce three talaq in one go and get surrounded with problems. If they follow Shariah then they can be safe from anger and negative temperament and the issue can also be resolved peacefully.

One should pronounce one talaq at first and if the problem is not resolved then the second and then the third in subsequent months, talaq should be pronounced again to resolve the matter. The issue of inheritance should also be dealt with in the same way. In other personal matters, Shariah has clearly explained the rights of different members of the family. If these guidance are followed then the family will live happily and the society will progress.

Another important aspect is the Biddah (unlawful innovation in religion) of wine and gamble which have been considered to be strictly illegitimate acts and which ruins wealth and the personal life. Most importantly it invites the wrath of Allah. Another form of gambling, known as lottery, exists in our society where many Muslims waste a huge chunk of their income with the hope of getting profits but their loss causes catastrophe in their families vulnerable.

Such misdeeds are making the community vulnerable to grief. It is the responsibility of the people of the community who have command over language or pen that they should come forward to help in eradicating these evils and provide succour to the community. ■

PALESTINE PROBLEM : GREATEST TRAGEDY OF THE WORLD

Lucknow : The problem of Palestine and the Palestinian people is one of the greatest tragedies of the world and it is the responsibility of all peace-loving nations and the Muslim world in particular to raise their voice against the injustice being meted out to them.

“The festering imbroglio which had claimed thousands of lives of Palestinians during the last five decades could not be resolved just because of several vetos exercised the United States in the Security Council in favour of Israel due to obvious reasons,” said Syed Hussain, additional advocate general of UP. He was chief guest at the symposium on “Present situation of Islamic world and our responsibility with special reference to Palestine” organized by Maulana Mohd Ali Jouhar Foundation Lucknow.

Tracing history of Palestines problem from immediately after the World War I and the disintegration of Turkish Ottoman Empire, Hasan said that it had been the conspiracy of Britain and its allies to get a separate state for the Jews (Israel) created in the Middle East which could act as a bridle for the small Muslim countries, which came into existence after the World War.

“Moreover, USA, notorious for its hegemony and imperialistic policies across the globe, did not allow any popular governments to take over in the Arab world. Instead, it allowed kings, emirs and dictators to assume power in these countries much against the wishes of the people so that these ‘puppets’ could allow it (US) to implement its ‘agenda of expansionism’ with impunity”, he claimed.

Maulana Saeed-ur-Rahman Azmi, principal of renowned Islamic seminary Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, in his presidential address, squarely blamed the western powers, particularly the United States, for the prevailing unrest in the Muslim countries including the Palestinian issue. Lashing out at US president George Bush for the loss of thousands of precious lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, the maulana said the ground for these senseless attacks against these two Muslim countries has been prepared much earlier.

“The main aim of the western powers is to target Muslims and their religion. The terms like “Islamic terrorism”, the blasphemous caricatures of Prophet Muhammad by a Danish cartoonist and the recent controversial 15-minute movie ‘Fitna’ made by a Dutch MP are vivid examples of the diatribe the western power resort to against the religion of 1.5 billion Muslims of the world”, he alleged. He has asked the Muslims not to get desperate but unite for the cause of the Palestinians as history always changes its course. He has also appealed to the Palestinians’ or ganisations Hamas and Al-Fatah to sink their differences and come on a common platform and then fight for the self determination of the Palestinians.

(The Times of India. - 19-4-08)

DEMOCRACY IN ISLAM

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Islam lays great stress on Justice, equality, morality, ethics, tolerance, forbearance, sympathy, integrity, honesty, brotherhood, fraternity, kindness, generosity, cleanliness, sanitation, enlightenment, wisdom and the like. The beauty and elegance of Islam is that it puts each thing in its proper place. Islam's main plank is to set up such a friendly environment wherein all people may live with peace and serenity regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. According to Islam all people are from the same origin and source and they were made into nations and tribes just to know each other, as confirmed by the following Quranic words: "O mankind We created you from a single male and a female, made you into nations and tribes, and ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things." (49:13)

That is why Islam enunciates that cooperation and help should be in matters of piety and virtues and not in evil and unholy acts and deeds. The holy Quran says: "Help ye another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah : for Allah is strict in punishment" (5:2)

Following sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are worth quoting.

Once the holy Prophet said : "Help your brother whether he is oppressed or oppressor". His companions asked, "How could we help if he is oppressor?" The Prophet replied: "Stop him from oppression." Narrated Abu Musa: Some people asked Allah's Apostle (S) "Whose Islam is the best ? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim?) He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands." Narrated Anas : The Prophet (S) said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his Muslim brother what he likes for himself." The Prophet says: "He is no true Muslim who eath his fill, and leaveth his neighbours hungry." Again he said: "The Muhajir is he who denounces the evil, and then keeps aloof from it." The Prophet declared, "He who hurts a dhimmi (non believer living in an Islamic state) hurts me and he who hurts me annoys God." He also said, "On the Day of Resurrection, I shall denounce him who oppresses a dhimmi or violates his right or puts a responsibility on him which is

beyond his strength or takes something away from him.”

These above traditions of the Prophet indicate that his mission is only for restoring dignity and upliftment of people and setting up an atmosphere of peace and amity throughout the world.

It should be kept in mind that it is Islam which first offered the concept of common citizenship and promoted a multi-religious and pluralistic society.

When the Prophet settled down in Madina, he constituted a city-state, in which Muslims, Pagan Arabs, Jews and Christians, all entered into a stable organism by means of a social contract.

In latter days wherever Islam spread, this trend was kept alive by Muslim rulers too. Accordingly Muslims had ruled more than 800 years over Spain. But not a single incident of forceful conversion occurred. Such cases are also seen in other countries under the sway of Muslim rulers including a longest period of Mughals rule in India. Needless to add that right from the very outset Islam has been the most tolerant and egalitarian of all religions.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says : “The spirit of human brotherhood built up by Islam is not hampered by concepts of racialism or sectarianism, be it linguistic, historic, traditionalistic or even of dogmatic nature. Its power to unite different races and nations in one brotherhood has always been recognized. Islam was the first religion which preached and practiced democracy.” (Islam and Civilization, P.25)

Similar thoughts are of the well known Indian freedom fighter and poetess Mrs Sarojini Naidu. She says: “It was the first religion that preached and practised democracy; for in the mosque when the call from the Minaret is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, “God alone is great.” I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man distinctly a brother.” (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, P. 169)

In short if we study Islam and ponder over its contributions and services to humanity, we come across to the conclusion that current misgivings about Islam are unfounded. Suffice it to say that Almighty Allah Himself addressed the Prophet to say, “O Muhammad, say to people, “To you be your religion, and to me mine.” (109:6) That is why the Prophet never compelled Jews or Christians to accept Islam. The Holy Quran strongly advocates that “There shall be no coercion on matters of faith.” (2:256) ■

ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN THE BALKANS 1970-1992

Fikret Karcic

INTRODUCTION

Islamic revival is a blanket term used to denote an increasing interest in Islam among the Muslim especially since the 1970s. This term encompasses different manifestations ranging from the call for introduction of the Shari'ah into national legal systems of Muslim nations to increased personal religiosity. Revival in Muslim majority countries has taken the form of more or less radical demand for changes in the social reality of the Muslims while Muslim minority nations focused on the preservation of Muslim identity against advancing secularization and assimilation.

Most researches on Islamic revivalism deal with Muslim majority countries. Even the elements of a definition of this term have been distracted from that experience. As far as Muslim minorities are concerned, there are several case studies without attempts for identification of the distinctive features of the revival among those communities.

The study of Islamic revival in the Balkans is important for several reasons. It tells us how Islam survived a century-long rule of hostile regimes and ideologies, what revival means for Muslims who live on the periphery of the Muslim world, and how non-Muslims perceive that process and react to it. In the present paper investigation will concentrate on three major Muslim groups in the region - the former Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria – between 1970 and 1992.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Muslim communities in Europe belong to two broad groups : (a) Muslim communities in the southeastern part of the continent, mainly the Balkans, which trace their origin, at least continuously, from the Ottoman times, and (b) Muslim communities in other parts of Europe which are mainly composed of Muslim immigrants in quest of better economic opportunities from 1950s and 1960s and political immigrants from most recent times.

These two groups differ significantly in terms of group structure, history, and political and legal status. The Muslims of the Balkans represent a conglomerate of different ethnic groups ranging from the Illyric-origin Albanians Slavic Bosniaks and Pomaks the descendants of Turkish settlers from Anatolia. Circassians, Tatars, etc.

They all belong to Ahl al-Sunnah wa 'l-jama'ah (except the Bektashis in Albania) and adhere to the Hanafi school of Fiqh.

The historical encounters between the Muslims in the Balkans and European Christian peoples and states have been also different from that of the Muslim communities in Western Europe have been perceived as a land of better opportunities, and a safe haven from oppression obtaining in their own homelands. On the other hand, the Muslims of the Balkans have been learning about Europe through the acts of insufficiently "Europeanized" states such as Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania. Those nation state see the Muslims either as former occupiers (Turks) or as 'renegades' (local Islamicized population) and Islam as an alien religion and an obstacle to national unity.

It was on these grounds that Muslims were massacred during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, the Balkan wars of 1912-1913, the First World War (1914-1918), and the Second World War (1941-1945). In fact, in all the conflicts of the modern Balkan history, Muslims were victimized, killed, expelled from their homes, and forced to migrate to Turkey or other countries. While West Europe opened its doors for the Muslim immigrants from Asia and Africa, some Balkan countries continued their policy of expelling local Muslims under the slogan "Go back to Asia".

The tragic aspect of the historic experience of Muslims in the Balkans was that they, from the second half of the 19th century, had to face extremely nationalistic, exclusivist and anti-Islamic Orthodox-Christian regimes. Additionally, after the Second World War Communist regimes were established in most of those states, thus replacing on dictatorship with another. Under the Communist rule, the Muslims were victimized on two grounds : as believers (because all religious people were persecuted) and as Muslims (adherents of "an alien religion"). Even the movements for independence in the former Communist countries did not bring peace and freedom for the Muslims. More than 300,000 Turks of Bulgaria were forcibly expelled from their homes in summer 1989. Bosniaks, who, compared with the other Balkan states, enjoyed relatively greater religious freedom were subject to all forms of genocide between 1992-1995. Albanians in Kosovo have continued to live under the Serbian imposed police regime since 1981. Post Communist history of the Balkans has been stained with Muslim blood and suffering.

The political and legal status of the Muslim groups in the Balkans during the period of 1970-1992 was also different. Muslims constituted an absolute majority in Albania, a large minority in the then Yugoslav federation and Bulgaria, and a consid-

erable minority in Greece and Romania.

The course of post-Ottoman history, the different legal and political status of Muslims under the Communist rule in each of these three Balkan states as well as different developments in the post-Communist era, have influenced the manifestation and dynamism of the process called Islamic revival.

THE DYNAMICS OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL

Islamic revival in the different countries of the region did not start simultaneously. Among the Communist countries in the Balkans, Yugoslavia has had the most liberal political atmosphere especially ever since the fall of the state Vice-president and the head of Internal Security Service (UDB), Aleksandar Rankovic, in July 1966. Since that time, all religious communities in Yugoslavia have recorded some revival, euphemistically called in the official usage as “normalization of relationship between state and church.

Belgrade and the Vatican signed a protocol on June 1966 and that was followed by the launching of a number of religious periodicals. After the fall of Aleksandar Rankovic, the Orthodox Macedonians were able to get otocephaly in ecclesiastical affairs in 1967. The situation of Muslims was complex. Certainly, they benefited from the decentralization of political and administrative system which ended with the adoption of the confederal constitution of 1974. The Bosniaks were recognized as a separate ethnic group (nation) under the name Muslimani, a move which positively influenced their further affirmation and which, at the same time, also gave rise to new controversies. The Albanians were given the status of a separate ethnic group (nacionalnost) with a large set of cultural rights and political autonomy in Kosovo.

That process of “national affirmation” of both Muslim groups necessarily opened the issue of the place of Islam in the cultural identity of Bosniaks and Albanians, In both cases, the Marxists attempted to direct and control the process of “national affirmation”. In Bosnia it took the shape of an attempt to create a Muslim nation without Islam. In that regard it was possible for the protagonists of that orientation to construct expressions such as “Muslim atheists”, i.e. members of the ethnic group Muslimani but atheists by conviction. In addition, the Marxist-sponsored project of “national affirmation” of Bosniaks took place under the very dogmatic regime in Bosnia in 1970s and 1980s . In that way the Bosniaks were relieved from the pressures from Belgrade but not from their own Marxists.

Similarly, among the Albanians in Kosovo and western Macedonia the secular

intellectuals became the most influential figures, in their case the situation was worse than in Bosnia because the Albanian intellectuals were formed, under the strong influence of dogmatic Marxism and nationalism from Albania. Therefore, when the revival of interest in Islam began in the 1970s among the Bosniaks and later among the Albanians, Muslim activists were faced with two sets of obstacles : the prejudices and hostility of non-Muslim circles and opposition from the Muslim secularized (officially Marxist) elites. The non-Muslim political elements, the ruling political elite embodied in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), were uneasy about the process of increasing growth of political self-consciousness among Bosniaks and Albanians. On the other hand, the Muslim Marxists, in need to protect their project of “national affirmation”, very often attacked the Islamic circles. By doing so, they were trying to eliminate the concurrent ideological trend within the Muslim corpus and to prove their loyalty to LCY.

Apart from the liberalization of the political regime and the political emancipation of Bosniaks and Albanians, several other factors have contributed to the Islamic revival in the former Yugoslavia. Among them one should mention the increased economic power of all Yugoslav citizens, including Muslims, due to the loans they received from abroad and the remittances of the “guest workers” in Western Europe. This factor, rather than foreign aid, has brought about massive (re) construction of mosques throughout Yugoslavia. Besides, the 1970s also saw the emergence of a new generation of young Muslim graduates, not only from the Middle-Eastern universities but also from the state universities of Yugoslavia, including – paradoxically enough – the Marxist – controlled Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo. At the same time, the first M. A. And Ph. D. graduates in Islamic Studies returned to Bosnia from al-Azhar, the University of Baghdad, the University of Kuwait and other Muslim institutions of higher learning abroad. This new generation brought new impulses in the petrified structure of the Islamic Religious Community (IVZ), an official administration of Islamic affairs in Yugoslavia, formally separated from the state but never allowed to be out of control.

Lastly, global trends in the Muslim world and the new wave of religious fervour approximately since the turn of the 15th century Hijrah in November 1979 have contributed to the new self-perception of the Muslims in Yugoslavia. Strangely, perhaps, they learned more about Islamic revival, a new development in the Muslim world, through the secular liberal media from Belgrade and Zagreb that through the publications of “The Islamic Community” which were still being carefully scruti-

nized by the state prosecutors and internal censorship.

Islamic revival among two other big Muslim communities in the Balkans – Bulgaria and Albania – began after the easing of the Communist dictatorship in autumn 1989 and winter 1991 respectively. In both the instances, Islamic revival took the form of revitalization of the elementary functions of religious communities.

In Bulgaria, a joint statement of the State Council and the Council of Ministers adopted on December 29, 1989 denoted an end of several decades long policy of restriction and abuse of religious, civil, political and cultural rights of the Muslims by the Communist regime. That policy, which was a continuation of the previous Bulgarian nationalist attitudes toward Muslims since 1958, included the following : constant ideological attack on Islam as an alien religion, the banning of Muslim attire, circumcision, religious sacrifices (qurban), observance of the Islamic practices and the use of Turkish language. The radicalization of that policy after 1971 added a striking change of policy in so far as pressure was brought on Muslims to change Muslim names and adopt Slavic (Orthodox Christian) names. Muslim resistance to these violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms was met by death penalties, long-term imprisonments and deportations. The most notorious episode of the Bulgarian anti-Muslim policy was the deportation and emigration of over 310,000 Muslims to Turkey in summer 1989.

The change of Bulgarian leadership in the fall of 1989 and the prospects for further democratization of the country enabled the Muslims to stay in their homeland without losing identity. The basic functions of the Islamic religious administration were revived and traumatic experience of long persecutions have brought emergence of Muslim based “Movement for the freedoms and liberties”.

The non-violent Muslim struggle for equal rights is far away from its end in a country where a symbiosis between the Orthodox Church and the state is an established tradition. It should be remembered that at the same time when an anti-Muslim policy was launched in 1953, the Bulgarian Patriarchate was restored and that even the democratically adopted constitution recognized a special role for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Islamic revival in Albania symbolically began in November 1990 with the popular demand for a public prayer in the main mosque of Tirana-Xhamia e Plumbit. That event has been followed by the official opening of the remaining mosques in the main Albanian cities. Revival of popular interest in Islam was a part of the mass movement against one of the most oppressive Communist regimes and its denial of fundamental rights and liberties. That movement, led by secular intellectuals and activists, de-

manded democracy and thereby acknowledged religious liberties as an integral part of the emancipation of the Albanians. As a natural consequence, Albanians of different religious backgrounds began to show increasing interest in the roots of their cultural identity. Therefore, Islamic revival in Albania, which overthrew the Communist dictatorship in a country with nearly 75% Muslim population, did not have an ideological orientation. Rather, it was an outcome of a larger pro-democracy movement.

The challenges which faced the Albania Muslims were considerable. Living in "the first atheistic country in the world", as proclaimed in the Albanian Constitution of 1967, the Muslims found themselves in 1991 virtually without any religious structure. They only had a small number of mosques which survived aggressive secularization, about sixty surviving members of the last batch graduated from the madrasah (Medreseja e Pergjithshme) in Tirana, expropriated waaf property and secularized post-war generations.

During the first two years of the post-Communist era, the Albanian Muslims concentrated on the basic ground work of building the religious institutions. On February 14, 1991, the Islamic Community of Albania was restored; the mosques in the bigger cities were constructed or renovated; about 10 Islamic schools were opened, Islamic newspapers began to be published and young Albanians were sent to different Muslim universities to pursue their studies.

This was just the beginning of the revitalization of the Islamic community aimed to provide the basic religious services to the Muslims in an atmosphere of severe competition between concurrent ideologies and intensive Christian missionary activities.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL

Renewed interest of the Balkan Muslims in their religion has found its expression, with different degrees of intensity, in some of the following areas:

- (1) (re) construction of mosques,
- (2) education,
- (3) publishing,
- (4) use of Islamic social symbols,
- (5) political culture and organizations, and
- (6) emergence of the Muslim solidarity institutions.

On the basis of the available data we shall try to examine these manifestations.

(Re) Construction of Mosques

The Yugoslavia of 1970s and 1980 saw construction activities on a relatively

large scale. A total of 2060 mosques (jami) (mosques with minaret where Friday prayers are performed) was recorded in 1991. In addition, there were 740 masjids (smaller places of worship, in local terminology), 1210 maktabas (places for religious instruction) and 44 tekiyes (places for Sufi dhkir). In April 1992 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the centre of Islam in Yugoslavia, there were 1144jami, 557 masjids, 954 maktabas, 15 tekiyes. Out of the total number of mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina, some 400 mosques were built during the period 1945-1985 and about 380 were renovated. When we interpret these facts we should keep in mind that a large number of mosques was destroyed during the Second World War, especially by the units of Yugoslav Royal Army (Chetniks). Thus renovation refers to those mosques destroyed during the war or those which needed it due to passage of time.

Newly-built mosques were mainly the result of the increasing economic power of the Muslims and the improvement of the standards of living in the villages. During the last few decades, hundreds of villages in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other parts of Yugoslavia came to have elementary schools, roads, clinics, post offices and, naturally, in the case of Muslims mosques. It goes without saying that mosques were built by the donations of the local Muslims. The aid given by foreign Muslim organizations was only symbolical and related to the big construction projects such as the Zagreb Islamic Centre and the reconstruction of Gazi Husrevbeg mosque in Sarajevo.

In Albania in 1945 there were 1, 127 mosques and they were either closed or had been destroyed together with other place of worship in 1967. In July 1993 there were 25 main working mosques in the bigger cities and 23 were under construction or renovation. Therefore, in the case of this country, the Muslims need several decades to reach the number of mosques necessary for the religious life of their population.

In Bulgaria all mosques (data are not available) except those preserved for propaganda purposes, were gradually closed after the 1946. That policy drastically changed the landscape of the traditional Muslim regions in this country. Therefore, reconstruction of certain mosques after 1991 was an attempt to provide the necessary places of worship and focal points of activity to the Muslim community.

Islamic education

In the case of Yugoslavia there were two types of Islamic education: (a) institutionalized education provided by the Islamic high schools (madrasas) and the Faculty of Islamic Theology in Sarajevo meant to produce religious officials, and (b) religious instruction for the common believers provided in the form of weekend

classes in specially designated places (maktabs). Out of hundred madrasas in Yugoslavia only two survived after 1945: Gazi Husrevbeg in Sarajevo (established in 1537) and Alauddin in Prishtine (Kopsovo). In 1984 Isabeg madrasah was opened in Skopje. Additionally, in 1977 the Faculty of Islamic Theology was opened in Sarajevo and this faculty could be considered as a continuation of the Higher School of Shari'ah and Theology which had been closed down by the Communists in 1946. In the same year a Girls' division of Gazi Husrevbeg madrasah was opened, again continuing the tradition of the girls' madrasah which had been closed down after the Second World War. In all these schools a total of 820 students were receiving formal Islamic education in 1991. Precise data on non-formal Islamic education provided in the maktabs are not available but the number of those children in 1980 was estimated at 120,000.

In Albania there were 17 madrasas in 1945. The madrasah in Tirana was closed down in 1965. In 1993 there were 10 madrasas with 1058 pupils. Some of those schools are without appropriate equipment. Albania continues to remain without any institution of higher Islamic learning.

In Bulgaria the Islamic courses were included in the curricula of the "minority schools" of the Turkish community. The Communist regime continuing the practice of its fascist predecessors, first nationalized "minority schools" in September 1946 and later in June 1960 abolished separate education. Medrese-i Nuvvab in Shumen, a school for training muftis, opened in 1923, was first put under the influence of modernists and transformed into "Nazim Hikmet Turkish Gymnasium" (1947) and finally closed down after a short time.

The Muslims of Bulgaria were not only left without proper Islamic educational institutions but their very existence was imperilled. Changes in the political atmosphere in 1989 led to the (re) opening of the Islamic College in Sofia and the revitalization of elementary Islamic instruction.

Islamic Publishing

Since 1970 Islamic publication activities in Yugoslavia were rapidly intensified. The centre of those activities was Sarajevo. Apart from the publication of the translation of the Qur'an, of Sahih al-Bukhari and a number of books written by classical and contemporary Muslim authors, a number of periodical publications also emerged. Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starjesinstva/Rijaseta (The Herald of the Supreme Islamic Authorities/Riyasat in Yugoslavia) was an official journal of the Islamic Community published as a bimonthly since 1933. Zemzem, a paper of the Society of

the Students of Gazi Husrevbeg Medresa has been in publication since 1968. The most important promoter of the revitalization of Islam was the biweekly Preporod (Renaissance), which first appeared in Sarajevo on 15 September 1970. In September 1995 this paper celebrated the 20th anniversary and it has been recorded that during that time some 2100 contributors published their works in this paper.

During the same decade a monthly magazine Islamshka misao (Islamic Thought) was started in Sarajevo. Around the same time the Association of 'Ulama' in Sarajevo was regularly publishing an almanac, Takvim, whose circulation reached 50,000 copies. 1980 saw the appearance of Educata Islame (Islamic Education), published in Albanian in Pristine; Elif, published in Bosnian in Titograd/Podgonica; El-Hilal, published in the Macedonian, Turkish and Albanian languages in Skopje.

After the decades of suppression, this mushrooming of Islamic news/views papers was perceived as a "revivalist boom" by the regime's ideologically staunch and anti-Islamic circles.

In Albania Drita Islame ("Light of Islam") the organ of the Islamic Community, has appeared as a monthly since 1991. Besides, there is Shkelqimi Islam ("Splendour of Islam"), a paper of the Islamic Youth Federation of Albania (Bashkimi te Rinise Islamike Shqiptare) was founded towards the end of 1990.

In Bulgaria Muslim publications have had a long history since the Ottoman times. The most flourishing period in it was the period of monarchy (1909-1941) when 67 Turkish papers and 13 magazines were published. Under the Communist rule that number was, first radically reduced (only 5 papers and 1 magazine) and all publications were put under firm ideological control. Finally, even the publication of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Turkish language (Yeni Isik - "New Light") was stopped in January 1985. Therefore, Muslim publications which emerged after 1990 were a modest effort to cater for the needs of the Muslim Community in Bulgaria.

Use of Islamic Social Symbols

The period of Islamic revival under study witnessed the reappearance of the Islamic social symbols in public life such as attire (scarfs and long skirts for girls and women), appearance (e.g. beard for men) and characteristically Islamic social etiquette. Those symbols expressed the increasing consciousness of the Muslims concerning their identity, emphasizing what distinguished them from others. In all the three Balkan countries mentioned above, viz. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and Bul-

garia, those symbols had been forbidden by the Communist regimes and had virtually disappeared from Muslim practice. In that sense their reappearance was not only an indicator of the widening of the horizons of freedom but also of the new Muslim consciousness, and of their conviction that faith demands certain social behaviour and their readiness to show to the public their distinctiveness.

In Yugoslavia, the traditional Islamic attire for Muslim women (zar and feredja) were prohibited by a law passed by that People's Assembly of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on September 27, 1950. In the following decades Muslim women and girls in urban areas adopted European attire and fashion. In the rural areas of Bosnia, Sandjak, Kosovo and Western Macedonia as well as in devoted Muslim families in towns, the traditional attire was preserved. But, the general trend until 1970s was towards Europeanization.

In the 1980s some observers noticed small group of young educated men and women in Bosnian urban centres, especially in Sarajevo, who, through their appearance, manifested adherence to Islam. After the collapse of the Communist rule this group enlarged and became much more visible.

The reappearance of Islamic attire in public by convinced, young, urban, educated Muslims was completely different from the preservation of the traditional Muslim costumes by womenfolk in the rural areas of Bosnia or among Albanian Muslim in Kosovo and Western Macedonia. Because of its different nature this phenomenon drew the attention of observers in other parts of Yugoslavia and abroad.

In Albania during the Communist drive for the creation of the "new Albanian man", especially after 1967, all Islamic social symbols were condemned as "reactionary". The traditional Muslim attire was preserved only in the rural areas as a part of the national folklore. Young women and girls were prohibited to wear scarves. It was only after winter 1990/91 that in big cities such as Tirana, Shkodra and Berat some women began to wear hijab. That practice was limited to a few individuals, mainly from devoted Muslim families, or those married to Arabs, or Albanians from Kosova, or graduates from the Islamic universities. But that trend is increasing and the local people respect those who opt for the Islamic attire.

Likewise, in Bulgaria the Communist regime prohibited traditional Muslim attire for women as well as for men in public places, officers and schools as a part of its assimilation policy guided by the concept of "one compact Bulgarian nation". Muslim attire was considered as a manifestation of "the overall backwardness of the

Turkish population. Liberalization of the policy toward the Muslims in Bulgaria contributed to encouraging some Muslim women and girls to return to traditional attire.

Political Culture and Organizations

One of the main characteristics of the Islamic revival is the increasing use of Islamic vocabulary in political life and the emergence of political organizations inspired by Islam. Of the three Balkan countries under discussion, Muslim-based political organization emerged in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

In Albania, political change was brought about by the pro-Western political forces rather than by Islamists. The most influential newly established party in Albania, the Democratic Party (DPA) led by Sali Berisha and Gramoz Pashko, proclaimed the Helsinki Final Act as the basis for the building of the new Albanian society. The term revival (*rilindja*) has been frequently used in Albanian political life but with the prefix “democratic” rather than “Islamic”.

In Yugoslavia, the Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka demokratske akcije*-SDA) under the leadership of Alija Izetbegovic was formed in May 1990. That party define itself as a “political union of citizens of Yugoslavia who belong to Muslim cultural and historical circle”. The party attracted the major proportion of Bosniaks in Bosnia, Sandjak, Croatia and Macedonia and attempted to articulate their specific political interests. The party used certain Muslim symbols such as the green coloured flag with the crescent and introduced into public discourse almost forgotten Muslim greetings. Islam is referred, in the party’s usage, as an element of Bosnian identity and religious liberties as a part of general human rights and freedoms. There were no demands for the establishment of the state on the basis of an Islamic ideology nor any call for the implementation of the Shariah. The best illustration of the attitude of SDA toward political system is a statement by its president, Alija Izetbegovic: “To be quite clear, I don’t want an Islamic Republic but I want Islam to survive in this part of the world, somebody likes it or not.

The emergence of SDA was basically the result of the introduction of political pluralism in Yugoslavia, on the one hand and increased political self-consciousness of Bosniaks on the other. ‘Islamic revival certainly influenced that process and led it toward a positive acknowledgment of the role of Islam in the creation of a separate Bosniak identity.

In Bulgaria the political organization of Muslims, mainly of Turkish ethnic origin, began through the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MFRF) led by the

former political prisoner, Ahmed Dogan. This was a grassroots movement for the protection of human rights of the Muslims. The very name of this movement indicates the need of the Muslims in the Balkans to protect their rights. Similar organizations were established among the Turks and Albanians in Yugoslavia in 1918 under the name 'Organization for the Protection of Rights of Yugoslav Muslims' (Yugoslavya'da Islam Muhafazayi Hukuk Cemiyeti). The movement in Bulgaria became a political party in 1990 and won 7.5 per cent votes of the total electoral body in the first free elections and 20 seats in the National Parliament. In spite of being the third largest group in the parliament, MFRF was prevented to participate in the government only because of its Muslims bases. Political observers agree that MFRF has a predominantly secular outlook and appeals to Turkish national feelings. Nevertheless, MFRF continued to be looked upon by most of the Bulgarian Orthodox as an undesirable element.

Emergence of Muslim Solidarity Institutions

One of the distinctive characteristics of Islamic revival in the 1970s was its stress on Muslim solidarity and the development of Islamic international organization and institutions. The emergence of the Organization of Islamic Conference in September 1969 was a very significant expression of such trend.

A certain attempt for the institutionalization of the link between Muslims in the Balkans, or rather East Europe, was initiated in 1989. It was aimed to overcome the isolation of individual Muslim communities in this region where Muslims did not have a unifying institution like the universal church of their Catholic fellow citizens or the unifying links between Orthodox national churches.

The collapse of Communism provided an opportunity for the institutionalization of Muslim solidarity in South-east Europe. After the cessation of the Ottoman rule the religious institutions of the Balkan Muslims had been built within the framework of nation states. Before the Second World War most of the Balkan states had accepted the legal obligation to allow the Muslims to have links with the Office of Shaykh al-Islam in Istanbul. But the mutual relationship between the Balkan Muslims were not developed nor put into any institutional form. The lack of the sense of belonging to a regional Muslim community and strategy of the Balkan national states to deal with the Muslims separately were the main causes of that situation. Until the collapse of Communism, the Balkan Muslims were interlinked only by their religious feelings.

From 1989 to 1991 there were some encouraging signs such as the trend toward the institutionalization of the links between Balkan Muslims. This became evident at the time when the expulsion of Turks from Bulgaria took place. The representatives of some East European Muslim communities (Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece) and the international Islamic organizations met at the Islamic Centre in Vienna between 30 June and 4 July 1989 to discuss, among other matters, the possibility of the establishment of an umbrella organization for the Muslims of that region. A special committee was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the Basic Act of that organization.

The second meeting in this connections was held in the middle of March 1990 where a draft version of the Basic Act was discussed. Unfortunately, the representatives of three major Muslim communities (Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia) were absent at this meeting. Finally, in August 1991 the third meeting was held with full participation of all Muslim communities of South East Europe: Muslims of Yugoslaviak (23 delegates), Muslims of Bulgaria (26 delegates), Muslims of Romania (9 delegates), Muslims of Greece (3 delegates), Muslims of Albania (15 delegates), Muslims of Poland (8 delegates), Muslims of Hungary (23 delegates), and Muslims of Czechoslovakia (5 delegates). The delegates adopted the proposed Basic Act of the future institutional link between them which paved the way for the beginning of the Islamic Council of Eastern Europe (al-Majlis al-Islami li Sharq Urubba).

The objectives of the Council, defined in the Article 3 of its Basic Act were among others, to deal with the strengthening of belief among the Muslims of the region; to improve the Islamic work (da 'wah): to facilitate the distribution of Islamic books; to provide scholarship to Muslim student; to encourage the memorizing of the Qur'an among young Muslims; to secure separtate graveyards for Muslims in places where there are no such graveyards and to encourage Muslims to develop strong cultural and social links with the societies in which they live. In addition, the Council was supposed to work on an adequate presentation of Islam to non-Muslims; to develop mutual administrative cooperation among the Muslim communities; to assist the development of Islamic educational institutions in the region and to follow the problems of the Muslims in this region and to present them to the Muslim international institutions as well as to the relevant bodies of the international community.

These aims, in fact, indicate the nature of the Islamic revival in the Balkans. Obviously, the Balkan Muslims wished to forge some kind of cooperation in matters

which fall under the category of universally recognized religious liberty. The means for the realization of these aims were generally described as "all means permitted by legal systems of countries where the respective minority live" (Art 4 of the Basic Act mentioned above).

The organizational structure of the Islamic Council for Eastern Europe includes a Board of Trustees consisting of representatives of the official Islamic organizations from Eastern Europe, representatives of Islamic organizations and institutions from the Islamic world, the director of the Islamic Centre of Vienna, and chairpersons of specific committees recommended by the Board of Trustees. It was decided that the **Board** should meet once a year and should convene an urgent meeting whenever necessary. Apart from the Board of Trustees, among the organs of the Council were also General Secretary, Executive Committee and Treasury.

The head quarters of the Council was to be located in the city where the President-elect of the Council happened to be living. Since the first President of the Council elected on 11 August 1991 was Haji Jakub Selimoski, the then Ra'is al-'Ulama' of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia. The site of the Council de jure was Sarajevo.

At the same time when the Islamic Council for Eastern Europe was established war broke out in Croatia and several months later in Bosnia. In regard to these events, the most tragic in the modern history of the Muslims in the Balkans, no voices were raised by the Islamic Council of Eastern Europe. Even the urgent meeting of the Board of Trustees envisaged in the Article 5 of the Basic Act was not convened.

The Ra'is al-'Ulama' of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia was removed from that post in April 1995 following the structural changes in the Community. The disintegration of the Yugoslav federation brought about the disintegration of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia, which followed a federal pattern. The Muslim leadership focused its attention on the consolidation of the Islamic institutions within the borders of the newly independent states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia). The Islamic Council of Eastern Europe ceased to function.

Much more research needs to be conducted in order to highlight causes of the failure of this institution of Muslim solidarity. In the light of available information, it seems that lack of sufficient time for the consolidation of a new institution has significantly contributed to bringing about its end.

THE NATURE OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL

The manifestations of Islamic revival in the Balkans (1970-1992) show that

this process was mainly related to the religious and cultural sphere, that it was a part of the greater social change in the former Communist countries, and that it was the outcome of internal developments, within the respective Muslim communities.

The main reason for the religious and cultural character of the Islamic revival in the Balkans in the political nature of Islam in this region in the post Ottoman period. The Balkan Muslims, in spite of being exposed to the hostile policy of their Orthodox-Christian neighbours, failed to organize themselves as Muslims until they were uprooted in most parts of the region. Besides, most of the Balkan Muslims born after 1945 were deprived of Islamic education and the possibility to live according to Islamic tradition, and for all practical purposes were hardly no more than “nominal Muslims”. For them the fall of Communism gave a chance to express interest in their cultural and religious roots. That process has become the substance of Islamic revival. The highest demand of the Muslims was to be free to profess and practice Islam as the Muslims did in Western Europe.

The religious and cultural character of Islamic revival in the Balkans has been noticed by certain European scholars who had been following the whole process with their field work. Cornelia Sorabji (UK), while doing research on Islamic revival and marriages in Bosnia before 1988, concluded that Islamic revival in that country was not a political movement. There were no calls for the reinstatement of Shari as, but rather a return to certain Shariah prescriptions such as the head covering of women. Likewise, Gyorgy Lederer (Hungary), researching on Islam in post-Communist Albania, concluded: “At the moment (1994) Islam in Albania is as the West would like it to be : non-political, moderate, loyal to the government and fully respecting the rules of European democracy.

On the other hand, some authors because of their ethnic or ideological connections, have portrayed Islamic revival particularly in some Balkan countries as a radical or militant movement which is spread from the Middle East towards Europe. Darko Tanaskovic (Serbia), analysing the revival of Islam in the Balkans after the demise of Communism, expressed doubt in the possibility of the existence of a “moderate Islam” acceptable to Europe. He qualifies the beginning of cooperation among the Balkan Muslim communities (like in the case of the Islamic Council for Eastern Europe) as a part of the larger strategic plan for the reconquest of the region. Similarly, Zachary T. Irwin’s judgement on Islamic revival in Bosnia was quite negative. He said: “The objective of the Bosnian Muslims were similar to those of militant

Islam elsewhere.

These dissonant tones in analysing Islamic revival in the Balkans at times inclines one to suspect that a number of analysts and experts were interested from the very beginning not only to explain this phenomenon but also to influence its direction.

Islamic revival in the Balkans was in fact part of the greater social change which took place in all the former Communist countries after 1989-90. In all these countries the Marxist model of modernization failed. The demise of the Marxist ideology and of aggressive secularism was, and integral part of the change brought about by the revival of religion. In the case of Muslims in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria it was also the failure of the concept of the "ruling nation" (Serbs and Bulgarians respectively) which necessarily implied some degree of alienation of the Muslims. In those cases, the revival of Islamic cultural identity was a Muslim reaction to an existing threat to their vital rights and interest.

The Communist attempt to create a Muslim nation in Bosnia without Islam and the Bulgarian attempt to bring Pomaks back into the religion of the "forefathers" and the Bulgarian Orthodox Christian nation have failed. Both Bosniaks and Pomaks eventually realized that without Islam they cannot keep their identities nor exist as nations.

The main protagonists of Islamic revival in the Balkans were the local Muslims educated mainly in the Balkan institutions of higher learning or in the Middle East. Those Muslim intellectuals were not necessarily part of the official Islamic administration, nor did they always belong to the circle of the 'ulama' Besides, the external Muslim factors also played a certain role in the revival. That role was sometimes exaggerated. We have found that the Muslims from abroad influenced Islamic revival in two ways : through the presence of the Muslim students and through the work of humanitarian organizations.

Foreign Muslim students brought into sharp focus the new trends in the Muslim world and served as a link between the Islamic heartland and periphery. The influence of these students was through marriages or small circles of their local friends. That influence was limited due to two reasons: first, their unfamiliarity with the local Muslim tradition and customs and, second, the general uneasiness of official Islamic workers to contact foreigners and thus provoke the state. As it is known, the Communists were obsessed with the foreign threat and the influence of the centres abroad.

Muslim humanitarian organizations appeared on the Balkan soil together with a number of Western organizations of the same kind after the humanitarian crises in Albania in 1990 caused by isolationist policy and in Yugoslavia in 1992 caused by the deliberate devastation of economic bases of the Muslims.

In Albania in 1993, the number of Muslim humanitarian organizations reached 14. These organizations supported publication activities and Islamic education which positively influenced Islamic revival. In Yugoslavia these organizations appeared after the break-up of the federation and influenced only more recent development which beyond the scope of this work.

CONCLUSION

The Balkan Muslims have been trying to preserve their existence, especially as a distinct religio-cultural entity, in their homeland since the end of the Ottoman rule in the region. The consecutive hostile regimes did not allow the Balkan Muslims to consolidate and to develop their theoretical and institutional responses to the challenges of life in the European southeast.

During the period 1970-1992 the Muslims in the then Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania experienced a revival. It first began in Yugoslavia, the most liberal Communist state in the region, and spread subsequently to the other two countries after the fall of Communism. That process was influenced by different socio-political status of the Muslims, the strength of the Islamic institutions and intellectual potentials of respective Muslim communities.

Islamic revival was expressed in increased personal religiosity, (re) construction of mosques, development of Islamic education and publications, increased use of Islamic social symbols and the attempts to building regional Muslim solidarity institutions. The Islamic influence on the political culture and organization was not substantial. Muslim-based parties in the region addressed Islam in their programmes as an element of national identity and its manifestation as a part of the general religious freedom.

The dissolution of Yugoslav Federation in 1991 and the subsequent genocide of Bosnian Muslims marked an end of one period of Islamic revival in the Balkans. The repetition of the century-long pattern of the solution of "Eastern question" in the Balkan introduced new impulses and orientation in the self-understanding of the Balkan Muslims and their attitudes toward others. The coming years will show the real consequences of that change. ■

SEMINAR ON DAWAH AT DAIRAE ARAFAT

A two-day symposium was held from March 29 to 30, 2008 on "Modern Age and Needs of Islamic Dawah in the light of Thoughts and Deeds of Late Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi" at Dairae Arafat, Raibareli, U.P.

Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi in his opening address said that Late Maulana restored the spirit of national integration till his last breath. Followers of different schools of thought held him in high esteem. The modern resources to make Islamic Dawah more effective remained his cherished desire. The deceitful and crafty tricks against Islam by western world always stirred him to deal with them effectively. To combat such ideological attacks he established an "Academy of Islamic Research and Publications". The reputation of the Academy has spread far and wide within a short span of time. The Academy is playing a constructive role in disseminating Islamic thoughts through its publications.

On this occasion the foundation stone of "Idara Markaz Al-Imam Abul Hasan Al-Nadwi" was laid at Dairae Arafat Raibareli. Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi hoped that this institution too would bear good fruits in this direction.

Maulana Abdul Qadir Irani considered it a great step. He exhorted that late Maulana's thoughts should be disseminated throughout the globe. He mentioned about the contribution of noted Irani scholar Maulana Abdul Hamid in the field of education and Islamic Dawah and recalled his relations with late Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

Dr. Saeedur Rahman Nadwi Principal D.N.U. lamented that western civilization is spreading its tentacles to harm the Islamic civilization. He elaborated that two things were found in Maulana's life : Pure doctrine and politeness. He said when UP government ordered all school children to recite Vande Mataram (A polytheistic song). He vehemently opposed it. His annoyance forced the government to withdraw the order.

Maulana Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi Director of Education Nadwatul Ulama's paper was very scholarly and informative. He analysed those personalities, publications and movements which played key role in building up of Maulana's life. Besides he

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