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# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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## Finality of Prophethood- A Boon for Muslims

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Proclamation of God that the Prophethood had come to its end, made even before the Prophet left this fleeting world, was a godsend blessing for Muslims. The declaration that no new Prophet would come after Muhammad, nor would there be a new revelation, not a new religious order after him, was a bounty from God envied by the learned and earnest Rabbis of the Jews who were aware of the stimulus given to eschatological speculations, confusion of thought and religious schisms brought about by the pseudo Messiahs during the long periods of distress undergone by the Jewish people. An authentic Tradition records that "Once a Rabbi said to Caliph Umar: "You have a verse in your Holy Book, which if it had been revealed to us we would have celebrated the day of its revelation as a festival". Caliph Umar asked: "Which is that verse?" The Rabbi replied: "It is: This day have I perfected your religion for you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-ISLAM." Caliph Umar then said: "I fully remember the day and the date and the time when this verse was revealed to the Prophet, on whom be peace and blessings. It was Friday, the evening of Arafa." ●

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## Wisdom of Qur' an

*And say, 'My Lord! Allow me to enter a true entry, and allow me to exit a true exit. And grant me from Yourself an authority to help..' (Surah Al-Isra :80 )*

### Commentary:

The authority was (material) help from Allah, for without His help, it would have been impossible for the Prophet to overcome the opposition to His call. He himself has said, "Allah's eradicates by means of authority, what he does not eradicate by means of the Qur'an" (Ibn Kathir).

"This shows that the reform which Islam seeks to bring about cannot be accomplished merely by preaching and by sermons. Accomplishment of that reform also requires the use of political power and authority. Now, since God Himself taught the Prophet (PBUH) to pray for such authority, it is quite evident that to seek governmental power and to strive for its acquisition so as to make the true faith prevail in human life, and so as to implement the Sharia'ah and to enforce the punishments laid down in God's Law is not only lawful but is also both required and desirable." ●

*"And say, The Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Surely, falsehood was bound to vanish."*

*(Surah Al-Isra:81)*

### Commentary:

When these words were revealed, they sounded like a tall order: given the weakness of the Muslims in that Makkan phase. But it wasn't a few years but the Prophet (saws) had entered Makkah victorious and reciting this verse, breaking the idols placed around the Ka'bah. The reference by "the truth" is to Islam while, by "falsehood," it is to all that stands against Islam (Ibn Jarir). The report is in the Sahihayn which adds that the Prophet had a stick in his hand with which he poked into the eyes of the idols cemented to the ground. They fell back, one after another. Then he ordered them broken. (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir.) ●

## Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

*Umm-i-Habiba related to us that the Apostle of God said: "Whoever will offer up 12 rak'ats during the day and the night (apart from the Farz prayers), for him a mansion will be built in Heaven. (The 12 rak'ats are): 4 before and 2 after Zuhr, 2 after Maghrib, 2 after Isha, and 2 before Fajr.*

*-Tirmizi*

*It is related by Ayesha that the Apostle of God did not show more anxiety for anyother Sunnat or Nafil prayers than the 2 ak'ats before Fajr*

*-Bukhari and Muslim*

### Commentary:

The above Tradition speaks of the offering up of 4 rak'ats before Zuhr.

Taking into account all the reports in this connection it would appear that the Prophet usually offered up 4 rak'ats before Zuhr, and, occasionally, only 2. Both of these courses were adopted by the Prophet and whichever of the two is followed, the Sunnat will be fulfilled. Our own experience is that some theologians, generally, offer 4 rak'ats before Zuhr but when the time for the congregation is short, they rest content with 2 Rak'ats.

Since the sacred Prophet was very particular about the 10 or 12 Ra'kats of Sunnat mentioned in these Traditions and laid a great stress on them, these are known as Sunnat-i-Muakkadah. Among them he attached the greatest importance to the Sunnats of Fajr. ●



**W**e are aware that the fast development of science and technology has revolutionised the pattern of living in literate societies. Developments in the field of electronics have brought the world closer and TV, e-Mail and Internet systems have reduced the importance of the print media. Even though the communication revolution has created two classes of readers one who have an access to latest computer techniques and the other who still bank on books and periodicals, the latter constitutes a majority. The Fragrance is an humble attempt to cater to the needs of this class.

While we have made tremendous scientific strides ranging from nuclear explosions to cloning of living beings our moral and cultural values appear to be fast receding. Historians will agree that since the inception of this world it has always been the endeavour of man to establish his superiority over others. In this process humankind has often lost its balance. Whereas on the one hand it aims to habitate the moon on the other it craves for scientific progress towards assembling devices of mass destruction.

The qualities which distinguish man from other living beings are increasingly getting lost in this fast drive towards scientific onmanship. Man forgets that he has been sent in the

world to spread peace and tranquility and not to create chaos and unrest. Great men were born from time to time to help mankind regulate their lives and lead a pure and pious life. Their areas of operations may have been confined to certain parts of the world but the message they propagated knew no physical or geographical barriers. Judaism and Christianity in their unpolluted form are not far from Islam. Coming closer to our country founders of Jainism and Budhism too spent their lives in search of 'Truth' and spread the message of peace, friendliness and brotherhood amongst mankind. Indeed religion is a vital factor which leads one to follow the Heavenly ordain "Do good and refrain from evils'. Through this periodical our efforts will be to spread the message of peace through the dissemination of relevant literature.. ●

### **Niqab row in Europe**

The controversy in France surrounding an imminent ban on the wearing of the 'burqa', the niqab or other full face coverings suddenly took a dramatic turn when other countries like Belgium have come out in support of such an ill conceived decision. France and Belgium propose to enact law in this respect. Though some broad-minded leaders and lawyers are apprehensive that such an Act will stand the scrutiny of their established 'laws'.

The ridiculous argument is advanced that often terrorists hide their identity and indulge in acts of terrorism. Those who are ignorant of Islamic Sharia also put in their half-baked knowledge that there is no support of Quran and Hadith in observing 'Purdah'. They are advised to read the Holy Qur'an and concentrate on "Surah Al-Noor"-30 to 31; "Say to the believing men that they gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appear thereof : that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husband, their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male attendants free of sexual desires. Or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And o ye Believers! turn ye all together towards

Allah in repentance that ye may be successful." (Surah An-Noor 30-31)

Qur'an further says: "O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when out of doors): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is oft-forgiving, most Merciful. (Surah Al-Ahzab 59).

We may further comprehend significance and importance of veil (purdah) through the following saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Narrated by Umme Salma that one day Umme Salma and Maimuna both were with the Prophet Muhammad. All of a sudden Abdullah bin Maktum a blind Companion of the Prophet came to him. The Prophet said to them to observe purdah. Umme Salma said he was blind neither he could see us nor he recognize us. Thereupon the Prophet (PBUH) said. "You are not blind, you are seeing him." (Abu Dawood and Tirmizi).

Besides there are many other authentic Ahadith in support of Purdah. ● S.A.

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## Task Before Muslims

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

**T**he World of Islam is passing through a crisis of confidence. However unpalatable it may be, the truth remains that the qualities of self-awareness and self-assurance are not the distinguishing features of Muslims in any part of the world today. Even the Muslim countries that are free (no matter whether they have attained freedom only recently) are intellectually and educationally subservient to the West. The rulers of these countries often show commendable courage, even to the extent of incurring grave risks, in the political field but where the cultural, intellectual and educational questions come up they betray and awful lack of self-confidence and freedom of judgement. But it is an accepted fact that cultural and intellectual servility is much more harmful and degrading than political serfdom. Once a country has passed under the cultural and intellectual domination of another it becomes unnecessary for the latter to annex it politically. Further, since in the modern world the conquest and annexation of one country by another has no longer remained possible, the Big Powers are getting inclined to concentrate, more and more, on strengthening their cultural and intellectual hold over the weaker nations instead of seeking their political subjugation.

If there could be any power in the present-day world which could challenge the cultural and intellectual supremacy of the West and its resulting ideological domination it was the World of Islam with its own distinctive personality, its characteristic programme of life and its soul-stirring moral and spiritual appeal, but, unfortunately, owing to the reasons enumerated in detail by the Author in an earlier book the Muslims have lapsed into such a state of powerlessness and disorder that they can offer little resistance to the growing influence of the West. In addition to it, the Western nations are taking due care to dissipate what little of moral and spiritual awareness and vitality is left in them through a number of well-calculated steps, some of which bear the stamp of innocence and magnanimity while others are openly hostile and vicious. Even the patronage of institutions like the UNESCO is proving detrimental to the interests of Islam in the Muslim countries in many ways. The moral and spiritual stamina of Muslims is being continuously sapped, sometimes through the generous supply of foreign teachers, researchers, social workers and technocrats, sometimes through a liberal provision of the wrong kind of literature which can only disturb the peace of mind and encourage doubt and disbelief by arousing in them what is the worst in man, and, sometimes,

through the launching of campaigns like the popularization of the TV in the name of raising the standard of living and making life more worthwhile. Often open-handed economic or military aid is made available to the developing countries, and, in return, they are compelled to enforce such changes or to set into operation such schemes as are positively inimical to the Islamic temperament and can only lead to the disintegration of the Muslim pattern of living. In brief, while apparently keeping away, the West has thrown such a powerful ring around the Muslim countries and created such conditions in them that these sovereign and independent nations are now caught more firmly in its grip than they were in the bygone days of naked Imperialism.

Ironically enough, the rulers of the Islamic world, some of whom never tire of posing before their people as the champions of Muslim regeneration or advocates of a separate Islamic block are, themselves, displaying much greater enthusiasm in the carrying out of these changes than the Western crusaders of modernization and reform in the East. The undiscerning manner in which the educational and other so-called progressive experiments made in the Soviet Union or America are being pushed through in the Muslim countries, the unbridled freedom that has been given to the Western experts to draw out programmes of a fundamental change in the thinking and disposition of Muslims, the way unlimited opportunities are being provided for indigenous pupils of the Western Orientalists to sow the seeds

of skepticism and discord in Muslim society and the recklessness with which the inclination towards luxuriousness and self-indulgence is being fostered and encouragement given to trends like co-education, the abolition of the *pardah* system and the free inter-mixing of the sexes drive one seriously to doubt if these West in its destructive designs and trying purposely to pervert the minds of their people in order to deprive them of the religious pride and moral sentiment which can any day pose a threat to their leadership by blossoming into a powerful force of Islamic revival. It is evident that if this process of change and 'reform' is allowed to continue for sometime and the forces of moral degradation and anarchy are left free to work themselves out, the rising generations in the Muslim countries would have drifted so far away from their spiritual moorings that no urge would be left in them to strive against the mounting pressures of Modernism and Westernisation. Among the new generations that are being exposed more and more to values and concepts imported whole-heartedly from the West the process of cultural, moral and intellectual de-Islamisation has already begun, and as this process *will gather momentum* the moral leprosy which has become the bane of the Western society will inevitably make a thorough conquest of the Islamic countries as well, and, then, there will remain not a single healthy and healthful society in the World which can hold out the hope for the moral and spiritual resuscitation of mankind.



So far as the West is concerned it can never be genuinely sincere or sympathetic towards the Islamic countries. Its malevolence is, partly, the outcome of history with the memories of the Crusades and the bloody and long-drawn strifes between the Ottoman Empire and the European nations still fresh in the minds, and, partly, dictated by commonsense for the Muslim world alone possesses the potential strength and capability to constitute a danger to the universal ascendancy of the West or to confront the world with a new power block based on a different philosophy of life and a call that transcends the limitations of race and geography. It is strengthened, further, by the realization of the worth and importance, the vast mineral wealth and other resources lying within the frontiers of the Muslim world which can be of a decisive consequence to the West, both economically and strategically. And, finally, there is the traditional weakness of the human nature that when a person is afflicted with an incurable disease he, sometimes, begins to derive a sort of morbid satisfaction from the desire that the others may also become like him so that there could be nothing to distinguish the healthy from the sick. Only those can remain immune from this failing or overcome it successfully who are endowed with a genuine fear of God and love for humanity, but these noble qualities can be developed in a man only through the teachings of the Holy Prophets. This wealth was, sadly, lost by the West centuries ago. The entire history of its rise shows that the countries that came under its sway

could scarcely save themselves from catching the infection of moral debasement the Western empire-builders invariably carried with them. As some of the more honest and objective western scholars themselves have admitted, movements for the propagation of agnostic ideas have deliberately been set afloat by Western Imperialists in the Eastern countries as a part of their political policy. However apathetic the West may be towards Christianity and to whatever limits of irreligiousness its craze for rationalism and freethinking may have reached at home, all its broadmindedness and liberality of outlook evaporates into thin air when it comes to the World of Islam. The Christian West can forgive the Jews, but not the Muslims. The anti-Muslim sentiment has become a part of its being. Innumerable instances can be cited to show that in the event of a quarrel between a Muslim and a non-Muslim country the West took the side of the non-Muslim country either openly or through subterfuge. The recent Arab-Israel war has proved conclusively that no Muslim state or community can afford to rely on the friendship of a Western Power. Muslims must learn to depend on God and on their own strength alone in whatever they do.

The leaders of the Muslim countries ought to realize that whatever good the reckless imitation of the West may do to them for the time being it will ultimately rock the foundations of the Islamic *Millat* and bring it to ruin.

In spite of all their faults and shortcomings, the vital religious feeling, the readiness to suffer in the cause of

God and the spirit of earnestness, fidelity and love that have become extinct among the materialistic nations of the West can still be seen in the Islamic countries. The Muslim peoples, their appalling ignorance and backwardness notwithstanding, are the raw material from which the finest models of humanity can be made. Their greatest asset is their faith and their simplicity, earnestness and enthusiasm. In the past, Muslims have worked wonders by drawing upon these matchless reservoirs of power and, in moments of crisis, it is these very qualities of their people that have come to the rescue of the Islamic countries. Even from the purely utilitarian point of view, the rulers of the Muslim countries should appreciate the latent spiritual vitality of their people and regard it as the most valuable instrument for the defence of national freedom and solidarity which can also enable them to play a role worthy of their great past on the stage of history. But, thanks to the all-pervading curse of Westernisation, the Muslim masses developing a moral cancer against which nothing can avail.

Taking into consideration the irrefutable educational and industrial superiority of the West there are only two courses open to Muslims. One is that they make a complete submission to it, accept its philosophy of life, its concept of the universe and its spiritual convictions and ethical standards in toto and try to cast their entire existence into its mould. But such a course can, apart from the fact that it will amount to gross apostasy, moral and intellectual 'hara-kiri' and shameless betrayal of

humanity whose only hope of redemption rests with this very community, raised up as it was, by the last of the Prophets, end up solely in relentless bloodshed and chaos within the Islamic fraternity. It would be like pulling down a well-conditioned building in the absurd hope of raising upon its ruins a structure for which neither the right kind of technical skill nor building material is available and which would neither be suited to the climate of the place nor be in harmony with the environment. Whenever such an attempt has been made in the Islamic world it has resulted in failure. The Muslim masses have rejected it firmly as soon as an opportunity to freely express their opinion has come their way. The same thing is happening in Turkey today and is going to happen soon in Syria and Iraq too.

The other course for the Muslims lies in making the fullest use of the physical sciences and technology of the West by learning them wholeheartedly and then subordinating them by means of their own intelligence and industry to the lofty purposes which the last of the Holy Prophets has bequeathed to them and by virtue of which they have won the distinction of being proclaimed as the 'Best of the People.' This happy co-ordination between the ends and means from the absence of which both the West and the East are suffering at present can alter the destiny of the world. It can save it from impending annihilation and put it firmly on the road to all-round progress and felicity. The West has all the resources in the world but it is devoid of a healthy sense of

purpose; the (Muslim) East is endowed with the soundest of aims and ideals but is very backward materially. As we have said earlier, this laudable task can be accomplished by no other people than the Muslims who are the successors of the last of the Apostles and the sole inheritors of his Message. The slogan of the Muslims, all over the world, should now be:

The tyranny of the West has laid the world to waste,

Arise, O Architect of the Harem, to build it anew.

A bold and enterprising country of the East, namely, Japan has shown us the way, although in a limited, and, from the standpoint of Islam, most imperfect manner. Japan learnt the material sciences and technology from the West and acquired mastery over them and, at the same time, it held fast to its spiritual background and cultural heritage. But, unfortunately, its religious creed and civilization are such that they cannot keep abreast of time or fulfil the need of a universal message. The Japanese culture is only an amalgam of antiquated beliefs and outworn traditions. It is a miracle of the will-power and loyalty to the past of its people that modern Japan is still clinging to it. With Islam, on the other hand, it is wholly different. It stands for a faith, a *Shariat* and a law for which the term 'ancient' and 'modern' have no meaning, and a civilization whose roots are embedded in imperishable truths. Like an evergreen tree it is always young and ready to send forth new blossoms. Hence, in the Muslim

countries the integration between modern sciences and the fundamental teachings of Islam can be worked out without any serious difficulty and its impact will also be much more revolutionary and extensive than what we have experienced in Japan. In a tradition-bound country an attempt like this is bound to be self-defeating. For a Muslim, however, there need be no contradiction in it, for, according to him, correct religion and correct knowledge do not pull in opposite directions or stand in the way of each other. Knowledge, says a Tradition of the sacred Prophet, is the lost property of a Muslim and he is its rightful owner. From the Muslim view-point, it is the end for which a means is employed that determines whether it is good or bad. The true purpose of all knowledge, power and all other worldly resources and acquirements is that they serve the cause of the Divine Faith and help to promote the genuine welfare of mankind. It is the duty of a Muslim to see that these precious gifts of God are not misused. To take them out of the wrong place and to put them in the right place and to assure that they are employed for constructive ends is a matter of moral responsibility with them.

But Muslims can discharge this sacred obligation only when they are able to produce in themselves that strength of faith and courage of conviction and skill and sincerity which can repulse the onslaught of glittering catch words and the prevalent imitative tendency and overcome the petty considerations of immediate gain, both individual and collective. For this their

leaders, too, will have to make the necessary sacrifices, but, even from the personal point of view these sacrifices will not be in vain for, by virtue of them, they will rise tremendously in the estimation of their people, and it will also become possible for them, and, through them, for their countries, to play the sublime role of guidance and leadership they can never dream of otherwise.

The Western civilization is doomed. It has become rotten to the core, and if it is still surviving it is not at all due to its latent qualities of strength and endurance but because no other civilization is at present ready to take its place. The other civilizations in the world are, at the utmost, its own hazy carbon copies or third class caricatures or they are so weak and decrepit that it is beyond their power and ability to stand against it, face to face. Now if a Muslim country or the World of Islam, as a whole, can muster enough strength and competence to fill the void that is going to be created by the fall of the Western civilization it can reestablish its claim to the leadership of mankind which, according to the unchanging practice of the Lord, always goes to those that are earnest, deep-hearted and resolute. The Muslims ought, therefore, to decide whether it is more honourable to approach the West with a begging bowl or to assume the exalted position of the stewardship and guidance of humanity more than which there is no greater glory in the world after Apostleship.

Does the sacrifice of worldly renown, power and wealth count for anything before it? Even if a man

possessed a hundred lives and he had to lay down all of them for the sake of it, the bargain would not be bad.

Let us, now, see which Muslim country comes forward to take up the gauntlet and carries out this gigantic mission in comparison with which the mighty events of the past, such as, the European renaissance or the French and the Soviet revolutions must fade into insignificance for the forces of peace, progress and freedom it will release will not remain confined to the Islamic countries alone but sweep across the world and give a fresh lease of life to the dying humanity. Only those people of communities can respond to this call who are bound in allegiance to the *Millat* of Ibrahim and for whom the choicest Quranic tidings and appellations of the 'Last of Divine Faiths' and 'the Termination of the Line of Holy Apostles' were meant. Today, the 'Song of Eternity' for the leaders of the Islamic World is the same which the Muslims had heard long, long ago, at the dawn of Islam:

"And strive for Allah with the endeavour which is His right. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship; the faith of your father Abraham (is yours). He has named you Muslims (those who have surrendered unto Him) of old times and in this (Scripture), that the messenger may be a witness against you, and that you may be witness against mankind. So, establish worship, pay poor-tax, and hold fast to Allah. He is your protecting friend; the best of patrons and the best of helpers." (Qur'an:XXII:78) ●

## Set your own House in Order

**S. M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi**

It is generally believed and Western writers give the impression also that the west is free from religious influence, the progress and glamour of the West is the result of freedom from religion. Experience shows that the Westerners whether they are political leaders, social activists, media people or organizations working in the fields of human rights, education etc., are invariably influenced by religious considerations and their thoughts and deeds are rooted in religious considerations. Any one who has met an European politician, thinker, man of letters, art or science can vouchsafe for their bias. To be influenced by or attached to religion is not a matter of surprise either. Not to be influenced by religion would be rather surprising, Western claim of freedom from religion is a myth which so-called intellectuals believed for quite a long.

It is an established fact, supported by experience that freedom from religion is a false notion and to wean people away from religion would always remain a futile effort.

A recent survey conducted to find out the number of followers of religion and of atheists showed that there were only a handful of persons who did not believe in any religion at all. The wide-spread efforts of propagating the Christian religion throughout the world are clear proof of Europe's devotion to religion. Innumerable organizations are engaged in

spreading the religious message and organizing religious groups all over the world. They draw their financial support from the so called advanced and self styled secular countries. They spend huge amount of money on building Churches, establishing missionary institutions and maintaining the clergy for propagating Christianity. They have no hesitations in expressing their solidarity with their Christian brethren. Europe uses all the resources in the propagation of Christianity and also takes advantage of the economic and social system which are under its influence. These facts are common knowledge and no one can hide them.

When communism gained ascendancy then ideas of divorcing religion from life became a fashion of the day, specially because the leaders of the communist world declared that religion was the first enemy of communism and they were the enemies of religion. But all this tirade against religion was in fact aimed at Islam and the Muslims. Communism targeted only Muslims in their brute persecution. The very same protagonist of communism and opponents of religion (read Islam) extended protection to Christianity. They were supporters and sympathisers of the ethnic European Christians, while they were enemies of Islam and Muslims. They took brutal action to uproot Muslims. They exiled Muslims, curtailed religious liberty, occupied mosques and educational institutions,

banned all religious (Islamic) literature. They made life difficult for Muslims. It is clearly established that the communists and their supporters are enemies only of Islam and not of other religions. The surprising thing is that these conditions prevailed not only during the communist regime, even after the collapse of communism oppression continues in the Muslim States which are under the Russian control.

In many countries this selective treatment take the form of persecution against Islam while the same time full protection, support and encouragement is extended to other religions in the name of liberalism and liberty or faith. Europeans have a sentimental affinity with Christianity and a soft corner for Churches and Christian clergy. It grants them full liberty and provides them all facilities. The Christian organizations and institutions freely use religious symbols like the Cross and pictures of Mary and other saints, the European governments patronize these institutions and provide them abundant funds. Missionary schools and colleges and institutions of publication and publicity are running all through these countries. Even in Arab countries, where we find Churches existing without any prejudice against them, inspite of the clear injunction of *Shariah* expelling the two communities from Arabia.

Anti-Islamic movements are encouraged in the name of liberalism. On the other hand Islamic movements are suppressed in Muslim countries too. So the Christian Missionary, Zionist and licentious activities are freely engaged in Anti-Islamic propaganda spreading hatred against Islam and

Muslims.

It is a general practice in Islamic countries to ban Islamic movements and religious organizations while the criminal elements go scot-free and have free play for mischief and crime. Obscene and exciting magazines are freely imported in those countries while Islamic literature and Muslim Ulema's writings are not allowed, since in their myopic view these instigate terrorism; these writings and movement are viewed as opposed to Western culture.

It appears that in all these countries religion means only Islam, for these governments give full liberty to to their religions, revival of their old and obsolete doctrines and concepts, languages and culture which have long since become extinct. Such moves are not decried as retrograde or backward, not are they termed as terrorist or racist, narrow-minded organizations and institutions of other religions are granted full liberty to propagate their views and beliefs and to establish educational institutions. All this in the name of freedom of faith and religion. But these very governments are not willing to grant similar liberty to Islamic organizations.

Islam is an eternal faith, since the beginning of human life. It is progressive in nature. It encompasses the wide expanse of human mind and expanding intellectual activity and respects humanity. It has stood the test of times for being more rational and more practical in solving the problems of life, than other religions. And yet it is kept aside from life even in Islamic countries. Preaching and propagation of Islamic teachings is not permitted in these countries and religious

assemblies, even meetings of exponents of the faith for consultations, are legally banned. These are viewed as terrorist activities, and are regarded as fundamentalism, Islam is a stranger in its own home, subjected to injustice and oppression. How can we complain against others? We do not expect that non-Muslims would permit propagation of Islam. The Problem is that even those who call themselves Muslims and proclaim their commitment to Islam, they too look at preaching of Islam with suspicion and when they are heads of governments or at the helm of affairs, try to suppress every effort of spreading Islam. They ban all Islamic movements and think that in this way they are serving the interest of their country. It is surprising that they consider the exponents of the teachings of reform and true guidance as making mischief. It is for such persons that Qur'an says:

"Of a surety, they are the ones who make the mischief, but they realize it not". (II:12)

The fact is that by creating such hindrances in the path of Islam they are only helping to prolong the days of imperialism and its control on Islamic countries. They weaken Muslim thinkers, demoralize Muslim youths and squander national wealth. They are still under the spell of the fraud which Europe had spread during Imperial ascendancy. Although imperialism has collapsed these people have not been able to liberate themselves from mental slavery of the West.

Religious, faith, is a basic need of human beings. It is the fountain head of peace and tranquility for humanity. Societies which have eschewed religion are deprived of spiritual peace

and are passing through turmoil and unrest. That is why we find that religious movements gain popularity quickly while political and economic movements do not catch people's imagination so fast. Today there are movements all over the world for spreading the Jewish, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist religions and the governments of the non-Muslim countries are extending to them patronage and full support in spite of their loud proclamation for being not sectarian and not religious. There is a revival of interest in religion in all the countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. In India too, revivalism is gaining popularity. The organizations who dream of turning the country into sectarian State of a particular faith are gaining ascendancy. The government is effecting changes in the system of education and syllabus in a planned manner to achieve that objective. Government machinery extends full support to these organizations and they are working without any restrictions or restraint within the country. They are extending their activities in other countries all over the world. Unlimited funds are being placed at their disposal from within the country and from external sources.

In contrast to this scenario the rulers of Islamic countries are in clash with the popular sentiments, and are taking steps to nullify and suppress all religious (Islamic) activity which is against the people's natural and legitimate wishes. The rulers oppress their own people but make friends with the real enemies of their respective countries. ●

## Cong ready for talks with All India Muslim Personal Law Board

**T**he Congress on Tuesday made it clear it was ready to discuss contentious issues raised by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

The move comes as the Lucknow Declaration of the Board has snowballed into a major political controversy. The party also said the Board's stand against the Prevention of Communal Violence Bill and the Liberhan Commission Report was because of a communication gap.

Since the Congress has been making desperate efforts to win over the Muslim community in UP, it could ill afford to antagonize the Board. The Samajwadi Party has already extended support to the Board's demands of amendment in the bill and proper implementation of the Liberhan report.

Thus, AICC minority department chairman Imran Kidwai told HT on Tuesday, "The Congress is ready to discuss suggestions mooted by the Board."

"If the suggestions on the bill and the Liberhan Commission report are acceptable, we will go ahead accordingly," Kidwai said and added, "The Board, however, should not interfere in foreign policy matters." The Board has called for reconsideration of ties with Israel.

UP Congress Legislature Party leader Pramod Tiwari said a communication gap led to this situation. The party would sort it out, he said and added that once the Board delegation meets the Central leaders, all confusion would be cleared.

However, Rajya Sabha deputy chairman K Rahman Khan, who was inducted into the AIMPLB as a member during three-day session here last week, disagreed with the Board decisions.

Rahman told HT over the Phone, "The Board should confine itself to Shariat law. Political issues should be left to other organizations." Rahman said a full-fledged debate was required on these issues before incorporating them into the declaration. Both Rahman and Kidwai, who are Congress leaders, rejected the Board's suggestion on the Indo-Israel relationship. While Kidwai said foreign policy was always framed in the national and not in any community's interest, Rahman pointed out that "the foreign policy could not stagnate." ●

(Hindustan Times 24-03-2010)



## The four Fiqh Schools

**Syed Iqbal Zaheer**

**T**he regularity with which questions concerning the legality of four Islamic School of Law are asked, by all classes of people, the humble, the sophomore and the elite, sends us wondering whether it is possible that we Muslims, especially in the non-Arab world, are behind the rest of the world in the exercise of simple, disciplined reasoning, when it comes to Islam?

We can grant some people's simplicity as the reason. Yet, we have no words to express our disappointment. For, simplicity does not offer full explanation. Ignorance is the word that suggests itself often. Granted. But why is ignorance dedicated to Islam? While we see people of other faiths defending every uncanny idea of their religion, we cannot help compare them with Muslims who cringe from every rational notion.

Those who seem to be constantly worried about differences in Islamic Fiqh never seem to be worried about differences that prevail among the peoples of the world. In fact, either they do not know, or ignore the lack of unity of other religious communities over everything, except, of course, that Muslims are their enemies. This is the only unity that exists among them, and this is the only unity that Muslims see and guess that it indicates complete unity among them.

That the leading scientific and

general Encyclopedias have half a dozen theories about how life originated, does not strike the Muslim as odd. He does not raise the question: Should there be half a dozen theories about a fundamental issue in Biology, after all these tremendous developments in science? Why is it that a Muslim does not ask the Scientists: "Fellows! You have 300 years of research behind you, millions of tons of dug-out earth in your account, a million laboratories, a million microscopes, and ten million people peering into them every minute, why can't you resolve the differences between yourselves and give us a single version of how life originated?"

Or in Cosmology: a simple question. How big is the Universe? There are several answers. The difference between one version and another is several billion light years. No Muslim raises the doubt that the Cosmological science is undependable and all schools of astronomy untrustworthy because they cannot even agree between themselves over how large the Universe is.

Or, in history, no Muslim expresses his doubts concerning the abilities of the historians who do not seem to agree upon what led Hitler's Germany to believe that all the economic, political and social troubles of Europe were because of the Jews? (A thought most European countries shared). Why can't historians agree

over the reasons of slaughter? If they cannot agree between themselves over such a simple issue, and a recent one, does it not mean rest of the history is not quite trustworthy?

A Muslim asks why there are four schools of Law in Islam. Why not one? He never asks why there are 52 schools of Law in the USA, each State with its own Law? Nor does a Muslim ask the Christians why they cannot agree on a date of birth of Jesus Christ, indeed, why they cannot agree over the year of his birth? Why does it strike him as odd that Muslims have several schools of Law, but it does not strike him as odd that Christianity has NO schools of Law.

It is amazing how Muslims can ask why there is not a single version of Law, without realizing that there is in fact a single version of Law in Islam. It is in minor details, in by-laws, in which the four schools differ. Going by the fundamentals, and even some less so, they are a single school of Law.

Consider the following few: every school is united in that there is a God; that He is not the God of Muslims but the God of all; that He is One, that He is indivisible, that he has no consort, no child, no partner, that the Qur'an is the Book of His Revelation, that it has 114 chapters, that the chapters contain 6,666 verses, that the Qur'an is inimitable, that it is now, as it was at any time, that Muhammad was Allah's Messenger, that he was a human being, that none of his Companions were liars that their consensus is a rule of Law, that there have been Prophets throughout human history such as 'Isa, Musa, Ibrahim, Nuh, and others, that there will be no more Messengers after

Muhammad, that there are angels in existence who are invisible to human eye and bring messages to humans chosen by Allah, and perform various other tasks assigned to them, that there will be a second coming of Jesus, that he will destroy Dajjal, that the world will end, that there is going to be Resurrection and reckoning, that the good will enter Paradise and evil the Fire; that Heaven and Hell are real things; that there are six canonical works of Hadith; that there are four approved schools of *fiqh*; that following any one of them is enough for a non-specialist; that Salah offered behind any of the four Madh-habs is valid; that Muslims should face Makkah as Qiblah during Prayers; that Iman (belief) has six branches, that Islam is based on five pillars, that five daily Prayers are prescribed by Islam, that the time for them is fixed, that the prayers are  $2+4+4+3+4=17$  cycles (raka'ah) a day, that congregational prayers are obligatory on the males, that women need not pray when in their cycle, that mosques should not have pictures or statues, or scenic photographs, the congregational prayers in mosques are to be led by an Imam, that the Imam has to be a male, that during morning, evening and night prayers recitation of the Qur'an should be aloud, that Friday prayer should be preceded by a sermon, that it is a two-rak'ah prayer, that Zakath is 2.5% beyond a certain range of sayings once a year, that Zakah on land-produce is either one-fifth or one-tenth, that the Zakah on animals is one goat over every forty (etc.), that Ramadan is the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic

calendar, that every adult is required to fast a month; that women need not fast if in their cycle but must repeat after Ramadan, that Umrah can be performed at Makkah any time during the year, that there are only two 'Eids in Islam, that each 'Eid prayer is two rak'ah, that they should be followed by a sermon, that women should inherit in the ratio of 1:2 against males, that usury, wine, pork, gambling are prohibited, that women have the right of mahr, food, clothing, medicine, housing; that a man is not required to work for herself or others, that divorce by the male means he loses everything he gave to the woman since marriage, that the children are the complete responsibility of the father; that a man can have four wives, that a woman can seek separation from her husband through khul'a, that both male and female children have right of inheritance, that a man cannot bequeath through will more than one-third of what he leaves behind him, that he cannot leave a will in favor of an inheritor, that the punishment for adultery is death, that the punishment for intoxication is flogging, that the punishment for theft is severing of the hand, that a bath is necessary after intercourse, that in case of violence the punishment is life for life, tooth for tooth; that nakedness is prohibited; that anything sacrificed in the name of other than Allah is prohibited, that women should use veil when coming out of their homes, that they are not obliged by the Law to cook, that the dead must be buried, that funeral prayers must be arranged before burial, that the Prayers

must be shortened during journey, that punishment for apostasy is death.. on and on... one can go on listing the issues over which the four schools of Law are united in consensus.

Thus far we have mentioned only some of those obligations (*fara'id wa wajibat*) over which there is no difference in opinion between the four schools of Law. We have not mentioned all of them. If we attempt it adding the Sunan over which there are no differences in opinion, we will need a book the size of this magazine.

A little exercise at this point, on the part of those who bemoan differences between the four schools of Law, will go some way in opening their minds and may be even hearts. The few agreements above occupy a page. Let them write down agreements between the Christians, starting with, of course God. (E.g., is He one or three? Does He have children, or does He not? And so on). Is bible the word of God? How many books are there in the Bible?

But there is nothing specific or special about Christian differences. Any other religion will do for comparison. And if the inquirer can list issues of consensus that need a quarter page to list, he should consider himself rewarded for the exercise.

The talk of differences between the four schools of *Fiqh* is a myth. It is a trick to hook them off the straight path. Consider the obligations, and you find that they agree more on issues that they disagree. Yes, they do disagree; but it is on minor points. ●

Courtesy: Young Muslim Digest)

## Madrasa Students To Get Easy Access To Varsities

All universities of the country, including Allahabad University, have been asked to treat students coming from madrasa at par with those passing class XII from colleges, for access to higher education. A communication to this effect has been sent to AU by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The instruction bears significance as till date AU and most of the Central and state universities were not treating the education imparted by madrasas at par with that of class XII of any other educational board. AU and other universities would now have to implement the UGC's instruction putting at par students doing 'Munshi' (Urdu and Persian) and "Maulvi" (Arabic) for class X and then Alim of two years from madrasas with students doing class XII from any other educational board of the country. The Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia University and Jamia Hamdard University have already offered access to higher education to students passing from madrasas.

Talking to TOI, Prof Jagdamba Singh, who has been closely associated with the admission process at AU, said "To the best of my knowledge, the varsity has never been treating the qualification imparted by madrasas at par with other boards."

"We have received a letter of the UGC in this connection and we would now follow the instructions," said varsity registrar Prof J N Mishra. On being asked why the same was not followed at AU, he said that now as the instructions have been clearly communicated to the AU, the issue would be taken on high priority.

The letter (no. F.62-3/2010 dated March 10) of the UGC, refers to a letter of the ministry of human resources development (MHRD) and mentions issues regarding implementation of the cabinet decision on the recommendations of the Sachar Committee report and Prime Minister's new 15-point programme for the welfare of minorities and action plans for achieving physical and financial targets for the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. Among other recommendations, the UGC has asked Central universities to set up a civil rights centre in their respective campuses to promote the importance of social inclusion. It also speaks of setting up women's hostels in colleges and universities during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, residential and remedial coaching schemes and equal opportunity cells.

It has also asked the AU to furnish details of steps taken by respective institutions to safeguard the interest of minority educational institutions and students belonging to the minority community.

Pointedly, implementation of the decisions of the cabinet is monitored by the committee of secretaries. The MHRD and UGC have also asked for furnishing details of the progress achieved in this regard in the year ending March 31 and the target fixed for 2010-11 and the rest of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. ●

(Times of India 24-03-2010)

## 'How I came to Love the Veil'

**Yvonne Ridley**

**P**oliticians and Journalists just love to write about the oppression of women in Islam... without even talking to the females beneath the veil. They simply have no idea how Muslim women are protected and respected within the Islamic framework which was built more than 1400 years ago.

Yet, by writing about cultural issues like child brides, female circumcision, honour killings and forced marriages they wrongly believe they are coming from a point of knowledge. And I am sick of Saudi Arabia being cited as an example of how women are subjugated in a country where they are banned from driving.

The issues above have simply nothing to do with Islam yet they still write and talk about them with an arrogant air of authority while wrongly blaming Islam. Please do not confuse cultural behavior with Islam.

I was asked to write about how Islam allows men to beat their wives. Sorry, not true. Yes, I'm sure critics of Islam will quote random Qur'anic verses or ahadith but all are usually taken out of context. If a man does raise a finger to his wife, he is not allowed to leave a mark on her body... this is another way of the Qur'an saying; 'Don't beat your wife, stupid.'

Now let's take a glance at some really interesting statistics. I can almost hear the words pot, kettle, black.

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, four million American women experience a serious assault by a partner during an average 12-month period. On the average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands and boyfriends every day... that is nearly 5,500 women battered to death since 9/11.

Some might say that is a shocking indictment on such a civilized society, but before I sound too smug, I would say that violence against women is a global issue. Violent men do not come in any particular religious or cultural category. The reality is that one out of three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime. Violence against women transcends religion, wealth, class, skin color and culture.

However, until Islam came on the scene women were treated as inferior beings. In fact we women still have a problem in the West where men think they are superior. This is reflected in our promotion and wages structure right across the spectrum from cleaners to career women who make it into the boardroom.

Western women are still treated as commodities, where sexual slavery is on the rise, disguised under marketing euphemisms, where women's bodies are traded throughout the advertising world. As mentioned

before, this is a society where rape, sexual assault, and violence on women is commonplace, a society where the equality between men and women is an illusion, a society where a women's power or influence is usually only related to the size of her breasts.

I used to look at veiled women as quiet, oppressed creatures and now I look at them as multi-skilled, multi-talented, resilient women whose brand of sisterhood makes Western feminism pale into insignificance. My views changed after the truly terrifying experience of being arrested by the Taleban for sneaking into Afghanistan in September 2001 wearing the burka.

During my 10-day captivity I struck a deal that if they let me go I would read the Qur'an and study Islam. Against all the odds, it worked and I was released. In return, I kept my word but as a journalist covering the Middle East, I realized I needed to expand my knowledge of a religion which was clearly a way of life.

And no. I'm not a victim of Stockholm Syndrome. To be a victim you have to bond with your captors. During my imprisonment I spat, swore, cursed and abused my jailers as well as refusing their food and going on hunger strike. I don't know who was happier when I was released them or me!

Reading the Qur'an was, I thought, going to be a very simple academic exercise. I was stunned to discover that it clearly stated women are equal in spirituality, education and worth. A woman's gift for child birth and child-rearing is very much recognized as a quality and attribute. Muslim women say with pride they are

homemakers and housewives.

Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) said that the most important person in the home was: The Mother, The Mother, The Mother. In fact, he also said that heaven lies at the feet of the mother. How many women make it into the top 100 power lists for simply being a 'great mother'? With Islam choosing to remain at home and raise children takes on a new dignity and respect in my eyes, similar to those sisters among us who choose to go out to work and have careers and professions.

I then began looking at inheritance, tax, property and divorce laws. This is where Hollywood divorce lawyers probably get their inspiration from. For instance, the woman gets to keep what she earns and owns while the man has to stump up half his worth. Isn't it funny the way the tabloid media gets very excited over the prospect of some pop or film stars pre-nuptial wedding agreement? Muslim women have had wedding contracts from day one. They can choose if they want to work or not and anything they earn is theirs to spend while the husband has to pay for all the household bills and the upkeep of his family.

Just about everything that feminists strived for in the 70s was already available to Muslim women 1400 years ago. As I said, Islam dignifies and brings respect to motherhood and being a wife. If you want to stay at home, stay at home. It is a great honour to be a home maker and the first educator of your children. But equally, the Qur'an states if you want to work, then work. Be a career woman, learn a profession become a politician.

Be what you want to be and excel in what you do as a Muslim because everything you do is in praise of Allah (swt).

There is an excessive, almost irritating concentration or focus on the issue of Muslim women's dress particularly by men (both Muslim and non-Muslim). Yes, it is an obligation for Muslim women to dress modestly but, in addition, there are many other important issues which concern Muslim women today. And yet everyone obsesses over the hijab. Look, it is part of my business suit. This tells you I am a Muslim and therefore I expect to be treated with respect.

Can you imagine if someone told a Wall Street executive or Washington banker to put on a t-shirt and jeans? He would tell you his business suit defines him during work hours, marks him out to be treated seriously. And yet in Britain we have had the former Foreign secretary Jack Straw describing the niqab the face veil revealing only the eyes- as an unwelcome barrier. When, oh when, will men learn to keep their mouths shut over a woman's wardrobe? We also had Government Ministers Gordon Brown and John Reid express disparaging remarks about the niqab both these men come from over the Scottish Borders where men wear skirts!!

Then we had a series of other parliamentarians enter the fray describing the niqab as a barrier for communication. What a load of nonsense. If this was the case can anyone explain to me why cell phones, landlines, emails, text messaging and fax machines are in daily use? Who

listens to the radio? No one switches off the wireless because they can not see the face of the presenter.

The majority of sisters I know who choose to wear the niqab are actually white, Western reverts who no longer want the unwelcome attention of those few leering men who will try and confront females and launch into inappropriate behavior. Mind you, there are a couple of London sisters I know who say they wear the niqab at anti-war marches because they can't stand the smell of spliffs.

I am afraid Islamophobia has become the last refuge of the racist scoundrel. But the cowardly, chauvinistic attack launched largely by men- is unacceptable to Muslimahs as well as their secular, female sisters from the left. I was a feminist for many years and now, as an Islamic feminist, I still promote womens' rights. The only difference is Muslim feminists are more radical than their secular counterparts. We all hate those ghastly beauty pageants, and tried to stop laughing when the emergence of Miss Afghanistan in bikini was hailed as a giant leap for women's liberation in Afghanistan.

I've been back to Afghanistan many times and I can tell you there are no career women emerging from the rubble in Kabul. My Afghan sisters say they wish the West would drop its obsession with the burka. "Don't try turning me into a career woman, get my husband a job first. Show me how I can send my children to school without fear of them being kidnapped. Give me security and bread on the table," one sister told me.

Young feminist Muslimahs see the hijab and the niqab as political symbols as well as a religious requirement. Some say it is their way of showing the world they reject the excesses of Western lifestyles such as binge drinking, casual sex, drug-taking etc. Superiority in Islam is accomplished through piety, not beauty, wealth, power, position or sex.

Now you tell me what is more liberating. Being judged on the length of your skirt and the size of your cosmetically enhanced breasts, or being judged on your character, mind and intelligence?

Glossy magazines tell us as women that unless we are tall, slim and beautiful we will be unloved and unwanted. The pressure on teenage magazine readers to have a boyfriend is almost obscene. Islam tells me that I have a right to an education and it is my duty to go out and seek knowledge whether I am single or married.

Nowhere in the framework of Islam are we told as women that we must do washing, cleaning or cooking for men but it is not just Muslim men who need to re-evaluate women in their home. Check out this 1992 excerpt from a Pat Robertson speech revealing his views on empowered women. And then you tell me who is civilized and who is not. He said:

"Feminism encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians."

Here is an American man living in a pre-Islamic age who needs to modernize and civilize. People like him are wearing a veil and we need to tear that veil of bigotry away so people can see Islam for what it is. ●

(Continued From Page 34)

**Profit sharing contract:** The return will be shared between the two parties based on a certain ratio or percentage agreed upon in advance. **Benevolent loan (Qarad Hassan):** The borrower is only required to repay the principal amount borrowed, as the debt extended is absolutely free from interest.

From the above reading it can be clear that in Islamic finance, all form of contracts and transactions must be free from excessive gharar (uncertainty). Ambiguity and uncertainty in contracts will lead to an unfair advantage to one party over another. Islamic finance thus upholds the principles of integrity, transparency, fairness and good corporate governance in all dealings. Islam encourages Muslims to invest their money and to become partners in order to share profits and risks in the business instead of becoming creditors. The Islamic investment method depends on risk taking, risks which result in added value to the community. Islam considers any economic transaction in terms of benefits that can be reaped by the community and gives lesser importance to individual earnings.

Islamic economists and financial experts agree that if certain conditions are met, it is lawful to invest in the stock market. Any earnings that result from such investments will be halal. The logic behind this argument is that when one purchases shares in a company he actually becomes a shareholder and thus becomes a partner in the business. This arrangement is tantamount to the Islamic concept of Musharakah (joint-venture). ●



## Abul Kalam Azad: A Revolutionary and Journalist

**Anis Ahmad Nadwi**

**M**aulana Abul Kalam Azad a visionary, and dynamic leader brought revolutionary changes and led the freedom struggle. Born in Mecca on 11th Nov. 1888, his name was Mohiyuddin but later he adopted the pseudonym of Abul Kalam Azad. His father Maulana Khairuddin was a celebrated Islamic scholar and a great mystic. His grandfather too was a great scholar. His forefathers had come to India from Herat Afghanistan during the time of Moghal emperor Babar. Maulana's ancestors had distinctive characteristics and so they were considered great in various fields especially in education and religion.

His formal education started when he was just five years old at the hands of Shaikul Haram in Mecca. When the family moved to India in 1895, his father put him under the old system of education as he had no faith in modern system. In his view modern education system would destroy the religious faith. Azad was taught at home by tutors and was not sent to any Madrasa. His father himself taught him and also engaged teachers for different subjects. Maulana was taught philosophy, Ukhliidas Mathematics Algebra etc.. Maulana Azad acquired proficiency in all these subjects very soon. At the age of 14 he had acquired Islamic sciences and philosophy. He

studied Arabic, Persian Turkish Literature. His interest in logic, Medicine, Chemistry and Astronomy was also there. In 1903 he completed Dars-e-Nizami. He also acquired the knowledge of French and English.

Maulana opened eyes in the aftermath of 1857, Muslims bore the brunt of British rage in 1857. The defeat in the first war of independence forced Muslim leaders to retreat. Nation was in distress. Muslims were in a confused state. The emergence of Deoband School and Sir Syed's movement brought some life to a demoralized community. Whereas Deoband School of thought concentrated on religious education, Sir Syed's emphasis was on acquiring that knowledge which can help them in getting employment in government services. That was the time when individual endeavors were taking shape of a national freedom movement. Indian National Congress had come into existence. Maulana Azad through his write-ups in *Al-Hilal*, *Al-Balagh* and *Lisanus Sidq* etc. raised the bogey of freedom. He rose to prominence through his works as a journalist, writer and orator.

Azad's views were considered radical. He fairly criticized the British Raj for racial discrimination and ignoring the needs of common people across India. He also criticized Muslim politicians for focusing on communal

issues over the national interests and rejected vehemently the All India Muslim League's communal Separatism agenda. Azad became an important national leader and served on the Congress Working Committee and remained its president for a long time. Azad was the youngest president of Indian National Congress.

Azad was the champion of Hindu-Muslim unity. He advocated enthusiastically for this great cause all through his life. At the Presidential Address of the Congress Session in 1923 he spoke vigorously, "If an angel were to descend from the clouds today, settle on the Qutub Minar of Delhi and proclaim from there that India will attain Swaraj provided Hindu Muslim unity is renounced, then I would renounce Swaraj and not sacrifice Hindu-Muslim Unity, Because if swaraj is delayed, it is lost to India, but if Hindu-Muslim Unity is lost it is the lost to Humanity." The dream of unity, communal harmony and juxtaposition of swaraj on which Maulana Azad emphasized is not found with the same intensity in other leaders of the time. It is as pertinent today as it was yesterday. He was a strong campaigner of peace, communal harmony, Hindu-Muslim unity and a vociferous freedom fighter.

The intellectual intensification and maturity of Maulana Azad was such that just when he was 14 years old, he advised the senior editor of Muraqqaa-e-Alam that he had better publish in his journal scientific and educational articles instead of publishing novels in episodes. He did not take much interest

in games and in play and fun like the children of his age but would take some book and go to some solitary place to read it. He always wished to acquire knowledge through reading. This passion had reached the extent of obsession. His obsession for books was such that he used to seek the list of books of famous booksellers of India as he would like always to keep a good collection of books for reading and reference. Though he had inherited a lot of books from his father and being a scholar himself he had a good collection of selected books instead of that he was always thirsty of books. The articles of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan initiated in him the penchant liking for modern sciences.

Though he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he preferred the life of struggle and industry and joined the Indian tumultuous politics. He joined the galaxy of Indian revolutionaries when he was just 17 years old. Bengal was the centre of politics and most awakened state among Indian provinces. Maulana met Sunder Chakravarty and through him other Indian revolutionaries and entered in active politics. Maulana narrates the story of his joining the India's struggle for independence in his political autobiography India Wins Freedom in the following words. "When Shyam Sunder Chakravarty introduced me to other revolutionaries and told them my wish to join their party, at first they did not fully trust me and kept me outside of their party's inner councils, But soon they realized their mistake and I gained

their confidence. I told them clearly that Muslims were not their enemies as they believed. We must therefore make every effort to win the support and friendship of the community.

I could not at first convince my revolutionary friends about the correctness of my diagnosis. During this period I had also started to work among Muslims and found that there was a group of young ready to take up new political tasks."

Maulana shines as a sun on the firmament of freedom movement of India and like an outstanding star among the freedom fighters. Maulana never agreed on two nation theory even when political heavyweights submitted themselves to the demagogues. Maulana refused to accept it even when Gandhiji who first supported him, accepted it later as the political alternative. The Cabinet Mission members were fully convinced of Maulana's concept of Undivided Federal India. The political endeavours that have been taken by him in this regard are highly valuable. That's why it could be said that he was the purest patriot who ever lived in India. Maulana mentioned the whole story in his famous book, India Wins Freedom.

Maulana was imprisoned for a long time. In 1942 the Congress decided to demand immediate and complete independence from the British and asked them to quit India. Maulana Azad was the president of the Congress at that time. He delivered an inspiring speech and moved all Indians into action by inaugurating the all-out

struggle against the British to quit India. The movement is known as Quit India Movement in the history of Indian freedom struggle. This was started on 7th August 1942 from Bombay. However the British Govt. arrested most of the prominent leaders including Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhiji. Maulana Azad was in forefront in all the major movements for the independence like the Khilafat Movement (1919-23) the Non-Cooperation Movement(1920-22) the Civil Disobedience Movement(1930-32) the Quit India Movement (1942).

India got freedom and made its trust with destiny in 1947. Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inducted him as Education Minister in his cabinet. Maulana Azad undertook a number of measures to promote primary, secondary and scientific education, establishment of universities and promotion of avenues of research and higher studies.

### **The sublime journalism of Maulana Azad.**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was an extraordinary genius. Only "Prodigy" can do justice to his knowledge in childhood. He had started his journalistic expedition just when he was 11years old. He started his journalistic journey with a monthly named Nairange Alam 1899 from Calcutta. After that he started a weekly entitled Al-Misbah in January 1901. Though they were very short term periodicals but Maulana made them prominent and literary by the touch of his pen. Then he joined

Khadange Nazr which published from Lucknow under the editorship of Naubath Rai. Maulana became its joint editor in 1903. The same year he was appointed as the editor of a Newspaper Edward Gazette. But in the same year he started his own monthly journal Lisanus Sidq. From October 1905 to March 1906 he worked as joint editor of the monthly journal Al-Nadwa under the patronage of Allama Shibli Nomani. This monthly periodical was published from the renowned Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama since 1904. In the editorship of Allama Shiblee Nomani, it reached its zenith of fame and it was counted among quality literary magazines. Allama Shibli Nomani was so much impressed by the knowledge and intellect of Abul Kalam Azad that said, "Maulana Azad's intellect and brain is from wonders of the world" and invited him to accept the position of assistant editor in the editorial board. The write-ups of Maulana Azad that appeared in Al-Nadwa were "Musalmano ka zakhirae uloom wa funun and Europe ki surparasti (The reservoir of Muslims Sciences and Skills and patronage of Europe over them). Ilmi Khabrein (Educational News) Europe mein gungeon ki taleem ( The education of Dumb in Europe).

The genesis of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's revolutionary journalism lies in his extensive visit that he undertook to Egypt, Turkey, Syria and France in 1908. During this visit he met Mustafa Kamal Pasha who was publishing a weekly from Cairo. He also

interacted with Iranian revolutionaries and the French Orientalist Louis Massignon in Iraq. These contacts and interactions created in him the idea that Muslims in India should join their fellow countrymen against the British in the Freedom Struggle. He thought it is the joint responsibility of all Indians without any discrimination. Having all these sincere thoughts and ideas in mind, he started Al-Hilal Press and a Weekly with the same name.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad started publishing Al-Hilal from 13th July 1912 from Calcutta. Initially only 2000 copies were printed but soon its circulation figure rose to 26000 copies even its back issues were in great demand. The messages of patriotism and nationalism coupled with religious fervor inherent in the weekly gained wide acceptance among the masses. Al-Hilal rose the rebellious sentiments in the masses nay it worked as the fuel to the fire of freedom, sentiments already existed in Indians though in a meager form. Al-Hilal was the heartthrob of the nation at the time. But all these developments disturbed the British Government. In 1914 Govt. imposed a security of 2000 rupees under the Press Act. When Maulana deposited the amount, the govt. confiscated it and the security amount of 10000 was imposed on it. These punitive measures failed to tone down the anti-establishment stance of the journal. The British govt. at last not only banned it but confiscated it also in 1915. After all Maulana was an ironman. He was never discouraged with all these

developments.

Maulana Azad started another weekly Al-Balagh after the ban was imposed on Al-Hilal. It was similar to Al-Hilal in its contents, form, style as well as sentiments. Maulana Azad was asked to leave Calcutta and his entry was prohibited in Punjab, UP, Delhi and Bombay. Therefore he went to Ranchi and he was kept under house arrest there.

In 1921 Maulana Azad started a weekly named Paigham but it was also banned in December 1921 and he was arrested. On 10th June 1927 Maulana Azad restarted the publication of Al-Hilal, but due to the oppression of the Govt. and due to his active participation in the freedom struggle it had to be stopped after the short period of six months on 9th December 1927.

The Al-Hilal weekly was a landmark in the history of Indian journalism. Maulana woke Indians from their slumber through his write-ups in Al-Hilal. He, besides turning them into patriotic and nationalistic citizens made them enthusiastic freedom fighters. His vociferous voice for liberty changed the mood of the nation. The freedom struggle got momentum only by his awakening write-ups in Al-Hilal. People awaited it impatiently and took it like hot cake. Maulana's outstanding journalism catered the needs of all types of readers in Al-Hilal. Its impact was inimitable and indomitable both in literary as well as in social perspectives. People liked it on account of its diversified subjects and articles.

Besides social and literary articles Maulana facilitated the thirst of scientific readers through his explanations of different scientific discoveries and inventions. He had elevated the taste of his readers by presenting articles in such a style and form that surpassed their imaginations.

He was an extraordinary thinker, leader, journalist and orator. His power of oration is famous. His speech in New Delhi to stop Indian Muslims from migrating to Pakistan is an historical and memorial event. He was such a visionary and prudent who would have always seen 100 years ahead of him. What was going to happen due to two nation theory in India as well as in Pakistan, he had already imagined. What would be the plight of those Muslims who migrated to Pakistan, he had seen that with his visionary power.

In short Maulana Azad is among those devoted patriots who dedicated all his capabilities to the motherland alongwith sacrificing all his comforts and pleasures for it. He loved the nation more than himself and near and dear ones. He not only directed the nation but also guided the Indian Muslim Community towards right direction. Hence whatever will be written would be only a drop from the ocean of his virtues, qualities, sentiments and accomplishments. He was the fittest on the couplet of Allama Iqbal ; Thousands of years narcissus weeps on its blindness only after a massive struggle such a prudent personality comes up. ●

## Purification of Wealth

**A**bdullah bin Abbas narrates that “when the verses (of Sura-i-Tauba) were revealed: They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Mohammad) of a painful doom; on the day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said to them): Now taste of what ye used to hoard, (34-35), the Companions felt very much burdened by it (and were greatly worried). Omar (thereupon) said: 'I will try to remove your distress.' He, thus, went to the Apostle of God and said: 'Sir! your Companions feel weighed down by these verses.' 'God has prescribed Zakat,' replied the Prophet, 'for the reason that whatever goods are left after paying it may become purified, and, (in the same way), the law of inheritance has been provided- (Ibn-i-Abbas tells that here the Prophet said something which he had forgotten but about the law of inheritance he was sure that the Prophet had said that it had been sent down so that) it might be a support to your dependents.' (On hearing it), Omar (joyously) exclaimed: 'Allah-o-Akbar!' The Apostle of God, then, said to Omar: 'May I tell you of the best of wealth which is worth acquiring and keeping with care and affection? It is a good-natured, chaste and virtuous spouse who may bring joy to the man's heart when he sees her and to what she is told and when the husband goes out somewhere, protects his household goods and (guards) his trust during his absence.”

-Abu Dawood

## Caste Discrimination

**Obaidur Rahman Nadwi**

**C**astism breeds hatred, a b o m i n a t i o n , abhorrence, enmity, and hostility. Besides it creates gulf and estrangement among a variety of nations. Today the conception of castism has developed to an extent that every dominant caste despises minorities.

Needless to add that this evil is not new; it was also in vogue during the Brahmanic Age. Gustave Le Bon says: "We have seen that, towards the close of the Vedic Age, occupations had started to become more or less hereditary, and the germ of the caste system had been sown. The Vedic Aryans were alive to the need of maintaining the purity of their race by not mixing with the conquered peoples, and when they advanced towards the east and subjugated vast populations, this need became still more manifest and the law-givers had to pay due regard to it. Then Aryans understood the problems of race well; they had come to realize that if a ruling minority did not take proper care of itself, it was rapidly assimilated with the servile population and deprived of its identity."

Noted Islamic Scholar Late S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says:

"The real credit for evolving the caste-system into a rigid social frame and a law goes to Manu, who, in the heyday of Brahmanic civilization in India, three hundred years before the birth of Christ, formulated what is commonly known as the 'Manu Shashtra'

as the sacred law of Hindu society. Manu classified the entire Hindu population into four classes with reference to their birth, namely (i) the Brahmans or the learned and the priestly class, (ii) the kshattriyas or the fighting and ruling class, (iii) the Vaisyas or the trading and agricultural people, and (iv) the Sudras or the lowest caste people whose only business in life was to serve their superiors." (Islam and the world, p. 26)

The author of the Iran ba'Ahd-i-Sasanian says: "In the land system of Naushirwan greater attention had been bestowed upon the interests of the Imperial Treasury than those of the people. The condition of the masses was as deplorable as ever. The Byzantine Philosophers who had taken refuge in the Emperor's Court were soon disgusted with what they saw in Iran. Maybe, they were not intellectually detached enough to take an objective view of the custom and practices of an alien people live taking one's own daughter or sister into wedlock or leaning away the dead for the vultures to feed upon. They could not think with the mind of an ethnologist and were disappointed to find things different from what they had expected in the empire of an philosopher king. But it was not its customs and practices alone that made them turn away from Iran. What really grieved them were the social divisions, the unconquerable rank misery of the poor and the heartless exploitation of the weak by the strong." (Christensen, p. 161)

The social classifications were no less severe in the Roman Empire according to Robert Briffault: "When a social structure visibly threatens to topple down, rulers try to prevent it from falling by preventing it from moving. The whole Roman society was fixed in a system of castes; no one was to change his avocation, the son must continue in the calling of his father." (The Making of Humanity, p. 160)

If we do comparative study of religions, we will find that Islam is only one religion that first did away with the very roots of discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour and region. The holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says: "No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab. Nor does a white man any superiority over a black man, or the black man any superiority on the white man. You are all children of Adam and Adam was created from clay." "One day a funeral procession passed by and the Prophet (PBUH) stood up. People objected, 'But it is the funeral of a Jew, and he responded, 'Is he not a human being?"

The most striking aspect of Islam is to foster Justice and equality amongst various communities regardless of religious affinity. "Once, a woman belonging to a noble family of Madina was caught while committing a theft. The case was put up before the Prophet and it was pleaded that she may be spared. The Prophet replied 'Nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common men for their offences but let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes. I swear by God Who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, had committed this crime I

would have got her hand amputated." The Prophet holds that "Give equitable punishment to the remote and near and have no fear of reproach of people in enforcement of this limits set up by God."

In this context United Kingdom's recent move to ban caste discrimination is timely and laudable. According to news reports British law makers are in the process of amending equality laws to make caste-based discrimination illegal, following mounting evidence of the practice within the Asian community. Academics and campaign groups have conducted surveys that highlight the prevalence of caste-based discrimination among people with origins in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Based on the evidence and research present in the report, the government is expected to amend equality laws and initiate measures to prevent caste-based discrimination in the same way as discrimination on grounds of sex, colour, religion, age, sexual orientation. The study says: "There is clear evidence from the survey and the focus groups that the caste system has been imported into the UK with the Asian Diaspora and that the associated discrimination affects citizens in ways beyond personal choices and social interaction."

In short keeping in view the prevailing dastardly and unsound scenario of the world UK's step to put an end to caste discrimination augurs well. We hope countries in Asia particularly India where castism is eating away the basic principles of civilization will rise to occasion and take lessons from the progressive nations. ●



# Islamic Finance and Investment

**Saif Hassan**

Islamic finance is due to the astonishing fact that the Islamic financial markets are not as badly affected by the global financial crisis as their conventional counterpart due to its unique structure. This unique structure of Islamic finance is the application of the shariah (Islamic law) to the finance sector. The shariah explains in detail the Islamic concepts of money and capital, the relationship between risk and profit, the social responsibilities of financial institutions, etc. The shariah is derived from four sources in order of their precedence that are the Holy Quran, The Sunna, Qiyas (analogy) and Ijma (consensus). There are 4 basic elements prohibited in Islamic finance business: Interest (riba), forbidden goods (haram), gambling (maisr) and ambiguity (gharar).

Furthermore, during the recent financial catastrophe, Islamic financial institutions have demonstrated significant resilience. They have been less affected compared to the conventional financial institutions because of the prohibitions on excessive leverage. The transfer of risks related with the debt is prohibited in Islamic finance. Therefore speculative transactions such as derivative are nonexistent. Transferring the risk related with the debt and speculative financial activities cause

unnecessary booming of the financial transaction volume well above the size of the real economy. Thereby rendering the entire financial system fragile. It is because of all these reasons.

Islamic finance offers a viable alternative to the conventional based financial system. This is because the Islamic financial system rejects the concept that a borrower is liable for the repayment of the funds borrowed and a predetermined return on those funds, regardless of the performance of the borrower's business. Under the Islamic system, this rejection of interest is replaced with the concept that the lender is to assume the risks of the borrower's business and share in the profits and losses of that business. To further elaborate, Islamic finance is based on the belief that the provider of capital and the user of capital should proportionately share the risks of business ventures. This means that the depositors, the bank and the borrower should share all risks and the rewards of the financing business ventures.

This is unlike the interest based conventional system, where all the pressure is on the borrower. He must pay back his loan, with the agreed interest, regardless of the success or failure of his business venture.

The central feature of the Islamic financial system is the prohibition of the payment and receipt of Riba (Islamic term for interest). Riba is a kind of

increase in the amount of a loan. Riba is totally prohibited because Islam is against exchange money for money with increment. This implies that in Islam money is not considered as commodity but it is just a medium of exchange and store of value. To further delve in to the strict prohibition of interest in Islam is a result of its deep concern for the economic, moral and social welfare of mankind.

**Economic:** Dependence on interest discourages people from working/trading to earn money and the value of work/trading is reduced. Such people won't bother to take the trouble of running a business or risking money in trade-industry.

**Moral:** Acceptance of usury discourages people from doing good to one another and lend out of goodwill. A society which encourages interest on lending will require needy people to pay back more than he borrowed, which quite often is a source of huge burden.

**Social:** if interest is allowed, the rich who are most likely to be lender will exploit the poor (borrower). As a result, the rich becomes richer and the poor becomes poorer. This generates envy and hatred among the poor toward the rich, resulting in social disorders and conflicts.

From the above explanation we can thus conclude that the prohibition against interest was revealed to save the poor from unscrupulous lenders and also to deter investors who demand a set return on their investments and decline to take the risk of engaging in useful trade.

The Islamic financial system does not favour hoarding of monetary

resources or centralization of monetary controls in the hands of a few. Since, historically, interest or usury has been one of the major vehicles used for exploitation as well as centralization of monetary controls in the hands of a few. Interest as human suffering has shown over centuries, causes much harm to human beings. Its institutionalization in the western economies causes wealth to be concentrated within the hands of the few (monopoly of money), which is something Islam clearly forbids.

Another prominent feature of the Islamic financial system is the PLS (profit and loss sharing system), where risk is shared between banker and borrower and the bank's profits are shared with its customers, a concept that is entirely alien to the conventional system.

An easy illustration of a "Banker-Customer relationship" would help us to elucidate the concept of Islamic finance more explicitly.

#### **Banker-Customer relationship in Islamic Finance**

In conventional banking, the banker-Customer relationship is a debtor- creditor relationship where the bank earns a profit by making a spread between interest charged on the borrower of funds and interest paid to the depositors. On the other hand, Islamic finance is governed by shariah rules that prohibit interest-based transactions.

The banker-customer relationship in Islamic finance can take different forms based on the contract entered in to by the Islamic financial institution and the customer:

(Continued on Page 24)

## IG Faizabad warned of demolition possibility

Anju Gupta

PS officer Anju Gupta appeared before Gulab Singh, Chief Judicial Magistrate in the special CBI court in Rae Bareilly on Friday, as prosecution witness number 9 in the criminal case, State through CBI versus Lal Krishna Advani and others.

Eight others have testified in the case (no. 2252/06) so far, among them Inspector Hanuman Prasad, who verified the FIR filed on December 6, 1992; Rajendra Kumar Swamy, a CRPF commander (now retired); Ram Bahudur Mishra and Jitender Kumar Mishra, two sub-inspectors; and Avdesh Upadhyaya, a priest from Ayodhya.

The highest ranking officer to depose in the case so far, Ms. Gupta recalled that on December 5, 1992, the then Inspector-General of Faizabad Zone, A.K. Sharan, had convened a security review meeting where, based on intelligence inputs, he warned that an attempt might be made the next day to demolish the Babri Masjid.

Ms. Gupta testified that during and after the demolition, leaders present on the Ram Katha Kunj Manch repeatedly urged karsevaks not to leave the complex, as their presence was required to finish the task at hand.

Currently posted as DIG in the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Ms. Gupta estimated the time of the fall of the first dome at around 2.15 p.m. The last and middle dome collapsed at

around 4.30 p.m., she added.

Describing the mood at this point, Ms. Gupta said Uma Bharti and Sadhvi Ritambhara erupted in joy and hugged each other even as they hugged L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi. They also distributed sweets.

As the domes fell, she said the bhajans and slogans grew louder and the speeches became more incendiary.

Acharya Dharmendra thundered that the falling domes represented the kalank (shame) of the Hindus, and Sadhvi Rithambhara kept up a chant of 'Ek Dhakka aur do, Babri Masjid tod do.' (Give one more push and break the Babri Masjid).

Ms. Gupta said former Director-General of the Uttar Pradesh Police and VHP leader S. C. Mishra complimented the State police and the administration for supporting the demolition.

She recollected him telling the police that they had done nothing wrong in refusing to act against the karsevaks, adding that for this bravery, they would find their names inscribed in gold.

Ms. Gupta said she was in charge of Mr. Advani's security on December 5 and 6. She received him on the Barabanki-Faizabad border on the night of December 5.

At around 10.15 am. on December 6, Ms. Gupta took Mr. Advani to Vinay Katiyar's house. From there she escorted him and Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi to the Ram Janmabhoomi complex.

Ms. Gupta said the two leaders were mobbed by frenzied karsevaks who shouted "Lal Krishna Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi zindabad."

Mr. Advani and Mr. Joshi went around the complex and inspected the pooja site, and finally took their assigned seats at the Ram Katha Kunj Manch.

Ms. Gupta told the court that there were already thousands of people in the complex and the numbers swelled by the minute.

She said the Manch was situated at a distance of about 150 to 175 metres from the "disputed structure." The domes of the Babri mosque were clearly visible from the manch, which was occupied by about 80 to 100 people, she added.

As the demolition progressed, Ms. Gupta said, she could see fire and smoke billowing from the localities around the complex.

Ms. Bharti took the mike at this point and told the crowds that "Muslims have themselves set fire to their homes."

She also announced that they had succeeded in forming a government in U.P. with only Hindu support and that they would succeed in getting a similar government at the Centre.

Ms. Gupta said that after the demolition, Mr. Advani wanted her to put him through to U.P. Chief Minister Kalyan Singh. After she expressed her inability to do so, he held a closed door meeting with the DM and SSP of Faizabad in the Ram Katha Kunj office.

Ms. Gupta said curfew was

imposed in Ayodhya at around 6 p.m. on December 6.

Stating that the administration's writ had weakened considerably in Ayodhya, she said the security arrangements in the complex were not in consonance with the threat perception for the area.

Mr. Gulab Singh fixed April 23 for the next hearing when Ms. Gupta would be cross examined by the defence. ●  
(The Hindu 27-03-2010)

### **Sense of smell linked to ageing in humans?**

Scientists have claimed that the sense of smell may be linked to the ageing process in humans, after they discovered that female fruit flies deprived of the ability to sniff food outlive their peers.

A team, led by Scott Pletcher of Michigan University, has found that eliminating fruit flies' ability to smell any odour enabled them to live 20 per cent longer than flies with an intact sense of smell, the 'News Scientist' reported.

But, why is this so? The scientists reasoned that food smells were the ones most likely to affect ageing, as nutrition and longevity are known to be linked in many organisms. For example, cutting the amount of food consumed lengthens the lifespan of yeast, mice and monkeys, and keeps a variety of diseases at bay in people. To test the idea that food odours affect lifespan, the team eliminated flies' ability to smell CO<sub>2</sub>, produced by some fly foods, such as live yeast. ●

*Ayodhya Ghost Resurrected:*

## **Ayodhya: Other leaders also in soup**

**Manjari Mishra**

*(Anju Gupta as an IPS officer on duty, was part of the administrative arrangements in Faizabad on the fateful days leading to the demolition of the Babri Masjid on Dec 6, 1992. She was part of L K Advani's entourage and had access to key players that day.*

*A 1990 batch IPS officer of the UP cadre, Gupta (47), who appeared before the special CBI court in the Ayodhya demolition case at Rae Bareilly on Friday March 26, was the ninth witness on the agency's list to testify. And, according to the CBI top brass, she has made the clearest and most comprehensive statement among those questioned by the investigators so far. Gupta currently serves the MHA in Delhi.)*

The claim, however, is not borne out by Gupta's description of what followed the razing of the Babri mosque. The IPS officer told the court about celebrations that broke out among the leaders of BJP and VHP as the mosque came down, and did not sort those who felt sad from those who were jubilant.

"The sight of the structure crashing down led to much euphoria among the dignitaries present on the dais of the Ram Katha Manch. I saw sweets being distributed, people congratulating and embracing each other," Gupta said. She continued, "The Ram Katha Manch, actually a single-storied building 150-170 metres away from the disputed structure, was a

beehive of activity. Among the people who flitted in and out, I could recognize apart from Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Vishnu Hari Dalmia, Vinay Katiyar, Uma Bharati, Sadhvi Rithambhara, Acharya Dharmendra Dev and Shrish Chand Dixit," she said.

Gupta also did not support Advani's claim that he had tried to stop the kar sevaks, suggesting that he was actually concerned about kar sevaks who injured themselves during the demolition act.

According to the officer, it was she who told Advani that a crowd had broken in and was demolishing the structure, and that a number of people had fallen off the dome and were critically injured.

"Reports of kar sevaks being injured upset Advani. He demanded to be led to the site so that he could persuade kar sevaks to come down. Advised against this, Advani dropped the idea and deputed Uma Bharati instead," she said.

The officer also accused other leaders of BJP/VHP combine Vinay Katiyar, Uma Bharti, Sadhvi Rithambhara- of making provocative speeches.

While approaching the manch, Gupta could hear speakers saying from the dais, "*Kar sevak upar se nahi neeche se karseva Karen*" (Kare sevaks should work from the bottom and not from the top)." Gupta also claimed to have heard Sadhvi

Rithambhara urging the crowd repeatedly, "*Ek dhakha aur do* (give one more push)." "Uma Bhaati was exhorting the crowd to start with the bottom for faster results. Explaining away the smoke rising from a distance, Uma Bharati said that the Muslims had set fire to their houses and now the time had come for Hindus to have their government at the Centre," she said.

Gupta recalled Katiyar surveying the multitude from the balcony of the manch. Katiyar had remarked, "Parinda bhi par nahi mar sakta (even a bird cannot dare to come)," mocking at the famous statement by Mulayam Singh Yadav in 1990 as he banned any movement in Ayodhya.

The nearly three-hour-long testimony also included Gupta's assertion that Advani asked her to put him across to chief minister, district magistrate and senior superintendent of police of Faizabad. "He also held closed-door meeting with district officials during the same period," she claimed.

Describing the charged atmosphere of Ayodhya during the buildup on December 5, 1992, Gupta said the kar sevaks were in a highly belligerent mood. "Even police officers were allowed in after they repeated Jai Shri Ram chant.

The administration's writ seemed to have run out on that day", she said. In a scathing commentary on the lax security arrangements, she pointed out that the arrangements were not in keeping with threat perception.

"This was the reason why the crowd could break the security cordon

within minutes and climb up the structure," she said.

After her deposition, Gupta was cross-examined by the defence. The court later adjourned the hearing in the case to April 23 when cross-examination of the IPS officer will resume. She also said that the state administration was ineffective and unwilling. "It was a time when the writ of the state administration seemed to have run out." ●

*(Times of India March 26, 2010)*

### **Disgraceful in any case**

It is related by Abdullah bin Omar that the Apostle of God, while exhorting the people from the pulpit to abstain from soliciting for charity, said: "The upper hand is better than the lower hand, and the lower hand is the begging hand."

-Bukhari and Muslim

## Around the World

### London Museum showcases Muslim scientists' inventions

In cooperation with Abdul Latif Jameel Community Services Program (ALJCSP), 1001 Inventions, and exhibitions showcasing the inventions of Muslim scientists, will continue to be displayed in London's Science Museum for a longer period until the end of June 2010. The exhibition organized under the theme "Discover the Muslim heritage in our world" is aimed at introducing 1,000 years of amnesia of Muslim science and technology, starting from the seventh Gregorian century to the present. The exhibition shed light on the scientific heritage of Muslim civilization and its contribution to the development of science in the world. ●

### Indian Atheist, Prof. Periyadarshan embraces Islam

A well-known Indian psychiatrist embraced Islam on 11 March. Dr. Periyadarshan, who has changed his name to Abdullah, told Arab News that Islam is the only religion in the world that follows a book directly revealed from God. He said that as a student of comparative religions he believes books of other faiths have not been directly revealed to mankind from God. He said the Holy Qur'an is still in the same format and style as it was

revealed to the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) from Almighty Allah.

Dr. Abdullah is a visiting professor at the University of California in Los Angeles. He also acted in the famous Tamil film "Karuthamma" about the killing of newborn baby girls in some remote villages in India. The production rewarded national award from the Indian government. "I was well-known in India for my atheist theology and later I became to realize that religion is the only way out for human beings both in this world as well as in the hereafter," he said. Dr. Abdullah performed Umrah on 13 March on his first visit to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. ●

### President appoints his envoy to OIC

United States President has appointed Rashad Hussain to serve as his special envoy to the Jeddah based Organization of the Islamic conference (OIC). The OIC, which is made up of over 50 member states, is considered the second largest inter-governmental organization in the world. As a hafiz of the Qur'an, he is respected member of the American Muslim community. The OIC issued a statement saying that the appointment will facilitate coordination between the US authorities and the OIC General Secretariat, particularly to promote mutual understanding on issues of interest to the Muslim world. ●

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