



# **THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST**

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# The Fragrance of East

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## The Quranic Dictum

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Qur'an lays stress on following the way of the prophets and asks the believers, time and again, to pattern their lives and conduct after the example set by the messengers of God.

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much."

It directs the Muslims to beseech God always to show them the right path.

"Show us the right path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured;

Not (the Path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray."

This prayer which forms part of the service repeated several times a day, teaches man to seek the companionship of the prophets, their leaders and guides and God-loved souls. Whoever shall live up to this supplication by coming close to the appearance and behaviour of these pious souls shall undoubtedly be sanctified and redeemed by divine grace. ■

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## Wisdom of Qur'an

He answered, 'Our Lord is the One who gave everything its form and then guided (it). (Ta-Ha 50)

### Commentary:

That is, after giving His organic creations their varying forms and shapes, Allah guided them to their means of sustenance, methods of obtaining them, and ways by which they could live in communities and multiply their numbers: all instinctively (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

In the words of Mawdudi, "Now God did not simply create each thing on a certain pattern and leave it at that; rather, He taught each created being how it should function and fulfill the purpose for which it has been created. It is God who taught the fish how to swim and the birds to fly, the plants to blossom and the soil to produce vegetation..."

"In the above sentence, which is crisp, pithy and rich, Moses not only mentions God Who is the object of his worship, but also explains why he accepted Him as his Lord and why none else could be acknowledged to be so. The statement embodies both the thesis and its supporting argument."

Asad adds: "In the original, this sentence appears in the past sense ("has given" and "has guided"); but as it obviously relates to the continuous process of God's creation, it is independent of the concept of time and denotes, as in so many other places in the Qur'an, an unceasing present. The term *khalq* signifies in this context not merely the inner nature of a created thing or being but also the outward *form* in which this nature manifests itself.."

Fir'awn's manner of asking suggested that he wanted Musa to give him the address of the Lord God. Musa told him in effect, "Our Lord God is not a physical being (who can be met across the street: Au.). He can only be known through His Qualities and Attributes: . 'Our Lord is the One who gave everyone its form and then guided (it)-Qurtubi. ■

## Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

(1) Abu Hurairah relates that the Apostle of God said: No believing man hates his believing wife. If there is a bad quality in her, there will, also, be a good quality. "

- Muslim

**Commentary:** It tells that if a man disliked his wife for some reason, he should not adopt an attitude of hatred or indifference towards her and start thinking in terms of divorce, but look for the good qualities in her and learn to admire her because of them. This is the claim of Faith on a believing husband and the privilege of a believing wife, As the Quran says: *But consort with them in kindness, for if ye hate them it may happen that ye hate a thing wherein Allah hath placed much good.*' -(IV:19).

(2) It is related by Ayesha that the Apostle of God said: "Among Muslims his Faith is more perfect whose behaviour towards (everyone) is good, and, (particularly) towards his wife is of love and kindness."

- Tirmizi

(3) It is related by Ayesha that the Apostle of God said: "Good among you are those who are good to their wives; and I, (on my part), am very good to my wives."

- Tirmizi

**Commentary:** It shows that a special mark of goodness is that a man treated his wife lovingly and well. To make the advice more effective for the Muslims, the *Prophet added* that, by the grace of God, he was most kind and considerate to his wives himself. The attitude of the sacred Prophet towards his wives was perfect, indeed, a few examples of which are contained in the narratives given below. ■

## **Tablighi Jamat-Truth and Fiction**

It is believed that second largest congregation 'ijtima' of Muslims after the Haj gathering in Saudi Arabia is held every year in Bangladesh. An estimated thirty lacs Muslims from all over the world including Europe and America attend this assemblage. Tablighi Jamat which has its Markaz (head-quarters) at Delhi organised the first 'Ijtima' (congregation) in 1966 in the then East Bengal and since then it has assumed an international significance and is held every year in Bangladesh soon after the I'dd and before the Haj. As a prelude to this grand conclave in Bangladesh Tablighi Jamat holds such Ijtimas in India as well at different places. In 1996 one was held at Padrauna near Deoria district of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Normally organisers of these Ijtimas shun publicity and avoid contact with the media. Newsmen themselves ignore them because they do not get anything 'newsworthy' in the proceedings to report. However, the Ijtima at Padrauna did find mention in the news dispatches in a section of the Press. Since million of Muslims from all over the country had gathered to a place close to the Indo- Nepal border it provided a good background to file a spicy story about the Ijtima. It was linked with ISI activities and branded an extension of their field. Not content with it even it was alleged that arms were distributed amongst the participants. Though such charges cast aspersion on the working of our Police and Intelligence agencies, the idea of spreading such mischievious accusations worked well in widening the gulf of distrust between two major communities in the country viz Hindus and Muslims.

Tablighi Jamat which has its headquarters in Basti Nizamuddin in New Delhi, is a popular name amongst Muslims while non-Muslims may be ignorant of even its existence. It does not indulge in mundane matters as such it has least concern with political affairs. Neither it interacts with politicians nor allows their platform to be used for political ends. The main thrust of its working is to make a Muslim understand the Islam and learn the lessons from holy Quran and Hadits which help them in growing up as a God fearing, true patriotic and honest Muslim. In fact, the whole philosophy of the Jamat revolves round the perfectness in faith and altruism. They work for Divine pleasure and reward in the world hereafter.

About five kilometers away from main Delhi there is a historical building

known as Chaunsath Khambha near the mousoleum of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia. In 1876 there lived a saint, Maulana Mohammad Ismail. Originally he belonged to Jhan jhana in Muzaffarnagar district of U.P. but had settled down in Delhi. He had made it a habit to help poors mostly labourers from Punjab (Now Haryana area) bordering Delhi by offering them water, eatables and sometime shelter. Muslims amongst them were also made to understand basic principles of Islam. In the process he established the Bangle wali Masjid cum Madarsa nearby. After the demise of Maulana Ismail in 1898 the responsibility of running the Madarsa first fell on his elder son, Mohammad Mian and then on Maulana Mohammad Ilyas. In Madarsa a few students from Mewat of Gurgaon district, who came from the parents deeply involved in criminal and antisocial activities, were admitted with the view of reformation. Since then it became a Centre of Reformation of Muslims and also of 'Tabligh' (preaching). Except the Mazar of Hazrat Nizamuddin and a few houses around it and this Bangle wali Masjid the whole area was a thick forest and presented a desolate and segregated area. In this natural set up of serenity and peace Maulana Ilyas with his devotion and unflinching love to God attracted a good number of students from Gurgaon, mostly of the Mewat region The Madarsa has now become a Centre of reformation of rude, crude and those with criminality in their blood. Mewat was mostly a Muslim populated area but they were ignorant of their religion and had no concept of sins and virtues. Maulana Ilyas thus got a barren though fertile field to make furrows of knowledge. Thus this mosque became the Institution of behavioural correction and Centre of preaching of Islam. This is now known as the Markaz of Tablighi Jamat.

Maulana Ilyas started sending small groups of his disciples to Mewat to live with local populace and thus impress upon them the importance of a pure and peaceful life. It had the sparkling effects Mewatis who had attained notoriety of dreaded criminals started responding of this Dawat (Invitation) and hordes and

*(Continued to page 38)*

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## Surat-ul-Fatiha\*

- Abul Kalam Azad

Revealed at Mecca - 7 Verses

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE  
COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

1. Praise is for Allah only - The Lord of All Being!
2. The Benevolent, the Merciful!
3. Master on the Day of Recompense!
4. Thee only do we serve, and Thee only do we ask for help.
5. Direct us to the Straight Path-
6. The path of those to whom Thou has been gracious -,
7. Not of those who have incurred Thy displeasure, nor of those who have gone astray.

### Importance

The *Surat-ul-Fatiha* is the first chapter of the Quran and for that reason styled *Fatihatul-Kitab* or the opening of the book. Because of its intrinsic value, it has been assigned a place of honour in the Quran and allowed to appear on the very first page of it. Indeed, the Quran endorses its importance in the following terms:

O Prophet! It is a fact that We have given thee seven oft-repeated verses and the great Quran. (Q : 15 : 87)

It has been established by *Hadith* and *Athar* that the reference here is to this chapter; for, it not only consists of seven

\* Extracted from 'India's Maulana' by S.S. Hameed.

verses, but is repeatedly recited in daily worship. It is also called *Sab'a al-mathani* (the oft-repeated Seven). The same sources give it further names - *Umm-ul-Quran* (the Core of the Quran), *Al-Kafia* (The Sufficient), *Al-Kanz* (The Treasure House) and *Asasul-Quran* (The Basis of the Quran), each emphasizing a particular aspect of its importance.

In Arabic, the term, *Umm* applies to concepts and objects which, in one form or another, bear inclusive connotation, or by virtue of which, assume the role of genitives. It is why the central part of the human head is called *Umm-ul-Ras*, because it is the seat of the brains. The flag of an army is called *Umm*, because the army gathers around it. Mecca was known as *Umm-ul-Quran*, for, consequent upon the location of the *Ka'aba* therein and the association therewith of the institution of *Haji*, it had grown into a place of assemblage for the people of Arabia. So, to style this chapter as *Umm-ul-Quran* is to acknowledge that in its tense comprehensiveness, it concentrates within its ambit the thought-content of the entire Qur'an, and, on that account, it rightly deserves the place of honour among its chapters.

Further, it is clear from some of the traditions of the Prophet that, even in his own lifetime, this unique role of the chapter had come to be recognized on all hands. The Prophet himself, according to one

tradition, is stated to have expressed to *Ubayy bin Ka'ab* that there was no chapter to compare with it, and according to another, to have styled it as the "greatest and the finest chapter".

Looking into the character of the contents of this chapter, it becomes apparent that the rest of the Qur'an is but a detailed commentary of the concentrated substance that it contains, or that it gives out in an epitomized form the fundamental objectives of the faith so elaborately expatiated upon in the rest of the Qur'an. If a person were to read nothing but this from out of the Qur'an and grasp its meaning, he could understand all the essentials of the Faith which form the subject of detailed exposition by the Qur'an. Further, when it is borne in mind that the form given to this chapter is one of invocation and that it is to be an integrated part of a Muslim's daily prayer, not only the importance of the chapter is reinforced, but the fact emphasized that a deep purpose underlies the provision of a concentrated version of the Qur'an clenched to the full form of it. The purpose clearly was to make available to every one an easily intelligible brief version of the Qur'an such as might freely be recited in his daily prayers. It was intended to bring to mind every day the substance of his beliefs, or his spiritual ideology, as well as his programme of righteous living. Hence, for Muslims, a knowledge of the contents of this chapter is regarded as indispensable. According to Bukhari and Musim, the Islamic form of prayer is incomplete without a recitation of it.

Before we proceed further, the question may as well be posed: what are the essential objectives of the Qur'an, and in what manner are they reflected in this chapter, since it has to function as an epitome of it? These may briefly be stated. In the first place, the Qur'an aims to present the attributes of God in proper perspective, for, it is in his approach to them that man has often blundered. In the second place, it lays emphasis on the principle of causation in life so as to suggest that, even as in nature, every cause has its effect in the domain of human life, both individual and collective; so much so, that a good action produces a good result and an evil action an evil result. In the third place, it aims to inculcate in man a belief in the life hereafter, by pointing out that man's life does not end with his earthly existence, but that there is a life to follow, where one has to account for his life on earth and where the effect of past deeds becomes manifest, as a matter of course. And lastly, it points the way to righteous or good life.

These objectives are all summed up in the *Surat-ul-Fatiha*. The chapter, be it noted, consists of just a few words easily counted. But they are so aptly chosen that they seem invested with striking significance. They are so simple in form. There is nothing complicated about them; nor do they confuse. The fact is that whatever is true to life is always easily comprehended. Look at nature. Nowhere does it appear elusive. Elusiveness is produced by artificiality. All that is true and real will necessarily be plain and attractive,



so attractive that when it appears before you, you do not feel any strangeness about it. Indeed, you accept it without hesitation.

Now, think it over. What plainer view can be taken of human devotion to God and all that it implies than what is presented in this chapter? Here are but seven brief phrases, each of not more than five words, every word crystal clear and impressive. God is here invoked in His attributes, the manifestations of which man beholds day in and day out, however much he may, through indifference, neglect to reflect over them. Here you have man's admission of his absolute dependence on God, his acknowledgement of the divine kindness shown to him, his earnest yearning to be saved from the pitfalls of life and to be led along the straight path. Nothing is abstruse here! Since we repeat this *Surat* so frequently and have grown so familiar with it, it may look as if it is but a commonplace concept of religion. But this very commonplace concept till it emerged before man was by no means commonplace or easy to grasp. So it is with everything real. So long as it does not come into sight, it looks as if there is nothing more difficult to perceive. When it is brought to view, what is there so clear and plain?

Whenever a revelation from the divine has come, it has not brought to the knowledge of man anything strikingly novel; for, in respect of devotion to God, there is nothing novel to impart. The

function of revelation has been simply to interpret, on the basis of knowledge and conviction, the inherent urges of man. And this is what the *Surat-ul-Fatiha* does. It expresses the instinctive urges of man so artfully and with such ease that he is impelled to affirm that every line of this chapter, nay every word of it, is but the compulsive voice of his own heart and mind.

Think it over again. Although by the very nature of it, this chapter is no more than a simple invocation, it reveals in every word of it, and in every turn of expression, one or other of the great purposes which underlie the *Din* or the way of life sponsored by the Quran.

The great mistake that man has made in this approach to the concept of God is that he has very often regarded God as the God, not of love, but of terror. The very first word of the chapter sets right this age-long deviation from truth. It begins with *Hamd* or the Praise of God. It is a term signifying the most beautiful form of praise ! 'Praise beautiful' is possible only of a being who truly is beautiful and good. The term cannot therefore sustain the concept of terror. The being which is Mahmud or worthy of 'the praise beautiful' will never inspire terror.

The *Hamd* or praise over, the *Surat* draws attention to the all-encompassing providence of God, His mercy and His justice; and thus gives a comprehensive picture of divine attributes which operate to provide man with all that he needs to sustain and develop the humanity in him

and prevent him from going down in the scale of life.

And then, by calling God *Rabb-ul-Alamin*, the Lord of all creation or of all forms of life, the *Surah* acknowledges the universal character of divine concern for every individual, group, community, country and every form of existence. The concept puts an end to all notions of exclusiveness which had hitherto prevailed among mankind assigning divine blessing and favours to one's own community.

The *Surah* then refers to God as *Malik-i-Yawmiddin*, or Master on the Day of Recompense. The word *Din* here postulates a law of recompense. It emphasizes that requital is but the natural reaction to one's own action, and is its inevitable result. It is not fair, therefore, to assert that God deals out punishment to anyone out of revenge or in anger, for, the word *Din* in this context simply means recompense or requital or what follows as a natural sequence.

The significance of *Malik-i-Yawmiddin* is this that alongside the attributes of 'grace' and 'beauty' those of 'power' and 'pressure' are also at work in the universe, and this is not because of any sense of anger or revenge in its creator, but because He is just, and because His wisdom has assigned to each object a particular quality productive of a particular result. Justice, according to the Qur'an, is not a negation of mercy. It is mercy itself.

Moreover, the form of prayer

suggested in the *Surat* is not, "We serve Thee", but is specifically worded, "Thee alone do we serve, and from Thee alone do we ask for help". This manner of expression fulfills the primary condition of belief in the unity of God, and disallows room for every form of *shirk* or associating with God anything beside Him.

Lastly, the path of goodness is styled *Sirat-al-Mustaqim* or the 'Straight Path'. There could be no better or more appropriate term than this to designate it, for, no one will fail to distinguish between a straight road and a road which is not straight, or disdain to choose the first. And then to enable him to know what a straight road is like, a clear pointer is furnished such as man can easily perceive for himself, and this, not in the form of any abstract idea, but in the form of a concrete reality, namely, the road followed by those on whom God has, as a result of their actions, bestowed favours. For, whatever the country or nation one may belong to, man has always found two ways lying clear before him. One is that of those who have lived successful lives, the other of failures. What is thus so obvious needs only to be hinted at, and that is exactly what is done here. This was the reason why the prayer form was adopted to stress the point. Had it taken the form of a regular catechism or of a specific command, the effect would have been lost. The prayer form helps to voice the inward condition of one who in sincerity invokes God. It clinches devotional thought intent on seeking a spontaneous expression. ■

## The Leadership of The Arab World\*

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Arab World occupies a very significant place on the map of the world. It has been the cradle of people who have played an important and determining role in history. In it lie treasures of unlimited wealth and power. It has petrol which is the life stream of industrial and military power. It is a link between Europe and the Far East and is the pulsating heart of the entire Muslim world, to which this world turns, with everlasting affection and devotion, for its religious and spiritual needs. Its significance is also heightened by the possibility of its becoming a theatre of a third World War. It has hands that are strong and minds that are sharp and bodies that can endure the hardships of war. It has big markets and some land of great fertility. It has Egypt, through which runs the Nile, and which, with its fertile soil and its long tradition of civilization and culture, occupies a special position in the world. In the Arab World lies Palestine which, with its neighbouring lands is distinguished for its natural beauty, delightful weather and its strategic importance. It contains Iraq which is famous for its hardihood, valour, courage and for its great reservoirs of petrol.

It has in it the Arabian peninsula which is unique in being the religious and spiritual nerve-centre of the Muslim World, where the annual assemblage of the people of the entire World for Hajj has no

parallel anywhere. It has wells that produce almost the greatest quantity of oil in the world.

These are some of the factors that have made the Arab World the focus of attention of the Western powers, the centre of their aspirations for supremacy, and the battleground of their struggle for leadership. All this, in turn, has resulted in creating a strong sentiment in these countries for Arab nationalism.

### Muhammad the Prophet of Islam

There is a world of difference between the point of view with which a European looks at the Arab World and that with which a Muslim looks at it. Even the way a nationalist Arab regards it is quite different from the way a Muslim from another part of the world does. To the Muslims in general, the Arab World is the cradle of Islam, a refuge for humanity, a tower of light and the very source of Muslim leadership. A Muslim believes that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, (Peace be on him.!) is the soul of the Arab World, the cornerstone of its prestige and the title to its glory. Without Muhammad this land, inspite of its riches and wealth of resources, will be no more than a picture without colour or a body without spirit. It is Muhammad alone who brought the Arab World into being. This world, before he came, was a world of divided people and warring tribes over which hovered clouds

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\*Rendered into English by Asadullah Kazmi.

of ignorance and darkness. Its potentialities lay untapped and its real virtues undiscovered.

The Arabs, at that time, could not, even in their wildest dream, think of waging a successful war against such imperial powers of the day as Rome and Persia. The very thought was impossible for them to conceive. Syria, which subsequently became an important part of the Arab World, was still a Roman colony and at the mercy of a ruthless and cruel dictatorship. It did not even understand the concept of justice or know the meaning of freedom. Iraq was the victim of the avarice and rapacity of the Sassanide rulers of Persia. New levies and ever-increasing heavy taxation had almost broken the back of the people. The Romans held Egypt and treated it like a milch animal from which is to be squeezed out the last drop of milk but which is badly looked after and poorly fed. Along with political domination, it was also subjected to religious persecution.

Then came a breath of fresh air. Muhammad, (Peace be on him!) appeared. He arrived at a time when the Arab World was on the verge of destruction and the pulse of its life at a very low ebb. It was he who gave it a new life, a new sense of direction, knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment and taught it self-discipline and self-reliance. By his coming the Arab World was completely transformed. It was now the ambassador of Islam, a messenger of peace and security, a source of comfort and grace to the people and the torchbearer of culture

and civilization.

Today we speak of Syria, Iraq and Egypt with pride. Had there been no Prophet of Islam with his message, there would be no Syria, no Iraq, no Egypt, in fact, no Arab World. Not only that, the world could not have reached the high level of culture and refinement it did, nor could knowledge, arts and science achieve such high standards.

If today anyone of the countries wishes to turn its face from Islam to the West, cast nostalgic eyes at its pre-Islamic state or emulate the West in its ordering of life, its laws, its forms and systems of government and does not accept the Holy Prophet as its preceptor, guide and leader, it should give up the blessings he brought and revert to its previous state. It will then go back to an age in which Roman and Persian imperialism held absolute sway, persecution and tyranny reigned supreme and in which people were steeped in ignorance and darkness and the Arabs stagnated in a life of obscurity.

The Arab World with its glorious history and its great achievements in refinement and culture, in knowledge and scholarship, in arts and science is the product of the advent of Muhammad (Peace be on him!) and the message he brought.

### **Faith is the Real Strength of the Arabs**

Faith in Islam is the only unifying force of the Arab World and the Holy Prophet its only leader and guide. It was this faith which enabled the Arabs to face successfully all opposition and conquer all

difficulties in their march forward to secure a fair deal for humanity. It is still the real source of all its strength and is available even today. It still remains the most effective weapon with which the Arab World can hold its own against its foes, preserve its existence and forge ahead and recover the prestige and power it had once. If the Arab World has to fight any of its foes, it can not very well do so on the support it gets from England or the alms it receives from America or even the money it gets by selling its oil to Western powers. It can only fight with the help of that faith, spiritual strength and fervour with which it had fought Rome and Persia simultaneously and inflicted on both of them a crushing defeat. It cannot fight with a heart that is in love with life and fears death, a hand that has been enfeebled by a life of ease and luxury and a mind that has been riddled by doubt and scepticism and in which high ideals and mean urges, noble thoughts and base instincts keep up a constant struggle. It has to be remembered that no one can fight the battles of life on borrowed arms, with a faith that is weak and a mind that is torn with doubt.

The most important duty of Arab leadership and of the Arab League is to inspire the hearts of its soldier, farmer and its common man with faith, rekindle in them the zeal for righteous strife and struggle in the path of God, breed in them contempt for material wealth, its pomp and show and train them to face death with a smile. They should be taught to give once again their best to life so that it is blessed again as it was blessed by the sweat and

toil and sacrifice of their forefathers.

### **The Supreme Importance of Keeping up the Martial and Manly Spirit of the Arabs**

It is unfortunate that the Arabs today seem to be neglecting habits and practices that kept their martial characteristics alive and active. Take, for instance, horsemanship for which the Arabs were famous all over the world. Horsemanship is now almost a forgotten art and is fast disappearing from the daily life of the Arabs. If horsemanship is allowed to disappear completely from Arab life, it will be a national loss and will greatly impair their manly spirit which used to be the most distinguishing trait in the Arab character. The horse is being superseded by the automobile and there is a real danger of the Arab horse, the pride of the world, becoming extinct. The Arabs have practically given up all those manly activities like horsemanship, archery and wrestling that keep up the martial spirit and have instead adopted games and sports which have but little value. It is incumbent on Arab educators to revive the martial spirit in their people, rekindle in them love for the hard life and train them to face difficulties and hardships with courage and fortitude. 'Umar, the Leader of the Faithful wrote thus to the Arab Governors appointed to non-Arab countries:

“Keep aloof from a life of ease and avoid expensive and ornate style of dress: keep up your habit of working in the sun for sunshine is the bath of the Arabs. Remain accustomed to simple dress, hardship and labour and be

steadfast and patient; retain the habit of leaping on horse-back with alacrity and keep up the practice of archery and marksmanship. The Holy Prophet, has said: "O Ye Arabs, keep up practising archery because your great ancestor (Ismail) was a great marksman" and again: "Remember (the power which the Qur'an emphasises) is marksmanship."

It is an essential part of the duties of Arab educators to fight against everything that saps the spirit of manliness and breeds effeminacy or incompetence, ban all indecent journalism and obscene literature that corrupts youth by propagating hypocrisy, shamelessness, and the pursuit of sensuous pleasures. They should not let such charlatans enter the camp of the Holy Prophet as corrupt the morals of Muslim youth and who, for a handful of silver, paint in glowing colours sin and libertinism, indecency and immorality.

History bears witness to the fact that whenever a people begins to lose its manliness, sense of honour and discipline, and its women fight against their very nature, give way to license in the name of freedom, and ape man in the name of equality, become indifferent to domestic virtues and seek to avoid the responsibilities of motherhood, then such a people is doomed. Hardly any trace is ever left of its greatness. Such was the fate of the Greeks, the Romans and the Persians and towards such a fate seems to be heading Europe and the world at large today.

### **A Curb on Extravagance and the Liquidation of the growing Disparity among People**

Owing to various influences the Arabs have, unfortunately, acquired habits of spending extravagantly on the non-essentials of life and on pomp and show. And side by side of this extravagance, there exist poverty and wretchedness, want and hunger. When a person looks at the big cities of the Arab World he is filled with shame and his distress verges on tears by the appalling disparity among classes which he finds there. He sees, on the one hand, a man who spends lavishly on the luxuries of life and, on the other, a destitute who cannot afford to have even one meal a day or a piece of cloth to cover his naked body. When Arab men of wealth sail by in their powerful limousines, a host of hungry children clad in rags runs by, begging for coppers.

As long as lofty mansions stand by the side of hovels and hunger and want exist side by side with opulence, doors on communism and other forces of disruption can never be closed. No propaganda however loud and persuasive, and no power however strong and pervasive can do it. Unless the Islamic system with all its virtues is established in these lands, the immutable retributive laws of God will usher in, as a reaction, a system that will be ruthless and cruel.

### **Self-sufficiency in Finance, Commerce and Industry**

It is imperative for the Arab states, as it is for the rest of the Muslim World, to

acquire self-sufficiency in all their financial, commercial, industrial and educational needs. These countries possess all the necessary pre-requisites of such a self-sufficiency. The people of these lands should, to begin with, use only what they produce with their own efforts out of their own resources. These states should learn to do without Europe in all spheres of life. They should not look to Europe for food, cloth, arms and machines. And they should certainly not depend on the crumbs from Europe's table.

The situation today is that, if for some unforeseen reason, the Arab World is obliged to take up arms against a European power, it cannot fight it because it is indebted to that power and depends a great deal on its help. This dependence has gone to such a length that even the fountain pen with which an Arab state signs an agreement with a European power, is made in Europe. If and when the Arab World has to fight, it fights with arms and ammunition manufactured in Europe. The great tragedy of the Arab World today is that it can not utilise, without outside help, its great reservoirs of wealth, energy and power. Instead of coursing in its own veins, its life blood is transfused into the veins of others. It is the army officers of European powers that train its armies, and the European experts and agents that look after the other departments of its life.

If the Arab World has to come to its own, as it must, then it should be the master in its own home. It should be able to look after its own needs and

requirements, have complete control over its economy and over the training of its soldiers and technicians. It should certainly train its own people to shoulder responsibilities and discharge them efficiently with integrity and loyalty.

### **The Personal Sacrifice made by the Arabs in the past for the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind**

As has been said earlier, the Prophet of Islam, (Peace be on him!) came with his message at a time when mankind had reached almost the last stage of misery and wretchedness.

To relieve humanity of its privations was beyond those who were, at that time, the over-lords of life. They had neither the vision nor the normal courage nor even the desire to undertake such a task. Luxurious living had sapped their energies and greed and avarice had undermined their courage. They had become incapable of giving up even an iota of their comforts for any noble cause. They could not face hardships and had no stomach left for trials and tribulations inherent in such a struggle. They could not look beyond their immediate interests, could have no thought for others and were not willing to give up anything for the collective good of mankind.

Mankind stood in sore need of those who were cast in a different mould. It needed men who held life cheap and who could risk their wealth and prosperity, even their lives for its sake. Mankind cried out for those who cared neither for loss nor gain and who would not hesitate to

sacrifice the high hopes and aspirations entertained of them by their own people and about whom these people would say what the people of Saleh said about him: " O ' Such, we had such high hopes of thee."

The salvation of humanity is not achieved by force of arms. It depends on the moral courage and the spirit of self-sacrifice of a handful of people who, by worldly standards, are often considered to be lacking in good fortune. It is they, who courting dangers and trials, release millions of people from their miseries and lead them from despair to hope and from wretchedness to grace. They are the people who consider it a cheap bargain if, by the sacrifice of a few many are able to achieve dignity and prosperity and if, by some loss of prosperity and wealth, the doors of material and spiritual well-being are opened on many.

The Prophet of Islam, (Peace be on him!) was ordained at a time, when the Romans and the Persians who shared power in the world, had become effete and had neither the moral courage to risk the comforts of their life nor the stamina to face the trials and hardships of the struggle for humanity at large. They could not give up even a small portion of the luxuries with which they had surrounded themselves. Such people were scarce among them who, by controlling their physical appetites and instincts, greed and avarice, liberate themselves from the bondage of luxurious living and lead a more purposive life dedicated to high and noble ideals. For such a cause a different

people were chosen by divine dispensation. The Arabs were chosen to be the companions and followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam and his great mission to ennoble life. These people were filled with the spirit of dedication and renunciation and prepared themselves to sacrifice all that they possessed in meeting the great trials that faced them in fulfilling the mission. The artificialities of sophisticated culture and luxurious living could not lure, nor worldly pomp and show, charm them. They were rich because they knew contentment; they were wise because they understood the higher values of life. The Prophet of Islam, (Peace be on him!) himself faced, in full measure, trials and hardships, privations and dangers in carrying out completely his great mission. He set his face against all worldly desires and ambitions, and everything that stood in the way of his mission. Worldly success with all its allurements could cast no spell on him nor could any power on earth make him deviate from his path. The choicest gifts of life like political power and supremacy, wealth and luxury which could ensnare the heart of any man, were un-hesitatingly spurned by him when offered to him, while he was still a young man, by the Quraish. Again when, on the insistence of the Quraish, his own uncle tried to dissuade him from his mission, he said "O My uncle, I swear by God that if the Quraish put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I will not give up my mission till it prevails or I perish in my efforts.

This striving for truth at all costs, this supreme indifference towards worldly



ease and comfort and this deliberate choice of a life of dedication, hardship and trial set an inspiring example to his followers and to those who had a noble mission to discharge and a high destiny to fulfil. In the discharge of his mission, the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace be on him !) denied ease and comfort and good living not only to himself but to all those who were near to him like his wives, children, relatives and friends. Those who were close to him always received less and much was taken from them. They were the first in the struggle and last to reap its benefits. Whenever he prohibited anything, he prohibited it first for his own people. Whenever there was any opportunity for material gain, others were considered first and his own last. They were often deprived of the good things of life when and if they came the way of the Muslims in general. When he prohibited usury, he began with his own uncle Abbas bin Abdul Mutallib, whose business of money lending was the first to be wound up and the interest that had accrued annulled. He acted in the same manner when he stood up to mitigate the evils of blood feuds and absolved those who had killed his own kinsman, Rubia bin Havis bin Abdul Mutallib, of his blood. When *zakat* i.e. the poor tax (which is a real blessing and will abide till the end of the world) was promulgated, he forbade for ever his own family and his descendants from accepting any portion of it however poor they may be.

When after the conquest of Mecca, his cousin Ali Ibne Talib, (May God be pleased with him!) claimed, on behalf of

Banu Hashim, the custody of the key of the Ka'ba. he met with a stern refusal. The Holy Prophet sent for Othman bin Talha and putting the key before him said "Othman ! This key is yours, take it. This is the day of recompense for obligations and pledges fulfilled. This key will remain with you for ever. Nobody can take it from you unless he takes it unjustly with a cruel hand". He preached austerity and simplicity of life to his wives and told them, in clear terms, that if they were willing to share with him a life of hard-ships they could stay with him. If, on the other hand, they preferred a life of ease and comfort, they were free to leave him. He told them of what God has said "O Prophet, say to your wives: "If you desire the comforts of life then come, I will give you some worldly goods and send you away with good grace. If, however, you prefer God, his Prophet, and the life hereafter, then for those of you who do good deeds, God has prepared a great reward." The world knows what their choice was. When his own daughter, Fatima, approached the Holy Prophet, with her hands blistered by constant grinding of corn and asked for a slave from the common pool so that she may have a little respite from this onerous work, she was told that her claims could be considered only after the claims of other people had been met. Instead of a slave she was given a special form of prayer for the glorification and praise of God. This was how all his relatives were treated. The nearer the relation, the greater his responsibility. Such examples of selflessness inspired and sustained those who, by embracing Islam, had lost

a great deal of their worldly possessions. Many of them were those who were used to a life of ease and comfort and were known for their rich and luxurious way of living. Many had lost even the very means of earning a livelihood. Events that were to shape the destiny of mankind seemed to wait for these people to decide whether they were willing or not to sacrifice themselves for the ultimate good of man. The decision was given in no uncertain terms. The Arabs decided to face the struggle and triumphed. They stood trials and faced privations with a fortitude that is rare in the history of man. And more was demanded of them. When the Ansars in Medina, who, in serving Islam, had completely neglected their farms and orchards, their main source of subsistence, asked for a little time to look after them, they were pulled up and were, in the words of the Qur'an, told "Spend in the path of God and do not destroy yourself with your own hands."

Such were the lessons of self-restraint and discipline which the Prophet, (Peace be on him !) taught not merely by word of mouth but by precept to those who were to carry the message and discharge its great responsibilities. Such was also the training of those Arabs and others who subsequently accepted the mission and who had their full share of the difficulties and privations in the struggle for its propagation. They are admonished by God thus: "If you hold your parents and children, your brothers and sisters, your wives and families, the wealth you have acquired and the trade you fear to lose dearer than God and His Apostle, then

wait till God sends His dispensation. God never leads to victory those who obey not (his behest)" At another place it is said: "It is not for the people of Medina and the Arabs of the neighbourhood to refuse to follow God's Apostle or to prefer their own lives to him." Such were the people on whose resolve and courage, renunciation and sacrifice were to be built the prosperity and happiness of mankind. And they were tested again and again. They are told: "But surely we will test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss of goods, or lives, of the fruit (of your toil)." Again they are told: "Will they be left alone by merely saying we believe and not be tested".

If the Arabs had hesitated to accept this leadership and feared to shoulder its great responsibilities, the darkness and ignorance of contemporary life could not have diminished nor the period of its misery and wretchedness shortened: "If you do not do this, there would be tumult and aggression on earth and great mischief, thereof."

The world stood at the cross-roads in the 6th century A. D. Two alternatives were open to it. One was for a band of dedicated and divinely inspired people to go forward, risk prosperity and wealth, kith and kin and all that is dear to man's heart, deny all pleasures of life and offer even their heads for the collective good of mankind. The other was to let things be and continue a life of narrow self-interest, of self-indulgence, of preferring personal gain to the general well-being of human beings. In that event the world lulled by ignorance and apathy would have

remained immersed in the quagmire of misery and darkness.

God, however, willed well for humanity and gave the Arabs the resolve and the courage to take up the first alternative. The fate of humanity was decided and man began to march forward under the leadership of the Arabs. The Prophet (Peace be on him!) breathed into the Arabs the spirit of faith and renunciation, and taught them to believe wholeheartedly in the life to come, and the great rewards it offered to those who believe and do righteous deeds. Buoyed by hopes of this reward and inspired by the spirit of service, these Arabs turned their eyes away from the comforts of life, renounced all that man's heart covets and sacrificed themselves in order to help humanity achieve happiness and dignity. They toiled with faith and sincerity and did not hesitate even to give up their lives. God, therefore, blessed them with the best of rewards "verily God loves those who do righteous deeds."

The world today has reached a state very similar to that in which it found itself in the 6th century A.D. A time has, surely, come when the Arabs (who have special links with the Holy Prophet) should come forward and offer once again their lives in order to change the fate of humanity. To release it from its present miseries and save it from impending disasters, they should risk once again their ease and comfort, wealth and possessions even their future prospects. Then would life be transformed once again and Man walk in dignity towards the goal of his high destiny.

The other alternative is that the Arabs remain engrossed in petty aims of personal gain, of preferment for offices and posts, salaries and income and securing better and still better means of personal comfort and ease. In that case the world would remain in the slough in which it has been floundering for sometime now.

If the Arab youth, enslaved by thoughts of selfish ends, remains tied down to the comforts and distractions of big cities, if the pivot around which revolves its life is but the stomach and material comfort, if all its efforts and energies are directed towards its own personal well-being and worldly success, then the resurgence of humanity will remain a mere dream never to be realised. The youth of the pre-Islamic period had equally big stakes in life and equally high intelligence, but, in pursuing the path of its choice, it sacrificed its physical comforts and even its future. The poet Umraul Qais was able to say, "Were I trying for an ordinary life, a little would be enough. But, I aspire for a greatness that lasts and is worthy of a man like me."

Once again is needed the courage of Muslim Youth who could, with its sacrifice, build a bridge so that life could cross over to its essential nobility and happiness. Life, like soil, needs fertilizers. That, which can fertilize life so that it gives of its best, is the renunciation of the Muslim Youth of its personal ambitions in order to bring Islam to its full fruition and fill God's earth with peace and plenty. Today a forsaken humanity demands the

courage and resolve of those who can, for its sake, give up ease and comfort, opportunities of worldly gain and concern for individual success and prosperity.

If the Muslims in general and the Arabs in particular, decide to take up the challenge and if, by the sacrifice of the few, humanity is brought back from the path of ruin to the path that leads to salvation, then it will be a cheap bargain indeed, the gains of which will far out weigh the sacrifices that are made.

“O heart, it is all gain in the bargain of love. Its only loss of life, and it is not such a loss after all.”

### **The Expectations of the Islamic World from the Arab World**

Because of its characteristics, its situation, and its political importance the Arab World has the right and the necessary competence to shoulder the responsibilities of the mission of Islam. It can easily take up the leadership of the entire Muslim World, strengthen itself to look at Europe in the face, and, by the grace of God and the strength of its faith, acquire supremacy over it, and lead the world once again from darkness to light, from wretchedness to grace, from destruction and ruin to peace and prosperity. In the words of the Muslim messenger to the court of Xerxes it could once again “lead men from the worship of Man to the worship of God, from the narrowing trivialities of life to the expanse of faith, from the injustices of creeds to the justice and equality of Islam”.

The whole world is looking towards

the Muslims as its saviour and the Muslim World to the Arabs for guidance and leadership. Can the Muslim world fulfil the expectations of the world? Can the Arab World rise to the occasion? For long a bruised and maimed humanity has been crying, in the words of Iqbal, for succour, still believing that the hands that built the Ka'ba can build humanity again.

“Thou art the custodian, the trustee of the Eternal Order.

Thou art the right and the left flank of the Lord of the Universe:

Oh! thou creature of dust, thou art the Time and thou art the Earth.

Drink the wine of conviction and get away from the tavern of uncertainty.

Wake up! wake up! from thy deep Slumber

From thy deep slumber, awake, from thy deep slumber, awake, awake.

From thy deep slumber, from thy deep slumber awake.

I cry mercy from the wantonness of Europe.

I cry mercy from the Sheerins and Purvazes of Europe.

The world has become dissolute by the despoilation of Europe.

O ! thou builder of the Ka 'ba, arise and build a new world again. ■

## **The First Military Confrontation by Muslims**

**- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\***

With that objective in view, the Prophet (SAW) dispatched *Sarayah* (contingents) in various directions. They were allowed only to take stock of the situation and have it shown to the enemy that the Muslims were no more feeble and would not desist any more from combating the force with force. To that end, the Prophet (SAW) adopted, in the first instance, by way of the first measure, to keep tabs on the manovours and mobilisations of the Quoraish and have the possibility of any action on their part gauged. The coastal region adjacent to Madinah was the route that the carvans plying between Makkah and Syria had to pass through. The Quoraish, the trustees of the *Kaba* that they were, had enjoyed the laissez passer sort of facility all over the place and could travel wherever they wanted to with immunity. They had this facility on this route, too. No tribe would ever get into their way. Hence, the carvans of the Quoraish kept travelling with immunity North-South, to-and-fro, for commercial purposes. That was the prerogative enjoyed exclusively by the Quoraish. Otherwise, the order of the day amongst the Arabs, in general, was that no tribe would let any member of any other tribe pass through its territories without having obtained its specific

\* *Rector, Nadwatul-Ulema, Lucknow.*

permission. In case anyone tried to force his way through, it would become an issue calling for a full-fledged war with him. And, hence, the people of one region would pass through the another one only after having secured asylum with some influential person of that region.

Madinah had now become a dominion of Muslims. Many of these Muslims were from the tribe of the Quoraish whom the Quoraish had harried so much that they had to vacate Makkah, leaving all their belongings behind and had arrived in Madinah, robbed and ruined. Their properties and possessions had now been taken possession of by the Quoraish who had, thus, their financial status further boosted. More than that, they had started expending this very wealth on bolstering their military might. Hence, the Muslims, on having arrived in Madinah, had this objective also in view that: as and when the parties of the Quoraish happen to pass through these quarters, attempts may be made by the Muslims to have their usurped wealth restored from the Quoraish. It was, after all, their wealth which the infidels of the Quoraish had usurped from them. And, it was because of this usurpation by them that the Muslims were facing, being in Alien land as they did, severe

financial constraints, whereas, the Quoraish were boosting and buttressing their trade further with this very wealth.

Hence, the Muslims, on getting the information that a party of the Quoraish, headed by their arch-enemy, Abu Jahl, was passing through their territories on a journey apparently meant for trade purposes, had a contingent of theirs despatched, in order to reconnoiter it. But, by the time they reached the site, the party had already crossed over. No face-off, therefore, took place. But, when this party of the Quoraish returned with their commercial merchandise, the Prophet (SAW) dispatched a team of thirty youngmen towards the sea route to have it checked. He (SAW) had appointed Hazrat Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib its *Ameer*. The Muslims, on arrival there, had a face-off, too, with them. The situation had come close to the point of clash when a person from the tribe of Juhainah who had terms with both the two sides saved the situation, through negotiations, from turning into a clash. This incident had taken place six months after the *Hijrah* (that is: the day the Prophet (SAW) had migrated on.)

Another incident took place in the eighth month of the first year of *Hijrah*. It was reported to the Prophet (SAW) that a group of two hundred youth of the enemy had mobilized at Rabigh, a place in between Makkah and Madinah. Thereupon, he (SAW) dispatched a team of about sixty to seventy Muslim

youth, under the command of Ubaida bin Al-Harith, to collect the information. Here a mild scuffle took place; but there was no regular battle.

Likewise, in the ninth month of the first year of *Hijrah*, it was reported to him (SAW) that at a place called 'Khiraaz', a horde of people from the Quoraish were getting mobilized. He (SAW) had, therefore, a detachment of twenty horsemen, under the command of Hazrat Sad bin Abi Waqqas, despatched. By the time Muslims reached there, the people from the Quoraish had already fled away from there. This party of Muslims had, therefore, come back.

Then a report was received about the mobilization of the Quoraish at the place called 'Wuddan'. To tackle that, the Prophet (SAW) himself, having appointed Hazrat Sad bin U'bada as his viceroy in Madinah, personally went there. There, too, the people had fled away from the place before his (SAW) arrival there.

Then, in the seventeenth month since the *Hijrah*, a party of the Quoraish was reported to have arrived in the region of 'Buwat'. There, too, he (SAW) himself went. But, the enemy had already beaten a retreat. *There was*, therefore, no occasion of any encounter.

The same month, a party from the enemies, commanded personally by Amr bin Jabir Fahri, got accessed to the outskirts of Madinah Munawwarah and went on a spree of pillage and plunder.

In its pursuit, the Prophet (SAW) himself had to set out, along with a team of Muslims. He (SAW) went in his pursuit up to the vicinity of 'Badr'. But, he (Amr bin Jabir Fahri) and his cohorts had gone so far ahead as were not possible to be caught. This incident got to be known by the name of Ghazwa-e-Safwan.

### **Ghazwa-e-Badr - The First Military Confrontation Between Infidels and Muslims:**

It was the sixteenth month since the *Hijrat* when the Prophet (SAW) got the information that a party of the Quoraish was advancing on the route to Syria; and, that it was headed by the military commander of the infidels, Abu sufyan; and, that its intent was to make provisions for getting the forces of the Quoraish further buttressed. He (SAW), accompanied by a team, went in its pursuit and got up to a place in the vicinity of Yanboo'. But that party had already gone ahead before the Prophet (SAW)'s arrival there. On getting the reports of the return of the self-same party from Syria, he (SAW) set out, taking a number of Muslims along with him, in its pursuit. On getting the information of his (SAW) departure, the party of the Quoraish had the word sent immediately to Makkah and sought special help from there. The Muslims had gotten up to the vicinity of 'Badr' in their pursuit. But, by the time they had reached there, that party had already crossed over the place. As the Muslims

were planning to get back to Madinah, the Prophet (SAW) received the information that the people in Makkah had already dispatched an army, equipped to the hilt, with the intent to wage a full-fledged war with the Muslims. The Prophet (SAW) held consultations with his companions. There were with him just 313 souls at the moment. They had, in fact, been taken along, considering them sufficient enough for the party of the Quoraish that had gone to Syria. They had not been taken along with the intention to get engaged in any regular warfare. Now that the issue of the arrival of the regular army of the enemy had come up, it was necessary to hold consultations as to whether the army of the Quoraish that was imminent to arrive should be confronted so that the impression was not carried that the Muslims had given the proof of chicken-heartedness and fled away from the battle-field; or, before its arrival there, the retreat to Madinah should be expedited so that getting into a regular warfare does not get necessitated. The outcome of the consultations was, however, that beating retreat from here now that the enemy was due to arrive for getting into a regular warfare would be deemed flight on the part of Muslims and have them disgraced. Hence, come what may, they have to face it and have it dealt with. It is this very incident which came to be known as 'the incident of Badr'. It had occurred in the form of a regular, full-fledged war.

The forces of the Quoraish were armed up to the hilt. They had one thousand or so strong troops. The Muslims were, as against them, one-third in strength, numerically speaking, that is. Nevertheless, The Muslims were sure and confident of the Succour and Support from Allah Almighty. Anyhow, the enemy, alongwith his huge army did arrive and the combat took place. And, the Muslims, one-third as they were against them, emerged miraculously victorious. The Quoraish were routed. This battle gave a great boost to the Muslims' repute. The impression that the people had about the Muslims that they were a helpless and feeble bunch of people got changed. The Quoraish as well as the people of neighbourhood had now fully realized -thanks to this battle-how strong a force the Muslims actually were.

In the context of this battle of Badr, the following incident is, also, worth being mentioned. Quite some time prior to this battle of Badr, the Prophet (SAW) had received information of some people from the Quoraish getting mobilized at a place called Nakhla. The Prophet (SAW) had, then, sent Abdullah bin Jahsh with a team of twelve persons there. They had instructions to just collect the information and get back. On arrival there, however, they had come across a caravan of the Quoraish and the situation had reached to the point where the skirmish was unavoidable. In

it, a member of the Quoraish, Amr bin Al-Hadhrami (1), had got killed. This incident had taken place towards the end of the month of Rajab which is the month during which waging a war was deemed prohibited. Hence, the Quoraish made it an issue of desecration of this month. It gave them the handle to launch a campaign of hostile propaganda against Muslims and to provoke and instigate the people on taking the revenge. On that pretext, they had started making plans of waging a war. It was in the name of this incident that they got the people provoked on launching a full-fledged war operation. Having the entire tribe of the Quoraish, to a man, provoked and instigated on war, they had a strong army built and had a march made towards Madinah. Having arrived in Badr, they had a fight with the Muslims. But this mischief-mongering on their part boomeranged on themselves and it were but the Muslims who, with the Help from Allah Amighty, did achieve the victory.

This great battle had taken place two months after the above mentioned incident at Nakhla, Friday, the 17th Ramadhan in the second year of *Hijrah*.

#### **Brief Account of the Battle:**

As to how the battle did take place, here is a picture portrayed. Badr is a place at a distance of about 150 kms., south of Madinah. It was then a vast open ground in the midst of mountains. There was a well in it. Actually, it is this well which was called Badr. On the



western side of it and close by it, the route from Makkah to Syria passed by. All the carvans used to take this very route on their journeys to and fro. The Prophet (SAW) had arrived, in order to intercept the caravan of the Quoraish, at this very point in the vicinity of Badr when the report reached that caravan of the enemy had already crossed over past the place. And, simultaneously, it was also reported that the infidels of Makkah had already, having raised an army, set out for waging the war. Thereupon, he (SAW) sought from his companions, *Mohajirs* and *Ansar* both, their opinions. In response, the opinion of all of them was unanimously in favour of facing the challenge. Hence, the Prophet (SAW) stayed put.

On its arrival, the army of the Quoraish camped in the better part of the open ground. Moreover, the Muslims were one-third, strength-wise, as against them. They were very short of war equipments also. None the less, it was the matter of life and death for the religious identity of the Muslims. In case the infidels—God forbid—had the victory achieved, the Muslims would get wiped off the face of the Earth. For, all the core strength that the Muslims had, their corps d'elite, was entirely this much that was here.

The Muslims had gotten a tent pitched at an elevated place of Badr for the Prophet (SAW). The place commanded the view of the entire battlefield of Badr. The Prophet (SAW)

and Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA) stayed within the tent while Hazrat Sad bin Waqqas, accoutred with arms, stood guard in front of it. He had taken the charge of protecting the Prophet (SAW). As for the Prophet (SAW), he had his head laid on the ground and kept weeping and saying on end: "Oh Sustainer of the world! In case this small group gets eliminated, there would be no one left to have Thee worshipped."

As per *Ibn-e-Ishaque's* version of the account, it was Aswad bin Abdullah el-Asad from the infidels' side who, first of all, made a raid on the water reservoir of the Muslims, but got killed. Then, Waleed bin Utbah, Utbah bin Rabeeyah and Shaiba bin Rabeeyah emerged out of the ranks and challenged the Muslims to combat. From this side, therefore, Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Hamzah and Hazrat Ubaidah bin Harith came forward. One-to-one duels took place and all the above-mentioned three infidels got killed. From amongst the Mujahideen, however, Hazrat Ubaidah got wounded. He had got his leg severed. Owing to it, while returning after having achieved the victory, he met his martyrdom at a place called 'Safraa.

After the above-mentioned infidels had been killed, there was a free-for-all encounter. The two sides got into scuffle with each other with no holds barred. On the Muslims' side, it was Mohja, the liege of Hazrat U'mar bin Khattab, who met, first of all, his martyrdom, getting hit by an arrow. Then it was Harith bin

Suraqah Ansari who, while he was drinking water from the pond, got hit by an arrow and met his martyrdom. Meanwhile, Hazrat U'mair bin Hammam made a vigorous assault and achieved martyrdom in the process.

The battle was, at its fiercest, on. The Prophet (SAW) was engrossed in making supplications. Such was the state of his engrossment that the *chadar* (shawl) that he had on had slid off his shoulders and yet he remained engaged in making entreaties to Allah Almighty with tears welling up from his eyes and rolling down his cheeks. Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA) had the *chadar* readjusted on his (SAW) shoulders. Still in the self-same ecstatic mood, he (SAW) picked up a handful of pebbles from the ground and, having the words (The faces got distorted) recited, had them exhaled on to the pebbles. Then he had them thrown towards the infidels. They started rubbing their eyes. Owing to this, their onslaught got affected. The Muslims started being felt by the infidels as too strong to be dealt with and started getting the upperhand. It is this very incident about which Allah Almighty has said:

(and thou throwest not, When thou throwest, but Allah threw)

Simultaneously, the Help from Allah Almighty through the angels, too, was rendered. The angels, having descended in the guise of Muslims, systemically participated in the battle

and gave the infidels a severe blow. In short, the complexion of the battle got changed within a short while. The Muslims emerged victorious with flying colours. Many a top-ranking chiefs of the infidels had bitten the dust. As to the rest, the Muslims started making them captives. They had a large number of them bound and bundled. The Muslims had the victory finally achieved.

It was the first ever battle the Muslims fought with the infidels. The Muslims were short in number and had, without having had any previous experience of any such battle, taken on an army that was many more times experienced than they. Yet, they had achieved a magnificent victory. The infidels were reduced to such a state that they wanted to make good their escape but had no recourse to.

#### **The Fate of the Foes:**

During the battle, two youngsters from among the *Ansar* who were yet in their adolescence asked one of their seniors: 'Uncle! This Abu Jahl who is the extremely virulent enemy of our Prophet! - Where is he? Just have him poined out to us'. 'There he stands' the senior said (pointing towards him): No sooner had they heard him say that than rushed headlong towards him and swooped down on him. Thus, that mighty and haughty arch-enemy had to bite the dust at the hands of young children. He was lying there after having been fatally hit when that gentleman noticed that he was still breathing. He

came over and put his foot on his neck. Thereupon he said: 'Do you know who you are putting your foot on? It is the neck of a great head.' Blurting out, as he did, this boastful, bloated blabble, he gave up the ghost.

The Prophet (SAW) wanted to know what did happen to his arch-enemy, the one who, along with his infidelity, had harboured rancor also against him (SAW). So, he (SAW) said: 'Would someone get me what happened to Abu Jahl?' Abu Jahl was the person who was the first and foremost among those who nursed animus against the Prophet (SAW). He had left no stone unturned in his attempt at having him (SAW) eliminated. And, it was he himself who was holding the command of the infidels, too, in this battle. In a short while his severed head was brought to him (SAW) with the report that he had been killed. He (SAW) then said:

(Allah is the One Who Alone and none else than He is the God.)

Thrice he said it. Then he (SAW) said:

(Allah is the Greatest. All the praises are his due. He has fulfilled His Promise. He rendered support to His slave. And, He alone got the groups (of enemies) vanquished.)

Thereafter he (SAW) said: Show me his head. Having seen it, he said: Here it is! The Pharaoh of this *ummah*!

When the battle was over, it was

found that the number of infidels killed in the battle was as large as seventy. Many of their great chiefs were done to death. Their corpses were thrown into the well of Badr. Standing in front of the infidels' corpses, the Prophet (SAW) said: How vicious kin of your Prophet you proved to be. You disbelieved me while others believed in me. You derogated me while others supported me. You expelled us (me and my companions) out of our home and hearth while others gave us shelter and refuge.

As against the number of infidels killed, the number of Muslim martyrs was much less. The number of their martyrs was just fourteen. Out of them six were *Mohajirs* and the rest were *Ansar*. All the rest returned crowned with victory. As a token of Appeasement with the over-all, selfless zeal of rendering support to the Truth and solicitation of the Divine ingratiating which the Muslims had taken part in the battle with, Allah Almighty had all the previous and future sins of the participants in the battle of Badr granted the Forgiveness, too. And, thus, their grade in merit was raised much more higher.

#### **Treatment Meted out to the Captives:**

In respect of individuals from among the enemy who were taken captives, the Prophet (SAW) decided, in consultation with his companions, to have them redeemed on payment of ransom money. Thereupon, it was Revealed by Allah Almighty that these

enemies had deserved but to be beheaded and that setting them free was not appropriate. But, since it has already been done it is no more blameworthy. Allah Almighty might have it itself turned out to your advantage.

Post war, the treatment meted out by the Prophet (SAW) to prisoners-of-war of the infidels varied from case to case. Whatever was expedient to do with who was carried out. Anyone of them whose enmity against Islam was perceived as ruthlessly violent and menacing was put to death. Others were redeemed against payment of ransom amount. That amount was later spent on fulfillment of general Islamic requirements and was thus made to serve the Muslims. Thus, there happened to be someone who was set free by him (SAW) in exchange of some Muslim captive. There was someone whom he (SAW) set free just for nothing in exchange. That he did just out of pity for him. Uqbah and Nadhr bin Harith were put to death. The captive soldiers were brought to Madinah. Included among them were Hazrat Abbas, Aqueel (Hazrat Ali's brother) and Abul Aas (the Prophet's son-in-law) also. They, too, were released from captivity against the payment of the ransom money.

One of them, Abul Aas bin Ar-Rabee', husband of the Prophet's daughter, Hazrat Zainub (RAA), who had till then not professed Islam and had taken part in the battle under pressure

from the people, was brought, made captive, before the Prophet (SAW). He, too, was allowed by Him (SAW) to be redeemed only against payment of the ransom that was the penalty. But, he had nothing with him to pay the penalty. It were, therefore, the bracelets of his wife that he had offered to be accepted for the penalty levied on him. Those were the bracelets which her mother, Hazrat Khadeejah (RAA), had gifted her daughter at the time of the wedding. They were her beloved mother's keepsake with her and so cherished by her. When those bracelets were put before him (SAW), he had his beloved and most compassionate wife recalled to his memory. He (SAW) was touched at heart. He (SAW) said to Muslims: Should you people be not averse, these bracelets may be returned to the daughter (to keep them as her late mother's gift). All of them willingly allowed that. This son-in-law of the Prophet (SAW) was so impressed that he had the Faith instilled in his heart. But, he had some obligations towards people in Makkah to be fulfilled. So, he went back to Makkah and having returned from there, embraced Islam.

Apart from him, there were several others who had nothing with them to pay in exchange. He (SAW) ruled that those of them who were literate may teach the Muslims reading and writing. That would be the compensation on their part. ■

## **Muharram - A Month To Remember**

**- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi**

Muharram, the first month of Islamic calendar is considered one of the four sacred month. The holy Quran says: "Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months a year), so it was ordained by Allah on the Day when He created the heavens and the month, of them, four are sacred. (Muharram, Ziqadah, Zilhijjah, and Rajab). That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein." (At-Tawbah-9:36)

History' bears witness that the month of Muharram assumes great significance because of various events. Adam was created on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram and he entered paradise the same day. He was thrown out of the paradise the same day and his repentance as also accepted that day. This is also said that the first time rain descended to earth on month of Muharram. Prophet Noah's ark touched Mount Judi from horrible deluge in this month. Namrud's fire turned into flowers on Prophet Ibrahim on tenth of Muharram. Prophet Jonah was taken out from abdomen of fish after a long time in this month. A splendid throne was conferred on Prophet Solomon on 10<sup>th</sup> of this month. Prophet Moses got rid of oppressions and atrocities of Pharaoh in this month. Hazrat Husain, grand son of Prophet

Mohammad (S), was martyred on 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram too.

It may be noted that when Prophet Muhammad (S) migrated from Mecca to Madinah, he saw that Jews observe fast on 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram. They said that it was the day on which the Prophet Moses and his followers crossed the Red Sea miraculously and the Pharaoh was drowned in its water. On hearing this from the Jews, the Holy Prophet said, "We are more closely related to Moses than you" and advised the Muslims to keep fast on the day of Ashoorah. The Prophet said: "The best of fasting after Ramadhan is the fasting in Allah's favourite month of Muharram. A number of Traditions describe virtues and attributes of Muharram in a sublime way. Let us see to what extent we observe the day of Ashoorah (10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram). Here there is no difference or distinction between different sects of Muslims as they observe this great and sacred day reverentially.

There is no dispute that the martyrdom of Hazrat Husain on 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram was indeed a great event in the annals of history. In his book "The Life of Caliph Ali", Maulana S. Abul Hasan Nadwi writes: "Abu Makhnuf relates that after Husain was martyred he saw his body bore marks

of 33 cuts by Lances and 34 by other weapons. The number of martyrs who laid their lives with Husain was 72. Muhammad b. Hanafiyah relates that 17 of the martyrs were the Progeny of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. The day on which this tragedy befell was Friday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, 61 H/10<sup>th</sup> of October 680 A.D. Husain was then of 54 years six and a half month of age.”

In fact Hazrat Husain was on the right path. He dedicated his whole life to the cause of Islam. His martyrdom reflects his courage, bravery, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, justice and righteousness to fight against evil and disruptive forces. Needless to add that Yazid whose forces attacked Hazrat Husain's party himself confessed his sin and mourned the death of Hazrat Husain.

Hisham says that when the head of Hazrat Husain was brought before Yazid, his eyes got filled with tears. He said to his courtiers: “I would not have admonished you if you had not killed Husain. May Allah curse Ibn Sumayyah. By God, had I been there, I would have forgiven him” (Al-Bidayah, Vol. VIII, P. 189)

It is a point to ponder over that Sunnis and Shias have no difference with each other on this issue. Sunnis and Shias both have high regard for Hazrat Husain. Needless to add that Hasan and Husain are called the leaders of youngmen in paradise. In Friday sermons Sunni Imams often

praise Hasan and Husain in their congregational address.

Ibn Taimiyah says: “Allah honoured Husain with martyrdom and disgraced those who took his life or assisted in the misdeed or assented to it. Husain was a paradigm of the earlier martyrs of Islam since he and his brother are the leaders of the youth Paradise. They had been brought up during the initial period of Islam and so they had been deprived of migration and sufferings for the cause of Islam and the persecution undergone by their predecessors. Therefore Allah blessed them with martyrdom and raised them in honour and esteem and enhanced their status. His martyrdom was grievous tragedy” (Fatawa Ibn Taymiyah Vol. IV: P. 483)

To sum up, Sunnis and Shias both hold Hazrat Husain in high regard and esteem. The tragedy of Karbala is considered by both too painful to be forgotten. It is unfortunate that today a political colour is given to this tragedy. The best tribute to Hazrat Husain would be to keep fast and get involved in good deeds and pious and holy acts on 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram. Husain laid down his life for the cause of establishing an honest and God-fearing society so he should not be betrayed by raising disputes on the interpretation of his mission and thus dividing the community.

■

## Sovereignty Belongs to Allah Alone

- Syed Akbar Hassan

*Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order for Iqamat-as-Salat. [i.e. to perform the five compulsory congregational Salat (prayers) (the males in mosques)], to pay the Zakat and they enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islam has forbidden) [i.e. they make the Qur'an as the law of their country in all the spheres of life]. And with Allah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures). (Al-Qur'an 22:41)*

This is the political manifesto for us, Muslim Ummah, as prescribed by Allah.

On getting closer to the Qur'an we find that Allah is referred to as "king" five times in the Qur'an. *"He is Allah, besides Whom there is no god; the King..."* [Surah al-Hashr: 23]; *"So exalted be Allah, the True King!"* [Surah TaHa: 114]; *"...the King of humanity, the God of humanity."* [Surah al-Nas: 2]; *"Lo! the righteous will dwell among gardens and rivers, in the seat of honor with a Mighty King."* [Surah al-Qamar: 54-55]

Secondly, the word for "owner" (*malik*) is closely related to the word

"king" (*malik*), Allah is referred to by this related name "Owner" in other verses, including: *"Owner of Judgment Day."* [Surah al-Fatihah: 4]. Also: *"Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty!"* [Surah Al Imran: 26] Allah is "the owner of sovereignty". Indeed, He is the King of Kings, since the lives and destinies of all earthly kings are in His hands. It is as Allah says: *"Blessed is He for whom sovereignty is in His hand."* [Surah al-Mulk: 1] And thus He is the "True King" who has "sovereignty of the heavens and the Earth".

Allah's sovereignty is absolute. It has no limit. Human beings can be described as possessing "sovereignty", but theirs is transient and it is limited in scope. We say that someone is king of a particular country. We likewise say that someone is the owner of a field or a vehicle. These types of sovereignty and ownership are limited in their timeframe - the duration of a person's lifetime at most, often less - as well as in the scope of what is being possessed or being ruled.

All over the world, we can see artefacts and monuments left behind by past civilisations: mighty castles, great estates, the ruins of Egypt, Greece and Rome. They attest to those who once possessed great

power but then passed on into the annals of history. They held sway for a period of time over a part of the globe. Then Allah decreed that their rule would come to an end. Thus it becomes clear to us that true sovereignty belongs to Allah alone, whereas human sovereignty is fleeting and whimsical, restricted and incomplete.

All who rule do so over a limited domain for a limited time. Allah has made it the norm throughout the ages that nations, kings, and powers would contended with one another. He says: *"And if not Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the Earth would indeed be full of mischief But Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds."* [Surah al-Baqarah: 251]. No human being has ever possessed the whole of the Earth or has been able to govern all of its affairs. Consider, then, how small a part the Earth is of Allah's vast universe.

Allah, indeed, is the True King in every way. He gives to His servants when they beseech Him, and Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) informs us that in the Paradise, Allah will bestow *"what no eye has yet seen, no ear ever heard, and no mind ever imagined."* [Sahih al-Bukhari (3244) and Sahih Muslim (2824)]

Moreover, Allah says: *"And no soul knows what delights of the eye*

*have been kept hidden in store from them as a reward for what they used to do."* [Surah al-Sajdah: 17]

Also, Allah tells us in the Qur'an: *"Say: a Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! You give sovereignty unto whom You will, and You snatch sovereignty from whom You will. You exalt whom You will, and You abase whom You will. In Your hand is the good. Lo ! You are able to do all things. You cause the night to pass in to the day, and You cause the day to pass into the night. And You bring forth the living from the dead, and You bring forth the dead from the living. And You give sustenance to whom You choose, without measure."* [Surah Al 'Imran:26-27]

Consider the choice of word "snatch" here. This is because when a human being possesses something of value, he or she is very reluctant to part with it. It is not parted with peacefully. We as human beings may comb the Earth for our sustenance. We may work with might and main to our utmost strength, producing, stretching our creativity and our intellects to the limit. Nevertheless, we will forever be the subjects to our Lord, the possessions of the One Who created us. We should know that this servitude to our Creator is the greatest station of liberty, for the servant of Allah acts from free conviction and free desire.

Our belief that Allah is King



benefits us. It increases our desire to turn to Allah and seek from His bounty. We increase our supplications to the one whom we know is the true Owner of all things. This belief also frees us from the thrall of what we see other people possessing. We do not debase ourselves before those people or compromise our human dignity in hopes of their favour. Instead, we apply our own energies and God-given talents to aspire to be the best we can be, placing our reliance and trust in Allah alone.

Thus, with the Qur'an and *Sunnah* serving as the primary sources of Islamic law, Islam provides the democratic principles of *Shura* (consultation), *Ijma* (consensus) and *Ijtihad* (legal independent interpretation of problems not precisely covered in the Qur'an), as secondary sources of Islamic law. Sovereignty is Allah's alone and a Muslim ruler has to govern within the limits set by Allah and examples demonstrated by the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him).

Islam recognises that a ruler must be selected with the acceptance of the people hence it gives people the fundamental right to elect a representative who would dispense the divine ideals of justice in serving the people. The reality is that Islam upholds core democratic values; in fact, a truly Islamic democracy would

do away with the negatives that are often accompanied by secular / western style democracies and establish a welfare state where everyone is treated according to the law.

Islamic governance has three core features, based on the Qur'anic vision and guidance on one hand and the experience under the Noble Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs on the other.

1. **CONSTITUTIONAL:** An Islamic government is essentially a "constitutional" government. The constitution is the agreement of the governed to govern by a set of clear and agreed upon terms. The source of the constitution is the Qur'an, the *Sunnah*, and anything that is deemed relevant, effective, as long as it is not inconsistent with Islam.

2. **PARTICIPATORY:** An Islamic political system is participatory. From establishing the institutional framework to implementing it, the process is participatory. It means that the leadership and the policies will be conducted on the basis of participation. This principle is the Islamic doctrine of *Shura*.

3. **ACCOUNTABLE:** The leadership and the holders of authority are accountable to people. Above all, the leaders, like all other Muslims, are accountable to Allah and His divine

guidance. The leader must present himself for any accountability demanded by the people.

**The key characteristics of a truly Islamic state would therefore be as follows:**

Sovereignty belongs to Allah alone.

In matters of faith, Allah has compelled nobody to believe; the ways of good and evil have been clearly indicated. Anyone may believe or disbelieve and in doing so will be responsible for the consequences. There must not be any compulsion, in the matter of faith. Everybody in the Islamic state must be free to follow their religion/belief system, provided his/her conduct is not detrimental to others.

Non-Muslims can live peacefully as citizens of a Muslim realm.

There shall be no racial discrimination. People become high or low only because of their character.

All avenues of economic exploitation must be stopped so that wealth does not circulate only in the hands of the few. There can be no room for *riba* (interest) and the economy must be free of this evil.

A person shall be free to earn as much as he/she can by legitimate means, without exploitation or fraud. However, beyond a certain minimum,

there will be a tax on capital.

Women shall enjoy an independent economic status. All their inherited wealth and their personal earnings shall be their own property.

A truly Islamic State can never be a monarchical state. It must be a democratic republic in which the Head is elected by a vote of the community on the basis of his capability and character.

It is incumbent on the ruler to have a council of advisers and consultants for purposes of legislation or major decisions. They shall be selected purely on merit.

There shall be no special class of priests in an Islamic society, though persons leading [a] better religious life and possessing better knowledge of religious affairs have a legitimate claim to honour. They will enjoy no special privileges.

There shall be perfect equality of opportunity and equality before the law. The law shall make no distinction between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, either in civil or in criminal cases.

The judiciary must be independent of the executive.

These are the fundamentals of an Islamic constitution that are mandatory. No ruler or no majority can change this as it is based on Divine laws.

An Islamic democracy could differ in its pattern from some of the modern democracies. However, it is un-Islamic that parliamentary government should run on a party basis. The chief purpose in party politics is not the welfare of the people, but to focus on the status of the party or weaken the position other parties.

This world has been created by Allah to test human beings who have been gifted with free will. This test covers all aspects of our lives be it at an individual level or at a collective level. Allah has given us the principles for governance and when Muslims followed these golden rules they not only prospered but also gained respect and dignity in the world of nations. The sad state of affairs that plague the Muslim world today can be reversed if truly Islamic principles of governance are adopted as they had been in the system run by Truly Guided Caliphs.

Even the opponents of Islam like H G Wells, in his book *A Concise History of the World* has written: *"Although the sermons of human fraternity, equality and freedom were said before also but it must be admitted that the social order based on these principles was for the first time in the whole history of mankind was established by Mohammad (SAW)."*

Lastly, how difficult and impossible it may seem in today's world to establish a system and state

based on the fundamentals as mentioned above but we must as Muslim *Ummah*, should pray, think, try, strive and do whatever we may within our own limitations. And we must always remain close to the Qur'an (our real guide and advisor) and *Sunnah*. Who knows when and how with HIS *hidayat*, rahmat and maghferat Allah turn things our way. It may be a distant dream for us but for Allah *Kun fayakun* is enough. ■

**Al-Azhar sheikh demands international law criminalizing defamation of religion**

Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Ahmed al-Tayyeb has demanded a UN resolution criminalizing blasphemy against Islam and other world religions, as well as demanding that those he described as "misled" be punished for committing "these heinous acts of abuse to the Prophet."

In a statement released Saturday, Tayyeb called on UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to criminalize the defamation of religion, saying that such actions and words threaten world peace and international security.

"Is not that irresponsible tampering, Mr. Secretary General, similar to the issue of [anti-Semitic] prejudice, which you condemn all the time, and [against] which verdicts were issued against alleged perpetrators in many countries of the world, even if they are great thinkers and scientists?" Tayyeb asked in the statement.

Tayyeb also called on all Egyptians to keep calm and condemned attacks on innocent people and expressed sympathy for victims of the recent violence. He also stressed the need to protect diplomatic missions and the headquarters of international organizations. *(Al-Masry Al- Youm, 15 Sept. 2012)* ■

## Over 8500 Women had Expertise in Ilme-hadith: Akram Nadwi

- Nadeem Sehar Ambreen

Islam has laid great emphasis on pursuit and quest for knowledge and in this regard it has made no difference between a man and a woman. Hence Muslim women have shown great interest in the field of knowledge and education and have made significant contributions. Particularly in the field of Ilme-Hadith, women's contribution has been extraordinary and highly palpable. All the *Muhadditheen* (Scholars of Hadith) in Islamic history were taught by a large number of women teachers. Women used to conduct study circles in Masjid-e-Haram (Makkah), Masjid-e-Nabawi (Madina), Masjid al-Aqsa (Palestine), Masjid-e-Umayya (Damascus), etc, and men and women used to assemble in large numbers to gain knowledge."

The above thought was expressed by Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi, Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, while delivering an Extension Lecture organised by Dr. Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, on September 3.

Dr. Nadvi said in the early ages of Islam women enjoyed a respectable position in the society and were seen with reverence. They were at the

forefront in all the spheres of life and in the field of education they not only were considered equal to men, but were a degree ahead of them. However, the later ages of Islam did not notice that enthusiasm and activity which was present in the early ages. The reason for this decline was that in the eyes of philosophers, status of women is lower as compared to that of men. Hence, in those ages when Muslims began discussing philosophy and Ilm-e-Kalam, women naturally got pushed to the edge.

Dr. Nadvi, after completing his studies in Islamic Sciences (degrees of *Almiyat* and *Fazilat*) from the renowned seminary Darul Uloom Nadwa, moved towards Oxford on persuasion of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi. He is currently a research fellow at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. From the past 22 years he has been working on *Ahadith*. Recently he has completed one of his projects entitled "Muslim Women in Dissemination of Ilme-Hadith."

Introducing his project, he said that during his stay at Britain he got bombarded with the claims that Islam, largely, has kept women at bay from the quest and pursuit of knowledge. So

he thought that, in order to counter the claim of the west, he will collect the data of women who had done some remarkable works in the field of education.

When he started reading books and other texts, he got a pleasant surprise that, in actual, there are huge numbers of women who were inclined to Ilme-Hadith and had done exceptional works related to it. Initially he thought that at the most he would get around 20-30 such women and all of them could easily be contained in a single volume, however slowly and gradually he got the account of more than 8,500 women who did superior work in teaching *ahadith*, *Riwayaat*, cross-checking of *hadith* and compilation, the account of which got incorporated in a whopping 53 volumes. Dr. Nadvi's remarkable work is in Arabic and is yet to be published. As an introduction and summary to his work, a book in English, running through 400 pages, has been compiled. The book has been published from UK and it is being received with appreciation in the educational circles in Europe.

Dr. Mohammad Razi-ul-Islam Nadvi, Secretary *Tasneefi* Academy, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and Deputy Editor of Urdu quarterly *Tehqeeqat-e-Islami*, presided over the programme. While praising the hard work of Dr. Akram Nadvi, he said the project is

worthy and deserves respect and reverence. "People allege that Islam has kept women at bay from seeking knowledge and the occidentals have created a virulent propaganda regarding it. Dr. Nadvi, while sitting in Europe, has given a fitting reply to them," Dr. Razi-ul-Islam said. For his exceptional services to Islam, Dr. Razi-ul-Islam gave Dr. Nadvi the title of "Ambassador of Islam" in Europe.

At the beginning of the programme, Dr. Akhtarul Wasey, Director, Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, gave a brief introduction of the speaker. He said that even after living in the west for quite a long time, Dr. Nadvi has maintained his eastern mindset and has presented an precept that can be followed by research scholars and students of Islam.

The extension lecture was followed by a question and answer session, wherein students and research scholars from the Department of Islamic Studies participated. The issue of rights of women in Islam also came under discussion and the speaker gave all the answers in a convincing and comprehensive way. Professor Wasey added that the present extension lecture was one of the best lectures ever organised by the institute since 1999. ■

(Courtesy: *The Radiance*)

*(Continued from page 6)*

hordes of Mewatis started coming around Maulana Ilyas and adopted the path of life laid down by Islam-peace, love and tolerance.

Gradually this reformation programme was introduced in other parts of the country. Muslims in small groups spread out through the nooks and corners of the land persuaded Muslims to give up those practices and habits which are forbidden in Islam to follow the path of virtue. Tablighi Jamat is not an organised body. Neither it has any membership nor governing body. Still it has been attracting millions of Muslims who come to Markaz for their own purification and with the aim and determination to carryout the work of reform in the Muslim society. They avoid conflict, arguments and discussions with followers of other faiths and convictions lest that may hurt their sensibilities. They do not hold any secret conclaves. In their sittings they read holy Quran and discuss the underlying message. Anyone irrespective of religion and faith can attend their 'Ijtima' or group discussions to benefit with the discourses. The main theme of their mission revolves round the following passage from the holy Quran :

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world.

Most gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement.

Thee do we worship. And thine aid we seek.

Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom thou has bestowed Thy Grace. Those whose (portion) is not wrath.

And who go not a stray.

Those who offer themselves for this correctional behaviour stay for a few days in Markaz and thereafter are sent out in small group along with an Ameer (who leads the caravan) to spend their days and nights in prayers and tabligh (preaching good things to others). In the last half a century this work of tabligh has spread out in other parts of the world. Small groups known as 'tablighi jamat' visit Europe, USA, Africa and most of the Asian countries.

To accuse such meek, weak and devoted persons of conspiring against the country of their own is to say the least a sin. They are true Muslims loyal to their motherland and devoted to God, fostering brotherhood, combating evils in society and imbibing patriotism to build men and women of steel character. Do they need arms to inculcate these virtues among the fellow citizens? ■

S.A.

## **Around the World**

### **BLASPHEMOUS FILM, CARTOONS AT THE HEART OF OIC'S AGENDA**

In a press conference on September 18 at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu said that the efforts made by the Organisation over the past few days have enabled the General Secretariat to accord the issue of the 'indecent' film the highest priority on the agenda of the Annual Meeting of OIC's Foreign Ministers next week. The meeting will discuss all initiatives with a view to reaching a plan of action and specific mechanisms to address the rising tide of incitement against Muslims.

The Secretary General explained that he had sustained high-level contacts in order to secure a unified international response, and pointed out that he addressed a letter to the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. He also contacted Dr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the Arab League, and Catherine Ashton, the EU Foreign Policy Chief to explore ways and means of putting an end to a recurrence of such acts of incitement and the ensuing cycles of violence.

### **MB YOUTH DISTRIBUTE DVD ON PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S LIFE IN 30 LANGUAGES**

Muslim Brotherhood youth in Cairo organised a campaign to introduce Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) to the world by distributing DVDs in 30 languages, explaining the message of Islam and the life of the Prophet. At the same time, Dr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Barr, member of the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau, called on Muslim producers to use their artistic talents to create productions of the highest standards of quality, in all languages, to highlight aspects of greatness in the Messenger of God, to introduce him to the peoples of the whole world, and to use those productions to

compete at international art festivals of all kinds.

"We must introduce the Prophet in an appropriately positive manner. When defending the Prophet, we must begin by understanding his life and his personality. Those who do not quite appreciate Prophet Muhammad must learn about him first, before talking about him. We should inform people about the Prophet, instead of pushing them away from him, from Islam."

### **UK TV CHANNEL'S ISLAM HISTORY PROGRAMME SPARKS OUTRAGE AMONG MUSLIMS**

A British channel has come under fire over a programme it broadcast on the history of Islam. The programme, 'Islam: The Untold Story', broadcast on Channel 4, triggered nearly 550 complaints to both the television regulator Ofcom and the channel's presenter Tom Holland. According to the Daily Mail, Holland has been accused of distorting the history of Islam by claiming that the Qur'an makes little or no reference to the city of Makkah. He has also been subjected to a number of abusive tweets, which include physical threats. One Twitter user accused him of trying to destroy Islamic history, while another tweet called him a 'fool' for suggesting Islam is a 'made-up religion'.

The Islamic Education and Research Academy has published a long paper denouncing the programme, but historians have rallied to Holland's defence, the report said. Dan Snow, who has presented history shows for the BBC with his father Peter, described the programme as 'a triumph', tweeting: "Dear angry, mad people - it is conceivable that you know more than the world's leading scholars, but very unlikely". Of com, which has received 150 complaints about the programme's alleged bias, inaccuracy and offence caused to Muslims, is considering an investigation into the show, the report said. ■

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