

# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

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# **The Fragrance Of East**

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## **WOMEN AND PATRIARCHY**

After half a century of independence Indians have woken up to take account of their achievements and failures. Keeping aside many vital issues suddenly it has dawned upon us that women constitute more the 50% of our population and yet they are devoid of social and political rights with which they can negotiate the patriarchal structures in which they live. It is more than evident that this abysmal situation has arisen because politico-religious hawks of all hues have been allowed to call the shots in every governmental move on gender issues. These power brokers in a bid to keep their own political positions intact have prevented any progressive legislation benefitting women to pass through. The devastating fall out of such a policy is more than obvious: Rapists get acquitted with ease. Dowry seekers stroll the street with impunity even as dowry deaths increase, and sexual harassment continues unabated with hapless women knocking the doors of justice in vain. From Maya Tyagi of Baghpat (Meerut) to Roopam Deol Bajaj, an IAS officer of Punjab, and Anjana Misra, the wife of an IFS officer in Orissa, there is an endless list of women cutting across classes, caste and community who have come to exemplify the pitiable state of affairs.

It is in this context that the present race amongst the political parties to corner credit of providing reservation for women in Parliament and state legislative assemblies appears to be a case of political hypocrisy. This is of course not to say that Women's Reservation Bill need not be supported, Indeed not only the Women's Bill but also any bill which will provide much needed relief to the women should be whole heartedly supported. The delay in the passage of these bills and the absence of a political will to push through these pieces of legislation makes the protracted political discourse around these themes meaningless.

It is high time that the political class paid some attention to the entrenched societal attitudes towards women which shape the political handling of gender issues. This is more important than merely shedding crocodile tears on the plight of women and

giving lip service to the idea of their being co-sharers of political power. There is a pressing political need to initiate a dialogue in society on the validity of the prescribed "role" for men and women. We adore women, use reverential language to address them, designate them as mothers, sisters or daughters. But we stoutly refuse to accept them in any other role. If women opt to make strides beyond the spheres prescribed for them by men then we see to it they are made vulnerable to male fury, lust and aggression.

The impunity with which violence against women is becoming a routine affair is best brought out in the accounts of partition. Mr. Andrew Whitehead, in his radio series "India: a people partitioned" broadcast on the BBC World Service has aptly observed that during the partition of the country when large scale migrations of people took place across the border women migrants suffered the most. The extent of sexual violence against women has been concealed behind a veil of silence and shame. Figures available suggest that about one lakh women were abducted mainly in Punjab. How many more were raped and killed or casually cast aside God only knows. Whitehead further says that it is not hard to find veterans of the partition violence who admit sometimes with remorse, often with an obscene pride that they rioted and perhaps even killed. But no one admits to have participated in mass rape of women. Yet in 1947 there were tens and thousands of rapists exacting what they saw as communal vengeance or taking advantage of the breakdown of law and order to brutalise and humiliate women.

The situation is not different even now when communal riots flare up in any part of the country. Women bear the brunt of mob fury. The despicable carnage in Gujrat is the latest instance of brutality towards women. Thus it is imperative that we first create a social atmosphere where women can live without fear of sexual harassment. Without ensuring this basic security all talk of elevation and empowerment are meaningless for a large majority of women.

We do not think that any religion worth its name sanctions aimless killing, what to say of sexual brutalities. Yet, alas! It is the women who become the first targets during riots. The basic attitudes of the patriarchs towards women first need to be reformed before the political classes take on the onus of debating

the feasibility of “empowering” women. The need of the hour is the enactment of powerful women friendly legislation which helps rather than intimidates victims of male brutality and aggression. Without that the political discourse on the Women Bill appears to be a farce.

However, since crores of Muslims live in this country it is desirable that while framing laws and acts Islamic views may also be kept in mind. A world wide misconception spread by non-Muslims that Islamic shari’ah is quite harsh towards women must be removed. It is needless to say that as compared to other faiths Islam has restored to women her rights as well as her dignity, assigned her a proper place in the society and protected her against not only the conceit of men but also from irrational and cruel customs. The holy Quran does not distinguish between men and women. Wherever it refers to God’s acceptance of good deeds, attainment of salvation and success in the hereafter, it refers to men as well as women.

“And whosoever does deeds of righteousness, be it male or female, believing-they shall enter paradise, and not be wronged a single date spot” (Q.4: 124)

And then Lord answers them; “I waste not the labours of any that labours among you, be you male or female—the one of you is as the other.” (Q. 3: 195)

The holy Quran promises goodly life to men and women alike in an equal measure. This means a life of peace and contentment and honour in this very world. □

S.A.

Views expressed in the articles are those of writers and not necessarily of the institution.

Editor

## **WHERE THE NUMBERS ARE SOURCED FROM**

**For a society usually inundated with information and useless numbers, India has no regular, rigorous method of charting how its various religious and ethnic groups fare in society, government, social development and other avenues.**

**In their paper A Case for Empowerment of Muslims, National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) scholars Azra Razzack and Anil Gomber use the Council's 1993-94 consumer survey, its 1999 India Human Development Report and collation of secondary sources—notably, 'Socioeconomic and demographic differentials between Hindus and Muslims in India', an Economic and Political Weekly article of 1995 authored by Abusaleh Sharif—to ascertain exactly where Muslims stand vis-à-vis Hindu and Indian society.**

**Working parallelly, Omar Khalidi, a sociologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is about to publish Khaki and Ethnic Violence in India.**

**This book, in essence, three long essays, looks at Muslim representation in India's armed, paramilitary and police forces. Delving into a variety of sources anecdotal to documented, this book is packed of with revelatory number.**

**The Sunday Express was privileged to be granted early access to these publications and spent a week mining them for the stories that makeup the rest of this package.**



# EVERY EIGHTH INDIAN IS MUSLIM

A. Shariff & Other

*Muslims make up 12 percent of India's 1.2 billion people. Are they pampered or impoverished? How are they represented in government and in education? Here's the number crunch.*

## The Muslim At Home

### Living on dreams

On an average, more Muslims live on smaller pieces of land than Hindus. Compared to her Hindu sister, the Muslim woman is less likely to work and more likely to stay at home.

As per an Economic and Political Weekly article written by Abusaleh Shariff in 1995—it has been reprinted by the NCAER as part of the current Muslim community study—a substantial 35 percent of rural Muslims are landless while only 28 percent of Hindus are.

At the other end of the scale, large land holdings are decidedly a non-Muslim preserve. Twenty percent of Hindus own five acres or more of land, while only 10 percent of Muslims do so.

NCAER data tells the nuts and bolts story. Fifty five percent of India's Hindus live in Kuchha houses but 65.9 percent of Muslims do. 43.2 percent of Hindus have access to electricity but only 30 percent of Muslims do, 25.3 percent of Hindus get piped water but just 19.4 percent of Muslim do.

Look at NCAER's desegregated data for the five states that collectively account for 64 percent of Muslim India. It is only in Karnataka the Muslims have a slight advantage over Hindus in terms of electricity and piped water consumption.

That aside, you have oddballs Bihar (11.2 percent to 2.6 percent) and West Bengal (15.1 percent to 7.1 percent) as two states where Muslim access to piped water is far greater than Hindu access. Other indices, across states, indicate relative Hindu prosperity.

How does the Muslim—indeed, how does anyone—get himself out of his present mess? By investing in the future, you'd say, by spending on education, increasing household income, empowering women. Is this happening?

Annual expenditure on education for an Indian is Rs.680. For Hindus it is Rs.667, for Muslims Rs.625. There is a deceptive sameness to these numbers.

Consider Uttar Pradesh, heartland of India, home to 17 per cent of its people, 40 per cent of them living poverty. Here average annual expenditure on education is Rs.689. For Hindus it is Rs.705, for Muslims Rs.552.

In West Bengal, the Hindu spends Rs.594 a year on education, the Muslim, one quarter of the state, Rs.417. Only in Bihar among the big population states does annual per capita Muslim expenditure on education, at Rs.734, comprehensively outscore the Hindu figure of Rs.676.

Expense is, of course, a function of income. Income, in turn depends on the ability to earn. In India, as per the NCAER HDR, 37.6 per cent of all adults—35.3 per cent of all males and 42.8 per cent of all females—are wage earners.

While Hindu figures are slightly above the national average Muslim ones are way down. Only 31.4 percent of all Muslims adults are wage earners; for adults women the figure is a low 26.4 per cent.

The lot of the female Muslim is one community leaders would do well to ponder. If they were to go by NSS 1987-88 data, they would find that in the five-nine years category, 32.8 percent of Muslim girls go to school, a figure that drops to a chilling 8.8 per cent in the 15-19 years—or senior school—category.

The corresponding Hindu numbers—40.6 percent and 12.2 percent—aren't exactly exemplary. Yet, even by Indian standards of gender inequality, the Muslim girl child lives a bleak life. Keeping her at home Indian can't get ahead in the world.

### **The Muslims in power**

## **The Uniform Decline**

Forget literacy rates, sex ratios and all the other niceties of development. In the end, it boils down to power. In a society such as India, the state is by miles the most powerful engine of

the economy, of job dispersal, of patronage.

For all the talk of a Muslim vote bank, the community has never pulled its weight in the Lok Sabha, sending a maximum of 49 members or 9.04 per cent in 1980. Whether it was 1952 (23 members out of 489) or 1996 (27 out of 543) it has comfortably make up less than five per cent of the Lower House.

Move to party structure. Quoting from the M.K. Siddiqui editor *Muslims in Free India*, the NCAER study details Muslim representation in central executive committees of political parties. In effect, it asks just how much Muslims matter in backroom leverage.

To take a random example, consider 1986, the year of the Shah Bano judgement, high point of "minority politics". Of the 19 Congress central executive members, two were Muslim at that stage. The CPI (M), with four out 65, did even worse. The example may be old, but it is not dated.

Outside of Parliament, India's most cherished institution is perhaps the army. In 1947, 32 percent of undivided India's armed forces were Muslim. As then minister of state for defence Mahavir Tyagi admitted in 1953, the figure "has come down to two (percent)".

Migration decimated Muslim presence in the army. The next 50 years didn't mend matters by 1999 former Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav was to estimate—MIT sociologist Omar Khalidi quotes Yadav in his forthcoming *Khaki and Ethnic Violence in India*—that "just one percent out of a total 1100,000 men-at-arms" were Muslim.

Move to the paramilitary. Khalidi cites a variety of reports to establish Muslim under-representation in the Assam Rifles (2.5 percent), BSF (4.254 percent), CISF (3.76 percent), CRPF (5.5 percent).

To the common man, the most visible face of the government is the policeman. The Indian Police Service, Khalidi's research tells us, was 1.55 percent Muslims between 1947-56. By 1965, the figure had risen to 3.58 percent, oscillating in a narrow band to finally settle at 3.65 percent in 2002.

In sum, one out of every eight Indians may be Muslim; but 26 of every 27 senior police officer are not.

## **No white collars for me**

In the absence of affirmative action or tax incentives for recruitment that reflects social diversity, the Muslim job seeker is left to his own devices.

It is no surprise then that a majority (53.4 per cent) of working urban Muslims is self-employed. The figure for Hindus is just 35.6 per cent. The other half of the story comes from organised sector employment. While 46.7 per cent of urban Hindus are wage/ salary earners, only 28.9 percent of Muslims are. In contrast, 56.1 per cent of Christians are part of the salariat.

In rural areas, the loose social stereotype that agriculture is somehow “Hindu” and non-agricultural trades relatively “Muslim” find attestation. While 43.9 per cent of rural Hindu are involved in farming—the figure going up to 72.2 per cent when you factor in agricultural labour—only 36.3 per cent of Muslims are.

When it comes to non-agriculture jobs in the Indian village, Muslims constitute the single largest group. If 21.2 per cent of Muslims are employed thus, only 11.7 percent of Hindus are. Some such professions—those of weavers and blacksmiths, for example—have been historically associated with caste groups that converted to Islam.

Yet the underlying theme is one of Muslims alienation from land.

A corollary follows: Are Muslims poorer than non-Muslims? A 1993-94 NCAER survey that draws from five states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, and Karnataka)—together, 64 per cent of India’s Muslim population—provides a clue.

The average household income in India is Rs25,653 a year, NCAER says. For Hindus, the figure is Rs25,713 and for Muslims, Rs22,8007. In the five sample states, the income advantage for Hindu households persists.

There is one exception, Kerala. At Rs29,991, Kerala’s Muslim household are better off than Hindu ones (Rs26,344). Yet here too if you compute per capita income, Muslims (Rs3,826) are worsted by Hindus (Rs4,235).

As in other fields, Bihar is Kerala’s antithesis. It is the

only state in the sample five, where Muslim per capital income (Rs3,479) is higher than Hindu per capita income (Rs3,276).

Yet even here household income for Hindus, at Rs22,812, is higher than for Muslims, at Rs21,369. In Bihar, Hindus and Muslim, compete for poverty.

## Learning the hard way

According to the India Human Development Report (NCAER,1999),53.5 percent of all Indians—of 65.6 percent of the men and 40.1 per cent of the women—are literate. Literacy among Hindus is 53.3 per cent, among Christians 80.8 per cent but among Muslims a low 49.4 per cent. If two of every five Indian women are literate, only one of every three Muslim women is.

The discrepancies are not recent. Going back to the National Sample Survey Organisation's data of 1987-88, male literacy for rural Muslims, one finds, is 41.8 per cent and for rural Hindus 48.7 per cent.

Urban difference are far sharper. If 25.3 per cent of city Hindu males were illiterate in 1987-88, the figure for Muslims was 42.4 per cent. If 42.2 per cent of city Hindu females were illiterate, as much as 59.5 per cent of urban Muslim women couldn't read and write.

The literacy of women is a reasonable barometer by which to judge a community's development. Muslims lagged Hindus on this score in regions as far apart as urban Maharashtra (42.8 per cent) and rural Assam (74.7 per cent versus 57.8 per cent).

A government report on minority uplift in 1983 made a crucial point: "At the elementary level the participation of Muslims in schooling is closer to their proportion of the population, however, this decreases at the higher, level of schooling as well as for professional courses." That year, 13.44 lakh pupils took the class X examination in India; only 0.54 lakh or four percent were Muslims. This, when the community comprised 12 per cent of the population.

Some argue the problem lies with the community's desire to "opt out" from the mainstream". NCAER data would superficially, bear this out. Just over 70 per cent of Hindu children in the age group 6-14 go to government schools but only 49.5 per cent Muslims children do.

This leads to the next popular assumption, that Muslims prefer education in community institutions, run for and by themselves. Here, too, statistics paint a piquant picture. Even in Muslim-managed educational center, Azra Razzack and Anil Gomber write in their paper Case for Empowerment of Muslims, the number of non-Muslims student rises as you go up the well, learning curve.

At the primary level, the number of non-Muslims in a Muslims-run school is 3.7 per cent. By middle school, it has gone up to 15.1 per cent, by high school to 36.7 per cent In colleges run by Muslim trusts, the community finds itself in minority: a massive 59 per cent of the students are non-Muslim.

So, is it the problem historical? Yes and no. It is no secret that Muslims did not take to western style education with the alacrity of Hindus. In 1871-72, a survey carried out in Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Assam, North-west Province, Oudh and Punjab revealed just how far behind the community was.

Muslims made up 22.8 per cent of the overall population but only 14.6 per cent of the school-going population. Even in Punjab, where Muslims were in a majority (51.6 per cent), barely a third (34.3 per cent) of school children were from the community.

By 1931-32, the situation had improved dramatically. An expanded assessment of eight provinces pointed out that while Muslims made up 25.1 per cent of the total population, 27.6 per cent of school children were Muslim. In short, the community was a leader, not a laggard in accessing education.

In Bengal and Punjab, it made up over 50 per cent of both the overall and school population. In the United Provinces (modern Uttar Pardesh), Muslims were 14.8 per cent of the total people but 18.6 per cent of children at school.

Sixteen years after that second, somewhat upbeat survey came Partition. The cream of India's Muslims, the middle-class talent of Bengal, Punjab and Uttar Pardesh migrated. As the educational indices testify, the community has not recovered from the blow.

## Studies for the hereafter

Twenty-four year old Mohammed Sajid doesn't present the image of the typical madrasa student, dressed in expensive, starched silken kurta-pyjama and sporting a neatly trimmed beard,

the son of a wealthy businessman from Palampur, Gujrat, confirms, "My father could have afforded to send me on a professional course. But *main yahan akharat kamane aya hoon* (I am here to earn for the hereafter)".

Sajid is a student of almiyat (graduation) at Madrasa Darul Uloom Azizia, Mira Road. Seated in his small hostel room in the three-storey madrasa building, he admits that studying at the madrasa is a "luxury". For most of the 400-odd students at Madrasa Azizia, though, is a necessity, the only way out of illiteracy.

Starting with just five students in 1976, this Deobandi madrasa today pats itself on the back for producing an army of *ulama* (religious scholars), "We provide food and accommodation to poor children who would have otherwise ended up in factories or powerlooms," Says Maulana Mazhar Alam Qasmi, the madrasa's founder-secretary. "It is a religious duty sanctified by the Quran and the Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet)."

But education comes here at a price—or with a reward, depending upon your viewpoint. From the time a child is admitted in *buniyadi darjah* (primary class) till he becomes a *frum* (post-graduate), the 16 long years are spent in the study of the Quran, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), Theology, Islamic Jurisprudence, Philosophy... and little else. Subjects like Maths, Science, History and English are wrapped up at the primary level.

Moazzam Ali Siddiqui, 20, studied up to the 9<sup>th</sup> standard in Madhubani, Bihar, before his father, a maulvi, admitted him here two years ago. Popular among his classmates because of his "acquired knowledge of English" (he buys an English evening paper thrice a week), Saidiqui is almost a misfit in an institution where most maulvis can't write anything beyond their names in English, "I want to improve my English and join a computer course after I become an *aalim*." He says, then waits for a moment before adding, "(but) where's the time?"

Almost isolated from the outside world and deprived of virtually all means of entertainment (no television, no sporting activities, not even a game of carrom), the boys follow a demanding routine; prayers, studies, homework. Zaheer Khan, 16, from Ahmedabad, watches television only "when I go home during vacations". He wants to liberate Bait-ul-Muqaddas (Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem) but hasn't heard of Ariel Sharon. "*Sharon*

*kaun hai* (who is Sharon)?" he asks innocently.

Qasmi justifies the strict ban on "TV and outside literature" in the madrasa campus. "TV promotes immorality in society. Look at the women newsreaders. All are dolled up, aimed to draw male attraction." Qasmi says. "We train the children to be purveyors of Islamic ethos." But how does he make the children shut their eyes to the outside world? "Where do they have time to think of anything but their studies? It's a training ground for the *kamil insaan* (complete man)," he rationalised.

But there are a few "clever" ones who flip through Hindi filmi magazines and sneak into cinemas. "The last film I saw was *Koi mil Gaya*. I liked Hrithik Roshan," say one boy, to the obvious amazement of his classmates.

Many of the students here are married; their wives live in their respective villages. Abdul Wahab, 20, from a village in Darbhanga, Bihar, tied the knot two years ago because, "my parents wished it so". A student of *almiyat*, he will study for three more years before his hunt for a job begins. "I have not thought what I will do after I finish my studies. Perhaps I will teach somewhere," he says, uncertainty writ large on his face.

Zaheer Khan, though, has no such doubts. Puffing his chest out with pride, he rubbishes all criticism with a couplet: "*Hamein duniya se kya matlab madrasa hai watan mera/mareng hum kitabon par warq hoga kafan mera* (I don't think of the world, madrasa is my country/I will die on books and the pages will be my shroud)." (M.Wajihuddin)

## The minority univ? No way

The first day of college is generally an unnerving experience for most. For Shamim Ahmad, straight from the rarefied atmosphere of a madrasa, it was like being catapulted into another world. A world that had boys and girls sharing a classroom, exchanging irreverent banter and approaching teacher informally.

Now in his second year at Jamia Millia Islamia, the History honours student has acclimatised to his surroundings. "I have retained what I am learning from my new life as well," says Shamim. "(After all) I came here to study further and learn about the world."

Not everyone at his madrasa shared his curiosity. Only a



handful of his classmates went in for higher studies; the rest either stayed on at the madrasa or started work. The trend is reflected in the composition of students at JMI: Of the 8,000 students, only 200 have madrasa roots. Significantly, JMI is one of the few universities in the country to recognise madrasa schooling.

Though the ratio seems alarmingly lopsided, professors say it is actually better than it used to be. "Jamia is trying to attract students from madrasas and take them towards a secular education," says Akhtarul Wasey, director of the Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic studies at JMI. The university plans to introduce an English course for madrasa student to open new avenues for them. Competition for the 20 seat course is intense.

The reason is clear: Madrasa students usually go in for traditional courses like history, Islamic studies (90 per cent of the students for the course are Muslims), political science, "They can't compete for the professional courses, of even science and language, because the madrasa syllabus does not provide them a grounding in these subjects." Says Omar Farooq, a research scholar at Jamia.

But the scenario is changing, surely if slowly, A madrasa student has joined the popular mass comm course. A few have taken up engineering after plus-2 from a regular school.

And that is not the only statistic that is changing. Over the years, professors have noticed a significant drop in minority community students, "Initially, we had a large number of Muslim students, but now the situation had changed," says S.M. Sajid, media coordinator at Jamia.

It's difficult to estimate how drastic the drop has been, but one can hazard a guess from the fact that Muslims account for 60 per cent of the students in traditional courses, and only 40 per cent in the professional courses. In mass comm, for instance, only 10 of the 35 students are Muslims. †

(Nirmala Ganapathy)

## **LACK OF QUALIFICATION IS THE REASON**

**I have no scientific data on which to base my opinion and so cannot speak authoritatively about why Muslims are very poorly represented in the corporate Sector. I don't think they constitute even 13-14 per cent—their percentage in the total population of the country—of the corporate sector. Alongside, I know that the percentage of their representation has slipped in the government and in the armed forces and services sector. So far as the corporate world is concerned, I'm not aware how much of the Muslims negligible presence is due to a bias but I personally feel that most of them—especially women—are not equipped with the educational qualifications that one needs to attain responsible positions in this sector. At the moment, I'm not into recruitment for our company, but when I was looking after it, we hardly had any Muslims coming for interviews. We had no bias but we did not have any Muslim candidates to select.**

**Anu Aga**

**(Chairperson Thermax)**

## ABDUL HASAN AL-MAWARDI ON THE CALIPHATE

Sayyid Ahsan

Abdul Hasan al-Mawardi (974-1058) was one of the eminent Muslim thinkers of the medieval period. He was born in Basra which was an intellectual centre of those days. He was a distinguished qadi with the title of *aqad al-qudat* under the Abbasid Caliph al-Qaimbillah. He was a prominent representative of the school of *al Shafii*.<sup>1</sup> Al Mawardi wrote many well known books and treatises on different topics such as *Kitab al-Havi al-Iqna*, *Siyast al-Mulk*, *Qawanin al-Wizarah*, *Adab al-Dunya wa'l-Din*, However his most outstanding work is *al Ahkam al Sultaniyya* According to A.K.S.Lambton:

“ His purpose [behind the compilation of *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*] was to give a legal exposition of the theory of government speculatively derived from the basis of theology and to set out the final basis of government so that the ruler, knowing his rights and duties, might fulfil the charge laid upon him.”<sup>2</sup>

It was the age of disintegration of the institution of caliphate. The caliph had become powerless and was a mere puppet in the hands of the powerful Buwayhid amirs who were the de facto rulers of the empire. But from the beginning of the fifth (eleventh) century the power of Buwayhid amirs began to disintegrate due to the internal strife and military revolts. In order to restore the lost glory and power caliph al-Qadirbillah (d. 422-1031) and his son and successor al-Qaimibllah took some measures against mistrule.<sup>3</sup>

Being the emissary of the caliph al-Mawardi took and active part in the negotiations between the Caliph and Buwayhid

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1-E.I.J.Rosenthal, Political Thought in Medieval Islam (Cambride, 1962, p.236.

2-A.K.S.Lambton, State and Government in Medieval Islam, (Oxford, 1981), p.84.

3-With the decline of the Buwayhid power at Baghdad, the caliphs were making some tentative efforts to asser their importance either by figuring as champions of good government against the mistrule of the later Buwayhid or interposing themselves as arbitrators between the Sunnis and the Shi'as in their religious quarrels.cf.A.H.Siddiqui, Caliphate and Kingship in Medieval Persia, Islamic Culture, Vol.X, 1936,p.390.

amirs. The Buwayhid rulers also confided in him. In the perface to his *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya* he writes:

“ Since the ordinance of the government have a special claim upon [the attention] of those who are set in authority, and since their admixture with all [manner of other] ordinance debarbs these persons from making a thorough study of them-not to speak of their pre-occupation with policy and administration. I have devoted the book exclusively to the subject. In so doing I have complied with the command of one to whom it is obligatory to render obedience, in order that he may know the views of the jurists as to those ordinances which define his rights, that he may exact them in full, and his duties, that he may perform them in full with the object of showing equity in his execution and judgement, and from a desire to respect the rights of others in his taking and giving”.<sup>1</sup>

All the scholars are unanimous in their opinion that one to whom it is obligatory to render obeisance indicates the authority of the caliph. There can be little doubt, there fore, that it was the wish of one or the other of these caliphs that his book was composed'.<sup>2</sup> The question then arises as to what the motive of the caliph was behind its compilation, whether it was for the purpose of seeking knowledge, or it was a means to establish superiority of the Abbasid caliph in his struggle with the Buwayhid amirs. The second alternative seems much more plausible that al-Mawardi's aim “.....was to strengthen the position of the Imam against this erosion and usurpation of his power, and so insists on certain matters, matters which because of the contemporary situation presumably seemed to him required special emphases.”<sup>3</sup>

The question of Khilafat has been a matter of controversy among the Muslim jurists whether the institution of caliphate is necessary or not. If it is necessary then whether it is demanded by revelation or reason. According to al-Mawardi the institution of Imamate is necessary on the grounds of revelation. He states with the authority of the Qur'an: “ The Imamate is necessary to succeed Prophecy in defence of faith and administration of world.”<sup>4</sup>

1-Al-Mawardi quoted by H.A.R.Gibb, studies on the Civilization of Islam (London, 1962), p. 152.

2-Ibid., p. 152.

3-A. K. S. Lambton. op. cit. p. 89.

4- Al-Mawardi. *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*, Urdu trs. Mufti Intezam Allah Shahabi (Karachi, n.d.), p. 38.

Al-Mawardi states two methods by which the caliph came to his office, elected by a group of persons whom he termed as *ahal-hall wa-l aqd* having special qualifications such as justice with all the conditions pertaining to it, knowledge, so that they can know that who is worthy of the office of Imamate with all the required qualifications, wisdom, which is helpful to elect the best qualified person,<sup>1</sup> and secondly nomination by the reigning caliph. In order to give validity to the practice of nomination of caliph, which was common in his time, al-Mawardi opines that the election is valid even if it was made by a single elector.

According to al-Mawardi the candidate for Imamate must fulfil certain conditions. These conditions are justice, learning, so that he should practice *ijtihad* in ordinary and extraordinary circumstances, soundness of senses and speech, physical fitness, bravery, so that he could defend the country against the enemies and wage Jihad against them, and Qurayshite descent.<sup>2</sup> With the insistence of Qurayshite descent for Imam al-Mawardi was, perhaps, concerned especially to counter Fatimid propaganda: the partisans of the Abbasids did not admit that the Fatimids were descended from the Quraysh.<sup>3</sup> This elective principle of the imamate is against the Shii doctrine of divine nomination.

According to the Kharijites all the citizens have equal rights in the election of the caliph and no one should get priority. Al-Mawardi gives priority to the residents of the capital for the purpose of election since the death of the caliph is generally at once known to them and the immediate appointment of the caliph is required due to the political considerations. Beside he believes that most of the people having the necessary qualifications for imamate generally reside there.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike shi'ites who believes that an inferior person cannot have precedence over a superior one, he states; if the *ahl al-hall wa'l aqd* appoint as Imam a person who in their opinion was the most competent in the society and after swearing allegiance to him another person is found to be more competent, then in such circumstances the person for whom they have sworn allegiance will remain in authority and the Imamate cannot be taken

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1-Ibid., p.40

2-Ibid., p.41.

3-A. K. S. Lambton, op.cit, p. 89.

4- Al-Mawardi, op.cit. p. 41

away from the first and given to the second.<sup>12</sup> On this theory A.A. Engineer writes:

“ This has been done obviously with a view to give free license to the Buwayhids to choose the most worthless and rotten caliph to tow their line.”<sup>1</sup>

To refute the legitimacy to the Fatimids and the Umayyads of Spain against the caliph of Baghdad, al-Mawardi declared the existence of two Imams at one time illegal. According to him if two Imams were appointed in two cities, then the one to whom allegiance was sworn first would remain in office and the later Imam should submit his Imamate to him and should as well swear allegiance.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Mawardi says that the nomination of as successor by the ruling Imam, provided he does not be his father or son, is permissible and the baya'ah of the ahl-al-hall wal aqd is not required. The baya'ah is a must if he nominates his son.<sup>3</sup>

The caliph can nominate two or more than two of his heirs (Wali'ahad ) but the order of priority should be maintained in it, and after his death the caliphate should be transferred to them according to the order of preference.<sup>4</sup> He justified it by the historical precedent of the Prophet's successive designation of generals in the battle of Muta its recognition by the 'Ulama' under the two successive dynasties.

According to al-Mawardi, after becoming Imam the first successor gets the right to nominate his own successor. He can set aside the eventual successor nominated by his predecessor. If he nominates his successor besides the successor nominated by his predecessor and dies without assigning priority to any of them then the *ahl-al-hall wa'l aqd* have the right to elect anyone as *khalifa*.<sup>5</sup> In the view of Gibb.

Here the historical precedents were against al-Mawardi and though he tried to explain away al-Mansur's action in the case of Isa b.Musa, he neglects entirely 'Umar II's refusal to set aside Yazid's b.Abd al-Malik and al-Amin's attempt to set aside al-Mamun. It is very curious that he should have chosen in this

1-Ibid., p.42.

2-A.A.Engineer, The Islamic State (Delhi, 1980),p.72.

3-Al-Mawardi,op.cit.pp.49-50.

4- Ibid.p.62.

5-Ibid.p.68.

instance to have followed legal *taqlid*, and the reasons for him doing so are obscure, since it seems unlikely that he had any special contingency.”<sup>1</sup>

Al-Mawardi enlists ten duties of an Imam, foremost among which is that he should protect the *din* as based on its established principle and propounded by the consensus of the first Muslims (*salaf*). It presupposes the ability to expound it against the heretics. This duty heads the list and is indicative of the emphasis the Abbasids laid on the spiritual side of their office.<sup>2</sup>

He should adjudicate between man and man according to the shari’a so the strong should not be able to tyrannise the weak.

He should see that the punishment were given to those who transgress the law of shari’a.

He should secure the law and order to make the life of his people peaceful and guarantee their livelihood.

He should defend the frontiers against the foreign invaders to guarantee the security of life of the Muslims and *dhimmis*.

He must invite the people to Islam. If they refuse he should organise and persecute jihad against them as long as they either accept Islam or become *dhimmi* because Kkalifa is responsible to God to establish the supremacy of Islam over all other religions and faiths.

He should make salaries and emoluments from the state treasury (Bayt-al-Mal) to those who are entitled to them. It should not be expended with extravagance or stinginess. It should be paid in time.

He is responsible to secure sound and effective administration by appointing the honest loyal men as his representatives. Reliable and honest men should be made the incharge of the state treasury (Bayt-al-Mal).

Lastly, he should supervise the public affairs in person and should never indulge in the life of luxury nor give up prayer.<sup>3</sup> Al-Mawardi writes:

“ After becoming Imam he distributes his rights among four types of officials:

The first type consists of those officials upon whom the

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1-H.A.R.Gibb,op.cit.p.158.

2-E.I.J.Rosenthal.op.cit.p.36

3-Al-Mawardi.op.cit.pp.70-72

Imam confers his general duties. They are viziers who without any distinction function as deputies in all matters.

The second type consists of those officials who, in particular areas exercise the general duties of the Imam, such as Nizams of the provinces Amils of the cities. Although they ruled over a certain part of the empire, they enjoy full rights.

The third type consists of those officials who enjoy full rights in particular departments i.e *Qadi al-qudat*, *Naqib Lashkar* etc.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth type is of those officials who enjoy limited power in particular areas, for example qadi of any province or city etc.

H.A.R. Gibb writes:

“..... the emphasis laid by al-Mawardi on its administrative duties is very clearly directed against any conception of the caliphate as a purely or mainly religious and judicial office, such as it was intending to become..... And of course, this was the point at issue between the caliphs and the Buwaihid amirs, since the latter..... implied, by their disregard of the caliphate in the matters of administration, that these lay outside the competence.”<sup>2</sup>

Al-Mawardi discussed at length the method of disposition of Imam. According to him the caliph can be removed from his office for one of the following reasons:

(1) Imam loses his title and authority if there occurs a change in his beliefs. It is of two types.

(a) If he becomes a slave of his inordinate desires and openly flouts shari'a he can not continue to hold his office.

(b) If his opinions are contrary to the established principles of Islam, he cannot remain a caliph.

(2) If a change occurs in the person of the Imam. It is of three types:

(a) Loss of physical senses. It is again of three types:

(i) The loss in the mental faculty and the loss of sight will make the Imam unfit to continue in office. If these losses are temporary like faintness, then the caliph would not be deposed.

(ii) If such senses were lost which do not hinder his performance of normal duties, like the loss of the sense of smell,

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1-Ibid.

2-H.A.R. Gibb. op.cit. p. 158-9.



then he would remain in his office.

(iii) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists about the third kind of loss of physical senses that is, dumbness and deafness. One group says that like the loss of the eyesight it also results in the deposition of the caliph since it effects the normal performance of his duty. The other group contradicts this view. The third group says that if the caliph is able to write he should remain in his office because he can express his views through writings. Al-Mawardi accepts the opinion of the first group.

(b) Loss of bodily organs. It is of four kinds:

(i) If it does not disfigure the external beauty and if it does so but could be hidden then the Imam would continue in his office.

(ii) If Imam becomes helpless and incapable of doing anything due to loss of organs such as loss of two hands or two feet, then the Imam would be deposed from his office.

(iii) After becoming the caliph if he loses his bodily organs which disfigures the external beauty of his body, then he should continue in office because it does not hinder the performance of normal duties.

(c) Loss in the ability to perform duties. It is of two kinds:

(i) If the amir seizes the power of the Imam but without challenging the authority of the caliph rules justly in accordance with the Shari'a the Imam would continue in his office. But if he acts contrary to the principles of religion and justice, it is necessary for the caliph to seek the help of a person who can oust the usurper and restore supreme authority to the caliph. It can scarcely be constrained as other than a threat to the Buwayhids.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) If he was imprisoned by any powerful enemy then it was the duty of the umma to release him. As long as there is any hope for his release he would remain in his office and when the hopes are lost he may be deposed from his office.

If the usurper was a Muslim and he made someone else his caliph and swore allegiance to him, the people, the *ahl al-hall wa'l-aqd*, should elect a new caliph. Then if the imprisoned Imam

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<sup>1</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, *op. cit.* p. 160.

gets released, even then, he would not become caliph because he had already been deposed.

The striking feature of his theory is the absence of a clear case of rebellion against the tyrant. This may be due to the fact that he was a civil servant which prevented him from advocating an open rebellion against the ruler. On the other hand it would result in the further weakening of the position of the Abbasids.

Thus we can deduce that the chief aim of al-Mawardi was legitimization of the current practices. ✦

# THE EVIL FACE OF HATRED

M.N.Buch\*

Ever since Rajiv Gandhi had the doors of the Babri Masjid opened at Ayodhya for worship and subsequently permitted the laying of the foundation stone of a temple, the communal temperature has been rising in India and has now reached a boiling point. Prior to the permission being given to worship Ramalalla the Hindu faith had not been in any jeopardy, Ram was enshrined in the hearts of all and neither Islam nor Hinduism faced any threat. Life was normal. Worship was not as yet totally politicised and the existence or otherwise of a Ram temple did not form the core of politics in India. One of the better fall-outs of the Indo-Pak War of 1971 was that Muslims were no longer considered crypto-agents of Pakistan and the Indian Muslims, including the few who at one time might have had reservations about living in a predominantly Hindu India, came to accept this country as their home, their nation and their ideal in which they had as fair a chance of security, development and progress as did any Hindu. Discrimination against Muslims was substantially reduced.

As soon as the doors of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janama Bhoomi were opened to worship Ramlala the situation changed. The BJP began to look upon the Ram temple issue as one with political promise and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), hitherto a largely cultural organisation, fell in into the hands of extremists like Ashok Singhal, B.P. Singhal and subsequently Praveen Togadia and his ilk. The drum-beat of frenzy culminated in the demolition of the Babri Masjid by a bunch of fanatics, egged on by their leaders, on December 6, 1992. Fifty five years of building bridges between Hindus and Muslims after partition came to naught because suddenly the two communities were at each other's throat on account of this highly irresponsible and unforgivable act. The strength of Hinduism is that it accepts other religions as equals and does not desecrate the places of worship of other faiths. The Babri Masjid demolition was the first instance of a mass of

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people destroying a place of worship of the Muslims and exulting that they had avenged the humiliations suffered by Hindus four hundred fifty years ago. A more specious argument is hard to come by.

Anyway, the demolition of the Babri Masjid was followed by some of the worst communal riots India has seen since 1974. The main victims of these riots, regardless of who initiated them, were the Muslims because in a riot it is always numbers which count and Hindus outnumber Muslims six to one. Ram was that manifestation of Divinity who fought a just war to liberate Sita and rid the world of the evil which Ravan personified. That he had no hatred for the people of Lanka is proved by his restoring the throne to Ravan's brother, Vibishan, and withdrawing completely from that country soon after victory. This avataar of Vishnu would never countenance the type of bloodshed unleashed on this country by the monsters of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad who masquerade as the protectors of Hinduism.

Emotions, apart, the dispute in Ayodhya is about the ownership of the land on which the Babri Masjid, was located and where the VHP wants to build a Ram temple. The wakf board claims the property as its own. The VHP's claim is based on a belief that at one time a temple of Ram stood at the site. The matter is pending before the courts. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of the VHP, India is a country governed by the rule of law and it is for the courts to decide matters of title. If in the case of the Ram temple brute force is to overrule title, then no property is safe in India because then any goonda can forcibly take over anyone's property as he is strong and the other party is weak. Can India live with such lawlessness? The sentiments and emotions of Hindus to which the VHP leaders keep referring are of absolutely no consequence in a society of laws. Any government which weakens the rule of law has no business to exist in India because that would take us back to the days of the Pindaris. I state this with due deliberation as a Hindu who finds his faith threatened by the likes of Ashok Singhal and Togadia.

What does the VHP want? It wants that under threat the Muslims should give up any right that they might claim not only in Ayodhya but in Mathura, Kashi and, as Togadia keeps repeat-

ing, in the case of thirty thousand other mosques which Togadia claims the Muslims have built. This is blackmail of the worst possible kind and no society of laws can tolerate it. The fact that successive governments have tolerated it proves that we are very near a state of anarchy in which governance itself has ceased. This is a matter which should cause very serious concern to our major political parties and in particular the party in power, the Congress.

I grew up before and during the Second World War and had watched any number of documentary films on the Nazis and their miasmic hold over Germany. Hitler virtually used to foam at the mouth when publicly attacking the Jews, Slavs and the Allies. Togadia addressing an audience, including the press conference he recently gave at Kanyakumari, sounds like Hitler. Anyone who attacks an entire race or religion is by definition a fascist and the VHP is now a totally fascist force. I object as a Hindu to the VHP calling itself a Hindu Parishad or claiming to represent all the Hindus, including me. I am ashamed that this country does not put down such people in the same manner as we would a hydrophobic dog because if the present trend continues, India will be a charnel house in which unending rivers of blood will flow. Is this what we want to make of India? ✦

## A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE

New Delhi, 26 July 2003: **Syed Shahabuddin, President of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM), has issued the following Statement:-**

“In his judgement in a case relating to the applicability to the Christians of the Indian Succession Act, 1926 Chief Justice Mr. V.N. Khare has expressed his regret at the delay in the introduction of the uniform civil code.

Unwittingly he has revived a controversial issue which had been put to sleep by the NDA in 1999. His obiter dicta is not binding on the Government or on the Parliament but it has come as a windfall for the Sangh Parivar to stir communal polarization in an already much divided nation.

The AIMMM notes that articles 37, the first article in the Chapter on Directive principles of State Policy, lays down the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws but not to make laws to apply them. In our Constitutional system it is the prerogative of the Government to initiate and of the Parliament to enact laws. The Government is, therefore, the best judge as to when and in which circumstances and in what form to give effect to Article 44. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had cautioned the Government in the Constituent Assembly against imposition of uniform civil code on any unwilling community. This explains why successive Governments, since independence have refused to enact a Code without a national consensus or even to interfere in the personal law of any community unless the community itself so desired. This is in consonance with the repeated assurances given to the Muslim community during the Freedom Movement.

The AIMMM fails to understand Justice Khare's logic. From birth to death, human life, in all religious societies, is governed by religion and by mandatory rites and rituals. The Constitution brackets Freedom of Conscience with Freedom of Religion. The Constitution cannot, therefore, ignore the essentials of a religious faith based on the scriptures. That is why the Shariat (Application) Act, 1939 is still the law of the land. Many Muslim States have adopted modern family codes but they are all (With the exception of Turkey) based on the Shariat. There is always a case for social reform within the framework of the Shariat but not for the separation of Muslim Personal Law from the Quran and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

Justice Khare has also spoken of common civil code as a factor for national integration. **Integration does not mean assimilation; coercion cannot promote integration. Equality does not mean uniformity. Diversity of laws from flows social plurality and does not attract Article 14.**

The AIMMM considers that the idea of a common civil code is impracticable today. That is why, in more than 50 years no one has placed before the nation even a working draft of the 'common' civil code which takes into account the essential religious requirements of all communities.

**The AIMMM calls upon the government and the political parties and the mass media not to load the shoulders of the nation, already bent double under the weight of many controversial, with yet another controversial issue.**

# **CONSEQUENCES OF US INVASION IN IRAQ**

**Mozammel Haque**

The US led invasion of Iraq in March this year has not come all on a sudden. It is a planned out strategy from the period of US president Nixon. As early as 1986, US Embassy press release pointed out the CIA strategy is to attack Iraq and Iran for security of Israel.

The attempt to attack Iraq and solve the problem permanently was taken during the presidency of President George Bush senior, but it was for some reasons or other, not accomplished. During the presidency of Bill Clinton, many other factors kept him away from this issue. Many factors joined together during the present US presidency to accomplish this objective. Hence, the invasion of Iraq has neither a connection with the September 11 events nor with the terrorism.

The invasion of Iraq was carried out against all odds and opposition from the world community and without the approval of the world body, the United Nations Security Council on the following grounds, (i) toppling of the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein (ii) liberation of the Iraqi people and (iii) presence of weapons of mass destruction. But the situation analysts found these grounds fallacious.

The real cause for the war is already established beyond any doubt: oil and lucrative contracts for the American multinationals. Bechtel has been already awarded with the contract of over \$680 million to restore water services and electricity destroyed by targeted American bombing raids. However, Bechtel is expected to remain in Iraq to complete so many other jobs, which are considered next in importance.

The US invasion of Iraq has both visible and invisible effects. It has also immediate and remote consequences. The immediate effects of the US invasion are mentioned first.

This war has also established some historical records, such as (i) pre-emptive actions and (ii) changed role of United Nations and a new international relationship between the world

civilisations. On the other hand, the world witnessed some immediate effects on the present situation of Iraq, such as (i) plunder of Islamic heritage, (ii) humanitarian catastrophe, (iii) traumatised children, (iv) human rights violations, (v) rise of terrorism, (vi) reconstruction and resistance. These points are explained in the following paragraphs.

## **Unprecedented Events**

### **Pre-emptive action**

“ To cover up aggression, the US still calls the war against Iraq pre-emptive strike. Nobody buys this argument. America is thousands of miles away from Iraq. Saddam is not even a viable opponent much less a challenge. So Washington is a bit defensive,” wrote Kuldip Nayar in his regular column, “ Between the Lines” in Saudi Gazette 29 March.

The pre-emptive action or preventive or strike policy of the United States could set the stage for world to become a totally lawless place, “From this moment on. “ said Hungary’s liberal paper, Magyar Hirlap on 23 March 2003, “any country can expect military retaliation if it fails to serve the interests of the strongest superpower. The UN could calmly dissolve and hand over its authority to the US legislation.”

If voices were not raised against unilateral action of the United States, then regional bullies could be tempted to follow preventive strikes policy in their respective regions. Chris Rycart from Dhahran in the letter to the editor’ of Arab News on 20 March, 2003, observed: “ The Bush doctrine or pre-emptive strikes will take international relations back to the Bronze Age. By legitimising the use of force without the approval of the UN Security Council, it will give the right to any country to go to war against any other, which is perceived as a potential security threat, thereby ensuring that the law of the jungle becomes once again the most respected form of international law. For example, following the Bush doctrine, let us examine the scenario of what might happen if a country like Syria perceives that Israel is potentially a threat to its security. Syria could approach Russia and China, citing the fact that Israel has weapons of mass destruction, that it is in breach of countless UN Security Council resolutions and that it is currently governed by a veteran war criminal,



who has yet to be prosecuted and ask them to form a coalition of the willing to remove Sharon from power and to liberate the people of Palestine.

### **UN: Irrelevant Talk Shop**

America has caused severe damage to the United Nations. The third world has lost faith in it. Precedence has been set. This will encourage some organisations to take to terrorism. It seems that the UN is an agency working for the interests of the superpower.

“The Security Council received the kiss of death from the United States when President George W. Bush delivered his two-day ultimatum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein,” said Fond Political Policy Institute Chief Vyacheslav Nikonov quoted by Dmitry Zaks. “It is now clear that the UN Security Council on its own, can no longer prevent world crises,” argued influential analyst Sergei Karaganov. Chairman of the Kremlin-linked Council on Foreign and Defence Policy.

M.J.Akbar, in his regular column: Byline in Arab News, observed: “One outcome that the Bush White House may have actually wanted is the conversion of the United Nations into the world’s largest NGO. The United Nations is now an office building: of some conceivable help to refugees, and of course a marvellous pad for those in love with their own voices. Its role as guarantor of peace and stability is over. It has become what the League of Nation became after the First World War: an irrelevant talk shop.” (23 March 2003).

### **Relations between Civilisations**

The world is working today in total disregard of the United Nations. Weaker nations lying over the fault lines, like Kashmir, Palestine, and communism’s last militant North Korea face challenge from new superpower-militant imperialism led by America of the COWs (Coalition of the Willing Warriors).

First the nations with a Muslim identity are charged with fomenting international terrorism and branded fundamentalists. They are charged with possession of weapons of mass destruction. Followed by the economic and diplomatic sanctions to weaken their economy.

John Gray, the author of "Al-Qaeda: and "What it Means to be Modern" wrote from London. "The idea that the world can be remade by terror is not peculiarly Islamic. If anything, it is distinctively Western." He explained, "The war in Iraq was masterminded by neo-conservative ideologues, who believe that global terrorism is the result of the failure of Arab societies to modernise. Paul Wolfowitz's grandiose scheme for remaking the Mideast embodies the dangerous myth that the only way to peace in the region is to emulate America-in the American deputy defence secretary's eyes, as in Blair's, the very paradigm of modernity. By seeking to impose a monolithic modernisation on Arab countries, the US is preventing them from finding their own paths to development."

The average common people, the religious and political leaders of the Muslim countries saw the present war against Iraq as a war against Islam. The Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Syed Ahmad Bukhari, denounced the war as an attack on Islam and called on the Islamic states to rise against the United States. "Indian Muslims consider the American attack on Iraq as an attack on Islam and humanity, and America by attacking Iraq has proved that it does not care for international public opinion," he said (21 March 2003).

The Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Abdullah Ahmed Badawi, addressing the nation on 21 March, feared that many Muslims would see this war as a war against Islam.

While writing about the future of Islam in the Middle East after this invasion of Iraq, Sarah Whalen, and Islamic law expert, who, earlier, taught the Islamic law at Temple University, School of Law, and presently teaches at Loyola University, School of Law, New Orleans, observed, "It is Islam's all-pervasiveness that alarms the West and pushes it toward this preemptive war. What the West wants now, the United States included, is a Middle East where Islam is shorn not just of obstinate leadership, but also of its sometimes explosive, primal force. An Islam relegated to a Friday congregational sermon and communal exchanges of goodwill is what the West is looking for."

Whalen added, "The Shari'ah of course will be the first thing to go, Western culture having totally stripped the law of its power to cause fear and instil obedience. No more of those, "bar-

baric” punishments. The West has spoken.”

Whalen continued, “Islam will soon exist throughout the Middle East only in the way that westerners find most palatable—stripped down to its ornaments. The new Islam will consist of poetry, architecture, and voluminous costumes that Arabs will occasionally put on for weddings or state occasions recalling how modestly they used to dress in obedience to God’s will in the days before the last Iraq war, much as Swedes and Danes and Germans now throw on the occasional traditional costume. A few days off every few years for the Hajj will round out the religious calendar. Once in a while, you can get a permit from your city council to barbecue a goat or a sheep.”

~~These are the first casualties and victims of this war: pre-emptive action. United Nations and relations of civilisation. This is not an ominous sign for peace and security of this planet. The other consequences of this war as the following:~~

## **Immediate Consequences**

### **Plunder of Islamic Heritage**

Iraq as a whole faced a severe devastation. This devastation and destruction extended to all the landmarks of culture and civilisation, including the libraries, museums, educational institution and even mosques and places of worship. People blaming the US establishment being an occupation power for its negligence to protect the National Museum of Iraq. The whole world watched on the television channels, the plunder of museums and libraries in Baghdad. Priceless antique treasures comprising almost 170,000 items from the Baghdad Museum were ransacked in the free-for-all looting plunder pillage.

Dr. Hamoud Al-Badr, the Secretary-General of the Shoura Council in Saudi Arabia, wrote: “The whole world saw on television channels the plunder of museums and libraries in Baghdad and Basra, at Baghdad library and even the looting of the shopping malls and how the owners, who tried to protect their property were killed in the most brutal manner. The whole world watched on television channels the robbery of a bank.” (Saudi Gazette, 22 April 2003).

“The US army ignored pleas from its own advisers to take measures against the looting that has wrecked Baghdad’s

once priceless collection of ancient artefacts, the observer newspaper reported. The office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) warned that looting of the National Archaeological Museum in Baghdad could mean the "irreparable loss of cultural treasures of enormous importance to all humanity" Arab News reported from AFP on 21 April 2003).

M.J.Akbar, editor of Asian Age, commented: "Bush preferred to protect the oil ministry building while permitting the loot of Iraq's priceless cultural heritage of over 170,000 pieces from 5,000 years of civilisation. These were the memories of Sumerian Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Parthian, Sassanid, Arab and Jewish culture and religion. The Baath Party may have been despotic, but they were not Taleban. Did Bush need to remind the world of an analogy that he must resent—the destruction of Baghdad's cultural heritage by the Mongols?"

One thing is tragically obvious: many of Iraq's precious cultural institutions are now the things of memory. Many of the nation's historical centerpieces have been lost to riots and rage. There were old copies of the Qur'an and other Islamic manuscripts that had withstood the sacking of Mongols, only to be burned this time. The national museum with its colossal sculptures and the first known calendar, was pillaged, "They burned the history of this country." Shakoor Khozai, the director of Iraq's national library, said: "Now we are standing here to begin from zero. Our memory is destroyed."

But the question is, who are these looters, thieves and riff-raff? One analyst enquired, "Why would Iraqi thieves and riff-raff, no matter how dirty, poor and downtrodden, want to burn the Quranic Library of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments? Why would they want to burn ancient leather manuscripts of the Qur'an dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century? Why would they set fire to the public health records, cultural archives and municipal records at the universities of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra? Why would they want to deface with a hammer two seated marble deities from the temple at Harta? Why would they burn archaeological card catalogues and photographs, or destroy priceless artefacts or smash Grecian and Roman statues of Nebuchednezzar and Sennacherib, the two ancient kings of

Babylon and Nineveh responsible for besieging the holy city of Jerusalem and enslaving the 10 northern tribes of ancient Israel? Why? Could this possibly be payback time? Revenge is definitely in the air."

People started asking: Is it not a clash of civilisation? If not, then what?

## **Humanitraian Catastrophe**

The website—[www.iraqbody-count.net](http://www.iraqbody-count.net)—calculates the civilian toll as between 5,425 and 7,041. A Los Angeles Times survey of 27 hospital records in Baghdad and its outlying districts found 1,700 civilians died in this region, The Los Angeles Times itself contacted four mosque-based burial societies, which reported interring 600 bodies of civilians, and many more of soldiers. Haider Tari, director of tracing missing persons for the Iraqi Red Crescent, estimated up to 3,000 such undocumented burials, perhaps two-third invoicing soldiers.

Journalist, Jonathan Seale of London-based the Independent, interviewed officers and soldiers in Baghdad, also suggested the military death toll exceeded the civilian, "The imbalance was not as grotesque as in the First Gulf War when around 3,500 Iraqi civilians were killed, compared with 100,000 soldiers."

Extrapolating from the death rates of between three percent and 10 percent found in the units around Baghdad, one reaches a toll of between 13,500 and 45,000 dead among the troops and paramilitary estimated the Iraqi military had 389,000 men, including 80,000 members of Republican Guard. Iraq was also believed to have up to 60,000 paramilitary personnel and 650,000 reservists; though how many of he latter answered the call is not clear," Jonathan Seale reported.

Beside, violating the tenets of democracy and human rights and also killing and wounding thousands of innocent Iraqis, including women and children, as said by Kuldip Nayar, there were reports of forced expulsion of Arabs in northern Iraq. "Media reports as well as eyewitness accounts from the Human Rights Watch indicate widespread intimidation and displacement in and around the city of Kirkuk in northern Iraq." A spokesman of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, said on 20 April, 2003.

Editorial of Arab News commented: "The United Na-

tions has estimated that the war could result in as many as two million refugees, who will be placed indefinitely in desert camps in Syria and in Jordan, where Oxfam alone has set up facilities for 30,000 refugees. They have already started to arrive. A humanitarian tragedy of immense proportion is beginning to unfold." (20 March 2003).

It is reported up to half a million Iraqis fled cities in the northern Kurdish area. The city of Dohuk near Turkey is almost depopulated. The UN estimated there were 350,000 to 450,000 internally displaced persons in the north. There are serious concerns for the health situation of those who are not appropriately sheltered. The International Committee of Red Cross estimated roughly 500,000 have left homes in the three northern protectorates. A spokesman said.

The international Committee of Red Cross warned that Basra, a city of 1.2 million may be facing a humanitarian disaster. (24 March 2003) The London-based Amnesty International said it feared the spread of humanitarian crises in Iraq. "This is the obvious result of the war. Arab News estimated some things more than that and its editorial observed. "More than 3,000 satellite-guided bombs will rain down upon the country. Due to the US targeting the water and power supplies, or sewerage facilities, cholera and typhoid will spread like wildfire. Hospitals will be rendered useless in the face of such a catastrophe, if they too are not bombed to smithereens. On June 10, 1991, US soldiers slaughtered as many as 100,000 Iraqi conscripts who after an agreed cease-fire, were retreating .....along the Basra highway." (Editorial. 20 March 2003).

### **Traumatised Children**

Consultant psychiatrist Dr. Mona Al-Sawwaf, who is head of the Psychiatrists Unit at the King Fahd Hospital. Jeddah said, " In the last 20 years or more, there have been significant changes in the nature and intensity of war. It is now considered that 80-90% of all casualties of armed conflicts are civilians, and that half of these casualties are children.

Figures suggest two million have died in armed conflicts in the past 30 years and three times as many are injured or disabled. Not surprisingly, the psychological impact of their experi-

ences will be significant. Studies involving refugee children from south Eastern Asia and more recently former Yugoslavia indicate the serious psychiatric disorder is present in 40-50% of these children.

Half a million or more Iraqi children caught in fighting may be left so traumatised they will need psychological help. "I suspect that some half a million children in Basra, Najaf, Karbala and Baghdad would possibly be in need of psycho-social rehabilitation, once we go back ni, Carel de Rooy the United Nations Children's agency, UNICEF's Iraq representative told a news briefing on 28 March 2003.

While UNICEF has no surveys or studies of the potential effects of the bombing on children, De Rooy told, "there are 5.7 million children of primary school age in the country. A minimum figure of 10 percent of these children would need support. It could be much bigger. We don't know what we will find when we go back, we suspect there might be a major issue of traumatised children," he said, "The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also expressed concern at the psychological effect bombing may have on children, the elderly and the physically and mentally disabled.

## **Human Rights**

"Washington's war on terror has made the world more dangerous by curbing the human rights, undermining international law and shielding governments from scrutiny." London based Amnesty International annual report into global human rights abuses in 2002, the London-based watchdog made one of its fiercest attacks yet on the policies pursued by the United States in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001. If the war on terror was supposed to make the world safer, it has failed and has given government an excuse to abuse human rights in the name of state security, it said. "What would have been unacceptable on September 10, 2001, is now becoming almost the norm," Amnesty Secretary General. Irene Khan, told a news conference, accusing Washington of adopting a new doctrine of human rights, highlighting the detention without charge or trial of hundreds of prisoner in Afghanistan and in a US military camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

## **Terrorism**

From journalists to intellectuals, politicians to diplomats all expressed their fear of increased terrorism and extremism. Kuldip Nayar said, "Resistance in the shape of terrorism of the worst type may emerge," (in his column: *Between the Lines* in Saudi Gazette, 29 March 2003), "The war in Iraq may instigate some terrorism," wrote Ikram Sehgal. (in his column in Saudi Gazette, 20 April 2003).

Malaysia's acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said in a broadcast to the nation on 20 March: "The consequence of this war will not only have devastating implication on Iraq and the Middle East, but will ultimately impact upon the entire world. The international campaign to rid the world of terrorism will be undermined, Anti-American sentiments around the world will rise, as will extremism and militancy."

Malaysia repeatedly warned that an attack on Baghdad would inflame Islamic extremists and increase recruits to the ranks of terrorist organisations. Abdullah said: "The world is now seeing the 'might is right'. The fate of smaller nations appears to be at the mercy of those who possess military power. A large and powerful nation, along with its allies, has acted with disregard for international law, humanity and universal justice. It has launched an attack against a sovereign state that has diminished capacity to defend itself. The use of military might to destroy nations that are weak and incapable of defending themselves will provoke the anger of the world community."

Lawrence James, author of a book, "Warrior Race: A History of the British at War", wrote in the Independent, "How could you simultaneously claim to be the enlightened banner bearer of civilisation and employ ferocious methods of coercion? The old dilemma of imperialism remains unresolved." (Arab News, 21 March).

## **Conclusion**

There is nothing to draw conclusion at the moment. Still the reconstruction work has to be started, the functioning of the civilian administration is awaited and in the midst of all this a new voice of resistance is being heard. The only conclusion which I would like to draw by putting a question which was asked by



Robert Fisk in his article in The Independent: "And all this, I asked myself yesterday, was all this for September 11, 2001,? All this was to strike back' at our attackers, albeit that Doha Soheil, Wahed Hassan and Imam Ali have nothing—absolutely nothing—to do with those crimes against humanity, any more than has the awful Saddam? Who decided, I wonder that these dchildren, these young women should suffer for September 11?" (This is the Reality of War by Robert Fisk, The Independent ✦

## **DO NOT DISCREDIT ISLAM, IT'S NOT A TERROR SOURCE: PM**

Describing international terrorism as a "global monster", Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today flayed the "selective approach" and differing standard of some countries in combating the menace. He also dismissed the Western belief that Islam was a source of terrorism.

With terrorism and the volatile situation in neighbouring Iraq high on his agenda, Vajpayee arrived to a red carpet welcome on a three-day visit to Turkey, the first by the head of an Indian government in 15 years.

"We cannot afford selective approaches which sacrifice the long term interests. Differing standards cannot be applied for judging terrorism," he said in a wide ranging interview with Turkish daily news. He expressed concern over the situation in Iraq, regrouping of Taliban in Afghanistan and dismissed suggestions that India had abandoned the Palestinians for Israel.

Saying terrorism "knows no national boundaries or territorial limits of operations," he said "it exploits the openness and freedom of democratic societies. It uses modern technologies and unorthodox techniques to achieve its destructive objectives."

The menace of terrorism, Vajpayee said, could be countered only by a global, united and comprehensive effort. About the tendency in the West to subscribe to the view that Islam was a source of terrorism, he said: "We totally dismiss the proposition that any religion is a source of terrorism such arguments seek to discredit one of the great religions of the world."

No religion, he said, prescribed violence against innocent people. "Our battle is against extremist elements who misuse and misinterpret religion to justify terrorism and incite violence."

# THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi\*

Ramadhan is the month of peace and tranquility, piety and righteousness, generosity and bestowal. Of the five requirements of Islam, fasting in the month of Ramadhan is a must every year. During fast one must abstain from eating drinking and smoking including inoculation and injections, from dawn to dusk. In this context the verses of the Holy Quran which ordain for fasting as an obligatory duty for Muslims are as follows:

“ O ye who believes fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint.” (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or in a journey, the prescribed number should be made up from later days. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that indigent, but he that will give more, of his own free will, it is better for him, and it is better for ye that ye face, if ye only knew.

Ramadhan's significance can be gauged from the fact that the Quran was revealed to prophet Mohammad (pbuh) in this month as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is home during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; he does not want to put you to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and per chance ye shall be grateful. (11.183.85). This particular month has been considered sacred even from pre-Islamic days too.

Ibn-Hisham states that the Qurayesh in the days of ignorance spent one month a year on Mt.Hira, practicing penance (Tahannutu). Before instituting fasting of Ramadhan Muhammad (saw) evidently observed fast on the tenth of Moharram. During Ramadhan evil conceals itself while good comes to the fore and

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\*Faculty member, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

the whole atmosphere is filled with piety and purity. The holy prophet says: "The deed of a son of Adam is increased several times (in Ramadhan) and the reward is increased by ten times to seven hundred times. But Allah says that fasting is exclusively for him and He himself will deliver its reward (to his bondsman) as he abstains from eating and controls his desires only for Him. There are (two instances of) happiness for the fasting Muslim, one is at the time of breaking his fast and the other at the time of meeting his Lord. And verily to God the smell of fasting person's breath is the best and cleanest." The prophet of Islam also says: There is a door of paradise called Rayyan towards which only the fasting will be called. Only the fasting will enter it and those who enter it will never feel thirsty.

*"Salman Farsi narrates that the Apostle of Allah delivered a sermon on the last day of Sha'aban in which he said: "O my people! You are on the threshold of a month of great solemnity and blessings. It is a month whose one night is better than a thousand months. God has prescribed fasting in this month and made Tarawih prayers optional. Whosoever willingly and with good intentions does one good act in this month will have the merit of having done an obligatory act in other months and one who does a prescribed act in this month it will be equal to seventy prescribed act of other month. This is the month of endurance and the reward of endurance is paradise and this is the month of sympathy and care towards the poor and the needy."*

It is needless to say that fasting is a shield against sins, crime, vices and other un-Islamic acts. The last prophet says: "Fast is like a shield for protection from satan's attack. Therefore, when one observes fast he should use this shield and abstain from quarrelling. If anybody abuses him or quarrels with him, he should simply say: Brother, I am fasting, do not expect me to indulge in similar conduct (Bukhari, Muslim).

It should be kept in mind that to restore real spirit of fast, it is incumbent to observe it with prescribed rules and regulations. The noble prophet said: "If one does not give up speaking a lie during fast, God does not require him to give up eating and drinking (Bukhari). On another occasion, he said: Many are the people who fast but who gain nothing from their fasts except hunger and thirst: and many are those who stand praying all night but gain nothing except sleeplessness (Darimi)." Fasting, according to Islam, is a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates moral discipline. It imparts moral strength and leads to the promotion of virtues of piety. ✦

# MUSLIM INDIA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Mohiuddin Ahmad

By the beginning of the eighth century of the Christian era the Arabs had conquered the frontier province of Sind and made it a part of the Islamic Empire. The Arabs, however, never carried the standard of Islam far beyond the Indus, and India, in general, remained untouched by the faith of the Prophet. The Muslim impact on Northern India came over from the north-west, in the beginning of eleventh century. But by that time the faith had lost its political unity as well as its original simplicity, pure morality, contentment and the spirit of justice and generosity—the corner-stones of Islamic polity. The conquests were now not meant to rid the humanity of the serfdom of man and bring it within the kingdom of God, as an Arab envoy had once told the Persian General; but, for extending the frontiers of powerful kingdoms which had sprung up after the caliphate turned into monarchy. Close to the western borders of India, the Turk Sabaktagin founded the kingdom of Ghazni, which was then a flourishing centre of Islamic culture and learning. Mahmud the son of Sabaktagin made his first expedition into India in 1001, and defeated Jaipal, the Raja of the Punjab. Ghaznavids were succeeded by the princes of Ghor. The Ghorids under Muhammad of Ghor, were the first to extend the permanent rule of Islam beyond the frontiers of the Punjab and Sind. Bengal was rapidly conquered and frontiers of Islamic kingdom extended towards the south under the Turk rulers, who also defended India against the successive onslaughts to the Mongol hordes. The Mogul rule was finally established in India by Babur in 1526, which lasted, but for a brief interval during the reign of Humayun, for more than three hundred years.

The sultans of Delhi prior to the Moghuls, recognised Islam as the state religion but they occasionally departed from the law to suit their convenience. The sultans enforced Shariah<sup>1</sup> as the law of the land, appointed Sadr us-Sadur and Diwan-e-Qaza

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1-The path to be followed: The totality of religious-moral law of Islam.

to supervise the working of shariah courts, to keep a watch on the public morals and to extend financial assistance to the Muslim divines, scholars and men of piety. Yet there was never a truly Islamic State, nor did the sultans constantly strive to make the state policy conform with the shariah. Barni, who closely observed the working of these monarchies, noted that duniadari (worldliness) of which the kingship was the climax in those day was absolutely opposed to dindari (religiosity). After tracing the process by which the pagan institution of monarchy had crept into Islam, he reached the conclusion that sovereignty was never possible without practising ~~non-Islamic~~ customs and usages. The common people thought the sultan really existed for protecting the faith and upholding the shariah; but, in reality, the decisive factor in the policy pursued by the sultans was the law of force and expediency. Barni says that very often capital punishment to the Muslims for political offences, which was contrary to the sacred law, was resorted to. Similarly, the law of inheritance, the strict distinction between halal and haram, between the permissible and the disallowed, and many other well known injunctions were violated; the ecclesiastics protested but were very frequently constrained to put up some excuse for such practices. The well known prohibition of the Shariah regarding usurious transactions was openly disregarded. In fine, to suit the sultans, convenience even the religious duties were sometimes sought to be confined for them to such matters as leading the prayers, making endowments for the religious establishments and dispensing justice, while the most flagrant breaches of the shariah rules were condoned,<sup>1</sup>

Upon the heels of Muslim invaders, specially after the Mongols had overrun the Muslim land from Central Asia to Syria, innumerable poets, artists, theologians and Sufi<sup>2</sup> saints sought refuge in the safety of Islamic realm in India. The influx of refugees from Iran, Turkistan, Iraq and several other lands continued unabated for a long time, which, in due course, made Delhi the central metropolis of Islam, a seat of Islamic culture and learning, art and architecture, surpassing even Baghdad and Cordova.

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1-A.B.M.Habibullah:Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,pp.348-50.

2-A Muslim Mystic.

3-Barni: Tarikh Firoz Shahi,pp.111-12.

Barni has given a long list of erudite scholars and men of piety who had come down to India, settled in smaller principalities, and engaged themselves in spreading learning and righteousness amongst the people through educational institutions, mosques and monasteries established by them in far off places.<sup>3</sup> These learned men, a number of whom were initiated into one or the other mystic orders, were loved and respected not only by the populace but they also exercised considerable influence on the autocratic rulers, kings and provincial governors. Historians have given many instances of the salutary effect produced by these doyens of spirituality on the state policies and public morals. Sheikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh Dehli approved the election of Firoz Shah (1351-1388) as Sultan after the demise of Muhammad Tughlaq, only when he had solemnly promised to rule the kingdom with justice and mercy.<sup>1</sup> Similarly Sheikh Burhan-ud-din refused to take an oath of allegiance to Sultan Muhammad Bahmani (1358-1375) unless he gave up drinking, reformed his conduct, and enforced Shariah as the law of the land.<sup>2</sup> Yet another instance, showing the strong influence of Khawaja Nizam-ud-din Auliya over the kings and the populace of Delhi is the detailed description given by Barni. "Sultan Ala-ud-din Muhammad Khilji (1296-1316) along with the nobles and the laity had betaken the path of righteousness, and during the last few years of Ala-ud-din's reign nobody even talked of wine and beloveds, immorality and laxness, gambling and wantonness; in short, the major sins had come to be regarded as almost synonymous with infidelity."<sup>3</sup>

By the time the Moghul rule had set its foot firmly on the Indian soil, Akbar (1556-1605) promulgated his new religion, the Din Ilahi or "Divine faith". The king had suffered himself to be flattered by the courtiers like Sheikh Mubarak, Mulla Shirazi, Hakim Abul Fath and Abul Fazal into the belief that Islam had had its day, after a thousand years of its inception, and that it was the duty of the king to assume his place as the spiritual as well as the temporal sovereign of his people. He concocted a seemingly eclectic creed likely, as he thought, to syncretize all religions but it ended up in the emergence of just one more religion. As

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1-Ibid.p.28.

2-Firishta: Tarikh Firishta Vol. I. p.560-62.

3-Barni p.346.

Wolseley Haig says: "Islam was the one faith excluded from the benefits of Sulh-e-kull, or 'Universal toleration', on which Akbar continually descanted. The names 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad' were disused and one foolish ordinance required that all words containing letters peculiar to Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, should be mis-spelt, the nearest equivalents of such letters being substituted. For the ordinary Muslim salutation, 'Peace be on you' and the reply 'And on you be peace', the disciples of the new faith were required to substitute Allah Akbar (God is most great) and Jalla Jalaluhu (May His glory be extolled), and the cavillers were not slow to note that each formula embodied one of Akbar's names."<sup>1</sup> The prayer,<sup>2</sup> fasting<sup>3</sup> during Ramzan, haj<sup>4</sup> and other religious observances<sup>5</sup> were discouraged. Study of religious sciences was banned,<sup>6</sup> drinking of wine was made lawful,<sup>7</sup> hogs were to be revered<sup>8</sup> and numerous mosques were closed down for service or even ordered to be demolished.<sup>9</sup> It became quite customary in those days to speak ill of the doctrines of Islam and even revile against the Holy Prophet.<sup>10</sup> "The whole gist of the regulations was," according to Dr. Vincent Smith, "to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain and Parsi practices, while discouraging or positively prohibiting essential Muslim rites. The policy of insult to and persecution of Islam, which was carried to greater extremes, subsequently, was actively pursued, even in the period from 1582 to 1585." <sup>11</sup>

There are certain historians who hold the view that Badauni took very opportunity, to rake up the notion of Akbar's

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1-Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 131.

2-Muntakha't Tawarikh, Vol. 11, 325.

3-Rafi-ud-din Shirazi: Tazkiratul Maluk, p. 231. Ubaid Ullah: Muballigh-ur-Rijal, p. 258.

4-Muntakha't Tawarikh, Vol. 11, pp. 246 and 316.

5-Ibid. p. 284, 286, 313, 317; Mukhtubat Imam Rabbani, Vol. 1, letters no. 46, 65, 82, and Vol. 11, letter no. 92; Ruqq-at-e-Abul Fadhl, Vol. 1, 11, p. 62.

6-Abul Fadhl, Ain Akbari, Vol. 1, p. 250; Muntakhab't Tawarikh Vol. 11, p. 317.

7-Muntakhab't Tawarikh Vol. 11, p. 349.

8-Ibid, pp. 303-4.

9-Maktubat Imam, Rabbani, Vol. 11, letter no. 92; Zahiruddin Farirqi, Aurangzeb and His Times, p. 563, Firishta Vol. 1, p. 291.

10-Muntakhab't Tawarikh, Vol. 11, p. 277 (for details see Din-e-Ilahi aur uska pas-e-Manzr, by N. Aslam).

11-Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 131.



apotheosis for the purpose of renewing attack upon the great emperor. There is, however, overwhelming evidence left by Akbar's contemporaries to show that the ridiculous vanity of the Emperor had caused unbearable miseries to the followers of Islam.<sup>1</sup> Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, a contemporary of Akbar wrote a letter that during the reign of Akbar "the infidels promulgated anti-Islamic laws in the realm of Islam, while Muslims were not allowed even to express the rules of Shari'ah, and if one ever did so he was put to sword. Alas! What a pity! What a plight! Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be on him) was loved and adored by God but his followers were humiliated and crushed, and his detractors were honoured and praised! Muslims bemoaned the fallen state of Islam with a heavy heart while infidels used to poke fun at them for adding insult to injury. The sun of guidance had been beclouded by the veil of irreligion and the light of truth enshrouded by gloom of falsehood."<sup>2</sup>

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), better known as Mujaddid Alf Thani (Renovator of the second millennium), strived to rehabilitate Islam in India. The energy with which he controverted the un-Islamic practices and tried to bring back the influential ruling circles back to the path of Islam rendered him particularly odious to certain Shi'a Chiefs who represented his activities as dangerous to the state. Jahangir (1605-1627), was, however, soon reconciled to Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, ordered his release from confinement in the Gwalior fort and awarded a robe of honour to him. It was chiefly owing to the persistent effort of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi that the government's attitude towards the religious injunctions gradually became tolerant and respectful. The reformatory endeavour of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was not confined to the ruling circles alone. Although he was connected with a prominent sufi order, he avoided the extravagance of the mystics of his time and opposed their pantheistic tendencies exhibited through a wrong interpretation of Wahdat-ul- Wajud (Unity of Existence), by presenting the alternative doctrine of Wahdat-us-Shahud (Unity of Manifestation). The benign influence exercised by the Sheikh and, after him, his son Khwaja Muhammad M'asum Sirhindi, brought up Aurangzeb in the best

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1-Muhammad Aslam;Din Ilahi aur Uska Pas-e-Manzr,pp.121-142-211-225.

2-Maktubat Imam Rabbani, Vol.1,letter No.47.

of Islamic traditions, who later rose to become the preserver of true faith. The religious experiment of Akbar was bound to fail, as it did only after inflicting a severe wound in the body politic of Islam. The respect for religion and its observances had suffered a lot during this interregnum. It was easy to destroy; but rather difficult to restore the moral health of the masses.

Indeed, it was due to Akbar's immaturity, who had nearly destroyed Islam that Aurangzeb had to adopt certain measures for the reassertion of Islam which alienated the sympathies of his non-Muslim subjects. Personal virtues, simple and saintly life and reformative zeal of Aurangzeb cannot be denied even by his worst critics; nevertheless, his rigid dogmatism—which included its saving merits as well as its defects—earned a bad name for him. Akbar, on the other hand, failed to realise that Islam and Hinduism were not only religions in the ordinary sense of the term; but that the social, economic, spiritual and political lives of their adherents were intertwined with their religious beliefs and practices. These were not merely cultures but different ways of life, based on different ideologies. It was just not possible for such cultures to coalesce to produce a unified culture as Akbar had in view. On the contrary, the most practicable way to achieve integration and unity among the two communities lay in genuine tolerance and respect for each other religious beliefs and taboos, modes and manners.

After Aurangzeb (d.1707) the central political authority gave place to court intrigues, and ceaseless wrangle for succession. The emergence of three independent provincial chiefs —Asaf Jah Nizamul-Mulk in Deccan in 1713, Sa'adat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk in Oudh in 1723 and Aliwardi Mahabat Jung in Bengal in 1740—sealed the fate of the great Moghul empire by the close of the eighteenth century. The disappearance of the central authority enabled three more predatory powers to raise their heads which were often utilised and strengthened by the mutual rivalry of the provincial governors. Of this, the Marathas were the first and the foremost who made endless encroachments; and, by degrees, seized upon several districts in the provinces of Agra and Allahabad and plundered even the imperial capital of the great Moghuls. The second were the predatory tribes of Jats who ravaged the country between Delhi and Agra; while the third, the

Sikhs in the Punjab, united as a separate sect to establish a kingdom under Ranjit Singh. In 1738, descended Nadir Shah like a hurricane, seized the imperial treasure and effects, destroyed Delhi through indiscriminate massacre and pillage and returned to Afghanistan after detaching all the provinces to the west of Indus from the dominion of the Moghuls. The Emperor still ruled at Delhi but without any power except over the imperial capital. The whole of India appeared now about to be swallowed by the Marathas. Then came down Ahmad Shah Abdali, who, joined by the Rohila chief, Najib-ud-daula, S'adullah Khan, and Hafiz Rahmat, crushed the Maratha power in the third battle of Panipat fought in January 1761. Had Ahmad Shah Abdali, whose empire was in its youth and vigour, not left India like Nadir Shah, he might have extended his dominion from Afganistan to Bengal. But his hasty retreat from India, with innumerable princelings warring amongst themselves, paved the way for gradual emergence of the British as the supreme power in India.

In this period of travail and transition, when every Indian chief was trying to consolidate his own power and prestige at the cost of others, the only Indian prince who had the foresight to correctly gauge the increasing political power and ambition of the British was Tipu Sultan of Mysore. He endeavoured to organise his 'Sultanat-e-Khuda-dad' on the Islamic principles of social justice, trained and equipped his armies on the western lines, warmed the blood of his soldiery with the fervour of jihad and attempted to secure alliances with the Marathas, Nizam and the French in order to expel the British from India. He sent emissaries to Kabul, Constantinople, Versailles and Mauritius to enlist the help of powerful allies against the British. Lord Wellesley, however, got the scent and started preparations for final assault. His martyrdom on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1799, brought about through treachery and intrigue, sent General Harris, the British Commander, to take a sigh of relief and remark exultantly: "From today India is ours".

The Muslim masses had, by that time, lost the sense of border lines demarcating the spheres of Islam and un-Islam: undue veneration of the saints and their tombs, ostentatious and wasteful expenditure on the occasion of births, deaths and other ceremonies, ban on the re-marriage of widows and numerous other customs and usages interwoven with polytheistic cults prevalent

amongst them were as irrational as economically ruinous. No longer actuated by the spirit of true faith, the people had fallen a prey to the strong passion with unrestrained appetite for sensual pleasures for the gratification of which they could incur any hazard." Saiyid Insha's *Darya-e-Latafat*<sup>1</sup> vividly depicts the dissoluteness of Muslim aristocracy of the time. The mathnavis of Shauq (1783-1871) reveal that the search for delights of love were not unknown among the women of respectable families.<sup>2</sup> A number of Muslim women like the famous Begum Samru (1751-1836) of Sardhana and Hayatunnisa Begum of Benaras had married the Europeans. Intoxicants like opium, wine and hemp, then in common use, had undoubtedly contributed to idleness and other bad habits. All this was because the then political system, in particular, undermined the possibility of planned, frugal living.<sup>3</sup>

Internal decay of the ruling powers and latitudinarian attitude of the masses were not a peculiar feature of Indian Islam in the eighteenth century. The entire world of Islam had, it seems, absorbed numerous innovations, accretions and exotic beliefs and practices which had sapped its vitality and capability to cope with the changing times. The stage it had reached everywhere—as in India—has been graphically described by Lothrop Stoddard:-

“ By the eighteenth century the Moslem world had sunk to the lowest depth of its decrepitude. Nowhere were there any signs of healthy vigour: everywhere were stagnation and decay. Manners and morals were alike execrable. The last vestiges of Saracenic culture had vanished in a barbarous luxury of the few and an equally barbarous degradation of the multitude. Learning was virtually dead, the few universities which survived had fallen into dreary decay and languishing in poverty and neglect. Government had become despotism tempered by anarchy and assassination. Here and there as major despot like the Sultan of Turkey or the Indian ‘Great Moghul’ maintained some semblance of state authority, albeit provincial pashas were forever striving to erect independent governments based, like their masters, on tyranny and extortion. The pashas, in turn, strove ceaselessly against unruly local chiefs and swarms of brigands who infested the countryside, Beneath this sinister hierarchy groaned the people,

1-Malcolm; *The Political History of India*, Vol. 11, p. 168.

2-M. Mujeeb; *The Indian Muslim*, p. 512.

3-Ibid, p. 201.

robbed, bullied, and ground into dust. Peasant and townsmen had alike lost all incentive to labour or initiative, and both agriculture and trade had fallen to the lowest level compatible with bare survival.

As for religion, it was as decadent as everything else. The austere monotheism of Mohammad had become overlaid with a rank growth of superstition and puerile mysticism. The mosques stood unfrequented and ruinous, deserted by the ignorant multitude, which, decked out in amulets, charms and rosaries, listened to squalid fakirs or ascetic dervishes, and went on pilgrimages to the tombs of 'holy men', worshiped as saints and 'intercessors' with that Allah who had become too remote a being for the direct devotion of these benighted souls. As for the moral precepts of the Koran, they were ignored or defied. Wine-drinking and opium-eating were well nigh universal, prostitution was rampant, and the most degrading vices flaunted naked and unashamed. Even the holy cities. Macca and Madina, were sink holes of iniquity, while the "Hajj" or pilgrimage ordained by the Prophet, had become a scandal through its abuses. In fine: the life had apparently gone out of Islam, leaving naught but a dry husk of soulless ritual and degrading superstition behind. Could Mohammad have returned to earth, he would unquestionably have anathematized his followers as apostates and idolaters.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental malaise of eighteenth century Islam in India was clearly perceived by Shah Wali Ullah<sup>2</sup> (1703-1762) who saw the empire of the Great Moghuls crumbling before him. The Shah had drawn up not only detailed plans for social, fiscal and political reforms but also strenuously endeavoured to restore a

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1-The New World of Islam, pp.20-21.

2-Born in 1703, Shah Wali Ullah received early education at Delhi. He set out for Haj in 1720 where he studied under Shah Abu Tahir Madni for some time. On returning to India he rose to become the moving spirit of reform renovation of Islam in India. It was he who invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to crush the power of Marathas in 1757. He succeeded his father as the Sheikh of Naqsbhandiyah order. He wrote 23 books and a number of treatises discussing economic, political, social and religious issues. On these the Hujjat Alla-il-Baligha, Izalatul Khifa, Al-Fauz-ul-Kabir, Fath-ur-Rahman, Tahimat-e-Ilahiya and Sat'at establishd him as the greatest scholar and thinker of his age. His thought pervades all the later movements of regeneration of Islam in India.

3-Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Islam in Modern History, p.52. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami Shah Wali Ullah aur Unke Siyasi Maktubat, pp.46-49.

central authority in India in order to curb the forces of disorder and strife tearing the country apart. It is erroneous to assume, as does Wilfred Cantwell Smith, that the Shah's political ambition was to restore Muslim power in India more or less on the Moghul pattern.<sup>2</sup> Shah Wali Ullah, no doubt, invited Ahmad Shah Abadali to India before the third battle of Panipat, and also urged upon Najib-ud-daula to put an end to the unbridled confusion then prevailing around Delhi, but that was primarily to save the Muslims undergoing unbearable hardships at the hands of predatory powers raising their head on the heels of vanishing Moghul empire and, secondly, because there was no power left in the country which could stem the tide of rising chaos and establish law and order on a firm footing. Nevertheless, the letters and treatises of Shah Wali Ullah leave no doubt that he had clearly perceived that the days of kingship were gone for ever. He accordingly pleaded that political stability and economic prosperity of the country depended on a political setup based on wider principles of humanitarianism, social justice and economic well-being of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Shah Wali Ullah condemned the autocratic kingship, the luxurious living of the nobility and the oppressive social order which saddled the peasantry and artisan classes with unbearable financial burden.<sup>3</sup> Shahwaliullah believed that whenever any section of the society was reduced to the position of beasts of burden<sup>2</sup> by an inequitable social order, God invariably paved the way for a revolution signalling the death of the oppressive system.<sup>3</sup> He advocated to get rid of the parasites like poets and mendicants who lived by sponging on the kings without performing any useful work, to reorganise the armed forces and to make regular payments to the troops, to reduce the number of jagirs of fiefs and to abolish the system of farming out agricultural lands to assignees (Ijaradars) at fixed rents by the proprietors.<sup>4</sup> Shah Wali Ullah also advised to promote economic wellbeing through co-operative efforts<sup>5</sup> and to develop the means of producing wealth like agriculture, irrigation and animal husbandry.<sup>6</sup> Shah Wali Ullah declaimed against the evils to which different sections of the Muslims had

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1-Ubaid Ullah Sindhi, *Shah Wali Ullah aur Unke Siyasi Takrik*, pp.26-29.

2-K.A.Nizami, *Shah Wali Ullah ke Siyasi Maktubat*, pp.35-37.

3-K.A.Nizami, *Shah Wali Ullah Ke Siyasi Mahtubat*, pp.35-37.

4-Ibid, pp.35-36.

5.Ibid, pp.37-38.

6-Ibid, p.37.

fallen a prey in his time. To the 'Ulama' his criticism was directed against their excessive dogmatism and lack of independent thinking, particularly, their refusal to reinterpret the Shariah in a way more suitable to the changing circumstances. Although initiated in the Naqshbandiyah order, he rejected the overemphasis of the then mystic thought on other-worldliness. He appealed to the Muslims to discard their ignorance, indolence and selfishness as well as all accretions and innovations so as to build up a vigorous and united society on the basis of fundamental purity of Islam. He gave the call to his coreligionists to shake off their langour and resist the oppressors. He advocated the use of 'ijthad'<sup>1</sup> rising, if necessary, above the four juristic schools, to re-interpret the Shariah laws afresh in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah.<sup>2</sup>

Shah Wali Ullah presented the Scripture and Prophetic Traditions as eternal sources of guidance in the changing world, as the living guides for humanity and not lifeless models of rituals. He maintained that there was nothing unintelligible in the creed of Islam or the injunctions of the Shariah. He translated the Qur'an for the first time in India into Persian which was looked with horror by the theologians of his time. He was also one of the few scholars who endeavoured to spell out the wisdom behind the different religious injunctions to satisfy the intellectual curiosity set in motion during, in the eighteenth century, as a result of Western impact, in the world of Islam. Shah Wali Ullah, thus based his concept of reform and regeneration of the Muslim society on intellectualism of the Shari'ah, but he did not discard the humanism or spiritualism of mysticism. And, this was perhaps his unique contribution to modern Islam in the Indian sub-continent. It can be asserted that all the later fundamentalist reformist movements, like those of Shah 'Abdul Aziz and Saiyid Ahmad Shahid and the Deoband and Nadwatul Ulama schools, as well as the ilberalist currents represented by Saiyid Ahmad Khand have drawn inspiration from him. Shah Abdul Aziz, his son and spiritual successor, initiated Saiyid Ahmad Shahid in his mystic order; the writings of Shah Muhammad Ismail bear the imprints of Shah Wali Ullah's style and thought; the founders of Deoband and Nadwatul Ulama movements, Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi (d. 1879), Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Maulana Muhammad Ali Monghyri and Maulana Shibli Na'omani all were connected with his school; while Saiyid Ahmad Khan, too, unmistakably showed traces of Shah Wali Ullah's influence<sup>3</sup> in his

1-To form an opinion as to a rule of law according to Islamic legal criteria.

2-The Practice of the prophet.

3-Bashir Ahmad Dar, Religious Thought of Saiyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 51 and 84, (In his commentary on the Qur'an Saiyid Ahmad Khan quotes Shah Wali Ullah in support of the interpretations given by him almost after very six or seven pages but only to interpret it in terms of his own rationalist exegesis. In his another work, Athar-us-Sanadid, first published in 1845, (continued on next page)

commentary on the Qur'an and Athar-us-Sanadid.

The eighteenth century Muslim society in India was thus marked, on the one hand, by internal decay and external threat and, on the other, by the resurgent thought of Shah Wali Ullah pleading to discard latitudinarian indifference to the Islamic creed and to build up a healthy society which could forge ahead with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. Strange though it may seem, another marked phenomenon of the eighteenth as well as nineteenth century Islam in India was the efflorescence of intellectual and literary endeavour, unmatched by the days gone by, in the surrounding gloom of lax public morals at the bottom, and political confusion, at the top. Shah Abdul Aziz (d. 1824) author of *Fath-ul-Aziz*, the famous commentary on the Qur'an and a collection of juristic opinions (*fatawa*); Maulana Shah Muhammad Ismail (d. 1831), the renowned reformer and author of *Abqat*, *Taqwiatul-Iman* and *Mansab-e-Imamat*; Qazi Thana Ullah of Panipat (d. 1810), writer of *Tafsir Mazahari* and *Mala Budda Minhu*; Shah Abdul Qadir (d. 1814), the famous exegete who penned *Muwaza-ih-ul-Qur'an*; Maulana Salam Ullah Muhaddith (d. 1813), the author of *Muhalla*; Maulana Abdul Hai Burhanwi (d. 1827), the author of *Fatawa Sheikh-ul-Islam* and Shah Ishaq Dehlavi (d. 1845) are some of the religious scholars who need be mentioned here.

In discursive sciences Maulana Abdul Ali Bahr-ul-Uloom of Lucknow (d. 1810) made valuable contributions, and so did Shah Rafiuddin of Delhi (d. 1817), Maulana Fazl Imam of Khairabad (d. 1827) and Maulana Haider Ali of Rampur (d. 1856). In the science of mathematics, *Shuruh-e-Makhrutat* and *Rasail Jabr-o-Muqabilah* were written by Nawab Tafadul Hasain Khan Allama (d. 1800), *Al-Sittata-ul-Jabriyah* and *Tuhfah-e-umaniyah* by Khwaja Farid-ud-din (d. 1828), *Shams-ul-Handisah* and *Sitta-e-Shamsiyah* by Nawab Fakhr-ud-din of Hyderabad (d. 1862). The famous lexicographers of the age were Mufti Ismail Landani, Maulana Auhad-ud-din of Bilgram (d. 1834) and Maulana Abdur Rahim of Safipur (d. 1850). *Nafis-ul-Lughat* and *Maftha-ul-Lisan* by Maulana Auhad-ud-din and *Muntha-al-Arab* by Maulana Abdur Rahim are still

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Saiyid Ahmad Khan related with great fervour the reformist zeal of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid and his companions. But in the second edition of the book brought out in 1854, he was compelled to delete, perhaps, owing to the changed political situation, the whole chapter dealing with the Saiyid and his disciples).



deemed as authoritative works on the subject. Another learned man of the time was Tafadul Hasain Khan, the Vakil of Nāwab Asaf-ud-Daula at Calcutta (1788-1792), who knew Latin and Greek besides oriental languages. He had translated Newton's *Principia* from Latin into Arabic. He had also translated several works on Algebra, Mechanics, Conic Sections and Logarithms.<sup>1</sup> Mirza Abu Talib Khan of Lucknow had undertaken an extensive tour of western Asia and Europe during 1788-1803 and written an intelligent and entertaining account of the countries visited by him. The book, which was later rendered into English by Charles Stewert,<sup>2</sup> gives a picture of the English society in his time, its complex legal system, freedom and equality enjoyed by the women and commonality as well as the limitations under which the two suffered, in comparison to their counterparts in India, under the veil of apparent freedom enjoyed by them.

We also come across reputed pedagogues like Mulla Mubin Firangi Mahli (d. 1810), Maulana Nurul Haq of Lucknow (d. 1822), Maulana Haider Ali Sandilawi (d. 1810) Maulana Abdul Basit of Kannauj (d. 1819) and Maulana Ghulam Jilani (d. 1819); prolific authors like Maulana Baqar of Madras (d. 1805), Mufti Ilahi Bakhsh (d. 1829) and Maulana Rashid-ud-din Khan (d. 1827); the doyens of Urdu classical poetry like Mir Hasan (d. 1886), Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810) Saliyid Insha Allah Khan Insha (d. 1817), Ghulam Hamdani Mushafi (d. 1824), Sheikh Imam Baksh Nasikh (d. 1838), Khawja Haider Ali Atish (d. 1846), Momin Khan Momin (d. 1851), Skeikh Ibrahim Zauq (d. 1854) and Asad Ullah Khan Ghalib (d. 1869); and also several celebrated saints and men of God diffusing moral health and godliness among the people. Some of them, worth mentioning, were Shah Ghulam Ali of Delhi (d. 1824), Maulana Naim Ullah (d. 1803) of Bahraich and Shah Murad Ullah (d. 1832) of Thanesar at Lucknow, Shah Muhammad Afaq (d. 1835) at Delhi, Shah Husain Ali Makanwi in the Punjab, Shah Dargahi Naqshbandi (d. 1811), at Rampur, Shah Ra'uf Ahmad Mujaddidi (d. 1833) at Bhopal and Maulana Ahmadi Kursawi, Shah Amin-ud-din (d. 1837) and Qazi Abdul Karim and his disciple of the same name in Oudh. Beside mystics of Mujaddidiyah order, the torch of Chishtiyah order was held

1-Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought of Saiyid Ahmad Khan*, pp.63-64

2-Travels in Asia, Africa and Europe, tr.by C.Stewert (London, 1814).

aloft by Maulana Qutb-ud-din (d. 1817), Sheikh Sabir Bakhsh (d. 1821), Shah Mir Muhammadi (d. 1826) Shah Niaz Ahmad (d. 1834) Shah Abdul Bari Amrohwi (d. 1811) and numerous others in the Punjab, Bihar and Oudh. These mystics exerted benign influence over the masses and their monasteries attracted hundreds of devotee from far off lands, such as, Samarkand, Tashkent, Bukhara, Qandahar, Kabul and Ghazni, Likewise, educational institution capable of affording a high degree of intellectual training and polish turned out thousands of scholars every year but in the absence of any central political authority and confusion and disorder then prevailing in the country the stray and uncoordinated efforts of the ecclesiastics, scholars and mystics had failed to produced any appreciable impact on the masses who could not be galvanised to fight the forces of evil and decadence.

Medieval India was what the Muslims had made it. They had attained a stage of civilization higher and to a certain degree unique, in this part of the globe. Persians and Turks coming from the western part of Asia possessed an elegant dialect, were celebrated for prosecuting the sciences, and had evolved a sociological structure which was egalitarian in its make up and productive of moral virtues like courage and manliness, graciousness and decorum, deference for religion, rectitude and integrity. Kingdoms and dynasties had come and gone but the social structure built by the muslims had sustained their rule for eight hundred years. It looked to the Muslim rulers for its political unity but was guided by the 'Ulama' and the preheated mystics in its intellectual and moral pursuits. With the confusion and disorder prevalling everywhere in the eighteenth century the links that coordinated its material, cultural, intellectual and spiritual moorings had been suddenly rent asunder leaving the people perplexed and abashed without any sense of purpose or a higher ideal. Nevertheless, the average Muslim had not entirely lost the qualities of his forefathers. He still had reverential regard for religious institutions and moral precepts. Even those who had fallen a victim to the faillings of human desire had not lost the shame to flaunt their misdoings and very often expressed feelings of humiliation excited by consciousness of their guilt. Independence and manliness, courage and valour marked their character and manners, but their efforts not being directed to any higher ideal,

these qualities were normally pressed into service for the defence of personal or family honour, or for the achievement of petty personal ends and, not infrequently, for personal aggrandisement. The more lofty in spirit oftentimes embarked upon spiritual travails and self-mortification under the influence of misguided mystics. The Muslims were also not bereft of creative zeal and finer instincts but these were misdirected towards niceties in food and dress and poetic extravagance in the form of ghazals and mathnavis. Last, but not the least, the Muslims had still not lost their enthusiasm, their warmth of spirit, nor had the sense of pride and self-confidence gone out of them and they, were, thus, still capable of being aroused to make a final efforts for regaining their lost glory.

Emergence of a mercantile nation as a formidable force on the political scene of India posed as much threat to the age-old economic system of the country as to the values cherished by the Muslims of India. Many of the higher posts, in the army, in the administration and in the learned professions had been in the hands of the Muslims. Closure of these avenues of employment had begun to sink the Muslims into poverty and to submerge their higher classes in the lower social strata. The demobilization of the armed forces of Indian states, mostly manned by the Muslims, meant not only the loss of livelihood but also seemed to diminish their martial spirit. In the judicial and revenue departments, where the Muslims held their own, the reforms of Warren Hastings introduced in 1772, gradually replaced the qazis, mir-adls, nazims and diwans by magistrates and deputy collectors of revenue.<sup>1</sup> Jagirs were not abolished, but the jagirdars or land-holders found themselves under the British, subjected to "critical scrutiny, detailed inquisition and frequent resumption and commutation to pension."<sup>2</sup> Another class of land-holder who suffered greatly under the British rule was the holder of revenue free lands granted by the Muslim rulers to support learning and education. In order to maximise receipts from the land revenue the East India Company issued, from 1793 onwards, regulations for investigation and resumption of such holding as did not possess unimpeachable title-deeds properly registered with the Collector. Muslims of Bengal where

1-P.Hardy; *The Muslims of British India*, p.36-37

2-Ibid, p.39

3-W.W.Hunter; *The Indian Musalmans*, pp. 181-83.

the East India Company acted as the revenue farmer for Shah Alam were worse hit than others by these resumption proceedings.<sup>1</sup> Then, the Permanent Settlement in Bengal virtually closed the doors to land lordships for the Muslims. But this was not all. The Muslims had in their hands many of the finer and more skilled industrial arts which were ruined by the fiscal policy of the East India Company. These measures of the new rulers of India had the effect of reducing the Muslims of the higher and middle classes into beggars; educational standard of the madarsa began to contract both in quality and quantity; Muslim nobility began to be caught in the moss of harmful influences; and, their intellectual and religious leadership began to show signs of deterioration. The baneful effects of the changing socio-political pattern of the country were visible even to the common man in the street, a seething discontent filled the air but there appeared to be no one who could take the revolutionary message of Islam to the masses, rid them of their sorry plight, make their lives more meaningful and awaken them from the deep slumber of sloth and indifference in order to shape their destiny once again. Indian Islam in the eighteenth century was thus in search of hero, a man of the hour, who could impart it again the sense of its role and identity, and it did find him in Saiyid Ahamd Shahid, at the turn of the century when it most needed him. †

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1-W.W.Hunter; The Indian Musalmans, pp. 181-83.

# AYODHYA SOLUTIONS

Rajeev Dhavan

*(The touchstone of any compromise is not a negotiated barter under coercive conditions but a result founded on secular principles.)*

As a private dispute, 'Ayodhya' will be settled by law. But, will it end with the court case? Rightly or wrongly 'Ayodhya' has entered the public domain to be resolved as a public issue on recognizable principles of public scrutiny. Resolving 'Ayodhya' is not matter of a tug of war between dominant Hindus and minority Muslims. The politics of pressure can never be a basis for any just or enduring solution. Rebuilding the destroyed Babri Masjid is not just a matter for Hindus and Muslims, but for all who rely on Indian secularism to keep the country together. Any solution must be consistent with Indian secularism which promises freedom and dignity to all. India cannot follow one principle of secularism on Kashmir and wholly contrary assumptions on 'Ayodhya'. A solution, inconsistent with Indian secularism, should be rejected as endangering the nation itself.

This is not the first round of negotiations. During the Shilanyas movement of sending bricks for the temple, the VHP entered into an agreement on September 27, 1989, with the Government of Uttar Pradesh to abide by the court's directions, "maintain status quo and not change the nature of the property in question." One of the signatories to this agreement was Ashok Singhal.

Later, the spirit of this agreement was violated when the VHP declared its kar seva programme in October 1990. Despite this, the Muslims entered into negotiations to consider whether Babur had destroyed a Ram temple to build this mosque. The VHP was adamant. The talks of 1990-91 failed. No less relentlessly, in October 1991, the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh acquired 2.77 acres ostensibly for tourism demolishing many older structures. This acquisition was eventually struck down as mala

fide by the Allahabad High Court on December 11, 1992. Little heed was paid to the national integration Council's Resolution of November 2, 1991 to maintain status quo.

In February 1992, a wall was sought to be constructed by the Uttar Pradesh Government pointing towards a construction of the temple. In March 1992, about 42 acres were leased out by the Government to the Ram Janamabhoomi Nyas. Notwithstanding this extreme pressure, the Muslims agreed to another round of negotiations from October 3, 1992, which was broken off on November 8, 1992 because a kar seva was announced for December 6 that eventually led to the destruction of the mosque. With this, something of India's secular soul was badly damaged. In 1994, the Supreme Court upheld the post-demolition acquisition of the site by the Union Government but underlined that the 'dispute' had to be decided by the Allahabad High Court.

From the Kumbh Mela of 2001, the VHP made it clear that it would build the temple. Physical attempts to break the status quo were thwarted by Supreme Court orders in 2001 and 2002. Now an unrepentant VHP threatens to go ahead with the construction, come what may.

Against this background and condition of unabated pressure, what is there to negotiate? One of the nodal points of concern in the 1990-91 and 1991-92 negotiations is whether a Ram temple was actually destroyed by Babur's general, Mir Baqi, in 1528? Now excavations ordered by the High Court for unconvincing reasons provide the lie to this assumption. No Ram temple was destroyed to build the mosque thus undermining even the questionable moral basis of 'redeeming' a destroyed temple.

Once this argument goes, the only argument (put at its best) is that the Muslims must purchase peace by bowing to the demands of Hindu sentiment, for which nothing is given in return. The only peace that India dare negotiate is a secular peace. A coercive peace imposed on the Muslims is unacceptably non-secular, and would threaten India, its Kashmir and Northeast policies and the peaceful co-existence of all faiths in the culturally richest multi religious nation in the world.

The VHP plea that parliamentary majorities step in to legislate in favour of a Mandir is not tenable. Parliament has already legislated on the issue. The places of Religious worship

Act, 1991, preserves the status quo as on August, 15, 1947, for all sites except the Babri Masjid. This incidentally, takes care of the renewed controversies raised about Kashi and Mathura by the VHP and Kanchi Shankaracharya's letter of July 1, 2003. But when parliament tried to take over the dispute by the Ayodhya Act of 1993, the Supreme Court's judgment of 1994 struck it down denying parliament the power to adjudicate on a pending legal case.

What was good for 1994 remains true for 2004 and beyond. The VHP's threat to invoke the brahmastra (ultimate weapon) of a parliamentary statute defies legal possibility. Amazingly, the BJP Government has chosen to remain silent rather than unequivocally tell the VHP that parliament is not empowered to take over the dispute and authorise the temple construction.

The Kanchi Acharya's interventions of June-July 2003 if well meant are elliptical. Recently, the seer himself had taken a view similar to the VHP agreement of September 27, 1989, that he would abide by the Court's verdict. The new proposal of June 16, 2003 seemed to demand building on the undisputed area- part of the VHP's demand rejected by the Supreme Court in March-April 2003. Eventually the masjid, which too was to be built, was to be relegated to a site many kilometres away. The seer's proposals of July 1, 2003, left the status of Kashi and Mathura open. There is no enigma in this riddle. Nor is it wrapped up in any mystery as the seer might have us believe. The offer simply appears to be to build the temple now, leaving everything else up for grabs. This is no offer, only a humiliating imposition intrinsically indifferent to secular fairness.

How do we test the fairness of any 'Ayodhya' solution? The touchstone of any compromise is not a negotiated barter under coercive conditions but a result founded on secular principles. The principles to be followed are clear. First, the principle of status quo. On August 15, 1947, India became a secular republic which is now the home of over 100 million Muslims. The places of Religious Worship Act, 1991, rightly enacted a 1947 status quo for all sites thus drawing a line recognised by India's history. Ideally, this should apply to the Babri Masjid; so that all faiths are told that independent India respects all faiths and sites at least

since its inception. Second is the restorative principle. On December 6, 1992, the mosque, both a heritage and religious site, was destroyed. It follows that restoring the mosque is of prime importance- a view endorsed by Parliament in its statement of Objects to the Ayodhya Act of 1991. Third, the principle of non coercion does not permit a community to be pressured by unrelenting majoritarian pressure. Fourth is the principle of co-existence. We have something to learn from South Africa's experiment with Truth and Reconciliation where Nelson Mandela brought an apartheid-torn people to peace. What follows from this is that there must be a general truth and reconciliation apology by all.

Then, the mosque must be restoratively built- both in contrition and as part of India's heritage. What is to be negotiated is the site of the Masjid which has to be on, or in the immediate vicinity of, the disputed site. This is the starting point of a fair and secular negotiation, which also requires that the 1947 status quo on all other sites be maintained at all costs.

What is troubling about 'Ayodhya' solution is the coercive subversion of secular principles that India swears by when advocating its case on Kashmir or defending its secular viability after Gujarat. Ayodhya concerns all Indians not just Hindus and Muslims. An unfair solution condemns and indicts all of us. ● ● ●

(The Hindu)



## **ROAD MAP MUST LEAD TO TEMPLE MOUNT**

**Kunal Ghosh\***

It is being reported/speculated in the English print media that India, the USA and Israel are going to form an "Anti-terror Axis" to deal with global terrorism. (Hindustan Times 2003) The imminent visit of the Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, will impress its Seal of Approval on the formation of such an axis. In current American officialese 'global terrorism' is an euphemism for Islamic terrorism, since the terrorism of North East India, which is often covertly supported by the southern Baptists of the USA, is conveniently forgotten (Ghosh 2002) and not counted as a part of global terrorism. India's National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, is supposed to be the key conceiver of the 'Anti-terror Axis' doctrine, mentioned above. During his recent visit to Washington D.C. he attended the 97<sup>th</sup> dinner meeting of the American Jewish Committee where a very large number of elected American Congressmen and Spanish PM Jose Maria Aznar were invited. Mishra is reported to have tabled the Indian proposal there, of forming a tripartite axis involving the three countries, to take on international terrorism. He purportedly claimed that these three countries are coming closer together since "they are all democracies, sharing a vision of pluralism, tolerance and equal opportunity".

I dispute the claim that Israel is a tolerant society professing pluralism. Three times in the past the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) had to be dissolved over the defining question—who is a true Jew? Can one imagine the American Congress being dissolved over the defining question—who is a true Christian? Such a question would be laughed out of court there. Israel had been violating the human rights of the Palestinians systematically; an entire house is blown up because of the suspected involvement of one member of the family in the resistance against Israeli occupation; a moving car with five occupants is destroyed by a

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missile fired from a helicopter, because one of them is a suspected terrorist.

From the Indian standpoint there is a more important question: will such an axis be in India's benefit? Before we take this up it is necessary to delve into recent history.

The Oslo peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians were signed in 1990 when Prime Minister Ehud Barak was in power. Subsequently, there was another round of accords on September 13, 1993, signed in Washington, which contained two agreements. First, the Israelis promised that any new Israeli Government, that would replace the Ehud Barak Government, would abide by the Oslo accords. Second, it was agreed that the Palestinians would de facto control Jerusalem's Islamic shrines, including the hilltop site of the Al Aqsa mosque. This site is known as the Temple Mount to the Jews. It was here their original main temple had stood before it was destroyed by the Romans in the first century AD, long before the birth of Islam.

The next Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, was assassinated by a Jewish bigot, because he had been implementing the provisions of Oslo accords regarding the Jewish settlements on occupied (by war) territories. A tough power struggle ensued between the sectarian religious forces and relatively tolerant liberals. The former won. The next PM Binyamin Netanyahu, dragged his feet in implementing the Oslo accords for three years. Ehud Barak returned with a more hard-line mandate from the electorate and did not abide by the Washington accords. But he tacitly admitted the right of the Palestinians to make a part of Jerusalem their capital and control the 'Temple Mount' the site of the Al Aqsa mosque.

In the second half of 2000 when it became apparent that the Barak Government was not likely to stay, Ariel Sharon made it clear that he did not recognise the Oslo and the subsequent Israeli Palestinian accords. He precipitated the notorious "Incident on the Temple Mount" by going there with a large number of armed supporters, staying there for several hours and provoking Palestinians religious sentiments. (Kulik 2001) The Palestinians erupted in stone throwing demonstrations in the cities of the West Bank, the cycle of terror and counter-terror started and the Oslo accords were given a noisy burial. That is exactly what

Sharon wanted. He made it amply clear that he would want the Temple Mount under Israeli control and succeeded in shifting the Israeli public opinion behind his hardline religious agenda. This agenda is not much talked about in international fora. Israel never explicitly states its objective about the Temple Mount in negotiations. But it is the secret agenda and President Arafat knows it. He is on record saying:

The Palestinian has not been born who could give away the Al Aqsa mosque,

There is now a new agreement on a so-called "road map" and the concomitant ceasefire held for nearly three months (till August 200). It was first broken by an Israeli raid in Gaza, which killed four suspected Palestinian militants. This was followed by the usual cycle of violence that led to the Palestinian militant groups calling off the ceasefire.

### **Iraq War, Neo-Conservatives & Reformation of Islam**

Compared to American-backed Israel, the Palestinians are extremely lightly armed. They witnessed the gradual occupation of their land by Israeli settlements, which form the main bone of contention and are talked about explicitly. The Palestinians fight back by terrorist suicide bombing and target civilians. In this act of self-sacrifice the suicide bomber is motivated by his religion. The Americans noted that the terrorist assault on the World Trade Centre, on September 11, 2001, was carried out by men who had been motivated by their religion<sup>1</sup> and most of them were Saudis. This has led them conclude that Wahabi Islam, the religion of Saudi Arabia, is an extreme form of Islam, which succeeds in indoctrinating the youth to commit self-sacrifice. So the American agenda is now to reform Islam by suppressing extremism and encouraging moderation and modernisation. The Iraq War is a part of this agenda. The theory, that the Americans wanted direct control over Iraqi oilfields and hence the war, does not hold water. The Iraqis under Saddam Hussein were only too keen to sell oil and were not allowed under a US-led UN embargo. The immediate economic benefit accruing to the American corporations because

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1-Swami Vivekananda delivered his message of 'Universal Toleration' in the Parliament of Religion in Chicago, USA, exactly on the same date, September 11, more than a century ago.

of the Iraq War is only a sideshow. The main purpose is long-term entrenchment of American hegemony and the security of Israel. The Americans would have us believe that they went into Iraq after WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction). They have unearthed not an iota of evidence since the end of the Saddam Hussein regime and the world public opinion does not buy this balderdash any longer. The real motive is reformation of Islam, which is a part of the neo-conservative global agenda. According to Pitt (2003), who is a New York Times journalist, the Project for the New American Century or PNAC is a group founded in 1997 that has been mobilising opinion for a war with Iraq. The Project for the New American Century seeks to found what they call "Pax Americana" across the globe. It is obvious that PNAC is the think-tank of the so called Neo-Cons or Neo-Conservatives. A PNAC signatory, author Norman Podhoretz, has been quoted by Pitt (2003) about the real meaning of the war with Iraq, that it is at bottom about " the long overdue internal reform and modernisation of Islam."

This was published in the September 2002 issue of Podhoretz's journal , Commentary. Pitt (2003) concludes, "Weapons of mass destruction are a smokescreen. Paeans to the idea of Iraqi liberation and democratisation are cynical in their inception. At the end of the day it is not about oil. The drive behind the war is ideological in nature, a "crusade" to reform the religion of Islam as it exists in both government and society within the Middle East (emphasis ours).

Who stand to benefit most if this policy succeeds? We can list them in an order of priority: Israel, America, the rest of the Anglo-Saxon world such as Britain, Australia etc. it should be noted that Jews in America are a very successful people. In particular, the Sephartim Jews ( mostly West European in origin; integrationist) have distinguished themselves in many spheres of life. Jews have a disproportionate representation, compared to their number, among the billionaires, bankers, film-makers. Congressmen, journalists and so on. This is evident from the large number of the Congressmen present in the dinner meeting of the American Jewish Committee attended by Brajesh Mishra, discussed earlier in the article. I will not be surprised if it turns out that PNAC and Neo-Cons have a fair number of Jewish members in their ranks.

Why are the Americans so keen to reform Islam? They

know that the fanatical suicide bomber, who is "assured" of a berth in heaven for the act of blowing up the infidel, cannot always be prevented, particularly if he seeks non-military commercial and civilian target. So they want to tackle the problem at what they think is the root, that is at the ideological religious level.

### **Ancient Wine in Modern Bottle**

All this is, of course, nothing new. The origin of this type of politico-religious conflict and ideology can be traced back to the Jewish and Assyrian traditions. The conquering tribe forced the vanquished tribe to adopt the religion of the conqueror. He was left with no culture of his own, and hence no identity and no will to resist and overthrow the new hegemony. This worked admirably well in the olden days. The Jewish-Assyrian practice was carried into Islam; the Islamic conquest of Persia and Afganistan are examples of how well the Arab conquerors absorbed these alien people into the Arab religio-body- politic the Arab hegemony was never overthrown. It decayed in time and gave rise to a number of local variants.

Religion in the Abrahamic tradition is german to politics and often used to entrench hegemony. In recent times, the British rulers of India facilitated the entry of the Baptist Church in the North-Eastern hills by imposing the Inner Line Regulation which restricted travel and communication between the plains and the hills. The Americans are aware of the role of their southern Baptists in North-American terrorism but it suits the cause of Anglo-American hegemony to look the other way. On the other hand religion has also been used to overthrow hegemony. Ayatollah Khomeini removed the Shah of Iran and his American master using religious fervour. Osama Bin Laden has called for the removal of foreign troops from the holy land of the two mosques of Mecca and Medina, that is, Saudi Arabia and the Americans have already started troop withdrawal. These religious fanatics may not be conscious that they are pressing religion into service to overthrow hegemony.

What is new in the twenty first century is that the conquering hyper power is not trying to overthrow the native religion altogether but to impose reform. It is trying to reform not only the religion but also the politics. Gradually deepening religio-

political reform, a moderate Islam with Western-style governance, a spirit of consumerism and hedonism to replace the austere self-denying version of Islam which successfully motivates the suicide bomber—all these are in the package.

While America argues that reform is not likely to come forth from within Islam and attempts forced reform (much like forced-conversion of the olden days), Israel pursues its hidden agenda—the Temple on the Mount. Hence it is necessary to look into its long history in a brief review.

### **Cyrus the Great: The Greatest Irony of History**

The first time the Temple on the Mount was destroyed was during the conquest of Samaria and Judia by the Assyrians and Babylonians, who came from Mesopotamia (the region between rivers Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq), between and 587 BC. (Parkes 1962) The Jewish ruling class—consisting of royals, aristocrats, priests and scholars—was decimated by slaughter and deportation to Mesopotamia. In 538 BC Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon. He was an Achaemenid king of ancient Persia, Zoroastrian in religion and belonged to a more tolerant tradition. He never deported anyone but allowed the Jewish people to return if they so wished. There was a substantial reverse migration to Judea. Cyrus allocated a large sum from his treasury and appointed a commissioner to oversee the restoration of culture and temples of the Jews. The main Temple on the Mount in Jerusalem was also rebuilt. No other king on earth has spared so much effort for reviving the culture and civilisation of an alien people. Jews in their numerous scriptures acknowledge him with gratitude. (Parkes 1962) But they did not seem to learn the virtue of tolerance and respect for a differing faith or philosophy from Cyrus, and lapsed back into their older ways. They started an intense persecution of the Samaritans, an older more orthodox Abrahamic sect, which hadn't accepted reform and new interpretation of the texts. The Jews eventually destroyed the main temple of the Samaritans.

The story of Cyrus connects with a “daughter” religion of Judaism, Islam, which arrived eleven centuries after him. Islam inherited and accepted the entire historiography, basic theology

and all the prophets of the Jews, and added to the list its own "last" prophet, Hazart Mohammad. Expectedly it also inherited sectarian intolerance from Judaism. Arabs professing Islam conquered Persia in the seventh-eighth century AD and destroyed her native religion Zoroastrianism. The Persians were absorbed into the religio-body politic of one of the Arab Islamic sects, called Shia. Thus the civilisation of Cyrus perished in his own land the people of present day Persia do not even remember him. *The greatest irony of history is that Cyrus saved from extinction the judaic tradition, from which emerged Islam, and its is Islam that eventually destroyed his civilisation.* In my opinion, the historians of the world have not paid sufficient attention to this aspect of Persian history, or else school children all over the world would learn about this great ancient king and his unique achievement which remains unparalleled to this day.

The second time the Temple on the Mount was destroyed, it was the Roman conquerors of the land who perpetrated the act. It was an act extremely uncharacteristic of the Romans who were known for religious tolerance. They did it, not immediately after the conquest, but several generations later in the second half of the first century AD. Judea and Samaria were under Greek occupation from the time of Alexander. Romans came later. Romans did not meddle with the religious practices and there was limited resistance to the Roman rule that propped a puppet Jewish king called Herod. If seems the Romans availed themselves of some funds from the coffers of the Temple on the Mount in collusion with some priests. There was a severe reaction in the populace that the Romans never expected. The Jews rose in a revolt led by a section of the priestly class called Pharisees. The Romans battled with the uprising for quite some time and eventually realised that the nerve centre was the Temple on the Mount. They then destroyed it. The Jewish temple has not been restored ever since.

The Arab Islamic conquerors came in the seventh century AD and built the Al Aqsa mosque partly at the site of the ruined temple but did not raze the only remaining wall of the temple complex. Since then the site has remained in the Arab hands except for a brief interregnum during the Crusades.

## **Justification for Muslim Control of the Site**

The Muslims do have an inalienable right to the holy site because right from the time of the birth of their religion they accepted all the history and mythology of the site, given in the Old Testament, as their own. And what is more, their acceptance is full of devotion. They accept all the prophets associated with that site as their own and revere them. If this does not entitle them to worship at that site, then there would be no justice left. If their acceptance and reverence were not so total, they shouldn't have any right to that site.

Let us for a moment go back to the days of the Arab conquerors who took over Palestine in the seventh century AD. While building the Al Aqsa mosque what were they thinking? What was their attitude? An attitude of reverence to the original prophets, no doubt. They did not know how the original temple that was destroyed by the Romans looked. Hence they must have thought that they were restoring the original shrine associated with the original prophets. In that sense the Shrine-on-the-Mount has already been rebuilt.

The Jews are also claiming the Hebron Shrine known as Ibrahim Mosque to the Muslims and Cave of Patriarchs to the Jews. In my opinion, both these shrines, that is, the shrines of Jerusalem and Hebron, should be opened to the Jews for a limited duration every Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, under UN supervision. Jews and Muslims share so many prophets and so much of history/theology, why can they not share shrines associated with the common prophets? The proposition sounds absurd in today's hate-filled ambience. But a process of sharing and syncretism is the only way forward to a durable peace. The alternative is bleak—artificially brokered peace agreements punctuated by mutual slaughter.

## **Conclusion**

Since the assassination of PM Yitzak Rabin in 1995, the Israeli religious Right has gained control. There is a hard line swing in mood of the Israeli electorate. Jewish extremists have been in the forefront of the settlement activity that is dotting the landscape of the occupied Palestinian territory. Such activities



have cut the ground under the Palestinian moderates, and extremists are becoming stronger by the day.

A comprehensive peace settlement, with mutual recognition of Palestinian and Israeli states, was within grasp under the parameters of the Oslo accord. But that accord itself had been relegated to the background by Ariel Sharon and Co. The Israeli religious Right, presently the dominating group, does not appear to be interested in a just peace. They seem to think that with overwhelming superiority of military power and American backing, with unending attrition and constriction of the living space (*Lebensraum*, to use the notorious German word) of the Palestinians, they can eventually force the Palestinians to concede the "Temple Mount" the site of the Al Aqsa mosque. *"There is no other explanation of the Israeli behaviour in the last decade"*. Religious reform in Saudi Arabia and other neighbouring Arab states will help fulfil the nefarious design of Israel and ensure its security—this seems to be the underlying scheme of the American contingency plan. In my opinion this is dangerous thinking because it will only prolong the conflict and make the world a very unsafe place. It will fuel Islamic terrorism all over the world more and more.

Pakistan deliberately equates the Kashmiri separatism-cum-terrorism with the Palestinian freedom struggle. It does so with facile and superficial arguments and regularly equates India with Israel as oppressor states. India has been rebutting these arguments by words and deeds, such as holding free elections, spending enormously on development etc. so far quite successfully. But at this juncture if India joins hands with Israel and America to form an axis, the bottom will fall out of her morally justified and carefully constructed position. It will lead to ideological confusion and may cause loss of support to India's counter-insurgency efforts in Kashmir, both at home and abroad.

In the short run Israeli and American military cooperation may help India, but eventually India will end up losing her image of a country of tolerance and justice, a country that upholds democracy and human rights. India must fight Muslim separatism with all her military might, but must not taint herself with the Israeli brush, for that will compromise the main themes of her civilisation—justice syncretism and respect for other people's

cultures. In the long run, military strength alone will not suffice, India needs to win the hearts and minds also in order to win peace.

Real politic, however, is necessary. We should never lose sight of one fact—Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's unqualified support to the Pakistani case on Kashmir. (It is Saddam Hussein of Iraq who always sided with India on Kashmir, at least in words if not in action.) The present situation does give India considerable diplomatic leverage. If she plays her cards well, she should be able to get Arafat to resile from his previous position and rescind his support to Pakistan on Kashmir. If India's Foreign Office succeeds in getting such a statement from Arafat, President Mushrraf's rhetoric—the Kashmiris are engaged in a freedom struggle just as the Palestinians—will sound hollow. We should demand Arafat's neutrality in clearest terms. That is a price we must extract from the Palestinians for our consistent moral support to their cause.

Our policy-makers, so far, seem to be blissfully unaware of the secret agenda of Israel—the Temple on the Mount. They have not seen through the Israeli charade of hopping from one peace agreement to the next. Each time the Israelis sabotage a holding agreement by unilateral aggressive action, on some pretext or another. This time it was the Palestinians terrorists regrouping under the cover of the peace agreement. They are deliberately destroying the present agreement because this-so-called 'road map' stops far short of the Temple Mount. All the agreements entered so far by the Israelis are fodder only for world public opinion. These are meant to continue the façade of Israel being the victim and as such eagerly calling for peace. Given the supportive role of the powerful Western news media, they have succeeded admirably so far. The hidden agenda of the Temple Mount is talked about only inside Israel.

Indian policy-makers have to strike a proper balance in determining Indian's relations with the Palestinians without caring for any reciprocity on their part. Now we seem to be on the brink of swinging to the other extreme. We have little to chose between Jewish and Muslim extremism that are two sides of the same coin. We should have bilateral relations with each Israel, Palestine and America but never form an axis with any of them. †

# A WORD ABOUT THE REVEALER OF THE QUR'AN<sup>1</sup>

M. Manzoor Nomani

It is, generally agreed that in the sixth century of the Christian era, the whole world was immersed in moral gloom and spiritual torpor. The torch of heavenly guidance had been extinguished. Europe was steeped in the darkness of the Middle Ages. Iran and its dependencies were caught in the tempest of the Mazakite Movement which had played havoc with the nobler values of life and reduced man to a beast. In India, the Puranic Age was in its prime. By all accounts, it marked the most woeful phase in the long and chequered history of the land. The condition of the other parts of the known world was no less deplorable.

Situated, so to speak, in the heart of the world was the Peninsula of Arabia. Owing to the centrality of its geographical position it was known, in the olden days as the "navel of the world". The whole country was devoid of the light of spiritual guidance, learning and civilization. The sixth century A.D., found the Arabs plunged in depravity, perversion and idolatry. Instead of one God, innumerable deities and images of stone were worshipped and human sacrifice was prevalent. The House of Ka'aba, built by the Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ismael) with their own hands for the worship of the Almighty, had been turned into a huge idol temple. The law of the jungle prevailed everywhere. There was not even the semblance of a Government. Murder, infanticide and robbery were the pride of the Arabs. Daughters were buried alive at birth. Social debasement and lewdness had become the rule so that people performed naked the ritual of circumambulation around the Ka'aba. In many tribes the eldest son took the widows of his father as his wives. There was no material well-being either. Many people were driven by poverty to live on carrion and insects.

It was in these circumstances, and in the midst of these people, that a child was born, exactly fourteen hundred years ago.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> these lines were written specially for the English edition.

<sup>2</sup> According to the well-known biographer of the holy Prophet, Qazi Sulaiman Mansurpuri, he was born on April 22, 571 A.D. Incidentally, today, when these lines are being written the date is 22nd April, 1971. Thus, on this day exactly fourteen hundred years have elapsed since the birth of the sacred Prophet.

at Mecca, in the respectable Banu Hashim family of the Quraish tribe. The child was born an orphan, as his father had died while he was still in the mother's womb. The widowed mother brought him up. When he was six years old, the mother, too, died, and, thereafter, his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, took care of him. But Abul Muttalib's guardianship was to last only for two years. When the child was in the eighth year of his life his grandfather, also, passed away, and his uncle, Abu Talib, took him under his affectionate protection. The child was named Mohammad which means 'The Praised one', i.e. one who is worthy of praise due to his natural disposition, character and attainments.

Education in those days was not common among the Arabs. Very few people knew the arts of reading and writing. So Mohammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) also remained unlettered. But he had other special virtues but did not have any of the vices that were prevalent in his city. God had saved him from all bad practices.

As the Prophet grew up, he thought of earning his own livelihood so that the burden of his maintenance might not fall on his uncle who already had a large family to support and was not rich. He chose trade, which was the family profession, but due to paucity of funds he could not set up his own business. He began to work in partnership with others. He provided the labour while they provided the money. Soon his reputation for honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness spread and the people of Mecca gave him the title of Al-Amin, meaning 'The trusted one'. Whoever came into contact with him was impressed by his good manners and perfect moral attributes.

In Mecca and belonging to the tribe of the Quraish, there lived a lady, a rich widow, called Khudaija. She had her own business, and, also, did trade in partnership with other people by advancing them money. She was very intelligent and possessed a noble character. The Prophet, also, had done some business for her and she was well pleased with his honesty, justice and high morals. Though the lady was about forty years old and the Prophet was only twenty five and she, also, had children from her earlier marriages, she wanted to marry him. The marriage between the Prophet and Hazart Khudija, thus, took place.

After the marriage. The Prophet was released of the need

to make a living. He begun to devote more and more time to the service of the people, specially of the weak and the downtrodden, and to the establishment of peace and order in the land. Life went on like that and people had, generally, come to love and admire him for his impeccable morals, righteousness and solicitude for the poor till in the fortieth year of his life, an extraordinary change came over the Prophet. He was seized with an overpowering desire to spend his time in prayer and meditation at some secluded place far away from everyone.

Very often the Prophet would walk to a mountain, on the outskirts of Mecca, and go to a cave called Hira. He would take his food with him and stay there for a week. At the end of the week he would come home and return to the cave after replenishing his meagre provisions.

Till then the Prophet had not attained the knowledge of God, of His Being and Attributes, which was later vouchsafed to him through Divine inspiration, and no particular mode of worship, also, had been taught to him. But he possessed that undefinable awareness of God and eagerness to earn His nearness and good favour which was expected of an earnest seeker of truth, blessed with a noble character, a refined soul and an accordance with his inner inclination and aptitude.

The Prophet was now in his fortieth year. One day in the month of Ramzan, while he was in the Hira Cave, a strange thing happened and he returned home, pale and trembling, as if he was stricken with fear or high fever. On arriving, he said to his wife, Hazrat Khudaija, "Cover me with thick cloth, Cover me with the thick cloth."

When the Prophet recovered from the shock he told his wife everything that had happened to him, the visit by the heavenly angel in the Cave, the way he had conveyed to him the Divine Word and made him repeat it and the tremendous strain the whole experience had put on his heart and soul.

Being the mature and very wise that she was, Hazrat Khudaija encouraged the Prophet and assured him that God would not fail an honest and just man like him who helped the poor, and the orphaned and did nothing to hurt his fellow men. She, then, took him to her uncle, named Waraka bin Nofel, who had forsaken the Paganish beliefs much earlier and embraced Christian-

ity. Waraka was a blind old man. He had studied the holy scriptures of the Torah and the Bible, and, also, translated them into Arabic.

When Hazrat Khudaija told his uncle what had happened to the Prophet in the Cave, his face shone with joy and he exclaimed "By the Divine Power that holds my life, to Mohammad has come the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit which brings the Divine message and commands to the Prophets. It appears that God has chosen you, O Mohammad, for the lofty mission of Apostleship. Listen carefully: your community will turn against you. It will persecute you and drive you away". In the end, Waraka said sorrowfully, "I wish I was alive and strong at that time and could help you with all my power".

This was the beginning of the ministry of the sacred Prophets.

Upto that time the Prophet had been leading a clean and spotless life of moral rectitude and social service. But, by nature, he was a man of few words and loved solitude. During those days the Arabs had a passion for poetry, but the Prophet did not take an interest in it also. He never appeared before the public as a poet or an orator. As a reformer, too, he did not start any movement or launch a struggle for the moral upliftment of his people. He had never said a word, during all those forty years, on Revelation and Apostleship, Resurrection and Afterlife, and Faith and Divine Law. He did not give any guidance to his community on political, economic or sociological problems. In sum, till age of forty, he had not given the faintest indication of being interested in such matters or possessing even a rudimentary knowledge of them.

But in the forty-first year of his life, after the event of Cave Hira, he was suddenly transformed. It appeared that a new spirit had come to dwell in him. He was a changed man now. He said to his people, "Inspiration has come to me from God, and He has entrusted me with the mission of His Apostleship as He once had Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ismael), Ishaq (Issac), Yaqoob (Jacob) and Yusuf (Joseph), and, then, Moosa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus).

He told them that the One God, and no one aside of Him, was the Creator and Sustainer of the Whole universe. He was

free from every kind of blemish. All the attributes of Greatness and Perfection were assembled in Him. He alone was worthy of worship and obedience. Life and death, health and sickness, and riches and poverty, in short, all kinds of good and evil, and gain and loss, lay solely in His hands. No one was like Him, His co-equal or partner. He was without a similitude. The gods and goddesses that were worshipped besides and regarded as dispensers of needs had nothing in their power. To worship them, or anyone apart from Him, was a fatal sin and an unpardonable crime. Hence, they should worship the One God and associate no one with Him. He, alone, was to be worshipped and to Him prayers and supplications were to be addressed. They should love Him wholly and in all conscience. This command was for him, for them, and for everyone.

He, also, told his people, and tried to the utmost to convince them that the world in which they lived was not a permanent one. It was not to endure forever. Just as everyone who was born was destined to die, after completing the allotted span of life, the entire world, too, would be destroyed one day at the command of God. That will be the Last Day. Then God, by His power, will raise up the dead again and bring another world, the world of the Hereafter, into existence in which men will be requited for the good or evil they might have done during their earthly sojourn. Those who will have led a life of piety and believed in God and obeyed His commands will be rewarded in the world to come with His choicest favours and blessings while those will have denied their Lord and transgressed against His laws and spent their days in folly and neglect will be caught in a dreadful chastisement.

After it, the Prophet informed them in detail about the rights of God on His servants and the rights of His servants on each other. He exhorted them to cultivate piety and a good moral disposition and to avoid wicked and shameful things and warned them against the evil sequel of perversion and immorality.

In the same way, he conveyed to them the guidance of God with regard to trade commerce, occupation and employment and all other monetary dealings and transactions and explained to them what was fair and legitimate, and what was otherwise in those spheres.

The Prophet, also, told his people about the allowed and the forbidden articles of food and drink. He did not stop merely at exhortation and elucidation but these things became the sole mission and purpose of his life. The anxiety for the propagation of those truths and the moral and spiritual upliftment of the Arabs and the whole of mankind became so great with him that nothing else could hold his interest. He kept himself occupied with his work his work day and night and, also, prayed to God from the depth of his heart that his people would wake up and realise the truth.

As a consequence of preaching his mission, the Prophet had to bear tremendous hardships. He was tortured and persecuted. The Prophet and his family were boycotted, socially and economically, for three long years. Guards were posted on all sides so that the supplies of food clothing could not reach them. But the Prophet bore it all with patience and an iron will and did not slacken his efforts. He did not make a compromise with his enemies and prayed to God even more fervently for his people.

Those among the Arabs in whose souls an element of virtue was present and who possessed, in some degree, the capacity to respond to the call of faith accepted his mission, in ones and twos, and they, too, became the targets of persecution. It continued in that way for about twelve years till the Prophet was forced by Pagans to leave Mecca. It had become impossible for him to carry out the duty of preaching the Divine faith in his own city.

The Prophet, thereupon, migrated to Medina, at the command of God, which now became the capital of Islam. On reaching there, the mission of Apostleship began to be fulfilled with greater enthusiasm, and, by the grace of the Lord, the pace of the acceptance of the Divine Call was also very much accelerated.

Within a short time a wonderful system of Government was established in Medina. It was a unique arrangement in which there was no regular army or police force. No one was an authorised functionary of the state and yet everyone was its functionary. All the functions of the Government were discharged by the Muslims who performed their duties without remuneration or an official designation. They did it solely for the sake of God and in the hope earning His reward and good pleasure.

The new type of Government, founded by the Prophet



Mohammad, showed to the world how the work of the State could be carried out and administrative functions performed in an ideal manner, without an army or an exchequer. It had to go to war against the enemies, and these wars can still serve, in many ways, as perfect models of warfare for mankind. It also, entered into treaties, made covenants and levied taxes from which much can be learnt even today.

After the Migration, the Prophet lived in this world only for ten years. In this short period almost the whole of Arabia had come under the sway of Islam and a large part of its population had embraced the Divine faith. Tens of thousands of persons who were sunk in idolatry, devil-worship and fetishness and to whom the life to come and retribution for good and evil as motives of action were practically unknown became, in the Prophet's company and through his guidance, such immaculate specimens of humanity that the like of them cannot be found in the annals of our race. Not individuals but the whole nation was awakened from slumber and it sprang into a new and earnest life of faith and uprightness.

All this was accomplished within the short space of ten—or, if the earlier phase of the Prophet's Ministry in Mecca is also included, twenty-two years by a man about whom it is known that he was illiterate and never had the benefit of the society of wise and godly men, and who was neither a poet nor an orator nor had he up to the age of forty, given an indication of the ability for leadership and organization. Those, again, were the days when the press, the radio, and other modern media of mass communication did not exist. The question, now, is how was this miracle, this most stupendous revolution in history was brought about by the agency of this individual?

This venerated servant of the Lord used to declare in a frank and straightforward manner that there really was nothing in him. He would say, "I am the son of a poor Quraish woman and I am also illiterate. I can neither read nor write. Whatever I tell about God, his Being, Nature, Attributes and Oneness, and about the Last Day, the After-life and Heaven and Hell, and the Laws I formulate regarding the various branches of life; in fact, whatever I preach, instruct or enjoin is not of my own volition or understanding but from the Lord who is the Creator and Cherisher

of the world. He has raised me up as His Messenger so that I may convey His guidance to you and serve among you as His Apostle” He recited a message, a communication which was the source and spring head of the guidance. There was a marvellous charm and appeal in it. Though it was in Arabic, which was the language of the land, it was supremely original and unique. Even the critics and opponents were impressed by it and called it magic. But its revealer insisted that it was not of his composition or authorship but the Word of God which had been inspired to him. It was the command and guidance for him in the same way as it was for others and the whole of humanity. This was the Quran, the Last of the Divine Scriptures.

The Quran is still present among us in its original form, intact and unsullied. A seeker of Truth can even today conclude for himself, by bestowing a little thought on it, that it could definitely not be the work of a human mortal.

What has been said in the Quran on subjects like the Nature and Attributes of God constitutes the highest degree of awareness which no man, of whatever merit or ability, can attain without Divine inspiration. Similarly, the way transcendental truths, such as, Resurrection and Futurity are expounded in it positively beyond the reach of human intellect and reasoning. The teachings of the Quran concerning the other spheres of life, also, are a class by themselves. These precepts are wholly sufficient for the guidance of mankind, in spite of all the changes that have taken place, or may take place, in the world we live in. about them it is, indeed, impossible to imagine that they are the product of a human mind, much less of the mind of a person like Mohammad bin Abdullah (peace and Blessings on the Lord be upon whom).

In fine, the Quran itself is the proof of its Divine Origin, of its being the word of God, and Guidance for mankind from Him, and of the fact that its revealer and interpreter, Prophet Mohammad, is among His true Apostles.

May Allah guide our steps and show us the straight path, the path of those upon whom is His favour. ✚

# RESURGENCE OF MUSLIM IS THE GOD'S WILL

S.M.Rabey H.Nadwi

*The following is a presentation of speech delivered by Maualna Syed Mohammad Rabey Hasani Nadwi, at Jamia Islamia Sultanpur, expounding various problems confronting the millat and the factors aggravating the same.*

The system and functions of the entire universe are ordained by God and are under His direct control. The essential requirement for initiating and promulgation of a pure, pious order of life was that the minds of the target population be uncontaminated and free of any predilections. At the time of emergence of Islam, the civilized world was ruled by two powerful kingdoms, Rome and Sasanians (present day Iran), both endowed with quality culture, knowledge and wisdom, military power (much akin to USA and USSR of our times). Arabs, bereft of and totally uninitiated to any of such qualities, dwelt in a different territory, in a state of disarray.

This deprivation rendered them as a clean slate upon which original words of advice, guidance and exhortation to positive action, could be inscribed, without having to eradicate too many pre-conceived notions. This coupled with their natural valour and willingness for vigorous action, marked them out as an ideal repository for a new, righteous way of life. They embraced the divine order, Islam, and became the pioneers for its magnificent uprising.

By virtue of untiring devotion and a burning zeal, the Arabs, within a period of two hundred years, became a highly enlightened race and a force to reckon with. So much so, that for over seven hundred years no other nation could consider itself their equal. Till this day, a vast and rich store house of knowledge in the world owes its origin and existence to Muslims, specially the Arabs. Genesis of this lofty status lay in a simple and pious way of life.

Complacency precedes decline as a natural phenomenon.

Muslims, ensconsed in a false notion that their status, attained through glorious deeds of their ancestors, would sustain forever, let things drift. As is the law of nature, absence of improvement led to deterioration. As of now, Muslims are one of the most retarded lots as far as education, scientific advancement, social, cultural values, political and military power are concerned. The essence of Islam lies in learning whereas its followers now neglect this aspect to a limit.

The orchestrated efforts of current world powers and media are focussed at depriving the Muslim of proper education and block whatever little opportunities are left with them. Media, specially concentrate on further degradation of moral and culture of Muslim through meticulously designed programmes. Media all over the globe almost, is controlled by Jews who have a firm grip over the economy also. The basic and important reason is the total devotion and zest of their youth to educational advancement and acquisition of knowledge.

Our government is based on secularism and as a logical sequence, system of education should be secular. Ground reality is quite something else. Under such an environment, our efforts should be directed to provide at least basic knowledge to the young in a manner which would ingrain in their minds the true message God and teaching of the holy Prophet (pbuh) so that the survival of Islam and a righteous mode life on earth is ensured. As it is, we have not been able to take care of Urdu language, which is a serious matter and should be paid due attention to.

That the world media and literature are going whole hog to present Muslims as a retrograde, destructive and subversive people, while, at the same, time suppressing the noble and virtuous traits, can be gauged to a great extent by two examples. One illustrates a subtle and other a blatant exercise:

A Western writer, in his book, eulogised the deeds and character of the holy Prophet (pbuh) describing him (pbuh), as a noble soul yet, side by side, presenting him (pbuh) as a great leader, devoted exclusively to the cause of Arabs. A lay reader would not be in a position to unravel the camouflage designed to pass over the role of prophet (pbuh) as the messenger of truth and peace for the whole world.

The other example is of a blatant attempt to belittle the

Muslims. A congregation of Muslims in Calcutta (now Kolkatta) actually attended by seven lakhs, was reported in an English daily as consisting of a mere few hundreds.

In fact such gimmicks are a global phenomenon, while there is no media under Muslim control or ownership which could counter such vendetta and also bring before the world the true and real image of Islam.

The rationalists have postulated physical theories for the earthquake which occurred in Gujrat in not too distant past, but a discerning mind would know that basically such a scourge is the expression of God's displeasure. When God designated the human being as his vicegerent on earth, the angels, ignorant beyond what had been revealed to them by the Almighty objected, and it was Adam who was gifted with a vast knowledge, by the Creator, at the very outset.

It is the bounden duty of Muslims allover the world, to re-learn the lesson of the original message and the last revelation for leading a life in accordance with God's commandments and along the path marked by his chosen messenger (pbuh). There in lies the one and only way for regaining the lost glory.

Some indications are evident of steps having moved in the right direction. Future action and hope for revival are the responsibly of the coming generations as the present one is on the way out. God helps those who help themselves, in the first instance. □

# **A LAST FRIDAY OF RAMDHAN AT TAKIA RAIBARELI**

**Baha-ud-din**

*A leaf from the diary of Mr. Baha-ud-din Hyderabadí 27<sup>th</sup>  
day of Ramadhan 1400 AH. August 10, 1980 CE.*

It was the last Friday of Ramzan 1400 AH (August 1980CE) holy moth. Our information was that on such occasions, the mosque at Takia Raibareli is jam-packed, what with devotees from all neighbouring area converging there. The congregational prayers were led by Maulana Saeed-ur-Rahman Nadwi Azmi, who also delivered the Khutba (Sermon). His style has a marked resemblance to that of Imam-e-Haram (the prayer leader at Kaaba) and one does feel transported, mentally, to the holiest of holies.

Prayer was followed by an announcement for an address by Maulana Ali Miyan, who adorned the pulpit after a short while.

Hazrat Maulana began with recitation to the glory of God and a verse from the holy Quran. His address, based principally, on the exegesis and elucidation of the Quranic verse, contained a message which ran as follows:

The present world scenario is very much akin to a dark rainy night with visibility almost nil, each step fraught with the risk of collision or a fall into an abyss. The entire humanity, with their hearts and minds saturated with falsehood, fraud, deceit, corruption, nepotism and engaged in nefarious acts, is blinded by the alluring glow of modern culture. There is not just the danger but an eagerness to dive into a quagmire of stink and filth. The participants in the race are not just the uneducated ignorant but also the so-called highly enlightened and emancipated who, in fact are ahead in the rush for the fire of hell. Forbidding efforts of a minority seem to be of no avail.

Even a transient luminiscence of truth can light up the path and by guiding the human race of to the correct direction, could prevent the fall into a stinking abyss or the blazing inferno.

Conditions obtaining just before the holy prophet (pbuh), conferred with the divine eternal message for the whole world, brought and spread the luminescence of truth and peace, were

much like the present day. This message it was that rescued the world from the ultimate calamity, the fire of hell. Wherever the glow of Islam reached, the world underwent a sea change. It is by dint of this guidance thanks to the Almighty, that we all here are a part of the noble clan (*ummah*). Hardly any effort is needed to discern that had it not been for the guidance by the holy prophet (pbuh) and spread of the divine light, all humanity would be doomed to hell. Those not walking in God's commandments and not following the path prescribed by the holy prophet (pbuh) unwittingly may be, could end up as faggot for hell fire.

As a contemporary example, Maulana referred to the flood raging currently, in Raibareli area, which had everyone, even the authorities, worried. Comparing the situation to the deluge of sins about to submerge the whole world and appearance of the messenger of God (pbuh) at that juncture as the saviour of humanity, he extolled the gifts conferred by God upon the world. The gifts comprise namaz, zakat, roza, hajj and the holy Quran which is a universal and eternal as also the ultimate guidance.

During the month of Ramzan, he explained, everyone leads a righteous life, abstaining from even the most minor vice, but the holy month shall pass. The lesson learnt should be to continue to live in the same way thereafter also. Reverting back to a casual way of life would be tantamount to having been rescued from the fury of hell by God but rejecting the amnesty and sauntering off along a wayward sinful life. Adherence to the path of righteousness holds promise of prizes and rewards from the Almighty.

Dwelling upon the benefits and pleasure of observing fast, Maulana quoted the example of a military doctor who was oblivious to most tenets of religion but observed fast (*roza*) regularly. Queried about the anomaly, the doctor explained that the pleasure experienced at the breaking of fast outmatched the most sumptuous of feasts. One can imagine the rewards for a life-long fast (abstinence from ill-deeds), which shall include a goblet filled from *hauz-e-kousar* and proffered to the deserving by the holy prophet (pbuh) himself.

At any Iftar party by a wealthy and highly placed person, high quality, mouth-watering fare is served. Can one comprehend the taste and quality of bounties gifted by God on the day of

judgement to the selected ones.

The discourse was followed by a palacation to the Almighty, with great devotion, humility and tearful eyes.

A day earlier, Maulana Shahbaz Islahi, a highly learned person, with a gift for spell-binding speech, had delivered a sermon on the importance of service to and care of parents in their old age. His discourse ran as follows: initially the parents devote attention, care and love to their children and spare no effort in bringing them up to a stage of maturity. Similar devotion then became due the parents in old age. Under such conditions, the aged ones tend to develop brittle nerves and frayed temper, with a sense of being neglected. Their demands are sometimes apparently unreasonable and the grown up children feel pestered. They should, however, in no case show resentment and realize that the idiosyncracies are the outcome of a feeling of having outlived their utility. God has explicitly ordered the able and grown up children to bear all with utmost care, considering that the opportunity to look after and care for the parents is a great gift from God, the reward for which is immeasurable. So much so that the children should not even speak to the aged parents in a harsh or loud tone.

The reward is reserved for the Day of Judgments. ✦



*Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi:*

## **THE MAN & HIS MISSION**

**Saiyid Hamid\***

Dr Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi, who used to occupy a central position with regard to Muslim affairs in Uttar Pardesh, has left a void by his untimely demise. He was a man of steadfast courage and unassailable integrity.

One of Dr. Qureishi's major achievements was in the field of Deeni Talim. He was associated with this significant and broad-based movement from its very inception. As is widely known Mr Adeel Abbasi of Basti decided to give grounding to Muslim children in the basics of their religion. The major hurdle was lack of resources. He struck on a novel idea which developed at once into a resource mobilisation drive and a system of primary education that combined religious and secular subjects. He appealed to kisans in his district that every woman householder be persuaded to save one fistful of atta to fund Deeni Talim every time a meal was prepared. The appeal fired the imagination of the people and brought forth a splendid response. The catchment area was gradually enlarged to embrace the entire state and occasionally to spill over into the neighbouring states. Thousands of primary schools came to be opened. A Deeni Talimi Council was established to oversee the network of Deeni Talimi institutions. It has ever since been in full and effective operation. It has ensured a happy blend of religious and secular education at a stage where foundations are laid.

Deeni Talimi Council had the benefit of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali's stewardship. But the power behind the throne most of the time was Dr Mohd Istiaq Husain Qureishi who brought to bear on this task his outstanding managerial qualities.

The Presidential addressed delivered year after year by Maulana Ali Mian of august memory, have been recently published by Mr Masud-ul-Hasan Usmani under the evocative title *Takbeer-e-Musalsal*. These addresses have comprehensive dimensions and cover the important issues facing the Muslim community not only in matters academic but also in other vital domains.

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\*Chancellor, Hamdard University, New Delhi.

Dr Qureishi played an equally significant role in mainstream education. He opened and managed two schools, one for girls, another for boys. The former has blossomed forth as a model madrasa for the education of our daughters.

Another, although allied, area of his endeavour was the monitoring of the state government's educational policy in so far as it affected the minorities. With the assistance of his colleagues he had timely corrections made in the curriculum whenever-and that was quite frequently-matters hurtful to Muslim sentiments were injected into it. As secretary of the UP Association of Minority Managed Institutions he rendered yeoman service in securing recognition for minority managed institutions. He also took up effectively with the state government the cause of Urdu with particular reference to the appointment of teachers and translators and recognition of Urdu as second official language in the state of its birth. It was only recently that he went up to the Allahabad High Court protesting against the unconstitutional exclusion by the state government of Urdu as medium of instruction.

Dr Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi played a key role in the movement for restoration of the minority character of the Aligarh Muslim University (1965-1980). He continued till the very last to take an active, informed and reformatory interest in the affairs of his alma mater.

Yet another area of his diverse activities was journalism. He was the founder editor of the Urdu weekly paper Nedai Millat which voiced with courage and clarity his policy, and his views. He was known for his bold and courageous espousal of worthy causes and his unflinching condemnation of erratic and time-serving behaviour of some of the leaders of the community. He was widely respected for the clarity and probity of his approach. He never minced his words in a milieu where expediency and palatability ruled the roost.

Dr Qureishi had roaring practice as a homoeopath but with his excellent management of time he could attend to most of the pressing problems of his community. For quite sometime he was the right hand man of Maulana Ali Mian who had respect for his usually unerring and ever unbiased counsel. This writer had the privilege of working with him in a number of areas.

One of Dr Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi's undying regrets was the failure of Muslim leadership to bring the weaker sections particularly the Dalits closer to themselves.

He was one the founding Directors of the Nation and the World. He made, in concert with the present writer, valiant effort at Resource Mobilisaion for a projected English daily. Alas, these efforts met a very marginal success and ended up with the fortnightly magazine. Dr Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi's persistence in quest of constructive work was in refreshing contrast to the fanfare which often envelops people aspiring for recognition and renown.

The staff and readers of the Nation and the World mourn the demise of the great benefactor of this journal and pray that his ardently restless soul may now rest in peace. ✦

*Al Maqdisi:*  
**THE GEOGRAPHER OF  
ISLAM**

Ilyas Fernini

Al-Muqaddasi, or Al-Maqdisi, originally from Al-Quds, Jerusalem, hence his name, is by far one of the most instructive of all early Islamic writers on the society of Islam. His works, generally, can be found under the subject of geography.

At-Muqaddasi, whose real name was Shams al-Din Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abi Bakr al Banna al Shamsi al Maqadisi al Bashasari was born in Bayt al-Maqdis in 946 A.D and died towards the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Geographer, cartographer, Al-Muqaddasi spent most of his life in Al-Quds, then travelled throughout other Islamic lands, excepting only al-Andulus, Sindh, and Sijistan (Southern Afghanistan). He also visited Sicily. As a geographer, he was unsatisfied with the works of his predecessors. He, therefore, planned a work of wider scope, designed to meet the needs and requirements of a wider audience (other than specific rulers), merchants, travellers and people of culture. Of geography, he wrote that, "it is a science in which kings and nobles take a keen interest, while the judges and the jurists seek it and the common people and the leaders love it."

Al-Muqaddasi's view of the subject, embraced a variety of topics, including various sects and schisms, trade and commerce, weights and measures, customs and traditions, coinage and monetary systems, and languages and dialects, and to all these subjects he brought a critical mind and narrative and investigative skills.

Although al-Muqaddasi brought a new aim to geography, his method was that of the Balkhi school of whom the chief adherents were al-Balkhi, al-Istikhari (who lived in the first half of the tenth century), and Ibn Hawqal (who compiled his geographical work in A.D. 97). The Balkhi geographers limited their descriptive writing to the Islamic empire and attempted to align their geographical concepts with those of the Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. His great geographical compen-

dium, the *Kitaab Ahsan al Taqasim fi Ma'rifaat Al-aqalim* (The Best Division for Knowledge of Regions), which he completed in Shiraz in A.D.985, would indicate, among other things, that he was knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence and was a follower of the Hanafi school of Islamic law. Latin, English, French and Urdu editions of this compendium exist in Leiden (1906), Calcutta (1897-1910), Damascus (1963), and Delhi (1962), respectively.

Al-Muqaddasi began his *Kitab ahsan al taqasim* with general remarks on a number of subjects, among them seas and rivers, place names and their variants (including names common to more than one place); the special characteristics of various regions; the sects of Islam, the non-Muslim inhabitants of the Islamic world; personal travel narratives; and sections entitled places about which there are differences of opinion, Epitome for the Jurists and World Aqalim and the position of the Qibla. These introductory passages embody some of Al-Muqaddasi's innovations; he was, for example, the first Arab geographer to determine and standardize the meanings and connotations of Arabic geographical terms, and the first to provide a list of towns and others features for quick reference. Al-Muqaddasi considered the Islamic world to be non-symmetrical, but rather irregular in shape. He divided this world into fourteen regions (aqalim), of which designated six-the 'Island of Arabia' namely Iraq (southern Mesopotamia), al-Sham (Syria), Misr (Egypt), and al-Maghrib-as Arab. The remaining eight-al Mashriq (the kingdom of the Samanids), al-Daylam (Gilan and the mountainous regions east of the Caspian Sea), al-Rahab (Azerbaijan, Arran, and Armenia), al-Jibal (ancient Media), Khuzistan (the area south of Media and east of Mesopotamia), Faras (ancient Persia), Kirman (the region to the south of Faras), and al-Sindh-he called 'Ajam, Persian. Each of these districts, it may be noted, is demarcated by well-defined physical boundaries, which he took into account. In commenting upon them, he further divided his remarks on each region into two sections, one of which was dedicated to physical features, toponymy and political subdivisions, while the other contained a discussion of general features.

Al-Muqaddasi drew a map of each iqlim, indicating regional boundaries and trade routes in red, sandy areas in yellow, salt seas in green, rivers in blue, and mountains in ochre, Al-

though most of the maps have been lost, it is possible to reconstruct them to some degree by considering those made by other geographical scholars of the Balkhi school, the conventions of which al-Muqaddasi again followed (although his book suggests that he specifically disagreed with some of the maps drawn by al-Balkhi). The world maps of this school are round, showing the land mass enriched by an ocean flow, almost meeting at the Isthmus of Suez. The boundaries of various aqalim are then shown within the land mass. Because of this high degree of stylization, these maps are less accurate than the more detailed maps of specific regions, which conform more closely to the geographers, descriptions and since the maps that al-Muqaddasi drew for the Kitab Ahsan al-Ta'asim were of the latter type, some fair amount of accuracy may be assumed. Al-Muqaddasi's book is also notable for its literary style. He wrote in an ornamental and varied manner, occasionally framing his comments in rhymed prose (saz). He used the local dialect of each region in describing it, or, when he did not do so, he explained using the Syrian dialect that was native to him. Through this initiation, the language of his section on al Mashriq is the most rhetorical not since the people of this area were perfect in Arabic, but because the language of the people of Egypt and al Maghrib was weak and unadorned, that of the inhabitants of al-Bata'ih (the swamps of Iraq) ugly, so, too, is the language in which al-Muqaddasi wrote of them.

(Courtesy: Young Muslim Digest  
October 2003)

# **LORDING IT OVER**

**Susannah Turbush**

The events of September 11 have put British Muslims in the spotlight as never before. Lord Nazir Ahmed, the first male Muslim member of the House of Lord talks about the problems of the British Muslim community.

In the four year since Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham became the first male Muslim member of the House of Lord, the Muslim community in Britain has faced profound challenges. Even before 9/11 British Muslims suffered widespread discrimination, deprivation and alienation, as was highlighted in the 1997 Runnymede report on Islamophobia.

.In summer 2001 social deprivation and provocation by far-right groups helped trigger serious riots involving Muslim in Bradford, Oldham and other cities in the north of England.

The events of September 11 put British Muslims in the spotlight as never before. Attacks on Muslims and mosques have intensified, and questions have been raised about their loyalty as British citizens. Tough new anti-terror laws have led to some non-British Muslims being held without charge in British jails. Since September 11 Lord Ahmed has consistently spoken in the House of Lords and elsewhere on the need for tolerance, coexistence and Muslim unity. In a speech to a seminar on Peace, Jihad and Conflict Resolution at Georgetown University in early November 2002 he said: 'The backlash as a result of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and in Bali, Indonesia, represents a new challenge for the international Muslim community, but particularly for Muslims living in the West'.

"The need to unite and end the internal bickering that has seen our community fragment over the years is now more necessary than ever. We must re-establish our identity, not just for ourselves but also for the world, which has for too long misunderstood the meaning of Islam."

In his speech at the seminar which was sponsored by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Islamic Educa-

tional, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Lord Ahmed said the "War against terrorism" has specific reference to what is seen as an "Islamic threat" and "with our Muslim brothers and sisters increasingly becoming targets for hostility and resentment around the world we should gain strength from each other to overcome this wave of anger."

He called on Muslims to integrate into mainstream society, while maintaining their Muslim identity. Muslims have a duty to be present and active in all spheres of public life. "The need for continued interfaith and intercultural dialogue is essential."

Looking back, it seems unbelievable that until Labour came to power in its landslide electoral victory of 1997 Britain's Muslim population had no representation in either of the houses of parliament despite numbering up to 2 million people.

Those general elections brought the first Muslim MP, Mohammad Sarwar, to the House of Commons. Prime Minister Tony Blair's appointment of the first two Muslim peers, Lord Nazir Ahmed and Baroness Pola Uddin, in 1998 was seen as a welcome sign that the Labour government was determined to give Muslims a greater say in decision making.

Blair probably chose Nazir Ahmed as a Muslim Lord both because of his long record of activism in the Labour Party and his experience of local politics at the grassroots and for his personal qualities of energy and forthrightness.

Lord Ahmed, who is of Pakistani origin, was born in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, in 1957. He was brought up in the town of Rotherham in northern England, joined the Labour Party at the age of 18 and studied public Administration at the University of Sheffield. He became a successful businessman and property developer. At the same time he was an active local councillor; in 1990 he founded the British Muslim Councillors' Forum and in the same year he was made a Justice of the Peace. He also served as chairman of the South Yorkshire Labour Party for several years.

When Nazir Ahmed was appointed to the House of Lords, so novel was the idea of a Muslim Lord that there was no Qur'an in the House on which he could swear his oath of allegiance. He made history by bringing his own Qur'an for the swearing in ceremony, which he then donated to the House of Lords library.



Lord Ahmed recalls how a policeman on duty at the entrance to the House of Lords assumed that this dark-complexioned, black bearded, relatively young man must be making a delivery. When Lord Ahmed said he actually worked there, the policeman asked "do you work in the kitchens then?" He apologised profusely when the reply came: "I am a member of the House of Lords."

Since 1998 two more Muslims have joined the House of Lords. In January 2000 Blair appointed Lord Adam Hafajee Patel, and the following year Lords Amir Bhatia was one of 15 "people's peers" selected by the House of Lords appointments commission. There is also a fifth life peer of Muslim origin, TV magnate Lord Waheed Ahmed.

In the House of Commons, Khalid Mahmood, an adviser to Blair on Muslim issues, joined Mohammed Sarwar as a Labour MP in the 2001 general election.

Although there are now six Muslim parliamentary representatives, they do not always act as a united bloc. "I don't think there is a consensus among ourselves," Lord Ahmed told Haj & Umra magazine in an interview. Just as the Muslim community is deeply divided in terms of country of origin, and other affiliations, so the Muslim parliamentarians have diverse interests and attitudes.

Lord Ahmed is in general the most outspoken and high profile of the Muslim parliamentarians. And he has been the most willing to express concern over certain government policies, despite being a Labour peer. In December 2001 he publicly accused the government of tapping his phone and monitoring his activities because of Afghanistan.

"I made no secret that I was totally opposed to the bombing of Afghanistan and I don't think the government has done any favors to the Afghan people," he says. He points out that there has been a huge increase in heroin production in Afghanistan and that "the killing, rape and torture are still going on."

Lord Ahmed has also been on a collision course with the government over its policy on Iraq, "I'm no friend of Saddam Hussein, in fact he has done damage to Muslims and to the Iraq people. If there was magic solution that would go and take Saddam out and let the Iraqi people decide their leadership, I'd be all for

it.” Lord Ahmed says. But he is worried that “if we don’t resist this thing now, the political hawks in Washington and London” will extend this “war against terrorism” to other countries “I think it’s time for us to stand and say enough is enough- if you want to sort out these problems we are also happy to do it, but there are ways other than military force.”

Asked how an attack on Iraq is likely to impact on the Muslim community in Britain, Lord Ahmed says: “First of all, I think racism and Islamophobia will increase. There will be attacks on Muslims, but more importantly the intelligence services will be bugging phones and locking up Muslim activists and will want to recruit more people in the mosque and other centres. The Muslim community will be isolated once again and we will once more be in this vicious cycle.”

He attributes the radicalisation that has occurred in some sectors of the Muslim community to poverty, unemployment and deprivation. “I think it’s time the government faces up to the problems and challenges and admits there has been negligence on their part as far as the Muslim community’s underachievement and high unemployment is concerned. How can you blame a community when it suffers so much poverty?”

He doesn’t appreciate some of the comments made by government ministers about British Muslims. In May the then Foreign Office Minister for Europe Peter Hain blamed Muslims for not trying harder to integrate into British society, so as to end their isolation and alienation and reduce the risk of fanatical groups taking root. Lord Ahmed dismissed Hain’s remarks as “complete nonsense-I would love to debate with him.”

He takes issue with the view of Home Secretary David Blunkett that immigrants should speak English in their homes. Lord Ahmed points out that his father, uncle and “hundreds of thousands of other- Arabs, Indians, Pakistanis made a huge contribution to the British economy and social structures yet did not speak English. They worked hard, 16 and 18 hours a day, to make this country the Great Britain it is today. They didn’t need English.” Lord Ahmed is dismayed that the government’s list of proscribed organisation under anti terror legislation includes mainly Muslim groups yet ignores extremist Hindu groups. He spoke in a debate in the House of Lord in late October on an

amendment order to the Terrorism Act of 200 adding four more organisations to the 21 already proscribed Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyaf Group, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Absat al-Ansar of Lebanon.

Lord Ahmed queried whether the Uzbek and Lebanese organisations are really a danger to the British public, and then asked why certain Hindu organisations such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad (International Hindu Council or VHP), Shiv Sena, Rashtrya Swayam-Sevak Sangh (National self-defence organisation or RSS) and Bajrang Dal are not on the proscribed list. "They are involved in the murder of 6,000 Muslims in Gujarat, including at least three Britons. They have branches in the UK where they collect money."

Lord Ahmed notes that when three Britons were among the hundreds of hostages seized by Chechen rebels in Moscow theatre "the Prime Minister went on air to say he sympathised with Vladimir Putin, but when our three British Muslims were killed in Gujrat, India, we didn't even get the secretary of state to make a comment." Lord Ahmed has raised the issue of the killings in Gujarat with the government.

When asked how Muslims can become more organised, Lord Ahmed says one thing they badly need is a Muslim policy studies centre to focus on foreign affairs and strategic matters. There is also a need for training Muslims in the media, a rebuttal centre to defend Islam and a centre for the dialogue between civilisations and for peace and reconciliation.

Like many other British Muslims he is exasperated by the activities of a small number of Muslims in Britain who have often come to Britain as asylum seekers and whose threatening statements receive much coverage in the media. "These extremists give the wrong impression and give us a bad name. The media is a big business and is always looking for sensational stories and something that will enable them to blame the Muslims and Islam."

He says the Muslim World League and other organisations from the Middle East "have done a tremendous amount of work- they come here on delegations, they give lectures and talks, but nobody takes any notice of them because they are preaching harmony and coexistence, while the media is interested in sensa-

tional stories.”

Lord Ahmed says his official line is that he supports the government on almost everything domestically except for its liberalisation of the laws on homosexuality. “Generally speaking I think the Labour government had helped improve the lives of many millions of people and take them out of poverty. The economy is very strong and Britain is prospering.”

In the House of Lords Ahmed shows the same proactive attitude he did as a local councillor and he frequently contributes to debates on issues of domestic concern to British Muslims and on foreign policy issues such as Palestine, Pakistan, Chechnya and the situation in Kashmir, which is particularly close to his heart. He lobbied hard for new law to outlaw religious discrimination.

In his maiden speech to the House in October 1998 he focused on the alarmingly rapid rise in the number of Muslims in British jails and called for the government to appoint a full-time adviser on the needs of Muslim prisoners paid for out of public funds. The Home Office did appoint such an adviser the following year, and a number of other government ministries now have Muslim advisers.

He and his colleague Baroness Uddin also took a lead in government moves to outlaw forced- as- opposed to arranged- marriages. They were the chairs of the Choice by Right working group which in 2000 drafted a document which recommended that forced marriage be treated like domestic violence or child abuse. Lord Ahmed was a joint head of the first British Haj delegation, of Muslim Foreign Office officials and members of the Muslim community, to go to Makkah al-Mukarrama in 2000 to offer consular services to the around 20,000 pilgrims from the UK. The British Haj delegation is now an annual feature. ✦

(Courtesy: Haj (K.S.A.)