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The Fragrance of East

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Great influence on Human Race

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Quranic teachings gave birth to a rationalist trend in the widest sense of the term taken etymologically and historically. It made a deep impact on arts and literature and human civilization all over the world in such a way as if a new window had been opened to let in light and fresh air. Islam broke open the Jock with which human intellect had been fastened for ages by the enemies of reason, masquerading as representatives of religion.

It was then that the humanity woke up after its long sleep of several centuries, removed the hurdles placed in its way and set its foot on the road to enlightenment and progress. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"And I have prepared you for Myself. Go then, you and your brother, with My signs. And slacken not in My remembrance."³⁸ (Sura Ta-Ha 41-42)

Commentary:

It is said that here onward the verses were revealed to Musa in Egypt (Alusi and others).

Thanwi adds: This verse is the basis of the opinion that for full profit of the efforts to spread knowledge, a teacher must engage himself in plenty of *dhikr*.

Go to Fir 'awn (the two of you), indeed he has rebelled. [44] But say to him soft words,³⁹ that he might be reminded, or perchance fear."⁴⁰ (Sura Ta-Ha 43)

Commentary:

It is said that one of the latter day *Khalafa'* was doing his *Tawaf* when a scholar reproached him harshly. The *Khalifah* protested, "Look! Neither I am worse than Fir'awn nor you better than Musa. Allah said, '*But say to him, the two of you, soft words.*'" That said, there is nothing wrong in acting tough with the *proud* (Au.).

Asad comments, "... obviously (this) does not imply any 'doubt' on God's part as to Pharaoh's future reaction: it implies no more than His command to the bearer of His message to address the sinner with a view to the latter's bethinking himself; in other words, it relates to the intention or hope with which the message-bearer should approach his task (Razi)." ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said: "O people! Follow my advice concerning the kindly treatment of wives. (I charge you to treat your wives with kindness and love). The woman has been created from the rib (and the rib is curved by nature), and the greatest curve is in the upper part of it. If you try to straighten the curved rib by force, it will break, and if you leave it alone (and make no effort-to correct it), it will remain curved forever. So, follow my advice, and treat Your wives kindly and well."

- Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary: What has been said about women, in it, that they have been created from the rib-is, apparently, allegorical, and, according to Hazrat Shah Waiullah's explanation, the purport of the Tradition is that there is some natural curvedness in the nature of a woman as there is in the rib. It, further tells, that the greatest curve is in the upper part of the rib which, perhaps, denotes that the curvedness in the nature of a woman, mostly, lies in the upper part of the body, that is, the head and the tongue. It, again, is told that if an attempt is made to straighten the curved rib by force, it will break, while if it is left alone, it will remain curved permanently. Thus, whoever will try to remove the curvedness of a woman's nature by force will not only not succeed, but it may, also, end up in separation. At the sometime, if nothing is done by way of correction and reform, the curvedness will stay as it is, and the happiness and tranquillity which, is the chief purpose of matrimonial alliance will not be gained. Thus, men should better overlook the minor faults and weaknesses of their wives and behave towards them in a loving and kindly manner. It may, ultimately, lead to an improvement in their disposition as well. ■

Editor's Note 

Rekindling of Lost Hopes

Late Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi alias Ali Miyan (RAH) was a great Islamic scholar of Twentieth century. Respected and adorned not only in India he commanded appreciation globally. Throughout his active life he kept himself away from politics, and remained dedicated to his academic and scholarly pursuits. In the late half of the past century, after independence of India, he always praised the secular and democratic values of the Indian constitution. In 1960s when communal riots in some parts of India erupted and Muslim community was targeted just

because of their faith Maulana got activated. He met people like Acharya Vinobha Bhave, a great Gandhian and follower of his non-violence ideology. He sought his cooperation in checking the communal riots. He undertook an exhaustive campaign all over the country against communalism. Through his "Payame Insaniat" platform he tried to bring two prominent communities viz Hindus and Muslim together and persuaded them to follow the path of peace and tranquility which has been the motto of every religion.

Maulana was of the view that it will be a Dooms day for the country if secularism and democracy are weakened. In his humble way he, in his last

days, spoken to many a national leaders who called on him, like late Rajiv Gandhi, Narsimha Rao, Mr. Deva Gowda and Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee who graced the seat of Prime Ministership, that they must strive for strengthening secularism and democracy in the country.

Recent Judgement of Ms. Jyostana Yagnik, Judge of the Designated court for trial of some of the cases of 2002 Gujarat genocide in her observations while convicting the rioters of Naroda Patya has echoed the same sentiments for which Maulana aspired.

Describing the communal violence as “Cancer in the society” Ms. Yagnik said exemplary punishments needed to be inflicted on the perpetrators of such crimes so that it was never repeated in future. Ms. Yagnik said the 2002 communal riots was a “black spot” on the democratic set up of India. Nobody can be allowed to take law into their own hands because India is a country that upholds the rule of law. Ms Yagnik further declared that “acts of communal violence are brutal, inhuman and shameful.

S.A.

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

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Havoc Wrought by Self-appointed Leaders

Throughout the course of its long history, mankind has been cruelly subjected to gruelling tests and trials by its self-appointed leaders, tyrants and despots, guides and legislators. These 'patrons' of humanity have ever played the devil with their own species almost in the same way as a child does with a piece of paper. He folds and unfolds, twists and turns the paper and tears it into pieces when he takes a fancy to it.

These leaders have seldom set store by the human life, the vast possibilities of its advancement and the far-reaching significance of its betterment. Their fellow beings yielded obedience to them for God had created the inclination for dutifulness and fidelity in man, but they were neither gracious nor God-fearing enough to be rightful and just to their followers. Nor were they mindful of their obligations and responsibilities to their friends and kinsmen: they only attended to their fancies and desires and made their leadership a means to fulfil their own ambitions. The caprice and conceit, perversity and pettiness of these leaders moved by their racial

and national prejudices have sown the seeds of an unending catastrophe for the humanity. They have, indeed, created doubts about their sagacity and trustworthiness, civility and benignity. Now, there is little reason to believe that they will ever succeed in ushering mankind in an era of peace and prosperity. History of the human race is an unrolled scroll of tragedies and misfortunes which makes one shed tears as well as smile at its luck. There is even today many a nation in the east and the west which is at the mercy of a wolf in sheep's clothing who trifles with the people and brings them to a new test ever and anon and, then, innocently declares that he has not succeeded in his efforts. Oftentimes, the crimes and misdeeds of such leaders are brought to light by their successors after they are dead and gone. It is then that a succeeding generation comes to know of the guilts of their leaders but then it is merely an obituary in the life story of that nation.

Prophets Needed to Lead the World

This blundering leadership has not spared even the creeds and beliefs, of the people on which depend man's success in this world and salvation in the world beyond, which

form the fundamental bases of true morality and healthy civilisation and the nexus between man and God; but once these links are severed it becomes well-nigh impossible to restore them again. The world, therefore, needs leaders and guides who are trustworthy, faultless, self-denying and beyond reproach, who are not devoured by their greed or passion, who do not base their decisions on their own Imperfect knowledge, faulty experience or personal gains, and if they ever commit a mistake they are willing to undo the wrong in the light of divine commandments.

Sincerity and Trustworthiness

This is the reason that you see every prophet assuring his followers about his sincerity, trustworthiness and selflessness.

See how the prophets affirm their selflessness and assure their nations about their trustworthiness.

(1) "Noah's folk denied the messengers (of Allah),
When their brother Noah said unto them:
Will ye not ward off (evil)?
Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you,
So keep your duty to Allah, and obey me.
And I ask of you no wage therefor ;
My wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds."

(2) "(The tribe of) A 'ad denied the messengers (of Allah), When their brother Hud said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)?

Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you,
So keep your duty to Allah and obey me.

And I ask of you no wage therefor; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the worlds."

(3) "The (tribe of) Thamud denied the messengers (of Allah),
When their brother Salih said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil) ?

Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you,
So keep your duty to Allah and obey me.

And I ask of you no wage therefor; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds."

(4) The folk of Lot denied the messengers (of Allah), When their brother Lot said unto them:
Will ye not ward off (evil)?

Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you,
So keep your duty to Allah and obey me.

And I ask of you no wage therefor; my wage is the concern of the Lord of the worlds."

(5) "The dwellers in the wood (of Midian) denied the messengers (of Allah),

When Shueyb said unto them, Will ye not ward off (evil)?

Lo ! I am a faithful messenger unto you,

So keep your duty to Allah and obey me.

And I ask of you no wage therefor;

My wage is the concern of the Lord of the worlds."

The unity of purpose or common objective of the prophets sent to different nations at different times is eloquently meaningful. The word *Aminun* or truthful used by every prophet to asseverate his dependability fully, encompasses the function of apostleship and covers the responsibility of receiving divine messages as well as his capability to transmit it truthfully to others. No other word so comprehensive, so meaningful is there in the Arabic language which embodies all the different obligations and compulsions lying on a prophet of God.

Muhammad, the Prophet, was known by the pagans of Mecca, as if by the pre-ordained will of God, by the name of '*Amin*' even before he was invested with the mantle of prophethood.

The prophets are, thus, sincere, selfless and indifferent to personal gain or partisanship. It is but natural for man

to give his love and respect to such self-sacrificing well-wishers of humanity. But, when they are rejected by the people they sorrowfully express their surprise as Prophet Salih had said to his tribe:

"O my people! I delivered my Lord's message unto you and gave you good advice, but ye love not good advisers."

And the man who then came from the uttermost part of the city, advised his brethren thus-

"O my people! Follow those who have been sent!

Follow those who ask of you no fee, and who are rightly guided."

Moses, too, presented the same message explicitly before Pharaoh when he told him:

"Moses said: O Pharaoh! Lo! I am a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds,

"Approved upon condition that I speak concerning Allah nothing but the truth. I come unto you with a clear proof from your Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with me."

A Tower of Strength

This sterling quality—the truthfulness, faultlessness and selflessness of the prophets is a godsend blessing for the people. It

helps their followers to maintain the uncompromising fidelity to an ideal; it is a passionate attachment to truth in the hour of stress and strain unleashed by the contending idealism of an alien people. Their conviction in the truthfulness of their prophet saves them from suspicion and disbelief.

Impeccability of the Prophets

Shah Waliullah has shed light on the vital characteristics of the prophets in his immortal book, *Hujjatullah-il-Baligha*, wherein he writes:

“It is essential for a prophet to demonstrate that he has been assigned a Divine charge and that his teaching is free from every fault and blemish. He has also to make plain that he is not a complaisant re-former willing to compromise on principles, that is, taking his reform to a certain extent and giving up a portion of it. If he has been sent to uphold the mission of an earlier prophet whose truthfulness is acknowledged by all and whose teachings have been preserved uncorrupted, then he can bring the beliefs and attitudes of his people into question and summon them up to accept the directions of the bygone prophet, whose mission he has come to propagate and complete.

“Anyway, the people need an impeccable guide who is accepted by all and who is either present among them or whose trustworthy teachings and traditions have been preserved. The doctrines of religious beliefs and their rewards or the sins and their punishments cannot be fathomed by the intellect which is otherwise adequate for worldly affairs, for these are not disclosed save to intuitive reason. Just as hunger, or thirst, or effects of medicines are felt by the instinct, the things seemly or unseemly to the soul are known only through an evolved sense.

“Impeccability of the prophets is the outcome of divine knowledge and conviction which impart assurance to them that the message vouchsafed from the divine source is God’s truth: they feel as if they are beholding the facts of mute reality and are also certain that their eyes are not deceiving them. The certitude of a prophet resembles the accepted connotation of a word as understood by the people speaking that language. It is like the sense of the words *Maun* or *Ardhun* which always signify water and the earth for an Arab, even though he may have no argument to clinch his

point, nor any testimony to prove the relationship between these terms and their significations. But, he is still confident of his comprehension of these terms: A prophet has, similarly, an inborn sense which always leads him, intuitively, to the truth of the matter and thus he is persuaded of the correctness of his inspired knowledge.

“The people are brought over to admit the faultless-ness of a prophet through the rational and verbal arguments advanced by him. The call he gives is always correct and his character so unblemished that it leaves no contingency of his being a liar. The people round a prophet often find credence in his fellowship with God through the miracles worked by him or the answering of his prayers. These are also to assure the people that a man with such a pious and angelic soul could never speak lies about God nor commit a sin. The confidence so produced brings the people nearer to the prophet and makes him dearer to his nation – as water is sought by the thirsty or the goods and children are adorned by the people. These are the imperatives without which no nation can be imbued with the touch and feelings of a prophet nor can it establish a concord with the soul

ever engrossed in the remembrance of God.”

Obedience to the Prophets

These men of God, so pure of heart, holding the ring of truth, sincere and honest, who always keep themselves within bounds and are the best amongst all men in thought and action, intellect and inclination, deserve that every man should submit himself in obedience to them. Following the divine command: “that thou mightest be trained according to My Will” heavenly hosts stand over the prophets to rear and raise them as teachers and guides of humanity. “Lo! We purified them with pure thought, remembrance of the Home; Lo! in Our sight they verily are the elect, the excellent,” Is the dictum of God about them. For they are preferred over the rest of mankind by virtue of their wisdom and prudence, talent and genius, God favours them with the Book and the direction and the prophethood, and tells mankind that:

“Those are they whom Allah guideth, so follow their guidance.”

Approved and Admirable

The prophets are accepted and approved by God. They enjoy such a divine favour that their way of life, habit and behaviour become the shining example to be observed by all observers.

There may be many paths leading to the same destination, but the one trodden by the prophets gets the approval of God. It is then preferred to every other way for it is the way of God's devoted friends; everything liked by the prophets becomes a model and a standard in the eyes of God. It is for this reason that to follow the example of the prophets, to take after their habits and behaviours and to act in accordance with the precedents set by them helps one to gain propinquity to God. The love of prophets makes one beloved of God and divine wrath is invited by ill-will to them-this is the Law of God that undergoes no change with the change of time and space. This is the ordinance of God proclaimed by the Prophet of Islam.

“Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. “

Just the opposite are the leanings towards the way of tyrants and misbelievers, the acceptance of their modes and patterns, which puts man away from God and Invites His displeasure.

“And incline not toward those who do wrong lest the Fire touch you, and ye have no protecting friends against Allah, and afterward ye would not be helped.”

Ways of Guidance

The ways and manners of the Prophet are recognised by the *Shari'ah* as *Khasal-i-Fitrat* or natural dispositions and *Sunan-ul-Huda*, that is, the ways of guidance. Divine law upholds prophetic practices as favoured observances and asks the believers to follow them. The usages and practices of the prophets exalt and elevate the character of man, for they have the approval of God.

“(This is the) colour from Allah, and who is better than Allah at colouring! We are His worshippers.”

And this is the reason why God prefers a certain mode, behaviour and practice over another style, manner or usage. The modes and behaviours acceptable to God are, thus, recommended by the *Shari'ah* as the traits of believers and natural dispositions of man. Any habit that is at variance with the prophetic practices is looked down upon by the Law as an impress of the ignorant, a custom of the stupid and a way of the unbeliever. One is the praxis of the prophets and the elects of God and the other is the old way of the pagan past, the beaten path of the devil and his followers.

This is the principle regulating customs and conventions, manners of eating and drinking, modes of dressing

and living, in short, everything that goes by the name of prophetic culture.

Why is the right hand preferred over the left; why is every good act, eating and drinking and giving of a thing or taking it commendable by the right hand; and why is the left hand used for washing after passing the urinal or for similar other purposes? Both the hands have been created by God and both seem to have an equal claim for respect. The people not conversant with the ways of the prophets do use both the hands for the same purpose for they have nothing to guide them in this regard.

There is no other reason except that the prophets, in general, and the last Prophet, in particular, got in the habit of using their right hand either by their own inclination towards cleanliness or through divine inspiration. As a matter of fact, the settled dispositions of the prophets are always in accord with the will and pleasure of God. The use of right hand for performing every act, dignified and decent, thus, became commendable practice or a set form of Islamic way of living. 'Ayesha relates that the Prophet of Islam used to begin every wholesome act with his right hand.

"The Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings) preferred to begin, as far as possible, every work from the right hand side, even

if it were mere purification, or combing or putting on shoes."

Now, one can visualise from it the inclinations and habits of the great patriarch, Abraham, whose ways have been described in the Traditions as commendable.

Prophets-The Founders of Culture

The prophets do not summon the people to accept only a creed and a law-Islam, but they also lay the foundation of a new way of life which carries the seed of a new culture, a new civilisation. This prophetic culture has its own particular rules, signs and characteristics which distinguish it from all other paganish cultures; it differs from the essence of others in the same way as the manifestations and outer forms of each conflict with one another.

Abrahamic - Muhammadan Civilisation

Abraham, the originator of this prophetic civilisation, raised its edifice on the foundation of God's Unity, His awe and an undying trust in Him, natural instincts and geniality of human nature and common weal of the human species.

Abraham's moral sense and his way of life percolate through the fibre of this civilisation.

"Lo! Abraham was mild, imploring, penitent."

“Lo ! Abraham was soft of heart, long suffering.”

Abraham was the author of this civilisation while the genius of Muhammad, who was a successor to the great patriarch, completed and perfected it. He gave a new life to it, imparted it the widest, unbounded prospect of perfection, refined its shape and content and made it a civilisation fit to become universal, perpetual.

Some Conspicuous Traits

That the Abrahamic-Muhammadan civilisation detests heathenism and association of partakers with the One, Supreme God, it lifts man from the reproach of idolatry in every shape or form. The ardent supplication made by Abraham to God was:

“My Lord! Make safe this territory, and preserve me and my sons from serving idols.”

And, his testament to his followers was:

“So shun the filth of idols, and shun lying speech; turning unto Allah (only); not ascribing partners unto Him.”

This civilisation does not permit anyone to indulge in vices, immodesty or vulgarity, nor does it prize filthy lucre of the world. It never appeals to arms for winning position and prestige for it

is essentially a mission whose slogan is -

“As for the Abode of the Hereafter We assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who ward off (evil).”

It does not differentiate between man and man: the colour, race or country makes no difference for it.

“All men are progeny of Adam and Adam was made of clay. No Arab has any preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, save by virtue of his piety. O mankind, We have given birth to all of you from a man and a woman and have made you different groups and tribes so that you may know one another. He is worthiest unto God amongst you who wards off evil.”

For this was the guiding principle of this civilisation, the last Prophet and teacher of humanity directed that:

“He is not one of us who gave a call for partisanship and who fought for partisanship and who died for partisanship.”

Once, when some Muhajirs and Ansars had called out their tribes for help, the Prophet admonished them saying :-

“Give up this factionalism, it is dirty and dead.”

This is a civilisation which glorifies Unity of God as a creed, dignity and equality of man as a social principle, humbleness and fear of God as a norm of behaviour, effort for the Hereafter and fighting in the way of God as human endeavour and charity and justice as the rule of war. Its norm for the conduct of government prescribes that spiritual well-being should take precedence over financial interests, dissemination of truth over collection of revenues, conferment over recipience and service of the people over wielding of the sceptre. It is the only civilisation which has the distinction of serving humanity with a selfless zeal, liberating mankind from the tyranny of superstition and ignorance and investing humanity with the spirit of altruism and charity.

For the name of God is the essence of this civilisation, His remembrance its sustenance, the divine hue its colour and trust in God its fibre, it can never be unfastened from its indwelling divine mood and disposition.

The Quranic Dictum

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

example set by the messengers of God.

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

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

“Show us the right path,
The path of those whom
Thou hast favoured;
Not (the Path) of those who
earn Thine anger nor of those who
go astray.”

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

Love and Respect of Prophets

The Qur'an demands reverential regard and affectionate devotion to the apostles of God; a tender feeling of admiration that arises from the core of one's heart; for, it places no value on an obedience which lacks spiritual coupling of the two souls. People yield

obedience to their kings, political leaders and military commanders but the submissiveness of this sort is more often a passive subservience. Islam wants more than that; it does not demand mere payment of *Zakat* and charity or observance of religious obligations; it wants willing and dutiful acquiescence in its commandments.

“That ye may believe in Allah and His messenger and may honour him,”

“Those, who believe in him, and honour him, and help him.”

The divine Scripture, therefore calls upon the believers to keep watch over everything that upholds the honour of the prophets and avoid whatever shows a lack of respect for them. An express injunction of the Qur’an is that:

“O ye who believe ! Lift not up your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as ye shout one to another, lest your works be rendered vain while ye perceive not.

“Lo ! they who subdue their voices in the presence of the messenger of Allah, those are they whose hearts Allah hath proven unto righteousness. Theirs will be forgiveness and immense reward.”

“Make not the calling of the messenger among you as your calling one of another.”

And, it was to safeguard the honour and dignity of the Prophet that his widows were denied wedlock again after his death.

And it is not for you to cause annoyance to the messenger of Allah, nor that ye should ever marry his wives after him.”

Many more commandments exist which require the believers to love and prefer the Prophet over their own lives, goods and children. An authentic Tradition of the Prophet declares that:

“None of you shall be a believer unless I am held dearer by you than your own father and your sons and all other men.”

Another version of this Tradition, related in Al- Tabrani’s *Al-M’ujam Al-Kabir* and *Al-Awsat* adds “than your own lives too” to this saying of the Prophet.

Similarly, it is related from the blessed Prophet that:

“One, who has three things shall savour the sweetness of faith; first, who holds Allah and His messenger dearer than all others.”

The companions of the Prophet of Islam had understood the significance of all-consuming love for God and His Apostle. They were, on this account, always extremely zealous in carrying out the orders of the

Prophet; they took pleasure in following his lead and patiently endured every hardship at his call. They shall, therefore, always occupy the pride of place among all the believers till the end of time. Abu Bakr loved the Prophet more than his own life. Once, he was so mercilessly beaten by 'Utba bin Rabi'a that his swollen face made the cheeks indistinct from his nose. Banu Tamim ultimately carried him away taking him to be dead. But when he regained consciousness, the first question he asked was whether the Prophet was alright? His anxious mind was set at ease only when he was assured that the Prophet was hale and hearty. But when he was asked to take some food, his reply was:

"Honest to God, I will touch no food or drink until

I have seen the Prophet."

Similar was the love of that Ansar lady-a love born of faith-who lost her father, husband and son in the battle of Ohad. She was told about the irreparable losses she had suffered, but unmindful of her bereavements she continued to enquire about the welfare of the Prophet, and when she saw him she came out spontaneously, "No suffering matters so long as you are safe."

The same was the love felt all too deeply by (Abdullah, son of the hypocrites' leader, (Abdullah bin Ubayy. He heard his father having remarked that the highest in dignity shall drive out the most debased when they returned to Madina. The worthy son of the unworthy father unsheathed his sword at the gate of the city and demanded from his father: "Were it you to say that? So help me God, you shall just know to whom belongs the dignity-to you or to the Prophet of God." He added, "You shall not enter Madina until you are granted permission by the Apostle of God."

And, it was this volcanic emotion which had made the Prophet's companions to put their lives at stake for Islam; they left their hearths and homes but not the way of God; death had become so dear to them that when, before the battle of Badr, the Ansars were asked by the Prophet to express their opinion about taking the field, they replied with one voice:

"As for our affairs, they are at your command. By God, If you go to Bark al-Ghimad, we shall accompany you to the end; and by God, if you demand of us, we shall jump into the sea with you."

Lifeblood of Islamic World

Islamic world of today lacks this lifeblood of love. If people do not act

on the *Shari'ah*, if religious observances appear bothersome to them or if the modern educated youth has difficulty in following the precepts of the Prophet it is because the Muslims are not inspired by the love and respect for the Prophet as demanded by the Qur'an. It is, of a fact, the same vital spark which has done wonders in the past and has still not lost its miraculous power. To lose this spark is a great loss—a loss which cannot be made good by intellectual gifts, determination or organisation.

Key to Success

Success of the communities following a prophet depends on their unquestioning submission to that prophet. No such community or nation can ever succeed, whatever be its talents, or means, or cultural attainments, if it does not love and follow and strive for the mission of its prophet. The nations which give up the track of their prophet and lean on their own political manoeuvring or on the help of any big power for gaining strength and importance ultimately end up in collapse, internal disorder and ignominious ruin.

Misfortune of the Muslim World

The whole world of Islam, nowadays, in general, and the Arab countries, in particular, furnish a

pathetic example of what happens when the followers of a prophet deviate from the path chalked out for them. The people of these countries have no success to their credit, nor have they been able to solve any problem facing them since the day they began giving preference to various 'isms' and the leaders upholding such cults, over the precepts of their unfailing guide. They have not even won the esteem of other nations by their readiness to accept the values and concepts of nationalism, socialism or modernism or by giving up the Islamic beliefs and observances to emulate the example of other God-less nations. I need no apology to cite the example of our Arab brethren for they have already lost their unity and the freedom of Palestine, and failed to obtain even an honourable position for themselves in the comity of nations. Every day that dawns brings a new problem, a new difficulty for them. The present condition of the Arabs calls to my mind the wisdom of what Caliph 'Umar had remarked when he was asked by someone to flaunt himself as the ruler of the biggest empire of the day. He had replied indignantly: "You were the most despicable people, then God bestowed honour on you through Islam. Hence, whenever you would try to gain recognition *sans* Islam, Allah will bring disgrace on you."

■

Shibli as an Educationist

- Javed Ali Khan

Muhammad Shibli Nomani's educational upbringing took place at a time when the Muslims had started becoming conscious to the need for reform and change. During the preceding decades the preaching of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and Shah Abdul Aziz Shah (1750-1824) had generated reformist zeal. In the succeeding years a section of the Muslim intelligentsia called upon the Muslims to develop a more homogenous and resilient outlook in order to admit such aspects of Western learning and thought which would not impair the basic belief of the Muslims. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) carried the thought further and by his various writings and institutional activities endeavoured to temper Muslim thought with a sense of reason and enquiry.

Shibli received traditional Islamic education from teachers who were not conversant with the new learning of the West. His chief intellectual mentor, Mawlana Faruq Chiryakoti, was against the radical views of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Altaf Husain Hali. But Shibli's family was fairly enlightened and had realised the importance of Western Learning. No wonder Shibli's

father had sent two of his other sons for education at Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, Aligarh. Even Shibli was an admirer of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan long before he had joined Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College as a Professor.

At Aligarh Shibli was exposed to the radiance of new learning. His passion for learning and knowledge received a new platform. Hitherto like a voracious seeker of knowledge he had travelled far and wide to quench his thirst for knowledge. During his travels he had realised the inadequacy of Muslim learning and pitiable condition of the *madarsas* throughout the Islamic world. Until then no attempt had been made to trace the history of Muslim learning, its pattern of education, the various schools of Islamic thought, and its contribution to the growth of science and technology and human progress in general.

Shibli observes that the advent of Islam released and channelised the latent energies of the Arabs towards understanding of the universe. The Holy Qur'an with its unique style of presentation is a miracle in itself. It challenges human being for a writing of similar kind and calls upon its

followers and readers to know and unfold the secrets of the universe. To the Arabs and Muslims at large it became a guideline for opening new vistas of knowledge and wisdom. Muslim scholars and travellers who visited distant lands opened a new era of exchange of intellectual thought and ideas. It opened the eyes of the Arabs to the knowledge of other races and communities whom they had hitherto considered insignificant and unworthy of cultural contact.

Shibli's contribution to Muslim education can be gauged at two planes. The first was his attempt to pen down briefly its past history. This resulted in his splendid work entitled *Musalmano Ki Guzashta Ta'alim*, the first of its kind, in which among other aspects, Shibli highlights the contributions of Medieval scientists and scholars for the conservation and dissemination of human knowledge. The second was his attempt to open new educational institutions and make necessary modification in the existing syllabus of the Indian *madarsas*.

In the aforesaid article Shibli chiefly pays attention to show how the Arabs acquired knowledge and wisdom of the preceding ages. This has been examined in two ways: the first relates to those sciences the originators of which were Muslims; and the second deals with those branches of knowledge which the Muslims

borrowed from other communities and then improved and perfected them to such a degree that they are accredited as their originators.

During the early period of Islam for a proper understanding of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic language, principles of syntax, rhetoric and morphology were evolved so that the non-Arab converts to Islam could easily understand the Quranic precepts. Fable writings of yonder days gave way to new themes embodying human manners and obedience, rights and duties, and proselytizing activities of Islam. In order to follow the foot-steps of prophet Muhammad (PBH) and to regulate Muslim social behaviour, different branches of Islamic sciences were initiated, such as *hadis* (tradition of Prophet Muhammad), *fiqah* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), *qasas* (instructive histories), etc. That these studies were not beyond the pale of reason and enquiry, principles of *asma-al-rijal* (critical study of the character of the transmitters of *hadis*), *usul-i-isnad* (figuring out all the persons involved in transmitting the tradition of Prophet Muhammad and the study of their character) and *ilm-i-dirayat* (principles of investigation) were formulated. All this placed the Arabs in an advantageous position in religious scriptural controversies over their rivals - the Jews and Christians. Later when Islamic thought was

confronted with Greek philosophy there emerged *ilm-kalam* or Islamic scholasticism. Metaphysics also received new attention. The subsequent history of Muslim education is marked for its vigour and passion. Baghdad became a great seat of learning .

Muslims learned mathematics, music, geometry, medicine, logic and natural sciences on a new scale from other communities, mostly Christians. They were the first to pay attention to the opening of translation bureau. The Umayyad and Abbasid rulers who are known for their catholicity were great patrons of learning. A large number of books on science, medicine, Greek philosophy and other branches of knowledge were collected from Italy, Greece, Syria, Iran and other far off lands at rich price. These books, which were mostly in Latin, Syriac, and Sanskrit, were translated into Arabic and Persian. The translators were mostly Christians, but Jews, Zoroastrians and Indians also rendered great service. The Muslims improved these translated works to such a level that the original works were soon forgotten. In fact, some of the original works are extant only in its Arabic translation.

The several Sanskrit works which were translated into Arabic and Persian, included the works of Charak, Shushrat, Shanaq Hindi, Sali and

Kankha Hindi. A Brahmin *yogi*, Bhujar, of Varanasi went to Akfut and presented his work *Amritkund* to Qazi Ruknuddin Samarqandi. In later times the great Indologist, Abu Raihan Biruni visited India and learned Sanskrit and Indian sciences. In return he acquainted the Indians with Greek philosophy. Another Arab who visited India and learned astronomy was, Ismail Tanukhi.

The Muslims held the translators in high respect and gave utmost importance to Roman, Greek and Indian scientists, and scholars to a degree, which they had not received, in their own land. Many of these scholars are known to have served as head of educational institutions.

The Muslims were, however, not blind imitators. They strove and worked to remove some of the errors of Greek thinkers, generated a renewed interest in Greek philosophy, offered enthusiasm to the study of social sciences, invented new scientific equipments, devised mechanical and water clocks, calculated the speed of light, designed apparatus filtration and distillation, formulated methods to test and differentiate various acids, laid the foundation of the science of chemistry and by their numerous experiments on plants added valuable information to the study of Botany. The science of optics made great advancement. Harun bin Hakim Muwaffiq-al-Dawlah

wrote a number of books on various diseases of the eye. In short, they carried forward the knowledge of ancient times, which would have otherwise perished, and by their intense spirit of enquiry and research raised human knowledge to a new pedestal. Scholars and thinkers such as Imam Razi and Imam Tusi enjoyed greater reputation than the Greek thinkers. A number of early modern discoveries and invention, which are attributed to the Europeans, is actually the early works of the Arabs.

Madarsas, which functioned like modern colleges and universities with well-equipped libraries, were known for their excellence. Herein students were free to choose the subjects of their liking. Lectures were delivered and after a time bound period certificates were given to the students. The practice of imparting education on private basis by eminent teachers continued simultaneously. Like the ancient Greeks, Qur'anic education in its early phase was transmitted orally, in which hundreds of teachers were involved in teaching and training. With the discovery of paper technology writing of books became popular.

However, after a short spell of brilliance, Muslim education suffered a decline. Shibli keenly probes why the decline set in. According to him the practice of giving lectures gradually

died. Rational sciences were not paid much attention to. Students were taught to strictly adhere to anyone of the four schools of Islamic thought. In course of time it gave birth to imitative method of education. The spirit of investigation and discovery lost force. Technical skill and study of crafts failed to meet new requirements. Little attention was paid to the study of logic and philosophy and in some *madarsas* these subjects did not find a place in the curriculum of studies. The Abbasid Caliph, Mutazidbillah issued a royal order forbidding booksellers to sell books of philosophy. A *mufti* of the Ottoman Empire was asked to discontinue his lectures on philosophy. Ibn Rushd had to disown his own writing when he was made a captive by the Sultan of Morroco. Political Science was not taught. History was taught, but more for expression of literary talent.

In the Indian sub-continent the first noticeable change in the syllabus is to be seen in *dars-i-Nizamryah* of Firangi Mahal, a distinguished centre of Islamic learning. It became a model for Indian *madarsas* in the nineteenth century. For the first time books of Indian authors were introduced. The syllabus was prepared with a view to develop the mental faculty of the students. The books taught included philosophy and music. Jurisprudence texts, which unnecessarily gave birth

to hair-splitting religious debates, were deleted. This largely explains why the *Ulema* of Firangi Mahal remained aloof from Shia-Sunni religious controversies.

Shibli did not lay the foundation of Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, Aligarh, but after having entered its service he actively and sincerely worked for the uplift of the college. His letters, written to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan from Constantinople, Cairo and other places, show his deep concern to procure rare manuscripts, printed books and transcripts of Islamic studies and other sciences for the college library. Later when efforts were made to upgrade the college to the status of University in 1911, he actively participated in various proceedings, meetings and delegations organised for the purpose. Apart from his contribution to the success of the Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, there are other aspects of Shibli's thought. He admitted the importance of Western learning but at the same time was not prepared to ignore the Oriental subjects or belittle the merit of Islamic sciences. At Aligarh he bravely withstood the radical Western impact, which was threatening to destroy the identity of the Muslims. By his writings, lectures and strict obedience to Islamic way of life he attracted a large number of Muslim students and thus saved the college

from being drowned in the whirlpool of Western culture.

After being disillusioned at Aligarh, Shibli decided to serve the cause of Nadwat-al-Ulama, Lucknow. As mentioned earlier in 1903 he took up the editorship of *Al-Nadwa* and served it till 1913. The journal was instrumental in revolutionizing the thought of the Indian *Ulama* and in broadening their outlook. As the Educational Secretary of Nadwa he promoted the teaching of modern Arabic, International Affairs and paved the way for establishing a well-equipped library. He strengthened the financial condition and laid stress on appointing teachers holding specialisation in a particular field of study. The study of English, Sanskrit and Hindi was introduced. With a missionary spirit he set up a team of students with the name of *Khadim-al-Din* whose members were to live an austere life and devote themselves to preaching of principles of pristine Islam in the countryside. A supplementary organization was *Anjuman-al-Moi'n* whose members were to propagate the benefits of education at Nadwa in different parts of the country and also to find means to help the poor and needy boys. In fact, he wanted to make Nadwa the epicentre of all Islamic activities. It is an irony that Shibli who was considered conservative at Aligarh but on account of introduction of

English and Sanskrit at Nadwa he was considered too radical. He met with strong opposition. His aristocratic lifestyle and meticulous behaviour was irksome to many of his colleagues. Other political and administrative reasons contributed to strain the relations and he had ultimately to resign. However educational developments were to show that those who opposed Shibli at Nadwa were self-conceited and narrow-minded people. Be that as it may, in the years to follow Nadwa was able to produce a band of scholars who were in a position to refute the unfounded allegations by critics of Islam.

Shibli's concern for Muslim education in his hometown found expression in 1883 when he laid the foundation of a school at Azamgarh and named it National School. He desired to see the students of this school speak English by the time they reached Standard V. He also wished to provide the school with boarding facilities so that students could live at low expense and in an environment, which would help them inculcate Islamic moral and religious values. This school has since then developed in stages and has now reached the status of a Post-Graduate college, the biggest Muslim institution in Northern India after Aligarh Muslim University. Later after his resignation from Nadwat-al-Ulama, Shibli came back to

settle at Azamgarh and laid the foundation of Dar-al-Musannefin (Shibli Academy) in 1913. This institution is among the premier institution of higher learning of Islamic, Indo-Islamic and Indian historical studies. With a similar spirit to promote the study of Qur'an and Islamic sciences he extended a helping hand to Madarsah Islah, Saraimir, where preliminary study of Islamic sciences had been already started.

Shibli's educational thought further found expression in the preparation of syllabi of *madarsas* in the State of Bhopal. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi opines that in India this was the first attempt to reform the Arabic *madarsas*. The notable change made was that philosophy, logic, theology, *Hadis* and mathematics were introduced. This was similar to the syllabi of Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College, Aligarh. Shibli was among those who were called to give their opinion for educational reforms in Madarsa Alia (Calcutta), Osmania University (Hyderabad) and Dacca University. In 1913 the Sultan of Turkey intended to establish a University in Madina whereupon, Shibli, among others, was asked to prepare Arabic text-books. But Shibli was unable to undertake the responsibilities on account of his fast deteriorating health. Notably, through many of his writings he expounded the role of Muslim

women in the history of early Islam and thereby emphasized the need for the education of women.

Meanwhile Shibli attended the Government Oriental Conference (1910) held at Shimla. In his address he proposed the study of Oriental subjects including the study of archaeology, cataloguing, promotion of vernacular languages and integration of Oriental and Occidental thought. He also called for providing incentive to students by grant of fellowship and scholarship and appointment of inspectors in *madarsas*. Though these suggestions were not implemented but they show the progressive attitude of Shibli. Herein emphasis was also laid on the collection on manuscripts, royal decree, paintings, calligraphic works and publication and display of Arabic and Persian literary works by holding annual exhibition.

Shibli was of the opinion that much of Muslim antipathy to Western learning arose because of their ignorance to European languages. This was why he emphasized the learning of English and setting up of a committee known by the name of *Majlis-i-Ilm-i-Kalam* in order to select those of Western thought which are compatible with Islam. With similar objective he successfully persuaded Sayyid Hasan Bilgrami to undertake the translation of the holy Qur'an into English.

A corollary effort was Shibli's reinterpretation of Islamic scholasticism in the light of modern thinking. The motive of his thinking was to establish a synthesis between faith and reason. He maintains that conflict and tension between science and religion did not arise in Islam as it to be seen in Europe during sixteenth and seventeenth century. In his *Al-Kalam* Shibli designates Islam as 'religion of nature' (*dinya-tabia*) in which reason is allotted a paramount role in judging the truth of religious beliefs. For instance, Shibli states, "except Islam no other religion in the world has claimed to be established by reason and that one has to accept religion on the basis of reason." This is the great difference that marks out Islam clearly from all other religions. Shibli forwards the views of medieval thinkers such as Al-Ghazali and Jalaluddin Rumi for the promotion of his rationalist modernism. He tries to explain prophethood, spirit, revelation, angels, and miracles. He believes that human reason as it is understood in the sciences is still far from having grasped the fullness of this Universal Order and its laws adequately. It is in this context that Christian W. Troll writes that Shibli displays much greater awareness than Sayyid Ahmad Khan with regard to specific difference between rational and suprarational modes of knowing. In short, Shibli's understanding of the

theological epistemology has its own importance .

Shibli was not satisfied with mere writing, lecturing, and attending conference, but also believed in action. For example, he actively worked for the protection and preservation of Urdu in the *nastaliq* script. In 1912 when Burn, the Chief Secretary of the government of Uttar Pradesh initiated a move for the introduction of Urdu in *devnagri* script, Shibli, as a member of the Vernacular Scheme Committee, vehemently opposed the move, and thus, Mr. Burn's scheme of introducing Urdu in *devnagri* was foiled. The period also witnessed a general policy of British historians and administrators to write Indian history in such a manner so as to create discord and animosity among the Indians and also to create a feeling of inferiority complex in them. The Indian Press would very often comment on this British policy, but it was in 1912 at Delhi that Shibli placed a resolution to this effect demanding withdrawal of objectionable books taught in schools and universities. Consequently, a number of objectionable books were withdrawn from the courses of study and a general scrutiny of all historical books was ordered by the British government.

The academic potentiality of Shibli was recognised quite early and as already stated the British government awarded him the

distinguished title of *Shams-al-Ulama*. Other organisations and institutions also honoured him. He was appointed Fellow of Allahabad University and a member of its Board of Studies in 1895. He was made a member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and India, and the first Secretary of *Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu* in 1903. In 1908 he was made the President of Edinburgh Muslim Society. In 1912 he was appointed a member of the Allahabad Government Vernacular Scheme Committee. He was also a valued member of various other committees - the committee on the controversy of Urdu and Hindi and the Committee for Hindu-Muslim unity convened by the government.

To conclude, Shibli by his various writings endeavoured to highlight the past history of Muslim education and also to draw the Muslims out, of obscurantism and educational backwardness. He was the driving force of several Muslim educational institutions wherein he tried to make education more meaningful and purposeful. He successfully expounded that Islamic sciences and learning contributed immensely to the growth of human knowledge and if the Muslims had ,not devoted themselves to the study of arts and sciences of the preceding ages, much of Europe's achievements of which they are so proud, would have perished. He highly

praises the investigative methodology of *hadis* and *maghaif* and says that Europe had no such method of cross-examination to determine the veracity of information till recent times. Although critical of an underlying anti-Islamic cross-current in Western Orientalism, he is among the earliest Muslim to pay tribute to Western scholarship for its painstaking investigation of the cultural and religious resources of Islam, its methodology and its effort to establish a historical and scientific perspective for the study of Islam. Guided by modern needs he strove to make Islamic doctrine compatible with

modern philosophical and scientific thought. With this end in view he called upon the Muslims to pay attention to both religious and secular sciences, and cherished the desire to see the new generation open new horizon of learning and creative thinking. All this contributed to soften the attitude of the conservative *Ulama* of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was perhaps the earliest Indian in modern times to make a study of the Indo-Arab intellectual relations and the rich contribution made by ancient India to the growth of Arab knowledge and wisdom. ■

(Continued from page 38)

self-projection as a secular, development-oriented leader remains to be seen. More important is that, while it's open to appeal, the Naroda Patia judgment comes as reassurance to victims of the 2002 riots. In a country where convictions for communal violence are dismally low, especially of the politically powerful, it will strengthen faith in the justice system.

(31.8.2012)

The Statesman

Judgment Day

(Rule of law reinforced)

The conviction of a former minister in the Gujarat government, an acknowledged leader of the Bajrang Dal, and 30 others for the Naroda Patiya massacre confirms that even in Narendra Modi's "authoritarian" state the law has clout. And enough clout to simultaneously release those against whom no firm evidence was presented. The sentencing is awaited, and of course the right to appeal is likely to be exercised, so there is no immediate finality. Some would insist that only the Supreme Court's appointment of a SIT got the investigations/prosecution under way. Perhaps there is truth to that: then again, "activists" often lose perspective. There have been convictions in other cases related to the post-Godhra killings too.

(31.8.2012) ■

The God Particle

- S. Iqbal Zaheer*

"The Nobel-prize winning Salam-Weinberg model of the electro-weak force expressing the weak and the electro-magnetic forces in a single equation (1967) had also required that the Higgs field exist, and that it manifests itself as a new particle called Higgs boson, which carries the force associated with the Higgs field." (Lee Smolin, *The Trouble with Physics*, p. 62, Penguin 2008).

Earlier than that, several scientists had predicted that to account for the masses of the elementary particles, a field, named after one such scientist Peter Higgs, must exist along with its corresponding particle.

Accordingly, a hunt was launched for the particle fifty years ago. Theoretically, it was quite possible that the field and the associated particle should exist in nature, but, because large-scale colliders where experiments could be conducted were still in the making, and smaller laboratories were not yielding the results required, the particle remained elusive. This elusiveness exasperated an American scientist who referred to it in an article as the "God-damned particle".

For the media, out to exploit every situation, event, word, or a picture, to twist and create sensation, it afforded an opportunity to play its tricks. The word 'damned' was dropped and it began to be mentioned as 'the God particle,' without any explanation to the gullible that the particle had nothing to do with God, and that, in fact, if found, it would be another occasion for some scientists to claim that God did not exist.

Thus, it is the misnomer that has ignited the debate in certain circles, whether, in view of the latest discovery, which promises to solve the mystery of how the Universe started, God exists or not?

Already it is being claimed by some scientists, that the discovery "takes us to the frontier of science," that, "we're reaching into the fabric of the Universe at a level we've never done before," and that, "in a few year's time, there will be nothing for physics to work on" - implying, all of nature's secrets would have been laid bare, without the need to refer to a Supreme Power who created it. As it was said, "With enough data, physics would make God obsolete... If we can describe the laws of nature back to the beginning of time without any supernatural shenanigans, it becomes clear that you don't need God."

* Editor young Muslim Digest

But, is that correct?

To evaluate this agenda and the hullabaloo that has been created with the discovery, we need to first ascertain what in reality this Higgs field and its associated Higgs particle are, and what does the discovery truly imply? In order to do that, we need to delve slightly deeper into the issue, otherwise, it will remain murky, and we will remain easy targets of the media, and those of the scientists who speak irresponsibly on the issue. To achieve this, perhaps we need to begin from the beginning.

From ancient times it has been known that matter (iron, timber, rocks, [and now] galaxies) could be broken down to its smallest components, called atom. It was assumed that an atom was indivisible. In fact, it happens to be so tiny that it is invisible to the eye. An atom is about one tenth of a nanometer in diameter. Forty-three million iron atoms lined up side by side would produce a line only one millimeter in length.

But by the beginning of the last century it was discovered that although there were different kinds of atoms, they were all composed of sub-atomic particles, which were named electrons, protons and neutrons. Protons and neutrons sat as a seed at the center called nucleus, while electrons rotated around the nucleus at such a high speed as if they were everywhere at any time. The electron is considered an elementary particle.

Lately it has been discovered that the electron is neither a particle, nor wave, but somehow both at a time. As a particle it rotates around its own axis, while going around the nucleus as if it was a little planet with the nucleus in the center acting as a sun. The nucleus is so tiny, that if the picture of an atom was enlarged then, if the nucleus is you, the circling electron is as far away as the earth from the sun, except that since electrons behave like waves, it would be as if that you" at the nucleus had clouds (or waves) extending around you to millions of miles. Actually, most of an atom (about 99.9%) is empty space. (And so we are, as humans, mostly empty space. Surely, Allah has power over all things).

The simplest type of atom is that of hydrogen. It also happens to be a unique atom, because it has a single proton in its nucleus with a single electron circling it. It is the only element that has no neutron in its nucleus.

A look into the Atomic Table will tell you that there are over a hundred elements. Oxygen, carbon gold, copper, are all elements. One element is different from another element not in the shape of its atom, but in the number of electrons, protons and neutrons it has. Oxygen for instance, has 8 electrons, 8 protons, and 8 neutrons. Iron (Fe) has 26 electrons, 26 protons, and 30 neutrons.

It may be noted that apart from these three: electrons, protons and neutrons, there is nothing else in any atom.

In comparison to the electron, protons and neutrons are (although so far away from the circling electrons), massive particles (like the sun is so massive against the earth). Protons and neutrons have about 2,000 times more mass than an electron.

The natural question was, are these two 'elementary particles' or are they composed of smaller particles? There was, and is, only one way to find out: smash the atom and see what comes out. To do this the scientists began to develop apparatuses that would achieve this. The first atom-smasher was a hand held one. But, of course, it wasn't powerful enough. Bigger ones demonstrated that the nucleus could be smashed. Following that, more powerful atom smashers were constructed. Today the largest and the most sophisticated one is in Europe which has a diameter of 17 miles.

The atom smashers (or, to be precise, Particle Accelerators) are generally circular in shape (there are hundreds in the world), consisting of a tunnel studded with magnets all around, through and through. Streams of sub-atomic particles (e.g. protons) are run through the tunnel, going round and round, until they acquire nearly the

speed of light, at which point, similarly accelerated particles are smashed into them. The head-on collision breaks the protons and a variety of sub-atomic particles are let loose. Computers record their properties before they extinguish.

In this manner, it was discovered that the protons (and neutrons) are actually 'composite particles,' that is, they are composed of a variety of tinier particles. These tiny particles were given the name 'quarks.' Each proton or neutron was found to be composed of 3 different varieties of quarks (named, for fancy), 'up,' 'down,' and 'charm,' etc. Thus, protons have 3 different types of quarks, and neutrons have 3 different types of quarks - totaling six. And since quarks are indivisible any further (at least for the moment), they too become elementary particles. It was also discovered that these quarks are held together within the proton or neutron by another kind of particle. This particle has been given the name 'gluons.' The gluons too are further indivisible. Therefore, a gluon is another elementary particle.

Experiments upon experiments have led to the discovery of over a hundred sub-atomic, particles, hidden within the atom. Tau, Muons, W and Z boson, etc. are some of the elementary particles discovered so far.

It has also been discovered that every particle has its anti-particle. For example, electron has its anti-particle

called anti-electron (but better known as positron), quarks have their anti-particle called anti-quarks, and so on. When regular particles and their anti-particles meet, they annihilate each other, releasing energy.

The nucleus of the atom seems to be stable, but if its electron is excited, such as, for instance, the atom heated to a certain temperature, it lets loose a tiny particle called photon. The photon breaks away to fly off at the speed of 300,000 km per second, never to be retrieved. If the excitement lasts for a while, that is, matter (iron, timber, rocks) is continuously heated then, the excited electrons of the atoms release a stream of photons, which, because of high quantity, become visible and are called light.

Protons are another of the elementary particles.

Are the 6 quarks the indivisible final entities, or, are there yet smaller fundamental particles? Various models developed to predict yet smaller -particles have predicted many more particles rather than the three quarks that were expected. But the tools to further crush the quarks are not available. Therefore, the efforts have been more or less abandoned.

And it is time to recap:

Matter is made of atoms, atoms are made of electrons and nuclei, nuclei is made of protons and neutrons,

and protons and neutrons are made of quarks.

Apart from matter, it has been found that there exist in nature a few fundamental forces working on matter. Without these 'forces of nature,' matter would not have the characteristics it has (mass, energy, etc.). These four forces are identified as: Gravitational force, electromagnetic force, and, strong and weak nuclear forces. For example, quarks stick together because of the strong nuclear force. Pluto remains in the orbit because of the gravitational force of the sun. Thus, to maintain law and order in the world of matter, down to controlling the smallest particle, the four forces of nature play their role.

On the other side, scientists had been trying to find out how the Universe could have begun. This has been a mathematical exercise, greatly aided by computers. The expansion of the universe gave them the initial clue. If the universe was so big today, it must have been smaller yesterday, still smaller day before yesterday, a year ago, a billion years ago and so on. Going back almost to the point when the universe exploded in a phenomenon called the Big-bang, they could theoretically work out, what could have been the state of matter, right at the start.

Well, it was not possible to work out what it was right at the start of the universe, but they could at least work

out the situation a micro- second after the Big-bang; and the calculations and experiments revealed that it must have been nothing but energy at the start, which got converted to matter as the expanding universe cooled.

Both, experiments in the atom-smashers as well as mathematical equations revealed that there must have been a few 'fundamental particles' (with the 4 forces) at the start without which it wouldn't have worked. Some 12 of them were identified as those that would have been there for matter to come out of pure energy at the start, for stars and galaxies to come into existence later, and life to develop on the earth. These fundamental particles are grouped into two types: Leptons (i.e. light particles), and Mesons (medium-weight particles, or simply Quarks). [Bosons are heavy particles].

The scientists have worked out equations combining the 12 fundamental particles and the 4 forces of nature (but minus the gravitational force), with the help of which all physical phenomenon from ordinary matter to that which was present at the start of the universe (or near start), can be described. This is known as the Standard Model. It has been tested in every possible way, and has passed every test.

To recap the second half of our discussion, in the words of Jonathan Atteberry:

"Here's the gist of the standard model, which was developed in the early '1970s: Our entire universe is made of 12 different matter particles and four forces. Among those 12 particles, we encounter six quarks and six leptons. Quarks make up protons and neutrons, while members of the lepton family include the electron and the electron neutrino, its neutrally charged counterpart. Scientists think that leptons and quarks are indivisible; that you can't break them apart into smaller particles. Along with all those particles, the standard model also acknowledges four forces: gravity, electromagnetic, strong and weak forces."

However, the Standard Model suffer some deficiencies. For example, it does not take into account the gravitational force. All efforts to accommodate this all-pervading force (which acts on every matter, to the end of the universe), have failed. Similarly, it does not account for the dark matter and dark energy (which we cannot discuss in this short article). There are other nagging problems. Scientists are hoping that a day will arrive when they can offer a complete theory, or, as they call it, the Grand Unified Theory (GUT); although a few scientists believe that might never happen.

Now, here comes a twist. Why do the sub-atomic particles have the masses that they have? This is crucial because, one can explain why all the

energy at the start (or near-start) of the universe, but, where did mass come from? This remained an intriguing question until six scientists came up with the same solution. (They were: Francois Englert, Robert Brout, Tom Kibble, Gerald Guralnik and Carl Hagen and Peter Higgs). They proposed the solution that intrinsically all particles have no mass. That is, they have zero mass. They acquire their mass by interacting with an invisible field that gives the particles mass as the particles interact with it. Those particles, such as the photon, that do not interact with the field, have no mass. A quark interacts strongly, and therefore, it has mass.

This field is similar to, say, the magnetic field, or the gravitational field. It is 3-dimensional and stretches in every direction, to the farthest end of the universe. The idea was proposed during the 60s and caught on the imagination of the scientists. The old idea of the aether, long abandoned, came back in the form of a field, now named the Higgs field.

But, how was the theory to be ascertained as a fact? Well, that was not difficult. If the field exists, it should have a corresponding particle (of such and such properties). Just like, if there is a magnetic field, there has to be a magnet. This corresponding (or carrier) particle was called Higgs boson (boson: because it should be very heavy, and heavy particles are called bosons).

Without this Higgs boson, the universe would have had no matter, only energy - because, at the start, it had only energy. That is why the Higgs particle is so important for the Standard Model.

As worded by Natalie Wolchover, "According to the theory, all of the particles in the newborn universe were massless and hurtled around at the speed of light. But one trillionth of a second after the big bang, the Higgs field switched on, turning the vacuum of space into a kind of cosmic glue.

However, because the Higgs particle is extremely high-energy (or, equivalently, very heavy), it was tough to excite the Higgs field enough to create one. That's where the Large Hadron Collider came in: by smashing together high-speed protons, it generated enough power to slosh the Higgs field, producing the Higgs bosons."

(<http://www.lifeslittlemysteries.com/2641-higgs-particle-mass.html>)

On July 4, 2012, scientists working with the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) announced their discovery of a particle that behaves the way the Higgs boson should behave. The results, while published with a high degree of certainty, are still somewhat preliminary. Some researchers are calling the particle "Higgslike".

On the other hand, some theorists suggest that the Higgs boson is not

one, but multiple particles with similar masses but different electrical charges.

Researchers at Fermilab in Illinois, say they have found some evidence for this multiple-particle theory.

It could take several years for scientists to work out whether they have found the simplest kind of Higgs particle that theories predicted, or part of a more complex picture: for example, one of a larger family of Higgs bosons. The discovery of more than one kind of Higgs particle would lead to entirely new ideas in physics.

To sum up:

1. It is not 100% certain that the newly discovered particle is the Higgs particle. It could be another exotic particle.
2. Higgs particle could be several, which one is this?
3. Discovery of more than one kind of Higgs particle may alter the present understanding of the universe, and how it came into being.
4. If the new find is Higgs boson, then, what is the answer to the notion, as stated by Paul Davies, "quantum fluctuations might cause the Higgs mechanism to operate differently in different universes?" (*The Mind of God*, Touchstone Books, 1993, p. 219) - which would mean that the laws of nature are not the same everywhere in the visible or invisible world.
5. The Standard Model does not fully explain the creation of the universe, nor as to why the Universe is, as it is observed now.
As it can be seen, the discovery of Higgs particle, its existence or non-existence, has nothing to do with the question of God's existence. The Standard Model is itself incomplete without the fourth force: the gravity. Even if a 'grand theory of everything' is worked out, it will still not answer all the questions about the world. For example:
 1. It will not explain where the laws governing the universe came from.
 2. It will not explain why various particles have different physical properties and values.
 3. Where did the initial energy and the Higgs field come from?
 4. Can we understand a universe in which 96% of the matter is missing?
 5. How to explain that the universe and its laws seem to be fine-tuned for life?
 6. If mathematical equations can explain the universe, as the common people are led to believe, then, where did mathematics come from? Who is the mathematician without whose rigorously worked out equations, the world could neither come to existence, nor survive for a moment?

7. Space is expanding and pushing matter (super-clusters) out; out into what?
8. How can the claim be made that a 'finished' Standard Model' is around and will explain everything, when Einstein's general theory of relativity, stubbornly refuses to combine with the quantum theory?
9. Are we at the end of research, or, a new phase begins with the discovery that encased within the proton are billions of point-like real or virtual quarks and gluons? Is there any end to explanations that raise newer and more difficult questions to answer, *ad infinitum*?

The above list of questions is not exhaustive. Depending on the depth of inquiry, there can be dozens or hundreds of unanswered questions.

The forgoing discussion demonstrates that the discovery of the Higgs boson (if it is really it), neither proves nor disproves the existence of God. Neither the Standard Model (if it succeeds) nor any other set of equations can disprove God's existence. The hullabaloo created around the discovery was merely media hype. The Higgs particle is not the 'God particle.' To be sure, every particle is 'God particle,' because, every particle in nature has - so to say- God's signature on it.

(Courtesy: Young Muslim Digest)

Recognise 'nikahnama's marriage certificate: MPLB

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board on passed a resolution demanding that the nikahnama the testimony of marriage in Islam - be accepted as a marriage registration certificate by government agencies.

The board also said the Union government's proposed Waqf Amendment Bill 2010 has many defects. It also said the attitude of Law Ministry and Ministry of Minorities Affairs is "irrational" in this matter.

"Though the nikahnama has been provided legal status in India, it is not acknowledged as a valid document at the passport office. Muslims face unnecessary harassment," said Mohammad Abdul Rahim Quraishi, general secretary of the board.

He demanded that the nikahnama be accepted as marriage certificate. "The board has decided to constitute committees in various states to study registration laws and make representation to recognise nikahnama," he said.

Quraishi added that Muslims had no objection to marriage registration. "In fact, Islam is the only religion with an elaborate system of marriage registration. The document is available with the qazis who solemnise nikah," he said.

The committee's meeting took place at Islamic seminary, Darul Uloom Nadwa-tul-Ulema. Chaired by AIMPLB president, Maulana Rabey Hasani Nadwi, the committee also expressed concern on some judgments against principles of Shariat in matters of divorce and maintenance to divorced women.

It was decided that the AIMPLB would move the Supreme Court for a review of the judgements. "Shariat is part of Islam and Muslims are bound to follow it," said Quraishi.

The members also condemned the role of the ministries of law and minority affairs in connection with the Central Waqf Amendment Bill, 2010. "They have been creating hurdles in letting us preserve, protect and recover waqf properties," said Zafaryab Jilani, member of the executive committee.

Gujarat Genocide

In 2002 after Gujarat genocide The Fragrance of East had taken out an special issue, compiling the event, and editorials as published in the national newspapers.

After a decade, decisions of the Courts have started trickling down. The judgment delivered by a designated Court in Naroda Patiya case in which 95 Muslims were massacred particularly women and children has been hailed by some national dailies. We reproduce a few of them :

The Hindu

A stunning verdict

The conviction by a Gujarat court of BJP legislator Maya Kodnani and Bajrang Dal leader Babu Bajrangji along with 30 others for their role in the Naroda Patia massacre is the strongest judicial affirmation yet that large-scale communal violence is almost always a product of premeditated political planning and calculation. An estimated 95 Muslims, many of them hapless women and children, were hacked to death in Naroda, a minority neighbourhood in Ahmedabad targeted by armed mobs under the indulgent gaze of the Gujarat government in the wake of the February 27, 2002 Godhra train carnage. The verdict is a landmark one. It is for the first time that an Indian court has convicted a sitting MLA - Ms Kodnani was also a minister in the Narendra Modi government from 2007 to 2009 - for mob

aggression against members of a religious community. Secondly, the court has not only upheld the charge of criminal conspiracy against the 32 individuals convicted, it has also found one of them guilty of rape and sexual harassment.

The establishment of conspiracy augurs well for the future of communal violence prosecutions, where the judicial trend so far has been to uphold murder but not conspiracy. It is a victory particularly for the Special Investigation Team that was brought into the picture by the Supreme Court following the failure of the State police to properly prosecute the post-Godhra riots cases. For the families of the Naroda victims, who identified the aggressors braving threats and intimidation and who were able to come forward to some extent because of the protection offered by the apex court, there cannot be a greater vindication than the trial court finding evidence of rape and molestation. It has been their plaintive cry that the violence was orchestrated and targeted against women, who were subjected to gang rape and worse before being slaughtered. Violence against women is a pattern established over and over in anti-minority pogroms, and the judgment has done yeoman service in foregrounding this fact. Needless to say, the conviction is a huge setback to the Gujarat Chief Minister personally. The fact that Ms Kodnani led the Naroda killings was common knowledge, yet Mr. Modi made

her a minister, even putting her in charge of 'women and child development' as if to thumb his nose at the victims. A bigger worry for Mr. Modi ought to be the establishment of conspiracy. The Chief Minister has maintained all along that the "riots" were a spontaneous act by crowds enraged by Godhra. It stretches credulity that Ms Kodnani could enter into a conspiracy with her co-accused without the government getting a whiff of the group's criminal intentions and conduct, before, during and after the killing.

(30.8.2012)

The Indian Express

Where law wins out

(Naroda Patiya convictions are reassuring. If only legal processes had triumphed in 1984, 1983)

The arc of history may finally be bending towards justice for the victims of communal violence that gripped Gujarat in 2002. Thirty-two people, including Maya Kodnani, formerly women and child development minister in the Narendra Modi government, and Babu Bajrangji, a Bajrang Dal leader, were convicted by a special court in Gujarat for their roles in the Naroda Patiya massacre in Ahmedabad.

This is the first time, after exhaustive investigations, that convictions have touched Gujarat's powerful. In April, the special court convicted 23 in the Ode case, another flashpoint in the 2002 violence. The Supreme Court has gone to great lengths to insulate the legal process from

powerful vested interests - setting up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) in 2008 at the request of Zakia Jafri and the NHRC to examine nine of the most critical cases, and also sending amicus curiae, Raju Ramchandran, to conduct independent investigations. The divergences in those two reports point to the complexity of assigning culpability in these cases. Kodnani, in fact, had been arrested by the SIT in 2009. This is a moment to admire the judicial system that has wrested some resolution for the trauma of Naroda Patiya.

And yet, it must be asked why justice and reparation are still missing for another scar in recent history - the 1984 riots in Delhi, in which Sikhs bore the brunt of the violence as retaliation for Indira Gandhi's assassination, under the watch of the Congress government. The police and administration were co-opted in similar ways; prominent Congress leaders were implicated in the violence. However, no powerful figure has been convicted yet. While the 1984 riots and the 2002 riots have become rhetorical tit-for-tats-between political forces, the fact remains that one is inching towards answers and the other has been treated as a matter best forgotten and transcended. What, also, of the Nellie massacre, which is not even invoked as a political talking point? In 1983, Muslim settlers were killed and injured in an ethnic clash during the Assam agitation - the All Assam Students Union and other activists had whipped up sentiment against "foreign nationals". But the

investigation reached nowhere, legal proceedings were soon dropped, not a single person has faced trial. As the legal process unfolds in Gujarat, bringing at least a partial justice for the events of 2002, it also casts a sidelight on these other sites of violence, still painfully unaddressed.

(30.8.2012)

The Times of India

Justice Delivered

(The Naroda Patia judgement has political ramifications the BJP can scarcely ignore)

It's been a long wait. But some of the victims of the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat are finally seeing justice delivered. In a key judgement, a special court in Ahmedabad convicted BJP legislator and former minister Maya Kodnani, Bajrang Dal leader Babu Bajrangi and 30 others, for their role in the infamous Naroda Patia massacre. Over 90 Muslims, many among them women and children, were killed by mobs in Naroda, a minority locality in Ahmedabad: While in consonance with other court verdicts as in the Ode and Dipda Darwaja massacre cases, this is the first time a powerful political functionary has been convicted in a riot-related case on triple charges of murder, conspiracy and spreading hatred. That's why the Naroda Patia judgement stands out.

[The verdict cannot but deepen apprehensions about long-standing allegations that the state administration

and political leadership were complicit in the violence that followed the February 2002 Godhra carnage. Upholding the charge of criminal conspiracy against Kodnani and Bajrangi, it challenges the BJP's explanation that the 2002 violence was a spontaneous backlash against the Godhra incident. Chief minister Narendra Modi will find it difficult to wink at the fact protracted violence took place on his watch. It'll be equally hard to justify Kodnani's elevation to the rank of minister of state for women and child development in his government in 2007.

Recall that witnesses from Naroda Patia had testified before the police against her in 2002. Worse, the Gujarat police were accused of having disregarded their testimonies as well as mobile phone evidence furnished by a police officer. Nor can the Gujarat government take credit for dispensation of justice. Where the public is concerned, things appeared to start moving for riot victims only after the Supreme Court referred nine riot cases, including Naroda Patia, to the special investigation team (SIT). Kodnani herself resigned from the state cabinet only after the SIT chargesheeted her in 2009.

Coming ahead of assembly elections in December, the Naroda Patia judgement could impact Modi's political ambitions. He's been championing "sadbhavna" in a seeming attempt to shed his hardliner image with an eye to the national stage. Whether it dents his

(Continued to page 27)

Around the World

CHINA RESTRICTS RAMADHAN FASTING FOR UIGHURS IN XINJIANG

Authorities in China's restive northwestern region of Xinjiang have banned Muslim officials and students from fasting during Ramadhan, prompting an exiled rights group to warn of new violence. Guidance posted on numerous government websites called on Communist Party leaders to restrict Muslim religious activities during the holy month, including fasting and visiting mosques. Xinjiang is home to around nine million Uighurs, a Turkic speaking, largely Muslim ethnic minority, many of whom accuse China's leaders of religious and political persecution. The region has been rocked by repeated outbreaks of ethnic violence.

A statement from Zonglang township in Xinjiang's Kashgar district said: "It is forbidden for Communist Party cadres, civil officials (including those who have retired) and students to participate in Ramadhan religious activities." Similar orders on curbing Ramadhan activities were posted on local government websites, with the educational bureau of Wensu county urging schools to ensure that students do not enter mosques during Ramadhan.

An exiled rights group, the World Uyghur Congress, warned the policy would force "the Uighur people to resist (Chinese rule) even further." "By banning fasting during Ramadhan, China is using administrative methods to force the Uighur people to eat in an effort to break the fasting," said group spokesman Dilshat Rexit in a statement. ■

EGYPT'S PM-DESIGNATE PLEDGES PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT

Egypt's prime minister-designate on August 2 pledged that his new 35-member Cabinet would be a "people's government" and called on Egyptians to rally behind it and the nation's newly elected president in the face of "grave challenges." The US-educated Hesham Kandil also confirmed that Hosni Mubarak's defence minister of 20 years, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, will retain the post. Tantawi led the military generals who took over from Mubarak when the president stepped down nearly 18 months following a popular uprising. The new Cabinet's line-up appeared aimed at allaying worries that Islamists will monopolise power in the government - three Brotherhood members were given ministries and several members of the outgoing, military-backed government will retain their posts, including the foreign and finance ministers.

Still, the line-up fell far short of the unity government that Morsi had initially said he would put together, bringing together political factions. Instead, the members were largely technocrats. And many will be looking to see how many of the new ministers, while not Brotherhood members, are Islamists or sympathetic to the movement to gain a real picture of the government's diversity.

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