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Islamic Culture

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Prophets of Allah do not only call people to the religion of Islam by presenting tenets of the Islamic Faith and its codes of law; they also pioneer a new culture, a new civilization, and a new way of life. Such a culture can aptly be called "Ibrahimi Culture". This culture has certain fundamental principles and characteristics which distinguish it from other cultures based on ignorance. This distinction may be seen in its spirit and principles as well as in its outward manifestations and details.

The first distinctive characteristic of the Islamic culture is the authentic religious beliefs, social ethics, and moral values on which it is based. This factor is commonly shared by Muslims all over the world, irrespective of their nationality, language, and dressing style. Due to this common feature Muslims from different parts of the world look like members of a family, easily identifiable as representatives of the same culture. Thus, the Muslims of the world have a specific culture of their own which could be best called the "Ibrahimi Culture". ■

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The Qur'an

O Believers! Enter into Islam wholly and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is an open enemy to you.

(al-Baqqrah 2:208)

This verse, though brief, contains a broad message for man, especially the Muslim community. Contained in it is much food for thought, for here Allah asks believers to be imbued with Islam in full. Another significant directive is to shun Satan's footsteps in that he is man's open enemy.

Let us first explain what is meant by Islam. Many people who have not conducted a study of comparative religions fail to appreciate the fundamental truth that Islam is a set of beliefs and a complete way of life. Other religions are named after their founders or their ethnic origin. Take the example of Judaism, which is named after YeHuda, a member of the Prophet's family. Christianity owes its name to Jesus Christ. Parsis are named after Faris, the old name of Iran, which was the birthplace of their religion. None of these religions represents an extensive call to believe in God or a Way of life. Hinduism takes its name from Sindh, and Brahamanism after a particular class. Buddhism too owes its name to its founder, Gautama Buddha. So is the case with Jainism. In contrast to all these, Islam is the only faith that prescribed a way of life and derives its message from the Scripture and the Messenger. It is based solely on divine revelation. The Shariah stands for His commands. Islam is a set of beliefs and the Shariah. In this respect it is unique, distinct from all other religions. ■

Hadith

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said : "Do not be suspicious, for suspicion is the height of falsehood, nor bear a grudge or enmity against each other, nor be jealous of each other, nor indulge in back-biting, nor pry into the secrets of one another, nor try unreasonably to excel one another, nor turn your faces against each other, but O bondmen of God ! live like brothers as the Lord has commanded."

—*Bukhari and Muslim*

Commentary: The evils mentioned above are highly detrimental to the growth of good and friendly relations. They cause ill-will and produce bitterness in the hearts. The sacred Prophet has, first of all, spoken of suspicion which is a form of unfounded feal and misdoubt, and whoever has a suspecting nature sees viciousness in everything a man does with whom he has the least difference, and his attitude towards him is, naturally, influenced by it. The other person, too, reacts and an atmosphere of sullen malice and ill-will is created between them.

The same is the case with the other habits indicated in it. They breed hatred and enmity and leave no room for goodwill and fellowship to develop which the common religious tie demands.

Abu Hurairah relates that the Apostle of God said: "Guard yourselves against envy for envy eats up good deeds as fire eats up wood."

— *Abu Dawood*

Commentary : When the fire of envy burns in anyone's heart, he misses no opportunity to hurt or harm the person at the sight of whose excellence or success he feels discontented, and, if nothing else, he seeks satisfaction by slandering him and speaking ill of him behind his back, and, as we learn from other Traditions of the Prophet, the lowest penalty the envious are going to pay in future existence is that their good deeds will be allotted to those against whom they have sinned. It will, perhaps, explain what is meant by the eating up of good deeds by envy, as stated in the above narrative. ■

Congregational service of Friday

There are four fundamental duties prescribed for Muslims. Salat (Regular worship), Zakat (Poor-due), Saum (Fasting) and Haj (Pilgrimage to Mecca). According to Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi the correct place in the Islamic Shariat, their proper legal position, their precise worth and importance in the religious structure and the individual and collective spheres of existence have been explained at length and such of their secrets and purposes set forth as are proved from the Holy Quran and the Traditions have been explained.

In this issue we will discuss the importance of the congregational service of Friday. It is distinguished by certain incentives and other features that have enhanced its solemnity and Splendour and are conducive to the generation of enthusiasm for the prayer and the promotion of the spirit of unity and co-operation among Muslims for piety and righteousness.

O ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation (Friday), hasten unto remembrance of Allah and leave your trading. That is better for you if ye did but know. (—1xii : 9)

Some of the Traditions of the holy prophet regarding the congregation of Friday are as follows:

He who misses three Friday service (in succession) owing to heedlessness or indolence, God sets the seal on his heart.

Let people give up neglect of the Friday prayer otherwise God will set the seal on their hearts, and then they will become of those that are negligent.

Sometimes I feel like telling someone else to lead the prayers so that I could go and set fire to the dwellings of those who stay away from the congregation.

For the Friday service a Muslim is required to take a bath, brush his teeth

and use perfume and take the greatest care for cleanliness. A sermon is also delivered before the commencement of the service. The sermon the holy Prophet used to deliver was not of a routine nature but he dwelt on the current problems and realities of life and made it an effective medium of guidance and instruction. We learn from Hazrat Jabir that “when the holy Prophet delivered the sermon his voice got raised and his eyes became red. It appeared that he was warning against the enemy, an attack from whom was imminent (and could take place at any time of the morning or evening).”

Writes Allama Ibn-i-Qaiyim in ‘Zad-ul-Maad :

“In his sermon the holy Prophet used to instruct and inform the Companions about the laws, principles and practices of Islam and if there was a matter of sanctioning or prohibiting he would sanction or prohibit (as the case might be).”

Commenting on the conduct of the Imams and preachers of his day, the Allama remarks :

“Then a long time elapsed, the light of Apostleship faded from the eyes and rituals took the place of Commands and practices became common which were carried out mechanically and without regard to their purpose and significance. People became obsessed with outward forms and ceremonials and thought only of observing them in an impressive manner. The rituals were elevated to the status of the Sunnah and lofty ideals and objectives, in respect of which the least amount of negligence or variation was forbidden, fell into neglect. They embellished their sermons with glittering phrases and far-fetched ideas, but the thought-content declined till the very object of the sermon, was lost.”

S.A.

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A Thought-Provoking Speech*

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Surely We created men of the best stature
Then We reduced him to the lowest of the
low.

—(xcv : 4-5)

Friends and Brothers

Today I will begin my speech with the remark to which I have been guided by the verses of the Quran that have just been recited. These verses have shown me the path of speaking to you. I am going to begin with something that may startle you. The Western World which stretches from Europe to the Americas is most fortunate, and yet it is most unfortunate. Such a big contradiction, in the same breath, may seem strange to you, but the verses which have been read to you, too, would appear self-contradictory, though they convey a profound reality. The same is the case with the whole of the West which, for reasons to go into which will be unnecessary here, has been vested by God with the leadership of the world. I have discussed at length in my book, *Islam and the World*, how universal leadership came to pass into the hands of the West. So, as I have said, what is true of man is, also, true of this part of the world. It is, at once, lucky and unlucky. It would not have mattered much had it been its own affair. Nations have risen to great heights in the past, and, then, their decline has set in and they have fallen into the abyss of obscurity. There would have

* *This speech was delivered on June 6, 1977 in the Hall of the Divinity College of Harvard University.*

been no reason for us to pay a particular attention if it appertained to a mere country. But when that country is in the position of leadership and its influence is felt throughout the world, it assumes serious proportions.

America is fortunate because Nature has been most generous to it. The Lord has bestowed His gifts lavishly upon this country. Its people are resourceful and enterprising. They are full of enthusiasm for living. They have been granted such a tenacity of purpose, resoluteness and pertinacity that they have made their country a paradise on earth. They have unraveled the mysteries of nature and harnessed its forces to their use. In the words of Iqbal, they have “enchained the rays of the sun”, and “sought the orbits of the stars”. They have turned the dust into gold. Now, in this land wealth pours down from the skies and rivers of milk and honey flow. This is the result of the galvanic spirit, robust imagination and unflagging eagerness of the American people. The United States not only abounds in mineral resources, but has, also, the hands to exploit them. In this respect, it is exceedingly fortunate and the whole world is, as if it were, keenly desirous to prove it. Everyone is a beggar at its door, eager to solicit its favours. But their ingenuity, sense of discipline and capacity for management, the people here have organised their life so well that the world at large is benefiting from it. In the material and economic fields they are supreme.

You can justly be envious of America

and admire it as much as you like. I do not believe in partisanship whether religious, social or political. One must give praise where praise is due.

But, at the same time, this country is most unfortunate. I say it with a full sense of responsibility. Many of you may be shocked at it, but it is a fact.

He who enchained the sunbeams

It has been a tragedy not only for America but the whole of mankind that it concentrated entirely on material progress and made the physical world the sole sphere of its activity. It would have been a different story had it received correct guidance and the boon and blessing of true faith had reached it, and the Americans had, also, paid attention to morality with equal earnestness and enthusiasm and looked for the portents of God in *Anfas* i. e., within themselves, and not only in *Afaq* i. e., the horizons. If the intellectual faculties of the Americans had not been directed altogether towards finding a clue to the mysteries of nature and they, also, had cared to discover the secrets of the self—of the heart and the soul—, they would have realised that the world of heart was immeasurably more extensive than the world of matter, so much so that if the whole of the universe was dropped -into the heart of man it would get lost like a pebble in an ocean. The people of America would, then, have been able to appreciate correctly the place of man in the grand design of creation. Of the time and energy they have recklessly spent on material sciences, and, as we all know, with what results, we have it in the Quran :

And that man hath only that for which he

maketh effort,

And that his effort will be seen.

And afterward he will be repaid for it with fullest payment.

—(LIII : 39-41)

Each do We supply, both these and those, from the bounty of thy Lord;

And the bounty of the Lord can never we walled up.

—(XVII : 20)

Whatever field man chooses for himself, God will grant him success in it. There is no limit to it; no thus far and no further. The consequences of the enterprise and industry of the West are before us. The world has shrunk and man has subjugated it for his own ends and interests. Had the Westerners exerted themselves, in the same way, on the heart, soul, and belief, the world would have known the true station of humanity. When the West worked on a tree, it produced from it a fruit no one could dream of. Identically, when it turned to Physics, Chemistry and Botany, it discovered new worlds. In the earlier days people were not inclined to believe in the plurality of the worlds and those who made such a claim were remorselessly punished by the Papal authority. But, today, a new world is being discovered in almost everything. In the same way, had the West known the true station of humanity and appreciated the distinction God had conferred upon man, the history of our race would have been different.

Most appropriate religion

Two events were largely responsible

for the tragedy which overtook not only the West, but the whole of mankind. One was the arrival of Christianity in the Western hemisphere. We, the Muslims, are, also, to blame and however much were we to regret it, it would not be unjustified. The fact is that the most appropriate religion for this part of the world would have been Islam which awakened the latent human capabilities, gave encouragement to intellect, and made man self-reliant and self-respecting. Says the Quran:

Surely We created man of the best stature.

—(XCV: 4)

Verily We have honoured the children of Adam.

We carry them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good things for them, and have preferred them over many of those whom We created with a marked preferment.

—(XVII : 70)

Lo ! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth.

—(11: 30)

Islam places the crown of Vicegerency on man's head than which there can be no greater honour. The whole structure of Islam is based upon the doctrine of Divine Unity and when it declares that man is Khaleefat-ul-Laah i. e., the Vicegerent of God on earth, it elevates him so much that one cannot think of a higher and nobler concept of humanity. Thus, in a Tradition, it is stated that on the Day of Judgement God will say to His bondsman, "I fell ill and you did not visit Me." The bondsman will reply, "Thou art the Lord of the Worlds. How could I visit Thee ?" God

will, thereupon, say, "Did you not know that such and such a bondsman of Mine was ill and you did not care to visit him? Had you gone to see him in order to comfort or help, you would have found Me with him." God, again, will say, "O son of Adam ! I asked you for food, but you did not give it to Me." The bondsman will reply, "Thou art the Lord of the Worlds. How could I give Thee food God will, then, say, "Are you not aware that such and such a bondsman of Mine begged you for food and you did not give it to him. Had you fed him you would have found it with Me." God, again, will say, "O son of Adam ! I was naked, but you did not cover Me with a garment." The bondsman will reply, "Thou art the Lord of the Worlds. How could I clothe Thee?" God will, then, say, "Such and such a bondsman of Mine begged you for something to wear and you did not give it to him. Had you done that the dress would have reached Me."

What greater honour can there be for mankind? Islam, further, tells that man is sinless by birth, his nature is pure, and his slate is clean. A Tradition has it that "every child is born on its nature i. e., pure and guiltless and it is its parents who make it a Jew, Christian or Fire-worshipper." They dye it in their own hue otherwise when a man is born he is on the Colour of Allah. Islam teaches that the innate characteristic, the fundamental reality of human nature is submission. There is no defect in it. It is basically sound. The Quran says : It gets what it earns, and it suffers what it earns. (II : 286)which means that it is beneficial for man what he earns and it is harmful for him what he earns with effort. The good deed a man does is in conformity with his nature while the wrong part he pursues is in defiance of it. The assertion that the

good deeds of man are in response to his natural instincts whereas his misdeeds are, so to speak, a revolt against himself bears a most eloquent testimony to the inherent purity of human nature.

So, Islam was the most suitable religion for this land. Had a union taken place between the two, the history of mankind would have taken a different course. On the one side, there would have been the unbounded natural resources of America, the tremendous vitality, resoluteness and enterprise of its people—the will to forge ahead and to win new laurels, and, on the other' the moderation of Islam, its message of hope and confidence its incomparable quality of being the Faith of Nature and its insistence on the intrinsic innocence of man i. e., the doctrine that man is born free from sin and if he goes astray and falls into error, it is a passing phase and the rust that is formed on his heart as a result of it disappears as soon as he resolves to offer sincere repentance which is not a thing of constraint, but an inborn impulsion, and, that is why, a high place has been given to those who repent after sinning.

Islam gives encouragement to the creativeness of man and arouses his dormant capabilities. It is the faith of Monotheism, of the Oneness of God. There is no speculative philosophy or empty idealism in it. It is based on solid facts and is such a simple religion that anyone can easily understand it. It does not put fetters on life, nor places obstacles in the path of knowledge, but elevates learning to an act of worship. It calls on man to study and reflect.

And in earth are portents for those whose

faith is sure, and (also) in yourselves. Can ye then not see?

—(LI: 20-21)

(Who) reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say) : Our Lord ! Thou createdst not this in vain.

—(111 : 191)

We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves.

—(XLI : 53)

Islam does not imprison the mind. On the contrary, it demands of man to make the fullest use of his mental faculties.

And those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat (but listen attentively and cogitate).

—(xxv : 73)

But, alas, the West opted out for a faith which upheld the doctrine of the Original Sin and gave rise to the worst kind of pessimism and frustration by hammering into man the belief that to sin was his destiny, and destiny was unalterable. Or, in other words, it was a hereditary trait with him, a congenital disease. It is a different matter that a man goes wrong and transgresses against a God-given law, but realises his mistake and makes amends for it. But if the idea is implanted in his mind that he is a born sinner, you can imagine to what abnormal reactions will he fall a prey.

Thus, one misfortune of this country was that it chose a religion which did not raise the stature of humanity, but put the mark of disgrace on its forehead and persuaded it to believe that it needed a

personality that could redeem it by offering an atonement for its misdeeds. To make the matters worse, the inclination for monasticism and renunciation of the world soon appeared in the West.

The Church put impediments in the path of knowledge and understanding

The other calamity was that when the Church was in the ascendant, the ecclesiastics blocked the path of knowledge and investigation. At a time Europe was waking up and breaking the chains, the Papal authority stood before it like a thick wall and started measuring everything with its own yardstick. The Church opposed when it was claimed that the earth was round. Bruno, whose only crime was that he taught the plurality of the worlds, was declared a heretic and burnt alive, and Galileo another scientist of no less worth, was punished till he died in prison for having held that the earth moved round the sun. The inquisition was established which performed its duty with such savage alacrity that the number of persons tried and punished by it was, in no way, less than the casualties in the last war.

The two things combined to turn the face of Europe decidedly towards materialism. The enlightened sections among the Europeans developed a strong aversion to everything associated with the ecclesiastics. They began to exhibit a definite intolerance of every kind of spiritual control. The feelings of disgust and disdain were directed not against a particular religion, but against the whole concept of religious belief and worship. In its haste, the West decided that no progress could be made until religion was discouraged and the bonds of slavery to the Church were

broken. Europe, thus, rose openly in revolt against the Church and set out on the journey of materialism, the mournful consequences of which stare us in the face everywhere.

Gentlemen, it is a long and painful story. You all are educated people and you must have read about it. Besides, the University at which I am speaking today is universally recognised as a great seat of I will, therefore, not go into the details.

Western Civilisation has completed its action

The Western Civilisation has reached the highest point of its development. No one knows the mysteries of the universe save God, nor can anyone say, positively, what lies in store for us tomorrow. But, as the case is at present, this Civilisation has brought forth the best fruits it was capable of bearing. Now, we are standing at the cross-roads of history. The Western Civilisation has almost completed its action, and America, which is a major centre of it, is swaying merrily in the swing of its attainments. It can proudly claim to have lifted every veil from the face of Nature and unfolded all its secrets—distances have been reduced and man is enjoying all the facilities he could think of.

Nevertheless, the heart of man is devoid of peace. His soul is unhappy. He has reached a stage where life seems meaningless. He is dazed and bewildered. What was needed at this juncture was that men were born in this very country who could pull it out of the morass of frustration and disillusionment, give it a new message and breathe a new life into it. The life is moving at a pace that has left man

breathless. The modern Civilisation is taking him at break-neck speed, he knows not where. Neither the reins are his hands nor are his feet in the stirrups.

Ray of hope

I do not believe in the philosophy of chance happenings feel that there is the Hand of God behind everything that takes place. That is the Measuring of the Mighty, the Wise. (XXXVI :37). You have come to live here in large numbers. There are not merely manual workers among you, but some highly gifted Muslims as well who are studying in the universities and engaged in valuable scientific investigation. Many of you have made your mark as scholars and researchers. What is more, Islam is spreading in America. It has made a dent. A number of Americans have either embraced Islam or are ready to do so. Our Black Muslim brethren are a source of strength to us. This country, in brief, seems to be taking a new turn and a new ray of hope is appearing. Due to our shortsightedness and internal dissensions we, in the past, lost the opportunity to come to its aid. Had Islam been propagated in Europe when the Ottomans had established their rule over a part of the Continent, or, even earlier, when the Moors had swept over Spain, the West, today, would not be finding itself in this predicament. It would not have been caught in the quagmire of materialism.

But, unfortunately, we did not rise to the occasion. How much do I wish that the Muslim evangelists had reached here when they had set out into the world in the early centuries of Islam. It is said that the Muslims had discovered America before Columbus. How wonderful it would have been had they

taken advantage of it and given the message of Islam to the New World. But it was not to be, and the Islamic countries have been paying the penalty for the last two hundred years. I believe that the way the Muslim countries have, today, become the lackeys of the West and the treatment they are receiving at its hands is a punishment for the failure the of Muslims to convey to it the Message of God at the proper time.

But now the circumstances are taking a favourable course. Muslims are migrating to America, in a steady stream; from different lands and for different reasons. There is no Islamic country whose finest young men are not found here. Lastly, a large number of enterprising people are coming to it from the country where the House of ka'aba is situated. You should, now, realise your responsibility which does not lie merely in acquiring higher education or solving your economic problem. You are not here only to earn and take back the money to your native lands and provide for your families. You should know that it is your duty to give this country what it lacks. If you look at its material attainments and scientific advancement, it presents a true picture of the Divine pronouncement, Surely We created man of the best stature, but if you think over its moral bankruptcy and the agony of its soul, you will find it at the level of the lowest of the low. Intellectual maturity and puerility exist side by side in America. On the one hand, the Americans are going to the moon, and, on the other, they are sinking into the lowest depths of moral degradation. The country that solved all the problems is finding itself helpless in providing a solution to the moral crisis of its youth. As Iqbal had said:

He who enchained the sunbeams could not
Unfurl the dawn on life's dark night.

I say it without hesitation that there is no Muslim country which can look the Westerners in the face and say: "See it is here that you stumbled. With us is the panacea of your ills and the balm for your inner wounds. It is the Quran and the teachings of our Prophet." The bitter truth is that we have made ourselves unworthy of speaking to the West like men. We carry a heavy load of gratitude to it on our heads, and are immersed from head to foot in its favours. Our ignorance deposes against us. Our poverty shouts from the rooftops. Our arm is stretched out for alms. Such being the case, how can an Islamic country speak, like an equal, to the West which has the whip in hand and enjoys every kind of superiority—intellectual, political and economic? Which Muslim country is there that can express the mildest criticism of the West or offer a suggestion ?

Your station is of men who invite to goodness

You may ascribe it to my imagination, but I will urge upon you to show them by your conduct and way of life that you have something to give to the West. You are not here simply to take, but are, also, capable of giving. No matter whether you are a University teacher or a student or working in a firm, you can prove the authenticity of Islam to those with whom you live or associate. You can arouse in them the feeling that Islam can still give them something. In spite of possessing everything, they are paupers; they are insolvent from within. They are not deriving

the advantage they should be from their material achievements. The real fruits of scientific and technological progress have been eluding them. You should have, first, faith in yourselves, in your station as the givers of the call to goodness. You are not mere gleaners to pick up the droppings. You can, also, fill their bowl with your own grain. It may sound preposterous in the present circumstances and many of my brothers and sisters may be wondering to what world do I belong.

But the Quran and the example of the Prophet fill me with faith and hope. The sacred Prophet had sent the following epistle to Caesar, who ruled over half of the then known world, when there was not enough to eat in his own house and the Muslim State had not been established in Medina.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful

From Mohammad, the bondsman and Messenger of Allah,

to Heraclius, the Emperor of Rome.

Peace be upon him who follows the Guidance. I invite you to the message of Islam. Accept Islam and you shall be delivered: two-fold will be Allah's reward to you. But if you turn away then on you will rest the sin of (the denial of) your community. Oh People of the Scripture ! Come to an agreement on a thing that is common between us and you : that we shall worship none but Allah, and ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if you turn back upon it then bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).

I am a follower of the Prophet who, with utmost self-reliance and trust in God, gave the call of Islam to the mightiest ruler of his time and in circumstances of utter poverty and powerlessness. When oven is not lighted in his house for months, when members of his household do not have a satisfactory meal even for two consecutive days, when his coffers are empty and his followers are few in number, he says to the Roman Emperor. "Accept Islam and you shall be delivered." We are the adherents of that Apostle. We must summon up courage to give to these people what they need, to make them realise that we possess what they are, regrettably, wanting in, and without which the Western Civilisation is doomed. This Civilisation is ready to commit suicide. If anything can save it, it is the guidance of the Quran. A harmonious blending has to be worked out between material progress and spiritual values. Disaster awaits the world if materialism gains the upper hand over morality. This is the call our Islamic countries should give. They should tell plainly to the West, "Look here. You are drowning and we can save you." But is anyone of them in that position? We have forfeited the right to do so. We are the hangers-on of the West. None of the Islamic countries has the courage to tell the West what ails its civilisation. They consider the Western Civilisation the last word in perfection. As someone has said, "The Qibla of the world is Haram , and the Qibla of Haram is America." I make bold to say that, today, the Islamic countries and the Muslim ruling classes are incapable of giving any call to the West. But you can perform the duty by displaying self-confidence, by presenting before them a solid example of the Islamic

way of life and by learning to be proud of your Faith. You should be grateful to the Lord for these favours. Through Namaz, supplication and freedom from servility to worldly ends and interests you should demonstrate the world that materialism can never enslave your hearts and minds. You have not yet lost the ability to judge between good and evil. Worldly goods are not everything in your sight; not even this existence. Hereafter is an article of faith with you. You hold as true that there is to come another life and another world at the end of this of mortal life. You believe that God is All-powerful, He has control over all things, and His good pleasure is the extreme limit of felicity and good fortune. God has given you the opportunity to acquaint the Americans with the realities that have receded into oblivion and Christianity has failed to revive them in spite of the vast resources at its disposal. You can discharge that responsibility, all your faults and weaknesses notwithstanding.

Friends ! I have taken a lot of your time. But you must make an allowance for the burning of my heart. Listen to the cry of anguish that rises from the depths of my soul. I can now attest before the Lord to have given the Azan in the biggest idol-hall of the world, and conveyed His Guidance to what can be the most appropriate place in the modern world. I shall deem myself successful if I have been able to evoke a sympathetic response in even one of my listeners here.

May Allah take from you, in an increasing degree, the service of his Faith and make you more useful to Islam and to this country than to yourselves, to your families, and to your native lands ! ■

Prophet's Mission and Message

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

All the Prophets who were raised, right from Hazrat Adam (AS) up to Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), strictly enjoined the renunciation of *Shirk* and adoption of *Tauheed*, because, it is Allah Almighty who is the Creator of the entire universe. It is He who has furnished the universe with all kinds of goods that might be needed. It is He who has made these goods fully usable by, and easily available to, man as a result of which every one draws mamum benefits from them throughout all his or her life and fulfils his/her needs. In fact the life of man itself is sustained by these very goods and their usability and availability. How is it, then, if the man forgets His Magnanimity and, abandoning Him, adopts some odd objects lying hither thither which he fancies can benefit him or pose a threat of causing some harm to him and starts saying: we are helped by so-and-so, our needs are fulfilled by so-and-so and such and such object is inagnuminous to us? How is it then that the man attributes the Magnanimity conferred exclusively by his Creator and Master, Allah Almighty, on him to others and asks them for fulfillment of his requirements and, abandoning his real Benefactor who is the greatest of all the benefactors and grants all kinds of beneficence, calls other petty objects his benefactor and master? How will, quite obviously, Allah Almighty, who has created each and everything and bestowed man with each and everything and continues to do so incessantly, allow all that to be perpetrated and be not angry? Hence it is the *Shirk* which Allah Almighty gets extremely displeased with. And that is something absolutely realistic, sensible and just.

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That is why all the Prophets and reformers interdicted, first of all and most of all, the *Shirk*. Thereafter and along with it, they kept calling for the removal of the rot, whatever and wherever it could have got generated in the human character and morals. For example, if there was in some populace, along with the *Shirk*, some sexual depravity, as was the case with the people of Lut (AS), or some other kind of malpractices were there in vogue amidst the peoples, their Prophets prohibited them from them. In some populace, along with the *Shirk*, the practice of making pilferage while measuring and weighing was rampant as was the case with the people of Madiyan. Their Prophet prohibited his people from doing that. In some populace, along with the *Shirk*, the hauteur and the habit of harrowing the weaker sections was in vogue as was the case with Fira'un's folks of Egypt. There Hazrat Musa (AS) was made the Prophet. He tried hard to make Firaun see the reason and put the fright of retribution from Allah in him and forbade him to indulge in *Shirk* and tyranny. In some habitations, a fondness, along with *Shirk*, for persecuting the weak and usurping the rights of others had taken root. The Prophet there prevented them from doing that, too. Likewise, whatever other vices, along with the *Shirk*, were there in the peoples, their respective Prophets restrained them from all these vices, too, along-with giving the call to adopt *Tauheed* (the Faith in Unity and Oneness of Allah) in its unassimilated form: that is to worship Allah Almighty alone who is sole Sustainer of the entire universe and all the creatures therein. ■

Glimpses of The Insights of Modern Science in Holy Quran

- Meraj Ahmad*

The universe as known to us today, is one of the greatest mysteries and miracles of science. Its sheer vastness makes it impossible to explore thoroughly and therefore, the universe that we see and understand so far is only about a fraction of the entire picture.

Nevertheless, we have come a long way in understanding the dynamics of the universe and have recently made some remarkable discoveries. Deciphering and decoding the origin of the universe, its creation, expansion and end, involve undertaking two diametrically opposite routes. The first one unfolds through science where observations, theories and experiments are central. The second one is enlightened through religion, which utilizes faith and revelation. Both are often considered to be incompatible as scientific theories need proof whereas religious beliefs need only faith. However, there are instances where the hinterland between science and religion converges entirely. The following postulates and theories of modern science find ample support and evidence from the Holy Quran:

1. The Big Bang Theory

The Big Bang theory has been concerned with the creation of universe.

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It was propounded in 1927 by Belgian astronomer Abbé Georges Lemaitre (the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. II, Pg 10). The central idea of the theory is that the heavenly bodies (stars, planets including the earth) were adjacent to one another (in an extremely compressed state in the shape of a huge ball of gas or fire). There was a great explosion (big bang) in this ball of fire resulting in its breaking up and division into innumerable parts which took the shape of heavenly bodies and the earth.

The Quranic evidence

- i. "Then He (God) turned to the heaven (sky) which was only smoke or gas at that time."

Al Fussilat (verse 11)

- ii. "The heavens and the earth were at first one mass, then We parted them."

Al Anbiya (verse 30)

2. Expanding Universe Theory

E. P. Hubble, an American astronomer in 1929 proved that the universe is constantly expanding itself like a balloon.

The Quranic evidence

"With power and skill We created the heavens and it is We who created the vastness of space...and We have

spread out the spacious earth; how excellently We do spread out.”

Al Adh-Dhariyat (verse 47-48)

3. Pulsating Theory

According to the pulsating theory, when the process of expansion of universe will reach its extreme point, the process of contraction and congestion will start due to which the planets will revert to their congestion point, causing a collision with a big bang and a catastrophe (Qayamat) will occur. Then the universe will convert itself again into a ball of fire.

The Quranic evidence

- i. “We built the heaven by our own might and We are continuously expanding it...and after a point it will start contracting.

-Al Adh-Dahriyat (verse 47)

- ii. “The great Disaster! What is the great disaster? The day when men will be like scattered moths and mountains like corded wool

Al-Qariah (verses 1-5)

- iii. “When the Heaven splits asunder, when the stars fan, scattering, when the seas are erupted, and when the (contents of) graves are laid open.”

Al-Infitar (verses 1-5)

- iv. “When the sun is folded up and when the stars scatter away and when the mountains are set in

motion (trembling).”

AJ-Takwir (verses 1-3)

- v. “When the inevitable event happens... the earth shall be shaken all of a sudden and the mountains shall crumble and become as scattered dust.”

Al Waqiah (verses 4-6)

- vi. “When the earth is shaken with the utmost shaking, and the earth discharges its burdens.”

Al-Zalzatah (verses 1-2)

4. Evolutionary Theory

The basic premise of the book ‘Origin of Species’ (1859) by Charles Darwin and Evolutionary theory (1801) also known as theory of Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics by Chevalier de Lamarck, has been that life originated from water.

The Quranic evidence

- i. “We made from water every living thing.”Al-Anbiya (verse 30)
- ii. “And God has created every animal from water.”

Al-Noor (verse 45)

5. Modern Astronomical Theory

The Modern Astronomical theory of space science puts forward the idea that the planets are revolving in accordance with the gravitational system characterized by dynamic equilibrium.

The Quranic evidence

- i. "He created the sun, the moon and the stars, all governed by fixed laws under His command."

Al-Araf (verse 54)

- ii. "The heavenly bodies (the planets, the Sun, the Moon and the Earth) are floating (revolving and rotating) according to a fixed law and these heavenly bodies cannot overlap and override each other's pre-determined courses."

Al-Yasin (verses 38-40)

- iii. "He created the heavens and the Earth with truth. He wraps the night around the day and wraps the day around the night, and has made the Sun and Moon subservient, each one running for a specified term. Is He not indeed the Almighty, the Endlessly Forgiving?"

Al-Zumar (verse 5)

- iv. "It is He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Each of them is floating in its orbit."

Al-Anbiya (verse 33)

6. Modern Scientific Theory of Astronomy

The theory of Modern Science has been that a special propelling force is required to enter the space by transcending the skirt (the meeting point) of the earth and sky (astrophysics). The Quranic evidence

"O, society of Jinns and Humans if it be, past beyond the bounds of the Earth and the Heaven, but you cannot do this as it requires a special power (to enter the space)."

Al-Rahman (verses 32, 33)

Thus, as we can see, the Holy Quran contains glimpses of almost all modern theories not only of science but also of astrophysics, astronomy, astrology, philosophy, sociology, etc., that were later on propounded and, subsequently, proven by modern-day scientists, social thinkers and philosophers. On this account, the Holy Quran has become a subject of extensive research not only in Islamic but also in western countries. Search is on to unearth the occult sciences as well as find the mystery of death. Many Islamic scholars are toiling day and night to find 'Ism-e-Azam' (the Miraculous Name of Allah). Search is also on to decipher the meaning of mystic symbols or the 'compound words' in the Holy Quran.

The author concludes by reciting the famous couplet by Allama Iqbal:

"Ye kainat abhi na-tamam hai shayad
Ke aa rahi hai damadam sada-e-kun
fayakun"

(Bal-e-Jibril-023)

(Perhaps the universe is as yet incomplete:

For each moment is with echoes of 'be'
and 'it becomes' replete) ■

Gender Equity in Islam

- Jamal Badawi

The Economic Aspect

The Right to Possess Personal Property

One aspect of the world-view of Islam is that everything in heaven and on earth belongs to Allah:

“To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth...”

(Qur’an 2284)

As such, all wealth and resources are ultimately “owned” by Allah. However, out of Allah’s mercy He created mankind to be, collectively, His trustees on earth in order to help mankind fulfil this trusteeship, He made the universe serviceable to mankind. “And He (Allah) has subjected to you, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect.”

(Qur’an 45:13)

It is the human family that is addressed in the above and in other verses of the Qur’an and since the family includes both genders, it follows that the basic right to personal possession of property (as Allah’s trustees) applies equally to males and females. More specifically:

1. The Shariah (Islamic Law) recognise the full property rights of women before and after marriage. They may buy, sell or lease any or all of their properties at will. For this reason, Muslim women may keep (and in fact they have traditionally kept) their maiden names after marriage, an

indication of their independent property right as legal entities.

Financial Security and Inheritance Law

2. Financial security is assured for women. They are entitled to receive marital gifts without limit and to keep present and future properties and income for their own security, even after marriage. No married woman is required to spend any amount at all from her property and income on the household. In special circumstances, however, such as when her husband is ill, disabled or jobless, she may find it necessary to spend from her earnings or savings to provide the necessities for her family. While this is not a legal obligation, it is consistent with the mutuality of care, love and co-operation among family members. The woman is entitled also to full financial support during marriage and during the waiting period (iddah) in case of divorce or widowhood. Some jurists require, in addition one year’s support for divorce and widowhood (or until they remarry, if remarriage takes place before the year is over).

A woman who bears a child in marriage is entitled to child support from the child’s father. Generally, a Muslim woman is guaranteed support in all stages of her life, as a daughter, wife, mother or sister. The financial advantages accorded to women and not to men in marriage and in family have a social counterpart in the provisions that the Qur’an lays down in the laws of inheritance, which afford the

male, in most cases twice the inheritance of a female. Males inherit more but ultimately they are financially responsible for their female relatives: their wives, daughters, mothers and sisters. Female inherit less but retain their share for investment and financial security, without any legal obligation to spend any part of it, even for their own sustenance (food, clothing, housing, medication, etc.)

It should be noted that in pre-Islamic society, women themselves were sometimes objects to inheritance. In some Western countries, even after the advent of Islam, the whole state of the deceased was given to his/her eldest son. The Qur'an however, made it clear that both men and women are entitled to an specified share of the estate of their deceased parents or close relations:

"From what is left by parents and those nearest related, there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large - a determinate share.

(Qur'an 4:7)

Employment

With regard to woman's right to seek employment, it should be stated first that Islam regards her role in society as a mother and a wife as her most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor babysitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of a upright, complex free, and carefully-reared child. Such a noble and vital role, which largely shapes the future of nations, cannot be regarded as "idleness". This may explain why a married woman must secure her husband's consent if she wishes to work,

unless her right to work was mutually agreed to as a condition at the time of marriage.

However, there is nor decree in Islam that forbids women from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in positions which fit her nature best and in which society needs her most. Examples of these professions are nursing, teaching, (especially children), medicine, and social and charitable work.

Moreover, there is no restriction on benefiting from women's talents in any field. Some early jurists, such as Abuhanifah and Al-Tabari, uphold that a qualified, Muslim woman may be appointed to the position of a judge. Other jurists hold different opinions.

Yet no jurist is able to point to an explicit text in the Qur'an or Sunnah that categorically excludes woman from any lawful type of employment except for the headship of the state.

Omar, the second Caliph after the Prophet, appointed a woman (Um Al-Shiffa; bint Abdullah) as the market place supervisor, a position that is equivalent in our world to "director of the consumer protection department."

In countries where Muslims are a numerical minority, some Muslim women, while recognising the importance of their role as mothers, may be forced to seek employment in order to survive. This is especially true in the case of divorcees and widows and in the absence of the Islamic financial security measures outlined above. ■

Role of Urdu Press in Freedom Struggle Movement

- Sultan Shakir Hashmi

Indian independence has not been achieved easily. Thousands and thousands of people had been fighting for the independence of their motherland and making all kinds of sacrifices to get their great country get rid of slavery from the foreign rule. The harsh and barbaric treatment of the corrupt rulers, their reign of terror and atrocities on innocent Indians, fighting for independence of their motherland is well known. The roads and streets of this great country have been repeatedly splashed with the blood of Indians fighting for their legitimate rights and freedom from slavery. Those who participated were from all religions, castes and creed whose purpose was the same viz regaining their lost independence, identity and honour. The Urdu Press played an important role in those early formative years. They helped the people to understand the problems of different provinces. Thus helped in creating of brotherhood and it became a powerful medium for the political education of the people. The newspapers were read eagerly in groups, even in the villages.

Maulvi Mohammad Baqar Started 'Dehli Akhbar' weekly in 1837 Mohammad Husain Azad, Munshi Sadasukh Lal started 'Jaan Jahan Numa' in 27th March 1822 from Calcutta."Sadiq-ul-Akbar", Editor Jamil

Uddin Hijra, 'Gulshan-e-Nav Bahar' Editor Abdul Qadir, 'Avadh Akhbar' started in 1859 by Munshi Newel Kishor, "Khai Khuwai Khalqe" by Munshi Ayodhya Prasad from Ajmer, "Manshure Mohammad" by Mohammad Sharif from Benglore, "Jalwa-e-Ture" Editor Sayed Zaheer Uddin from Meerut" Avadh Panch" Editor Munshi Sajjad Husain Kakorvi, Urdu Magazine "Moalla" by Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Daily Newspaper "Zamindar" by ZafarAli Khan, "Humdard" by Maulana Mohammad Ali, "Azad" by Bish Sahai Azad, Daily Newspaper by Lala Lajpat Rai, "AlJamiyat" Jamiat-ul-Ulma-e-Hind, "Saach" and "Sidqe-Jadeed" by Maulana AbdulMajid Dariyabadi, Monthly magazine "Tariq-e-Bagawate-Hind" by Mukund Lal Agra, "Inqelaab" by Maulana Abdul Hamid Salik "Pratap" from Lahore "Milap-", "Sadaqat", "Mauj Narenada", "Sabhe-Watan" "Rahbare-Watan" and "Rahnuma" published from Bhopal, Delli Urdu Akhbar "Siraj-ul-Akhbar" in Persian published from Dehli, "Manshur Mohamadi" by Mohammad Ashraf, Banglore.

The freedom fighters were active on two fronts. People like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Moti Lal Verma, Zafar Ali Khan, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Hasrat Mohani, Baburao Vishnu Purarkar, Maulana

Mohammad Ali Jauhar and Shanti Narain Bhatnagar and innumerable freedom fighters like them were also very courageously fighting and contributing for the cause of Indian freedom struggle through their innumerable patriotic magazines and newspapers and their revolutionary writings in very adverse circumstances. After the Lahor session Amin Salonvi established an Urdu News Agency under the name of "Independent News Service" in Lucknow.

With equal courage were fighting the brave freedom fighters on political front facing Lathis and Bullets and facing unbearable atrocities and inhuman treatment in jails. Besides the Mujahideens, the Indians Urdu Press played an important role in those early formative years. They helped the citizens to understand the problems of different provinces thus created a sort of brotherhood and became a powerful medium between the Mujahideens and the Britishers.

Thus, thousands of innocent Indians were brutally massacred fighting for the independence of their motherland and thousands and thousands of them were repeatedly sent to jails for years for taking part in processions and Non Co-operation movement and even on mere suspicions. Even the women and children were not spared from inhuman treatment.

The Indian Press had played a very important role in the country's struggle for freedom and the role of Urdu Press also could never be forgotten. The struggle of the Urdu Press in the freedom struggle started with the movement of freedom struggle in India. The stronger the fight for freedom grew in strength, the more the Urdu Press grew in boldness and strength and acquired dignity and respect. The Newspapers in Hindi and Urdu gained wide spread popularity and were a great source of creating awakening and patriotism in the people and spreading the fire of freedom movement.

The reason behind this is that, Urdu language is a sweet and widely spoken language all over the country and in many other countries of the world. The Mirat-ul-Akhbar a Persian weekly started in 1822 this newspaper was perhaps the first to be conducted by an Indian. The Urdu language is no foreign language brought to India from any other country. It was born in India, grew and developed in India and became instantly popular among the Indians. The language has greatly contributed to the progress and prosperity of India and rendered invaluable contribution in the freedom movement. It has always played a very important role in creating communal harmony, bringing all the communities of India closer to each other which was of greatest importance at that time. Language has always

played an extremely important role at the time of communal riots easing the tension and hatred and creating an atmosphere of mutual love, understanding and trust amongst Indians.

Besides these Urdu newspaper also published from abroad and look an important role in "Freedom of India".

Urdu Journalists continued their struggles and got rigorous imprisonment for getting independence of India till the country did not get freedom.

Remembering and to tell everybody that Indians living in America continued struggle and founded a party in the name of "Ghadar Party" ("Rebellion Party") on 21 st April 1912 for getting his country's independence. The party published weekly/Newspaper of Urdu, Panjabi and Hindi Languages from this name of "Ghadar".

The weekly Urdu Newspaper "Ghadar" the 1st edition was published on 1st November 1913. The few edition got on cyclo style and after that the paper got published through Letho Press. The first Editor was Lala Har Dayal when he was exiled from America then an Editorial Board was formed in which Sardar Harnam Singh Kotla, Sardar Kartar Singh Sarabha and Niranjan Das were included.

The circulation of this newspaper

not only in the city of America and Canada but this was also sent in Malaysia, Hongkong, Singapur Singhai, Philipine, Argentina and South Africa and to other different countries.

Where all "Newspaper" was read with intrest and through its help the "Ghadar party" was formed.

The publishing of this Newspaper was done through Lala Har Dayal of Uttar Pradesh.

There was no any fix subscription of the Paper from all the places and from the helpers the amount was collected and that was sent to Head office.

From Tashqand a Newspaper named "ZAMINDAR" was published in 1920 in city of "BAKO" "SOVIET UNION" an fortnightly Urdu Paper "AZAD HINDUSTAN" was published. Both these papers gained publicity of socialism.

So it proves that Urdu Newspaper not only published from India but these Urdu Newspapers were also published in the other countries of the world. Where the Indians live. They did everything what they could do for the Independence of the country.

It is to be remembered that "Kohey Noor" published from Lahore. The Editor Munshi Harsukh Rai got rigorous imprisonment for three years in 1857. Sayed Jameeluddin Hijr the

“SADIQUL AKBAR” Delhvi got three years imprisonment.

Azimuddin and Amiruddin the publisher and Editor “SUBEH DECCAN” Hyderabad were exciled from the city in 1898.

Lala Jaswant Rai the publisher of the weekly Punjabi Lahore got two years imprisonment in 1907.

Lala Deena Nath and Lala Piudi Das Malik the publisher and Editor of Newspaper “India Goojarwala” got five years imprisonment in 1907.

Shanti Narayan bhatnagar, Nana Gopal Ludha Ram Editor “SWARAJA” Allahabad got Ten years storm prisonment. Besides these Mahashai Krishna the Editor “Prata”, Maulana Al-Hameed Salik Editor “ZAMINDAR” Lahore and Qazi Abdul ghaffar got imprisonment for Urdu Journalism but nobody became afraid.

The quality of Urdu Journalism is this everyone got published Newspapers for the revealing of profession qualities and difficulties. When the lawyers got published their Newspaper and the Indian Policemen also got published their Newspapers more over surprising that “Process” also got published their Newspapers and every caste religion, believers took help from Urdu Journalism and in 1916 at Afghanistan where the Excile independent government was formed

and published a Newspaper in the name of “Jahaney Islam” and its Head office was in Istambol.

This paper was also distributed among the Indian soldiers and sailors and etc. Editor was Abu Sayeedul Arbi. This paper was not only propagating the sentiments but also propagating for the development and Unity among the Indian people. From this....can be known what is the importance of Urdu journalism in the struggle of “Indian Freedom Movement”.

The Urdu press has never lagged behind other language newspapers and the Urdu newspapers, Urdu journalists have shown tremendous courage and maturity while dealing with important national issues.

Although the Urdu newspapers and magazines are facing a number of problems these days they are bravely facing the difficulties and marching ahead with great dedication to serve the country.

Efforts are being made to solve the problems faced by Urdu language newspapers, magazines and Urdu language journalists at various levels but they are not enough. In the interest of national integration, communal harmony, progress and prosperity of the country the government of India and the State governments should have paid greater attention towards Urdu language press and solved their problems. ■

Islamic Concept of Talaq

- T.M. Farhathullah

The Supreme Court has made instant and irrevocable *Talaq* invalid to the delight of most of the people. Majority of Muslims, however, feel that the verdict has manifestly gone against their *Shariat*. In this context, the media are seized with certain wrong concepts and interpretations on *Talaq* and hence this article aims at focusing on the real Islamic concept of *Talaq*.

Divorce in most of the religions is not possible at personal level. It is to be decided in the court. It is not so in Islam. But the misconception is that a husband can divorce his wife but the wife cannot. In Islam, if the wife is subject to domestic violence and physical torture, she is entitled to claim '*Khula*,' another form of *Talaq* in *Shariat*.

Likewise, the husband on account of incompatibility of temperament with his wife and certain irreconcilable matters can divorce his wife. In these two types of *Talaq*, no court interference is required. One of the couple can, however, take the matter to the court. This means that Muslim women can claim perfect equality with their men in matters of *Talaq*.

It is not possible for the husband to arbitrarily part with his wife proclaiming *Talaq*. Islam has set the following specific procedure which the

husband has to follow before he divorces his wife.

- i. **Mutual talk:** In case of strained relationship between husband and wife, they should sit together and dispassionately discuss all the angularities and dissensions and try to make an all-out attempt to resolve their disputes amicably.
- ii. **Temporary separation:** If they cannot resolve their dispute amicably, they should keep themselves away from each other for a short period of a week, a fortnight or more.
- iii. **Arbitration:** The third step is the arbitration by the elders of the families of the husband and the wife, with an open discussion on discord and estrangement between the couple and, thus, the attempt to pave the way for reconciliation and peace between them.
- iv. **Outside intervention:** If the third step fails, an outsider known to the two families should be allowed to intervene and bring about rapprochement and reconciliation between the warring couple.

If all the four serious attempts fail to bring about the reunion between the

couple, the husband is allowed to pronounce a single *Talaq* with two persons as witness and thus the implementation of *Talaq* takes place. A *Talaq* without exhausting these options has no legal validity.

Utterance of *Talaq* once is the most desirable form of separation. In this form, within the *Iddat* period of three months, the husband can sink his differences at any time and reconcile with his wife and resume conjugal relationship with her without any interference from others.

In the second type of *Talaq*, the husband utters *Talaq* twice. In this form, provision for reunion is the remarriage with his wife soon after the *Iddat* period.

The third type is the most despicable form in which the husband in a fit of anger utters *Talaq* thrice. In this form, there is no possibility of reunion. The Triple *Talaq* is permissible in Islam but not commended and Prophet most heartily detested it.

Husbands mostly resort to the sinful *Talaq* in the heat of his anger. He resorts to the irrevocable *Talaq* willfully ignoring the two other options of *Talaq* where reconciliation is possible. Triple *Talaq* is the product of the past when people married frequently, taking as many wives as they liked. Divorce was easy and frequent: a man having set aside a wife, might remarry her again and re-establish conjugal relationship

with her. They had a sort of provisional divorce i.e., divorcing a wife for a short period and taking her back later. All these kinds of immoral and unethical practices were thrown to the winds by Mohammed (*saws*).

It was Mohammed (*saws*) who established balance and greater justice and equality in the field of marriage and divorce. His principle was 'either keep or release your wives in fair manner.' Even Triple *Talaq* is an extremely rare occurrence among Muslims. In the Muslim population of 100 million in India, the divorced women constitute hardly ¼ % of the Muslim population. It is not known how many out of this are victims of Triple *Talaq*.

Even in the pronouncement of *Talaq*, the husband has to adhere to the following steps:

1. He should not divorce his wife during menstruation period nor should he do it when she is pregnant.
2. The divorce should be of single type which provides the husband a possibility to reconcile with his wife.
3. He is strongly discouraged from pronouncing three *Talaq* together at one time.

There is a general belief that a divorced wife is driven out of her husband's house and is only tolerated in her parent's place. It is a gross

misconception. The husband after dissolution of marital relationship with his wife cannot resort to her eviction from his house. She will remain in his house.

The husband has to bear the entire expenses on her maintenance – food, clothing and medicine until the waiting period. He should not retain any part of what he has gifted her during his life. At the end of the *Iddat* period, her father has to take care of her and, after father's death it is the duty of her brother to maintain her. Islam also permits her a second marriage which is not easy in

other religions.

Besides, if the divorced wife is pregnant, she stays in the house of her former husband till her delivery and *Iddat* period is extended. The husband has to bear the expenses of the child throughout the life.

Thus, in Islam divorce is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is a last resort and solution for an unending bickering and dissension between the couple, causing relief to both. ■

(Courtesy: YMD)

“When Europe was passing through darkness and ignorance of the middle ages, Muslim world was producing scholars, thinkers, educationists, eminent masters of physical, and social sciences. European writers have quite often acknowledged that for six hundred years Europe learnt and benefited from the researches and treasures of knowledge of the Muslims before commencing on their march to progress”.

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

An American Mormon's Journey to Islam

- Anthony (Talib Abdul Hameed)

One night, not so long ago, I began to question my belief in the purity of the Bible. Because of this, I felt depressed. I knew that God was there, and I knew that He had sent down His religion to man, but I could not find it. Why was it so hard to find? Why would God allow it to be so hard? I prayed and asked God, Why would You send down a scripture (the Bible) and allow for there to be flaws in it? My Lord had been answering my question even before I asked.

About two years before this point, when I was sixteen, I had a religious yearning. It was like a thirst that I could not quench. I thought I was satisfied with my religion of Mormonism. But the truth was, I wasn't satisfied. It was as if God was calling me. I decided to put the Scriptures under close examination. I put aside my Book of Mormon and picked up the Bible. I studied it from a viewpoint outside of what my religion taught me since my religion taught me how to interpret the Bible in a very specific and "official" way. Instead, I looked at it not as one who had no religion, but as one who wanted to follow the Scriptures to the fullest.

As I studied, I noticed how Christ taught only to the Jews. He would not preach to anyone except the children of Israel. Studying his life closely, I noticed that this man did not follow any religion

that actually exists today. He was a follower of God's law as it was sent to the Jews in the past. Right there, my religion was questionable.

I also read in the book of Acts that the apostles would not eat pork or any other foods that were earlier prohibited by God. In the other books, the followers of Christ (peace be upon him) would follow all of the laws and traditions which God had sent down in the past. Neither my religion nor any other Christians that I knew followed this example.

Studying it even closer, I saw that all Christian churches relied upon the teachings of Paul, whose letters actually contradicted many of the words of Jesus (peace be upon him). Now I knew that my religion was definitely in question.

I believed in one God, I believed in Jesus, I believed in Moses, I believed in Noah, and I believed in all of the other prophets who preached the worship of one God. But what other Books existed to replace the Bible? I believed that there were none.

Then I remembered what an old Muslim friend told me. He said that Muslims believe in the Qur'an, in only one God, and in all the messengers of God, which includes all of the Christian and Jewish prophets. At that time, I had a book that explained Islam at a very

basic level. It was a great source for me. I began to understand Islam much more and found it somewhat interesting.

After this, I went on the Internet to look up things about Islam. I found some sites with arguments against Christian beliefs, and I studied their arguments closely. They explained how most Christians do not follow their Scriptures as closely as they should. In truth, the Muslim sites were confirming what I already knew.

My interest in Islam was soaring. I decided to ask my neighbor to borrow his Qur'an. I read it in a few weeks. I loved it – I believed every word it said. However, I could not believe that the crucifixion was a false story. I was so brainwashed by the Bible that I could not accept the truth at the time.

So, when the night came in which I finally lost my trust in the Bible's purity and incorruptibility, I decided to look into Islam again. In my heart during those two years, I knew that the truth lay in Islam, but I simply could not allow myself to accept it. There were personal reasons for my stubbornness – reasons planted in my heart by Satan.

That night I went online to begin my new spiritual search. I went to many online sites, and I ordered information from many of them. Then I went to *Why-Islam.org*, and I read a beautiful article entitled, "The Fall of Atheism." I read some interesting facts about the Qur'an, and I said to myself, this might be the

way that God has led me. But it was still too soon to tell.

Just before I logged off, I ordered more information about Islam. A few days later, a representative of *Why-Islam.org* sent me an email. He thanked me for my interest in Islam and told me that I could write to him at any time if I had any questions concerning Islam.

Thus, we began a dialogue online. He gave me a lot of information about Islam. I asked him a deep question: How do Muslims actually prove to Christians that the crucifixion did not happen? He wanted to meet up with me to discuss it, and I agreed. We met up in a neighborhood pizza parlor. Our discussion left me in awe. He showed me verses of the Bible that I had always overlooked. He left me with a Qur'an and a lecture on CD. As soon as I went home, I knew that this was God's religion, but I did not want to rush into it. Instead, I studied it more.

All my studies led me to the same conclusion: Islam was the path of God. Still, I was afraid to convert. Converting is a life decision, and I was not willing to take that decision lightly.

One day, the brother from *Why-Islam.org* wanted to take me to the Friday prayer (the *Juma'a* prayer). The night before, Satan struck with all his force. He knew that I was going to say the *Shahada* (the public declaration that there is no deity but God, and that Muhammad is His Messenger), and

thereby convert to Islam. All night, he whispered things in my heart, trying to show me that Islam was not the way to go. In fact, so intense were his promptings that I slept for no more than an hour that night. I kept on praying to God, reading the Qur'an, and praying some more. Satan put so many thoughts in my head that even I believed that I was not going to convert.

About an hour after I had fallen to sleep, my mother woke me up saying that I had to watch the kids until she came back from the hospital. My little brother's toe was hurting him and my mother believed that it was broken. She needed me to stay home with the other kids so she could take him to the doctor. She did not expect to be back until six in the evening.

When I heard this, I knew that I was not going to the *Juma'a* prayer service. I had to stay home with the kids at the time that it started. The brother from Why-Islam.org called me up. He asked if I was ready, and I told him the story. He explained that he felt especially bad because this Friday was his only Friday in which he was free to bring me there. He even told me that I could bring the kids with me. I figured that they would feel awkward there, and so I said no. I told him to call me after half an hour. Maybe I would have a solution by then, but deep inside I did not expect to go.

I talked to my mother and asked her if it was possible for me to go. She found some extra money for the kids to

go with her, thus letting me off the hook. I thank God for this little miracle, for this event changed my life. The Muslim brother later told me that he had relied on God to lead me to the mosque that day. When he heard that I was not going to come, he prayed to God knowing that I did not have a choice in the matter. If I was to become Muslim, it was God Who was going to make me a Muslim. If I was not going to become a Muslim, that was again God's will.

When the brother heard that I was able to come, he was very happy. He picked me up shortly after that. On the way there, I began to feel sick. I felt nauseous, weak, dizzy as if I was going to collapse. It was Satan doing this to me. He was desperate to get me away from the mosque and he made me think that I was feeling too sick to go. In fact, these were just minor side effects from having too little sleep the night before.

In the car on our way to the mosque, I told the brother that I was thinking about changing my mind about taking *Shahada*. He told me that the choice was mine, but to beware of the doubts that Satan puts into one's head. For a while, we talked in the car about Satan whispering into people's hearts, and how Satan tries to drag someone from the Light. He explained to me that only Muslims and non-Muslims who are on their way to becoming Muslim are heavily affected by Satan. He said that non-Muslims are generally left alone because Satan does not need to

distract them from God, since they are already far from Him. He explained that last night, all the thoughts that flooded my head were from Satan. Satan put so much doubt in my head in that one night in order to pull me from the Light. This was how desperate Satan was – he knew that I was going to take *Shahada* the next day and was trying anything to prevent this.

We went into the mosque, and the brother taught me how to make ablution (*wudhu*-cleaning one's self before prayer). After the ablution, I felt brand new, and my nausea had left my body. I was not even thinking about the sickness anymore, I just felt good to be in a place where God is worshiped. We approached the director and told him that I wanted to take the *Shahada* that day after the service. He smiled and congratulated me with a warm hug. Another brother who overheard us did the same. He said, "God bless you, and congratulations." These were beautiful people, people of God. These were the kind of people I wanted to be like.

During the service, the *Imam* amazingly gave his speech about Satan's whisperings into the hearts of men in the attempt to lead them away from the Light. It left me in utter shock. The brother was talking to me about this in the car, and by an amazing coincidence, the *Imam* thought it was best that day to talk about Satan's whispers. This, I believe, was God getting His Message across to me,

telling me to ignore Satan. I could not wait to declare the *Shahada*, and when the time came after the service, I rushed up to the front.

After publicly declaring my Islam, I think that every Muslim brother present that day came and hugged me. There were at least a few hundred brothers present, so you can imagine how many hugs I received. They congratulated me and said, "God bless you, you made the right choice."

Two forces were at work that day: Satan and God. But God's force was too powerful for me to resist, and so I submitted to Him in Islam. The brother told me that the greatest gift that God gives to us in this world is Islam. This gift I shall keep for the rest of my life, God willing (*in sha'Allah*). He also told me that he never went to a Friday service where the *Imam* talked purely about Satan's whispers. He said that the subject was mentioned occasionally, but it almost never actually made up an entire service.

I pray that my story helps those who go through the same mental struggle that I had with Satan. My experience is so amazing to me that I cannot truly describe it in words. I pray that those who read this will be able to overcome Satan as I was able to that day. Remember, Satan only whispers to the heart, but God shouts to the heart. It was God's shout that brought me to Him in Islam. ■

(Courtesy: YMD)

Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library: Digitization of the Manuscripts

- Aftab H. Kola

Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, India, an internationally acclaimed research powerhouse for Islamic and Asian history is India's pride.

Though founded earlier, it was opened for public in October, 1891 by the illustrious son of Bihar, Khan Bahadur Khuda Bakhsh with 4,000 manuscripts, of which he had inherited 1,400 from his father Maulvi Mohammed Bakhsh.

Khuda Bakhsh Khan donated his entire personal collection to the people of Patna by a deed of trust. Acknowledging the great historical and intellectual value of its rich and valued collection, the Government of India declared the Library as an Institution of National Importance by an act of Parliament in 1969. The Library is now fully patronised by the Ministry of Culture (Government of India). It was formally opened by Sir Charles Elliot, Governor of Bengal, on October 5, 1891. It was initially called the Oriental Public Library or the Bankipur Oriental Library.

Digitisation of the manuscripts

A major initiative in digitisation of the manuscripts and other documents is in progress at the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, which is a unique repository of about 21,000 Oriental manuscripts and 2.5 lakh printed books.

The manuscripts are written on

paper, palm-leaf, deer-skin, cloth and sundry material. At the same time it has a modern face, housing about 2.84 lakh books in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English and Hindi, besides a few in German and French, and some in Punjabi, Japanese and Russian. The Library combines the twin features of a centre of research in Oriental studies and a public library catering to the needs of students, youth and senior citizens.

Beginning with the first phase, about 3,263 manuscripts have been completely digitised. At present this data is available to the user in the Library reading room.

In the second phase, the digitisation of rare journals and periodicals are being done and to be followed by the digitisation of rare books.

The functional objectives of the digitisation programme are to improve access, prevent damages caused by frequent handling, open doors to the publishing of e-books, share resources with other institutions and ensure conservation. The technical objectives ensure that they manuscripts are catalogued as per the Dublin Code Standards, develop an e-reading room for in-house readers, prepare a Web-based catalogue of digitised manuscripts, host a few samples first for viewing and then develop an e-library with storage, archival

and retrieval facilities, and to make available the digitised material to readers, researchers and scholars online.

Rare and valuable Collections

It is one of the richest collections in the world of manuscripts with illustrations. Although the architectural features of the library summarise much of Jerusalem's history, it is its intellectual structure that comprises the real treasure.

Medieval manuscripts form the focus of the library. The collection spans a very broad spectrum of subjects, with a focus on religious law. Other fields include medicine, society, history, geography, astronomy, Qur'anic exegesis, rhetoric, logic, philosophy and poetry.

Stunning collection

Among the range of rare collections in the library are *Al-Quran*, *Jehangir-Nama*, *Shah-Nama*, *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuriya* (a history of the Timur dynasty commissioned by Akbar), *Kitab-al-Hashaish* and *Al-Lumafi al-Tasawwuf*. The manuscript of *Diwan-i-Hafiz* from the personal collection of Mughal emperors Humayun and Jehangir also find a place in the Khuda Bakhsh Library. *Kitab-Al-Hashaish* is a revised Arabic version by Hunayn bin Ishaq of the Greek original dictionary of medicine listing the properties of medicinal plants. The manuscript of *Kitab-Al-Tasrif* describes in detail many methods and instruments of surgery with exquisite illustrations and is written in the

Arabic language with Mahgribi characters.

Another oldest manuscript dates back to the 11th century C.E. The manuscript, written in Naskh script, contains miniature paintings of medicinal plants, herbs and reptiles. It was translated from Latin into Arabic during the regime of Mamun Rashid in Baghdad.

The library brought out a series of Khuda Bakhsh lectures in a book titled *Secularism in India*. Membership is open to anyone interested, though initially a six-month temporary membership is granted to see if the member has a genuine interest and can handle the books carefully.

The library was termed an "institution of national importance" by an Act of Parliament in 1969, making it an autonomous body. A dedicated laboratory and staff undertake the fumigation, deacidification and binding that keep the works from decay. The sheen of the gold leaf pages, the vibrancy of the colours - red, green, blue, brown – and the velvety black sweep of the calligraphy belie the antiquity of these texts, turning back, quite literally, the pages of history.

The library's guest book is a history in itself – all the renowned names of India's colonial and post-colonial past are mentioned in this book. Viceroys and governors-general aplenty: the Lords Elgin, Curzon, Hardinge, Irwin, Linlithgow, Wavell and Mountbatten grace its pages.

Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Zakir

Hussain and numerous Indian presidents came visiting and felt proud about the treasures in the library. The library also saw the visits of Nobel laureates Rabindranath Tagore and C.V. Raman.

A multi-lingual research quarterly *Khuda Bakhsh Library Journal* is brought out every quarter. The primary aim of bringing out this Journal is to advance research in Oriental and Islamic Studies and also to promote research in Literature. Hence it carries scholarly articles, reprints articles from old research periodicals and prints original articles on the subjects in which the library specialises.

Simultaneously, the Library also undertook a project of publishing research treatises, its manuscripts after getting them edited by scholars, facsimile edition of manuscripts, indices of Urdu periodicals, catalogue of the manuscripts, books bridging the communal gap and also books on Indian culture, history, literature and Islam.

International seminars have been organised on manuscript literature on Tibb (Unani Medicine), Tasawwuf (Islamic Mysticism), Quranic sciences, Medieval Indian history followed by the seminars on Urdu Manuscripts and on Indo-Uzbek relations. Free India and Dr. Zakir Husain were the topics for national seminars. Besides, symposia on Reservation for Muslims and Indian Woman have also been arranged in the library.

Khuda Bakhsh Library is not merely

a library, it is in fact a nucleus of multi-dimensional activities. It caters to the needs of intellectuals and scholars, promotes research, advocates communal harmony and also serves public.

The Library encourages scholars and provides them with all research facilities including free accommodation. It awards 10 research fellowships – 3 Senior and 7 Junior – for a period of 2 years and helps them do Ph.D./D.Litt. It also assigns different projects to them, for example, editing of manuscripts, compilation of descriptive catalogue of manuscripts, indexes of Urdu periodicals, subject bibliographies, etc.

Besides, it also offers lump sum amount to retired professors to work on its manuscripts.

Compilation of descriptive catalogue of manuscripts is also a research work. Its catalogues published so far contain rich information about the manuscripts and hence they are highly valued in the academic world.

The Library also runs the Curzon Reading Room, named after Lord Curzon, where people can read newspapers, magazines, reference books and books for competitive examinations.

Little wonder then the Library is an internationally acclaimed research powerhouse for students of Islamic and Asian history. ■

Nadwatul-Ulama Lays importance on English Language

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The mutiny of 1857 was the turning point for the Indians particularly for Muslims. They were more affected because of the shifting of political power from their hands to British.

In 1866, Maulana Qasim Nanatvi and his enlightened friends established Darul Uloom Deoband to protect Islam from the onslaught of British and to prepare them to make up what they have lost in 1857. The syllabi of Darul-Uloom consisted of Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, fiqh and Usul-e-fiqah. There was no provision of modern subjects in its curriculum.

In 1875, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded M.A.O. College at Aligarh to impart teaching of social sciences and pure sciences. Whereas Deoband started promoting Islamic scholars. Aligarh school helped in pushing out scholars of English and other modern subjects.

The two different streams of knowledge caused a piquant situation in Muslim society. Ulama from Deoband started denigrating Aligarh school products and in situation Aligarh looked on Ulama as fundamentalists and persons of obscure understanding.

To meet this situation and find out its cure some Muslim intellectuals thought to establish an institution 'that may cater both the streams of knowledge' "With this aim in view Maulana Muhammad Ali Mungeri, Maulana Shibli Nomani, Maulana Habibur Rahman Khan Sherwani, Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Maulana Lutf-Ullah of Aligarh, Maulana Sulaiman Phulmari met in Kanpur in 1892/1310, and laid the foundation of Nadwatul Ulama. Syed Muhammad Ali Mungeri was elected its first Rector (Nazim). They thought that the modern education and traditional

education had to be studied side by side. Apart from it the curriculum of Madaras too needed reform.

After wide publicity of Nadwatul-Ulama in India as well as in foreign countries its first meeting was held on 22, 23, 24 April 1894 in Madaras-e-Faiz- Am, Kanpur. Having kept their differences aside Muslims of almost all sects and groups participated in the meeting. It should be noted that the head office of Nadwa was in Kanpur since 1897/ 1315 and on 2nd September 1898 it was shifted to Lucknow.

Reform in syllabi of Madrasas is one of the main objectives of Nadwatul-Ulama. It played a remarkable role in improving the syllabi of Madrasas. Great emphasis had been laid on the up to - date curriculum in every meeting, every lecture and every pamphlet of Nadwa. Members of Nadwatul - Ulama realized and experienced that without establishment of new Darul - Uloom, it was impossible to introduce the reformed curriculum. Accordingly, they established Darul - Uloom in Khatun Manzil, Golaganj, Lucknow. Primary classes started functioning from 26 September 1898. On the invitation Allama Shibli, Sir Agah Khan attended the meeting of Nadwatul Ulama, which was held in the incomplete central hall of Darul Uloom on February 3, 1910. The editor of al-Manar 'Allamah Rashid Raza was also received on April 6, 1912 in the same hall. In 1914 Darul Uloom was shifted in this incomplete building from *Khatoon Manzil*.

Darul-Uloom started functioning. It introduced modern subjects along with religious subjects. Its reputation spread not only in India but abroad within a short span of time.

Founder members of Nadwatul-Ulama played a constructive role in Nadwa's establishment and its progress and prosperity. Besides, they tried their best to lessen differences between various communities and restore peace in the society through this forum.

The basic objects of Nadwatul Ulama

- I. To bring about basic and far-reaching reforms in Syllabi of Madrasas and chart out such one, in the light of Islamic principles and Shariah, as could fulfill the need of the day.
- II. To produce such Ulama who become well-versed in the teaching of Qur'an and Sunnah and create awareness of modern thoughts and ideologies. Besides, they may keep pace with the time and may feel pulse of the community.
- III. To unite Muslim community by lessening differences prevailing among them and foster feeling of Islamic brotherhood as well.
- IV. To disseminate teachings of Islam particularly to acquaint the people of the country to its virtues and values.

Maulana Syed Mohammad Ali Mongeri did his best to achieve the said objectives. He wrote letters and essays in newspapers regarding the necessity of Nadwa and highlighted its objectives. To acquaint the people with its aims and objectives, a delegation was sent, headed by Maulana Mustaq Ali Naginvi to different parts of India with letters of Maulana Mongeri. He visited Deoband, Rampur, Patna, Nagina, Najibabad, Etawa, Aligarh, Jhansi, Bhopal and Bumbay.

The delegation reached Aligarh. Here they met Maulana Shibli and explained their scheme. Shibli at that time was a teacher in M.A.O. College, Aligarh. Besides Indian

Madrasas, he had also seen degradation, debasement and low standard of education of Madrasas in Italy (Rome), Egypt and Syria. It seemed that he found a solution of his dream and ointment of his sores in objectives of Nadwatul-Ulama. Hence, he gave full consent and completely agreed with aims and objects of Nadwa.

From Bombay the delegation led by Maulana Mustaq Ali Naginvi went to Jeddah (Mecca and Madina). The first debut of Nadwatul Ulama was made in Hijaz by Maulana Mustaq Ali Naginvi. Scholars of Hijaz acknowledged Nadwa's necessity and its significance. He also put forward aims and objectives of Nadwatul Ulama before the Ulama of Madina. During this visit, he met Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki in Hijaz and showed him all written documents and proceedings. He expressed immense pleasure and signed the papers too.

Nadwatu Ulama produced hundreds of scholars, reformers, thinkers, and writers of world repute. It is Nadwa which first paid due attention to Arabic language and literature in sub-continent. Keeping in view that it is the language of Quran and Sunnah (Sayings of Prophet Muhammad). It prepared its own syllabus. A good number of religious seminaries adopted its syllabus in and out of India. Achievements of graduates of Nadwatul-Ulama cannot be ignored in the field of Arabic language and literature.

Scholars of Nadwatul-Ulama have made a distinguishing position in the arena of education, Journalism, national integration and social reforms due to their erudition and knowledge. For instance Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi's monumental work Siratun Nabi is regarded an Islamic Encyclopedia. Thus Mulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's extraordinary contributions in the field of Arabic

language and literature will always be remembered.

Nadwatul-Ulama played an important role to the development of journalism. It publishes academic journals in Urdu, Arabic, English including Hindi. It started Al-Nadwa (monthly) from 1904-1916, again in 1940-1945. Ad-diya (from 1932-1935), Al-Bath-al- Islami (monthly) since 1955, Al-raid (fortnightly) since 1959, Tamir-e-Hayat (fortnightly) since 1964, the Hindi journal Sachcha Rahi since 2002, the English journal The Fragrance of East since 1998, which help the teachers and students get acquainted with latest trends and issues and provide guidance for the dissemination of Islamic faith and learning.

Founder members of Nadwatul-Ulama were far sighted, provident and sagacious. They realized that unless the syllabi of madrasas are reformed and changed good scholars may not be produced. Accordingly, they introduced modern subjects along with Islamic sciences so that the students might be able to face the challenges of time. Apart from it they laid great stress on promoting Arabic language and literature. For one cannot study the original sources of Islamic sciences without acquiring proficiency in Arabic language and literature.

To a great extent Nadwatul- Ulama succeeded in bringing peace and restoring amity between different communities. Students hailing from various schools of thought come here to quench their thirst of learning.

Inclusion of English language in the curriculum of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama

Right from the beginning the main thrust of Nadwatul Ulama had been to produce such scholars who may rectify the wrong interpretation of the Qur'anic injunctions by

orientalists and to refute the westerners' attack. Besides, they may check the unbridled interpretation of Islam by westernized Muslim scholars.

Maulana Shibli advocated the inclusion of English in the curriculum of Nadwa and it was introduced in primary classes in 1901.

In 1905, Nadwa's administrative infrastructure was divided under three heads, e.g.(1) Registrar Office (Daftar Murasilats) Maulana Syed Abdul Hai Hasani elected Registrar, (ii) Finance Office (Daftar Mal) Munshi Ihtisham Ali Kakori became Finance officer and (iii) Dean Office (Daftar Talim) Maulana Shibli took the charge of Deanship.

After Maulana Shibli became Director of Education in Nadwa in April, 1905, he made English as compulsory subject in the curriculum of Nadwatul Ulama. Due to his hard work and efforts, students started taking interest in learning the language. Maulana Abdul Bari a Nadwa passed out translated the books on Modern Philosophy of Barklay and Hume into Arabic and also wrote an English treatise on miracles. Maulvi Zainul Abedin and Maulvi Ahmadullah Journeyed to America and London respectively and served there for the cause of Islam. As a matter of fact, Shibli wanted to give a significant place to English language in the curriculum so as to produce trained theologians acquainted with modern intellectual trends thought English education.

It goes without saying that Nadwatul Ulama has produced a galaxy of scholars in English language like Maulana Ziyaul Hasan Alavi Nadwi Dr. Abdullah Abbas Nadwi, Dr. Muzzammil Husain Siddique Nadwi, Dr. Salman Nadwi, Dr. Habibul Haque Nadwi, Dr. Syed Zeyaul Hasan Nadwi, Dr. Mazhar Alam Nadwi, Dr. Muhsin Usmani Nadwi, Dr. Ayyub

Tajuddin Nadwi, Dr. Qazi Abdul Majid Nadwi, Dr. Mujib Akhtar Nadwi, Dr. Nasim Akhtar Nadwi, Dr. Shafiq Ahmad Khan Nadwi, Dr. Ehtisham Ahmad Nadwi, Dr. Wali Akhtar Nadwi, Dr. Mujibur Rahman Nadwi, Dr. Sanaullah Nadwi, Dr. Ehsanul Haque Nadwi, Dr. Akram Nadwi, Dr. Iqbal Husain Nadwi and others.

The teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit was also subsequently started in the Darul Uloom. The reason behind this was mainly the desire to defend Islam because at that time Aryans were openly attacking Islam. In this situation, Allamah Shibli advocated for the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit in Darul Uloom in order to enable the Muslim Ulama to understand the nature of Aryan's attack on Islam and counterpose the ideological weakness of Hinduism and also preaching Islam among Hindu Communities.

English language holds a very important position in the world for more than one reason. It is not merely the language of the English people, but spoken daily by several hundreds of millions in four continents. As a matter of fact, this language is found extensively used in different countries in Asia and Africa, and it is also the language of the U.S.A. Nearly 260 million people speak in this language, whereas Russian, Spanish, German and French are spoken by 140 million people, 135 million people, 90 million people and 60 million respectively. Actually, the number of English-speaking people constitute about one-tenth of the population of the world.

As a language, English has not merely cosmopolitanism in flexibility, but also universality in applicability. The influence of this language is dominant in the East as well as in the West. English is taught, as a compulsory subject, in most of the higher schools in Europe, Asia and Africa. A good many eastern

countries have even adopted it as a second language. All this clearly adds to the belief that English will become, in a natural way, the single inter-communicating term of the world. Its resourceful and cosmopolitan vocabulary, inflectional simplicity and logical yet flexible grammar are all the chief factors to make it an easy and popular language, among different people, which as well as black, in the world. This is certainly a strong factor for the international status of the English language.

Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was a multifaceted genius. On account of his extraordinary erudition and deep scholarship of Islam, he became a world figure. Decidedly he was an undisputed leader of Islamic world. Nadwatul Ulama made all round progress under his inspiring stewardship. He was a staunch believer in national unity and communal harmony. Besides, his ardent wish was promoting English language and popularizing internet studies among students. Mr. Shariq Alavi Editor of the Fragrance of East once said it was Maulana Ali Miyan's wish to publish an English Magazine from Nadwa. Al-Hamdulillah, this desire of him was fulfilled in his life time. Mr. Alavi stated that how happy Maulana Nadwi felt whenever a new issue of the Fragrance was presented to him. He also reminded Maulana's message. "Use of the pen in spreading amity, brotherhood and patriotic feelings amongst different classes of the society". Moreover, it was on Maulana desire that Media Research Centre came into being in 1994 and Department of Journalism and Languages was established in 1995.

Keeping in view significance and importance of English language Executive Committee of Nadwatul Ulama has decided to start one-year diploma course in English. The main purpose of this department is to train

students for Dawah activities. It is hoped that having completed one-year diploma course in English, they may surely be able to communicate teachings of Islam throughout the world. Besides, they may excel and enhance spoken English and communication skills including letter drafting, debates, resume writing and interview communication.

Its inaugural ceremony was held on September 3, 2018. Hazarat Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama and President All India Muslim Personal Law Board, presided over the event. In his presidential address he said, "Muslims are in minority in the world and from the very outset it has been felt that as compared to majority scant attention is always paid towards the minority. Today knowledge is the most dominant element in the world. It is knowledge through which developed countries gained influence, excellence, progress and advancement in every spheres of life. Lack of knowledge is the main cause of Muslims' backwardness and their marginalization in every walk of life. Every country whether it be Germany, France, England and other countries prefer its own language. The English ruled over India for a long time. They made English language as the language of motherland in India. Even today intellectual circles have good command over English language and are unable to understand Urdu or Arabic. They fail to comprehend teachings of Islam. Hence it is imperative that Ulama must learn English well and have excellent proficiency and profundity over it so that they may easily convey the true message of Islam to them. He further said, "Though English is incorporated in the syllabus of Nadwa yet we will have to produce experts of English language. So that real picture of Islam may be presented before the world in a good sublime way. It is obvious that without profound and deep

knowledge of English language it is impossible.

In his thought-provoking speech Maulana S.M Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi, Director of Education, Nadwatul Ulama said; "Onslaught on Islam is being perpetrated from time immemorial. Due to lack of the knowledge of Western languages, Ulama could not refute allegations, doubts, scepticisms made by orientalis against Islam. Even a wide range of doubts were created regarding the Qur'an, Hadith and biography of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) but they failed to retort them due to unawareness of their languages. It is incumbent for Ulama to learn prevailing languages of the world so that they may respond to them in their own languages and styles.

Dr. Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi, Principal Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama laid great stress on acquiring English language. He stated that today English language has been language of Dawah. Ulama should learn it and also aware of pros and cons of this language. Being heirs of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) a great responsibility lies on Islamic scholars. They must gird up their loins to undertake this great job. The need of opening a special department for English language was being felt for a long time of which today has been given final shape. It is hoped that this newly department will certainly bear good fruits and will bring credit to Nadwatul Ulama.

The dedicated English Department has started with ten students. The Department has five member team- head of department is former principal of Islamia College Dr. Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui and four teachers namely Obaidur Rahman Nadwi, Anis Ahmad Nadwi, Shakir Nadwi and Yusuf Mustafa Nadwi. The diploma students get a monthly stipend of Rs. 3,000 and free hostel facility on campus.■

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