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**Religion as Guardian
of Life**

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Time is a proportionate and balanced mixture of stability and change, stagnation and movement. If it loses either of these characteristics, it will lose its relevance. Islam as a religion accepts this fact and is ready to make necessary accommodations, but it holds the position that as religion it has to guide life, not simply follow it. Religion, as Islam pleads, does not have to passively approve all changes. It is not lifeless like the needle of a barometer which moves up or down mechanically to measure the pressure of the atmosphere, or a weather-cock fixed on the top of a building which moves to show the direction of the wind. The function of religion is not simply to acknowledge and show the changes which are occurring at a time. Its obligation is to check whether a change is healthy or unhealthy, constructive or destructive. It has to evaluate the effect of a change on mankind at large and on its promoters in particular. It judges all pros and cons of a change before it approves it. It, therefore, will discourage a change if it is destructive. It may even oppose the latter kind.

At this point we can see a clear difference between religion and morality. Religion feels obliged to oppose wrong inclinations, whereas morality simply identifies them. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

Evil has become rife on the land and at sea because of men's deeds; this in order that He may cause them to have a taste of some of their deeds; perhaps they will turn back (from evil).

(Al-Qur'an – 30:41)

This verse of the Qur'an holds men's deeds responsible for all the riots and killings, evils and corruption spread over the land and at sea. It also says that this spread of evil et al can cause the erring persons to realise their guilt, their sins, their crimes, ill consequences of their deeds, and above all the imperfectness of human thinking and behaviour. But for this they need to have the eyes that can see, the ears that can listen, and the heart that can realise the reality.

"Man's own doings" means the wickedness and oppression and tyranny, which inevitably appear in human conduct and character as a result of adopting shirk (polytheism) and atheism and ignoring the Hereafter."

"Maybe they mend their ways" means that Allah shows the evil consequences of some of the acts of men in this world before the punishment of the Hereafter so that they understand the reality, feel the error of their conjectures and turn to the righteous belief, which the Prophets of Allah have been presenting before man since the earliest times, and besides adopting which there is no other way of ordering human conduct on sound foundations.

This subject has been presented at several places in the Qur'an, e.g. in At-Taubah: 126, Ar-Ra'd: 31, As-Sajdah: 21, Al-Tur: 47. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Anas bin Malik relates that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said, "If Adam's son had a valley full of gold, he would like to have two valleys, for nothing fills his mouth except dust. And Allah forgives him who repents to Him."

(Bukhari)

Striving for the better is inherent to human nature. We all want to be better off, get higher education, find a better job, get a bigger house, a faster car, etc. The list is endless; generally people long for and leave no stone unturned to attain whatever they wish, without thinking a bit of the evil consequences of their whims and inconsistencies.

Love of this world, with all its enjoyments, may distract us from seeking the hereafter. We should always remember that the main purpose of our existence is to worship Allah. The Qur'an says, "And it is not your wealth, nor your children that bring you nearer to Us, but only he (will please Us) who believes, and does righteous deeds; for such (people), there will be a double reward for what they did, and they will reside in the high dwellings (of Paradise), in peace and security." (Qur'an – 34:37).

Contentment is the key to success and happiness; and greed is just contrary to it. We should be content with what we have been blessed with at any given moment while still pursuing more. The Holy Prophet said, "Happiness is due to him who is guided to Islam and possesses provision that suffices him for his day and remains content." ■

Editor's Note 

Remembering Ali Miyan

The last century was coming to an end and we were looking forward the new era to come that suddenly Renowned Islamic scholar, historian and literature of eminence. Maulana Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi popularly known as Ali Miyan passed away on December 31, 1999, at his native village Takiapar. Dairae Shah ilmullah, in Raibareli district. His burial took place the same night in the ancestral graveyard of the family. The end came peacefully while he was getting ready for Friday namaz. He collapsed while reciting the holy Qur'an and observing his Ramadan fast. According to an official estimate more than one lakh admirers of the Maulana attended his last rites in chilling weather with temperatures dipping to freezing point. The state government was represented by two ministers besides senior officials of Raibareli and neighbouring districts.

Son of an eminent Arabic and Urdu writer Hakim Maulana Abdul Hai, Ali Miyan had his formal education in Darul Uloom Nadwatul & Ulema and Darul Uloom Deoband. He mastered tafseer (exegesis) of the Holy Qur'an under Maulana Ahmad Ali of Lahore in early 1930's. He authored over eighty books on subjects related to Islamic faith, literature and history. His fluency in Arabic both in writing and speeches surpassed even those who have this language as their mother tongue.

Chairman of All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Rector

of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow Maulana was a revered personality in the Islamic world. He was chairman of the Islamic Centre, Oxford University, UK, Chairman of the World Forum of Islamic Literature, Chief of the Foundation for studies and Research, Luxemburg, Founder member of the Muslim World League, Mecca (Saudi Arabia), member advisory committee, University of Median, besides heading many other prestigious organizations.

Born in 1914, Maulana brought laurels to the country for contribution as an Islamic scholar. He was honoured by the UAE government by conferring on him the “Scholar of the year” Award. He was flown to Dubai in a special Aircraft sent by the UAE government to Lucknow so as to ensure the ailing Maulana’s comfortable journey. A senior minister of UAE had come to accompany Ali Miyan to UAE.

Maulana through his “Payame Insaniyat” (message of humanity) campaign travelled through out the country and tried to bring different communities particularly Muslims and Hindus together. He spread messages of love, affection and brotherhood among different communities. Incidentally his last public statement issued a day before he died was the condemnation of the hijacking of IC 814 flight. He termed the act inhuman and un-Islamic. ■

S.A.

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along with a hard copy, duly signed, by post.

The Achievement of Apostleship

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Through Revelation and Apostleship the Lord entrusted His Messengers with the reform and elevation of humanity, and they made man the object of their call and endeavor. It was revealed to the Prophets that the destiny of the world depended upon man. If the real man was there, the world was in a good and flourishing state in spite of poverty and dilapidation, and if he was not, it was no better than a wasteland, all its luster and affluence notwithstanding. Its misfortune did not lie in the dearth of means and resources, but in their misuse. Whenever the world was destroyed, it was due to human waywardness and imprudence; the tools and assets only hastened the process.

Again, by virtue of his dignity, solidity and depth, and the pivotal place he occupied in the design of creation, man deserved more than all other creatures to be the subject of earnest attention and solicitude.

The world is a mysterious place. It is very big, extensive and beautiful. But as compared to the secrets of human nature and its hidden treasures, the vastness of the heart of man and the high flight of his mind, the ardour and restlessness of his soul, and his endless desires and aspirations, and boundless

capabilities, it is nothing. Many worlds like it can get lost in the extensiveness of his faith; the fire cannot compete with the passionate burning of his love, nor can the oceans with a single tear of his eyes. The beauty of his character puts into shade all that is lovely and charming in the world, and the forces of nature low before his will. To produce genuine faith, right ideals, and true morality in man, and to take from him the work of the vicegency of God on earth is the real task and achievement of Apostleship.

This lofty mission was fulfilled by all the Apostles during their time and they gave to the world men who imparted a new and purposeful life to it. Among the achievements of Apostleship, the most glorious and imperishable is that of the Prophet Mohammad which is preserved to the minutest detail in the annals of our race. The success he attained in producing good and virtuous men has not yet come the way of anyone else. The level from which he began the reconstruction of mankind had not confronted any other Apostle or reformer. It was the level that marked the line of demarcation between barbarism and humanity. The stage to which he carried the task, also, had not been reached by any other person striving for the reform and redemption of mankind. Beginning from the lowest depths of

humanity, he took his mission to the highest point of elevation. Each one of the men produced by him was a masterpiece of Apostleship and a source of pride for the entire human race. No better, finer and more lovable portrait is to be found in the whole collection of mankind, leaving aside the Prophets. The steadfastness of their faith, the plainness of their living, their selflessness and God fearingness, piety and devoutness, kindness and benevolence, courage and resoluteness, fondness for worship and eagerness for martyrdom, their horsemanship and nightly vigil, indifference to worldly riches and comforts, and administrative skill and impartiality and fairness are without a parallel at any period of time and in any part of the world. Such, indeed, was their nobility and greatness that had they not dwelt under the full blaze of history and authentic records of their lives and attainments were not available, people would have dismissed them as mythical figures. But they were not the creatures of imagination of exaggerated veneration, but real men, in flesh and blood, like ourselves. Only the miracle of Apostleship had produced divergent, and, often, mutually opposed qualities and aptitudes in them.

Fashioned of dust and light, slave
with attributes of the master,

His heart is indifferent to the riches
of the worlds;

His earthly hopes are few, his aims
high,

Courtesy is his mien, gaining all
hearts with a glance;

Soft in speech, fierce in the hour
of pursuit,

In war and in peace, pure in
thought and deed;

His times are wondrous, his
legends strange,

To the ages outworn he gave the
command to depart;

Saqi of men of taste, horseman of
the realm of desire,

Pure and unmixed his wine,
tempered his steel.

When such an individual had been produced, he proved his worth in all the spheres of life and discharged whatever responsibility that was entrusted to him with exemplary devotion and success. As a judge and arbitrator, he decided cases with utmost care and honesty, and as Commander of the army, he acted with matchless skill and gallantry;- if he was relieved of the command, he showed not a trace of grudge or grievance, and continued to fight under the new commander with the same courage and determination. As a master or officer, he was kind-hearted and accommodating, and behaved like the head of a family, and as a labourer he was conscientious and hard-working. If he happened to be a beggar,

he bore the hardships of poverty with patience and resignation, and if he was rich, he was generous-hearted and thankful; if a scholar, he was ready to share his knowledge with others and guide people along the right path, and if a pupil, he took his studies as an act of worship and devoted himself to them with single-minded attention. As the administrator of a town, he was a watchman by night and a dispenser of justice by day. In fine, wherever he was and in whatever capacity, he proved himself an asset to the society.

When the most delicate and onerous responsibility that of government was assigned to him, he presented a marvelous example of asceticism, self-effacement, industry and earnestness.

We shall, now, take up a few instances appertaining to the days of Khilafat-Rashidsa by way to an illustration. The chronicler of the reign of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq writes:

“Once the wife of Hazrat Abu Bakr wanted to eat a sweet dish. When she expressed the desire to her husband, he replied that he had no money for it. She, thereupon, asked if she could save a little from the daily allowance for the purpose to which he agreed. When enough money had been saved, she gave it to Hazrat Abu Bakr for buying the sweets. Taking the money, Hazrat Abu Bakr remarked that it appeared that it was in excess

of the needs of his household, and, therefore, the Public Treasury had a claim on it. He returned the money to the Treasury and ordered a proportionate cut in his allowance.”

You will be aware of the pomp and ceremony that attends the official visits of foreign Heads of states and Governments. Now read what Allama Shibli has to say in his monumental work, Al-Farooq, about the visit of the most powerful ruler of the Seventh Century, Hazrat Omar Farooq, to Jerusalem. He writes:

People will be anxious to know what a grand spectacle the journey of Hazrat Omar had presented, particularly when the object was to impress the people with the might and glory of Islam. But, in fact, he had not taken even an ordinary tent with him, what to speak of drums and trumpets, retinue and attendants, and army with its baggage and camp-followers. There was only a horse for riding and a few Ansars and Mahajirs. Nevertheless, the earth shook as the news received that Farooq the Great had set out for Syria from Madina.

“He made a long halt at Jabia, and it was here that the Jerusalem agreement was written. After the Treaty had been concluded, Hazrat Omar decided to proceed to Jerusalem. The hooves of the horse he was riding had worn out, and it had difficulty in moving. On seeing it,

Hazrat Omar dismounted, and a fine Turkish horse was provided by the people in its place. It was a spirited animal, and as Hazrat Omar got up on it, it began to strut. 'Wretched animal', remarked Hazrat Omar, 'Where did you learn the proud and haughty gait?' He alighted from the horse and began to walk. As he approached Jerusalem, Hazrat Abu Obaida and other Army officers came up to greet him. The Muslims felt ashamed to see the clothes of Hazrat Omar and the other articles he was carrying with him. They thought what the Christians would say, and presented to him another Turkish horse and a fine dress. But he replied. 'The honour God has bestowed upon me is honour of Islam, and that is enough for me?'

Here is the description of another journey of Hazrat Omar to Syria which took place in 18 A.H.

"Hazrat Omar resolved to go to Syria. He entrusted the government of Madina to Hazrat Ali, and set out for Ila. His slave, Yarfa, and a number of Companions were with him. As he approached Ila, he gave his horse to the slave, for some reason, and seated himself on the latter's camel. On the way, people would enquire, 'where is Amir-ul-Momineen?' 'In front of you', he said. It was thus that Hazrat Omar arrived in Ila where he stayed for a few days. His shirt, made of a

coarse cloth, had got torn at the back owing to friction against the camel's saddle, which he gave to the Bishop of Ila for repair. The Bishop put a patch on it with his own hands, and, also, had a new shirt made. But Hazrat Omar preferred to use his own shirt saying that it absorbed the sweat better."

Fragments from the lives of the Rightly-guided Caliphs and descriptions of their moral virtues are contained in various books and we can draw a complete portrait of an ideal character by piecing them together, but, fortunately, a full account of the life and moral disposition of one of them, Hazrat Ali, is available to us. Read it and see if a more fascinating picture of human elevation is possible, and what glorious specimens of his training and instruction had the holy Prophet left behind. Writes Zarar bin Zamrah, who was a constant companion of Hazrat Ali, about him.

"He was a very high-minded person, most magnanimous and brave. His speech was measured. He decided cases with fairness and justice. A fountain of knowledge flowed from his mouth, and was evident from whatever he said or did. He was averse to worldly joys and comforts, and felt happy in the night and its darkness. His eyes were moist and he remained absorbed in thought and anxiety. The march of time amazed him, and he never ceased looking inward. He liked to wear clothes

of rough and coarse material and eat simple food that was, generally, eaten by the poor. He did not like a mark of distinction for himself and looked like any other member of the community. He used to reply when we asked a question, and when we went to him, he was the first to greet and enquire about our welfare. When we invited him as a guest, he would accept the invitation. But in spite of all the closeness and equality, so awe-inspiring was his presence that one dared not speak to him, and it was not easy to start a conversation. When he smiled, the teeth looked like a string of pearls. He entertained respect for the devout and the virtuous and loved the poor, but with all the humility and self-abasement, no one however rich or powerful could prevail upon him to give a wrong decision or obtain a favour from him unjustly. The weak and the indigent had the fullest faith in his sense of justice and fair-mindedness.

“I swear that once I saw him in the state that night had dropped its curtains of darkness and the stars had begun to fade and he was standing in the Mehrab of his mosque, holding the beard in his fist and wreathing with agony as if a snake had bitten him. He was crying as if his heart was wounded. His words are still ringing in my ears: ‘Oh world! Hast thou ventured to test me? Doth thou dare tempt me and lead me into evil? Despair of it, give up the hope, and

go and deceive someone else. I have divorced thee thrice after which there is no question of restitution. Now, I cannot take thee back. Thy lift is short, and thy joy is unreal, and the danger from thee is great. Alas! How little is the provision, how long the journey, and how perilous the path!”

This achievement of Apostleship is not peculiar to the time of the raising up of the Prophet or the First Century A.H.,. The patterns of life left by the teachings of the holy Prophet and his Companions continued to throw up men of outstanding worth and merit among the succeeding generations of Muslims and in different parts of the Islamic World. The products of the ageless seminary of Apostleship who had learnt, in it, the ageless seminary of Apostleship who had learnt, in it, the lesson of humanity, self-denial, morality and God-awareness, and sympathy and fellow feeling were the ornaments of their time and the pride of mankind. It is impossible even to prepare a mere list of the names of the millions of men of faith and God-realisation that have been coming up in different lands and at different stages of history as a result of this training and instruction. To trace the outline of their moral excellence, spiritual attainments and high humanity is emphatically out of the question. Whatever of their life-accounts have been preserved in history make one wonder if this creature of clay, i.e., man

could, really, attain to such heights of spiritual advancement, purity of the self, large-heartedness, and magnanimity and self-abnegation, belief in transcendental truths and unseen realities, and indifference to the riches of the world and fearlessness to kings and other rulers of the day. Their faith and love inspired the hearts of countless men and revolutionized their lives. People with beastly urges and inclinations became truly civilized, and a popular inclination towards God-seeking, God-fearingness and love for mankind was produced in their company. Our own country has been most fortunate in this regard as it has given rise to numerous deep-hearted men who, in their time, have made a magnificent contribution to the upliftment of humanity.

Even among the kings and potentates who know nothing but power and rule and luxury and self indulgence, ascetic rulers and self-denying monarchs were produced the like of whom were hard to find among world-renouncing anchorites, faquires and yogis. As Iqbal has said:

By their rule, the strange secret
was revealed to all,

Men of pure hearts hold sway to
serve, not to enslave

From among the class of kings
and conquerors who were lucky enough
to be benefited by the 'Seminary who

Apostleship' let us take the case of Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi. About this greatest ruler of Middle East, in the Sixth Century A.H., whose kingdom extended from Kurdistan in Asia to the Nubian Desert of Sudan in Africa, his friend and secretary, Ibn-i-Shaddad, deposes that:

“Zakat could not be binding upon him throughout his life for he never saved enough on which it had to be paid. All his wealth was given away in charity. The entire assets of the Sultan, at the time of his death, were 47 dirhams and a gold coin. He left behind no other property; no house, no grove, no village, no agricultural land. Not a piece was spent on his burial from what he had left behind. Everything had to be borrowed, even the bundles of straw for the grave. The shroud was provided by his minister and chronicler, Qazi Fazil, from a legitimate source.”

Sultan Salahuddin deserves to be ranked among the greatest men of history, also, from the viewpoint of moral excellence and nobleness of character. The large heartedness he displayed at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem, as against the unspeakable cruelties perpetrated upon the helpless Muslims by Christians on their entry into that city, has been extolled by Stanley Lane-Poole in these words:

“If the taking of Jerusalem was

the only fact known about Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and, perhaps, of any age.”

This was about a ruler of the Middle East. Now, let us take up an incident from the life of a ruler of our own country, Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat, (died 932 A.H.), who had attacked and taken possession of Mandu in support of Mahmud Shah Khilji when the latter had been deposed by his minister, Mandli, Rai. It is stated that “when Muzaffar Shah entered the fort and the noblemen who were with him beheld the fabulous wealth of the rulers of Malwa and heard accounts of the richness of the soil, they ventured to suggest in his presence that since 2,000 of their horsemen had been killed in the fighting it would not be wise to restore the kingdom to a ruler who, owing to his incompetence, had lost it to his minister. As soon as Muzaffar Shah had heard it, he cut short the round of inspection and came out of the fort, telling Mahmud Shah not to allow any member of his entourage into it. The latter begged him to stay there for a few more days and have some rest, but he firmly declined.

“Explaining his action, Muzaffar Shah, latter on, remarked that ‘I had waged the war simply for the good pleasure of the Lord. When I heard the talk of the noblemen, I feared that an evil desire might arise in my heart to ruin the

sincerity of my act. I have not done any favour to Mahmud Shah. On the contrary, I am indebted to him for it was because of him that I got the opportunity to perform a virtuous deed.”

Far be it from my mind to suggest that all the rulers of the Islamic Age belonged to the class of Nuruddin, Salahuddin, Nasiruddin Mahmud and Sultan Muzaffar Halim. What I mean, simply, is that the kings in whom you find a reflection of the sublime qualities of piety, austerity, selflessness and compassion, and who seem to you to be above the level of their times and different from the conventional image of sovereigns, were, invariably, the beneficiaries of Apostleship and animated by the religious ideal. If you study their lives and achievements, you will agree that they all owed their greatness to the same springhead of guidance that always has produced men of the highest stature however removed they may have been from it in terms of time. In fact, they all had been moulded into shape in the ‘Seminary of Apostleship’ which has carried on the evolution of mankind at the largest scale and to the highest level and whose beneficence is still keeping the lamp of humanity alive and burning and whatever light is found in the world is due to it.

Modern Civilization and contemporary intellectual leadership have miserably failed in the sphere of character building and giving to the

world conscientious individuals, guided by a living sense of social responsibility. It can “enchain the sunbeams”, ‘seek the orbits of the stars” send men to the planets, and put the atomic energy to great purpose. It can remove poverty, and make everyone literate. No one can deny its achievements. But its helplessness is self-evident where the raising up of good and virtuous individuals of men of faith and moral rectitude is concerned. Here in lies the greatest tragedy. That is why, the work of centuries is being wasted, and an overpowering feeling of frustration and non-fulfilment is creeping over the world. What is more, man is losing faith even in science and learning which can set off a powerful reaction against knowledge and civilization and mark accepted norms of society. Misguided men have perverted even the sound and harmless means and implements and turned them into tools of corruption and destruction. A strong boat cannot be made with rotten boards. It is a fallacy to believe that the boards may be weak and decayed, piece by piece, but when they are put together they become good and strong. Thieves may be thieves individually, but if they form a group, they get transformed into watchmen and begin to act as responsible citizens. The individuals modern intellectual leadership is giving to the world are devoid of faith and earnestness. They are ignorant of the true station and dignity of mankind. It is only the logic of

strength and the doctrine of pleasure that they understand. Or they swear by nationalism. Whether such men are the leaders of a democratic or socialist system, they cannot set up a healthy and God-fearing society, nor create an environment of peace and well-doing. Society, nor create an environment of peace and well-doing. They can never be trusted with the destiny of mankind.

It is Apostleship that has given the best of individuals and the cleanest of society to the world. It has the power to change and warm up the hearts, to bend the self and lend constancy to it, and to produce the inclination for what is good and aversion to what is evil. It is such men, alone; who can save the world and preserve all that is precious in the stock of human civilization.

The Apostleship did not give science and technology. It lays no claim to it, nor offers an apology. Its achievements is that it produced individuals who could follow the correct path, and, also, lead the world along it; who could profit from all the good things themselves, and be of benefit to others as well, and who could realize the purpose of their existence and possessed a living awareness of the Creator.

It is the existence of these men that is the chief wealth of mankind, and it is their training and guidance which is the real achievement of Apostleship. ■

Moderation And Tolerance

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Almighty Allah made Islam a compendious, moderate and simple religion. It has all virtues of other divine faiths. Apart from it Islam encompasses all events taking place right from the time of Prophet Muhammad(S) and covers the period thereafter. The present day situation is no doubt different from the one prevailing earlier. It may become more varying and different in days to come. Present day developments, spreading of education, scientific inventions and harnessing of natural resources have assumed significance. With the result that Globalization has come into existence. Phenomenal expansion of means of communications has helped in bringing the far off nations closer. The sense of distance has vanished and neighbourly feelings have surfaced.

Accordingly, if anything takes place in any part of the world, its news spreads like fire as if this event occurred in any town or city of our own country. This trend of international interaction has created some uniformity in manners and ways of life.

Every part of the world, retains its own distinctive features. It is obvious that the climate of a place influences its inhabitants. If some facilities and amenities of life are available in one

corner of the world, same may not be found in other part of the universe. Somewhere paucity of potable water is felt but somewhere it is in abundance. Somewhere vast land for cultivation is seen but at another place barren land stretches. Somewhere dehydrated mountain and somewhere green-mountains are observed. Somewhere there are coastal and aquatic areas. Somewhere fish and other things living in water are available. Somewhere even water is hardly found. Somewhere animals are main source of livelihood. People live at some places where scorching heat reaches its zenith. Somewhere rotation of day and night takes place in the same time and some where differently. Nevertheless people have to bear such odds in their day to day life.

When we cast a glance at Islamic Shariah, which is to remain enforced till eternity and covers whole of the universe we get ample proof of its being a divine ordained.

Prophet Muhammad (S) has described religion very easy and said: Addin-u-yusrun" (The religion is easy). He further added that if someone presents it as a hard one he will fail in his efforts. This is the reason that it has been instructed to adopt moderation and choose the soft way so that it may

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

be easy to practice the religion. If it was not so then at some places it would have been followed in an easy way and at other in a hard way. This would have cast doubt on its being a universal religion.

Whatever the Prophet ordained about the religion he has kept due consideration of possible relaxations according to the situation and prevailing conditions. Prophet himself practiced a particular action in different ways. He also often approved actions of Sahaba (Companions) practiced in different ways. Thus he allowed to follow Shariah in a more congenial and relaxed way according to the prevailing conditions.

The true reason of differences is that companions observed various practices of the Prophet at different times. Companions narrated them in various ways after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (S). It resulted in coming up of various schools of thoughts. But main stream of all is the same i.e. traditions of the prophet.

No doubt, differences in Islamic Shariah are divine gift and mercy for all and sundry. Variations in practice and following of Shariah instructions should not be taken as a result of separation and parochialism. These are indeed a boon from Almighty God. Any School of thought should not regard itself as the true follower of Islam and others deviator of Shariah.

It should be kept in mind that such

sort of differences in Bani-Israil and their oppression on others are mentioned in the holy Quran as an act of repugnance. Islam lays great emphasis on Muslims to unite and foster pan-Islamic brotherhood and fraternity.

Unfortunately, despite these facts some schools of thoughts try to intensify in religious issues because of prejudice and bias. They present points of difference in such a way as if it is an issue between Islam and infidelity. It seems that they are only on the right path and others are astray. Often it is also seen that followers of one sect do not offer (Salat) behind the other.

It is obvious that under these circumstances we appear to be a fractured community. The holy Quran says: "Verily, this ummah of yours is a single ummah and I am your Lord and Cherisher therefore. Serve me (and no other). (S-21, A .92) "The holy Quran also mentioned the doctrine of prophets: "We make no distinction (they say) between one another of His messengers (S.2, A. 285)." The holy Quran explicitly warns us not to divide among themselves.

In such a scenario Muslims should live amicably with each other as brothers and do not isolate themselves from each other.

It should be noted that authoritative interpretations of those who render service in the cause of Islam, according

to the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (S) should be taken as genuine. Whether any interpretative difference exists our forefather acted upon it. A host of instances are found in this regard. Omar bin Abdul Aziz said: "I would not have been pleased hearing that differences did not occur in the lives of the Prophet. For if they agreed on an issue. Next someone comes and does not act on words of the Prophet then he becomes astray. But when differences occurred amongst the companions, one is free to choose the one he likes. No doubt, there is an ample room in Islamic Shariah.

On the basis of it Ulema of Shawafe said about "Amr bil-Maruf Wannahi-Anil Munkar" (Enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong). "Interpretation of law point should not be denied by dint of power. If one argues with scholarly proof and fair reasons then out of two things follow one which appears correct."

Imam Ibn Taymia has mentioned such issues in detail in his collection of Fatawas. We also see Imam Shafai, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and other traditionists and Jurists as to how they maintained tolerance and moderation among themselves despite these differences on issues.

The need of hour is that we must keep their practices alive and imitate them otherwise every school of thought will regard itself the follower of right path and disagree with others.

In any way it is not appropriate for the followers of the last Prophet Muhammad (S) to create a gulf among themselves on the ground of practices and performances of religious rituals in different ways. It is time we must unite and be an emblem of this verse of the holy Quran. "And thus we have made you a community Justly-balanced, that you might be witnesses to mankind, and that the messenger might be a witness to you." (S.2, A. 143) ■

Obituary

Mohammad Tahir Hanfi father of Abu Mohammad Aamir Nadwi passed away on October 24, 2021 in Lucknow. He was a government retired person. He was immensely impressed with noted Islamic scholar Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. After his demise he perpetuated the spiritual nexus with his true successor Maulana S.M.Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector of Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. Mr. Hanfi was an active member of Tableeghi Jamat. He remained associated with it for about 40 years. He is survived by a son and two daughters. His son Abu Mohammad Aamir is an employee in Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. A good number of teaching and non-teaching members of Nawatul Ulama and Tableeghi Markaz Lucknow attended his last rites. May Allah forgive his shortcomings and bestow upon him His special mercy! Aameen!

Eating Habits

Muslims are not free in eating and drinking as they like. A line of demarcation has been drawn for them in the Islamic Sharia (Code of Law) between Halal (Permissible) and Haram (Prohibited) which they are not allowed to cross. They cannot use the meat of an animal or that of a bird unless they slaughter it Islamically and pronounce Allah's name over it. If an animal or a bird is not slaughtered Islamically, its meat is just like that of a dead animal or bird. Similarly, if an animal is slaughtered in the name of somebody other than Allah—may it be a goddess, a god, an idol, a prophet, a saint, or a martyr—it is also like a dead animal for Muslims which is prohibited for them to eat. The dog and the pig are considered unclean in Islam and are prohibited for Muslims. Some other animals—lions, tigers, leopards and the like—are not considered unclean but Muslims are forbidden to eat their meat. Similarly, the meat of birds that use claws to eat or that of hunting birds is forbidden, whereas the meat of birds eating with their beaks is permissible. These rules of eating are, in fact, based on the model of the culture established by Prophet Ibrahim which Muslims are required to follow, no matter at what time or place in the human history they happen to live. ■

Islam And Education

- Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui*

Right from the beginning Islam used knowledge as an important tool to root out ignorance, illiteracy, superstitions, banalities, obscenity, bad customs and other a host of anti social activities. The six century of Christian era in which Prophet Muhammad was born was the darkest phase in the history of mankind. The moral fabric of the society was torn to shreds. Humanity had reached the edge of precipice. Allah sent prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to take out the people from darkness to light and steer them to the right way and gave him a book named "The Qur'an" through Angel Jibrael. The first revelation which descended to the prophet was "Iqra bismе Rabbi kallaji khalaq.." (Read with the name of thy Lord Who created you). No doubt, the first revelation of the Qur'an vividly indicates to the importance and significance of education. "That is why Islam always laid immense stress on acquisition of education. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman".

"The importance of education in Islamic theory and practice is too well known to be reiterated here. The word 'Qur'an' comes from 'Quara' meaning 'to read' .During the first half of the 7th

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Century, Muslims made a vigorous start with education. The Sayings of the Holy Prophet cover such modern ideas as compulsory education for both sexes, adult and continuing education and exchange in the field of education and learning. Serious and concerted efforts were made to widen the educated segment of society without any loss of time and even prisoners of war were asked to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to their captors to obtain their release. This produced an unbelievable educational upsurge in the lives of the nomadic Arabs. In this, the Arabs present an extraordinary spectacle in the history of civilization. The ignorant and illiterate Arabs, within a hundred years after their grand march of conquest, assumed the leadership of intellectual pursuits. It was this extra-ordinary phenomenon which made Muslims masters of a large part of the world in a short time". (Islamic Education Redefinition of Aims and Methodology by Manzoor Ahmad, p,7)

History bears witness that knowledge has always been a guiding factor in human life. It has played crucial role in the the past and will surely be a beacon in the present and also in the future. "In his book "Madrasa Education In India" Kuldip Kaur says, "According to Islam, education is a powerful instrument for bringing about social change and to put an end to ignorance and superstitions.

Education can also transform the world into an abode of peace, free sin and misery. A teacher is held in high esteem in the Islamic society, even though he may not be wealthy. Learning and scholarship have always been the most prized virtues in Islamic society; so "imparting education" has been considered a meritorious deed. "Muslim education was pioneered by a man who had no formal education. Yet both as a preacher of a new religion and as the head of a state, Muhammad proved to be an effective teacher and an enthusiastic promoter of learning. Muhammad sat in the mosque at Madina surrounded by his followers, and instructed them by repeating whatever he had to say three times ", until they memorized it - such instructions were also imparted to women. People in search of knowledge went to the mosque, which, besides being a place of worship, also served as an educational center. Under the Abbasids, education made tremendous progress because Muslims came under the influence of Greek literature and philosophy. It was during this period that the Arabs became acquainted with Indian sciences, particularly medicine, mathematics and astronomy. The contact of the Arabs with the outside world revolutionized their outlook on different spheres of life. This period witnessed the intensification of efforts towards formalisation of the educational system, initiated during the Umayyad times. Besides providing elementary education to the general masses, efforts also made for development of higher education.

"There are many versions at the sayings of the Holy Prophet emphasizing the importance of imparting knowledge as a religious duty. The followers of Islam have always held learning and education in such regard as verging on veneration. This attitude towards learning has made the Muslims contribute to the progress of science for the benefit of mankind. Universities such as Qartaba (Cordova) in Spain, Al-Azhar at Cairo and Madrasa Nizamiya at Baghdad have turned out scholars as Ibn-Khaldun, Ibn A sir, Imam-al-Ghazzali, Imam Fakhruddin Razi, Abu Ali Ibn Sena (Avicenna), Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi, Umar Khayyam, Saadi and Hafiz among many others". "Noted Islamic scholar Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has rightly said, "There is not a single sector of European revival which is not indebted to Islamic thought. Islam imparted a new glow of life to Europe".

In short, until Muslims attached to education and accorded their spectacular attention to it they made remarkable progress and prosperity in every spheres of life. But ever since they showed negligence, indolence, and tardiness, they dwindled and humiliated everywhere. The crux of the matter is that the future of any nation depends on education. In the words of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Accordingly, it is high time due attention must be paid towards education. It is the greatest asset which Allah has given us to lead a peaceful life in this world. ■

Philosophy And Education

- Mahar Abdul Haq

Philosophy is a compound word, derived from the Greek. It is compound of 'philo' "lover of" or "friend of", and 'sophy' "Wisdom" (or knowledge). In common usage the word philosophy stands for love of wisdom (or knowledge) especially that which deals with ultimate reality or with the most general causes and principles of things. It also means system for conduct of life, serenity and resignation. One view presents philosophy as basis of knowledge about the nature of things. The other view is that it is a guide to the good life of man because knowledge that does not characterise the condition of man's well-being and is applied uncritically, without prudence, without sagacity or without the light of experience is not wisdom which is the essence of real philosophy. These two altogether different views have made it extremely difficult for scholars of all the ages to arrive at a conclusive or at least a comprehensive definition of 'philosophy'.

Looking back into history we find that the social upheaval caused by the triumph of the Greeks over the Persians produced a spirit of dissatisfaction with existing conditions and current beliefs of those times and awakened a widespread interest in knowledge. A class of professional teachers called Sophists responded to this demand.

They sold their knowledge like street-vendors for miserably low price of a bare living. Although they did much for the spread of general education, yet their emphasis on practical problems of material interests compelled other thinkers also to probe seriously into the worldly aspects of human life, Their new doctrine is contained in the dictum, of Protagoras: 'Man is the measure of things.' This dictum which years later became the foundation of present materialism, taught the people that truth had only relative value and goodness only that which best satisfied the practical needs of man. To prove that their knowledge was not worthless thing they sold it off and made fortunes.

But very soon imitators cropped up from all sides to sell their pseudo-knowledge and half-truths in the flourishing market and the Sophists, who were once paid teachers of philosophy and rhetoric, were now dubbed as captious or fallacious reasoners. From this we have the word 'Sophism' meaning "false argument intended to deceive", and other words like sophistry, sophistication etc., for adulteration, misguidance, artificiality and falsehood. It was under the deep influence of these environments that Athens became the center of Greek philosophy.

The human quest for truth is

certainly one of the greatest enterprises of man and the story of that quest has an intrinsic value of its own, besides affording some help to the understanding of the present and its roots in the past. There have been occasional lapses in human thinking but time and again Prophets, equipped with the true knowledge of revelation, have been setting the deviators again on the correct path of life and purifying human intellect of all its adulterations. Today emphasis has once again shifted from wisdom to knowledge and it is science, not philosophy, to which modern thought is looking for guidance. "One of the strongest schools of philosophy (positivism) holds that only the empirical sciences are true knowledge, and that philosophy's role is to be merely an interpreter and critic of these sciences. We do not mean to belittle the importance of 'Science' as it is understood today, but everyone knows that science studies only our physical and social environment; it describes how things behave and not how they should behave. In other words, science produces things or power but it does not, because it cannot, tell us how to use the things or power properly. We may use these things for building up civilizations or for destroying them, science has nothing to do with it.

It does not prevent us from misusing the power that it gives us. The knowledge accumulated by it can poison or cure, destroy or construct, give life or death. It provides us with

means which may facilitate our pursuits of bad ends as well as good ones as it is totally unable to give us any moral direction. Philosophical knowledge is not only useful but superior to every other knowledge because, its application is moral and directive. Science should, therefore, be the means and philosophy the end, otherwise things would never go right. The more we possess science the more we stand in need of philosophy; the more we acquire power the more we require direction and right guidance.

It is alleged that philosophy is the most difficult of all branches of knowledge because it is mostly indecisive, hazy, obscure and occasionally turbid. We have to remain extremely patient in our research for what belongs to philosophy and even when we have reached the end of our enquiry we are still not quite sure whether the end is real one or the beginning of yet another end. In spite of all this nebulosity no science or its offshoot is without a philosophy. As things are learnt by opposites also, let us try to understand what philosophy is by contrasting it with what philosophy is not.

We know that when a carpenter is asked to make a chair or a table for us he is equipped with the material, the instruments, the specimen which he has to copy and the pattern of ornamentation which he has to carve. All these things are definite; even the experience, the dexterity and the

training that the carpenter has is not vague. The product of his labour can be judged or valued either by himself or by someone else who is competent to do so. There is not much questioning about it. Then, there is Engineering. The making of a bridge, for example, is a hundred times more difficult than that of a carpenter but with the help of mathematicians, skilled artisans and wonderful machines of modern age the engineer is able to accomplish some very astonishing feats. But here, too, the men, the materials, the plans, the object to be achieved, are all well-known and the value is quite measureable.

Let us now look into a task, which is somewhat different from the above-mentioned tasks. This is painting. In it there is less definiteness or determinacy. No one can say whether it is good or bad until the work is completed. Even after that opinions differ. The elements of vagueness is always there in the artist's achievement. This is because its value is neither known nor can it be foretold. Art consists in the artist's own expression of the beautiful in Nature, or in Man, or in both. There is no fixed measure with which the artist might judge his personal experience or its value nor has he any set rules to inform him how to communicate that value or experience to a mind other than his own. Moreover, the value of the artist's product cannot be measured by its strength or usefulness. It may exceed the painter's own expectations or it may be

disappointing for even the layman. The value of even the best painting is entirely an aesthetic one and can hardly be appreciated by any two persons in exactly the same way.

The art of poetry certainly rises higher than painting because the poet chooses words, instead of paints, as the medium of expression of his experience of the beautiful. A picture may depict a single image, a poem is a series of images and for this, and for its melody, it is more expressive and impressive to mankind than any other art. But here, too, the value remains indeterminate. No two men will appreciate a good piece of poetry in exactly the same way. Some will be enchanted by the music, some will value the words, and to some the thoughts, imagination, subtle meanings and many such other qualities will be appreciable.

From the above examples it can be seen that no artist or artisan can succeed without being a lover of wisdom. All of them must necessarily be able to put a value on their work. This value lies not in money but in the truthfulness of what they have created; in its goodness and in its beauty. This is wisdom, for wisdom means the possession of experience and knowledge together with the extraordinary ability of applying them critically, practically and constructively.

Just as our will dominates our actions so does philosophy dominate all other branches of knowledge. It tries

to fathom the depth of all arts and sciences but strangely enough it cannot find its own bottom. The main purpose of philosophical enquire is to ascertain the ultimate character of reality which may be called just 'Being' or 'Existence' because it is again difficult to define Reality though it is the very existence which underlies all appearances. This immense sweep of philosophical interests has resulted in the production of various types of philosophies with hosts of philosophers influenced by their Ages personal likes and dislikes, arts, religions, political movements and social environments etc., peculiar to individual thinkers. But this apparent conglomeration of diverse and contradictory philosophies is by no means disappointing. As 'Reality', as a whole, cannot be cut into pieces for an analysis, a consensus in the findings of all true philosophies is not an impossibility. In analytical knowledge Reality reveals its various aspects, whereas in philosophical synthesis it again shows itself as a whole.

We can study the ultimate nature of Reality only by indentifying ourselves with the course which Reality adopts in its various manifestations. The being born with "the breath of God" or the rationalizing spirit in him is always ready to seek unity in all apparent complexities. But the man of the world looks after his own business and leaves all questioning and answering to philosophers who generally get little approbation for the pains they take.

Even then it has always been one mastermind endowed with far superior powers of insight and foresight, whose inspiration and right guidance has steered the ship of humanity gone adrift in troubled waters through to the shores of safety.

As a matter of fact, all knowledge, being love of wisdom, was one whole in the beginning. With the increase in the bulk of knowledge philosophy is differentiated from science. The word science, with its Sanskrit root-word 'Sanyas' (searching herbs to cure bodily diseases), refers to the application of knowledge to its use in practical life of man. But later science itself differentiated into many sciences and even philosophy branched out into a number of studies. Today knowledge has become so vast that it is impossible to lump it together into one whole.

Philosophy, as a matter of fact, is the mother of all sciences, but due to vast cleavages in the thinking of the Western nations and their materialistic approach to the over increasing problems of life, it has, unfortunately lost much of its importance. We must not lose sight of the fact that a philosopher, be he right or wrong is satisfying an in born hunger after knowledge and is indispensable.

Education is philosophy in action. All people think, speak, act and behave as they learn through various agencies of education. The theories of education are directly influenced, determined and

put into practice by the current philosophical trends, unless they are guided by such 'universals' as remain true for all times and all places. Education concerns the whole man and the whole man becomes whole only when all the aspects of his life-material, moral, social, spiritual, in fact all-are developed equally well. Each shift in the emphasis brings about a change not only in the aims of Education of subject matter learnt, methods of teaching but the educational values as well. It is said that each teacher has an educational philosophy of his own. This may hold good with respect to individual teacher's personal beliefs, unbelief's, likes, dislikes or preferences etc., which have certainly a bearing on how he infuses knowledge into the plastic minds of his students but to say that he remains absolutely uninfluenced by the popular thought or the force of legitimate reasoning is wrong. A good teacher, in addition to being a philosopher, is a friend and a guide also. He remains constantly in search of permanent values of life because, by virtue of his rank of holding the greatest responsibility on this earth, he is expected to rise above the low levels of caste creed, colour nationality and the like to the higher concept of universal brotherhood of mankind. Viewed from this perspective, Philosophy and Education are not two different disciplines but one.

Traditionally, the philosophic methods have performed three functions: firstly, speculative; secondly,

normative and lastly, critical. Human intellect, in its early and immature state, can only speculate. It simply cannot understand the subtle truths of existence unless it is guided by the transcendental knowledge of Revelation. To pursue an inquiry, to meditate or to form a theory on or about a subject or cause of a thing is good thing because the faculty of reasoning is the most valuable possession of man, but it must start building up from some real fact and not from mere supposition. Conjecture remains wavering between doubt and true knowledge and on account of its vacillation between two extremes it leads man to nowhere. Revelation provides human intellect with a sure foundation and then leaves it free to theories further constructively. For example, it tells man that the Universe has not been created in jest or sport; it has a definite purpose. Man, too is not without a purpose here: he has to collect the rays of Truth and Honour scattered all round him in the Universe and then reflect the light thus collected by him on to all other things with which he has been directly or indirectly related. If this basic Truth is not accepted as a fundamental belief, intellect will remain wandering in the wilderness of conjectural opinions and man never be able to promote Allah's great purpose and plan. The Holy Qur'an very emphatically warn; us against the dangers of conjecture; it says, "Truly, fancy can be of no avail against Truth." (10: 36)

In matters which are beyond the reach of Reasoning some 'beliefs' must needs be accepted as hypothetical truths otherwise, as the Qur'an says:

"Woe to the falsehood-mongers, Those who (flounder) heedless in a flood of confusion" (51:10-11)

To save humanity from floundering in the confusion of speculative philosophy, especially at a time when Revelation perfected and finalised itself and recognized the maturity of human intellect for the first time in history, it was necessary to provide man with some basic Truths and Laws on which intellect could build further structure with certainty of knowledge. Allah's knowledge is absolute; "man has been given very little knowledge, as much as was deemed necessary for him." (2: 255) Allah's knowledge is not conditioned by Time and Space: to us, His creatures, these conditions always apply. Our knowledge gets some reflection of Reality when it accords with His will and Plan. The Holy Qur'an points out to the imperfection of human knowledge in many fields, for example it says:

"Verily, the knowledge of 'the Hour' is with Allah alone. It is He Who sends down Rain, and He Who knows what is in wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow: nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily, with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things)." (31:34)

Kant suggested a tracheotomy of the modes of cognition into knowledge, opinion and faith. He says, "Opinion is such holding of a judgment as is consciously insufficient, not only objectively but also subjectively. Out holding of a judgment be only subjectively sufficient, we have that is termed believing. Lastly when the holding of thing to be true is sufficient both subjectively and objectively, it is knowledge." (The Critique Pure Reason) According to the Holy Qur'an 'Faith' is not what has been said above as believing; it is what Kant calls knowledge, or rather the result of reason and knowledge. Any belief which divorced from reason is not accepted by the Holy Qur'an as 'Faith'. Though it does involve the acceptance of certain basic things which cannot be known through sense-perception; but there is no reason to presume that things which cannot be thus perceived do not exist. Indeed, our reason itself compels us to recognise the existence of many such things. Belief in certain fundamentals saves us from much idle thinking and is, therefore, necessary for practical, solid and constructive 'duties' that man has to perform on this earth as Allah's Agent-in-Chief. Thus in Islam, Philosophy rises above speculation to the level of 'knowledge plus wisdom' and becomes normative as well as critical in its functions. The Educational Philosophy of the Holy Qur'an is, therefore, to be understood and followed strictly in that sense and not in

the conventional sense of fancy or guess or conjecture.

Islam is not merely a dogma or just a religion among other religions; it is the religion (or rather DIN as called by the Holy Qur'an) meaning thereby 'a perfected way of life'. It is very simple and easy to follow; so is the Qur'anic Philosophy of Education. It is realistic, definite, with not the least doubt or scruple in its judgments. By appealing to reason it answers satisfactorily all questions that can arise in the doubting minds of humanity.

The Word and Message of Allah is conveyed to human beings in their own language; so does the Holy Qur'an. It uses the same words which are current in common vocabulary, but it uses them with a difference. For example, it uses the same words for God, Prophet, Worship and Prayer etc., as have been in currency through ages among all the peoples of the world, but it either gives new meanings to them, or enhances their purport, or their sense and thus clarifies all obscurities. For Philosophy the Qur'anic word is 'Hikmat', commonly translated as wisdom. Its root-word means 'the strap of the rein with which the jaws of a horse are tied up', This strap prevents the horse from becoming unruly or going astray. To fix the rights and obligations and thus to prevent someone from exceeding limits is 'Hukm' Hikmat, therefore, means to fix with justice and correct proportion the rights and

obligations of men and to prevent them from transgressions. A 'Hakeem' or philosopher will, therefore, be one who sets things right in due order and proportion, beautifully, authoritatively and with a firm belief in the correctness of his decisions. In Verses 4:13, 6:89 and 2:25 we are told that the great Educators sent by Allah to humanity as His Holy Messengers were equipped with the following four things integrated into one discipline called Nabuwwat:

1. Law (Kitab, or the book),
2. Wisdom (Hikmat),
3. Authority (Hukm) and
4. Knowledge ('Ilm),

Thus the seed of rift that the word 'philosophy' contained in it its earlier meanings was removed and men were warned not to shift emphasis from wisdom to knowledge otherwise that would cause great detriment to human society. Its first discipline, Law or the 'Book', is the most perfect, complete and progressive way of life that gives practical training to people in keeping things in right order and proportion. The second discipline, Wisdom, brightens up the understanding of the essence of each law and provides man's free-will with right guidance towards an appropriate behaviour. Authority is necessary to protect both Law and Wisdom from the onslaughts of rebellious forces of Evil that work within man himself and outside of him. Knowledge, the fourth discipline, has to subdue Nature for the common benefit

and advancement of human society. Thus, knowledge is for the right understanding of relationships and for maintaining right order and discipline and correct proportion in them, and this ultimately leads to wisdom. Knowledge that subordinates not itself to the Divine Laws of the highest wisdom is worse than useless. It has an innate tendency to swerve towards arrogance and pride, and consequently, to upset the peace and order, tranquility and freedom. This, in a nutshell, is essence of the Qur'anic philosophy of Education. Its main purpose is not only to criticise existing conditions or to offer suggestions for improvement but also to check authoritatively all vagrancies of thought and behaviour and to see that imbalances do not appear anywhere in relationships. As a matter of fact, it is always the philosophy of the people which determines their actions, manners, morals, values, patterns of behaviour; in fact, all the ways of life as well as the angle of vision from which they look at other people of the world. The Qur'anic universals provide us with the surest and most all perfect guidance in all matters referred to above. They suit all times and all peoples.

To show how fast these relationships are breaking up in the educational institutions of the materialistic countries of the world, particularly in America, where Democracy is supposed to be at its best, we quote from professor Ducasse's book: Selected Reading in

the Philosophy of Education' (3rd Edition) edited by Joe Park of the Northwestern University and published by The Macmillan Company Limited, London, 1968, page 9.

"What I refer is the chaos of irresponsibility, fads, vested interests and inefficiency which exists in various degrees and at all levels in American education today. Hardly a week now passes without some book or article appearing that asks why Johnny can't read, why Mary can't count, or more generally, why our educational institutions turn so large a proportion of uneducated and undisciplined young people. Our problem is then specifically what practical contribution philosophy can make to the urgent task of bringing intelligent order, responsibility and efficiency into that chaotic situation."

The simplest answer to that problem is that higher stages of the development of man's humanness, in which 'values' are cherished more than the material gains of this worldly life, can be achieved only when 'man' has an unflinching belief in the accountability of his each and every act, whether open or secret, before an All-Powerful authority Who is transcendentally supreme to man. Human intellect will have to seek guidance and help from the higher wisdom and knowledge of Revelation which is, to all intents and purposes, above reason but not against it. ■

Zubaida: The Great Philanthropist

- Abu Tariq Hijazi

Zubaida Khatoon was born in 148 AH. (766 CE), a few months after Haroon-al-Rasheed ascended to the Caliphate. She was pretty and so her grandfather, Caliph Mansur, named her Zubaida (a cup of cream).

Her actual name was Amatul Aziz (like Abdul Aziz for boys). She was daughter of Ja'afer, brother of Caliph Mahdi and her mother, Salsal was the sister of Khaizran, wife of Caliph Mahdi. Thus, she was connected to Haroon Al-Rasheed from her mother as well as father's side.

She was very brilliant, beautiful and fond of learning. She learned the Holy Qur'an, Hadith and Arabic literature with due interest. She also showed great interest in literature and science and allocated funds inviting tens of poets, scientists and literary figures to Baghdad.

It is said that her palace "sounded like a beehive" as she employed one hundred women maids who recited the Holy Qur'an day and night. Wherever she went in the palace the verses of Holy Qur'an were echoing all around.

She sponsored a group of Ulema for promoting Islamic learning. She lived during- and after- the time of Imam Al-Shafe'i. She was married to Haroon Al-Rasheed in 165 AH (781 AD), who was

the fifth Abbasid Caliph and ruled for 23 years (786-809).

Queen Zubaida was a very devout Muslim and never missed a prayer. She also performed Hajj many times, often making the 900-mile trip from Baghdad to Makkah on foot with her husband.

Zubaida got a son named Mohammed al-Amin. He was six month younger to his step brother Ali al-Ma'moun, whose mother was a concubine named Marajel. Zubaida pleaded for the nomination of her son Amin as the crown prince though Caliph Haroon preferred Ma'moun because of his intelligence and scholarship.

Finally, Haroon decided not to infuriate his wife and appointed her son as crown prince and al Mamoun as crown prince to the new crown prince, and also appointed his third son al Kassim as a third crown prince.

As expected, al- Amin started to mess things up from his first days in power, after the death of his father. Eventually, his conflict with his brother escalated and it ended after fierce battle, in which he was killed. His mother overcame her sorrow and tragedy and wrote to Al Ma'moun thus:

"I congratulate you as the new Caliph. I have lost a son, but he was replaced by the son that I did not give

birth to.”

These words moved the new Caliph as Ma'moun was also raised by Zubaida when his mother died after three days of his birth. He rushed to her and swore that he did not order the killing of his brother. Zubaida lived for 22 years after the death of her husband.

Caliph Ma'moun gave her full respect and comfort and consulted her in important matters. She died at the age of 67 in 216 A.H.

Her biggest achievement was the planning and execution of a road project from Baghdad to Makkah. There was a path that existed before but she saw the pilgrims dying with thirst and losing the way because of desert and sandstorms.

To solve this problem, Zubaida planned to build a well-demarcated route with buildup walls and shelters to protect the travelers from shifting sands and harsh weather conditions. Her engineers moved in the direction of the Qibla and drew a map of over 1200 kilometers. The road was divided into more than 40 stations for shelter of huge caravans of pilgrims with their animals.

Deep wells, water pools, guest houses, mosques and police posts were erected to provide comfort and security to the pilgrims. High minarets were raised to locate the place and in the night towers were lit with fire to guide the caravans to the right direction.

All these structures were so strong that they remained intact for centuries. The result was that Darb Zubaida served for more than 1,000 years, for millions of pilgrims from Iraq, Faris, Khorasan and Kurdistan. Though about 1,300 years have passed, some of the wells and pools of this route can still be identified.

Darb Zubaida started from Baghdad and passing through Kufa, Najaf, Qadsiya, Mughiaha, Thalabia, Feedh and Samera reached Naqra where it bifurcated for Madina through Al-Akhakia.

The main route to Makkah continued through Mughhaith, Beir-Ghifari, Al-Saleelah, Birka-Zabda and reached Mahad Dhahab (Gold mines). Later crossing through Safinah, Ghamrah, it reached Meeqat named Zat-Irq, and later passing through Bustan reached Makkah.

Darb Zubaida also mobilized the cultural and commercial activity in the region. Pilgrims exchanged their ideas, delivered sermons, told historical stories and reached commercial dealing during the night halts.

This route remained active for six months every year for Hajj traffic and for the remaining period, served the locals and traders. It is said that Zubaida spent 1,700,000 mithqaal on this project which is equal to 5,950 kg of pure gold costing billions of dollars today. ■

(YMD)

Islam And Human Rights

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Islam, no doubt, is the religion of an equilibrium between body and soul. It solves every issue of human life and leads to such a way in which human beings may live with peace and amity. It goes without saying that Islam introduced Human rights and stressed its importance. The last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is the first charter of Human Rights in Islam. It should be kept in mind that the terms of Human rights had been alien for a long time. After the French Revolution of 1789 and American Revolution of 1775, the concept of Human Rights fostered. Even after the Second World War, the United Nation Organization (UNO) has set up a Human Rights Commission. Swami Vivekananda says: "My experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality (egalitarianism) in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone, I am firmly persuaded, therefore, that without the help of practical Islam, theories of veganism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind." (Letters of Swami Vivekananda, P. 463) The similar thoughts are also of G.B. Shaw, he says: "I have always had the religion of

Muhammand in high estimation because of its wonderful Vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me that possesses that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existing which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him- the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today. " G.B. Shaw, the Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No, 8, 1936). Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says, "Socially, a most epoch-making change was brought about by the Islamic notion of human equality and brother-hood. There was no division of society into permanent classes and no such community as the Untouchables among the Muslims: Their belief was that no one born unclean into the world nor predetermination ignorant and debarred by the very fact of his birth in a certain class from the acquirement of

knowledge. No trade or occupation was reserved for any particular section of humanity. On the other hand, they fraternized freely with each - other at all levels, the rich strove with the poor in the pursuit of learning and there was freedom of profession for all. The idea of brotherhood was for the Indian mind and the Indian society a novel experience and a call to renewed thinking which did a lot of good to the country. The bonds of the then existing class-ridden society were relaxed to a considerable extent and thus witnessed a widespread recoil from the excessive rigidity of the caste-system. The advent of Islam acted as a challenge to social reformers in other fields also." The well-known Indian freedom fighter and poetess Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has precisely said, "It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for, in the mosque when the call from the Minaret is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim "God alone is great ". I have been struck over and over again this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man distinctly a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian an Indian and a Turk in London, what matters that Egypt was the motherland of one and India motherland

of another" (The Ideals of Islam in Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, Madras 1918, P. 169) Islam regards all human beings alike. Its main plank is to prevail equality and justice in order to create an atmosphere of peace and amity in the world. The holy Quran says: "We verily sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and repeated with them the scripture and the Balance, that mankind may observe right measure; and revealed Iron, wherein is mighty power and (many) uses for mankind...." In the words of Sarojini Naidu: "Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Quran I find these dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conducts of life suited to the whole world." (LVII: 25). (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, Madras, 1918, P 167). If we study Islam and ponder over its contributions and services to humanity, we come across to the conclusion that current misgivings about Islam are unfounded. Suffice it to say that Almighty Allah Himself addressed the Prophet to say: "O Muhammad! Say to people, "To you be your religion, and to me mine. That is why the Prophet never compelled Jews or Christians (109:6) to accept Islam. The Holy Quran strongly advocates that- "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith." (2:256). It will be in the fitness

of things that one should know Islam before leveling any allegation against it. It is time to foster brotherhood and fraternity regardless of caste, creed, colour and region and create an atmosphere of peace and amity throughout the world.

Needless to add that U.N. General Assembly has declared December 10 as Human Rights Day in 1948. So it is observed on December 10 all over the world. The Assembly proclaimed the declaration as a “common standard of achievement for all people and all nations”. It defines social discrimination as “any distinction based on race, colours or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying the recognition, exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural or any other fields of public life”.

None can gainsay the achievements and contributions made by the UNO in eradicating racism and racial discrimination, racist policies and racist regimes. We may recall the atrocities and oppressions perpetrated by the whites of ruling class in South Africa. But under the pressure of the UNO, the ruling party had to give up the age-long policy of apartheid or racial discrimination. Consequently Nelson Mandela, the most popular leader of the African people had been released from

jail in February, 1990. Later on the South African Government had to conduct the first multi-racial elections in South Africa on April 27, 1994. Wherein the African National Congress (ANC) got 252 seats out of 400 and formed the first democratic Government in South Africa under Nelson Mandela the first president of the new Government. Thus imperialism came to an end in South Africa and so did apartheid. But it is unfortunate that the U.N.O's services are one sided. Since the Second World War, the US has attacked 21 countries from Vietnam to Yugoslavia to Nieragna, killing millions of innocent people. Gulf countries have faced three wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973 after the Second World War and creation of Israel. The recent attack on Iraq dethroning Saddam Husain is most deplorable.

Today the Islamic world including Syria and Palestine is passing through an ordeal. No country raises voice against the atrocities and oppressions being meted out to the people of the Islamic World. It is an open secret that despite all its brutalities, Israel gets all-out support of America.

It is time the UNO should get the issues of the Islamic world including Palestine solved friendly and amicably only then celebration of the “Human Rights Day” will be meaningful and appropriate.■

Did You Know?

- ☛ Lightning is a very powerful source of energy and a single lightning can light up the bulb for months.
- ☛ To clean its ears from the dirt a giraffe uses its tongue.
- ☛ A single mummy took 70 days to make and it is found in a research that Egyptians made total of 70 millions of them.
- ☛ The heart pumps enough blood within a year to fill up a Olympic Game standard swimming pool.
- ☛ Crocodiles can live as long as 100 years and it can have 2,500 pounds of weight.
- ☛ Corks that are used to seal-off the mouth of bottles are made by oak tree and one large oak tree can produce 1,00,000 soft corks.
- ☛ Stars in the galaxies are 2.5 trillion and blood vessels in human body are 250 trillion,
- ☛ 1,300 degree Fahrenheit is a very high temperature and it can easily melt the steel off. A person named David Grout walked 165ft in length on burning coal, in 1998, which was having the temperature mentioned above.
- ☛ Formula One Racing Car races at average speed of 170 miles per hour and a golf ball when gets hits from front strike has the same speed.

(YMD)

Urdu Language of the Masses, Not of A Community

- Anupam Srivastava

Urdu is the language of love not of a community, said Farhan Wasti, who established Jashn-e-Urdu (which organises the biggest Mushaira of the world in Dubai and Delhi).

Talking on the phone from Dubai on World Urdu Day (Tuesday), he said, "Urdu is the language of the country (India). I love Hindi and Urdu both as Hindi is my mother tongue. I established Jashn-e-Urdu with the help of friends like Kumar Vishwas and Alok Srivastava who are Hindus. Today, the Mushaira and Kavi Sammelan of Dubai and Delhi are considered as the most prestigious in the world. Even Pakistani poets crave to participate in the event."

Meanwhile, here in Lucknow, scores of youth, scholars, poets and writers, cutting across religious lines, participated in 'Jashn-e-Urdu', a day of conferences, seminars, a Mushaira, and an Urdu Book Fair, on World Urdu Day, at the Islamic Centre of India, Aishbagh.

Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali, chairman, Islamic Centre of India, said, "You will not believe that more than 80% of the crowd at the Islamic Centre for Jashn-e-Urdu was Hindu. Many of them came directly from Hanuman temple with Tikas on their forehead to purchase an Urdu book. More than 2,000 Urdu books

were displayed in 10 stalls and a number of them were sold. I am happy to see the success of the festival. Next year it will be even bigger.

"In the very first session of the conference organised as part of 'Jashn-e-Urdu', we discussed the contributions of Raghupati Sahay, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Jamuna Das Akhtar, Ram Lal, Dr Jagannath Azad, Krishna Chander, in the development of Urdu. The participation of the common Lucknowite in such festivals exhibits the cosmopolitan culture of Lucknow."

Echoing that sentiment, professor Parvez Malikzada, noted Urdu scholar and editor of 'Imqaan' Urdu magazine, felt that today, more than Muslims, Hindus were learning this language of peace and love. In other words, they are the flag-bearers of Urdu. "It's wrong to label Urdu as the language of Muslims only. Ghulam Hamadani Musafi used the term Urdu for the first time in 1780. The Mughal rulers called this language Hindi or Hindavi. In written form, it used the Persian script. That's why people think of it as the language of Muslims," Malikzada said.

He said, "Urdu poetry was made rich by the contribution of poets like Brij Narain 'Chakbast' who composed his own Urdu narration of Ram's story. He was the one who decided to interpret

Hinduism through the idiom of Urdu high literature. He was born in Lucknow.

“Lucknow has inherited not just the poetry of Majaz and Mir Taqi Mir, but also of Chakbast, Krishna Behari Noor, and Sanjay Mishra ‘Shauq’. That’s why Lucknow is one of the most secular cities in the country, both politically and culturally. The interest of most youths in Urdu is a logical continuation of this tradition.”

Malikzada said, “The art of marsias, rubais started by Mir Anees is protected and taken to a new high by a Hindu like Sanjay Mishra ‘Shauq’. One

rubs one’s eyes in disbelief when an Urdu poet with a name like Mishra (a Brahmin) recites poems in praise of Hasan and Hussain. This can only be found in Lucknow.”

Lucknow has produced master Urdu ghazal writers like Krishna Behari Noor, who was popular for his unique style of poetry recitation. Everyone knows Ram Prakash ‘Bekhud’, Khushbir Singh ‘Shad’ and Manish Shukla, not only in India but in other parts of the world,” he added. ■

(Hindustan Times – 11-11-21)

Man’s Ultimate Responsibility

If human beings subjugate themselves to the supremacy of material things and become slaves to their selfish desires, life on earth will become hellish and unbearable. Man has to remember that his place in the scheme of creation is that of God’s vicegerent. As the Quran bears testimony, Allah ordered the angels to bow down in front of man as a mark of respect. This clearly establishes that it is highly humiliating for man, God’s deputy on earth, to bow down in front of anybody except his Creator. Had there been any such scope, Allah should have allowed man to bow down in front of the angels as they carry on Allah’s orders on the earth: they, for instance, bring rain and make the wind blow. By making the angels bow down in front of man Allah clearly revealed His will that the world has been given to the care of man as His vicegerent and that he himself is created for the worship of Allah the Almighty. Man must look at his present miserable lot and tell himself that he is supposed to do better. He must rise to his appointed position as Allah’s vicegerent, take none else except Allah as his Lord, and save himself and the world from eternal suffering. ■

Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi Re-elected AIMPLB President

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector of Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow was unanimously elected president of AIMPLB for the consecutive six term at the 27th Annual Convention of All India Muslim Personal Law Board held at Jajmau, Kanpur on November 19-20, 2021.

The Muslim Personal Law Board was set up by a group of Ulama in Maharashtra on December 28, 1972. Its first meeting was held in historical city Hyderabad on April 7-8, 1973 in which Maulana Qari Tayyib was elected its first president and Maulana Minnatullah Rahmani was chosen its first General Secretary. Maulana Qari Tayyib held the post till July 17, 1983. After his demise Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was elected as its second President on December 28, 1983 and served till his death on December 31, 1999. After his passing away Maulana Qazi Mujahidul Islam Qasmi was elected the president of the Board on April 23, 2000 and held the post till his death on April 4, 2002. After passing away of Maulana Qazi Mujahidul Islam Qasmi, Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi was elected the fourth President of the Board on June 22, 2002. For two decades Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi held the same post.

Similarly, Maulana Minnatullah Rahmani served as the General Secretary of the Board from April 12, 1973 to March 19, 1991. After his death Maulana Syed Nizamuddin became the Board's second General Secretary on November 23, 1991 and held the designation till 2016. After his passing away Maulana Wali Rahmani was elected General Secretary and held the same till on April 4, 2021. Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani was elected as fourth General Secretary of the Board on November 20, 2021 in Kanpur Session of AIMPLB.

Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi was born in 1930 at Takiya Kalan, Raebareilly, U.P. (India). He had his elementary education at home and got higher education at Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Maulana Mohammad Shah

Haleem Ata, Maulana Mufti Mohammad Saeed, Maulana Syed Hameeduddin. Maulana Mohammad Ishaq, Maulana Mohammad Oais Nagrami were his eminent teachers. After completing education from Nadwa he went to Deoband and achieved immense academic gains from Maulana Syed Husain Ahmad Madani and other distinguished Ulama of Deoband.

He also spent about one year in Hijaz (Saudi Arabia) where he gained considerable benefits from prominent scholars of Hijaz.

Shortly after he was appointed as teacher in Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama. Later on he held various prestigious posts including principalship.

Besides, he is member of Makkah based Muslim World League, Executive Member of Darul Uloom Deoband, Patron, Islamic Fiqh Academy, New Delhi, Patron, Maulana Azad Memorial Academy, Lucknow, patron, Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Academy, Bhatkal, Karnataka, President Deeni Talimi Council, U.P. and honorary member of a host of institutions in and out of India. He is also a prolific writer. He has written several books in Arabic and Urdu. His various books are included in the syllabus of different institutions including Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

He is also an accomplished journalist. He carved a niche in the arena of journalism. Because of his vast knowledge in all the religious sciences including jurisprudence and profound and deep knowledge of different languages like Urdu, Arabic, English, Persian and the like he frankly sheds light on every subject at length.

He was also conferred President Award for his outstanding contributions to the field of Arabic language and literature in 1982.

Truly speaking, Maulana is a true replica of Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and his real successor. ■

Kanpur Session of AIMPLB

The 27th convention of All India Muslim Personal Law Board was held on November 19-20, 2021 at Kanpur. About 200 delegates from all over the country participated in the meeting. Eminent Islamic scholar and Rector of Nadwatul Ulama, Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi was unanimously elected the president of AIMPLB for the sixth time. Similarly, noted jurist Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani was elected general secretary of the Board. The post lay vacant after the demise of Maulana Wali Rahmani, former general secretary of the Board. "Addressing the gathering Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi said that after partition Muslims confronted various issues including Islamic Sharia. The most important issue which was faced by them was the issue of Civil Court. Various laws and Court verdicts badly affected the Islamic Sharia. Keeping in view the then prevailing scenario of the country a group of Islamic scholars and intellectuals established AIMPLB in 1972 and safeguarded the Islamic Sharia with wisdom and sagacity. The present scenario of the country is more critical and sensitive than the past. But it is unfortunate that today our mutual differences turned into animosities. It is a matter of great concern. The need of the hour is that we must unite cutting across sectarian and ideological lines. It is obvious when we do so no one will defeat us.

"The Board has sought a new blasphemy law while expressing concern over the increasing instances of insults to prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, accompanied by Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahli,

Maulana Jalaluddin Umri and Maulana Fazlur Rahman said stern action should be initiated against the Hindu Mahasabha for fomenting communal trouble in Mathura and Varanasi where security of the Shahi Eidgah and the Gyanvapi Masjid, respectively, should be further beefed up. The Akhil Bharati Hindu Mahasabha recently announced its plans to install an idol at a site within the Eidgah at the adjoining Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura on December 6. The Board also mentioned the Supreme Court verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit case. "Asked about the arrests made with regard to forced conversions, Maulana Rahmani said it was forbidden in Islam. The Constitution allows people to propagate their own religions.

The Board has demanded that the government must take stern action against lynchings, illegal arrests of innocent members of the community. It also advised the community members not to go for interfaith marriages. During the meeting, the emphasis was on simple Nikah and reducing the unnecessary expenses on weddings. If the clerics found weddings were organized lavishly they could perform Nikah, but also make sure they give a detailed speech to dissuade people from extravagance. The Board also deliberated upon Waqf properties. Maulana Rahmani said the selling of Waqf properties was the prerogative of the people who put the property originally in trust or the Mutawalli or Caretaker adding that this was as per Shariat and any interference by the authorities was wrong. ■

Around the World

Ranks First in Tourism Investment

Bahrain was ranked first in the Middle East and Africa for attracting the highest tourism capital investment in 2020, according to the FDI intelligence Tourism Investment Report 2021. Last year, major investments from UAE-based property developers helped Bahrain's tourism sector remain buoyant and created jobs during the worst ever period for the global tourism industry. Bahrain secured USD492 million of tourism capital investment in 2020, mainly made up of investments from global property developers.

PM Gives First Address Since Taliban Takeover

Kabul: The Taliban co-founder and now prime minister of Afghanistan Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund pledged that his government will "not interfere" in other countries' internal affairs, and urged international charities to continue offering aid to the war-ravaged country.

Hassan's audio speech broadcast on state television- his first address to the nation since the Taliban seized power in August - came ahead of next week's meeting between the United States and the Taliban in Doha.

"We assure all the countries that we will not interfere in their internal affairs and we want to have good economic relations with them," said Hassan in a nearly 30-minute speech.

"We are drowned in our problems and we are trying to get the strength to bring our people out of miseries and hardships with God's help," he said.

Hassan's government faces a series of challenges, in particular reviving the country's dilapidated economy that has been dried of international aid, which used to make up 75% of the national budget under the previous US-backed governments.

"We ask all the international charity organisations to not withhold their aid and to help our exhausted nation ... so that the problems of the people could be solved," Hassan said in his speech insisting that the problems facing the country were the result of the previous governments.

US hid airstrikes that killed civilians in Syria

The US military covered up 2019 airstrikes in Syria that killed up to 64 women and children, a possible war crime, during the battle against Islamic State, the New York Times reported.

The two back-to-back airstrikes near the town of Baghuz were ordered by a classified American special operations unit tasked with ground operations in Syria, according to the report. The newspaper said that US Central Command, which oversaw US air operations in Syria, acknowledged the strikes for the first time this week and said they were justified.

In a statement, Central Command reiterated the account it gave the newspaper that 80 people were killed in the strikes.

Central Command said the strikes took place while Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were under heavy fire and in danger of being overrun and the SDF had reported the area clear of civilians.

The newspaper said its report was based on confidential documents and descriptions of classified reports, as well as interviews with personnel directly involved.

Myanmar junta charges Suu Kyi with poll fraud

YANGON/WASHINGTON: Myanmar's military authorities announced detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi will be prosecuted for electoral fraud and abuse of power, preparing new charges as a judge set a date for delivering the first verdict in her trial.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Suu Kyi was one of 16 people, mostly former election commissioners, accused of involvement in "electoral processes, electoral fraud and lawless actions" some of which involved threatening local officials, according to announcement in state media.

The case alleges Suu Kyi and deposed President Win Myint were involved in the dissemination in the days after the coup of an unsigned letter bearing their names, which urged foreign countries not to recognise the junta. They deny involvement because they were being held incommunicado at the time.

Their trials are taking place behind closed doors and defence lawyers, previously the only source of information on the proceedings, are currently the subjects of a gag order.

The military said it took power because of complaints of fraud by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party, which won last year's election in a landslide, were being ignored by the election commission. ■

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