



THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

Vol. XXIV No. 2

February 2022

Annual Subscription:

Rs. 250 (per copy Rs. 25) in India
\$ 75 (USA, UK, Asian, African and European Countries)

Cheques and Drafts may please be sent to:

The Fragrance of East

Nadwatul Ulama, P.O. Box 93,
Tagore Marg. Lucknow-226007, U.P. (India)

Out-station cheques will not be accepted.

A/C 10 863 759 664

IFSC Code No. SBIN 0000 125
State Bank of India, Main Branch, Lucknow

Phone. No. : 0522 - 2740406

E-mail: fragranceofeast1998@gmail.com

Rs. 25/-



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Duty of Muslim Teachers And Reformers

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

It is the duty of the Millat, particularly of the Ulema and those who are engaged in the task of moral and religious correction and reform, to take care not to lose this priceless heritage. The wondrous light shed by it must be preserved in the encircling gloom of ungodliness and materialism and despite all the winds of change and revolution that may blow because its loss cannot be made up by anything, no matter how many treatises on Islamic Shariat and Jurisprudence are written or sermons delivered. Movements for reform and regeneration can succeed among the Muslims only when the spark of faith is ignited again in the hearts of the Ulema as well as of the common people and some glimpses of the crusading spirit, the enthusiasm for religious preaching and instruction and the warmth and earnestness of Salat are revived and recreated in the Millat which were the chief characteristics of the Muslims of the earlier times and the real springs of their strength. It has been aptly said by Malik bin Anas that "only that can set right the last part of the Ummat which had set right its first part."

Successful indeed are the believers
Who are humble in their prayers.

(—xxiii 1-2)

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Wisdom of Qur'an

“Have you not seen that all those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth prostrate themselves before Allah; and so do the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and so do many human beings, and even many of those who are condemned to chastisement. And he whom Allah humiliates, none can give him honour. Allah does whatever He wills.”

(Al-Qur'ân – 22:18)

‘All those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth’ include angels, heavenly bodies and all the creatures that might exist in worlds other than the earth. These might include beings possessed of reason and free-will like human beings, or animals, plants, or solid matter, air and light that are devoid of reason and free-will.

The expression ‘and so do many human beings’ specifically refers to those who deliberately and wilfully, rather than involuntarily, prostrate themselves before God. Mention follows immediately thereafter of those who, in contrast wilfully refuse to prostrate themselves before God. This is so in spite of the fact that they are in the firm grip of natural laws and are among those who involuntarily prostrate themselves before God’s Will.

The expression ‘to humiliate’ and ‘confer honour upon someone’ signify, respectively, the attitudes of rejecting the truth or following it. The former is bound to lead one to humiliation and the latter to achieving a position of honour. One who does not perceive the truths that are clear invites humiliation upon himself. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Iyaz bin Himar relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: **“Allah, the Most Exalted, has revealed to me that you should show courtesy and be cordial with each other so that nobody should consider himself superior to another nor harm him.”**

(Muslim)

Cordiality is a great virtue. It helps run the cycle of social life smoothly. It is the single salient trait of human character which distinguishes a civilized man from an uncivilized one. Since Islam aims at making a man, man in the real sense of the term, it moulds the very inner traits of those who pledge to live by its teachings and thereby earn the pleasure of Allah.

Here the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) reveals the Divine wish that one should be humble towards another. A Muslim should be kind, gentle and considerate. He should never use his strength and power against others. His ability, influence, wealth, shrewdness and physical prowess should not be used for the purpose of either suppressing, persecuting or causing harm to others. One ought to be gentle, merciful, sympathetic and mild-tempered. By virtue of the intensity and firmness of his faith, the sincerity of character and insight and perspicacity, a Muslim should work for the welfare and well-being of the Ummah.

On many occasions, the Blessed Prophet asked his followers to be polite with one another. **“A Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands, other Muslims are safe,”** the Prophet once said to his companions. ■

Editor's Note 

TAWHEED

A study of religions shows that reformers and prophets in different times and at different places worked for the propagation of peace and tranquility in the society. It is said that first human being on this earth was Adam who was later joined by Eve. Thus the building up of society began. To make them live peacefully and establish a beneficial society a code of conduct was framed. With the passage of time evil forces created dissension amongst them. To restore normalcy Prophets and Reformers came forward. To make the hostile people and erring groups cool down they were made to believe that there is a supreme power which controls, the world and His directions be followed. This marked the commencement of the concept of God and the urge to follow His commands.

The existence of God and His supreme power was believed to be the right path. However, to reach that Power different routes were adopted and that led to the formation of different religion. Islam has a very clear conception about the oneness of Allah.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi writes:

Belief in Oneness of Allah is the first and foremost tenet of the Islamic faith. It does not leave any space for an intermediary between the worshipper and his Lord in matters of worship and supplication. It also does not allow any room for belief in the diversity of gods, or in the existence of a person as God's reflection, or in God merging with any of His creatures to become one with him. Instead, in Islam a believer clearly confesses that there is no god but Allah, the Almighty, the Independent. He has no father, no son, and no associate of any kind. He alone is the Creator of the universe, exercises complete administration of the world, and holds full control of the land and the sky. He does not need help from anybody.

Allah has always existed and shall exist for ever. His attributes are perfect, worthy of praise and glory. He is above all limitations and weaknesses, whatsoever. His knowledge encompasses all and everything. This whole universe came into existence at His will. He is the Living, the Hearing, the Seeing. There is none like Him. He alone deserves worship, the highest manifestation of reverence. It is He Who cures the sick, provides sustenance to creatures, and removes hardship from the suffering. To take anything except Allah as deity, to bow or prostrate in front of it in devotion, and to supplicate to it for favours which are only in Allah's power (for example, granting a baby, bringing luck, reaching a devotee for help anywhere, hearing everything from any distance, and knowing the secrets of heart) is called, in Islamic terminology, *Shirk* (polytheism). It is the most serious sin which is not forgiven unless the person committing it offers sincere repentance.

It is related in the Quran that Allah's power is such that when He intends to do a thing, He simply says "Be", and it becomes (*Yassen: 82*). He does not dwell in any specific place or direction. Whatever He wills comes to pass, for nothing can ever happen against His will. He is absolutely independent. Nobody can order Him for anything or question Him about any of his actions. Wisdom is His attribute and all His actions reflect wisdom, ultimately leading to good. None except Him is the true Lord.

Fate, good or bad, has been decreed by Allah. He knows in advance things that are to happen in the future and causes them to come to pass.

He has created the Angels, who are high in rank and close to Him in relationship. The Devils (*Shayateen*) are also His creatures who are a source of evil for mankind. He has also created the Jinns.

The Quran is a book revealed by Allah. Its words as well as their intended meaning are all from Allah. It is complete and safe from interpolation and change. A person who believes that an addition or deletion had taken place in it is not a Muslim.

It is true that the dead will be brought to life again on an appointed day. Accountability, reward, and punishment are true. The Heaven and the Hell exist in reality.

It is true that Allah sent prophets to mankind in the world. It is also true that Allah sent His commandments to inform and educate His bondsmen through the prophets. Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, is the last of Allah's prophets. No prophet will be sent after him. The message brought by him is for the whole world. In this exceptional privilege and on some other points of preference, he excels all other prophets. The faith of a person in Islam is not valid and complete unless he affirms faith in the prophethood of Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. No other religion is acceptable to Allah and can ensure salvation in the hereafter. Nobody is exempted on account of his piety and godliness from following the injunctions of the Islamic Shari'a. The Companions of the Prophet are the leaders of the Muslims in religion. It is forbidden to mention them in a derogatory way. It is obligatory on Muslims to hold them in esteem and respect. ■

S.A.

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:
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Sources of Knowledge – An Evaluation

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

I

SENSORY ORGANS

Nature has endowed us with sensory organs which are the greatest source of acquiring certain and specific knowledge. We cannot be sure of anything except that which is perceived through our sensorial reactions. We have, indeed, discovered this world and derive benefit from it through these senses: we have found out many physical laws through them—in short, we have gathered a vast treasure of observations, experiences and perceptions through them, and therefore, we should first look at the above questions once more and try to solve each one of them through the agency of our senses.

Sense Perception

But, can we do it? A number of philosophers regard the senses as a weak, doubtful and unreliable medium for, the acquisition of knowledge. A Philosopher of the seventeenth century, Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715), expounds this view in his book entitled 'Recherche de La Verite'. He says that the main reason for our mistake in this regard is the erroneous belief that the senses, which have been given to us to serve practical ends, are also capable of revealing to us the nature of things.

Another philosopher, Michel De Montaigne (1533-1592), puts forth the view that the knowledge of man is extremely imperfect and his senses are uncertain and erring. We can never be sure that what they impart to us is always true. They merely show us the world as conditioned by our own nature and circumstances. Not external objects, but merely the condition of the sense organs appears to us in sensuous perception. In order to be able to place implicit faith in the senses we must possess an instrument that can control them and, then a means of controlling this instrument, and, so on.

Limitation of Senses

Nevertheless, let us take the first question. Where did we come from and where have we to go? In other words, what is the beginning and end of the Cosmic Order? Can our eyes, ears, hands and tongue guide us to find an answer to this question? We can only find out where we presently are through our sensory impressions. These faculties lead us only up to a certain limit; they stop before an impregnable wall. We cannot see or hear beyond a certain distance while other sensory organs suffer from even greater limitations. Whether there is a life after death or not can neither be affirmed nor denied by sensorial observations. In fact, our

sensory organs are to sub serve life and they confine themselves to the limitations inherent in life itself. They cannot provide an answer to or affirm or deny anything outside the field of their powers. At the most, they can deny of having perceived something but cannot deny its existence. But is perception and existence one and the same; whether anything not discernible through the agency of sensory organs non-existent? Do we act on this premise in our daily life and refuse to accept everything not actually perceived by our senses? No. We do not, for such an attitude would totally demolish the distinction between a man and an animal and all the treasures of knowledge and culture would be rendered meaningless.

Now, since we cannot perceive life by means of our sensory organs, how can we obtain further details of it through them.

Sensory perceptions are likewise ill-suited to furnish a reply to the question about the reality of Cosmos. Sensorial observations can only comprehend different objects they perceive parts of the world or conceive the reality in fragments. They have undoubtedly perceived and discovered a large number of fragments of the world but can we grasp the inner harmony between them which integrates these various pieces into a composite entity, into a world in its totality ; do they lead

to the underlying cause of essential unity in diversity, the spirit of unity running through apparently conflicting phenomena? The essence and motive power behind the well balanced Cosmic order is even harder to conceive through the methodical equipment of human senses. We can comprehend a part of the physical laws governing this universe because their effects are perceived and experienced by us. Some of these are quite obvious, as, for example, we know that fire burns, water quenches thirst and poison kills. But the experience about moral behaviour is of an entirely different nature. We can find out heat and its effect by the tactile sense but we cannot discover the harm inflicted through cruelty, falsehood or misappropriation by means of our senses. We need an ethical intuition, religious faith and a deep feeling of spiritual security, for finding our way to the effects of moral behaviour, and these are quite distinct and different from the feeling experienced by touching fire.

We do feel that our sensory organs are quite free and act independently of everything beyond them. They are apparently not accountable to any super-human entity. We also do not find any difference between man and beast except that man is a more developed animal capable of speaking and reaching conclusions by connected thought.

Clearly, such a concept can only lead us to the conclusion that the ultimate aim of life should be satisfaction of human desires, in a better way and with greater ease than animals can do.

This is a conclusion, natural and inevitable, if we rely only on the functioning of our sensory organs. I shall not dilate here on the type of cultural and socio-ethical order that can be designed on the basis of this concept or the faults and short-comings that must underlie a structure raised on such a foundation. I shall come to it later on.

II

INTELLECT

The difference between animals and human beings is accountable mainly to intellect or reason. All the issues raised in the beginning concern man alone and therefore let us see if human reason can solve these problems of human life and determine his place in the universe.

Limitation of Intellect

If we were to evaluate reason impartially and rationally, without being over-awed by it, we would find that by itself reason is unable to perform its function. In order to find out something that intellect does not know, it has of necessity to take the help of other faculties lower than itself. It has to depend on recollections borrowed from sensory impressions. If we analyse

rational thought and go back to the stages through which it has passed, we will discover that initially there were simple sensorial perceptions and observations which were used by intellect in its process of arriving at a particular conclusion. Intellect could not have conceived anything by itself without drawing upon the earlier simple sensory perceptions stored up in the mind.

Where our senses do not help or the observations and perceptions fail, our reasoning faculty also becomes helpless like the man who wants to cross an ocean without a ship or to fly without an aeroplane.

You can very well test this hypothesis. None howsoever intelligent can solve a complicated arithmetical equation if he is not conversant with numerical figures and the elementary rules of that branch of knowledge. Nor can anybody solve a geometrical theorem without knowing its basic principles or decipher a writing without gaining acquaintance with the alphabets. His intelligence and reason will be of no avail unless he possesses some elementary knowledge in that particular field.

Now let us take the questions posed earlier. All of them belong to the realm of metaphysics. Is there even one of them whether appertaining to the beginning and the end of the universe, or to life after death, or to the Creator

and the Sustainer of the Cosmic order, or to His attributes, or transcendental ethical code, or the rote of man in this world about which we possess any recollection derived from a sensory perception or experience? Can we acquire even a rudimentary knowledge of these truths through our sensory organs, or, for that matter, through our intellect or reason? Indeed, a truly rational course for the intellect is to take an impartial attitude in this matter like the sensory organs and declare that it is neither capable of proving, or comprehending anything, nor has it a right to deny anything solely on the ground of its own limitations. A blind man has no right to deny the observations of

anyone simply because he cannot see the thing for himself. He can, at the most, deny of having himself seen the thing described but he has no right to affirm or deny, much less to begin describing the thing in detail.

But, man is never satisfied and always yearns to probe into regions unknown to him. He, therefore, continues his effort. Intellect, inquisitive by nature and armed with a blind faith in its capabilities, always strives to grasp these problems and formulates with the help of imagination, reason and speculation, certain answers on the basis of whatever limited and imperfect data it can gather from the senses. This is what we call philosophy. ■

How Hate Speeches Erode Democracy

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took up the case of hate speeches made at a religious gathering in Uttarakhand's Haridwar town last month, asking the state and Union governments to investigate the matter but stopping short of issuing an order. The bench, headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana, also permitted the petitioners to approach local authorities against holding similar events, and posted the matter for hearing after 10 days. The speeches were made at a religious parliament held from December 15-17, and later surfaced on social media, sparking outrage. The leaders made derogatory remarks about Muslims, Christians, Manmohan Singh, and even Mahatma Gandhi.

The government's response has been slow. A First Information Report was registered after days of outrage, and with little to no progress, it appeared that the case was becoming a victim of political considerations. Also, only a few political leaders condemned the speeches. Freedom of religion forms the bedrock of a democracy. But this foundation can be eroded by hate that goads people into violence and creates a majoritarian worldview. It should not fall upon the top court to push for an investigation. The administration and police must examine evidence, determine if a crime was committed, and proceed against the accused. Until the investigation is complete, such events must not be held.

It is not enough to dismiss people who peddle violent notions as the fringe. Prompt, commensurate legal action is essential to keeping the Republic strong, and ensuring that all individuals feel like equal participants in the nation's progress. India is strong only when all its citizens stand together.

(Editorial Hindustan Times 13-01-2022)

The Khaiber Event

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

In Moharram, the 7th year Hijrah, the Allah's Prophet (SAW) marched towards Khaiber. Its purpose was only to put a restraint on the Jewish forces that had gotten mobilized in Khaiber, after having left Madinah one after another. Besides that, security against a very strong tribe, that of Ghatfan, who had their in the north and the middle of the Arab Peninsula, in between Hijaz and Najd, was also to be ascertained. They were actually a very cantankerous and vigorous conglomeration Arab tribes. Without having ascertained the security against them, the threats from the enemies in Makkah were not possible to be kept fully restrained. As regards to Khaiber, it was getting transformed into the military headquarters of Jews. It was now their last bastion in the Arabian Peninsula. Having come out of Madinah, the Jew leaders would continuously make efforts, sitting here, to reinforce the anti-Islam element by giving them advices and extending their cooperation to them. From their hub that they had set up here, they would keep continuously hatching conspiracies. In collusion with them, the members of the Ghatfan tribe, too, conspired to mount an attack on Madinah. These people were extremely malevolent towards the Prophet (SAW). Having arrived in Khaiber, he (SAW) conquered all their fortresses, one after another. For the last one which was

not easy to be conquered, he (SAW) chose Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib to have that conquered. The Muslims, under his command, had that, too, conquered. Before handing him over the flag, he (SAW) had issued to him following directives: have your camp set up in front of them, and then invite them to embrace Islam and remind them their obligation that they owe towards Allah Almighty. By God, if even a single person gets guidance from Allah through your medium, it is far better for you than even the ruddy camels.

Ultimately, fort after fort, one after another, kept being vanquished. The conflict and siege lasted several days at a stretch. At long last, the Jews, getting frustrated with this state of affairs, made an offer to him (SAW) for conciliation. Subsequently, he (SAW) allowed the Jews to stay on in Khaiber with the rider that the half of the agricultural produce of the place would go to the Muslims; and, that the Prophet (SAW) would keep the agreement in force as long as he wished.

For the division of the agricultural produce, the Prophet (SAW) used to send Hazrat Abullah bin Rawahah (RAA) to them, Having made an estimation of the products of that place, he would have it divided into two lots. He would then tell them to take whichever of the two they wanted. Seeing this demeanour, they would say: it is this gesture (of justice) which the heavens and earth are rested

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

upon!

It was during this very event when he (SAW) was administered poison. It so happened that the wife of Salam bin Mushakam, the Jew, Zainub bint Harith, sent him (SAW), as an offering, a roasted goat laced with poison. As soon as he tasted it he had it known that there was poison in it. He did not touch it again. Yet, that one bite that he had had left such an effect that it resurfaced again after the lapse of a certain period.

After getting relieved of Khaiber issue, he (SAW) had his attention diverted towards Fidak. There, too, the Jews wanted to have the conciliation on fifty-fifty basis. He (SAW) deigned to concede to their offer. Whatever revenue got collected under this deal was disbursed, the way he (SAW) deemed proper, by him (SAW) in his own as well as in the interest of the Muslims, in general. For, the spoils gained without having any confrontation made and just as a result of negotiation with the Prophet (SAW) were placed, under Islam's dispensation, at absolute disposal of the Allah's Prophet who wielded the

proprietary rights over them.

Thereafter, the Prophet (SAW) betook himself to Wadi-el-Quora. It was a modern colony located between Khaiber and Taimaa. Waging a war was not the purpose. He (SAW) invited the people there towards Islam. He (SAW) told them in case they accepted Islam, their lives and properties would all remain intact. They would be accountable only to Allah Almighty. But, the Jews there had their minds already made up to go in for a war. They started shooting arrows forthwith. That set the war waged. But, after having the battle fought for a while, the Jews capitulated. Finally, on terms similar to that of Khaiber, conciliation was made.

The Jews of Taimaa, having come to know of peace pacts made by the Prophet (SAW) with the peoples of Khaiber, Fidak and Wadi-el-Quora, they lost no time in getting concealed with the Prophet (SAW). Their possessions and properties remained, as they were, in their possession. Thereafter, the Prophet (SAW) betook himself back to Madinah. ■

(Cont. from page 25)

out of our reach. Today, we are on the lowest position of dishonour where we are being trampled and treated scornfully and we are forced to give up our rights. Why is it so? There is no reason of it but that we have turned down our position of leadership and accustomed to the life of slavery, quit the way to lead the life of self respect and decency and we have embraced all those things that steer to disrupt the unity and disconnect Islamic brotherhood. Further more we try to find out the reason of these troubles and calamities in other sources and hold other people responsible for our sorry state. This way of ours is the most surprising and alarming and a sound mind seems unable to solve this puzzle. ■

(English Rendering: Mohammad Shakir Nadwi)

The Uniform Civil Code

- Minnatullah Rahmani

India is a country of different culture and inhabits people of different religions. Religion has been ever embedded in its soil. People of different faiths have acted upon their religious beliefs with full freedom in this country. History of the remote past, when Muslim first set foot on the soil of this country and settled along the western coast, says that this multi-religious land had freedom of restriction by the Government on the rules and traditions connected with religion and culture. The variety of culture and allegiance to various faiths did not become the cause of discord and chaos in the social set-up of its people. Muslim who came over to this land with their eternal faith and perfect culture had legal freedom not only in their modes of worship but also in respect of their own system, of personal law. Early history tells us that just as the Hindus has "Brahmins", appointed to solve their problems and affairs, so also the matters concerning the Muslim used to be decided by Muslim Quazis, who were all known technically as "Hunermand" (the wise).

Muslim ruled over India for a pretty long time during which period also the system of prayer and worship of the non-Muslims as well as their personal laws were left intact and the affairs of the followers of different religions well settled according to their provisions of

their religion. After the end of Muslim regime even during the British rule the personal laws remained intact and the Britishers during the first half of the present century gradually incorporated the Islamic laws in the Act which came to be known as "Muslim Personal Law". This was in fact a recognition of the truth that the Muslims would not give up these laws which related to their personal and family life. It is the duty of a responsible govt. to realise the importance of these laws and provide for the security of the same.

When India became independent and a new constitution was formed for the country, the legal status of the Muslim Personal Law was duly acknowledged and the traditions of the long past and popular trends, which are based on faith, came to be honoured. It was expressly declared by the legislators in the Constituent Assembly that 'there shall be no interference in the Muslim Personal Law'.

THE PROBLEM OF THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

There is a talk now afoot in the country for abrogating the Muslim Personal Law and for enforcing a uniform civil code instead. "Uniform Civil Code" means the laws framed for the social and family life of the people inhabiting a particular territory. These laws encompass all matters relating to

the personal and family life of every individual and the matters relating to Nikah, Talaq, Dissolution, Gifts, Wills, Inheritance and Adoption are to be decided under these laws. These laws are to be enforced without any regard to the religion, culture, traditions and customs of any person. Regardless of all such things, there is only one law under the uniform civil code for the followers of every religion. This is the law that would govern even matters relating to Nikah & Talaq. In short all the matters which relate to personal law would come under the purview of the civil code.

In India the Uniform Civil Code would clearly mean that the Muslims in this country may have to perform Nikah & Talaq even against the mandates of their faith. In matters of wills (Wasiat) and inheritance too they shall have to follow laws other than the laws of the religion. In the same way the followers of other religions, traditions and customs shall have to drift away from their religion and abrogate their traditions thus binding themselves under a new system of law. Thus the Uniform Civil Code has clearly a system at variance with the Muslim Personal Law, which shall have no place after the Uniform Civil Code is enforced. In other words the Muslim Personal Law, which is based on the Quran and Sunnah, and the Uniform Civil Code can't go side by side. This fact has been explained by Mr. Gajendra Gadker (Chairman, Law

Commission, Govt. of India) in his speech as follows:

“For the Muslim brotherhood Secularism declares that the matters relating to the abolition of polygamy and the subject of uniform civil code shall be decided on purely social considerations and not with reference to the Quran”.

The reason behind this 'declaration of Secularism' in his mind may be the fact that unless the Quran and religion are not avoided completely, the plan of a secular State can't be accomplished as was also opined by an intellectual: “If any state does not frame uniform civil laws for all the citizens, it has no right to call itself a secular state. Or, he might have come to the conclusion that “the Scripture of any religion, whether divinely revealed to man or hummed into the ears of saints and Rishis can't command the degree of finality in any sphere of life.” Whatever, the reason, the view held by a reputed jurist and a responsible spokesman of the Government as that no dialogue can be held with reference to the Quran on the problem of the Uniform Civil Code, while the Muslim Personal Law has its foundations only on the Quran and Sunnah.

None the less it is the marvel of the constitution-makers that while on the one side they have provided constitutional guarantees to the Muslim Personal Law, they have also given the directives on the other hand for the

enforcement of a uniform civil code, thereby evolving a scheme which can please both the hunted and the hunted for the time being.

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND

The history of a uniform civil law starts with this dual policy adopted by the framers of the Constitution. It would be better first to examine that part of the constitution which relates to the Uniform Civil Code ' The directive principal under Article 44 of the Constitution lays down:

“The State shall endeavour to secure for citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India”.

During the reading of Article 44 in the Parliament, debates were held at length. The Muslim members of the Parliament made demands for additions and alterations and proposed several amendments but none of these was accepted.

Doctor Amedkar tried to satisfy them by his statement:

“The Govt. is being simply vested with these powers which does not mean that the personal & religious law would be necessarily abrogated in spite of the opposition by the Muslims, Christians or any other section of the Country. No body should have apprehensions that the Govt. shall insist on it by the “simple vesting of power.

The power of the Government are practically always limited whatever be the unrestricted character given to it by

words. For the Government cannot exercise its power in a way which may result in Muslim revolt. Should the Govt. contemplate to act so it would be dubbed as senseless” .

It was thus that the vastness of power conferred by the Constitution was attempted to be narrowed down by verbal assurance. The success of this endeavour can be assessed by the force in this assurance. However, Article 44 was passed by a majority of votes on the Parliament and thus the seed was sown for enforcing the Uniform Civil Code.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

While keeping in mind the legal background of the Uniform Civil Code, it would be proper to examine the historical factors so that we may be able to assess what has been the line of thinking adopted by the Government and the people responsible for legislation.

This is a fact that continued endeavours have been made to pave the way, on governmental and semi-governmental levels through different platforms, for the enforcement of the civil code. Extremists and moderate groups have been organised making efforts directly or indirectly, for enforcement of a uniform civil code. Even such associations have been formed as have adopted this as their basic objects. These individuals groups or association although not enjoying the co-operation of the Muslim masses and people versed in the knowledge of

Quran and Sunnah, are working at their own levels and claim unabashed that quite a large section of the Muslims is with them.

The attitude of the Governmental authorities is also in support of the Uniform Civil Code which has been manifested by them on various occasions. For instance, when the Hindu Personal Law was being modified afresh, the then Central Law Minister, Mr. Patsker declared:

“After the coming into force of our Constitution on 26th January, 1950 we have passed the special Marriage Act and, the Hindu Marriage Act. The Hindu Law of inheritance is now under consideration of the Parliament, All these are step towards framing a uniform civil code”.

In course of the steps taken towards framing a uniform civil code why the Hindus came first and how the Uniform Civil Code is to be enforced throughout the country had been thus explained by him at a press conference:

“The reforms now being introduced in the Hindu Laws shall be enforced among the entire population of India in the near future. If we succeed in framing laws affecting the 85% of our population, they will not be difficult to be enforced against the rest. Such a law will bring uniformity in the whole country.”

This statement by Mr, Patsker is a declaration of a well designed policy. It is true that the policy has not been

executed practically till now but the outlines of the policy have never faded in their minds and from time to time assessment is being made whether the minds of the people apart from the 85% can put up with this policy or not.

In 1963, the Government proposed to appoint a commission with the object of considering amendments to the Muslim personal Law and finding out practical ways of operation. This commission could not be appointed in face of complete opposition by the Muslims and the Law Minister had to end the discussions stating that the Govt. at present does not consider it proper to bring in the amendments (in the Muslim Personal Law). This statement itself indicates that the question is not over nor there is a change in the policy: The atmosphere is not favourable, therefore the policy will not be executed. In 1972, the Central Law Minister Mr. Gokhale again reiterated this policy, while presenting the Adoption of Children Bill, 1972 he stated in the parliament : “This Bill is a strong step towards the Uniform Civil Code”.

The statements made by the different law, ministers are in index of the Government policy and suggest that the Govt. wants to take full advantage of the Directive Principle in the matter of the Uniform Civil Code and wants a brain-washing of every individual and group for enforcing the Uniform Civil Code. But alongside, there are some,

such persons also in the Government and outside the Govt. whose thinking is devoid of any regard for people's opinion and who want to enforce the Uniform Civil Code by force. These people think that "after a common family law is enforced by the Govt. with the help of the so called secular members of the parliament, the Muslims will resent for some time but the sky will not come down on that account". This was repeated with greater clarity by Mr. Gajendra Gadkar (Chairman Law Commission) as follows: "The Muslims should prepare themselves to accept the Uniform Civil Code. Should they not accept this proposal voluntarily, the law shall be brought into effect by force".

THE REASONS BEHIND THE SUPPORT TO A UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

The details given above point to the fact that the Government has always wanted enforcement of a uniform civil code and for a long time past a particular section in the country, consisting of Hindu in the majority with a few Muslims has been trying brain-washing for the purpose. Some people with extremist mentality suggest the enforcement of the uniform Civil Code even by force and some want to prepare the way under the plea of reforms while others in sermonising pose advise to put up with the circumstances. But all these people with their different counsels have the same goal. Their suggestions may be

different, their tones varied and their reasonings diversified, but a deeper study suggests that the object is the same and all of them will reach the same goal sooner or later.

The reason behind such unity of purpose is due to the fact that their minds have been influenced by western ideas and their education and training has been on western patterns. They have their mental and practical attachment with the western society and they have studied and followed the western system of law; therefore, the Muslim personal law appears to them to be foreign to the frame of the Indian Constitution. They consider Shariat to be a thing redundant and, in their opinion, it is just a private affair of the individuals but cannot be the law. Their western way of thinking has also rendered the traditions of the East undeserving of respect and the eastern ways and temperament have no appeal for them. The only touchstone for them is what, has been given by the West to test things. Apart from the West they have no ideology, no message, no line of thought and action. The lesson for a uniform civil code has been given to them by the West where everything pertaining to religion is a private matter of individuals, restricted to prayers and rituals only. Therefore, these people can hardly conceive of anything apart from the uniform civil code.

The important reason for the Support to the Uniform Civil Code may

be attributed to enactments by the Parliament during the period 1954 to 1956, which gave a particular shape to the Hindu Personal Law, a thing quite foreign to the concept of Hindu religion. This has been the reason for touch opposition to these enactments by a fairly educated section of the Hindus, and it is also a historical fact that the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, had given his assent there with great reluctance. Right from the time the Hindu personal law came to be abrogated, minds had begun to be set for the abolition of the Muslim personal law also and for enforcing on every Indian citizen the personal laws on the same pattern as had been imported from the West for the Hindus. While the aforesaid laws for the Hindus, were under consideration before the Parliament, the well known leader Acharya Kriplani participating in the debates had said: "If India is a democratic State, I would submit that the laws ought not to be framed for any single community. Will our Government enact laws on monogamy for the Muslims?"

THE REASONINGS OF THE SUPPORTERS , OF A UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Some of the reasonings in support of the Uniform Civil Code relate to certain provisions of the Muslim personal law and some directly concern the Uniform Civil Code. The reasonings relating to any provision of the Muslim

Personal Law are not to be discussed here as they are incidental which it would be wrong to consider as the basis for settling issues. Here we have to present the substance of the arguments which directly refer to the Uniform Civil Code. From the analysis of these arguments four basic issues emerge before us.

(i) The argument advanced from the constitutional point of view that in face of Article 44 of the Directive Principle, there should be only one civil code for the citizens of the country. These Directive Principles in the Constitutions are really the outlines which present a picture of the country's future. The Government must adopt a path which may lead to the achievement of the objective of the Directive Principle.

(ii) India is a secular State; secularism naturally demands that the law of the land should be rid of the religious bindings and, therefore, non-religious family laws should be enforced through the Uniform Civil Code.

(iii) Religious laws have become obsolete and their utility-importance has ceased to exist. These do not conform to the demands of the age, nor they have the capacity to solve social complications. The antique set of static teachings can't be useful for the society and, therefore, it is necessary to enforce new laws in place of the religions laws so that a powerful society may be nursed into shape.

(iv) India has the followers of various religions and it is necessary that they should have some personal laws in order to developed among them the spirit of integration and to strengthen unity. The diversity of personal law becomes a source of differences between them causing injury to national integration.

THE REASONS AGAINST A UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

The Muslims are opposed to the Uniform Civil Code. The religious minded sections of the Hindus also do not favour it. The basic reason for the opposition by the Muslims is the fact that the uniform Civil Code conflicts with the religious teachings and in the wake of its enforcement the mandates of the Quran and Sunnah shall have to be given a go-bye in family and personal life, and such laws will have to be brought in force as will do away with the restrictions imposed by the religion and the very concept of right, and wrong (Halal & Haram) shall vanish from the personal life of individuals. Muslims are not prepared to find solutions to their family and personal problems through these laws which may come in conflict with their religion at every step.

Those who have not studied Islam and consider it to be just a collected lot of prayers, customs, and usages like other religions, can't understand the cause of opposition by the Muslims to the enforcement of Uniform Civil Laws. So also those who are not aware of the

devotion of, the Muslims to their religion, can have no idea of the real force of Muslim opinion on this subject. The complete devotion of Muslims to their faith and the comprehensive teaching of Islam don't provide any scope to them for renouncing their religious law governing their personal life, for these form an important part of their faith and they are founded on the Quran and Sunnah just as Namaz, Fasting and the other items of worship. The other reason is that the followers of every religion have some distinctive features of their cultures which mostly relate to personal laws. In some religions these are based not on religious teaching but on custom and usages or geographical factors. The Muslim have also their cultural specialties founded on the teachings of religion, which the Muslims are not prepared to give up. It is not because the Muslims have any distinctive point of view without reason or are guided by feelings of segregation. It is because these distinctions are founded on the teachings of their religion. Otherwise also, the cultural diversities and the distinctive features of the different ways in social life do not result in separatist tendencies. Separatist tendencies are manifested by lack of interest in national affairs, lack of common social contacts and aloofness from welfare undertakings. The Hindu not praying in the mosque the Muslim not performing pujas in a temple, the Christian not acting upon the Granth Saheb and the Sikh who does not consider the sacred

teaching of the Bible essential for him, can never be dubbed as separatist.

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE REASONING
ADVANCED BY THE SUPPORTERS
OF THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE**

The basic arguments advanced in support of the Uniform Civil Code are not considered acceptable by the opponent to the said code, on an analysis of the points made out in support of the code it appears that these neither have any logical force nor are in agreement with Indian temperament and society. It is proper to scrutinise the reasonings so that the other side of the picture may also be presented.

(1) The most important point involved is the constitutional aspect which has served as the very seed of the problem. As already explained in the introductory portions, the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution under Article 44 provide for the introduction of uniform civil laws but the Constitution of India also gives an assurance for religious freedom under Article 25 relating to Fundamental Rights. It guarantees that every individual will have the perfect right to accept any faith and to act on and propagate the same. The context of the Constitution runs is as follows.

“Article 25 (1) - Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate

religion.

(2)—Nothing in this Article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law—

(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice.

(b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institution of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

The uniform civil laws can't go on side by side with religious freedom which leads the jurist to the conclusion that the two Articles stand in conflict. These gentlemen have discussed at length both the provisions of law i.e. the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles, and the decisions by different courts also throw light on both. It is the general trend of the judiciary and law experts that the provisions relating to fundamental rights are more important and constitute part of the complete law, while the position of Directive Principles is subservient and can't be described as the complete law. Religious freedom relates to fundamental rights and therefore, has legal superiority in its fullness and the uniform civil law can't be forced in the existence of this constitutional provision.

The Directive Principle in the Constitution might provide outlines for

the makers of the Constitution, but these do not necessarily mean that the picture be completed on these outlines. The Directive Principles under the Constitution also provide for other matters besides the Uniform Civil Code, but no legal shape has been given to them nor anyone has a grievance that the said outlines have been left without completing the picture. Not only this, there are other Directive Principles which have been incorporated into law with further executive action, but later on scope has been provided in the law and provisions have been made which rendered them ineffective. "Prohibition" is a case in instance. It finds place in the directions of Gandhiji himself which he had been proclaiming again & again even before Independence; and the largest political party, the All India National Congress had also resolved before the achievement of Independence against the use of intoxicants, while the Constitution of India under its Directive Principle has clearly provided for Prohibition. Laws came to be also framed for the achievement of the object, but the use of intoxicants has once again received full legal protection under the force of circumstances.

1. This mode for applying the law in India also suggests that the Directive Principles are not to be necessarily acted upon and in view of legal tradition it can well be said that the Directive Principles do not present any blue-print

of the country's future. These might be the vision of the Constitution makers which do materialise sometimes but more often than naught the endeavour for their fulfilment touches the very borders of life and death.

2. Secularism neither demands that the Uniform Civil Code must be enforced in India nor it means to scratch out of existence the religious impressions, from every spot of the country, the tradition from the society and the religious teachings from the hearts of men. The secular state means that the Government itself shall have no religious complexion and shall not be partisan to any religion and there shall be no discrimination on the ground of believing or not believing in any religion, every Individual having the freedom to follow the religion of his choice. This is manifest from the Constitution of India, and laws have been framed having the same aspect in view. Therefore, the question does not arise that the Uniform Civil Code is the essential demand of secularism.

It can also be very well said that secularism provides a compromising via media through which the State has the right to make laws concerning general matters of the State, to participate in international affairs and to find out solutions to the problems arising in the common life of the citizens, while the individual has the right to follow in his personal and family life the laws governing him by virtue of his religion

or customs and usage. If Secularism be interpreted as anything else and be used for abolishing the Muslim Personal Law, it will be only the dictatorship of the majority but no secularism.

3. It is a fact that the religious laws are old but it can never mean that they have become frozen and have ceased to possess any utility having lost the capacity for solving social problems. Religious laws, are divided into two parts. The one relates to fundamentals and the principles which don't admit of any amendment. The other relates to matters which may be adjusted according to the change of circumstances, know practices and customs and they are being even so adjusted. In face of the existing laws classified under the second part, it would be wrong to say that religious laws have become frozen and they have lost their utility and the capacity to solve social problems.

The view point that every law becomes obsolete by antiquity, has no logical force. Neither every ancient thing becomes useless nor everything new becomes useful. The usefulness or otherwise of laws has to be judged only on the criterion whether they are capable of maintaining and developing the society on reliable foundations and with vitality. The family laws under discussion here should be judged on this principle alone. Obviously the Uniform Civil Code will be founded on the pattern of Western laws. The Hindu

Code itself has been drawn up on the basis of personal family laws prevalent in the West and the outlines of the Uniform Civil Code will not be very different from them. Therefore, it can be very well said that the laws which are being attempted to be introduced in India have already got their laboratory, we should make a study of these laboratories and find out to what extent these laws have served as means to the attainment of satisfaction and peace in family life.

This is a subject for extensive and comparative study for which there is no scope within these limited pages. But on factual grounds it must be admitted that the family life in the Western countries is crumbling into bits and personal life has lost all peace and confidence. Marriage has become a play thing and divorce a thing of fun. Modesty and chastity are just words confined to the pages of dictionary. Society is swarmed which children of unknown fathers and with unmarried mothers, Stark nudity and the assemblage of the nudes are probably being looked upon as part of a vital society. These are the miracles of modern civilisation and the resultants of the Western family laws being enforced. If the hearts of the intellectuals have not become devoid of feelings for the losses and still possess the capability and courage to admit the evil as evil, and if they do not believe that everything new must be accepted and everything old

must be hated then there is no reason why the Uniform Civil Code should be advocated denouncing the religious personal law as absolute.

4. Unity and national integration is of vital need to the country. To develop the feelings of friendship and tolerance among the different communities inhabiting India is the best national service, but to use the slogan of national integration for political exploitation is an anti-national act of the worst kind. It is wrong, and even fatal for the future of the country, that whatever appeals to the people having a particular, mental set-up should be assumed as the demands of secularism and a medium for, national integration and what conflicts with their way of thinking should be branded as bigoted, narrow-minded and communal.

In what manner and to what extent National integration and mutual tolerance are related to the "Uniform Civil Code" can be assessed from the fact that the matters relating to the personal life of individuals have never led to conflict between any communities. No instance can be cited regarding any difference between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians on the question of Nikah, Talaq, Hiba, Inheritance etc, for these are matters not between two communities but between two or some of the same community. On the contrary, inter-community marriages (which may constitute an article of law under the Uniform Civil Code) are likely to result

in grave consequences, and on several occasions extremely serious communal tension has been generated on that account. Thus it would be correct to say in the light of facts that the personal laws of the different communities cannot injure the cause of national integration and the unity of the country.

The fact cannot be denied that there are serious problems existing which have damaged the cause of national unity and integrity and involve the further risk of damage in future. But for expediency's sake endeavours have been made continually for adjustments to suit popular temperament. The subject-matter itself has not been abolished in the name of national integrity. The language problem is one amongst them existing as burning flame which has created commotion in Assam. It did excite Bengal and created the wide gulf of hatred and enmity between the North and the South. The extent of gulf can, be ascertained from the disturbances in the past and possibly it may lead to separation in future. Notwithstanding all these, the fascinating slogan of national integrity could not be heard on the question of language and if it is at all heard, it is just to stop the disturbance.

Under these circumstances if the opponents of the Uniform Civil Code say that the slogan of national unity and integrity are made use of only for political exploitation, they cannot be said to be in the wrong. Inter-community

marriage is projected as the best recipe for national integration and communal harmony. But the undesirable consequences of different such marriages in the recent past are lost sight of while making this proposition. More than that, it is also forgotten that this recipe was adopted even by that personality who is described generally in India as the symbol of communalism, the destroyer of the unity of the country and responsible for its partition. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah got himself married in a Parsi family under the Special Marriage Act, which itself served as parallel legislation injuring the Muslim Personal Law and was adopted by a popular Muslim leader. But all know how far this could improve the cause of national integration. In fact experience tells us that without religious, cultural and linguistic affinities between the conjugal pair most of the marriages end in fiasco, leading very often to a divorce. The marriage that cannot bring about integration between husband and wife can hardly be expected to produce national integration.

The truth is that these personal laws do not have any adverse effect on national integrity and the Uniform Civil Code cannot be the means for national integrity. Of course it can be the because of national discord. The laws should be so framed that all the religious, cultural and linguistic units in the country may be assured about their individual security and may participate as peaceful and active citizens in

bringing strength and prosperity to the country within the frame work of these laws. This mode of legislation will be helpful in creating an atmosphere for integration. But if the various cultural, linguistic or religious, units feel their individualities being wiped out through legislation, a reaction will set in among them. They will raise their voice of protest against it and shall cease to repose any confidence in the legislators which will be damaging to the cause of national integration. The Muslims firmly believe that the Uniform Civil Code will be the means for the effacement of their cultural and social entity. As such, the Uniform Civil Code cannot be the means for the effacement of their cultural and social entity. As such, the Uniform Civil Code cannot be the means for the attainment of national integration but contains the potentiality of creating national disintegration.

In view of the above facts Muslim leaders, Ulema and Scholars are opposed to any 'Uniform Civil Code'. They think that the Muslim Personal Law provides a useful way for the solution of the problems in the personal life of the Muslims and that the Government ought to provide further convenience and legal facilities for the enforcement of the same. The enforcement of the Uniform Civil Code by abrogating the Muslim Personal Laws may be a source of appeasement to certain sentiments but this change cannot lead to any useful performance. ■

Our Way of Life – The Most Surprising and Alarming

- Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi

Now, we have come to the extent that we trace materialistic reasons and factors behind every single incident or tragedy. Sometimes we are unable to express it. And in the majority of the cases we do not feel it. But it is a fact that Muslims in general try to find an external reason for every calamity and trouble and they blame materialistic circumstances and motives for those incidents and tragedies. As a result they mourn and curse the perpetrators of that occurrence. The same situation or the other can be seen at every level. The sole responsibility of incident either directed to the intrigues hatched against the Muslims or the secret plans prepared by rival countries, super powers, international army organisations or anti-social parties are held responsible. But we do not have time to find out the reasons of these incidents in our character, daily activities and programs, in our multidimensional preoccupations and distorted way of life. We are indifferent to these ways to know the reasons behind our calamity. We are quite oblivious to this aspect.

The crux of the matter is that we have to assess all the troubles and calamities in the light of the circumstances in which we lead our lives. Especially those related to our morals and actions to which we adhere impudently. Today, we are only superficial Muslims and attached to Islam only traditionally. We are Muslims in

census records. However, our population in the world has exceeded the mark of 1 billion, even in many countries Muslims hold the power. They have a distinct representation in the UNO and The United Nations Security Council. When they are abundant with materialistic resources, riches and power. They have formed the influential organisations of international repute. Despite all these privileges only Muslims are the most backward and weak in civilisational, scientific and social domain.

What is the reason behind it? The reason is crystal clear. That is the Muslims have lost their ideal identity. They have shirked from the guidance of the world. Consequently, Islamic way of life lost its way into the dreary civilization of the materialistic world. That is why if any one cast a glance at all moral evils collectively, they will be obvious and apparent in the lives of Muslims alone. They are divided on the scale of colour, caste, language and regions but they are united as the receptive of evils.

The pedestal position from where we would address the nations and communities, dispense the lessons of literature, religion and high morals, instill the etiquettes of civilization and social life, take out people from the depth of disgrace and show the light of guidance and knowledge. Today, that higher position is

(Cont. to page 12)

Unaware of Our Own World

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi

One of the major diseases of the present age is that the sense of duty is disappearing. Usually, the people do not realize their responsibilities and they always spy other's faults and trace their shortcomings. No one is ready to imitate Hazrat Umar like attitudes and virtues. Everyone wants to become the old lady who publicly warned Hazrat Umar. As a result the Ummah is facing severe difficulties today. They are confronted with a host of issues and problems. The solution of which is not visible. Unfortunately, instead of finding solutions and putting this psychology into practice more problems arise. This situation is a big concern for Muslims. History bears witness that Muslims have always been harmed by their own people. There have always been the sleeve snakes who blew out the lamps of governments, shattered movements into shreds and tried to undermine the community through immorality and immodesty. We have learnt a lesson from the past.

The machine works well when its all parts are sound and intact otherwise the whole work comes to a standstill. It is imperative for Muslims to ignore others' shortcomings and undertake their duties and responsibilities. It doesn't mean that one should not warn the wrongdoers and offenders. It is commendable for the Ummah and it is obligatory for Islamic scholars. But the difference needs to be understood. Where warning and admonishing is suitable overtly or covertly. Even temperature of words and tone and tenor should also be taken into consideration. If this is not

considered, the matter will become worse and instead of benefits it will bring detriments and disadvantages.

The big problem at the moment is that no one is ready to do anything. But everyone is prone to criticize others and it is considered the greatest Jihad of the time. It is a well - known fact that one who sees the eyeballs of others can not see his own eye beam. Thus they are engaged in demolishing their own brothers's forts and castles. The situation needs a change. After all, we should introspect ourselves. It is a famous proverb. It appears in Hadith, "Alkaiesu mann dana nafsahu" (He is the wise who introspects himself). It further says, "Wa amela lema baadal maut" (And works for the Day of Judgment viz the life after death).

It is unfortunate that we don't realize what we do. We all need to take stock of ourselves. What is the true way of success in the Hereafter? How long will the honour and wealth of this world last? After death everything will be manifest that who is slave and who is king. What is the reality of worldly honour and luxurious life and for how long they will remain? "It is time to wake up from our deep slumber and comprehend our duties and do for the cause of the community whatever we can afford. If such a mood develops then the mountains of miseries and difficulties will crumble away and the roads will open and destinations will become easier. "And those who strive in Our cause, We will certainly guide them to Our paths: for verily Allah is with those who do right". (S.29,A.69) ■

(English Rendering :O.R.Nadwi)

Islam And Science

- Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui*

It is generally believed that Islam and science are opposed to each other. But the crux of the matter is that the both are intimately linked. Islam places a high premium on science and repeatedly encourages the pursuit of it. The Qur'an is not a book of science, but it is consistent with it. It is interesting to note that the Qur'an was revealed fourteen centuries ago but it predicted about today's innumerable inventions and discoveries as well. The Holy Qur'an says, "And He has created horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride and as an ornament and He has created other things of which ye have no knowledge" (S.16,A.8)

The verse of the Holy Qur'an vividly mentioned about the means of transport used in the past days as well as the means of communication of today's and future in a quite sublime way. The verse "Wa yakhluqu ma la talamun" (And He has created other things of which ye have no knowledge) clearly indicates the means of transport what will be invented till the Last Day.

It further says "And ye shall certainly know the truth of it all after a while" (S.38,A.88) "Soon will We show them Our Signs in the farthest regions of the earth, and in their own souls, until

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it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things" (S.41A.53) Now, let us ponder over what the Holy Qur'an said about the embryology and creation of humankind. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recited the following miraculous verse that explain the creation of mankind. Such knowledge was not known at his time and the science of embryology was not yet discovered 1400 years ago. "He created you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a three veils of darkness (threefold gloom). This is Allah, your Lord. The Sovereignty is His. There is no God except Him. How then are you turned away?". (S.39,A.6)

Modern science explains that there are three layers that form veils of darkness that surround the fetus in the womb and provide sturdy and powerful protection for the embryo; (1) the interior abdominal wall of the mother, (2) the uterine wall and (3) the amino-chorionic membrane. The creation of mankind is described miraculously in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an. "Verily We created man from clay (quintessence of product of wet earth), then We placed him as a drop (of sperm) in a safe lodging; then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed (solid) blood, then of that clot We made a fetus lump, then We made out of that lump bones then covered the bones with flesh, and then

produced it another creation". (S.23,A.12-13)

In his book "Islam and Science" Keith L. Moore explaining the above verse of the Holy Qur'an says, "The word "fa" indicates that the following stages occur directly after one another: 1- Alaqah changing to mudgah 2-Mudgah changing to izam 3-Izam changing to lahm

The embryo at 24-25 days is in the end of the alaqah stage, and it makes a direct change into the mudgah stage at 26-27 days. The mudgah stage lasts until the 6th week, and then changes directly into the izam by the beginning of the 7th week, since the skeleton begins its appearance at that time, the lahm stage follows in the 8th week immediately after the izam stage, since muscle precursor cells begin their development into muscle as soon as the bone is formed in the Quran to accurately and the muscles can become attached. Thus, the word "fa" is used in the Qur'an to accurately and strongly indicates that these developments follow one another immediately with no delay.

The terms which have been used in the Qur'an are very descriptive of developments which occur in the various stages, and they describe these events in their chronological order. Morphological changes that occur with development in each stage are also accurately described by the use of these terms. Because the staging of human

embryos is complex going through a continuous process of change during development, it is proposed that a new system of classification could be developed, using the terms mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The proposed system is simple, comprehensive and conforms with present embryological knowledge. These facts about development could not have been known by Muhammad (PBUH) in the 7th century, because most of them were not discovered until the 20th century. Muslims and others are justified in concluding that these facts could only have been revealed to Muhammad (PBUH) by God, Who knows all about us not only about how we develop but how we live and function. "Surprisingly, embryo development as stated in the Qur'an was found identical to the discoveries of medicine science. Also, it was found that bones were formed before the formation of flesh, exactly as mentioned in the above verse.

In addition, scientists discovered that the hearing sense for the embryo develops in the mother's womb before the sense of sight. This is compatible to the sequence mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Verses 9:32, V2:76, V78:23 all refer to the hearing sense before the sight sense. "So blessed be Allah the Best of Creators". (S.23,A.14)(The Prophet Muhammad Biography and Pictorial Guide, p 191-193)■

(To be continued)

The Politics of Hate vs Politics of Secularism

- Yamini Aiyar*

Secularism's grammar was not adopted to eschew religion; it was a pathway to peace. Today, we have shunned this principle, favouring instead a competitive religious politics that coexists with hate

The sun sets on 2021 against the backdrop of hate, prejudice and the growing legitimisation of communal poison that is spreading fast and wide. Last week, we bore witness to the ugly spectacle of the three-day-long “Dharam Sansad” in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, where participants riding on hate gave a public call for genocide against Muslims. As Christmas celebrations began, the anti-Christian mob found its way into schools, on to streets, desecrating statues of Christ and burning effigies of Santa Claus, even as a Member of Parliament gave a clarion for preventing religious conversion and making reconversion to Hinduism a priority.

At a time when week after week, the mob can disrupt Friday prayers, when lynching in the name of sacrilege is met with political silence, when Aurangzeb is invoked in political speeches, the events of last week cannot be dismissed as isolated or voices of the fringe. Hate and communal poison are today part and parcel of our everyday public life. They are inextricably linked with the project of Hindutva and the current response to this

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project. And in their repeated invocation, our democracy lies severely diminished.

The events of 2021 exposed many fault lines that threaten our democracy. In those dark days of April and May as hapless citizens searched for oxygen and hospital beds, the limits of our health system and associated socioeconomic inequities were laid bare. The farm protests and the eventual repeal of laws made visible deep fractures in our economic policymaking, the repeated incidents of violence — recall the brutal killings of farmer protesters at Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, the young man protesting an eviction drive in Assam, countless citizens being jailed without bail — served as a reminder of the near breakdown of the rule of law and shrunken spaces for dissent. But it is the deliberate stirring of hate and legitimization of communal prejudice that is the most dangerous because it attacks the foundation of our democracy and worse, we do not have a political vocabulary to counter it.

Regular readers will forgive me for repeating an argument I have made often in these pages, but the present moment makes this repetition urgent and necessary. The only antidote to hate, prejudice and communal poison is a politics of genuine secularism. It has become commonplace in our public discourse to argue that the appropriate

political response to this brand of Hindutva and the hate and prejudice it has unleashed is to steer clear of the discourse on secularism.

The churning underway in the public sphere, the argument goes, requires a politics steeped in a grammar of religiosity. This is the “mood” of the nation — epitomised by the Kashi extravaganza — and the only viable political alternative is to embrace religion, which the argument goes was the problem with “Western secularism” that sought to actively eschew religion from our public life. And so, you have a political discourse that is actively competing to prove its “religious” (largely Hindu) credentials- the Aam Aadmi Party’s tirth yatras are among its most prominent of electoral promises this season, the Congress is busy defining what a good “Hindu” is. None of this is about promoting hate and communalism. It is argued, rather it is about developing a viable political alternative to the two binaries that mark our political life: A politics of hate versus a discredited politics of secularism that is detached from religion.

The problem with this argument and the brand of competitive religious politics it supports is that it lacks a grammar for articulating and putting into practice norms to govern a tolerant, plural society. Consequently, when it confronts hate, prejudice, and violence, it has neither the moral authority nor the capacity to negotiate across social bases to create a counter-narrative. We have witnessed this time and again, most recently in the

political response to the lynching in a Punjab gurdwara, where the Congress caught itself in a bind, failing to condemn the lynching and arguing instead for stronger blasphemy laws. It also ensures that the political response to hate is muted at best. It is instructive that political outrage against the Haridwar hate fest is limited to press conference and Twitter posts, rather than street mobilisation.

There is no argument that India’s experiment with secularism was flawed. But it is important to remember that our founding fathers adopted the principles of secularism in response to the increasing politicisation of religion and widespread communal disharmony that culminated in Partition. The grammar of secularism — all religions are equal in the eyes of the law and that the State shall not propagate one particular religion — was not adopted to eschew religion. Rather, it was a pathway to peace. The challenge for modern India was to demonstrate the possibilities of the practice of secularism that stayed true to this ethos. On this metric of democracy, India has repeatedly failed.

But what makes the present moment all the more dangerous is that we have eschewed this principle altogether, favouring instead a competitive religious politics that seems to coexist comfortably with hate and prejudice. Can Indian democracy thrive without the secular ethos? This is the question India must answer for itself in 2022. ■

(Hindustan Times, 29-12-2021)

Hate Hurts, And Hurts All

- Sikandar Azam

Hate hurts, and hurts all. It hurts not only the target group or community and the nation at large but the haters as well. The recent hate speeches at the various places in the country drive the point home. They hurt the minorities, in particular Muslims, and peace – and justice - loving people cutting across all strata of society. They also hurt the rabid haters themselves in the sense that they earned wide criticism as well as the long arm of the law.

These haters are in fact ignorant. Their ignorance does not allow them to see the reason behind the concept of an inclusive society. This also makes them narrow-minded in their approach to life; for they wish only a particular group should and can live in the country and everyone else be subjugated, harassed and exterminated much against the social norms and the law of the land.

What does the Lord Almighty, Who is Creator and Sustainer of both believers and unbelievers alike, say about such ignorant persons? He says: “They seek to extinguish God’s light (by blowing) with their mouths, but God shall spread His light in all its fullness, howsoever the unbelievers may abhor this.” (The Qur’ân – 61:8) The *ayah* means to assert that no one will succeed

in blowing out this light of God, but it will shine forth and spread throughout the world whether the disbelievers and polytheists like it or not, and whoever they support it or resist it. God is certainly able to fulfil what He has warned the evildoers of. History bears witness that He already made it all happen during the lifetime of His Messenger.

Then in these circumstances what the believers should do. The Qur’ân (23:96-98) says: “Repel evil with that which is best. We are fully aware of all that they say. And say: ‘My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the promptings of the evil ones; and I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me.’”

As Islam is the religion of peace, its adherents have to practise peace howsoever trying the situation they are in might be. Therefore, here they are directed to ‘repel evil with what is best’. They should never let the prompting of Satan to work. They should know for certain that Satan is the archenemy of believers; he would persuade them to pay the ignorant back in the same coin. But the believers are encouraged to seek the refuge of God: ‘My Lord! I seek refuge with You.’ And who can harm one who comes in the refuge of the Lord of the universe. ■

Morality In Islam

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The role of Islam in fostering moral and ethical values, sublime norms has no parallel. The main plank of Islam is to create a sound and healthy society by enhancing the aforesaid attributes and traits.

Needless to add that the entire life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a paragon of excellent virtues. In the words of the holy Quran "And you (stand) on an exalted standard of character" (68:4)

The concept of Islamic morality according to the holy Quran has been described as follows. "Serve ye God and join not aught with Him. And be good to parents, and to kinsfolk, and to orphans, and to the needy and to neighbour who is not of kin, and to the fellow-traveller and to the wayfarer, and to those under your care and control (the slaves). Verily, God loved not the proud, the boastful, who themselves being niggardly, bid others to be niggardly and abstain from disclosing what God of His bounty hath given them. For the ungrateful We have prepared a humiliating chastisement" (4:36-37)

"The Believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two contending brothers, and fear Allah, that

ye may receive Mercy". O ye who believe let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the latter are better than the former: nor let some women laugh at others: it may former: nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by offensive nicknames: ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: and those who do not desist are indeed doing wrong. O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as possible: for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and say not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? nay, ye would abhor it.... But fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful". "O mankind We created you from a single pair of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things. (S.49, A.10-13)

"Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Satans and the Satan is to his Lord (Himself) ungrateful" (S.17. A. 27) ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling,

sacrificing to stones, and divination by arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: eschew such abomination that ye may prosper not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin" "Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is an indecent deed and an evil way". "Nor take life which Allah has made sacred except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority to demand "Qisas" or to forgive: but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life, for he is helped by the law". "Come not nigh to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength, and fulfill every engagement, for every engagement will be enquired into the Day of Reckoning". "Give full measure when ye measure and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is better and fairer in the final determination" And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for surely the hearing, the sight, the heart all of those shall be questioned of". "Nor walk on the earth with insolence; for than canst not rend the earth asunder nor reach the mountains in height" (S.17.A.31-37)

"And the servants of Allah most gracious are those who walk on the earth humility and when the ignorant address them, they say, "peace." "Invite

(all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious; for your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His path, and who are truly guided" (S.16.A.125)" Who is better in speech than one who calls men to Allah, works righteousness, and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam". Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate" (S.41.A 33-34)

We may easily comprehend through the following sayings of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as to how he exhorted us to shun rancour, enmity, hatred, jealousy and advised us to extend hands of friendship to others regardless of their caste, creed, colour and region. He says: "Do not hate each other, and do not every each other and do not abandon each other. You are Allah's servants so be like brothers" (Muslim)"None of you could be a perfect Muslim unless you like for others what you like for yourselves" (Ahmad)" A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he neither oppresses him nor does he fail him, he neither lies to him nor does he hold him in contempt, piety is right here and pointed to his breast three times. It is evil enough for a man to hold his Muslim brother in contempt. The whole

of a Muslim for another Muslim is inviolable: his blood, his property, and his honour". (Muslim)

It is related by Abdullah bin Amr that the Apostle of God said: "The best of you are those who possess the best of manners". (Bukhari and Muslim) Abu Hurairah related to us that the Apostle of God said: "Muslims who possess better morals are the most perfect in Faith". (Abu Dawood). It is related by Abu Darda, he relates that the weighty item in the Scales of Deeds will be good manners". (Abu Dawood and Tirmizi). Ayesha relates that she heard the Apostle of God say: "A Believer with good manners and a good moral disposition gets the same reward as he who fasts (permanently) and spends his nights in prayer"

Philip K. Hitti has rightly said: "The sanctions of private as well as public morality in the Moslem world are all of a religious character. Basically the will of Allah, as revealed through Muhammad, determines what is right (halal=permitted, legitimate) and what is wrong (haram=forbidden). In the historical evolution of religion in Arabia, Islam was the first to demand personal belief and personal morality. In the realm of ethical conduct it substituted the moral fellowship of religion for the tribal fellowship of blood kinship of the human virtues it insists on beneficence, in the

form of Zakah, most urgently". (History of the Arabs, P.138).

A noted scholar K. S. Durrany has rightly observed that, "The virtues which aim at checking man to commit mischief to others may be named as: chastity, honesty, meekness, politeness, truthfulness, etc. And the virtues which aim at promoting good to others may, be named as: forgiveness, goodness or justice, courage, patience, sympathy, gratitude, evenness, etc. However we do not intend to limit Islamic ethics with these few "do's" and "don'ts", for moral theory and practice in Islam is a very comprehensive discipline of mind and manners and good education and good breeding and a mode of conduct and behaviour. In short, it includes all the virtues, good manners and joining of the good relationship. The mention of these virtues throws only a glimpse on the vast subject of ethical values in Islam" (Islam at a Glance, p, 49)

It is time we must amend our behavior and conduct and enhance our ethical values and moral virtues. Besides, we must avoid all sort of anti-social activities which demoralize us and lead us to the path of devastation and ruin. No doubt, only morality can prevent us from committing heinous crimes and unholy acts. It is such an asset which distinguishes between human beings and beasts. ■

The Corona Hypocrisy

- Saroor Ahmed

How the ruling elite is responsible for the spread of pandemic

Two years after the coronavirus first emerged on this planet, one thing can be said with certainty: the hypocrisy of the ruling elite and the creamy layer of the society is primarily responsible for the spread of this pandemic. Nothing can be more shameful than a series of drink parties held in the official residence of the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Not only that, two dozen people lost their lives in Murree Hills in Pakistan due to heavy snowfall even though the world is yet to recover from the pandemic. Similarly, thousands converged to the hill stations in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh on the two days when people of Delhi were put under curfew on January 7 and 8. The authorities and media turned a blind eye to this glaring omission of corona norms obviously because it would affect the rich and powerful involved in tourism business.

As “War is too important to be left to Generals”, about 800 days after COVID-19 was first detected one can say that pandemic is too serious a matter to be left only in the hands of doctors and other health experts. The time has come to pay attention to common mistakes which are being committed by the victims of virus and their family members.

Ironically, the top health experts across the world are in general not pointing towards these facts though at the local level many doctors are questioning the way the whole issue has been hijacked by the big corporate houses.

First, the British media reported last month as to how the Christmas party was held on December 18, 2020 at 10 Downing Street, the official residence of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, when hundreds of people were dying and thousands getting affected everyday in England. On that very day 514 people perished in this small country. The party continued till midnight, though only a couple of days before Johnson himself appealed to the Britons to cancel all such get-togethers.

Curiously, it took one full year for the British newspapers to uncover this happening which occurred on the eve of Xmas of 2020. Though there is no Press censorship in the United Kingdom yet the people came to know about this gross violation of rules by the powers that be a year later. Now on January 12, 2022 Boris Johnson apologised for the drink party held in the same official residence on the evening of May 20, 2020. Once again this fact could be known only on January 10.

England is not the only country

where the corona related restrictions are limited to the common people. Why just blame politicians? Those who form the ruling elite of the society are too responsible for the double-speak on corona protocols. They include big businessmen, journalists, doctors, bureaucrats, technocrats, academics, sportspersons, other professionals, etc.

For example, everyone in the World Health Organisation, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and all the experts are well aware that maintaining 'social distancing' is simply not possible anywhere on earth. It can be possible only when the world is brought to the standstill. No plane, no train, no ship, no factory, no farming, no dairy related work, no hospital as well as no other means of production is possible if one follows the criteria of six feet for the so-called social distancing. In a matter of few days the whole global population would face the starvation death. So why this stupidity is being propagated day in and day out.

Recently, this correspondent was socially persuaded to attend two marriage ceremonies, though he normally avoids any such gathering. The first one was on October 30 and the second was on December 10, that is after the advent of Omicron in the world.

In the first one there were quite a few doctors among the guests (as well as the baraatis) while in the second one the host himself was a doctor, who

otherwise would advise the use of mask. In these two functions, held in packed air-conditioned hotels with no scope of ventilation, cold drinks and icecream were served.

It was this correspondent who kept warning the people not to take cold drinks and icecreams and asked why are the hotel using AC when the weather is already cold and that too when the pandemic has not yet gone.

Not to speak of doctors, a generation back even average parents would reprimand their children not to take cold drinks and ice-creams during winter. Today after Covid-19 has taken millions of lives across the globe, doctors themselves are unmindful of eating and drinking them. But meet them in clinic or hospital the same doctor would advise the patient to take warm water.

Why is it that the doctor fraternity not coming out openly against the use of AC, cold drinks, ice-cream, as well as flocking of tourists in hill stations in such freezing temperature? Are they so much influenced by the propaganda and advertisement machinery of big business houses?

The tragedy is that the doctors are themselves treating people in poorly ventilated centrally air-conditioned hospitals, which look more like five-star hotels. Till three-four decades back hospital wards and doctors' clinics used to be well ventilated, even though the

medical science was not so advanced then as now. Today instead of windows and exhaust fans, they prefer AC everywhere and thus become exposed to virus. This may be a reason why more doctors are falling to pandemic than the scavengers and lower level sanitation-workers in hospitals.

One fails to understand the wisdom behind carrying corona patients in air-conditioned ambulance with attendant(s) sitting beside. That was the one reason why so many people from one family had either suffered from the virus or had even died.

Hardly any health experts who matter questioned the manner in which the whole vaccine campaign was undertaken. To make record people were asked to throng in a large number at the vaccine centres and hospitals. So many of them actually got afflicted by the

virus before taking vaccine. What about social distancing guideline being parroted by many of our anchors and health experts.

Unlike the countries having extremely cold condition where one cannot live without centralised heat-system, in India and other places one can survive without centralised AC, at least till the pandemic is wreaking havoc.

But since no one can dare to speak out against the big multi-national companies and hospitality industry, the best thing is to impose fine on the poor masses and use police lathis on them.

Keep them in tight leash so that they cannot ask as to why is it that this virus is affecting the politicians, bureaucrats, doctors, and well-off persons more than have-nots, who otherwise lead a very hard life. ■

China Virus Cases at Highest Level in Nearly Two Years

The number of Covid-19 cases in China reached its highest level since March 2020 as Beijing races to smother outbreaks just three weeks before hosting the Winter Olympics and ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday.

China, where the virus first emerged in late 2019, has stuck to a strict policy of targeting zero Covid cases. But its approach has come under pressure in recent weeks. There were 223 more cases reported, including another 80 in the virus-hit port city of Tianjin, and nine more - including cases of the highly transmissible Omicron variant - in the southern manufacturing hub of Guangdong.

Another 68 cases were reported across central Henan province, where partial lock-downs and mass testing have been rolled out for millions of residents. Zhuhai, the mainland city bordering the gambling hub of Macau, has told residents to avoid leaving the city after detecting a handful of Omicron cases and started testing the whole city from Monday.

China cancelled plans to sell tickets to the public for the Winter Olympics in Beijing, allowing only invitees to view the action as part of strict virus control measures.

Pakistani health authorities announced the completion of a successful clinical trial of Chinese traditional herbal medicine for treating Covid-19. The Chinese medicine, Jinhua Qinggan Granules manufactured by Juxiechang (Beijing) pharmaceutical, is already being used in treatment of Covid-19 patients in China. ■

Syed Saeeduddin Passes Away

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Syed Saeeduddin, former lecturer of Islamia Inter College, Lucknow and former teacher of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow passed away on January 13, 2022 after a prolonged illness in Lucknow.

Born on July 1, 1936 at Lucknow. His father Mufti Imamuddin was a reputed peer. Host of people achieved spiritual and intrinsic benefits from him. He played an outstanding role in removing superstitions, obscenity and illiteracy. He had a good number of disciples. Syed Saeeduddin got his elementary education from his father. He did his High School in 1952 from Mumtaz Higher Secondary School, Lucknow and did Intermediate in 1954 from Amiruddaula Islamia Intermediate College, Lucknow. Similarly, he took his B.A. and his M.A. in Urdu and Economics from University of Lucknow.

Known for his extraordinary moral virtues, honesty, integrity, straightforwardness and piety. His good command over Urdu literature and Economics made him stand out among his contemporaries. He proved himself as a selfless and dedicated instructor in both institutions. He was a good and beloved teacher. He was an embodiment of all sublime qualities and virtues, necessary for a good teacher. His method of teaching was

unprecedented. Scores of his students quenched their thirst for knowledge from him. He left a galaxy of students behind him who impart education in their respective areas. No doubt, it is an everlasting tribute to the departed soul. He met everyone cheerfully. He never showed egotism, pride and haughtiness. His was a highly minded and finely moulded nature. Where he sat an atmosphere of peace and cheerfulness came up.

He had literary flavor, poetic relish and journalistic taste. His pen name was Tabish Saeed. He wrote numerous letters and articles in different Urdu newspapers. He also compiled a few books.

Like his father he also served as a peer and played a reformatory role in the field of Dawah. His disciples are scattered in various parts of the state.

He is survived by five sons and three daughters. His eldest son Mr. Muzaffar Saeed led his funeral prayer. He was buried at Aishbagh graveyard. Hundreds of his admirers from various parts of the state thronged to attend his last rites. May Allah forgive his shortcomings and adorn his grave with luminosity and refulgence and grant peace to his soul! Aameen! ■

Around the World

China Plans Space Station Completion In 2022

China will complete building the country's space station in 2022 and has planned more than 40 launches for the year including manned flights, putting it roughly level with the US. The launches for the year include two Shenzhou crewed missions, two Tianzhou cargo spacecraft and the under-construction space station's additional two modules, the Xinhua News Agency reported citing an announcement by China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. Other missions relating to the space station include in-orbital rendezvous and docking, extravehicular activities, the CASC said.

Israeli Citizens Hacked By Police Using Pegasus

The internal security minister Omer Barlev pledged to ensure that electronic surveillance in criminal investigations is conducted by the book after a newspaper reported illicit use of a controversial hacking tool against citizens of the country.

Without citing sources, the Calcalist financial daily said Israeli police have possessed the Pegasus spyware made by Israel's NSO Group - which is now on a US government black list - since 2013. Calcalist said the police used it against targets including anti-government protest leaders, sometimes without the required court warrants. The report added new domestic angle to global pressure on Israel following allegations that Pegasus has been abused by some foreign Client governments to spy on human rights activists, journalists and politicians.

Russia Could Launch Ukraine Invasion At any Point, Says

White House spokesperson Jen Psaki said that the Ukraine crisis is extremely dangerous and that Russia could launch an attack at any point. With tens of thousands of Russian troops massing on Ukraine's borders, efforts have intensified to prevent a conflict and US secretary of state Antony Blinken was preparing to fly to Kiev for talks later. Blinken's trip, 'which will also take him to Berlin for meetings with European allies, is the latest in a flurry of diplomacy to prevent Ukraine row from escalating into a war. Russia denies planning a military offensive.

In a call with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, Blinken "stressed the importance of diplomatic path", a US spokesman said. Moscow said Lavrov told Blinken it needs "concrete answers" to its demands. Washington has so far rejected the demands, which include limits on allied deployments in former Warsaw Pact allies like Poland and the ex-Soviet Baltic states that joined Nato after Cold War.

Ex-Malian President Keita Dies at 76

KEBBI: Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the former president of Mali who took office in a landmark election held after a destabilizing coup only to be ousted in another military takeover nearly seven years later, has died. He was 76. Keita, known to Malians by his initials IBK, had been in declining health since his forced resignation in 2020.

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