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Importance of Religion For Muslims

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Religion occupies a pivotal position in the personal, social, and cultural lives of Muslims due to which they are extremely sensitive in matters relating to their faith. It is, therefore, pertinent that this important point is not overlooked whenever any problem relating to Muslims, individual or collective, moral or social, legal or constitutional, is taken into consideration. That is why Muslims are so particular about the Islamic laws governing their affairs, which are popularly known as Muslim Personal Law. In fact, the fundamental part of the Muslim Personal Law is derived directly from the Qur'an itself whereas the details and explanations are based on Traditions and Islamic Jurisprudence.

The Muslim Personal Law is an integral part of the Islamic Shari'a (Islamic Code of Laws) and religion and is duly authenticated by the Qur'an and Hadith. It has not been developed independently by Muslim researchers, social scientists, lawyers or reformers. It, therefore, cannot be changed even by a Muslim government. It is a part of the religion of Islam because in Islam the jurisdiction of religion is not limited to faith and devotional services only; it also covers mutual relationships, rights and duties, and social values and customs. If culture and social life are separated from religion, religion becomes ineffective, and culture and social life become the agents of the wild desires and selfish interests of people. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

“(Adhere to the True Faith and) turn to Him, and establish Prayer, and do not be of those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity.”

(Al Qur'an – 30-31)

“To turn to God means anyone who opts to act independently of God's directives and thus deviates from the path prescribed for him by God, or whoever betrays God by accepting to serve aught apart from the One True God, should give up that attitude and revert to serving God Whose born servant he is.

Man should dread the punishment which he will incur by acting independently of, or worshipping others besides God, despite the fact that it is God Who brought him into being. Man should, therefore, shun all attitudes that lead to God's wrath.

Turning to God and holding His wrath in awe are acts of the heart. In order that this state of heart might become manifest and be reinforced, one needs to engage in physical acts which indicate that one has truly returned to the service and worship of the One True God, One Who has no associates in His Divinity. The regular performance of these acts helps develop in man the state of returning to and fearing God. This is why God asks him to engage in the establishment of Prayer.

The performance of the five daily Prayers at their stated times is the most effective means to develop God-consciousness and God-fearing. Thus man rehearses over and over again the Qur'an's teaching that man should believe in God and submit to Him in his day-to-day life. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Abu Hurairah relates that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said: “A person who calls people towards doing good deed will get the same reward as those who follow him and do good; and nothing will be diminished from the requital of the latter. Similarly, those who call the people towards vice will have the same punishment as those who follow him without any diminution in the punishment of the perpetrators.”

(Sahih Muslim)

This hadith gives good tidings to one who invites people to virtue, and warns a person against inviting his fellow beings to vice. Calling people towards doing good deeds is in itself a virtuous act. It wins the pleasure of God. Contrary to it, the act of inviting people to some evil is in itself a vicious act. It earns the Divine wrath.

God can give reward and likewise award punishment, here on earth and in the hereafter as well, to whom He wills. But this does not mean that His judgement is baseless. He knows perfectly well the deeds done by His servants as well as the intention working behind the commission of the deeds. Hence His judgement is based on human actions. He however can forgive whomsoever He wills.

This hadith encourages Muslims to call people towards doing good deeds because it will yield to him the same reward as those who in response to his call do good deeds. Similarly, it forbids them to invite people to do evil because it is a sin and earns the same punishment. ■

Editor's Note 

Dominance of Interest

The problem of interest is causing worry amongst Muslims. Presently the whole system of governance is involved in Economic juglary.

Mr. Hifzur Rab, "The Dominance of Interest and the way out" has made an attempt to deal with issue. An extract from his book is given below:

What can be better for the believers than what is ordained by Allah.

Clearly what has been ordained by Allah is the best for the believers. Some times, despite being legally free to act in accordance with the Islamic provisions even practicing Muslims perceive that it is impractical to follow what is said to be Islamic? Normally, our failure to use the Quran and the Sunnah to arrive at truly Islamic solutions cause such problems. Our intellectual stagnation and the dominance of exploitative and oppressive capitalist system are the main causes. The Satanic forces have gained near total control over the economic resources of the world and they are deliberately trying to keep the Ummah divided and to weaken its faith (by confounding truth with falsehood)

In this period of total dominance of the capitalism, an Intelligent person is bound to realize that capitalism has created severe difficulties for the righteous in their search for the Allah's Fazl (lawful earning) and life becomes miserable for them unless they take

recourse to the doctrine of the Fiqh (jurisprudence) according to which, 'the necessities make the forbidden lawful.' Prevalence of depreciating currency is one of the fundamental causes of dominance of interest and it has pulverized the economy of the Muslims. Ummah can protect itself from many of the losses it causes by using a standard measure of wealth as standard of account and by keeping the use of the currency to minimum. For example: while selling on credit, one may sell goods against agreed number of the measure and the buyer shall clear the dues by paying for the measures due as per the market rate. This will free our dealings from interest). However, in the countries where rate of inflation is less than 2.5%, the currency may be used as standard of account specially for the short term transactions.

It does not seem possible that justice may prevail unless honest and faithful persons are able to acquire control over reasonable quantum of the resources. Thus, those aspiring to free the world from the clutches of these blood sucking exploiters and oppressors must struggle to achieve reasonable control over the resources. It is our duty to try our best to solve the problems created by the dominance of the capitalism, so that the people are able to satisfy their necessities and needs by earning Rizq Halal (lawful wealth or riches) and are not compelled to indulge in interest.■

S.A.

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

Defending Faith

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

O believers! Endure and be patient. Guard your territory by stationing army units permanently at the places from where the enemy can attack you. And fear Allah so that you may be successful.

(Al 'Imran 3:200)

Allah directs believers to bear with their condition by way of creating an ambience of perseverance, urging one another to be patient. Another directive is to defend their frontiers. This is rounded off with an exhortation of God-consciousness. They should do everything in the realisation that Allah is omnipotent and All-Seeing. This will help them achieve success.

The first and foremost directive is patience. It is in the form of a command with which the address opens. Believers are asked to persevere. The Arabic expression *sabr* has changed its connotations over a long period of time. In Urdu, it has assumed yet more connotations. Furthermore, it is used in Urdu in a very narrow, restricted sense. Generally speaking, it is taken to mean that one should put up with a calamity, an injustice, pain or suffering, without complaint. In the original Arabic, however, *sabr* carries a wider range of meaning. It stands for constancy, consistency, an unwavering resolve and taking an uncompromising stand on one's

principles.

In the above passage believers are asked both to be patient and to act with perseverance. These twin directives are worth studying. Patience alone does not suffice for communities in their struggle. Rather, there is a need for an atmosphere of perseverance, constancy, boldness and courage. This should characterise community life. Every individual should reinforce the other to be patient and persevering. A believer's entire way of life, his conviction, his perseverance, his ambition and resolve, his excellent conduct and his behaviour should be such as to boost others' morale and be a guide for everyone. His illustrious example should be a source of strength and inspiration for others. He should motivate the weak-hearted, exhorting them to take a firm stand. In sum, the ambience should be such that one should find it difficult to demoralise others. Any lack of spirit should be widely condemned. On being faced with doubt and scepticism, every believer should encourage others to adopt a firm stance.

The believers are told emphatically in the above passage to be patient. It is evident from Arabic idiom that the Qur'anic expression used in this passage signifies oneness personal conduct. The other expression is, however, related to the community as a whole. In other words,

believers should be patient in their personal lives. At another level, they should urge perseverance, display the utmost endurance and tolerance and face situations courageously and in a manly fashion. Such a stance posits no weakness.

The believers should be consistent in their faith, beliefs and trust in Allah, and take only Him as the All-Powerful. They are instructed to create an ambience of perseverance. Their conduct at both personal and collective levels should display their ability to endure and persevere. The believing community should stand out above others for its perseverance. It should infuse others with a great power of resistance. For some strategic reason or while looking for divine help or in the larger interests of community and country this community may defer taking a decisive step. Yet it will strike later when the time is right. Yet this does not amount to any weakness on its part. Rather, all believers should be full of perseverance. They should impart the impression that they possess tremendous powers of resistance. They should be ready to take on their enemies, both from within and without. Notwithstanding their desire to wage a decisive battle, they must also exercise self-restraint in the public interest. They reckon with what suits their country. They are equally aware of the rights and interests of their neighbours. The evil emanating from violence and bloodshed prevents them from taking up arms. They are checked by their faith, their

moral training and the role model provided by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions. Otherwise they would immediately plunge into the thick of the battlefield. They have tremendous capacity for action. History bears testimony that minority groups have often been successful. They can destroy country upon country, reducing vast empires to nothing more than rubble.

The Qur'anic directive, nonetheless, is that they should do only that which is best for the community as a whole. The believers are guided in every respect by the Prophet's sayings and his Sunnah, Believers do not have absolute freedom to act as they like. Nor are they expected to act impulsively, provoked by the course of events. It is befitting for them instead to take steps in a controlled, self-restrained and wise way. They should take into consideration all the factors before committing themselves to action.

It is the miracle of the Qur'an that the import of the passage under discussion appears to be addressed in particular to the Indian Muslims of our time. We are directed to be patient, persevere, and act with steadfastness even in the face of the communal carnage, frequent attacks, violence and bloodshed directed against us and all the injustice and apathy shown to us.

More importantly, we are instructed to defend our frontiers. The Qur'an uses the expression *ribat* which refers to a safe

habitation. Believers are exhorted to live together in unity, giving the ambience of an invincible fortress to the enemy. They are to defend themselves against the enemy. What follows this is the best piece of advice one can obtain: "Fear Allah". This sets apart the directive from the comments of any military or political leader. A statesman or politician may, at most, harp at unity. However, the divine directive stands out for its moral tenor. Anyone else in this position may have preached tolerance and patience and insisted on displaying solidarity. However, Allah's directive is designed to transform man's morality. Accordingly, the believers are asked to become God-conscious. This is the feature of divine faith. In contrast, any man-made philosophy or "ism" is moulded by only ground realities and experiences. A leader succumbs to the aspirations of his people and presents a blueprint in line with their wishes. He does not leave any room for piety and moral values. Allah, nonetheless, exhorts Muslims to practise patience even in the face of the worst provocation, whether it be invasion, excess, or aggression. Even in such a situation Muslims are obliged to act with perseverance. They may be victims of an oppressor, indulging in aggression, rape, and ill-treatment of the old and scholars. Such reports of injustice are fairly common. Yet believers should fear Allah and display patience. Generally speaking, in such a situation one thinks only of retaliation and of teaching the enemy a lesson. In taking revenge one

hardly observes any limit. However, the Shari'ah keep the believers in check in such a situation, asking them to fear Allah. They are told not to behave like their oppressors in exceeding the limits, in gratifying their animal instincts and in turning a blind eye to moral values and norms. Rather, they are bound by the limits set by Allah. Thus the above passage represents a detailed guidance for Muslims.

All Muslims believe in the Qur'an, taking it as a miracle granted by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). We regard it as the Word of Allah. Let it also be realised that the Qur'an is a miracle both in its whole and in its various parts. In other words, each and every Qur'anic verse is a miracle in itself. Few recognise this truth, though it is generally believed that the Qur'an is a miracle. Its miraculous features appear in different ages in a variety of ways. The Qur'anic passage under study is a miracle in itself for its abiding message for us all.

It is hard to enumerate on how many occasions the Qur'an has guided mankind, especially in a crisis. It has given Muslims a new impetus — spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and collectively. If we imbibe the message of this verse, and if Allah blesses us with strength and inspiration, we may derive all the benefits from such Qur'anic guidance. Rather, it would appear that the Qur'an has been sent down in our times, specifically addressed to us. ■

(Cont. from page 28)

Hindu ideology; they are more Gandhian than Gandhi". Many others have said that Bhagwat is deviating from K B Hedgewar and M S Golwalkar, who wanted to deny even voting rights to Muslims.

For any such dialogue to be successful, the RSS should engage with such Muslims who are widely respected by the whole country and are not seen as "sarkari Musalman". As per Hindutva ideology, we are all citizens of one country and should come out of identity politics. Accordingly, no exclusive Muslim group can have a superior claim in such dialogues. Liberal Hindus have an equal stake in such conversations and Muslim delegations must include some prominent Hindu scholars and activists who have spent a lifetime espousing Muslim causes.

In an age of majoritarianism, the RSS chief is one person who can initiate and lead Hindutva's perestroika. In this atmosphere of hate and distrust, he can restore sanity, tolerance and accommodation — the essential attributes of classical Hinduism. He alone can rein in the aggressive Hindutva forces and convince them about the values of diversity. Similarly, prominent Muslims must rein in fanatics and fundamentalists from their community. Extreme positions cannot solve contentious issues. Let the RSS chief and Muslims search for the middle ground, re-examine the stereotyped positions, and understand and appreciate each other's perspectives. ■

(The Indian Express, 01-10-2022)

(Cont. from page 33)

was silence. When they went inside, they found that she had passed away.

Rabia Basri's quotes

- When asked about some worldly thing she wanted to have, she replied: I am ashamed to ask for a thing of this world from Him to whom this world belongs; how can I ask for it from those to whom it does not belong.
- Indeed your days are numbered, for when one day passes; a significant portion of your life has passed away. And when that portion has fled, soon it will come to pass that your whole life has disappeared. As you know this, strive always towards the performance of good deeds.
- I am not after any reward for my good works, but only that on the Day of Judgment the Prophet Muhammad (saws) should say to the rest of the Prophets: 'Behold this woman of my community; this was her work.'
- All people are afraid of the reckoning of the Day of Judgment, whereas I long for it. At last Allah will address me as 'O, My servant!'
- Conceal your good qualities as much as you conceal your bad qualities.
- Death is a bridge between friends. The time now nears that I cross that bridge, and friend meets Friend. ■

(Courtesy: Arab News)

Problems Confronting Madrasas & Their Solution

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

Of late, the Islamic madrasas have become the target of a baseless vendetta, in an attempt to put thorn in a dock. History of the world would be incomplete sans mention of the services rendered by these institutions, by way of spreading literacy and enlightenment in all cadres and fields of life covering authors, journalists, national leaders who imparted knowledge and guidance to the masses. It is high time that the millat (community) be appraised of real nature of the nefarious campaign, and devise and implement a cogent plan to eradicate the wrong impression by forestalling the anti-madrassa drive.

The thoughts and advice of Syed Mohammad Rabey Hasani Nadwi on the subject, as expounded below should be an eye opener and conducive to a concrete action.

Question: What, in your opinion could be the motive behind and, aims of the conspiracies, allegations and reasons for the world powers going against madrasas? Can it be construed as a well planned and far reaching drive against our religious and cultural values?

Answer: For a comprehensive assessment, complete historical background shall have to be viewed in correct perspective. A series of armed

conflicts, termed by the Europeans as Wars of the Cross, or more commonly the Crusades, raged for a considerable period, between European powers and contiguous Muslim countries. Ottoman kingdom of Turkey, as bulwork for the Muslims, were the victors, overall. As a result, the former developed a sense of hatred and deep-rooted grudge towards Muslims. Decline of political power and standard of learning among Turkish and other Muslim nations, coincident with upsurge of European powers, turned the tide, erstwhile victors becoming the vanquished, in all aspects of life. A natural consequence of political surrender was cultural and philosophical subjugation. The new domineering powers promulgated a system of education to suit their designs of mental supremacy, directed mainly against Islamic culture. Gripped in a vice of Western influence, new generation muslims, viewing their own time-honoured system with scepticism, sank into an abyss of self-doubt, went adrift. An inferiority complex took sway over their minds, with the feeling that Islam, in word and deed, was in no position to keep pace with time and tide. The purpose of Western powers, of rendering the Muslims rudderless, was adequately served literature and media coverage, designed on anti-Islamic principles, augmented the impression created by the educational

* Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

methodology. This, in effect, was the same mentality which had led to Crusades, in a different form, albeit.

The vexing situation, obviously, attracted attention of Islamic thinkers, philosophers, literati. As a result, considerable literature from their pens came up, re-kindled the original luminaire of Islam and re-directed the stray community along the right path. Madrasas functioned in tandem, educating the uninitiated and producing experts on Islamic teachings and jurisprudence. Despite falling somewhat short of the coveted target, madrasas performed yeoman service in the act of re-furbishing the shaky structure and also of exposing the ugly facet of anti-Islamic forces.

The two pronged drive for a healthy revival, by the end of the twentieth century, raised hopes of the next century belonging to Islam, eliciting serious attention from Western powers. Apprehensive of a Muslim renaissance, they went hammer and tongs in their effort to crush the resurgence, wherever and whenever evident. Two cases in point are the atrocities perpetrated in Bosnia and Chechenya. The cruelties upon Muslims, very naturally, gave rise to sorrow and anger among muslims at large, which did not escape notice of the west, prompting an anti-Muslim drive, pin-pointing madrasas as responsible for fresh wave of awareness among Muslims. Their surmise was that these seats of wisdom and learning constitute the key-link

between the pristine glory and current renaissance of Islam. Absence of any constitutional sanctions was a road-block towards total obliteration of their existence and hence resort was taken to a well-orchestrated diatribe, bereft of proof though, to project among the masses an image of madrasas cradles of terrorism.

Support of Israel's anti-Muslim acts in Palestine and coercion against pro-Islamic forces in Afghanistan, created an anti-American feeling among Muslims the world over. Besides, the activities of the groups nurtured in Pakistani madrasas, the upsurge of Taliban in Afghanistan, were categorised as terrorism. No deep insight is needed to realise that both the movements were the brain-children of USA itself: one to perturb and fan the tension between two natural neighbours and the other to combat the Russian dominance.

Indian government, under an erroneous impression, viewed the madrasas as being antinational, utterly in disregard of the factual background of these institutions having had as vital a role in the struggle for freedom from British rule, making as great sacrifices as any other organisation in the country. The ulterior motive behind the propaganda is obviously to thwart the constructive positive efforts of madrasas and to dis-align them from overall national progress. In reality, however, as a result of probe by their own investigating agencies, the

government has realised the constructive, beneficial and harmless role of madrasas.

The other part of the problem, about the vendetta being aimed towards achievement of far-reaching consequences, subverting our religious and moral values, needs hardly any deep insight to figure out our religion, for its survival in its true form, is dependent on education in madrasas. In case their functions are impaired or retarded, there can be no guarantee for survival of Islam, in spirit and deed, among the future generations. The religion, however is destined to be eternal and the Almighty has ordained for it to be nurtured and spread through madrasas, whose steadfastness, erudition and sincere devotion forms a bulwark against nefarious actions.

Question: Could it be that the allegations against madrasas are based on some misunderstandings?

Answer: Islam is basically a religion of peace and tranquility. The word ‘jihad’ in its literal sense means endeavour and efforts for a noble cause, main emphasis being on self-reform and guiding others along the correct lines. The edict and advice is “Invite people (for discussions) by peaceful means and interact in a polite manner.”

Interpretation of word “jihad”, as deliberate combative attack against people of faiths different from Islam, as currently circulated, is utterly misplaced and the word is not to be maligned on

this account. Resort to combat is permissible in case of invasion by another party, as a defence and also as a force, against unjust coercion, oppression and cruelties.

Question: What could be the course of action for rectification of the misconceived notion?

Answer: The need of the hour is to make use of the very same media, at present carrying negative propaganda. Amicable interaction with the opponents should be arranged to strive for gainful results.

Question: In this quagmire of allegations, what should be the proper course of action by the madrasa managements?

Answer: A large population in the country is not even aware of real nature of madrasa education. The onus for presenting the correct image is on us. To combat negative publicity, our non-Muslim brethren should be made aware of the values cultural and moral, ingrained in Islam, which incorporate guarantees for peace and brotherhood for the entire humanity. This would, to a large extent, bring home to them the intrinsic virtues of Islam and eradicate the misgivings, by and large.

It is a democratic and constitutional right that our successive generations be made fully conversant with the tenets and teachings of religion. The government has an integral role in this act and madrasas, in fact, are filling

a yawning gap in the field of education.

A continuous liaison with political and administrative quarters is to be maintained for appraising them of true nature and quantum of yeoman service that madrasas render in spreading-luminescence of education. They should be convinced of the necessity to obtain - information first hand, by direct contact with madrasa management and take an objective view of the affairs and activities.

All said and done, it is absolutely essential that our system should be beyond reproach, our own house keeping clean and actions transparent.

Question: What is your valued opinion about the outwardly favourable disposition of the government, such as offer of aid to madrasas?

Answer: In itself it appears to be a welcome gesture, yet the possibility of a covert motive cannot be ruled out, without proper scrutiny. The aid could bring in a move for alteration in curriculae and imposing a system of administration which may set the madrasa education entirely adrift from their original direction. I would rather that the well placed madrasas which can manage on their own resources desist from accepting any aid.

Question: What would be your valued opinion about well meaning suggestions by our own sincere educationalists about partial modification in the syllabi?

Answer: Opinion on the subject has

been expressed quite often. In fact, such modifications were an important ingredient of the original concept of Nadwat-ul-Ulama movement.

Changes could be to include two categories of disciplines, viz. social sciences such as history, geography and natural sciences like physics etc.

Inclusion of social sciences up to an essential level, is desirable and manageable. Basic Islamic spirit should remain firmly ingrained, lest having been developed on Western pattern; these may carry trends of infidelity and materialism, with adverse effects on nascent brains of pupils. The syllabi should be moulded to accord with Islamic spirit and teachings, as this would be a great service not only to our own students, but the world at large.

Acquisition of proficiency, even excellence, in natural sciences in madrasa curriculum would require a different approach. Input of basic essentials can, and should be arranged. Specialization in these sciences and their detailed study in institutions meant for religious education leading up to expertise, would neither be feasible nor desirable as it could detract from religious education and excellence, impairing its quality and standard while failing to do reel justice to natural sciences. Another problem, apparent enough, would be the non-practicability of taking up diverse disciplines like, say, medicine and engineering in the same institution.

Preferably, for imparting specialized education in natural and material sciences, exclusive schools should be established, which besides imparting knowledge, should be able to orient the young minds towards Godliness and obviate the ingress of concept of incompatibility between religion and science. In my opinion, a section of Muslims not only learn but excel in these sciences. The specialists could suffice for the entire millat and impart essential knowledge wherever needed, (thus perform farz-i-kifayah).

Question: In the background of allegations against madrasas how would you like to address the country's administration?

Answer : I am all for letting them have first hand information by actual inspection, which would serve to remove all misgivings. The system, functions, education are in no way guilty of violation of constitutional provisions and any subversive activity attributed to madrasas is only a fabricated tale.

Question: What would be your attitude towards clear-headed, peace-loving non-Muslim brethren?

Answer: To remove any lingering apprehensions in their mind, we should make use of media and bring home to them the real picture, in their own language.

Question: What precept would you offer to madrasa management?

Answer: Their focus should on

constructive, positive errands in all seriousness, in the light of their duty to Islam. All that they do should be to the glory of God. They should acquaint themselves with the message and demands of their religion and strive for mental and moral fortification of millat. They should keep others informed of the importance of madrasa system, Abidance by the law of the land, functioning within democratic and constitutional ambit and guarding against any false step, which might invite false allegations should be the watchword.

Lure of self-aggrandisement and publicity is to be eschewed and single-minded devotion to their assigned sacred duty is a must.

Such attitude shall be a harbinger of blessings and help from Almighty and their efforts shall desired results.■

China imposes COVID Lockdown on 6,00,000 Around iPhone Plant

Chinese officials imposed lockdowns on 6,00,000 people in the area surrounding the world's largest iPhone factory in Zhengzhou.

Employees complained of poor conditions, lack of supplies and having to flee the factory on foot to avoid COVID transport curbs. There are currently more than 200,000 workers at the facility.

(The Hindu, 3-11-2022)

The Importance And The Necessity of Madrasas

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

Indian Islamic scholars were the first to envision the dream of a free India. Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824) issued a Fatwa (Islamic juridical edict) for Jihad against the British colonialists and the practical initiative in this endeavour was started by Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831).

He wrote letters to Maharaja of Gwalior and motivated him for the freedom struggle. Ulema fought with the Britishers tooth and nail in the field of Shamli and offered sacrifices for this cause. The Silk Letter Movement (Tehreek-e-Reshmi Rumal) was led by Shaikh-ul Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan Deobandi and Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar invited Mahatma Gandhi for leading this movement. No doubt, they made a very valuable contribution to the national struggle for the freedom of India. They took an uncompromising stand against the British and fought with them a relentless war until India's independence. To further the importance of freedom it was necessary to train the younger generation about it. Thus came up the concept of establishment of Madrasas.

In the words of Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, "Madrasa is the biggest institution in which human beings are nurtured and moulded, where preachers and heroes of Islam are prepared. Madrasa is the powerhouse of Islamic world, from where the energy is supplied to the Islamic world, as well as the entire world. Madrasa is the practical

laboratory, where the heart and eyes, brain and mind are moulded in a sublime manner. Madrasa is the place from where the entire world may gain inspiration and spirit to lead the life.

Needless to add that the education system of Madrasas assumes immense significance which makes man the real and true man.

We can say that Madrasas play a leading role in character building and moulding humanity with sublime qualities and ethical values of human life.

Generally speaking, other educational institutions have become commercial hubs. Immodesty and immorality have been the order of the day in colleges and universities. They themselves prove to be a nuisance for the teachers and the taught. Their impact is obviously felt on the Madrasas. Despite these genuine facts, Madrasas are committed to impart education by observing morality, modesty, love, dignity of humanity in letter and spirit. Today, Madrasas may play an extraordinary and remarkable role to make a value based and knowledge oriented society in the country.

This, it is imperative to safeguard these Madrasas from all sort of evils and disruptive forces. These Madrasas are, no doubt, powerhouse of knowledge and fountains of love, brotherhood, fraternity, and humanity. ■

(English Rendering: O.R. Nadwi)

* Nazir-e-Aam, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow

The Politics of The Madrasa Survey

- Shaikh Mujibur Rehman*

The Uttar Pradesh government's decision to undertake a survey of madrasas has raised serious concerns not just over the fate of these institutions but also on the future of Muslim identity. Other BJP-ruled States have also expressed concerns about madrasas. In May, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the word 'madrasa' should cease to exist. In September, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhammi said his State would also conduct a survey of madrasas, like Uttar Pradesh. The stated reason is to check the availability of basic facilities for the students. Responding to this, Maulana Arshad Madani, head of the Darul Uloom Deoband, appealed to Ulemas in charge of various madrasas to cooperate in the survey, taking the stated logic of governance at face value.

In politics, the logic of governance has always been a handy tool to achieve ideological objectives. This was the case in the 1905 Bengal Partition and, as some may argue, during the 2014 general election campaign. The ideological aspect of this survey will become clear only after the survey is completed and various political parties respond to its outcomes. What strands of majoritarianism inspired the survey? Is the survey motivated by prejudice towards Muslims? Whatever the answer, madrasas have become a new

battlefront between the Hindu Right and Indian Muslims, and the survey has the potential to offer material that could shape Muslim identity.

Views about madrasas

In India, two arguments are often made about madrasas. The first is that Muslims are economically backward because most of them are educated in madrasas. The second argument is that madrasas are nurseries of radical Islam. This view gained momentum globally after the 9/11 attack. The response of the Western states, or the War on Terror, was formulated based on this argument. Despite the fact that the al-Qaeda failed to attract Indian Muslims, the Indian political class was swayed by this view of madrasas. The most surprising endorsement of this view came from former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya in 2002.

The Sachar Committee Report (2006) demolished both these arguments with robust empirical evidence. It found that only 3% of Muslim children of school-going age go to madrasas at the national level. It also drew a distinction between madrasas and maktabas. Maktabas are neighbourhood schools, often attached to mosques. They offer religious education to children who attend other schools to get mainstream education. The share of Muslims who attend madrasas and maktabas is not more than 6.3%, the

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report said. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) debunked both these arguments with strong empirical evidence. It found that only 3% of Muslim children of school-going age attend madrassas nationally. It also differentiated between madrasas and maqtabas. Maktabas are neighborhood schools, often associated with mosques. They provide religious education to children who go to other schools to get mainstream education. The report states that the share of Muslims attending madrassas and maqtabas does not exceed 6.3%. The report's most crucial observation was that Muslims are aspirational. Muslim parents are eager to see their children enrolled in modern educational institutions, but often fail to do so due to their poor financial condition. The report therefore recommended that scholarships be given to Muslim students so that they don't drop out of school. This was even implemented by some BJP ruled states such as Madhya Pradesh, but not by the then Gujarat government. Such scholarships have made a difference, say some researchers, though scholars have expressed concerns over the lack of commitment of various national governments, including the United Progressive Alliance governments that helped formulate the report, in implementing the committee's recommendations.

A policy for Muslims

It is clear that the governments of Uttar Pradesh, Assam or Uttarakhand have little appreciation for these findings. One BJP leader dismissed the Sachar report

as an act of appeasement. Curiously, the authors of the Sachar Committee report deliberately chose to stay away from discussions over party politics or issues of secularism or communalism and the implications of these for the welfare of Muslims. They pretended as if no causal relationship exists between ideology and development. The politics that is expected to follow the madrassa survey will highlight how crucial this relationship is, and how utopian the authors of the Sachar report were in hoping that they could frame a policy for Muslims outside the framework of secularism and communalism.

Madrasas have a long and complex history. In the post-mutiny period, they emerged mainly to help save Muslim identity in the face of growing colonial interventions, which they suspected might impose Christian values on fellow Muslims. Madrasas, particularly Deobands, chose not to seek state support because they suspected that the colonial state, among others, would eventually expect them to produce "loyal subjects for the British Crown" as became the case with Aligarh Muslim University. So, they sought autonomy. Deoband took a political stand and fiercely resisted Partition. While there are issues concerning madrassas and modernity, particularly with regard to issues such as patriarchy and child rights, some of which were raised by the Sachar Committee, to have any state intervention inspired by Islamophobic views will only help deepen majoritarianism. ■

(Courtesy: The Hindu, 20-10-2022)

“Is Brain Death Actual Death?” “Absolutely Not!”*

- Abid Hussain

Abstract

Despite the concept of brain death being around for over five decades and the various attempts to define death by different disciplines, the question, “Is brain death actual death?” continues to be a source of controversy and debate. Unfortunately, the arguments put forward by the proponents and opponents are often highly detailed and complex and sometimes so convoluted that only those with academic interest in the field take the trouble to read them. Despite the scholarly input, none of the arguments put forward have been decisive.

The short article, by focusing on some basic principles/ features of actual traditional death which are widely if not universally accepted across the whole spectrum of human society, together with basic logical arguments, demonstrates that brain death is not actual death. Brain death is death is a time-bound concept of convenience rather than the accumulated understanding and wisdom of what actual death is over centuries of practical experience. If we accept the reality that brain death is not actual death but a new entity, a new understanding of death which was proposed in 1968 to reflect time bound societal needs and values then this opens

up a number of ethical questions which need to be discussed by Muslim scholars and Muslim doctors. Do the societal needs and values on which the concept of brain death was proposed reflect our Islamic values and traditions?

Introduction

The question of whether brain death is death or not has been posed since 1968, when the Harvard Ad Hoc Committee⁴ under the chairmanship of Henry Beecher proposed equating brain death with death. Many experts from various fields of knowledge have tackled this question from different perspectives: medical, ethical, philosophical, religious etc. There is a huge amount of academic literature on the issue, yet the question remains unsettled. The problem is partly due to the fact that the word “death” is a vague term in that there are many different kinds of death, such as social death, spiritual death, human death, clinical death, religious death, legal death, biological death, and actual death. So, when we ask the question “Does brain death equate with death”, we need to qualify what kind of death we are referring to, in order to make the question more specific and allow us to derive at a more meaningful answer.

A further complication is that the Harvard Ad Hoc Committee had proposed a new understanding of death, effectively a new entity to be regarded as death. This entity characterised by irreversible coma

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and apnoea was labelled “brain death”, and it gained acceptance over the forthcoming years. But it remained unclear what exactly was being diagnosed and why it should be called death, since this new entity was very different from the traditional understanding of death in terms of its features and criteria for diagnosis. Over the years some people tried to put forward the idea that brain death was another way of diagnosing actual traditional death on the basis that the brain is the master integrator and without it the rest of the body will disintegrate. This theory is probably what led to the confusion and controversy regarding brain death. Even though this theory has been successfully refuted the controversy continues.

Whatever criteria we propose to diagnose or declare death must fit in with our general understanding of the word death. After all, death is not a new phenomenon, it has been around ever since human beings have inhabited the Earth and transcends across all human societies without exception. Furthermore, whether brain death is actual death or not should be applicable to all human beings, irrelevant of country, jurisdiction, race, or religion.

Basic Principles

While trying to answer the question: “Is brain death actual death?” let us consider the following four basic principles related to death:

1. A person who is known to be alive continues to be alive unless there is

evidence to the contrary.

2. An individual undergoes only one actual death.
3. Actual death is irreversible. A dead body does not move, it will not make any kind of recovery, instead it will start to decompose.
4. Actual death is not synonymous with legal death.

Let’s look at each one of these basic principles in a bit more detail.

1. A person who is known to be alive continues to be alive unless there is evidence to the contrary.

This basic principle of presumption of continuity is accepted universally. In the context of death, it means that a person who is alive when admitted to the ICU remains alive unless there is clear-cut evidence to the contrary. If brain death is to be accepted as actual death, then the onus is on the proponents of brain death to prove death has indeed taken place, and not for the opponents to prove the brain dead person is alive. The question then is what degree of evidence should be required to declare an individual dead. Is a dominant probability of 51% sufficient or should a diagnosis of death be based on near certainty or at least as certain as possible?

2. An individual undergoes only one actual death.

Actual death takes place only once in each individual; it is wholly irreversible, barring an act of God Almighty.

3. Actual death is irreversible. A dead body does not move, it will not make any kind of recovery, instead it will start to decompose.

This feature is universally accepted as a feature of actual death. The dead body of an individual who is actually dead is totally unresponsive to any external stimuli, it does not move. Yet a large percentage of brain dead patients exhibit spontaneous movements or movements in response to external stimuli. Furthermore, the body of brain dead individuals can continue to absorb and digest food, thereby, able to grow and mature; the body of a brain dead individual does not decompose, it can be kept in that state for years, as can be seen from the case of Jahi McMath.

On very rare occasions, brain dead individuals have recovered, something which can never happen in actual death. Lewis Roberts, a 19-year-old man who suffered serious trauma to the head following a motor vehicle accident, was declared brainstem dead at University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust in the United Kingdom. However, hours before surgery to remove his organs for transplantation, he began to breathe on his own and a few weeks later he began to talk.

Zack Dunlap was declared brain dead in 2007, in Wichita Falls, Texas, after suffering severe brain injury following a motor accident. A PET scan confirmed a diagnosis of whole brain death by showing

no blood flow to Zack's brain. While waiting for the organ-harvesting team to arrive Zack's family noticed signs of life. 48 days after being declared brain dead Zack went home.

Roberts and Versnick reported two cases of brain death in Canada who regained spontaneous respiration.

One reason why the incidence of recovery from brain death is extremely low may be due to the fact that soon after diagnosis of brain death life support systems are withdrawn, or organ retrieval takes place. Both these interventions result in actual death.

4. Actual death is not synonymous with legal death.

Legal death is a state when an individual is considered dead in the eyes of the law even though in some cases the individual may not be actually dead. Ideally, an individual should be declared legally dead after actual death has taken place. This is what happens in the vast majority of cases and there is no need to distinguish between legal death and actual death.

However, in certain circumstances it is not possible to ascertain if an individual has actually died or not, such as a person who goes missing for many years, in which case the law courts can issue a declaration of presumed death based on evidence. Individuals diagnosed as brain dead are also presumed to be dead, thereby allowing such patients to be declared legally dead.

A society can determine the definition of legal death to suit its needs, but actual death is an act of nature or, for the religiously minded, an act decreed by God Almighty. Consequently, legal death varies from country to country and sometimes from State to State within one country. Unlike legal death, the features defining actual death are immutable; it is a universal phenomenon with no boundaries of land, religion, or race. In a similar way, society can decide the age of majority, that is when a child becomes an adult. This age varies from country to country. However, if a 15-year-old girl becomes pregnant then she is an adult by the law of nature even though she may be treated as a child in the eyes of the law.

Determining precisely when a child becomes an adult, or when exactly a person dies is very difficult to do in practice, but it is necessary to draw an arbitrary line in time when a child become an adult and when a living person becomes a dead body from a legal standpoint for the smooth functioning of a civil society.

It is important to realise the limitations of man-made laws, in that they can conflict with reality.

Unlike actual death, legal death, can on rare occasions, be reversed in the case of a missing person and it has also happened in a case of brain death. Jahi McMath, who was declared brain dead and legally dead in California was transferred to New Jersey, where she remained brain

dead, but she was no longer legally dead. Two death certificates were issued for Jahi McMath: one in 2013 and the second one in 2018. The first death certificate was at the time of diagnosis of brain death and the second one 5 years later at the time of actual death.

For Muslims there are two obvious questions:

- i) Is brain death legal death in Islam?
- ii) Does brain death equate with the removal of the soul from the body by the Angel of Death?

These two questions have been discussed by the author in the paper entitled: Is the "Concept" of Brain Death Compatible with the "Reality" of Religious Death? to which the reader may refer for details. Regarding legal opinions on brain death by Muslim scholars, the people who seek legal opinions from Muslim jurists or *fiqh* councils on brain death are almost always from the transplant community. So, the information provided to the jurists may be incomplete or even biased. It is important to look at the details of the discussions that took place before the ruling was issued and whether medical experts were consulted.

Whether someone is declared dead or not should not be dependent on whether the individual is an organ donor or not. However, the declaration of brain death as legal death is inextricably linked to organ donation. For the Muslim transplant community, the issue of whether a brain

dead individual is legally dead or not is crucial because if the brain dead individual is not considered to be dead then the removal of vital organs for donation will be the cause of his death and there is liability within Islamic law for such a type of homicide.

Discussion and Conclusion

If all the four basic principles stated above are accepted, then the answer to the question: "Is brain death actual death?" is "Absolutely not!" This applies to all different types of brain death currently in clinical practice.

The concept of brain death is a social construct based on time-bound social needs and values, a pragmatic utilitarian approach to get from A to B. A number of medical developments occurred in a relatively short period of time in the 1950s and 1960s to give birth to the concept of brain death. There was a cohort of patients with total brain failure (irreversible coma) with no hope of survival who could be kept alive by modern artificial ventilators. These patients were a burden on the health care system. Besides the costs, they were occupying precious resources such as intensive care beds. There was another cohort of patients with other types of end-stage organ failure such as kidney, heart, and liver. This second group were salvageable if a new organ could be transplanted into their bodies to replace their own failing organ. But the new organs to be transplanted must be living organs and living organs can only

be obtained from living individuals.

If the patients with total brain failure who were effectively "as good as dead" since medicine had nothing to offer them could be labelled as "dead" then the futile use of expensive medical treatment could be stopped, thereby freeing up precious ICU beds and additionally, their organs could be used for transplantation. A value judgment was made. Effectively, sacrificing one life to improve or save the lives of a few.

Those who do not accept that brain dead patients are truly dead but accept it as legal death then for them organ procurement from brain dead patients is still homicide, but it is not illegal.

Those who came up with the concept of brain death as death in 1968⁴ did not have any malicious intent to kill patients, they were serving the needs of their society, the greatest good for the greatest number. The proposal put forward by the Harvard Ad Hoc Committee was not an alternative way to diagnose traditional actual death but a new entity, a new way to understand death. However, over time some people tried to equate brain death with actual traditional death by suggesting that the body could not survive without a functioning brain, the body would soon disintegrate. This false perception has been one of the root causes of the controversy and confusion surrounding brain death. Brain death is not actual traditional death but a separate distinct entity, a social construct, a value-based

judgment when an individual will be treated as if he or she is dead. The British neurologist, Christopher Pallis, who is accredited with introducing the concept of brainstem death in the U.K. stated that his definition of death had a sociological basis.

Brain death and actual or biological death should be seen as two separate entities. Brain dead individuals are not truly dead in the traditional sense, and neither are donors declared dead after controlled circulatory arrest (DCD), both are in the process of dying with very poor prognosis, but they are not truly dead at the time of organ procurement. The underlying basis for declaration of death after controlled circulatory arrest is brain death. It is assumed by depriving the brain of a blood supply for 5 minutes (this is the standard used in U.K.) ensures loss of brain functions thereby fulfilling the brain death criteria. Declaration of death after controlled circulatory arrest of 2-5 minutes can be said to be a state of impending death but not actual death because the patients can be potentially resuscitated after the heart stops beating for 2-5 minutes. In fact, hearts can be transplanted from such patients. If such a patient, after being declared dead after 2-5 minutes of cessation of the heart beating, is resuscitated, which every doctor accepts is possible, then we would have to conclude that death is reversible. And since successful heart transplantation takes place from such donors then one has to conclude that the irreversible can be reversed. The conclusion in both of

these scenarios is ludicrous and the only logical explanation is that the assumption brain death is actual death is false.

Scholars have also discussed whether life and death are interconnected or independent entities. If they are considered to be independent entities then it should be possible for an individual to be alive and dead at the same time, which clearly does not occur, leaving us with the conclusion that life and death are interconnected, our are either dead or alive.

There is no disagreement that living organs can only be obtained from living human beings. If organs could be procured from truly dead individuals, then there would be no shortage of organs. This is further evidence that organ donors after brain death and controlled circulatory death are not actually dead.

The concept of brain death increased the supply of living organs, perhaps not by design, but controlled circulatory arrest (DCD) criteria for death was designed specifically to further increase the supply of living organs. Despite these new criteria for declaring death, the demand for organs still outstrips the supply of organs. In response to this shortage some countries have introduced donation prior to death (DPD) thereby firmly putting to one side the dead donor rule which was probably being violated anyway, other countries such as the U.K. have introduced a system of presumed consent. Both these methods are controversial.

You only need one case to refute a theory. The theory of brain death is actual death is refuted by cases like Lewis Roberts and Zack Dunlap. Lewis Roberts and Zack Dunlap were both clearly declared brain dead and scheduled for organ retrieval, but both showed signs of recovery just a few hours before their organs were due to be removed. They both went on to make full recoveries. Lewis was playing football sixteen months after being diagnosed as brain dead; Zack went home 48 days after being declared brain dead and went on to get married and have a family. We, doctors used to say: "No one who has met the criteria for brain death has ever survived." That statement may no longer be true.

If the question is: "Is brain death legal death?" then the answer is a firm, "Yes." In many jurisdictions around the world brain death is accepted as legal death. Actual death is either presumed or it does not really matter.

An important question for Muslims is: "Is brain death legal death according to Islamic law?" Some religious authorities have said "Yes," while others have said "No." Law makers and jurists have the authority to determine what constitutes legal death in their jurisdiction or sphere of influence, but they do not have the same authority to dictate what actual death is. Actual death is determined by nature or from a religious perspective by God Almighty.

Some commentators have put forward the idea that an individual

undergoes a legal death and an actual death thereby suggesting that there are two types of death that an individual undergoes, but it also implies that brain death is not actual death.

Under certain circumstances what matters is legal death rather than actual death, in other circumstances actual death is more relevant than legal death.

The chances of a brain dead person making any meaningful recovery is minuscule. So, keeping such individuals alive with high-tech medical interventions is futile in the majority of cases. Added to this is the huge economic burden brain dead individuals place on the health care system and in some cases their families together with the prolonged emotional trauma suffered by close relatives if these patients are kept alive. Many religious authorities sanction the cessation of life support systems in individuals where the specialist doctors consider the case to be futile even if the individual does not fulfil the criteria of brain death.

Brain dead individuals can be said to be "as good as dead," or at least "dead enough" to declare them legally dead. The individual as a person is dead, he has no perception, no interaction with either people or his environment. What is the point of keeping such individuals alive at great cost except up to the point of retrieving their precious organs for transplantation? It makes medical, economic, and perhaps ethical sense to label them as dead. This is the utilitarian

approach to the problem. The concept of brain death as death has been very successfully marketed. There are no stakeholders to challenge this notion and it seems essential for the success of the solid organ transplantation program which besides being cost-effective brings with it huge health benefits to the recipients.

Besides the significant economic benefits and obvious health of labelling brain dead patients as legally dead it has one other major benefit. The potential charge of homicide against those doctors who retrieve vital organs from these brain dead patients is eliminated. This is a very important consideration.

The debate on brain death and organ donation needs to move on. The question of whether organ donation is permissible in Islam or not has been exhausted. We must accept that organ donation from the truly dead is a myth. Only tissues and corneas can be retrieved from truly dead individuals. Only organs retrieved from living individuals are suitable for transplantation. Once we accept these realities then the ethical and moral debate can move forward to consider the new challenges facing our communities:

1. Is it morally justifiable not to discuss the issue of brain death in a transparent manner when trying to recruit potential organ donors?
2. To what extent is the rule "first, do no harm" applicable in modern medicine and Islam?
3. Do the social and ethical values on

which brain death was founded fit in with Islamic values?

4. Is it justifiable to take one life in an effort to try to save several lives?
5. Can killing an innocent vulnerable individual ever be justified?

Even though there may be no benefit to society in keeping brain dead individuals alive, a case could be made that the individual himself may benefit from a religious perspective, in that such suffering may be a means of expiating sins.

In the future, if xenotransplantation or another alternative becomes widespread such that human organs are no longer required then the concept of brain death will be relegated into the history books.

Until then, the combination of presumption of death in patients declared brain dead combined with presumed consent for organ donation should be of concern to the Muslim community but surprisingly the Muslim community did not raise any concerns when there was an opportunity to do so.

Transplantation surgery has been a great success of modern medicine and we should try to promote it but within the limits of permissibility of Islam. There is a need for greater dialogue and discussion on the subject between Muslim doctors and Muslim scholars as well as a need for greater transparency and involvement of the public. ■

Searching For The Middle Ground

- Faizan Mustafa*

The unexpected meeting between five prominent Muslims who were honest in admitting that they do not represent the whole community and RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat has received much media attention. Many have welcomed this initiative and see it as the continuation of the dialogue process that started on July 4, 2021, when the RSS chief released Khwaja Iftikar Ahmed's book, *The Meeting of Minds: A Bridging Initiative*. Some liberal secularists, fundamentalists and well-wishers of the Muslim community have been highly critical of this meeting as they think it is nothing more than a "sell out". They are not willing to trust the RSS till the organisation explicitly disowns the philosophy and writings of its founders. The pertinent question is: What are Muslims willing to disown? Would Muslims be better off if they do not talk to RSS? All the contentious issues cannot be resolved in just one meeting, which was little more than an icebreaker. But within a month of this meeting, Bhagwat also visited a mosque and interacted with madrasa students.

No meaningful dialogue is possible without creating favourable conditions. Liberals are right that the RSS chief went to the meeting from a

position of power. In fact, the person who has power has the responsibility of initiating, sustaining and taking the dialogue forward. What is Bhagwat's record? Does it inspire confidence?

In July 2021 had asserted that "the only solution to Hindu-Muslim conflict is dialogue, not discord". Bhagwat reiterated that the talk of Hindu-Muslim unity is misleading "as they are not different, but one". He has famously said that the DNA of Hindus and Muslims is the same. In the last few years, Bhagwat has been consistently making several positive statements about Muslims. Speaking at the event 'Hindustan First, Hindustani Best' in July 2021, Bhagwat, in a way acknowledged that many Muslims today indeed live under fear. He urged Muslims not to get "trapped in the cycle of fear that Islam is in danger in India". If a meaningful dialogue is sustained over a period of time, he may be persuaded to tell Hindutva foot soldiers that Hindus too are not in any danger.

On January 1, 2021, at the launch of J K Bajaj and M D Srinivas's book, *Making of a Hindu Patriot: Background of Gandhiji's Hind Swaraj*, Bhagwat clearly went against Hindutva's narrow concept of nationalism, in which territory is given excessive importance. In his characteristic style and again without

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mincing words, he said that “love for the country does not mean land only, it means its people, rivers, culture, traditions and everything”. Condemning mob lynchings in the strongest words, Bhagwat had said that “these lynchings are against Hindutva” and those who indulge in it are not Hindus.

In a clear departure from the classical Hindutva stand, he has asserted that the Constitution nowhere says that only Hindus can live in India or only Hindus will have a say in this country or to live in India one has to accept the supremacy of Hindus. He also tried to demolish the Hindutva theory of Muslim rule being exclusively “Muslim” rule by citing the example of the battle of Haldighati (1576) between Mughals and Rajputs, when he said that a large number of Muslims were on the side of Maharana Pratap and fought bravely against the Mughal army led by another Rajput, Raja Man Singh.

In his address at the Muslim gathering on ‘Nation first, Nation Supreme’, Bhagwat had rightly blamed the British for sowing the seeds of communalism in India. He had said that the British told Muslims that in a Hindu majority state, they would be at a receiving end with no power, position or influence. They similarly convinced Hindus about the dangers of staying with Muslims who are by nature extremists. Indeed, the British distorted history to demonstrate that Muslim

rulers discriminated against Hindus.

The RSS chief has repeatedly said that Muslims are equal citizens of India while Hindutva has historically distinguished between indigenous religions and Abrahamic religions. Such a departure from the stated position should not be overlooked. One should not expect a complete break from the past ideology overnight. Any change in the century-old position can only be gradual.

Are not the above statements indicative of the fact that Bhagwat is – albeit in an extremely slow and gradual manner – trying to change Sangh’s attitude towards Muslims? He is facing huge criticism for going soft on Muslims. He is in a precarious situation — liberals do not trust him and hardcore Hindutva supporters have started disowning him. Annoyed by Bhagwat’s so-called “Muslim appeasement”, former CBI head M Nageswara Rao termed the RSS as “pseudo-Hindutva fraud” and asked the Hindus to work toward an “RSS-mukt Bharat”. He went on to say that the RSS is encouraging Islam and taking “Hinduism to the path of golden destruction”. Madhu Kishwar angrily responded to Bhagwat’s DNA statement by saying “the expiry date of Shri Mohan Bhagwat ji predates his becoming head of RSS” and the “RSS has nothing to do with propagating

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The Status of Man in The Holy Qur'an

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Man according to the teachings of Islam, the representative and vicegerent of Allah on earth. This world is a trust and man is its trustee. It is not a personal property of an individual or people which could be used or missed to satisfy personal desires. It is man's responsibility to manage the world according to Allah's instructions and promote divine guidance. This great world-including animals, birds trees, rivers, mountains, gold, silver, and all it contains has been given to the care of man because he is more familiar than any one else with the world (as he is himself made of dust) and has also a genuine interest in it. Thus, because he has knowledge of the world and interest in it-two essential conditions for a successful trustee-he can be a good caretaker of the world. (Islam An Introduction, p,145)

The Qur'an was sent to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to guide man and lead him out of darkness to the truth. The Holy Qur'an says, "A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light." (S.14,A.1) He further says," We have revealed for you a book (O men!) which will give you eminence.Will ye not understand? (S.21,A.10) That is why the subject matter of the Qur'an is mankind.

Abdullah Abbas Nadwi former Director of Education Nadwatul Ulama precisely said, "There is no book more magnificent than the Glorious Qur'an in the world. There is no book more oppressed than the Glorious Qur'an under the sky!

The criticism of the non-Muslims does not carry any weight with us and those who have said a few words in praise have demonstrated their insight.The columnist of Encyclopedia Britannica writes: "The most widely-read book in existence". (Enc. Brit. Vol. xv, p, 898)

It is a statement of fact and an admission of truth. It is claimed that the Holy Bible has been translated in about a thousand languages and it is placed in the suites of posh hotels in the seven continents. It is distributed free of cost all over the world. Still the number of readers of the Bible in ten years does not equal the number of reciters of the Glorious Qur'an in a day! Few selected verses from Bible are sung in the Churches accompanied by music. A few church-goers, consisting mostly of aged ladies, attend the services on Sunday and on festive occasions. A few words of benediction or requiem are repeated as the occasion demands. On the contrary there is not a single moment in twenty-four hours when the Glorious Qur'an is not recited in some or the other part of the world. Besides hundreds of Glossaries and Lexicons have been compiled to help recite it correctly and grasp the meanings properly. The writings of commentaries started in the third century Hijri and since then there is no period of time when a new commentary has not been added in a topical way. The people found new subjects of study every time a new commentary saw the light of the day and it appeared that a secret has been unfolded

which was concealed so long! We take, for instance, the Opening Chapter (al-Fatiha)-over ten thousand commentaries have been written on it alone. It is recited thousands of times every day and nobody gets weary of it."

No doubt, it is the last of the revealed books. It covers spectrums of issues regarding mankind ranging from birth to death and life after death as well as creation of earth and the Day of Judgment. It mentions various stages of man's embryonic development: (We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him as a drop in a place of settlement, firmly fixed. Then We made the drop into an alaqah (leech, suspended thing, and blood clot), then We made the alaqah into mudghah (chewed substance)....(S.23, A.12-14)

Allah vividly says, "O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other); verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you" (S.59.A.13)

According to the Qur'an the whole universe is the subject of observation, experimentation and research. The Holy Qur'an says, "In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alteration of night and day there are indeed signs for men of sense." (S.3,A.190)

Besides, a believer in the Qur'an is commanded to assume special responsibility to establish and transact for a just order and not to deviate from the principles of justice, come what may. "So

establish weight with justice and fall not short of balance". (S.55,A.9)

No doubt, Allah is the Lord of the Heavens, the Earth and of all that between them. "To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth: to Allah do all matters return. " But out of all creatures mankind has been endowed with highest rank, status and dignity. He Himself says. "We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation' (S. 17, A70). We may easily comprehend the position of mankind through the following verse of the holy Quran. "And when thy Lord said unto the angels ! Lo! I am about to place a viceregent in the earth, they said: "Will Thou place there in the earth one who will do harm and will shed blood. We hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee". He said: "Surely I know that which ye know not" (S.2, A, 30)

The above mentioned two verses of the Holy Qu'ran indicate that God bestowed upon human beings the highest position as compared to other creatures of Him. "Allah lays great stress on human dignity by declaring that "If anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people" (S: 5.A.32)

He further warns us saying that "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive with his might and main for mischief through the land is: execution or crucifixion or the cutting off hands and feet from opposite

sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world and a heavy punishment is theirs in the hereafter." (S.5,A. 33)

In this context it should be kept in mind that God sent Prophets and messengers to show people the path of salvation. All Prophets performed their duties with integrity and honesty.

But a long time had passed since the raising of Jesus by God, humanity had reached the edge of precipice. People had gone astray. Even divine books were not intact. Hence God sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to extricate people from the darkness to lead the right path and enlightenment. It is Prophet Muhammad(PBUH)who first taught people the lesson of brotherhood, fraternity, love and equality. Besides, he first introduced Human Rights and stressed on its importance. Indeed the last sermon of the Prophet was the first Charter of Human Rights.

Noted Islamic scholar S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH) says: "The world before the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was divided by nanifold divisions of castes and creeds, tribes and nations. Some claiming ranks of nobility for themselves and condemning others to the position of serfs and chattels. It was the first time that the world heard the revolutionary message of human equality from the Prophet of Islam."

"O mankind! your God is one and you have but one father. You are all progeny of Adam and Adam was made of clay. LO! the noblest among you, in the Sight of God, is the best conduct. No Arab has any preference over a non-Arab nor a non-

Arab over an Arab save by his Piety." The Prophet said: The entire creation constitutes the family of God and he is dearest to Him who is the best in his dealings with God's family" Narrated Anas (R): The Prophet (SAW) said. "none of you will have faith till he wishes his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself. He also said "A person whose neighbour is not safe from his acts of misdemeanour shall not enter Paradise' "He who has had a full meal while his neighbour sleeps at night on an empty stomach is not a true Muslim" Narrated Musa (R) some people asked Allah's apostle (S) whose Islam is the best (who is a very good Muslim?" He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands."

Despite these instructions and advice of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, if any Muslim gets involved in unholy and anti-social activities, he is not a good Muslim. Not to speak of harming and killing anyone, a true Muslim can not even call anyone names.

It is imperative that we must keep away from inhuman and terroristic acts. No religion allows such sort of atrocities and offences. Anyone commits such kind of heinous crimes and wrong doings, he is not true follower of his faith. He is reprobate, malevolent and not loyal to his religion.

The need of the hour is that we should abide by the teachings of our respective religions in letter and spirit. Moreover, we must develop humanitarian attitude and come forward to render welfare and charitable services for the poor and down-trodden sections of the society irrespective of caste, creed, colour and region. ■

Rabia Basri : The Ascetic Woman Saint of Islamic History

- Abu Tariq Hijazi

Rabia Basri is a model for all Muslim women. She rules on the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people around the world. Born in 95 A.H. in Basra in a poor but respected family, she was the fourth daughter of her father. She was born in a dark night.

The family was so poor that there was no oil even to light it in the lamp. Her sister asked her father to get some oil from the neighbor's house, but he said he would never ask anyone for any help except Allah (swt).

When he slept with a heavy heart, he dreamed that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came to him and said, "Don't grieve, your newborn daughter is a favorite of the Lord and will lead many Muslims to the right path.

You should approach the Amir of Basra and present him a letter with a message that every night he is wont to offer 100 daroods to me and on Friday nights 400. But this Friday he did not offer daroods, so tell him that as a penalty he must give you 400 dinars."

Rabia's father got up and went straight to the Amir. The Amir was delighted on receiving the message. He distributed 1,000 dinars to the poor and joyously gave 400 to Rabia's father. The Amir then asked Rabia's father to come to him whenever he needed anything as it was an honor for him to help somebody liked by Allah (swt).

After the death of her father, Basra

was hit by famine. Rabia got separated from her sisters and left alone. She was with a caravan that was attacked by robbers. The chief of the robbers took Rabia as captive and sold her as a slave. Rabia's new master used to make her do hard work.

One day while she was going out, a man chased her. She ran to save herself but fell down and broke her arm. Thereupon, she prayed to Allah, "I am a poor orphan and a slave. Now my hand is broken. But I do not mind these things if you be pleased with me..."

Rabia spent the whole night in prayer after finishing her household work. She used to fast regularly. Once when her master woke up in the middle of the night he was attracted by Rabia's prayer:

"My Lord! You know well that my desire is to carry out Your commandments and to serve You with all my heart. O light of my eyes. If I were free I would spend the whole day and night in prayers. But what should I do when You have made me slave of a human being?"

The master felt that it was sacrilegious to keep her as a slave. He freed her and offered her the choice of staying with him or leaving. She told him she wanted to carry on her worship in solitude.

She went to the desert and devoted herself to worship. Her mentor was

Hassan Basri. Much of her early life is narrated by Farid Al-Din Attar, using earlier sources. Rabia herself did not leave any written work.

She devoted herself to prayers. Later she set out for Haj. Rabia reached Makkah and there she met Ibrahim Adham who also performed Haj that year.

Her love of God, poverty and self-denial throughout her life remained her constant companions. She spent all night in prayer and contemplation. As her fame grew she had many disciples.

Though she had many offers of marriage, and even one from the Amir of Basra, she refused them as she had no time in her life for anything other than the Love of Allah (swt).

Once when asked why she did not marry she replied:

"If you free me from having to worry about three things, I will marry. First of all, at the moment of death, shall my faith be sufficient to bring me to salvation? Second, will the Book of my deeds be given to me in my left or right hand? Third, on that hour when a party of people are called forth on the left hand to Hell, and another group from the right hand are summoned to Heaven, which company will I belong to? And further when I am interrogated in the grave by the two angels, shall I be able to answer their questions?"

Once Malik Bin Dinaar visited Rabia Basri. He found in her home a partly broken pitcher which she used for ablution and drinking water, a very old straw-mat on which she slept and a

brick which she used as a pillow.

He said to her, "I have many affluent friends. Shall I ask them to bring some items for you?"

Rabia Basri said, "O Malik! Is my Provider, your Provider and the Provider of the wealthy, not the same?"

Malik said, "Yes."

Rabia then said, "Has He forgotten about the needs of the poor on account of their poverty, while he remembers the needs of the wealthy?"

Malik said, "It is not so."

Rabia then said, "When He never forgets anyone, why should we remind Him? He has wished this condition for me and I am pleased with it, because it is, His pleasure."

Rabia has taught us that repentance is a gift from Allah (swt) because no one can repent unless Almighty Allah allows him to do so.

Ibn Al-Jawzi relates that at the time of her death, she called Abda Bint Abi Showal and told her that no one be informed of her death and that she be shrouded only in her old robe for burial. When her last hour came, leading sheikhs gathered around her, but she told them to "Go out and leave place for the Angels."

They all went out and closed the door. While they were waiting outside, they heard from inside a voice reciting: "O soul at rest and peace! Return to your Lord..."

For a long while thereafter there
(Cont. on page 10)

Development And Promotion of Islamic Science

- P.A. Wahid*

The rivalry between religion and science is centuries old. The controversy, which started between the Christian Church and scientific community, reached its peak in 1859 following the publication of Darwin's book *Origin of Species*, which proposed a theory of chance-driven evolution of organic beings demolishing the need for Creator God. The fight still goes on unabated. A resolution passed by the National Academy of Sciences, USA, in 1981 states: "Religion and science are separate and mutually exclusive realms of human thought whose presentation in the same context leads to misunderstanding of both scientific theory and religious belief". The stand of Britain's Royal Society is not different either: "creationism has no scientific basis and should not be part of the science curriculum." Several verbal battles and confrontations between the clergy and scientists had taken place in the past. Scopes case or 'monkey trial' of 1925 in the USA marked the beginning of legal battles. After the Scopes trial, the laws banning the teaching of human evolution remained in effect for more than 40 years. But teaching students about Darwin's general principle of evolution with reference to non-human organisms has never been illegal in the United States. In 1968, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned an Arkansas state law banning the teaching of evolution. And in 1987, it ruled against balancing evolution lessons by teaching creationism. Attack on evolution is however on the rise once again in the USA. School boards in Kansas, Pennsylvania and other states had either

restrained the teaching of evolution in science classes or introduced alternative explanations that were essentially religious in character. Creationism took a different form under the new name "intelligent design" (ID). Teaching of ID in classrooms was legally challenged in 2005. Intelligent design lost the legal battle because the court ruled the idea was not scientifically sound.

It will not be too difficult to find there is deep-rooted conspiracy going on to promote atheism through science. It is possible to distinguish two broad domains in science. These are technology-oriented domain and technology-not-oriented (or non-tech) domain. Scientific knowledge in the technology-oriented domain is self-correcting and directional as otherwise the targeted technology will not result. This domain has therefore factual content. On the other hand, non-tech domain lacks mechanism for self-correction. Since this space does not contribute to the development of technologies, it does not attract much attention and remains not of immediate concern to the people. Obviously, this domain can be easily manipulated and is being manipulated. It is this non-tech domain of science that nurtures theories against theism. Steady state cosmology, Darwin's theory of biological evolution, theories of origin of life, etc., are some of them. Despite their inherent inadequacies and weaknesses, these theories are retained as scientific theories by the powerful forum-controlling atheist lobby with the sole intention of imparting credence to atheism and thereby labelling theism as irrational doctrine. Entry of such

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pseudoscientific theories in science not only takes science in the wrong direction but more importantly misleads people from the divine righteous path. As these theories are included in science curriculum, the children are exposed to atheistic theories at a young age in the schools and colleges, which can do serious damage to their religious outlook and theistic perception of the universe and purpose their life.

The Qur'an and Science

Muslim community cannot stand as mute witness to what is happening in science and in the name of science to demolish theistic doctrine and religion. It is the bounden duty of every believer to thwart satanic designs and sustain the divinity and veracity of knowledge. The Christian conflict is limited to evolutionary theory only. However from the Qur'anic standpoint, the issue is far more serious with wider implications and consequences.

The controversy has only helped to create the wrong impression that religion and science are mutually contradicting ideologies. The general notion about religion and science among people is both religion and science are man-made ideologies. Although Muslims believe that Islam is divine religion, they generally consider science as man-made. The debate on Islam and modern science is now more than a hundred years old. Attempts to Islamize knowledge or to develop Islamic science have not been successful because the Muslim world is not a homogenous community with uniform religious rites and observances but a mixture of factions with varied concepts and ideologies. Nevertheless, the Quran unites them all and bring them under one umbrella. The Quran is from God (3:3, 12:2) and it is under His

protection (15:9). Clearly therefore, Islamic science should be developed within the framework of the Qur'an. It is on that basis Islamization of knowledge is conceptualized here.

Conformity of science with the Qur'an

Knowledge has no boundaries Like the Quran, science is also from Allah. It is Allah who gave us knowledge (96:5, 2:255, 2:31). Both the Qur'an and science originated from the same source - Allah. That is why we find the Qur'an and science mutually compatible and complementary. The non-compatible portion of science must be of satanic origin. The Qur'an is not merely a text of religious information; it also contains revelations about the creation of the universe, its organization, purpose of creating man and the universe, fate of the universe, future of mankind, etc. Many Quranic revelations about the universe and man have been found to agree well with the scientific findings made during the past century. This indicates that Allah did intend to give evidences of the divinity of the Quran to the non-believers through science. This is quite evident from the verse 21:30, which addresses the non-believers: "Do not the unbelievers see that the skies and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder? We made from water every organism. Will they not believe then?" (21:30). "With hands (power and skill) did We construct the sky: For it is We who create the vastness of space." (51:47). These two verses indicate that the components of the universe were together at some point of time in the past before they were separated and the universe has been expanding ever since. The people of Prophet Muhammad's time had no scientific knowledge to understand the implication of these verses. Obviously the message was meant for future generation

when the required scientific knowledge is made available by God. The Qur'an informs us that the knowledge we get is what Allah releases to us (2:255). In 1924 American astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that ours was not the only galaxy; there were some hundred thousand million galaxies spaced far between and they all have been moving away from us. This observation confirmed the expansion of the universe implying that the galaxies were together in the distant past as given in the Qur'an. It is these findings that provided sufficient proof to the big bang cosmology, which describes the origin of the universe and time.

There are several other verses in the Qur'an that have scientific significance. This does not mean that the Qur'an is full of science and whatever discoveries are to be made in the future are already there in the Qur'an. Maurice Bucaille and Keith Moore were the pioneers in bringing to light the agreement between the Quranic revelations and modern science. The Qur'an-science conformity does help Muslims of modern era of science and technology to strengthen their belief in Islam. To an unprejudiced unbiased non-believer it proves that the Qur'an is scientifically sound, rational and divine, though Islam bashers may refute the Quran-science compatibility. Effectively, the Qur'an-science compatibility is a proof of scientific veracity of the Qur'an based on Carl Popper's criterion of falsifiability. Much like a scientific theory can be proven by confirming its predictions, the Quran's divinity and credibility can be proven through scientific confirmation of its revelations about the universe and man. A detailed discussion of these aspects has been made in my book *Scientific Foundation of Islam*. Scientific basis of the Quran has to be revealed to the world particularly in the

context of atheists' organized move against theism.

Some of the revelations in the Qur'an have not yet been subjected to experimental verification. They can be treated as scientific theories. These include revelation of the organization of the cosmic space as seven skies one above the other (67:3, 71:15-16), the creation of earth as the first component of the universe (41:9-12), etc. It is hoped that further advancement in science will throw light on these phenomena.

Scientific interpretation of the Qur'an

The Quran-science mutualism led to the development of a computer model of the universe by me. This concept was first published in my book *The Divine Expert System* in 1998. It explains the self-propelled and self-regulated functioning of the universe. The universe is information-laden system and the information carried by it is the divine command as Allah says: "So He completed them as seven skies...and inspired in each sky its duty and command... (41:12). In computer parlance, the divine commands or instructions form the programs that drive the system. There are several other verses also in the Quran that suggest a computerised set-up of the universe. Accordingly, the universe was described as a system designed, programmed and created by God. The subject was discussed in detail in my two recent books *The Computer Universe: A Scientific Rendering of the Holy Quran* (2006), and *An Introduction to Islamic Science* (2007). Now there are more than four books on this subject published mainly by US scientists from purely scientific angle. The basic change that the computer concept of the universe brings into our present knowledge of the universe and cosmology is

that it is the patterns of divine information (instructions) rather than matter and energy per se that represent the fundamental units of reality. Although the knowledgebase created by science covers almost every aspect of the universe from subatomic level to galaxies and beyond, questions like how the various components of the universe acquired their characteristic properties and behaviour have not yet been addressed in science. The computer model enables us to answer such fundamental questions about the universe in the light of the Quranic revelations.

Biologists consider life as a physical phenomenon assuming that the genetic program is constituted by DNA molecule (the molecular gene or the genome concept). This means an organism is merely a bundle of chemical molecules. The Quran on the other hand reveals that the phenomenon of life non-physical. Life is created by non-material rooh. The non-physical nature of life can be explained convincingly with the help of computer model of organism.

Atheism-based theories

It is high time that the Muslim world realized that there is an organized move by the powerful and influential atheistic lobby in the scientific community against theism. It is not particularly against any religion but its aim is to uproot the belief in God from the society. When the big bang model was proposed, there was a lot of hue and cry made by the atheist lobby against it for the only reason that it implied the need of Creator God for the universe. Consequently, the atheists wanted to replace the big bang theory with another theory that did not have such divine implication. While discussing the big bang model, Stephen Hawking wrote: "Many people

do not like the idea that time has a beginning, probably because it smacks of divine intervention.... There were therefore a number of attempts to avoid the conclusion that there had been a big bang. The proposal that gained widest support was called the steady state theory.... Another attempt to avoid the conclusion that there must have been a big bang, and therefore a beginning of time, was made by two Russian scientists, Evangenii Lifshitz and Isaac Khalatnikov, in 1963." The steady state model was proposed by Hermann Bondi and Thomas Gold (two Austrian scientists) along with the British astronomer Fred Hoyle in 1949. According to that theory, the universe did not have a beginning nor will it end. The theory held the centre stage for nearly two decades but could not be proved. It is almost rejected now in favour of the big bang theory, which upholds theism.

The failure of the steady state theory has as expected, shifted the attention of the atheist lobby completely to theories in biology namely, molecular gene and genome concepts, evolutionary theory, and theories of origin of life. Today biology has become the breeding ground for atheism-based pseudoscientific theories. What we find is the deliberate attempt of the atheist lobby to fabricate and plant theories in the garb of science to suit their agenda. This is nothing but exploitation of the credibility and confidence reposed by the public in science and scientific community.

Pseudoscientific theories can be identified by evaluating the theories in the light of the Qur'an. Being the truth from Allah, the Qur'an unquestionably lends itself as the reference standard for assessing the veracity of information from other sources. This means that any information including scientific

theories that is contradictory to the Quranic message will be false. In other words, by bringing science within the framework of the Quran, it will be possible to purify science. The Quran reiterates that falsehood will not last, it will disappear (17:81). Theories of origin of life from non-life, molecular gene (genome) theory, and theory of evolution of species by chance, steady state cosmology, etc. are against the Qu'ran and what we find is such theories either face problems or have become controversial. This is clear-cut evidence that any theory opposed to the Creator will fail as implied in the Quranic verses 17:81. Any scientific theory that is against the Quran should be rejected by Muslims.

Development of Islamic Science

True science and the Qur'an can harmoniously blend with each other as they are compatible and mutually complementary knowledge systems. The product of fusion of science with the Qur'an constitutes the Revealed Knowledge or the totality of knowledge about the universe and man, which Allah wants to convey. This holistic knowledge can be aptly called "Islamic Science". A beginning has been made by me in this field in my book *An Introduction to Islamic Science*. It is an area requiring inputs from both Qur'anic scholars and scientists. The Qur'anic scholars and scientists in various fields have to work together to develop Islamic science.

It has become imperative that we separate the grain from chaff in science in the light of the Qur'an and exclude pseudoscience from the academic curricula and research agenda. Exclusion of these theories will not hamper advancement of science and progress of any country as these

theories do not contribute to the development of any technology. Further they also do not offer any useful or factual information. Science curricula in schools and colleges have to be restructured and revamped in the light of the Qur'an. This should receive top priority in Muslim countries. Scientific theories based on the Qur'an have also to be developed to replace atheism-based theories now being taught in classes.

Modern science does not assign any purpose to the universe and human life. The Qur'an is the only source that reveals to us the purpose of creation and the divine mission with the human species and the universe. Going by modern science, which declares there is no purpose for the universe and man, one will be totally misled and misguided. This means that modern education is deficient in several important respects. This calls for the development of Islamic science, which alone can provide holistic view of the universe and human life in the light of divine purpose.

The false propaganda being made by the scientific community that the theistic doctrine is superstitious and unscientific has to be countered effectively by the Muslim community. This can be best done by explaining the Quranic revelations about the universe and human life scientifically and proving the compatibility between the Qur'an and science. Efforts should also be made to convince the people that both the Qur'an and science originate from God. Development of Islamic science and its inclusion in science curriculum in the educational institutions can bring the modern education system into theistic fold.

A detailed project can be prepared in this subject and submitted. ■

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi

Sheikh Yusuf bin Abdullah Al-Qaradawi, a great Muslim scholar of global repute and founding Chairman of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, breathed his last on September 26. He was 96.

Born on September 9, 1926 in the village of Saft Turab, Egypt, which was still under British colonial rule, Qaradawi went to study at the Al-Azhar University, Cairo. He studied religious sciences during his youth, in which he combined his Islamic education with anti-colonial activism. He was arrested several times throughout the 1950s as a result of his political activism, as well as his association with the Muslim Brotherhood. That eventually led him to move to Qatar in the 1960s, where he acquired the position of Dean of the Faculty of Shari'ah at Qatar University.

Qaradawi was a supporter of the Palestinian cause. He was a strong participant in international conferences and events related to the Palestinian cause. His book, Jerusalem is the Cause of Every Muslim bears testimony to his strong commitment to Palestine.

He was also one of the prominent figures of Islam in the present era in science, thought, advocacy and jihad in the Islamic world. Over the years, he was named a "moderate Islamist" by some, due to his reinterpretations of matters relating to Muslims in the West and positive advocacy for democracy while, at the same time, being highly criticised by others for vocally supporting suicide bombings against Israeli military targets and opposing the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Qaradawi was vocal on the conflict in Syria over the past decade, where the Bashar

Al-Assad regime brutally cracked down on peaceful protestors, killed hundreds of thousands of civilians, detained and tortured to death tens of thousands. For events in Egypt, too, he also openly condemned the 2013 military coup against the democratically-elected President Mohammed Morsi and opposed the new government under Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Following his condemnation, he was unable to return to Egypt for a second time, after his first exile prior to the 2011 revolution.

Qaradawi is best known for his programme al-Shari'a wa'lHaya (Sharia and Life) broadcast on Al Jazeera, which has an estimated audience of 40-60 million worldwide. He has more than 120 books to his credit, including The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam, Islam: The Future Civilization and Fiqh al-Zakat (The Jurisprudence of Zakat). Through his bilingual Arabic-English website Islamonline.net, he issued over 150 fatwas. He received eight international prizes for his contributions to Islamic scholarship, and is considered one of the most influential Islamic scholars of his time. He also sought to reinterpret historical rules of Islamic law in order to better integrate Muslims in non-Muslim societies.

His death sparked strong reactions across the Muslim world, as people took to social media to mourn his death. Sheikh Muhammad AlHasan bin Al-Diddu Al-Shanqiti led the funeral prayer of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi at Imam Muhammad ibn Abd Al Wahhab Mosque, Doha on September 27. Thereafter Sheikh Qaradawi was laid to rest at Mesaimeer Cemetery. ■

(Radiance)

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