



# THE FRAGRANCE OF EAST

Vol. XXV No. 1

January 2023

## Annual Subscription:

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

Cheques and Drafts may please be sent to:

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Tagore Marg, Lucknow-226007, U.P. (India)

Out-station cheques will not be accepted.

**A/C 10 863 759 664**

IFSC Code No. SBIN 0000 125  
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# The Fragrance of East

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## Life is Ever Changing

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

Islam is the last message of God Almighty; it has been presented in a complete form before the world, which has been told that:

*"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM"*  
(Al-Ma'ida:3)

On the one hand God has been well-pleased to favour mankind with a perfect and final religion; on the other, the fact is that life is on the move, ever-changing and evolving as someone has aptly said:

"Life is ever youthful,

Continuously on the move, zestful."

The religion bestowed by Omniscient God is grounded in a faith in eternal values and transcendental facts, yet, it is also zestful, perpetually -moving and sufficing for the transformations of life. God has endowed His religion with the capacity to turn over a new leaf with the changes ringing the world and thus provide human beings with an uninterrupted guidance in every phase of their life. It can help humanity to find its way at every turn and pass. It is not a culture of any particular age or the architecture of a particular place preserved in the shape of archaeological remains, but a living faith, a masterpiece of ingenuity and craftsmanship of the omniscient and Wise Creator :

*"That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise.*  
(Ya Sin : 38)

*... the doing of Allah Who perfecteth all things. Lo! He is Informed of what ye do."*

(An Namal : 88)

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### ***The Qur'an***

*Those who, if We establish them in the land, will establish the prayer and pay zakah and enjoin good and forbid evil. And unto Allah is the end of all affairs. (al-Haj 22:41)*

This verse stands out for its broad range of concepts and meanings.

Allah declares that if He grants power to the believers, they will not abuse it to lead a life of luxury. Nor will they indulge in material-pursuits, nor have palaces, nor accumulate treasure. They will not focus only on refining their culture and beautifying their towns. Fast-moving vehicles and quality food will not be their main concerns. Rather, their careers will be characterised by conquest, resolve and noble ideals.

On being blessed with power and authority, they will turn to prayer. Not only will they offer this, rather they will establish it, making it an essential part of their lives. They will create an ambience conducive to its performance. Moreover, they will instil its importance into the minds of others. Furthermore, they will participate in the erection of mosques. In sum, then, the verse depicts wide-ranging concepts for believers to execute.

Likewise, they will cheerfully pay zakah. They will popularise both the concept and practice of zakah. More importantly, they will enjoin good and forbid evil. Let it be realised that the Qur'an employs the imperative form for assigning this duty. Muslims are not requested to do this. Rather, they are commanded to accomplish this task. It goes without saying that Arabic is a rich language, employing different forms for commands and requests. The Qur'an has thus carefully chosen the imperative form on this count. ■

### ***The Hadith***

It is related by Abu Hurairah that, once, some Companions presented themselves before the Apostle of God and said, "Our condition is that sometimes we experience such evil thoughts and sentiments in our heart that it is most painful even to mention them." "Is it really so?" inquired the Prophet. "Yes", replied the Companions, "This is our condition." "But that is pure Faith," the Prophet exclaimed.

—Muslim

*Commentary*— It shows that to feel so greatly distressed at notions that are contrary to Islam and the Shariat that it may be intolerable even to bring them on the tongue is a mark of the purity of Faith.

(57) It is related by Abu Huraira that the Apostle of God said: "Occasionally, Satan comes to you and asks, 'Who created this thing [and] who created that thing,' It goes on like that till about God Himself he sows the doubt in your hearts [that when everything has been created by someone] who is His creator? So when this stage is reached the bondsman should seek the refuge of the Lord and stop."

—Bukhari and Muslim

*Commentary*—It shows that such ideas and misgivings are the handiwork of Satan and when he causes a doubt concerning the very existence of the Lord to crop up in anyone's heart the best course for him is to beg the protection of God against the mischief of the Devil and divert his mind from it. When the existence of Allah is an Attribute of His Being and He is the Creator of all things a question like this does not arise about Him in the least degree. ■

*Editor's Note* 

## Remembering Ali Mian

It was the last day of outgoing century (December 31, 1999). He got up at dawn performed his usual 'Tahajjud' prayers. Later he offered 'Fajr Prayers' and settled down for routine programme. It was Friday so he called the barber got his hair cut, beard trimmed took bath and by noon he was ready for 'Juma' prayer. Before he could set off to mosque he felt uneasy and asked his student to recite a particular verse from holy Qur'an. But before that he himself started reciting some verses and laid down to breathe his last.

The passing away of Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi Rahmat-ullah-alaih is a great loss not only to India but to all those countries where he was admired and revered as a great scholar. Maulana's end came when he was reciting the verses of the holy Qur'an. As a scholar of Arabic he had a deep knowledge of the holy book. As a historian and theologian he knew the references and context of each and every 'surah'. He was so deeply involved in following the Qur'anic instructions that he not only spent each and every moment living his own life in accordance with the spirit of Islam, but tried his best to make others also understand the message of Allah as interpreted and practiced by Prophet Mohammad (May peace be upon him).

We feel no hesitation in saying that the Maulana was an ardent Muslim, an emblem to Islamic Culture and a rigid follower of Islam. Yet, he can never be accused of nurturing bias against anyone. This is because of his broad vision that derived from the Qur'anic dictate: "To thee your way, and to me mine". Love for his country, its prosperity and well being always remained central to his concerns. Through his movement of "Payame-Insaniyat" (message of Humanity) he tried his best to bring people of different faiths on one platform. He worked hard to instill

confidence, particularly amongst Indian Muslims, and encouraged brotherhood not only between different sects of Muslims but also with their non-Muslim fellow countrymen. Maulana's doors always remained open for all. He believed in listening to others and making others listen to him. He never believed in living a secluded life. His mission had always been 'Dawah' and spreading love, peace and amity.

As an eminent scholar and widely traveled historian he was quite aware of the tremendous achievements that the world had made in the field of science and technology. The revolutionary developments in the electronic field were also considered by him as heavenly blessings to mankind.

The late Maulana realised the importance of media in the modern world and emphasised that Nadwa too must establish and develop a well equipped media centre. It was his constant encouragement that resulted in the creation of a Media Research Centre under the department of Journalism and Publicity in Nadwa. The English magazine "The Fragrance of the East" is in fact the outcome of a long cherished desire of the Maulana to create a forum for transmission of knowledge in Islamic affairs internationally. He was happy and delighted each time the latest issue of the "Fragrance" was presented to him. The editor had his last audience with Maulana on December 27, 1999 just before the 'Iftar' of the Ramadhan fast. This was four days before his demise. His parting words were: "*Isko jari rakhiye*" [Carry on its (Fragrance) publication]. May God give strength and enable us to fulfil his desire. ■

**S.A.**

We solicit articles for publication in The Fragrance of East. Suitable remuneration will be paid to writers. We prefer receipt of articles on:  
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## A Global Community

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

A very important characteristic of Muslims, which should be appreciated in its realistic context, is that Muslims consider themselves an international community and their religion an international religion joining coreligionists beyond the limitations of race, language, and nationality. They take interest in the common international Islamic problems, are influenced by the problems of Muslim nations, and extend sympathy and moral support to each other to the possible extent and within the provisions of the laws of their countries. They do not consider it against their love and faithfulness for their country of residence. They always have sincere love for their motherland and wish to contribute in the best possible way to its prosperity and progress. They consider their attachment for the Muslims living in other parts of the world

as an outcome of their faith in religion, justice, and noble human nature and take it to be a source of benefit and stability for their country as well. The Indian Muslims have always been in the forefront in this regard. The enthusiasm with which they sided with the Turks in the famous Khilafat Movement, the zeal with which they formed Khilafat Committees, the sincerity due to which they won the support of the whole India and most notably that of the greatest leader of India Gandhiji, and the way in which the Khilafat leaders—the Ali brothers, Maulana Azad and Maulana Abdul Bari—raised up the whole country on this issue are events of the recent past. This is a distinctive characteristic of the Muslim community and a natural result of its educational and historical backgrounds. It is necessary to take into consideration this fact before any decision relating to Muslims is taken. ■

## Backbiting- A Lethal Menace

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi\*

Backbiting is a fatal disease. It vitiates the social milieu and creates fissures and gulfs. With the result that often murder and blood-shedding take place. The main task of the backbiters is to convey the right and wrong thing to others for creating the disturbance and anarchy. For the very reason the Holy Qur'an describes them as "Masshaamim benameem" i.e. who backbite each others. In a Hadith came "who backbite, they spoil the relationship of the friends. The crux of matter is that backbiters do not want to let others to live peacefully. Some people develop this habit to such a great extent that they always spy and try to raise row and squabble. Such persons are dubbed as "Qattat"

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Backbiter will not enter Paradise."

Such people exaggerate and project things adding salt and pepper in a manner that the listener may be deceived and his heart also gets spoiled. It is related in Sahihain that

the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) passed by a grave and said, "One gets punishment and chastisement since he used to backbite." It is, indeed, a collection of various sins. Backbiting, amputation, slander, spying, lies, accusation and other numerous menaces in which backbiters are involved. They do not consider them as major sins while it is akin to mischief and corruption. The mischief is harder than the killing. The Holy Qur'an also mentions the recipe for saving the society from the menace. The Holy Book says, "O ye who believe! if a sinner comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done. (S.49, A.6) It further says, "Obey not every mean, swearer. A slander, going about with calumnies. (S.68, A.10-11)

In short, it is time we must save the society from the aforesaid menace and keep aloof from such persons who tend to create gulf by adopting the means of backbiting. ■

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\* Nazir-e-Aam, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow

(English Rendering: Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

## Charity And Conversion

- Tahir Mahmood\*

‘The Purpose of charity should not be conversion. Every charity or good work is welcome, but what is required to be considered is the intention,’ said a Division Bench judge of the apex court hearing a petition seeking a ban on “forced” conversions (IE, December 6). The observation, loaded with significant implications, is to be considered in the light of the provisions of the Constitution relating to people’s fundamental right to freedom of religion, its legislative history and judicial interpretation.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 — which was before the makers of the future Constitution for independent India — had proclaimed: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance” [Article 18]. Keeping this in mind, religious freedom as a people’s right was repeatedly debated in the Constituent Assembly. In cognizance of Christianity’s traditions of evangelism and proselytisation, this right was to include the right to propagate religion.

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\* *The writer is former chair, National Minorities Commission.*

While the first draft of the future Constitution proposed to restrain conversion except by one’s own free will, the second was to recognise the “right to preach and convert within limits compatible with public order and morality.” Eventually, the Constitution recognised the right to propagate, along with freedom of conscience and the right to profess and practice, one’s religion as people’s fundamental right. Prima facie, individuals’ right to forsake their religion by birth and embrace another faith was integral to freedom of conscience. Interestingly, the Bombay High Court has recently held that the freedom of conscience of a person “includes a right to openly say that he does not believe in any religion” (Ranjeet Mohite, 2015).

As regards the propagation of religion, in two cases decided in 1954, the apex court observed that Article 25 covered every individual’s right “to propagate his religious views for the edification of others”(RP Gandhi) and that “It is the propagation of belief that is protected, no matter whether the propagation takes place in a church or monastery, or in a temple or parlour meeting” (Shirur Math). Alarmed by these decisions, an Indian Converts (Regulation and Registration) Bill was soon moved Parliament by a member of the ruling party of the time. However,

neither the said Bill nor the Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill of 1960 led to the enactment of any central law on conversion.

The British rulers of India, who were never shy of introducing measures to facilitate the conversion of others to their faith, had enacted in 1866 a Native Converts Marriage Dissolution Act to provide the facility of divorce to married Indians who converted to Christianity and were thereupon deserted by their non-converting spouses. After Independence, the law Commission of India recommended that this Act be revised to make it a general law on the effect of post-marriage change of religion (Report no. 18 of 1961), but the government did not take any action on it. The original Act remained in force till recently but was eventually dropped from the statute book by the Repealing and Amending Act of 2017.

Alerted by the missionaries' evangelistic activities, several princely states of the pre-Independence era had enforced anti-conversion laws — Raigarh, Udaipur and Bikaner among them. During 1967-68, state legislatures in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh enacted similar laws, both ostensibly titled as Freedom of Religion Act. Christian leaders lost no time in challenging their constitutional validity in the Supreme Court. Heading a Constitution Bench, Chief Justice of the time AN Ray — known for his infamous ruling in the ADM Jabalpur case of the

dark Emergency days — argued that converting people interfered with their religious freedom and held that Article 25 granted “not the right to convert another person to one’s own religion but (only) to transmit and spread one’s religion by an exposition of its tenets” (Rev. Stanislaus, 1977). The verdict evoked sharp criticism by some eminent constitutional experts including HM Seervai who said that the “conclusion runs counter to legislative history” of Article 25 and that the decision of the Bench was “clearly wrong” (Constitutional law of India, 1983).

The Constitution Bench decision inspired some other states to enact similar laws, beginning with the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act 1978. Today there are such laws in about half of our states. Some of these have been either newly enacted or made more stringent, since the beginning of the present political dispensation in 2014. All of them prohibit converting people from one to another religion without their free will and, to indicate this, use various expressions like force, fraud, inducement and allurement. The evangelists, however, never admit using any of such unlawful means to win converts and persistently claim that conversion to their faith is always voluntary. The stories of the use of force or fraud by the evangelists for converting people may not be true, but the cases of

resorting to inducement and allurements for this purpose are not altogether without a basis. The charity-conversion nexus for which the apex court has shown deep concern in the case under hearing cannot, therefore, be flatly brushed aside as something totally imaginary.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that “all faiths are equally true though equally imperfect” — how true indeed. He had pleaded that, instead of converting others to one’s own faith, “our innermost prayer should be that a Hindu should be

a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian” (Young India, 1924). The great Mahatma had also once said: “If I had power and could legislate I should stop all proselytizing”(Harijan, 1935). Had the power the Father of the Nation was longing for been duly conferred on him, today the nation could have been largely free from communal tensions resulting from the Achilles’ heel of conversion from the majority religion of the country to any other faith. ■

*(The Indian Express – 10-12-22)*

### Fever pitch

It was a match, as pundits and people concurred, truly worthy of the occasion. Messi and Mbappe shone like the stars they are billed to be. A contest that came alive in classical fashion – one team takes lead and the other, just as everyone writes off the possibility, comes back. Penalties are a cruel way to sort out winners, especially in contests as exhilarating as this. But they are also perhaps the only quick and pragmatic way – and they too are a test, of nerves, of skill. And in those moments Argentina found another hero, goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

But perhaps the script was pre-written and Messi would not be denied. La Pulga finally had the one trophy that was missing from his cabinet and the economically battered nation of Argentina could dream again – even if briefly. Suffering from decades of despondency induced by an economy on life support – inflation stood at a staggering 88% over the last 12 months and almost 40% of the country is estimated to be below the poverty line – Argentina perhaps needed that Cup more than France.

Now carping critics of Qatar as a host of a World Cup should be good sports and congratulate the nation on pulling off a grand spectacle. The Qatar Cup brought the world’s greatest sporting spectacle to a long-neglected footballing region. Football got a new flavour – from the hospitality of the local Qataris to the support for Palestine and the protests in Iran. Qatar 2022 was also the tournament that saw the best-ever performance by non-European and non-South American teams. Four Asian and African teams qualified for the knockout stage with Morocco making a fairy-tale run to the semi-final – the first African nation to do so. This World Cup surely proved that football is no monopoly of a select few. That’s a lesson India – currently ranked 106 by Fifa – would do well to take to heart. A nation of 1.4 billion and a large, fast-growing economy should be aiming higher in this most enchanting of sporting endeavours.

*(Editorial, The Times of India 20-12-2022)*

## Who's Afraid of Conversion?

- Faizan Mustafa\*

Swami Vivekananda in his famous address in 1893 at the World Parliament of Religions had said, "The Christian is not to become Hindu or a Buddhist, nor is the Hindu or Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must integrate the spirit of others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth." A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court consisting of Justice MR Shah and Justice Hima Kohli probably had Vivekanand's statement in mind when it observed that forced conversions may "ultimately affect the security of nation and freedom of religion and conscience of citizen."

It directed the central government to clarify what steps it intends to take to curb deceitful or compulsory religious conversions. The solicitor general, too, indicated support of the PIL by Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, who has been filing several petitions of this kind with mixed success. Interestingly, in 2021 a three-judge bench of Justices RF Nariman, BR Gavai and Hrishikesh Roy had dismissed a similar petition by Upadhyay himself and had even threatened to impose heavy costs if he persisted with the petition. This bench had opined that religious conversion law would be violative of the constitution as the constitution allows joining of any

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\* *The writer is a constitutional law expert.*

religion of choice and that's why the word "propagate" is in the Constitution.

Religious conversion has been on the BJP's agenda and a law against it has been in its manifesto. In 2006, LK Advani had said that "We strongly condemn the campaign of proselytisation which poses a grave threat to Hindu society and to the national integration as well as.... it is bad enough that religious conversions are conducted in a systematic manner through inducements and coercion RSS-linked weekly. Organiser has carried a story titled "Amazing cross connection" alleging Amazon's involvement in financing Christian conversion in Northeast.

Justice Shah's concerns look genuine, as, not just in the Northeast or tribal areas, even in the plains of Punjab, people are getting attracted towards Christianity in huge numbers. Ramjit Singh, after superannuation from the navy, has become part of the First Baptist Church and is drawing huge crowds. Similar is the popularity of Ankur Yoseph Narula of The Church of Signs and Wonders and Harpreet Deol of The Open Door Church & Jesus Healing Ministry. Many are making a bee line to these turbaned pastors. Jesus da langar is becoming popular. But, nationally speaking, there is no significant increase in the number of

Christians, though in some villages/tribal areas, their numbers have gone up. Christians are just 2.3 per cent of our population but they are in a majority in Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya. As per PEW findings, only 0.4 per cent Hindu adults are Christian converts.

The Niyogi Commission (1956) and Wadhwa Commission (2000), after the gruesome killing of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons, had highlighted the problem of conversion. It is a different story that the Wadhwa Commission instead of focusing on the motive of the assassin looked more concerned about the motives of converts in Odisha. Strangely, the report reproduced in detail Pastor Timothy Murmu's testimony in which he asserted that "no force or allurement was used on anybody for conversion." Murmu said that the economic conditions of converts did not improve and he himself converted after a serious ailment was cured. A member of the SC group who converts does pay the price of losing the benefit of reservation.

Conversion is an emotive issue for the Hindu right just like Babri Masjid, Article 370, UCC. But the question arises: Will a conversion law really succeed in preventing people from changing their faith? Many of us are not aware that anti-conversion laws had been there in several Hindu princely states even prior to independence, such as Raigarh, Bikaner, Kota, Jodhpur,

Surguja, Patna, Udaipur and Kalahandi. The states of Orissa (1967), Madhya Pradesh (1968), Arunachal Pradesh (1978), too, passed similar laws in the 1960s. The Arunachal Pradesh law was never implemented. How come these laws were not able to contain forced conversions?

Those who favour national anti-conversion laws often take the support of the Supreme Court judgment of 1977 in *Rev Stanislaus v State of Madhya Pradesh*, in which it was held that the MP Freedom of Religion Act, 1968 and Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1968, were constitutional even though both these Acts were hindrances in the propagation of religion. It was held that the "right to propagate" does not mean the "right to convert". HM Seervai, constitutional law expert, called this judgment "productive of great public mischief". Where propagation ends and conversion begins, is difficult to say.

As a result of the above decision, in the last 20 years or so, over a dozen states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, UP, Uttarakhand passed stringent conversion or "love jihad" laws. Even the Congress government in Himachal Pradesh had enacted such a law. The chief minister had told the assembly that nearly 500 conversions have taken place in four years. No one knows how many of them were voluntary and how many were indeed forced conversions. But is this such a big number?

Where is the hard data on cases filed under these laws and convictions made by courts of law and upheld by higher courts? If the state laws have not succeeded, what is the guarantee that a central law would put an end to forced conversions? In January 2021, Madhya Pradesh came up with a stringent ordinance and within the first 23 days, as many as 23 cases were filed alleging force conversions. None of them have resulted in conviction. There has been just one conviction by the lower court out of 16 cases under the UP law. In Chhattisgarh, a Raigarh court in 2002 had convicted two priests and a nun on the charge of forcible conversion of 22 people. But the court had attached no importance to the written testimony of converts to the district authorities that they had changed their faith out of their own free will. Similarly, there have also been incidents of conversion to Hinduism. In 2014, 57 Muslim families with more than 200 members converted to Hinduism in Agra. In 2021, 300 Muslims in Haryana converted to Hinduism. But all these laws strangely do not consider re-conversion as conversion. They are rather called “ghar wapsi”, that is, homecoming.

The other problem with these laws, interestingly called Freedom of Religion laws, is that they provide for the prior permission of public authorities for conversion which is a private act with which the state should have no concern. These laws are also problematic

because all of them had been enacted on the dated premise that women, SCs and STS are vulnerable, need protection and cannot take vital decisions in their life on their own. Thus, these laws perpetuate social hierarchies of a casteist and patriarchal society.

The rhetoric of forced conversions has another big problem — it wrongly assumes that there are no material reasons why a person would want to remain or become a Hindu.

International human rights instruments like UDHR and ICCPR, to which India is a party, specifically include the right to conversion within the freedom of religion provided in Article 18.

Indian Muslims need not oppose the banning of forced conversion as the Qur’an itself prohibits it. The general principle is that there is no compulsion in religion (Q2:256) Allah has explicitly commanded: “Will thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?” (010.99). The Supreme Court’s observation of the limits of “propagate” is indeed consistent with the Qur’anic injunction “And so, (O Prophet!) exhort them your task is only to exhort; you cannot compel them to believe”. (Q.12.88:21, 22).

One has to concede that most of the time the needs of the heart trump those of the mind. Let us therefore debate poverty as well. ■

*(The Indian Express – 18-12-22)*

## Prophet's Upbringing And Evolution of His Character

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi\*

The manifestation of the Prophecy of Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) had taken place in the wake of innumerable prophets having already getting raised amidst the innumerable peoples and after their having performed the assigned task of Prophecy in their respective peoples. These peoples had, despite the best efforts of their respective Prophets, not complied with their injunctions except only a few of them. They brought about very little changes in their respective lives which they used to lead in pursuit of gratification of their sensual desires, the dolce vita that they were engrossed in. Ultimately, Allah Almighty kept span of six hundred years period void of any manifestation of Prophecy and left the matter up to sages and thinkers amongst the human beings letting them get, if they could, their religious and moral ways mended on their own. But, the state of the human beings got further degenerated and had reached the god-awful extent as is mentioned in the holy tradition. Even so, Allah Almighty took pity yet again on the humanity. He decreed to send down such a Prophet as would perform the job of reformation in a more effective and more comprehensive manner and would not keep it confined to merely religious compartment of life. He would, instead, instill in the people a propensity of compliance with the

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\* *Rector, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.*

Command of the Lord of the worlds in all spheres of life and would train them in having that acted out in life. Prior to him, Prophets were kept being sent to various peoples in various regions. They did carry out their jobs within the bounds of their respective regions. But, even despite all their efforts, whenever the hope of reform used to get thwarted and the people would have their Prophet driven to gross frustration, get, rather, bent on having him even killed and annihilated, Allah Almighty would have His Wrath descended on them in the form of Retribution and for having the rot caused by them removed He would have the world totally purged of them.

After the long chain of reformative messages and missions, the era that started with the 6th century AD was felt to be the era that was to usher in extremely debased conditions in the lives of the human beings. On the other hand, the human civilization, having passed through practical experiments conducted with heuristic trial-and-error process, was about to embark upon a multifarious, universal-level order of life and the era of communization of knowledge and mass-education. On the one hand, the human life had reached, in terms of moral and religious conditions, to the extent of extreme debasement giving consequently rise to such a situation wherein either Allah Almighty might, in order to exterminate this

debasement, have this world itself totally eliminated; or, alternatively, adopting the course of extraordinary condescension, grant the humanity one more chance to get reformed.

To that end, that is, in case of adoption of the second alternative, only such Prophet, and none else, was needed as could undertake various sorts of responsibilities in various sorts of circumstances; one whose human attributes, too, were evolved in as best a manner as possible. There was the need of such a Prophet the tablets of whose head and heart had no impressions of the self-affected and self-centered knowledge and civilization of the human beings. The tablets of his head and heart were required to be clean of the human knowledge and education so that the process of educating him through the Divine Instruction could easily be carried out, in order to lay a firm foundation of undertaking the responsibility of shouldering the burden of the Prophecy that was to be as highly far-reaching and comprehensive as could ever be.

Hence, Allah Almighty chose Mohammad (SAW) for this task and made him endure, from the very childhood, such circumstances as would generate in him, in as perfect a manner as possible, the capability to bear the burden of this designated office. And so, He sent down Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), as a Prophet having him endowed with all-embracing, versatile and perfect qualities which were

entirely in keeping with this high office and mission. And so was his upbringing, too. That is how the evolution of a versatile and magnificent personality was planned and perfected. It is what we see prominently in the holy life of the Prophet (SAW); that he was made capable of becoming a paragon and preceptor for the humanity in respect of each and every aspect of human life: individual, social, congenital and civilisational.

The responsibility that the Prophet (SAW) was assigned called for, on the one hand, lofty characteristics at individual level and, on the other hand, capabilities of vast-scale, rather, of universal level of life. On individual level, it called for ideal character, de rigueur social requirements of the human life, statesmanship, amity and affability in maintaining mutual relations, politics, economics, matters of learning and knowledge equal. Simultaneously, he was also accorded the capability of arranging and organizing the subjugation of all those aspects of life to the Will and Approbation of the Lord and Providence of the world. The Divine order of religion and Shariat that had been Decreed was thus to be taken, up to the acme. Because of the religion getting climaxed in it, proclamation of such a Shariah was to be made in it as would have all the issues and problems that might crop up any time up till the Doomsday taken into account. Even, in case of there being people inhabiting various parts of the world, the ways to have the morals and civic

requirements comprehended and adopted were taken into account. It also had into consideration the situations that might emerge from the scientific endeavors and the people associated with them and their dispositions. It was thus the Shariah of far-reaching effects and one that had taken the diversity of the human life fully into account, an all-inclusive and most efficacious Shariah that was ever evolved.

According to the accounts of the previous peoples given in the holy Quran, their Shariats appear to be concerned only with matters confined within the sphere of their limited circumstances. But, the era that was now setting in was bound to have the peoples, owing to civilizational and scientific developments, getting progressively closer to each other, Even though there might be, within it, peoples inhabiting regions having their respective regional and racial distinctions and disparities in the world and the lives. The distinction and disparity could be even on the basis of uniform weather and uniform geographical conditions. There could also be the difference and disparity from the point of view of winter and summer and the long and short duration of day and night. But, owing to civilisational and scientific developments the mutual rapport amongst them, too, had started getting intensified. Even the likely diversity of their respective regional and social conditions of human beings was kept into consideration in the Shariat of the Prophet of this era. Alongside it, the provision was also had in

it for adopting the posture of combating the antagonistic and hostile forces, in case it were necessary to make use of force, in order to establish the order of life of lofty human values and abidance by the injunctions of the Lord of the worlds. Moreover, the new, upcoming era was the one wherein knowledge was going to be made a property common among all the people and was to become the need of each and every human being. For this very reason, perhaps, the guidance received by the Prophet (SAW) through the very first Divine Revelation was commenced, keeping in view the inception of this era, with the word Iqra that is: "read." In this Revelation, the importance of the role played by the pen is also made explicit. The new era is, thereby, obviously accorded the status of the era of knowledge and science. The Lord says:

(Recite thou in the name of thy Lord Who has created everything, has created man from a clot! Recite thou, and thy Lord is the most Bountiful. Who has taught man by the pen, has taught man what he know not.) (Alaque: 1-5)

In this Revelation the importance of knowledge for man is made explicit and that the important instrument to make knowledge public is the pen. It is, therefore, particularly referred to. It is emphasized that knowledge should be associated with the God's name. It is well known that knowledge was left, up till then, unleashed, instead of having it tied up to its original source. It had caused moral depravation

amongst the human beings. Alongside it, it was also taught that man, on getting power and potentiality, develops a tendency towards, and disposition of, intransigence, tyranny and aggression. Hence, he was told to be on the alert. He was cautioned that he would have to give an account of his deeds before his Lord in the Hereafter. The Lord Says:

(No indeed: Verily man exorbitates, as he considers himself self-sufficient. Truly to thy Lord is the return.)  
(Alaue: 6-8)

The history of the post-Islam days tells us that in the era, wherein knowledge was made a public property and common to all and which had started under the aegis of Islam, the followers of Islam supervised, on the one hand, knowledge at international level, widened its scope and had it promoted. Having found out newer after newer fields for it, they set a series of activities, too, in motion in each of them. With their advancements in the field of knowledge they made mankind gain a lot. They, on the other hand, had knowledge associated with the name of God and made it the means of guidance and of the human life, instead of its perdition and ruin. Islam gave the call for increasing knowledge and making it profitable by means of constant deliberation and exploration in it, laying emphasis on the importance of the element of contemplation and deliberation. Islam has, thus, kept it secure from intransigence and aggression and its misuse, contrary to

other nations, as they caused, by means of knowledge, nothing but harm. Having made knowledge the means of estrangement with, rather, denial of, God and intransigence, they had the atom bombs and lethal weapons made. They did nothing but caused the decadence of minds and had it misused.

Anyway the Shariah of this Prophet (SAW) happened to be the one associated with knowledge and fully considerate to the requirements of the means of knowledge that is the human mind. Thanks to it, knowledge became the means of recognition of God and rendering service to His creatures. Apart from knowledge, it adopted a novel attitude towards the wealth and riches. It pointed out towards the human disposition that it starts getting unruly particularly when the wealth is coming in and the man's mind is averse to God and functions in isolation from obedience to God. He thinks it is obtained by him by means of his own endeavour and learning and he can utilize it the way he likes. Thus, the pattern of the religion of Islam that started under the command of the Prophet (SAW) (Fidaho Abi Wa Umme) had the prowess to provide guidance in all aspects of human life. It was, thus, a very comprehensive guidance and it ensured the safety and salvation of man and his triumph in this world and the Hereafter both. And, it got kick-started at full throttle with the holy life of the Prophet (SAW) himself. The necessary guidance in respect of all these aspects was impacted by him. ■

## Islamic Education

- Manzoor Ahmed

### (a) What is education?

Education may be defined as an attempt on the part of individuals and society to transmit to the succeeding generations their accumulated store of the knowledge of arts, values, customs and their ideals of life as a whole as well as their experiences in various fields which should help the younger generation in carrying on their activities of life effectively and successfully. This planned transmission enables the new generation to acquire and assimilate, within a short span of time, the fruits of learning of thousands of years of its predecessors. This generation also enriches this accumulated treasure of knowledge with its own experiences.

In this process, slowly and gradually, this accumulated knowledge becomes very large, too large for the human mind. Therefore, in order to stimulate fast development of the younger generation, a careful selection of the knowledge and experience is made. This brings us to the problem of a constant re-examination of scope and methodology of education. However, this re-examination has to be done by the community with a correct perception of its history, traditions, its cultural and spiritual legacies and its value system as well as a clear understanding of the

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present and future needs of the society.

Education is, therefore, an investment in the development of a total human personality. It is also an effective instrument of social, economic and political change. It supplies the required trained manpower to the community to run its professions, services and economy. If correctly applied, it may also help in creation of a just society and an accelerated development of the younger generation in intellectual, spiritual, cultural and aesthetic fields. History provides many examples where a small community has used its superior education as a means to ensure for itself a position much higher than what its numerical strength would have otherwise given it.

### (b) Education System and Society

No education system operates in a vacuum; it works in a given social, political and ethical milieu. In 1957 the presidents of all the U.S. Universities met at Harvard to devise an educational system absolutely compatible with their system of government. The basic assumption of the participants was that democracy, as practised in the U.S., provided solution to all the needs of their society. They decided to divide all studies in three categories - Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences - and recommended

that every undergraduate should take at least one course from each of the three categories in order to develop himself or herself into all-round democratic personality. Similarly, the socialist block countries have devised their own educational system with an eye to keeping it absolutely compatible with their social and political system. This system also attempts to produce what Claus Mehnert has elaborately described as Soviet Man.”

Both, the Western and the socialist systems of Education have, in this way, tried to produce citizens fully compatible with their value systems and social and political consciousness. They do not allow anyone to disturb their scheme of things in this field. So strong are the constraints placed by the socio-political establishment both in the East and the West that Bertrand Russell was forced to comment that if Christ came and tried to teach his gospel now, he would be restrained from doing so.

**(c) Absence of Moral Contents in the Western and Socialist Models**

In the value system of neither the East nor the West do divinity and religion occupy a place of any serious study. The need to satisfy a person’s spiritual craving is not felt. This is, in fact a negation of an important field of human thoughts and activities. An educational system which overlooks or negates the spiritual cravings of the individual by cutting him from his

religious moorings does make a man or a society rootless. It may produce excellent engineers, competent doctors and learned philosophers but it would fail to imbibe in the younger generation righteous and ethical sensibility without which the other capabilities are not of much avail. Even enlightened Western thinkers realise this weakness of their system. Mr. M.V.C. Jaffreys says in his Aims of Education, “It stands to reason that if education is supremely concerned with the quality of people, it needs the inspiration of some vision of what human beings ought to be; some notion of what is a good kind of person. This is a moral and spiritual quality and one to which it is very difficult to get a clear and united answer in these days of confused and disintegrating values.” In fact, this nihilistic system of education, when thoughtlessly introduced to our society poses a threat not only to the Muslim value system but also to the future civilisation itself.

**(d) Islamic View of Education — Its Distinctive Features**

The education system for the Muslims also has to operate in their special religious, spiritual, social and political milieu. The value system of Islam has created some fundamental differences between Islamic and the modern education system — both of the West and the East.

The first and the foremost difference between the Islamic system

of education and the modern system lies in their attitude towards life itself. While the former does not regard this life as an end in itself but also as a means to the attainment of spiritual goals hereafter, the latter considers this life and its happiness as its final aim. It concerns itself solely and entirely with material well-being on this side of the grave.

Unlike the West, there is no segregation between the religious and secular or temporal education in the Islamic system. This segregation in the West is a curious product of the historical conflict between the Church and the leaders of the Renaissance and Reformation. Ever since, it is reflected in all their social and political institutions. On the six days of the week, people of the West are guided by one set of values and on Sabbath, by another set of values which is represented by the Church. This has produced a permanent dichotomy and double thinking in Western society. In the Islamic value system there is no such segregation. The Islamic concept of education does not lead to such a rootlessness or lack of an integrated personality. The Islamic World View, in fact, controls and determines the educational value of the Muslim Community at large.

In the Islamic system, there is equality of opportunity irrespective of class or economic status. Like the mosque, there is complete equality in

the Madarsa also. There is no room for elitist public schools” in this system.

The Islamic system gives a great deal of freedom to the students to choose their fields of interest and has no rigid examination system. Also, education is seen as an ever-continuing process and it has no limitation of age.

Islamic education is much broader in its scope than the educational systems of the democratic West and the socialist East. It aims at training the sensibility of the pupils in such a manner that in their attitude to their environs and approach to all kinds of knowledge, they are governed by the spiritual and ethical values of Islam. As Shah Waliullah has said, “Muslim education aims at nurturing of a righteous man in a righteous society”.

Another fundamental difference between the Islamic system of education and the modern lies in conception of man himself. In the Islamic concept of life, man is born free and innocent, not burdened with the Original Sin. Here, the man is not only the creature of this earth but also a spiritual being gifted with limitless power to control and govern the Universe. The Qur’an also calls him the Vice regent of Allah on earth and his superiority lies in his knowledge and ability to learn.

As against this, the modern system of Education, its sciences and technology have, instead of serving man

and making him free, started controlling his body and soul. Man, who should be the master of knowledge and sciences, has become, to borrow a phrase from Thomas Hobbes, 'Worm in the entrails' of modern sciences. We shall come to this aspect later in some details.

The aim of acquisition of knowledge in the Islamic system is not merely to satisfy an intellectual curiosity but to train rational and righteous individuals for the moral and physical good of their families, their people and for the entire mankind. The Islamic system of education strikes a balance between the need for individual excellence and the requirements of the society.

Finally, Islamic education is based on the whole-hearted acceptance of the revelation or Wahi as a guide to all knowledge and conduct.

#### **(e) Emphasis on Education In Islamic Theory and Practice**

The importance of education in Islamic theory and practice is too well known to be reiterated here. The word 'Qur'an' comes from 'Quara' meaning 'to read'. During the first half of the 7th Century, Muslims made a vigorous start with education. The sayings of the Holy Prophet cover such modern ideas as compulsory education for both sexes, adult and continuing education and exchange in the field of education and learning. Serious and concerted efforts were made to widen the educated

segment of society without any loss of time and even prisoners of war were asked to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to their captors to obtain their release. This produced an unbelievable educational upsurge in the lives of the nomadic Arabs. In this, the Arabs present an extra-ordinary spectacle in the history of civilisation. The ignorant and illiterate Arabs, within a hundred years after their grand march of conquest, assumed the leadership of intellectual pursuits. It was this extra-ordinary phenomenon which made Muslims masters of a large part of the world in a short time.

History bears witness that a strong army of an intellectually inferior people may win a war against a vastly superior culture but ultimately surrenders, culturally, to the vanquished. The German Tribes defeated the Christians but they themselves ultimately adopted the religion and culture of the vanquished as they could not develop a higher culture of their own. Similarly, the Mangols, after defeating and decimating the Muslims all over Central Asia and Middle East, who themselves converted to Islam as the defeated Muslims had attained a higher cultural level. Similarly, if the Arab Muslims had failed in making such strides in the field of culture and sciences, their military victories would have been of no avail and they could have ended up as Christians or Zoroastrians. However, the extra-ordinary speed with which the

Muslims mastered and advanced the sciences of their times preserved their identity and superiority in political and religious fields also.

**(f) European Renaissance, a Product of Muslim Educational Influences**

The Islamic influence on European culture reached its peak in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century (4th Century Hجري) in Spain when, according to R.W. Southern, in his book, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962 — Page 21) talented young Christians were reading books in Arabic and were reported to “despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention. “They also ignored the study of Latin and took to Arabic. Arabic books were also translated in Latin in large number between the 11th Century and 13th Century. M. Nakosteen in his book *A History of Islamic Origin of Western Education AD 800-1350* (Published by University Colorado Press, 1964) has said that Universities were founded in Europe during the period to assimilate the flood of Muslim sciences and technologies inundating Europe. Incidentally, the highest point of the Muslim sciences and technologies in the West is also the lowest and the most destructive part of our history during the Mongol invasion. While the Islamic sciences stopped growing by the 14th Century, their influence lasted in Europe till 17th

Century.

It was the Muslim influence on Europe which brought about the Renaissance. For four centuries there was not a single advance in the field of science or technology which was not made by the Muslims. Moritz Cantor fails to explain this phenomenon in material terms when he says, “That a people who for centuries together were closed to all the cultural influence from their neighbours, who themselves did not influence others during all this time, who then all of a sudden imposed their faith, their laws and their language, on other nations to an extent which has no parallel in history — all this is such an extra-ordinary phenomenon that it is worthwhile to investigate its causes. At the same time we can be sure that this sudden outburst of intellectual maturity could not have originated of itself.”

It will require a long study to pin point the reasons for decline in the Islamic learning. However, the debilitating battles of the Crusades, Taimoor’s invasion from Delhi to Angora and the Turkish political ascendancy of the Muslim world who could not pay attention to arts and culture on account of their constant warfare, were some of the important reasons for the down-hill journey of Muslim sciences. The defeat and disintegration of the Muslim world at the hands of the nascent industrial powers of Europe completed this Job in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. ■

## Islamic Concept of Literature And Criticism

- M. Iqbal Husain Nadwi

### THE HOLY QUR'AN AND CRITISISM

After the advent of Islam there started an age of light and learning and the "Days of Ignorance" came to an end. Arabs entered a new era of history. The Qur'an, the first Arabic composition in the Arabic language, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), opened a glorious chapter of literature and the Arabs became familiar with science, literature, advanced culture and civilization. As an Islamic manifesto of life, the Qur'an brought the Arabs out of darkness and guided them towards light and learning. Syed Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi (1976) precisely made this observation.

"As humanity lay gasping in an agony of death, God raised Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to resuscitate it and to deliver it from darkness into light. Says the Holy Qur'an: "A book which we have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightiest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light - by the leave of their Lord - to the way of (Him), the Exalted in power, Worthy of all praise. (XIV.I)"

The prophet broke the fetters of ignorance and superstition and invited men to a servitude that released them from every other form of bondage. He restored to them the legitimate comforts of life which they had deprived themselves under

false ethical and spiritual notions. The book of Islam says:

"For He commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure), He relieves them from their heavy burden and releases them from the yokes that are upon them" (VII. 157).

His advent gave to humanity a new life, a new light, a new faith, a new warmth, a new society, and a new culture. It ushered in a new era in the human history marking the commencement of a real mission of man upon earth.

"The blind and the seeing are not alike, nor are the depths of dark nesses and light; nor are the (chilly) shade and the (genial) heat of the sun; nor are alike those that are living and those that are dead." (XXXV. 19-22)

Yawning between Islam and Ignorance there was a chasm as deep and wide as it could be. Yet under the inspired leadership of the Prophet, the world jumped across it and passed from Ignorance to Islam with an alacrity that is without a parallel in history." (P. 36, 37)

Islam as the most progressive religion inspired its followers and believers to acquire knowledge and invoked them to gain more learning and enlightenment

and advised them to reach the culmination of the advancement of learning As Afdalur-Rahman) ( 1981) wrote:

The Qur'an teaches that religious advancement is through the medium of learning. It has placed great emphasis upon learning. In fact the whole philosophy of the Qur'an is based on learning, which raises human status. The Creator's first command to man was to learn: "Read: In the name of your Lord, who created man, out of a (mere) clot of blood, "Read, and your Lord is the Most Bountiful,- He who taught (the use of) the pen - taught man that which he knew not." (96.1-5), (P.32, 33)

Syed Amir 'Ali (1902) also says: "The Koran itself bears testimony to the supreme value of learning and science." (232)

The Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) have suggested to men to touch each and every corner of learning that is beneficial for human beings and advantageous for the human welfare Quoting a number of sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Syed Amir 'Ali (1902) writes:

"He would often say "The ink of the scholar was holier than the blood of the martyr", and repeatedly impressed upon his disciples the necessity knowledge even unto China (Misbaush-Shariyet). He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God". "He who travels in search of knowledge, to him

God shows the way to Paradise". (231,232)

Bashir Ahmed Misri wrote in his article "The Influence of the Holy Qur'an upon Arabic Literature" (1939):

"The impulse given by the Holy Prophet to literary pursuit of the Muslims is not negligible either. There are many sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), which show his burning desire for learning." (P428)

This was the favourite reason that aroused Muslims to illuminating the world with the light of knowledge and spirit of learning. The Holy Qur'an had an impact felt in all branches of science and literature thereafter. Robert L. Gulick Jn. (1953) said:

"It has already been mentioned that the true and most great miracle of Muhammad, the unlettered educator, was the high gift of the Qur'an, the first prose book of the Arabs. This work perpetuated the Meccan dialect as the literary language of the Arabs, and ultimately, by reasons of the universal character of Islam as a mercy for all mankind, the common tongue of the world of culture" (P 89)

He further said: "The Qur'an contains this beautiful short prayer for Intellectual development And say." And say, O Lord, increase me in knowledge (Sura XX, V-113)"(P. 49)

Dr. M. Hamidullah (1974) wrote in these impressive words:

"It is care for an equilibrium between

the body and the soul, that Islam taught Moderation in all things, led the natural talent in the right direction and tried to develop in man a harmonious whole” (P 191)

Gibb throws light on this aspect by saying as:

“The influence of the Qur’an on the development of Arabic literature has been incalculable. Though for several decades at least there was no other prose work written in Arabic, and it exercised little immediate influence on the poets, it was to the studies connected with the Qur’an that a majority of branches of Arabic literature owed their origin”.(P.26)

Recognizing the influence of the Holy Qur’an on the advancement of learning, F.A. Klein says (1918):

“The Qur’an is considered to be not only the source of knowledge of true religion, but of all knowledge and science in general. It is looked up to as the standard of the Arabic language, grammar, style, logic, and is said to contain elements of innumerable other sciences”. (P.4)

It is a fact that the Holy Qur’an depicted a new trend of life and literature and, as a religious book, it codified a standard form for life and introduced principles to be followed thereto. To have an idea of its tendency towards literature it is imperative to get its views about life. Although it is not a book of literary principles or criticism, it points to the way of literary trend, because without life there is no

literature, and it is by itself a masterpiece of literature and it opened a new chapter in the literary field. Keeping this in mind, a brief Islamic view of life and of literature is hereafter attempted. Syed Abul Hasan ‘Ali Nadwi summed up the ideology of Islam about life in these words:

“Islam alone, of all religions embraces life in all aspects. It does not stand as a barrier between man and his legitimate desire to live. It does not regard man’s earthly existence as a gloomy deal of sorrows or a punishment for some original or inherited sin. At the same time, it does not look upon this life as a fleeting opportunity for material satisfaction or a place for sensual delight. Islam proclaims life to be a divine gift so that man may attain nearness unto God and attain perfection by making full use of the possibilities of his body and spirit. It is an opportunity for action to make the best of ourself; (because) there is not going to be another opportunity after it”. (P. 77)

Whereas Islam changed aspects of life and diverted the trend and principles of religion, it described an original view on literature also. The expression and style of the Qur’an was a new lesson for literature. The pagan Arabs had no clear conception of this great work and they could not interpret the Qur’an and hence called it poetry; for, except poetry there was nothing in their mind. The Holy Qur’an refuted this idea and clearly advised that it was neither poetry nor was its subject matter related to poetic aspects. It was a

constitution of life and its style was so sublime and elevated that it could not be compared with any prose writings or other sorts of literature. Nicholson rightly wrote:

“Thus, as regards its external features, the style of the Koran is modelled upon the Saj, or rhymed prose, of the pagan soothsayers, but with such freedom that it may fairly be described as original. Since it was not in Muhammad ‘s (peace be upon him) power to create a form that could be absolutely new, his choice lay between Saj and poetry, the only form of elevated style then known to the Arabs .... He, the divinely inspired Prophet, could have nothing to do with men who owed their inspiration to demons and gloried in the ideals of paganism which he was striving to overthrow. “And the poets do follow those who go astray. Dost thou not see that they wander distraught in every vale? and that they say that which do not do.” (Koran XXVI, 224-226). (P. 159)

It means that the Holy Qur’an was not a book of poetry but pointed out a guideline with regard to poetry and literature. Its revelations gave directive principles towards literature, although not in a great deal and only in dispersed meditations. An outstanding modern Arabic ‘Abd al-Rahman Rafat-al-Basha (1985) noted: “Islam brought a great change in the function of literature and a great difference in the views of people towards it.”(P.7)

Islam changed the current views of

literature in the mind of people and this change was due to many factors and principles of Islam and the Holy Qur’an, but as a directive principle to examine the literature these words were there as guidelines in the Holy Qur’an:

“As for the poets, it is the seduced who follow them. Observest thou not that they wander about every vale? And that they say that which they do not do. Save those who believed and worked righteous works and remembered Allah much and vindicated themselves after they had been wronged?”(XXVI.224-227)

Summing up the comments on these words of the Holy Qur’an, a noted critic and commentator of the Qur’an, ‘Abd al-Majid Daryabadi (1971) writes:

“These straying in the course of evil; wicked, these having not relation with the realities of life always indulging in fancies and phantasm divorced from real life. The poets very often painted a vicious thing so vividly and alluringly as to excite passions and to darken the intellect. Poetry, unless kept under control by reason or Revelation, is apt to induce mental unbalance and hysteria, and is the fountain-head of false values ... Poetry, with its usual concomitant of imagination running riot, is condemned outright. An exception is made in favour of such poets as enjoined to true faith and piety and vindicate and promulgate the religion of God or write satirical verse in sheer self-defence.” (P.367)

In the Qur’an, the word Shi’r (poetry)

or Sha'ir (poet) are used to defend the charges of the pagan Arabs against the Prophet (peace be upon him) or the Holy Qur'an as a poet or poetry, and to give this idea that it contains the elements of innumerable other sciences. It concentrated on the idea of standard form of literature and criticism in the aforesaid words. In this regard Sami Makki al-'Ani (1975) made a good comment and gave an outline:

“He, who studies the word Shi'r and Sha'ir in the Holy Qur'an, will find these words in five places (Anbiya-5, Yasin-69, Saffat-36, Tur-30, Haqaat-69).”

These five places which I have mentioned are to conceive of the attitude of polytheists towards the Qur'an and its influence on the human being and moreover to refute their comments as well as to assurance that the Qur'an is the revelation from Allah. It is inspired by Gabriel in the heart of Muhammad (peace be upon him). All these are to reject the charge that the Prophet is among the poets and these are to prove null and void the claims of the polytheists in this regard that the Qur'an is a sort of poetry as all commentators seem to believe. In these five places the Qur'an does not speak about poetry as an art. It is permissible for Muslims to either assume or not. The words Shi'r and Sha'ir are used to determine into and distinguish between them only. And the place where the Qur'an used the words of Shi'r (poetry) for art indicated that was possible that it would

be used for good or vicious (purpose). As Allah said:

“As for the poets it is the seduced who follow them. Observe these not that they wander about every vale; and that they say that which they do not do.”

The Qur'an did not wage a war against poetry itself in these sentences, but waged a war against the course which was adopted by Shi'r and Sha'ir (path on which a man walked) the way of mere pleasure and excitement that has not a uniform code, and a way of dream which is not concerned with reality for its followers.” (P.26-27)

In the light of the above sentences of the Holy Qur'an it is stated that the Holy Qur'an as a uniform code or constitution directs human beings to walk on the right path and to work for human welfare, but the aesthetic attitude should always be kept in mind and this aesthetic trend will not divert men from good to delusion or deception. Islam by itself, reminds us of Heaven. It gave its detailed description in the aesthetic manner that inspires human beings to follow the aesthetic vision, because the aesthetic temperament animates human welfare, it is the basic purpose of Islam and its perfect ideology. If there is no good conception or image of art in life, it cannot produce a masterpiece which contains pleasure, sublimity and values of human life. The noted Arabic critic Syed Muhammad Rabey Nadwi (1983) states this point in these words:

“In fact, the religion Islam is not limited to the mere prayers as it is said that its literature is reduced in the scope of prayers only, but, of course, that is the unique religion that expanded like the expansion of a human being and it developed like his life. It did not oppose (other things) except those which contradict human welfare and the aesthetic quality, whereas it goes against, it takes the route of destruction against human welfare and humanity.” (P. 11)

Syed Qutub who is one of the most learned and renowned Arabic scholars of the 20th century has written in detail about the conception of the Holy Qur’an with reference to literature and criticism. He has specially drawn attention of the critics to the literary principles of criticism embodied in the Holy Qur’an and has proposed to examine literature with a new approach according to Qur’anic theory. He evaluates the literary principles of the Holy Qur’an in these words:

“By nature, Islam is a complete code of life. It is to be executed in the life of the material world. It is a great movement in the concealed hearts and in the practices of the worldly life. The constitution of Islam does not agree with the nature of poets as the human race generally recognizes them, because the poet creates a dream world in his sentiment and feels satisfied with it. But Islam wants to realize the dream and to act on its realization. It wants to change all sensation into fact and truth in this world that is its sublime specimen.

In spite of this, Islam by itself does not forbid poetry and art.

As it is understood from the outward meaning of the word, that Islam wages war against the uniform that is codified by poetry and art. It is the way of pleasure and sentiment that does not have a perfect theory. It is the way to Utopia which distracts its performers to realize it. Whereas the spirit of Islamic principles make art and poetry nurture with the influence of Islamic disposition. It plays an important role in realizing this noble sensation in the world (Fi Dilal) Qur’an, Vol.1X. 120-124)

Syed Qutub sums up the ideology and the theory of the Qur’an in connection with the principles of literary criticism in these words:

“The Qur’an explains that the approach of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and of the Qur’an is basically different from the approach of the poet and poetry. The Qur’an takes a clear stand and urges to a perfect goal. It walks on a straight path (to reach) to this goal. The Prophet does not speak today anything that contradicts tomorrow. He does not follow variable pleasures and excitements. He persists in the preaching and stands firm in the belief. He largely puts into practice the Islamic principle without a slight deviation from it. The poets are not such. They walk on the path of variable excitements and changeable passions. Their sensations govern them

and they are directed to pronounce them. They observe something black at one time and white in the next moment. They look happy with a word and angry with others. They are such men as change their disposition in a short time and are not firm in position.” (P. 119)

This long statement of Syed Qutub regarding the Qur’anic attitude towards literature and criticism gives this direction that the Holy Qur’an appreciates healthy and great literature, but there are some restrictions that will be applied and a critic is bound to follow them, otherwise critical appreciation will not be considered a first rate criticism and the literature will be under the high watermark and will lose its greatness. According to it, great art or literature must be a good art or good literature in regard to subject matter and style. This is a notable point that a great art is always good, but for a good art it is not necessary to be great. It is great whenever the subject matter regards human welfare, moral values, eternal life, truthness of beauty, interpretation of life, imitation and imagination of goodwill. Its diction and style are grand and sublime. In spite of the contradictions between the philosophy of life and of the Qur’an and the theory of Walter Pater there is a similarity between them regarding literature Pater says: “Good art, but not necessarily great art, the distinction between great art and good art depending immediately, as regards literature at all events, not on its form, but on the matter.” (“Style”, P24)

But poetic sentiment or contemplation of beauty is not enough and it is not a quality that is to be appreciated only. To attain mainly pleasurable elevation or excitement of the soul that is recognized as the poetic sentiment is not enough for good art. The poetic sentiment would be inter-wined with the truth as it is and interpreted by the Qur’an. It means that the poet composing a verse should take care of morality and of higher ethical values; but his composition should not be merely propaganda literature or an advocacy of moral education. Poetic sentiment will attain morality so delicately that it will inspire people to recognize the most glorious Pious pleasure and beauty will be the province of the poem. As a poet who believes in God and performs his actions and functions in seeking pleasure in the eternal life and has always human welfare in his mind, learns to acknowledge beauty for the pleasure of society. The Qur’anic teaching obviously indicates that every man should identify natural beauty, goodwill, good thinking and good conception of the universe by means of achievements and natural gift of artistic capabilities in various fields without good ideology or good deeds in life one cannot produce good literature or good art. Whereas an artist who has good imagination of his God and His natural gift, may have a good sentiment. His sensuousness that is pertaining to beautiful things is a touchstone which excites the emotions, as a result, to

compose poetry or to inscribe a beautiful imaginative art that matches real life. A noted Arabic critic 'Abd al-Rahman Hasan Habannaka (1983), describing the aesthetic value in the literature and the poetic sentiment in the light of the Holy Qur'an and its conception, says: "No wonder that poetry is one of the aspects of beauty in literature." (P.76)

He uses this sentence only to propound the Qur'anic ideology of literary criticism. Cantarin(1982) says that:

Koranic commentators as well as men of letters emphasized the fundamental opposition between the sincere truthfulness of Koranic discourse and the lack of sincerity of the poets in their compositions. Although the practical explanation for the denial of the poetic character of the Koran alays retained formal considerations about its lack of rhythmic metre and rhyme, the theological emphasis on the Koranic truth versus the mendacity of the poets in their compositions introduced into Arabic literary criticism a new direction in the inquiry concerning the real nature of poetry. The significance of an approach based on what we could call 'ethics of poetics' lay in the fact that it forced literary analysis of poetry to de-emphasize the formal aspects of rhyme and metrical rhythm and to concentrate on a consideration of the poetic content (P-34).

This is the principle of the Holy Qur'an that literature is like a weapon or

sword that may be used for a noble purpose or a vicious cause. Good literature, as a good material, may create an atmosphere of peace and Justice. Its contemplation of beauty, sweet language and diction, influential grand style, its sublimity, healthy meditations, noble ideas, profundity and good spirit may prove like a beautiful flower whose sweet smell and perfume gives pleasure to everyone who passes by it. A man who plants this kind of flower exists in a place that deserves love; is beloved of the society. According to the Holy Qur'an, a man whose actions are good, exists in a good society and his creative work whether it is literary or of other sort is for the good purpose. If he uses his sword, it is also for justice and to teach a good lesson. We may say in the words of Longinus:

"We may regard these words as truly noble and sublime, which please all and please always. For where the same impression on all who read it, whatever be the differences in their pursuits, their manner of life, their aspiration, there ages, or their language, such a harmony of opposites gives authority to their favourable opinion. " (Tr.H L Havell,C VII)

Summing up, we may say that the Holy Qur'an requires a literature which consists of universal qualities, aspects of noble life and is able to present a gentle world of beautiful art; and highly remarkable literature that is produced only for human welfare.■

*(To be continued)*

## Intellect: The Core of The Life

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

In his book "The Fall of the Human Intellect" Swami Parthasarathy has beautifully illustrated the difference and disparity between intellect and intelligence. He has rightly said, "A man is a brilliant scientist with profound knowledge of his subject. He has acquired abundant intelligence but never cared to develop his intellect. His intellect has always remained weak. It lacks the strength to handle the multifarious demand of the mind. His intellect is not powerful enough to control the nagging desire. He further said, 'The world abounds in personalities with one sided development. Intelligence and no intellect. Following this trend humanity has reached a perilous state.'"

There is no doubt that today the entire world is in a state of turmoil due to lack of intellect. Peace and happiness cannot be attained sans enhancing this essence.

Imam Al-Gazzali said, "Intellect is the source and fountainhead of knowledge as well as its foundation. Knowledge springs from it as the fruit from the tree and the light from the sun and vision from the eye."

It should be noted the word 'Aql' has been frequently used in the Holy Qur'an for human intellect. The Almighty Allah says: "Have they not journeyed in the earth, so that there might become unto them hearts to understand with, or ears to hear with? Surely it is not the sights that

are blind, but blind are the hearts that are in the breasts (xxii; 45) He further says: "And wert thou to ask them: who sends down water from the sky, and there with revives the earth after its death? They would surely say: Allah say thou: all praise to Allah! Aye! Most of them reflect not (xxix; 63). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "The first thing which God created was the intellect. On creating it God ordered it saying, come forth, and it came forth He then ordered it saying, 'Return' and it returned. There upon God said, "By My power and glory I have created nothing more reverent towards Me than thee. Through thee I take and through thee I give, through thee I reward and through thee I punish." The holy Prophet also said: Verily the believer who is most beloved of God is he who toils in the service of God and gives counsel to his people, whose understanding is complete; who admonishes himself and consequently sees (the truth) and acts accordingly all the days of his life, with the result that he himself prospers and leads other to success". And again, "the man who possesses the most mature mind among you is he who fears God most fulfilling best what He enjoined and desisting from what He has forbidden, although that man may be the least willing to obey."

It was related on the authority of Ibn-Abbas that the Apostle of God said, "For everything there is an instrument and a tool, and the instrument of the believer is his intellect, for everything there is a

mainstay, and the mainstay of man is his intellect, for everything there is a support, and the support of religion is the intellect, for every group of men there is a goal, and the goal worshippers is the intellect; for every people there is missionary (who calls them to the true faith), and the missionary of the devout is the intellect; for every merchant there are goods and merchandise and the merchandise of the scholars is the intellect; for every house there is a keeper, and the keeper of the house of the saints is the intellect; for the every ruin there is rehabilitation, and the rehabilitation of the death is the intellect; for every man there is an offspring who bears his name an perpetuates his

memory and the off springs of the saints, who bear their names and perpetuate their memory, are their intellects; and finally for every journey there is a shelter and the shelter of the believers is the intellect.”

The need of the hour is that we must develop and strengthen the intellect. It is such an asset that helps in ascending endless heights of spiritual and intellectual perfection and elevation. Besides it saves us from destruction, devastation and ruin. Suffice it to say that we cannot achieve the desired goals and motives without it. In the words of Albert Einstein, “Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.” ■

### Unity in biodiversity

A landmark Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was hammered out in Montreal on December 19 under the umbrella of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. It's important for a couple of reasons. Biodiversity now will be accorded seriousness in the effort to limit environmental damage. And there are some realistic measures among the four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030. The most important goal is that the level of biodiversity protection which today is limited to 17% and 10% of the world's terrestrial and marine areas respectively will now be enhanced to 30%.

The term biodiversity represents the collection of all living things on earth. Scientists have identified about 1.6 million different species, only a part of what is believed to exist. This biodiversity is the result of at least 4 billion years of evolution that has left all forms of life intricately wound together. For example, many insects serve as pollinators that are essential to agriculture. The three primary direct causes for biodiversity loss are land use change (30%), over-exploitation (20%) and climate change and pollution (14%).

Formulating biodiversity protection as a step against economic development is inaccurate. Consider India's experience with rice, the most important food crop by output. Between 1950-51 and 2016-17, India's rice production increased over fivefold to about 110 million tonnes a year. Yet, during the same period the area under rice cultivation rose just 1.4 times to 43.19 million hectares. This was achieved without India being an exceptional performer in productivity and agricultural practices. It shows the extent to which technological advancement has offset fears that may have been valid 50 years ago. In this context, one of GBF's suggestions merits mention. It calls for reform of subsidies that undermine biodiversity. Realising this goal is in India's self-interest and something Gol and many states seek.

Technological progress makes the possibility of enhancing biodiversity protection without sacrificing economic output achievable. This takes us to the challenging issue of financing biodiversity protection. GBF's target is to raise annual international financial flows to poorer countries to at least \$25 billion by 2025 and \$30 billion by 2030. The poor track record of meeting financing targets in combating climate change is bound to lead to scepticism. Despite this drawback, there's a lot in the GBF that is achievable and also in sync with India's vision. That's reason for optimism.

*(Editorial, The Times of India 20-12-2022)*

## Kinds of Income And Expenditure

There were only five sources of income in Islam due to various reasons: Booty, fee, Zakat, Jizya, Kharaj. With the exception of the first and second, the rest were collected annually. The booty came in the hands of the Muslims only as a result of victory. It was a custom among the Arabs that one-fourth of the Booty called Marba was taken by the commander of the army and the rest was taken by those who happened to lay their hands on it. There was no regular system of distribution. After the battle of Badr, the booty was declared as the property of Allah, the fifth part of which was set apart for spending on various purposes of the Khilafat:

They ask thee (O Muhammad) of the spoils of war say: The spoils of war belong to Allah and the messenger.

*(Spoils of War)*

Property of Allah and the Messenger means that it is not the personal property of the soldiers; the Khalifa has the right to spend it in the best interests of the state. Similarly it has been mentioned about Khums (fifth part) in the Holy Qur'an:

And know that whatever ye take as spoils of War. Lo! a fifth thereof is for Allah, and for the Messenger and for the kinsman (who hath need) and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer.

*(Spoils of War)*

With the exception of one or two instances, where the Holy prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) distributed the booty among the muhajirin or newly converted Muslims of Makkah, it was a usual practice that he distributed a part thereof equally among the soldiers; three shares to the riders and one share to those on foot. According to some traditions, the riders used to get only two shares. Only a little portion of the Khums was used on personal needs; generally it was spent on the deserving and needy persons as has been said in the above verse.

Payment of Zakat was incumbent upon the Muslims only it was collected from four sources i.e. cash, fruits and agricultural produce, cattle (excepting horse) goods for trading. No Zakat was levied upto two hundred dirhams of silver, twenty mithqals of gold and five camels. Zakat which was taken on agricultural production was levied on the quantity of five wasq (or 300sa'a according to the research of Imam Tirmidhi) or more than five wasq. Fortieth part of silver and gold was deducted for Zakat. The rate of Zakat on cattle was in accordance with the number of different species of animals, the detail of which can be seen in the books of Ahadith and Fiqah. There were two kinds of land, the first which was irrigated with rain water or flowing water. One-tenth of the production from such

land was taken as 'Ushr and from the land which was irrigated by canals, tube-wells etc. one-twentieth of 'Ushr was deducted. There was no Zakat on vegetable. Zakat could be spent in eight ways, the detail of which is given in the Holy Qur'an. It can be spent on the beggars, poor, newly converted persons, purchase of servants in order to free them, those under debt, travellers, disbursement of pay of collectors of Zakat and other welfare works. Zakat was usually spent on the deserving and needy persons of the place whence it was collected. The companions had become so used to it that once Ziyad posted a certain companion as collector at some place. When he returned, Ziyad demanded the amount from the collector who replied: We have disbursed it in the way we have been doing in the period of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When Mu'adh bin Jabal was appointed as Governor of Yemen, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed about Zakat Sadaqa (Zakat) will be taken from the rich and distributed among the poor.

Jizya is taken from the non-Muslims in lieu of taking the responsibility of their protection and safety. Its rate was fixed. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had ordered to receive one dinar from every sane male of his subject. Women and children were

exempted from this task. The collection of Jizya of Aila amounted to three hundred dinars. In the days of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the largest amount of Jizya was received from Bahrain.

### **Kharaj**

The share of the agricultural production of land fixed as a result of mutual agreement with the non-Muslims, in lieu of the rights of their ownership, is called Kharaj. It was Kharaj which was collected from Khaibar, Fadak, valley Al-Qura and Taima. When the crops and fruits were ripe, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent one of his companions who made an estimate after seeing the crops and fruits. In order to remove any doubt, one-third was deducted from this estimate and Kharaj was imposed on the rest in accordance with the terms and conditions. In Khaibar, the treaty of peace was entered into on the condition that half of the production should be paid. The amount of Kharaj and Jizya was spent on the salaries of the soldiers and to meet the expenses of war. All the companions acted as volunteers and whatever they got, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) distributed it there and then, firstly to those who were previously slaves. The names of such people were recorded in a register and were called out serial wise. Those who had families were given two shares and those who were single were recipient of one share.

### **Property and Cultivation of Uncultivated Lands**

Major part of Arabia was desert, barren and stony. Fertile lands were under the possession of foreigners; the rest of land was uncultivated. Cultivation was done in Madinah and Ta'if. The other Arabs lived on looting or trading. In the absence of any regular profession, the life of the Arabs was not safe. It was, therefore, essential for the establishment of law and order that management of land should be done according to the need of time. Many lands were lying uncultivated due to the migration of non-Muslims from Yemen and Hijaz. These lands needed habitation.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave an incentive to his companions in the following words:

Anyone who cultivated the uncultivated land that land belongs to him and whosoever made the boundary of a land, that belongs to him.

Besides this general incentive, he also made special arrangements. The date-palms and fields of Banu Nadir and Danu Quraiza were declared as belonging to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he got them distributed among the Muhajirin and some persons of Ansar. The land of Khaibar remained under the control of the Government and the rest was distributed among the Muhajirin and Ansar who participated in

Hudaibiya; but practically they had to deal with the Jews who took one-half of the production themselves and gave the other half to the owners. The cultivated lands, however, remained under the possession of their original owners on certain conditions. So the settlement with 'Ak, Dhu Khiwan 'Aila, Adhrah, Najran etc. was made this basis. The uncultivated lands were also handed over the companions as their property. Hadrat Wa'il was granted a plot in Hadr Maut. Bilal bin Harith Muzani was allotted a big plot of land and shops. Hadrat Zubair and Hadrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) were granted estates near Madinah and Khaibar. Banu Rifa'a was given land near Dummat al-Jandal.

These properties and estates were granted so generously that every person could choose them and verify the correctness of its area. Once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Hadrat Zubair (may Allah be pleased with him): The distance to which your horse can reach will be your estate. So he made his horse to run. It stopped at a particular place. From there he threw his stick and the point where it fell was reckoned as the area of his estate. Springs of water were urgently required for the desert land of Arabia. Once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered: He who would seize the spring which is not already in the possession of a Muslim, that would belong to him. All the people ran to

locate their springs.

The fame of this generosity spread far and wide and the people began to submit applications for grant of estates which were accepted by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Once a companion came to him and have granted a big spring to them as endowment. Since it was a public property, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took it back. These endowments were not from the public properties; the properties of public welfare were not touched. It was an ancient custom among the Arabs that they had their own pastures called Huma. The tree generally served as fodder for camels and there was no restriction on it; but when Abyad bin Hamat tried to include it in his pasture, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not allow him to do so. It was a custom among the Arabs that their chiefs and rulers took possession of their own pastures for grazing their own cattle and did not let anyone enter therein. As the general public suffered by it, restrictions were imposed on this practice. Similarly there was a place in Arabia named Dahna. On one side of it lived the tribe of Bakr bin Wa'il and the other side was inhabited by Banu Tamim. Huraith bin Hassan requested the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that the land may be granted to Bakr bin Wa'il. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that sanction

regarding the grant of land may be issued. Just at that time, a woman from the tribe of Banu Tamim was sitting there. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) looked at her. She said: O Messenger of Allah! It is a pasture for grazing our camels and goats and the women and children of Banu Tamim live near it. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: What the poor women say is true. Don't issue the sanction. A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. One spring and one pasture is sufficient for all.

#### **The Management of the Religion**

Of all the administrative arrangements which were done for establishing law and order in the country, the most important was the management of the religious affairs. There was a particular family among the Jews which perform this duty. Among the Christians, although it was not the duty of one specific family to manage the religious affairs, a special group had emerged which had the sole monopoly in this respect. Among the Hindus a non-Brahmin cannot exercise this right. The other nations of the world were no exception. But in the Shari'ah which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought, this duty was not performed by any specific person or family or group but every Muslim could exercise this function. ■

*(Extracted from Sirat-un-Nabi V-3 by Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, page 52-56)*

## Inside India

### **Stalin gives Rs 5cr. to JNU to set up Tamil literary studies dept.**

Chief Minister Stalin presented a cheque for Rs 5crore to create a separate department of Tamil Literary Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. The cheque was handed over to Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Vice-chancellor of the university. The Chief Minister presented royalty to writers whose works had been nationalized. He also conferred the Tamil Semmal Award on 38 Tamil scholars and Translators' Award on 10 translators. Tamil scholars whose works were nationalized included Nellai S. Divan, Viduthalai Rajendran and N. Mammathu. They were given Rs 15 lakh each.

### **Bihar hooch tragedy: 2 of liquor mafia held**

The special investigation team probing into the biggest hooch tragedy in dry Bihar's Saran district in which at least 70 people died arrested two liquor mafia in connection with the case, police said. Those arrested were identified as Akhilesh Kumar Yadav, alias Akhilesh Rai, and Anil Singh said Saran superintendent of police Santosh Kumar. Initial probe has revealed the accused had brought spirit from Uttar Pradesh which was used in making of spurious liquor that was consumed by villagers in Saran leading to the deaths.

### **16 Army Men Killed as Truck Falls off Mountain Road in North Sikkim**

Sixteen Indian Army personnel including three Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) were killed and four injured when a truck carrying them fell off a mountain road while negotiating a sharp

turn at Zema in North Sikkim. President Daroupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah were among those who expressed anguish over the loss of lives and wished the injured speedy recovery.

### **SC Seeks Govt. reply on Plea For Caste, Based Census For OBCs**

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has sought response from the Centre and others on a plea seeking directions for a caste-based census for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the upcoming Census.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha issued notices to the Centre, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and others while seeking their replies.

It also tagged the matter with a similar case pending before it.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Krishan Kanhaya Pal who said that the governments are unable to share the benefits of the welfare schemes with all sections among backward classes due to a lack of caste-based survey and a caste-based census of the OBCs is of 'vital necessity'.

The petition had contended that concrete policies cannot be formulated in the absence of concrete data.

Pal had stated that despite the announcement made by the then Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in 2018, there would be a census of the OBC population during the 2021 Census, however, the government refrained from tabling the report of the Rohini Commission that was established in 2017.■

## Around the World

### **18 Nuclear-Capable Bombers Threaten Taiwan**

**Taipei:** China sent a record 18 nuclear-capable bombers into Taiwan's air defence zone, Taipei said, just days after Beijing banned more Taiwanese imports in the latest sign of deteriorating ties. Democratic Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by China, which sees the self-ruled island as part of its territory to be seized one day.

Beijing has ramped up military, diplomatic and economic pressure since the 2016 election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, who rejects its stance that the island is part of China. In a daily update Taiwan's defence ministry said 21 aircraft entered the island's southwest air defence identification zone over the last 24 hours, including 18 nuclear-capable H-6 bombers. That represents by far the largest daily sortie by H-6 bombers since Taipei first began releasing daily incursion data in September 2020.

### **PM Modi's Views on Nukes Impacted Russia: CIA Chief**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's views on the use of nuclear weapons had an impact on the Russians and could well have averted a global disaster in the context of the Ukraine war, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Bill Burns said, according to television network PBS. "I think it's also been very useful that Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi in India have also raised their concerns about the use of nuclear weapons as well. I think that's also having an impact on the Russians," Bill Burns said in an interview with PBS. India has maintained its stance on holding dialogue on the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

### **EU Reaches Deal on Major Carbon Market Reform**

EU announced an agreement for a major reform to the bloc's carbon market. The deal aims to

accelerate emissions cuts, phase out free allowances to industries and targets fuel emissions from the building and road transport sectors. The deep reforms are part of the region's plan to cut emissions by at least 55% from 1990 levels by 2030, and reach net zero by 2050.

### **US Finds Record Number of Guns on Passengers**

WASHINGTON: The federal agency tasked with screening passengers before they get on planes says officers this year have stopped a record number of guns brought by passengers attempting to go through airport security checkpoints. The TSA officers in the US have found 6,301 firearms in carry-on bag so far this year, surpassing the previous record of 5,972 found in 2021.

### **Don't Believe UK is Racist, Says Sunak Amid Royal Row**

London: Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has defended the UK's record on race amid a brewing row over controversial remarks by a columnist attacking Prince Harry's wife Meghan Markle, who is of African-American heritage.

Sunak was addressing questions posed by reporters during a visit to the Latvian capital of Riga when he spoke out against racism. "I absolutely don't believe that Britain is a racist country. And I'd hope that as our nation's first British Asian PM when I say that it carries some weight," he said. Sunak was reacting to an ongoing row over former TV presenter and columnist Jeremy Clarkson writing in 'Sun' about loathing Meghan Markle, "on a cellular level", in the wake of the controversial 'Harry and Meghan' documentary been aired on Netflix recently. Meanwhile, more than 60 cross-party British MPs have written to the editor of 'Sun' to demand action be taken against Clarkson. ■

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