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The Fragrance of East

Founder:

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

Patron:

S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi

Advisory Board :

Jafar Masood Hasani Nadwi

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Shamsul Haque Nadwi

Editor:

Shariq Alavi

Asstt. Editor:

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Malice a Serious Evil

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The view of life arising from prophetic teachings has equity and moderation as its two immutable bases. Speaking of the right-guided persons, the Qur'an says:

"And those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is ever a firm station between the two."

(*Al-Furqan* : 67)

Again, the dominant characteristic of the followers of the Qur'an is stated to be their remarkable moderation:

"Thus we have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be a witness against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you."

(*Al-Baqarah*: 143)

The Prophet himself afforded an illustrious example of complete and ennobling moderation. The distinguishing feature of Islam too, described as "the straight path" and "a right religion", is natural temperance and moderation and refraining from the aberrations of excess and extremism. Addressing the Prophet of Islam, says. God Almighty :

"Say: Lo! As for me, my Lord hath guided me unto a straight path, a right religion, the community of Abraham, the upright, who was no idolater."

(*Al-Anam*: 162) ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

"Tell them: 'Call upon those whom you fancy to be [your helpers] beside Him! They have no power to remove any affliction from you, nor can they shift it.' Those whom they call upon are themselves seeking the means of access to their Lord, each trying to be nearer to Him. They crave for His mercy and dread His chastisement. Surely your Lord's punishment is to be feared."

(Al-Qur'an-17:56-57)

These verses throw a challenge to the unbelievers and polytheists to call upon their self-made deities whom they consider to be their helpers beside God to come to their rescue at times of affliction. They assert that these deities have no power to remove any affliction.

Not only prostrating oneself before someone other than God but also praying to and invoking anyone other than God amounts to associating others in His Divinity, i.e. to polytheism. Prayer and invocation are modes of worship and anyone who invokes someone other than God is as guilty of polytheism as an idol-worshipper.

Nor can anyone other than God avert a calamity or alter anyone's plight. If someone entertains such beliefs about anyone other than God, then such beliefs are false and betray the fact that he associates others with God in His Divinity. How ironic that those whom the polytheists invoked and whom they sought to intercede with God on their behalf were themselves in need of God's mercy, dreaded His punishment, and were constantly on the look-out for the means which would bring them close to Him. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas that Muadh said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) sent me (as governor of Yemen) and (at the time of departure) instructed me thus: you will soon find yourself in a community one among the People of the Book; so first call them to testify that there is no god but Allah, that I (Muhammad) am the messenger of Allah, and if they accept this, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers during the day and the night, and if they accept it, then tell them that Allah has made Zakat obligatory for them that it should be collected from the rich and distributed among the poor, and if they agree to it, don't pick up (as a share of Zakat) the best of their wealth. Beware of the supplication of the oppressed for there is no barrier between him and Allah.

(Sahih Muslim)

The People of the Book never denied the existence of God. Their belief however was not correct as it was alloyed with wrong conceptions and mistaken notions. This shows that mere faith in God is not enough. Therefore, the Holy Messenger asked Muadh to call the People of the Book to testify God, first and foremost. Calling to the prophethood of Muhammad is indicative of the fact that belief in his prophethood is an integral part of the faith. This hadith highlights the practical wisdom with which Dawah should be imparted to the fellow beings. ■

The Way of Prophet

We lead our life in accordance with Allah's guidance we would follow the right way leading us to Paradise. Allah's guidance has been conveyed to man in the form of the Scriptures- 'the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms and other scrolls through His Messengers. Lastly, after the Christ, the same guidance in the form of Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, the last Messenger, the intercessor of the Sinners, the mercy for the world and the best among pious. Allah says "Thus have We sent you O Muhammad to a community before whom other communities has passed away; in order that you might recite unto them what We have inspired to you.

Angels visited the Prophet while he was asleep. They told one another: "There is a saying for this person (Muhammad) and they related the same (so that it may reach the Prophet's followers)." Some angels said: "Since he is asleep, it is pointless to relate the same". To this some said: "While he is asleep, his heart remains awake (so it should be related)." Then they elaborated: "His similitude is that of one who built a house, managed for a feast there and sent a person to invite the people to the same. Then the one who accepted the invitation, would enter the house and have food. But the one who rejects his invitation would not enter the house and get no food". Some angels asked its further clarification—so that he (the Prophet) may

follow it. Someone observed: "He is asleep." To this others replied: "He is asleep while his heart remains awake." the angels said: "(In the above similitude) the house represents Paradise, the caller is Muhammad. One who accepts his call stands for the one who obeys Muhammad and thus obeys Allah; and the one who rejects his call disobeys Muhammad and thus disobeys Allah. Muhammad thus distinguishes between people in respect of truth and falsehood." (Bukhari)

Explanation: What the above-quoted Hadith means is that Allah built a house i.e., Paradise, and arranged for provision therein. Then He sent down Muhammad as Messenger among people, asking him to invite people to the provisions in Paradise. Accordingly he invited people to the same. Those who greeted his call, affirming sincerely that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger, and led their life in obedience to him would enter the house, i.e., Paradise and enjoy Divine bounties by partaking provisions in Paradise. And those rejecting his call would not enter the house. Nor would they get any of the provisions of the house i.e. Paradise. ■

S.A.

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Some Outstanding Muslim Personalities

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Intrinsic Strength

The appearance, from time to time, among a people of personalities that are endowed with exceptional capabilities in the different branches of human endeavour is a proof of its intrinsic strength and creative vitality. It shows that the sources of its thought and action have not yet run dry, its spirit is alive and it has not forfeited its right to existence with honour and dignity in the world. The Indian Muslims have reason to be proud of them-selves in this respect. They have remained well supplied with their share of outstanding men who have risen gloriously above the common level in their respective spheres of living and doing.

Exodus of Muslims Following Tartar Invasion

As soon as the foundations of a strong and enlightened Muslim Kingdom were laid in India in the 12th Century, learned men and artists and skilled craftsmen had started to assemble under its benevolent shadow from all parts of the Islamic world. A tremendous impetus was given to this exodus by the Tartar invasion of the Muslim east. The Tartars had laid desolate the entire Islamic Empire, but their wrath had

fallen most ferociously on its capital, Baghdad, and on its other important centres of learning and culture. The result was that the process of migration was greatly speeded up from the cities that had fallen a victim to the barbarism of the Tartar and Mongol hordes. Educated and aristocratic families fled from one country to another in search of peace and security against the uncivilised invaders.

At that time India was under the rule of monarchs belonging to what is known in history as the Slave Dynasty—a dynasty of Turkish slaves—and it stood out to be the only country that could finally hold at bay the savage attackers by repelling successfully their repeated inroads. Consequently, a large number of enlightened, high-class families of Iran and Afghanistan abandoned their homes and took refuge in India during the fearful stretch of time. Innumerable nobleman who for generations had been distinguished for high respect, learning and cultural refinement and were holding positions of honour and trust in their countries came here to settle permanently, particularly during the reigns of Shamsuddin Il-tut-mish, Ghayasuddin Balban and Alauddin Khilji. Discussing the huge exodus,

and its causes, the noted historian, Ziauddin Barni, writes, “ All these families of respected nobleman, accomplished scholars and exalted spiritual leaders left their homes and wended their way towards India as a result of the invasion by the Mongols and by Chengiz Khan. Princes of the blood, experienced generals, celebrated teachers, learned jurists and illustrious religious and spiritual masters were included among the migrants.”

From these families and the families of India origin which came into the fold of Islam through their efforts there sprang up a steady stream of spiritual and intellectual luminaries, administrators, statesman, army generals and conquerors. Among them some were blessed with such uncommon greatness that they could legitimately be a source of pride and honour to the entire Muslim world.

Great Monarchs

Take Sher Shah Suri. When one considers his gigantic undertakings for public welfare, the mighty development plans he put through successfully, his splendid administrative achievements and revolutionary judicial reforms, and weighs against the fact that his rule extended over a bare five years, one becomes convinced automatically of the unique versatility and brilliance of

this genius among kings, Some of his attainments during that brief span of time were so marvellous that many a well-established government would find it hard to accomplish them during much longer periods of time. Sher Shah, indeed, is one of the greatest rulers the world has yet seen.

“Without doubt”, says Marshman Clark, “Sher Shah was a most wise, kind-hearted and sagacious person. He was as accomplished an administrator as he is famous as a soldier. Though he got little respite from wars he reformed every branch of administration and made it perfect. The laws and regulations enacted by him continued to be in force even after his death till Akbar adopted them as models for his administrative reforms which later became known as Ain-i-Akbari.

Then there is Akbar. Whatever the difference between the teachings of Islam and his religious views and the Din-i-Ilahi he founded, and however much may a Muslim historian grieve at the intemperate developments that took place during the latter part of his reign, it goes without saying that judged by his high-mindedness, legislative and administrative ability, conquests and annexations, and natural knack for leadership and the splendid patronage he extended to arts and

learning, he was a magnificent ruler and empire-builder.

Aurangzeb's equal also will not easily be found in history. His excellent virtues of mind and character, his eventful life loaded with destiny, half-a-century of continuous warfare and incessant struggle, his enormous conquests and far-reaching reforms, his simple, ascetic life, his matchless courage, fortitude and determination, the strict regularity of his hours, the management of a vast, sprawling empire, the direct personal command of armies in the battlefield even in old age, the zealous observance of the obligatory as well as supererogatory prayers, and unceasing love for learning and study in spite of extreme occupation mark him out as a man and an emperor of a class by himself. He was a man of steel who knew not what fear, indecision and despair were. He is sure to walk in his own right, into any list that may be prepared impartially and with a due sense of responsibility of great men of all times.

Similarly, what a sublime picture of saintliness and scholarship does the life of Sultan Muzaffar Halim of Gujarat (d. 1525) present! His faith and earnestness, his piety and moral integrity and self-denial, religious enthusiasm and high-mindedness, and his prodigious scholarship can scarcely be found even in those who have nothing to do with kingship and

statecraft and spend their lives exclusively in religious and literary pursuits. The following incident illustrating the loftiness of his character and utter, over-whelming unselfishness will always be remembered in the annals of imperial exploits, wars and conquests.

"For a hundred years," says a historian of Gujarat, "the rulers of Malwa had tried in vain to make war on Gujarat. But when Mahmud Shah II of Malwa was disposed by his minister, Mandli Rai, and the rites of Islam there began to be wantonly outraged, the religious pride of Muzaffar Shah, the king of Gujarat, was stirred. Setting out with a powerful army, he covered the distance to Malwa with the utmost speed and besieging its fort. Realising that he was no match for the besieging force, Mandli Rai begged Rana Sanga to come to his aid. But before Rana Sanga could advance as far as Sarangpur, Muzaffar Shah dispatched a detachment of his valiant army to deal with him. Soon the fort of Malwa fell.

"The sum and substance of the story is that when Muzaffar Shah entered the fort and the chiefs of his escort beheld the enormous wealth the rulers of Malwa had amassed in it and heard accounts of the richness of the land, they ventured

to suggest in his presence that since 2,000 of their horsemen had been killed in the fighting, it would not be wise to restore the kingdom back to the ruler, who owing, to his incompetence, had lost it to his minister. As soon as Muzaffar Shah had heard it, he cut short the round of inspection and came out of the fort, instructing Mahmud Shah not to allow any member of his party into the fort. The latter entreated him to stay on for a few days more but he firmly declined. Explaining his action on a later occasion, Mahmud Shah said, I had waged that war simply for the sake of earning the good pleasure of God. When I heard the conversation of the chiefs, I became apprehensive lest some unwholesome desire cropped up in my heart to ruin the sincerity of my act. I have not done any favour to Mahmud Shah. On the contrary, I feel indebted to him for it was through him that I was given the opportunity of doing a noble deed.”

As for his deep learning and passionate devotion to theological sciences and the Traditions of the Prophet, it will suffice here to reproduce the following words from the ‘public acknowledgement of boons conferred on him by God,’ he made a short while before his death.

“By the grace of God,” he said, “in addition to knowing the Quran by

heart, I have a full command over the points of law and precepts arising out of every verse of it, the occasion of its revelation and the method of its recitation. I remember by heart all the Traditions of the Prophet—their texts, references, the antecedents of their narrators and everything. I possess such knowledge of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) that I hope to bear testimony to the veracity of the Prophet’s words that ‘for whom God makes a decision of virtue, He makes them the jurists of His Faith’.

“I have now been engaged for some time in the purification of the self after the system of the Sufis and aspire for their blessings on the strength of the dictum that ‘he who makes himself resemble a people (ultimately becomes one of them.’ I have read Tafseer Ma’alim-ul-Tanzeel once. I am now revising it and have completed about half of it. I hope to complete it in heaven.”

As death approached, the following prayer of Prophet Yusuf was on his lips:

“O my Lord, Thou hast given me (something) of sovereignty and hath taught me (something) of the interpretation or events—Creator of the heavens and the earth, Thou art my Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous. (Quran: XII,

101)

Statesmen

Cutting short the story of kings and emperors, we will take up now the lives and attainments of some outstanding ministers and statesmen. The first name to command notice is that of Imaduddin Gilani alias Mahmud Gawan (d. 1481) who besides being an administrator and statesman of exceptional brilliance was also a man of profound learning and a noted writer of his time. It seems as if he combined in himself the goodness and greatness of both the words—temporal as well as spiritual. His fame had spread to distant lands like Iran, Arabia and Turkestan. He was without a peer where devoutness, piety and administrative acumen were concerned.

The life of Abul Qasim Abdul Aziz Gujarati (d. 1515), who is famous by the name of Asaf Khan Minister of Gujarat, presents another astounding picture of composite excellence and versatility. Allama Shahabuddin Ibn-i-Hajar El-Makki, the most important Arab scholar of that time, wrote a book on him in which he paid glowing tributes to his high learning and spiritual merit. In it he says, "A peculiar glow had come over Mecca during the period of Asaf Khan's stay. The wise and the learned considered it a privilege to converse with him. There was a great fostering of learning

....."

Several panegyrics were written in his praise by the poets of Arabia. There is also a mournful elegy by a distinguished Arab poet on his death.

The renowned Mughal commander-in-chief, Abdul Rahim Khan-Khanan wrote exquisite poems in Persian, Arabic and Hindi apart from being a literary critic of a high order. He was equally proficient with the pen and the sword and was also an excellent linguist. An unimpeachable historian says of him:-

"His intelligence and sagacity his magnanimity and high mindedness, his liberty and munificence were beyond words. He was excessively fond of poetry and literature, and was a voracious reader, particularly of historical books. He admired greatly the company of men of learning and excellence and shunned the society of those who were otherwise. His life was one of piety and rigid self-discipline. He loved to do magnanimous deeds and things that were outside the pale of pettiness. He was a such a versatile person and in him there was an assemblage of such diverse virtues that the like of him cannot be found far and wide in the world and over long stretches of time in history."

In the same way, Abdul Razzaq

Khawafi has observed in Ma'aser-ul-Umara that "Abdul Rahim Khan Stands unrivalled among his contemporaries for courage and generosity. He enjoyed mastery over Persian, Arabic and Hindi. He could converse freely and compose beautiful verses in all the three languages. "

Abdul Rahim Khan was a celebrated Hindi poet. He still commands a distinguished place in Hindi poetry. He was among the front-rank poets in Persian also but the wealth and the many-sided splendour of his genius cast a veil over the quality of his Persian poetry. Had he made it the vehicle of his fame or chosen it for the display of his talents, he would, surely, have risen to as high an eminence as any of the Iranian poets of his Court with whose songs the mansion of Persian poetry is still resounding majestically.

Abul Fazl and Fyzee were the choicest glories of the court of Akbar. Irrespective of their religious and spiritual views and conduct and the harm they did thereby to the cause of Islam in India, they were without a doubt among the most outstanding men of their time not only in India but the whole literary world. Both of them were gifted with exceptional mental faculties, a rare love for learning and an extraordinary poetic and literary taste and aptitude. Fyzee deserves a place among the all-time masters of

Iran for his Persian poetry, while Abul Fazl's Akbari and Akbar Nama are marvels of knowledge and wisdom and observation and analysis. Says Carrade Vaux of Akbar Nama:

"Akbar Nama is an extraordinary literary work; it is overflowing with life, ideas and facts. A study of it reveals that all the fields of human existence have been thoroughly examined and the conclusions thus reached have been critically arranged and analysed. The eyes are dazzled by the continuous evolution of ideas it contains. It is a literary document of which the entire oriental civilization can be proud. The persons whose mighty intellects have introduced themselves through this voluminous book seem to be far ahead of their age in administration and state craft, and not only in administration an state craft but religious philosophy as well. These poets and thinkers saw the material world with a highly penetrating eye. They were given to observe everything very deeply and to preserve in their minds what they saw. They used to experience everything personally and examine their own views and notions against the background of facts. On the one hand, their mode of expression was rich and eloquent, and, on the other, they supported and fortified their statements with facts and figures."

Solitary Exception

A sort of intellectual stagnation had come over the Muslim World after the Mongol invasion. Minds had become sterile and blindly imitative. Intellectual activity was brought almost to a standstill. The picture of degeneration became complete with the approach of the 14th Century when lethargy and inertia crept also into the other branches of life. With a few exceptions, like Ibn-i-Khaldun, the Islamic World could not produce anyone during the period under review who was above the general level of mediocrity. But India, on account of its physical remoteness from the scene, managed comparatively to escape from the ravages of the decay. The Tartars who had descended upon the World of Islam like a terrible scourge; spelling ruin and destruction wherever they went, could not spread their tentacles fully over India because of its geographical isolation. Consequently, a major proportion of the finest brains of the Muslim World had sought safety by migrating to India and settling down here as permanent citizens. Because of them intellectual activity here was kept going for a considerable length of time, brisk endeavours continued to be in evidence in the literary-field and men of learning and wisdom did not cease to come forward who can rightfully be ranked among the foremost thinkers and scholars of Islam. One discovers,

for example, in the writings of Sheikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri (d. 1370), Sheikh-ul-Islam Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (d. 1762), Shah Rafiuddin Dehlavi (d. 1817) and Shah Islamail Shaheed Dehlavi (d. 1830) new literary values and original modes of thinking that are generally absent from the works of their contemporaries in the other parts of the Muslim World.

Reform and Renovation

Owing to various natural and historical factors, which we propose to discuss in the third volume of our 'Saviours of Islamic Spirit. India had come to be the nerve-centre of religious and spiritual correction and reform during the declining phase of Islamic supremacy. Proselytizing and reformationist activities made such an advance in India that many other countries were also influenced by them. Religious preachers and renovators were born here who on the strength of their earnestness, learning and popularity, the effectiveness of their appeal and the great number of people who profited by their efforts and by their natural harmony with the real spirit of Islam and its call constituted to the choicest examples of Islamic missionaries and reformers.

The most elevated among these religious guides and redeemers was Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) upon whom men of vision and understanding have conferred the title

of Mujadid Alf-is-Sani (the Renovator of the second Millennium). It was he who renewed and strengthened the bond of Indian Muslims with Islam and saved the Shariat from being corrupted by innovations and the apostasy of the extremist Sufis, inclined openly, as they were, towards the pantheistic doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wajood (God is everything and everything is God). It was he again, who rescued the Mughal Empire from the whirlpool of irreligiousness it had got caught into, and put a check on the highly dangerous movement for the unity and amalgamation of faiths as well as on the revival of Brahmanism. The great devotee of God and indefatigable crusader in His cause, Aurangzeb, too, was a product of his mighty struggle. The Sufistic Order founded by him still endures, besides India, in countries like Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan and Syria. The popularity this Order acquired through the efforts of his disciple, Allama Khalid Shahrazori Kurdi (d. 1826) in Arabia, Kurdistan, Syria and Turkey has not come by the way of any other Sufi System.

Then there was Syed Ahmad Shaheed who so splendidly reawakened the spirit of Jihad among the Muslims. He aroused them to make heroic sacrifices for the victory of Faith and the establishment of a truly Islamic government on the lines of Khilafat-i-Rashida. As a result

of his struggle, a wave of true religiousness and righteous living swept over the Muslims, or, in other words, a gust of wind belonging to the early decades of Islam blew in breathing a new life of faith and endeavour into the dead body of the Indian part of the Millet. He had endowed his followers with rare religious devotion and enthusiasm. The religious steadfastness, scrupulous observance of the Shariat and the ardent zeal for Jihad they displayed were simply unique. Writes Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Syed Ahmad Shaheed and the splendid men he had collected around himself:

“..... the gist of the matter is that a man of his stature has not been heard of in the current age in any part of the world, nor has a fraction of what his haloed band has done for the Muslims been achieved by any of the contemporary religious teachers or divines.”

In the modern times, India has once again become the centre of Islamic propagation and reform. It began under the inspired leadership of Maulana Mohammad Ilyas of Delhi (d. 1943)—and we must confess that throughout our travels in Muslim countries we have not had the experience of coming across a more staunch and fervent preacher of Islam than him. His special distinction lay in his absolute reliance upon God and

total dedication to the cause of Islamic revival and resurgence. The missionary movement founded by the Maulana is now actively at work in all parts of the Muslim World and parties of preachers are sent out regularly even to far-off lands the United States, the European countries and Japan. This movement has succeeded, in howsoever small a measure, in warming up the frozen furnaces of the hearts of Muslims by rekindling in them the sublime flame of Faith.

These are but a handful of instances of men of endeavour, faith and learning that arose from among the Indian Muslims to leave an indelible mark on the 'Sands of Time.' The eight volumes of Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir contain an account of 5,000 Muslims of confirmed excellence in various walks of life who sprang from the Indian dust. It shows how inexhaustible, indeed, is the capacity of this land of ours to throw up sons of exceptional ability and unusual calibre in all branches of human activity.

The sapling of Islam which the early Muslims had planted on the Indian soil with their hands and nourished with their life-blood is still in bloom. The Indian Muslims have during all the stages of their career produced such exalted personalities as have been the envy of the world. Even under the British regime, where a deliberate policy was pursued to

liquidate them intellectually and economically, they did not stop sending forth eminent legists, administrators, mathematicians and educationists and such brilliant masters of the English language whose proficiency and skill was acknowledged by Englishmen themselves.

The Indian Muslims have produced world-class leaders, legislators, debaters and orators. The fame of their thinkers and poets has travelled to Afganistan, Iran and Turkey and their works have been translated into a number of foreign languages, particularly of Muslim countries.

Throughout, they have also held dear the Arab culture and civilization and made their own contribution to it. Judging from the prevailing trends, it would seem that a new mode of thought and expression will soon get evolved in Arabic literature under the influence of Indian writers which will be richly representative of both literary and spiritual values.

The glorious past of Indian Muslims holds for them the guarantee for the future. Passing though they, at present, are through the most critical phase of their history, the Muslims of India are determined to ensure for themselves an honourable place in the Indian sun. Their personality is indestructible; it is touched with eternity. ■

The Importance And The Necessity of Madrasas

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

(English Rendering: O.R. Nadwi)

Understanding Nadwa's Educational Philosophy: A Response to A Student's Inquiry

- Syed Huzaifah Ali Nadwi

Recently, I received an email from a student in South Africa who posed an intriguing question about Nadwa and its educational philosophy. The student mentioned that they knew of a scholar who held a minority opinion on a particular issue, and they wondered if this viewpoint was reflective of what Nadwa teaches its students. Given my background as a graduate of Nadwa, coupled with my family's deep connections to the institution, I felt compelled to address this question comprehensively.

Nadwa, officially known as Darul Ulum Nadwatul Ulama, is renowned for its balanced approach to Islamic education. The primary goal of Nadwa is not to impose a rigid way of thinking on its students but to cultivate an environment that encourages critical thinking, open dialogue, and intellectual growth. During my time there, I observed that the institution places a significant emphasis on understanding diverse viewpoints and engaging with them constructively.

One of the hallmarks of Nadwa's educational environment is its openness to debate and discussion. In our classes, teachers encouraged us to ask questions and express our thoughts

freely. This approach not only facilitated a deeper understanding of the subjects but also fostered a culture of respect for differing opinions. It was common to witness healthy debates on various topics, with students and teachers alike contributing to a vibrant intellectual atmosphere.

Nadwa recognises the importance of a strong foundation in tarbiyah (moral and spiritual upbringing) that often begins at home. Students who come from families with a background in Islamic education tend to adapt well to Nadwa's environment. This pre-existing framework of values and principles complements the institution's efforts to nurture well-rounded individuals who are not just knowledgeable, but also ethically grounded.

A crucial aspect of Nadwa's philosophy is its commitment to accepting and respecting diverse opinions. The institution does not advocate for a uniform interpretation of Islamic teachings. Instead, it promotes an understanding that scholars may hold differing views, and these differences should be acknowledged and respected. This openness to various interpretations is a testament to

Nadwa's inclusive and progressive approach to education.

It is also important to note that while the teachers at Nadwa are aware of discussions in the West and global intellectual currents, they maintain a critical perspective. The institution remains firmly grounded in Islamic principles and values, ensuring that the education provided is deeply rooted in traditional Islamic scholarship. This balanced approach helps students navigate the complexities of the modern world without compromising their religious identity, integrating their faith with contemporary challenges thoughtfully and confidently.

However, it is important to note that on certain core issues, such as matters relating to Aqidah (creed), there is generally a unified stance that is upheld. Nadwa is a Sunni institution, adhering to the principles of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, which are widely agreed upon. While there is room for intellectual discourse on various topics, core theological issues tend to have a singular viewpoint that is taught and upheld within the institution.

Regarding the specific query from the student in South Africa about whether Nadwa preaches a particular minority opinion, it is important to clarify that the institution does not endorse a single viewpoint. The scholar mentioned

by the student may hold a unique perspective, but this does not imply that Nadwa universally advocates for this position. The institution's ethos is to provide students with the tools and knowledge to engage with a spectrum of opinions, encouraging them to arrive at their own informed conclusions.

It is also worth noting that there are cases where individuals who graduate from Nadwa might hold views that differ from the mainstream after they leave the institution. These opinions could be influenced by the environments they encounter or the places they reside in post-graduation. Such changes in viewpoints are part of the broader intellectual journey and are not necessarily reflective of the education they received at Nadwa.

To summarise, Nadwa's educational philosophy is rooted in fostering critical thinking, open dialogue, and respect for diverse viewpoints, while also maintaining a unified stance on core theological issues. The institution's approach is not about enforcing conformity but about empowering students to think independently and engage constructively with various perspectives. As a graduate of Nadwa, I can attest to the enriching and inclusive nature of its educational environment, which has significantly shaped my own understanding and approach to learning and scholarship. ■

Tipu Sultan And The National Struggle For Freedom

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Muslims have played a very significant role in the national struggle for freedom. They have been in the forefront of it. It was, after all, from their hands that the British had wrested power in India. When British Imperialism was spreading its tentacles over the country and devouring one province after the other, the first man to realize the gravity of the danger was the lion-hearted Tipu Sultan of Mysore. He saw clearly that unless determined efforts were made in time to thwart the nefarious designs of the greedy aliens, the whole of India would ultimately be swallowed up by them. With this resolve, he unsheathed his sword and jumped into a fierce, life and death against the British exploiters.

Tipu Sultan's Crusade:

Tipu Sultan made a valiant bid to unite Indian princess against British usurpers. He even wrote to Sultan Salim 111 of Turkey to join hands with him for the expulsion of the British. His whole life was spent in the struggle. He came on the verge of success, the English were about to be swept out of the land, but they managed to achieve through diplomacy what they could not gain by arms. They cleverly obtained the support of some rulers of the South and by the use of other methods of treachery and deceit brought to nought

the patriotic ambitions of that gallant son Of Mysore. Tipu Sultan was finally killed in the thick of battle on May 4, 1799. He preferred death to a life of servitude under the British. His famous, historic, words spoken a little before he met death were: "To live for a day like a tiger is far more precious than to live for a hundred years like a jackal". It is reported that when the British Commander, General Horse, received the news of the Sultan's death and went to inspect his corpse, he cried out in exultation: "From today India is ours".

The history of India does not tell of a braver patriot and a more uncompromising enemy if foreign rule than him. In his life-time he was the most hated man among the English. To give vent to their spite, Englishmen in India even went to the extent of giving to their dogs the name Tipu. It continued to be like this with them for a long time. "(Muslims in India, page, 104-105)

Tipu Sultan was born on November 10, 1750 at Dewanhelli, Mysore, Bangalore. He was brought up like a soldier. His father Sultan Hider Ali himself fought the Britishers heart and soul. He captured the throne of Mysore in 1761. The Britishers tried their level best to defeat Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan along with Marathas and Nizam Hyderabad numerous

occasions but received a humiliating defeat at every encounter.

Needless to add that Tipu Sultan was made the Commander of his father's army when he was only 16 years old. His father Haider Ali passed away in 1782 and subsequently his son Tipu Sultan ascended on the throne of Mysore in the same year.

After ascending the throne in 1782 he delivered his maiden speech as follows:-

"I am a small person and black clouds are shrouding around my administration. I also have no surety of my own life, but my duty is to defend my country and continue revolution for achieving freedom till I am alive. People in thousands might be slaughtered to death but for the sake of benefit of the country, it is also a big sacrifice. We shall have to give up our lives for the sake of defence of the country. My dear people of my beloved country we all are Hindustanis, my love and affection as well as my heart is meant for your well being. My blood as well as my life and everything are for the sake of my country".

"Tipu Sultan rightly deserved the title "The Great Lion" of Mysore. Tipu Sultan's whole life was greatly influenced by Lions. That is why he lived his entire life like "Brave Lion" and many aspects of his life deeply reflect this. It is said that he used to see lions in his dreams. Even the royal throne of Tipu Sultan

resembled like a lion. His jackets, attires and even his handkerchiefs looked like a lion's skin. The uniforms of his soldiers, the guards and caretakers of his palace, all seemed like lion's skin." (The Golden Chapter of Freedom History, p, 87)

Truly speaking, Tipu Sultan laid down his entire life for the sake of the country. He remained as a rock and invited all states small or big to fight against the British and succeeded in his mission to a great extent. The Britishers never defeated Tipu Sultan. That was why they feared most Tipu Sultan. They thought so long he would live it was impossible to capture India. So, the British regarded Tipu Sultan as their sanguine foe.

More importantly, Tipu Sultan left no stone unturned to save India from the clutches of the Britishers.

Besides inviting Sultan Hamid II of Turkey, he also wrote letters to Napoleon Bonaparte to wage war against the Britishers. Napoleon was a dead enemy of the Britishers. Accordingly he declared his full support to Tipu Sultan in 1798. To achieve his end, Tipu Sultan established good relationship with Afghanistan and Iran also.

Colonel Williams writes, "After the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, it has been noticed that there was not a single state, either small or big, where Tipu Sultan's appeal did not teach requesting

for waging joint- struggle against the foreigners for ousting them from the country."

It should be noted that after the fall of Tipu Sultan on 4th May 1799 the Britishers became more powerful in India and started crushing the Indians with barbarism. The atrocities of the Britisher continued increasing day- by-day with a view to counter these unparallel onslaughts of brave freedom fighters like Shah Waliullah, Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmad Shaheed to a name a few came to the front along with their thousands of brave supporters and followers all over India. They did not let the flame of "Freedom Struggle" extinguish through their fire brand speeches and writings to inspire the commoners keeping in mind the necessity of laying the foundation stone for the great Indian freedom revolution of 1857". (Ibid, p, 89)

Tipu Sultan's Contribution to the development of Rockets in India:

The real inventor of the Rockets was Tipu Sultan. He attacked the Britishers with the rockets. He was widely known to the then contemporary world through his great service.

Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam pointedly said, "The development of Indian rockets in the twentieth century can be seen as a revival of the eighteenth century dream of Tipu Sultan. When Tipu Sultan was killed, the British captured more than 700 rockets and subsystems

of 900 rockets in the battle of Turukhanahally in 1799. His army had 27 brigades, called Kushoons, and each brigade had a company of rocket men, called Jourks. These rockets had been taken to England by William Congreve and were subjected by the British to what we call 'reverse engineering' today. There were, of course, no GATT, IPR Act, or patent regime. With the death of Tipu, Indian rocketry also met its demise-at least for 150 years.

Meanwhile, rocket technology made great strides abroad. Konstantin Tsiolkovsky in Russia(1903), Robert Goddard in USA(1914) and Hermann Oberth in Germany (1923) have rocketry new dimensions." (Wings of Fire, p, 42-43)

It is unfortunate that some people know that the real inventor of the rockets in India was Tipu Sultan. A few know about this great achievement of Tipu Sultan to the development of the rocketry system.

It is time our national heroes who laid their precious lives for the sake of the motherland must be introduced so that new generation may be aware of their outstanding contributions and unprecedented achievements made for the country.

In so doing, they also may derive benefits and shine their career by imitating the national heroes like Tipu Sultan. ■

Characteristics, Virtues And Traits of The Prophet (SAW)

- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Whenever Allah Almighty sends down someone as a Prophet for the reform and edification of any people, He chooses for the purpose some such person from amongst the people as is distinguished within the entire community in perception and prudence, character and conduct, and valour and aspiration. This distinction is, in fact, conferred on him by Allah Almighty Himself in order to enable him to perform the assigned job of reform and guidance. To that end, celestial dictates are issued to him according to whom he invites them towards the righteousness and Guidance. During the period passed before getting assigned the office of Prophecy by Allah Almighty, the human traits in him are vested by his Providence that are confined within the sphere of innate human nature and those are the loftiest traits. These traits are watched and liked by his people. Living among them, as he does, he has the people made already conversant with his sublime and virtuous human traits.

Hence, when he gives them a call, on getting assigned the Prophecy, towards righteousness and Guidance, the obstinate and egoistic people of his community repudiate it saying only that 'this person is now starting saying such things as were not said by our elders. He has gone astray from the ways of our elders.' But, along with that, they do not

find it possible for themselves to deny his virtuous and humanistic traits. They are unable to bring themselves round, just out of prejudice and stubbornness, to listen to anything against their religious rituals and customs which are practiced by them since their birth. But, they do not deny, at the same time, the moral and humanistic qualities of the Prophet. The Prophet would say to them that: 'Dear brethren! You know me very well. You know how long it is since you are watching and observing me. You have tested and tried me. Yet, you do not pay attention to what I say.' It is what the holy Quran has referred to in this verse:

(Of a surety I have tarried among you a lifetime before it).

Sincerity, nobility, resoluteness and courage, fortitude and steadiness, affability and amiability, compassion and politeness are those virtues of prophets which make whoever listens to their message even with a least bit of impartiality feel compelled to comply with him.

The case with the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) was exactly the same. He had been loved and liked for forty years by the people among whom he had lived. But, when he took to preventing them from their wrong practices and distorted religion and started calling them towards good

morals and correct religion, they got disaffected with him. But, despite getting extremely belligerent on his making the call, some of them would keep mulling over his message and finally have it accepted. For, they were well aware of his humanitarianism, honesty, chastity and good character. Hence, whoever listened to him with an open mind would get enamoured of him. So much so that one coming to him with the intention of causing harm to him would suddenly get transmogrified after having witnessed his (SAW) amiability. Nevertheless, a large number of the people would not be willing to listen to his message. They would have their ears, as it were, stuffed with cotton, making sure that it does not get into their ears. And, then, in order to prevent him from giving this message, they would adopt violent ways and be cruel to him.

When he (SAW) got entrusted with the responsibility of the Prophecy, he expressed his anxiety, owing to the load of its weight that he was feeling, to his revered wife, Hazrat Khadeejat-el-Kubra (RAA). Thereupon she consoled and comforted him with these words: 'You need not be upset. I swear by Allah, He would never let you be disgraced and humbled. For, you are the one who has regard for the uterine relations and kinship, take the load off the others, render assistance to the needy, extend hospitality to the guest and bring relief to those who sustain inflictions and

distresses in the cause of the Truth.'

Umm-ul-Momineen, Hazrat Khadeejat-ul-Kubra (RAA) had said what is quoted above on the basis of her common-sense, her unsophisticated nature as well as the experiences of her own personal life and the knowledge she had of the people. The Prophet (SAW) had earned from the people the honorifics of 'As-Sadique' and 'Al-Ameen' because of his good traits, honesty and probity. That was the testimony from them to the fact that he was really very honest and extremely trustworthy. Hence, despite being hostile to him, they relied on him in all other matters. They even deposited their valuables with him for safe custody. He (SAW), too, used to be considerate to everyone on occasions where his cooperation and compassion was required. Even on occasion of renovation of Ka'ba he joined all others in carrying stones. Whenever there would be consultations for any good cause he would take part in it. Anyone in distress and inflicted upon by any calamity would be helped by him. One instance of the same is as follows: There was a man whom Abu Jahl had bought camels from. But, in making payment of the price, Abu Jahl had adopted the course of inordinate dilly-dallying. Whenever he would come to him to collect the price, he would put him off. In a gathering of youths from the Quoraish, that man brought up this issue. Some of the people in the

gathering saw there a prospect of having some fun. As the case involved Abu Jahl who was extremely hostile to the Prophet (SAW), they thought it would be great fun to watch when the two come to combat each other. They said to him (pointing towards the Prophet — SAW): 'Go to that gentleman sitting there and seek assistance from him.' He came up to him (SAW) and, making a complaint of Abu Jahl's dishonesty, sought assistance from him. Even though it was something preposterous for him (SAW) to go to Abu Jahl and make an appeal to, or request, him to make the payment or the price to that man. But, prompted by his urge to help him out, he (SAW) paid no heed to the risk involved and said to him: 'Come on I would try to help you out'. Reaching the Abu Jahl's house, he (SAW) knocked at the door. When he came out, the Prophet (SAW) him to have the payment made. Abu Jahl was so awed by the Prophet's boldness that he agreed to make the payment and having fetched the price-money from inside he had it paid to that man. When Abu Jahl joined his mates later, they scoffed at him saying: 'Generally, you make a great show of your strength against Mohammad (SAW); but, you got cowed down by him on this occasion'. He confessed that he had gotten really awed by him and found himself compelled on doing what he did. Such behaviour of the Prophet (SAW) was never for the sake of his own benefit. In his own case, he (SAW) would endure

distress and would never think of taking any revenge from the aggressor. But, in case someone else needed his help, he would go all out to help him. He had a soft corner for each and every-one. It is what Allah Almighty Himself has defined him with:

(It was then of the mercy of Allah that thou hast been gentle with them; and wert thou rough, hard-hearted, they had surely dispersed from around thee. So pardon them thou, and ask thou forgiveness for them and take thou counsel with them in the affair, and when thou hast resolved, put thy trust in Allah. Verily Allah loveth the trustful.)

In case of someone having personal enmity with him (SAW), he would not be revengeful to him at all. But, where the interest involved used to be religious or were a matter of principle, he would take a tough stand. The definition of his character in traditional annals is worded thus:

Describing the lofty morals of the Prophet (SAW), Hazrat Ali (RAA) says:

"I did not see him ever taking revenge from anyone for his cruelty and aggression, unless it were the matter pertaining to violation of restraints imposed by Allah Almighty and disregard for his dictates. In case any dictate of Allah Almighty was trampled and His Honour was smeared, he (SAW) would, of course, be angry with the culprit more than anybody else."

Hazrat Anas bin Malik states that the Prophet of Allah (SAW) was very kind-hearted. Whenever any indigent came to him, he (SAW) would positively assure him of his assistance. In case he had something, he would immediately fulfil his need. Once there came a Bedouin when the congregational prayer was already in progress and, getting hold of his (SAW) mantle, got to saying: 'A small requirement of mine is still remains unfulfilled. I am afraid I might forget it'. He (SAW) went with him. When he had his need fulfilled, the Prophet (SAW) came back and had the prayer performed.

The incidents of his (SAW) tolerance, fortitude, magnanimity, endurance and resoluteness are corroborated by the testimony given by his (SAW) attendant, Hazrat Anas (RAA). It is about the time when he was very young. He says: I served the Prophet (SAW) for ten years. He (SAW) never objected to anything I did and never said why I did, or not did, this or that.

Hazrat U'mar narrates that the Prophet (SAW) said: "Do not exaggerate in commending and defining me like the Christians did with Hazrat Isa bin Maryam (AS). I am just a bond-man of Allah. Do call me just 'Bond-man of Allah and His Apostle'".

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abi Aufa narrates that the Prophet (SAW) had no inhibition and did not feel ashamed at

going in company of any slave or any widow till his or her need was fulfilled.

Hazrat Anas (RAA) says: 'Anyone of the bond-maids and slave-girls of Madinah would hold him (SAW) by hand and have whatever she wanted to say said to him and would take him along with her as far as she wanted to'.

When Adi bin Hatim et-Tai (RAA) called on him (RAA), he took him inside his house. The bond-maid offered the cushion to rest upon. He (SAW) had it placed in between him and Hazrat Adi and made himself seated on the floor, Hazrat Adi says: "That made me realize that he (SAW) was not a man of pomp and show."

Hazrat Anas (RAA) states that: "The Prophet (SAW) would call on the sick, accompany the funeral procession and accept the invitation of the poor."

Hazrat Jabir (RAA) says: "Being considerate to the infirm, he (SAW) would slow down his speed and pray to Allah for him."

Hazrat Anas (RAA) has been quoted to have said that the Prophet (SAW) said: "I am bond-man of Allah, eat like a bondman and sit like a bond-man."

The Prophet (SAW) would have his house himself cleaned, his camels tethered, his cattle served with fodder, partake with his servant in having meal, assist him in kneading the flour and have the victuals brought from the market. ■

Scientific Knowledge And Religion

- Shaukat Ali

Exploration of the mysteries buried deep in the bosom of nature, is an endless activity of human mind. Science and religion are generally considered to be the two major contenders in this eternal endeavour of man. Religious and scientific views in most cases are irreconcilable. Scientists ridicule the theologians as irrational and mythical and the theologians in turn castigate the scientists as atheists or materialists. Both tend to claim the monopoly of truth. In Islam however, the struggle between science and religion was never so acute or critical. In fact during most of the Islamic history science and religion remained in a very healthy combination in uncovering the secrets of the universe and in fortifying the beliefs and ideals of the Muslims. There is a general consensus among historians of Islamic civilization, that religion in Islam instead of being to scientific investigation provided a powerful thrust for greater and wider inquiry mysteries of the relationship between man and nature.

The Quran in very clear terms has brought home this message to every believer. A passage in the fourth chapter reads as follows:

He it is Who sendeth down water from the sky, and therewith We bring forth buds of every kind ; We bring forth the green blade from which We bring forth the thick-clustered grain ;

and from the date-palm, from the pollen thereof, spring pendant bunches ; and (We bring forth) gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, alike and unlike. Look upon the fruit thereof, when they bear fruit, and upon its ripening. Lo! herein verily are portents for a people who believe.

Floods, rains, clouds, insects, are all God's creations. He is the sole Provider and Protector. He enjoins upon every believer to understand these manifold manifestations of nature, as Ayats (signs) of the Creator. There are numerous verses in the Quran which repeatedly emphasise this theme. Some of them can be reproduced as follows:

So We sent against them the flood and the locusts and the vermin and the frogs and the blood—a succession of clear signs. But they were arrogant and became a guilty folk.

And He it is Who sendeth the winds as tidings heralding His mercy, till, when they bear a cloud heavy (with rain), We lead it to a dead land, and then cause water to descend thereon and thereby bring forth fruits of every kind. Thus bring We forth the dead. Haply ye may remember.

He sendeth down water from the sky, so that valleys flow according to their

measure, and the flood beareth (on its surface) swelling foam—from that which they smelt in the fire in order to make ornaments and tools riseth a foam like unto it— thus Allah coineth (the similitude of) the true and the false. Then, as for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks; banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitudes.

What, have they not beheld heaven above them, how We have built it, and decked it out fair, and it has no cracks? And the earth—We stretched it forth and cast on it firm mountains, and We caused to grow therein of every joyous kind for an insight and a reminder to every penitent servant. We sent down out of heaven water blessed, and caused to grow thereby gardens and grain of harvest and tall palm-trees with spathes compact, a provision for the servants, and thereby We revived a land that was dead. Even so is the coming forth.

All commentators of these verses agree that uncovering the secrets of nature is a religious duty of every believer. Scientific and philosophic explorations and the results derived out of them should help the believer to fortify his faith in God. In order to facilitate rational enquiry and save human knowledge from stagnation, Quran allows intellectual and ideological disputations among the learned because

that is the only way one can sort out truth from falsehood. The Quranic verse in this regard is as follows:

Call thou to the way of thy Lord
With wisdom and good admonition,
and dispute with them
in the better way.

The Muslim scientists used this verse to demonstrate that knowledge acquired through research is valid and does not in any way contradict the revealed word of God. Arberry has given the following interpretation of the verse:

When the Quranic term 'hikma' (wisdom) came to be used loosely to signify philosophy, this text fortified the philosophers in their contest with the obscurantists. The verbal noun derived from 'jadalhum' (dispute with them) was to acquire the technical meaning of 'reasoned debate.' As for 'mau'iza' (admonition) that was the chosen method of the preachers. This verse would be taken to confirm Aristotle's threefold differentiation of proof into demonstrative, rhetorical and dialectical.

There is ample evidence in the Traditions of the Prophet that he too believed that life without intellectual activity is fruitless. He once pointed out that intellect was the first thing created by God. Therefore, effective and gainful use of intellect was a kind of prayer which would be pleasing to God.

In spite of the clear indications in

the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet that scientific and rational investigation in human life, and natural phenomena was a religious duty, the relationship between scientific knowledge and religious learning in Islam was often very uncomfortable. Suspicions between the protagonists of the two increased after the Greek thought under the patronage of the early Abbasides became almost an official doctrine in the Muslim kingdom. The clash between the knowledge based on reason and the one derived through revelation kept on mounting, until it became a permanent feature of the world of scholarship in Islam. Such a clash was natural because the Semitic mind for ages had made revealed knowledge the chief pillar of human life, while the Hellenic thinking had relied solely on rational and logical enquiry. The theological circles were disturbed particularly when the rationalists started questioning some of the fundamental principles of Islam. Attributes of God, the nature and character of prophesy, the authenticity of revelation, and numerous other issues relating to miracles, angels and life hereafter were subjected to very critical examination by the rationalist thinkers. The increasing popularity of such concepts created widespread fears among religious scholars about the future of the religion. Seeds of dissension sown between secular and religious knowledge early in Islamic history persisted for a long time. In this controversy the scientists

unquestionably were at a disadvantage. The hold of religion on the masses was so strong that they would easily be relied in defence of any religious cause. Moreover, their contact with the religious leaders was constant. In each mosque, five times during the day, hundreds of them congregated for prayers and listened to the learned theologians with reverence. Scientists and philosophers on the other hand were mostly cloistered in their ivory towers; and their technical and abstruse writings could not be comprehended by the vast majority of the illiterate people. Another point which needs to be kept in mind is that learning in Islam to a large extent depended on royal patronage, and the kind of knowledge that would be encouraged and developed was determined by the outlook of the ruler. Even a cursory glance at the Islamic history would reveal that, although not practicing Muslims in the true sense of the term, most of the Muslim rulers proclaimed themselves to be defenders of the faith. A large number of theologians held powerful positions in government and exercised deep influence on all aspects of public policy. Even under the most rationalist of the rulers, Sharia was the law of the land, and religious scholars held the monopoly of interpreting its principles. Judgments given in the religious courts could not be contested in any other court of law, and opinion pronounced by Kazis and Muftis, in most cases used to become precedents for later decisions. From this however, it

should not be construed that theologians had an absolute veto in the affairs of the government. There is no question that as an elitist group they wielded considerable power in a Muslim state, but their decisions could be vetoed by the rulers.

Scientists and philosophers were also consulted very often by the rulers but since their advice had no religious backing it lacked the impact of a Mufti's fatwa (religious pronouncement of a Juro-consult). In extreme cases, the theologians used to declare rationalists as Kafirs (infidels), which could be extremely detrimental to their reputation.

The result of this preponderant influence of religion was that secularism as it is understood in the West, never flourished in the Muslim civilization. Irrespective of their private opinions and intellectual proclivities, all public officials in a Muslim state had to show some deference to the word of God.

Even the renowned scientists of Islam, with all their undiminished commitment to reason, never thought that religion in any way was a barrier to their scientific researches. They remained firmly anchored to the religious faith, and there is no evidence that they ever felt intellectually thwarted by the laws of the Sharia. George DeSantillana has made the following remarks on the approach of the Muslim scientists to religion:

One wishes only at times that he had

not drawn so tight the web of orthodox piety as to leave in an uncomfortable and slightly alien position, along the course of time, men who stand out more clearly as representing the scientific temper. These men do not belong to the phase of withdrawal, but to the phase of world leadership; they are good Muslims and true, and a glory of their civilization. Therefore, since this is a history centred on science, I feel they should have been presented in bolder relief. In al-Beruni, the greatest scientist of Islam, we meet a mind no way different from the Western lay scientific mind at its best. His religious faith is secure but carried lightly, without protestations. It does not impede his freedom of judgement, his love of fact, his free-wheeling curiosity, and his easy sarcasm, his strict and watchful cult of intellectual integrity. We recognize soon, in al-Beruni, the scientist without qualifications as we mean him, as he has been understood again and again, and the same may be said of the other great men of his ilk-observers, experimenters, analysts, such men as Rhazes, Alhazen, al-Battani, Averroes. This is what the Islamic intellect was able to bring forth during the golden age, as well as later, and they surely need no apologies for their perhaps-a-shade-too-secular attitude, nor deserve the hint that they were out of step with their own culture. ■

(To be continued)

Abdullah bin Zaid (Advisor of The Prophet)

- Abdul Aziz Ash-Shanawi

His Full Name and Lineage

He is 'Abdullah bin (bin means, 'son of) Tha'labah bin 'Abd-Rabbihi bin Zaid. He is from the clan of Banu Jusham bin Al-Harith bin Al-Khazraj. Therefore, he is a Khazriji (from the Khazraj tribe) and a Harithi (from the descendants of Al-Harith). And he is also an Ansari (title that was given to each native Muslim dweller of Al-Madinah; as opposed to a Muhajir, which refers to a Muslim who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah).

His Kunyah

Kunyah is a kind of name, the form of which is, 'Father of so and so,' or, 'Mother of so and so.' It is often used literally for one's eldest son. So if one's eldest son is 'Abdullah, one's Kunyah is Abu (father of) 'Abdullah. But it is not necessarily the case that one's Kunyah is based on the name of one's eldest son, nor is it necessarily always the case that a Kunyah is used literally. It can also be used figuratively to connote a close relationship between a person and an object or idea. For example, since one famous Companion was often seen with a small kitten (Hurairah, in Arabic), he was given the Kunyah, Abu Hurairah. And if one wants to refer jokingly to the fact that his friend is wealthy, he might say to him, 'O Abu

Fulus (Fulus meaning money).' Coming back to the point in question, 'Abdullah bin Zaid's Kunyah was Abu Muhammad.

His Acceptance of Islam

After a number of years passed by without most of Makkah's inhabitants embracing Islam, a group of people from the Khazraj tribe of Al-Madinah visited Makkah and met with the Messenger of Allah Jamratul-'Aqabah. Among the emissaries of Khazraj were As'ad bin Zarah, Rafi bin Malik, 'Uqbah bin 'Amir bin Nabi, and Jabir bin 'Abdullah.

"Who are you?" the Messenger of Allah asked them.

"We are people from the Khazraj," they answered. They of course knew the Messenger of Allah, or at least had heard of him, for news of the conflict in Makkah was beginning to spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. That news concerned the Khazraj in a most significant sense, for not only had they heard about the on-going conflict in Makkah, but they also were constantly reminded by the Jews of Al-Madinah about the advent of a Prophet in Arabia. The Jews threatened them, saying that, when the awaited Prophet appeared, they would follow him. And with him on their side, they would

destroy the 'Aus and Khazraj tribes, the two native Arab tribes of Al-Madinah.

"You are allies of the Jews (of Al-Madinah)?" asked the Prophet.

"Yes," they answered. A simple and Hue answer to a simple question; however, their answer did not fully explain the complex reality of life in Al-Madinah. In previous years, their tribe had constantly engaged in battles with the 'Aus tribe as well as with the Jewish tribes of Al-Madinah. But at the present, since there was no battle being fought, they could truthfully say that they were allies. However, the harsh reality was that the threat of war was always looming between the various tribes of Al-Madinah.

The Messenger of Allah then began presenting Islam to them. He recited Verses of the Qur'an to them, and they all listened attentively to his words. They were greatly impressed by the truthfulness of his tone and the goodness of his teachings. He was, they knew for certain, the awaited Prophet that the Jews were always reminding them about.

"By Allah, he is truthful," they said to one another. "He is indeed the Prophet that the People of the Book have mentioned to us... and threatened us about, so do not let them beat us to him (i.e., beat us to becoming his followers)."

"You are indeed the Messenger of Allah," they said to him.

"We recognize you (from the description given to us by the Jews of Al-Madinah), we have faith in you, and we believe you. So command us, and we will not disobey you." They then told the Prophet about the problems they were having in Al-Madinah and how the threat of war with the 'Aus tribe constantly threatened their safety. They ardently hoped that the Messenger of Allah would be able to unite the 'Aus and Khazraj and bring peace and stability to Al-Madinah. After this important meeting, the first Muslims of Al-Madinah returned to their hometown with the light of guidance.

13 years after the Prophet received revelation for the first time, most of Makkah's inhabitants were still polytheists. To the credit of the 'Aus and Khazraj (and this was from the grace of Allah Islam spread at a much faster rate among the dwellers of Al-Madinah. After the delegates of Al-Khazraj returned to Al-Madinah, they went to their families and informed them about their meeting with the Messenger of Allah "O people," they said, "by Allah, he is indeed the Prophet that the Jews warned you about, so do not let them beat you."

Whatever they had memorized from the Qur'an, they recited to their people. The Verses they recited found

a direct path to the hearts of their audience. One such audience member, 'Abdullah bin Zaid, immediately felt these words rolling off of his tongue: "I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Islam also began to spread among the 'Aus tribe. Before very long, the Messenger of Allah's name was being discussed in every single household of both tribes.

A Return to Al-'Aqabah

Very soon thereafter, a total of forty men, some from the 'Aus tribe and some from the Khazraj tribe began to perform prayer behind As'ad bin Zurarah. These were all new Muslims, and they feared that the bitter wounds of the past would be revisited again. They feared that, because of past disputes, a man from the 'Aus would hate to pray behind a man from the Khazraj, or that a man from the Khazraj would hate to pray behind a man from the 'Aus. Wanting to avoid such conflict, 'Abdullah bin Tha'labah suggested that their Imam should be one of the Prophet's Companions from Makkah.

Since the idea made sense, and but they did in fact need someone to teach them more about Islam, they sent a letter to the Messenger of Allah:

'Indeed, Islam has spread among us, so send us a man from your Companions who will teach us the

Qur'an, educate us about the ways and legislations of Islam, and lead us in Prayer.'

In response to their request, the Prophet sent Mus'ab bin 'Umar to them.

Then, in the matter of a single day, 'Usaid bin Hudair, Sa'd bin Mu'adh, and all of the members of the Banu 'Abd-Al-Ashhal clan embraced Islam. One of the first tasks they set about completing was to completely destroy the idols that they had worshipped for their entire lives; and they did not hesitate in the least to do so, which was a strong indication of just how deeply Islam had penetrated into their hearts.

One year after their previous meeting with the Prophet, a delegation consisting of 72 men and 2 women returned to Al-'Aqabah for a second meeting. This time around, 'Abdullah bin Zaid was one of the delegates. They chose 12 representatives to go and pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah on their behalf. And so the representatives went and pledged to worship Allah without associating any partners with Him in worship, and to protect the Prophet just as they would protect their own lives, and the lives of their children and women.

The Call to Prayer

From the day the Prophet arrived in Al-Madinah, one of his main

concerns was to establish safety there, to extinguish the fires of enmity and hatred that had been raging for years between the 'Aus and Khazraj tribes. Things went well in this regard, for Allah united their hearts, and no longer was a dweller of Al-Madinah primarily known for being a member of the 'Aus or Khazraj tribe. Instead, every person who was a Muslim and a native dweller of Al-Madinah became primarily known by the title, 'Ansari.' The Ansar (plural of Ansari) were the native Muslim dwellers of Al-Madinah who welcomed and honoured the Muslims who migrated from Makkah (these were the 'Muhajirun,' or the 'Migrators').

Congregational prayer was quickly established; Zakat (obligatory charity) and Fasting were soon legislated, and so were the other laws of Islam. But in the early days that followed the Prophet's migration to Al-Madinah, the Prophet led prayer when it was time to pray, but no announcement was made to notify the people that it was time for prayer. Preoccupied with business and other personal affairs, some people would miss the prayer.

Then, one day, the Prophet consulted his Companions about how they should gather people for prayer. Such a meeting was not an uncommon one, for the Prophet would often consult his Companions before he made a final decision in a matter. Allah

said:

"And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)."

One person suggested, "When it is time to pray, put up a flag. When the people see it, they can inform the others." This view did not appeal to the Prophet. Someone suggested that, like the Jews, they could use a horn to announce the commencement of Prayer. Disliking this idea, the Prophet said:

"This is from the practice of the Jews."

Someone proposed that they use a bell. The Prophet said:

"That is from the practice of the Christians."

Another person suggested that they light a fire: When the people see it, they will know that it is time for prayer.

"That is from the practice of the Magians," said the Prophet.

'Umar bin Al-Khattab then spoke: "Will you not send a man to call people to the prayer?"

"I had indeed intended to send

men out to call [people] when it is time for prayer,” said the Prophet.

“And I had indeed intended to order men to stand on the rooftops of high buildings to call the Muslims when it is time for prayer.”

The Prophet then ordered Bilal bin Rabah to call the people to prayer. Bilal stood up and called out, “The prayer is gathering (i.e., the Prayer is commencing)... The Prayer is gathering.” People then began to issue forth from their homes and from the marketplace in order to pray behind the Prophet.

‘Abdullah bin Zaid Sees a Dream About the Adhan (the Call to Prayer)

After ‘Abdullah bin Zaid finished praying, he returned to his house; he felt somewhat tired and wanted to go to sleep. When he tried to sleep, he fell into a state that was somewhere between wakefulness and sleep, or at least it felt that way. He saw a man wearing two green garments and carrying a bell in his hand. “O slave of Allah, will you sell the bell?” ‘Abdullah asked.

“What do you wish to do with it?” inquired the man.

“Call (people) to prayer with it,” answered ‘Abdullah.

“Shall I not guide you to that which is better for you?” asked the man.

“Yes.”

“Say,” the man instructed, “Allahuakbar (Allah is Most Great), Allahuakbar; Ash-hadu Al-Lailaha illallah (I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), Ash-hadu Al-La ilaha illallah; Ash-hadu Anna Muhammadar-Rasulallah (I bear witness that Muhammad is indeed the Messenger of Allah), Ash-hadu Anna Muhammadar-Rasulullah; Hayya ‘Alas-Salah (hasten to prayer), Hayya ‘Alas-Salah; Hayya ‘Alal-Falah (hasten to the success), Hayya ‘Alal-Falah; Allahuakbar (Allah is the Most Great), Allahuakbar; La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah).”

The man then moved away from ‘Abdullah, but not far away, and said, “And when the prayer is established (i.e., the Imam is ready, and the people are standing in the rows), say; Allahuakbar, Allahuakbar; Ash-hadu Al-La ilaha illallah; Ash-hadu Anna Muhammadar-Rasulullah; Hayya ‘Alas-Salah; Hayya ‘Alal-Falah; Qad Qamatis-Salah [the prayer is established (i.e., the Imam is ready, the people are standing in the rows, and the prayer is about to commence)], Qad Qamatis-Salah; Allahuakbar, Allahuakbar; La ilaha illallah.”

‘Abdullah bin Zaid then woke up in a very excited frame of mind. He remembered the dream so vividly that he thought he had been awake and

not sleeping. He tried to control his excitement and let the matter rest until the morning. But as much as he tried, he felt that he couldn't wait, and so he went to the Messenger of Allah and informed him about what he had seen.

"It is indeed a true dream, In sha Allah (if Allah wills)," said the Prophet who then turned towards Bilal bin Rabah and said about him, "Let him make the call with (the words you heard in your dream), for indeed, his voice is sweeter and better than yours."

When Bilal approached, the Prophet said:

"Stand, see what 'Abdullah bin Zaid commands you with, and then do it (i.e., do what he says)."

'Abdullah bin Zaid began to dictate the Adhan (the Call to prayer) to Bilal, who proceeded to call out with it.

At the time, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab was in his house. If one could have seen him when the words of the Adhan entered his ears, one would have seen an expression of amazement on his face. He hurried out of his house and headed in the direction of the Masjid, and when he was in the presence of the Prophet he asked about the Adhan. In the discussion that followed, 'Umar learned about 'Abdullah bin Zaid's dream. 'Umar then said, "By the One Who has sent you with the truth, O Messenger of Allah, I have indeed seen a dream

similar to the one that Abdullah bin Zaid saw."

"All praise is for Allah," said the Prophet

"You have indeed been preceded in this regard by revelation."

The people felt a sense of peace in their hearts when they heard the Adhan that morning; they came out of their homes and headed towards the Masjid in joyful moods.

With the Messenger of Allah

'Abdullah bin Zaid took part in the Battle of Badr and in all ensuing battles. On the day of the Makkah Conquest, he carried with him the banner of the Banu Al-Harith clan. And he performed exceptionally well during the Battle of Al-Hunain, displaying both bravery and skill in fighting.

A Narrator of Hadith

The following are some of the people who related Hadith narrations on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Zaid: Sa'id bin Al-Musayyib, 'Abdur-Rahmaan bin Abi Layla, and 'Abdullah's son, Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin Zaid.

His Death

'Abdullah bin Zaid bin Tha'labah died in the city of the Messenger of Allah in the year 32 H, at the age of 64. The Leader of the Believers, 'Uthmaan bin 'Affan, led his funeral prayer.■

Miraculous Sayings of Muhammad (PBUH) in Relation To Food And Medicine

Prevention is Better Than Cure

Although Muhammad (pbuh) was not a physician, his sayings in relation to food, healthy eating habits, treatment with herbs and alternative medicine were collected in books later known as "The Prophetic Medicine".

Muhammad (pbuh) indicated on several occasions the belly is the worst pot to fill. Small meals and a few bites that satisfy hunger will be better than filling the stomach. It will help a great deal avoid health complications.

He encouraged his companions to eat and drink in moderation, avoid obesity and maintain an active and a healthy style of life. He recited God's Words in this context Verse 31, Chapter 7 in the Holy Qur'an states:

"O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but do not be prodigal (waste by excess). He (God) does not like prodigals (extravagant people)."

Muhammad Prescribing Barley:

Today, there is a great deal of research that demonstrates the amazing health benefits of barley. Barley grass is a whole food supplement.

It contains a wide spectrum of enzymes, vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and all eight essential amino acids including Tryptophan which helps prevent depression.

Muhammad (pbuh) recommended barley soup (talbinah) for stomach disorder and indicated in his undisputable sayings that it helps relieve sorrow and depression. His wife Aisha used to recommend close relatives of a have Talbina soup in order to (Narrated in Sahih Bukhari).

According to medical research, depressive illness is found to be caused by a decrease of certain chemicals or neurotransmitters in the brain that are responsible for mood. Antidepressants stimulate chemical changes that increase the levels of these neurotransmitters.

The three main neurotransmitters associated with mood are serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine. Barley was found to influence serotonin in a positive way that relieves depression. The prescription of Barley by Muhammad (pbuh) 1400 years ago was definitely miraculous medicine.

It is revealing that Muhammad (pbuh) did indulge in regular wheat

consumption but ate instead mostly barley and bread made from barley flour.

It is discovered that whole grain barley has many health benefits. It can regulate blood sugar, prevent tiny blood clots, and reduce the body's production of cholesterol.

It is part of Muhammad's teachings to have small meals during the day. Should some one likes to eat must not be more than two thirds full. He told his companions to keep one food and one third of their stomach's space for food and one third for drink and the last third should be kept empty for breath.

Zamzam Mineral Water: Zamzam is the name of mineral water that comes out of a well 20 meters east of Kaaba in Makkah city the holiest place in Islam. Muslims believe that it was miraculously generated thousands of years ago when Ibrahim's son Ishmael was thirsty and kept crying and kicking the ground until water gushed out.

It is slightly alkaline (pH=7.5) and has a distinct taste. (Please note that drinking de-mineralized water such as distilled waters will create an acid pH in the stomach and intestines. Also, it will aggravate acid reflux).

Muhammad (pbuh) said that Zamzam water is a blessed water from God. It is a lavish meal and a

great healer,

(narrated by Bazzar and Tabarani).

Mineral water is classified by the U.S. FDA or Food and Drug Authority as having at least 250 parts per million (ppm) (total dissolved solids TDS).

Chemical analysis of Zamzam water revealed that it has TDS in excess of 1000 ppm of mg/L. It complies with World Health Organization (WHO) standards for potable water.

It is plentiful meal that contains a range of minerals that the human body needs such as calcium (which is needed for strong bones and for the heart muscles and nerves to function properly), Fluoride which is necessary for teeth and bicarbonates which helps food digestion.

Zamzam water is one of the richest potable waters in calcium. It has 195-200 mg/L Calcium. (this is 20% of the average recommended daily intake of calcium for adults).

It is higher than many known mineral waters on the earth such as "Evian" (78-80 mg/L Calcium and "Perrier" (147-150 mg/L Calcium).

Mineral water has a wide range of therapeutic functions that can relieve and treat muscle and joint inflammation, rheumatism and

arthritis.

Truffles As A Medicine:

Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Truffles are a kind of 'Manna' (sent down upon the children of Israel) and their juice is a medicine for the eyes".

Narrated by Bukhari, Muslim & Tirmithi

Truffle is a fleshy fungus mushroom-like plant that belongs to the Agaricaceae family. It grows in groups under the surface of the soil (2-50 cm deep) in desert moist areas without leaves or roots. It has a distinct smell and can be white, grey or brown in color.

According to the analytical research, 77% of truffle is water and the remaining part is a mix of protein, fat, carbohydrates and other materials.

However, modern science discoveries indicate that the liquid of truffles has an effective curable effect for many eye diseases including Trachoma which is an infectious eye disease that causes damage to the cornea cells.

Muhammad And Olive Oil:

Muhammad (pbuh) described olive oil as it comes from a blessed tree. He recommended his companions to eat olive oil and to anoint or smear it over their body skin

(Narrated by Tirmithi)

All modern scientific discoveries confirm that olive oil is full of health benefits. Most of the fatty acid "building blocks" that make up olive oil come from monounsaturated fat (good fat) which offers protection against heart disease by controlling LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels while raising HDL (the "good" cholesterol) levels.

Olive oil is very well tolerated by the stomach. Its protective function has a beneficial effect for treating ulcers and gastritis.

EXTRA VIRGIN olive oil, from the first pressing of the olives, contains higher levels of antioxidants, particularly vitamin E and phenols, because it is less processed.

Today, olive oil is considered a good remedy for skin problems and an effective moisturizer.

Those at risk for diabetes are advised to combine a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet with olive oil. Studies show this combination is superior at controlling blood sugar levels compared to a diet that consists entirely of low-fat meals.

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) said

"Eat olive oil and smear it over your bodies" (Narrated by Trimidhi)■

Around the World

Yunus Accuses Hasina of Destroying Every Institution

Bangladesh's interim government chief Muhammad Yunus accused deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina of destroying every institution of the country in her efforts to stay in power as he promised to hold a "free, fair and participatory" election as soon as his government completes the "mandate" of carrying out "vital reforms."

Ms. Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India on August 5 following a massive protest by students against a controversial quota system in government jobs. After Hasina's ouster, 84-year-old Yunus took oath as the Chief Adviser of the interim government on August 8.

"In their efforts to stay in power, Sheikh Hasina's dictatorship destroyed every institution of the country. The judiciary was broken. Democratic rights were suppressed through a brutal decade-and-a-half long crackdown," *United News of Bangladesh* quoted Mr. Yunus as saying through his Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam.

His comments came as he briefed diplomats stationed in Dhaka. ■

Cases against Hasina

An application was filed with a court in Bangladesh to register a case against Ms. Hasina and 33 others, accusing them of carrying out a mass murder by indiscriminately firing on a rally organised in 2013 by Hefazat-e-Islam.

With this, Ms. Hasina now faces 11

cases, including eight for murder, one for abduction, and two for committing crimes against humanity and genocide, in Bangladesh.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra Takes Office As Thailand's PM

Thailand's new Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of controversial billionaire ex-premier Thaksin, vowed to boost the kingdom's sluggish economy as she formally took office.

Ms. Paetongtarn, at 37 the kingdom's youngest ever Prime Minister, comes to power after a court sacked the previous premier and disbanded the main Opposition party - Move Forward Party — throwing Thailand's ever, febrile political scene into a new round of turmoil. ■

Application Process For Haj 2025 Begins

Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju opened the process for applying for the Haj pilgrimage in 2025 through the Haj Committee of India.

For the first time, applications have been invited on the Haj Suvidha App in addition to the website of the Haj Committee of India. The preparations have begun almost a year in advance.

Briefing about the Haj, the Ministry said a quota of 1,75,025 has been allotted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India for the pilgrimage next year. ■

OUR REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD

Britain	:	Mr. Akram Nadwi O.C.I.S.St. Cross College Oxford Ox 1 3 TU (UK)
Dubai	:	Mohammad Khalid Kanpuri P.O. Box No. 12772 Dubai U.A.E.
Pakistan	:	Mr. Ataullah Sector A-50, Near SAU Qrs. Karachi 31 (Pakistan)
Qatar	:	Dr. Aftab Alam Nadwi P.O. Box No. 1513 Doha, Qatar
Saudi Arabia	:	Mr. Zia Abdullah Nadwi Director Al Waha International School P.B.No. 12491 Jeddah, Pin-21473 (K.S.A.)
South Africa	:	Mr. M. Yahaya Sallo Nadwi P.O. Box No. 388 Vereniging, (South Africa)
U.S.A.	:	Dr. A. M. Siddiqui 98-Conklin Ave. Woodmere, New York 11598