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**Ulama And The English
Language**

S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Muslims are in minority in the world and from the very outset it has been felt that as compared to the majority scant attention is always paid towards the minority. Today, knowledge is the most dominant element in the world. It is knowledge through which developed countries gained influence, excellence, progress and advancement in every sphere of life. Lack of Knowledge is the main cause of Muslims' backwardness and their marginalization in every walk of life. Every country, whether it be Germany, France, England and other countries, prefers its language. The English ruled over India for a long time. They made the English language the language of the motherland in India. Even today, intellectual circles have good command over the English language and are unable to understand Urdu and Arabic. They fail to comprehend the teachings of Islam. Hence, Ulama must learn English well and have excellent proficiency and profundity over it so that they may easily convey the true message of Islam to others. Though English is incorporated in the syllabus of Nadwa, yet we will have to produce experts in the English language so that the real picture of Islam is sublimely presented before the world. It is obvious that without profound knowledge of the English language, it is impossible. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

This day I have perfected your religion for you. I have completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.

(al-Ma'idah 5:3)

It emerges from studying the Qur'an that two points are crucial to faith. First the spread of faith and second measures to protect faith. As regards the former, the Qur'an contains clear guidance: It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger [the Prophet Muhammad] with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions even though the polytheists hate it. (al-Tawbah 9:33) Elsewhere too, it is said that Allah will accomplish the above, much to the chagrin of the unbelievers.

(al-Tawbah 9:32)

It is clear from the Qur'anic statement given in Surah al - Ma'idah that Islam will establish its superiority over all religions. This will occur not only in the political domain, but also in terms of its impact on the human mind. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was given the glad tidings: When there comes the help of Allah to you [O Prophet] and the victory, and you see the people enter Allah's religion in crowds, glorify the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness. He is the One Who always accepts repentance and Who forgives. (al-Nasr 110:1-3)

The divine promise that people would embrace Islam in large numbers came true during the Prophet's life time. The Qur'an asserts:

Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will certainly grant them succession in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant the authority to practise their religion which He has chosen for them. And He will surely give them in exchange security after their fear.

(al-Nür 24:55)

This naturally facilitated the spread of Islam. The Qur'an also states:

Those who, if We give them power in the land, enjoy the establishing of prayer, the payment of zakah and exhorting people to do good and forbid evil. (al-Hajj 22:41) ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said : "No adulterer commits adultery and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the adultery, and no thief commits theft and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the theft, and no drinker drinks wine and remains a Muslim during the time he drinks the wine, and no robber commits robbery, in full view of men, and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the robbery, and no embezzler commits embezzlement and remains a Muslim during the time he commits the embezzlement. Thus, O ye who believe ! Save yourselves from these [Faith-destroying] actss. Save [yourselves]."

—Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary.—Adultery, theft, wine-drinking, murder and robbery and embezzlement are antithetical to Islam and during the time a person performs any of these evil acts the light of Faith deserts him. It does not, however, mean that he altogether goes out of the fold and becomes an Infidel. While commenting on this saying, Imam Bukhari himself has remarked that "the perpetrator of these sins ceases to be a full Believer at the time at which he perpetrates them and the light of Faith does not remain in him."

To put it differently, if the peculiar inner feeling which is known as Faith is alive and the heart is illumined with it, a person will never be guilty of these wicked acts. Such sins are committed only when the flame of Faith has died out in the heart and the special spiritual consciousness which protects a man against evil-doing has disappeared or grown feeble due to some reason or the other. ■

Editor's Note 

The Glorious Qur'an

Almost all religions have their holy books for guidance where authors may not really be known but Islam is the religion of God, that was why God revealed the Qur'an to His messenger, Muhammad (PBUH) as a guidance for the pious, a Law for the Muslims, a healing for the disease that is in hearts of those whom Allah wants to heal and a light for those whom Allah wants to give success. It contains the fundamentals for which Allah sent the Messengers. The Qur'an was not the first Book to be revealed nor was Muhammad the first Messenger to be sent. Allah has revealed the Scriptures to Abraham; Torah to Moses and Gospel to Jesus. All these Books were revelations from Allah to His Prophets and Messengers. But the contents of most of these Books have been lost and have become extinct, and interpolation and alterations have entered them.

As for the Qur'an, Allah Himself guarantees its protection and makes it the witness and abolisher of earlier Books. He says while addressing the Prophet

"And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it and as a witness over it."

He describes the Qur'an as an explanation of everything,

"And We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything."

He calls it guidance and mercy,

"So now has come to you a clear proof (the Qur'an) from your Lord, and guidance and a mercy."

He describes it as that which guides to uprightness when He says,

"Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right."

The Qur'an guides mankind to the most righteous path in all aspects of their life.

Whoever reflects on how the Qur'an was revealed and how it was preserved will give the book its due estimation and purify his intention for Allah alone. Allah, the Exalted says,

"And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of all the worlds,"

which, the trustworthy spirit (Jibreel) has brought down upon your heart (O Muhammad) that you may be (one) of the warners."

So the One Who revealed the Qur'an is Allah, Lord of all the worlds; and the one who brought it is the trustworthy spirit Gabriel; and the one in whose heart it was revealed is the Prophet.

The Qur'an is an everlasting miracle for Muhammad. It contains signs that shall abide till the Day of Resurrection. The signs and miracles of previous Prophets used to end at the termination of the Prophets' lives, but Allah has made the Qur'an the everlasting proof.

It is the extensive proof and dazzling sign. Allah challenges the mankind to produce the like thereof or ten Surahs like it or even a single Surah that resembles it, and they are unable to do that in spite of the fact that it is composed of letters and words and the people on whom it was first revealed were people of eloquence and rhetoric. Allah says,

"Or do they say: (Muhammad) has forged it? Say: Bring then a Surah like unto it and call upon whomsoever you can besides Allah, if you are truthful."

Among the things that testify to the fact that the Qur'an is a revelation from Allah is that it contains stories of the past nations, prophesied future events that came to happen as it has prophesied and the fact that it mentions many scientific facts that have not being discovered until recently. Another proof of its being a Divinely revealed Book is that the Prophet on whom it was revealed was unknown with anything similar to that or reported to have known anything similar to the Qur'an Allah says,

"Say (O Muhammad): If Allah had so willed, I should not have recited it to you, or would He have made it known to you. Verily, I have stayed amongst you a lifetime before this. Have you then no sense?" ■

S.A.

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The New World

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

This world of ours, they say, is very old. Yet, time and again, it has woken up from death-like slumber and staged a wonderful recovery. The last time it was restored to life and rendered active and flourishing again was when a grandson was born in the family of Abdul Muttalib in Mecca. Though born an orphan, the child was to take care of all mankind and give it a new lease of life. A life spent in sleep is no life. Time used up in killing oneself cannot be called existence. The real age of the world, hence, is not more than fourteen hundred years.

The cart of humanity was moving along the downward track in the 6th Century of the Christian era. It was growing darker and darker, and the slope was becoming deeper. The cart was gathering momentum. It was rolling down with greater force. The whole family of Adam was seated in the cart. There were, in it, the fruits of thousands of years of human endeavour, of ancient civilizations and intellectual development. The occupants were either fast asleep or quarrelling among themselves for a better place. No one gave a thought to the danger that lay ahead.

Physically, the human race was strong and vigorous, but its heart was

weary, mind fatigued and conscience dead. The pulse was sinking, and the eyes were about to petrify. It had lost the wealth of faith long ago. Not one man of belief and conviction was to be found in whole communities. Superstition was rampant in the world. Man had disgraced himself. He had bowed low before his own slaves and servants, and was ready to kneel to everyone save One God. He had developed a fondness for the forbidden and the unlawful.

The ruling classes, drunk with power, indulged in reckless oppression, their dogs lolled in luxury while the human beings starved. The mounting standard of living had turned life into a nightmare. Whoever did not conform to it was looked down upon as uncivilized. The common people lived in grinding poverty. Taxes and other duties and multiplied manifold. Wars had become a regular feature. People, everywhere, were entangled in their internal problems. They had neither the time nor inclination for the higher values and ideals of life. The world had become hollow from within.

The correction and reform of the world had gone beyond the power of man. It was not the question of a country's freedom or a nation's progress. The whole of mankind was

hovering between life and death. There was not one sore to be healed; the entire body of mankind was a big, festering boil.

No one seemed fitted for the task. Neither the philosophers, nor the writers, nor the statesmen. They, all, were the victims of the same malady. How could the sick heal the sick? How could those who were bereft of faith impart it to others? A huge lock had been placed on the destiny of man, and the key was missing.

The excessively gloomy state of affairs, certainly, was not pleasing to the Lord. Ultimately, He raised up an Apostle among the simple, unaffected, freedom-loving Arabs. No one, indeed, besides a Divine Apostle could rescue mankind from the clutches of death and restore it back to life. His name is Mohammad bin Abdullah. Boundless salutations to him, and endless benedictions!

Whose name did I utter, Oh God!

That my speech came up and kissed my tongue?

All the ingredients of life were intact. They had only become disorganized. The wheel of life had not stopped. It was moving, but in the wrong direction. The real fault was that the tenon of life had become loose. But was that tenon? Correct knowledge and awareness of the Creator, the resolve

to obey Him, to believe in His Apostles and to follow their teachings, and faith in the Hereafter.

The Prophet Mohammad set right the axle of life, but at the gravest peril to himself and his family. He sacrificed everything for the sake of it; he spurned the crown, rejected the offers of worldly power and wealth, abandoned the beloved home-town for good, and spent his whole life in suffering and privation. He tied stones to his stomach (to suppress hunger), never ate to satisfaction throughout his life, and made his family a sharer and partner in adversity and tribulation. He was always in the forefront on occasions of trial and danger, and kept strictly away from every manner of gain and gratification. Yet he did not depart from the world until he had put it on the right path and turned the tide of history.

Within a space of 23 years, the world was transformed. The conscience of man was aroused, the inclination towards well-doing was created and the power of discernment between right and wrong was developed. The path of the worship of God and obeisance to Him was opened, and man began to feel ashamed of prostrating himself before fellowmen and his own slaves. Inequality came to an end, and racial pride disappeared; rights were restored to women, and comfort was brought to the weak and the indigent.

In sum, the face of the world was changed in no time. Where a God-fearing man was not to be found in a whole country, hundreds and thousands of persons were produced who lived in the constant presence of the Almighty. They did justice even to the enemy and cared nothing for their own children when it came to fairness and impartiality. They were ready to depose against themselves and willingly bore hard-ship for the sake of others and espoused the cause of the weak against the strong. They were ascetics by night and horsemen by day, and wielded the upper hand over everything, power, wealth and desire. They knew only one lord and Master, the Almighty, the Supreme Being, the king of kings. They animated and inspired the world and instilled it with faith, civilization, morality and God-remembrance.

A new dawn was heralded. A new era was ushered in. As man changed, the world, too, changed with him. The earth and the sky changed. The marvelous revolution was brought about by the teachings and endeavour of one man, the prophet Mohammad. The family of Adam is not indebted to anyone more than him. He is the greatest benefactor of humanity. The clock of civilization would be put back by thousands of years if what the holy Prophet gave to the world was taken away.

Why should the day of the birth of the sacred Prophet not be blessed when the most blessed man the world has seen was born on it?

The springtide that has come over the world,

It is he who set the plants. ■

The Seven Who will be under Allah's Shelter of Mercy

Abu-Hurayrah related that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

“Seven types of people will be under the shelter of Mercy on the Day when there will be no shade other than that of Allah's Mercy: 1) a just ruler, 2) a young person who kept busy in Allah's worship, 3) a person whose heart was attached to the mosque, 4) two persons who loved each other for Allah's sake, they met for His sake and partook for His sake and left each other for His sake, 5) a man who was invited by a beautiful and charming woman but declined her offer saying, I fear Allah, 6) a person who gave charity so secretly that his left hand did not know what was given by his right hand and 7) a person who remembered Allah private, so that his eyes brimmed over with tears.” ■

- *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Prophet's Mission And Message

- *S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi*

All the Prophets who were raised, right from Hazrat Adam (AS) up to Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), strictly enjoined the renunciation of Shirk and adoption of Tauheed, because, it is Allah Almighty who is the Creator of the entire universe. It is He who has furnished the universe with all kinds of goods that might be needed, It is He who has made these goods fully usable by, and easily available to, man as a result of which everyone draws mamum benefits from them throughout all his or her life and fulfils his/her needs. In fact the life of man itself is sustained by these very goods and their usability and availability. How is it, then, if the man forgets His Magnanimity and, abandoning Him, adopts some odd objects lying hither thither which he fancies can benefit him or pose a threat of causing some harm to him and starts saying: we are helped by so-and-so, our needs are fulfilled by so-and-so and such and such object is inaganimous to us? How is it then that the man attributes the Magnanimity conferred exclusively by his Creator and Master, Allah Almighty, on him to others and asks them for fulfillment of his requirements and, abandoning his real Benefactor who is the greatest of all the benefactors and grants all kinds of beneficence, calls other petty objects his benefactor and master? How will, quite obviously, Allah Almighty, who has created each and everything and bestowed man with each and everything and continues to do so incessantly, allow all that to be perpetrated and be not angry? Hence it is the Shirk which Allah Almighty gets extremely displeased with. And that is something absolutely realistic, sensible and just.

That is why all the Prophets and reformers interdicted, first of all and most of all, the Shirk. Thereafter and along with it, they kept calling for the removal of the rot, whatever and wherever it could have got generated in the human character and morals. For example, if there was in some populace, along with the Shirk, some sexual depravity, as was the case with the people of Lut (AS), or some other kind of malpractices were there in vogue amidst the peoples, their Prophets prohibited them from them. In some populace, along with the Shirk, the practice of making pilferage while measuring and weighing was rampant as was the case with the people of Madiyan. Their Prophet prohibited his people from doing that. In some populace, along with the Shirk, the hauteur and the habit of harrowing the weaker sections was in vogue as was the case with Fira'aun's folks of Egypt. There Hazrat Musa (AS) was made the Prophet. He tried hard to make Firaun see the reason and put the fright of retribution from Allah in him and forbade him to indulge in Shirk and tyranny. In some habitations, a fondness, along with Shirk, for persecuting the weak and usurping the rights of others had taken root. The Prophet there prevented them from doing that, too. Likewise, whatever other vices, along with the Shirk, were there in the peoples, their respective Prophets restrained them from all these vices, too, along-with giving the call to adopt Tauheed (the Faith in Unity and Oneness of Allah) in its unassimilated form: that is to worship Allah Almighty alone who is sole Sustainer of the entire universe and all the creatures therein.■

Islamic Influence On Indian Society

- M. Mujeeb

I believe there would be much less misunderstanding among the representatives of the different cultures of the world if we examined more closely the nature of what we call influence. Influence is not imposition, or a free gift of ideas and goods to those supposed to need them, or a borrowing and lending or imitation of the ways of one people by another. It is something really indefinable and can take the most devious ways. We look for it in obvious and concrete forms, in architecture, music, painting, literature, where it is least genuine and seldom enduring, and we generally come to the wrong conclusions. For instance, would it be accounted an influence of Islam, which is rightly taken to be a democratic religion, that the caste system should become more deeply rooted than ever before among the Hindus? But that is what did happen. The Muslim Sufis in Iran and Khurasan initiated in the 10th century a movement of taking Islam from the classes to the masses. Muslim sufis in India continued this movement. Goswami Tulsi Das, through his Ramayana, made the veneration of Rama the religion of the masses in north India, and as an indirect consequence strengthened the faith of the masses in the caste system as an unalterable;

divine dispensation. Would this be considered an influence of Islam? We would say yes, if we regarded the idea of taking religion to the masses as the essential element, and say no, very emphatically, if we valued the democratic tendencies of Islam. Or again, take the case of the poet saint Kabir. He attacked both Muslims and Hindus for making religion exclusive. We cannot be sure whether he himself was a Muslim or a Hindu; to what influence, then, can we trace his determination to attack and ridicule exclusiveness? Islam, as a missionary faith, enjoins the eradication of false belief, and I would say that Kabir's attitude is an instance of Islamic influence. But, then, Kabir accused the Muslims of holding false beliefs, although they professed Islam. A third instance is even more illuminating. I have often heard it said that in north India Muslims have been the most outstanding masters of vocal and instrumental music. But music is, according to Muslim religious law, one of the frivolities, and for this reason, addiction to it has been condemned. The only explanation I have been able to think of is that the Muslim who took up music would have been one of the damned, both in this world and the next,

unless he achieved the highest excellence. That would give him a status in this world, and he would have the confidence to expect forgiveness in the next. But would we call this the influence of Islam.

So let us not try to simplify matters where the reality is complex and, for that reason, all the more fascinating. Let us assume—what was most probably also true—that the Muslims wanted to keep Islam and the Muslim way of life to themselves, and that the Hindus had no desire whatever to be influenced by the Muslims. Then let us see what changes took place.

One I have already mentioned. Religion became the religion of the people. Then, the spoken languages of the people became literary languages. We have the beginnings of Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi and Sindhi literature. Further, the city became the centre of culture, tailored clothing came into general use, simplicity was discarded in favour of a life enriched and complicated by a vast increase in the articles of daily use, manners became elaborate and were, so to say, codified in the form of a recognised etiquette. None of these changes, except perhaps the first, can be regarded as due to the influence of Islam, but the changes would not have taken place when they did if Islam had

not become one of the religions of India,

Spoken languages benefited because Muslim rulers, while not exclusive in their patronage, had no reverence for Sanskrit and no reason to venerate the Brahnnans, who were generally the only people who learnt and could speak it. On the other hand, the Muslim Sufis wished to propagate their ideas, and they could do this only in the language of the people. They were not interested in the Hindus but in the Muslims of the lower classes. The Muslims thus made a wide breach in the ramparts behind which the linguistic prestige of Sanskrit—and also, let us remember of Arabic and to some extent Persian—was entrenched. As early as the first decades of the 15th century, a Muslim sufi was asked why he was so favourable to Hindi. And about a hundred years earlier people had seen that when Persian verses failed to produce a mood of exaltation in Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, the singers took up some Hindi folk song, and the Shaikh was soon in rapture.

Islam is averse to luxury of any kind, and the life of the good Muslim should perhaps be more simple and austere than that of the Hindu. But the cultural expression of Islam has been the exact opposite, and Islam has almost everywhere promoted urban life and luxury. This was, perhaps, inevitable

when religion required the congregation of the faithful in the mosque preferably five times a day but at least once in a week. Muslims have to live together, a mosque has to be the central feature of every Muslim settlement. In India, specially during the first two or three centuries, the Muslims could maintain themselves as a community only in the cities. Their ruling classes had to strike the imagination of the people. And so we have both a multiplication and a rapid development of cities, and of the glamorous products of craft and industry. From this flow the other changes—the demand for many and excellent products of all kinds, even to the extent of having a pair of slippers costing Rs. 50,000, the cultivation of elaborate manners, and so on.

I have already indicated how the evolution of an elaborate and extravagant city life can be traced back to some features of Islam. Hinduism is not congregational. There were large cities in the Mauryan and Gupta periods : there have, indeed, to be cities, if there is to be any civilisation. But the Hindu ideal—and my own, if it comes to that—is life away from the city, away from noise and dust and worldliness, where one can live in peace and think. I remember reading somewhere that the Vedas should not be studied and recited in cities. There is, therefore,

according to Hindu standards, advantage but no religious merit in city life.

And now I come to the intriguing question of the use of tailored clothing. There is a Sanskrit word for tailor, but I have not found evidence of tailors having been generally busy at any time previous to the settlement of the Muslims. Men and women draped cloth around themselves, or tied it where just draping could not be depended upon. The tailor may have existed, but he could be dispensed with. The Muslim, on the other hand, cannot say his five daily prayers without the help of the tailor and his craft, and the Muslim woman would lose all rights and status if the tailor did not enable her to clothe herself completely up to the wrists, the neck and the ankles. Rulers set the standard of respectability, and non-Muslim women had to pay the price of respectability by employing tailors and wearing a minimum of tailored clothing.

Finally, though it is not my business to discuss the influence of Hinduism on the Muslims, I must say that if I were an eighteenth or early nineteenth century Muslim, I could easily have become that public nuisance called a reformer. I could have said, 'Islam is buried deep beneath Hindu influences; let us dig it out, clean it and see what it really looks like !' ■

(Cont. from page 38)

“Who will come to me with news of Sa’d bin Ar-Rabi’?”

A man from the Ansar stood up and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I will go and see what happened to Sa’d, to see whether he is among the living or the dead.” The man then went about the task of looking among the corpses and severed body parts that were scattered about on the battlefield. When he found Sa’d, he saw that his body was wounded in many places but that he still had a few breaths of life left in him.

“What is your business?” asked Sa’d.

“Indeed, the Messenger of Allah asked me to see whether you are among the living or the dead...”

“I am among the dead,” said Sa’d. “Convey greetings of peace from me to the Messenger of Allah and say to him, ‘Indeed, Sa’d bin Ar-Rabi’ says to you: May Allah reward you for us with what Allah rewards a Prophet for his nation.’ And convey greetings of peace from me to your people...” “After a few final words of advice for the Muslims, Sa’d died. When the man from the Ansar returned to the Prophet and informed him about Sa’d’s death, the Prophet said:

“May Allah have mercy on him. Both alive and dead (i.e., on the verge of dying), he has been sincere to Allah and His Messenger.”

Sa’d bin Ar-Rabi and Kharijah bin Abi Zaid bin Abi Zuhair were then buried in the same grave.

The Two Daughters of Sa’d bin Ar-Rabi’

Allah said:

“If (there are) only daughters, two or more, their share is two thirds of the inheritance.

When this verse was revealed, Sa’d bin Ar-Rabi’s wife went to the Prophet and said, “O Messenger of Allah, Sa’d died as a martyr on the Day of Uhud, and he left behind two daughters.” Accordingly, the Prophet gave Sa’d’s two daughters two-thirds of Sa’d’s estate. ■

(Concluded)

The Essentials Of An Islamic Community

- Maryam Jameelah

If we profess to be Muslims who value the integrity of our faith, we must vigorously reassert our religious and cultural identity. It is not enough to condemn the atheism of modern civilization and its institutions so destructive to all we cherish. Instead we must always stress the positive and constructive values of the Islamic way of life and build them up as practical alternatives. Only after these alternatives are provided will it become possible to permanently demolish alien influence. In so doing we shall have to engage in a desperate struggle with vested interests within our ranks who will spare no pains to frustrate our efforts. They will invariably scorn the course of action suggested here as unworkable and the product of wishful thinking. They will point out that because of technological progress, all parts of the world have become so dependent upon each other that no people can remain aloof from modern civilization and hope to survive. They say that it is impossible for any government to function in the modern world based on a Law revealed more than thirteen centuries ago. They insist that the Shariah is a fossil and the Khalifate no more than a museum piece.

It is highly questionable who put "realism" and "practicality" before all else have ever stopped to ponder that were the Holy Prophet of the same turn

of mind, he and his tiny band of followers in Medina would have given up their cause as hopeless, deeming it impossible to fight against the greatest imperialistic powers of the time. Surely the Battle of Badr would never have taken place since the poverty-stricken Muslims were so few in number that they could barely muster an army of 300 ill-equipped men on foot against more than 3,000 well-armed Quraishis on horseback. Do they forget that it was the "realists" who feared the destruction of the idols in the Kaaba because these were the source of income not only of Mecca but of the whole of Arabia. Those who admire "practicality" must logically praise Mu'awiya's worldly triumph over Hazrat Ali and consider Hazrat Hussain hot-headed indeed because his chances of winning at the Battle of Kerbala were almost nil. Indeed, the distinguishing characteristic between the believer and the unbeliever is that while the unbeliever bases his actions upon opportunism and expediency, the believer does what is right regardless of worldly consequences.

We cannot attain an Islamic society until we recognize the supremacy of the Shariah. Ruler and ruled alike are all equally subject to the Divine Law, tyranny and despotism will find no place in an Islamic state. In order to derive full benefit from the Shariah, it must always be interpreted in a strict,

literal sense and no concessions nor compromises whatsoever be made to the so-called "changing times".

This immediately raises the question of Ijtihad (use of independent judgment in interpreting the Shariah) versus Taqlid (or the reliance upon the authority of the previous jurists). It has become the fashion now-a-days to blame the decadence, stagnation and decline of the Muslim world on Taqlid. This popular but misleading belief must be exposed for the fallacy that it, is for Taqlid was the result of these unfortunate circumstances and not the cause. During the Crusades and the Mongol invasions which destroyed so many centres of learning, the leading jurists and theologians were far-sighted enough to realize that society would disintegrate into utter chaos if unqualified, ignorant people were free to tamper with the Shariah as they pleased. The impact of modern Western civilization has created a similar situation of far more serious proportions. Now-a-days Western educated leaders with little or no appreciation of Islamic values, are claiming the right of Ijtihad to mutilate the Shariah beyond recognition. This they do by rejecting the Fiqh of the great classical jurists as no longer applicable to the present day add by casting doubt on the authenticity of Hadith in order to allow them the maximum freedom to introduce Western innovations. This is what the modernizers today understand as Ijtihad.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Ijtihad is a basic and indispensable tool of Islamic jurisprudence sanctioned no less than by the Holy Prophet himself. Thus Ijtihad can never be rejected on principle, but rather only its abuses condemned as interpreted and practiced today. Ijtihad is valid when : (1) it is applied only where there are no specific injunctions of the Quran or Sunnah ; (2) it does not conflict with Quran or Sunnah ; (3) no sophistry is used to obscure the true principles of the Quran and the Sunnah. It is glaringly evident that the modernists have violated every one of these rules, particularly the last.

Any attempt to revise the Shariah in the light of modern conditions is bound to destroy the last vestige of permanency and stability which a Muslim, instinctively and correctly associates with the concept of Divine Law. For if revision is necessary now, it will certainly become necessary a few decades hence when conditions will have changed again and so on until the Law of Islam will be entirely revised out of existence. If this were justified, what right would we have to claim the Law-Giver has conceived the Law of Islam as an eternal proposition? Would it not in that event be much more appropriate to say that this Law instead of creating conditions is subservient to them and that therefore it cannot be Divine Law.

Education is the most important function of an Islamic society. A renaissance of Islam is impossible

without popular support. It can never hope to succeed unless the rising generation understand and fully appreciate the value of our faith. How can this be accomplished?

First of all, we must recognize the mosque as the only proper place for the education of our youth. Every mosque should also be a school. Secondly, the study of Arabic must be made compulsory at all educational levels and given first priority. Every Muslim child should learn not only to read and recite but fully understand the meaning of the original text of Qur'an in Arabic. Arabic must be the medium of instruction and Qur'an, instead of being just another incidental subject, must be the focal point around which the entire curriculum revolves. All other subjects should be taught in relation to Qur'an to avoid any sharp distinction between religious and secular learning. In this way, the entire educational curriculum will be integrated harmoniously. The study of European languages, literature, philosophy and law should be confined to the universities, preferably on the graduate level. Under no circumstances should we expose our children to secularism because there is no deadlier poison to impressionable, immature minds. On the other hand it, is essential that those in positions of authority and influence possess through familiarity with modern civilization in order to effectively combat its influence.

In order to give our youth a clear understanding of the past in relation to

the present, we must revolutionize our attitude in regard to Islamic history. Too many of our educated elite regard the transmission of Greek philosophy by the Mu'tazilites (rationalists) to medieval Europe as the most important contribution of Islamic civilization to humanity. Such Hellenistic philosophers as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd have been praised more than they deserve. A truer perspective of Islamic history enables us to understand why the achievements of Umar ibn Abd al Aziz, Salah-ud-din Ayubi and Alamgir Aurangzeb were so much greater. Instead of boasting of Islam's contribution to Western civilization, we must be aware of the fact that the transmission of Greek learning to medieval Europe was quite coincidental and had nothing to do with Islam itself. Since Islam is of infallible Divine origin and therefore complete, self sufficient, and independent of man-made philosophy, it is futile to attempt to justify its validity by a comparison with any other civilization, past or present. Hence the uselessness of trying to prove the greatness of Islamic civilization by boasting of its contributions to medieval Europe, for Islam exists independently for itself and not as subservient to other cultures.

Although it is a religious duty for our rulers in their personal capacity to give their full moral support and generous financial contributions for the maintenance and growth of our educational system, our schools should

be freed from direct state control and allowed to flourish on an independent basis. Those who have wealth should be induced to contribute financially to schools at all levels both through Zakat and voluntary charity. With our educational system supported financially through Zakat, voluntary charity, wills and the Waqf foundations, it shall then be possible to make all education completely tuition-free from the primary through the graduate university level. Although primary schools should be open to all children, secondary and university education should be limited to those youth who possess sufficient interest and intellectual capacity to profit by it. Although parents should be given every encouragement to send their children to school, they must not be forced by law to do so because it is the father who must decide how his children are to be reared—not the State.

An important function of an Islamic society is the protection of the family. Strong family ties of mutual affection and responsibility are indispensable for a healthy society. Filial loyalty and respect and consideration for old people must be emphasized and encouraged in every possible way. The most effective means of doing this is to put an end to the cult of youth-worship. When women are made to feel dignified and important in bearing the major responsibility for preserving a wholesome home life, they will have no more desire to play the role

of a man. No longer will they regard their dignity as human beings dependent upon competing with men in business and politics. Neither will they resent being required by law to dress modestly and conceal their bodies in public. An Islamic society must insist on segregation of boys and girls after puberty, ban immoral books, the publication of pictures in newspapers, magazines, books and commercial advertising, forbid the sale of alcoholic beverages and enforce the full penalties of the Shariah against illicit sex.

No poison is more deadly to Islamic moral values than the modern cinema industry. Therefore, it is imperative to ban the importation of all foreign films and prohibit the production of domestic ones. Cinema and television must be limited strictly to educational purposes.

We must make every effort to combat the evil of nationalism and strengthen the bonds of the Ummah from one end of the Muslim world to the other. If the different Muslim countries are unable to unite politically at once, they can pave the way by eliminating visa requirements, passports, tariffs and custom duties in order to promote unrestricted freedom of commerce and travel.

Minority groups living under Muslim rule must be allowed religious and cultural autonomy in self contained communities of their own and their rights scrupulously protected according to the laws of the Shariah.

We will never gain vigour and vitality until we recognize the catastrophic consequences of imitating a foreign culture and do everything possible to put an end to this. Let anyone who doubts the crucial importance of avoiding the adoption of Western dress and living habits, listen to what the historian, Ibn Khaldun (1332—1406) had to say on this subject:

The vanquished always seek to imitate their victors in their dress, insignia and other customs and usages. This is because men are always inclined to attribute perfection to those who have defeated and subjugated them. Men do this either because the reverence they feel towards their conquerors makes them see perfection in them or because they refuse to admit that their defeat could have been brought about by ordinary causes and hence they suppose that it is due to the perfection of the conquerors. Should this belief persist long, it will change into a profound conviction and will lead to the adoption of all the tenets of the victors and the imitation of all their characteristics. This imitation may come about either unconsciously or because of a mistaken belief that the victory of the conquerors was due not to their superior solidarity and physical strength but to the inferiority of the customs and beliefs of the conquered. Hence arises the delusion that such an imitation will remove the causes of defeat. In fact, every country which has

powerful conquering neighbours tends to imitate those neighbours as we see among the Spanish Muslims who imitate their Christian neighbours in their dress and ornaments even to the extent of having statues and pictures on the walls of their homes and shops. And in this the careful observer will mark a sign of inferiority.

Here in this single paragraph, Ibn Khaldun has described with superb insight exactly what is wrong with us. The remedy is obvious. If our pride in our faith and its heritage is genuine, it must be expressed by our physical appearance. If we do not want to be like our enemies, we should not want to look like them either. Certainly we have no right to call ourselves Muslims if we are ashamed to be identified as such.

Only a very poor psychologist will say that these things are merely outward and therefore unimportant. Next to a man's body, his clothes and his home are the nearest things to his soul and have an incalculable influence upon it. It was easy for his soul to conform to Islam in the surroundings which Islamic civilization provided for it, but now, for no good reason, that God-given civilization has been pushed aside ; therefore we find in most so-called Islamic countries, men have shaved off their beards, forsaken their turbans and taken to wearing a dress which puts many obstacles in the way of ablution and which makes the movements of the prayer look ugly and even ridiculous and as for their homes, there is nothing in

them to make one remember God and much to make one forget Him. One of the outward tokens of that inward dignity of the Muslim is the turban. The Holy Prophet praised the turban in many of his sayings just as he also enjoined upon men to grow their beards. It can also be said that the loose, flowing garments such as worn by him and his companions are the only true Islamic dress for this is the only kind of dress which conforms to the movements of the prayer. The Holy Prophet's house in Medina was an extension of his mosque and for more than twelve hundred years, every Muslim house was as an extension of the nearest mosque. Men took off their shoes to enter their homes ; the floors were strewn with ritually purified mats or carpets ; they sat at home as they would sit in the mosque and the ornaments on their walls were all reminders of God—Divine Names, verses from the Qur'an, sayings of the Prophet. This is the essence of Islamic civilization and there is absolutely no reason why any of the things I have mentioned here should have been changed or why the Muslim home today should not still be as an extension of the mosque. Only in such surroundings as these can Islam truly flourish.

What will the world be like under Islamic rule ?

When men recognize the sovereignty of God and the supremacy of His Law, all false values will be automatically swept away. It will be a world where men are slaves of God and not to each other. It would mean freedom

from all forms of tyranny. It will be a world where a man is judged by his character and not by his worldly success. There will be no place for racial discrimination or class hatred. Congregational prayer, Hajj, fasting and Zakat will create strong bonds of affection, trust and responsibility between man and his fellow man. The prosperous will enjoy their wealth as a bounty from God in which the poor have rightful share assured by law. It will be a world without artificiality or deception. Women will not try to be like men nor will the old feel ashamed of their age. Since this world will be recognized as only a temporary abode, people will be preoccupied with eternal salvation and shun as evil all that diverts them from the remembrance of God and the Hereafters. Night clubs, dance halls, theaters, bars, saloons, gambling casinos and brothels would soon go bankrupt and forced to close down for lack of business.

An Islamic society would not be utopia, for perfection does not belong to this world. Some of us will be tempted to break the Law but crime will be limited to isolated individuals instead of a raging epidemic. There will be no confusion in any mind as to what is right and what is wrong. Yes, even in an Islamic society human beings will suffer, for sorrow is as an inseparable part of this life as are its joys. There will be pain, hunger, sickness and death. But despair and boredom will be absent. Suicides will be unknown. Nobody will doubt the meaning or the purpose of life. ■

A Faraway Peace

- P.R. Kumaraswami*

AT last, there's a ceasefire deal. Though fragile and temporary, the cessation of active hostilities in the Israel-Hamas war is a welcome development. This is the first sign of hope since brief pause in 2023 that saw the release of 41 Israeli hostages in return for the freedom of 300 Palestinian prisoners. Out of the 251 Israelis taken hostage by Hamas in October 2023, Israel says that 94 are yet to be returned, of which 34 are presumed dead. If there are no last-minute twists, the ceasefire should come into force on Sunday, January 19.

Under the deal mediated by the outgoing Biden administration and Qatar. 33 Israeli hostages would be released during the first of the ceasefire lasting six weeks, and the remaining during the second phase, negotiations for which will start on the 16th day of phase one. Israel is expected to free about 1,000 Palestinians including several who are serving life-terms, in the first phase. They might be freed and sent to third countries willing to accept them. The ceasefire also will facilitate the flow of much-needed humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip and evacuation of injured Gazans to Egypt for further treatment.

The deal comes more than 15 months after the Hamas-led attack on

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Israel of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent Israeli counter-offensive. In total, the war has caused the deaths of over 46,000 Palestinians and close to 2,000 Israelis, nearly half of them soldiers. The number of injured is over 1, 10,000 on the Palestinian side and over 13,500 Israelis. The conflict has also resulted in the displacement over 19 million Palestinians and over 2,00,000 Israelis (if one includes northern Israel following Hezbollah's attacks). The Infrastructure destruction of the Gaza Strip is humongous. The brutal conflict has generated intense personal animosity and hatred on both sides, which is difficult to overcome, if not mend.

While Hamas has agreed to the deal, the Israeli cabinet was expected to discuss and endorse it on Thursday. As required by domestic laws, the list of Palestinian prisoners to be freed has to be notified, and this might trigger legal challenges, further delaying the swap agreement. Even within the cabinet, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu might face opposition from hard-line ministers who are not ready for any accommodation with Hamas. Hence, the Sunday deadline is still uncertain.

Several issues need some clarity. While Israel is committed to a partial withdrawal from some parts, there are no details concerning the complete withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces

from the Gaza Strip, one of the major preconditions of Hamas that torpedoed previous negotiations. Will both sides stop military operations? Will the ceasefire enable ordinary Israelis and Palestinians to return to their homes and rebuild their lives? Will the Iran-backed “axis of resistance” — that also includes Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen — honour the Israel-Hamas deal? Or will they support more radical Palestinian elements and undermine the ceasefire efforts? What will be the nature of reconstruction efforts in Gaza, a territory reduced to rubble? Will Israel and Hamas convince the international community to fund a reconstruction effort free from future destructive paths?

Officially, Israel had ruled out any meaningful role for Hamas in post-ceasefire Gaza. This means that the internationally recognised and West Bank-based Palestine National Authority (PNA) will have to play a central role in the administration of the Gaza Strip. There are greater calls for the octogenarian Mahmoud Abbas to take the lead, but this will not be easy. Due to internal security threats in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat moved his headquarters to Ramallah back in 2001. Since then, neither Arafat nor his successor Abbas have ever set foot in the Gaza Strip. Intra-Palestinian tensions culminated in the takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas in June 2007, leading to a de facto division of Palestinian territories. Hence, the PNA taking over the

administration of the Gaza Strip will be a herculean task.

Moreover, Hamas and other militant Palestinian groups are without a recognised or recognisable leadership. Since the recent conflict began, Israel has eliminated a number of senior Hamas leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh and Mohammed Deif. Israel has considerably destroyed the infrastructure of the militant group and in the process, curtailed the social welfare component for which Hamas is supported by certain sections of the Palestinian people.

Since October 2023, various national and international bodies, including the United Nations, have been working for a ceasefire. The main parties to the conflict—Hamas and Netanyahu — are not easy customers. Though unpopular and severely condemned, Netanyahu’s militant approach has damaged and weakened Israel’s other adversaries — Hezbollah, Iran and Syria — silencing several of his critics.

The fears over the incoming Trump administration also pushed the parties to conclude the elusive deal. Despite widespread criticisms and condemnations of the US and its favouritism towards Israel, the Biden administration even in its last days, is more effective than all other powers in bringing about some hope for peace. But in the eternally unpredictable Middle East, nothing is final until it actually happens. Sunday could still be far-off. ■

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Unity of Muslim Ummah: Challenges And Strategies

- Jamil Farooqui

The concept of the Ummah is a holistic one and indicates a collectivity into which the entire human race, with different individualities and variations, is blended together. Islam preaches the utmost unity, equality and fraternity among human beings because they originate from a single source and have a sole purpose for which they have to live and operate in this world. It unites humankind into a meaningful fold, a well-integrated whole and a strong community to accomplish the mission which is assigned to them and to fulfil the purpose for which they are created. The organization and the system of sociability that Islam develops are based on a distinct purpose by which humans are knit together, show solidarity and turn into a vital force.

The Ummah is an ideological community rather than an ethnic and cultural group. It comes into existence when people identify the ideal, consider it noble, righteous and beneficial, affirm it and commit themselves to it. The Arabic word Ummah is derived from the word Umm which means mother. Thus, Muslims are the offspring of the same mother — the faith of Islam. The goal and destiny of all are the same — Allah Himself whom they have to obey and to whom they have to return. The Muslim Ummah is the community of faith in the

one and only God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord and is in complete submission to Him. It is the basis of human life and of social structure which initiates collective actions. It creates harmony between society and history.

It does not mean that the Ummah has no ethnic or cultural traits. It, of course, has those traits but they are merged into the ideological one. In fact, the ideological base of the Ummah transcends all differentiations and variations, surpasses all other bases of human organization and sociability. Thus, Muslims are not characterized by caste, colour, creed or any other ethnic or cultural trait but by their faith, mission and ideology which distinguish them from other human groups and collectivities. The ideological base of the Ummah is the only source of its unity, integrity, solidarity, and, as such, of its vitality. On the basis of its ideology it is considered as 'the best community ever evolved'. Its distinctness and superiority lie in the fact that it 'enjoins what is right, forbids what is wrong and believes in Allah'. Thus, Islam unites humans into a collectivity for a distinct purpose, a noble and sublime one, and impresses upon its members to make it the basis of all their activities and relations with their fellow beings.

Islam is the only system of life

which considers all humankind to be one family, binds humans into a fraternity and establishes a world community which we call the Ummah. It is based on unity as it has to strive and work for one purpose shared by all of its members. The unity of the Ummah is considered virtuous and righteous and motivates the members to treat their fellow beings as brothers and have cordial relations based on sympathy, love and affection.

Nature of Unity

The Muslim Ummah operates along with certain vital principles that strengthen its structure, provide vitality and activate it to act upon the Divine guidance. Defiance and non-compliance damage its integrity, weaken its vitality and undermine its value.

1. The first and foremost principle on which the concept of the Ummah is founded is unity. The members of the Ummah join with others to follow the Divine guidance, establish the Divine order and lead life according to the Divine commandment. Islamic injunctions are addressed not to individuals but to the whole community. The Islamic command of inviting people to good, enjoining decency and forbidding indecency is not given to an individual but to the whole Ummah. It is the collective responsibility of the group to invite people to decency, worship the

Lord and do good. The entire group will be subject to disgrace if it fails in its duty. The Qur'an always addresses the people, the whole band of believers:

“O you who believe! Bow down, prostrate yourselves and adore your Lord and do good, that you may prosper, and strive in His cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and under discipline).”

It should be borne in mind that the prosperity of humans lies in their submission to the Lord. Muslims accept this reality, manifest it, in one way or another, in their actions and mould their lives accordingly. As a matter of fact, they organize themselves into a group, work together, strive together, pray together to accomplish this task and survive as a collectively. They declare that “we worship only You and ask for help only from You “. They ask for His grace not for the individual person but for the whole community. They say, “Show us the straight path, the path of those whom You have favoured’. God has given one system — the right one — to human beings and impressed upon them to follow and implement it and be united for it. He created a unity of purpose, bound humans into one system and gave them a meaning to life for which they are characterized and identified as a ‘single community’ When they became separated from that community of purpose and associate with other sect, individuals lose their significance and

have no value. The unity among Believers is essential and emerges and remains intact because their purpose and mission in life is one for which they have to strive collectively. The Qur'an clearly indicates: "Truly Allah loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure." Muslims live in this world not for physical enjoyment or comfort, but for the implementation of the Divine order. They unite themselves, for this purpose, into a community, organize their activities for the accomplishment of this task and are regarded as the soldiers of Allah. The Prophet (peace be on him) considers them as a 'compacted edifice' and said:

A Momin has the position of a structure for another Momin, whose one part supplies strength to the other part.

In another place the Prophet described the close relations and the meaningful bonds that exist among Muslims. He said:

The mutual love, kindness and graciousness of Muslims is like a body, when some of its parts are in pain then all other parts of the body become a victim of fever and sleeplessness.

Islam always reminds its members of their mission and work in this world and instructs them to be united to make their stay comfortable and meaningful. If they do so they will get felicity, enjoy power and lead life with dignity otherwise they will be nowhere

and face humiliation. Unity is, in fact, a major determinant of the mission and existence of Muslims in this world. The Qur'an proclaims:

"And hold fast all together by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you."

Muslims are, further, instructed to avoid disagreement and all those acts that create dispute and disunity. They should remain intact and continuously work for the mission of their lives:

"And obey Allah and His Messenger; and fall into no disputes, lest you lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering; for Allah is with those who patiently persevere."

2. The second principle on which the concept of the Ummah is based is 'brotherhood' which "is the soul of the living faith and the essence of the delicate feelings which a Muslim has in his heart for his other brethren." It indicates how close the relation among the members of the faith is that the benefit of one is the benefit of others. Brotherhood shows common bonds between two or more persons who cooperate, coordinate, act in the interest of each other, work and struggle together for their common survival. This closeness, as the general conception is, develops through common descent

about which it is said that the same blood flows in the veins of all. Islam does not give importance to blood relationship but, being a sound and strong ideology, is much concerned with its mission. Thus, the common bond that exists among the adherents of Islam and which they share is of the purpose and mission of life and not derived from any other criteria. It is so strong that it unites people into a cohesive group and enables its members to live for others. The common purpose and mission in life constitute the core of the concept of 'brotherhood' which Islam preaches according to which all Believers are considered as a 'single brotherhood' not because of their descent but only for this reason that it considers Allah its Lord, Cherisher and serves Him. All Believers are one family if they adhere to the principles of Islam, and as such, they share the joy and grief of each other and come to the rescue of each other. They cease to be its members when they deviate from its tenets and refuse to follow them. The Prophet said:

“A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. He should neither oppress him nor should he usurp his right. He who provides for the needs of his brother, Allah will help him. And he who removes one difficulty of a Muslim brother, Allah will remove his one difficulty on the Day of Judgement, and he who covers the defect of a Muslim brother, then on the Day of Judgement Allah will cover his

defect.”

Al-Ghazali mentioned three characteristics of 'brotherhood'. First is the sympathy, which every Muslim must express to others. They should treat others as the parts or their own body, solve their problems and remove their difficulties. Second is the help which every Muslim must extend to others. They should consider others as being as important as they are. They should develop a feeling according to which they treat others' joy and grief, pain and pleasure as their own. They will always cooperate with their brethren in good and bad conditions, and work as parts of a composite and integrated whole. Islam creates this spirit of brotherhood among its followers.

The third is a distinct etiquette which Islam prescribes and Muslims observe in dealing with other brethren and fellows. Islam lays down certain principles and explains clearly the doctrine that creates the true spirit of brotherhood. The Qur'an instructs the human beings to maintain peace and reconciliation among themselves and, in case of dispute, to follow Divine instructions and resolve differences accordingly. The relation of a human to another in Islam is not based on his interest, gain, liking and disliking but purely on his relation to his Lord. A Muslim establishes relations, interacts with others and lives in this world to seek the pleasure of Allah. The fear of Allah

guides Muslims' behaviour and enables them to live in peace and harmony. This is the reason why the Qur'an says:

"The Believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah that ye may receive mercy".

The Prophet pointed out the factors that corrode tranquility and destroy the compassion among Believers. He suggested in detail the ways in which one can promote and maintain peace, harmony and placidity as well as strengthen the relation among the fellow human beings. He instructed Muslims to avoid undue misgivings, not to be inquisitive, over-curious or prying. Muslims should not be jealous of one another, should not hate each other and should not be enemies of one another. They should not oppress another Muslim (his brother), should not leave him isolated and should not think him mean. The property, blood and honour of a Muslim are Haram (prohibited) for another Muslim. It is not permissible for any Muslim that he should break off a relationship with another Muslim for more than three days.

These are simple and ordinary principles but very crucial to create cordial and affectionate conditions among human beings. If we observe these principles in our day-to-day activities we will develop the feeling of

friendship brotherhood, establish peace harmony and lead life with dignity. The distinct feature of Islamic brotherhood is that it is spiritual as it comes into being through the love of God and surpasses all other relationships, particularly of blood. Al-Ghazali observes:

"The society where the seeds of love and brotherhood among men are sown on the basis of the love of God, where the symbols of Islam are safeguarded and watched, in such a society the spiritual brotherhood takes the place of racial brotherhood and many times this relationship of faith proves to be more strong and firm than the relationship of blood."

3. The third principle of the Ummah is its moderate character. It always adopts the middle path and avoids extremism. Islam always takes a balanced view of life. It does not encourage a person to leave the world and devote himself entirely to prayer. It presents a synthesis of the spiritual and material aspects of life. The Qur'an identifies Muslims as an Ummah of Wasat (middle path) which was 'raised to be a witness over humankind and the apostle may be a witness over it'. It indicates that we should always be just in our thought and action, support truth and exhibit it in our behaviour. The word 'Wasat' signifies justice or equity (Adl) and, as such, Muslims are a just community and they have to maintain

justice in all spheres of their lives.

4. The fourth principle is the concept of collective action. Islam preaches complete unity among its members so that they may become a band of people which should be dedicated and committed to its faith and principles. The unity of the Ummah is the unity of action. The whole Ummah has to collectively struggle to implement' Divine order on the earth, invite people to good and forbid evil. It is the foremost duty of the Ummah, and if it fails in its duty, it has to face the consequences. It is evident from history that many Ummahs faced punishment and were destroyed because they denied the truth, deviated from the good and acted upon evil.

5. The fifth principle is that the goal of the individual and of society is the same. The purpose of individual life can best be attained when one completely integrates oneself into the community and acts collectively with others to accomplish the mission of the organization. The set of rules developed for performing different actions as well as interacting with others is the same for both the individual and society. Individuals are the inseparable parts of society, they work for the ideals which society cherishes, and therefore, the integrity and solidarity of the society is more important. This is the reason why the virtues and morality developed for the guidance of the individual are of

social importance. They facilitate the performance of collective action for the attainment of a goal, and are in the interest of society as a whole. In the social structure of Islam it is the collective responsibility of all members to create a state of servitude for complete submission to God, and for which the whole community is accountable to Him. To accomplish this task is the joint responsibility of all members and, as such, they form a group and perform collective action.

The unity that Islam promotes is, thus, the unity of purpose that flows in the veins of Believers, gives strength to their bodies and provides vitality to their existence. It is so strong that it binds individuals together and constitutes an entity in which they live together, act together and die together. They cooperate with each other in their struggle to fulfil the purpose of their lives. In this process they share the ethos and pathos of each other in the manner that the joy of one is the joy of the other and the grief of one is the grief of the other. In fact, they are the one soul that runs in different bodies.

The Islamic society that emerged at the horizon of Arabian Peninsula by efforts of the Prophet exhibited exemplary unity and fraternity. Members of this society had friendly relations with their fellow Believers, extended all possible help and treated each other as brethren. When the Prophet and his

colleagues migrated to Madinah the people of the city welcomed them with open hearts and requested them to share their amenities and privileges and use their property as their own. They had sincere feelings to accommodate the immigrants within their group because they were struggling for the same mission. The Arabian society before the emergence of Islam was famous for its infighting and internal feuds. People were divided into various tribes and ethnic groups and were at daggers drawn with one another. They were characterized for their savage attitude, rivalry and enmity among themselves. They used to shed blood over petty issues. Islam removed their savagery, united them for a mission and developed love among them. Allah pointed out this fact and reminded them of His favour: "for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His Grace you became brethren." The caliphs and companions of the Prophet retained this trait; their successors continued the tradition until their conviction and devotion to the faith were strong.

Contemporary Situation

The contemporary Muslim situation is very pathetic and alarming. The community which was raised to lead humanity to excellence and glory, peace and tranquility, righteousness and piety is now struggling for its own survival and looking to others for help. It is losing its

real strength and vigour for which it is characterized as the 'best community'. The major setback is the widespread disunity in thought and action of its members. It is unfortunate that the more its ideology preaches and emphasizes unity, the more its adherents exhibit disunity.

Muslims are now a distorted lot. They are facing numerous challenges from both within and outside the group which have made them drift from their basic traits and weakened their commitment to their ideology. As a matter of fact, they, by their thinking and action, began to give preference to the factors that divided the Ummah into groups and cliques and shattered its unity.

The division of the Ummah into columns and rows, further created infighting within the group and developed behavioral weaknesses like superiority, anger, revenge, defaming, suspicion, lack of confidence, and intolerance to mention a few.

Others took advantage of these weaknesses and planned strategies to further divide Muslims into groups and subgroups for their own petty gains. Indeed, Muslims were subjugated, ruled by others and became the victims of the atrocities, savageries, brutalities, oppression, solutism and despotism of others.

Now the situation is that they do

not agree on any issue, they do not have a common plan and strategy to face the modern challenges. They have developed different sects and camps. They think of the interest of their own sect and group instead of that of the whole Ummah. They are the silent spectators of the atrocities committed on their brethren. They have no courage to come to their rescue, share their grief and help them.

their weak position, make strategies to further divide them, involve them in fighting and conflict, rule and subjugate them. They do not realize their own strength, and desperately look to others, follow them, creating further contradictions and making them weaker and weaker. "It is extremely regrettable that the present-day Muslims have become oblivious to the great legacy of brotherhood of all Muslims." ■

Their enemies take advantage of

(MWL)

Value of Love

- *S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi*

But there is an exceptional glare of love in man's eyes which is not found in any other creature. His heart is characterized with softness and melting quality inspired by love and quivers with the touch of pain and suffering for others. Such a heart is not in the treasures of the angels and surely man alone can present to his Lord a heart full of sincere love for others.

The excellence of man lies in his love and mercy for others: one person is pricked with a thorn but another person feels the pain. Man is gifted with tears which fall from his eyes when he sees a widow's head uncovered in helplessness, a poor man's kitchen unlit, and a sick man in distress. If such a drop of tear is put in a sea of transgression, it will cleanse it. If it falls on a forest of sins, it will burn it and fill the space again with the effulgence of virtue. The angels can bring forward anything, but they cannot present this drop of tear. The angels do not sleep due to their cognizance of Allah's being and attributes, but their vigil does not have the excellence of man's inability to sleep due to the sufferings of others.

The quality of love permeating through the human heart is a very precious gift of God. When something stirs it, it assumes a strange power. It rises above the considerations of religion, community, nation, and motherland. It then only sees another man's heart and feels its suffering and is drawn to it by nature as is pulled an iron chip toward a magnet. ■

Faith In The Revealed Scriptures

- S. Sulaiman Nadwi

Another basic article of Faith which Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has commanded us to believe, is faith in the Books of Allah; Books which He has sent down to mankind through His Prophets from time to time. The Divine guidance continued throughout the history of man; that guidance which only the One Who possesses the knowledge of all things could provide for His creatures. However, the guidance revealed to the Prophets before Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to particular groups of people; it was not intended to be universal because humanity had not yet reached the state of readiness for such a final, comprehensive statement of Allah's guidance for all times to come.

The Holy Qur'an is the only Divinely revealed Scripture in the history of mankind which has been preserved to the present time in its exact original form. For although parts of earlier revelations, such segments of the Torah (Taurat) given to Moses (peace be upon him), the Psalms (Zaboor) revealed to David (peace be upon him) and the Gospel (Injeel) revealed to Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) still remain, they are so heavily intermixed with human additions and alterations that it is very difficult to determine what part of them constitutes the original message (as many Biblical scholars admit). That the Qur'an has been preserved in the exact Arabic

wording in which it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and in the exact order in which he himself placed it, commanded by Divine revelation, is a matter well-documented historically and beyond dispute.

We have been commanded to believe that before the Qur'an also God had sent down Books through His Prophets and that they were all from One and the same God, the same God Who sent the Qur'an and it is the dogma for every Muslim to believe not only in the Qur'an, but also in the Divine books of the Pre-Islamic epochs. The sending of the Qur'an is not a new event, but it is only to confirm, restate and complete those Divine instructions which people had changed and interpolated or were obliterated with the passage of time. The former Divine books had been sent in the languages which have been extinct since long. In the present era no nation or community speaks those languages and there are only few people who claim to understand them. The language of the Qur'an, on the other hand, is a living language; millions of people speak and understand it.

The faith in the previous revealed Scriptures of God is one of the excellent teachings of Islam which is not found in any other religion of the world. This tolerance is characteristic of the teaching

of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When we testify the truthfulness of all to them and affirm that all the true Prophets of Allah from Adam (peace be upon him) to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought the same Divine message and teachings, Islam is the name of the one and the same religion which was vouchsafed to all the Prophets of Allah and was taught by Adam (peace be upon him) to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). As already stated, the books revealed to the Prophets in the pre-Islamic epochs were either changed or interpolated by the people to such an extent that it is very difficult to distinguish what portion of it is from God and what portion from man or they were obliterated or lost in antiquity. The Qur'an is the last of the revealed books which was vouchsafed to the Last of the Prophets, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Its message is complete, perfect, final and comprehensive in all respects to guide the humanity in all spheres of life. It exists exactly in its original text and not a word—nay, not a dot of it had been changed.

The Holy Qur'an confirms that Islam, as religion, is pure and one and the same which Allah chose for all mankind and sent to all His Prophets.

He hath ordained for you that religion which He commanded unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee and Moses and Jesus saying: Establish the religion and be not divided therein. Dreadful for the

idolater is that unto which thou callest them Allah chooseth Himself whom He will, and guideth unto Himself who turneth (toward Him).

And they were not divided until after the knowledge came unto them, through rivalry among themselves; and had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from thy Lord for an appointed term, it surely had been judged between them. And those who were made to inherit the Scripture after them are verily in hopeless doubt concerning it.

Unto this then summon (O Muhammad). And be thou upright as thou art commanded and follow not their lusts but say: I believe in whatever Scripture Allah hath sent down, and I am commanded to be just among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord Unto us our works and unto you your works; no argument between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and unto Him is the Journeying.

(42:13-15)

Say: O people of the scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered unto Him;

(3:64)

In the following verses of the Holy Qur'an, it has been said that the Jews and Christians had made changes and

interpolations in the revealed books. As a result thereof various religious groups and sects came into existence:

Lo! As for those who sunder their religion and become schismatics, no concern at all hast thou with them. Their case will go to Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do. (6:160)

Say: 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. (6:162)

We have been ordained to confirm that all the previous Divine books were from Allah, were true and had been sent to fulfil the same purpose for which the Holy Qur'an had been sent.

And before this was the Scripture of Moses as a guide and a mercy. And this Scripture (the Qur'an) confirms it in the Arabic tongue to warn the wrong-doers and as a glad tidings to those who do good. (46:12)

And in their footsteps We sent Jesus, the son of Mary. We gave him the Injeel, therein was guidance and light and confirmation of what is in hand of the Taurat, guidance and an admonition to those who fear God. (5:46)

It is He Who revealed to thee (Muhammad) the Scripture (the Qur'an) in truth confirming what is in hand of (the Scripture) that went before it. And He revealed the Taurat and the Injeel before this as guidance to mankind. And He revealed the criterion (of judgement

between right and wrong). (3:3-4)

Our faith in the Holy Qur'an should be of the nature that it is purely and absolutely Allah's own Word, that it is perfectly true, that everything mentioned therein is right, that it is the bounden duty of man to carry out in his life each and every command of it, and that whatever is against it must be rejected.

The Holy Qur'an is immune from all sorts of changes, interpolations etc. Allah, the Exalted, has Himself undertaken the responsibility of its protection and security. It is itself a great miracle, has no parallel in its language, teachings and form of expression and gives a challenge to the unbelievers to produce a piece of writing comparable with it.

Lo! We, even We, reveal the Reminder, and Lo! We verily are its Guardian. (15:9)

Stir not thy tongue to hasten it.

Lo! upon us (resteth) the putting together of and the reading thereof.

And when We read it, follow thou the reading; Then Lo! upon us (resteth) the explanation thereof. (75:16-19)

Lo! those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it cometh into them (are guilty), for Lo! it is an unassailable Scripture.

Falsehood cannot come at it from before or behind it. It is a revelation from the Wise, the Owner of Praise. (41:41,42)■

Islam And Education

- Mohd. Aslam Siddiqui

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Passing Away of Maulana Jafar Masood Hasani Nadwi

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana Jafar Masood Hasani Nadwi's sudden death shook us up like an earthquake. All and sundry deeply mourned over his demise. He died in an accident on January 15, 2025 at Rae Berily, U.P.

He was a distinguished Islamic scholar, editor of fortnightly "Al Raid" and Nazir-e-Aam of Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. Besides, he was also associated with a host of national and international academic institutions and organizations.

He was scion of a highly educated and religiously enriched Hasani family of district Rae Berily, Uttar Pradesh, India. He was son of well-known Islamic scholar and former Director of Education of Nadwatul Ulama Maulana S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi and nephew and son-in-law of Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi ex- Rector of Nadwatul Ulama and former President of All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

He was born on September 13, 1965 at Takiya Kalan, Rae Berily, U.P. He got his elementary education at home. He memorized the entire Holy Qur'an. He was a good Hafiz. Thereafter he enrolled in Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow from where he did his Alimiat in 1981 and Fazilat in 1983 respectively. He also did his M.A. in Arabic from University of Lucknow. In 1990 he went to Saudi Arabia and did a one year training course from there. He derived immense academic gains from the prominent scholars of Saudi Arabia.

He started his practical life as a teacher in Madrasa Alia Irfania, Lucknow. He proved himself as an able teacher. He was a dedicated teacher. He was an embodiment of all sublime qualities and virtues necessary for a good teacher. His method of teaching was unprecedented. Scores of students quenched their thirst for knowledge from him. He left a galaxy of students behind him who impart education in their respective states.

It should be noted that passing away of Maulana Jafar Masood Hasani Nadwi is a personal loss to me. Like his father Maulana S.M.

Wazeh Rasheed Hasani Nadwi (1933-2019) and his uncle and father-in-law Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi (1929-2023), he had also been a great inspiration to me. I have the honour and privilege to gain considerable benefits from them. They had been my teachers as well as mentors.

Undoubtedly, he was a highly qualified person and was an emblem of morality. He was a man of transparent heart and noble qualities. He never showed egotism, pride, and haughtiness. He met everyone cheerfully. He led a pious and exemplary life. His life is a living example for us.

Needless to add that he was an accomplished Journalist. He carved a niche in the field of journalism. Because of his vast knowledge of Arabic, he became Editor in Chief of the fortnightly "Al-Raid" after his father's demise in 2019.

He was also a good writer of Urdu and an able translator. He authored some books in Urdu and Arabic. Similarly, he rendered several books into Arabic as well.

It is interesting to note here that he always kept himself aloof from delivering speeches but having become Nazir-e-Aam of Nadwatul Ulama in 2023 he began to deliver speeches and within a short span of time he became a famous speaker.

Decidedly, Maulana Jafar Masood Hasani's death caused a great vacuum. His demise is a great loss to Nadwatul Ulama in particular and to the Millat Islamia in general. His myriad selfless contributions and outstanding services will always be remembered.

He is survived by his wife, a daughter and three sons.

His funeral prayer was led by Maulana Syed Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi, Rector Nadwatul Ulama and was buried in his ancestral graveyard Takia Kalan Rae Berily. May Allah pardon his all shortcomings and adorn his grave with luminosity and refulgence and peace to his soul. Aameen! ■

Sa'd bin Ar - Rabi

- Abdul Aziz As - Shanawi

The Prophet Consults with Sa'd bin Ar-Rabi'

The Quraish soon prepared another army to return to Al-Madinah; their goal was to exact revenge against the Muslims for the losses they incurred on the Day of Badr. Al-Abbas bin 'Abdul-Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet quickly dispatched a letter to the Prophet. The messenger who brought the letter met the Prophet at Quba. Upon receiving the letter from him, the Messenger of Allah handed it over to Ubai bin Ka'b, who then began to read it to him: "Indeed, the Quraish has assembled an army to march towards you. Do whatever you see fit to do when they arrive. They have actually set out, and they are 3000 (fighters) in total. They are bringing 200 horses, and they have among them 700 armor-clad (fighters). Also, they have with them 3000 camels that are loaded with weapons."

The Prophet asked Ubai bin Kalb to keep secret the contents of Al-'Abbas's letter. The Prophet then entered Said bin Ar-Rabi's house and said, "Is anyone in the house?" From the Prophet's tone, Said immediately perceived that it was a private or secret matter that the Prophet wanted to discuss with him, and so he said, "No, say whatever you need to say." The

Prophet proceeded to tell him about Al-'Abbās's letter, intending thereby to seek Sa'd's counsel in the matter.

"O Messenger of Allah," said Sa'd, "I indeed hope that there is goodness in that (i.e., for the Muslims to overcome them in battle)." Before they concluded their meeting, the Prophet asked Sa'd bin Ar-Rabi' to keep what they discussed a secret between them. After the meeting was concluded, the Messenger of Allah began the short trek back to Al-Madinah.

As soon as the Messenger of Allah left Sa'd's home, Sa'd's wife appeared and asked, "What did the Messenger of Allah say to you?"

"What does that have to do with you? May you have no mother!"

"I was listening to you," she said. She then repeated to Sa'd the entire discussion he had just had with the Prophet. Sa'd said, "Indeed, to Allah we belong, and to Him we are returning!" He then forced her to come out with him.

Sa'd began to run, forcing his wife to move quickly along with him, until he caught up with the Messenger of Allah "O Messenger of Allah," he said, "My wife asked me to inform her about what you said, but I preserved our secret (and refused to tell her anything). Then she

said, 'I heard what the Messenger of Allah said,' after which she repeated all that was said (during our meeting). I feared, O Messenger of Allah, that news would spread because of that (i.e., because of her) and that you would then think that I had divulged your secret."

"Let her go," the Prophet said. So angry was Sa'd that he was still holding his wife by her hair. But upon hearing the Prophet's command, he forthwith let go of her.

The Day of Uhud

News quickly spread about the coming of the Quraish, and shortly thereafter the Prophet and his Companions — Sa'd bin Ar-Rabi' included — set out for Uhud in order to meet with the enemy.

We know what happened next: the Muslims initially had the upper hand, and then a group of archers disobeyed the Prophet's command, which left the Muslim army vulnerable from behind. The polytheists then quickly took control of the battle, and the Muslims began to flee. It was at that juncture during the battle that Mus'ab bin 'Umair lifted the flag of the Messenger of Allah and called out, "O people of Al-'Aqabah (referring to the Muslims who pledged to protect the Prophet in the Pledge of Al-'Aqabah), O leaders (referring to the leaders of the 'Aus and Khazraj who made the pledge on behalf of the others; Sa'd bin Ar-Rabi' was one of them)."

Sa'd heard this call and, without hesitating in the least, raced towards the heart of the opposing army, just as others were fleeing in the opposite direction. He fought valiantly, striking his sword at the many targets that surrounded him. But soon many fighters surrounded him, and it was only a matter of time before someone was going to deliver him a lethal blow. Yet despite his many injuries, he continued to fight with a great deal of zeal: his limbs were failing him, but his heart forced them to continue fighting. Then he fell down to the ground, though he still had some life left in him. No matter, though, for he had successfully fulfilled the covenant he had made to Allah

I Am Among the Dead

Around the time when Ibn Qami'ah announced that Muhammad had been killed, Malik bin Ad-Dukhshum passed by Sa'id bin Ar-Rabi' O, whose body was pierced in 12 different places.

"Do you know that Muhammad has died?" asked Malik.

"I bear witness that Muhammad has conveyed the message," said Sa'd. "But you must continue to fight for your religion, for indeed, Allah is alive and never dies."

After the dust had settled from the Battle of Uhud and the Quraish had begun their return journey to Makkah, the first thing that the Prophet said was:

(Cont. on page 14)

Around the World

Homes Destroyed, Thousands Flee As Wildfires Tear Through Los Angeles

Wildfires tore across the Los Angeles area with devastating force after setting off a desperate escape from burning homes through flames, ferocious winds and towering clouds of smoke.

The flames from a fire that broke out on Tuesday evening near a nature preserve in the inland foothills northeast of Los Angeles spread so rapidly that staff at a senior living centre had to push dozens of residents in wheelchairs and hospital beds down the street to a parking lot.

Another blaze that started hours earlier ripped through the city's Pacific Palisades neighbourhood.

The fires at higher elevations were preventing utility crews from getting water to refill tanks, the Los Angeles Department of Wind and Power said in a statement Tuesday night.

A third wildfire started around 10:30 p.m. and quickly prompted evacuations in Sylmar, a San Fernando Valley community that is the northernmost neighbourhood in Los Angeles. The causes of all three fires were under investigation.

Flames were being pushed by Santa Ana winds topping 97 kmph in some places on Tuesday, increasing to 129 kmph by early Wednesday, according to reports received by the National Weather Service. They could top 160 kmph in mountains and

foothills including in areas that have not seen substantial rain in months.

The erratic weather caused President Joe Biden to cancel plans to travel to inland Riverside County, where he was to announce the establishment of two new national monuments in the State. He remained in Los Angeles, where smoke was visible from his hotel, and was briefed on the wildfires. The Federal Emergency Management Agency approved a grant to help reimburse California for the fire-fighting cost.

Officials did not give an estimate of structures damaged or destroyed in the Pacific Palisades wildfire, but they said about 30,000 residents were under evacuation orders and more than 13,000 structures were under threat. Mr. Newsom visited the scene and said many homes had burned.

LA Blaze Damage Likely To Be Largest Wildfire Insured Loss in US History

The Los Angeles wildfires, which have reduced entire neighbourhoods to smouldering ruins and left an apocalyptic landscape, could become the costliest wildfires in US history in terms of insured losses if analysts' estimates of up to \$20 billion materialise. Accu Weather forecasts total economic losses from the disaster to range between \$135 billion and \$150 billion, signalling a challenging recovery and likely surging homeowners' insurance costs. ■

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