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# The Fragrance of East

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## Prophethood: Its Nature And Necessity

**S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

A question arises here. If the tremendous space and innumerable creations contained therein are beyond human imagination, if all the trees and seven seas are inadequate to expound the wisdom and glory of God and if the infinite signs and commandments of the Lord are beyond the ken of human understanding, then how can man attain the knowledge of His excellence and His attributes, how can the mystery of life be solved and how is man to seek the path Divine guidance and righteousness? The prophets too are no more than mortals. We know that the knowledge of man is extremely limited and liable to commit mistakes. Then, how are we to place reliance on the teachings and wisdom of a prophet? The Surah reveals the answer to all these questions on behalf of the last Prophet of God.

“Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only One God.”  
(Al-Kahf. 111)

This verse tells us that the only reliable source of God’s gnosis, the means to fathom the mystery of mysteries, as also the mark of honour and excellence of the prophets is the revelation vouchsafed to them. Man can never aspire to attain enduring success without placing reliance in the prophetic inspiration. This was the quintessence and central truth of prophethood expounded by the Prophet of Islam when he said: “I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only one God. ■

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### **Wisdom of Qur'an**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)**

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

*(Sahih Muslim)*

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

*Editor's Note* 

## Islamic Jurisprudence

The law and order of a nation is judged as to how its judicial machinery works. No doubt for the dispensation of justice various grades of courts are constituted. From lower court of a first class Magistrate to the Supreme Court one has to run to get justice.

Islam has laid specific punishment for all sort of crime. Here we quote a murder case which was decided by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in a twinkling of an eye:

According to a report in Tafsir Mu 'alim al-Tanzeel, there once erupted a quarrel between a Jew and a hypocrite Muslim. The latter told him to call on Ka'b bin Ashraf, a rabbi, to resolve their dispute while the Jew insisted on referring the matter to the Prophet (PBUH).

Both of them eventually visited the Prophet (PBUH) who upon hearing the case decided it in favour of the Jew. However, the hypocrite Muslim resented the decision and asked the Jew to refer the case to 'Umar. Accordingly, he called upon 'Umar. The Jew related to him the whole case, adding that the Prophet (PBUH) had already adjudged it in his favour. 'Umar asked the hypocrite to verify the Jew's version. As he affirmed, Umar killed the hypocrite, saying: "This is the end of the one who is not happy with the Prophet's judgement."

The relatives of the slain person pressed murder charge against 'Umar and lodged the case with the Prophet (PBUH) that 'Umar was guilty of killing a fellow Muslim. On the one hand, there were the relatives of the slain person as claimant and on the other hand 'Umar as the defendant. In between them Prophet (PBUH) was the judge to give his verdict. Meanwhile, Jibrael brought the following revelation:

"And when it is said to them: 'Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger,' you (O Muhammad) see the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion." (An-Nisa, 4:61)

The charge was that 'Umar had killed a fellow Muslim. Allah clarified that he was a hypocrite, not a Muslim in that his hypocrisy lay in his dissatisfaction with what was revealed by Allah—the Qur'an and His Messenger. He deviated from

the Prophet's judgement and rejected Hadith.

O Muslim brethren! Think! Allah brands such a person in this verse as a hypocrite, though he used to pray, fast and was known like others as a Muslim. He did not agree to the prophet's decision. He neglected the Prophet's command and turned to a member of the Muslim Ummah. For this act he was condemned as a hypocrite. Allah adjudged that 'Umar had not killed a fellow Muslim, but a hypocrite. As to his relatives the Qur'an remarked:

"How then, when a catastrophe befalls them because of what their hands have sent forth, they come to you, swearing by Allah: 'We meant no more than goodwill and conciliation'." (An-Nisa, 4:62)

The relatives of the slain person told the Prophet (PBUH) that they had not approached 'Umar with an appeal in connection with the order of the Prophet (PBUH), but that 'Umar may affect a compromise between all of them. Allah says:

"They (hypocrites) are those of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts, so turn aside from them but admonish them, and speak to them an effective word to reach their inner-selves." (An-Nisa, 4:63)

As to their contention that they had gone there for compromise, it was a lie. They were hypocrites, devoid of their Faith in that they did not like the Prophet's judgement and his Hadith. They turned away from it and acted upon something other than Hadith. Allah knows well their hypocrisy. Their charge against 'Umar is invalid. The Prophet (PBUH) is asked not to entertain them and drive them away for their crime of rejecting Hadith. They are to be shunned for their dissatisfaction with the Prophet's judgement. Though they claim to be Muslims, they do not obey his command. They preferred 'Umar's view to the Prophet's command. Since they turn away from his decision in aversion, they are undoubtedly hypocrites who are devoid of Faith. ■

**S.A.**

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

## The Three Civilizations

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

### MATERIALISTIC CIVILIZATION

The social order founded on sensory perceptions and its cognitions is the oldest and most popular. No social order is more satisfying; none so easy to evolve and so readily acceptable to the majority of men in all climes and at all times. It has such an attraction for the masses that its roots need not go deep into the soil, nor is it necessary to raise the level of human intelligence or make any sacrifice for its sake. History bears witness to the fact that no social order has so persistently come to have its sway on humanity as it has done.

Any civilization based on senses will invariably possess the following distinguishing features:

#### Undue Reliance on Senses

It will deny everything which cannot be perceived through sensory organs. As a consequence, there will be no faith in any power or being which may be imperceptible to the senses and thus inconceivable by the intellect. Without faith in such a power, obviously, there is no question of any fear or hope arising out of it. Even if paganish cults with numerous gods sometimes do exist concurrently with it owing to age-old beliefs and superstitions which die hard, there is hardly any noticeable impact on the intellectual atmosphere created by materialism, as

the former never comes into conflict with the materialistic view-point and utilitarian outlook of life and moral behaviour.

Where sensory impressions are a necessary condition for the acceptance of any existence, there is obviously no room for recognition of any reality beyond the reach of human perception for these cannot be perceived by means of sensorial reactions. Denial of the Hereafter and life after death, or, in other words, of telefinalist morality, follows as a logical conclusion of such an approach, if only because these can be accepted on the basis of evidences other than those furnished by the sensory impressions. Further, the denial of life after death must of necessity make the terrestrial world and life in it an end in itself. Divine retribution has no place in life which, again, is driven to libertarian conduct undaunted by transitory laws and rules of social morality. Just as the senses do not perceive the life after death, they furnish an irrefutable evidence that death is the end of life. As a logical development of this idea, the demand for making the best of the present life becomes unassailable, rationally and intellectually, and all efforts are directed only to make life more comfortable. The conclusion thus arrived at by the sensist intellect is, indeed, reasonable and correct.

During the initial stages of a

materialistic civilization (sometimes even in later stages too) the impulse behind human behaviour is not abstract morality but self-interest. As this civilization progresses, social needs make it necessary to take recourse to certain moral concepts but these too are generally based on epicurean ideals. In other words, the objective remains pleasure and sensual enjoyment. In a more developed stage the ideal changes from pleasure to utility i.e. the moral code of the society aims at the greatest good of the greatest number but pleasure and sensual enjoyment continues to play a dominant role in the determination of utility.

### **Utilitarian Outlook**

Another feature of the sensist and materialistic civilization, in fact a supplementary trait of the one described above, is the preference given to immediate benefit over ultimate gain, owing to proximity of the former to sensory cognition. Preference of the immediate gain requires little thought to be given in deciding any issue. This is the reason why materialistic civilization manifests a peculiar shallowness and ostentation, and its social behaviour is marked by individualism, selfishness and profit-motive.

A natural outcome of such a mentality is exaltation of material gains over principles, morals and faith. How-so-ever lofty principles or ideologies, ethical or moral codes and articles of faith or belief

may be there, they can be jettisoned at the altar of meanest profit and smallest gain. Persons acquiring such an outlook of life and attitude of behaviour are always ready to compromise with every system; they exhibit a wonderful capacity of adaptability according to changed circumstances. They can mould themselves with greater ease than a man made of wax. They can work for any ideology, fight under any flag and die or kill for any cause provided they have something to gain; no matter whether the profit to be had is negligible, or even doubtful. This attitude often develops into a national outlook but in every case its message remains: Go with the time, if the time goes hard for you.

### **Man—A Social Animal**

The sensist civilization accords recognition to sensory organs as the sole media for acquiring knowledge. The sensory perceptions, as already stated, indicate nothing beyond the fact that man is physiologically an animal, albeit of a higher species. It, therefore, goes back to animalism—the gestures dictated by its perceptions—looking forward to the animal for finding the lost chains of human history, the secrets of human behaviour, attitudes and instincts; and prescribes norms of conduct, as it should, animalised in spirit and content for human beings.

The recurrence of the words 'sensist' and 'animal' should not cause any misunderstanding that a sensist civilization



implies a primitive form of social existence bereft of cultural attainments and civilized institutions. In fact I call it sensist because of its origin and spirit even though it is the most developed and sophisticated social order. Under the sensist civilization life is enriched, made comfortable and attractive, and all the available material resources are mobilised for inventions and improvements designed to make life easier to an extent larger than under civilizations springing from intellectual or revelatory ideologies. No other civilization can, indeed, lay a greater claim to material welfare and advancement because this form of civilization is furnished with all the sinews of material progress.

### **Material progress**

The world has at times seen phenomenal progress achieved by this civilization. It has turned barren lands into gardens, constructed canals over mountains raised magnificent buildings and produced such monuments of human skill and ingenuity that one is apt to regard it as an intellectual civilization. Still, the fact remains that it conquers intellect solely for sensual and materialistic comforts.

### **Denial of God**

Adites of ancient Arabia were once the greatest exponents of sensist-materialistic civilization. Their culture was the most advanced of that Age and exhibited numerous features of sensism. The way of their life was marked by denial of God and the life after death. They

constructed palatial buildings, sometimes unnecessarily, merely for ostentation, fame and worldly glory. Their love for life and of the world had taken possession of their soul to such an extent that they considered their nation to be immortal. Their wars were such a display of tyrannical power as if they had placed themselves beyond the bounds of creature lines and denied the control of a Divine power over them.

The Prophet of Adites, Hud (peace be upon him), addressed them thus:

“Build ye on every high place a monument for vain delight?

And seek ye out strongholds, that haply ye may last forever?

And if ye seize by force, seize ye as tyrants”?

(Shu'ara: 128-30)

Their successors, Thamudites, were also so preoccupied with the pursuits of worldly life and its comforts that it was clearly visible that they had lost all faith in everything imperceptible to their senses. Their Prophet, Salih (peace be upon him), told them:

“Will ye be left secure in that which is here before us, in gardens and water-springs,

And tilted fields and heavy-sheathed palm trees, though ye hew out dwellings in the mountain, being skilful”?

(Shu'ara: 146-9)

## Idol worship

Sensism, materialism and animism go together. The religious instinct of the nations accepting sensism and materialism finds expression in idol worship; for, those steeped in sensist outlook, attitude and approach towards everything find it extremely difficult to conceive a God that cannot be concretised, seen or brought before them as a symbol for meditation. They create material demi- gods to satisfy the innate divine instinct and thus materialise or falsify the spirituous in them like other phases of their life.

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was born in a nation which had gone far ahead in idol worship on its path of materialistic civilization. Al-Qur'an says of them:

“Recite unto them the story of Abraham:

When he said unto his father and his folk:

What worship ye?

They said : We worship idols, and are ever devoted unto them.

He said : Do they hear you when ye cry ?

Or do they benefit or harm you?

They said: Nay, but we found our fathers acting on this wise

He said: See now that which ye

worship,

Ye and your fore-fathers!

Lo ! they are (all) an enemy unto me, save the Lord

of the Worlds,

Who created me, and He doth guide me,

And Who feedeth me and watereth me.

And when I sicken, then He healeth me.

And Who causeth me to die, then giveth me life

(again).

And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sin on

the Day of Judgement”.

(Shu 'ara: 69-82)

## Perversion of human nature

Increasing emphasis on materialism and sensisms and the exaltation of sensual desires and their satisfaction over moral precepts result into perversion of human nature. The good sense becomes dormant and moral responsibility recedes into insignificance, Human nature degenerates to a level which is shameful even for the beast. Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) was born amongst a people who had reached the same depth moral degradation. He said to his people:

“What ! of all creatures do ye come

unto the males,

And leave the wives your Lord  
created for you?

Nay but ye are forward folk”.

(Shu‘ara: 165-6)

“For come ye not in unto males, and  
cut ye not the road (for travelers), and  
commit ye not abomination in your  
meetings?

(Ankabbt: 29)

### Profiteering

The covetous desire to exact the maximum of profit is a natural outcome of utilitarian mentality. This motive, by its very nature, is incapable of making any distinction between lawful and unlawful gains and prefers personal benefit over that of the community irrespective of the evil effects following in the wake of adopting such a course. Deceit, dishonesty and other malpractices become the secrets of trade.

Midianites were adept traders, well-versed in all these malpractices of the profession. Their Prophet demanded of them:

“Give full measure, and be not of those

Who give less (than the due).

And weigh with the true balance.

Wrong not makind in their goods,  
and do not evil,

making mischief, in the earth”.

(Shu‘arä : 181-3)

### Moral confusion under Roman Empire

Egypt, Syria, Iran and Greece have been centres of materialistic civilization in different periods of history. The natural corollaries of sensist-materialism found full expression at different times in each of these countries.

The Roman civilization was, however, a masterpiece of sensist-materialistic culture. Sensism regulated its moral behaviour and ethical code while materialistic outlook informed the thought and attitude of its citizens and determined the objectives of social life. Its thought philosophy, social outlook and intellectual precept survived not only numerous revolutions and the ups-and-downs of kingdoms and empires but still animates the modern western civilization. John William Draper depicts a picture of social and moral confusion prevailing during the glorious age of Roman Empire in these words:

“When the empire in a military and political sense had reached its culmination, in a religious and social aspect it had attained its height of immorality. It had become thoroughly epicurean; its maxim was, that life should be made a feast, that virtue is only the seasoning of pleasure, and temperance the means of prolonging it. Dining-rooms glittering with gold and incrustated with

gems, slaves in superb apparel, the fascinations of female society where all the women were dissolute, magnificent baths, theatres, gladiators, such were the objects of Roman desire. The conquerors of the world had discovered that the only thing worth worshipping is Force. By it all things might be secured, all that toil and trade had laboriously obtained. The confiscation of goods and lands, the taxation of provinces, were the reward of successful warfare; and the emperor was the symbol of force. There was a social splendour, but it was the phosphorescent corruption of the ancient Mediterranean World."

### Arabian age of Ignorance

The Arabian Age of Ignorance prior to the advent of Islam in the seventh Century A. D., was a purely sensist-materialistic age in thought and attitude, social and moral behavior. It had no concept of the life after death: it had been assumed that the alternation of day and night within the orbit of time and space, heaven and earth, provided the cause behind everything that took place; and that no super-human or super-natural agency had any power to break this chain of automation. Al-Qur'an says about these people:

"There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and we shall not be raised (again).

(Mominun: 37)

"And they say: There is naught but

our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time."

(Jāthia 24)

A poet of that age, Shaddakh bin Y'amar-al-Kan'ani, employs the same argument to exhort his tribe to war against another. He asks: "Why be cowards if you have to die like your enemy?' His argument is an example of the sensist way of thinking and the psychology of its adherents:

"Yea, fight ye tribe of Khoza'ah with your enemies

and don't be cowards.

Thy adversaries, like ye, have hair on their heads ;

Shall they come to life, once dead?"

Purely materialistic and epicurean attitude of emerges as a logical inference of the denial of the after and this can be noticed in the Arabian Age of Ignorance too. They thought that one has to die in any case, then why waste this brief sojourn on earth by denying sensual gratification or the satisfaction of carnal desires ; for, won't it be better to die contented than to live in want? Another poet of that Age of Ignorance, Tarafa bin al-Abad, epitomises the same concept in these verses:

"O thou, who censurest me for engaging in combats and pursuing pleasures, wilt thou, if I avoid them, insure me immortality?

If thou art unable to repel the stroke of death, allow me, before it comes, to

enjoy the good, which I possess.

A man of my generous spirits drinks his full draught today; and tomorrow, when we are dead, it will be known, which of us has not quenched his thirst”.

In a purely sensist and materialistic age the other object of life—a bit higher than comfort and luxury—is achievement of fame and honour, display of power, courage and manliness. Indeed, an intellect steeped in materialism cannot think of anything nobler. These aspirations find expression in the following lines’ by Tarafa:

“Save only for three things in which noble youth take delight.

I care not how soon rises over me the coronach loud:

Wine that foams when the water is poured on it, ruddy, not bright,

Dark wine that I quaff stol’n away from the cavilling crowd;

And then my fierce charge to the rescue on back of a mare.

Wide-stepping as wolf, I have startled where thirsty he cowers;

And third, the day-long with a lass in her tent of goat’s hair,

To hear the wild rain and beguile of their slowness the hours”.

Ideas like these give birth to a peculiar philosophy of ignorance, for, not even uncivilized and unlettered people can

maintain a semblance of social coherence without a philosophy—a view of life in entirety. Like other branches of its learning, arts and sciences, the philosophy of ignorance does not go deep, it is content to draw inference from the exterior and to adopt the concrete and present in preference to the ultimate and unseen. Ideas, thoughts and emotions expressed by the poets of such an age expound its philosophic view of life. This is more so in the case of Arabian Age-of Ignorance wherein poetry was the only compass of its wisdom. These thoughts, sometimes depicting a truth, are not without the innate spirit and instinct of the age in which they were born. In one of his poems Tarafa holds that after death, prudence and indifference become indistinguishable. He points to the graves of two persons, one extremely cautious and the other frivolous, and says that both have been reduced to dust. The miser and prodigal are here merely symbolic, thereby covering the entire field of human behaviour.

“To my eyes the grave of the niggardly who’s mean with his money,

Is one with the wastrel’s who’s squandered his substance in idleness;

All you can see is a couple of heaps of dust, and on them,

Slabs of granite, flat stones piled shoulder to shoulder.”

With these psychological traits at the base, the social life under ignorance develops a peculiar ethical code suited to

its genius. In such societies, unless historical circumstances give birth to effeminate tendencies, manliness, valour, fights and forays bulk large in the life of the people. War is considered a necessity in people constantly remain at feud for trifles, even if no purpose is to be achieved through it. Sometimes when they have no enemy to fight, they attack their own allies to satisfy their lust for strife and bloodshed. An Arab poet, Qatami, expresses this master-passion of those days in these words:

“And we attack our brethren Banu Bakar, when

Amongst the brothers and allies we have to fight none.”

The instinct to wage war for its own sake or, merely for the display of war-like prowess of any people is an impulse of ignorance, and it very often takes hold of the sensist societies. A poet of Ignorance expresses his savage joy over the fury of war which he hopes to blaze when his horse is able to carry him on its back:

“When my young, ruddy colt is grown up for ride,

May God inflame, between tribes, the flaming furnace of fight;

A fire flaming, that consumes every one, and spares none.”

The cooperation and alliance in an age of ignorance is never imbued with the principles of equity; nor is it bound by the limitations of just and unjust, right and

wrong, permitted and forbidden or the like. Instead, a partisan spirit lies at the back of all transactions of peace and amity. Never paying any heed to the call or the object for which its help is sought, the materialistic civilizations only look to the person giving the call or seeking its help. This sentiment has found a beautiful expression in a verse by an Arab poet who says:

“Help thy brother, whether he be oppressor or the oppressed.”

Again, the poet says:

“In oppression, if I help not my brother,

What help can I, when he is oppressed, render?”

I have indicated the features of sensist-materialistic civilization in some detail for it has almost always been the dominant, widespread and most popular social order of the world.

## INTELLECTUAL CIVILIZATION

We do not find in the annals of history any civilization which can be called intellectual, in which nothing ever accepted unless weighed in the scale of reason or commended by human intellect. If such a civilization were to come into existence it would make life an ordeal and would not perhaps last for more than a few days. As a western writer has well said:

“Man is by far more stupid in his actions than prudent”.

It would thus not be correct to claim

that reason alone can become the base of culture and its ramifications. In fact, ideas and thoughts, beliefs and superstitions, habits, customs and usages come into existence first, before any thought is given to them ; thereafter intellect comes to discriminate, accept or reject them, and not unoften it so happens that the intellect assumes the role of an advocate and defender of the existing usages. What reasons were not conceived by the Grecian intellect to vindicate female lewdness and prostitution? No act of human brutality and savagery can rival gladiatorial sports, but, did Roman intellectuals' sophistry not try to prove it inoffensive? Was not Arabian custom of infanticide and suttee in India rationalised by the intellectual pundits of these countries? Nevertheless, these sophistries and rationalisations could neither alter the realities nor intellectualise these customs or the civilizations which produced them.

Even philosophy cannot claim to be completely free irrational traits much less to prefer such a claim on behalf of culture or social order.

Greek philosophy is commonly regarded as the essence of speculative thought but quite a large portion of it was drawn from Grecian mythology and superstitions. Even Aristotle and Plato, with all their claims to free-thought, could not deliver their precepts from the confines of their environment and accepted many an illogical notion of the day.

### **Materialism in intellectual civilization**

Civilizations commonly accepted as intellectual and scientific at the first glance, if subjected to a closer scrutiny, would none-the-less be found to be essentially sensist and materialistic. Among such social orders the present civilization of the West has been the most deceptive, thanks to its crafty propagandists; for, it is regarded as the most scientific and intellectual civilization man has ever known. It was, however, an offspring of the revolt of sensism and pragmatism against the intellectual movement, and its achievements comprise a decisive victory of matter over intellect, senses over spirit and experience over faith. European philosophers, scholars, social scientists and ethicists began their crusade against intellectualism in the seventeenth century. They declared that anything which cannot be experimented, measured, weighed or counted is not acceptable, and, abiding by the same standard, believed that nothing is moral if it has no utility. They sought a rational elaboration of pure perception in order to propound a new theory of cosmology completely divorced of a transcendental, human and metaphysical reality. They denied every power save matter and motion and dubbed the spiritual explanation of cosmic phenomena as essentially irrational and untenable. They propounded the theory of mechanical or natural causation which, in their view, was the only intelligible and scientific explanation of the cosmic order. Every

other explanation, thought and discourse was rejected as irrational or unscientific with the result that gradually pragmatism, natural selection and utilitarianism came to have its sway over the entire field of human life. The new doctrine thus animated the entire human existence, leaving not untouched its remotest corner—the recesses of mind and heart—and accepted utility and pragmatic experience as the cornerstone of social, ethical, economic and political life.

It is undoubtedly correct that the terms “intellect” and “nature” have been used to a far greater extent in the European literature than in other literary compositions of the world. These works have had a magical effect and are still readily acceptable to the western mind but if one were to explore their meanings and examine their application to human life, he would find that intellect stands for animal intellect (if it can be so named); an intellect bound by perceptions and experiences and rejecting everything imperceptible as irrational and unreal. A philosopher of the fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci, expounded this view in unambiguous terms. Leonardo’s view has been thus expressed by Herold Hoffding in his *History of Modern Philosophy*.

“..... the results of our knowledge can only acquire perfect certainty by means of the employment of mathematics. Wisdom is the daughter of experience and it is therefore, also a

product of time. Leonardo rejects all speculations which find no confirmation in experience, the common mother of all sciences”.

Human nature thus construed is not different from the nature of the beast; for, it becomes devoid of sublime instincts, moral consciousness, nobleness of heart and intellectual virtue. It is weary of all restraints over its freedom and demands complete mastery over itself in order to satisfy the appetites of flesh; to eat, drink and amuse itself without any intervention from any quarter. The context in which the word “nature” is more often used in western literature leaves no doubt that it does not stand for aught but animal instinct.

Sensist thought and empirical sciences had evolved a hazy concept of social animal for the human being. The European age of materialistic reasoning has unfolded this concept into a perfect and logical postulate of materialism which, since accepted as an article of faith, permeates the intellect and soul of the man, and renders it propitious for him to attain conformity with his true nature i.e. his ancestral instincts.

### **Epicurean ideals**

As a consequence, natural and inevitable, as it should be, pleasure and enjoyment became the ultimate object or ideal of human life. An Arab poet of the Age of Ignorance beautifully renders the same sentiment in these words:



“He is a generous fellow, one that soaks himself in wine;

You will know tomorrow, when we’re dead, where the world exists”.

Another poet expressed the same idea when he said: “Enjoy life for it is bestowed only once”, but, the oriental symbolism and idiomatic expression being unsuited to the Occidental frankness, the latter spelt out this view unambiguously in the well-known maxim: “Eat, Drink and be Merry ere ye die tomorrow.”

This materialistic view-point and selfish disposition pervades all spheres of human life, as, for example, in economics it turns to capitalism, in politics to imperialism. In attitude and thought it chooses between two opposing systems, that which it finds easier, perceptible and nearer to its sensist leanings, as, for instance, its choice fell to the limited geographical and racial nationalism which, being nearer to sensism, is more even though a social order with an ideological base is prone to be universal and more wide-based. Indeed, it could have never conceived of the whole world as the birth-place of human beings and, accordingly, accepted the narrower concept of nationalism in preference to a broader view of humanism. With the gradual attenuation of religion in the West, nationalism established itself as if these were two sides of the same scale—one rose to the extent the other went down.

The contemporary literature of

Europe, no doubt, exhibits a keen interest in spiritualism but it would be erroneous to suppose that this literature interprets any spiritual movement aiming at the purification of hurt or moral refinement; since, the object of these compositions is simply development of certain latent human faculties for the display of wondrous and startling feats. It is treated as an art, or, rather as a science like mesmerism, having nothing to do with the betterment of human morals or the elevation-of soul.

### **Western materialism**

The whole of Europe has, indeed, not renounced religion. A greater part of it still professes Christianity; Church services are attended on Sundays, Christian rites and functions are held with considerable pomp and show in the whole of Europe, many traces of Christian traditions are still visible, yet, the religion of Europe is nothing but materialism.

A right thinking European Muslim analyses the modern materialistic life of Europe in these words:

“The average Occidental—be he a Democrat or a Fascist, a Capitalist or a Bolshevik, a manual worker or an intellectual—knows only one positive “religion” and that is the worship of material progress, the belief that there is no other goal in life than to make that very life continually easier or, as the current expression goes, “independent of Nature”. The temple of this “religion” are the gigantic

factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, dancing halls, hydro-electric works; and its priests ate bankers, engineers, film stars, captains of industry, record airmen.

The unavoidable result of this craving after power and pleasure is the creation of hostile groups armed to the teeth and determined to destroy each other whenever and wherever their respective interests come to clash. And on the cultural side the result is the creation of a human type whose morality is confined to the questions of practical utility alone, and whose highest criterion of good and evil is material success.

In the profound transformation the social life of the West is undergoing at present, that new, utilitarian morality becomes daily more and more apparent. All virtues having a direct bearing upon the material welfare of society—for example, technical efficiency, patriotism, nationalist group-sense—are being exalted and often absurdly exaggerated in their value; while virtues which, until recently, were valued from a purely ethical point of view, as, for example, filial love or sexual fidelity, rapidly lose their importance—because they do not confer a tangible, material benefit upon society. The age in which the insistence on strong family bonds was decisive for the well-being of the group or the clan is being superseded, in the modern West, by an age of collective organisation under far wider headings. And in a society which is essentially technological and is being organised, at a rapidly increasing pace, on

purely mechanical lines the behaviour of a son towards his father is of no great social importance so long as those individuals behave within the limits of general decency imposed by the society on the intercourse between its members. Consequently, the western father daily loses more and more authority over his son and quite logically the son loses respect for the father. Their mutual relations are being slowly overruled and—for all practical purposes—made obsolete by the postulates of mechanized society which has a tendency to abolish all privileges of one individual over another, and—in the logical development of this idea—also the privileges due to family relationship.”

### MYSTICAL CIVILIZATION

Mysticism is an antithesis of sensism and materialism. It seeks annihilation of the matter and mortification the body just as sensism denies existence of soul and its ramifications: the former attacks the body and flesh which, in its view, being the seats of sin, have to be chastened. Asceticism conceives the soul as a bird imprisoned the cage of human frame, fettered and obstructed from taking wings to the regions, sublime and divine. In its view the soul cannot establish communion with the Ultimate Reality, the fountain-head of its own existence, unless the fetters are broken and soul rendered capable of free movement towards its soul.

Porphry (233-304) the second greatest exponent of Neo-Platonism holds that the aim of his school of thought is union or immediacy with death; for, the death severe body from soul and thus achieves the ultimate end of life. Another expounder of this school considers pleasure to be the greatest calamity for mankind. In his view it is because of pleasure that soul develops an attachment and concern for the body, weakens its divine content, forgets reality and takes after the ways of the flesh. But the doors of philosophic comprehension are opened only to the pure and unmixed intellect after mortifying the senses. Flesh misleads the soul and so long as soul remains entangled with the matter, it can never penetrate the ultimate and abiding reality.

All those religious and moral orders which had been influenced by asceticism had prescribed self-annihilation, celibacy and repression of sensual pleasures as an essential ingredient of their moral disciplines.

It had become a cardinal principle of these systems that the body and soul were discordant elements which could never unite. Naturally, they considered it propitious for man to ignore and annihilate the body for the sake of his soul.

### **Consequences of monasticism**

Asceticism inevitably generates a willful apathy towards the body and its needs. Not un-often it ignites such a

passion against the body as if it were a stumbling-block in the way of human progress. For it the world becomes an abode of evil, life a dead-weight and social relations a snare. Clearly, such a concept of life cuts at the very root of social existence—it can destroy but not build. Sensism and spiritualism are, no doubt, at the opposite ends of the same pole but there is a difference between the two: one can easily create and sustain a social order of its own but the other cannot bring forth any cultural pattern of civilized social existence even for a short while anywhere in the world.

A logical development of asceticism was that those who accepted this creed became sensists and materialists in their worldly affairs. They had to compromise between their spiritual demands and the needs of the flesh; they were mystics in the monasteries but indulgent materialists on the stage of politics. The world has witnessed many examples of the kind. Ashoka was a devoted and fervent Buddhist, and, at the same time, a successful ruler and a ruthless conqueror. When the Roman Emperor, Constantine, embraced Christianity which had by then degenerated into a mystical and ascetic cult, he had to adopt the same duality. He tried to bring about a fusion of Christian spiritualism with the ignorant and materialistic paganism of his predecessors. Such a synthesis is simply an impossibility and whenever any civilization begins to draw inspiration from

a spiritual cult, decay inevitably sets in; where after either that civilization, culture or nation is effaced from the stage of history, or, if any vitality to defend itself is still left in it, a strong reaction sets in against decadent spiritualism culminating eventually in the victory of sensuous materialism—naked, uncompromising and revengeful—which cannot tolerate spiritualism in any form. This is what had happened in Europe. Christianity had then turned into an ascetic order—to a certain extent more than any other mystic order—first, owing to the impact of Neo-Platonic mystical cults and, secondly, because of the false and misleading interpretation of the Scriptures by the misguided and ignorant clergy who presented Christianity as an unnatural mysticism. Marriage was considered a sin, women a worldly scourge, relationship with the fair sex an impediment in the way of spiritual development; such were the accepted norms of the faith. Learned theologians openly preached celibacy and illustrious monks and priests took pride in abducting children from their homes in order to train them in far off desert monasteries. Numerous examples of hideous and atrocious self-torture then practised by Christian saints and monks have been cited by Lecky: how the monks lived in caves abandoned by wild beasts, dried up wells and graveyards, donned tunics of long hair, crawled on all fours like animals, ate grass, remained standing on one foot for years together; such was the sickly

state of the Age which had numbed humanity and paralysed civilization in the medieval Europe.

Fanatical asceticism, monstrous and cruel, as it was, inundated the whole of Christendom and shook the very foundations of its civilization; the population of Europe began to deplete quickly, disease, death and famine ravaged the land frequently, knowledge and learning perished, cities wasted away, means of sustenance became scarce, and the entire Christian World was encompassed by ignorance, barbarism and darkness so much so that the Medieval Ages in Europe became a Dark Age.

The reaction against this tyrannical gloom of decadent civilization was inevitable but not unnatural. While spiritualism and monasticism were finally thrown over- board in the nineteenth century, modern Europe hastened to materialism as irresistibly as a starving man falls on the food. The materialism of Europe was the revenge of suffering humanity against the atrocities that it had to undergo for centuries together at the hands of Christian clergy and monks. But it was another aberration of human nature and nobody can say which of the two would be more crushing, monstrous and ruthless for the humanity. It is also difficult to predict when a reaction against the present brutal materialism and its attendant concept of mechanical causation will set in and where will it end. ■

## The Khaiber Event

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

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

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

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

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

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

After getting relieved of Khaiber issue, he (SAW) had his attention diverted towards Fidak. There, too, the Jews wanted to have the conciliation on fifty-fifty basis. He (SAW) deigned to concede to their offer. Whatever revenue got collected under this deal was disbursed, the way he (SAW) deemed proper, by him (SAW) in his own as well as in the interest of the Muslims, in general. For, the spoils

gained without having any confrontation made and just as a result of negotiation with the Prophet (SAW) were placed, under Islam's dispensation, at absolute disposal of the Allah's Prophet who wielded the proprietary rights over them.

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

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

## Backbiting-A Lethal Menace

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi\*

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

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

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

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

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

(English Rendering: Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

\* Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

## Muhammad The Messenger of God

- K.K. Usman

The Quran was revealed to Muhammad in the seventh century, a time of instability all around. Judaism and Christianity were in decline and plagued by internal conflicts. The great empires of Persia and Byzantine were interlocked in bloody wars. In Asia paganism was rampant in many parts, though Buddhism and Confucianism had made some inroads here and there. In such troubled times, in the desert lands of Central Arabia, far away from centres of civilisation, Muhammad proclaimed the Oneness of God and brought the Quran to his people and to the whole humankind. His country men at that time lived by primitive practices which glorified superstitions and witchcraft and spent their energies in endless tribal warfare.

To use an expression of Voltaire, 'The turn of Arabia' came; when the hour had already struck for the most complete, the most sudden and the most extra ordinary revolution that has ever come over any nation upon earth.

What were those teachings of Muhammad that resulted in such great revolution? We will quote the eloquent words of Jafar Ibn Abu talib and referred to in 'Preaching of Islam' by T. W. Arnold.

As Muhammad was unable to relieve his persecuted followers, he advised them to take refuge in Abyssinia and in the fifth year of his mission (A.D 615) eleven men and four women crossed over to Abyssina where they received a kind welcome from the Christian King of the country. But the hatred of the enemies pursued the fugitives even to Abyssinia, and an embassy was sent to demand their extradition from the King of that country. In answer to his enquiries as to their

religion, Jafar- their leader, said:

"O King, we were in a Mate of ignorance and immorality, worshipping idols and eating carrion; we practiced all sorts of abominations, severed the ties of kinship and maltreated our neighbours; the strong among us exploited the weak. So we remained until God sent us an apostle among ourselves whose lineage, truthfulness, loyalty and purity are well known to us. He called upon us to worship the One God and to repudiate all the stones and idols which we and our ancestors used to worship. He bade us to be truthful in speech, faithful to our promises and trust, compassionate and kind to our parents and neighbours and desists from crime and bloodshed. He forbade us to do evil, to lie, to rob or defame women. He commanded us to avoid perjury, false witness and fornication. He enjoined on us the worship of God alone, with prayer, sharing of wealth and fasting. And we believed in him and followed the teachings that he brought us from God. But our country men rose up against us and persecuted us to renounce our faith, and return to the worship of idols and the abominations of our former life. We took refuge in your country, putting our trust in your justice, we hope that you will deliver us from the oppression of our enemies. "

Their prayer was heard and the embassy of Quraish returned discomfited.

The most outstanding characteristic of the Prophet's life is the amazing success which he achieved in bringing about a complete transformation in the life of his followers in all aspects. And all this came to pass in a short span of a little over 20 years. No other reformer found his people at such a



depth of degradation as the Prophet found the Arabs, and no one raised them materially, morally and spiritually to the height to which he raised them. Not only was their deep-rooted love for idols and their superstitions swept away and the nation awakened to a sense of true dignity of humankind based on a rational religion but also there was a complete metamorphosis in their character. The Arab was cleansed of deep-rooted vice and bare-faced immorality; he was inspired with a burning desire for the best and noblest deed in the service of, not a country or nation, but, what is far higher than that, humanity. Old customs which involved injustice to the weak were all swept away and just and reasonable laws took their place. Drunkenness to which Arabia was addicted from time immemorial disappeared completely, gambling became unknown and loose relations between sexes gave place to the highest regard for chastity and mutual respect. The Arab who prided himself on ignorance became the lover of knowledge, drinking deep at every fountain of learning to which he could get access. The whole character of the nation was changed. And thus from a discordant and disunited people full of vices and superstitions, the religion and the Prophet of Islam welded together a united nation full of life, vigour and virtues before whose onward march the greatest kingdoms of the world crumbled. No man ever breathed such a new life into a people on such a wide scale, no other religion brought about such transformation in their lives affecting all branches of human activity — a transformation of the individual, of the family, of the society, of the nation, of the country, an awakening material as well as moral, intellectual as well as spiritual — as did the teachings of Islam and Prophet Muhammad.

It has been remarked by Gibbon that

no incipient prophet ever passed through so severe an ordeal as Muhammad. Seeking refuge from the harassment, persecution and oppressive conditions of Mecca, followed only by Zeid, his faithful freeman, Muhammad went to Tayif, the town after Mecca most wholly given to idolatry. But he boldly challenged the protection and obedience of the inhabitants. They stoned him out of the city. He returned to Mecca defeated, but not disheartened, cast down, but not destroyed; quietly saying himself, "If thou, O Lord, art not angry, I am safe; I seek refuge in the light of thy countenance alone. O my Lord! Forgive my people; they are an ignorant lot."

Muhammad had firm conviction, absolute faith in God's mercy and total commitment to his cause and vision: "Should they array against me the sun on my right hand, and the moon on my left", said Muhammad, 'yet while God should command me, I would not renounce my purpose.' At the time of his migration to Medina (Hijrah) he was accompanied only by his friend and an early convert, Abu Bakr. For three days they concealed in a cavern, a league from Mecca. The Quraish pursuers scoured the country thirsting for his blood. The enemies approached the cavern. 'We are only two', said his trembling companion. There is a third', said Muhammad; 'it is God himself.'

On his successful return to Mecca as a 'Conqueror', Bosworth Smith writes:

"Now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satiate his lust, to glut his revenge. Is there anything of the kind? Read the account of the entry of Mohammed into Mecca, side by side with that of Marius or Sulla into Rome. Compare all the attendant circumstances, the outrages that proceeded, and the use made by each of his recovered power, and we shall then be in a position

better to appreciate the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia. There were no proscription lists, no plunder, no wanton revenge.”

Instead, a general amnesty was declared and a public guarantee of equality of treatment to friend and foe alike was announced. The Meccans who had migrated to Medina were not to take back their houses from those who occupied them. Not only Abu Sufiyan but even his wife Hind, who had openly abused and plotted against the Prophet, was forgiven. The day of Muhammad’s greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his greatest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Quraish all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had affected him. For Muhammad, the higher interest of mission came first and last. Similarly, the Prophet would not execute (as the prevailing custom dictated), ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who had vilified and cheated him, committed treason against the Islamic state, and fought the movement on every occasion. When the son of ibn Ubayy, a fervently committed Muslim, heard that his father had been condemned by the Prophet, he asked that he be the executioner, lest somebody else’s execution create in him a will to vengeance. Indeed, when ibn Ubayy died, the Prophet offered a shroud for his remains, led the funerary prayer for him, and walked in his funeral, thus convincing his son and all those who witnessed these events that propagation of the faith could and should vanquish all thoughts of retribution.

The Quranic injunction revealed at the time of victory over Mecca was clear:

When, with God’s help, victory comes, and you see men in hordes accepting way, then glorify the Lord; and ask for His

forgiveness. And proclaim His grace and mercy.

(110:1-3)

For long there was the common belief that Muhammad gave to non-Muslims only two choices, the Quran or the sword, and further, that Islam spread through the sword. Sir Thomas Arnold, after a much painstaking research, collected facts and figures for his monumental work *The Preaching of Islam* and proved that Islam was spread, not by ‘the exploits of that mythical personage—the Muslim warrior with the sword in one hand and the Quran in the other,’ but by the force of the Word of God (Quran) and the character of the Prophet. In this connection Bosworth Smith writes:

“We must not judge of a religion by its perversions or corruptions.. Islam was spread, not by the sword, but by the earnest and simple minded Arab missionaries... The sword may silence, it cannot convince: it may enforce hypocrisy; it can never force belief.”

One may remember the well- known verses of injunctions in the Quran:

“No coercion in religion. Truth and right guidance are now clearly distinct from error and misguidance... Remind and warn, that is your commission. You have no imperial authority over any man.”

“Had God willed it, all men on earth would have been believers. (But he did not). Would you then compel men to believe?.. Say: O men, the truth has been revealed by your Lord. Whoever accepts it does so for his own good, and whoever rejects it does so at his own peril.”

While the result of the embassy to Abyssinia was being looked for in Mecca with the greatest expectancy, there occurred the conversion of a man, who before had been

one of the most bitter enemies of Muhammad, and had opposed him with the utmost persistence and fanaticism, a man whom the Muslims had every reason then to look on as their most terrible and virulent enemy, though afterwards he shines as one of the noblest figures in the early history of Islam, viz, Umar ibn al-Khattab. One day, in a fit of rage against the Prophet, he set out, sword in hand, to slay him. On the way, one of his relatives met him and asked him where he was going. I am looking for Muhammad." he answered, to kill the renegade who has brought discord among the Quraish, called them fools, reviled their religion and defamed their gods." Why dost thou not rather punish those of thy own family, and set right?" "And who are these of my own family?" answered Umar. "Thy brother-in-law Sa'id and thy sister Fatimah, who have become Muslims and followers of Muhammad." Umar at once rushed off to the house of his sister, and found her with her husband and Kabbab, another of the followers of Muhammad, who was teaching them to recite a chapter of the Quran. Umar burst into the room: "What was that sound I heard? It was nothing." they replied. "Nay, but I heard you and I have learned that you have become followers of Muhammad." Whereupon he rushed upon Sa'id and struck him. Fatimah threw herself between them, to protect her husband, crying, "Yes, we are Muslims, we believe in God and His Prophet: slay us if you will." In the struggle his sister was wounded and when 'Umar saw the blood on her face, he was softened and asked to see the scroll they had been reading: after some hesitation she handed it to him. It contained the 20th Surah of the Quran. When Umar read it, he exclaimed, "How beautiful, how sublime it is!" As he read on, conviction suddenly overpowered him and he cried: "Lead me to Muhammad that I may tell him of my conversion."

It was not the power of sword of Muhammad, but that of the Word of God which conquered the minds of men.

Muhammad did not claim Islam to be a new religion. Rather it is the 'Original' religion, that primordial faith which has had its roots deep in man's consciousness since the first true human being walked upon earth, because the Creator Himself implanted it there, the faith revealed to and preached by all the Prophets: the religion of submission and accountability to the One God. Islam teaches the Divine origin of this message, pointing to the similarity and continuity of the teachings brought by the various messengers of God throughout history. Each successive revelation (Scripture) has been higher than the preceding one, though each was complete in itself, as being adequate to the circumstances of the time.

Muslims revere other Prophets and accept their Scriptures as they were originally revealed But others falsified the Scriptures, anthropomorphized God; developed a 'chosen people' complex. The Quran accepts these as Divine revelations, though it disapproves of the later accretions in them which diluted the monotheistic creed and their original purity. To Muslims, Muhammad is the culmination of Prophetic order — he is God's last messenger, 'the seal of prophets.' And the Quran is the complete, final and eternal Word of God. Muhammad's Prophet-hood was the last because — in as much as the essential principles of the law were revealed once and for all in the imperishable Quran, man is henceforth mature enough to elaborate the law and find its various applications to the human situations without external aid.

Prophecy, however, does not create divinity. Prophets were not divine. They were

only God's instruments sent by Him to transmit His message. That is why the Quran insists on making it clear that Muhammad was human and so were all other Prophets. They emphasize God's supremacy and make it clear that only to Him is man accountable for his deeds and misdeeds. God is the final arbiter of man's destiny and on the Day of Judgement He will reward the virtuous and punish the wrong doer.

Muhammad was told by his detractors to establish his claim of prophet-hood by performing some miracle; he told them unhesitatingly that his only miracle was the message revealed to him by God, Viz. the Quran. Muhammad could have easily given to himself the aura of divinity and many of his followers would have been too happy to hail him for it. Instead he curbed them and warned them not to deify him. All through his life, Muhammad reasoned with the people and tried to convince and convert them. He did not resort to force, magic or any hypnotic methods to gather followers. He valued the intellect and emphasized the role of reason in human development. There are numerous verses in the Quran which admonish him to shun coercion and exercise persuasion and patience.

To his detractors who demanded him to perform miracle, the inspired reply of Muhammad was: God alone can work miracles, the other prophets had wrought miracle and had not been believed, God gave the power of working miracles to whom He pleased, that there were greater miracles in nature than any which could be wrought outside of it, he, at all events, treated the miraculous as subordinate to the moral evidence of his mission and, the Quran itself was a miracle.

The Prophet is presented in the Quran

as the best example of its teachings and a perfect model of human behaviour. His life was an open book, it had to be, if the Quranic teachings were to be properly understood and strictly followed by the faithful. Therefore, he kept his companions fully aware of every movement of his. Unlike other religious leaders, Muhammad was as much a preacher as an administrator; as much as a judge as a law - giver; as unuch as a warrior as a peace- maker... To quote Bosworth Smith:

"Head of the State as well as of the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right Divine, it was Mohammed; for he had all the power without its instruments and without its support."

He was a simple man, who never ceased to be human and refused to be regarded as divine. When Prophet Muhammad died, and as the news spread, his followers gathered in the mosque. Some of his companions could not believe it. Umar, who later became the second Caliph, was greatly upset and agitated. Abu Bakr, a close companion of Muhammad and who was later nominated as the first Caliph, visited the house of the Prophet and ascertained his death. Returning to the mosque Abu Bakr said, "Softly Umar." But Umar kept on speaking and threatening. Abu Bakr then stood up and said:

"O people! Whoever of you has been worshipping Muhammad, let him know for certain that Muhammad is dead; but whoever of you has been worshipping God, then let him know that God never dies."■

(Concluded)

## Hamd

- Abul Kalam Azad

In Arabic, the word Hamd means Praise. The grammatical prefix Al denotes a definite article. So, Al-Hamdu Lillah really means, "Praise (strictly speaking) is for Allah only", since all goodness and perfection exist only in Him and proceed from Him.

Why does the chapter begin with the praise of God? It is, because, such is the initial reaction inevitably created on the mind of one who takes his first step in the direction of God.

What then is the road one should take to seek knowledge of God? The Quran says there is but one road to it, and that is to reflect over the phenomenal world of creation. The study of an invention takes the student so to say, directly into the very presence of the inventor himself.

Those who bear God in mind, standing, sitting, and reclining, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and of the earth, they will say: "Our Lord! Thou has not created all this in vain".

(Q:3:191)

Visualize for yourself what his first impression will be when an earnest seeker of truth reflects over the working of the universe? He will notice that his very being and all that is at work outside of him are the handicraft of a consummate artist; and that the touch of His grace and tender providence is dearly felt in every particle of the

universe. Naturally, his mind will be filled with wonder and admiration, so much so, that he will cry out instinctively: "Praise is for God only, Lord of all Being!" Praise truly is His who is the fountainhead of the grace, beauty, and perfection which subsist in every corner of His creation.

The tragedy of the human mind has lain in this that it tends to lose itself in the things of creation and does not always strive to step beyond them to seek the Creator Himself. Man is dazzled by the artistry of the veils which first meet his eye, but rarely does he attempt to lift them and reach Him who has thrown such attractive veils over His own creative beauty. The worship of the phenomenal owes its origin to this defect in vision. The expression, "Praise is for God only", is a definite affirmation of the fact that the beauty and benevolence which subsist in a variety of forms in every field of existence are but manifestations of the attributes of God. Whatever the esteem in which we may hold beauty, perfection or goodness, the credit should go not to the phenomenal object which displays these qualities, but to the artist who fashioned it into a thing of beauty.

### Allah

Prior to the revelation of the Quran, the term Allah was used in Arabic as a proper name for God, as is borne out

by the writings of pre-Islamic poets. It was never used in the sense of an attribute, although He was credited with numerous attributes. The Quran has but followed the usage:

Allah has beautiful names or attributes; so invoke Him by them.

(Q:7:180)

Did the Quran adopt the term Allah merely out of regard for etymology, or was there any intrinsic appropriateness about it compelling adoption?

In the annals of ancient religious concepts, there was a period when man used to worship objects of nature. In course of time, this form of worship developed into the worship of demi-gods. As corollary to this development, different names in different languages came to be applied to the new deities, and, as time went on, with the widening of scope in worship, the significance of the terms applied also widened. But since it was not agreeable to human nature to let the human mind ignore the concept of a Creator for the world, there lurked therein, alongside of the thought of demigods, the idea, in one form or other, of a Supreme Being as well. So, in addition to the numerous terms coined to designate demi-gods, a term also had necessarily to be invented to apply to this unseen highest being as well.

For instance, a study of the Semitic group of languages - Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Chaldean, Himyarita

and Arabic - discloses that a special style of word formation and of sound had been in vogue among the Semitic peoples to denote the Supreme Being. The alphabets A, L and H combined in varied form to constitute the term by which this Supreme Being was to be styled. The Chaldean and Syriac term *Ilahia*, the Hebrew *Iloha* and the Arabic *Ilah* are of this category. It is the *Ilah* in Arabic which assumed the form of *Allah* and was applied exclusively to the Creator of the universe.

But if the term *Allah* is derived from *Ilah*, what then is *Ilah*? Lexicographers have given different stories. The most plausible is that it is itself derived from the root 'lah, ar, ejaculation expressive of wonder or helplessness. Some lexicographers trace the term form *Walah* which bears the same significance. Hence the term *Allah* came to be used as the proper name for the Creator of the universe in respect of whom man can express nothing except his sense of wonder which increases in intensity, the more he thinks of Him, only to admit, eventually, that the road to the knowledge of God begins and ends in wonder and humility. Says a poet:

Thou art beyond my speech and thought

Woe be unto my specifications of you and my comparisons!

Now consider whether, of all the terms which man has used, there could be any better term than this (*Allah*) to

apply to God. If God is to be called by any attribute, an endless number of terms could be suggested. But attributes apart, if God is to be given a proper name, what other term is then except this to designate a being which inspires nothing but wonder?

This is the reason why whenever anything was said in respect of the highest knowledge gained of God, it was to only admit that the utmost that man could say of God was simply to acknowledge the profundity of his ignorance about Him. The prayer of a gnostic has always been: "O God increase me in my wonder over what You are". Likewise, the admission of

philosophers has always been: "We know this much that we know nothing".

Since the term Allah is used as a proper name for God, it has necessarily to cover all the attributes that can appropriately be associated with His Being. If we visualize God in any particular attribute of His, as when we refer to Him as Al-Rabb or Al-Rahim, we confine our vision within the limits of the attribute concerned. We shall think of Him only as one who possesses the attribute of Providence or Mercy. But when we refer to Him as Allah, our mind instinctively clenches the sum total of all the qualities attributed to Him, or what He necessarily must possess. ■

### THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

The Muslim Era began with the Great Event of the Hijrah from Mecca to Medina or the Emigration of Prophet Muhammad and his Companions from Mecca to Medina. The adoption of this Event as the beginning of the Muslim Era took place in the Caliphate of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second Caliph after Muhammad.

The Muslim calendar is Lunar, and its months are determined by the various positions of the moon. In every year there are twelve months, and each month is either thirty or twenty-nine days depending on the position of the moon. These months are: Muharram, Safar, Rabee' Al-Awwal, Rabee' Al-Thani, Jumada Al-Oola, Jumada Al-Thaniyah, Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Thul-Qa'dah, and Thul-Hijjah.

Every week has one special day to remember and observe. This is Friday, and its significance stems from the noon congregational prayers which must be observed by every Muslim who can attend. There are other significant occasions which should be remembered with a special observance.

1. The Hijrah which falls on the Eve of the first day of Muharram.
2. The Prophet's Birthday which falls on the Eve of the twelfth day of Rabee' Al-Awwal.
3. Ramadan, the Month of Fasting, in which the Qur'an was revealed.
4. The Night of Power of Qadr which may be celebrated on the eve of the twenty-third or the twenty-fifth or the twenty-seventh of Ramadan.
5. 'Eedul-Fitr (Feast of Breaking the Fast of Ramadan) which falls on the First day of Shawwal.
6. 'Eedul-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) which falls on the tenth day of Thul-Hijjah. ■

## Tolerance in Islam

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

The Holy Quran vividly says: "To be your religion, and to me my religion"(Surah:109,6). It again says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion"(Surah 2: 256). These two verses of the Quran precisely make it clear that Islam accords freedom of the thoughts and equality of opportunity for all without any distinction of caste, creed, colour, region and treats them alike. That is why conversion to Islam at the point of sword is not seen anywhere. Strangely, despite gross misconceptions and bad notions against it Islam today is the fastest growing religion in the world.

The Holy Quran says: "You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong". (S.3, A, 110 ) Again it says: "let there arise, out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity."(S, 3, A.104). The crux of the matter is that Allah has conferred the title "Khaira Ummat" (the best nation) with followers of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the obvious reason of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Hence, it is imperative for us to invite all people towards the right path regardless of caste, creed, race, colour and region. If we only perform Dawah job among Muslims, will not deserve the God-given honour "Khaira Ummat" (the best nation). The history bears witness that since its inception Islam has been the most tolerant and egalitarian of all religions. Muslims had ruled more than 800 years over Spain. But not a single incident of forceful conversion occurred. Such cases are also not seen in other countries under the sway of Muslim rulers including the longest period of Mughals rule in India. What to say for forceful conversion to Islam, the Holy Prophet strictly prohibited to harm or to hurt non-Muslim in any away. Prophet Muhammad says: "Whoever torments the Zimmis (non-Muslims) torments me."

It goes without saying that Islam first introduced Human Rights and stressed its importance. The last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the first charter of Human Rights in Islam. In 632, C.E, Prophet Muhammad said in his farewell sermon at Arafat valley near Makkah, "O people verily your Lord is one and your father is one. All of you belong to Adam and Adam is (made) of earth. Behold, there is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for a red- colored over a black colored and for a black-skinned except in piety, Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most pious."

It should be kept in mind that the term of Human Rights had been alien for a long time. After the French Revolution of 1789 and American Revolution of 1775, the concept of Human Rights fostered. Even after Second World War, United Nation Organization (UNO) has set up a Human Rights Commission. One has rightly said: "The West very vociferously claims that the basic concept of human rights became known to the world for the first time from the British Magna Carta. But they conveniently have forgotten that the Magna came into existence six hundred years after the advent of Islam.

Islam lays great stress on morality, ethics, tolerance, forbearance, sympathy, integrity, honesty, brotherhood, fraternity, kindness, generosity, cleanliness, sanitation, enlightenment, wisdom and the like. The beauty and elegance of Islam is that it puts each thing in its proper place. Islam's main plank is to set up such a friendly environment where in all people may live with peace and serenity regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. According to Islam all people are from the same origin and source and they were made into nations and tribes just to know each other, as confirmed by the following Quranic words:



“O mankind We created you from a single male and a female, made you into nations and tribes, and ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things.” (49:13)

That is why Islam enunciates that cooperation and help should be in matters of piety and virtues and not in evil and unholy acts and deeds. The holy Quran says: “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah : for Allah is strict in punishment” (5:2)

The most striking aspect of Islam is to foster justice and equality amongst a variety of nations regardless of caste, creed, colour and region. A cursory look on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) shows a lot of instances which manifest his judicious and fair treatment with Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) declares that “He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression, and he is not of us who calls others to help him in tyranny, and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice.”

Once, a woman belonging to a noble family of Madina was caught while committing a theft. The case was put up before the prophet and it was pleaded that she may be spared. The Prophet replied “Nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common men for their offences but let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes. I swear by God who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, had committed this crime I would have got her hand amputated.” The Prophet holds that: “Give equitable punishment to the remote and near and have no fear of reproach of people in enforcement of his limits set up by God.

The fact is that Islam is not only a metaphysical religion but also a complete code of life and the real emancipator of human beings. It presents remedy to all evils. Maulana

Abul Kalam Azad has rightly said: “Even in the modern context Islam alone could provide salvation to the world. What required was true adherence to Islam which provides most comprehensive and perfect law to mankind.”

To illustrate the point following sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are worth quoting.

Once the holy Prophet said: “Help your brother whether he is oppressed or oppressor”. His companions asked, “How could we help if he is oppressor?” The Prophet replied: “Stop him from oppression.” Narrated Abu Musa: Some people asked Allah’s Apostle (S) “Whose Islam is the best ? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim?) He replied, “One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands.” Narrated Anas : The Prophet (S) said, “None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself.” The Prophet says: “He is not true Muslim who eath his fill, and leaveth his neighbours hungry.” Again he said: “The Muhajir is he who denounces the evil, and then keeps aloof from it.” He also said, “On the Day of Resurrection, I shall denounce him who oppresses a dhimmi or violates his right or puts a responsibility on him which is beyond his strength or takes something away from him.”

These above Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) indicate that the main mission of Islam is only for restoring dignity and upliftment of people and setting up an atmosphere of peace and amity throughout the world. It should also be kept in mind that it is Islam which first offered the concept of common citizenship and promoted a multi-religious and pluralistic society. When the Prophet settled down in Madina, he constituted a city-state, in which Muslims, Pagan Arabs, Jews and Christians, all entered into a stable organism by means of a social contract.

On account of these attributes, beauties and grandeurs, Islam had earned a good reputation within a short span of time as compared to other religions of the world. Besides Islam made great strides in every field.

In the words of late Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, "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." Noted scholar Asghar Ali Engineer has rightly said : "The early Islamic society was quite progressive and dynamic but since the early 13th century, it began to stagnate. Besides theology, early Muslims achieved great heights of knowledge in natural sciences and secular philosophies. Any one could be proud of these achievements. In fact Europe was passing through dark ages when Islamic society was thriving with knowledge. Europe learnt from Arabs. Most advanced universities of the world were located in Baghdad, Cairo and other Plaecs."

In this context we may recall what Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar says: "Islam is not a bundle of dogmas and doctrines that theologians plague humanity with. It is a complete scheme of life, a perfect code of right conduct and a comprehensive social polity as wide as human race and in fact as wide as the human creation." Similarly according to Swami Vivekananda : " My experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality (egalitarianism) in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone, I am firmly persuaded, therefore, that without the help of practical Islam, theories of veganism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind." (Letters of Swami Vivekananda, P. 463). The similar thoughts are also of G.B. Shah, he says: I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful Vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me possesses that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existing which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him-the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the saviour of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of

Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today." (G.B. Shah, The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No, 8, 1936).

In a nutshell, Islam regards all human beings alike. Its main plank is to prevail equality, tolerance, and justice in order to create an atmosphere of peace and amity in the world. The holy Quran says.: "We verily sent our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the scripture and the Balance, that the mankind may observe right measure; and revealed Iron, wherein is mighty power and many uses for mankind... (57: 25) In the words of Sarojini Naidu: "sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qur'an I find these dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conducts of life suited to the whole world." (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, Madras, 1918, P. 167) H. A. R. Gibb writes- "But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity..No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India, and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim community Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition." (H. A. R. Gibb: Whither Islam? London 1932, p. 379)

The need of the hour is that we may learn as how to live with peace and amity and share other's sufferings and woes regardless of caste, creed, colour, region and religion. The holy Quran says, "We have honored the sons of Adam; Provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation.■

## Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr

### The First Horse Soldier Of Islam

#### His Lineage

He is Al- Miqdad bin (bin means, 'son of') 'Amr bin Tha'labah bin Malik bin Rabi'ah bin 'Amir bin Matrud Al-Bahrani, and it is said, Al- Hadrami. His father is 'Amr bin Tha'labah.

Because he killed someone from his tribe, 'Amr had to flee from his homeland; he travelled to Hadramaut, where he allied himself to Kindah, which is why he later took on the attributive appellation, Al-Kindi. 'Amr married one of the woman of Hadramaut, and she bore him a son — Al-Miqdad.

When Al-Miqdad grew up, he got implicated in a situation similar to the one that his father faced years ago. He got into a dispute with Abu Shamr bin Hajar Al- Kindi, and their quarrel quickly precipitated into a physical fight. Al-Miqdad got the better of Abu Shamr, for he struck him with his sword in the leg, but being that this occurred in Abu Shamr's homeland — where he had many relatives who would be eager for revenge — Al-Miqdad had to flee like his father before him. He took refuge in Makkah, where he allied himself with Al-Aswad bin 'Abd-Yaghuth Az-Zuhri, Al-Miqdad then wrote to his father, informing him of his safe arrival, and his father later joined him in Makkah.

Al-Aswad bin 'Abd Yaghuth took Al-Miqdad to be his adopted son- a not uncommon practice at the time, even if the father was alive – and so he became known as, Al-Miqdad bin Al-Aswad. But during the days of Islam, when the following Verse was revealed:

“Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just.”

- he again became known as, Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr.

#### His Kunyah

For men, a Kunyah begins with Abu, meaning: 'father of.' Usually, one's Kunyah is based on one's eldest son, so if one's eldest son is named Zaid, one's Kunyah is Abu Zaid. But this is not always the case; one's Kunyah can refer to other children; it can even be used in a figurative sense, denoting a close connection between someone and some object or idea. Because he liked kittens, a famous Companion of the Prophet is known not by the name he was given at birth, but by his Kunyah: Abu Hurairah (Hurairah meaning a small cat).

As for Al-Miqdād's Kunyah, it has been said that it is 'Abul-Aswad; it has also been said that it is Abu 'Umar; and it has also been said that it is Abu Sa'id.

### **His Acceptance of Islam**

Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr was one of the earliest of people to accept Islam, in fact, he was the seventh person to openly proclaim his Islam (which does not mean that he was the seventh person to accept Islam, since some kept their Islam secret in the early days of the Prophet's Mission).

### **The Punishment He Endured**

As we saw from his biography before the days of Islam, Al-Miqdad was not a native of Makkah, never mind one of its chiefs. Thus he shared the lot of other weak Muslims, who were either slaves, people in the lower echelons of Makkan society, outsiders (like Miqdad) who gained protection in Makkah, or people who had no patron or protector from the chiefs of Makkah. Al-Miqdad was tortured over and over again, and all he had to do in order to convince his tormentors to stop hurting him was to renounce his Islam; yet he refused, remaining brave and firm and steadfast upon the truth.

### **His Description**

Al-Mada'ini said: "Al-Miqdad was tall and tanned. He was hirsute, with large eyes and connected eyebrows. And he used to dye his beard yellow." Al-Miqdad's wife, Karimah, described him as having a large stomach.

### **His Migration**

Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr was one of

the few who made both migrations, to Al-Habashah and to Al-Madinah.

### **His Brother Front The Ansar**

When the Muslims of Makkah (the Muhajirun, or 'the migrators') migrated to Al-Madinah, they received a warm welcome from its Muslim inhabitants (the Ansar, or 'the helpers'). To further strengthen the ties of brotherhood between the Muslims of both cities, the Prophet assigned for each Muhajir a brother from the Ansar. As for Al-Miqdad, the Prophet formed a bond of brotherhood between him and 'Abdullah bin Rawahah.

### **His Noteworthy Contribution On The Day Of Badr**

In order to confront a Makkan caravan headed by Abu Sufyan, the Prophet set out of Al-Madinah with more than 300 of his Companions. Abu Sufyan was able to flee, but the people of Makkah had already set out in order to defend their caravan. This unexpected turn of events called for an important decision and quick resolve, for the Muslims had not come out to fight. The Prophet consulted his Companions, saying, "O people, give me your counsel." Abu Bakr stood and spoke well, and then 'Umar bin Al-Khattab stood and spoke well. The Prophet then repeated his request, saying, "O people, give me your counsel." Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr came forth, and he was the only Companion

who was riding a horse at the time (a horse called 'Sabhah'). He said:

O' Messenger of Allah, execute that (plan) which Allah has shown to you, for we are with you. By Allah, we will not say to you as the children of Israel said to Musa: 'So go you and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here.' Instead, we say to you, 'Go you and your Lord and fight: we are with you and will fight: And by the One Who sent you with the truth, if you led us to Birkul-Ghimad — place on the outlying regions of Yemen- we would fight alongside you against those who come before it (and there were many tribes separating Al-Mndinah and Birkul-Ghimad), until you reached it. And we will indeed fight from your right, from your left, from before you, and from behind you until Allah makes you victorious.

Of this firm and brave stance, the eminent Companion 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud said, "I witnessed a situation with Al-Miqdad, which made his companionship more beloved to me than anything similar to it (from worldly things)." It was a speech that, according to certain narrations, made the Prophet's face shine, so pleased was he with Miqdad's words. In speaking the above mentioned words, Al-Miqdad showed not only his bravery, but his wisdom as well, for his speech prompted others to express similar commitments of loyalty and bravery, which were especially wanted

from the Ansar, who had pledged to protect the Prophet from attacking enemies, but not to go out and initiate battle. As soon as Al-Miqdad finished speaking, one of the leaders of the Ansar came forth and expressed similar sentiments on behalf of his people.

### **His Dedicated Companionship**

Al-Miqdad did not miss even a single of the Prophet's battles; rather, he participated in each one, always shining as a brave and formidable horseman.

### **His Marriage**

One day, Al Miqdad bin 'Amr was sitting with 'Abdur Rahman bin Awfr, when the latter said, "Will you not marry?" Al-Miqdad said, "Marry your daughter to me." Angry at Al-Miqdads answer, 'Abdur-Rahman gave him a severe rebuke, which prompted Al-Miqdad to complain to the Prophet. The Prophet said:

"I will marry you (to someone),"

and so the Prophet of mercy married him to Duba'ah the daughter of Az-Zubair bin 'Abdul Muttalib.

### **His Short Stint As Leader**

On one occasion, the Prophet appointed Al-Miqdad to govern a specific area. When Al-Miqdad returned from his duties, the Prophet asked:

"How did you find your

leadership to be?”

Al-Miqdad answered, “I indeed began to look at myself as if I were above people, and they were all beneath me (in ranking).” He then said, “By the one Who sent you with the truth, after today, I will never become leader of (even) two people.” The fear of pride and haughtiness becoming a part of his character is what prompted him to make that oath, and he lived up to it, for he never assumed the role of Amir (leader) after that day.

### **His Wisdom**

Al Miqdad bin ‘Amr was wise in his sayings and dealings; after all, he learned from the teacher of mankind who said:

“Indeed, the heart of the son of Adam becomes restless faster than does a pot when it is brought to boil.”

Here we will limit ourselves to just one example of Al-Miqdad’s profound wisdom. One day, some of his companions who were seated in his company said, “Blessed are your two eyes that have seen the Messenger of Allah. By Allah, we truly wish that we saw what you saw, and that we witnessed what you witnessed.”

Al-Miqdad said, “What makes one of you wish for something that Allah has made hidden for him. You don’t know how you would have

conducted yourselves had you witnessed (what I witnessed). And by Allah, Allah — the Possessor of might and glory — overturned some of the Prophet’s contemporaries on their noses in the Hell-fire! Should you not rather praise Allah, Who has kept you away from a trial similar to theirs and has made you come out as believers in your Lord and in your Prophet?”

### **“He Ordered Me To Love Four”**

The Prophet said:

“Indeed, Allah ordered me to love four, and He informed me that He indeed loves them: ‘Ali, Abu Dharr, Al-Miqdad, and Salman.

### **In Egypt**

Along with ‘Amr bin Al-’As, Al-Miqdad was a part of the Muslim army that went to and conquered Egypt.

### **Al-Miqdad — A Narrator Of Hadith**

Al-Miqdad narrated Ahadith from the Prophet ‘Ali, Anas, ‘Ubaidullah bin Al-Khiyar, Hammam bin Al- Harith, ‘Abdur-Rahman bin Abu Layla — these, among others, related narrations on the authority of Al-Miqdad.

### **His Death**

After leading a fruitful life, the noble Companion Al-Miqdad bin ‘Amr died at the age of 70 in the year 33 H, during the caliphate of ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan.■

## Around the World

### Forced To Wait For Trump, Israel Faces Dilemma Over Nuclear Site

US President Donald Trump's decision to defer a US attack on Iran has left Israel in a strategic bind.

Israel's main remaining war goal is to wipe out a nuclear enrichment site at Fordo in northern Iran, which is buried so deep underground that Israeli bombs will struggle to damage it.

For days, Israeli officials hoped that Mr. Trump would send American warplanes armed with the only munitions in the world that are deemed powerful enough to destroy Fordo. Now, Mr. Trump says he will wait up to two weeks before deciding whether to make such an intervention — a delay that imposes a dilemma on Israel.

The longer Israel waits for Trump, the greater the strain on its air defense system. To keep out Iran's ballistic missile barrages, Israel is burning through its stocks of missile interceptors, forcing it to prioritize the protection of some areas over others. As time goes on, that raises the risk of more missiles hitting both civilian neighborhoods and strategic security sites.

With Israel's airspace closed and much of its economic life suspended, the war's protraction will also come at an economic cost.

Israel could decide to attack Fordo alone — taking a chance with the planes and munitions it has at its disposal. Some analysts say that Israel could even send commandos to enter and sabotage the site. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted at going it alone, saying in a television interview that Israel would “achieve all of our objectives, all of their nuclear facilities. We have the power to do so.”

But experts say that this route is fraught with risk and that its effect may be limited.

Another option is for Israel to wind down the war unilaterally, without attacking Fordo. For now, Israel does not seem set to take that route.

Israel's leadership has begun to speak openly about prompting the collapse of the Iranian regime and assassinating its leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. ■

### Judge Orders Release Of Activist Khalil

**New York:** A US judge ordered that Columbia University graduate Mahmoud Khalil be released from immigration custody, a major victory for rights groups that challenged what they called the Trump administration's unlawful targeting of a pro-Palestinian activist. Khalil, a prominent figure in pro-Palestinian protests against Israel's war on Gaza, was arrested immigration agents in the lobby of his university residence in Manhattan on March 8. Khalil, a legal permanent resident of the US, says he is being punished for his political speech in violation of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment. ■

### Pope Flags AI Impact On Kids' Development

**Rome:** Pope Leo XIV warned that AI could negatively affect the intellectual, neurological and spiritual development of young people. He sent a message to a conference of AI and ethics, part of which was taking place in the Vatican in a sign of the Holy See's concern for the new technologies. Leo said any further development of AI must be evaluated according to the “superior ethical criterion” of the dignity of each human. ■

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