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E-mail: fragranceofeast1998@gmail.com

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Founder:

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RAH)

Patron:

S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi

Advisory Board :

Syed Ammar Abdul Ali Hasani Nadwi

Mohammad Aslam Siddiqui

Shamsul Haque Nadwi

Editor:

Shariq Alavi

Asstt. Editor:

Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Bases of Character Building

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

When the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, departed from the world and, thus, the opportunity of benefitting directly from his company came to an end, the Holy Quran, the illustrious Traditions and biography of the Prophet remained the only sources for Muslims to fill the gap. The laws and wise methods dealing with the internal part of man's self which were developed on the basis of these sources served as permanent and universal guidelines to treat sickness of the heart, insurgence of the ego, and intrigues of the devil.

The material found in the books of Hadith falls into two categories. The first category comprises Traditions dealing with the external form of deeds, such as standing, bowing, sitting and prostrating in the prayer, recitation of the Quran, remembrance of Allah, supplication, missionary endeavour, holy war, and treating friends and foes in war and peace. The second category is related to the internal state of heart and mind, such as sincerity and trust in Allah, patience and humbleness, piety and God-consciousness, generosity and kindness. These fine qualities, which are the true essence of good deeds, may never be fully appreciated by people unless there is an exemplary figure in front of them. And, undoubtedly, the best and most reliable model in whom we find these qualities in the richest and sincerest form is the plain and simple life of the Prophet of Islam. ■

CONTENTS

1- The Qur'an - The Hadith	-	4
<u>Editorial:</u>		
2- Caliphs Around The Prophet	- Shariq Alavi	5
<u>Society:</u>		
3- Three Features of The Ibrahimi Culture	- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi	7
4- Unaware Of Our Own World	- S.Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi	11
5- What NCRB Data Says About Nature Of Crime	- P.K. Raghavan	13
6- The Indian Democracy And Harmony In History	- Ram Puniyani	15
7. Characteristics of Sayyid Ahmad's Missionary Work	- Shah Ebadur Rahman	24
<u>Seerah:</u>		
8- The Need For The Most Magnificent Reformer (Prophet)	- S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi	28
9- Makkan Life	- Khalid Saifullah Rahmani	30
<u>Religion</u>		
10- How To Study The Qur'an	- Abdur Rashid Siddiqui	34
<u>Personality:</u>		
11- Nazir Ahmad Nadwi: An Exemplary Teacher	- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi	37
12- Around The World	-	39

Wisdom of Qur'an

Their knowledge can comprehend little of the Hereafter. They are in doubt about it. Nay, they are blind unto it.

(al-Naml 27:66)

This verse graphically states the Western mindset. Westerners' knowledge is seriously flawed. To use an analogy it represents a car with a flat tyre. This naturally results in the breakdown of the car. Western knowledge, no doubt, has made advancements, especially in rational sciences, physics, mathematics and metaphysics. However, on studying the divine being and attributes the Western mind appears to have gone astray. It cannot comprehend the concept of the Hereafter, confused with regard to it. Some Westerners are even seen expressing mental reservations and doubts about it. They are thus devoid of any insight into this issue. In Qur'anic parlance, they are blind to it.

Another relevant Qur'anic verse, which has been elucidated by Imam Ibn Taymiyah in his work al-Nubuwwah to illustrate the same point is as follows: They deny what their knowledge cannot comprehend. (Yunus 10:39)

It is a common Western perception that what is not palpable is non-existent. To restrict beings to only those who are visible or palpable is essentially flawed reasoning. In turn, this severely affects man's knowledge base. Yet, the West takes its stance in this regard as its strength in the field of intellectuality. This has wreaked havoc on the human condition. It betrays a total disregard for the knowledge vouchsafed by Allah's messengers. Only those who do not pay any heed to the knowledge bestowed by Allah are liable to hold such a position. The Prophet Abraham (peace and blessings be upon him) portrayed such a mindset thus: Do you dispute with me about Allah when He has guided me? (al-An'am 6:80) ■

Pearls From the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Apostle of God said: "He who has fear sets out at the beginning of the night and he who sets out at the beginning of the night reaches the destination safely. Remember, the bargain of the Lord is not cheap, but extremely dear. Remember, the bargain of the Lord is Paradise."

—Tirmidhi

Commentary—In Arabia, the caravans, generally, started in the last part of the night and, therefore, the highwaymen, too, made their raids during the early hours of the morning. The travelers who were careful, however, preferred to begin their journey in the earlier part of the night so that they reached the destination without being attacked by the robbers. The Prophet, accordingly, says that just as prudent travelers forgo the night's sleep and start on the journey soon after dusk, those who are keen to attain Paradise should, also, proceed energetically towards the goal and be ready to suppress their desires and give up comforts for the sake of it. He, further, emphasises that what the bondsman is -looking forward to obtaining from the Lord is not a thing of a poor quality that can be given away without a price but Heaven, the abode of celestial bliss, which do one can hope to gain without making a sacrifice of the most valued things like life, property and carnal appetites. Says the Quran : Lo ! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs. [ix : iii]. ■

Editor's Note

Caliphs Around The Prophet

Our revered Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) after attaining the Prophet-hood stayed for a short time in Mecca, but here when he pronounced the unity of God and warned about the idol worship people got annoyed and started threatening him. He was compelled to leave Mecca. With a small group of his followers he proceeded to Medinah.

To smoothen the transition for the migrators and to create a sense of unity between them and the native residents of Al-Madinah (the Ansar), the Messenger of Allah (SWS) established bonds of brotherhood between them. He (SWS) said, "Become brothers for Allah, two brothers at a time (i.e., each person from the Ansar was to have a brother from the Muhajirun)." He (SWS) then took 'Ali bin Abu Talib (RA) by the hand and said, "This is my brother." A bond of brotherhood was established between Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and Kharijah bin Zaid Al-Khazraji and between 'Umar bin Al-Khattab and 'Itban bin Malik (RA).

From the day that he accepted Islam, 'Umar (RA) became one of the foremost of Companions (RA) in ranking. High ranking is what he truly deserved, for he was such a man that, if he was absent, the people missed him; and if he was present in a gathering, people looked to him for sound opinions. The Messenger of Allah (SWT) would take counsel from 'Umar and Abu Bakr (RA); he (SWS) said:

"The ranking of Abu Bakr and 'Umar in this religion is similar to that of hearing (ears) and sight (eyes) for the head."

And in another narration, the Prophet (SWS) said:

"Every Prophet has two ministers from the dwellers of the heavens, and (two) from the dwellers of earth. My two ministers from the dwellers of the heavens are Jibril and Mikail; my two ministers from the dwellers of earth are Abu Bakr and 'Umar."

Brave and steadfast, 'Umar (RA) participated with the Prophet (SWS) in every single battle. And on the day of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (SWS) said:

"In the heavens are two angels, one of whom orders with harshness while the other orders with gentleness, and both of them are correct. One of them is Jibril, and the other is Mikail. And there are two Prophets, one of whom orders with gentleness while the other orders with harshness, and both are correct: Ibrahim and Nuh. And I have two Companions, one of whom orders with gentleness while the other orders with harshness, and both are correct: Abu Bakr and 'Umar."

And the Prophet said:

"The most gentle of those from my nation is Abu Bakr; the sternest of them regarding the command of Allah is 'Umar; the most truthful of them in his modesty is 'Uthman; the most skilled of them at issuing correct judgments is 'Ali; the most knowledgeable of them regarding the laws of inheritance is Zaid bin Thabit; the most well-read of them

concerning Allah's Book is Ubai bin Ka'ab; the most knowledgeable of them regarding the lawful and the prohibited is Mu'adh bin Jabal; and every nation has a trustworthy one, and the trustworthy one of this nation is Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarah."

Reported by Abu Ya'la in his Musnad, from Ibn 'Umar (RA).

The Prophet (SWS) also said:

"The Shaitan has never met 'Umar in a road between two mountains and heard his voice, except that he took another path."

One day, while he was among his Companions (RA), the Prophet (SWS) said:

"In my sleep (i.e., in a dream), a large drinking glass, full of milk, was brought to me. I drank from it until I became full, and I saw it (the milk) flow through my veins. Something remained from the milk, and so 'Umar bin Al-Khattab look if and drank it. Interpret this (dream)."

"(It refers to) knowledge," said the Companions (RA).

"You are correct," said the Prophet (SWS)

(Reported by Al-Khatib and Ibn 'Asakir, from 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA))

According to another narration, the Prophet (SWS) said:

"Indeed, Allah has placed the truth upon the heart and tongue of 'Umar."

When the Messenger of Allah (SWS) announced that the Muslims should make preparations for going out to fight the Romans — the Battle of Tabuk — he also ordered them to give charity, the proceeds of which were needed for the expedition. 'Umar (RA) was much pleased, for the Prophet's announcement coincided with him having wealth to spend, and so he said, "If there is ever a day in which I beat Abu Bakr (in the performance of good deeds), then today is that day." He (RA) went with half of his wealth, and the Prophet (SWS) asked him:

'What did you leave for your family?"

He answered, "An amount equivalent to that which is here."

Then Abu Bakr (RA) came, bringing with him all of his wealth, and when the Prophet (SWS) asked him, "What did you leave for your family?" he replied, "I have left for them Allah and His Messenger." 'Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) said, "I will never beat him at anything." ■

S.A.

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Three Features of The Ibrahimi Culture

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Ibrahimi Culture has three distinctive features: faith in the Being of Allah and its constant awareness, faith in the Oneness of Allah (as taught by the Prophets and laid down in the Qur'an), and belief in the nobility of mankind and their inherent right to equality and justice. To my best knowledge, these characteristics, which inspire the true spirit of the Ibrahimi Culture, are not found with such a clear projection in any other culture.

First Feature:

Faith in the Being of Allah

Faith in the Being of Allah with constant awareness of it (keeping it in view all the time and following it in practice) is a distinctive feature of the Muslim culture and is an integral part of it. If we consider different Muslim cultures and civilizations as dresses of different fashions (affected by diverse tastes of different people, local considerations, seasonal variations, and outside influences), we find all the dresses deeply drenched in one colour (Faith in Allah) which reaches every fibre and thread. The frequent remembrance and mention of the name of Allah flow in the veins

of the Muslim culture like life-giving blood.

When a baby is born in a Muslim family, Adhan (Islamic prayer call) is called as first words in his ears, making thus the baby hear and learn the name of Allah even before his own name. When he is seven days old, his Aqeeqah (shaving off the head) is performed and an Islamic name is given to him. Such names are preferred which reflect man's bondsmanship to Allah and Allah's Oneness. Babies are sometimes also given the names of the Prophets, who were the greatest monotheists of their times. When the child begins his schooling, he is first of all taught the name of Allah and verses of the Quran. At the time of marriage a Muslim man and a woman are united as wife and husband in the name of Allah and are made responsible to honour the sanctity of Allah's name for the rest of their lives. In the festival of Eid al-Fitr Muslims proclaim the name of Allah in the prescribed way and offer two Rak'ahs of Prayer of thankfulness. In Eid al-Adha animals are sacrificed in the name of Allah.

When a Muslim is in his death bed, he is encouraged by his

relatives to utter the name of Allah as his last word in the world to ensure for him a noble death. When the news of the death of a Muslim reaches other Muslims, they automatically respond by saying: "To God we belong and to Him is our return" [II 156].

During the burial rites the name of Allah is very frequently mentioned from the beginning to the end. Muslims say prayers for the forgiveness of the deceased as well as for themselves, invoking Allah's help for living in faithfulness to Him and departing from the world with true faith in Him. Then the dead person is laid into the grave, all present uttering the name of Allah. In the grave his face is turned toward the K'aba, the direction he faced in prayers all his life. After his burial, whenever a Muslim passes by his grave, he says prayers for his forgiveness and invokes Allah's blessings on him. Thus, the name of Allah accompanies a Muslim in his life's journey at every step from birth to death.

Those mentioned above are clearly important stages in life, but even in ordinary engagements of the daily life a Muslim remembers his Lord and mentions His name so frequently. He begins eating with the

name of Allah and ends with words of thankfulness to Him. Those eager to follow the Sunnah (practices of the Prophet of Allah) eat and drink, put off and put on dress, enter and come out of the lavatory, in fact, do everything with the name of Allah on their tongues and His remembrance in their minds and hearts. When a Muslim sneezes, for example, he is instructed to say Allah's praise; the Muslim who hears him sneezing is required to invoke a prayer for him. Other parts of a Muslim's time are also full of Allah's remembrance. Expressions such as Masha Allah ("May Allah increase it"), Insha Allah ("If Allah wills so") and La hawla wala quwwala illa billah ("There is no power or strength except that which comes from Allah"), which are words taught by the Prophet to Muslims to remember Allah, have now become an essential part of the languages spoken by Muslims throughout the world. These are Muslims' characteristic ways to remember Allah and to remind others of Him. The culture, language, literature, and lifestyle of no other people are so profoundly influenced by faith in Allah's Being and constant awareness of it as are the culture, language, literature and lifestyle of Muslims. This is the first universal feature of the Islamic

culture.

Second Feature:

Faith in the Oneness of Allah

The second universal feature of the Islamic culture is Muslims' faith in the Oneness of Allah which is so strongly reflected in their lives, ranging from faith to practice, from worship to celebration. It is proclaimed five times from the minarets of their mosques that there is none deserving worship except Allah. It is required that their houses too remain free from decorations bearing polytheistic signs and symbols. Pictures, statues, and idols are forbidden in their religion to the extent that these have to be avoided even in the toys played by Muslim children. Whether it is a religious ceremony or a national festival, a birthday celebration of a religious or political leader or an occasion of national flag hoistation—it is forbidden for Muslims to bow in front of idols and statues, stand in front of them in reverence with folded hands, and put flower wreaths around them. All such acts are contrary to their monotheistic culture. Wherever Muslims are adhering to the Islamic culture, they discard all such polytheistic practices. Any act defying Allah's Oneness in any form—in giving

name to a baby, in taking an oath, in revering pious persons and saints, or the like—is against the teaching of Islam.

Third Feature:

Belief in the Nobility of Man

The third universal feature of the Islamic culture is belief in the nobility of man and in the fact that all human beings are essentially equal on humanitarian terms. This teaching is so strongly emphasized in Islam that a belief in it becomes a second nature of a Muslim and fully controls his mind and heart. Consequently, the practice of observing discrimination in the name of cast and the tradition of untouchability are totally alien to Muslims. A Muslim would take meals with any other Muslim, nay any human being, without hesitation. Persons, several in number and different in background, eat together from one plate, eat each other's left-over food and drink left-over water. The king and the slave stand together shoulder to shoulder with each other in prayers. A person with lesser social status but greater knowledge is entitled to lead the prayers, the most important responsibility in Islam, while the rich and the elite have to follow him by standing behind him. ■

Indian embassy in Kabul will ensure 'regional peace': Taliban spokesman

The Taliban administration in Afghanistan has welcomed India's decision to upgrade the Indian Technical Mission in Kabul into an embassy. In a statement to The Hindu, the spokesman for international media for the Taliban administration, Suhail Shaheen said the Indian move would help in building "regional peace".

"It is a rightful step to put bilateral relations on normal track, build trust, promote trade and cooperation and play a constructive role in regional peace. I welcome this decision and look forward to seeing good bilateral relations between Afghanistan and India," said Mr. Shaheen, who is also serving as Kabul's ambassador to Qatar.

"It is an important and needed decision for relations between the two countries in various areas," he said.

India's move coincided with Qatar's which also introduced its ambassador and special representative in its embassy in Kabul on Tuesday. Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson of the Taliban administration, in an interview with Afghan news outlet Tolonews has welcomed both the Indian and Qatari moves to upgrade diplomatic ties.

As decided during the recent visit of Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, India restored formal diplomatic links with Kabul on Tuesday by upgrading the Technical Mission into an embassy with "immediate effect". Official sources said this would lead to India appointing a CDA (charge d'affaires) in the Indian embassy in Kabul.

"The embassy of India in Kabul will further augment India's contribution to Afghanistan's comprehensive development, humanitarian assistance, and capacity building initiatives, in keeping with the priorities and aspirations of Afghan society," said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in the statement announcing the restoration of formal diplomatic contact with Taliban-administered Afghanistan.

India had shut its embassy in Kabul and withdrew existing staff in August 2021 when law and order situation had broken down as Taliban overthrew the government of President Ashraf Ghani. The Indian consulates in Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Herat had also been closed as the conflict intensified in early 2021.

India had sent a technical team to Kabul to run the mission on June 23, 2022, which was meant to facilitate humanitarian assistance and provide consular support. ■

(The Hindu 23-10-2025)

Unaware Of Our Own World

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

One of the major diseases of the present age is that the sense of duty is disappearing. Usually, the people do not realize their responsibilities and they always spy other's faults and trace their shortcomings. No one is ready to imitate Hazrat Umar like attitudes and virtues. Everyone wants to become the old lady who publicly warned Hazrat Umar. As a result, the Ummah is facing severe difficulties today. They are confronted with a host of issues and problems. The solution of which is not visible. Unfortunately, instead of finding solutions and putting this psychology into practice more problems arise. This situation is a big concern for Muslims. History bears witness that Muslims have always been harmed by their own people. There have always been the sleeve snakes who blew out the lamps of governments, shattered movements into shreds and tried to undermine the community through immorality and Immodesty. We have learnt a lesson from the past."

The machine works well when its

all parts are sound and intact otherwise the whole work comes to a standstill. It is imperative for Muslims to ignore others' shortcomings and undertake their duties. and responsibilities. It doesn't mean that one should not warn the wrongdoers and offenders. It is commendable for the Ummah and it is obligatory for Islamic scholars. But the difference needs to be understood. Where warning and admonishing is suitable overtly or covertly. Even temperature of words and tone and tenor should also be taken into consideration. If this is not considered, the matter will become worse and instead of benefits it will bring detriments and disadvantages."

The big problem at the moment is that no one is ready to do anything. But everyone is prone to criticize others and it is considered the greatest Jihad of the time. It is a well-known fact that one who sees the eyeballs of others can not see his own eye beam. Thus they are engaged in demolishing their own brothers's forts and castles. The situation needs a change. After all, we should introspect

* Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

ourselves. it is a famous proverb. It appears in Hadith, "Alkaiesu mann dana nafsahu" (He is the wise who introspects himself). It further says, "Wa amela lema baadal maut" (And works for the Day of Judgment viz the life after death).“

It is unfortunate that we don't realize what we do. We all need to take stock of ourselves. What is the true way of success in the Hereafter? How long will the honour and wealth of this world last? After death everything will be manifest that who is slave and who is king. What is the

reality of worldly honour and luxurious life and for how long they will remain? "It is time to wake up from our deep slumber and comprehend our duties and do for the cause of the community whatever we can afford. If such a mood develops then the mountains of miseries and difficulties will crumble away and the roads will open and destinations will become easier. "And those who strive in Our cause, We will certainly guide them to Our paths: for verily Allah is with those who do right". (S.29.A.69)“ ■

(English Rendering: O.R. Nadwi)

Place Your Need Before God, Not Men

Abdullah bin Masud related to us that the Apostle of God said: “Whoever is confronted with a severe need and places it before men (and begs them for help), he will never be relieved of it parmanently, and whoever places it before God and beseeches Him (for it), it is confidently hoped that God will put an end to his need either by granting him death before a long (if he appointed time of his death has arrived) or by bestowing prosperity upon him after sometime.” ■

- Abu Dawood and Nassai

What NCRB Data Says About Nature of Crime

- P.K. Raghavan*

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recently released its Crime in India 2023 report. NCRB's Crime in India reports are a comprehensive analysis of the crime scene in the country. Despite its fairly wide acceptance, some users of crime data — within and outside government — are sceptical of the accuracy of the data in the report. There is even a small section that believes the report massages statistics to cast the establishment in good light. Such views add spice to our dynamic democracy, but are otherwise gibberish.

However, if you discard NCRB reports as unreliable, there is nothing else in the public domain that would give you a picture of crime incidence, nature, and trends, among others. One criticism that holds is that official crime figures are more than a year old when they are released. This delay is because the NCRB is dependent on state

police forces for the data. Many states delay submitting data, and a few do not submit all the numbers in one go. Still, the NCRB comes out with eminently clear analysis.

In 2023, cognisable crime increased by 5.7% under the then existent Indian Penal Code and a 9.5% increase under special and local laws. The crime rate, i.e., crime per 100,000 population rose from 422 in 2022 to 440 in 2023. This doesn't appear very significant in a country like ours, with its large population and acute unemployment problem.

Any form of crime is a matter of concern, but what the common man finds most distressing is homicides and violence against women and the elderly. There were more than 29,000 rapes in 2023 — a marginal drop from the year earlier — with 1,088 cases reported in the national capital alone. This brings to mind the national reaction to the Delhi 2012 gangrape-murder case, which reflected poorly on the state of policing. Fortunately, crimes of such depravity are not frequent.

* *RK Raghavan, a former CBI director, is professor of criminal justice at the Jindal Global University.*

However, there is no room for complacency.

As a measure of prevention, a larger police presence, especially in crime-prone areas, can help reduce violence against women. Citizens must also do their bit to prevent such crimes from occurring. We must remember that rapes are one of the most under-reported crimes the world over, and this is especially true of rural India. More so, when an influential person commits the crime. Social stigma, on top of the very real threat of intimidation, often allows rapes to go unreported.

Police negligence and connivance are also not uncommon. Unless women activists intervene in larger numbers and are supported by the government and the police, this shameful situation will continue to be a blot on our social fabric. Consequently, the successful prosecution of sex offenders will remain abysmally low, especially when courts look for unassailable proof of crime, which is often not available.

Another heinous crime is murder. There were 27,721

homicides during 2023 — an increase of 1,200 over the previous year. Given the fact that a murder is often caused by the impulsive act of an individual, it is one of the most difficult-to-prevent violent crimes.

The use of guns in India was low until a decade ago. This is changing fast. Recovery of illegal firearms is on the rise. If we do not want to become another America, we have to be more proactive on gun control.

An alarming aspect of crime in India would be the rising graph of cybercrime — twice as many reported in 2023 compared to 2022. The greater penetration of digital technology in our lives, very evidently, comes with a large price tag. There is some awareness of the complexity and pervasiveness of cybercrime, but not enough to check it comprehensively. This is where we need significant effort, from the government and civil society alike, to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens, be it the elderly or women or children, don't fall prey to fraud/scams, extortion, and are not ensnared by criminals to join their growing networks. ■

Indian Democracy And Harmony In History

- Ram Puniyani

Last two decades have been difficult for the Indian democracy. It is this period that the religion based Nationalism Hindutva - surged; it's during this period that communal violence assumed horrific shape; it's during this period that demolition of historic Babri Masjid was followed by gruesome violence in Mumbai and in many parts of the country; it's during this period that Pastor Graham Staines was burned alive, it's during period that anti-Muslim pogrom snuffed lives of thousands of Muslims. It's no coincidence that Hindutva, deriving its legitimacy from Hindu religion, went on rampage and the minorities in general and Muslim in particular were at the receiving end.

During this period the myths against Muslims and Christians to some extent were turned into a reality. Muslims were stereotyped. They were labeled as fanatic, orthodox, loyal to Pakistan, trying to create a Muslim nation in India by having more children, and refusing to accept common civil code. Islam was touted as an aggressive religion, spread through sword and Muslim kings were held responsible for the destruction of temples. These are just the tip of the iceberg.

Various other myths were manufactured and propagated through the word of mouth and also through RSS-backed media and journalists. The demonisation comes in handy for communal parties in unleashing communal violence.

Gujarat was the best example. Two incidents throw some light on the mindset of common Hindus. Two women are exchanging notes about their areas, trying to prove as to who lives in a better area. The clincher and decider comes when one of them says that our area is so good that no Muslim stays around. In another incidence one college student is shocked when she realizes that the medical doctor she visited turned out to be so good that it's impossible to believe that he's a Muslim.

I

Muslims are not a homogenous community. Economically, socially and religious denomination wise gross differences are found among them. Initially, Islam was introduced to India by the Arab traders, who came to Malabar-coast. Later came the Muslim kings. A few people converted to Islam either out of fear or temptation of power. But that is a miniscule proportion. The real converts, who embraced Islam through

the teachings of Sufi saints, were the one's who wanted to escape the tyranny of Brahminical system which did not allow them to enter temples and be part of Hindu community. They were shudras and untouchable.

A large number of Muslims come from the poor socio-economic stratum. Even during the Muslim period, barring some Muslim kings, the majority of Muslims were either poor peasants or artisans. They were also subject to severe persecution post-1857 rebellion against the British. This period witnessed the opening of new job opportunities, which was availed by Hindu elite to the hilt. The initial effort to spread education amongst Muslims were restricted to the Muslim elite only, which supported the politics of communalism, the parallel and opposite of Hindu communalism. Later on they demanded separate homeland for Muslims—— Pakistan.

The poor Muslims were more with the ulema and other Muslim leaders who stood for composite Indian nationalism and were opposed to the idea of separate country for Muslims. The freedom movement culminating in the partition of the country on religious ground also resulted in massive violence and transmigration of population. Affluent Muslims left India for the 'greener

pastures'. Thus partition deflated the Muslim communalism in this part of the country and also deprived them of the affluent and powerful sections.

With India getting Constitution based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity (community) the affirmative clauses for Dalits and minorities were rightly put in the Constitution. Both these sections had a similar socioeconomic grounding in general. Dalits in addition got the provision for reservations in jobs and professional colleges. A large section of them benefitted from modern education. Whereas Muslims having similar handicap had no such provision. Muslims' apathy towards modern education further compounded their problems.

II

The condition of Muslims remained abysmal barring a few of them who could set up their own businesses, succeeded in education somehow and could get jobs in the Middle East. The larger section of community stayed away from education, women being the worst hit.

The Hindu communal politics kept itself alive and its effects kept manifesting through occasional riots here and there. Jabalpur communal riot of 1961 was an eye opener but after the death of former Prime Minister Jawahar

Lal Nehru the importance of secular values started declining in policies of the state. Later on political parties such as the Congress used communalism for their advantage. The party espousing the cause of Hindutva, supposedly for Hindus, Jan Sangh, kept itself going through some ups and downs till 1980, when it started getting more response from a section of society.

Meenakshipuram conversion — in which some Dalits converted to Islam — was used to raise the bogey of ‘Hinduism in danger’ and the Government’s apparent appeasement of Muslim mullas in Shah Bano case led to ‘Muslim appeasement’. Simultaneously many new terms were coined to denigrate the secular values and democratic principles. Pseudo secularism and Hindu Rashtra were drilled into the minds of Indians through the campaigns and section of media to win over Hindu population. With Ram Mandir movement taking off and getting strengthened in the aftermath of Mandal Commission implementation, there was no stopping the onslaught of Hindutva rath (chariot), which led to the demolition of the Masjid. Communal violence broke out in Mumbai and several other places of the country at that time. The decade of 1980s had already seen Meerut, Malyana, Bhagalpur and Bhivandi riots amongst others. Muslims suffered

hugely in these riots. Lack of modern education in the broader sections of Muslim community supplemented by the violence, created the psychological and physical ghettoization.

The NDA led Alliance, which was in power, did all in its reach to worsen the lot of Muslims at deeper level. While the country has tragically seen many a riot so far, Gujarat was a different cup of poison; it surpassed all the previous lapses on the part of state officials, as state itself became the most proactive agency in conducting the pogrom. Along with this the polarization of communities on religious lines is going on at a rapid pace.

To make matters worse, the US lust for oil led it to create the monster of Al Qaeda. The US actively collaborates with the Zionism in Israel and subtly launches a ‘hate Islam’ campaign through the theories like clash of civilization.

The international situation came handy to the RSS and its affiliates. They also started the anti-Christian violence, the worst of which was seen in the burning alive of Pastor Graham Stains in Orissa. At societal level one also saw the social engineering operation to co-opt Dalits in Hindutva fold and to use them as foot soldiers against the Muslims.

III

This is leading to a communalisation of social space at a rapid pace. Prior to 2004 elections BJP and its cohorts, sticking to it for the pelf and power, did create an atmosphere where it appeared as if the liberal space will be done away in due course of the POTA and attacks on liberal secular individuals, were the two manifestations of same. It was the wisdom of Indian electorate, which came to the rescue of democratic and plural values. The BJP-led coalition had to bite the dust. The atmosphere is not yet totally conducive for the process of democratisation of society.

The response of Muslim community to all this has been very diverse. Gujarat showed that even affluent Muslims couldn't take their rights to life for granted. Ehsan Jaffery's brutal killing was a signal for all to see and learn from. Despite that gruesome incident just prior to 2004 elections, a section of Muslim like Arif Muhammad Khan went to the BJP, with the hope that surrendering to the killers is the only hope for survival. This was the most desperate reaction. The Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid exhorted Muslims to vote for the BJP. This reminded us of the prevalence of desperation and a sense of helplessness in the diverse sections

of Muslims community.

At social level the responses have been mainly of three types. One, those who felt that sticking to conservatism is the only way. The second one became over critical of Muslims for the weaknesses, which the community shows in terms of sticking to conservative values, and blame Muslims alone for their own plight. This is the section most appreciated by the RSS and its progeny. They are the 'model' Muslims as per RSS. The third section is the one trying to uphold the democratic and secular values among Muslims, seeking association with secular movement as the hope and future of Muslims in India.

This section apart from emphasising on the promotion of modern education among Muslims is calling for reform in society to give up conservative values. This section looks forward to secularism not just as a tactic for Muslims to adopt because they are in a minority but because democracy is the value of modern times, the base which can bring the Muslims on the ground of equality with all others and in turn demand the safeguards as a matter of right as the democratic citizens. Time alone will tell as to which of these tendency will get stronger among the Muslims.

IV

The plight of Muslims cannot be seen in isolation. It is part of two major political processes. At the level of the country, it is the affluent upper caste-upper class section, which is opposed to the process of democracy, social change towards equality and so resorts to communalism, and a politics, which regards religious identity of the community as the basis of politics. This politics longs for the hierarchy of caste and gender at deeper level. At one level it targets the other community and while doing so invokes the selected values from religion which are against the notions of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Globally this process is getting support due to increase an power of Imperialist countries, the US and its cohort the UK in particular, which are behaving like World emperors and have unilaterally and arbitrarily been on the rampage in the oil-rich countries. At another level they are asserting that they want to bring in democracy, but their policies are suppressing human rights and also the very notion of people deciding their own fate. With US army breathing down the neck of these countries what sort of democracy will come is anybody's guess. Incidentally the US is currently the biggest violator of human rights in the World.

The US has been a firm ally of despotic rulers and has the record of attacking the countries, which had democratic system or had the inner potential of democracy. In 1953 the US supported the Shah to suppress democratic movement in Iran.

Worldwide the global movement for peace, disarmament and strengthening of the UN on democratic ground is an urgent necessity. At home we have to ensure that democratic norms prevail. It is not just a question of keeping BJP out of power, but to combat communal ideology at ground level. If sufficient pressure can be generated for the concept of human rights of all, if sufficient pressure can be put for right kind of ideas, the divisive ideas of communal politics can be kept at bay.

The sequence of communal violence begins from the hate other ideology and the propagation of myths. Post-riot polarization and ghettoisation are the steps involved in strengthening of communalism. Breaking the circuit at the first step is the long-term measure for creating a national and global community where the people are not killed or maimed just because they belong to 'another religion'. Apart from working within the community for education and better employment, there

is urgent need to build societal bridges with other communities and social groups, uncompromisingly struggle for human rights, creating a political platform of oppressed sections of society to get social, economic and gender justice.

HARMONY IN HISTORY

The rise of communal problem in India has been accompanied by a great deal of misinterpretation of history, especially the medieval history. It has been propagated that the invasion of Muslim Kings led to all sort of problems in India. Hindus were enslaved and suffered extensively at the hands of Muslim Kings. Hindus were converted by force. This selective projection of history itself is not only wrong but feeds into the communal prejudices.

This type of mythification of history has served as a potent tool in the hands of communal forces who in turn, then demonise the whole community leading to intensification of hatred.

What is the real truth? Is the history of medieval times, all about invasion of Muslim kings who destroyed temples and converted people to Islam? Is this period of history the dark period of our social life? Though it is true that kings fought among each other for larger control of territories and the clergy (Ulema and Brahmins) looked down

upon others' mode of worship, the average people, and the downtrodden of both the religions interacted with each other. While the kings had bigger preoccupations with expansion or preservation of their kingdoms for their material benefit, the large chunk of society derived the pleasure from their social and community life.

Religion

The biggest synthetic trends are discernible in the popular religions. Bhakti from Hindu and Sufi from Islam are the major religious trends to have come up in this period. Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas reflected the synthetic trends and the influence of both religions in their lives and works.

Kabir, rejected Sanskrit, the language of elite Brahmins and communicated with people in simple Hindi and reflected the building of bridges between the two communities. In one of his *Sabha* he goes on to say that just as ornaments are different manifestation of some basic product, gold, so Allah, Ram, Rahim, and Hari were all different names of the same god. *Puja* offered by Hindus and *namaz* performed by Muslims are just different methods of adoration of the same God. Kabir was a harsh critic of institutionalised religions and the religious traditions which divided

people. He was a critic of the mullahs and pandits and social evils which had infested the society in the name of religion like caste system and untouchability. His teachings spread amongst vast number of people.

Tulsidas another poet sage of this time in an autobiographical couplet shows how the religious synthesis was operating at this time:

A slave of Ram is Tulsi,

What ever they say let them say.

On alms I live, the mosque is my refuge,

My give and take with the world is done here.

Tulsidas: from Kavitavali)

One of the biggest Ram bhakts of the time was living in a mosque, from where most of his devotional works for lord Ram emanated. Guru Nanak was for peace in society. Influenced by the ideas of Kabir, he was a strong proponent of syncretism. He tried to unite Hinduism and Islam by adopting beliefs from both these religions.

Sufis attracted a large following among the lower classes and castes. It was their unorthodox and simple lifestyle which attracted a large number of low castes people to convert to Islam. Their *mazars* (mausoleums) were open to all

irrespective of their religious following. Sufis were basically upholding the spiritual side of Islam. One of the great Sufi saints Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi founded the doctrine of Wahahdat-al-wujud i.e. unity of being, which promoted spiritual universalism, in turn demolishing the barriers of caste and creed. This doctrine states that the real being is One and we are all its manifestations, this brought in harmony amongst followers of different religions.

It is interesting to note that Sufi saints' writings appealed the people. Baba Farid wrote poetry in Punjabi and his writings are a part of Granth Sahib the holy book of the Sikhs. Baba Farid distinguished follower was Nizamuddin Auliya, who proudly used to say that there were as many ways of worshipping God as there are particles of sand. He was very fond of listening to *bhajans*, being touched equally by *bhajans* and *qawwallis*. His respect for local traditions was tremendous. One small story will illustrate as to how he was away from Islamic orthodoxy and had great respect for local traditions. "One day he was passing through the bank of Yamuna in Delhi, along with his disciple, the famous poet Khusru, and saw some Hindu women taking bath in the Yamuna and offering prayers to the sun. To this Hazrat Nizamuddin said, O Khusru, these women are also praying to Allah;

they have their own way of prayer, and then he recited a verse from Quran: "And everyone has a direction to which one turns, so vie with one another in good works" (from A.A Engineer, Sufism and Interfaith Harmony: Institute of Islamic Studies, March 4, 95)

It is also interesting to note here that "Ulema often denounced all those who followed religions other than Islam as *kafirs*, whereas Sufis respected similar spiritual practices in all other religions and showed utmost respect to them" (A.A Engineer, above paper). Similarly Mazhar Jan-I-Janan was a Sufi theologian of repute who respected others traditions. Dara Shikoh, the heir of Jahangirs' throne, who was murdered by his own brother for the sake of power was a great Sanskrit scholar who had studied the Hindu scriptures and had written a book called Majmaul Bahrayn (The meeting of the two great oceans, Hinduism and Islam). In this book he compared the Islamic and Sufi phraseology and that of Hinduism and shows that there is much in common between the two.

The interaction of the practice of these two religions has very well summarised by well-known scholar Dr. BN Pandey in his *Islam and Hinduism*, which appeared at the start so antithetical, at last intermingled, each

one stirred the profoundest depth of the other and from their synthesis grew the religion of Bhakti and *Tasawwuf*, the religion of love and devotion. The currents of Islamic Sufism and Hindu Bhakti combined into a mighty stream which fertilised old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. It was this spirit of India which achieved apparently an impossible task of reconciling the puritanical severity and awe inspiring transcendence of Islam into luxuriant fullness and abundance of form and the intuitive perception of their imminent unity with Hinduism, and created those monuments of art, literature, painting, music and poetry which are the heritage of Indian history, during the middle ages.

Culture

Due to interaction of the Muslim kings, Islam and local culture, there developed a whole stream of synthetic culture in all walks of life. *Khayal*, *ghazal* and *thumri* are outstanding contributions of these interactions. North Indian classical music as known today is a thorough blend of Hindu and Muslim elements achieved over 500 years. Ibrahim II of Adilshahi of Bijapur (1580-1626) had 300 Hindu singers in his court. To popularize this music among Muslims he himself composed *Kitab-e-Naurang* in Urdu (a book containing 59

poems) and of those the first one is an invocation of Goddess Saraswati). Chaitanya Maha Prabhu and most of the Vaishnav saint poets influenced many Muslims to write in their idiom. Rahim and Raskhan are among the very popular Hindi poets who wrote in Brij-bhasha in praise of lord Krishna. Syed Wazid Shah wrote *Hir and Ranjha* the greatest classic of medieval times. Sheikh Mohammed has greatly contributed to Marathi literature and Shivajis' guru (saint teacher) Ramdas had special words of praise for him.

Mixture of Persian dialect with western Hindi spoken in and around Delhi produced a new language which later on came to be called Urdu. There were great Hindu scholars who took to Urdu not only as administrative language but also wrote and contributed to Urdu literature. Hindu architecture was masked by profusion of intricate sculptured detail, while Islamic architecture was notable for elegance and lightness. The fusion of the two manifested in different architectural marvels which came up during this phase. This fusion is seen in Jodhabai's palace in Agra fort, in Fatehpur Sikri, and in arches of Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. The influence of this mixture is discernible far and wide in the havelis of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the Indo-Saracenic architecture of

Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. Similarly fusion of Persian techniques and brilliant Hindu colours resulted in the type of miniature painting marked by beauty and lyricism.

One of the most valuable relics of the harmony of mediaeval society which has survived the onslaughts of different communal forces is Sufi *dargah* (shrine). These *dargahs* are scattered in many a cities, managed by Hindu or Muslim families and visited by people of all religions, unmindful of the communal venom being poured by practitioners of communal politics. Right near Mumbai, Haji Malang shrine is a very good expression of syncretic ethos of medieval times. The hereditary trustee of the shrine is Kailashnath Gopal Ketkar (a Brahmin). The offerings given at the shrine are a mixture of Hindu and Muslim traditions. Devotees offer chadars, coconuts, flower and sheets of flower.

Such examples are numerous and scattered all over. Today there is a conscious attempt to downplay such a valuable tradition and to harp upon the differences of the elite and the rulers. There is a need to look at the truth as a whole. There is a need to observe the richness of these syncretic traditions which are a rich tribute to our communities' love, respect and tolerance for each other. ■

Characteristics of Sayyid Ahmad's Missionary Work

- Shah Ebadur Rahman

The first and most striking characteristic of Sayyid Ahmad's missionary work was the sincerity (Ikhlas) with which he extended his call to the people. Like all other endeavors in life, he carried on his Da'wah solely for the pleasure of his Lord and never wished to get any recognition or reward from the people. Words of admiration and praise meant nothing to him; gifts and presentations had no attraction for him. When the wife of Sheikh Imam Bakhsh, a rich merchant of Calcutta, presented to him an expensive residential building constructed in the midst of a beautiful garden, he gave it back to Imam Bakhsh and said these memorable words: "We are the indigent travelers. Allah provides us daily with fresh food, fresh water, and a new place to live. What shall we do then of this house? I give the building to you from my side."

Second, he did not sit and wait for the people to come to him to learn about Islam. Like the Prophet, peace be upon him, he himself went to them and conveyed the message of Islam. His extensive tours in the area of Doaba, his missionary tour in the area east of Rae Bareilly, his missionary trip to Lucknow, his missionary work during his pilgrimage journey, his reformist endeavors in the Frontier, which are so wide in range and deep in effect, were all taken up in the same spirit. He also encouraged his followers to take their call for Islamic

revival to the people by going to them. On one occasion, he told a large group of landlords: "For the sake of Allah alone go to the villages in your areas, teach Muslims Tawheed and ways of Islam and save them from polytheism and innovation. Allah will bless you with a great reward."

Third, Sayyid Ahmad prepared himself and his associates to patiently bear any ill treatment met in discharging the duty of preaching with. To a group of Tibetans whom he had persuaded to return to Tibet and preach among the people there the true teachings of Islam rather than perform Hajj with him, he instructed: "Teach Muslims the injunctions of Tawheed and Sunnah there and persuade them to give up polytheism and innovation." He then gave the final advice to them in these words: "But you must not forget one thing. Even if they hit you with a stick or stone, or kick or punch you, observe patience and do not say anything to them in retaliation. Simply continue preaching in the same way. Also, to a group of his disciples from Bengal he instructed: "Tour different places and teach the tenets of Tawheed and Sunnah that you have learned here to people, and dissuade them from acts of polytheism and innovation. And if anybody hits or hurts you in any way, observe patience and don't give up preaching."

Fourth, Sayyid Ahmad always

remained steadfast in his missionary work. Once when he was in Lucknow, a number of the Shia Muslims converted to the Sunni faith. Nawwab Motamedud Dawla, the Prime Minister of Lucknow, sent a stern warning to him that he stop preaching to the Shias or leave Lucknow immediately. The Nawwab also threatened to take disciplinary action against him if he ignored his orders. But Sayyid Ahmad remained steadfast and continued his Da'wah work in Lucknow in the same way. He said later, "If we were simply asked to leave the city, we would have readily complied as we were the subjects. But because we were forbidden from preaching, it would have been against the teachings of Islam to accept such a commandment." He made his perspective further clear in these words: "Whoever comes to me, a Shia or a Sunni, I will tell him what is Islamically right and what is wrong."

Fifth, Sayyid Ahmad's way of preaching was essentially humane, marked with extraordinary wisdom suited to human nature. He hated the sin, but he was a true well wisher of the transgressor, always trying and hoping for his transformation for the better and eagerly awaiting any good opportunity to show him the right path. When he was in the army of Amir Khan, he always showed care and indulgence to the soldiers who came to him for his advice and prayers and tried to encourage them to practice the teachings of Islam in a pleasant way. Similarly in Lucknow he received Amanullah Khan and his associates, who

were outlaws and criminals, with due respect and showed them the beauty of Islam in such a way that all of them gave up the criminal life and became pious Muslims. Also, at Topai he brought back a notorious robber called Phulela to the fold of Islam in the same way. Instead of treating the transgressors with disdain, he helped them transform their lives. That is why, we see among his beneficiaries notorious criminals, professional beggars, eunuchs, and the prostitutes who became the best specimen of practicing Muslims after reversion.

Sixth, Sayyid Ahmad's mission was open to all: everybody was invited to join and contribute in his own way. He did not call everybody to participate in Jihad; he invited everybody, nevertheless, to adopt the true teachings of Islam, contribute to the renaissance of Islam in whatever way possible and attain Allah's pleasure. He asked the rulers, like Nawwab Wazeerud Dawla, and chiefs, like Fatah Khan Panjtari, to rule over their subjects according to the Islamic Law. He deputed others, like Maulana Abdul Hai Budhanwi and Wilayat Ali Azeemabadi, to do the missionary work. He encouraged poets like Momin Khan Momin and Khurram Ali Balhouri to write poems in order to raise the morale of the Mujahideen: Khurram Ali's famous poem Qasidae Jihadiya was sung in the battlefield to boost up the morale of the Mujahideen. Some other poets were asked to compose short and simple poems containing the teachings of Islam for the benefit of less educated Muslims. In the Frontier qualified aged

persons were given the responsibility of teaching the Qur'an to the Mujahideen. The chiefs of the Delhi and Patna centers were responsible for collecting money and recruiting men. Others were given responsibilities like transferring money and men to the Frontier. When he found a capable person interested in learning, he spared time to personally teach him. As narrated in Wasaya, Maulvi Imamudeen Bengali had taken lessons in Sirate Mustaqeem directly from him and had gone over the book with him several times.

Means Adopted for Preaching

Sayyid Ahmad followed the prophetic tradition of adopting necessary means available to achieve his end. He made long tours, resorted to sincere supplications, accepted followers in Bai'ah, offered personal advice, delivered short discourses and public sermons, organized study circles such as those of Shah Ismail and Maulana Abdul Hai at Makkah, wrote letters to different persons, and used all these for the success of his missionary work. Some other means that he adopted for this purpose deserve special mention here.

In order to prepare his followers for his mission, Sayyid Ahmad selected capable persons and kept them in his company to train them. He then sent them to the areas where missionary work was needed. This brought into existence a very effective network. As Maulana Haider Ali Rampuri writes, "in many countries the righteous deputies [of Sayyid Ahmad] toured and showed hundreds of

thousands of people the straight path of the religion of Islam."

Sayyid Ahmad's Movement was supported by well-developed missionary literature - books, short and long. Mehr mentions that the following books were prepared under the personal care of Sayyid Ahmad: Sirate Mustaqeem; Tambihul Ghafileen (Persian), Risalah dar Namax-uia-Ibadat (published from Calcutta under the caption Haqiqatus Salah, also reprinted in Al-Rahim, September 1965 Number, Hyderabad, Sindh), and Risalah dar Nikah Betuagan, Persian, unpublished. His associates followed the same path. Shah Ismail's Taqunyatul Iman; Wilayat Ali's Durre Mantlioor, Jafar Naqwi's Manzooratus So'ada; Maulana Abdul' Rahim's Tazkerah Sadiqa (Al-Durrul Manthoor fi Tarajime Ahle Sadiqpur), Jafar Thanessari's Tauariqhe Ajeeb and Kala Pani, and above all, Waqa'e Ahmadi, which contains the narrations of several of those associates of Sayyid Ahmad who survived the battle of Balakot, are only a few titles from the long list of books which were written by his followers.

Haider Ali Rampuri acknowledges that in doing the Da'wah work some deputies of Sayyid Ahmad concentrated on delivering sermons while others "wrote books based on the teachings of the Qur'an and authentic sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) through which they transformed thousands of illiterate people ... into an educated lot." These books were very widely circulated by the centers that the Mujahideen had established all over

India. Small booklets were printed and circulated in large numbers. Shah Ismail's Taqwiyyatul Iman and Tazkeerul Ikhwan; and short writings of Sayyid Awlad Hasan Qannawji, Maulvi Khurram Ali Balhowri, Maulana Wilayat Ali, Maulana Inayat Ali and scores of others were made available at a cheap price.

The later leaders of Sayyid Ahmad's Movement also established printing and publishing houses to support the Movement. Sayyid Abdullah Sarampuri, a follower of Sayyid Ahmad, established a printing press in Sarampur from which many important religious books were published. He also published the translation of the Qur'an by Shah Abdul Qadir Dehlavi first and made it available to common Muslims. Similarly, Maulvi Badeeuzzaman of Burdawan, Khalifa of Maulana Wilayat Ali Azeemabadi, bought a press and published several books to support the missionary work. This was the first press established under a missionary program in the Indian sub-continent. Thus the Mujahideen soon developed their own missionary literature to support their cause. Mehr also acknowledges that the Mujahideen established printing press at different places from where missionary literature was published regularly.

Sayyid Ahmad also followed the prophetic policy of sending letters to the chiefs of different areas to call them to support Islam. He wrote long letters to the chiefs, the Sayyids and the Ulema to explain to them the Islamic perspective of his mission and used his letters to strengthen his missionary work. His letters

are a very valuable contribution to the Islamic literature and have been published in book form. A collection of his letters is preserved now in the British Museum. Ghulam Rasool Mehr writes that all letters of Sayyid Ahmad are not available now; some are lost. But he mentions the names of thirteen rulers and thirty-two chiefs and Khans of the Frontier whom Sayyid Ahmad wrote personal letters. He does not include in this list names of common Ulema and chiefs of India and the Frontier whom Sayyid Ahmad sent such letters. Mehr concludes that, in fact, there was no important person from the state of Sindh to the borders of Kashmir to whom Sayyid Ahmad did not contact to support Islam.

The Mujahideen also established Da'wah centers all over India for supporting their mission. Such centers were set up in most of the villages; some large villages had two such centers. Large centers were established at district level. A town or a city had several centers. At one time in the Hyderabad city alone fourteen Da'wah centers were run by the deputies of Maulana Wilayat Ali.

The Mujahideen also used mosques for supporting their Da'wah work: they constructed new mosques and activated the old ones to make sure that the local Muslims attended congregational prayers regularly and were united as a well-knit community. They also appointed such Imams there who could discharge the duty of educating the local Muslims in religion and settling the disputes among them. These mosques were managed by the centers run by the Mujahideen. ■

The Need For A Most Magnificent Reformer (Prophet)

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

In accordance with the Divine Wisdom and calculation, the phase that the world of humanity was now going to enter was one of getting the four corners of the world closer and proximate to each other and of making as best and maximum use of scientific practical experiments as possible. Hence, Allah Almighty had this last Prophet assigned the office of Prophecy with the solution of those problems and plights. The Divine Book that He gave him was made the all-inclusive guide covering all those aspects. He Himself undertook the responsibility of keeping this Book preserved and intact so that the vicious ones of the mankind would not be able to tamper with it; and like the continuation of the Prophet's Prophecy till the Doomsday, the truthful guidance by means of this Book should also continue till the Doomsday. Under the supervision of these two great luminous lights, the path to Guidance, any alteration or amendment made into it, should remain illumined before the Muslim Ummah. Thus, whoever would really be desirous of getting the guidance to the right path could be guided and whoever would himself like to go

astray would really get lost and be dammed.

In accordance with the fore-ordained Divine arrangement and His knowledge, for the new era of the world that was to come up, too, it was ordained by Allah Almighty that it should get staffed by means of this very Prophet, the one endowed with the last, universal and perpetuated-till-the-Doomsday Prophecy and that his Ummat should promulgate it all over the world. Hence, through the Book given to this Prophet and the injunctions given by this Prophet and through his own practices in life, the world took to that trend on the basis of which the knowledge gained currency in the earthly life and it could assume a global order. This global order is not the one given the name of global order by the selfish and egoistic powers for the purpose aggrandizement of their hegemony and control. Instead, this order was Islamic global order and a Prophetic one. It comprises a global system for making the goodness wide spread for making the equal facilities, amenities and means of livelihood available to everyone, big and/or small, rich and/or poor, strong and/or weak,

powerful and/or helpless, for bringing each and everyone uniformly within the fold of obedience to only the One and the Only God. This is the global order conferred by the Lord of the worlds on all of His servants through His last Prophet which is the exposition of this Quranic verse:

(And We have not sent thee except as a mercy to the worlds.)
(Al-Anbiaa: 107)“

And:“

(Verily this community of yours is a single community, and I am your Lord; so worship me.)■

The Essence of The Surat-ul-Kahf

‘There is no strength save in Allah’ carries the essence of the Surat-ul-Kahf. The Prophet of Islam and every believer reciting the Qur’n has been called upon to place implicit reliance in God in every affair instead of relying on his own resources. Every intention and hope for the morrow has thus to be dependent on the will and pleasure of God.

“And say not of anything: Lo! I shall do that tomorrow, Except Allah will. And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest, and say: It may be that my Lord guideth unto a nearer way of truth than this.”

(Al-Kahf: 24-24) One would verily not bow in submission before the outward material causes, nor rely on those who appear to possess the means nor even on his own whims, desires and caprices if he ascribes every favour to the beneficence of the Merciful Lord. Except if Allah wills or whatsoever Allah may will might appear to be two common place traditional phrases often repeated mechanically by force of habit, but these are really very significant, pithy and meaningful expressions which cut at the very root of blind faith in one’s own capacity or material resources. ■

Makkan Life

- Khalid Saifullah Rahmani*

Before Prophethood

Prophet Muhammad (SWS) was born on 20th of April in the year 571 A.D. that corresponds to 9th Rabi ul Awal according to researchers. His grandfather named him Mohammad, and his mother gave him the name Ahmad. On attaining maturity, he adopted the nickname "Abul Qasim". His father was Abdullah paternal grandfather Abdul Mutallib, paternal great grandfather Hashim, maternal grandfather Wahub. His paternal grandmother was Fatima, and maternal grandmother Barrah. His father had ten brothers:

1) Abbas 2) Hamza 3) Abu Lahb, 4) Abu Talib 5) Zubair Harith 7) Muqawim 8) Hajal 9) Zitar 10) Abdullah

Among them, Abbas (RA) and Hamza (RA) accepted Islam, Abu Talib was his benevolent and beloved uncle, and Abu Lahb was his sworn enemy. The Prophet (SWS) had paternal aunts (His father's sisters):

1) Umm Hakim 2) 'Atika 3) Barrah 4) Umamah 5) Arwah 6) Safiyyah

* President All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

Among them, Safiyyah (RA) accepted Islam and Umm Hakim was the twin sister of his father.

The Prophet (SWS)'s lineage from his father's side is as follows:

Abdullah -> Abdul Mutallib -> Hashim > Abdi Munaf-> Qusai -> Kilaab -> Murrah -> Luway -> Ghalib -> Fahr bin Malik (Quraish) His lineage from his mother's side is as follows:

Aamena -> Wahb > Abdi Munaf-> Zahra -> Kilab

The Prophet's (SWS) father passed away two months before his birth. His mother breastfed him first, followed by Abu Lahab's bondswoman Soubiyah. In Arab tradition, infants from noble families were often placed under the foster care of tribal women. These women received financial support from the child's parents. The rationale behind this practice was the belief that growing up in rural areas would enable the children to acquire a pure and unadulterated form of the language (Arabic), as opposed to the city where the language gets corrupted due to intermingling of various dialects of different tribes.

In accordance with this tradition,

Prophet Muhammad (SWS) was placed under the foster care of Haleema S'adiya (may Allah be pleased with her), a member of the Banu Sa'ad tribe known for their eloquent and fluent use of Arabic. She nursed him for two years, and after experiencing the blessings in her household due to his presence, she requested to continue nursing him for another two years.

Here are the names of his foster siblings (children of Haleema (RA)): Abdullah, Huzaifah, Unaisa, Shima. His foster father (Haleema's husband) was Harith bin Abdul Uzza. Soubiyah (RA) and Haleema (RA) accepted Islam first Harith bin Abdul Uzza, Abdullah and Shima also accepted Islam.

Soubiyah (RA) also wet-nursed Hamza (RA), Jafar (RA), Abu Salamah (the first husband of Umm Salamah), and her own son Masrooh (RA). The Prophet paternal cousin, Sufiyan bin Harith (RA), was wet-nursed by Haleema (RA). Thus, all of them were his foster siblings. In addition to these, there were other women who nursed the Prophet (SWS) for some time.

Madinah was Hz. Aamena's paternal home, and Hz. Abdullah had passed away in Madinah. When the Prophet (SWS) was six years old,

Aamena visited Madinah along with him and her slave girl, Umm Aiman (RA). During their return journey, she passed away at a place called Abwa. Umm Aiman (RA) brought the Prophet (SWS) back to Makkah, and he came under the guardianship of his grandfather, Abdul Mutallib. Umm Aiman (RA) raised him with boundless love and affection, akin to his own mother. The Prophet (SWS) often spoke of her as a second mother to him, following his real mother. Sadly, his grandfather also passed away when the prophet (SWS) was just eight years old.

Abu Talib was the Prophet's (SWS) father's brother from the same mother. Abdul Mutallib entrusted the young Prophet (SWS) to the guardianship of Abu Talib. Abu Talib's wife, Fatima bint Asad, also treated the Prophet (SWS) with great affection, a fact the Prophet himself acknowledged. Together, his uncle and aunt cared for him as if he were their own child, and in addition to them, Umm Aiman (RA) took care of the prophet (SWS) as was instructed by Abdul Mutallib in this matter.

Following Abdul Mutallib's will, his uncle Zubair assumed leadership of the Banu Hashim tribe. He held this position for thirteen years until his death when the Prophet (SWS) was

approximately 21-22 years old. After Zubair, leadership passed to Abu Talib, who remained the chief for 28 years. Following Abu Talib's death, Abu Lahb assumed leadership of the Banu Hashim tribe, with the Prophet (SWS) being around fifty years old at that time.

Following the customs of the Arabs, the Prophet (SWS) herded sheep during his childhood. At the age of twelve, he accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on a business trip to Syria. Their journey included a stop at a place called Tema, where a Rabbi named Buhairah observed signs of the last Prophet in him (SWS). Fearing that the Jews of Syria might recognize him, which could pose a threat to his life, Rabbi Buhairah advised Abu Talib to send the Prophet (SWS) back to Makkah. Abu Talib heeded this advice and sent the Prophet back to Makkah. At the age of 25, the Prophet (SWS) embarked on a journey to Syria, where he traded goods belonging to Khadija (RA). Accompanying him on this journey was Khadija (RA)'s slave, Maisarah. This trip proved to be highly profitable.

Khadija (RA) was deeply impressed by his honesty and integrity, and after learning about his life through Maisarah, she sent a marriage proposal to the Prophet which he accepted. At the time of their

marriage, the Prophet (SWS) was 25 years old, while Khadija (RA) was either forty years old (as per some narrations) or 28 years old. During that era, it was customary for representatives from both sides to deliver sermons at the time of marriage, praising their tribes and families. Abu Talib delivered the sermon from the groom's side, and Warqah bin Noufal delivered it from the bride's side. There are three different narrations regarding the bridal gift: one mentions twenty camels, another mentions four hundred dinars, and the third mentions five hundred dirhams.

After his marriage to Khadija (RA), the Prophet (SWS) moved into her house, known as "Dar al Khuzaima." Khadija (RA) had a nephew named Zaid bin Haitha (RA), who was originally the son of the chief of the Yemeni tribe "Banu Khuza'a." Zaid was kidnapped by robbers and sold into slavery. Khadija (RA) gave him into service of the Prophet (SWS), and Zaid loyal to the Prophet (SWS). He was so devoted to the prophet (SWS) that he refused to depart from him even when his father came to take him. Zaid continued to be the Prophet (SWS)'s loyal and beloved companion, a bond that persisted even after the Prophet's prophet-hood was established.

Half al Fuzool

An intriguing event happened prior to Prophet-hood when a group of individuals gathered at Abdullah bin Jud'an's house to take an oath. Their pledge was to unite in efforts to combat oppression and support the oppressed, and this solemn oath came to be known as 'Hilf al-Fudul' or 'The Alliance of the Virtuous.' The Prophet (SWS) was a participant in this group. He held such high regard for this collective endeavor that even after attaining prophet-hood, he fondly recalled it and expressed that if a similar call to like this were made today, he would have had readily responded.

When he was 25 years old, a fissure appeared in the Ka'ba due to heavy rains, necessitating renovation work. The task was divided among different tribes: the tribes of Bani Abdi Munaf and Bani Zohra were responsible for the wall containing the door, while the area between Rukn-e-Yamani and Hajr-e-Aswad was entrusted to Banu Makhzoom and Banu Taim. The Hatim side was assigned to Banu Abdu Dar, Banu Asad, and Banu Adi. The rear wall was renovated by Banu Saham and Banu Jamh. The installation of Hajr-e-Aswad became a contentious issue among the various tribes, and the situation

appeared to be on the brink of potential conflict. In a bid to find a solution, a wise man from among the Makkans, Umayyah bin Mugairah, proposed that the first person to enter the Ka'ba the following day should have the honor of placing the Hajr-e-Aswad. As fate would have it, the first person to enter the Ka'ba was the Prophet (SWS). He requested a long enough piece of cloth to be laid out and Hajr-e-Aswad to be placed in the center of the cloth, and he suggested that a representative from each tribe should hold the corner of the cloth and elevate the cloth to the level of the designated place of Hajr-e-Aswad and then prophet (SWS) himself placed Hajr-e-Aswad at its designated place.

Even before attaining prophet-hood, the Prophet Muhammad (SWS) never engaged in idol-worship, refrained from sinful activities, and never committed indecent acts. His circle of close friends included individuals like Abu Bakr Siddique (RA), Hakeem bin Huzaam (RA), and Zamad bin Thalaba (RA), all of whom later embraced Islam. Due to his impeccable manners and unwavering honesty, the Prophet (SWS) was known by titles such as 'Saadiq' (Truthful) and 'Ameen' (Trustworthy) even before receiving his prophethood.■

How To Study The Qura'n

- Abdur Rashid Siddiqui

And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

(al-Qamar 54: 17)

The Glorious Qur'an is a Book of Guidance and the mercy of Allah (swt) for mankind. We usually say that the Qur'an is a Book. Certainly it is collected and put together between two covers, but it is much more than a mere book. So how does al-Qur'an describe itself. Unlike any other book that I know of, the Qur'an has used more than fifty adjectives to explain what it is. Some of these are as follows:

Exhortation, Warning, Guidance, Enlightenment, Inner insight, Clear way, Healing for (the diseases) of the heart, Mercy, Convincing proof, Clear statement, Criterion for right and wrong, Clear proof, Remembrance, Not crooked, Straight and clear book, Blessed, Glorious, The Book, The Scripture and of course, al-Qur'an.

Thus, we see it is much more than a book. It may be considered as a book of reference, a manual and a guide that should be our constant companion to lead us to the Right Path in the journey of our lives.

Ustadh Khurram Murad in his book,

The Way to the Qur'an, has given valuable advice on studying the Holy Qur'an. I will try to summarise what he has written:

- There are certain prerequisites that we should fulfil for receiving the blessings of the Qur'an. The first requirement is that we should realise that the Qur'an does not open its treasures of wisdom for those who have no faith in its Divine origin. Thus, to receive guidance from the Qur'an we should have a strong and deep Faith that the Quran is the Word of Allah (swt).
- Second, we should approach it with purity of intention and purpose. The purpose should be to seek guidance from the Qur'an. Some people have pre-conceived ideas and they approach the Qur'an to corroborate their own views. They try to read their own ideas into the Qur'an. Thus, instead of receiving Guidance they get what they were looking for. We should approach the Qur'an in deep humility with an open mind seeking Allah's help to receive Guidance.
- Third, we should be grateful to Allah (swt) for giving us this blessed Book. The more grateful we are the more the mercy of Allah will engulf us.

- Fourth, having accepted the Qur'an as the Book of Allah, we should open our hearts and accept everything mentioned in the Qur'an as true and have complete faith in it.
- Finally, it is a Book that changed the history of mankind forever. When we approach it we should be ready to obey its commandments and prepare to change our lifestyle and show the readiness to comply with its guidance. Only then will we receive the blessings of the Qur'an. Thus, there are very many non-Muslims, for example Orientalists, who have spent their lives in the study of the Qur'an but they have failed to receive any guidance from it because they do not fulfil these requirements.

Studying the Qur'an on your own poses some problems. Some 'ulama' discourage novices from undertaking any study of the Qur'an on their own. They say the Qur'an is difficult for a lay person to understand. It is only for the 'ulama' to explain its meaning. But this argument runs counter to the teachings of the Qur'an. Again, historical evidence we obtain from the lives of the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) shows that they all were able to benefit from the teachings of the Qur'an. As we know, they were not all scholars. They were people from all walks of life and they were able to understand the meaning of the Qur'an and follow its guidance.

There are two levels of study and understanding. One is called Tadhakkur which means admonition, advice, remembrance, taking heed or taking to heart. This primary level is easy for everyone to understand and practice. Indeed the Holy Qur'an itself has repeatedly asserted this in Surah al-Qamar:

And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: Then is there any that will receive admonition?

(al-Qamar 54: 17, 22, 32 and 40)

The other more advanced level is called Tadabbur which means reflection, deep thought and full comprehension. This may not be possible for everyone to achieve. But the Qur'an urges its readers to attempt this as well:

Do they not earnestly seek to reflect on the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them?

(Muhammad 47: 24)

Of course when you are studying the Qur'an there are certain risks, which you should be aware of. First, you should know your own limitations. You should evaluate your own knowledge of Arabic, Hadith and Sirah. If you do not know Arabic you have to rely on translations.

Second, each subject has its own vocabulary hence you should know basic keywords of the Qur'an, for example, Ilah, Rabb, Din, Taqwa,

‘Ibadah, etc. There are now some dictionaries of Qur’anic terms available in English as well that will help you in your study.

This brings me to the third point, that you should read the whole Qur’an with a translation and if possible with some reliable tafsir once. This will help you to understand the overall message of the Qur’an. It is essential that you should always confine your own conclusions so as to confirm with tafsir and the ‘Ulama’.

Fourth, the Quran is a vast and multi-dimensional work. It will take years to understand it fully. Thus, do not attempt to derive your own Fiqh from it and do not go beyond the general consensus of the Ummah. It may be that sometimes you do not understand the complete meaning of the passage by studying on your own. Group study and mutual discussion are often helpful. You may also seek the help of an ‘Alim.

And finally, we are accustomed to reading books that present information, ideas and arguments systematically and coherently. So when we embark on the study of the Qur’an, we expect that this book will revolve around a definite subject. However when we open the Quran we encounter a completely unfamiliar genre of literature. We notice that it embodies precepts of belief and conduct, moral injunctions, good tidings, dire warnings, stories of past nations, signs of Allah visible in the Universe and

so on. It also deals with cultural, social, political and legal issues. These are discussed in a different way unlike the way books on social sciences deal with these issues. As we are not accustomed to this we sometimes become confused.

We should realise that the subject of the Qur’an is man and that it seeks to explain the ultimate cause of man’s success and failure. The Qur’an is the Book of Guidance, thus, it confines itself to essentials and its contents revolve around this theme. We should also know that the style of the Qur’an is oratorical and not narrative. As you know, oral language and style differ greatly from one written composition to another. Therefore, literal translations of the Qur’an lack literary force, fluency, eloquence and charm. Thus, if you try to understand the Qur’an through translations you may be disappointed.

If you keep in mind these important differences between other books and the Glorious Qur’an, you will understand its logical arrangement, its rhetorical force and rhythmic beauty which penetrates human hearts.

I hope this brief introduction and the guidelines so delineated will help you to start on your own lifetime journey of reading and understanding the Divine Book. May Allah (swt) help us all to derive benefit from His Book and may we receive its blessings. (Amin).■

Nazir Ahmad Nadwi : An Exemplary Teacher

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Dr. Nazir Ahmad Nadwi, senior faculty member of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow passed away after a brief illness on 7 October 2025 in Lucknow. His sudden demise came as a shock for everyone.

Almighty Allah bestowed upon him extraordinary qualities and a variety of calibers. His personality was a marvelous amalgamation of a teacher, orator, journalist, academician, preacher of Islam and translator par excellence.

Born in 1965 in district Etawa, Uttar Pradesh (India), he received his basic education in his hometown. Thereafter, he joined Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama for higher studies. He did his Alimiat in 1987 and Fazilat (Specialization in Hadith) in 1989 respectively. He also did his Ph.D. from University of Lucknow. After completion of education from Nadwa, he was appointed as an employee in Al- Raid (Fortnightly), an Arabic wing of Nadwatul Ulama. While working at Al -Raid he came in close contact with Maulana S.M. Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi, an accomplished journalist and prominent Islamic scholar. No doubt Maulana Wazeh left an indelible impact upon his life. It was Maulana Wazeh who had

developed journalistic flavor and literary taste in him. Besides, he derived considerable academic benefits from Maulana S.M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, former Rector of Nadwatul Ulama and Maulana Dr. Saeedur Rahman Azami Nadwi, Principal of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow

After a few years, he was promoted as a teacher. He was an embodiment of all sublime qualities and virtues, necessary for a good teacher. He proved himself as a selfless and dedicated teacher. His method of teaching was unprecedented.

He was a beloved teacher and scores of students quenched their thirst for knowledge from him.

Maulana led a very simple life. He left behind remarkable marks. He always kept himself away from name and fame. He did everything merely for the sake of Allah.

It should be noted that Maulana Nazir Nadwi achieved distinction in many languages such as Urdu, Arabic, English, Hindi, and Persian.

There are a number of things about Dr. Nazir Ahmad which people noticed and have written about. The writer

personally have been most influenced by his personality. To him nothing was more precious than time. He was very punctual and meticulous.

The nicest thing is that he treated all with equal courtesy. He was a paragon of morality. He never showed egotism, pride and haughtiness. He performed his duties with honesty and integrity.

He had literary flavor, poetic flourish and journalistic taste. He wrote numerous articles for different newspapers and journals including Al-Raid. He also compiled a few books.

On his demise various condolence meetings were held in and out of India in which glowing tributes paid to the departed soul.

A condolence meeting was held in Nadwa's Jama Masjid on the second day of his death. In his condolence message, Maulana S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi said, "Maulana Nazir Ahmad Nadwi possessed extraordinary qualities and sublime norms. He was a dedicated teacher who knew pros and cons of Arabic language. He taught in Nadwa for more than three decades. He paid particular attention to each of his students to prepare them for the great task of spreading education in every nook and corner of the country. He left behind a galaxy of students.

Besides, he had profound knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith. Truly speaking, he was a man of letters. His passing away is a great loss to Nadwa.

Describing his outstanding contributions in the field of Arabic language, Maulana S. Ammar Hasani Nadwi, Nazir-e-Aam Nadwatul Ulama stated that Maulana Nazir Ahmad was a great Arabic scholar. He was well trained by Maulana Wazeh Rasheed Nadwi. He had good command over different languages. He always talked with authenticity and reference. A good number of students benefited from him. He will always be remembered for his selfless services.

Decidedly, Maulana's sad death is an irreparable loss. He was not just a teacher but an institution. He is survived by his wife and a daughter. His funeral prayer was led twice. The first funeral prayer was led by Maulana S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi, Rector of Nadwatul Ulama at the premises of Nadwa and the second was led by Imam of the late Maulana's village and was buried in his ancestral graveyard. A host of his admirers from various parts of the country thronged to attend the last rites of Maulana Nadwi.

May Allah adorn his grave with luminosity and refulgence and grant peace to his soul! Aameen!■

Around the World

Thailand and Cambodia make progress towards peace

BANGKOK, Oct 23 (Reuters) –

Talks between Thailand and Cambodia this week have made “meaningful progress”, Thai defense minister Natthaphon Narkphanit said on Thursday, ahead of the potential signing of a broader ceasefire agreement between the two countries on Sunday.

U.S. President Donald Trump is also expected to witness the signing of the ceasefire deal on the side lines of an ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s foreign minister said last week.

Thai and Cambodian officials have been meeting all week to thrash out the details of the agreement to ease hostilities, after border tensions between the two countries exploded into a deadly five-day conflict in July.

The five-day war killed at least 48 people and temporarily displaced hundreds of thousands on both sides in what was the worst fighting between the two countries in decades. An initial ceasefire brokered in Malaysia with U.S. involvement was signed on July 28. The two countries have already reached a consensus in four areas, Natthaphon said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur after one of the meetings, which also included observers from the United States and Malaysia.■

Europe aerospace firms team up in space to counter Musk

ROME/PARIS: Europe’s largest space groups unveiled a preliminary deal on Thursday to join forces in satellite manufacturing and services after months of negotiations to counter the runaway growth of rivals led by Elon Musk’s Starlink.

The deal between Airbus, Thales and Leonardo will forge a new France-based venture starting from 2027 in the most ambitious tie-up of European aerospace assets since MBDA missiles maker in 2001.

French Finance Minister Roland Lescure said the deal would “strengthen European sovereignty in a context of intense global competition”.

The new combination will employ 25,000 people with revenues of 6.5 billion euros (\$7.58 billion), based on 2024 figures.

It is expected to generate “mid-triple digit” millions of euros of synergies starting after five years, the companies said, without detailing how these would be achieved.

Shareholders now face up to two years of talks with governments, unions and the European Commission over the deal, which has implications for activities in Britain and Germany as well as Italy and France, where the venture will be based.■

OUR REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD

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