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# The Fragrance of East

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## The Need of The Hour

### S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The most pressing need today is to develop respect for humanity while we adhere to our respective faiths. Let us try to reinvigorate humanity. We should greet one another as human beings. Then in the light of our study, reflection and with God's help we may opt for a way of life of our preference. But let us first promote an air of mutual love and trust. Once we welcome others, we will be in a position to move forward. If we lack this, we will not be able to communicate with anyone.

What is man? What traits does he possess? What rights does he owe to others? What is man's essential nature? Who has created man? Why has he been created? Each and every member of society should ponder over these questions. We should strive for a trustworthy ambience in the country, marked by mutual love and confidence. Incidents like those which happened in Benaras should not recur.

As a religious person I hold the view that natural calamities strike us owing to our sins and injustice. God thus demonstrates that He can kill at a greater scale. We witnessed this in the storm and flood which ravaged Andhra Pradesh. Whenever there is an instance of injustice, I apprehend divine reprisal. I do not exempt anyone from this. God will assert His might whenever injustice is perpetrated. Nature takes its toll for such violations. ■

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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* 

## **Communal Harmony**

In the world there are countries which are ruled by monarch or Political leaders of particular community. Their advantage is that subjects of these nations belong to the same stream. With the political enlightenment monarchy is on its way out. Now democratic way of governance is taking its place. Economic revolution has given birth to different ideologies also. Our country India is a multi-religious nation. Here Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others live together following their own faith and practices. Our democracy is, therefore, known as secular democracy. Our constitution which was enforced after independence guarantees freedom of religious commitment and thus there is no conflict between followers of different faiths. The most worth mentioning fact is that in our Constituent Assembly there were 80 percent Hindus but they were so magnanimous that they helped in framing the Indian Constitution in such a way that it covers the interest of all religious bodies.

It is unfortunate that with the passing away of old guards their successors are not so committed to our Constitution as their elders were. Now contradictory issues are raised and often assume dangerous turns. In a secular democracy there should have been no place of dispute on the basis of religious, social and cultural issues. It is unfortunate that demon of communalism, castism and regional attachments has started

raising its head. Its threatening is so wild that often it appears that it would consume the whole good-will and brotherly feelings amongst Indians. Before things go out of hand concerted efforts should be made to ward off evil forces to save the democracy and secularism. Realising the gravity of the situation in 1974 a great Reformer of his time Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi(RAH)laid down the foundation of a very constructive mission by the name of 'Payam-e-Insaniat' (Message of Humanity).He was quite perturbed of communal riots which were occurring in different parts of the country and creating hatred and animosity between different classes of citizens. He consistently reminded his fellow countrymen to live by high moral standards and whenever he noticed a failing in the society, he made a concerted effort to eradicate it. In large public meetings in major cities of India he reminded people about moral values which were universally espoused by all religions and societies.

Presently we are passing through very crucial stage of our life. It is unfortunate that threat is staring at our door. We must create an atmosphere of good will. The Mission of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi should be strengthened and given a push to restore peace, harmony and brotherhood.■

**S.A.**

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e-mail: shariqalavi4@gmail.com  
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## The World of Islam In The Field of Action

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

In spite of being a revealed religion, having its roots in Divine Revelation and Apostleship, Islam had worked out a typical consciousness among its people - a consciousness that was deeper, stronger and wider than what we mean by it to-day. It had developed a frame of mind that was stoutly anti-Pagan and an understanding which, with all its breadth and flexibility, could not for a moment accommodate belief and notions which were inconsistent with its own basic pattern.

Take, for example, the following incident. Owing to the teachings of the Prophet (Peace be on him!) it had got fixed firmly in the minds of the Companions that injustice was an evil which was not to be permitted in any circumstances. They had given up their ancient family and tribal predilections, believing that there was no place for such things in Islam. Then one day they heard the Prophet (Peace be on him!) say. "Stand by your brother, be he the aggressor or the aggrieved." Had there been the slightest weakness in the development of their new understanding, they would have readily accepted the command in its apparent meaning, firstly, because of the background of their native traditions and, secondly, because they believed

as a matter of faith that what the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him!) said was not out of his own volition but due to Divine inspiration. Their loyalty to the Prophet (Peace be on him!) was unmatched. Yet, they could not resist speaking out. "Helping the aggrieved is all right, O Prophet of God, but how can one help the aggressor?" The Prophet (Peace be on him!) explained that the way to help the aggressor was to restrain him from committing aggression. This gave them a new understanding and enlightenment. But until they had heard it, they were not disposed to accept even the advice of the Prophet (On whom be peace !) in spite of their implicit faith in him. This was because Islam had taught them to exercise their judgement and they learned how to do it.

Similarly, the Prophet once despatched an army under the command of a Companion and enjoined on it to remain obedient to its Commander. On the way it so happened that the Commander got upset with his men for some reason and had a big fire kindled. He ordered the soldiers to march into the fire. The soldiers refused. They said that they had embraced Islam to save themselves from fire and not to march into it. When the incident was reported to the Prophet

(Peace be on him!), he commended the act of the soldiers and said that had they stepped into the fire, they would never have come out of it (meaning that they would have gone straight to hell).

The Companions did not hesitate even to challenge the Caliph publicly if they suspected him to be guilty of a wrong act. Once, as the mighty Caliph 'Umar arose to address a gathering, he was cut short by Salman who said that he would "neither listen to, nor obey" the Caliph unless he explained how he happened to be wearing a garment made of two pieces of cloth while to others he had allotted only one piece each. Hazrat 'Umar advised him to hold peace, and then he called upon his son, 'Abdullah. At the first instance there was no response. Hazrat 'Umar called again, "O 'Abdullah, the son of 'Umar!" This time 'Abdullah got up. Hazrat 'Umar said to him, "Tell them whether the hulla I am wearing is mine own or one borrowed from you". 'Abdullah affirmed that it was his (Abdullah's) and that he had lent it to his father for use. On hearing it, Salman said, "Proceed Amir-ul-Mu'minin we will now listen to you."

This powerful awakening proved to be the strongest bulwark against the imperialistic ambitions of the Umayyads. It was not until the whole of the generation that had been brought up under the influence of the Prophet (Peace be on him!) had passed away that the Umayyads could heave a sigh

of relief.

### **Intellectual Core**

Every movement has an intellectual background. No revolution can succeed unless minds of the people have been prepared for it. A study of the French Revolution will show how irresistible the masses can become, once their minds are aroused. The French Revolution was not the outcome of a sudden impulse. Its leaders had patiently prepared the minds of Frenchmen much in advance. There was an army of intellectuals who had given a meaningful content to the popular urges that ultimately found expression in the three-word slogan of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." Though its leaders could not make the revolution beneficial for humanity, it proved to be a mighty force in human history because it had sprung from the minds of the people.

If the West is still alive and powerful, it is due to the stout political consciousness and the keen civic sense of its people. One hears but rarely of anyone there violating his allegiance to his country or subordinating national interests to personal considerations.

The leaders in the Muslim countries on the other hand, can any day mortgage the destiny of their people and walk away with it. Their people will still swell their ranks and dance to their tunes. In a number of Muslim countries

the conditions are extremely deplorable - the common man there leads a sub human existence, the authority of God is brazenly violated and all sorts of shameful things are done, and it calls up no indignation and arouses no pain among the Muslims. This is so because the process of thinking among Muslim. is stagnant and their social consciousness is almost dead.

It is essential for the revivification of Islam that conscious efforts should be made for the development of an enlightened and responsible public opinion in the Muslim countries. Without it all manifestations of religious enthusiasm or political fervour will be of little significance.

### **No Place for Selfishness**

The famous book of fiction, the Arabian Nights, tells the story of an age when the State or the Empire was the lengthened shadow of one man- the King or the Caliph, who held sway over society like a huge tree that sends out enormous branches in all directions and robs the tiny plants growing under it of sunshine and air. The wheels of the nation's life moved for him alone, for him alone did the farmers till the soil, the traders ply their trade and the workmen work with their tools; for him alone did the authors write, the poets sing, the soldiers march into the battle field, the mothers give birth to children, the earth open up its bowels and the seas dish

out their treasures.

This exerted enormous influence on the Muslim social organization whether in Baghdad, Cairo or Damascus. The stories of the Arabian Nights and the literary masterpieces of "The Book of Aghani" are a living proof of the strength of this influence. But, for all that, the spirit of this age was diametrically opposed to the spirit of Islamic civilization. Islam had come to bring the structure of such a civilization to the ground. The Holy Prophet (Upon whom be peace!) had dubbed it as the "Age of Ignorance" and foretold the end of the reign of all imperial rulers.

This age has now forfeited its right to continue any more. The very idea of such an age is revolting to our mind. Who in the current context of things would like a state of society to exist in which a few individuals were permanently sick with indigestion due to over-eating, while the rest of them were permanently in the throes of death due to starvation ? Such a situation is illogical, unnatural and unjust. It should not have been tolerated even for a day. If it flourished in the past, it was because Islam had not yet acquired enough strength to expose its hypocrisy. As the Islamic movement spread and people learnt to distinguish clearly between right and wrong, they progressively emerged out of it. The age of the Arabian Nights has quit the stage of History for all time to come.

Islam can have nothing to do with egotism and self-conceit, individual or collective. Whether these sentiments take the form of family or sectarian pride, as in the Eastern and the Islamic countries, or of British Imperialism, American Capitalism or Russian Communism, as in the Western world, they are patently un-Islamic. These systems may succeed in putting off their doom for some time, but they are bound ultimately to go. The conscience of humanity cannot be cheated indefinitely. The future of the world is inseparably linked with the social justice of Islam.

### **Industrial and Military Self-sufficiency**

The work of the regeneration of Islam does not end here. If the Muslim World really wants to turn its way upwards and make Islam once again the instrument of realizing human destiny as has already happened, it cannot afford to ignore any more its educational, scientific and industrial development and the organization of its military strength. It must quickly make itself independent of the West and attain a position wherein it can work its natural resources, manufacture its weapons and feed and clothe its people without having to look to others for assistance. It must build up its economic and military strength so that it may not have to join this or that power bloc for security and protection.

So long as the Muslim countries

continue depending West for economic and military aid, the West will not cease to suck their blood and keep them weak and disorganized. In the past, the Muslims were neglectful of their duty to themselves and to the rest of the world, and they were condemned to a long period of servitude and misery. The rule of the West was clamped down upon them, which proved to be the starting point of the degeneracy of man in modern times. If they do not pay immediate attention to their intellectual and economic re-birth, the period of their suffering will be extended and the world will be damned indefinitely.

### **Educational Reorganization**

The educational set-up of the Islamic World will have to be thoroughly over-hauled in the light of the Islamic ideals and precepts. To learn from the Western countries which are scientifically and technologically advanced is one thing, but the moment Muslims forget that their roots are in Islam, and become the intellectual camp-followers of others, their creative energies are damped. In former times the intellectual leadership of the Muslims was accepted all over the world. Their culture and learning had made their way into every sphere of human life all over the globe. For a long time the world continued to think in the Islamic way and draw inspiration from Islamic life. Arabic was the vehicle of learning in the Western world and every writer of note

used this language to say what he had to say. Sometimes the original book was brought out in Arabic and a summary of it was produced in another language like Imam Ghazzali's *Kimiya-i-Saadat*. Though the educational system introduced by the Abbasids was more Greek and Iranian in its essence than Islamic, and had a number of defects from the academic point of view, it had gained currency almost everywhere.

Then the times changed, and there dawned the epoch of Western ascendancy. It brought with it a new attitude towards learning, which was the product of Europe's own cultural experiences and exigencies. The world began blindly to follow the new structure. The Muslim countries, too, on account of their intellectual sluggishness succumbed to the illusion that their salvation lay only in a slavish submission to the West and to its educational system.

Ground was thus prepared for not merely intellectual adoration but also for actual imitation of the Western civilization by the Muslim intelligentsia. Religious skepticism, self-conceit, discontent and all other characteristics of the modern Western mode of living began steadily to replace the cultural ideals of the rising generations of the Muslims. The spiritual civilization of Islam began systematically to be replaced by the material culture of

Europe.

It is vital for the regaining of world-leadership for Islam now that the Muslims should re-establish their intellectual superiority over the West. For this the Islamic culture will have to re-assert itself. Crusading endeavours will have to be made in all branches of learning. This, obviously, is not the work of a few individuals or associations. The Muslim states should take the task of intellectual regeneration seriously in hand. High-powered committees and institutions should immediately be set up for the purpose of evolving an educational structure that should fully conform to the spirit of the Qur'an and the Sunnah without overlooking the requirements of modern learning and scientific research. Muslim educationists and scientists ought to apply their own force of speculative reasoning to the empirical sciences so that they can save the coming generations of Muslims from developing a feeling of contempt for their own past and despair for their future.

This is the way in which an Islamic revival can be brought about. This is the way in which the Muslims can spread the light of Islam to lands far away and save mankind from the stark ruin that is staring it in the face. Leadership is not an easy job. It calls for tremendous faith, labour and sacrifice. ■

*(Concluded)*

## Selfishness

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi\*

Selfishness is an internal disease that makes a person helpless and destitute in this world and the Hereafter as well. A person inflicted with this trait thinks only about his own advantage and profit. The focus of his efforts is just to attain his own gains. He neither thinks about nor works for the good of others. His thoughts and plans are restricted by his selfish interest.

Consequently, he can readily cause all kinds of harm and disadvantages to others. He, inter alia, does not care for others at all.

And then he gradually loses his credibility in the eyes of others. Besides, this disease definitely deprives the selfish person of many blessings and bounties of the Hereafter too.

The characteristic of this religion is that it describes a system of collective life. It emphasizes the rights of others, and lays tremendous stress on the importance of selflessness and sacrifice. The Holy Qur'an itself states:

"And they prefer (others) over their own lives, even though they

themselves are in poverty, and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,-they are the ones that achieve prosperity". (S.59.A.9)

It is narrated regarding the context of the revelation of this verse that one day some people came to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and there was nothing in his house to offer them. He (PBUH) said: "Is there anyone who would accept their hospitality"? An Ansar companion brought them to his house. Unfortunately, it was found that there was nothing in his house either, except a little food which would be just enough for the children. Hence, he said to his wife: put the children to sleep and serve the food. When the meal starts, put out the lamp under the pretext that we will also sit together so that it seems that we are also sharing in the meal, but we will not eat, and the food will be sufficient for the guests. In the morning, when they came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), he recited to them the above mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'an which Allah had revealed in his praise i.e.

"And they prefer (others) over

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\* Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.

their own lives, even though they themselves are in poverty, and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,-they are the ones that achieve prosperity".( S.59.A.9)

Prophet Muhammad ( PBUH) further says, "None of you can be a believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself".

Truly speaking, selflessness is

a highly desirable quality, and in contrast, selfishness dehumanizes a person. He only cares about himself and his own feelings. Just as an animal does not feel the pain of others, similarly, a selfish person only sees his own interests and benefits and does not care about others at all.■

*(English Rendering: by O.R. Nadwi)*

#### Wire We Here?

Nostalgia for the OG Telegram

"Telegram was blocked for a few days," I informed Kamala, as I handed her a cup of coffee. I then pulled out a fraying brownish folded piece of paper from my old diary. The original telegram. This particular one said: Baby Boy, Both well.

I smiled, as we both remembered the good old days of letters and telegrams. The telegram taught us to communicate the most important news with the least number of words. Charges were per word and so we chose our words carefully. No preamble, no salutation, no rambling, no decoration. Crisp, concise communication. "I wish some world leaders would be required to voice their thoughts, succinctly, only through these telegrams," Kamala wistfully said, pulling out her Trump card. "We could then finish unnecessary wars a lot earlier."

Both of us meandered nostalgically through those sepia-tinted days of the telegram. Announcements of a marriage, joy of a successful job interview, or an addition to the family, or worry about an illness, were all, invariably, conveyed quickly by this method. For 163 years, the telegram brought both good news and bad news in to Indian homes. The postman got dressed in a classical khaki uniform and then rode up on a bicycle and shouted out the word "Telegram!!" Pulses would race and hearts would thump in anticipation, as the (un) familiar piece of paper was opened. Like cinema, the expression on the face of the family member reading the telegram, would reveal the nature of the news. The words were like bullets-sharp, precise and targeted. Father serious. Come soon.

No flowery sentences, no rodomontade, no exasperating farrago of vexing vocabulary - Tharoorisms in a telegram would be an unacceptable ostentation. Of course this was much before people started spelling good morning as gud mng. Or had the entire world news easily delivered to the screen of their mobile phone.

Meanwhile, the modern-day Telegram was temporarily banned in India, years after the original telegram became defunct on July 14, 2013. Why? Because when last month's NEET exam saw leakages and other glitches, the young kid on the block, Telegram Junior, got blamed for a lot of it. The message was to plug the leaks, the messenger was shot instead. If edmin were to get an old-fashioned telegram summarising this situation, it would probably read: Students serious. System unwell. Adults missing.

*(Editorial, The Times of India, 23-06-2026)*

## A Nation Determined To Endure And Overcome

- Hamid Ansari\*

The history of Iran is replete with paradoxes and exceptions. It is a land of great contrasts both in climate and geography and is inhabited by, in the words of an ancient historian, “a poor people with a proud spirit.” Given its location, the Iranian people and its rulers have interacted with its neighbouring states throughout history both as their oppressors and as victims.

Over the past two centuries, Iran has oscillated between extremes as the country searched for a viable response to the multiple challenges of Western style modernity. Under the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties, it sought for an emulation of all things Western until the Islamic Revolution of 1979 reversed the trend and brought forth a *new prototype*.

### The decline of the Shah

The discovery of oil in the country in 1901 had led to the formation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) with the British government holding almost half its shares. However, post World War I, its nationalisation in 1953 resulted in tensions with Western powers, which led to the active involvement of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) in overthrowing

the then Mosaddeq government. The U.S. then became the deciding factor in resolving the Anglo-Iranian nationalisation dispute.

Developments in the global oil market saw Iranian oil revenues increase from \$2 billion to \$20 billion in 1974. This resulted in poorly conceived and badly implemented programmes of socio-economic and military modernisation by the Shah; his so-called White Revolution (a series of reforms to modernise Iran) and ‘Great Civilisation’ projects (highlighted by the 2,500th anniversary of the Iranian monarchy) were not successful and were widely resented within Iran. The major sources of opposition were political organisations from both the left and the right; pro-democracy reformists; merchants and bazaaris; and the ulema (recognised scholars of Islam).

In addition, and despite “parallelism of interests” between the two countries, the presence of Americans everywhere was resented by the Iranian public. As James Bill put it in his book *The Eagle and the Lion*, “the very best and very worst of America were on display in the cities of Iran.” In the 1970s, according to a contemporary observer, “the political culture of the Shah’s regime both

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\* Former Vice-President of India.

became more repressive and hardened on the one hand, and more remote and attenuated on the other: "The subsequent 'progress' in U.S.-Iran relations emanated from wrong policies, misunderstandings and cultural misperceptions. These together contributed to the U.S. becoming in the eyes of Iran, the 'Great Satan'.

Also in the 1970s, the U.S. encouraged Iran to develop nuclear power arguing that the country would eventually run out of oil. The Shah also periodically hinted that he wanted Iran to build nuclear weapons and, in response to official denials, said Iran "has no intention of acquiring [them] but if small states began building them, then Iran might to reconsider its policy:" U.S. documents of that period suggest that it was in the U.S.s national interest, both with respect to the economy and security, to have Iran acquire nuclear power.

However, by the end of 1977, the Shah had alienated the ulema, estranged the merchants, and created a poor and deracinated working class in Tehran. He had also alienated many of the educated middle-class through his oppressive policies and human rights abuses. As alternatives, radical intellectuals such as Ali Shariati propagated the ideology of 'Red Shiism' (are interpretation of Shi'a Islam as an active, classless

movement for social justice). The Marxists were also active as the Tudeh party before being suppressed. But separately, and with greater impact and influence, Ayatollah Khomeini was advocating for the Vilayat-e-Faqih (Regency of the Islamic Jurist).

The revolution of 1979 was not primarily a religious event though it drew strength from its Shia form. It was sustained by middle-class disillusionment with corruption and economic stagnation. The process of Islamisation of the state and society commenced with a national referendum in March 1979 and gradually enveloped the institutions and practices of the state.

### **Post the revolution**

In November 1979, prompted by news that the former Shah was being given asylum in the U.S., students broke into the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took the diplomats hostage. A laudatory account of that episode, which had far-reaching Consequences, was written by one of its women student leaders Massoumeh Ebtekar. In an interview to a U.S. scholar about the hostages, Ms. Ebtekar said "it is very difficult to compare the suffering that the Iranian nation felt during fifty years of foreign domination and comparing that to the suffering or pain that may have faced during these 444 days."

This sudden and sharp decline in U.S.-Iran relations changed the global picture as seen from Washington.

Regional tranquillity was further shattered when Iraq disowned the 1975 Algiers Treaty and invaded Iran in 1980 at different points of their common border. The seven-year war, from 1980 to 1987, unleashed by Iraq became for Iran a defence of its national territory. It transformed from a border war on Iran's western borders in the first two years to becoming a full-fledged war extending into the interior cities. It became an inescapable fact of life in Iran and merged into the consciousness of the public.

Iraq was assisted in the war by most Arab countries as well as by the U.S. Each had its own reasons to be apprehensive of Iran's revolutionary agenda emphasised in Khomeini's pronouncement that "there is only one way to save this revolution and that is to rapidly export the revolution, mobilise the world's Muslims and, later on all oppressed masses against the oppressors and governments related to them"

### **The role of Israel**

Israel covertly assisted Iran, viewing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as the more severe, existential threat. This pragmatism

overrode the ideological hostility against the newly established Islamic Republic and resulted in a crucial, multi-faceted role for Israel. The country became one of Iran's primary sources of military equipment, covertly providing desperately needed spare parts, ammunition; and heavy weapons. In 1980, it secretly supplied Iran with hundreds of spare tires to keep its grounded American-made F4 Phantom fighter jets operational. In exchange for Covert arms sales, Israel received Iranian crude oil. This helped Israel bypass the severe energy shortages caused by the 1979 oil crisis, while allowing Iran to sustain its war effort. It also provided Israel's domestic defence industry with valuable combat-testing data for its weapons.

Israeli policymakers believed that a strong and well supplied Iran would successfully bog down Saddam Hussein's military, preventing Iraq from posing a threat to its neighbours or Israel itself. By ensuring that the two most hostile regional powers spent eight years depleting each other's military, economic, and human resources, the conflict provided Israel with a highly valuable "strategic breather". It also, at times, helped facilitate the safe and unhindered emigration of the Persian Jewish community out of Iran.

The war gave there revolutionary

authorities of Iran an opportunity to weaken the Iranian national army of the Shah's period and to create instead the 'Sepahe-e-Pasdaran' or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. It went from strength to strength during the war, numbering around 1 million while the regular armed forces numbered around 3,55,000.

### **Iran's determination**

Iran showed considerable ingenuity in meeting the challenge of Iraq-Iran war. It reduced the import of nonessentials and managed to keep its oil flowing despite periodic air attacks. It diversified sources of arms supply and capitalised on the support of the masses for the war while squeezing the well to do and the bazaaris. The war to all intents and purposes became the sole criterion for judging the Islamic Republic.

There was some public opposition to the conduct of the war such as from the Islamic Liberation Movement, co-founded by former Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, which labelled the continuation of the war as 'un-Islamic'.

Separately, reports indicative of chronic disorder of governance 'have appeared in publications close to the establishment, suggesting 'prolonged ambiguity' in decision-making.

The Iranian tenacity during the Iraq war, and in the ongoing U.S.-Israel conflict, is evidence enough of its capacity and determination to endure and overcome adversity. Iran has asserted its place in the region and is not oblivious of it in the world of tomorrow. ■

*(The Hindu, 17-06-2026)*

### **Historian who read silences of the past**

Thrashed By the sea, the world curdled like cheese, 'from which multitudes of worms were born. These became men, of whom the most powerful and wisest was God. "This statement of the 16th-century Italian miller Menocchio would land him in prison. Four centuries later, Carlo Ginzburg tapped into Menocchio's often contradictory claims about Christ and the Church to reveal a European world outside the Renaissance. First published in Italian in 1976, Cheese and the Worms established Ginzburg, who died on Wednesday, as one of the pioneers of micro history, whose practitioners would study a small unit, an event, an individual or a village.

In his celebrated essay, 'Clues, Roots of an Evidential Paradigm', Ginzburg compared the historian's craft to that of detectives. Judicial records, though created by the elite, preserve the sentiments of the socially excluded. By reading their silences, historians could show how the lives of millers, witches, farmers carry insights into power, knowledge and social change.

Ginzburg's methods often exasperated his more traditionally inclined peers. JHPlumbis reported to have said that "the life of Isaac Newton is more important than witch trials". But microhistory would leave its imprint, influencing scholars from members of the Subaltern school to writers of broad sweep accounts like Pulitzer prize winner Jill Lepore. That's because its greatest contribution was to seek meaning in the smallest traces of the past.. ■

*(Editorial, The Indian Express, 19-06-2026)*

## A Passport That Doesn't Count, A Narrowing Idea of Citizenship

- Faizan Mustafa\*

CITIZENSHIP is a vertical relationship between the individual and the state. Originally, citizenship used to signify a belief in certain liberal and republican ideas and did not have much to do with territory and status. Today, it is all about territory status, and exclusion rather than inclusion. The Foreigners' Tribunals in Assam reportedly denied citizenship to people despite some possessing as many as 15 documents. The judiciary, too, has become quite restrictive in this regard.

In Shabbir Hussain's (1951) case a trader who got stuck in Lahore during Partition and returned to India only on a temporary permit but was subsequently arrested for overstaying in India- the apex court refused to treat him as a Pakistani national. Similarly, in Abdul Khader (1960), the Supreme Court refused to treat Khader as a foreigner despite his having a Pakistani passport. But in Izhar Ahmad Khan (1962), the Court treated possession of a Pakistani passport as conclusive proof of Pakistani citizenship. By 2008, the Court had become even more restrictive when, in Razia Begum, it held that even possession of an Indian

passport was not sufficient proof of citizenship.

BR Ambedkar said that the citizenship provisions of the Constitution had given the Constitution's Drafting Committee "a head ache". Yet, the citizenship topic was considered so settled that no constitutional law syllabus included it with prominence. After the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA), citizenship became the most important subject not only for law students but for the masses. Though the government enacted the CAA with great alacrity, it took five years to notify its rules. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar in 2025 and other states in 2026 has once again brought at the citizenship debate to the centre stage.

The SC, in its Bihar SIR judgment, held that the passport is "conclusive proof" of citizenship. The latest clarification by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has explicitly said it is nothing more than a travel document. Strictly in terms of law and judgments, the MEA is correct. But since the government does not issue any citizenship card or certificate, how should one prove their citizenship? Why hasn't a single resident of Assam among the 3.11 crore people whose citizenship

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was proved during the NRC exercise been issued a citizenship card? Is the latest clarification a precursor to such a document? If yes, not only will people have to queue up like during demonetisation, but just like the Assam NRC, an overwhelming number of Indians won't be able to prove their citizenship. In Assam, a majority of the 19 lakh excluded people were Hindus.

Article 5, on the commencement of the Constitution, conferred citizenship on everyone born in India. Article 11 empowers Parliament to regulate citizenship by law, and thus the Citizenship Act was passed in 1955. It has been amended six times, but major amendments were made in 1986, 2003, and 2019. Parliament, over the decades, has narrowed the universal principles of citizenship incorporated in Article 5. Unlike the original Act, which gave citizenship on the principle of *jus soli* or by birth, the 1986 amendment was less inclusive as it added the condition that, in addition to one's own birth in India, one can get citizenship only if either parent was an Indian citizen at the time of birth. In 2003, an amendment under the Vajpayee government added that either both parents should be Indian citizens or one must be an Indian citizen and the other should not be an illegal migrant. With these restrictive amendments, India has almost moved towards the narrow principle of *jus sanguinis*-

blood re-lationships become more important than birth on Indian soil.

Based on these provisions, how is Indian citizenship to be proved? Section 2(1)(e) of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023, says evidence can be either oral or documentary. "Proved" under Section 2(1)(j) means that after considering the matters before it, the court believes such a fact to exist or a prudent man would act upon the supposition that it exists. The crucial point is that "proved" is a subjective state of mind of the judge. "Disproved" under Section 2(1)(c) means a belief that it does not exist. The third concept is "conclusive proof", which under Section 2(1)

(b) means that if a fact is declared by the evidence law as conclusive proof of another, on the proof of that fact, the court shall not allow evidence to disprove it. Since today, a passport, Aadhaar, or voter ID card is not taken as "conclusive" proof of citizenship, evidence can certainly be given to disprove someone's citizenship status.

But evidence law also provides for certain "presumptions of fact" and "presumptions of law", Section 2(1)(h) lays down that whenever this law provides the court may presume a fact, it may regard it as proved unless it is disproved. Section 2(1)(1) says that when the evidence law directs that the

court shall presume a fact, it shall regard it as proved unless and until it is disproved. Thus, in cases of rape where sexual intercourse by the accused is proved, Section 120 provides for the presumption that it was without consent.

Since passports and voter ID cards can be issued only to citizens, why is there no presumption of citizenship? Is this not an official act? Many of us have experienced police verification prior to the issuance of passports. Passport, voter ID, etc., require governmental satisfaction about citizenship. Section 78 of the Sakshya Adhinyam says the court shall presume every document to be genuine if it is declared by law as evidence of any particular fact and is certified by any government officer. Section 104 says the one who asserts a fact bears the burden of proof. Shouldn't anyone who questions someone's citizenship despite a passport or voter ID bear the burden of proving such an assertion?

During the SIR, the EC insisted on certain documents and arbitrarily excluded Aadhaar and its own voter ID card, which the Supreme Court did not find problematic. But none of the documents included was a proof of citizenship. Under the law of estoppel, the government cannot deny citizenship to those to whom it had issued a passport or voter ID card, unless the same were obtained fraudulently. This author's own first passport explicitly certified him as a citizen. Why has this seal of citizenship been dropped? The proof of citizenship should be demanded only from those who are caught while crossing over to India, or a foreigner found in India with a passport of another country, or those born abroad. For anyone born in India, there must be a presumption of citizenship, and voter ID and a passport must be taken as conclusive proof of citizenship. ■

*(The Indian Express, 27-06-2026)*

### **Loss of Spirituality**

**- S.Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

We have lost the way and do not have access to the straight way. We have blocked our heart and spirituality. With our selfish outlook we cannot attain spirituality. The heart is affected by worldliness, pride and base desires. Our hearts do not affirm the authority of Allah. We do not believe in His might and glory. We do not hold ourselves accountable to Him. Given this, we face the present malaise. Owing to Godlessness we do not help one another. Nor do we risk our lives for others. Even real brothers consider each other as customers and business party. Exploitation is rife everywhere. The human nature has been corrupted. Parents are critical of their children and teachers are unhappy with their students. ■

## The Strait of Hormuz: The World's Energy Valve

- Arshad Shaikh

The Strait of Hormuz is barely 33 kilometres wide at its narrowest point. Its geography resembles an inverted parabola whose narrowest point lies just short of its apex. This unique arrangement of land and sea has repeatedly proved that geography exercises more power than armies. The Strait of Hormuz was in the limelight, every time tensions flared between Iran and the United States. So why does this narrow ribbon of water connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea yield such enormous power? Why do oil prices climb, insurance premiums surge, financial markets wobble and governments begin contingency planning if Hormuz faces military or political turbulence?

The answer lies in the fact that the Strait of Hormuz has become the economic valve of the globe. Nearly one-fifth of the world's petroleum consumption and over one-quarter of all seaborne oil trade passes through Hormuz. Qatar's liquefied natural gas (LNG), together with crude oil from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE and Iran - all navigate this narrow sea passage before reaching global markets. Even a minor disruption lasting a few days can send tremors across the

global economy, with the potential to hike petrol prices in Mumbai, cause inflation in London and reduce the industrial output in Beijing.

### History and Geography

The Strait of Hormuz has a long history of holding strategic importance in global commerce. Successive empires jostled for ownership of Hormuz. It was the convergence point of merchant ships carrying spices, silk, horses and textiles and became one of the busiest transit points of international trade. The Portuguese captured Hormuz in 1507 under Afonso de Albuquerque; the Ottomans challenged them in 1552; and an Anglo-Persian alliance expelled the Portuguese in 1622. These battles show that whoever controls Hormuz gains control over one of the world's most valuable trade corridors.

The latest conflict over the Strait by America wanting to capture Hormuz is thus a history-repeats-itself phenomenon. Geography has bestowed upon Iran a unique strategic advantage in the shape of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran controls almost the entire northern coastline of the Strait and possesses several strategically located islands like Qeshm, Larak and Abu Musa. All these islands overlook the

busy shipping lanes making it easy for Iran to regulate them at will. Tehran has repeatedly described the Strait as central to its national security. Naturally, Iranian leadership keep reminding the world that they control the planet's most important energy corridor.

### **International Law**

At the heart of the legal dispute over the Strait of Hormuz lies the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS adopted in 1994). The United States and Israel (who themselves are not signatory to UNCLOS) assert that the right of transit passage is part of customary international law. Iran takes a different legal view of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. It argues that ships passing through the Strait are governed by the principle of innocent passage, rather than the broader right of transit passage recognised under UNCLOS.

Under the regime of innocent passage, coastal states enjoy greater authority to regulate maritime traffic. For example, submarines are required to sail on the surface and display their national flag, and foreign military aircraft do not enjoy the automatic right of overflight that accompanies transit passage. Moreover, Article 25(1) of UNCLOS allows a coastal state to take necessary measures to prevent any passage that it considers inconsistent

with the principle of innocent passage.

In contrast, the regime of transit passage gives ships and aircraft much greater freedom to pass through international straits with minimal interference from coastal states. Iran's position is further strengthened by the fact that, although it signed UNCLOS, it has never ratified the Convention. Tehran argues that the concept of transit passage was introduced only under UNCLOS and does not form part of customary international law. Consequently, in Iran's view, only countries that have ratified UNCLOS are entitled to invoke the right of transit passage.

Iran also maintains that even if transit passage has evolved into customary international law, it is exempt under the doctrine of the persistent objector, having consistently opposed the rule from the outset. Although Iran has signed several international maritime treaties, including the 1958 Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, UNCLOS and the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, it has not ratified any of them.

### **Free Passage and Commercial Risk**

It is a well-known fact that passage through the Panama and Suez Canals is not free. These are artificial waterways built, owned and operated by

the governmental authorities of Panama and Egypt respectively who collect transit fees. Ships do not have to pay Iran a toll in the way they pay Panama or Egypt. Although there are reports that Iran did collect transit fees during the conflict just to prove a point and demonstrate the cost of belligerence against Iran.

Once the conflict started, Brent crude prices rose sharply. Commercial shipping companies were forced to divert their vessels, and war-risk insurance premiums rose multiplied. Economists call this a 'soft closure. It means there is a situation in which trade slows dramatically without any formal blockade. However, it produces consequences that are similar to a blockade. Some of the grave consequences of any soft closure of the Strait can be gauged by reading the following facts: Over 60% of India's crude oil imports originate in the Gulf with a substantial share transiting Hormuz. Japan and South Korea face a similar situation. Then, nearly 90% of China's Gulf oil imports pass through Hormuz.

### **The Strait and Dollar Hegemony**

Crude oil is predominantly traded in US dollars. Consequently, any disruption in Hormuz has implications beyond energy markets. The blockade of the Strait can challenge US dollar

hegemony by encouraging countries to trade oil in other currencies.

According to the Petrodollar Theory, the global demand for dollars is sustained because most oil-exporting countries price and sell petroleum in US dollars. Oil-importing nations are forced to hold large dollar reserves to pay for their energy imports.

The Strait of Hormuz crisis showed how dollar-based oil trade is vulnerable to disruptions that endangers the economy of oil-importing countries by inflating their Current Account Deficits which has a ripple effect on other macroeconomic parameters. Hence these countries may increasingly settle oil transactions in alternative currencies such as the Chinese yuan or through bilateral local-currency arrangements.

Such trends will accelerate de-dollarisation and challenge the dollar hegemony. According to the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the dominance of the US dollar depends upon America's ability to guarantee and secure global trade routes. That ability was exposed by Iran to be an 'inability' to protect the interests of its allies and friends. Iran has fired the first salvo to dismantle the unjust 'dollar hegemony. Hopefully, the world will soon move towards a more balanced and multipolar international monetary system. ■

## A Movement Born in The Aftermath of Partition

- S. Abdul Ali Hasani Nadwi

About seventy - nine years ago, when India was fragmented and partitioned on the basis of religion and faith. Subsequently, circumstances of the country started becoming tense and apprehensive as communal hatred and polarisation struck the country hardest , an environment of mutual animosity and civil unrest which ultimately culminated in communal violence began to emerge— especially to tarnish the image of Islam and to marginalise Muslims — at that critical juncture one the most prominent scholars and thinkers of his time Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi (known as Ali Mian in the subcontinent) launched a movement.

Maulana felt that nobody is raising a voice against this methodical hatred and dehumanised ecosystem, and nobody is taking stand to promote harmony, solidarity and brotherhood amidst the hatred and communalism being peddled around systematically.

Eventually, he remarked on one occasion that after long period of anticipation for more than 25 years- for somebody to take stand whether from among the Muslims or Hindus against these toxic sectarian trends and raise his voice, and he said that I wasn't an activist rather I am devoted to reading and writing therefore he was remained a bit conservative and cautious about it and reluctant to enter that domain. But when he saw that nobody stood up, he

decided to stand up himself to fill this huge vacuum.

He believed that if these misunderstandings and misconceptions were not addressed and removed, then the situation of the country and its people would continue to deteriorate further. So, Maulana started this movement and campaign from 1950 onwards. He especially called huge gatherings of mixed communities in Lucknow and its vicinity to undertake subjects of humanity and solidarity and to spread love, compassion, and brotherhood equally among all communities.

Thus after the string of successful gatherings spanning two decades officially, the foundation of the All India Payam-e-Insaniyat Forum was laid in 1974 on the historical land of "Allahabad" with the primary objective of reminding the people of the country and whole of humanity at large, of a long-forgotten and often-neglected lesson that is nevertheless an integral part and inseparable aspect of its innate nature. However, prevailing circumstances and their poisonous after-effects often corrupt it and consequently cause human beings to disregard the most substantial and existential element of life, and that is humanity.

Therefore, this movement was launched and this organization was

established to awaken people who are under the intoxicating spell of lethal diseases whose poison is deceptively sweet, such as selfishness, opportunism, greed and avarice, religious hatred, mutual animosity, regional prejudice, caste-based bias, and all forms of hatred, discrimination and evil and it encourages them to embrace mutual love and harmony, peace and tranquility, shared compassion and sympathy, and it is to unite them in a single bond of humanity.

The founder of the movement, would remarked with all clarity and explicitly in the world when he was asked "concerns are expressed whether this organisation promotes pluralism (unity or oneness of religions) he replied "this movement is a movement of human unity" where people from various religious ideologies, civilizational values, and different thoughts and beliefs assemble on a common platform, where ideas are exchanged for the upliftment of human society and the welfare of the people and the country. Moreover, this mission serves as a remedy for social evils and as an irreplaceable antidote to counter the toxic influences being regularly injected into society.

### **Methodology and Scope of Work**

The mission relies on two wheels — communication implementation—which keep the caravan of Payam-e-Insaniyat moving and enable it to achieve its objectives effectively.

On one hand, interactive forums and dialogue sessions are convened every now and then, where influential people from different ideological, traditional, and religious backgrounds are invited to express their thoughts on humanitarian and social issues and moral concerns. In these gatherings, we reflect upon subjects such as peaceful coexistence, mutual tolerance, common human welfare, and mutual cooperation. Strategies that can help to eradicate social evils in all their forms are brought into focus, and practical measures are discussed to undertake service-oriented initiatives for fellow Indians and for humanity at large. We also involve the aforementioned participants in these efforts.

Simultaneously, as Muslims, we always strive to play the leading role and stand at the forefront with the flag in hand, showing the way to people and setting an example to inspire them. In this manner, other communities can perceive the overall value and contribution of the Muslim Ummah, and that's also the divine principle for dignified survival of nations as Allah says in his final revelation:

"As for the foam, it passes away as scum; but that which benefits people remains on the earth in this way Allah presents examples"

The simple yet profound principle derived from the verse is the principle of "the survival of the beneficial" and any individual, community or civilization that

doesn't have the capacity to benefit others materially or spiritually is destined to fade away so (truly) the best people are those who bring benefit to others.

Showing good manners and rendering benefits, help, and assistance to the whole of humanity, irrespective of caste, color, region, and religion, is a core attribute obliged upon all Muslims. In the Last Word of Allah, He says:

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be good to parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the distant neighbor, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant and boastful.” (Qur'an 4:36)

This particular verse explains the beauty of Islam and the true spirit of Islamic character as well. It further explains that Allah does not like those who are arrogant; rather, He loves those who adopt good behavior and seek opportunities to help and assist others from among the poor, orphans, widows, neighbors, strangers, and travelers—Muslims and non-Muslims alike, irrespective of their religion, caste, color, or region.

This is especially vital in recent times, when Muslims across the country are going through difficult times and facing oppression, injustice and planned campaigns of hatred, communalism, and discrimination, we

see that some Muslims suffer from the psychology of reaction. They sometimes become overly emotional or despondent rather than remaining active and constructive. As a result, out of anger and anguish they start painting the entire population of the country with one brush, tagging all of them as hate-mongers, biased, and discriminatory against Muslims. Subsequently, due to this approach, very little room is left to engage constructively with the people of the country and to awaken those who may be unaware of the realities around them.

It is true that there are groups of hate-mongers and propaganda peddlers from sections of the mainstream media, as well as social media users, who do whatever they can against Muslims. However, what Allah commands us in His Last Divine Scripture is a principle that every Muslim is required to follow. Allah says:

"And let not the hatred of a people lead you to be unjust. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness (taqwa)." (Qur'an 5:8)

This is the verse that should enlighten us and guide our actions and we must take steps towards constructive resolutions according to the message of the Qur'an and the exemplary life of Prophet Muhammad . And eventually It reminds us that justice, fairness, and balanced judgment must prevail even in the face of hostility and prejudice. And yes, while doing such works, a true Muslim may hope that

those who benefit from his kindness and assistance might be attracted to Islam. However, even if they are not, we must never refrain from helping them. There is a verse in the Qur'an regarding which many scholars mention that it was revealed concerning some Companions of the Prophet ﷺ who used to help the polytheists of Makkah. When they realized that their constant assistance was not bringing those people closer to Islam, they decided to pull the plug and stop extending their support. Thereupon, Allah revealed to the Prophet a superb benevolent Qur'anic principle:

"That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. Whatever good you spend is for your own benefit, and you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah. Whatever good you spend will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged." (Qur'an 2:272)

This verse established a remarkable Islamic principle that whatever the circumstances are, never cease kindness and compassion to those who are in dire need of it, so let the delightful breezes of the morning, pleasant and fragrant, may flow through the luminous portals of Prophetic character and enrich all humankind with their blessings.

This, and on the other hand programmes and counseling sessions are organized for discussions to be held and talks to be delivered on previously noted topics in general and on

education and its substantial purpose in particular. While delivering a talk, the intellectual capacity and psychological background of the audience should be taken into account. Another important consideration is that the discussion should always revolve around human values, with its inspiration drawn from the Qur'an and Hadith without explicitly referring to them. Otherwise, a healthy dialogue may quickly turn into a heated religious debate, and the pleasant atmosphere may become tense.

In similar lines there are various patterns to convey the message of humanity and to keep the spirit of humanity alive through gentle and appealing diction and tone.

### **Practical Implementation**

Along with communication practical execution on ground is also necessary in a way that no community could come close to us in social work for the sake of Allah, In this pursuit, numerous activities are carried out across different parts of the country. The results have been more than satisfactory and speak for themselves wherever these initiatives are implemented properly, at the required pace, and in accordance with the guidelines of the central organization.

Describing all the practical activities in detail would be rather lengthy. In a nutshell, the services rendered are primarily concentrated in three major domains:

(A) Health

(B) Education

(C) Public Welfare and Relief Services.

In health department activities such as hospital visits to serve patients who are stranded and free assistance for them if needed, medical camps in down to BPL localities and rural regions, blood donation camps, medical examination camps are conducted with a consistent approach, moreover in the same pursuit campaigns of addiction free society and hunger free India are also held in different parts of the country on regular basis and for facts and figures about hunger rise and intoxication are really destructive and dangerous and extremely concerning special attention is being paid to them.

In education department which is comparatively much more crucial free counseling sessions, awareness programmes about the ideal purpose of education and speech competitions and essay contests on given social and moral topics that may highlight grave problems of the country and and their long-term practical solutions and other services are rendered from time to time that enable students to contemplate for the betterment of society and the future of the country rather than being selfish or overly self-centered and most often than not extremely self-destructive.

In other public welfare programs visits to old-age homes and orphanages to share love, warmth, affection, and a sense of belonging with those who are in dire need of it; outreach

programs for the underprivileged sections of society to uplift and support them; assistance in securing the release of eligible bailable prisoners; and the organization of seminars and awareness programs for the betterment of society.

### **Desired outcomes and the sensitivity of the work**

If these charitable works, coupled with clear and heartfelt messages of humanity, are carried out in a proper manner, they can serve as an excellent preface and path-paver for introducing and portraying the practical image of Islam. Moreover, they can become a means of bringing our institutions, organisations, Madaaris, and Masaajid into a stronger shield and fortress within society.

Finally, there are some precautionary measures that we cannot afford to overlook. First and foremost, this work is not direct Da'wah; rather, it is a path-paver for Da'wah. Therefore, indulgence in interreligious crossover can create difficulties and put both the individual and the organisation into trouble. Secondly, during this work, there will be opportunities to interact with non-believers, so we must remain cautious. We must avoid over-socialising to the extent of developing an inclination towards polytheistic or blasphemous beliefs and rituals, or taking them lightly in our hearts. At the same time, we must not isolate ourselves to such a degree that it widens the gap and makes people unwilling even to listen to us. ■

## Migration To Madinah

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

The momentous and trying task of making the call towards, and propagating, the religion that he (SAW) was entrusted with on the inception of the era of Prophecy in Makkah Mokarramah was duly carried out by him and, under his command., by those who had professed the Faith in response to his call, throughout the thirteen years long duration of the Makkah phase. But, it was not a smooth sailing. In fulfillment of their obligations, they had to face difficulties and distresses and a lot of hurdles and obstacles put in their way. Nevertheless, they gave the full evidence of their perseverance and endurance and had themselves fully acquitted of the obligation assigned them.

The 13 year long period of man's initial life is such a one during which his training and tutelage gets fully accomplished and the essential experiences of his practical life are also gained by him. These experiences lend him guidance in his future practical life and are conducive towards making the performance level of the activists of any movement or missionary campaign buttressed and boosted. The 13 years period is, in a manner of speaking, the period

commencing from the birth of a person up till his coming of age; that is, the attainment of the age of adulthood. The self-same period got established as the tenure commencing from its inception up to the attainment of its adulthood by the message of Truth prescribed by Allah Almighty. After having completed this tenure with patience and perseverance, it was now time for the next phase to get started.

For the 13year long Makkah phase, apparently, the action plan prescribed by Allah Almighty was that the arduous task of having the obligation of calling towards the religion was to be performed which did get performed. That served as a means for training in the field of missionary work. This had all happened in Makkah, the central city of this entire region; in fact, the central city of the entire Arab peninsula. Not only that, this place actually held the position of the central point located exactly in the middle of the populated area of the entire world. The way the missionary work started here was meant, as if, to get it strengthened and firmly rooted, under the Divine Succour and Supervision. And, once a team equipped with practical

competence, vigour and urge surging from within got prepared there in requisite number when the conditions were rendered no more propitious for carrying out this work within even the local limits of Makkah, he (SAW) was to move on to another place where the scope was ample for carrying out the job the way it was required to be done and for having the system in order. He was to make this new place the hub of the missionary work to be performed in future.

Consequently, this new place was provided in the form of Madinah Munawwarah where the opportunity was available for getting the mission strengthened and expanded far and wide. It was necessary that his companions get there in advance of the Prophet's arrival there and have the ground paved for his arrival. That need, too, had been fulfilled. His venerated companions and the devoted followers of Islam had, having migrated to Madinah, got consolidated and coalesced there like one, single family. It was only when almost all of them had already shifted thereto that he (SAW) was granted the permission to migrate. It was also when the infidels of Makkah, having seen that his followers had already succeeded in getting shifted to a safe haven and had found a pied-a terre,

leaving Makkah behind and obviously he (SAW), too, would now be going thereto and would keep giving the call towards the Truth from there, they had taken the resolve to have his life itself extinguished. Hence, it was decreed by Allah Almighty that he (SAW), too, now should get shifted to Madinah. Hence, he (SAW) left Makkah quietly in the dark of night, wending his way through the midst of his enemies and, having migrated, came over thereto. And, thus the opportunity of setting up a stable centre and system was now procured. From this centre the work could be progressed further and the message of Truth could be disseminated up to places far and wide.

The original Arab inhabitants of Yathrab (Madinah) were composed of the people of the two tribes of Aus and Khazraj.' By the time he (SAW) had arrived there, most and maximum number of them had already embraced Islam. With the fraternal compassion that they had towards the Muhajirin, they had assumed, together, the status of a regular joint fraternity of Muslims. They were all ready and prepared to welcome him (SAW).

#### **The Prophet's (SAW) Arrival in Madinah:**

On arrival in Madinah, he (SAW) entered the city from the Quba

side. It is a locality affiliated with Madinah at a distance of about three miles south of it. It has orchards of date-palms. Besides, it has, in its southern regions on the eastern and western sides untractable mountainous ups and downs extended up to Madinah city which are called Hirrah. The rocks of such regions are black, uneven and sharp-edged. It is hard to tread on them. Madinah Munawwarah is surrounded by regions of such rocks from East, South and West. Hence, those bound for the city enter it only from its Northern side. But, the Prophet (SAW) arrived there from the Southern side. Probably, he (SAW) did so out of circumspection; and, it was from this very side, too, that his arrival was awaited. On arrival at Ouba, he (SAW) had his halt there for several days. There he had a mosque built which earned the renown of being the first ever mosque built after the advent of Islam. It is about it that the Quran says:

(Surely a mosque built from first day on piety is worthier that thou shouldst stand therein. In it are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah approves the pure.) (Al-Tauba: 108)

It was Monday when he (SAW) had arrived there. Three days later, on

Friday, he set out for Madinah. En route, the time for the Juma prayers set in and he had the Juma prayers offered en route itself. On arrival in Madinah, he (SAW) was accorded a very warm welcome. The head of each and every family requested him to camp and take up lodging at his house. But, instead of taking a decision himself, he left his mount loose. He had the orders from God to do the same. And, for the mount it was destined by God to halt only at the place that was Divinely prespecified for the purpose. Under the instructions from Allah, he (SAW) was to have that very place chosen. Otherwise, there were offers galore from all sides to take up the lodgings at their residences.

Any way, this privilege happened to be the lot of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (RAA) as it was the doorway of his house where the Prophet's she-camel took the halt and knelt down. And, he (SAW) decided to take up his lodgings there itself". It was a happy coincidence, too, that Abu Ayyub (RAA) was a member of such a blood-line of Khazraj tribe of Madinah which the mother of the Prophet's (SAW) grandfather, Abdul-Muttalib, had belonged to. Thus, the Prophet (SAW) had happened to have a kinship, too, with this household.■

*(To be Continued)*

## Negotiating Federalism in Higher Education

- Eldho Mathews\*

Higher education in India has emerged as an important site through which the changing dynamics of Indian federalism are being expressed. Issues relating to regulatory authority, curriculum, language policy, public funding, and digital governance have transformed the sector into a critical site where competing visions of the Union and State governments intersect. These developments not only shape the direction of higher education but also illuminate broader questions concerning the distribution of power within the Indian Union. As a result, governance of higher education can no longer be viewed merely as a sectoral policy concern; rather, it has become an integral component of India's evolving federal architecture.

Some recent examples include the contestations surrounding the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 across different States. Recent regulatory reforms facilitating the establishment of foreign university campuses in India have also generated varied responses from State governments, reflecting differing perspectives. This fragmented political landscape has

important implications for higher education governance in the country. However, they have received only relatively limited attention.

### **Growing influence of Centre**

Several developments have illustrated these tensions. In Tamil Nadu, the State government repeatedly opposed various aspects of the NEP 2020, particularly the three-language formula as well as the University Grants Commission's (UGC) circular on the third language this year. Centre-State tensions in higher education were also evident in the disputes over the appointment of Vice Chancellors and the powers of Governors in States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and West Bengal.

Although education remains constitutionally within the Concurrent List, which gives both the Union and the States legislative authority, the prevailing governance dynamic increasingly favours the Union. Through the Ministry of Education, the UGC, and various regulatory and accreditation bodies, the Union government possesses substantial leverage over universities and colleges across the country.

The introduction of the NEP, 2020

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\* *The writer is with the Kerala State Higher Education Council.*

is an important restructuring attempt to redesign the architecture of higher education in India. The policy has proposed Sweeping reforms, including four-year undergraduate programmes, an Academic Bank of Credits, institutional restructuring, multidisciplinary universities, and internationalisation initiatives. These reforms also represent an expansion of the influence of the Centre into domains that have historically been the preserve of State governments.

Moreover, access to central funding now is increasingly dependent on compliance with nationally designed reform agendas. Programmes such as the Institutions of Eminence initiative and competitive research mechanisms under the Anusandhan National Research Foundation have contributed to the influence of the Union government over States' authority. The role of national regulatory agencies has also become another important site of conflict. The structures proposed by the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which are intended to replace existing higher education regulatory bodies including the UGC, have generated apprehensions regarding the gradual erosion of the authority of State governments. Another important dimension to centralisation is digital governance. Mechanisms such as the Academic

Bank of Credits have expanded the capacity of the Union government to standardise and monitor higher education governance across States.

In States with strong regional political identities, these reforms are viewed not just as administrative issues but as constitutional questions concerning the balance of power within the Indian Union.

### **Strategic adaptation**

Interestingly, the implementation of the NEP, 2020 has also revealed that Centre-State relations in higher education are not purely adversarial. Rather than adopting positions of complete acceptance or outright rejection, many States, including Opposition-ruled States, have selectively adapted aspects of reforms in accordance with local political contexts. This reflects the emergence of a more negotiated form of federalism characterised by strategic adaptation.

For instance, with respect to internationalisation, several States are seeking to position themselves as regional education hubs by facilitating partnerships with overseas institutions. These developments underscore the growing recognition of higher education as a strategic instrument for global visibility and knowledge-driven development. The debate surrounding the establishment

of international branch campuses further illustrates this change. While the regulatory framework and policy direction are largely determined by the Union government, the actual implementation of such initiatives depends substantially on State governments through local administrative clearances, infrastructure support, and investment facilitation.

landscape continues to evolve, the trajectory of higher education governance will depend not only on constitutional provisions or national-level policy frameworks, but also on the capacity of the Centre and the States to negotiate competing political and developmental priorities within the federal structure. ■

*(The Hindu, 11-6-2026)*

As India's regional political

### **Messengers Direct Us To Goals**

**- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

It is not the job of Messengers to invent or discover things or produce gadgets. Rather, they produce such human beings who may use all resources for a good cause. Europe is good at producing resources. In contrast, Messengers guide us to the goals of life. True, Messengers did not create any machine but they transformed human beings. Europe has manufactured a variety of machines. The big question is who is to use these machines? Is it man with animal instincts? Today the crisis is that we have numerous resources, inventions and materials. But we do not have such human beings who may use them properly. ■

## Faith (Iman) - The Fountainhead of Islam

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Faith (Iman) is the greatest gift that Allah accorded to us. It is the fountainhead of Islam.

One who has complete faith in Allah and fears Him can never commit a sin or perform other illegal activities.

It is Faith that keeps one away from scores of obnoxious acts, wrongdoings and polytheistical deeds- the elimination of which leads to the path of salvation, progress and prosperity. Moreover, faith develops such an extent of vigour that it can lift one from the depths of degradation to the greatest height of glory.

We may easily comprehend the essence and significance of Faith through the following Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Sufiyān bin Abdullah Saqfi has related: Once, he asked the Prophet, "O Apostle of God! Tell me an all-encompassing thing about Islam so that, after you, I may not have to ask from anyone in this regard." The Prophet replied, "Say, I believe in God, and remain true to it." (Muslim).

It is enough for a man to make himself a faithful bondsman of God by affirming faith in Him as the Lord

and Creator of the Worlds, and, then, to make the conscientious fulfilment of the duties stemming from it his characteristic behaviour and way of life.

This Tradition is included among the "all-embracing sayings." The sacred Prophet has summed up the fundamental meaning and purpose of Islam in a few words. Faith in God and constancy and steadfastness in it constitutes the pith and essence of Islam.

It is related by Tamin Dari that the Apostle of God, once, said: "Faith is the name of loyalty and earnestness." He was asked, "Loyalty and earnestness towards whom?" The Prophet replied, "Towards God, towards His Book, towards His Apostle, towards the leaders of Muslims, and towards the Muslims as a whole." (Muslim).

This Tradition, too, is included among the "all-embracing sayings." According to Imam Al-Nawawi, it is comprehensive of all the objectives of Faith and to act upon it is to fulfil its aim and purpose altogether.

No aspect or department of Faith

has been left out in the above Tradition. It declares that Islam consists of loyalty to God, to His Book, to His Apostles, to the leaders of Muslims and to the entire Muslim Millet, and this is what Faith is, without a trace of doubt."(Meaning and Message of the Traditions, p, 126-127)

Undoubtedly, we have almost sunk into an abyss of destruction, ruin, moral degradation, abasement and decline due to abstaining from Faith.

In short, without Faith our life is meaningless. Due to lack of Faith, we could be leading a life like an animal.

Today, the entire world has become almost like a hornet's nest. Wars are hovering over us.

Innumerable casualties of war are daily reported.

We are neither safe at home, nor in journey. Our homes, schools, mosques have been transformed into camps of war.

We really don't know when we would be looted, plundered or killed. These things are happening because of lack of fear of Allah and not having full faith in Him.

Today, we may have learnt to fly in the air like birds and swim in the water like fish, but we have forgotten how to walk on earth.

It is time to revive our Faith and fear Allah so that the turbulent situation before the world may transform into peace and tranquility .■

### **Need For An Amalgam of Knowledge And Morals**

**- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**

We do not stand for ascetism and monasticism. We are not for retiring from this world to some cave. Rather, our call is for such spirituality which is aligned with this world. Our spirituality guides us in our life. We are not regressive. Nor do we believe in extremism. It is essential for humanity that morals, knowledge, science and God-consciousness should be blended. Today there is an extreme imbalance between these. There is no co-operation amid these. Science and morals have been moving in the two opposite directions. ■

## **Maulana Barkatullah: First PM of India Whose Name Varsity Wants to Drop**

- Yashee

The Executive council of Bhopal's Barkatullah University has passed a proposal to change its name to Vagdevi Bhojpal University. The university got its current name in 1988, before which it was called Bhopal University. Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali was a freedom fighter and the first prime minister of independent India, as he along with some associates, most notably Raja Mahendra Pratap, setup India's first 'government in exile' in Kabul in 1915.

"Maulana Barkatullah devoted his life to working for India's freedom abroad. From Japan to England to US to Germany to Russia to Afghanistan, he travelled to several countries, creating awareness for and building alliances to usher in India's independence. He died in 1927 in the US, which is probably why his activities weren't widely known back home. There cognition given to him in 1988, by naming a university after him in his home town, had been along-due honour," said Chaman Lal, Honorary Advisor, Bhagat Singh Archives and Resource centre, New Delhi. Lal, a retired JNU professor, said that instead of changing the university's name, more should be done to popularise the legacy of Barkatullah.

### **His beliefs, ideals**

Maulana Barkatullah is believed to have been born on July 7, 1854, in Bhopal. A meritorious student, he went to Bombay and then London for studies. He started teaching in Liverpool, where he came into contact with Indian revolutionaries. His articles and speeches attracted negative attention from the government, after which he left for the US in 1899. Here, he corresponded with the freedom fighter Maulana Hasrat Mohani (who coined the slogan Inquilab Zindabad). The letters give a clear idea of his views.

An article by Iqbal Husain that appeared in the Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol.66 (2005-2006), quotes from one of the letters. Nearly 20 million people have perished due to starvation and hunger. These poverty-stricken people were both Hindus and Muslims...an entire country has perished due to hunger, "Barkatullah wrote.

Barkatullah firmly believed that the British could be driven out of India only if Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder and resisted the divide-and-rule ploy.

"What makes Barkatullah special is his strong belief that India

could only be free if all its communities stood together. He worked closely with Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and people from every region,” said Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Secretary, Indian History Congress, and Professor of History at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). “The best example of this is the Provisional Government of India set up in Kabul in 1915. He, along with Raja Mahendra Pratap, a Hindu prince, and Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, a great Islamic thinker, formed a government in exile. Raja Mahendra Pratap became president, and Barkatullah became prime minister. This was one of the first times Indians had set up their own independent political body outside British control. This story is important not just because it challenged the British, but because it showed a vision of India where people of different faiths fought for a common goal,” Rezavi said.

### **Govt in Kabul, Meeting Lenin**

During World War I, Barkatullah and his Associates travelled to Germany and tried to convince captured Indian soldiers to form an army against the British. He also worked prominently for the Ghadar Party, founded by Lal Har Dayal in 1913, which aimed to win independence through armed struggle.

Then on December 1, 1915, the Provisional Government of India’ was

formed in Kabul. Four years later, the leaders of this government’ travelled to Moscow to meet Vladimir Lenin, the leader of Soviet Russia. After the British victory in World War I, the Indian revolutionaries’ plans suffered major reverses. However, Barkatullah kept travelling – to Belgium, Switzerland, France –working for his cause,

“Unlike many freedom fighters who worked from inside the country, Barkatullah spent most of his life in exile. He connected with anti-colonial movements around the World and became one of the most well-known Indian revolutionaries of his time. Inspired by resistance efforts in the Muslim world, he believed that justice was a global cause and that India’s freedom was part of that larger fight,” Rezavi said.

In 1927, despite failing health, he travelled to California for a Ghadar Party event. This is where, in September 1927, he breathed his last. He was laid to rest in Sacramento, with Raja Mahendra Pratap by his side till the end.

Both Rezavi and Chaman Lal pointed out that the Union government is working to popularise Raja Mahendra Pratap, and Barkatullah, as his close associate, should get the same treatment. ■

*(The Indian Express, 06-06-2026)*

## Around the World

### **Israel Issues New Lebanon 'Occupation' Map, in Talks With US Over Deployment**

Jerusalem: Israel's military published a map showing an expanded zone of Control for its troops in southern Lebanon, as Israeli officials told Reuters Israel was holding talks with the US over continuing its deployment.

An interim pact signed to end the US-Israeli war with Iran calls for an end to fighting on all fronts, including in Lebanon, and for parties to ensure "the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon."

Israel has rejected calls to withdraw troops from southern Lebanon, which it invaded in March in response to rocket fire by the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia. Israeli attacks and the destruction of villages have killed thousands and set off a displacement crisis.

Hezbollah has continued to launch attacks on Israeli positions in the south this week, including with explosive drones that have killed and injured troops.

The military, which in April published a map marking its so-called buffer zone in southern Lebanon, released a new map that shows its troops are operating several kilometres deeper in to the country, including near the Hezbollah strong hold of Nabatieh north of the Litani River. ■

### **Trump's Fears About Economy Undercut US Leverage in Iran Talks**

Donald Trump said the prospect of global economic collapse was a big reason he signed an interim deal with Iran. That admission exposes a key US weakness heading into the next round of talks with Tehran.

The MoU that Trump signed reopened the Hormuz and set in motion waivers for sanctions on Iran's oil sales, after which the price of oil tumbled and US stocks rose, facts that Trump pointed to at a presser in France. "I didn't want to see economic catastrophe," he said. "If you kept this going, that could've happened."

That acknowledgment undercuts the US negotiating position as the two sides plan to open talks in Switzerland. Under the deal, they have 60 days to discuss imposing limits on Iran's nuclear program and granting Iran economic relief. Knowing that Trump will be reluctant to restart the military campaign - and thus spark fresh economic turmoil - eases the pressure for Iran to end the talks quickly.

Indeed, even before the talks opened, Iran announced it was closing Hormuz in response to new strife between Israel and Lebanon.

The pressure on the US may only get worse. "Taken as whole, the 14 points in the MoU put Tehran in a strong negotiating position as the two sides tackle the nuclear file," said Chris Kennedy, the economic statecraft lead at Bloomberg Economics and a former State Department official.

The problem for the US is that the deal was skewed in Iran's favour, giving it gains before the next round of talks even begin. Miad Maleki, a former US Treasury sanctions official and a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said, "The US can still escalate militarily, but it has dismantled its economic leverage at the exact moment it needs it most. ■

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