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A Lone Voice Bringing About Revolution

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

If you have respect for mankind, it should translate into action. The influential persons, be they Prime Minister or teachers, should forego their cosy positions and come forward to save mankind. If our country does not survive, how will universities, government and democracy flourish? Who will sustain or protect them? If the country disintegrates and humanity is destroyed, only animals will be found in the UN. We must first be good human beings, imbued with the love of nation and a political understanding.

It was imperative that those occupying top positions should have relinquished their posts in order to salvage mankind. They should have rescued their country and humanity. However, when we noted that no one was making any move in this direction, we thought of embarking on this mission. It is evident from the history of nations and also from the history of social and religious reform that at times a lone voice made all the difference as it struck a chord in everyone's heart. This eventually brought about a revolution. We have visited you in order to awaken you. Once you are sensitised, you can achieve much. Even a lone voice can help you rise to the occasion. ■

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Wisdom of Qur'an

And be not like those who forgot Allah, and He caused them to forget their own selves.

(al-Hashr 59:19)

Man is by nature self-centred. His own interests preoccupy him. His love for others is prompted by selfish ends. Therefore, he loves those who love him. He is not drawn to those who hate him, even though he may be a paragon of virtue. Self-love activates man to undertake numerous pursuits. All his actions are centred on this. Man may forget everything but his self-interests are always close to heart. He may disregard even his wife, children, family members and relatives at the expense of ensuring his own welfare. This is often observed in an hour of crisis. It is an everyday occurrence, for it is rooted deep in human nature. One who contends against this observation is most likely to be refuted by everyone. For it is quite an event, to find someone practising self-abnegation while working for the welfare of others. The one who disregards his own interests for the sake of others inevitably becomes the centre of attention. At times, he may risk his own life to rescue others. Let us therefore discuss this phenomenon at some length. The Qur'an proclaims that those forgetful of Allah are liable to forget their own selves. Once man banishes God from his life, his orientation is disturbed. He is wholly given over to worldliness. He is seen hankering after material objects, oblivious to higher truths. Material things become an end in themselves. Lost in this maze, he forgets his own self. This obviously results in a crisis, bringing an end to such a person's feelings and emotions. No longer does regret the loss incurred by him. Rather the malaise is on account of a shift in focus, as man replaces God with his own self. The more he turns away from God, the greater is the risk of self-destruction. ■

Pearls From the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

It is related by Anas that [one of the favourite] prayers of the Apostle of God was : "O God ! Keep me alive in the state of indigence, and raise from the world in the state of indigence, and let me be in the company of those that are indigent."

—Tirmidhi and Baihaqi

Commentary: We have just seen that when the Lord asked the Prophet if the valley of Mecca be filled with gold for him, the Prophet replied, "No, my Lord ! What I like is that I may eat my fill on one day and go without a meal on the other."

The Prophet had purposely chosen a life of poverty for himself which was also the inclination of his enlightened inner self. It is indisputable that no other pattern of living could be more suited to the lofty position he occupied and the noble task he had to perform. Should the Lord grant contentment and submission to anyone, it is, generally, preferable for him, from the viewpoint of Faith and Futurity, to lead an existence of want and indigence instead of plenty and prosperity.

It is related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet [often] used to pray : "O God ! Bestow upon the dependants of Mohammad only as much of provision as is necessary to sustain life."

— Bukhari and Muslim

Commentary: In the literal sense, the word Aal [used in the above Tradition] means 'household' which includes servants and dependants, but in the present Tradition it, apparently, denotes only the dependants. Hence, we have, here, translated it as such. Both Quwat and Kafaf, occurring in the original Arabic text, signify that the provision should be only as much as was necessary to keep the business of living going. It should neither be so meagre as to make it difficult for the bondsman to attend to his duties due to hunger or mental distress or compel him to extend a begging hand before others nor so abundant that he may hoard and preserve it for future need. ■

Editor's Note

Madrasas in India

The madrasa, which literally means a school for the ulema, has recently been in the news in the Indian media. There are allegations that many of these institutions have foreign funding and have become the den of activities not conducive to nation's well-being. So far no substantial evidence has been provided for any such charges. Yet, the concerted aspersions cast on their status and role in Indian society has indeed brought unnecessary bad publicity. This has no doubt caused as much concern to the community as to the government. As the state and community scrutinise madrasas, it is evident that the basis of much of the negative propaganda has been ignorance about their role in society. It is therefore imperative that we understand the historical process of the emergence of the madrasas and their objectives in India.

It is interesting that the arrival of Muslim rule in India in the 13th century did not see a sudden mushrooming of madrasas in India. In Mughal India for instance education was informal. A student who wanted a religious career would learn Persian and Arabic from the learned and pious in his family and neighborhood. Both the Quran and Hadis knowledge (manqulat) and the rational sciences (ma'qulat) he acquired in this informal way. It is to be noted that the emphasis even in a religious career was always on rational sciences as well. In fact the Mughal ulema were famous for this branch of knowledge. Mughal Delhi was regarded as an important centre for ma'qulat. It was thus not surprising that religious career did not cripple a student in the material world. Indeed those who completed scholarly training sought out official positions or grants and endowments offered by kings and aristocrats.

The tradition of combining religious and secular learning continued after the collapse of the Mughal Empire. Its best examples can be traced in Awadh (part of modern day Uttar Pradesh). Here, the Firangi Mahall madrasa combined effectively the ma'qulat and manqulat instructions. The Shiah Nawab of Lucknow patronised the madrasa precisely because it did not produce merely Sunni ulema but also offered training for bureaucrats. Preparing qazis and Muftis, the legal officials required by the court, was the speciality of Farangi Mahall. Indeed this madrasah systematised the informal curriculum followed for training ulema in Mughal India. The syllabus was called Dars-e- Nazamiya. The name was taken after Mulla Nizamuddin who was the son of the madrasah's founding member Mulla Qutbuddin. This syllabus that combines religious and secular learning has dominated religious teaching in south Asia to the present. In other words it means that the madrasas that follow this syllabus lay stress on both religious and rational sciences learning. It is therefore not surprising that the madrasas that were set up under British rule also adopted this syllabus. For instance, the Madrasa-i-Aliyah in Calcutta established under British patronage in 1780, had the Dars-e-Nizamiya as its curriculum.

After the 1857 revolt as the British state clamped down heavily on all sections of Indian society, the focus of activity for the Ulema shifted away from the big cities like Delhi and Lucknow and localised in qasbahs. It was in the qasbahs of Awadh that many new Madrasas sprung up in the late 19th century. Some of these followed the traditions of Muslim

learning set-up in the big cities and others followed more revivalist or reformist agendas. These centres were clearly responding to the challenges posed by the British government to both the community and the nation. It is here that one can see the emergence of Deoband madrasa in 1867. Maulana Rashid Ahmad, Maulana Muhammad Qasim and others set up this madrasa and used it as the base of their activity to take up the formidable challenge the British posed to the nation. They modelled their institution on patterns of the British educational institutions with which they were familiar. The goal of the madrasa was to train well educated ulema that would be dedicated to reformed Islam. Such Ulema would have many roles: prayer leaders, writers, preachers and teachers. The medium of instruction was Urdu. In its teaching style and open minded approach to learning it was broadly very much on the lines of the westernised Aligarh college and the Delhi college. Thus the madrasa had a popular appeal because it was in tune with the times. And this appeal and use of modern instrumentation was used to pursue the goal of training Muslims in religious classics so as to spread Islamic norms and beliefs that would connect them to the changed times.

These madrasas have produced eminent writers, historians and social reformers who have brought glory to the nation. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Maulana Abdul Hai Hasani and Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi are some of these Madrasa products who have made a place for themselves in their respective fields.

The greatest achievement of these establishments is that they help poor and backward class of students to study and mould themselves as an asset to the society. Many a students of Madrasas later joined Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and others in getting India liberated.

This brief trajectory of madrasa education in India reveals their very positive and outward looking attitude. It is quite clear that through history madrasas have endeavoured to make Muslims understand better the changed times through rigorous learning and accept the challenges of western modernity. Indeed it is in this role of negotiating western modernity that the madrasa could never remain isolated from the nationalist leadership of the country that had similar agendas. Thus they have been a critical bridgehead between state and society. This critical role of mediation is something that they should ideally continue to play in independent modern India as well. Most of them are already sensitive to this responsibility. It is in recognition of this responsibility that the government of India funds a wide range of madrasas every year. We hope, that they continue their constructive role in society and provide no reason for a misplaced campaign against them. ■

S.A.

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All Creatures Are God's Family

- S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Qur'an declares: "Allah commands that justice and excellent conduct be practised and the kin should be given their due. He forbids indecency, evil and rebellion. He admonishes so that you may reflect." (16: 90).

The Qur'anic verse cited by me forms part of the Friday prayer sermon. Every week Muslims listen to and recite it. Since we are unfamiliar with Arabic, we do not reflect on what is recited as part of prayer and sermon. We take it only as a ritual which is part of worship. We never care to understand it or ask someone to explain its meaning. The above Qur'anic verse is indeed the manifesto, code of conduct and guideline of Islam. Allah commands justice and excellent conduct to everyone. As to giving in charity, it specifies the kin. Yet it does not insist on any particular category of kin. All those who are close to one in kinship, neighbourhood, fellow nationals or colleagues may fall into this category. The Qur'an, however, clarifies that the near and dear ones are intended.

Moreover, Allah forbids indecency and vain acts. He admonishes so that people may take a lesson.

This town of Ujjain is associated

with Vikramajit who is known for justice. It is reported that he was a just ruler. Today we have neglected justice and doing good to others. Justice has become rare in our times. Though it has not disappeared altogether from the world, it is hedged in by many narrow considerations.

Today justice is dispensed, based on motives and concerns. We are very particular about justice to own kith and kin, co-religionists, clan and tribe. We demand justice in their case. However, if the victim is not one of us and we may not get anything in return, say praise, we fail to deliver justice. We deny it, apprehending someone's displeasure.

For dispensing justice, we first think of a label, our own family, people, country or nation. We do not stand for justice in its absolute sense and as a religious duty. Only the pious, noble souls who have respect for humanity are ever-ready to do justice. For they look upon the whole mankind as God's family.

It is recorded in a hadith: All creatures are God's family." This statement is explicit notwithstanding the fact that Islam makes no compromise regarding its basic doctrine of monotheism (*tawhid*). Although Islam is so sensitive about

monotheism, it speaks of all creatures as God's family. This is a radical statement. For, *surah al-Ikhlās* is reckoned as the one-third of the whole Qur'an. It deals solely with the doctrine of the unity of God. This *surah* reads as follows: "(O Prophet), say: 'He is Allah, the One. Allah is unique. He does not give birth. Nor did anyone give Him birth. No one is equal unto Him.'" (112:1-4

Islam designates the above *surah* as the heart of the Qur'an and equal to one-third of the divine scripture. The same religion declares all human beings, without any distinction of their caste, colour, creed, race or nationality as part of God's family. He sustains every human being.

As to who is God's favourite, he is not the one who worships Him most. Rather, he who helps His family most. Had the idea of God's family been part of any other religion, it was understandable. However, Islam despite its uncompromising stand on monotheism, subscribes to this idea. This idea features in Islam which is God's final religion.

Justice is always fair and transparent

Allah has not directed that justice and good be done to any particular community. It should be as transparent as rain water: Only the one dispensing justice may be a Muslim or Hindu and

he will be known as a just person. Justice must, however, be done to everyone, irrespective of his caste, colour or creed.

Allah commands the dispensation of justice and good in absolute terms, not to Muslims alone. Likewise, Allah introduces Himself as the Lord of the worlds, not of Muslims or Christians, Arabs or non-Arabs.

He has prescribed justice and fairness for everyone, including the universe, stars, the sun and the moon, galaxies, solar system of our world, continents, plants and animals. He does not believe in injustice for any nation, country or family. The Islamic command for doing justice and good is general and universal.

Another Qur'anic directive' exhorts Muslims to do justice in all circumstance and their enmity towards any particular Community should not prompt them to commit any injustice. They may have some grievance against a certain group or clan. However, it should not drive them to act unjustly towards them. When they dispense, they should be perfectly fair and even, grant them their due and dispense justice. For this is what pleases Allah and reflects obedience to His directives.

Let us bear this in mind that justice should be for everyone. Our Creator, Master and Sustainer has asked us to do justice and good to

everyone, regardless of their community or faith. There should be no discrimination in matters of justice. Nor should anyone receive preference.

I ask Muslims that if they truly believe in Allah, they should not commit any injustice. This is our article of faith that Allah treats every one alike. His love, sustenance, protection, and bounties are for everyone. His command is for justice for everyone. His affection for mankind is 70 times more than that of a mother for her child. He provides air, water and all other bounties to everyone, without any discrimination. He forbids any prejudice. This directive has been followed by all noble souls in all time. I have read in works on history that Vikramajit who once ruled over your town, Ujjain, was a just person. Vikrami calendar is named after him. God liked his good deed and hence this calendar commemorating him is still in vogue. We know that many calendars have gone into disuse. However, the solar and lunar calendars associated with two Messengers of Allah are still followed. This does not come as a surprise to us. For their followers flourish in billions up to this day. However, the survival of Vikrami calendar underscores that God liked his good deed. As we know from history, he was a just ruler who dispensed perfect justice. We wish the same justice would have prevailed

today.

Reason for the global decline and delay

The present decline and decay is on account of injustice and unfairness. Justice means total objectivity. It is like a balance accurately weighs anything, including precious jewels.

Rulers, politicians, intellectuals, scholars, poets, philosophers, writers and thinkers should be perfectly just in their dealings. Had justice been prevalent in the US, the Arabs would not have been betrayed by the creation of Israel. Had justice been there in the UK, India would enslaved by the British for one hundred years. Indians' estates, and crafts would not have been destroyed. Nor would have so many Indians been brutally killed by the British. Had there been no imperialism and had justice been the order of the day in our country, communal riots, grievances, court cases, strikes and demonstration would not have erupted. Everyone then would have reaped the dividends of justice.

Two instructive incidents

Here is an instructive example of justice: In the era of 'Amr ibn Al-As, the victor-governor of Egypt, there was a horse race which his son too, participated. As a Copt outpaced him, the governor's son. Slapped him. That ordinary citizen went straight to

Madinah, the capital and complained to the Caliph Umar. The Caliph summoned the governor and his son. In a public gathering Umar asked that Copt to slap the governor's son in the same way in his presence, which he did. It was followed by the Caliph's following remark, of which all of us should be proud. He said: "Since when have you started enslaving people, though they were born free? We should take pride in this incident and in" Umar. We are equally proud of Vikramajit. Anyone who does good should be owned by everyone. The other incident is of our own country which happened less than 100 years ago. There were two claimants to a land plot in Kandhla or Muzaffarnagar. Muslims claimed it to be a mosque while Hindus insisted that it was their religious site. The judge, an Englishman, listened to both the parties who had hired leading lawyers. The judge was a decent and courageous person. He asked the Hindus and Muslims to name an arbiter. They named Mawlana Mahmud Baksh. He belonged to the family of Mawlana Ilyas, the founder of Tablighi Jam'at, a globally acclaimed movement now). The Hindus held him as the most honest person in the town. This astonished the judge that the Hindus had identified a Muslim for this role. They were ready to abide by his ruling. When he was summoned, he declined, saying that he had never seen the face of any Englishman. Nor

did he intend to do so in future. The judge nonetheless persisted and assured him that he could testify, even without interacting with him. Such English judges were uncommon. When Mawlana Mahmud Baksh arrived, he turned his back to the judge and asked him to proceed. When the judge asked him about the ownership of the site, he asserted that it belonged to Hindus and the Muslims' claim was false.

It is a notable example of excellent conduct. Had we emulated such role models, we would not have been lost in the present morass. The super powers of the day, the US and Russia are highly unjust and dishonest. They care only about their own interest, not about justice. Take the case of Israel as illustrative. Its creation is a blatant travesty of injustice. The Palestinians had been living there for centuries and were the legitimate owners of the land. However, they were forcibly evicted while Jews from the US, Africa, Australia, UK, Germany and Russia were settled there. These Jews now rule over this territory.

This is only one of the numerous instances of injustice and falsehood across the world.

Allah commands doing justice and good. What it means to feed the hungry, provide water to the thirsty, and call on the sick, regardless of their caste, colour or creed. As a judge, we

must always act fairly. As a ruler we should treat all alike. As an official we should help everyone. Likewise, we should take care of all and share their suffering. This will serve also the cause of one's faith and prove one as a decent citizen. Today we lack the concern for justice. Had justice been emphasised at such forums as state, radio, TV, educational institutions, social gatherings, mosques, temples, madrasahs, weddings and other celebrations, our country's fate would have changed. It would have turned into Paradise on earth. Today we go only by appearance. We do not care about truth and values.

All human beings are flowers and buds of God's garden. Yet many buds wither, with the killing of babies and cruelty to women. Who is responsible for all this? It is the devil inside us which unleashes such brutality. We are now soaked in sins. Dr Ishtiaq Qureishi who addressed you before me, rightly insisted that we all should first cleanse our heart.

Paving the way in India

Our message is that we should turn into good human beings. We should reconstruct our society and pave the way for a good beginning. If a seed itself is rotten, nothing will grow. Let us first reform our country. We should sow quality seeds and cleanse our heart for good harvest. We should be mentally prepared better for absorbing good ideas.

Moral teachings are not part of curriculum in our educational institution, be these primary schools or colleges or universities. Let us focus energy moral training because man is liable to debasing himself as a beast. We neglect human values and do not love fellow human beings. We want to revert to the era of barbarism and cave life. We should try our best to transform this diseased mind set.

Our Muslim brethren owe this great responsibility because of their grand claim. It is not unjustified because they have been brought into being for performing this role. It is their life-long mission to work for God's cause by way of helping victims, the weak and all human beings.

The residents of Ujain also share this responsibility of upholding justice and fairness. They should create an ambience conducive to full freedom and justice for getting one's due and for advancing as much as he wishes. The same model should be replicated all over the country. There is no point in having animal like existence.

Our message consists in preaching justice. This is a mode of worship and essence and spirit of faith. We do not have any political ambition. It is a completely spiritual, moral, humane, divine mission resting on God-consciousness. We ask Muslims to turn into true believers and to pray. For, we are inspired in our

mission by our prayer and study of the Qur'an. We urge them to study the Qur'an carefully and to offer life-enriching prayer. They should develop mutual love and unity and promote justice for all. As decent citizens and servants of humanity we should benefit others. Let everyone draw upon us. We should be like angels of mercy wherever we are. People should not let us part company with them.

Gaining trust

There were some persons who intended to migrate in the wake of the 1947 holocaust yet non-Muslims did not reconcile to their migration and insisted on their staying in India.

Mawlana Liqa-Allah Uthmani of Panipat was a very pious, devout person. In 1947 all Muslims left Panipat while he stayed back. After a few years, however, he felt troubled, apprehending that no one will be able to bury him Islamically. He thought of joining fellow Muslims in Pakistan. However, the Hindu and Sikh migrants who had by then now settled in Panipat, told him that they will not let him leave the town. They would not allow any vehicle to take him. They expressed their resolve to get some Muslims settled there who would ensure his Islamic burial. Finally he stayed and passed away there.

This is a remarkable example of a pleasant life, love and excellent

morals and manners. Nothing is more rewarding than love in life.

This marks the end of my speech. Other speakers will enlighten you further. If my health could permit, I could have stayed and benefitted from your company. However, I slept little last night in that we had a big programme in Bhopal. My physician, Dr Ishtiaq Qureishi has warned that I would fall ill, if I do not sleep well and travel all the time. This would put you to hardship. I therefore seek your leave and request you not to rise. My brother, Shaykh Parikh will tell you further about the humane, religious, spiritual and moral way of life.

Had we lived a good life, people would have thronged to us for having a glimpse of devout persons who lead a meaningful life.

I am gratified to see this large gathering on the road listening to our talk. It is a welcome, healthy sign that people sincerely and warmly listen to our message. If people grow cynical because of political leaders' false promises, it does not auger well for our country. That you listened to us patiently and diligently, knowing well that we do not have any political agenda, is something really good and leave while promising, I take your leave while thanking you. I look forward to a happy, positive change in Ujjain, when and if I visit it next. ■

Protection of Faith - A Big Problem

- S. Bilal Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi*

Today, the most striking issue in the country is to safeguard the faith. The new generation is rapidly going astray from the straight path. Madrasa going children can be counted on fingers. About 95 percent of Muslim children study in government schools, colleges and universities. Unfortunately, they are left free and no particular attention is paid towards their educational curricula. The need of the hour is that an attempt must be made as what they are taught, how they are brought up and how their minds are moulded. Now, they are openly made rebels against the teachings of Islam. The present scenario is not less than the scourge for Ulama and leaders of the community.

The new syllabus also plays destructive role by sowing the seeds of hatred, abhorrence and animosity in the minds of innocent children. It is not hidden from Islamic scholars and peace loving persons. It has been taken for granted that these school going children belong to a particular section. A few days back someone showed me a lesson from a prescribed book in which appeared that Eid is the festival of Muslims they celebrate it in this or that manner. Holi is the festival of Hindus they enjoy it in this or that way. The above mentioned division clearly steers towards an unfriendly atmosphere. Moreover, it projects phenomena of polytheism in a magnificent way. Besides, Islamic history is presented in a distorted form. It is not less than a deadly poison. For the last one decade incidents of

apostasy and recantation gained momentum to a great extent. The new menace badly affects the new generation. It appears that it will wash them away from the mainstream. If it is not checked only Allah knows what will happen in the future. There are two ways to handle it. One thing is that morning and evening makatibs (schools) for the period of one or two hours should be set up for the school going children and such arrangements should be made in every mosque of the locality. Thus they may easily learn basic tenets of Islam and be able to lead their lives according to Islamic Sharia. The second thing is that standard Islamic schools are to be established where modern education should be imparted along with moral and religious learning in sublime and sophisticated way. In this way an atmosphere of peace and serenity may come up in the society. It also may help put an end to the prevailing spate of apostasy which is engulfing the new generation as a whole.

In a nutshell, these two tasks are very important for all of us. It is time we must take it seriously and gird up our loins to do these life-giving and holistic endeavors. It is such a phenomenon which leads to the promotion of faith and the development of the spirit of brotherhood and fellow-feeling. God willing, situation will definitely change. Indeed, Allah helps those who strive hard and lay their lives for the way of Allah. As the Holy Qur'an says, "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: Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

* *Rector Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.*

(Continued from page 38)

He said, "Suppose there is a double storeyed boat in which the passengers of the lower deck have to fetch water from the upper deck. This causes inconvenience to the occupants of the upper deck and they do not like it. Now, if in their foolishness the passengers of the lower deck decide not to go to the upper deck and for their supply of water and begin to bore a hole in the bottom of the boat, and the passengers of the upper deck do not stop them from doing so, so, the entire boat, with all the passengers, will sink. But If the occupants of the upper deck, somehow, manage to dissuade the the occupants of the lower deck from hole, they will save occupants of the lower deck as well as themselves from being drowned. The same is true with wickedness and sin. If a community, as a whole, dwells in a state of ignorance and sinfulness and its enlightened and virtuous sections do not take steps to reform it and to bring it on the right path then Divine punishment will be sent down upon it because of its sins and transgressions and the pious and virtuous members of the community will, also, be caught in it. On the other hand, if an 'endeavour is made by them to reform the sinners and wrong doers, the whole community will be saved."

Again, the Prophet is reported to have said:

"By the Almighty in whose power lies my life, do not neglect the duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Remember if you neglected your duty, it is quite possible that God sent down His punishment on you, and, then, all your prayers and supplications will be in vain."

Brothers,-Some of the most enlightened and spiritually evolved divines of our day are of the view that the disasters and humiliations that have been visiting Muslims for a long time, and the troubles and difficulties they are caught in universally these days and which do not seem to abate or relent a bit in spite of all their pathetic petitions to God and prayers etc., are due mainly to the very reason that they have ceased to discharge the function they were raised up for and for which they were made wholly responsible after the termination of Prophecy and Apostleship. Evidently, when a watchman fails to perform his duty he is dismissed from service and castigated sternly for his negligence.

Come, let us resolve solemnly that we shall be found wanting no more in the discharge of our duty. God's help will be with us. He has promised:

God, certainly, will aid those who aid His Cause. ■

(XXII:40)

In India, Voting Cannot Remain Merely A Statutory Right

- S.Y. Quraishi*

Recently, a Congress leader revived an old constitutional debate by demanding that voting should be recognised as a fundamental right. At first sight, the demand appears unexceptionable. In a democracy, what could be more fundamental than a citizen's right to choose those who govern? Yet, for more than seven decades, the Supreme Court of India has consistently held that the right to vote is not a fundamental right but merely a statutory right.

This judicial position, though well established, has become increasingly difficult to reconcile with the Court's own evolving jurisprudence. In a series of landmark decisions, the Court has gradually transformed the voter from a passive statutory creature into an active constitutional actor.

The result is a curious paradox: while the act of voting itself continues to be described as statutory, many of its essential facets have already acquired constitutional protection. The traditional position dates back to N.P.

Ponnuswami vs Returning Officer (1952), where the Court held that the right to vote and the right to

contest elections are not common law rights but rights created by statute. The principle was reaffirmed in *Jyoti Basu & Others vs Debi Ghosal & Others* (1982), where Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy observed that the right to elect, "fundamental though it is to democracy", is neither a fundamental right nor a common law right, but "purely a statutory right". A Constitution Bench reiterated this position in *Kuldip Nayar vs Union of India* (2006), holding that while democracy forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution, the individual right to vote flows from legislation, principally the Representation of the People Acts.

The logic behind this approach is understandable. The Constitution does not expressly enumerate the right to vote among the fundamental rights contained in Part III. Parliament, therefore, enjoys considerable latitude in prescribing qualifications, disqualifications and procedures governing elections.

However, the story does not end there.

Constitutionalising the poll process

Beginning in the early years of this century, the Court embarked upon

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a process of constitutionalising the electoral process. In *Union of India vs Association for Democratic Reforms* (2002), the Court held that voters have a right to know the criminal antecedents, educational qualifications and financial assets of candidates. This right was located squarely in Article 19(1) (a), the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. The Court reasoned that meaningful participation in democracy is impossible unless voters are adequately informed.

A year later, in *People's Union of Civil Liberties vs Union India* (2003), the court drew an important distinction. While reiterating that the right to vote is statutory, it held that the freedom of voting that is, the freedom to make an informed choice- is a fundamental right protected by Article 19 (1) (a).

The most intriguing development came in the 2013 NOTA judgment. Recognising the option of "None of the Above", the Court held that a voter's decision to reject all candidates is a form of political expression protected by Article 19) (a). The Court further held that secrecy of the ballot must extend even to those who choose not to vote for any candidate.

This produces an extraordinary constitutional anomaly. The Court has effectively held that the right to know

is fundamental, the freedom to make an informed choice is fundamental, the secrecy of the ballot is fundamental, and even the right to reject all candidates is constitutionally protected. Yet, the act of voting itself continues to be treated as a mere statutory entitlement.

One is tempted to ask: if the Constitution protects the right to reject all candidates, why does it not protect the right to choose one?

Recent constitutional jurisprudence also points in this direction. In *Anoop Barawal vs Union India* (2023), Justice Ajay Rastogi, in his separate opinion, expressly favoured recognising voting as a fundamental right. Although this view did not command a majority, the Constitution Bench repeatedly referred to voting as a constitutional right rather than merely a statutory one. This marks an important shift in judicial understanding. The Court may not yet have elevated voting to the status of a fundamental right, but it has undoubtedly moved beyond the narrow statutory conception that dominated earlier decisions.

The anomaly becomes even more striking when viewed through the prism of the basic structure doctrine. Since *Kesavananda Bharati vs State Kerala* (1973), the Court has repeatedly held that democracy forms

part of the Constitution's basic structure. In *Indira Nehru Gandhi vs Shri Raj Narain & Anr.* (1975), the Court underscored that free and fair elections are an essential feature of democracy. Subsequent decisions have consistently reaffirmed this principle.

Democracy begins with votes

But democracy does not exist in the abstract. It operates through elections, and elections derive their legitimacy from the participation of citizens through the ballot. The vote is the very instrument through which popular sovereignty is exercised. It is through the vote that "We, the People" periodically renew the legitimacy of the state and hold governments accountable.

If democracy is a part of the Constitution's basic structure, and if free and fair elections are indispensable to democracy, it is difficult to explain why the citizen's right to vote should remain outside the constitutional core. To say that democracy is basic to the Constitution while the citizen's vote is merely a statutory right appears incongruous. A democracy without voters is inconceivable.

This does not necessarily mean that every aspect of voting should be elevated into an absolute fundamental right immune from regulation.

Parliament must continue to prescribe qualifications, disqualifications and procedures necessary for the conduct of elections. Age requirements, electoral rolls, residency conditions, disqualifications for corrupt practices and other regulatory provisions are indispensable for orderly elections.

What requires constitutional recognition is not every procedural detail but the core right of every eligible citizen to participate in the democratic process.

This becomes particularly evident when one examines Article 326 of the Constitution. The Article mandates that elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies shall be based on universal adult suffrage. Every citizen above the age of 18 is constitutionally entitled to be registered as an elector, subject only to narrowly defined disqualifications. The source of this entitlement is not legislation but the Constitution itself. The Representation of the People Acts merely operationalise that constitutional command.

Thus, while the mechanics of voting may be statutory, the citizen's entitlement to be a voter flows directly from the Constitution. Exclusion from the electoral roll, except in accordance with constitutionally permissible limitations, therefore, strikes at a

constitutional guarantee.

A matter for the Court to revisit

The distinction between statutory and constitutional rights may have served a useful purpose in the early years of the Republic, when electoral jurisprudence was still in its infancy. But the Court's own decisions have steadily blurred that distinction by progressively constitutionalising various facets of voting.

Perhaps the time has come for the Court to revisit an old doctrine. In a Constitution where democracy and

free and fair elections constitute the basic structure, the citizen's vote cannot remain a constitutional orphan. The ballot is not merely a statutory privilege conferred by Parliament. It is the instrument through which popular sovereignty is expressed and the Republic periodically renews its democratic legitimacy.

After all, if the Constitution protects the right to reject every candidate, it can scarcely deny protection to the right to choose one. ■

(The Hindu- 7-7-2026)

UN report captures Israel's crimes against Palestinian children

What began as a response to the terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, has prolonged into a nearly three-year-long aggression resulting in over 73,000 deaths and about 1.8 lakh injuries in the Gaza Strip. Children accounted for 30% of these casualties and 26% of the injuries. Israel's actions have been termed a genocide by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry in its September 2025 report.

Though Israel has denied such allegations, the Commission's new report released on June 18, 2026 has offered further evidence of Israel's violence. The report observed that several acts of the Israeli forces amounted to "war crime of willful killing and the crime against humanity of extermination." The Commission's inquiry conducted in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel examined violations and crimes affecting Palestinian children. It noted how Israeli soldiers mocked and weaponised symbols of childhood in Gaza. The report has captured various cases, showing how a systematic and deliberate infliction of harm has been imposed on the children in Gaza. The report highlighted that the children killed in Gaza represented around 2% of its entire child population. As per the report, the conditions of life imposed by Israel in Gaza has deprived the children access to schools and food, resulting in malnourishment among children.

The Commission concluded that Israel has deliberately carried out acts inflicting bodily harm on thousands of children. It stated that much of this harm was not incidental but "intended to destroy the existence of Palestinians in Gaza". To read more about the report, please see this [link newsth.live/justiceinterview](https://newsth.live/justiceinterview)

(The Hindu, 01-07-2026)

Role of Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali in The Freedom Struggle of India

- Obaidur Rahman Nadwi

Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali was one of those freedom fighters who sacrificed everything to get India free. This illustrious son of India was born on 7 July, 1854 at Itawara Mahallah, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and died on 20 September, 1927 at the age of 73 in San Francisco, California, United States of America.

He was not an erudite Islamic scholar but also a man of many sided genius. He was an accomplished and a fiery journalist besides being a nationalist to the core. He was also an author of several books and a polyglot who knew more than eight languages. Bhopal University was renamed as Barkatullah University in 1988, after him.

Needless to add that Maulana Barkatullah dedicated his life to the Independence of India. He was a key figure in the Indian nationalist movement. He is known for his bold and fiery speeches and revolutionary writings against British rule. He also served as the Prime Minister of India's "Government - in - exile". He always advocated for India's Independence through journalism and public speaking. He founded the Indian Home Rule Society and actively engaged in various revolutionary groups. In 1915, he became the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of India,

established in Kabul with Raja Mahendra Pratab as its president.

He was a prominent figure in the Ghadar Party, a revolutionary organization formed by Indian expatriates in the United States of America in 1913 to overthrow British rule in India.

Undoubtedly, his efforts with the Ghadar Party and his role in the provisional Government of India demonstrated his commitment to India's freedom struggle.

Education:

He received his primary education in his locality. Thereafter, he joined the prestigious Suleymannya School where he memorized the Holy Qur'an and studied Sihah Sittah (the six canonical books of Hadith). He did his graduation from this institution in 1878. Thus he became an accomplished Maulana and a learned scholar of Arabic, Persian and Islamic Studies. Here he got opportunity to learn English up to the Matric level. Thus he was educated from primary to college level at Bhopal. Later, he went to Bombay and London for higher studies.

It should be noted that "Maulana Barkatullah was a born revolutionary. He started giving signs of his revolutionary nature from his early life. First of all, he became self-dependent.

He also developed a keen interest in getting proficiency in the English language in order to be able to plead the cause of his country's independence at the international level in a more efficient manner. In 1883 he suddenly left Bhopal at the age of 23 and joined service at a Christian Missionary School in Jabalpur. Then he left for Bombay where he diligently studied the English language for four years. From there he went to England for higher studies in 1890. But he could not continue his formal education there, as he became preoccupied with political and revolutionary activities aimed at getting independence for his country.

The Maulana was one of those freedom fighters who spent the major part of their lives outside India. The main countries of his activities were England, Japan, the United States of America, Turkey, Afghanistan, Russia and Germany. He remained busy touring these countries and seeking support for the liberation of India. When he reached London, the main thought which agitated his mind was as to how such a small country like England could become so prosperous and powerful that they ruled a big country like India. He was convinced that the British rule over India was the main cause of its misery. "(Musalmanon ka Jang - e- Azadi mein Hissah, p,19)

As a fiery Journalist:

He was an accomplished journalist. He carved a niche in the field of journalism. He brought out several

magazines and journals in different countries. In Japan, he edited "Islamic Fraternity" and he edited "Al - Islah" in France and Germany. He actively used journalism to promote India's Independence. His writings focused on the need for unity among Indians and criticized British rule.

In 1895, he was invited by the British convert Abdullah Quilliam to work at the Muslim Institute in Liverpool. Maulana got opportunity to write in two organs of Muslim Institute of Liverpool "the Crescent" and Islamic World". He wrote a plethora of articles in both magazines. Besides, Maulana's write-ups had continuously been published in the newspapers of England. Specially, "Landon Times" published Maulana's articles with regularity.

He subsequently taught at the Oriental College of University of Liverpool.

In England, he met two prominent revolutionaries, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Shyamaji Krishna Verma, and interacted with them closely. Greatly influenced by their revolutionary thoughts, he became filled with nationalistic zeal.

"Another important plan of the revolutionary mission launched by Maulana Barkatullah was to attack British India with the assistance of Turkey and Germany by raising an army of volunteers in the name of Jund - e- Allah (Army of Allah). The main objective of this army was to dislodge the British not only from India, but also

from other countries of the Middle East. Medina in Saudi Arabia was the headquarters of this army, while Kabul Constantinople and Tehran were other centers of recruitments to it under the centralized supervision of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi. Thus Maulana Barkatullah may also appropriately be credited with having been an early champion of the cause of Asian solidarity. But the Indian Government in exile could not function for a long period of time, because the Afghan government, under pressure from the British withdrew its support, following which the mission had to be closed in Afghanistan.

Even after the collapse of the parallel Indian government in Kabul, Maulana Barkatullah far from being nervous, remained active and busy making his best efforts for the Independence of his country. He toured a number of European and Asian countries canvassing support for India's freedom. Along with Raja Mahendra Pratab and others he met Lenin on 7th May, 1919. He also wrote and published a Persian pamphlet under the title "Bolshevism and the Islamic Nations" which was translated into English by Captain Samad Shah, a British Indian officer. But the pamphlet was proscribed and banned in British India. (Muslims in India, op.cit., Vol. 11, p. 122)

Maulana Barkatullah lived about 11 years in England.

It should be noted that Maulana Barkatullah arrived in New York in 1899,

where he kept in touch with fellow revolutionaries and scholars. He was involved in the formation of the Pan-Aryan Association in New York in 1904. He was actively involved in campaigning for Indian Independence from there. He was also one of the founders of the Ghadar Party in San Francisco in 1913. Maulana stayed approximately six years in the United States of America.

Similarly, Maulana moved to Japan in 1909. He taught in Japan for nearly five years, from 1909 to 1914. He was a professor of Urdu at Tokyo university. He also published two journals "The Islamic Fraternity" and "Al - Islah" there. His anti-British activities in Japan, including publishing seditious materials, eventually led to his departure in 1914. He stayed five years in Japan.

In short, Maulana Barkatullah occupies a significant position in the history of India's freedom struggle.

More importantly, for thirty five long years the period of his exile from India- he wandered from place to place as a political refugee, with a price on his head. He suffered much. He went through all kinds of ordeals. Yet nothing could deter him from his grim purpose. No doubt, he lived for India and died for India.

This great revolutionary, staunch freedom fighter and illustrious son of India must always be remembered especially on 15th August the Independence Day of India. ■

The Concept of Life

- Hammudah Abdalati

Life is a brilliant demonstration of God's wisdom and knowledge, a vivid reflection of His art and power. He is the Giver and Creator of life. Nothing comes to existence by chance, and nobody creates himself or anybody else. Life is a dear and cherishable asset, and no sensible or normal person would like to lose it by choice. Even those who feel so desperate and take their lives by committing slow suicide, try in the last minute to regain their existence and wish to capture a second chance to live. Life is given to man by God, and He is the only Rightful One to take it back; no one else has the right to destroy a life. This is why Islam forbids all kinds of suicide and self-destruction, and recommends patience and good Faith when a dear soul passes away. When a murderer is executed in punishment, his life is taken away by the right of God and in accordance with His Law.

When God gives life to man, it is not in vain that He endows him with unique qualities and great abilities. Nor is it in vain that He charges him with certain obligations. God means to help man to fulfill the purpose of life and realize the goal of existence. He means to help him to learn the creative art of living and enjoy the good taste of life according to the Divine guidance. Life is a trust from God, and man is a trustee who should handle his trust with honesty and skill,

with mindfulness of God and with consciousness of responsibility to Him.

Life may be likened to a journey starting from a certain point and ending at a certain destination. It is a transitory stage, an introduction to the Eternal Life in the Hereafter. In this journey man is a traveller and should be concerned with only what is of use to him in the Future Life. In other words, he should do all the good he can and make himself fully prepared to move any minute to Eternity. He should consider his life on this earth as a chance provided for him to make the best of it while he can, because when his time to leave comes he can never delay it for one second. If his term expires, it will be too late to do anything about it or extend it. The best use of life, therefore, is to live it according to the teachings of God and to make it a safe passage to the Future Life of Eternity. Because life is so important as a means to an ultimate end, Islam has laid down a complete system of regulations and principles to show man how to live it, what to take and what to leave, what to do and what to shun, and so on. All men come from God, and there is no doubt that they shall return to Him. In one of His comprehensive statements Prophet Muhammad wisely advised man to consider himself a stranger in this life or a traveller passing by the world. ■

Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi - A Great Freedom Fighter

- Sultan Shakir Hashmi

One of the most towering personalise of Indian freedom struggle Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was born in Miyanwali in the state of Punjab on 10th March, 1817 in a Hindu family who converted to Hinduism to Shikism. His father Ram Singh was a goldsmith by profession and had expired a few months before he was born. His grandfather Jasopat Ram too died when he was barely two years old. This compelled his mother to shift to her mother's place and later to Dera Ghazi Khan in Jaipur to live with her brother, where Maulana Obaidullah received his elementary education.

It was here that Maulana happened to read "Tohfatul Hind" given to him in 1887 by one of his friends which greatly impressed him. Then he converted to Islam and left for Sindh at the age of sixteen.

In Sindh, Maulana Obaidullah started studying Islamic philosophy and read many books on the subject and was more inclined towards Islam and Islamic teaching. Later on he married the daughter of Azim Khan, Headmaster in Sakkar Islamia School and decided to live Sakkar and informed his mother of his decision. His mother rushed to Sakkar but was greatly shocked to see that her son was now a Muslim. Both mother and son immensely loved each other and

the Maulana had greatest regard for her. His mother started living with him but she strictly adhered to her religion and lived like a Hindu while his Son remained a Muslim.

It was here that he happened to obtain some books written by Shah Ismail, the nephew of Shah Abdul Aziz, the second head and chief of the organization of grand movement for freedom struggle of Shah Waliullah. This was the first time Maulana Obaidullah came to know about Shah Waliullah's organization and its freedom struggle movement which greatly impressed and interested him. He wanted to know more about the organization and its activities. Later on he came in contact with some people of Sindh who were the followers of Shah Waliullah and his policies and were working in the direction of combating the British influence in India and to oust them from the sacred Indian land. He continued meeting them and mixed up with them. He was accepted in their fold when these followers of Shah Waliullah movement started trusting him and accepted him as a colleague.

It was through them that Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi came to know that the head and chief of the whole organisation of Shah Waliullah's freedom struggle was Maulana

Mahmood-ul-Hasan of Darul Uloom at Deoband and became anxious to meet him. At the earliest opportunity he met Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan and became his disciple and follower, and within a short time won the heart of Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan and was able to gain his confidence. It was at Darul Uloom that Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi realized the greatness and noble cause of Shah Waliullah's organization and its freedom struggle movement and ideals and objectives behind the movement and himself became a sincere and a devoted follower. Impressed by his devotion and sincerity Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan confessed him in the organization and started including him in the secret meetings of the organisation.

After sometime Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan sent him to Delhi to run another Madarsa "Nazarat-ul-Maarif". He introduced Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi to famous and learned personalities like Dr.M.A. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan who were his friends and asked them to help Maulana Obaidullah in running the Madarsa.

While living in Delhi and looking after the affairs of "Nazaratul Maarif" Madarsa, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi with the help of some of his followers and friends was able to form a Revolutionary Party at Delhi, as an armed struggle against the Britishers

in 1913. By that time similar organizations had been formed in Punjab and Bengal and other parts of India with similar aims and objectives, and Maulana Obaidullah was able to establish contact with them which has been mentioned in the book "Bandi Jibon" by famous revolutionary Shachindra Chandra Sanyal.

Maulana Mohmood-ul-Hasan later asked him to proceed to Kabul. Although Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi had done a great deal of work in Delhi but decided to go to Kabul as he had the greatest regard for Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan and crossed the border along with his three colleagues and reached there on 15th October 1915.

Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi had to face great hardships on his way to Kabul and even in Kabul his difficulties were not over. He was sent to jail by the government. It was only when Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh reached Kabul with a German-Turkish Mission that Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and his colleagues were released from jail along with scores of other Indians who were also languishing in prison. On his release from jail, Maulana Obaidullah again became active and met General Nadir Khan and had a long discussion with him. It was a pleasant surprise for him to know that General Nadir Khan already knew a lot about the on going activities of Shah Waliullah freedom struggle movement in India and in

Kabul and knew Maulana Mahmood ul-Hasan very well. The general assured him of all possible help.

Later on, a 'Government' in exile of independent India was formed in Kabul and Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was given an important portfolio in the same. He was also chosen as the commander of the army which was to be formed in Kabul to fight against the British government in India.

Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi got a secret message written on a silk handkerchief and sent the same to Sheikh Abdul Rahim for onward transmission to Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan, through a student by the name of Abdul Haq. Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan at that time was in Makkah. But Abdul Haq was in fact dishonest and switched his loyalties and handed over the letter to Khan Bahadur Haq Nawaz Khan instead of Sheikh Abdul Rahim. As Nawaz Khan was loyal to British he handed over the same to Sir Mahael O'Dayar. Thus the whole secret was disclosed and the British government agents at once came to know about the conspiracies being hatched in Kabul and India. Arrest warrants were immediately issued for many people involved including Sheikh Abdul Rahim who fled before his arrest. Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan was arrested in Makkah and the British government asked the government in Kabul to arrest Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi his colleagues and hand them over to the

British government. However, the ruler of Afghanistan Amir Habibullah's younger brother Nasrullah and his son Amanullah Khan intervened and Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and his followers were only arrested and jailed in Kabul and they were not handed over to the Britishers. The Maulana continued his activities in jail and kept on helping the people in Afghanistan who were against the British government.

After some time on 19th February 1919 Amanullah Khan became the ruler of Afghanistan when Amir Habibullah was killed as he was puppet of the British government. Thus Maulana Obaidullah and his followers were released from jail and came much closer to Amanullah Khan, who held him in high esteem and respected him.

It was a time when there was great resentment in India and there was great resentment all over the country. There was Martial Law in Punjab and people were protesting against Rowlet Act on a large scale. On the advice of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, Afghanistan declared war against the British government. The independent Qabilas at border were actively supporting him. The British government had to compromise with Afghanistan and grant complete freedom to Afghanistan on the condition that Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi would not be allowed any political activities in Afghanistan. This

was not acceptable to Maulana Obaidullah and he left Kabul though he very well knew that he would be in trouble and would have to face unbearable hardships if he left Kabul.

After leaving Afghanistan, Maulana widely travelled to many countries and went to Russia, Turkey and Italy. By this time Maulana had come to realize that by associating with Indian National Congress and including his own aims and objectives in their programme was the only resort for achieving his aims and objectives. In Turkey, he met visiting Indian leaders Lala Lajpat Rai and Dr. M.A. Ansari and had long discussions with them and exchanged views about Indian independence and Hindu-Muslim unity. Later he met Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru too in Italy and had wide ranging talks.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru has mentioned in his book "Meri Kahani" the programme of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and his views and appreciated his views on the Hindu and Muslim unity perspective. Later on he migrated to Makkah and started living in Makkah.

In 1936 Indian National Congress demanded permission for Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi to return to India and the Congress succeeded in its efforts when Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh formed the 'Government' in Sindh and Maulana Obaidullah received the permission of the British

government to return to India on 1st of November, 1937. Thus after a very long exile of 22 years outside India in which he had faced immense hardships, beyond imagination Maulana was able to return to his loving mother land and meet his old colleagues and followers. It was like a dream come true for him and he was deeply moved by the love and affection and the warm reception he received in India. Once in India he started his activities again and started living in Delhi. The long and difficult and harsh exile could not dishearten the great patriot and dampen his spirits and he started working for the freedom struggle movement and continued with his efforts as long as he lived. According to him, the greatest worship of God was to love each other without any distinction of religion, caste or creed.

The great freedom fighter of the Indian freedom struggle movement lived for his native land and constantly worked for the independence of India with great devotion, sincerity and dedication along with his innumerable followers. His contribution to Hindu Muslim unity has been equally great and praiseworthy. He breathed his last on 21st August 1944 in Deenpur (Bahawal) leaving lacs of mourners and admirers weeping. His contribution in the freedom struggle can never be forgotten for years to come.■

Migration To Madinah

- S. M. Rabey Hasani Nadwi

Construction of Masjid-e-Nabawi (The Prophet's Mosque):

Then, after having bought the land in front of this very place, he (SAW) had a mosque constructed on it. This land had belonged to two orphan kids. Coming to know that it was meant for mosque, they wanted to have it donated. But, he (SAW) did not like to have it procured without payment of price. He paid its price in full. In the work of construction of mosque, too, he (SAW) participated equally with others. This mosque got to be known as "Masjid-e Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque) which assumed the position of the grand and main mosque of Madina.

One of the honours conferred by Allah Almighty. on him (SAW) was that this mosque built by him (SAW) was held so auspicious in Allah's reckoning that on offering prayers in it, the merit accrued thereupon got proclaimed to be equivalent to fifty thousand prayers offered in other ordinary mosques. On the South and East of this very mosque and adjacent to it, he (SAW) got the chambers for his pious wives built'. And, thus, his (SAW) residence happened to be adjacent to the mosque. Latter, on the advent of his demise, in the chamber of his pious wife, Hazrat Ayisha, adjacent to this very mosque, wherein he had breathed his last, he (SAW) was laid at

rest, too, for his final repose. Thus, the occasion of offering prayers in this mosque came to serve as an opportunity for offering Salam to him (SAW) and expressing one's love for, and his bond with, him (SAW). Hence, whoever goes on Hajj pilgrimage, pays homage to this mosque as well. That part of this mosque that lies adjacent to his (SAW) place of repose (the grave) up to the pulpit of the mosque has been proclaimed to be a flowerbed from amongst the flowerbeds of the paradise. To offer prayers in it is like offering prayers in the paradise.

By the time his arrival in Madinah took place, the majority of its inhabitants had already become his followers. And, the aboriginal inhabitants of the place had already given assurances, too, of having him defended and to have their lives transformed, under his guidance, into an Islamic one. It was, thus, the second phase of his Call towards the Truth that had now got launched. And the credit and the honour thereof went to the city called Yathrab'. Yathrab was, essentially, the name of a part of the city which got, gradually, applied to the entire city. This word had an opprobrious implication also. He (SAW), therefore, liked it to be expressed in other appellations instead of this one. Since then, it got to be named as Taiba, Taba and, in ascription to him (SAW), Madinat-un-Nabi, (Prophet's city). And, for the sake of

brevity, Madinat-un-Nabi came to be called just 'Al-Madinah.

There had come once an opportunity when this honor and glory could have, perhaps, gone to Taif, had the powers-that-be there appreciated the magnificence of this mission and offered themselves for its support and had him (SAW) shifted there. The Harbinger of this Call for the Truth had himself, having undertaken the arduous journey, put up to them the proposal of extending support to him. But this lofty position was not destined to be the Jot of this city. Owing to their obstinacy and contumacy, they had themselves deprived of this honor and glory. It was, in fact, not destined by the Divinity itself to be their lot.

Ultimately, three years after this very occasion, that glory and honor got bestowed on Madinah, whose people responded to the offer made by him (SAW) in a positive way and gave their consent to lend support to him (SAW) wholeheartedly. And, thus, the city of Yathrab got transformed into Madint-ul-Munawwarah (literally meaning: the city made resplendent with radiance). It became the abode and the domicile of the last Prophet of Allah Almighty wherein he got the opportunity, living, as he did, amidst strong supporters, to disseminate the message of Islam. This phase of dissemination of the message of Islam got commenced after his having spent 13 years facing one severe hurdle after

another and one distress after another in performance of the task of calling towards the Truth since he had the office of the Prophecy assigned and under which he was called upon to have this job performed.

Thanks to this shift in location, he (SAW) and his honourable companions had now the opportunity to take safeguards against the enmity and persecutions of the people of the city of Makkah, the place whence the call towards the religion of Truth had gotten initiated. Besides that, the Muslims got also, thanks to the fraternal and cooperative atmosphere that they got here, ample opportunity to fulfill the obligation of carrying out the task of propagating and disseminating the religion of Truth in much more organized manner and with concentration. Although, it was, in this phase, the hostility at collective and organized level, instead of the enmity and baiting at individual level, that had to be tackled.

The Physical and Geographical Condition of Madinah:

Location-wise, Madinah Munawwarah held a particular place of importance. It is located about 450 kms. North of Makkah Mokarramah. It had around it a range of mountains. On the other side of the mountains on the West is the sea at a distance not far away. In between the sea and the mountain, the land is level. It was, geographically, part of Tehama. Caravans coming from the

south bound for Syria, Egypt and Turkey had to pass through it. Being, it did, in the proximity of Madinah, this route was, in a way, within the domain of the people of Madinah. The city of Madinah, looking at it from its eastward direction, is located on the western end of the mountainous range called Hijaz. Its land is arable and fertile. Hence, farming and husbandry has continuously been done here. There have always been orchards of date-palms and grapes also here. Because of that, denizens of this place happen, generally, to be farmers and land-owners. This was something contradictory to Makkah where the land was arid. The people there used to be, by profession, traders. Owing to that, they had to go, carrying with them their merchandise, sometimes to Yemen and, sometimes, to Syria. On their way to Syria, they had to pass by the vicinity of Madinah. Hence, throughout the expanse of the Arab Peninsula, this importance of the people of this place was duly appreciated. That, in case they got annoyed, they could cause blockade of the trade routes, particularly vis-à-vis the Quoraish who were, by profession, the traders. Hence, the latter were fully aware of the criticality of having their trade route to Syria passing through the vicinity of Madinah. Moreover, the tribes of Aus and Khazraj, who were the inhabitants of Madinah, belonged to the Qahtanite race of Arabs; whereas the Quoraishite and the tribes of their friends and kinsfolk belonged to the Ismailite

race. Because of this tribal disparity, too, each of the two groups had, to some extent, a separate mindset of its own. Each of the two groups also had, to certain extent, the racial predilection of their respective tribes.

The Social Condition:

This city of Madinah, prior to its people becoming Muslim and the arrival of the Prophet (SAW) here, was, after the custom and tradition of Arab tribes of other regions, in the throes of internecine civil war because of the exaggerated sense of self esteem. Its regional and local conditions had their own peculiar complexities also. There were here two Arab tribes, Aus and Khazraj, who had, essentially, belonged to the same race. But, spurred by tribalism, they kept fighting each other. There were, besides them, the Jewish tribes also in the neighborhood. Being non-Arabs, as they did, they were regarded as aliens. Their population, too, was not much. The main and prominent clans of them were known by the denominations of Banu Nudhair, Banu Quraiza, and Banu Qainqaa. These were the affluent people of this place. They had, generally, turned into landlords. They would employ the Arabs as labourers in their gardens and fields on wages and lend money to their poor and pauper on interest. They would render support to one party against the other in the latter's internecine in-fighting. That would get the internecine fighting

of the Arab tribes further intensified'. Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi writes as follows:

"The life there was far ahead in complexities than that in Makkah. And, thus, the problems faced by the Prophet (SAW) at Madinah were of varied nature. There were several religions, societies and cultures. The task of getting all of them under control and having Madinah dyed with a single dye of one creed and one religion could not have been done but only by a Prophet 'reinforced by Allah' Himself, the one whom Allah had endowed with probity and perception, faculty of determination and the extraordinary capability of having the fragmented elements of the humanity reassembled and organized, the capability of having the forces and ideologies engaged in mutual in-fighting converted into associates of each other in performance of the task of Guidance and Reform of the humanity; the one end owed with a charming personage. This is the fact which has been described by Allah Almighty in His Book thus:

(He it is who confirmed thee with His help and with the believers. And He united their hearts Hadst thou spent all that is on the earth thou couldst not have united their hearts. But Allah united them; Verily He is Mighty,

Wise.)" (AL-Anfal:62-63)

The Universal Fraternization:

Now with the arrival of Muslims of

the tribe of the Quoraish in Madinah and their getting united with Aus and Khazraj, the moral and religious bond between the two races of the populace of Madinah, that is Aus and Khazraj, on the one hand, and the Muslims of the Quoraish tribe, on the other, had, at least, eliminated, to a great extent, the prejudicial disparateness between these two races. Under the banner of Islam, both of them got united. Both of them had now just one Mentor and one Leader. And, thus, the Islamic order of life got substantially bolstered by it. It had, in addition, the Prophet's (SAW) sagacious, affectionate and affable guidance available to it. Thus, a force that had its reigns in the Prophet's (SAW) hands, got evolved here. The Muslims coming from Makkah, being members of the Ismailite race did not have the congenital kinship with Aus and Khazraj. Instead, they had deemed each other kind of aliens, nay, rivals, rather. To redeem this disparateness and estrangement, the Prophet (SAW) took the measure that he (SAW) had them formally fraternized. That is, he (SAW) had a covenant of their being brothers, on the line of kinship that exists between the sanguine siblings, formally solemnized. It was on one-to-one basis'. As are sult thereof, their racial disparateness got transformed into propinquity and fraternity.

Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi writes:

"This fraternization was the

prelude to establishment of a missionary Ummat, that was the foundation of a unique of its kind, Islamic and universal fraternity which was going to be raised for having a new world order, say, a new world, evolved. It was getting evolved to give the world the correct and specific creeds and such pious objectives as would emancipate it from the desolation and disorder, to give it the bonds of Faith, the real fraternity and unified campaigning. This bond of limited brotherhood between Muhajirs and Ansar thus proved to be the harbinger of a new life for the world of the humanity.

Hence, with the arrival of Islam in this city and its acceptance the Islamic injunctions, its habitants got instructed into making themselves brothers to each other, and into adopting, having given and fraternity up the tribal predilections, the attitude of humanistic compassion justice. Despite the tribal predilection, the feeling got generated in them. They (Aus and Khazraj) had not only themselves become brothers to each other, but had made the people of Makkah, too, their brothers. With the arrival of the Prophet (SAW) there, a magnificent ambience of love, brotherhood compassion and commiseration was created there.

Treaty with the Jews of Madinah:

The Jewish tribes domiciled, besides the Arabs, in Madinah hailed, originally, from the Syrian region. They had, having read the prediction of

appearance of a Prophet in "some or the other Arab region of the regions having date-palms' in their scripture, had come over here and got settled. Because of their racial disparateness, they were different in their mind set and characteristics from Arabs. In terms of religion, too, they were distinct from them. Thus, on religious and racial grounds, they had an identity of their own, different from that of the original inhabitants of this place. At the same time, in terms of learning and economy, they had supremacy over Arabs. Taking advantage of it, they drew political and economic benefits there-from. However, in terms of population and numerical strength, Arabs had an edge over them. Members of the Jewish community, owing to their economic and academic supremacy over Arabs, considered the latter inferior to them. In the economic field, they would make a display of their strength. Making threat on academic grounds, they would say that: our books contain this prediction that a Prophet is to appear in these quarters. On his appearance, we would, under his leadership, have our formal dominance and supremacy attained over you.

Even though their religion was the same as that of Musa (AS) and Musa (AS) was one of Allah Almighty's chosen Prophets, the practices of these Jews as well as the Jews of other regions, too, were not fully in conformity with their religion. They had even made

interpolations, as per their own sweet will, in their Divine Book, Torah. And, on the strength of these interpolations, having proclaimed some wrong deeds, too, as the right ones, they would do act as per their own free will.

Ultimately, owing to this sort of persistent contumacy on their part, Allah Almighty had them proclaimed as the despised lot. They had, however, the misconception that the forthcoming Prophet would only be from amongst them. For, quite for some time past, exactly so had been the case. Because of their being descendants of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), they were having benedictions made on them. It was their incessant disregard of them that had made them the despised lot. Yet, out of their fallacy, they were still expectant of having this last Prophet from amongst them only. It was on the basis of some spatial denotations that some of their family lines had, having come over to Madinah and its northern regions, got settled there and were awaiting the appearance of the Prophet.

But, when the Prophet (SAW) got raised from amongst the Arabs, instead of them, they took umbrage. They refused to accept him (SAW) as the Prophet. But, the Arabs of Madinah, on the basis of what they had heard from the Jews, found the news about his (SAW) Prophecy, being in conformity with what the Jews have been telling them. To them it appeared, rather, sort

of proof, too, of the veracity of his Prophecy. That was the reason that an atmosphere favorable to acceptance of Islam with convenience had already been evolved in Madinah. Then, on the Prophet's (SAW) arrival in Madinah, the Jews, seeing that the majority of Madinah people had already joined him (SAW), kept their displeasure, due to the fear of this majority, to themselves. On this end, however, the Prophet (SAW) had, thoroughly, taken in the situation. He, therefore, thought it prudent to have a peace treaty concluded with the Jews so that no atmosphere of any sort of turmoil could be created within the populace of Madinah. Since the Jews were in minority, they conceded to entering into the treaty by way of temporal expediency. In this treaty, provision was had for mutual peaceful co-existence between Arab Muslims and Jews. Provision was also had in it for maintenance of religious and social autonomy was also had in it for maintenance of religious and social autonomy was also had in it for maintenance of religious and social autonomy of each other. It was also agreed upon that in case of threat from outside, both the two sides would help each other. After having this treaty concluded, there was no hindrance left in the way of making call towards Islam and in adoption of the Islamic order and the Islamic way of life in the city of Madinah.

(To be continued)

Sheikh Hamad - The Architect of Modern Qatar

Qatar's former Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani (1952-2026), known as the "Father Emir", ruled over Qatar from 1995 until his abdication in 2013. He is widely regarded as the architect of modern Qatar.

Hamad was born on January 1, 1952 and passed away on July 12, 2026 at the age of 74.

He did his primary and secondary schooling in Doha, Qatar, and graduated from the British Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom in 1971.

He served as Minister of Defense, Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief and Heir Apparent before becoming Emir of Qatar.

More importantly, he transformed the country into one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

Sheikh Hamad's father Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani (1932-2016) was the Emir of Qatar from 22 February 1972 until he was deposed by his son Hamad bin Khalifa in a coup on 27 June 1995 and ruled over for 18 years before peacefully handing power to his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. During that period, the country progressed from shipping its first cargo of liquefied natural gas in 1996 to becoming the world's largest exporter of LNG. Hamad parlayed these riches into global influence and unrivaled wealth for his citizens.

Hamad gradually accumulated responsibilities for the country's day-to-day affairs. In 1995, Sheikh Khalifa tried to claw back some of his son's powers, and Hamad seized power while his father was in Switzerland.

From the beginning, Hamad was seen as a modernising influencer, both in the Gulf region and within Qatar. He organised Qatar's first municipal elections in 1999, and approved a constitution that was ratified in 2004.

Under Hamad's reign, Qatar's economy grew more than 20-fold, climbing to \$199 billion in 2013.

He founded the prominent news channel Al Jazeera in 1996 and used assertive diplomacy to position Qatar as a major international mediator for conflicts in the Middle East and Africa.

Besides, the news channel drastically reshaped Arabic language- broadcasting and established itself as a major international voice.

He established the Qatar Foundation and Education City to build a knowledge-based economy through top-tier international universities.

He is globally recognized for revolutionizing Qatar's education system.

Needless to add that he embarked on leading development and reform plans and educational programs using his country's vast natural gas wealth to push an ambitious agenda of political economic and social reforms.

Under his leadership, the Gulf nation secured the right to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup marking the first time the tournament was held in the Middle East.

It is heartening to learn that it was the former Emir who supported and backed the well-known Islamic scholar Allama Yusuf Qaradavi in every possible way. Qaradavi shifted to Qatar from Egypt in 1960. Later on, he was granted Qatari citizenship and provided continuous protection by the Emir. He lived in Qatar until his death in September 2022. It should be noted that he voluntarily stepped down in 2013 to hand over the reins of power to the present ruler, his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Truly speaking, Sheikh Hamad dedicated his entire life to Qatar's political, economic, social, cultural, educational and healthcare transformation.

He will be remembered for his outstanding contribution and unprecedented achievements in transforming Qatar into an energy, diplomatic and global economic powerhouse as well. ■

(Obaidur Rahman Nadwi)

Alam Badi Azmi - An Exemplary Leader

- Maulshree Seth

Alam Badi Azmi was a veteran Indian politician, five-time Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and the oldest serving member of Uttar Pradesh Assembly. Representing the Samajwadi party, he served the Nizamabad Constituency in Azamgarh. He passed away at the age of 90 on July 23, 2026.

Azmi never acquired the trappings of power that often accompany long political careers. Even as one of the state's seniormost legislators, he continued to use a basic keypad mobile phone, was often seen reaching the Assembly on a two-wheeler, and preferred spending time among people in his constituency rather than in political circles.

SP leaders said Azmi's simplicity extended to every aspect of his public life. They recalled that he would often travel from Azamgarh to Lucknow by public bus to attend Assembly sessions or party meetings and would readily take a cycle rickshaw to reach his destination if needed, without hesitation. "He never believed in political showmanship. During elections, he would refuse to put up posters or banners and would simply say, 'If I have worked for the people, they will vote for me any way. That was his way of politics,'" said an SP legislator, adding that party colleagues affectionately called him "Chacha (uncle)", "Even at 90, he was among the most active legislators I have seen."

He was personally inspecting development works in his constituency until about two months ago," the legislator added.

Born on March 16, 1936, in Vindwal village of Azamgarh district, Azmi trained as an electrical and mechanical engineer before entering politics. Inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and

Subhas Chandra Bose, he briefly worked as an engineer before dedicating himself to public life.

His electoral journey began in 1996, when he was elected to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly from Nizamabad on a Samajwadi Party ticket. Voters returned him to the Assembly in 2002, 2012, 2017, and 2022, making him one of the longest-serving legislators from the region.

Colleagues across political parties described him as a soft-spoken, accessible, and honest leader whose personal integrity earned him widespread respect. Residents recall that he remained approachable throughout his career, choosing modesty over political spectacle. Beyond politics, Azmi worked on issues of communal harmony and social welfare. According to his Assembly profile, he founded the Qaumi Ekta Manch in Azamgarh, served with the Muslim Relief Committee and authored a book on communal harmony.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav paid a rich tribute to the veteran legislator, saying he was deeply saddened by his demise and was praying for peace to the departed soul. He also extended condolences to the bereaved family.

Azmi had been unwell for some time and died at his residence in Kurmi Tola, Azamgarh. His funeral prayer was held at Jamiyat-ur-Rashad, after which he was laid to rest at the city's new graveyard. ■

(The Indian Express, 24-07-2026)

Preaching And Propagation

- Mohammad Manzoor Nomani

Essential as it is for us to affirm faith in God and the Prophet and to follow with righteousness and sincerity the straight path of Islam, it is also of no mean importance that we strove earnestly to guide the others, too, to the path of Faith who are ignorant of it or who may be unwilling to adopt it on account of prejudice or spiritual malaise. As God has placed on us the duty of being His pious, devout and faithful servants so also has He made it obligatory for us to work among His other creatures as well towards the same end, that is, towards making them also His pious, devout and faithful bondmen. That is what is meant by the service of Faith and its preaching and propagation.

This work is so great in the sight of God that for it He sent down thousands of Prophets into the world. The Prophets bore tremendous hardships and went through the severest of trials and privations to carry out their mission. They worked for the moral and spiritual reform and uplift of mankind. (May the eternal blessings of God be on them and their companions and supporters).

The glorious chain of Prophecy and Apostleship ended with the last of the Prophets, the Prophet Mohammad

(Peace and Blessings of God be upon whom). Through him also God proclaimed to the world that no more Prophets would now be raised up for the guidance of humanity. The celestial mission shall now be carried on by those who have accepted his guidance and the religion he had brought with him into the world.

In sum, after the termination of the luminous line of Apostles the responsibility for preaching and propagation of Faith and religious instruction and reform of mankind has fallen wholly upon the shoulders of the followers of the sacred Prophet. This honour, indeed, is unique. In the Quran, the very object of the raising up of Muslims has been defined as nothing but this:

You are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in God.

(III:110)

The Muslims were, thus, superior to all other peoples and communities for the simple reason that they, in addition to adopting for themselves the path of Faith and righteousness, were charged with the special duty of striving to bring others also to practise

what was right and to avoid what was wrong. It was because of this that they were given the distinction of being the 'Best of Peoples'. It is, also, evident from the above verse that should the Muslims fail to discharge the function they would not only forfeit the claim but also render themselves liable to be punished by God for neglecting the duty He had assigned to them. Let us take an illustration: suppose a company of sentries is posted in a town by the Government to check the immoral activities of its citizens and the sentries not only fail to perform their duty but, what is more, they themselves begin to indulge in the same transgressions they were required to suppress. Now, will or be retained in service and rewarded by the Government taken severely to task by it for their negligence and misconduct? It will, certainly, not be improper or unjust if they were punished more severely than the other offenders.

The conditions prevailing in the entire Muslim World today are so extremely deplorable that, what to speak of the preaching of Faith and correction and reform of others, not more than five or ten per cent of Muslims themselves are true to Islam and do good deeds and abstain from what is evil and prohibited. In these circumstances, it becomes our primary duty to carry out the mission

of moral and spiritual reform and guidance among our own people among such sections of them as have drifted mournfully away from the path of Faith and moral uprightness.

One of the reasons for it is that those who call themselves, or are known as Muslims, whatever be their practical state, have, after all, forged a link between themselves and God and His Prophet and Faith, and become members of the Muslim brotherhood or Ummat, through the acceptance of Islam. Solicitude for their moral and spiritual well-being is our first responsibility, in any case, in the same way as the responsibility of looking after the welfare of his own children and near relations is greater on a man than that of looking after the welfare of others.

And, secondly, before everything else, it is the actual condition of Muslims from which the world will generally judge about Islam, and the spectacle of degeneration that Muslims, on the whole, present these days is such that it cannot be expected to make a very favourable impression on anyone in respect of their Faith. The non-Muslim World is not likely to think very highly of the excellent teachings of Islam as long as Muslims remain what they are today. On the other hand, it is a feeling of revulsion and dislike which non-

Muslims usually get about Islam when they look at the moral and spiritual depths into which the Muslims have sunk. It has always been like this. People have always formed their opinion, good or bad or indifferent, about a religion from the actual moral and social state of its followers.

In the past when Muslims used to be truthful Muslims, observing strictly the postulates of their Faith, people were attracted towards Islam simply by seeing them. Whole nations and communities were converted to Islam in this way. But since the Muslims sank so low that the majority of them remained Muslims only in name their conduct and morals grew un-Islamic and their hearts got bereft of Faith and righteousness the world has developed a prejudice against Islam itself.

In fine, we should realise the truth of it clearly that the daily life of Muslims, their social and moral and spiritual conduct and behaviour, is the biggest testimony and the chief measuring rod with regard to Islam. If the practical life of Muslims is good the world will form a good opinion about Islam and, if it is bad, the opinion the world will acquire about Islam will also be bad. In latter case, the preaching of Islam among non-Muslims is destined to be fruitless. Hence, the success of all the efforts aimed at the propagation of

Islam among non-Muslims as well is dependent on the condition that Islamic life, i. e., the life of Faith and righteous action became the chief attribute of the entire Muslim community. From this point of view, also, it is necessary to strive first for the guidance and reformation for Muslims and to launch the struggle with all our might popularising values of Islamic life among them before we turned our attention to others.

The Quran has given the task of religious preaching, reform and guidance the name of Jihad-i-Akbar, The Jihad. If it is undertaken in the right spirit, with sincerity and selflessness, and solely for the sake of winning Divine work, approbation, this work, definitely, is a very great Jihad in the sight of God.

Many people suppose that Jihad means only a war which is waged in the path of God and according to the rules and instructions laid down for it in the Shariat. But not correct. The truth is that whatever endeavour that can be made at a particular time for the preaching and propagation of Islam and moral and spiritual correction and guidance of mankind is Jihad of that age.

The holy Prophet remained in Mecca for about twelve years after the mantle of Apostleship had fallen upon him. During this period Jihad of the

Prophet and his Companions consisted altogether in adhering steadfastly to Faith in spite of the terrible persecution unleashed on them by the enemies of Islam, and in doing all that lay in their power, openly as well as secretly, to spread the Divine message of Islam and reform, morally and spiritually, those who lived around them.

To devote oneself to the noble task of guiding the ignorant, the wayward and the thoughtless to the straight path of Islam, and of bringing them nearer to God, to spend one's time and money on it, to sacrifice one's comfort, all this, in any case, is Jihad in Divine estimation. In fact, it is the Jihad of the present age.

The rich reward that awaits those in the Hereafter who engage themselves in the lofty endeavour as well as the dreadful punishment that is going to fall to the lot of those who neglect it and do not participate in it can well be imagined from the Traditions we give below:

“A person who guides another to a deed of virtue shall receive the same recompense for it as the doer of the deed and there will be no reduction in the reward of the doer himself because of it.”

What the Tradition means is that suppose ten persons, or even five,

were reformed through our efforts and they came to believe in God and the Prophet and to observe the Divine commandments they began to offer Namaz and carry out other religious duties and avoided what was wrong and forbidden-then the reward they will earn on it jointly will be granted to us alone also. A little thought will show that there is simply no other way in which a person can win so much reward-the reward of the prayers and other pious and virtuous deeds of hundreds of men.

Another Tradition of the holy Prophet says :

“By the Almighty, if only one man receives guidance through you, it is better for you than red camels.”

As we have said earlier, the endeavour for mankind's moral and spiritual guidance and reformation is a service of Faith of the highest order, and a thing of outstanding merit and excellence. It is the special heritage left to us by the Prophets. It means their deputyship; it means their vicegerency. What worldly gain, what earthly glory, can compare with it?

The holy Prophet, in the under-mentioned Tradition, has made use of a simple example to impress upon us the importance of the work of religious reformation and guidance.

(Continued to page 14)

Around the World

U.S. military will be out of country by end of September, says Iraqi PM

The U.S. military will leave Iraq by the end of September, American officials and Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi said, following a 23-year presence that started with the 2003 invasion against Saddam Hussein. ■

U.S. Senators vie to levy 100% tariff on countries buying oil from Russia

A bipartisan group of U.S. Senators unveiled a Bill that seeks to impose 100% tariffs on five countries, including India and China, for purchasing oil from Russia. The Bill, brokered by late Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, exempts 15 European nations that buy gas from Russia from the tariffs. ■

Xi says AI should not be dominated by one nation

Artificial intelligence should not be dominated by a single country, China's President Xi Jinping said at a major technology conference in Shanghai, urging international cooperation on its development.

Chinese AI models are catching up to the most powerful US offerings and attracting global users with lower costs.

But how to govern the sector has become a key question, as concerns grow over military AI deployment or its use by hackers and terrorists.

"AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation," Xi said at the opening of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference. "We

should jointly oppose overstretching the national security concept in the field of AI or placing one country's security over that of others."

The United States and European Union restrict tech exports to China over national security concerns, while tussles between Washington and American AI labs have raised the issue of who controls top technologies.

"China is trying to lead not only in terms of the technology development, but also in terms of AI governance," said Sheng yun Lu, AI entrepreneur and founder of Shanghai consultancy Praxis Advisory.

Lu said that in his view, AI should be regulated "like we regulate nuclear power" ■

Venezuela earthquakes toll rises to 5,278: National Assembly President

The number of people killed in the powerful dual Venezuela earthquakes last month rose to 5,278, according to official figures updated. National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez said on Telegram the death toll from the quakes reached at least 5,278, while the number reported injured remained at 16,740. ■

Africa surpasses Asia with highest population facing hunger, says UN

Africa has for the first time become the continent with the largest number of people facing hunger, a UN report said, as a growing number of Africans have faced undernourishment. "The centre of gravity of hunger has shifted from Asia to Africa," said an official with Food and Agriculture Organisation. ■

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