





## **The Responsibility of Muslims in India**

“.....and work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering thereof.”

*Surah al-A'araf : 85*

**Brothers and Friends,**

The above verse of the glorious Qur'an contains the words with which Sho'aib, Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) admonished his tribe. It is usually said, "do not create disorder or confusion," but he spoke these eternal words and summed up the teachings of all the Prophets (peace be on them all): "O my people I do not indulge in evil and create confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof)." The words are only a few in number and quite simple but they carry a wealth of meaning in them. When laborious efforts have been made in any community or country to establish proper relations between the Creator (Allah) and the created (man) as also between man and man; when rights and duties are discharged equitably after a majority or the entire community has accepted the teachings of the Prophets (peace be on them all) then for the sake of Allah do not bring their labour of love to naught. It would be a great injustice because the Prophets (peace be on them all) had nurtured the ideal society with their precious life-blood, sacrificed personal interests and comforts, staked their honour and lives and the lives of their loved ones to attain these hard-to-achieve objectives. They had just one ideal before them that man

may learn to live as a human being and an obedient servant of Allah on the earth. The way the beads are strung together in a rosary (*tasbeeh*) or flowers are threaded in a garland in the same way the individuals were wreathed in the brotherhood of man. They were taught that man is the progeny of Adam (peace be on him) and he was created of clay. For the sake of Allah do not break this thread because the beads would scatter. The Prophets (peace be on them all) did their best to keep the beads together but Satan always tried to scatter them. The words of Prophet Sho'aib (peace be on him) are, in fact, the painful pang of his troubled heart. The Prophets (peace be on them all) taught the lesson of brotherhood, humility and advised their followers to live as desired of them by Allah after years of hard struggle. They said: it is not commendable for men to swim like fishes in water or fly like birds in the air. It is also not worthy of men to pounce on one another like lions or mangle like wolves (i. e. not to develop animal like propensities) but it is desirable for man to walk on the earth like an obedient servant of Allah.

“And walk not in the earth exultant. Lo! thou can’st not rend the earth, nor can’st thou stretch to the height of the hills.”

*Surah Bani Israil : 37*

The skies and the earth and everything that lies in between them belong to Allah then why this defiance and disobedience? He has used the word *islah* (rectification) for which there has to be a Prophet (peace be on him), constant preachings and Divine guidance. The words cover all this and the history of prophethood. The Prophets (peace be on them all) and those who looked after the interests and welfare of others had turned the earth into the garden of Eden by their sustained and tireless efforts. It was during these times that every man was prepared to make sacrifices for others-even lay down his life, if need be; the bandits had become beneficent friends and there were such examples of sacrifice for others that if we had not had authentic records of their noble deeds,

It would be difficult to believe them.

The most serious crime in the sight of Allah, the Prophets (peace be on them all) and reformers is that some one for the sake of his personal gains or on account of short sightedness should create disorder in any society.

Some people think that they need not worry because there is disorder in another locality, township or a distant part of the State. They refuse to move when an innocent wayfarer is stabbed or the houses are burnt down along with their inmates. But what will happen if these evils proliferate? There is no better example in any literature than that which has been given in a Tradition by Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) in this context. He said :

“There are some passengers in a double decker boat—the upper class and the lower class (this is also a miracle of Prophethood to visualise such a boat because there were no double decker boats in those days. If there were any, they would not be known in the Arabian Peninsula, specially Hejaz). There are some passengers on the upper deck and some on the lower deck. The water is stored on the upper deck as the upper class always exacts some concessions. The passengers from the lower deck go up to fetch water. It splashes inspite of careful handling. Then the boat rocks and inspite of all caution the water spills and spoils the clothes of the upper class people. It happened once, twice, thrice. It went on for some time till the people in the upper class lost patience and warned the lower deck people that they cannot stand this nuisance any more. The lower deck passengers on their part thought that they cannot do without water and decided to bore a hole in the bottom of the boat and get their supplies of water without depending on others. If the upper class people had not lost the balance of their mind, they would stop these people from executing their plan and plead with them to revert to the old practice and tolerate a little inconvenience to save

themselves. Because if the boat sinks all the passengers on board will perish."

We have to live here. We are all occupying the same boat. If some people have become selfish and think that it is enough if their interests are being served at present and they are not concerned with what happens to others or elsewhere, they are living in a fool's paradise. It has become very common that a certain section of our society gives preference to its kith and kin however incompetent they may be to the neglect of others better qualified. The most unfortunate part of it is that it has become universal. It causes heart burning and breeds discontent and disaffection among the people.

The Prophets (peace be on them all) preached the gospel of love and peace. They had knit individuals and communities into the brotherhood of man. If we go deep into this matter, we will find that whatever remnants of love for others, feeling of brotherhood among different sections of people, desire for peace, fear of Allah, respect for life, honour and property of others are found in the world today, they are result of the teachings of the Prophets (peace be on them all) and their true followers.

Mankind stood on the brink of a volcano at the beginning of sixth century and was about to stumble, a Prophet (peace be on him) was raised in Arabia to save it from falling in it. He once said, 'the likeness of me and you is that of a man who has kindled a fire; the moths start throwing themselves on it and he drives them away. I catch you from behind to save you from the fire, and you slip away from my grasp.'

.....and (how) ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He (Allah) did save you from it....."

*Surah al-I-Imran : 103*

It has happened many times in history that man became a brute. Then a Prophet (peace be on him) came and turned the blood-thirsty brutes into models of humanity. Illiterate persons became moralists, law givers and world leaders by following his teachings.

Whatever heritage of love we find in our country, is the gift of the mystics (sufis) who preached the message of love. Khwaja Gesu Daraz said, "if somebody places a thorn at a place and you do the same, there will be thorns all over. The remedy for evil is not evil but goodness."

Look good deeds annul ill deeds

This is a reminder for the mindful

*Surah Hud : 114*

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and earlier Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hujveri and all the *'awliya'* in this long chain preached the message of love. They had learnt it from the lives and teachings of the Prophets (peace be on them all) and won the hearts of men by love.

"He who wins the hearts is the conqueror of the world."

The mystics won the hearts by affection and persuasion. Then these persons became dearer than parents and blood relations. If we look into the life of Shaikh Ahmed Khattu (the city of Ahmedabad is named after him), we will find a good example of winning the heart by love. He was separated from his wet-nurse in a storm in childhood. Then a caravan which found him took him to a *'wali'* in the township of Khattu in Gujarat. When his parents came to know of his whereabouts they came to fetch him. The *'wali'* gave Shaikh Ahmed the option of going back with his parents or to stay with him. But he preferred to live the life of austerity and simplicity with the *'wali'* in the *'Khanqah'* to the comfortable life with his parents at home in Delhi.

It is the responsibility of the Muslim community—*khair-ummat'*—to stand up and meet their obligations to save the country from fall in moral standards. It is not correct to think that it is the sole responsibility of the powers-that-be because there are diverse pulls and pressures working on them. It is the responsibility of the *'millat'* in the light of the glorious Qur'an. It ill becomes them to allow the efforts of the true preachers,

religious reformers and other benefactors of humanity to go in vain. The Muslims are liable to be questioned on the Day of Judgement as to how the country went morally bankrupt with so many of them living there. It is for the Muslims to present an exemplary character and demonstrate that fear of Allah is the "be all and end all" of life and not money, power and position. Then come love and sympathy. If the '*ummat*' practices these precepts then the chances are that it may become the loved one once again. It is also possible that it may then exercise some authority and play an effective role in the affairs of the country. We have read many stories of individuals winning the love of Allah and the people. But this '*ummat*' had become lovable by the grace of Allah when it sacrificed its personal interests to save mankind from evils and made its future brighter; when it stuck to truth and sincerity. Once a Abbasid Caliph received a call from China—which is so far away from Arab countries that it is proverbial for remoteness in Arabic language. The Chinese ruler (*khaqan*) sent a delegation to the Caliph with a request to send some persons from his country to decide their disputes with justice as there was dearth of such persons in whom the people of China could repose confidence and who could decide their cases without fear or favour.

It happened at a time when the '*ummat*' believed and practised :

"Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind."

*Surah al-i-Imran : 110*

We have not been raised to live for ourselves but to guide mankind. It has been recorded by historians that when the Islamic army was stationed at Homs (Syria) and arrayed against the Roman army under the command of Abu Obaida bin Jarrah, he received orders from Caliph Umar to shift to Yarmuk where a decisive battle was to be fought. The Commander instructed the army to move from there and refund the tax which was collected from the non-Muslims for their

protection against outside aggression. When the Jews and Christians received back the amount of the tax realised from them they enquired as to why it is being paid back. The tax collectors replied that this amount was realised so that the army would protect them. But it is not in a position to discharge its obligations at the moment as it is moving to another front for strategic reasons. They do not know if they would come back or not and they had no right to keep that money. The historians narrate that the Jews and Christians cried and prayed that Muslims would come back. They preferred the Muslim rulers to their former rulers saying that they used to exact exorbitant taxes and also tyrannise them whereas they found the behaviour of the Muslims quite different. There are several such instances of exemplary behaviour by the '*ummat*'. The Muslims were welcomed wherever they went. They were considered to be the messengers of peace. The people believed that they would bring prosperity, ward-off evil, remove their mutual differences and attract the Mercy of Allah.

It was truth, love, justice, equality and morality which won over the *Berbers* of North Africa (who were left alone by Romans thinking them to be unconquerable) to Islam. They became so enamoured of Arabic culture that inspite of its best efforts the French Government, later on, miserably failed to dissociate them from Arabic language and culture and to revive their own former (berber) language, traditions and culture.

#### Brothers and Friends,

We have not thought seriously over the problem of making the '*millat*' lovable once again. There are certain qualities which go to make an individual or *millat* lovable. If these qualities are developed in an individual he becomes lovable and if developed by the *millat* or a majority of it, then the *millat* becomes lovable. There is no other way for the Muslims in India except this to regain respectability and dignity (i. e., through their virtuous behaviour).

Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts...

*Surah ar-R'ad : 11*

Sincerity (Khuṣṣ), sacrifice (Qurbanī) and selfless service (Iṣṣāḥ-Khidmat) are the qualities which go to make one lovable. State, Culture and Civilization are subservient to them. If these qualities are not present then political power, higher posts of authority and politicking are not of any avail. It is necessary especially for our Muslim youth to prove that they are efficient, honest, duty-conscious and possess a better sense of responsibility. If one is offered a tempting bribe and the need for money is also there, he should just not touch it. He should tell the person who has tried to bribe him that he has insulted him and his community. Wherever a Muslim youth is working he must prove by his virtuous behaviour that no individual, party or government can buy him off.

The problems of the 'millat' would be solved through belief in Allah and righteous deeds. This is the only way for it to survive and preserve its identity.

Those who believe and do right: Joy is for them, and bliss (their) journey's end.

*Surah ar-R'ad : 29*

We lost power and prestige through our mistakes. We can regain them through our capabilities. Nobody in the world can help us in this matter. The Arabs in Palestine and Lebanon were let down by both the super powers. Some of them depended on Russia while others on the United States though it has been very clearly mentioned in the glorious Qur'an that Satan lets them down who rely on him in the nick of time. They ought to have placed their trust in Allah, the teachings of the glorious Qur'an and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). They ought to have prepared themselves properly and thus faced the crisis. It is not correct to think that our destiny is linked with that of others. There is no defender and protector for Muslims

save Allah :

"If Allah is your helper none can overcome you....."

*Surah al-Imran : 160*

If there is any thing which can help the Muslims to stand on their feet, it is their faith and righteous deeds, competence and usefulness. The Muslims have to prove that the country needs them and cannot do without them. The ship of the State cannot find the safety of the harbour without Muslims for it is caught in the maelstrom of lust for money, struggle for power, and narrow mindedness—a creation of self-seeking individuals and petty politicians.

".....Then, as for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitudes."

*Surah ar-Ra'd : 17*

It is certain that humanity cannot proceed in the right direction without the guidance of the glorious Qur'an and its custodians :

"Then We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom We elected of Our bondsmen."

*Surah al-Fatir : 32*

The entire history of mankind bears testimony that whenever any community has left the course chalked up by the Prophets (peace be on them all) it has come to grief.

The Western Nations are speculating on the 'survival of the fittest' whereas the glorious Qur'an lays emphasis on the "survival of the useful" as mentioned in the verse quoted elsewhere because being fit alone is not enough ; usefulness is also necessary.

History provides evidence that first of all moral degeneration takes place in any nation and then follows its political downfall as a natural consequence. The history of the downfall of the Roman, Iranian, ancient Indian Empires and

Muslims Sultanates would provide us the proof, if any is required. The powers-that-be, leaders of the political parties, scholars and intellectuals should seriously think over the conditions prevailing in the country with sincerity, and far-sightedness and give serious thought to the factors responsible for them. If they do so they would shudder at the chaos which is spreading in the country. It is quite clear that craze for money and race for political power have become the real objectives to aspire and work for and the rest is nothing but idle talk—a subterfuge for the gullible. Then the worst part of it is that there are very few persons in this vast country to keep up the standard of morality, to treat our less fortunate brethren as equals and to save the country from the chaos in which it has been placed.

There are thousands of workers who invite the people to their party or to accept the leadership of a certain person but very few who are worried about the chaotic conditions prevailing here and that this trend needs to be checked and rectified. It is the "writing on the wall" for every body who has a little insight to read.

I have tried to analyse the causes of rise and fall of nations in this short discourse. It is upto the members of the '*millat*' especially the youth to heed the advice tendered here, to do some hard thinking, plan their course of action and help themselves, help the '*millat*' and help the country.

"Le apne Muqaddar ke Sitare ko too pehchan."

(Here! Look for the star of your destiny)

—Iqbal

**THE END**





# Plain Speaking to Muslims

Dear Brothers,

I would like to do some 'plain speaking' without mincing matters because the distressing and sorrowful plight of the 'millat' all over the world warrants soul-searching by all thinking and responsible members of this vast community at the present juncture. It is being done in the interest and for the well-being of all of us in all sincerity and sympathy from the depth of my heart and I hope it will be received in the same spirit.

"Rakhiyo Ghalib mujhe is talkh nawal men mu'af,  
Aaj kuchh dard mere dil men siwa hota hai."  
(Ghalib excuse me for speaking so bitterly,  
For today I feel greater pain in my heart).

Ghalib

The secret of safety, security and survival of the 'ummat' lies in looking for the real causes of the present distressful conditions and finding a way out of this unprecedented predicament. We are placed in a very unenviable position and there is no way out except to revert to Islam.

"\_\_\_\_\_ and who had felt that the earth, spacious as it was, had become too strait for them and their very lives had become a burden unto them, and who had thought that there was no refuge from Allah except in Himself."

Surah at Tauba : 118

It is necessary as patriotic and conscientious citizens to draw the attention of the powers-that-be and important institutions of national standing to their errors of omission and commission and there is no need to be afraid of being misunderstood over it.

### **An Honest General Survey :**

It is also our religious duty to speak the truth and not be guided by opportunism in doing so. The "khair-e-ummat" cannot and should not shirk its responsibility in this regard even if its voice is not heard. It is necessary for the elite in the 'ummat' to make a thorough study of the lurking dangers in the light of the 'Sermon on Mount Safa' by Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and speak plainly about the righteous deeds and moral obligations on which the Divine Law of Rise and Fall of Nations is based : Recall the time when the Makkan elite had assembled at the foot of Mount Safa in response to the call by Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who was known among them as "truthful" and "trustworthy." They thought that they would be told about a possible enemy attack or some such catastrophe. But they were told that there is no danger from outside, but it is from 'within' which is to overtake them on account of their ungodly and erroneous ways of life.

The guidance offered by the glorious Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) is enough for the 'ummat' as a perfect and infallible guide for all times and under all conditions however worse they be. A few guide-lines are being spelled out in this short discourse for consideration of the elite in the 'millat'. It is necessary for them to devote immediate and urgent attention to the suggestions being offered here to attract Divine Mercy and bring about a wind of change in the prevailing miserable conditions.

## **The Difference Between Monotheism and Polytheism :**

It is abundantly clear from the study of the glorious Qur'an that if a community blessed with a divine book and avowing belief in Allah; is involved in polytheism of any kind, instead of following the guidance offered therein, it is deprived of the Divine Help, falls in disfavour and ultimately disgraced.

"The displeasure of their Lord will surely rest on those who had worshipped the calf and humiliation will be their share in their present life, for, so do We requite those who give rise to false notions."

Surah al - A'araf : 152

"We shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve because they ascribe unto Allah partners for which no warrant hath been revealed."

Surah al - I - Imran : 15

On the other hand if it follows Divine Ordinances in letter and spirit, to the best of its capacity, there is a definite promise of safety, peace and glory in the world as evident from the following verse of the glorious Qur'an.

"Allah hath held out the promise that those who believe and do what is right that He will accord to them the privilege of ruling in the land, even as He had accorded to those who had gone before them, and that He will let the way of life (din) chosen for them prevail and that He will replace their state of fear by one of security (the privilege of being conditioned by the Divine Command : They shall have to serve Me alone, without setting up any peers to Me. And whose prove ungrateful after this, shall be regarded as wicked."

Surah an Nur : 54

## **The Lives of the Companions of the Prophet :**

The glorious Qur'an vouchsafes for the companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) when they practised the principles laid down therein, that :

And remember the time when you were but few (at Makkah) and held of little account in the land and in dread of those who would forcibly expel you. It was then that He found for you a place of refuge (Madina) and strengthened you with His help and provided you with the good things of life that haply you might give thanks."

Surah al-Anfal : 26

## **A Few Polytheistic Beliefs and Practices :**

The disclosure may, however, be unpleasant for some people, but it is a fact that some polytheistic beliefs and practices have penetrated in a section of the 'ummat'. It requires a little understanding of the glorious Qur'an and moral courage to realise it. The glorious Qur'an has denounced polytheism in unambiguous terms as an unforgivable sin.

"Surely Allah forgives not the setting up of peers for Him; for anything less than this, He forgives whomsoever He pleases."

Surah an-Nisa : 48

If anybody disbelieves or doubts the veracity of the above statement, he would do well to visit any popular shrine or attend an "Urs" and overhear the conversation of the frequent visitors to these places about the dogmatic notions which they, including a few bigwigs, have about these sages

and "aulia". Except for the few attributes (sifat) like creation of the universe and the like, they have ascribed many divine attributes to these "aulia" including invocation (dua) from and prostration (sajda) before their graves though these forms of submission are exclusively meant for Allah. If someone, who has a little knowledge of the principles of Islam, visits any locality inhabited by such Muslims, it is feared, he may cry out :

"And many of them believe not in Allah except by joining others (with Him)."

Surah Yusuf : 106

We cannot, therefore, expect anything substantial out of the plausible and specious means adopted at the instance of the so called leaders for safety, security and welfare of the "ummat" when the glorious Qur'an declares :

"Allah hath held out the promise that those who believe and do what is right."

Surah an Nur : 55

The preachers, speakers and scholars who are endowed with the understanding of the spirit of Islam cannot escape their responsibility in this respect and they are likely to be questioned on the Day of Judgement.

### **The ill-effects of Immorality and Misdeeds :**

The way the writ of Allah runs in the universe since creation, the properties of matter are an established and known fact-water, fire, herbs, poisons etc. have their specific properties. The way discipline, diligence and such other tried and tested methods have proved their worth for

success in the world in accordance with the Will of Allah, in the same way morality and righteous deeds and immorality and misdeeds do effect the lives of individuals and communities. The glorious Qur'an has described the ill-effects and dire consequences of misdeeds on the lives of individuals and communities in details. It is enough to look at the deplorable conditions and end of the tribes of Prophets Nuh, Hud, Salih, and Lut (peace be on them all) wherein their peculiar characteristic traits and deeds (rather misdeeds) have been mentioned along with the Divine chastisement which was wreaked on those tribes.

"O my people ! Let not the schism with me cause you to sin so that there befall you that which befell the folk of Noah and the folk of Hud, and the folk of Salih; and the folk of Lot are not far off from you."

Surah Hud : 89

Those who do not work according to the divine principles of Islam lead a miserable life. They are afflicted with distress, disrespect, diseases, abnormal deaths etc. The merciful Prophet (peace be on him) has also warned that when the "Ordering of good" and "forbidding of evil" is abandoned, the invocations are not answered. On the other hand if a climate of repentance (inabat) and recantation (tauba) is created, the Divine chastisement is withdrawn.

".....When they (the folk of Jonah) believed We drew off from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the world and gave them comfort for a while."

Surah Yunus : 99

It is observed that a large number of Muslims are involved in dissimulation (nifaq) of deeds (a'mal) and morals (akhlaq), and a good number of the pseudo leaders in the dissimulation of faith. It has also been noticed that a large majority of our brethren is permanently negligent of the daily five obligatory prayers - the most important of the fundamental principles of Islam after "Iman." It is absolutely necessary that along with other measures for the uplift of the "ummat" (in fact, before they are taken up), the members of the "ummat" should be called upon to strictly follow the tenets of Islam, i.e., Prayers, Zakat, Fasting and Hajj along with rectification (Islah) of their conduct and morals without which nothing worthwhile can be achieved by us as a whole. We should, where necessary, put a little fright in the hearts of the errant members of the "ummat" of the chastisement that afflicts the wrong doers in this world and the next for negligence of these fundamentals, which constitute the pillars of Islam.

"And obey Allah and His messenger, and dispute not one with another lest ye falter and your strength depart from you; but be steadfast! Lo! Allah is with the steadfast."

Surah al - Anfal : 46

### **The Practice of Certain Rituals for Cheap Popularity :**

The deeds which have their ill-effects in this world and the next and far-reaching consequences on the lives of individuals and communities are personal affairs, mutual dealings (mu'amalat), extravagance in certain rituals, spending lavishly for satisfaction of personal whims and fancies, etc. Because there can be no propriety for extravagance in religious ceremonies and social

functions. They are not in keeping with the spirit of Islam and such persons are liable to be questioned when lots of people do not have the means to meet the basic needs of life; when thousands of children cannot afford text books or school fees and cannot continue their studies; when such institutions, which form the backbone of the community, are struggling for survival and scores of plans, without which the meaningful existence of the community is inconceivable, are lagging behind or cannot prosper for want of necessary funds. It is unfortunate that prosperous persons and purse-proud upstarts spend lavishly on the marriages of their children and other ceremonies. The system of dowry is another curse which has infiltrated in a section of the 'millat' at some places. It is sad that in spite of education, social and political changes these princely and wasteful expenses have not stopped. On the contrary, novel methods have been adopted and political ambitions have been linked with them.

Even today in most of our professional fraternities, business class and the urban elite, the observance of these customs and conventions is given to ostentation; even if some of them are a necessity and a religious duty but they should be observed with austerity. There are some people who are otherwise religious minded but they consider these ceremonies unrelated with religion. The glorious Qur'an admonishes such persons in the following verses :

- i) "What thinkest thou (O Muhammad!) of him who hath chosen to worship his own desires."

Surah al - Furqan : 43

- ii) 'But they say. We found our fathers following a certain way and we are simply guided by their foot-steps.

Surah az - Zukhruf : 22

We have to make radical changes in the ideals and concepts attached with these ceremonies. It is necessary to rise against such conventions, make it clear that these grandiose practices invite the wrath of Allah and bring about the decline and downfall of the community. The Beneficent and Merciful Allah and His equitable laws do not countenance this prodigality for illusory notions of recognition and "the bubble reputation" when the wealth thus wasted can be usefully utilised to provide means of subsistence for laze of indigent members of the "millat" or utilised to meet the expenses of institutions of religious, educational and technical instruction which sorely need funds.

"And whenever We intend (in consequence of misdeeds, to let the law of life take its course) to destroy a city, We forewarn the affluent among its people but when they disregard the warning, the doom deserved overtakes them; and We let it come to absolute ruin."

Surah Bani Israil : 16

The most detestable practice which can invite the wrath or chastisement of Allah is the long list of demands made by the groom's side from the bride's as a condition of marriage. This practice has been given different names at different places. The dowry in accordance with one's status is not against "Sharikat." It is, in fact, an estimable convention and a sign of good family ties. The Prophet (peace be on him) gave certain

house-hold articles in dowry to his daughter Fatima Zahra because Hazrat Ali did not have those articles of daily use. The companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) and the Muslims of all classes and in all ages have given dowry to their daughters. But the form has now changed. It is no more a gift, a token of family ties. It is given in some cases to make a name, or as a ritual, but in most of the cases under compulsion. The father of the bride, at times, raises a loan (may be at exorbitant interest), or disposes of his property to meet the demands of dowry. The importance attached to dowry in India is not the practice in other Muslim countries. It, therefore, appears to be indigenous custom. It has now assumed an alarming magnitude and made marriages difficult and a curse and such despicable acts are perpetrated for dowry that they are enough to invite the wrath of Beneficent and Merciful Allah as such practices have been the cause of destruction of kingdoms and obliteration of civilisations in the past

The Muslims who claim to follow the Prophet who was sent as 'Mercy for the worlds' (peace be on him) ought to have come forward and stopped this wicked practice as sincere and true followers of that Prophet (peace be on him) about whom the glorious Qur'an says.

"But Allah would not punish them  
while thou wast with them -----"

Surah al - Anfal : 33

It is very sad that this evil has infiltrated in Muslim community also and some Muslims do not consider it against humanity and religion. If just one item in the long list of demands is not

provided the grooms (or in some cases the in-laws) do not allow the wedded wives to join them for years.

It is necessary that this evil be eradicated root and branch, else, I am afraid, the divine calamity may strike all of a sudden. Even otherwise the ill-effects of this practice which have affected the family and social life are not hidden from those who have a seeing eye. The holy prophet (peace be on him) is reported to have said :

Hazrat Huzaila Yamani narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said, "By Allah in whose hands is my life, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. It is, otherwise, feared that Allah may send His chastisement ('azab) and you pray and it may not be answered."

(Tirmizi)

### **An Exemplary Event :**

Those affluent members of the "ummat" who spend lavishly on banquets and illumination should keep the following exemplary event in mind. Hazrat Abdul Rehman bin 'Auf married after migration to Madina and Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was not informed of this important event though his presence would have been auspicious (babarkat) and a matter of just pride for him. These days relations are invited from far off places-countries from where passports and visas are required. When the Prophet (peace be on him) came to know about the marriage, he asked him to give a marriage feast (walimah).

The time has now come that this tendency of pompous feasts and lighting should be curbed by the elite. They should openly express their disgust and displeasure at this wastage and

discourage this trend by total boycott of such persons and festivities.

These spend-thrifts should know that there can be no justification for this needless luxury.

They should be afraid of accountability on the Day of Judgement when they would be called upon to render account for each and every paise and prove the legality of this wastefulness.

"He it is who hath placed you viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the test of) that which He hath given you. Lo! the Lord is swift in prosecution, and lo! He is Forgiving, Merciful."

Surah al - An'am : 165

### **Indifference to Social Obligations :**

It is clear from the study of the glorious Qur'an that excessive interest and occupation in one's personal affairs and business or economic advancement to the neglect of collective needs of the "millat", propagation and defence of faith, etc. are like committing suicide. The "millat" which takes to this wrong course is doomed to failure.

"And spend in the way of Allah and do not with your own hands work for your ruin and do good for Allah verily loves who do good."

Surah al - Baqarah : 195

Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari-the host of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)-who knew the real significance of this verse rebuked his comrades-in-army at the time of the siege of Constantinople

when they wrongly inferred from this verse that wilful exposure of oneself to undue risks in 'Jihad' is like committing suicide. He explained that this verse had been revealed when 'Ansar' had thought to take time off and look after their personal affairs, business, agriculture etc., which were adversely affected on account of their pre-occupation in learning and propagating the teachings of Islam. The 'Ansar' were admonished that if they suspend their religious obligations to look after personal affairs, this diversion albeit temporary, would be like committing suicide. It was made clear to them in unequivocal terms that individual safety and security lies in the excellent state of preservation of the entire 'ummat' in the same way as freshness of leaves depends on their remaining joined with the trees. If the leaves are detached from the tree they are seared. The life, progress and advancement of individuals is bound with the 'ummat' and this law of life is inviolable.

**"Palwasta reh shajar se ummaid-e-bahar rakh"  
( Keep joined with the tree and hope for the spring ).**

The individual members of the 'millat' cannot live with respect and remain secure on the unfounded notion of personal prestige and riches, social and economic status detached from the 'millat'. The history of the 'millat' provides evidence that whenever a community forming part of it behaved in this short-sighted manner it was ousted from its hearths and homes.

**"The likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh unto herself a house and lo! the frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew",**

**Surah al-Ankabut : 41**

## **The Need for Judicious Efforts :**

The 'ummat' is at a cross road at the present time. It is, therefore, necessary that judicious and determined efforts are made for the survival of the entire 'ummat'. The situation demands vigorous implementation of certain well-thought out plans for our individual and collective existence as Muslims. It is necessary that they should be safe, respected and be in a position to play an effective and decisive role in the affairs of the society. They have also to retain their special characteristics, make themselves useful to others and a blessing for humanity at large.

They must rise to the occasion, move with times (without in any way giving up the fundamental and basic principles of Islam) and march in step or ahead of developing nations as our forebears did. If necessary they should provide guidance and save the society from impending dangers and moral collapse. It is incumbent on the 'millat' to have its own educational institutions, initiate constructive plans and programmes and make organised efforts in the right direction. They are as important as air and water for life. If these institutions function properly and continue to march forward then the survival of the 'ummat' would be assured, its future would be bright and its position firmly established in the society. The narrow-mindedness and prejudices of some people, laxity or partiality of those in power and endeavours on the part of some persons in and outside the 'millat' to disrupt its unity or retard its future progress and these frequent disturbances would not seriously effect the attaining of its destined goal.

**"If Allah is your helper none can overcome you,  
and if He withdraw His help from you, who is**

there who can help you? In Allah let believers put their faith."

Surah al - I - Imran : 160

### **The Poor Man's Lamp :**

If a few members of the "milliat" are busy feathering their own nests, the rich and the powerful are negligent of the needs and demands of the 'milliat' and they are unabashedly luxurious in satisfying their whims and wishes when such institutions and programmes which are vital for the meaningful existence and regeneration of the 'milliat' are in a morbid state, then these individuals, may be as rich as Korah, are exposed to catastrophic upheavals. They carry absolutely no weight in the sight of Allah. A slight turn of the wheel of fortune would dislodge them from their high but precarious position and when they come to their senses they would find themselves deprived of everything worthwhile and meet the fate of extravagant and defaultant people.

"-----And even they ( the People of the Book ) on their part thought that their fortress will protect them against Allah. But Allah came upon them from whence they scarcely expected it and caused such upheaval in their hearts, that they let their houses be demolished by their own hands".

Surah Hashr : 2

Those scholars who have been endowed with some understanding of the immutable laws of Allah are apprehensive about the present conditions of the 'milliat' as a whole.

The 'millat' inspite of the political changes and economic backwardness is still in a position to run its religious, educational and technical institutions and finance the plans and programmes meant for its all round progress. These institutions and plans need not suffer or lag behind for want or lack of funds. Because there are many plans without which the educational, economic and other problems of the 'millat' cannot be solved and there are a number of institutions in the absence of which it would not be fair to say :

**"Khas hai tarkib men qaum-e-Rasool-e-Hashmi"**  
( Distinct is in composition the 'ummat' of Hashemite Prophet ).

Iqbal

There are many educational and similar other institutions which can save the Muslim youth from mental and cultural apostasy ( which has overwhelmed the Muslim countries ) and regenerate their faith ( which has been dampened by Western education ) in Islam and its bright future and provide antidote for the poison with which the Orientalists have perverted the minds of those youngmen who now monopolise leadership or hold the reins of government in Muslim countries. There are, again, many institutions which can bring about a reconciliation between the ever-changing life patterns and the eternal laws of Islam; which can infuse a new faith and confidence and provide guidance to our younger generation which has been misguided by Western ideologies. These institutions can undertake the work of re-orientation which had been achieved by the former scholars. There are many institutions which can translate the glorious Qur'an and present the exemplary life of Prophet Muhammad ( peace be on him ) in different national and international languages which

would help in providing a greater understanding of Islam to those persons who harbour misgivings about it on account of the false propoganda carried out against it. But alas! all these plans and programmes remain a dream or exist just on paper and they cannot be implemented or expanded because the necessary funds are not forthcoming.

### **The Absence of English and Hindi Press :**

It is difficult to find a parallel instance in history that a community whose numbers run in crores and which has lacs of rich and highly educated persons should suffer on account of doubts and suspicions created about it in the minds of others on the strength of distorted history and there are possibilities of fresh misunderstandings being created about it at all times. At a time when every incident, however, unimportant it may be, is utilised to paint the community in the blackest possible colours; when it is innocent and oppressed it is indicted as tyrant and blood-thirsty; when it is unable to exercise its birth-right to self protection, it is accused of oppression and armed raids; when its members are murdered, it is easy to denounce them as murderers; when the hostile press can make a mountain of a mole-hill; when fictitious stories are given the widest publicity; when all these things are going on for years on end, that community has no English and/or Hindi Daily Newspaper of its own to refute these false allegations, voice its genuine grievances and convey its tale of woes and miseries to the powers-that-be and the elitist circles and educate them on the truths about this much maligned community and religion.

What can we say about the common sense and intelligence of that community whose privileged few make a show of being happy and in easy circumstances on all occasions in and outside the country;

when a large majority of its members is oppressed and poor, backward and uneducated, unskilled and unemployed.

"Khama angusht ba-dandan hai ise kiya likhiye,  
Natiqa sir bagariban hai ise kiya kahiye".  
(The pen is awe struck as what to write about it,  
The speech is dumb-founded as what to call it).

Ghalib

Then that community has no right to complain about others. There is no use frowning at any event, however, shocking and objectionable it be. The frequent occurrence of riots has reached the stage that it should receive our immediate attention. It is not only the religious obligation to render all possible help to the helpless and homeless victims of the 'millat' but it is a moral and humanitarian duty also. It should not, however, take away all our time, energy and attention.

### **This State Of Affairs is Intolerable :**

We should not allow the present state of affairs to become a permanent feature of our existence. That community is very unfortunate and pitiable which is persecuted time and again and all its resources are frittered away in finding remedies to these inflictions.

This 'ummat' has not been raised to be continuously operated upon and to dissipate its energies all the time in attending to the gaping immedicable wounds. It is, therefore necessary to plug the loopholes through which these riots find their way into Muslim localities whether they be in or outside them.

There is an urgent need to imbibe Islamic teachings in their pristine form as expounded by Prophet Muhammad ( peace be on him ) and practised

by his compositions which show the way for our unity, safety and welfare. We should take firm, positive and concrete steps in this direction and these should continue unabated till we feel sure of complete protection of the entire 'millat'. We should not leave any available stone unturned till we achieve our set goal.

"And hold fast all of you together, the cable of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favour with you, how ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts by His grace, and (how) you were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it".

Surah al-I-Imran : 103

The recent woeful and tragic course of events all over the world demand that we sit up and take stock of the situation in a rational and candid manner like a living and conscientious community. The malaise is deep seated. We must revert to the glorious Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) because the root cause of our trials and tribulations is different as are their remedies.

"Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done in order that they may return (from evil)".

Surah ar-Rum : 41

### **Excessive Sentimental Speeches :**

Of the weaknesses which have crept into the temperament of the 'millat' in recent times, specially after the Khilafat Movement (which of course, created

a political awakening amongst the Muslims), one is sentimental and passionate speeches by some of its leaders. There is no doubt that in order to brave national calamities, stiff opposition and to emerge triumphantly from the tight corners we find ourselves in, firm resolution and a spirit of adventure are necessary and helpful. We find evidence of it in the history of different nations. But wise and intelligent leaders use impassioned speeches with utmost caution or else these impetuous speeches lose their efficacy and the old story of 'crying wolf' is repeated.

It has become a fashion with some speakers to talk big and inundate the audience with a deluge of words.

It should, however, be borne in mind that words also have their own temper. It would be wrong for a speaker to use harsh words at a time when mild words should be used.

It is also not wise to use strong language and stir human passions when there is no intention or occasion to turn words into deeds. It is a sort of a deception with the audience. Those who have a sense of realism are very sensitive in this respect, and their leaders use proper words in proper places. The way extravagance in matters of money is contemptible in the same way volcanic words are undesirable specially when they have an effect on the future of the 'millat'. This lack of caution may sometimes lead into desperate situations where remedial measures may not be possible. It is, therefore, necessary to be more cautious in the use of words than in that of money (it affects mainly the individuals and families), and exercise moderation in appealing to the sentiments of the people.

It is now being observed that at such meetings which are held with the specific object of reforms in the 'millat' or presenting some problems or voice its grievances (before the powers-that-be), the speakers compete in inciting the emotions of the audience and try to demonstrate their excellence in oratory. The strong words which are employed in very special circumstances are freely used in such meetings. While a speaker finishes his speech with a warning; "We will erect a minaret of skulls", the other boasts, 'We will cause a sea of blood to flow etc. etc.'. When no results are obtained after these inflamed speeches the words lose their effectiveness and the people their capacity to carry anything into effect.

It is necessary to be more careful where different sects and communities are living. It is sometimes felt that Muslims are born orators and every member of this community can speak with vigour. As against this, we find, the nations which have won many political battles and the ruling power had to yield to them even though they used rhetoric and jugglery of words to a lesser degree. They are still solving bigger problems with moderate and balanced speeches. But in view of the inflamed speeches the taste of the 'millat' has become like that of a person who relishes strong flavoured spices and demands more and more of them.

For the nations which have to live a respectable life the speech which may tire out the people easily, is neither needed nor it is wise. It is not also in accord with the temperament of the community which has been entrusted with the responsibility of preaching and reformation.

## **Lack of Patience :**

The natural and psychological result of these inflamed speeches is that the 'millat' has lost its capacity for long and hard struggle, especially when the chances of quick results are not bright; when at times staking ones life or whole fortune for any cause appears easier but persistent efforts and ability to bear hardship for a considerable time seem to be against the nature of our people.

This impatience on a large scale in the 'millat' causes anxiety because silent, continuous and patient struggles are necessary to create a place of honour for it, to find solutions to its multiple problems and preserve its unique personality, as couriers of a divine message, rather than as demagogues.

It is an established fact that the minority community has to exert itself two-fold or even four-fold to live with respect compared to what the majority community does. The Jews gave proof of their capacity to work hard and acquired such influence in the national affairs of the United States and some European countries which is quite out of proportion to their small population. But the 'millat' in India far from exerting itself two-fold or four-fold is not prepared even to work as hard as the majority community does with the result that it lags behind in competitive examinations and is deprived of executive posts. If this trend continues for some time more, it is feared, that the Muslims may fall back and join the rank of backward classes or even linger behind them.

This temperament which is to some extent the result of inflamed speeches and the desire to get quick results out of their scanty efforts, has become the cause of a severe trial for the 'millat' with its

manifold and complicated problems. It has become difficult for them to run any organisation or persevere in their endeavours in any issue for long. The institutions which the 'millat' founded a century or half a century back are almost in the same position as at the time of their founding or languish in a torpid state on account of indifference by Muslims. But the educational institutions which the majority community or other minority communities started have progressed far ahead during the same period. There is no comparison in the standard of education, number and size of buildings and over-all working conditions. This difference in mental attitudes and temperament is a result of the style of leadership and impassioned speeches which have become a characteristic trait and a matter of prestige with the Muslims.

#### **Lack of Co-operation and Confidence :**

The spirit of mutual co-operation and confidence is lacking in joint ventures with the result that several larger Muslim institutions, whether educational or otherwise, are in a torpid condition. They are faced with all sorts of problems and it appears that they may close down at any time. The major reason for this state of affairs is lack of faith in the sincerity, honesty and managing capacity of the people who are responsible for running these institutions. Their decisions and actions are regarded with suspicion. There is always pressure on them to keep the members (as well as non-members) satisfied, sacrifice the interests of the institution over the wishes of the patrons, political leaders and influential persons and produce results.

If at any time a petty wish (be it irregular) of any person who matters is not complied with, he would not hesitate to destroy the institution and deprive the 'millat' of a useful and valuable national

asset. The other symptom of decline is the lack of patience and spirit of sacrifice. If by chance any institution obtains the services of a sincere worker who cannot please the political leaders, guardians of students and members of different committees and embarks on a few constructive measures to reform the institution, then all his past achievements, good qualities, sincerity and honesty are forgotten and a campaign of vilification mounted against him.

The masses have double standards : one for themselves and the other for national leaders and public workers. They adopt a policy of 'forget and forgive' for themselves and their ilk but demand austerity, abstinence and simplicity of Syedna Umar bin Abdul Aziz, if not of Hazrat Umar Farooq from public workers. This kind of thinking has created uncertain conditions for our institutions and those sincere persons who can serve the people with honesty think a hundred times before accepting any responsibility when they look to the unenviable position of other social workers.

The matter is not confined only to lack of confidence and undue criticism, it has gone to the extent of casting aspersions, making insinuations and even character assassination. If some one hears something unsavoury about a social worker or a political leader he puts together disjointed events, concocts a story and makes a mountain of a mole hill. The main purpose behind this fib of imagination and slander campaign is to gain some political advantage or news scoop. This trend started from the times of 'Khilafat Movement' when the intrepid and devoted leaders staked and sacrificed their lives for the 'millat' and it has now extended to regional leaders, social workers and theologians (ulama) also.

But the attitude of the majority community towards their leaders is different. They are, by and large, broad-minded and prepared to wait for results. The outcome of this confidence in their leaders is that they get sufficient time to implement their plans and carry them to successful conclusion. Their followers acknowledge it with an open heart and feel grateful for their achievements. This is the general practice in regard to the founders of universities and ashrams, reformers and communalist revivalist movements.

### **The Need to Acquaint Others with Islam :**

An evidence of the short-sightedness of the Muslims is that they did not try to acquaint their neighbours (the majority of which has not only religious differences with them but is suspicious of them on historical and political grounds) with the principles of Islam, the pious lives of their illustrious religious leaders and renowned historical figures. They have also not tried to explain the role they played after coming to India, the various gifts they conferred on the Indian society, and the contribution they can still make in internal and external affairs of the country. They have again, not tried to show that inspite of certain weaknesses they possess certain inherent qualities through which the Indian society can be saved from all round degeneration towards which it is fast moving. The commonman has not experienced their superior morals and excellent character. The non-Muslims have come across them as rivals in the political field and elections or in market places, offices etc. and they did not find any distinguishing signs among them which could set them apart from others. They know that a Muslim is circumcised, considers it necessary to eat beef as if it is part of his religion and that he is inclined to be short tempered. The other sign of a Muslim

is that he is offended by the playing of music in front of a mosque. We have not tried to explain the 'azan' which is pronounced five times a day (at some places through loud-speakers). Our compatriots are also responsible for this lack of knowledge and hateful attitude (which is dangerous for the country). Their attitude of superiority is partly responsible for this neglect. The curriculum, the political system, the communal leaders and the elections have also contributed a lot to the present estranged relations among different sections of the population. I am addressing you and I would like to concentrate on our own short-comings at the moment. We did not present before our countrymen the true Islamic way of life which would have attracted them and made them curious about Islam-the fountainhead of peaceful social revolution. It would have at least created a desire to study, think and enquire about it in them.

The process of bringing them closer can be achieved without sacrificing our principles, character, traditions and with no twinge of conscience. It requires exemplary conduct, good morals, spirit of sacrifice, patriotism, cordial relations and participation in social and such other works, and where necessary to provide guidance and make sincere attempts to save the country from impending moral chaos. It is easier for the 'ummat' which neither consider the life of the world to be final nor the fulfilment of personal interests to be the sole aim of life. It has, inspite of all its present weaknesses, divine teachings, the legacy of the prophets (peace be on them all) and traces of faith (iman).

It is clear as day and it does not require any extra intelligence that inspite of institutions of higher education, scholarly researches, presence of very intelligent and pious persons if the majority

community is unaware of the teachings of Islam - indeed  
disgustful and scared - then a tide of communal  
frenzy, a storm of hate and a fit of hysteria can  
change the whole scene in a few hours and destroy  
the achievements of years in a few minutes. The  
communal riots at some places have proved this.  
That is why we have to provide a 'safeguard' strong  
enough to protect all the religious and educational  
institutions, libraries, mosques and schools; as well as  
our honour and identity : It is that the people around  
us should be acquainted and familiarised with the  
fundamental principles of Islam; they should consider  
all these properties as precious national assets and a  
trust and recognise the usefulness and intrinsic value  
of the 'millat' in their midst.

Then it is necessary that there should be normal  
and peaceful conditions for continuance of all these  
efforts unhampered and to convey our thoughts to  
others. The other people should also be in a mood  
to hear and think over them patiently. If there is a  
thunder-storm, lightning or heavy rains it can disturb  
any meeting or social gathering. If a snake or a  
rabid dog appears at a meeting where a fascinating  
speaker ( may be Sehban of his time ) is delivering  
a speech the audience would disperse helter skelter  
and they would not like to gather again despite best  
efforts of the organisers. Then how a discredited  
minority can survive and continue its long term  
programmes in disturbed conditions ?

### **The Need for Critical Review :**

It is not enough for others to be acquainted  
with Islam. It is necessary for the Muslims to be well  
aware of the conditions obtaining in the country and  
their pulls and pressures and be vigilant about them.  
Their link with the society should not be cut off.

We know from history that when the Muslims did everything they could for the country but were unmindful of the harsh realities of life; did not try to discharge their responsibility of guidance (enjoin the right and forbid the wrong), they were ousted from their hearths and homes. If the Muslims shut their eyes to the changing conditions, laws, educational system, language, script and the propoganda which is being dinned into their ears through all available media then far from providing guidance to others, their own survival as a community would become doubtful and their future generations would be exposed to mental confusion and prove an easy prey for apostasy.

Lastly, the only way for the Muslims, to live in this country with respect is that they should prove their usefulness, fill the gap of moral leadership when moral degeneration has reached a point where the very existence of the nation appears to be in jeopardy. Because no minority community can live with respect and in peace in any country without proving its utility and indispensibility through selfless service, guidance and preaching. Dr. Iqbal has rightly said :

“Life is a struggle, not a privilege”.

Furthermore the following edict of the glorious Qur'an stands for all times :

“Then, as for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitudes”.

Surah ar - R'ad : 17

# Acknowledgment

Kindly post it to :

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THE HISTORY OF THE  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN  
INDIA

1639  
15099

BY

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Revised by

Abdul Hamid

UNIVERSITY OF  
AL-QADISIYAH  
AL-QADISIYAH, IRAQ

## INTRODUCTION

We have great pleasure in presenting the English version of a speech delivered by the eminent thinker, orator and author, Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi at the residence of Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Farooq to a select gathering of *ulama* and intellectuals at Srinagar (J & K) on 30th day of Oct. 1981. It was published in Urdu Fortnightly "Tameer e-Hayat", Lucknow, dated 25th day of July, 1982.

It is being presented before the elite of the *millat* with the expectation that they would seriously think over their responsibility and act accordingly.

29, Chandralok Colony,  
Indore 452 001.  
10th day of *Zul Hijj*, 1403  
18th day of Sep., 1983.

Board of Islamic Studies

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ELITE IN THE "MILLAT"

Brothers and Friends,

A tradition of Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) warns us:—

“Beware ! There is a piece of flesh in the body of man which when good the whole body is good; and when bad, the whole body is bad and that it is the heart.”

I think as the human body has a heart, the *ummat* has a *heart* and mankind also has a *heart*. The entire human system depends on the proper functioning of the heart. If it is diseased or damaged (for which there can be many reasons) the body does not remain unaffected.

I know I am addressing the *heart* and *mind* of Kashmir. I do not say the “men of heart” (*ahle dil*). Because the term has a different implication and a special significance. It has sublimity attached to it.

The responsibility of the heart is to keep the different tissues of the body well nourished according to their needs. Some times the mind needs more blood and some times the feet. It is for the heart to look after their needs.

There are three conditions for the heart to fulfil its assigned function; the first is that it should be alive as life depends entirely on it, the second is that it should beat harmoniously. The moment the heart stops beating life comes to an end. We know how the Heart Specialists struggle to resuscitate the heart. There are different ways to do it, internal and external, which now include pace-makers. The third condition is that the heart should have warmth. It should not have become frigid or benumbed. These are the three requirements : *life, beating* and *warmth*.

This applies as well to the elite in the family, a locality and the *millat*. The elite should be alive, active and should have warmth (religious zeal). If any one of these qualities is wanting

and the link between the elite and the masses is cut off, we can imagine the plight of the commonman.

When the *Power House* of an area stops working the whole locality is plunged in darkness. The elite of a *millat* are its *Power House*, its heart. History reveals that this *Power House* never stopped working. The history of the continued existence of the *millat* is, in fact, the history of the continued reformatory activities of the elite. There were persons in every period who were alive (to their responsibilities), active and had warmth.

The main reason for the degeneration of the communities in the past ages was that their *Power House* had stopped working. It is the lesson we get from the history of the Jews and the Christians. The *Power House* of the Jews (rabbis) had stopped working after their prophets (peace be on them all) had departed. What was the duty of their elite? It was to differentiate between right and wrong, provide right guidance, rely on Allah and have the courage to tell the truth under all circumstances. The following verse of the glorious Qur'an provides the evidence.

“O ye who believe ! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah.”

at—Tauba : 34.

The rabbis and monks were the respective *Power Houses* of the Jews and the Christians. If translated into our terminology these would mean *Ulama* and *Mashaikh* (plural of Shaikh). Some of the rabbis and monks used to appropriate others property without justification. They were not doing their duty properly, which means the *Power House* had stopped working. If the traffic constable leaves his post and guides a way-farer who has lost the way, he would be hauled up for laxity though he is doing yeoman's service to an individual. The real job of the rabbis and the monks was to offer correct guidance on points of their law (Shariat), practice abstinence and contentment.

But they became avaricious. They were not doing their job but devouring the fruits of others labours. The commonman works to make a living for himself and his family. The rabbis

and monks used to share with commonman what he had earned, but they did not allow him to share their knowledge. They misguided the commonman for their selfish ends. They became mercenaries instead of missionaries. If we go through the history of different nations, we find that first their *Power House* stopped working, then people strayed from the *straight path*.

This is the history of every community. But the history of our *ummat* provides evidence that the *Power House* has not stopped working even for a brief while. There were always persons who said the right thing under all circumstances. The evidence to that effect is provided in the following tradition of the Prophet (peace be on him) :

“Among my community (*ummat*) at every time there will be a group which will be on the right course and howsoever the people may oppose them and do not help them (the opposition) nobody would be able to harm them (the righteous).”

The greatest calamity for a community is that the elite, who form the *heart* of a place, may become inactive or lose their religious zeal. We have now to see whether these three qualities are found in us ; life, beating (activity) and warmth. If we are alive and there is no activity, the life becomes static and there is bound to be disorder in the *millat* as stagnant water develops an offensive smell. If there is warmth, i.e., link with Allah, love of the Prophet (peace be on him) fondness for Paradise and courage to tell the truth; then however one may conspire to misguide the *millat* it will not go astray. But if the heart stops beating no power on earth can revive it. If the tree loses its fertility, it may be watered variously but it will not bear fruits again. It will be cut down and used as fuel.

Gentlemen,

Our history tells us that there were persons at all times who had warmth of faith and love of Allah; that everybody used to feel the warmth including the passersby. We find that in India due to the presence of true mystics (*Sufi*) a wave of religious zeal and passion for righteous deeds ran through right down to common people. If there were even one such person in a town

then ignorance, God forgetfulness and worship of mammon would not have their sway over the *millat*. It never happened that the entire *millat* had become degenerated. When Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia (rh) was in Delhi, it appeared that the centre of gravity of the muslim world was Delhi; high and low, rich and poor, poets and writers were all attracted towards his humble hermitage as if drawn by a magnet. Then Khwaja Nasiruddin Chiragh (rh) took his place. The entire area was filled with the aura and warmth of religious ardour. Let us take the example of Kashmir. Syed Ali Hamdani (rh) came here and converted the entire region to Islam. We still feel the benevolence (barkat) of his sincerity (*ikhlas*) and godliness (*lillahiyat*). What was it due to? It was the (*Islamic*) conduct (*akhlaq*) and warmth of the heart. The heart is small compared to the body, but this little piece of flesh rules the body. The proper function or dysfunction of the whole body is bound with it. The stagnation, greed and confusion among the elite are sign of degeneration.

I am reminded of an incident narrated to me by a respectable friend. He said: "There was a wali. He had pain in his knees. I was applying an embrocation on his knees. He had a large following. When his disciples (*murid*) sat around him, they used to be very quiet and disciplined. When he said anything, everybody would listen attentively. On that particular day of which I am talking, it was quite different. Everybody was talking as if it were a fish market. I was surprised; the holy man is here and nobody appears to be aware of his presence." When he noticed my surprise at the unruly behaviour of his disciples, he pointed towards his knee. I thought there was severe pain and I started massaging it. There was no change in the disorderly behaviour. He again pointed towards his knee. I started rubbing at that particular spot. Then he whispered in my ear that on account of the pain in the knee, he could not carry out his customary pre-dawn prayers (*tahajjud*) and what I saw that day was the evil effect of that lapse. I ask you if giving up of optional prayers by a holy man had its ill effect on the entire assembly, what would be the effect on the *millat* if a good

number of the elite ignore their obligatory duties. What will be the commulative effect of the lapse of about fifty or more such persons? What will be the condition of the *millat* if the majority of the elite of a place fail to perform their obligations?

There was a time when *ulama* and sages used to think nothing of kings and viziers in telling the truth. Shaikh-ul-Islam Izzuddin Abdul Salam of Damascus was the greatest of the *Shafa'i ulama* and known as the "King of Ulama." He once admonished the ruler in a sermon. The ruler was annoyed. After a few days the ruler had some guests. They knew the ruler was displeased with Shaikh Izzuddin. They said to the ruler if there had been a great scholar like the Shaikh in their domain, they would have given him the honour he deserved. It was surprising that the ruler was treating the scholar in that unkind manner. The ruler realised his mistake but he thought that if he apologised, it would be an insult to him. He sent one of his ministers to Shaikh Izzuddin with a request that he might come to the Darbar and kiss his hands. The courtiers would see it and the matter would be over. When this message was conveyed to Shaikh Izzuddin he said that far from kissing the hands of the ruler, he would not like the ruler to kiss his hands (if he so wished).

A King of Delhi once requested Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan (rh) that Allah had graced him with great wealth, he might please accept a part of it. He replied: "the glorious Qur'an lays down:

"Say (unto them, O Mohammad!) the comfort of this world is scant."

an Nisa : 77

India is part of the world and your kingdom is part of India. If I take a part of it, how much would it be?

There are so many such true stories which give *warmth* to the heart. The love of worldly possessions is part of human nature:

"And lo! in the love of wealth he (men) is violent."

al 'Adiyat : 8

These examples of contentment and "freedom from want" and disregard for ostentation refurbish the faith and help develop resistance to the temptations of luxurious and extravagant living. Thus the *millat* could not be carried away from the path of moderation like a blade of grass in a gust of wind the way most of the people are going these days.

It is not enough for the elite to be *alive* and *active* but they must have *warmth*. How do we get warmth? We get it by reciting the glorious Qur'an, repeating the name, attributes and praises of Allah (*zikr*) bearing hardship in *His Way*, etc. The people who lived a life of resignation and contentment had not adopted austerity out of helplessness. It was in response to the voice from within. Their conscience pricked them. They did not like to be the slaves of wealth, power or authority.

There should be no place without such persons who are beyond reproach. Nobody should have the courage to say that such and such a person among the elite misguided him or one of them lacks knowledge or another did not tell him the truth. Nobody may allege that the elite were *sold*. It is the secret for the preservation of the *millat*. It does not matter if the number of elite is small. But they must be above reproach.

"What happened when ye asked an evil act of Joseph? They answered, Allah blameless! We know no evil of him....."

Surah Yusuf : 51

These are the words the wife of potiphar spoke about Prophet Yusuf (peace be on him) when King Pharoah asked her: "What is the truth, it has become the talk of the town." She replied: "the truth is that we did not find any weakness in him." These days also there is a similar confrontation in a different form. The temptations being wealth, power and authority. The attachment with religion should be such that no such thing should be able to entice the muslims away from their faith. When asked about the conduct of a muslim anybody may stand a witness and say: "We know no evil of him." The truth is that the stability of the *millat* is due to such *ahle-dil* that it could not be carried away from the *straight path*.

The second point is that the work of (right) guidance and accountability (*muhasaba*) should continue at all times. The number of muslims offering prayers must increase. It should be observed whether or not the mosques are full. It is the duty of the elite to be watchful so that no evils have a chance of spreading, viz., drinking, gambling, etc. They should keep in touch with the masses and keep themselves informed that the common people are following the religion assiduously.

We should popularise the study of the glorious Qur'an. It is the best way to keep the common people attached to the belief in the Oneness of Allah (*tauhid*) and away from polytheism (*shirk*). The lessons(dars)of Qur'an should be imparted in every locality. This method has previously been employed for correction of beliefs and lacs of people benefited by it.

Hazrat Ali (rz) Said : Remember, I have heard the prophet (peace be on him) say : Beware ! "A mischief (fitna) will crop up shortly." I requested what will be the way out from it? He said : "The Book of Allah."

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# **THE NEED TO LEARN FROM CURRENT EVENTS**

By

**MAULANA SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI**

The following speech was delivered at the residence of Dr. I. C. Dawoodbhoy in Bombay, in the presence of a select gathering of scholars and medical practitioners.

Gentlemen,

The Muslims have been enjoined in the glorious Qur'an to learn from past events and draw proper inference from them because there is a definite relationship between means (asbab) and ends (nataij). The way roots and leaves, even weeds, have certain specific properties and produce their effect, in the same way our mode of conduct and way of life react on us—rather they are more powerful as they have a built-in mechanism to make or mar our lives (here and in the hereafter). The food articles and plants (edible and medicinal), in short, everything has been created for the sake of protection and preservation of mankind. It is life which is all important and we should take lessons from the incidents which occur around us. Because we have not only been directed to draw morals from important events narrated in the glorious Qur'an, but admonished for not doing so :

“Many are the signs in the heaven and the earth (so full of meaning for man) yet they pass them by, hardly taking notice of them.”

Surah Yusuf : 105

There are many signs in the heaven and the earth which people pass by without noticing and do not learn from them. We have been warned in another chapter in still harsher terms :

- 1) "But for those who disdain to understand neither the sign of Allah (in the heaven and the earth) nor the admonition of warners (the Prophets) will avail."

Surah Yunus : 101

- 2) "Soon will We show them Our signs in the regions (of the earth) and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the glorious Qur'an) is the Truth."

Surah Ha Mim as-Sajdah : 53

The most tragic events towards which the 'millat' should devote its immediate attention are the frequent disturbances which take a heavy toll of life and property and every time occur with increased savagery and brutality. Why do these disturbances take place ? Do they occur by chance or they have become part of the destiny of the 'millat'? Is there any short-coming on our part or in our mode of living, or the responsibility lies with the administration. This is the most pressing problem and a challenge of our times. It is not a big gathering but the select persons who are present here are more important because they carry more weight in society on account of their educational and cultural background and achievements. I think what I will say to this elite audience would be more useful in many respects than a speech at a public meeting.

## **Sentences,**

The first and foremost duty of the 'ummat' is to share with their countrymen the boon (the true religion) which has been bestowed by Allah. The 'ummat' should worry over the fate of other people because the Prophets (peace be on them all) used to worry over their 'ummat'. The last Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) has been consoled on account of it in the glorious Qur'an :

"It may be that thou torments thyself (O Muhammad) because they believe not."

Surah ash-Shura : 3

It is the primary responsibility entrusted to the 'ummat' especially those who are 'heir to the Prophets' (peace be on them all) i. e. Ulama, that right guidance (hidayat) should spread as far and wide as possible. It should be their endeavour that the light (of Islam) with which they have been blessed by Allah should illuminate the four corners of the world :

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoin right conduct and forbid what is wrong. Such are they who are successful."

Surah al-i-Imran : 104

There are many verses in the glorious Qur'an in which the present 'ummat' has been saddled with the responsibility of preaching, in fact, it has been mentioned as the main reason for its excellence over all the past generations !

"You are the best community that has been raised-up for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency ; and you believe in Allah."

Surah al-i-Imran : 110

The other responsibility which devolves on the 'ummat' according to their religion and also as a matter of sound reason is that it should acquaint other people with the Fundamental Principles of Islam in the mutual interest of both. What is Islam ; what are its teachings and what is the ultimate outcome of following or failure to follow them :

"Eat ye and drink ye to your heart's content, for that ye worked (righteous deeds). Thus do We certainly reward the doers of good. (O ye unjust!) eat ye and enjoy yourself (but) a little while for that ye are sinners. Ah woe, that Day to rejectors of Truth."

Surah Mursalat : 41-46

Then we should introduce ourselves and the principles which we have been commanded to practise and which we have accepted as the way of our life. We should also try to bring other people closer to ourselves by exemplary conduct and persuade them to study the religion which we represent and follow. They should be made curious about Islam. They may start thinking as what type of people the Muslims are and the religion they follow. The other people must be brought to realize that the Muslims do not ill-treat or harm anybody. They wish well for one and all. The Muslims do not consider the worldly possessions the be-all and end-all of everything in life. It seems they have different values and ideals before them. They cannot be dissuaded from their principles for any consideration. They cannot be incited to oppression etc. Is there any other world which they (the Muslims) have in view which is concealed from us ?

I may point out that there are certain events which influence the mind of a person and sometimes bring about a revolutionary change in his life.

Jabbar bin Salma was a companion (Sahabi) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), when asked how he came to embrace Islam as he was very steadfast in following his former religion, he said, 'just one short sentence brought about this big change.' Then he narrated that he attacked a Muslim (Hazrat Haram bin Milhan), with his spear, it pierced his body and he fell on the ground, but before dying he uttered the following words :

'I swear by Allah of Ka'ba I have succeeded.'

This short sentence set me thinking. I asked myself : what is success ? Are there different criteria of success ? I see that a person who is mortally wounded and falls to the ground, he would soon be deprived of all pleasures of life, his wife would be widowed and the children orphaned; and yet he says he has succeeded. I tried to know and understand how he considered himself successful although he was on the verge of death. I knew that he would leave all his belongings in the world. I also knew that truth sits on the lips of a dying man (even otherwise the Arabs were not prone to lies).

I enquired from some Muslims as what the dying man saw at that moment that he said, he has succeeded. They told me that I did not understand the implication of that sentence. He was happy that he died for Truth (Haqq). The Muslims believe in Allah and they know that martyrs go to Paradise. The dying Muslim might have seen a glimpse of his place in Paradise. That is why he said, he had succeeded. Then he admitted this short sentence caused him to embrace Islam.

The incident which I related is unique in the history of Islam. I do not say every Muslim should follow his example. It is not necessary either. But the Muslims should live in such a manner that other people

may be constrained to think what type of people the Muslims are : Do they not realise the value of money ? Do they not know that one can buy comforts and pleasure, command respect and authority with money? Do they not know that sometimes lies can be used as allies and the possession of wealth carries tremendous weight in any society these days ? Then why do they not try to lead a life of ease and comfort as we do ? Why cannot these persons be tempted to err with the use of money ?

The mode of our living should have been exemplary which would have attracted other people to Islam. I cite an example and it is a challenge for the learned people. The Prophet (peace be on him) preached for thirteen years in Makkah and another six years in Madina blessed with consummate expertise, as he was in preaching, performing miracles now and then and at a time when the glorious Qur'an was being revealed, but only a few people embraced Islam. But according to Imam Zohri, who is one of the trusted traditionists (muhaddis) in between the period of signing the Treaty of Hudaibiyah and the Prophet's (peace be on him) Triumphant Entry into Makkah, a very large number of people entered the fold of Islam as never before. What could have been the reason ? The Prophet (peace be on him) is the same, the glorious Qur'an is the same, but it seems as if the flood gates were thrown wide open or the thread of the chaplet (tasbeeh) was broken and the beads scattered all around.

The apparent reason behind this was that after this famous Treaty the non Muslim Arabs were free to come to Madina and have a close look at the lives of the Muslims. There was no communication between the Muslims and the non-Muslims before this Treaty as a state of confrontation had existed between them. The non-Muslims were afraid of coming to Madina.

They used to meet the Muslims either in the battle-field or sometimes in the course of their travels. There was a clause in the Treaty that non-Muslims could visit Madina and Muslims could visit Makkah without any restriction. There was freedom of movement after the Treaty came into force. The people from Makkah came to meet their relations in Madina and observed that their way of life had changed to a great extent. They noticed that they belong to the same stock, speak the same language, dress in the same manner and eat the same type of food, then how is it that their (Muslims') morals and manners are quite distinct from their own, their way of life and dealings are very different. The non-Muslims saw that as they stayed with them as guests (though they do not belong to their religion) they feed their guests first and at times allowed their children to go hungry, they looked after the comforts of the guests in preference to the members of their own family. The Muslims always employed polite language and decorum in their conversation with non-Muslims, they never indulged in gibes, taunts or sarcasm. They were also hard working and not that they had become lazy after embracing Islam, they went for prayers five times a day with all eagerness and their behaviour in the family was courteous. They were living happily among themselves with mutual co-operation and good will. What had made all this difference? They were forced to conclude that Islam had brought about this great change in their lives. The non-Muslims of Makkah had an opportunity to ponder over the teachings of Islam at leisure and in a congenial atmosphere. They were attracted towards Islam and thousand upon thousand embraced Islam. Imam Zohri further says that the non-Muslim Arabs had the occasion to meet and observe the lives of Muslims at close quarters and Islam created a place for itself in their hearts.

The Muslims have been living in this country for about a thousand years and they have not introduced themselves in the manner they ought to have done and influenced their countrymen. Is it not a short-coming on part? The crux of the matter is that our countrymen did not get an opportunity to experience Islamic morals and exemplary conduct. They have known us as rivals in elections and competitors in business with the result that they behave with us in the way unfriendly strangers are treated. They are not aware of our inherent qualities—the quality of love and sympathy for one and all. They do not have an inkling of the earnest desire we harbour in our hearts for their welfare and well-being. We have not been able to convince our non-Muslim neighbours that it is on account of the Muslims that the Divine Mercy descends on the country and thus how essential and useful we are in this respect. If you enquire from any literate Hindu if he has studied Islam most likely, he would reply in the negative.

An Arab friend told me that when he visited the United States, some of the American friends repeatedly asked him two questions. How many wives he had in his harem and how many camels in the camel-shed. It appeared that these were the two main criteria for a Muslim in the eyes of an average American: plurality of wives and keeping of camels. The common non-Muslim in India thinks that there are two essential attributes of a Muslim. He is circumcised and eats beef as if it were part of his religion and that he is inclined to be short-tempered. The other indication of a Muslim is that he is easily offended by the playing of music in front of a mosque. This is the image of an average Muslim which has ordinarily been projected here.

I was once travelling from Hardoi to Lucknow by train with a party. We said our prayers in congre-

gation (Jama'at), I was leading the prayers. I said "Allah-u-Akbar" aloud several times as in usual. A co-traveller who had introduced himself as Chairman of a District Board earlier, very innocently asked me after the prayers : 'Maulana Saheb, when you uttered 'Allah-u-Akbar', were you addressing these words to the late Mughal King Akbar ?' We have not so far tried to explain the 'azan' which is pronounced five times a day (and at some places through loud-speakers). A Muslim sage once suggested that at least we ought to have translated the words of 'azan' in Hindi. They do not know that these words simply mean : "rise upto worship," rise upto well-being," the service of worship is better than sleep, etc."

What have we been doing here all these years ? When there is a disturbance, we complain, "What type of people they (the non-Muslims) are." We are living here for hundreds of years and they do not have any regard for us. No doubt, our countrymen are also at fault. The curriculum, the political system and elections too have contributed a lot to the present woeful conditions. The scholars and educationists have been told time and again that the text books of history are creating an atmosphere of hatred and fear. There are many weaknesses in our countrymen. I know all these as a student of history. I am not addressing them or the administrators or educationists at present. I will tell them all this when there will be an occasion for it. They (the Non-Muslims) ought to have tried to understand the basic beliefs, culture, social customs, morals, habits and peculiarities of the Muslims who have been living as their neighbours for a thousand years and who have taken a leading part in all-round progress of the country for a long time. Their co-religionists also live in the neighbouring countries as also in dozens of independent countries in Asia and Africa. But it is no use telling about their short-comings here. I am

addressing you and presently concentrating on our own short-comings. We did not acquaint our neighbours with Islam. I would like to pose a question before you : How many of those present here have tried to educate their class-fellows and co-workers about Islam ? How many good writers have we produced in regional languages ? What we do these days is that we start an Urdu newspaper. If there are four already somebody would add one more and consider it a great "jihad". Was there no need to start a daily newspaper or a weekly magazine with an attractive get-up in one of the many regional languages spoken here containing standard and authentic articles on Islam ? We do not have an English daily newspaper. When there is a disturbance, we complain that wide publicity is given to one-sided views by the so called national press. We are oppressed and persecuted but we are presented as oppressors and persecutors.

I distinctly remember about a big public meeting of All-India Muslim Personal Law Board in Bombay held on 27th and 28th December, 1972, where the attendance might have been 60,000 or more. The late Hamid Dalwai demonstrated at the meeting with a few followers-may be twenty or so. But the news about the Board meeting was relegated to a corner, whereas the news about this petty demonstration was given great prominence as if it was a great event involving 10,000 to 20,000 people.

We have to concentrate on two points in the present circumstances. The number of participants in this meeting may be small, but every one present here must be having a large circle of friends. We should make an attempt to publish thought-provoking booklets and pamphlets in regional languages. It would be still better if good non-Muslim writers can be commissioned to write these booklets in their mother tongues. Because

there is a marked difference in their style and that of other writers. We should also get first rate monographs written by competent 'Ulama'. By the grace of Allah, the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow, has published good many booklets in regional languages which can be given to non-Muslims without any hesitation. Kindly obtain such booklets from it, and distribute them among non-Muslim neighbours and friends with a request to read them at leisure. The system of sending 'Eid cards may be extended to cover non-Muslims also. The 'Eid is auspicious (mubarak) for us because we observe fast and, Insha Allah, we would get a great reward in the hereafter which we cannot even think of in this world. The 'Eid card may convey a message about Islam-select an appropriate verse from the glorious Qur'an or a saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). They may read it or not. But if a person gets a good number of such cards year after year he may be inclined to read one or some of them. The message may begin with such words that today is the auspicious day of 'Eid, we are happy and we want to share our happiness with you. If this custom spreads then some day, some persons may feel how can such people be harmed when they believe in and practise such good principles of friendliness

The one best way to stop these frequent disturbances is to change the mode of living in such a manner that it may appeal to non-Muslims. They may notice that a Muslim walks in the street with his eyes cast down. He does not stare at the women passing by. He does not harm any body but helps everybody, if you are travelling by train and you have asked a vendor for tea at a station while a co-traveller has also asked for it, offer it to him if you get your tea before he does his. If he declines tell him politely that you would take it later when the vendor brings tea for you, it is unexpected of you, but these small courtesies will go a

long way in changing their attitude towards Muslims and Islam. They will be constrained to think that Islam does not preach hatred and Muslims are a helpful people. Islam does not teach to throw about provoking insinuations but tends to civilise and confer refinement. Whenever and wherever be it a market place, office or a workshop, you get an opportunity to present an agreeable picture of Islamic teachings and morals, temperament and conduct do so by your charming manners.

I have placed my points of view in the short time we had at our disposal. There were many other things to be told, but what I have said here is enough for the present. We should now pray that Allah may accord His approbation to what has been said here in brief and make it easy for us to act on it and profitable for all of us. He may also protect and help us.

"..... There is no help except from Allah, the Exalted, the Wise."

Surah al-I-Imrah : 126

The End





# The Glorious Qur'an-An Infalliable Guide

**"And now We have sent down a Book to you, wherein there is admonition for you. Can you not even now understand (what you have to do)."**

Surah al-Ambiya : 10

**Brothers and Friends,**

The above verse tells us that the glorious Qur'an is a clear, faithful and honest mirror in which every one can see his image and know his position in the sight of Allah and in society. Because it describes the morals and manners, character and conduct the attributes which are desirable for all men. It contains the characteristic traits of all types of men-high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, etc.

The glorious Qur'an gives an account of the qualities and position of man as understood by a majority of 'ulama' (exegesists). Our forebears considered the glorious Qur'an as a 'living' book. They did not consider it to be a book of history or archeology which deals with the past events and peoples of former times, and that it has nothing to do with living peoples and changing times, innumerable and unaccountable types of men who inhabit the world. Every thing was quite clear and well-defined for them. They used to seek guidance from the Scripture and looked for their morals and manners in this unique and wonderful book and find their true 'self' in it. If it was what it should be they used to thank Allah for that. If, on the contrary, it was other than what it should be, they used to ask forgiveness of Allah and try to mend their ways.

This verse reminds me of Syedna Ahnaf bin Qais, who was an eminent disciple of the companion (Sahaba) of Prophet (peace be on him)-a "Taba'i" and one among the close associates of Syedna 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. His gentleness was proverbial. But inspite of it when he got angry his sense of honour and zeal knew no bounds. It was said that when Syedna Ahnaf gets angry, one lac swords are unsheathed.

It is said that once he heard somebody reciting the above quoted verse. He was startled to hear it. He asked that the glorious Qur'an be brought to him, adding that he wanted to know his position as where he stood and with which people he bore resemblance or affinity.

He went on turning the pages of the glorious Qur'an and came across the following verses one after the other.

- (1) "They used to sleep but little of the night, and ere the dawning of each day would seek forgiveness. And in their wealth the beggar and the outcast had due share"

Surah adh-Dhariyat : 17-19

- (2) "Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of what We have bestowed on them."

Surah as-Sajdah : 16

Then he came across the reference to a group of people which has been praised in the following words :

- (3) "And who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing."

Surah al-Furqan : 64

- (4) "Those who spend (of what which Allah hath given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind; Allah loveth the good."

Surah al-i-Imran : 134

- (5) "Those who entered in city and the faith before them, love those who flee unto them for refuge, and find in their breasts no need for that which hath been given them, but prefer the (fugitives) above themselves though poverty became their lot. And whose is saved from his own avarice-such are they who are successful."

Surah al-Hashr : 9

- (6) "And those who shun the worst of sins and Indecencies and, when they are wroth, forgive. And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them."

Surah ash-Shura : 37-38

He stopped here and said, Oh Allah ! 'I do not find my self among these people'. He started looking elsewhere in the glorious Qur'an. He found the description of a people as below :

- (7) "For when it was said unto them. There is no god save Allah, they were scornful. And said : Shall we forsake our gods for a mad poet ?"

Surah as-Saffat : 35-36

Then he found the description of some other people :

- (8) "And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter, are repelled, and when those (whom they worship) beside Him are mentioned, behold ! they are glad".

Surah az-Zumar : 45

He also came across the people who will be questioned :

- (9) "What hath brought you to this burning ? They will answer : We were not of those who prayed : Nor did we feed the wretched: We used to wade (in vain dispute) with (all) waders, and we used to deny the Day of Judgement, till the inevitable came to us.

Surah al-Mudath-thir ; 42-47

He stopped again and prayed, 'Oh Allah ! 'I disavow such people.' He started turning the pages of the glorious Qur'an again, and came across the following verse :

- (10) ' And (there are) others who have acknowledged their faults. They mixed a righteous action with another that was bad. It may be that Allah will relent toward them. Lo ! Allah Is Relenting, Merciful."

Surah at-Tauba : 102

When he read the above verse, he cried out, 'Allah be praised, I am one of them.'

Let us now see our position in the glorious Qur'an seriously and sincerely- It is a messenger of good news as well as a warner. Along with righteous people, it contains the description of Infidels and atheists. It draws the true picture of individuals and communities both: It says :-

- (11) "And of mankind there is he whose conversation on the life of this world pleaseth thee (Muhammad) and he calleth Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart; yet he is the most rigid of opponents. And when he turneth away (from thee) his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle; and Allah loveth not mischief. And when it is said unto him: Be careful of thy duty to Allah, pride taketh him to sin. Hell will settle his account, an evil resting-place."

Surah al - Baqarah: 204-206

Then it says :

- (12) "And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah; and Allah hath compassion on (His) bondmen."

Surah al-Baqarah: 207

A community has been described thus:

- (13) "O ye who believe! Whoso of you becometh a renegade from his religion, (know that in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers

striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah which He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is all-Embracing, all Knowing"

Surah al-Maidah: 54

Another community has been described thus:

- (14) "Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenanted with Allah. Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle), and some of them still are awaiting; and they have not altered in the least."

Surah al-Ahzab: 23.

The glorious Qur'an advises to offer thanks and acknowledge obligations. It has narrated the true stories of prophets (peace be on them all) and their followers, It also frightens of the ill-effects of thanklessness and ingratitude, pride and misbehaviour instead of humility and good behaviour :

- (15) "Hast thou not seen those who gave the grace of Allah in exchange for thanklessness and led their people down to the Abode of Loss."

Surah Ibrahim: 28

It describes the condition of a community which had been ungrateful for the bounties of Allah and they were proud of their affluence:

- (16) "Allah coineth a similitude: a township that dwelt secure and well content, its provision coming to it in abundance from every side,

but it disbelieved in Allah's favours, so Allah made it experience the garb of dearth and fear because of what they used to do."

Surah Al-Nahl-112

These are the specimen of human beings and their morals-examples which the glorious Qur'an has described under different nomenclatures; at some place by the name of an autocratic rulers like Pharaoh or some stubborn and perverse officials or rich men like Haman or a proud and miserly capitalist like Korah, or tyrant and oppressive community like 'Aad or expert artisans like Thamud. These are immortal symbols of different human characteristics which are not bound by time and place. They represent specimen of human weaknesses.

The glorious Qur'an throws light on the deplorable end of these individuals and communities and makes it clear that those who will follow their characteristic traits or accept them as their leaders will meet the same fate which befell these defaultant people;

- (17) ".....That was Allah's way with those who passed away of old - and the commandment of Allah is certain destiny."

Surah al - Ahzab: 38

We have placed a 'mirror' in your hands. It is for you to see your image in the light of these selected verses of the glorious Qur'an-thank Allah if you find yourself among those people who were guided aright and graced with the bounties and munificence of Allah or recant and mend your ways, if God forbid, you find yourself among those people who followed their own wishes and invited the wrath of Allah here and in the Hereafter.

# WHAT A MUSLIM SHOULD DO

By

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The twelve-point programme chalked up by Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi in his book 'Guidebook for Muslims' for leading a virtuous life in accordance with the glorious Qur'an and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

Translated by S. G. Mohiuddin

1. We should begin from the premise that Allah Who has sent down the Scripture (the glorious Qur'an) and raised Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who preached, expounded and practised His Message has left no room for any deviation or aberration from the authoritative creed. We should, therefore, first of all have a look at our own beliefs in the light of the glorious Qur'an for it is the only 'mirror' which enables us to see our true selves.

2. The prescribed devotions and the four practical manifestations (Prayer, Fasting, Zakat and Hajj) should be observed in their true spirit with complete observance of their external and internal as well as physical and spiritual contents. We should follow the path of the holy Prophet (peace be on him) as best as possible and should try to find out sincerely and diligently, his modes, and manners-for he is the only perfect and complete model for us to imitate:

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much".

Surah al-Ahzab : 21.

3. The rights of people come next to creed, religious observances and the rights of Allah. There is no doubt that Allah will condone the lapse (whom He will) in regard to the obligations we owe to Him, but the remission of wrongs committed by one man to another will be left to the discretion of the wronged person. Bukhari contains a tradition of Prophet (peace be on him) that "if any body is under obligation to his Muslim brother, whether relating to his prestige or something of that sort (like property or loan) it is better that he should meet his obligation in this world rather than defer it to the time when there would neither be 'dinar' or 'dirham' to pay his debt."

4. We should, then, go all length to adopt the cardinal virtues, attain purity of self and cleanse our hearts from all faults and failings. Unrighteousness impedes our efforts to receive benefits from the prophetic teachings which constitute the easiest and surest way to follow the religion sent down by Allah. We should take the glorious Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) as the two infallible criteria for forming a judgement about the correctness of our own actions and the purification of our inner self.

5. A thorough knowledge about the religious practices, the rules of 'Shariat' about permissible and impermissible, obligatory duties, incumbent acts, matters commanded or disapproved and the limits imposed by it is absolutely necessary for every believer. One should know the rules of 'Shariat' about the

profession or calling one is engaged in and act on them as a dutiful and God-fearing Muslim apprehensive of the Hereafter.

6. Many amongst us are scrupulous about the time of supplications mentioned in the traditions for recital at the time of awakening, going to answer the call of nature and at the time of leaving the house, performing ablution, entry in the mosque and coming out of it, retiring for sleep, setting out for a journey and return, etc., but there is always the apprehension that we may not be getting the promised rewards as stated by the holy Prophet (peace be on him, for the simple reason that we might be reciting these supplications in a routine manner by force of habit. There are several acts of worship, commonly known to be obligatory. A great reward is attached to all of them but their full reward depends on the doer's conviction, zeal and hope for recompense promised for them. Imam Bukhari commences his great work:

"Acts depend on the intention and everyone will be recompensed in accordance with what he has intended."

7. It is advisable to cultivate the habit of reciting such portions of the glorious Qur'an as may be convenient to one and this should not be missed save in case of illness or for reasons unavoidable. Two things are helpful in deriving full benefit from the glorious Qur'an. First a knowledge of the merits of the glorious Qur'an, its recitation and its competence to create a direct relationship between man and his Creator, and the implicit belief in the rewards that can be had through it in the Hereafter. Secondly, one should get oneself acquainted with the way the purer in soul, 'aulia' and scholars, used to recite the glorious Qur'an, how they used to deliberate on it and what precautions they took in its recitation.

8. It is essential to go through the traditions and biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) with the intention of creating a heartfelt attachment with the holy Prophet (peace be on him) and for taking to his ways, manners and behaviour in every walk of life. Repeated recitation of 'durud' the prescribed benediction for the holy Prophet (peace be on him) is highly beneficial since glorious Qur'an has placed great importance on it.

"Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe ! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation."

Surah al-Ahzab : 56

9. There are also 'aurad' and 'wazaif' or remembrances and litanies. We should try to engage ourselves in some of these remembrances regularly and also recite those meant for particular occasions.

10. The biographies of such 'aulla', 'sufi' and 'faqih' of Islam whose faith, love for Prophet (peace be on him) knowledge of the glorious Qur'an and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), self-purification and anxiety for the Hereafter are well-known, should also be studied regularly.

11. Whatever be our engagements, we ought to devote a bit of our time to preaching and calling the people to the 'way of Allah'. This was the primary objective of prophethood and it was for this purpose that the Divine Scriptures were revealed and the traditions of the last Prophet (peace be on him) were brought forth:

**"Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid Indecency; and ye believe in Allah."**

**Surah al-i-Imran 110**

**12. Lastly, contemplation on the transient nature of the world and all that it contains, the short span of man's life and inevitability of death is the most effective means of softening the heart, leading a life of moderation and contentment. Meditation upon death, should cause us to care for and look forward to a happy end since our ultimate success depends on virtuousness at the point of death.**

**N. B. Kindly refer to the original book for detailed discussion on the above points which have been abridged here.**

# THE MOVEMENT FOR PROTECTION OF 'SHARIAT'

*An Important Interview with*  
**Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi**  
*President*  
**All India Muslim Personal Law Board**

*by*  
**Maulana Nazrul Hafeez Nadwi Azhari**

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*Published by*  
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## INTRODUCTION

The protection of 'Shariat' is a burning problem for Indian Muslims these days. Their religious sentiments are badly hurt as attempts are being made to put an end to the practice of 'Shariat' in their personal affairs like marriage and divorce after they had patiently tolerated persistent riots, polytheistic teachings in curriculum, economic and political backwardness and denial of government jobs. The ambiguous attitude of the government and the recent judgement of the Supreme Court (in the Shah Bano Case) have put the future of Islam (and Muslims) in jeopardy. There are some Muslims who too, willingly or unwillingly, are adding fuel to fire. It was, therefore, considered necessary to know in this regard the views of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, President, All India Muslim Personal Law Board who is leading the movement for the Protection of "Shariat" on account of the delicate nature and seriousness of the problem.

Lucknow  
10-10-'85

Nur 'Azim Nadwi

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## **Movement For Protection of 'Shariat'**

### **Question :**

You have given interviews on your political views, literary and religious activities of Indian Muslims. These interviews are valuable documents on the problems of Indian Muslims. The future historians of Indian Muslims would find them very useful for their works. For instance, you gave an interview to 'Nida-e-Millat' on All-India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat in February, 1971, and another interview on the 'Message of Humanity' in June, 1978. These interviews brought out such facts to light which were never known before. I am again giving you the trouble (of an interview) on a problem which is agitating the minds of the 'millat' for some time. I mean Muslim Personal Law. But before I ask any questions about it, I would like to know the circumstances in which you accepted the presidentship of the Board. I know your literary and other activities (which keep you busy all the time) and also your refusal to accept the presidentship of All-India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat at the instance of a revered leader, the late Dr. Syed Mahmud.

### **Answer :**

You have made a good beginning and asked the question about the Board in a nice way. It has brought back to my mind some forgotten memories. The fact is that those persons who have read my articles especially my auto-biography, know that I attach great importance to two problems of Indian Muslims and this is the result of my deep study of history of Indian Muslims and some knowledge of the purpose for which this 'ummat' has been raised and the message it has to impart to mankind :

1. The protection of 'iman' (faith) and beliefs of the future generations of Indian Muslims, perpetuation of their intrinsic and spiritual qualities, provision for their religious education, prevention from mental aberration, transmission of Islamic heritage

to them and preparing them to be the bearers and protectors of the same.

2. To maintain the Islamic identity of the 'millat' in India— a country which is a confluence of different religions, civilisation and nations; to try and keep their link with celestial teachings and divine law; here the concept of religion is not limited to prayers but embraces the whole life; it has its own Personal Law and system based on the clear injunctions of the glorious Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and which a Muslim is duty bound to follow.

It was on account of this feeling that when the Provincial Dini T'alimi Council was formed at a meeting called by the late Qazi Adil Abbasi and the presidentship of that body fell to my lot, I accepted it as a religious obligation. I am still working in the same capacity because I consider it as an indispensable duty.

The same is the case with the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board. The Indian Muslims were faced with a challenge after independence as a result of apathetic attitude of the government and the demand of some progressive Muslims (whose number is negligible) for a Uniform Civil Code, on the pretext that national unity and uniformity cannot be had without it. The guarded and vague statements of the government added to our fears. There was a group of Muslims which started a movement\* for change in Muslim Personal Law. It was yet another trial (of faith for the Muslims) and a forerunner of their cultural and social backsliding, rebellion against and a move to deprive the Muslims of the blessings of "Shariat".

"..... whoso judgeth not by that which Allah has revealed : such are disbelievers."

Surah Maida : 94

Those persons who realised this danger, Maulana Minnattullah, Amir-e-Shariat, Bihar and Orissa, was one of them. He

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\* Which is no more than a storm in a tea cup,

decided to establish a body to oppose this trend in an organised manner and it was decided to hold a convention on Muslim Personal Law in Bombay on 27th and 28th December, 1972. I and Maulana Manzoor N'omani had gone to Makkah Mukarramah to attend the meetings of the Muslim World League and wanted to perform Hajj, but came back early in view of the importance of this convention. The convention was attended by "Ulama" (theologians and jurists) of all schools of thought and shades of opinion, a like of which is rarely seen these days. It was decided to form the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board in this convention and Maulana Qari Muhammad Taiyib was named as the President and Maulana Minnatullah, the General Secretary.

Qari Muhammad Taiyib was a very popular person and there was unanimity on his presidentship. The question of change in presidentship of the Board was raised at the Ranchi Session on account of his health and my name was proposed. The proposers, however, withdrew the proposal when I said we do not change horses in mid-stream and it was difficult to find a more deserving president than him for a joint body like the Board. But Maulana Qari Muhammad Taiyib passed away on 17th July, 1983. It was then decided to hold a meeting of the Board at Madras on 28th and 29th December 1983. I had not attended one or two meetings on account of my illness or foreign commitments. I, therefore, decided to attend this meeting and had the seats reserved, but at the eleventh hour I was afflicted with gout of which I am an old patient. I was confined to bed and it was difficult to move out of it.

I came to know after the meeting that my name was proposed for presidentship and those members of the Board who knew my nature suggested that I would accept the office if there is unanimity over it and I was elected as such.

When I was told about the election I had no option but to accept it though it was not in conformity with my failing health, advanced age and other pre-occupations. I would have declined it without a second thought if I were asked to accept any office in any political or other organisation. But on one side I had

in mind the importance of the Personal Law which I consider like the jugular vein in human body. Secondly I have great regard for Maulana Minnatullah as he is the son of the (late) Maulana Muhammad Ali, founder of Nadwat-ul-Ulama. I never thought that after my accepting the office of presidentship the Indian Muslims would be confronted with such exacting problems which the Board (and the Community itself) had never faced before. They would call for extra-ordinary qualities of leadership, firmness of purpose, order and discipline among the public, intelligence and knowledge of the 'ulama' and lawyers alike, absolute reliance on leadership, patience and forbearance, allocation of various jobs to others with confidence and acceptance by them in good spirit. I am referring to the judgement of the Supreme Court delivered on 23rd April 1985, on payment of maintenance (nafaqa) to a divorcee (after 'iddat') which brought the entire 'millat' at the crossroad where its adherence to 'Shariat', fidelity with Islam and self-respect were put to severe test. It was the Will of Allah (and nobody knows the mysterious ways of Allah) that this delicate and decisive problem and arduous trial came to pass during my tenure of office which required utmost mental and physical strain, lot of patience and time (if the 'millat' comes off this trial with flying colours then God willing, the Personal Law would be saved from being made the target by the courts). It may probably invite the Mercy of Allah without which the most competent leaders and highly ambitious reformers cannot achieve any success:

“..... Victory cometh only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.”

Surah Al-i-Imran : 126

### **Question**

Would you like to throw some light on the activities of the Board for the protection of Muslim Personal Law till now ?

### **Answer**

It must be in your knowledge that a General Body Meeting of the Board was held in Calcutta in April, 1985. The representatives of all schools of thought and of almost all the big Muslim bodies and organisations were present in this meeting like their

predecessors. The Presidential address was delivered 'extempore' (and published in Urdu and English), in which I tried to shed light on the special nature and importance of our problem in true perspective. The Valedictory Address was delivered in Shaheed Minar Park in which according to a conservative estimate about five lacs of people were present. I thought it fit to address the Muslims in particular and make a little assessment of their religious activities ; the attitude they have adopted in this regard and the indirect and moral effect it has on the 'millat'. This address has been published in Urdu.

Then there were two more meetings in Delhi - one on 16th May and the other on 10th August, 1985. It was decided in the second meeting that a delegation should meet Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister (We met him on 21st August 1985, in a cordial and congenial atmosphere). The delegation included heads and responsible members of all the political parties and other important organisations. We presented a memorandum to him in which all the vital information and relevant material were provided which would help him to understand the whole problem in the right perspective and suggested the easy, constitutional and legal way which would satisfy the Muslim community.

I may add that as President of the Board I initiated the talks. I told him that I am now seventy-two years old. I have seen and heard your great grand-father, Shri Motilal Nehru in Aminabad Park, Lucknow and I had occasions to see and know Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru and Smt. Indira Gandhi at close quarters. There is no movement, political or otherwise right from the time of 'Khilafat' movement till today, which I have not seen at close range, I also know the reaction among the general public about these movements. I can say in the light of this age-old experience that I have never seen such unanimity among different schools of thought, political parties and various other Muslim Organisations as in the case of protection of Muslim Personal Law especially against the recent judgement of the Supreme Court. Shri Rajiv Gandhi heard us with attention and did not argue over anything. Then the other members of the delegation spoke including Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Banatwala, Syed Shahab-

uddin, Al-Haj Ibrahim Suleman Seth and all of them intelligently presented the case of Muslim Personal Law.

When All-India Muslim Personal Law Board decided to observe the last Friday of last Ramazan as 'Protection of Shariat Day' it was observed throughout the length and breadth of the country with dignity and without clamour and fanfare—speeches were delivered in the mosques and innumerable telegrams were sent to the Prime Minister and Law Minister. When the 'Protection of Shariat Week' was observed all sections of Muslim 'millat' without any distinction, participated in the meetings. They showed complete unanimity, unity and spirit of co-operation which was being aspired for a long time. It would not be out of place if I say that the recent Supreme Court Judgement (in Shah Bano case) has worked in such a manner in uniting all sections of the Muslim 'millat' which would otherwise be difficult to achieve albeit long and hard struggle. The 'Shariat Week' has been observed in U.P., Bihar and Orissa\*. It remains to be observed in other States. These meetings were very successful on all counts at all the places. The enthusiasm and co-operation among workers and large gatherings which were seen during these meetings were not witnessed for a long time. It is estimated that between fifty thousand to a lac of people attended the meeting at Kanpur. The Moradabad meeting was also very successful.

It can be said that this problem (protection of 'Shariat') would become the cause of general awakening among the Muslim masses on account of its special nature and attachment with it. It would also build an opposition to Uniform Civil Code amongst the Muslims. The 'Millat' would realise that united it can achieve its objects (by peaceful means), save itself from great dangers and prove that it is a living community.

#### **Question :**

Besides, the brighter side of all these activities which every

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**N.B.** There have been such meetings in Kashmir, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, and Karnataka which were as successful as these ones.

Muslim or patriotic citizen has realised, what apprehensions you have in this connection ; You have not only written a comprehensive history of Indian Muslims but travelled extensively in Muslim majority countries, warned the people of those countries about their weaknesses and the dangers they face (from within and without), we would, therefore, like to hear from you which is the most difficult problem which we are likely to encounter in the future ?

**Answer :**

You have revived some bitter memories of the past by asking this question and forced me to say something which in the ordinary course, I would not say. As Allama Iqbal has said :

“Bear my bitter-talk with patience.

Poison also at times works as anti-dote.

(Chaman mein talkh nawai meri gawara kar.

Ke Zehr bhi kabhi karta hai kar-e-tiryaqi.).

I have serious apprehensions about two weaknesses of the Muslim ‘millat’ (which is not merely an apprehension but it is being witnessed now), this I say with a heavy heart because it is becoming a national character: one is indecent haste and lack of patience. The problem may be quite vexatious and complicated and may require long and patient struggle, but the Muslims want it to be solved in a matter of days. They want that whatever plan or movement they start in the morning should show results before evening. The important factors in solving any problems are patience, forbearance and courage. The history not only of Muslims, but of all the ‘living’ and victorious nations is full of ups and downs, conquests and defeats, sorrows and pleasures, in short, a mixture of long, patient and distressful struggle. We have no better example than the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) but his life is also full of such incidents. The history of all big movements also teaches us the same lessons.

I was in Bombay in the second week of September, 1985, and

I had an opportunity to attend the Action Committee meeting of Maharashtra Muslim Personal Law Board. The meeting was going on in a sober atmosphere and different proposals were being considered for protection of 'Shariat', then all of a sudden a youngman stood up and started reading a paper. He said that the mark of living nations is that if any party fails to solve a problem, it withdraws and gives chance to others. A long time has passed and the Muslim Personal Law Board could not solve any problems, now the members should admit their failure and give an opportunity to others. This had a serious repercussion on my mind and I said that it (the attitude he represented) is a symptom of diseased mind. I asked: Have you studied the character of our fellow-countrymen? How they waited patiently during freedom struggle and later for implementation of Development Plans. May it be Gandhiji or Malwiyaji or any other Hindu political leader or nation-builder—these leaders worked with patience and peace of mind. The nations did not call them in question after a few days of starting any movement or project. The Muslims should be more tolerant. They believe in the glorious Qur'an and in Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). They rely on Al-mighty Allah and it should make them more broadminded and far-sighted. But it is sad that their practice is just the opposite of what it should be.

The other weakness of the Muslims which has become characteristic with them is lack of confidence in their leaders, misgivings about their capacity to deliver the goods, uncalled for and unhealthy criticism and character assassination. I repeat that the attitude of our fellow-countrymen towards their leaders and public workers is quite different. To expect noble character and unimpeachable honesty from leaders are in accord with Islamic teachings and is ideal. But to look at every leader and worker with doubt and suspicion from the very beginning, lack of confidence in and disrespect for them, to readily believe anything said about them by anybody however far-fetched and exaggerated it be, no hesitation in believing such rumours without enquiry or setting rumours afloat are such maladies which are enough to disrupt the unity of the 'millat'. This attitude can dishearten any 'lion-hearted', sincere, and pious

public worker and it is heart-rending for the most skilled leader who can steer the ship of the 'millat'. A sincere worker can bear the enemy inflicted hardships, imprisonment and hunger of the children and other dear ones without raising an eye-brow but he cannot tolerate these accusations because by these he becomes heart-broken and loses courage. Somebody has rightly said that the stories of an old woman who admonished Hazrat 'Umar and a villager, who made searching enquiries of Hazrat 'Umar have been so emphasized in our public meetings that every one has started imitating these examples though the man criticised may not be a man of the calibre of Hazrat 'Umar. The attitude of majority towards their leaders is just the opposite. In spite of certain other short-comings they are cautious, broad-minded and far-sighted.

#### **Question :**

There are some persons who have pretended ignorance and supported part of the Supreme Court Judgement saying what harm is there if alimony (nafaqa) be paid to the divorcee by her ex-husband till re-marriage or for life. If there is no such provision in 'Shariat' it matters little as it can be included now. The Personal Law is not a touch-me-not that it would fade-away and it would not be calamitous if a little amendment be made in it. It is a matter of 'ijtihad' which the imams have done in every period. They have misinterpreted the word 'mata' in the glorious Qur'an and presented it out of context for payment of 'nafaqa' after the 'waiting period' (iddat). Why not the 'ulama' specially the powerful members of the Muslim Personal Law Board which is made up of heads of great religious and educational institutions issue a 'juristic opinion' (fatwa) and declare such persons outcasts from Muslim society so that others may learn a lesson and do not have the courage to distort the 'Shariat' in future.

#### **Answer :**

You have asked a very relevant question. The other learned members of the Board are free to express their opinion, but my personal opinion is that it is not proper for 'ulama' and religious institutions to adopt the role of the 'Courts of Inquisition' of the Dark Ages which declared the heretic Christians, who did not

conform to their beliefs (according to them) as outcasts from the fold of Christianity and awarded hideous punishments on account of which a section of the public was displeased with the Church and hated Christianity.

I think we should try to imbibe religious awareness in the 'millat' which would take such progressive self-styled 'faqih' (jurists) and 'mufassir' (exegesists) to task and make them realise that they have cut themselves off from Muslim society. The attitude of the society would open their eyes (if they have any sense of honour left in them) and it would be enough for them to realise their mistaken behaviour. It would enable them to decide that it would be better to live like any other member of the Muslim society and they have to live and die in it which would stand by them in their weal and woe or to live on the respect and praise which is being lavished on them now though it is illusory and undependable.

**Question :**

I want your permission to ask one more question which is no less important than earlier ones. I think that it must be agitating the minds of many observant Muslims and intellectuals.

**Answer :**

You may ask that question also so that no aspect of the problem remains uncovered.

**Question :**

What in your opinion is required to be done in this very important religious and social problem and what should be our programme in the future ?

**Answer :**

You have asked a very pertinent question and that too at the proper time. This interview would have remained incomplete if this question was not raised here. In my opinion the first and foremost task is to invite the Muslims to stick to Islamic teachings—the 'Shariat' of which the vital and central points are rights of husband and wife towards each other and keep before them the exemplary life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and

live with love and sympathy which have been ordained by the glorious Qur'an.

“.....and He (Allah) ordained between you love and mercy.. ..”

Surah ar-Rum : 21

The Muslim families should live in such a way that the qualities of love, kindness and mercy dominate their lives. The relationship between blood relations, distribution of property and the right to divorce should be strictly according to the 'Shariat'.

“.....be careful of your duty towards Allah in whom you claim (your rights) of one another and towards the wombs (that bare you).....”

Surah an-Nisa : 1

We should live in accord with the guidance provided in the glorious Qur'an which embraces all aspects of human activity. This message should be carried out on a war footing so that it reaches every town, village and all Muslim localities. We should use all kinds of Muslim assemblies, functions and festivities as also newspapers, magazines and other media, at our disposal, for this purpose. I am of the opinion that it is the most important task before the 'millat'. It is also the only way out of the evils and miseries which have become problematic for the 'millat' for quite sometime when the promise of Allah is :

“O ye who believe ! If you keep your duty to Allah, He will give your discrimination (between right and wrong) and will rid you of your evil thoughts and deeds and will forgive you.....”

Surah al-Anfal : 29

I gave an analysis in very clear terms of the causes of prevalent afflictions of the 'millat' in the Public meeting held under the auspices of All-Indian Muslim Personal Law Board at Calcutta on 7th April 1985 in which the number of audience was estimated at five lacs. I told them that they should take up self-introspection and look around themselves as to what extent they follow the laws and teachings of 'Shariat'. It is necessary that

this Valedictory Address should be published in different regional languages.\*

The second important need is that the right thinking educated Muslims, scholars and intellectual should prove the superiority and excellence of Muslim Personal Law over others, and demonstrate that it is in harmony with nature and in conformity with sound wisdom as it has been sent down by Allah, the Wise, the Merciful. It should be presented in a scientific manner supported by irrefutable proofs, that it is simple and easy to follow as compared to all other Personal Laws and systems in vogue and these books should be published in Urdu, Hindi, English and other regional languages.

The Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow, Central Personal Law Office, Monghyr and Maktaba Jama'at-e-Islami, Delhi and some other bodies have published a good many books, but it needs to be done on a wider and larger scale. The learned and devoted scholars should be asked to write books on subjects concerning 'Shariat'. There should be symposia in which expert jurists from Arab countries should be invited, and, I, as a member of the Muslim World League, take responsibility that they would accept the invitation and be happy to participate in them. The dialogue on this and such other problems would be helpful and some well-intentioned scholars should think over it with the seriousness it deserves.

The third important need is to explain that payment of 'maintenance' to divorcee by her ex-husband after the 'waiting period' ('iddat') is not proper according to 'Shariat' and common sense—it is not proper according to 'Shariat' because there is no scope for it in view of the injunctions of the glorious Qur'an and express dictum (of Law), it is not proper from administrative point because it would give rise to the incidence of unnatural deaths in the same way as 'bride-burning' has proliferated in recent times. I told Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, in a private conversation that if it is enforced by law then instead of being divorced undesirable wives would be done to death by poisoning

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\* It has already been published in Urdu.

or burning which is already being done in the country in case of dissatisfaction with the dowry the wife has brought.

Apart from the question of permanent law for 'maintenance' to divorcees (after 'iddat') we have to revive and practise those alternative arrangements which have been described in great detail in the 'Shariat'.

## APPENDIX

### ALLAH HAS GIVEN US A UNIVERSAL AND ETERNAL LAW

"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam".

Surah Maida : 3

This historic revelation heralded the beginning of a new and unique chapter in the ordered and systematized life of mankind when all the laws of Islam which were in force before revelation of this verse were perfected in all respects. They included laws on marriage, divorce, inheritance and covered everything needed for methodic and organized human life. In fact, Allah set the seal of perfection on 'Shariat' with this revelation and there is no need for any alteration, addition, amendment or cancellation in it at any time.

Islam is not a religion of festivals\* but the religion of the worship of Allah. Allah revealed this verse when 'Shariat' as preached and practised by last Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was perfected and with it the completion of the religion was also announced because all the directives, commandments and laws were clearly explained and enforced. It was achieved in 9 A. H. (632 C. E.) and nothing has been included in the 'Shariat' from that time till this date. There is, therefore, no need for anybody's help or any modification in it for the obedient servants of Allah. There is no difference in the mode of 'prayers' (salat) anywhere in the world. It means that the laws of Islam are based on sound principles and solid grounds. In the same way the principles of marriage and divorce are one throughout the Muslim world though the languages of the followers may be different, Islam is founded on unity of the 'ummat'. The inherent prosperity (barakat) and universal character of 'Shariat' would hold good and last till the Doomsday. There can be no marriage if it is not performed according to

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\* There are just two festivals—Idul Fitr and Idul Azha.

**'Shariat.'** The great revolutions in all these fourteen hundred years could not make any change in it. The Muslims have to be alert and examine and review the prevailing conditions at frequent intervals that there is no deviation from 'Shariat'.

Those nations and communities which do not have a complete code of life make changes in the current laws with changing times and differing conditions. There are certain nations which have revealed books, but they do not act according to them. Allah has given such a law to the followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) that it embraces all aspects of human activity. There can be no change in the 'Shariat', in the same way as there can be no change in the established 'rak'ats' of 'namaz'. We cannot think of any change in 'Shariat.' The law which Allah has given us is not only universal but eternal.

The Muslims might have migrated under compulsion but they have never given up 'Shariat.' There can be no worse people than the present generation if they give up 'Shariat' which our forbears preserved at the cost of their lives.

If the Muslims remain unmindful at this critical juncture, history would change its course and it would be very difficult to undo it in hundreds of years. The people who cannot preserve their entity (national characteristics) are lost in the dark corners of history. We live in a country where different religions and laws are extant. We should, therefore, be vigilant without being aggressive in any manner.

I once told Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister, that if the ex-husband is forced to pay alimony (nafaqa) to the divorcee after 'iddat' then the incidence of unnatural deaths would increase by burning, strangulation, drowning, etc., as in the case of dowry-deaths.

The divorce has been allowed in Islam under conditions when life of the married couple becomes unbearable (for both or any one of them). But the propoganda that is being carried out against polygamy and divorce among Muslims is not correct. If a census is taken about polygamy and divorce, it would be

found that the number of polygamous marriages and divorces is higher among non-Muslims than Muslims.

The recent interference in Muslim Personal Law has united the Muslim community as during the days of 'Khilafat' movement. Nobody has the courage to challenge or speak about change in Muslim Personal Law in a gathering of Muslims now.

If we keep quiet now the future generations would not forgive us. The Muslims have to give evidence of their self-respect. It is a trial of their 'iman' (faith). If the Muslims do not record strong enough protest now then tomorrow people would criticise our 'namaz' saying that there is apprehension of a riot because of it. I would say in the end :

**Unite for the Sake of 'Shariat' and Personal Law**

Tameer-e-Hayat, Lucknow.  
10.10.1985



# MAULANA SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI

## A PROFILE

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was born in 1914 in a family which had a long tradition of selfless service to the nation and the country. He had his early education at home. Then he joined the Darul Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulama, and qualified from there with distinction. He specialised in 'Hadees' (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) under the tutorship of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and 'Tafseer' (exegesis) under Maulana Ahmad Ali of Lahore. He is now Rector (Nazim) of Darul Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulama.

He has written over eighty books on subjects related to Islamic faith, literature and history in Arabic and Urdu, a number of which have been translated into English, French, Turkish, Indonesian, Persian, Filipino and other languages.

He started a movement by the name of 'Payam-e-Insaniyat' in 1974 and travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country for it. The main purpose of the movement is to create a feeling of love, affection and brotherhood among different sections of the population and to root out the evils of corruption, favouritism, black-marketing, etc. from Indian society.

He is widely travelled and he has delivered lectures in world famous universities like those of Oxford, Harvard, Berlin, etc.,

He is Chairman of the Islamic Centre, Oxford University, Oxford (U. K.), Chairman, World Forum of Islamic Literature (which has membership from all over the Muslim world), Chairman, Foundation for Studies and Research, Luxembourg Member, Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus (Syria), Member, National Foundation for Translation, Research and Studies, Carthage (Tunisia), Member, Academy of Research in Islamic Civilisation, Amman (Jordan), Member, Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat (Morocco), Member, Advisory Committee, University of Madina, Founder-Member, Muslim World League, Makkah (Saudi Arabia), President, Shibli Academy, Azamgarh (U. P.), President, All-India Muslim Personal Law Board, President, Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow. He was granted Shah Faisal Award in 1980, for his outstanding contribution to Islamic Studies.