

# THE TIMES THAT LIE AHEAD - *An Action Plan*



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## INTRODUCTION

The times we live in are dire, complicated and worrying. Humanity is gripped by tribulation and desperation. Life has become painful for so many around the world, especially Muslims. Historically, the Muslim Ummah has always rose up to its challenges and prevailed by the Will of Allah Ta'ala.

In present times, when Muslims seem to be at their weakest, there is an urgent need for a revival of faith and the true spirit of Islam. This shall only be achieved through understanding our trials with the correct perspective and by collectively working towards the solutions. This book is a compilation of short, thought provoking articles authored by the following personalities,

1. *Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (Rahimahullah)* – an internationally renowned personality
2. *Mufti Zubair Bayat (Hafizahullah)* – Ameer of Darul Ihsan Centre - Durban
3. *Brother Khalid Baig (Hafizahullah)* – An engineer by profession from Canada

This book endeavours to provide traction to some of the ideas and strategies that could bring about the revival and glory of the Ummah.

This work is dedicated to the Muslim Ummah and every individual who strives towards restoring the glory of Islam.

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# THE TIMES WE LIVE IN AND THE TIMES THAT LIE AHEAD

*Mufti Zubair Bayat*

**W**e are living in an age that is the most advanced in science, technology and inventions yet the worst in terms of humanity, morality and values ...

This is an age that is characterized by the worst that mankind has ever witnessed ... genocide, killings, bombings, mass murder, torture, violence, injustice, tyranny, sadism, cruelty on a scale never witnessed before ... deception, hypocrisy, lies, allegations, propaganda to hoodwink the masses that makes tyrants appear benign and the victims as aggressors ... godlessness, blasphemy, Satanism, black magic, occultism, cynicism, deviant groupings and sects reign supreme ... crime, robbery, hijackings, kidnappings, gangsterism, drugs are the order. Immorality, lust, adultery, rape, pornography, sodomy, lesbianism, paedophilia, prostitution, human trafficking are made to appear normal. Social mayhem, divorces, illegitimate children, dereliction of familial duties, delinquency, and rebellion are not abnormal anymore. Greed, pride, jealousy, malice, hatred, suspicion, disunity, ignorance, accusations, prejudice, racism, nepotism, corruption, exploitation are deemed to be acceptable. Poverty, hunger, diseases, unemployment, economic meltdown is increasing rapidly. Vice, sin, pure evil overpowers all else. In short, the law of the jungle prevails, where might is right and the strong devour the weak, a return to an era worse than that of *Ayyame-Jahilliyah* – the dark ages of ignorance!

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## **GIGANTIC ‘PRESSURE COOKER’**

None are spared from the fire of this wickedness, neither women, elderly people, children, nor even innocent toddlers ... Aside from the ‘hot spots’ and war torn zones of the earth, even in ‘normal’ countries, none are safe. Not in the streets, offices, factories, schools, parks, public spaces, nor even in homes. The newspapers and media are filled with the most horrifying stories of the suffering that human beings inflict upon one another.

This is the dismal, dark and gloomy but real picture of our world of today. It is a bleak existence that has led to hopelessness, despair, depression, anxiety, fear and intellectual paralysis. Millions have lost hope and have become completely despondent. Many are expecting an “Armageddon” of some sort to happen and some are even hastening its occurrence. The earth is boiling with rage. The voiceless and speechless creatures are disgusted and the sky is protesting in anger at the dastardly deeds and actions of mankind. There are certainly going to be dire consequences and repercussions for this madness in the form of colossal and frequent calamities, catastrophes, havoc, all forms of natural and other disasters, just like how the beads of a broken rosary (*Tasbeeh/Subha*) fall in quick succession. What is even more terrifying is that this all-pervading evil and the resultant calamities only appear to be increasing in intensity and frequency by the day. It feels as if all of mankind is in some kind of a gigantic ‘pressure cooker’!

## **THE WAY AHEAD**

Is there any hope in this dark existence? What should be done, if anything? Is there a way forward? For a believer in the Last Testament to mankind, the Holy Qur’an, and in the teachings of the best role

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model and guide to humanity, Nabi Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*), there is certainly ample hope and a clear course of action.

Due to brevity, a short 4-point plan of action is proposed:

Knowledge of what is occurring and what lies ahead is crucial. Countless accurate and correct predictions of the times that lie ahead have been made by Hazrat Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*). A focused and meticulous study and understanding of these is crucial. Lack of knowledge of these lead to despondency, inertia and confusion.

Accept these realities and adapt to them as best as possible. These are inevitable and unavoidable occurrences which no power on earth can hold back from happening.

Not to waste energy, time and resources in trying to impute these occurrences to ‘other’ causes such as conspiracy theories. Indeed, there is reality in conspiracies, but at times the theories far exceed the reality of the conspiracy, which is greatly exaggerated. These conspiracy theories lead to loss of hope, despair and even weakening and even loss of *Imaan*, and dissipation of energy and resources in useless avenues.

To adopt all the factors of salvation and avoid all factors of destruction. For example, all the predictions that have been made regarding the vices and evils that will appear have to be avoided completely and adoption of all those means of safety and protection in these corrupt times. There is a lot of detail regarding this point that requires greater elucidation.

*May Allah protect the Ummah all over the world from all forms of harm.*

**IN YOUR COUNTRY!**

**EARN YOUR PLACE**

*Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (Rahimahullah)*

*A dynamic speech delivered by Maulana in Dewsbury, UK in 1982 at the opening of the Dewsbury Masjid. Almost 40 years later, this profound message is ever more relevant and important!*

I am filled with happiness by your reception. I would be most ungrateful if I do not respect your wishes and share my inner feelings. If I desire, I could shower you with praises, for Almighty Allah has bestowed me with an abundance of vocabulary, but I would not be fulfilling the right of friendship.

### **DA'WAH IN THE SEERAH**

As you are aware, Nabi Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*), had a burning desire to invite humanity towards Islam. Despite 13 years of untiring effort in Makkah Mukarramah and 7 years in Madinah Munawwarah, there was no large scale movement of non-Muslims into Islam. Between 7 AH and 10 AH, which is the period after Fath-Makkah (Conquest of Makkah) until Nabi's (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) demise, there was such an influx of people entering the ranks of Islam that was not witnessed in the preceding 20 years.



Imam Zuhri (Rahimahullah), an eminent Scholar and Tabi'i (companion of the Sahabah), expressed surprise on this sea of change, with so many people embracing Islam in a matter of just 3 years. Along with other distinguished Scholars he has commented that this was due to non-Muslims having had an opportunity for the first time, to observe and intermingle with Muslims, witness their honesty, fair dealing, compassion and sole reliance on Almighty Allah. This left such a deep and profound impression on non-Muslims that thousands entered into the fold of Islam within a relatively short period of time.

## APPLYING THE LESSONS OF SEERAH HERE AND NOW

This incident also contains abundant lessons on how Muslims should live in this country. Their conduct should be sublime and captivating. Whosoever should see us should accept Islam. Whosoever sits with us should be inclined towards Islam. There should be no need to convince anyone to accept the Truth.

Therefore, in this country, if you wish to live peacefully and have an opportunity to present Islam to the host community, you will need to inculcate and manifest sterling qualities, not just inside the Masjid but also outside in the streets, in the markets, in your daily activities, and at home. A life of Taqwa will immediately attract non-Muslims towards Islam.

## DANGERS OF LIVING ISOLATED AND INSULATED

As an ordinary student of Islam, it is my religious responsibility to warn you. If you do not lead an upright life, if you continue to live an insular lifestyle and if you fail to manifest the beauty of Islam to non-Muslims, **then you face some real dangers**. In such a case, there is no reason for you to feel content and secure in this country.

If ever the fire of race, religion or nationalism rages here, you will not be saved. In Spain there were Masjids a hundred times more beautiful

than yours. So do not feel content and self-satisfied. As an ordinary student of Islam, I wish to express my joy and happiness at this wonderful new Masjid but what words shall I use to congratulate you?

## LESSONS FROM SPAIN

Others may not speak to you as plainly, but remember the glorious Masjid of Cordova. It still stands in Spain. Iqbal, the great Poet of the East, so eloquently reminisces the great legacy of Islamic Spain in his famous poem Masjide Qurtaba. In Islamic Spain, there were such brilliant Masjids, celebrated Madrasahs, famous scholars like Shaikhul-Akbar, Ibnu-Hazm, Qurtubi, Shatbi and how many others shall I mention? However, **when the flames of religious sectarianism raged, then the Masjids and Madrasahs became deserted.**

Once, Islamic Spain boasted such magnificent structures, distinguished educational centres, refined culture and society. Regrettably, the Muslims, despite such a high standard of living, did not draw the non-Muslims of that country to see the truth of Islam to warn them of the dangers of disbelief, with the result that ensuing religious violence subsequently consumed them like a morsel. The Arabs with their glowing history, architectural splendour and vast oceans of knowledge were displaced from the country. Today, unfortunately, the ears eagerly wait to hear the Azaan and the empty Masjids are thirsty for the Salah.

## EARN YOUR PLACE IN YOUR COUNTRY

My dear brothers, you must earn your recognition in this country. You should earn your place and leave an imprint on the host community of your value and significance. You must show that your exemplary conduct is far nobler than that of other people. You must impart on them the lessons of humanity. You should demonstrate such

commitment and noble virtues that impress on people that there cannot be found more upright humans elsewhere besides you. You need to establish your worth, showing what blessing and mercy you are for the country. If however you decide **to live in an enclosed environment simply content with your prayers and fasting, apathetic to the people and society you live in, never introducing them to the high Islamic values and your own personal qualities, then beware**, lest any religious or sectarian violence flares up. In such a situation, you will not find safety or protection.

I pray to Almighty Allah my fears are totally unfounded. But remember, you are guests here. Your Da'wah, Masjids, Madrasahs, worship and religious sacrifices are all worthy of commendation. May Almighty Allah grant you Barakah. Do not forget to earn your place in this country. Gain proficiency of the national language and use it to effectively propagate Islam. Prepare writers and orators to convey the message of Islam. **Although you will distance yourself from their religion, do not distance yourself from them.** Establish your credibility to the extent that if you are entrusted with onerous responsibilities, as was Prophet Yusuf (Alayhis Salam), you do not shirk but embrace all challenges wholeheartedly.

## **YOUR PRIORITY SHOULD NOT BE WEALTH & LUXURY**

You will have to present a new pattern of life to this country. You will not earn recognition by exerting yourselves in the workplace. If you overwork you will be looked upon disparagingly and be likened to horses and bulls. In fact, you will be labelled as money-making machines. However, if you can show the people here that you are worshippers of Almighty Allah and not worshippers of wealth, you do not bow before power but only before virtue, you are humans and think like humans, you are concerned not only about yourselves but also about others and you are compassionate about your own children

as well as theirs, that you are earnestly concerned about the path of destruction they have chosen for themselves, you will then earn their respect. They will begin to respect Islam and become desirous of studying it. They will ask you for literature concerning Islamic beliefs and practices and an opportunity will arise here for you to promote Islam.

On the other hand, if you remain preoccupied in eating and working, engaged in prayers, remaining indifferent to what is happening in the country, insulated within the Muslim community, totally apathetic to what is happening outside and which direction the country is taking. In such a situation if there is trouble you will not be able to save yourselves.

## **STRENGTHEN YOUR POSITION**

I have been meaning to convey and accentuate this message to you as I do not know whether I will be able visit you again in the future. You gathered here with love and affection and therefore it was easy for me to convey. As a student of religion it would have been convenient for me to recommend the virtues of reciting various Zikr or prescribe certain *Wazifahs* but you may not have had an opportunity of listening to the message I have just conveyed from anyone else.

Please strengthen your position in this country. Earn your recognition. Do not be like a straw or crop that is uprooted by a mere breeze. You should be so firm that not even a hurricane is able to displace you. Display such noble character that you attract the hearts of the people. See then how these people will stand up to defend you. If there is the slightest hostility towards you, they will be the first ones to argue on your behalf and argue what a blessing you are for them.

*May Almighty Allah grant us the ability to understand what is right; may He bless and protect you. Aameen.*

## SECURING OUR FUTURE

*Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (Rahimahullah)*

*A historic speech delivered by Maulana in Rangoon, Burma in 1964*

### INTRODUCTION

democratic government ruled Burma (today known as Myanmar). Many people from India, especially Gujarat and Surat migrated to Burma and resided there. They were involved in business and were settled there very well. They assisted many Madrasas of India in terms of finances. Great Ulama were welcomed warmly into their midst and were highly honoured. Despite this, they were intoxicated with the love for wealth. They were greatly engrossed in it. People were absorbed in comforts and luxuries. They had forsaken the effort and sacrifice for Deen, and forgot the importance of reminding each other about their duties and propagating Islam (Da'wah).

### MILITARY REVOLUTION

In 1964, a military revolution took place which destroyed their wealth and collapsed the economy. Conditions were such that the people, who used to give Zakah, now became deserving of Zakah. They left the country bare footed, running for their lives. Prior to the revolution,

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (*Rahimahullah*) visited Burma. He delivered this lecture at the famous Surti Sunni Masjid, wherein he stirred the hearts and motivated the people by reminding them of their primary duties as Muslims. He warned them of the future dangers. Every word of his lecture is a lesson for the Muslims of the world today. Honourable Reader, please read these timeless advises repeatedly, reflect and act.

## **MEANS OF SECURITY**

Time is a valuable asset that is passing by. If you were to take out some time from your daily work and businesses for the effort of Da'wah by reminding others and propagating the teachings of Islam, then Allah will reward you immensely, even in this world and Jannah (paradise) awaits you in the Hereafter. On the other hand, if you do not occupy yourself in this effort, then I warn you that you will not be able to reside here. I do not make this statement as a politician, but rather using the divine light that Allah has granted each Mu'min (Believer). If you do not spare any time for the Deen of Allah Ta'ala, it will be difficult for you to stay in this country. Moreover, when that time comes, even your shops and factories will not be safe. Remember, the means for security comes from above; from the heavenly protection of Allah Ta'ala. In some places and countries, the means for security are created from above. At other places, the Muslims efforts for Deen is the sole means for security. Their efforts strengthen Iman to such levels that Allah manifests his promises and it results in them gaining divine assistance. Then, no one can cause them any harm.

## **INITIAL INTENTION**

What was your initial intention of moving to Burma? You set foot into this country so that people of this nation may also produce great personalities through your efforts. You came so that those ignorant of

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Allah prostrate before Allah, their hearts illuminate with divine recognition and remembrance of Allah Those who were initially destined for the hellfire save themselves and become worthy of the splendour and favours of Jannah. You took these people for granted. Rather than saving their souls and filling their bosoms, you began to take from them.

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You made them your customers, whereas you were sent as their messengers. If a teacher is employed at an institution to teach, but regards his students to be his customers, and keeps his eyes on their pockets to fill his own, it will be regarded an act of shame and disgrace. Similarly, you never came to this country to regard them as your customers. You came to give them the gift of guidance and prophetic knowledge. You came to guide them to Allah and to open the doors of Allah's mercy, but your own quests and businesses carried you away. Today you do not have a moment to spare from trading, building houses and mansions and advancing in your businesses. Allah surely never sent you for this. Can there be a better business (than calling towards Allah)?

### **DOUBLE ROLE**

O servants of Allah! O Muslims! You have been destined to be in this country. You have a double role. If any unfortunate one is to leave the fold of Islam, all the people here will be held responsible. Respected friends and elders! This country of Burma has been left for us. It is a jungle of the creation of Allah that has been left in your care. The central purpose of your migration here was not to eat, drink, run shops and businesses. Allah never sent you solely to resort to personal work, running businesses, so that you may earn and spend freely. Today, Allah has granted you such a big 'factory' of human beings. He has



made you from the wealthy people of this land and has given you leadership. Guidance of the people of this country has also been entrusted to you. This country of seventeen million people known as Burma has been given to you from Allah and tomorrow you will be questioned.

### **BECOME 'MANIACS'**

What did you do? Allah sent you in this country with the responsibilities of increasing the Muslim nation, saving the servants of Allah from the torment of hellfire, taking out the people from the ignorant, animalistic life into the divine light and guidance of Allah, ultimately making them the chosen servants of Allah, deserving of Jannah and the mercy of Allah. You have been sent from everywhere to save them from the threat and dangers of this world and the Hereafter while you kept thinking you came to earn. The obligation of the time - if Allah has granted you intelligence, even the slightest of intelligence, are to open your eyes, comprehend and understand that you cannot survive in this country without Islam. Become 'maniacs' for once; become such strong, truthful Muslims who cannot be shaken by the greatest quakes and tornadoes. For this purpose, disperse throughout the country. Go from town to town, spreading the message of Allah. Portray Islamic manners and announce the words and teachings of Islam.

### **SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY**

For Allah's sake, do not give so much preference to your businesses as you are doing presently. Do something for your Deen. Go from one corner to the other corner of the country and blow the 'trumpet' of Islamic morality. Today, you have the opportunity, not knowing how long this opportunity will remain. If you embrace this excellent

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opportunity, then there will be means created by Allah not only for the security of Deen, but the advancement and progress of Deen, Insha Allah. In this manner, your businesses, family and offspring will be safeguarded. You will be granted prosperity and honour in this country. It is not far-fetched that the reins of leadership are also placed in your hands, for leadership and control are tantamount to the soil that lies under the feet of the efforts exerted for the Deen of Allah.

### **IF I HAD THE POWER!**

Honestly speaking and I am not exaggerating, if I had the power, **I would have closed down all your shops, factories and businesses,**

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**not for a few months but for a few years and sent out all the people to involve themselves in propagating and uplifting Islam.** I would have told you not to worry about your homes. You would get food to eat, a few sets of clothes to wear. If they were to be torn, patch them, and if your provisions were to run out, stay hungry, but continue the effort of Islam for ten years then you will see how work will flow. Two things, if carried out, would be sufficient. Making the Muslims firm on their faith, and the non-Muslims familiar to Islam, are the two most important efforts. There is no third job. If you were to carry out these two duties, you will do yourselves a great favour.

### **FALL OF SPAIN**

The people of Spain never took up this up this effort. Consequently, they were driven out. Uncle was fighting with his nephew. Both claimants of the country fell prey to luxuries. They built buildings and competed in Masajid. A fort was built by the name of Al Hamra. A whole city was built by the name of Madinatuz Zahra, by which

tourists are amazed even today. In the eyes of Allah, these are not works of security. Those people did not occupy themselves in the effort of Da'wah and propagation of Islam. A historian writes that one of the reasons for the fall of the Muslims in Spain was due to their complete negligence of Da'wah and the effort of Deen. They forgot and were unmindful of the fact that majority of the population of the country were non-Muslims, namely Christians. Their duty was to spread the message of Islam and to create such an environment that the possibility of the Muslims being driven out should not have emerged.

These servants of Allah did not have any concern of inviting their fellow citizens to Islam. The result was that they ended up in luxuries and weakening their own Iman. They became very weak and there was no one to come to their rescue. Ultimately, the promise of Allah was fulfilled and the time had arrived. They were ordered to leave. Allah did not consider their Masajid, the fort of Hamra, the Garden of Zahra, Garnatah, Qurtuba, nor Balansiyyah. There were great Qurra, Ulama, Huffaz, Awliya, Imams and Mujtahids that were born in these places but none of this saved them. The people did not adhere to the principle of life, to which Allah says:

*“Undoubtedly Allah does not change the condition of a nation (the difficulties they face) until they change the condition within themselves (with upright conduct)”.*

[Surah Ra'ad 13:11]

## **DEMAND OF THE TIME**

Therefore friends, this is the demand of the time. These factories, workers, shops, businesses, leadership will all remain. Remain assured, these things will stay and not be taken away. Just make some

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effort for a few days, take out time and strengthen the foundations of Islam. Expand the sphere of Islam, then Insha Allah, this country is yours. There will be no danger and I can openly say that this country will be yours.

Allah Ta'ala says in the Holy Qur'an:

*'Without doubt, We have already written in the Zabur (Psalms) after the Reminder (Tawrah) that My pious bondsmen shall inherit the land. There is certainly sufficient lesson in this for the people of worship'.*

[Surah Ambiya 21:105/6]

## **IN THE WEST**

### **MESSAGE FOR MUSLIMS**

*Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (Rahimahullah)*

*Maulana was requested to convey a message for the  
Muslims of America.*

*His resounding message, delivered in Lucknow, India on  
3 September 1983 is significant not only for the Muslims of  
America but for all Muslims residing in the West.*

## **YOU ARE AT A GOLD MINE**

reetings of love, sincerity and affection to my brothers who are not present and who cannot see me and I cannot see them.

**G**You are very fortunate indeed, as Allah has placed you at a gold mine, or rather at a new mine of jewels. This is the mine of searching human souls, agitated hearts and restive minds that are looking for a path, a way that will restore to them faith and certitude, establish their link with the Creator of the Universe, make them understand his qualities and attributes and his unique relationship with his creation. A way that can create in them the inspiration to grasp the expanse of the cosmos, the depth of the human soul and the flights of the human spirit. Allah has given you this opportunity which was not accessible to many scholars and pious figures before. They used to long that Allah Ta'ala would give them the opportunity through which they could ignite the spirit of Islam and thereby enhance their own connection with Allah. They used to pass ages without finding such an opportunity.

## **DISCOVER THE 'NEW WORLD'**

Allah has sent you into that land. I do not subscribe to the logic of incidental occurrence. My mind cannot accept that anything in this world can happen without the will and plan of Allah Ta'ala. I believe that Allah has chosen you to live in that land so that you may discover that 'new world'. It is time now that the 'new world' be rediscovered. Columbus was not the only one to have this honour, it is time that every one of you seek the discovery of a 'new world'. The 'new world' that I am talking about is not a continent, but a world of humanity, human progress and human perfection. Whosoever will discover this 'new world' will do a favour to humanity greater than what Columbus

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claimed. To discover a new continent for the exploitation of one's nation and its conquests is not a favour to humanity.

### **INCREASE YOUR FAITH**

You have a golden opportunity to discover a 'new world'. You must protect your own faith. The word 'protect' however, I consider below the rank of a Muslim. A Muslim is the protector of the faith of the nations of this earth. He protects their relationship with Allah Ta'ala. To tell a Muslim to protect his own faith is below the rank of a Muslim. But the winds of faithlessness that are blowing and the new mental and spiritual unrest that is prevalent, especially in America, makes me believe that you must protect your faith there. You must in fact increase your faith. The failure of western culture and the inadequacy of science and technology to fulfil those objectives of life that bring peace and satisfaction should urge you to present to them the noble message of Islam.

### **'NARROWNESS' OF THIS WORLD**

As the Arab envoys said long ago, we came to free men from being slaves of other men to becoming the servants of Allah and to free them from the narrowness of this world to the vastness of the world. Today, this mission is as important as it was in the seventh century after Christ. Indeed, it has become even more important now. It is possible to fulfil this mission today as it was in the sixth and seventh centuries.

This mission was accomplished by human beings then, by the members of this Ummah. The desert dwellers of Arabia, the camel riders and tent makers went to the courts of Caesar and Khusro and presented this message to them. They entered Rustam's palace which was especially decorated for that occasion and when they were asked, "Why did you come here, and what has brought you here"? Their terse

bold answer was without hesitation.” Allah has sent and appointed us that we may, by his leave, liberate mankind from being slaves to each other to being the servants of Allah and from living in the narrowness of this world to living in the vastness of the world.”

## **‘VASTNESS’ OF THIS WORLD**

I always say that if those Arabs would have said that, “We came to take you out from the narrowness of the world to the vastness of the hereafter,” there would have been nothing surprising about this. They had the right to say this because they had truly understood and recognised the hereafter. But what made them say that we came to bring you out from the narrowness of the world to the vastness of the world. They themselves were living in a land where even sufficient food was not available. They had little knowledge or awareness of the vast regions of the world. They were living in isolation almost separated from the rest of the world. But they meant to say that what you consider as the world is very small and narrow. Your world is only the world of food and drink, of luxuries of fulfilment of material needs. Your world is limited to some families, some factories, or to some fun places, but the real world is much bigger and greater than that. **It is the world of spirit of Iman, of divine love, of human compassion, of universal brotherhood of man, and the world of effort and labour - to bring happiness to the hearts and souls of others.** This world is greater than your continents. If your continents were to be thrown in the ocean of this vast world, it would be no more than a small pebble.

## **AMBASSADORS OF ISLAM**

This is our message to all Muslims. One of your brothers without seeing you but trusting your faith asks you that when Allah has sent

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you to this new land, you become the ambassadors of Islam there. You are the unofficial ambassadors. You are not paid any salaries or have any formal contract with the government, but you are the direct ambassadors of Islam; its ambassadors of faith, morality and goodness. Wherever you are and whatever social or economic levels of life you are in, you must consider yourself as the representatives of Islam and its religious ambassadors.

### **HOPE IN MY GOOD WISHES**

I have said these words in a hurry at the request of my friend Muzammil Siddiqi. I do hope that the sincere feelings that are at work behind these words and my good wishes for you will add meaning to them. With the grace of Allah Ta'ala, these words, whilst spoken in India in a corner of the city of Lucknow, will reach thousands of Muslims and will find a way to their hearts. Please accept my salaams and my sincere affection for you. I pray for you and ask you not to forget me also in your prayers.”

### **DA'WAH TO NON-MUSLIMS**

**A neglected duty of Muslim minorities** ;

*Mufti Zubair Bayat*



## **INDIFFERENCE TO OUR PRIMARY DUTY**

**A**n obvious but disturbing truth about Muslims living as minorities in non-Muslim countries is their general neglect of Da'wah among non-Muslims. Why is this so? This is a question that requires deep analysis to arrive at a correct answer. As an Ummah of one billion Muslims, Da'wah to our non-Muslim neighbours and fellow countrymen hardly has any place among our goals and priorities. Very little of our resources are spent on this pivotal duty of Islam. As Muslim minority communities living within non-Muslim countries, we live indifferent to this primary duty to our neighbours. Neither do we make an Islamic impact on them, though we are more than a million strong in some Western countries. In India, Muslims are officially more than 130 million!

## **IMPORTANCE OF DA'WAH TO NON-MUSLIMS**

Da'wah among non-Muslims should not be treated as an isolated branch of Islam. Unless we are prepared to recognise and acknowledge the central place Da'wah occupies in the life of every Muslim, we will not give it the importance it deserves. We will then not devote our energies to it as we ought to. Unless we understand the importance of Da'wah to non-Muslims, it will not form an integral part of our total endeavours and struggles in the path of Allah.

Da'wah among non-Muslims must not be merely an appendage or an afterthought in the life of a Muslim. It cannot be pursued as a contingent activity. It should not be incidental to any special circumstances. Da'wah, for example, should not be taken up as a response or reaction to missionary activities by other faiths. If Da'wah is approached in this fashion, it will suffer the fate that it is suffering

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now. In other words, Da'wah should not be a reactive measure for Muslims but it should in fact be a proactive endeavour.

## **NEGLECT TOWARDS DA'WAH**

The neglect towards Da'wah stems from the state of the current Muslim mind and attitude, individual and collective, towards Islam, towards fulfilling the dictates of Islam and towards Da'wah to all mankind in fulfilment of the mission of Islam. The general attitude of Muslims is one of unawareness, indifference or sheer neglect. Without attempting to correct this mindset, the problems with respect to Dawah will remain.

The contradiction between Islamic teachings and the practice and examples of Muslims which is a state of near hypocrisy – as harsh as this sounds, drives away many a non-Muslim from Islam. How can an average non-Muslim feel any attraction towards Islam let alone choose to follow it with the present state of Muslims? How can they respond merely by listening to sermons and reading books (except for a few fortunate souls)?

As part of their overall Da'wah responsibility towards non-Muslims, it is a compulsory requisite that Muslims must begin to follow Islam more seriously and conscientiously. This in itself is an indirect form of Da'wah that has attracted many towards Islam!

## HOW TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF DA'WAH

The questions that Muslims, especially our religious scholars and elders need to address urgently along with others are: How to revive the spirit of Da'wah in the hearts of all Muslims. If Da'wah is taking place, why is it not effective? What are the factors that are making a natural way of life such as Islam unattractive for non-Muslims? Are our present concepts, approaches and methods appropriate and correct for Da'wah among non-Muslims, or do they need to be modified or altered? If so, in what ways?

It is vitally important that discussions, conferences or workshops along these lines be conducted to address these and related issues in depth. These need to be held on all levels; regionally, nationally and internationally. This will be the starting point of establishing a sound framework for Da'wah activities. In the absence of a solid framework, Da'wah efforts will be limited, short-term, disorganised and ineffective.

In the meanwhile, every Muslim needs to remind himself daily and other Muslims as well that Da'wah towards non-Muslims is an important aspect of a Muslim's existence in this world.

# SURVIVING THE MELTING POT ;

*Khalid Baig*

Muslim immigrants first came to the western countries more than a century ago. In Australia they went as Afghan camel drivers. In the U.S. they went variously as Lebanese autoworkers and Punjabi farmers (not to mention African slaves). These earlier Muslims worked very hard to serve these lands. They built roads, opened access to mines, and performed gruelling work to till the land or run the factories. Their great contributions and economic successes aside, they had one glaring failure: they failed to build Muslim communities that could last. Their descendants disappeared into the ‘melting pot.’ Today one cannot find the Muslim children of these earlier Muslims.

Another wave of Muslim immigration started after the Second World War and gained momentum during the last three decades. Will the children of these immigrants survive as Muslims in a land that has a history of assimilating people of all faiths or will they too meet the fate of the children of earlier immigrants? Today the ‘melting pot’ is hotter than ever, the popular culture is stronger than ever and the influence and reach of the media in promoting the popular culture is greater than it ever has been. What is the chance of survival for those being raised in the eye of the storm?

It can happen but it will not happen without properly guided effort. Here is the advice from the scholars.

## RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS

Salah (obligatory prayer) is the most important obligation of a Muslim. It is impossible to build a wholesome life without this pillar. As the Hadith says, “Salah is the pillar of religion. Whoever destroys it has destroyed the entire religion.”

In the ex-Soviet Union and other Communist countries, it was a ‘crime’ to offer Salah. Those who prayed did so secretly and at great personal risk. In the Western countries, there is no such barrier. Those who fail to pray regularly have nothing but their own laziness or weakness of faith to blame.

We should be regular in performing other religious obligations as well. In addition, we must allocate time for reading the Qur’an and good religious books in our daily schedule. To survive in a non-Muslim environment, says Maulana Yusuf Ludhianwi, “all these are as important as food and medicine.”

## HALAL

A concern for Halal and Haram consumption is not only an important obligation, it is a prerequisite for building a wholesome Islamic life. The Qur’an says, “*O Messengers! Eat things good and pure and act righteously.*” [Al-Mu'minoon 23:51]. At-Tayyibat (good and pure) is a beautiful way to refer to Halal as Haram things are not good or pure. This verse teaches us a very important fact. Physical actions have moral and spiritual consequences as well, thus eating Halal is necessary for leading a life of righteousness.

Science, by definition, cannot go beyond the physical world in its explorations. Those who are ignorant of the limitations of science and therefore seek guidance from it in areas where it is unable to provide

any, get easily confused on this issue. “Why is pork Haram?” they might ask. Answer: Because Allah said so. And He said so because it is detrimental for our moral and spiritual health.

A glass of water may look clean, but if somebody tells us that it contains a poison or virus, we would not touch it. Haram is the same way, only more so. Whatever Islam has declared as haram is as unsafe as poison, although it’s poisonous consequences will be apparent in the Hereafter.

## **MATERIALISM**

Today the entire world is in the grip of rampant materialism. But it is more corrosive in its birthplace. In the Muslim world, materialism is rampant but is considered a vice; people are not (yet) presented as role models simply because of their wealth. Over here (in the West) it is a virtue; the life styles of the rich and famous are an object for adulation. Additionally, Maulana Yusuf Ludhianwi (R) cautions: “Never allow yourself to be impressed by the great worldly possessions of a non-believer. If you realize the eternal doom that disbelief promises, you will feel pity rather than envy.”

## **Q & A**

The tremendous interest in question and answer columns in newspapers, magazines, and on the Internet is a sign of the concern of Muslims for religious guidance and for doing what is right. The

downside is that all sorts of “experts” have also sprung up to dispense legal opinion and religious guidance.

This state of affairs is a result of general ignorance of even basic religious teachings among today’s “educated Muslims.” Additionally, there is a commonly held opinion that the person giving a wrong fatwa is responsible for it, not the one who follows it.

Actually, we *are* responsible for searching for the authorities carefully before we put our trust in them. We do so in other realms of life. We do not accept medical advice simply because the giver appeared to be a doctor. We ascertain qualifications before we accept advice. Fortunately, that profession is generally regulated and we don’t have to deal with unqualified practitioners very often. In case of religious guidance, it is up to us to exercise the same caution.

## CONDUCT

Justice, honesty, integrity, kindness, sincerity, and truthfulness are important qualities of a good Muslim. He should be a man of principles, a source of good. According to one hadith, the believers are like rain, spreading their goodness wherever they go.

It was these qualities of the Muslims that opened the hearts of millions of people in Asia and Africa to the truth of Islam. People knew the tree of Islam by the fruits of the good conduct it produced in its followers.

## CHILDREN

The above are necessary for building a strong Muslim home. **However, we need to do more to ensure that our children do not step out from our tiny islands only to drown into an ocean of Godlessness.** Two of the greatest evil influences come in the name of entertainment and education. First is television and we must protect our children from it. The second is the secular education system that

forcefully promotes ideas that are totally anathema to Islam to those most impressionable and least able to question them. Muslims must develop their schools that teach all subjects in an Islamic context. On both of these issues we have shown scant awareness.

Yes, we can survive as Muslims in the West, but it won't happen without properly guided effort and the time to act is now!

## THE SHIP AND THE LIFEBOATS

*Khalid Baig*

**A**lthough the pen and the sword are arrayed against it, Islam is spreading but there are also problems within the Muslim re-awakening.

### TOUGH TIMES

We are living at a time when the daily news about the world, especially about the Muslim world is quite depressing. In Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other places, Muslim life, property and honour have been declared fair game by those who wield worldly power. It is not just armies waging this war. A whole gamut of institutions from sophisticated research centres to slick media is dedicated to the campaign to sow doubt, to spread confusion and to denigrate Islam. In hot spot after hot spot around the world, the sword



is busy prosecuting a war on Islam. The pen is busy in both conducting a war on Islam and in trying to foment a war within Islam. While the unprecedented and unexpected momentum gained by the anti-war movement in the middle of February has given some hope that the mad rush to slaughter may be deflected, the overall picture remains grim.

Yet these are also the times when people all over the world are coming to Islam in unprecedented numbers. At a time when Muslims have lost control of the sword and the pen, Islam is finding new followers everywhere every day. (It is quite revealing that even as Islam continues to spread despite the sword, some people should continue to insist that it spread by the sword. As Qur'an repeatedly reminds us, the opponents of Islam are a closed-minded lot).

## **MUSLIM AWAKENING**

Within the Muslim world also there are signs of awakening. Muslims are coming back to Islam after having toyed with one false ideology after another. Colonialism had hit them hard. It subjugated them physically, politically, economically, culturally and mentally. An education system that they embraced as a ticket out of their miseries during that period of oppression compounded their problems by producing self-doubt and self-hate. It produced generations of perfect strangers within the house of Islam, who were then, for this 'achievement' given leadership roles in all areas of Muslim societies. They hated their languages, their culture and their religion. It is such people who rule the Muslim world today.

Yet, the scene is changing. More women are choosing hijab and are becoming more assertive about it as a symbol of their Islamic identity. There is a greater interest in Islamic knowledge. Qur'an lectures are attracting crowds that were not seen in the past. The nature of the

questions people ask about Islam is also changing. There are more ‘how to’ and ‘what to’ questions than ‘why’ questions coming from the secular educated groups. The Biswa Ijtima (annual gathering of Tablighi Jamaat in Bangladesh) attracts some two million attendees. A parallel growth can be seen in Islamic activism. Politics, media, relief and charity, education and community service are all attracting new workers and new organisations. There is a new enthusiasm, new energy and new awareness.

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## **ANOTHER ISSUE**

There is another issue. Most of our new activism thrives on sincerity, concern and drive but not on knowledge or guidance. There are Islamic relief organizations providing much needed support for the destitute millions. But many do not show a sensitivity to check whether their fund raising methods are Islamic; whether they are distributing the zakat according to Shariah or whether their operation meets the Islamic guidelines. There are organisations focused on media and political activism, certainly very important fields that sometime say things that the media or political establishment they are talking to would like to hear, even if they are totally wrong and un-Islamic. They seem to be doing as much damage as good through ignorance and carelessness.

## **PROBLEMS WITHIN THE AWAKENING**

But there are also problems within this awakening. The period of colonialism was a big crash in which our ship was destroyed. In the immediate aftermath, survival was the main goal and people came with whatever lifeboats they could. Now is the time to pick up the pieces and build the ship again. The problem is we have been living in

the lifeboats for so long and are confusing the lifeboats with the ship. The schools for secular education were one such lifeboat. They imparted some skills necessary for survival in a changed world, although they impoverished Muslim education and society tremendously in so many ways. But today, so many well-meaning people who get excited about spreading education in the Muslim world think of nothing more than establishing more of these same schools. Campaigns for ‘democracy’, whatever it means, were another such lifeboat, aimed at returning control of Muslim affairs to them thereby seeking liberation. Today, democracy or no democracy, nowhere do Muslims have any control over their affairs but this lifeboat has become a ship and the Islamic system of governance remains a strange entity. Islamic organizations were such a lifeboat, aimed at gathering like-minded people so they could focus their resources and energies on some of the important things. Yet each of them is considered to be the ship by its occupants and captains, thereby creating new lines of cleavage within the Ummah.

The same observation can be made about our efforts at spreading Islamic knowledge. It is embarrassing how many of those giving lectures, issuing ‘fatwas’ (not necessarily calling them so but issuing legal opinions nonetheless) and conducting Qur’an lessons have no qualifications for the job. Yet they find a ready audience among those who confuse eloquence with scholarship.

### **CRITERION IS THE SHARIAH**

Our renewed interest in our religion is great but it is good to remember that Islamic revival will not take place through the blind leading the blind. All Islamic work requires guidance from the Shariah, which in turn requires knowledge and understanding. Recognizing the need for such guidance from true scholars is the first step in getting it. The questions we need to ask may not have ready-made answers but that

does not justify not asking them or accepting answers from unqualified sources. There is a very good example in the work done in the field of Islamic finance during the last decades. It was the collaboration of religious scholars with experts in economics and finance that produced the body of knowledge today that did not exist before. A similar effort is needed in other fields. Muslim journalists working with scholars can help evolve an Islamic protocol for Journalism. Muslim activists working with scholars can help evolve Islamic protocol for media and political activism. Relief organizations can establish Shariah advisory boards to ensure their operations are within the bounds of Shariah. Bringing our own house in order is the only response we can and must have to the threats, challenges and fears we face today.

## **THE NEED OF THE HOUR!**

*Mufti Zubair Bayat*

**P**ace, happiness, mercy and all good that accompany them is the inherent need of every human being. The world today is thirsty for peace, for justice, for happiness, for harmony, for mercy and for hope and humanity. A major reason for the lack of peace and harmony in the world today is the detachment of man from the sources of peace and harmony.

### **ISLAM REPRESENTS PEACE**

The root word of Islam is “*silm*”, which means peace. The personality who presented the radiant light of peace to the world when humanity was at its darkest, was our beloved Master and Leader, Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*). No man had a greater task than him. In a short time, he succeeded remarkably by delivering humanity from

the clutches of injustice, oppression, immorality and animalism to heights of greatness, virtue, nobility and piety.

## **A UNIVERSAL LEGACY OF MERCY**

The remarkable life of our Nabi (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) has been researched, discussed and written about more than any man in history. It is a living legacy that calls for attention to detail and for practice with purpose. Any human being that will adopt this simple, practical and beneficial lifestyle will most surely reap its benefit.

Anyone who practices on the prophetic model of mercy, trustworthiness, honesty, humility, compassion, kindness, generosity, love, hope, cheerfulness and every other noble quality of the Sunnah will succeed. Today, the corporate world has embraced the principles of Islam and the Sunnah into its business practice and has prevailed. Financial models, social systems and even dietary plans that have incorporated the Sunnah teaching are enjoying the great benefits of the prophetic model.

There is no doubt that the early Muslims were attracted to Islam through Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*). They lived with him, knew everything about him, they loved him and gave up everything for him. Most importantly they mirrored his life and teachings in every aspect of their lives. The latter Muslims will also attain salvation and prosperity through adopting the very same legacy their forbears did. The Sunnah is the universal benchmark for peace, justice, security and harmony for every nation till the end.

## **THE REALITY**

No Muslim will deny that Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) is his beloved and the way of Muhammad is the best way to live. Sadly,

apart from this basic belief and knowledge, there is not much more we know about him or really do to profess our love and allegiance for him. Whilst we claim to love him, our character and ways do not suggest that at all. We do not have too much of an idea who he really was, what he stood for and how he behaved in times of tribulation. To know Rasulullah (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) is more important than knowing ourselves.

## **THE NEED TO BRING ALIVE THE SEERAH**

In Rabi al-Awwal there is a proliferation of conferences, programmes, lectures, seminars and speeches on the Seerah, yet year after year the essence of the Seerah seems to allude most Muslims. The Seerah presents the most profound and powerful solution yet to the woes of the global Ummah. The challenge is for the Ummah to embrace this golden rope without being apologetic or afraid.

Individually and collectively the Ummah is spiritually drained. Let us realise that spiritual elevation is proportionate to our emulation of the life of Nabi (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*). The greater the emulation, the greater the elevation and proximity to Allah Ta'ala.

Let us resolve to learn about our beloved Nabi (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*), to ponder and reflect over his noble life and to begin to live his Sunnah that he so anxiously implored us to. Any other option would be an exercise in vain.

*“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad salallahu alayhi wasalam) you have an excellent example to follow for him who hopes (to meet) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah abundantly.”*

[Surah Al-Ahzab 33:21]

# THE WORLD IS DESPERATE

## FOR LOVE AND MERCY

*Mufti Zubair Bayat*

**“DO NOT GIVE ME A SCISSOR, GIVE ME  
A NEEDLE!”**

Sultanul-Awliya, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya (R) is among the most renowned and revered saints of India. A huge railway station, the Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station, and an entire colony is named after him in New Delhi, referred to as the Hazrat Nizamuddin colony. On one occasion, one of his disciples brought a scissor as a gift for Hazrat Nizamuddin (R). He returned it saying: **“Do not give me a scissor as a gift, which is only good for cutting and shearing, but rather give me a needle, that is used to join.”** Obviously it was meant in a figurative sense. The Awliya Allah (Saints) were paragons and embodiments of love, mercy, kindness, sympathy and compassion towards the general public. It is through the warmth of that love and mercy that Islam spread and flourished, until thousands upon thousands were salvaged from the fire of hell and found their path towards paradise. If this is the case of the Awliya Allah, one can well

imagine the love and mercy that the Ambiya Alayhimus Salaam must have possessed?! Imagine then what must have been the level of love, mercy, kindness and compassion of Hazrat Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) whom Allah has referred to in the Quran ‘Mercy unto the Universe’

## **AN EMBODIMENT OF LOVE & MERCY**

Nabi Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) said, “The believer is a person of love and there is no good in the one who doesn’t love or is not loved!” (Tabrani). In this amazing Hadith, an outstanding quality that defines the personality of the Believers has been mentioned - the quality of giving love and the quality of receiving love. Furthermore, it has been stated that one who neither gives love nor receives love is one who is bereft and devoid of all goodness. The giving of love requires a generous, clean and open heart, otherwise love will not emerge from such a heart. And when a person is the owner of such an open and generous heart, then automatically such a heart will attract the love of other hearts, like one magnet attracts another magnet. But the heart that does not have this quality, repels other hearts, because such a heart will be a closed, mean, dirty, dry and a hard heart. Obviously nobody is attracted to such a heart!

## **HATRED WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING**

This is the lesson of love that a world so full of hatred is so desperately in need of. Today we live in a world that is dominated by hatred and harshness. In all directions the atmosphere is one of hatred and detestation. This hatred has wrecked communities, countries and nations. It is the ‘scissor’ that is cutting mankind into pieces and generating suspicion and animosity between families, communities



and citizens of countries and continents. This hatred silently fuels a fire that is about to erupt and burn and destroy everything around it.

## **DESTRUCTIVE ROLE OF HATE MONGERS**

Unfortunately hate mongers are found in all segments of society. Hate mongers gain instant publicity and attract many people. The main reason is because they manipulate the fear factor and sensationalise in their hate speeches. Hatred is spread and propagated by politicians for short term gains, by the media for fulfilling the agenda of its masters and funders, by academics who justify it through elaborate but baseless arguments and by the general public who take their cue from their leaders, their media and their intellectuals. The result is a world that is cruel, callous and heartless, devoid of mercy and love.

## **A MUSLIM SHOULD DISPLAY LOVE AND MERCY**

In a recent lecture at Darul Ihsan Centre, the President of Jamiatul Ulama of India, Moulana Sayyid Arshad Madani emphasised, *“In today’s world, the effort of the Ulama in particular and the Muslim public should be to promote the proper picture of Islam and to display love and mercy to mankind in whichever way possible.”*

There is an urgent need for all peace loving, sober-minded leaders and people to spread the message of love, peace and mercy in a world that is being engulfed in the flames of hatred. Become ‘needles’ of love, rather than ‘scissors’ of hate!

