

# The Greatest Gift of Ramadan

by Akhter-ul-Alam

THE Quran was first revealed in the month of Ramadan and this was the greatest gift of Ramadan towards mankind. Dr Maurice Bucaille, a renowned Catholic scholar of France, has substantiated in his famous book "The Bible, the Quran and Science" that the Quran was the only revealed book still remains in its original form. Dr Rashed Khalifa, an Egyptian scientist, has proved through computer scanning that till date not a single word or verse of the Quran has been changed/alterd or modified.

If today, God forbid, all the written Quran are destroyed, then a full authentic and as-it-was Quran could easily be written and published in no time.

There are hundreds and thousands of men and women in this world who are able to recite the whole text without a single distortion from their memory. They are known as

Hafiz-i-Quran. Unlike other scriptures this is a unique speciality of the Quran. It is a clear declaration of the Quran that there is no doubt in it (2:2) and no falsehood can approach it (41:42). Allah the Almighty has sent it and there is an assurance from Him that He will guard and protect it (15:9).

This is a book of wisdom (10:1, 31:2) and it contains the essence of messages of all former prophets (41:43, 43:44-45). This is a scripture which declared itself as a universal (81:27) and said, this truth has come from God Almighty and no other else (6:92, 17:105-107, 27:6, 45:2). This kind of book cannot be written or produced by man or Jinn (2:23, 10:38, 11:13 and 17:88). This is a challenge till to-date; but no one dares to accept it. All the great scholars of the world ac-

claimed it highly. Those microscopic minority who were trying and are still trying to mislead people by telling something else, all of them are either ignorant about it, or motivated. No, they are really unbelievers; because "the unbelievers will reject it" (84:20-25).

What is the message of the Quran? "Follow it and do right" (6:155). In the Quran one can find things which are clear, the intention is to lead the people "from darkness to light", this is a "mercy and guide to those who believe" (16:64). If one wants to know it he will have to study it; and one should study it with faith (2:121). Today, everywhere the people of wisdom are studying the Quran. Dr Maurice Bucaille's "The Bible, the Quran and Science" is a valuable research work. This book is the result of tiresome survey and research and this is a scientific study of a master mind.

TODAY'S Islamic world encompasses more than 50 countries in the globe. Geographically Islamic world claims 16 per cent of the world's land mass. There are over one billion Muslims in the world today. Therefore, here is a power bloc which cannot be ignored. Islam remains a force, despite division among the Muslim countries, to be reckoned with on the world's geopolitical and diplomatic fronts.

Many religious leaders and political pundits in many countries, time and again, spoke about Islam. Of late, Prince Charles came out with truth about Islam at a lecture at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies on 27 October 1993. One is tempted to quote from his lecture: "Islam is part our past and our present, in all fields of human endeavour. It has helped to create modern Europe. It is part of our own inheritance, not a thing apart. More than this, Islam can teach us today a way of understanding and living in the

# Diplomacy in Islam

by Mohammad Amjad Hossain

Diplomacy in Islam did not flourish in a day or two but it took a definite shape over the years since the days of Prophet Muhammad (SM). This fact has completely been ignored by the writers on diplomacy.

The emergence of Islam was neither a marginal event, as some Christian historiographers would have depicted it, nor one important happening but it represented a turning point in the struggle between spiritual belief and materialistic philosophy. As a religion, Islam brings in the concept of equality of man. As a matter of fact Islam is a complete code of life encompassing all spheres of human activities — social, economic, legal, cultural and political. Islam is for all mankind irrespective of cast, creed and colour. It's

Islam that provides the idea of a universal state based on the equality of man.

In early days of Islam, diplomacy was referred to as an auxiliary to or a substitute for war. For example, message was delivered by an emissary to the Emperor or King to accept Islam before war broke out and emissary was sent to exchange prisoners of war at the end of war. During Abbasid period exchange of gifts or negotiation of treaties were carried out. Emissaries were despatched abroad by Prophet Muhammad (SM) to preach tenets of Islam or for political purpose. Such emissaries were received by the Emperor or King of Byzantine, Egypt, Persia and Ethiopia.

According to historians, the Emperor of Ethiopia and Muqawas of Egypt accepted the invitation while the Emperor of Byzantine refused to embrace Islam. The Persian King, however, tore up the letter. When this news was carried back by the envoy to Prophet Muhammad (SM), he remarked that "his kingdom would be torn". The nature of this diplomatic exchange was essentially religious. The emissaries were selected from amongst the confidants who were known as knowledgeable, adroit, physically strong and good looking.

During those old days emissaries were looked upon as spy. As such they were instructed to refrain from drinking and to keep away from women. Negotiating skill constitutes an important factor in diplomacy and nations must rely upon the quality of their diplomacy to act as a catalyst

for the different factors that constitute their power. Prophet Muhammad (SM) initially began preaching Islam in Mecca but he was opposed by Quraysh. Twice he organised meetings of the elites of Quraysh in Mecca to pass the messages of Allah revealed to him but he was jeered at. Finally he went to the masses to address them but when he spoke against their many gods they became furious and considered him as their enemy. His uncle Abu Talib, who was also against him, however, protected him from the wrath of Quraysh. A deputation of Quraysh went to Abu Talib to register protest against Prophet Muhammad (SM) and Abu Talib averted the crisis by his conciliatory note. But relations between Prophet Muhammad (SM) and Quraysh continued to deteriorate. A complaint was lodged with Abu Talib again and he was told to put a stop to the activities of his nephew. "Until we are rid of him we will fight both of you till one side is perished," said the Quraysh Abu Talib called his nephew and admonished him by saying "Spare me and yourself. Do not put on me a burden greater than I can bear."

But despite stiff opposition and accusation Prophet Muhammad (SM) remained calm and composed which are good qualities of a diplomat.

When the Quraysh did not succeed in stopping his activities, they started negotiation with him. They thought that they could buy Muhammad (SM) by offering him money or if it was an honour, they would make him their chief, or if it

was sovereignty, they would make him the King. Muhammad (SM) listened to them avidly and when their arguments were over, recited (Surah): "Our hearts are veiled from that which you invite us." The Quraysh lost their case as Muhammad (SM) did not accede to any of their proposals. Muslims became the target of attacks in Mecca and Muhammad (SM) was humiliated following failure of negotiations initiated by the Quraysh. He decided to move to Taif to convince the chiefs there but he could not succeed as the chiefs turned down his invitation to embrace Islam.

Stones accompanied by jeers and abuses rained on him. He was wounded but he carried out his mission. When all the chiefs in Mecca decided to kill Prophet Muhammad (SM), he decided to leave for Medina.

At the age of 53 Prophet Muhammad (SM) migrated to Medina where he was received with affection. Initially he wanted to establish a base from where he could spread his message. Therefore he started negotiations with the people of Medina and the Jews to sign a treaty of friendship and cooperation. He succeeded in executing the treaty which became the first treaty that he ever signed. It remained a document of great historical significance because it gave birth to the concept of a state based on faith, apart from being first treaty in Islam.

The Muslims were declared as one community (Ummah) and the Muslims from Mecca became the brethren of Muslims from Medina.

This treaty is known as the 'Charter of Medina'. It stipulates the idea of Islamic state in its formative stage while it explicitly spelt-out that any incident or quarrel from which

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# In the Virtue of Quran : A Story from Life

by M Atiqul Haque

"They do not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal....." (Al Q 2:77)

"Life is nothing but a bundle of experiences," is what they say. Islam adds to it by saying: "Life is nothing but what you achieve from it by way of doing good." By way of doing good to yourself and to others is what you are supposed to do in this life. But do we always do this? No. Why not? We are arrogant, we are proud of our own intelligence, we are conscious of our ego, which is nothing but a self-deception. But in this world most of us are drowned in self-deception and we pride on following our ego rather

than the Ego of our Creator. And this is the cause of our clashes in this world.

Without this clash — the clash of good with bad, the clash of a friend with an enemy, the clash of light with darkness, etc etc — this world would have been turned into a heaven and this is not the Plan of Allah. Where lies the success and benefit of this Plan is not known to us, it is known only to Allah. And we are to carry out His orders only and there lies our success. We are not to question His Authority, because, we are His created sub-

jects, and a subject has no right to question his master about anything he asks for. He must know that it is for his benefit (since he is His creation) that his Master has ordered him to do such and such things and not to do such and such things. In compliance lies his success and in defiance, his massacre.

Once I was playing 'Kabadi' (while I was a boy of 7 or 8) in my village, home Kadipur, Jalalpur, Sylhet, with my playmates who were jealous of my physical superiority and strength, and they hatched a plan to harm me physically to

deprive me of my physical advantage. This jealousy again is a disease and a very base disease which every man should take care of and should pray to Allah to save him from this baseness. For, jealousy does not pay the man any good but harms him so much that his good self is destroyed. The Prophet (SA) said that a man is allowed to grudge jealousy against two (things) persons. He can be jealous of a person who is gifted with knowledge and who spreads it to others for their benefit. Secondly, he can be jealous of a person who is gifted with wealth and spends it for others' benefit. All other jealousies burn him like a hell and he never gets peace of mind.

So my playmates were after me to teach me a lesson to deprive me of my physical superiority (a gift blessed by Allah), because, they could not keep pace with me when I played 'Kabadi' with them. If they could not match me in the play they had no right to match me

from behind my back. They fell upon me in a body one evening while I was in their court doing the usual 'breathing' exercise. All the eleven boys of the other court were on my body and they wanted to throttle me under their heavy weight. I was panting for breath, my left hand was already broken in the elbow and I was shouting for help. A few of the visitors that were witnessing the game came to my rescue and got me released from their clutch. I was sweating and crying with my broken elbow.

I did not know what to do. I was afraid of my parents, particularly of my father, who would beat me for my playing with these boys. Reluctantly, I proceeded towards my house, to face my parents and other elders, including my grand parents. The first person I met was my dear mother who asked me what was wrong and why I was at home so early. I mumbled my words to give her some reply and I went to bed. I fell asleep but, at dead of night, I woke up being unable to bear the pain of my broken

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