

Muhammad Hamidullah: Peacefully and finally

Allah granted his every wish

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IN the third week of December 2002, the world lost a great Muslim writer, scholar and the last citizen of the State of Hyderabad. I lost my beloved Dada (grandfather), my spiritual guide, mentor and teacher, my adopted father, my surrogate mother, my best friend and confidant, my big brother and my favourite poet. We belong to Allah and to Allah we all return.

Grief stricken as I am, Dada will insist that I answer all your calls and messages, answer every salaam sent to me, as he always did. So with a broken heart I am writing to tell you about the final hours of his life.

We had dinner together on the night of Monday 16 December 2002. I tried to cut his hair and trim his beard. He allowed only his moustache to be trimmed and went to bed shortly after 11.00pm as usual.

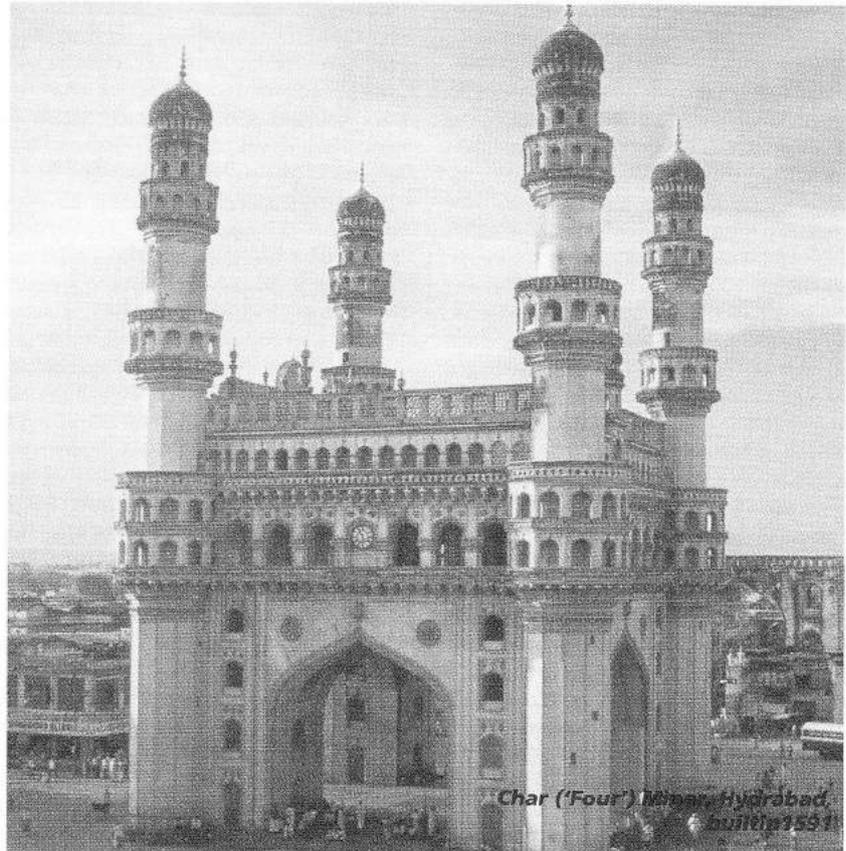
Tuesday morning I helped him to get up at 4.00am and began the usual morning routine. He walked without help to the bathroom, showered, had breakfast in the dining area and walked back to bed on his own at 6.00am. He was sitting on the bed as I went to get ready to go to work.

When I looked into his room, as I was ready to leave the house at 6.45am, he was already sleeping peacefully on his side with his face towards the wall.

When I returned home about 1.15pm, he had kept his promise that he had jokingly made in Paris in 1996 that he would not let the Angel of Death take his soul in my presence. (He had breathed his last at around 11.00am according to the doctor.)

Saturday 20 January 1996, he had been rushed to a Paris hospital almost half alive suffering from hypothermia. I reached Paris the very next morning. He was on a life support system. Next day, which was a Monday, I was told that his body system was no more functional and he could not be sustained any more. I was, therefore, asked to give my consent for the tubes to be removed and the system switched off.

It took me three days to agonise and grapple with this difficult dilemma but after a great deal of soul searching, I



gave the necessary permission. However, the next morning, to the amazement of his doctors, he was sitting up on his own, eating his breakfast. He wanted to start fasting because he had not missed a fast in Ramadan since he was nine-years-old.

He was apologetic that I had to suffer the pain of giving permission for his departure from this world and in an attempt to make him laugh I demanded that he would not die in front of me. He was amused at such a request but said that was not possible, but if it was, he would make whatever bargain that may be necessary with the angel of death and the people who came to take him for his last journey, and try not to depart in my presence.

He had departed today. There was a slight smile on his face; his legs were stretched out with his hands folded as if he was standing in *salat* (prayers).

When I walked in I knew he was gone because he always slept with his legs close to his body.

I called Irfan Khalilullah, my brother, at work and Dr Yusuf Ziya Kavakci, Dada's student from Turkey and the Imam of Dallas, in Dallas² to come and attend to Dada's final needs. After Irfan arrived in a few minutes, we called Dr Sadia, a Hyderabad physician who lives in the neighbourhood. She confirmed what we already knew. With her help, Irfan and I re-positioned his bed mindful of the direction of Makkah al-Mukarramah, with his head lifted slightly, as we had seen our elders do in Hyderabad.

We also called his attending physician, Dr Obaidullah Ahmad, who had provided medical care and home visits since we moved to Jacksonville. Indeed without his loving personal care for the last three years, we may have had to

hospitalise Dada.

After talking to the police, Sister Nailah Bolden, whose mother, Rajah Matthews, was buried recently in the same graveyard, and Sister Najmah Shabazz, my friend and colleague, called the funeral home and the cemetery officials. We received permission to keep Dada at home and take him direct to the graveyard as soon as the grave was ready.

We turned on the AC, packed the room with ice and turned on the fans to cool the room. Dr Yusuf Kavakci from Dallas and Reihan, my brother, from Lancaster Pennsylvania, arrived in Jacksonville by 10.00pm and a few local Muslims, probably well under 50, called to pay their respects.

Reihan and I sat all night with Dada as Irfan got the burial shroud, arranged for the grave digging and made all the arrangements to wash and prepare the body next morning with the help of local brothers.

Junaid and Muzaffar Adil, my cousins from New Jersey and Chicago, arrived the next morning.

After Fajr on Wednesday, Dr Yusuf Kavakci, Irfan, Reihan and two or three neighbours washed Dada in the patio and laid him out in the dining area, in the same spot where he had his last meal, less than 24 hours ago. We then waited for the final arrangements.

At 12.15pm Dada began his last journey to his resting place on St Johns Bluff. Irfan, Reihan, Junaid, Dr Yusuf Kavakci and other brothers carried him in their arms to the van, and wrapped in an additional sheet to prevent his burial shroud touching unclean surfaces.

He arrived at Chapel Hill Cemetery. Brother Adam Ferreti applied 'itr (natural scent extracted from flowers), which he had received as a gift in Makkah al-Mukarramah when he had accepted Islam.

There were about 70 men and five women at the graveyard. And Dr Yusuf Kavakci led the prayers.

The Jacksonville Imam, Hafiz Zaid Malik, Irfan and others went into the grave and Dr Yusuf Kavakci, Dr Muzaffar, Dr Junaid and Dr Reihan lowered Dada into it.

Whenever I would say, 'I think you need to see a doctor,' Dada would joke that the Doctor of doctors is already in the house and doesn't need to see a doctor. The 'Doctor of doctors' was entrusted to the sands of St Johns River.

Dada loved the old trees in Paris and frequently mentioned the Neem and Tamarind trees of Hyderabad. Today

MY DADA

by Sadida Athaullah

The beloved of Allah

Muhammad Hamidullah

Arrived at dawn in 1908

The Sun rising over river Musi

Heard gurgles of a tiny baby with big beautiful eyes

As yet unaware of life.

My beloved Dada departed in the afternoon in 2002

The sun stayed behind clouds the chilly St Johns river no substitute for Musi providing the sand and silt*

After almost a century Living, breathing, writing

To please Allah Having touched the world

Unimagined by the rest of humanity

* Like the Thames or Seine, Musi or Musa Nadi flows through the capital, also called Hyderabad; its occasional flooding has been part of folklore. One of its worst floods had happened in 1908, only seven months after Dada's birth. After the floods there was an outbreak of disease killing a large number of infants and old people. Many Hyderabadis who had survived the floods died of disease later.

Dada said his elders used to tell him that they thought that as he did not die at that time, even though a sickly baby, it must have been for good reason and God wanted him to do something in his life. Musa Nadi was, therefore, very important to Dada. We would stroll by the River Seine in Paris and he would call it the Musa Nadi of Paris, and make up some verses about the refugees and homeless having to find their Musa Nadi wherever they happened to end up.

When I brought him to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, I took him to the River Susquehanna when we shared the old jokes about the Seine. After we moved to Jacksonville on the banks of the St Johns river, in summer I used to take him frequently to sit by the Susquehanna river.

he is shaded by a grand old live oak tree and I plan to plant a pomegranate tree by the fence.

He is buried in the first row of graves so there is no one above him. He is at the end of the row, so no one will be buried next to him on the left. On the right, he is in the company of a 83-year-old female writer¹, a Muslim writer-activist and young mother², who died of complications giving birth to twin boys, and a two-year-old child³. It seems Allah granted Dada his every wish, including the occupants of neighbouring graves, for writers and children were always his preferred companions.

He wanted to be 'that fortunate man who lived and worked and died in anonymity and acknowledged 200 years after his death'.

And he got that too. May Allah shower him with His blessings, and give him everything he may have missed here.

I pray that Allah gives me the strength to live to please Allah and forgives anything I may have done otherwise.

Please keep me in all your prayers. ■

Sadida Athaullah

1. See Confessions and Conversations

2. Former Dean and Professor of Islamic Law at the College of Islamic Studies, Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey, and now director and imam at the Islamic Centre of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.

3. Sister Rajah Matthews who recently passed away after suffering from cancer for a few months. She had returned to Islam late in life and loved Islam so much that she wanted to share it with all whom she met. She wrote a book on Islam and published it herself and gave all proceeds to the local Islamic school. She also helped set up the Islamic library at the school and was a frequent volunteer at the Masjid.

4. Tonya Hussain was a Muslim writer-activist, a graphic artist working on Islamic art. She used to organise many of the local Muslim youth activities.

5. Armaan Sulaiman.

Humble and dignified

Away from fame and glamour

Anyone who met him even once was also struck by his keen sense of humour, his respect for time, his expediency with words, and his profound desire to serve Allah's *deen*.

ON 18 December 2002 (13 Shawwal 1423), Dr Muhammad Hamidullah was buried in a small corner of a cemetery in Jacksonville, Florida, USA.

Despite his intellectually bold contribution to Islamic thought, Dr Hamidullah lived a very humble life away from the fame and glamour, ignoring all material gain. Allah *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* intended a quiet and peaceful resting place for his last resort.

He lived in a modest apartment in Paris throughout much of his academic and literary career. After the Juma'a prayer in the main Mosque, Le Mosque de Paris, he would sit by a fountain, surrounded by a beautiful rose garden, so Muslims could come and greet him freely. His presence was sorely missed if he did not arrive there in time. On an average, 20,000 people prayed at the centrally located Paris Mosque.

Anyone who met him was immediately struck by his penetrating gaze. The depth of his knowledge was inscribed on his face. His elevated forehead was the symbol of wisdom and foresight. But his face was bathed in peaceful innocence; a smile would appear with a child-like innocence. He would speak only when necessary or when spoken to. His hands reflected the strength Allah had given him with the pen. One would spontaneously switch one's gaze at his hands in wonder.

Dr Hamidullah was my grandfather Muhammad Sa'dullah's uncle. The family is known as Ahl al-Nawa'it, the people from Nawa'it. Professor Muhammad Yusuf Kokan's *Khanwada Qadi Badr-ud-dawlah* (1963) says that the Nawa'it were a branch of Banu Hashim who had subsequently moved to a place called Na'it in or around Basra. In the 8th century they emigrated to Kokan, India, where they were appointed as *faqih* and *mufti* by Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq (d.1351), the most famous of them being Maulvi Muhammad Sibghatullah (d. 1280H/1863). He was given the title of Qadi Badr-ud-dawlah.

Dr Hamidullah was his grandson.

The family spread over different parts of India, Madras, Hyderabad, Beedar, Sidhot, Arakat, etc. and for the last 17 generations, they have been engaged in either teaching Islam or other academic pursuits. They remain modest and humble and steer clear of any family pride.

Several times when I would try to ask Dr Hamidullah about the family, he would change the subject with a meaningful smile. My mother too tried to ask him where had they come from, where had they landed in India and who were our ancestors. The reply she received was as follows:

■ We are spiritually related to Rasool Allah, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam* and the *Sahaba, alaihim assalam*.

■ We landed at the Coast of Malabar, Bhatkal, Goa, Arakat, etc.

■ They came around the same time as the famous traveller ibn Batuta (1303-77).

■ Lastly, he said: 'Why are you so worried about where did we come from, you should worry about where are you heading to.'

The last time I met him, in April 2002, was a memorable moment in my life. With a graceful smile, he extended his arm to greet me. I was so overwhelmed to realise that he was so coherent in spite of his advanced age.

His scholarship spanned almost a century, surviving the perils of two world wars. Seldom does a scholar of such a calibre emerge. His death leaves a great void in the field of Islamic scholarship.

He dedicated himself to the solitary life of research and study and published more than 1,000 articles and some 250* books. He did not take any monetary benefit for those publications. He knew more than 22 languages well enough to translate freely between his works.

A reporter from Pakistan once asked Dr Hamidullah: 'How do you feel about your achievement? His humble reply was: 'If Allah *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* asked me: "What have you done with the knowledge I have given you," I will not be able to answer Him.' This remark gives us an insight into his humility.

Anyone who met him even once was also struck by his keen sense of humour, his respect for time, his

expediency with words, and his profound desire to serve Allah's *deen*.

He would sign his letters to family members, 'Remember me in your good deeds.'

He would go to the far corners of the earth to collect the work of the Messenger of God, and his dear Companions. Dr Hamidullah studied the *Mushaf*, which was prepared under the auspices of the third rightly-guided Caliph, 'Uthman, *Radi-Allahu anhu*. Dr Hamidullah travelled to Russia, Britain and Turkey to compare the different copies of the *Mushaf*. He concluded that there were no changes from the original text of the Qur'an.

He performed the same task with the *Sahifa Hammam ibn Munabbih*. He travelled from Berlin to Beirut to Damascus to prove that these were the precise copies of the *Sahifa*, which Abu Huraira (677/58H) had prepared for his pupil Hammam ibn Munabbih.

Dr Hamidullah climbed up the Mount of Uhud twice to explore where the Messenger, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, had been rescued after suffering an injury.

Dr Hamidullah walked from Makkah al-Mukarramah to Hunain once; on another occasion he rode a mule to assess the distance the Messenger, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, had travelled to reach those spots. This thoroughness in research shows the efficiency and perfection in his work.

It is not enough merely to read his works, but we must take advantage of his knowledge to help Muslims in need and to establish research institutions to advance his works. We must seek to benefit from his powerful message and vast scholarship. ■

Nadia Batool Ahmad

Nadia Batool Ahmad graduated from UC Berkeley and is now studying at University of Florida College of Law.

* There is a little problem of an exact count about the actual number of books authored by Dr Hamidullah since many of these were translated into several other languages as well. He also wrote under a few different pen names; so a correct tally of his books would be known after a consolidated list of all his published works had been prepared. Dr Hamidullah himself maintained a list of his publications which he used to update from time to time. A list of his published works dated July 1988 had 878 entries.

Sirah, Hadith and Law

Almost a century of scholarship

Dr Muhammad Hamidullah's work belongs to the genre of Islamic scholarship associated with such luminaries as Abu Nasr al-Farabi (d.950/339H), Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d.1111/505H) and Shah Wali Allah Dihlavi (d.1762-1176H). Devotion to scholarship, commitment to truth, self-denial, encyclopaedic knowledge and ground-breaking academic contribution are some of the hallmarks of this tradition.

Born with exceptional natural talent, God gave Dr Hamidullah an especially long span of life (99 years, according to the Hijri calendar), and freedom from the worries of family life, which provided him with considerably greater opportunity to devote himself single-mindedly to scholarship.

His 165 books* and around a 1,000 research papers cover an astonishingly wide range of subjects in Islamic Studies so much so that one is left wondering whether there remains any significant field of Islamic learning bereft of Dr Hamidullah's impact.

Dr Hamidullah's major areas of interest, however, were *Sirah* (biography of the Prophet), history of the codification of Hadith, and Muslim International Law. As a student of law he proved himself to be extraordinarily brilliant. In his twenties he had already begun to make his mark as a jurist and a writer on legal subjects. This is quite evident from his early publications, including his articles on jurisprudence and international law, let alone his books.

In the initial stage of his academic career, Dr Hamidullah translated books on international law from English and French into Urdu. His early contribution to international law was, however, not confined either simply to translating or reproducing the ideas and concepts of western scholars. His treatment of the concepts prevalent in the academia was marked, instead, by a critical spirit. Even his early works exhibit this along with his proneness to introduce relevant information from Islamic sources to the field of international law.

Although Dr Hamidullah did not use the euphemism 'Islamisation of knowledge', the substance of that

concept is clearly apparent in his early writings on international law. One of his earliest works on the subject is *Qanun-i Bain-al-Mamalik ke Usul aur Naziren* (International Law: Its Principles and Precedents). It is a small-sized book of barely 250 pages. However, it is not a run-of-the-mill textbook of international law but a good embodiment of Dr Hamidullah's critical approach and with an Islamic perspective.

One can safely consider this work to be the starting point of Dr Hamidullah's efforts to develop a new approach to the study of international law. Perhaps his initial acquaintance with this subject provided the impetus to undertake a full fledged study of Muslim International Law, technically known as *Siyar*. His first major contribution in this field was the dissertation that he submitted to the University of Bonn in 1933, entitled *Die Neutralitat im islamischen Volkerrecht*. (Neutrality in Islamic International Law). Published from Bonn and Leipzig in 1935, it was the first attempt to make a systematic exposition of both the basic concept and the laws of neutrality in Muslim International Law.

The work is significant in several respects. First, it brings to the fore an aspect of Muslim International Law that had hitherto been almost unknown both in the Islamic countries and the West. Second, this work dispels the misgiving that Islamic law recognises only one category of relationship between the Islamic state and other states, that of war and belligerency. Third, it attempts to develop a systematic theory of the concept of neutrality in Muslim International Law. Fourth, it shows that the legal concepts and practices in the field of Muslim international law should be viewed in the context of contemporary historical data and *vice versa*. The work was promising on all these counts.

Dr Hamidullah's second major contribution to the field of *Siyar* was another dissertation of his entitled *La diplomatie musulmane a l'epoque du Prophete et des Khalifes Orthodoxe* (Muslim diplomacy in the time of the Prophet of Islam and his orthodox successors) which was submitted to the University

of Sorbonne in 1934. It was published from Paris in 1935 in two volumes.

The first volume deals with the relations obtaining between the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, and his four immediate successors on the one hand and the rulers and tribal chiefs on the other. The book was a pioneering effort to illuminate the political and diplomatic background of the initiatives taken by the early Islamic state in conducting its relations with other states.

The second volume contains a selection of important political, constitutional and diplomatic documents pertaining to the time of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, and his four successors. These documents, which had been unearthed from a whole range of varied sources, were arranged systematically and translated into French.

After a few years, the second volume was further enlarged to include the original Arabic documents along with their variant texts and published as a separate book known as *al-Watha'iq-al-Siyasiyyah* from Beirut in 1940. This book, which has run into a dozen editions, has become one of the foremost sources for the study of early Muslim diplomacy.

The most comprehensive work of Dr Hamidullah on the subject of Muslim International Law, however, is *The Muslim Conduct of State*. Originally submitted as a Master's thesis to Osmania University of Hyderabad, this book was first published in 1941 from Lahore, and embodied the whole gamut of his findings on Muslim International Law. However, he kept adding new material and ideas in its subsequent editions (the current edition being the ninth).

The Muslim Conduct of State represents a good model for the reformulation of Muslim International Law. Muslim scholars had felt the need to reformulate or reconstruct Islamic law ever since the beginning of the 20th century. Muhammad Iqbal (d.1938) in particular had been advocating this since the 1920s. He had tried to initiate the process and had solicited assistance from some of the most distinguished Islamic scholars known to him,

especially Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d.1930) and Maulana Sayyid Abul 'Ala Mawdudi (d.1979). How Iqbal would have pursued this task is not known; however, there are reasons to believe that had he lived to see *The Muslim Conduct of State*, he would have found the work quite close to his aspirations.

Apparently while writing *The Muslim Conduct of State*, Dr Hamidullah kept Oppenheim's classical work, *International Law*, as his model. This is evident from the fact that he adopted the same sequence as regards the content and followed Oppenheim's scheme of classification of the questions discussed in international law.

Dr Hamidullah assiduously culled a wealth of material from all available sources, both published and unpublished, found in the libraries of India, France, Germany, Britain, North Africa, Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Hijaz. He surveyed exhaustively not only the works of Islamic law but also the available literature on history, navigation, travel, warfare and biographies and extensively consulted commentaries of the Qur'an and the Hadith and the books of literature and lexicography. Thanks to this effort, Dr Hamidullah was able to provide a rich Islamic content to the major questions that had been raised by Oppenheim.

Besides Fiqhi material, Dr Hamidullah introduced some new subjects to the field of Muslim International Law. In treating the question of conflict of laws, he did not follow the pattern of the classical works of Muslim International Law. Moreover, he collected the material on this subject from other branches of Fiqh as well, systematised it, and presented it as a consistent and coherent theory of conflict of laws.

Apart from introducing new material and concepts in international law, Dr Hamidullah also gave new interpretations to the existing material. In this respect, this book is a rich reservoir of information and fresh interpretations. In it one notices a balanced combination of theory and historical facts, each complementing the other. *The Muslim Conduct of State* remains the best available model for the reconstruction of Islamic Law.

In addition to these major works on Muslim International Law, Dr Hamidullah has left a vast literature dealing with background material on the subject. He also edited several texts which shed light on wars and inter-tribal relations in the early period of Islam. He also edited the seminal work on the life of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu*

alayhi wa sallam, by Ibn Ishaq, and *Kitab al-Riddah* by al-Waqidi (d.822/207H).

Dr Hamidullah played a pioneering role in drawing attention to the Charter of Madinah, which he characterised as 'the first written constitution of the world'. He edited a very important text of the famous Hanbali jurist, Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1350/751H), *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimmah* (two volumes). This is perhaps the best book in Fiqhi literature on the private international law of Islam.

Therefore it would be appropriate to say that Dr Hamidullah was the master architect of Muslim International Law in modern times. If Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d.804/189H) is called the father of Muslim International Law, Dr Hamidullah was definitely the father of the modern version of that law, and fully deserves the title: 'Shaybani of the 20th century'.

The second major area of Dr Hamidullah's contribution is *Sirah*. It seems that he developed interest in this field while he was collecting material on diplomacy in the early period of Islam. During the second half of the 70 years of his active academic career, he mainly concentrated on *Sirah*. (Then, he hardly wrote anything substantial on Muslim International Law, which was the starting point of his academic contribution. However, he continued to add new data to his earlier publications which further reinforced his conclusions and expanded the matrix of his treatment of the subject.)

Dr Hamidullah's earliest publication on *Sirah* is his book, *Ahd-i Nabawi men Nizam-i-Hukmrani* (The System of Government in the Time of the Prophet). It was basically a collection of Dr Hamidullah's research papers on the administration of justice and system of government in the early Madinan state, which Dr Hamidullah was wont to call the 'City-state of Madinah'. The earliest paper in this collection seems to be on the City-state of Makkah, which was first published in 1939. Other papers were also written in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This book proved to be a seminal work on the subject and it contains rich new material that was not available to the earlier writers on *Sirah*. About half a dozen editions of it have been published, each subsequent edition containing some additional material and new ideas.

A sister volume of this book is another collection of papers entitled *Rasul-i Akram ki Siyasi Zindagi* (The Political Life of the Noble Messenger). The material included in it was produced

over a long period, 1935-50; it appeared as a separate volume under this title in 1950. Most of the material included in this book is the same as in his French book, *La diplomatie*, though, of course, with some substantial addition. Like several other books of Dr Hamidullah it, too, has gone into more editions in which the author has continued to add fresh data. It is noteworthy that other works on the life of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, which appeared after the publication of these books, bear a clear impress of Dr Hamidullah's work.

These books were followed by yet another significant publication, *The Battlefields of the Holy Prophet*, which sought to locate and describe the sites of the major battles fought by the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, during the last eight years of his life. It first appeared in Urdu and was subsequently translated by the author himself into English and French. These translated versions incorporated some additional material.

Dr Hamidullah visited Madinah, Makkah and Taif in the 1930s - perhaps on his way back to India from Europe - to determine the locations of the various battlefields. He measured the exact locations of these battlefields in the light of the data preserved in the early Islamic texts, and prepared maps and graphs. The book also highlighted the political and diplomatic background of the various battles and examined their impact.

However, Dr Hamidullah's *magnum opus* in the field of *Sirah* is his French book *Le Prophete de l'Islam, sa vie et son oeuvre*, which was first published in 1959 from Paris. New editions appeared with new data and other additions. Dr Hamidullah prepared the last edition, the fifth, in 1989. The book consists of two volumes.

The first deals with the early life, mission and politico-religious aspect of the life and activities of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. It can safely be claimed that the book is the best representative of his findings and conclusions on *Sirah*. While the first volume is primarily historical in its approach and content, the second deals with deeper issues and is focused on the Prophet's teaching and message. It is a treasure of information relating to the political, economic and social practices and institutions of 6th century Arabia.

Given the background and academic interest of the author, the book throws significant light on the political system and diplomatic norms of Arabia during the 6th and 7th centuries. It also deals

with the relations between various states and tribal groups in so far as they are relevant to the early history of Islam and the life of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*.

Dr Hamidullah's discussion of the role of different tribes in the success of the Prophet's mission is perhaps among his most original contributions. It helps the reader to understand the background and rationale of many decisions made by the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. The author successfully explains the importance of the contribution of the different tribes and their mutual conflicts to the development of the cause of Islam. He succinctly examines why the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, entered into agreement with some tribes rather than others. His relations with his contemporary rulers are also analysed in the light of rich historical data with the result that the rationale of his relations with different rulers and tribal chiefs becomes quite evident.

Before Dr Hamidullah, the world was generally aware only of the City-state of the Greeks. But Dr Hamidullah was the first scholar who introduced to the world the expressions 'the City-state of Makkah' and the 'City-state of Madinah'. He collected abundant material and convincing data about these city-states. The constitution of the City-state of Madinah, as pointed out earlier, was also brought to limelight for the first time by Dr Hamidullah.

The historicity of the Qur'an and Hadith has also been a major focus of Dr Hamidullah's writings. His writings on *Sirah*, particularly his two-volume French work and his *Emergence of Islam* (published in 1993 from Islamabad), include important material on the compilation and historical authenticity of the Qur'anic text.

Unlike several other contemporary scholars, Dr Hamidullah did not discard the reports about the Qur'an's compilation found in books such as *Kitab al-Masahif* of Abu Daud, reports that seemed to be inconsistent with the generally held views regarding the history of the compilation of the Qur'an. Instead of discarding, Dr Hamidullah interpreted these reports differently and explained them in a manner that made them fully harmonious with his conclusions.

Dr Hamidullah's contribution to Hadith studies is unique as well as phenomenal in so far as he paved the way for other scholars to establish definitively the historicity of the Hadith material with convincing arguments and a wealth of historical evidence. Dr

Hamidullah's interest in Hadith was mostly confined to the history of its compilation about which some scholars, mainly orientalist, had expressed serious doubts.

Since the middle of the 19th century several scholars had come out with a series of works challenging the authenticity of the Hadith material. Their starting points were: that the major collections of Hadith had been compiled in the 3rd century; and that these compilations were based on oral transmission which, in their estimate, provided much scope for misreporting, adding and altering traditions from the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*.

This theory of the oral transmission of Hadith was so forcefully articulated by a number of scholars that many readers, in the east as well in the west, felt convinced that the Hadith material was indeed based on hearsay and its worth was hardly more than that of folklore narrations of old women and story tellers of the countryside. In fact, it was Dr Hamidullah's illustrious teacher, the late Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani (d.1956/1376H) who had initially opened before his promising student new avenues in this fecund field.

The late Maulana had taken pains to collect evidence to show that it was the Companions of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, who had prepared written material containing the sayings and instructions of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. Taking cue from his great teacher, Dr Hamidullah vigorously pursued the subject with his characteristic zeal, depth of knowledge and exhaustive approach.

Dr Hamidullah discovered some very early collections of Ahadith preserved in the libraries of Turkey, France and Germany. On the basis of these collections he refuted the misgiving spread by orientalist and even some unknowing Muslim scholars that the Ahadith had been transmitted only orally and, therefore, according to their view, they were probably less accurate or less reliable. He arrayed impressive evidence to show that apart from a number of Companions who had prepared their own personal collections of Ahadith, a large number of Ahadith had been dictated by the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, himself for a variety of readers and purposes.

These Ahadith consisted of the Prophet's instructions and directives which were first preserved by the Companions and then by the Successors and subsequently by jurists and historians. These include the Charter of Madinah which contained

more than 52 sections dealing with the rights and obligations of the various entities that formed a part of the Madinan society. These collections also include, among others, a census report, letters-patent by the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, to different rulers and tribal chiefs, letters addressed to rulers inviting them to Islam, correspondence with tribal chiefs, instructions to governors and other state functionaries, and the tariff of Zakat and other dues.

The most important collections of Ahadith prepared by the Companions, as mentioned by Dr Hamidullah, are those by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As, Abu Rafi', Anas ibn Malik, 'Amr ibn Hazm and Abu Hurairah. He also traces a tradition which states that the Companion 'Abd Allah ibn Abi 'Awfah used to teach Hadith through correspondence. Another Companion, Samurah ibn Jundub, had also prepared a collection which was later inherited by his son, Sulaiman ibn Samurah. This collection embodied, according to Dr Hamidullah, 'a great deal of knowledge'. On the whole, Dr Hamidullah discovered some 14 different written collections of the Ahadith of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, made by the Companions.

One of these compilers, Abu Hurairah (d.677/58H) which he then memorised to dictate to his audience; to check the accuracy of his memory he would compare it with the written material with him.

Dr Hamidullah has quoted an interesting incident which shows how sensitive the government officials were to preserving the purity and originality of the actual words of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*: Abu Hurairah was known for his prodigious memory, a result of the Prophet's blessing. Being aware of his reputation, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, the governor of Madinah, decided to put it to test.

The governor sent for Abu Hurairah and after engaging him in conversation on a variety of subjects, asked him about the Hadith of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. Behind the curtain was seated a scribe who was writing down everything that the unsuspecting Abu Hurairah was saying. The scribe relates:

'Marwan went on asking, and I went on writing, and the Ahadith grew considerable in number. After the lapse of a year, Marwan sent for Abu Hurairah again and I was seated once more behind the curtain. He [Marwan] kept questioning him [Abu Hurairah] about the same Ahadith, while I

compared what he said now with what he had narrated before. He did not speak a word more or a word less [than he had said earlier].'

This establishes not only how retentive Abu Hurairah's memory was, but also that a number of Ahadith by Abu Hurairah were committed to writing on the order of Marwan, and that they were also verified by comparing them with the original.

In order to substantiate his thesis about the dual method of transmitting Ahadith, written and oral, Dr Hamidullah selected one of earliest collections of Hadith by Hammam ibn al-Munabbih (d.719/101H), a close disciple of Abu Hurairah. Dr Hamidullah traces several compilations prepared by Abu Hurairah, which were subsequently improved and edited by his disciples. Of these, Dr Hamidullah selected the one prepared by Hamman. The manuscripts of these Ahadith were available in Berlin and Damascus.

After tracing the history of these two manuscripts, Dr Hamidullah collated their contents with those of Bukhari

(d.870/257H). He thereby established that one of the teachers of Bukhari, namely 'Abd al-Razzaq, had narrated traditions to his disciple, Bukhari, who had derived them from the written collection of 'Abd al-Razzaq (now published as *al-Musannaf*). 'Abd al-Razzaq had received a part of his material from his teacher, Ma'mar ibn al-Rashid (d. 827/212H), who has made a collection of his own known as *al-Jami'*. This Ma'mar was a direct disciple of Hamman ibn al-Munabbih. Thus, Dr Hamidullah demonstrated that the Hadith material communicated by Abu Hurairah to Hamman was in turn communicated to Bukhari through Ma'mar and 'Abd al-Razzaq, through both oral and written transmission. On collation of these written sources one finds complete conformity between the texts.

Dr Hamidullah's work help to demolish any orientalist misconception about Hadith. Dr Fuat Sezgin, Dr Zia al-Rahman al-'Azami and Dr Muhammad Mustafa al-'Azami - he represents the apogee - deserve special mention for

espousing and further developing this trend. In his books, particularly in his *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (1968, Beirut), the line of argument that had been initiated some 70 years ago by Dr Hamidullah and his teacher, Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, reaches its logical conclusion. It establishes definitively the overall authenticity of the Hadith material on which the entire edifice of Islamic theology and law rests. ■

Dr Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi

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* There is a little problem of an exact count about the actual number of books authored by Dr Hamidullah as many of these were translated into several other languages as well. He also wrote under a few different pen names and a correct tally of his books would be known after a consolidated list of all his published works had been prepared. Dr Hamidullah himself maintained a list of his publications which he used to update from time to time. A list of his published works dated July 1988 had 878 entries.

Story of King Faisal Prize

In the event, escaped embarrassment

IT was sometime in the early 1980s; I was working at the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, England, when we also used to correspond with the late Dr Muhammad Hamidullah as we regularly sought his advice or opinion on various questions of academic interest relating to our own writing, studies or research. I need hardly say that he was as thorough and meticulous as he was precise and prompt in replying to any query or reference that we made to him. I also had the honour of meeting him in Paris. I think it was towards the end of 1984.

The Islamic Foundation was among the various learned bodies and individuals around the world which the King Faisal International Foundation in Riyadh used to ask to nominate people of distinction and achievement for their two main annual awards for Service to Islam and Contribution to Islamic Studies.

Who could be more suitable for the King Faisal International Award than Dr Muhammad Hamidullah? His all round contribution to Islamic scholarship did not need any formal nomination. Therefore, one wondered why the Faisal Foundation had not done itself the honour of awarding him the prize.

Though we knew that Dr Hamidullah's response to suggestions for nomination had never been encouraging, we thought the Islamic Foundation should try to put forward his name for the award. So I wrote a detailed letter to the Director General, King Faisal International Foundation, in Riyadh proposing his name.

But I was not aware of the formalities that were required. Instead of accepting our nomination eagerly, the Faisal

Foundation sent us a number of forms to be completed and returned to them along with a set of photographs as well as copies of all his publications. They, at the Faisal Foundation, did not seem to know who was Dr Hamidullah.

Therefore we had to tell Dr Hamidullah about our nomination and ask him for all the necessary information in order to submit the forms.

He wrote to say he feared that if he were to accept any worldly reward for his modest work, he may not get his due in the hereafter and be left with only his sins in his book of deeds and, therefore, 'I keep telling everyone I don't want these awards.'

Not surprised, but we did not give up.

We went on insisting until Dr Hamidullah sent us a several-pages-long hand written list of all his published work, that was all! I sent this list then containing more than 500 publications in several world languages to the Faisal Foundation. The Faisal Foundation of course still wanted all their procedural formalities to be completed. Presumably they did not know Dr Hamidullah.

Dr Hamidullah felt greatly relieved that he was saved from embarrassment. He said he had not 'taken' the Pakistani [Hijrah Award] and had no special preference for the Saudi prize. He added he had already declined such a request from Ali Mian (the late Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi), as he wanted to 'meet my Lord without these worldly recognition and awards'. The letter was dated 20 Dhu al-Q'adah 1407 (16 July 1987). ■

Syed Faiyazuddin Ahmad

Teacher *par excellence*

The honour of knowing him

IT was around 1974 that I wrote to him for his guidance on a topic for doctoral research. The following week, I received a prompt but brief reply: 'Your inquiry did not impress me. Titles are not important; contents are important, Yours Muhammad Hamidullah.' Later when he knew me better, his answers were friendlier and more helpful.

To Dr Hamidullah, answering a letter was *fard*, a religious obligation. He made sure that each and every letter was answered promptly. His responses used to be very brief yet precise and covered almost any subject directly or indirectly relating to the vast field of the knowledge of Islam. He seldom failed to reply to a letter. He never ignored any query; nor did he shy away from admitting his ignorance about a question that did not relate to his specialisation or of which he had not made adequate study.

Despite being totally immersed in his academic studies and research, Dr Hamidullah was available to thousands of students and researchers and hundreds of thousands of admirers worldwide. As it was his norm to write to 30-40 correspondents every day, he developed a particular style of writing letters and responding to any query: his answers were candid, precise and straightforward. He always carried with him dozens of aerogrammes (airletters) – seldom used envelopes – to answer letters immediately.

My acquaintance with Dr Hamidullah goes back to the early 1970s, though initially it was through correspondence, when I started learning French. I was fortunate to spend many hours with him, listening to his talks, discourses and personal conversation when he stopped for a few days in Pakistan at the request of the Islamic Research Institute. He was then on his way to Istanbul and Paris from Malaysia.

Most of his talks and discourses concentrated on the presentation of Islam to non-Muslim audience, but unlike many modern Muslim scholars he was averse to toning down or toning up the teachings of Islam for the benefit of his audience; such consideration never crossed his mind. He would explain his Islamic point so

thoroughly and meticulously, backed by forceful arguments and historical data, that there would be no room for questions.

I had met Dr Hamidullah several times at his modest residence in Paris. He also visited me, whenever he happened to be in Islamabad. In 1987, he was in Pakistan to attend a meeting of the Advisory Board under the National Hijrah Council to select 100 best books produced by Muslim academia on different disciplines in the past 114 years. He came to my house for the *Bismillah* of my twin daughters, Maria and Ramla.

He asked the children to recite with him the first five verses of Surah 96 (*Al-'Alaq*) of the Qur'an, the first revelation received by Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. Dr Hamidullah recalled that he himself was initiated in such a manner by a visiting dignitary at the beginning of 1911 (He was born in February 1908.) He said he had completed the memorisation of the Qur'an at the age of seven.

He elaborated on the modes of teaching the Qur'an to the children in different parts of the world, and was not happy with the traditional methods followed in the South Asian sub-continent. Dr Hamidullah was keen on developing new tools with the help of audio and video, which he thought would shorten the period of study and consolidate the results.

After he had made Paris his home, Dr Hamidullah visited Pakistan several times, more frequently during the days of late President Ziaul Haq. In 1981, the President invited him to advise and assist in the preparation of the speech that President Ziaul Haq was going to make in the UN General Assembly. He stayed for around ten days and called on the President several times.

Since the purpose of the visit was known to very few people, some took this visit as a threat to their position. A respectable gentleman who was heading an Islamic institution got the impression that he would be replaced by Dr Hamidullah; another, who was more vocal, could not conceal his anxiety about his job. Fortunately, Dr Hamidullah was unaware of it.

During one of these meetings with the

President, at my suggestion and request, Dr Hamidullah asked him to institute a chair for the study of Hadith at the University of Balochistan to be known as Imam Abu Daud Chair to commemorate the relationship of Imam Abu Daud al-Sajistani. (The third century Hijrah great savant of Hadith was from the present Pakistani province of Balochistan.) The chair has yet to be established.

Dr Hamidullah's last visit to Pakistan was in April 1992, when he was invited by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The protocol officers of the government of Pakistan were astonished to see him arrive with only one small shoulder bag. Throughout his travels worldwide, he never took any baggage; only one extra shirt, a pair of South Asian Muslim-style 'qameez pyjama' and a pair of slippers.

And the only academic tool that he carried on his frequent lecture tours was his pen; never needed any notes or books. He had a vast reservoir of knowledge and a computer-like mind, from which retrieval was quick and orderly.

Before his last visit, Dr Zafar Ishaque Ansari and I approached then Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaque Khan and suggested that he invite Dr Hamidullah to a meal and try to persuade him to come over to Pakistan, permanently, and spend the last years of his life in his own 'country', Pakistan.

The President offered him appointment as a distinguished national professor at a university of his choice, with the highest salary and emoluments admissible to the highest public servant in Pakistan. He also assured him of the necessary academic and secretarial assistance. To his astonishment and that of his senior staff members, Professor Hamidullah politely but firmly declined the offer which, in his estimation, was a kind of favour, something he was never prepared even to consider.

Previously, too, he had declined similar requests, including one from President Ziaul Haq. He always maintained that he could not leave Paris because of his deep involvement in *da'wah* and with his educational and research projects.

Despite his modest lifestyle and very

limited resources – pension from National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in Paris – he was generous to a fault. Thousands of students from all over the world made requests for photocopies of manuscripts, books etc., held in different libraries of Paris, but he never disappointed them.

I was no exception to receiving unceasing favours from him: he sent me not only his new publications but also copies of his earlier publications. Once when I asked for a photocopy of a book on Fiqh, which was available in a library in Paris, he sent it but enquired why I wanted it. He thought it was apparently a normal Fiqh text. Though he himself never agreed to be reimbursed for expenses incurred, he always insisted on paying for expenses that others incurred in doing anything for him.

He would usually ask for copies of new studies relevant to *Sirah* or early history of Islamic Jurisprudence. Once he asked for a list of articles about *Sirah* in *Nuqush*, a literary journal published from Lahore from which he selected an article or two for copies. He was very selective in purchasing books as well as in receiving them as gifts. He would politely decline what he did not need, perhaps because he had neither the space for books nor did he want the books that he did not need.

Dr Hamidullah's generosity also extended financial help to a number of relatives and friends, their families and children. On a visit to Lahore, on one occasion, he pursued certain publishers for overdue royalties, and on receiving them straight to the post office he went. And pulling out from his pocket a long list of addresses, he spent all the money on many poor students, widows and other acquaintances in need in different parts of Pakistan, and elsewhere.

It was characteristic of Dr Hamidullah to make exhaustive efforts, in terms of time, labour and material, to find answers to queries, no matter how trivial or insignificant they may appear to be. He would spend days, at times weeks, to ensure that all possible sources had been looked into before arriving at the correct conclusion.

Some 25 years earlier, a scholar from Karachi published an Urdu translation of a well known book in Arabic on Biblical criticism. Its promotional advertisement claimed that when the original Arabic version was published in mid 19th century, *The Times*, London, had reviewed it. The reviewer was supposed to have said that should the book continue to circulate in the

western world, Christianity would eventually disappear.

That claim was not enough for the meticulous scholar: Dr Hamidullah had to make sure whether this was so. He, therefore, checked through all the back issues of the newspaper over a period of 150 years – the entire 19th century and the early 50 years of the 20th. In the event, he had to make it known to the person concerned that the review, as claimed, was not traceable in the files of *The Times*.

While editing the well known classical encyclopaedic dictionary on botany, botanical terms and products entitled, *Kitab-al-Nabat* by Abu Haneefah Dinawary of which only one volume was extant, Dr Hamidullah realised that the book had been profusely referred to by many subsequent classical authors. It gave him the idea of culling this scattered material from these sources to reproduce the complete volume. One can well imagine how many thousands of pages must have been scanned painstakingly by this devout academic.

His profundity of knowledge, extensive study of Islamic sources and penetrating research in his areas of specialisation endowed him with an extremely balanced approach and a unique perspective. Some of his views, though, were a little variance with those generally held by other religious scholars, which inevitably led him into controversy.

However, despite his accommodative approach, he held tenaciously to his views and would never modify them for the sake of others. Confronted by the upholders of a popular view, he would say politely, but unhesitatingly: 'Give me a valid argument or show that my argument is not sound.' Susceptible only to the merits of argument, nothing but sound reason and logic, was acceptable to him. He was never impressed by the reputation of a person. He expressed his views with the courage and boldness of a seeker of truth and demonstrated remarkable skill in couching his opinion in an extremely amiable manner.

In a lecture Dr Hamidullah expressed the opinion that *Ijma* (consensus) of the Muslim Ummah can be replaced, modified, amended, reviewed, even totally abrogated by a subsequent *Ijma* of later generations, which triggered a furious response from an Imam of the Friday prayer, the following day. Dr Hamidullah listened calmly, as if nothing had happened. As we were coming back from the mosque, I expressed my grief and sorrow over the matter, but he said in a very sweet tone:

'Perhaps the Maulana did not read Baidawi [d.1286/685H] who holds the same views.'

Though Dr Hamidullah did not always adhere to the predictable traditional line, he often appeared to be far from taking a lenient attitude. For example, he would never allow anybody to take his photograph. He never declared it to be prohibited; simply that he had reservations. And his reservations about photographs were well known.

Therefore, people were astonished to see a modern camera, dangling from his shoulders; he was taking photographs of mosques in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. He explained to one questioner that he was doing it at the request of a child of a new Muslim family who was interested in collecting photos of mosques in different parts of the world.

He was above sectarian, ethnic or any other affiliations. Born into a Shafi'i family in the Nizam State of Hyderabad-Deccan, he lived all his life among the Malikis, but most of his academic interaction was with Hanafis. None of his visitors, students or readers ever got the feeling that he preferred one Muslim group, or point of view, over others.

He studied all Muslim legal and religious schools with equal depth and thoroughness. He wrote on the codification of Islamic law by Imam Abu Haneefah (d.150H) with affection and reverence no less than that of any enthusiastic Hanafi. He edited an extremely valuable manuscript on private international law of Islam by Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1350/751H), the leading Hanbali jurist of the 14th century (Hijrah). He also edited the well known Mutazilite book *Kitab al-Mu'tamad* on jurisprudence, by *Abul Husain al-Basri* (d.436H).

The Emergence of Islam (1993, Islamabad), which is the English translation of his Bahawalpur lectures (*Khutbat-e-Bahawalpur*, 1981) is, perhaps, the best representative of the balanced, moderate and accommodative approach that is characteristic of Dr Hamidullah. It is based on a series of 12 lectures that he delivered – without notes – at Islamia University, Bahawalpur, Pakistan, on the early development of Qur'anic Sciences, Hadith, Fiqh and Sirah.

Contrary to many contemporary Muslims, his attitude towards orientalis was mainly appreciative. He never subscribed to the idea that western orientalis had been driven by non-academic motives. He believed in dialogue not only with the orientalis

but with everyone.

His towering personality and unrivalled academic achievements were matched only by his conduct and moral rectitude. Modesty personified, Dr Hamidullah dealt with humility with whoever he came in contact with, especially visitors and acquaintances. I saw him meeting heads of the states and governments as well as commonest of the common without the least difference in his attitude and reaction.

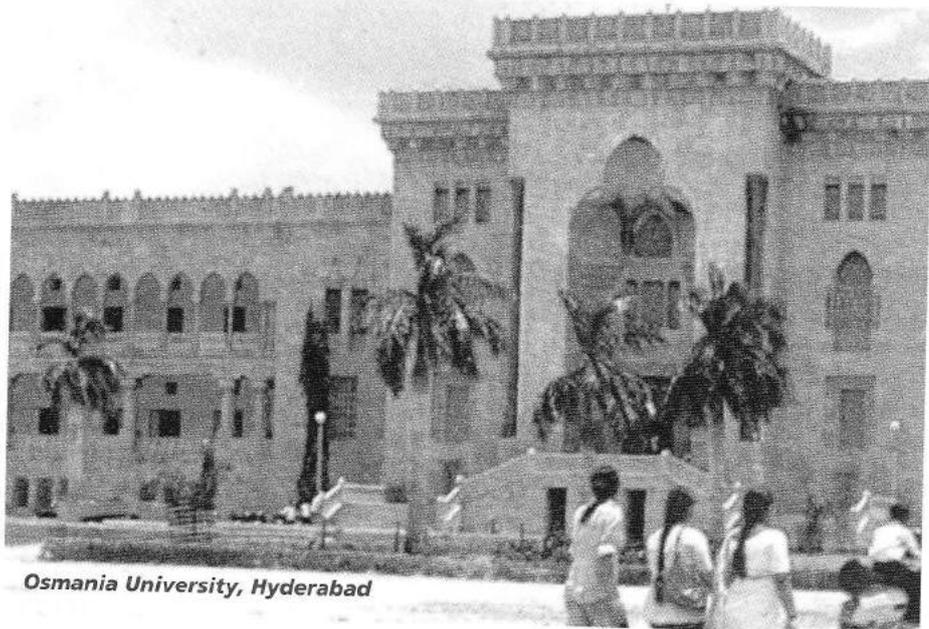
He lived almost 60 years of his life in a modest flat on the fifth floor of an old mansion on rue de Tournon, Paris. The building had no lift, yet the octogenarian professor surprised his young visitors, briskly going up and down the stairs several times a day.

He prepared his own food, did his own frugal shopping, and managed all his secretarial work himself. The typewriter that he continued to use until the last days of his writing career was perhaps acquired for typing his PhD theses in 1935; his furniture was old; and his accommodation was where he had spent his student days.

He was living in France as a stateless person as a citizen of the State of Hyderabad, which had been invaded and occupied by India. His official position was that since his country had been illegally occupied by a foreign aggressor, he could not go back, and that he needed a refugee permit to stay on in Paris until his country became free. Dr Hamidullah was working as Professor of International Law at Osmania University of Hyderabad when India invaded Hyderabad.

Although he had to revalidate the permit every six months, undoubtedly a cumbersome affair, Dr Hamidullah never took the easy way out by acquiring French nationality that would have entitled him to a French passport. Thus he remained loyal to his own native nationality but a refugee throughout his life.

Dr Hamidullah, who had been a member of the official delegation to the United Nations to lodge a complaint against India's aggression, told me in 1987 that the complaint was still on the agenda of the UN Security Council and he had time and again enquired from the office of the Security Council about its fate. Realising that the prospects of his returning to Hyderabad were bleak, he finally settled down in Paris where he had lived in the 1930s as a student at the University of Sorbonne.



Osmania University, Hyderabad

His self-exile in France, brought Dr Hamidullah in contact with many Muslim émigrés, especially from North Africa. He expressed solidarity with Muslim freedom movements in Algeria, Tunisia, Palestine and elsewhere. He was also a great admirer of the Turks and the Algerians.

For quite sometime, he worked as a Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Elahiyat in the University of Istanbul, where he spent three or four months a year teaching, among other subjects, the constitutional history of Islam.

He was engaged in writing a detailed history of constitutional thought and practice followed in different Muslim states. He had completed a number of chapters based on his lectures in Istanbul, up to the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (775/158H). Apparently, the notes of his lectures on the constitutional history of Islam relating to subsequent period are with his students in Turkey.

The great scholar was not much enamoured of the ideals of western democracy. In an article on the Islamic state, which he presented at a seminar in Islamabad in October 1979, he almost advocated the system of monarchy. That it might go against the grain of contemporary Muslim thought did not seem to bother him. He believed in saying without inhibition what he sincerely held to be true.

Similarly, he differed from the traditional views about the martyrdom of Husain, *Radi-Allahu anhu*, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. He was very appreciative of the role played by the Umayyads in the consolidation of the

Islamic state and the dissemination of the message of Islam in different parts of the world. When I suggested that historians should dispel the misgivings about the Umayyads created in some quarters, he not only welcomed the idea but also suggested how it could be achieved.

As one who was a regular visitor to Turkey, involved as he was in teaching there, Dr Hamidullah naturally had some strong views. He spoke highly of the great qualities of the Turks and their dedication to the cause of Islam, and was naturally critical of the secular position of Mustafa Kamal, who founded modern Turkey after liquidating the Ottoman caliphate. In his private conversations, Dr Hamidullah would narrate stories from his own personal experience and reminiscences about the growingly negative perception of Turkish youth and the general public about Mustafa Kamal and his secular policies.

Dr Hamidullah's deep personal commitment to the cause of Palestine was no less than that of any patriotic Arab Muslim. He had not eaten meat for 35 years in Paris because no *halal* meat was available in Paris during the early 1950s and 1960s. The reason he did not buy *kosher* from a Jewish butcher, he explained: 'Jewish traders and shopkeepers in France regularly contribute to the welfare fund of the so-called state of Israel. I cannot accept that my money is used even indirectly for the cause of a government which is massacring my innocent brothers and sisters in Palestine.' ■

Dr Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi

Great encounters

Karachi, Paris and Dhahran

'If I would take it here, what would I get there?' an unusual question I heard in Paris, which opens a window to a most unusual personality: Dr Muhammad Hamidullah.

MY first encounter with Dr Muhammad Hamidullah goes back to the summer of 1948. Pakistan, established with the intent to concretise the Islamic worldview, was not even one year old. A group of concerned people in Pakistan felt the need to try outline the basic principles and characteristics of an Islamic polity to serve as the ideological rudder to the nascent state.

Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (d. 1949), Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Thanavi (d. 1980), and my father, Muhammad Zafar Ahmad Ansari (d. 1991), took the initiative and brought together some scholars to Karachi to address this task. Those* who, according to my recollection, responded to their call were Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani (d. 1956), Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah (d. 2002), and a relatively lesser-known person, Ghulam Dastgir Rashid, the author of a work that had attained considerable recognition in the mid-1940s, *Islami Tahdhib kiya hai?* (What is Islamic Civilisation?). All from Hyderabad-Deccan.

The expenses of this undertaking, to the best of my knowledge, were borne by the prosperous and devout Mia family. Originally from Surat (India), the Mias had established themselves in business in South Africa and were at that time exploring business prospects in Karachi. The family's devotion to Islam was combined with their willingness to spend generously on Islamic causes.

The group of six held their deliberations each day for about two weeks at a large flat in a building opposite Mereweather Tower in Karachi which the Mias had just bought. This building housed for decades the excellent Majlis-i-'Ilmi Library established by the Mia family.

Very young as I was, it was obviously out of the question for me to attend

these meetings, or even to find out what was going on there except for the occasional remarks or fragments of conversation that I might incidentally hear. Being the eldest son of one of the organisers, I was occasionally asked to do one errand or another in connection with these meetings. Even as an 'errand boy', I considered myself privileged to catch a glimpse of these highly distinguished people.

To begin with, I was impressed by the *persona* of Maulana Gilani who, apart from his fame as a scholar, struck me as dignified and good humoured. I was, likewise, struck by the utter self-abnegation, humility and modesty of Dr Hamidullah who had begun to be known in the subcontinent as a good and promising scholar.

I had already seen his book *The Muslim Conduct of State* with my father. (This copy of the book, bearing the signature of my father and carrying the date January 1948 (the date of its purchase), was the first revised edition of the work and was published in 1945 by Ashraf of Lahore. The original had appeared in *Islamic Culture* (1941-42), which was reprinted with addenda and corrigenda in December 1942.

I recall that I had tried to flip through the book, but prudence dictated that I lay it aside for it was a bit too technical and intellectually demanding for me. The scholarly flavour of the work, however, left a favourable impression on me. I was to realise a few years later that the book was a work of solid scholarship which broke fresh ground in a new field – Islamic International Law.

The meetings of these scholars lasted no more than 10 or 12 days. I am not sure why the meetings were wound up in just about two weeks. Perhaps the three dignitaries who had come from Hyderabad could not afford to stay away for long from their home; the tragic end that eventually overtook that state had begun to cast its ominous shadows.

This exercise was not publicised, and I think this was deliberate. For one thing, those who had taken this initiative wanted some solid work to be done rather than to make political mileage out of it. Also, presumably it would have

been embarrassing for the guests from the other side of the border if it became known that they were actively assisting in the setting up of an Islamic state. The result was that hardly anyone even knows that this effort was undertaken.

These meetings did not lead to the production of any report or any written set of recommendations. The enterprise, in my view, was still useful in so far as it, presumably, jolted some important figures involved in the Islamisation effort from complacency and made them realise the difficult nature of their task.

This realisation, however, did not dampen their enthusiasm for their Islamisation cause. It only created a degree of realism that an Islamic polity in mid 20th century cannot be brought into being by simply replicating – lock, stock and barrel – the institutions of the Umayyads or the Abbasids or the Ottomans.

The task which had to be addressed was thus of a highly creative and innovative character. The outcome of this initial exercise was not the discovery answers to the relevant questions that arise in connection with Islamic statehood. Its achievement rather lay in identifying a good many of those questions.

One might speculate that perhaps the serious thinking triggered by this initial exercise indirectly contributed to the work of the Board of Talimat-i-Islamia set up in 1949, or in the famous meeting of the 31 'ulama of all schools of Islamic thought held in 1951 in Karachi when, with full agreement, the Twenty-two Basic Principles of Islamic State were clearly articulated. This last was indeed a singular achievement.

The next that I heard about Dr Hamidullah was a few weeks later when the threat to Hyderabad-Deccan's independent existence seemed imminent. I heard that Dr Hamidullah had gone abroad via Karachi as a member of an official delegation of Hyderabad.

The task of the delegation was to arouse world opinion against India's impending aggression and to persuade the freedom-loving nations to take a strong stand against India's determined

intent to swallow up Hyderabad. It seems that after participating in the Karachi meetings Dr Hamidullah went back to Hyderabad-Deccan and returned to Karachi within weeks and thence proceeded abroad.

I had, however, the privilege to see a great deal of Dr Hamidullah, during his one-year stay in Karachi (1949-50). Dr Hamidullah had joined the Board of Talimat-i-Islamia, a board which had been founded to assist the Constituent Assembly in framing an Islamic constitution. He had come to Karachi from Paris, where he had been a student in the early 1930s, and where he had taken refuge after India's occupation of his home state in September 1948.

The Board of Talimat-i-Islamia was established in 1949. Its title seemed to be a misnomer for the words 'Talimat-i-Islamia' would suggest that the board has something to do with Islamic education. Its task, however, was confined to furnishing advice on constitutional matters.

The board members were:

Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (d.1953), Chairman; Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi (d.1976); Dr M Hamidullah; Professor M Abdul Khaliq; Mufti Jafar Husain Mujtahid. (d.1983); and my father, Muhammad Zafar Ahmad Ansari, Secretary of the board.

We lived then in a flat near the well known spot in Karachi called Saeed Manzil. (To be exact, we lived in a flat of a two-storey building bearing the number 12/18 on Bunder Road, now called M A Jinnah Road.) The walking time from home to the Constituent Assembly, wherein the board was located, was about ten minutes. Occasionally, I went there to see my father. This enabled me to meet the distinguished members of the board.

Dr Hamidullah's humility, piety and unpretentiousness were too conspicuous to go unnoticed or to fail to endear him to those with whom he came into contact. I, however, had little interaction with him beyond exchanging greetings and courtesies. I was rather too young and perhaps also a bit too diffident to engage him in conversations on subjects of any consequence.

I felt Dr Hamidullah was perhaps also slightly too reserved to initiate any interchange. The result was that I heard him speak very little unless some questions were put to him. But when he spoke, he impressed me with his responsible manner of speaking as well as his modesty and humility.

I recall that somehow the word that

often came to my mind when I saw him was 'spartan'. This was despite his very conspicuous tenderness and civility. This 'spartanism' was confirmed to me one day when on being asked, he said that on workdays he walked to the office of the board from Khudadad Colony, where he lived with a relative of his. The distance, in my estimation, would be about four miles.

I was then a student of Islamia College, Karachi. During the first term of 1949, Dr Hamidullah once came to our college to deliver a lecture on 'Islamic International Law'. Although he had no written notes, his was a thoroughly prepared, well organised, coherent, informative and insightful lecture. It was, however, delivered in a very low key, in a somewhat subdued tone, with the speaker scarcely looking the audience in their eyes.

In every sense it was an excellent academic discourse, one that was devoid of all demagogic theatrics.

I recall that the learned speaker, thanks to his impressive array of evidence, drove home the thesis that international law had essentially been developed by Muslim jurists. (Dr Hamidullah also preferred to use an alternate expression for international law, and that was 'inter-statal law'.) The name of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 804/189H), a world pioneer in formulating the principles of international law, is etched into my memory ever since that day in the early autumn of 1949.

After spending one year in Karachi as a member of the board, Dr Hamidullah left for Paris. Everyone felt unhappy at his departure. All of us were grieved to learn that he left because he was feeling unhappy.

Maybe he did not feel that the work of the board would be of much consequence. Perhaps, he missed the rich libraries of Paris and his real vocation - reading, teaching and writing. Perhaps he had got used to working under conditions wherein the roles of all concerned are fully defined. Perhaps before coming to Karachi he felt a degree of distrust as regards the *bona fides* of the people who mattered in Pakistan *vis-a-vis* Islam. Perhaps Dr Hamidullah also thought that the acceptance of the board's recommendations ought to be mandatory for the Constituent Assembly.

All I heard was that Dr Hamidullah was not happy and so had decided to return to Paris. However, I did not know what it was that made him unhappy. I do not recall asking my

father about the matter, nor do I recall that he volunteered any definite information. But, true to his character, Dr Hamidullah left without making any fuss at all.

There was a gap of six years between my last meeting with him in Karachi and my next in Paris. Like so many of his admirers, his address, 4 rue de Tournon, Paris VI, was not only registered in my notebook but also fondly imprinted on my mind. In September 1956, I was on my way to Montreal where I was to be a graduate student at McGill. My friend, Muhammad Hasan, and I seized this opportunity for a two-day stopover in Paris. Without the least exaggeration, our almost exclusive agenda in Paris was to derive maximum inspiration from this legendary scholar-cum-saint.

Those were the heady days of the Algerian war of independence. It is difficult for me to revive the highly charged anti-imperialist emotions which seized us some 47 years ago. In our part of the world, the campaign to boycott France had stirred us to the roots. At the Paris air terminal we decided not to stay in any French-owned hotel. France had to be boycotted even in Paris!

In our youthful zeal, we told the Hostess of Paris (a bureau to assist the tourists to find a place to stay) that we wanted to stay in an Algerian hotel. When the girl on the counter told us that she did not know which hotel was Algerian and which was not, we thought she was just being awkward! In any case, we looked at a list of inexpensive hotels in Paris and chose one called Hotel de Grenade. There was, after all, something Islamic about it!

On our way there we had our taxi pass by Dr Hamidullah's house. And *voilà*, Dr Hamidullah was about to enter an oldish building. He was in his familiar spartan demeanour, holding a paper bag filled with loaves of French bread. The aroma of freshly baked loaves wafting from the bag whetted our appetite. It was about 5pm, at the end of a working day, and Dr Hamidullah looked rather tired. He greeted us with a broad smile and kind words of welcome.

We told Dr Hamidullah that we were on our way to our hotel where we would freshen up, and if he could spare any time, we would like to return and spend a good part of the evening with him. He nodded, his face beaming with happiness, and said he would be delighted. Soon, we were back and climbed several storeys to his modest attic flat in what to us was the most

celebrated spot in Paris – 4 rue de Tournon!

At first we spent some time talking about things that interested us. In a matter-of-fact style Dr Hamidullah told us a great deal about Islam in France, and how a fairly good number of people were increasingly finding their spiritual refuge in it.

At our suggestion Dr Hamidullah walked with us to an Algerian restaurant, perhaps called Al Hambra. *Halal* meat, of course, was not available, so all of us had to do with a meatless fare. Much against our wish and to our sheer embarrassment, even before we could make the effort to pay the bill, we learnt that Dr Hamidullah had already settled the account. All those who have had any encounter with him will testify that generosity and hospitality were among the most prominent traits of this Muslim savant's character.

After the meal, we could not resist imposing ourselves on him. Being extremely zealous about the Algerian cause, we could not help trying to meet Algerian youths and communicating to them our strong support to the cause of Algeria's heroic war of independence.

So Dr Hamidullah took us to the office of the Algerian Muslim Students Association. There we met Muhammad Khemisti, then secretary general of the Association. A few years later when Algeria was liberated we realised how privileged we had been. This modest young man, with whom we had conversed for more than an hour, had become independent Algeria's first minister of foreign affairs.

The next morning, which was Friday, we hurried to rue de Tournon after breakfast. The previous night, before we parted, Dr Hamidullah had kindly volunteered to take us along to the Mosque of Paris where we would offer the Friday Prayer. When we reached his flat, he was giving instruction to a French lady in Islam. We realised she was a Muslim when Dr Hamidullah asked us to greet our '*dini bahin*' (sister-in-faith).

Having completed the day's lesson with her, he turned to us. Picking up the thread of conversation from the previous night, he told us that there was a significant rise in the number of those who were embracing Islam in France, particularly among the ladies. Surprisingly, some beauty queens of France were also drawn to Islam, including one who had embraced Islam only a few weeks ago. We then left for the Mosque of Paris by the underground train. It was our first

experience, and that made our brief journey all the more exciting.

As we approached the mosque, I was overcome by fascination on two accounts. The Moorish architecture of the Mosque of Paris, which is inspired by the famous Alhambra in Spain, was exceedingly captivating and added to the grandeur and beauty of the mosque. Secondly, the very idea of offering Friday prayers in the heartland of Europe was a moving experience that left us with a feeling of spiritual elation and an inward happiness.

As I mentioned earlier, Dr Hamidullah had very generously hosted us at Al Hambra restaurant the night before. I vividly recall that when we asked the owner of the restaurant whether the meat that was served was *dhabihah* or not, he had replied that regrettably *dhabihah* was not available and in the last 25 years we were the first ones to have even requested for *dhabihah*.

The restaurateur then invited us for lunch the next day, promising to go to the cattle farm himself especially to slaughter a lamb for us. To our utter delight, when we reached the restaurant after Friday prayers, the kind owner had prepared an appetising North African meal for us. Having spent quite a few meatless days, we ate our lunch with great appreciation and relish, both for the food and the company of Dr Hamidullah.

That evening as we prepared to leave Paris and say *au revoir* to the legendary Dr Hamidullah, there was not the slightest feeling of remorse for not having visited the great monuments and sites of this city of astounding beauty.

We had been blessed with the company of Dr Hamidullah for many, many precious hours, a company that we would cherish for a long time to come.

One of the most inspiring encounters I had with Dr Hamidullah was the one in Dhahran/Khobar in 1974. He had come to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the Saudi government. I was then teaching in what is now known as King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran. During this visit Dr Hamidullah delivered lectures at several educational institutions, including one in my own university.

To my wonder, at the ripe age of 66, Dr Hamidullah was still pursuing his field research on important sites in the Arabian Peninsula. He still had the same zeal and energy that he once displayed in his early thirties, and which

had led to his book, *The Battlefields of the Prophet*.

One Thursday morning – Thursday being the first day of the weekend holiday in Saudi Arabia – a few people including myself accompanied Dr Hamidullah to the oasis town of Qatif. The Mayor of the town was waiting for him in his office. Prior to our departure, Dr Hamidullah had clearly spelled out his exploratory interests. [See also: East Arabian memories by M Hamidullah, *impact international*, 27 December 1984 - 9 January 1975.]

The real purpose of this journey to Qatif was to visit a small village, called Zarah, only a few kilometres from Qatif, and which was extremely close to another hamlet called 'Awamiyyah. Dr Hamidullah had come fully prepared for his on-the-ground research.

He explained that during the years when the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, was actively engaged in trading, which was before he reached the age of 40, he had made several voyages to the eastern part of Arabia, especially its coastal areas in connection with trade. He stressed that in the 6th and 7th centuries, trade fairs used to be held quite regularly in this region. In fact, the timing of these fairs had been so fixed that they were held virtually all along the year with little interruption.

As I recall this today, I feel overawed by Dr Hamidullah's instructional ability because a good deal of what he had said about these matters in 1974 is still fresh in my memory and I can reproduce much of it, including some of the quotations he gave *verbatim* from important texts.

On this occasion Dr Hamidullah also mentioned a statement of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, that he had stayed by 'the spring of Zarah'. [For this Hadith see Ahmad ibn Hanbal al-Musnad, Hadith no. 17161. (N.P. *Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi*, 1991)] All relevant details about the history and geography of the region were at his fingertips.

Within a matter of minutes, Zarah had been identified on the maps, let alone the fact that several local people present there did not need any map to go to Zarah. A few moments later we were standing beside an artesian spring, along with Qatif's mayor at the place which had been trodden upon about 1400 years ago by our beloved Prophet! What an experience it was! A small mosque, built by the Ottoman Turks, stood beside the spring.

Dr Hamidullah must surely have visited several other places in the area

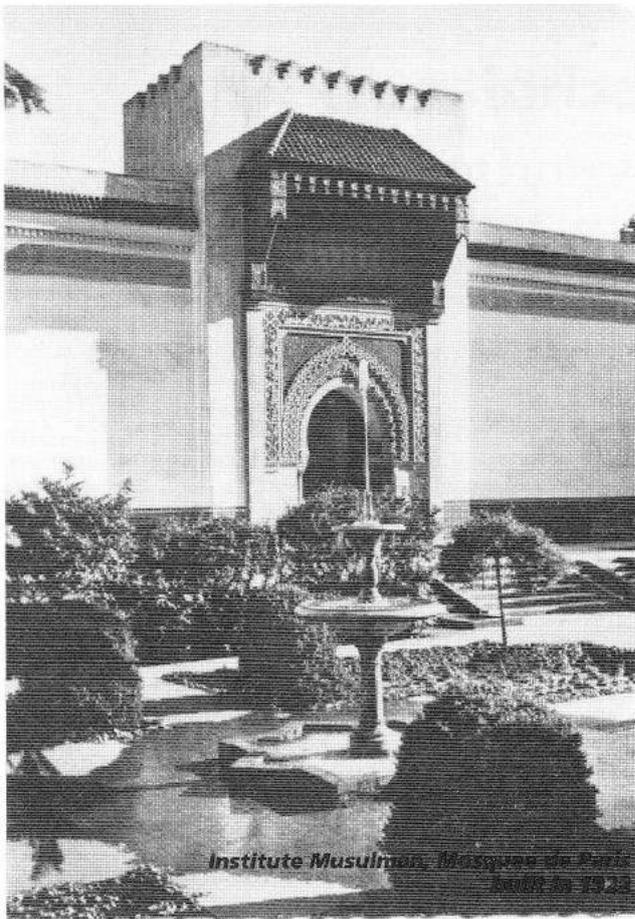
such as Hofuf about which he had a great deal of historical information. Owing to my teaching duties in the University I could not have the pleasure of accompanying him to other places during the weekdays. I only wish I could have been with him everywhere he went. It would have been so highly educative.

Dr Hamidullah's abundance of knowledge – historical, geographical, and what not – did not come as a surprise. Nevertheless, the extent of it which I directly witnessed on this occasion was even greater than what I had thought. What was even more evident was his deep and ardent love of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. It is that which drove Dr Hamidullah all his life from valley to valley, from village to village, and from monument to monument – to any place that had any association with the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. Dr Hamidullah was now in his late sixties, yet I could see in him the same zeal, the same sustained labour of love which had always been a major driving force in his life.

Eleven years later, in 1985, an esteemed friend of mine and a renowned scholar of Saudi Arabia, Ismail Ibrahim Nawwab, and I went to Paris in connection with a meeting of UNESCO. Both of us hold Dr Hamidullah in deep respect for his piety, his saintliness, his scholarship. Both of us share the conviction that Dr Hamidullah lived in the shade of God's very special blessing. One afternoon we made our way to his place and rang the door bell. By now his hearing had been greatly impaired. As we pressed the electric button, a bulb lit up in his flat and a few moments later Dr Hamidullah was at the door. We spent an hour with him, talking about a whole range of subjects.

During this memorable encounter, my friend Nawwab reminisced about Dr Hamidullah's visit to the Hijaz in the late 1940s, when, as a young boy, he met the great scholar under the shade of the Ka'bah. Nawwab recounted that he was amazed at the number of languages that the learned doctor had mastery of.

Dr Hamidullah had come as the Amir of the *hajj qafilah* of Hyderabad-Deccan.



Nawwab's conversation with him in al-Haram of Makkah on that occasion revolved around two important undertakings that Dr Hamidullah was then focused on: multilingual translations of the Qur'an and his continuing research on the antiquities of Madinah and the major battlefields of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*.

In the course of my conversation, I told Dr Hamidullah that I had read in the newspapers that he had received an award of a million rupees from the government of Pakistan for his distinguished work on *Sirah*, and, instead of taking it himself, he had donated the entire amount to the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad. I looked at him for confirmation. He said: 'What you have heard is correct.' He paused for a moment, and then continued in his matter-of-fact style: 'If I would take it here [in this world], what would I get there [in the Next World]?'

The logic of the statement was absolutely disarming. This straightforward statement, made in the simplest words, had the ring of utter sincerity. It seemed to have come from the depths of his heart.

If we had looked for the key that could explain the Hamidullah phenomenon, suddenly, unexpectedly, that key was in our hands: 'If I would take it here, what would I get there?'

Great though Dr Hamidullah's works are, we had not yet discovered in them the true key to his personality: Neither in his French translation of the Qur'an, which went into about a score of editions, nor in his monumental biographies of the Prophet, such as his celebrated two-volume *Le Prophete de l'Islam*; nor in those masterpieces of his painstaking, meticulous works of solid research, such as al-Baladhuri's *Ansab al-Ashraf*, which he edited; nor in *al-Watha'iq*, which is an assiduous collection of the political documents relating to the time of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs; nor in his seminal work on Islamic International Law, *The Muslim Conduct of State*.

The key that we had accidentally found during this short visit explained his personality, his work, and the *barakah* that characterised them. We felt that we could now make much better sense of the immense popularity of his translation of the Qur'an, the inordinate attraction of his *Sirah* works, and of the fact that innumerable human beings, Muslims and non-Muslims, had found through him a new direction in their lives. Dr Hamidullah was no longer an enigma!

A rare man, a great scholar, a pious believer and a generous soul, Dr Muhammad Hamidullah lived for two spheres of reality simultaneously: this world and the Hereafter. By any measure, his was a splendid achievement, one hard to surpass. ■

Zafar Ishaq Ansari

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* Perhaps there were more than three participants from across the border, I remember only these three. I have just learnt from Dr Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi and his younger brother, Dr Muhammad al-Ghazali, about at least one more invitee - Maulana Ihtishamul Hasan Kandhalvi (1906-71) who had come from India.

A Scholar's scholar

Lenient with others, strict with himself

THE inevitable happened and the sad news one always shuddered to hear came on 17 December 2002. That morning Dr Muhammad Hamidullah had passed away at the home of his grandniece, Sadida, in Jacksonville, Florida, USA. *Inna lillahi wa inna alayhi raji'un* - From God we are and to whom we return!

This piece is not about his academic stature and his contribution to knowledge some of which is already a matter of record and yet a great deal more needs to be written. In fact I have been asked to try to reflect on some aspects of his person which may not be on record but to which I alone may perhaps be privy.

I had heard the name, 'Dr Muhammad Hamidullah of Hyderabad-Deccan', quite early in my life through his correspondence with my late father, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (1884-1953), then at the Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, India. But I was very impressed with some of his books in Urdu such as *Rasul-i-Akram ki Siyasi Zindagi* (The Political life of the Prophet), published in 1950, *Ahd-i-Nabawi ka Nizam-e-Hukmrani* (Administrative system of the Prophet), *Ahd-i-Nabawi ke Maidan-e-Jang* (Battlefield of the Prophet), published in 1953, which were sent to my father with his compliments. Thus I also developed a kind of reverence and attachment with his name and his works.

I met him the first time in Karachi, Pakistan, on 20 June 1950 when he visited my father at home. What struck me most was his simple clothes and easy manner of speech. My father had been specially invited by the government of Pakistan to chair the Board of Talimat-i-Islamia (Board of Islamic Studies), a body which had been set up to advise the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on the Islamic provision of the country's constitution. Dr Hamidullah, too, had been invited to serve on the board along with other eminent experts and scholars. He was indeed a reputed expert on Islamic constitutional and international law.

He was totally devoted to his research and writing and never felt comfortable doing nothing. The problem was that while the board had been established, there was a great deal of ambiguity

about its terms of reference: what exactly was it supposed to do. My father did not want to preside over a sinecure body just to offer advice only to be filed in the labyrinthine corridors of the new Islamic country's secular and indifferent bureaucracy. He wanted to have the whole thing laid down clearly and unambiguously before he took up the work. The files moved to and fro and it took almost a year before the matter was settled and my father assumed work as chairman sometime in 1951.

However, Dr Hamidullah's patience had already run out. He found it intolerable that he was not doing the work for which he had been called all the way from Paris, but was simply waiting and idling his time. He had waited enough, but not long enough, in deference to my father's insistent request that he stayed on and remained a little more patient. He finally apologised and left for Paris before the board could formally start work.

Dr Hamidullah had a very organised and disciplined lifestyle. His programme of work, reading, writing, studying, eating, drinking and sleeping were all set to a precise schedule from which he did not wish to depart. To my knowledge, the only other person who was equally firm about his routines was Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (1892-1977). Famously known for the crisp and punchy Urdu weekly, *Sidq-i-Jadid*, that he founded and edited and a distinguished scholar, Daryabadi also translated in Urdu the meaning of The Qur'an. An English version of his translation was published in 2002 by Islamic Foundation, Leicester.

Here I am reminded of an otherwise small incident but which showed how difficult it was for Dr Hamidullah to depart from his set routine.

Early one morning, I still remember it very vividly, Dr Hamidullah came to see my father who was having breakfast at the time. He sat down on the floor and was having small talk with my father but did not join him in the breakfast. My father asked him to have at least something and have tea. But he refused politely, saying that he had had his breakfast. He refused the invitation twice but when my father asked him a

third time, he inquired whether it was a command or advice. Realising the implication of his question, my father replied without any hesitation that it was a command. Only then Dr Hamidullah took a little something.

Although he had left Pakistan permanently and had settled in Paris, my father kept in touch with him to seek his expert advice on questions of Islamic constitution. I remember this correspondence and advice he gave on various complicated constitutional issues. His views and expert opinion were also crucial to the drawing up of an historic constitutional document, 'Basic Principles of an Islamic State', agreed to and issued later by 31 top 'ulama and experts representing all Islamic schools of thought.

For a while, I lost touch with him after my father had passed away and I had gone to the University of Chicago, USA to do my doctorate degree. However, at Chicago, I was able to resume my contact with him through correspondence. The topic of my PhD dissertation was Abdullah bin al-Zubayr and the question of *Khalifah*.

Dr Hamidullah was always prompt in replying even if only to acknowledge a letter. He sent me several of his writings and gave his own opinion, too, on the adoption of the term *Khalifah* by the early community of Islam. His thesis was that the term or title by which the ruler of an Islamic state was known was not of much relevance in the sense that the ruler could be known by any title, he could even be called a king.

His argument was that kingship was not un-Islamic *per se*. He quoted from the Qur'an (*Al Naml*, 27:16) that the Prophet Sulaiman, *Alayhis-Salam*, inherited the kingdom of Prophet Da'ud, *Alayhis-Salam*, which meant that kingship as a form of government and the title king were not necessarily repugnant to Islam.

My views on the issue were quite contrary to his. When all my arguments failed to convince him, he said anyway that is how he thought and it was for me to agree or not with him. But I did not give up and I gave a forceful final argument.

I said that the Qur'an has used both terms, king (*malik*) and *Khalifah* and

that the Arabs were most familiar with the title, king, yet the *Sahaba, Radi-Allahu anhum*, did not adopt this term, but chose instead for a new term, *Khalifah*. And furthermore, I said, they adopted an elective rather than the hereditary system like Sulaiman succeeding Da'ud. Both terms carried their own connotation and that is why the *Sahaba* did not use the term, king, but chose the term, *Khalifah*.

I am not sure if he was convinced by my argument but he listened carefully to my vehement reasoning. He was a real gentleman.

In 1973 I joined the University of Durham, Westville, South Africa, as professor and chairman of the Department of Islamic Studies and started a research journal, *al-Ilm*, in English. He sent me several of his articles which we published in our journal. I also started serialising my English translation of my father's book, *Arabon ki Jahazrani* (Arab Navigation). He wrote to me that he always waited eagerly for the journal. When I informed him that I was planning to visit him in April 1974, and hoped to stay one night in a hotel near his residence, he was extremely pleased.

When I arrived at his flat by taxi he took me to a hotel very nearby. He looked after me very well and showed me around with enthusiasm. Then he related to me an incident about the book, *Arab Navigation*, which was published originally in Urdu a long time ago.

He told me that when the book first appeared he wrote a short article in which he had expressed his reservation on certain findings of my father and had differed with his identification of certain places and names. He said that he sent the rejoinder to my father for his personal consideration but 'Hadhrat Sayyid Saheb' - as my father was popularly known - published the rejoinder in his journal, *Ma'arif* and then included it later as an Explanatory Note, *Istidrak*, in the second edition of the book. He said that he felt much embarrassed by this but he was tremendously impressed by my father's magnanimity and that he had valued his work.

When the time came for me to take leave of him and pay my hotel bill, the desk manager told me that it had already been paid by my host. Though I was embarrassed a little, it raised him further in my esteem.

While I was with him in Paris, he expressed a wish to know the history of Muslims and Islam in South Africa. So I sent him some booklets on the subject

and suggested that he visited South Africa as my guest at his convenience. He accepted my request and finally came to South Africa in November 1984 and stayed with me for about ten days.

He visited historical places related to Muslims and Waterfall Islamic Institute library in Johannesburg. It had been established by Maulana Musa Mia, a well known Muslim philanthropist from Surat in India. He had first founded the Majlis-i-Ilmi library in Bombay, then another in Karachi. The Waterfall Islamic Institute library is now run by his son, Ebrahim Mia.

In South Africa, Dr Hamidullah autographed all his books for me as well as for my children and gave his autograph to my daughter in nine languages - Arabic, English, French, German, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and two other languages, which I am not able to recall. The more interesting thing about these autographs was that they were all signed in the Arabic script.

By then I had become so close to him that I could ask him personal questions as well. He lived in Paris alone with no aide or assistant, no telephone, radio or television. He never married. But he was very kind and loving to the children. He also used to crack jokes

with my son, Samir, 20, and daughter, Shaima, 16 who, too, enjoyed his company.

At last, I posed the question that everyone wanted to ask, but could not pluck the courage to do so: why had he not married? I demanded to know, of course, in the most polite and respectful way. He was very gracious and said that he had lost his both parents at a very young age and had as a result become elder of the family. Since elders were normally supposed to marry off their children, he found himself in an awkward predicament to do it for himself. Besides being preoccupied with higher education, the question of marriage failed to demand his attention. And then it became too late for him to marry.

He had very firm views concerning certain Fiqhi (Islamic juridical) issues of which I became aware when he stayed with me in South Africa. He was totally opposed to being photographed; if anyone tried to take his picture, he would cover his face with both hands. He maintained that he allowed himself to be photographed strictly for obligatory purposes from which he could not escape, such as for passport or ID card etc.

Similarly I was surprised to note that he did not like to offer his prayers (*salah*) while travelling in an aeroplane. Therefore, as soon as he arrived at my home in Durban in the afternoon he wished to make *wudhu* and to offer his missed (*Qadha*) prayers. What surprised me was that although quite *lenient* in his advice to others on Fiqhi issues, he was very strict when it came to his own person.

He had translated the Qur'an into French and written an illuminating preface to it. I wrote to him saying that if he had translated it into English it would have had a wider circle of readership. He replied that he had done it for the French-speaking people; if anyone wished to translate it into English he would be more than happy to give his permission. Therefore, with his permission I got the French preface translated into English which he reviewed and corrected before I published it in *al-Ilm*.

Once he asked me if I knew how a copy of *Muthafe-e-Uthmani*, prepared under the supervision of Syedna Uthman, *Radi-Allahu anhu*, the fourth right-guided caliph, had found its way to Tashkent. I did not know and he told me that on the eve of the Communist revolution of 1917, one Muslim general, Umar who did not want it to fall into the hands of the Communist

4 rue de Tournon Paris

For well over half a century this was the address of Dr Muhammad Hamidullah, his home in Paris, a small flat on the top floor in a 17th century building that is classified as a national monument (*classe patrimonie*). The building has no lift but a grand staircase and a chandelier, with tiled marble floor - though a little run down - and opening into a private cobbled-stone courtyard. Opposite the church of St Sulpice, it is situated in an area of the French capital that has acquired fame as 'the left bank', where literary and cultural figures such as Ernest Hemingway and artist Delacroix dwelt. Whereas tourists throng the neighbourhood for its ambience, for Dr Hamidullah the left bank brought poignant memories of his lost home country Hyderabad as he strolled by the River Seine that passes through Paris.

revolutionaries took possession of that copy from the Moscow Museum and went off to Tashkent. The authorities did try to follow the train in which he was travelling but failed to capture Umar. Thus the historic copy of the Qur'an reached the Tashkent Museum.

As each of the three extant copies of *Muthhaf-e-Uthmani* had a few pages missing from them, Dr Hamidullah meticulously went through them and prepared a complete *Muthhaf-e-Uthmani* and had a facsimile edition printed later in England. He autographed it and presented it to me during his visit to South Africa.

The greatest thing about his person was his modesty and his humility, even in matters about which he was himself well qualified to deal with.

While in South Africa he asked me that as the main mosque in the heart of Paris, Institute Musulman, Mosque de Paris, was not large enough to accommodate all those who wished to offer their Friday prayers, would it be permissible to hold more than one congregation, one after another, in order to accommodate everybody. I replied, yes it would be quite permissible as long as each prayer had a separate Imam with separate Friday *khutbah*. He said he too felt the same way but would like to check and confirm with some competent 'alim (Islamic scholar).

Luckily, we had an opportunity to meet Mufti Mahmoodul Hasan Gangohi of Deoband who was visiting Johannesburg. I introduced him to Mufti Saheb with reference to Dr

Hamidullah's famous work, *Sahifah Hammam ibn Munabbih*. Dr Hamidullah put his question to Mufti Mahmoodul Hasan who replied in the affirmative, saying that each congregation must have its own *khutbah* (sermon) and its own Imam, adding further that by doing so you were inviting people for prayer, not for anything sinful.

Though he was well qualified to answer the question in his own right, Dr Hamidullah preferred to confirm his opinion with another religious scholar. On the other hand, he did not change or alter his opinion easily, once he had reached an opinion after a thorough research of his own. No matter what argument was offered, he stuck to his opinion, saying that it was his opinion whether others agreed with him or not.

He shunned both fame and publicity and was well content with whatever he earned. He was quite reluctant to accept Pakistan's International Hijrah Award conferred by President Ziaul Haq (d.1988) but when insisted upon by his Pakistani admirers, he accepted the award but donated the prize money, one million Pakistani rupees, to the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad. The institute used his donation to set up a library in his name, Hamidullah Library. But this was not the only example of his being a *ghani*, richly contented.

Very few people know why in January 1996 he had suddenly collapsed and had to be rushed to hospital in Paris and put in intensive care. (See: Final Hours) I hope I am not disclosing a family secret, but it is worthwhile to

know the truth, which reflects his character.

Someone had stolen the entire amount from his bank account and he only discovered when he went to withdraw money. Absolutely penniless, he had no money even for his daily needs. Frail and 88, he went without food for almost three days when he simply fainted while inside the Paris mosque and was removed to a hospital, suffering from hypothermia. He did not ask for money from anyone, nor did he tell anyone about it.

I last met him on 12 September 1999 in the US, after attending the annual Convention of ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) in Chicago, 3-6 September 1999. ISNA had dedicated a whole session to Dr Hamidullah and I was among those who had been asked to speak on his scholarship and scholarly contribution to the study and understanding of Islam. I visited Dr Hamidullah at Sadida's home in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, and spent a whole day with him. He was pleasant and cheerful as usual. He was mobile but looked weak.

He said that by the grace of God he had tried to do as much as he could, and it was time now for others to take up from where he had left off. Time indeed!

Dr Hamidullah's scholarship was his *Sadaqah* and the only way to honour his memory is to carry on from where he has left. ■

Syed Salman Nadvi

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Muhammad

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Malay counsels

Scholarship, da'wah and dialogue

SINCE the three years that Dr Muhammad Hamidullah spent in 1974 as Visiting Professor and Academic Assessor at the Faculty of Islamic Study, National University of Malaysia, Malay Muslim intellectuals have held him in great esteem. The name of Dr Hamidullah is familiar to Malaysian intellectuals because many of his books, particularly, *The Muslim Conduct of State*, have been translated into Malay and published in Malaysia, and are standard reference books in universities in the country.

Besides his normal academic duties and evaluating the academic structure for the extension and improvement of the faculty, Dr Hamidullah delivered a series of special lectures to an exclusive group of Malay Muslim intellectuals, and leaders of the Islamic movement as well as to the academic staff of the University. Among those who never missed his lectures were the former deputy prime minister and minister of finance, Anwar Ibrahim – then president of Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) – and the former president of Islamic party, PAS, the late Ustaz Fadzil Noor (d.2002). See Obituary, *impact*, September 2002) who was then deputy president of ABIM.

Among other popular issues, which were raised in the lectures were the establishment of Islamic State with special reference to Malaysia; political approach of the Islamic movement in general; and *da'wah* activities of the Jama'at-e Tabligh.

Dr Hamidullah would not be drawn into commenting directly on Maulana Mawdudi's (d.1979) concept of Islamic state or Hasan al-Banna's (d.1949) call to establish Islamic government, except to say that Hasan al-Banna had carried out his duty to the utmost and Mawdudi had tried his very best to explain his idea of the concept of an Islamic state. Dr Hamidullah emphasised it was important to establish it in one's heart before establishing it in a country. (*Aqimuu Daulat Al-Islam Fisudurikum Qabla An Tuqimuuha Fi Ardikum.*)

However, he advised those attending his lectures to work hard in their respective fields to educate the Muslims and help them understand more about Islam. At the same time, he called upon Muslim intellectuals to strive to explain

Islam to the non-Muslims.

In his opinion, Islamic state was both form and essence; therefore, emphasis and priority should be given to the essence. If form is what constituted an Islamic state, then the first Islamic state in history is Islamic Republic of Pakistan, he pointed out. For no other government or state was given the name of Islamic. However, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan seemed little better than the secular government of India.

In the case of Malaysia, his advice was that Malay Muslim intellectuals should organise systematic and regular dialogues with non-Muslims since the country was fortunate to have a pluralistic society, with Muslims in leadership position in government and politics. He reminded his Malaysian audience that it provided an excellent opportunity to study how Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, had approached the pluralistic society of Madinah al-Munnawwarah, which was pluralistic at the time of *hijrah*.

Malaysia, he believed, could become the paving ground for the study and for the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah and he advised holding a regular dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims on Islamic issues, particularly, about the Islamic state and the Shari'ah.

Citing his experience of dialogues with the non-Muslims of France, Dr Hamidullah felt dialogues with the non-Muslims of Malaysia, too, would receive *hidayah* if the way to *hidayah* is opened to them. When Dr Hamidullah's French translation of the Qur'an was first published, some 100,000 copies were sold within a year, and he witnessed or received, on an average, daily five people into Islam. He looked forward to his next visit to Malaysia when he hoped to see many non-Muslims in the fold of Islam.

Almost five years later, in September 1980, he was in Malaysia to take part in a conference on Islamic thought and contemporary challenges. The first question he asked was whether we had organised regular dialogues with the non-Muslim community, and how were the Muslims responding to talks.

Though Dr Hamidullah wished to visit Malaysia again, he never made it after that. However, even though he was already old and weak, he had utilised

his time fully during his term at the National University. He never declined an invitation to speak. I still remember the day in 1974 when I took him to Johor Bahru, a town close to Singapore, where he was to give a lecture at a Muslim girls' college.

We left Kuala Lumpur immediately after Fajr prayer, using the old rough roads, which were full of sharp corners, and reached our destination about 'Asr prayer. There was time for only a short rest, as his lecture was after Isha prayer. The programme between Maghrib and Isha prayers was the reading of *Berzanji* (a classical Malay version of the biography of Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*).

The ceremony, which was led by the Grand Mufti of the state of Johor, took almost two hours, delaying the lecture. When I introduced Dr Hamidullah to the Grand Mufti, he did not give much attention, probably because of his humble appearance: he wore an old shirt and trousers and an old Pakistani cap.

Only when I told the Mufti that Dr Hamidullah spoke and wrote seven languages, studied Turkish within six months and wrote the PhD thesis, *The Muslim Conduct of State*, within eight months and wrote many other books in various languages, including Arabic, the Mufti was impressed. I showed him, *Al-Watha'iq al-Siyasiyah al-Nabawiyyah*, and the Mufti said Hamidullah must be a very learned person.

After the programme finished almost at 11.00pm, we returned to Kuala Lumpur by road. On the way back, we stopped at various food stalls. We were worried as all he had was plain water. He told me that he was not used to having food at night. We did not arrive in Kuala Lumpur until Fajr. Naturally, we were concerned that he looked so frail. When I inquired how he was, he said: 'Razali, I'm an old man.' I apologised for treating him as a young man, like me. He smiled.

I had the opportunity to pray behind him many a time. I noticed every time after he raised his hand for the *takbir*, he shook his shoulder, which somehow affected me. After raising my hands for *Takbir al-Ihram*, I do not feel comfortable unless I gently move my shoulder; it always reminds me of the late Muhammad Hamidullah. ■

Razali Nawawi

Then dean, Faculty of Islamic Studies at the National University of Malaysia (1972-78) and later founding Dean Faculty of Laws, International Islamic University Malaysia (1983-1988), Professor Razali Nawawi teaches Islamic Law at the Faculty of Laws at the International Islamic University Malaysia.

A Pupil's memories *al-Faqir, al-Da'yi and Waliyullah*

THE biography of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, was Dr Hamidullah's forté. He edited two books on *Sirah* in Arabic: al-Baladhuri's *Kitab Al-Ansab al-Ashraf*, vol.1 (Cairo, 1959) and *Sirah Ibn Ishaq al-Musamma bi-Kitab al-Mubtada' wa'l-Mab'ath wa'l-Maghazi*, which he edited in collaboration with Muhammad al-Fasi of Morocco (Rabat, 1976). Together with his English biography of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, Muhammad Rasulullah* (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1974) and the French *Le Prophete de l'Islam* (Paris, 1959), he had made a lasting contribution to *Sirah* research. The last title was translated into Turkish and other languages.

The arrival in Malaysia of Professor Muhammad Hamidullah in January 1974 coincided with my appointment as a lecturer in Islamic History at the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia). Fortunately for me Prof Abdul Jalil Hassan and his secretary, Muhammad Salleh, met me at Subang International Airport and brought me to the Shah's Village Motel in Petaling Jaya, which was my temporary accommodation. On 3 January, I paid a visit to the Islamic Faculty Building at the University Road, Jalan University, where I was introduced to members of staff of the Faculty of Islamic Studies and the Dean of Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Razali Nawawi.

My first impression of my new colleagues was most pleasant. The Malays are a kind and welcoming people. Soon I met other new staff members, including the Visiting Professor of Arabic, Syed Muhammad Yusuf, from Karachi University, and Professor Muhammad Hamidullah of Paris, who was there to develop various courses of study in the Department of Theology (including Arabic language and literature) and the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) department.

Then I knew little about Muhammad Hamidullah, much less about Syed Muhammad Yusuf. This was my first meeting with them. My position as a lecturer was practically insignificant. However, one afternoon I had a chance to exchange greetings and afterwards opinions with my co-residents at the

Shah's Village Motel. Both were speaking in Arabic and Urdu, which I only partly followed.

On the table, I noticed Dr Hamidullah's celebrated *Le Prophete de l'Islam* (Paris, 1959), and my first thought was to request him to translate it into English. He said if he did so, its meaning would change significantly. During our conversation, I presented him with an offprint of my essay on Umayyad and Abbasid Social History, which had appeared in *Islamic Culture*, a quarterly published from Hyderabad-Deccan. I also mentioned that I had read some of the articles he and Syed Yusuf had contributed to the same journal.

Notable among Dr Hamidullah's articles in *Islamic Culture* were: *Administration of Justice in Early Islam* (1937); *City-state of Mecca* (1938); and *Some inscriptions of Madinah of the early years of the Hijrah* (1939). Either on that day or another, Dr Hamidullah presented me an offprint of *Muhammad ibn Ishaq, the biographer of the Prophet*, which had appeared in the *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society* (1967).

I recall telling him that I had read his *Introduction to Islam*. To this he said that he was not the sole author of the book, but it was the work of a group of Islamic scholars. The other contributors had requested that he put forward his name as a compiler, as he was the most well known among them, and he agreed. Later I discovered it had been written as text for a correspondence course on Islam, which has since been translated into 12 different languages.

Dr Hamidullah's mild manners, humility, and his erudition soon won him many admirers among Malaysian colleagues and members of the audience who attended his public lectures. I recall, on one evening, after the Maghrib prayer, he delivered a lecture on 'The Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, as a statesman', which impressed the staff and students. Many members of the audience asked questions regarding the position of non-Muslims in a Muslim society. He graciously answered them all.

On another occasion, he delivered a lecture on 'The Prophet of Islam as a lawgiver'. In his lecture on 'The

Prophet as a military strategist', he pointed out that in the wars during Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*'s, life not many lives were lost: only 250 enemy soldiers were killed in all the battles and, during his ten years' stay in Madinah al-Munnawwarah, only one Muslim, on average, was martyred in a month. Each day, on average, Islam spread over an area of 274 square miles. On the Prophet's death more than a million square miles lay under the banner of Islam.

Thus Dr Hamidullah proved that the history of early Islam was not at all costly in terms of human life. It is wrong to claim that Islam spread at the point of the sword. It was through persuasion and preaching (*da'wah*) that Islam gained adherents.

At the request of the students, Dr Hamidullah submitted a copy of his summary of an earlier research on *The Constitution of Madinah* to the editorial board of the Islamic Faculty's *Jurnal Jihad* (vol.1 part 1). It was published in 1975 as *The First Written Constitution in the world* (pp. 52-55). This essay had been published originally in 1941 in the *Islamic Review*, Woking, England. A smaller book under the same title was published by Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, in 1968.

Dr Hamidullah was kind enough to accede to my request to help me follow the original Arabic chapter of the Constitution of Madinah in his celebrated compilation *Majmu'at al-Watha'iq al-Siyasiyah li'l-'Ahd al-Nabawi wa'l-Khilafah al-Rashidah* (Beirut, 1969, pp. 41-7); published in Paris in 1935 under the title *Documents sur La diplomatie musulmane a l'epoque du Prophete et des Khalifes Orthodoxe*, 2 vols - also known as *Corpus des documents sur la diplomatie musulmane*. As I read the text, he explained to me the meaning and nuances of this great historical document.

On another occasion, he gave a talk about Islam to nuns. By the end of his lecture some were ready to accept Islam. This lecture proved hugely popular among my colleagues at the university (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia).

Dr Hamidullah also delivered a lecture at the Law Faculty of University

of Malaya sometime in April or May 1974. As a result, he was invited by Professor Tan Sri Ahmad Ibrahim (d. 1999, see Obituary, *impact*, June 1999), and author of *Islamic Law in Malaya*, to return as a Visiting Professor the following year to their university.

Before his return to Paris in late May or early June 1974, I talked to Dr Hamidullah about some of my academic interests and mentioned that I was researching the lives of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. I specifically told him that after reading some volumes of Ibn al-Athir's famous history, *al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh*, I had discovered some inconsistencies in the chronology. My knowledge of the *Sahabah* was only rudimentary, but I found that the historian had recorded several conflicting dates of the death of one *Sahabi* that would devalue this historical study.

After listening to my preliminary findings, he advised me against rushing into this field of investigation. He said that it would take some time to establish accurate dates, but if I could establish an accurate chronology it would still be a significant contribution to this field of research. His words gave me hope that I could yet make a contribution to this new field of investigation.

Dr Hamidullah was indeed a helpful scholar, always ready to assist younger scholars like me build our careers in research. He was generous with his time, and would sometimes write at the end of his letter: 'Could I perform another service for you?' There was no doubt he had dedicated his life to promoting academic research.

When I returned to my *alma mater*, Cambridge, after 16 years at the Universities of Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, I started corresponding with Prof Muhammad Hamidullah in Paris. He had been a Visiting Professor at Istanbul University, where he used to spend about five months every year researching into international law of Muslims, and some of his works on Shari'ah being translated from French or English into Turkish by Turkish scholars, such as Prof Salih Tug. (For instance, *Hazrat Peygamber'in savaslari*, Istanbul, 1962; and *Islam Fikhi ve Roma hukuku*, Istanbul, 1964). While he was a professor there, his French translation of the Qur'an was published as *Le Saint Coran*, with a foreword by Prof Louis Massignon, of College de France.

In the last week of February and first week of March 1992, I visited him in

Dr Hamidullah was indeed a helpful scholar, always ready to assist younger scholars like me build our careers in research. He was generous with his time, and would sometimes write at the end of his letter: 'Could I perform another service for you?'

Paris. Although he had grown older, his mind was still very much alert. When I saw him first he was talking to some North African students who had come for his advice. He was working on something unusual; there was a Sanskrit text from *Ramayana*, if I remember correctly.

He explained the text that concerned the ordeal by fire of Rama's wife, the chaste Queen Sita, who survived unharmed. Dr Hamidullah explained that the reference in the text was significant as it bore a resemblance to the ordeal by fire of Nabi Ibrahim, *Alayhis-Salam*, (Patriarch Abraham). He inferred that when the Aryans emigrated from the Middle East to India, they carried the idea that a chaste and holy person could survive an ordeal by fire through the grace of God.

On the following day I saw him writing notes on the margin of his translation of the Qur'an into French, *Le Saint Coran*. He was making emendations and improvements for a future edition. Dr Hamidullah was always busy; everyday, it seemed, he woke up with a new plan for reading and writing.

The next day was a Sunday, when he would deliver a lecture on Islam at a Paris Mosque, presumably the Stalingrad Mosque. He would go there in the company of some Muslims. Before this he had bath and after his lecture (*khutbah*), the proper meal of the week. So I could not see him on that particular day.

On the last day that I spent with him in Paris, I saw him working on a new edition of al-Dinawari's *Kitab al-Nabat*

(Book of Plants). In 1953 his article entitled *Dinawari's Encyclopaedia Botanica in the light of fragments in Turkish Libraries* had appeared in *Festschrift Fuad Koprulu* in Ankara.

In one of the evenings with him, he told me that the Ottoman Turkish ambassadors, accredited to France, were given a special Prayer Room (or a mosque) in the Palace of Versailles to pray during or after their audience with the French ruler. Though Dr Hamidullah visited Versailles many times to discover the 'palace mosque' of the Turkish ambassadors, he failed to identify the building.

He said the Uthmaniyah Turks had a special relationship with France. It was a wonderful diplomatic gesture of the French to grant a facility to the Turkish envoys to pray on stipulated times in a special mosque in Versailles Palace.

On 1 March 1992 I bought a copy of Dr Hamidullah's *Le Prophet de l'Islam*, which he autographed in the final evening, when he also autographed another book bought from a nearby bookshop; it dealt with an aspect of the constitutional development in early Islam.

That afternoon we went for a stroll, and, if I remember correctly, passed by the Senate. Returning to his room, I saw by chance an old exercise book of his on which was written in Arabic: *Maibu'at Hamidullah*: (Hamidullah's Publications) that listed nearly 1000 of his published works (including books, booklets, articles and letters). Realising my keen interest in it, he promised to send a photocopy to me in England. Someday I hope to find time to edit and publish it as his intellectual legacy.

I left with him a photocopy of my typescript of the *Sahabah - the founders of Islamic History*, which he carefully read and returned to me after a year with his erudite comments and corrections. He also pointed to me some new sources and gave me some of his own notes too. I have since published the first part of this work under the title, *Brief Lives of the Companions of the Prophet* (2002).

When I left Paris the following day with a lot of precious memories of my elderly friend, I did not know that this would be our last meeting.

Some of my Malaysian colleagues called Dr Muhammad Hamidullah *Waliyullah*, (saint), but he preferred to call himself *al-Faqir 'ila-Allah* (a beggar in the path of God) and *al-Da'iyi 'ila-Allah* (a caller to Allah) i.e. a veritable preacher of Islam. ■

Dr Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg

The debt we owe in Turkey

Quietly an intellectual liberation

HERE he was tall and slim, straight like the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and almost all Muslim languages, until their original letters were changed into Roman or Cyrillic. The year was 1957 when Professor Muhammad Hamidullah came to lecture at the Edebiyat Fakültesi of Islam Arastiremalari Enstitüsü, (Faculty of Letters, Islamic Research Institute, College of Liberal Arts, University of Istanbul). Istanbul University is the oldest university in Turkey founded in the 15th century in the Ottoman era.

Dr Hamidullah was wearing a suit and tie, with a Jinnah cap on his head, like the *kalpak* that Mustafa Kemal Pasha used to wear until the early days of the Turkish Republic. I saw my Ustadh, Professor Hamidullah, dress thus all his life.

He was accompanied by Dr Fuat Sezgin, then a research assistant who acted as his translator. Each spring semester the professor was invited to lecture at our faculty. Soon afterwards Dr Sezgin had to leave for Germany where he became a faculty member at Goethe Universitaet in Munchen.¹

Salih Tug, then a research assistant, who later became dean of the faculty at the Marmara University College of Theology (Istanbul) was the second person at the Institute to assist and translate Hamidullah's lectures.² Dr Hamidullah also guided him to write his doctoral thesis on Islamic financial system during the time of Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, and his *Sahaba* (Companions), *Radi-Allahu anhum*.

As a multilinguist, Dr Hamidullah used to lecture in the language in which his translator was most proficient: Arabic, English, French or German. With Dr Fuat Sezgin, he gave his lecture in Arabic which was rendered into Turkish; for Dr Salih Tug, he spoke in French and as for me, it was either Arabic or English.

Dr Hamidullah had been invited first by Ord. Professor Dr Zeki Velidi Togan, then director of institute. (In the old system Ord Professor or Professor Ordinarius was the highest

level of professorship.) After his death Prof Dr Tayyib Gokbilgin continued the tradition to the great benefit of the academic community. The Ustadh lectured on Islam and Islamic history generally. I remember specifically his comprehensive lectures on the subject Islamic constitution during the time of the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*. The lectures were also open to the general public.

It was a challenging job. After the closing down of the College of Theology under Darul Funun at the University of Istanbul, there were now in Turkish academia a number of people who were very much averse to the teaching of any Islamic subject, at any level, in the university. And they ran the university.

Dr Hamidullah's arrival on the Turkish academic scene in the mid 1950s was timely and auspicious. Here was an eminent Muslim academician well versed in both Islamic and western disciplines. He lived in Paris and was a fellow at CNRS, the prestigious French National Centre of the Scientific Research (*Le centre national de la recherche scientifique*). He was more knowledgeable and more educated in western thought than most of these doubters, and could speak to them in whatever happened to be 'their' language.

However, despite his academic calibre, he gave himself no airs, nor was he arrogant. His were the most kind and winning manners. So when he lectured about Islam, Islamic law or Muslim history, many of our elite gradually began to take him seriously according him the respect that he deserved.

Still, he had to prove that he was not against the regime or that he was a khilafatist. His lectures were taped and, possibly, carefully read and analysed by hard core intelligence men. He did not seem to mind, though; his demeanour was scholarly, polite and humble. He held his head high literally as well as morally.

After the elections in 1950 Turkey experienced a great change: *adhan* could be called in its original Arabic

form; students were given the option to study Islamic subjects in schools; and special Islamic schools, the Imam-Khatip Schools, were established. These schools followed the normal syllabus together with Arabic, Qur'an, Islamiyat, and at later stages Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh and other Islamic subjects. The graduates of these Islamic schools could go to the university for higher studies in humanities and natural and physical sciences.

The Imam-Khatip Schools were to prove so popular that beginning with only seven, their numbers had grown to well over 500 by 1997. Islamic studies were coming back to the Turkish academia when post-1997, a roll back began, ostensibly, to protect Kemalism.

The system of integrated Islamic education provided by Imam-Khatip schools was virtually scrapped; even though required by the Qur'an, no girl or female student who covered her head could now be admitted to any school or university. Even the privately funded Imam-Khatip school buildings were seized by various official departments for uses other than what their benefactors had in view.

I myself had the privilege of working with Dr Hamidullah when he was preparing a complete copy of the two early copies of the Qur'an, *Muthhaf-e-'Uthmani*, that were in Istanbul's Topkapi Museum. A few pages from each had gone missing and the task was to read carefully and compare page by page the two copies of the *Muthhaf* in the now unfamiliar kufi script.

He edited with textual criticism in Arabic *Kitab al-Mu'tamad fi Usul al-Fiqh li Abu al-Hasan al-Basri al-Mu'tazili* which was printed in Damascus by the French Institute of Archaeology. He also added a very learned introduction to *Usul al-Fiqh* (Rules of Islamic Jurisprudence) which now needs further study and development by young researchers.

The *Kitab al-Mu'tamad* is the first source book for the study of the *Usul* issues, how the Mu'tazilites view them in their words. Before the publication of this book, Islamic scholarship did not have ready access to the Mu'tazili

side of *Usul*.

Dr Hamidullah's another great contribution was his recovery and reconstruction of Abu Hanifah al-Dinawary's manuscript of *Kitab-al-Nabat*. He discovered some pages in San'a and some in a North African library, which he compared with other available copies to make a complete and authentic copy and added all the necessary references as well. This early and valuable work was as much a contribution to the study of botanical science as an example of his diligent and dedicated devotion to research and research methodology itself.

A keen admirer of Shams al-a'immah al-Sarakhsi (Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Ali bin Abi Sahl, d.1097/490H), Dr Hamidullah translated into French Sarakhsi's Commentary on Shaybani's *Kitab al-Siyar al-Kabir*, the *Sharh Kitab al-Siyar al-Kabir* for publication by UNESCO. This book is a compendium of Islamic International Law. (Dr Hamidullah, however, preferred to use the term, inter-State law instead of inter-national law.) Though Hugo Grotious (1583-1645) is regarded as the father of International Law in the West, Shaybani's work predated him by some eight centuries. (Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Shaybani died in 804/189H.)

Dr Hamidullah himself typed his French translation of the work on his old typewriter and typed a second time a final copy after correcting the typing errors. But somehow UNESCO reneged on its publication; perhaps someone did not like the pre-eminence of Hugo Grotious being overshadowed by Shaybani. Anyway, the credit for publishing this huge, I think four volumes, goes to an Islamic waqf under the Turkish government's department of Religious Affairs in Ankara. By then Dr Hamidullah's health had begun to decline.

While in Turkey for his lectures, the Ustadh travelled extensively as he always wanted to compare, correct or complement his academic work with field studies. He lectured and gave seminars in Ankara, Konya, Kayseri, Erzurum and many other places to a most receptive and enthusiastic audience of a young generation of students, teachers intellectual and the general public.

Without doubt Dr Hamidullah was a very important influence in the formation of new Muslim thought in Turkey. Among the many who owed him their intellectual nurturing, were Professor Dr Hayrettin Karaman, Professor Dr Bekir Topaloglu,

Professor Ihsan Sureyya Sirma and Professor Dr Suat Yildirim.

At the end of 1974, I moved to Erzurum as an Associate Professor at the College of Islamic Studies (Islamic Limier Fakultesi), Ataturk University, Erzurum, at its third year and I invited Professor Hamidullah, a few years in a row, during spring semesters; it was an honour to hear his scholarly and illuminating talks and lectures. This was a new College of Islamic Studies with many assistants who went on to obtain PhDs in Islamic studies from universities in France, Germany and Britain.

Being the senior most member in the faculty, it was my privilege, and honour, to organise Dr Hamidullah's visits and lectures as well as his accommodation in Erzurum. He stayed in a small and rather very modest apartment but it did not matter to him as he had a very simple lifestyle.

In Istanbul our Ustadh used to stay in Sipahi Palas (Mahmudiye) Hotel, ever since his first visit to Istanbul in the 1930s. The hotel is located in Cemberlitas, near Turbe, close to Sultanahmet Square where the Blue Mosque is; it is in the very heart of the old Byzantine part of Istanbul. The window of his room opened towards the grave of Sultan Abdulhamid Khan II (1842-1918); I think the hotel is even less than 15 yards away from the Turbe of the Sultan. I can guess why he always chose to stay at Sipahi Palas.

This Sultan was the one who presided over the Ottoman Caliphate for 33 years (1876-1909) when Turkey, then a big power, was the target of many plots and conspiracies from abroad. At home were the Young Turks of the Union and Progress, Ittehad ve Taraqqi Jamiyyati, a group many of whom were from the *Donmeh* (Crypto-Jewish) belt of Salonika where they had settled after their expulsion from Spain. It was from here that Mustafa Kemal emerged who as Ataturk led the 'revolution' against Ottoman rule and changed the course of Turkish history.

The Young Turks seemed to have been taken up by the idea that by imitating the West, almost entirely, and importing wholesale western values and mandates – even if some were not compatible with the genius of the people – they could make Turkey a great and modern power. In the event Sultan Abdulhamid was deposed and later put under house arrest.

Earlier during his reign, a *Donmeh* notable from Salonika named Sabahettin Karasu had asked the Sultan

to let the Jews establish a homeland in Palestine; in return, he said, the world Jewry would take care of his enormous foreign debts. Abdulhamid did not take a second to reject the otherwise attractive offer of bribe.

This Karasu was a member of the committee that called upon Sultan Abdulhamid to tell him that he had been deposed, who reportedly asked: 'Couldn't you find anyone else, other than Karasu, to bring this message to me?'

Ustadh Hamidullah came from the Shafi'i background but he had great respect for Hanafi jurists and their works; he was very much involved in Hanafi Fiqh work as well. He particularly admired the work of Hanafi *fugaha* during the Qarakhanid period (919-1212), and this encouraged me to work for my PhD degree on 'The Qarakhanid period *fugaha* in Mavraul-Nahar' [Transoxiana], which was published by the Ataturk University. Although he was not my official supervisor, he helped me a great deal during his one-semester visits to Erzurum.

Inviting him and organising his visit to Turkey was often a little problematic because he was a stateless person. (He had not given up his legitimate citizenship of the Nizam State of Hyderabad, even after it had been invaded and occupied by India in September 1948 and renamed as an Indian state, the so-called Andhra Pradesh.) Obtaining a visa for him was not quite straight forward.

The immigration and police officials in Turkey were extra careful in vetting and checking Dr Hamidullah's documents which at times one found rather frustrating and embarrassing as well. I remember while we were on a visit to Kayseri High Islamic Institute, two officers wanted to check his ID; as I was accompanying him, it was my duty to protect him from being treated unreasonably. If the Ustadh felt anything about such checks, he never expressed it.

At Ataturk University one did get a feeling that people from the intelligence were quite curious about him as to what was he saying or doing, and who was he meeting etc. At times one felt that someone had entered his room in his absence and gone through his notes and papers to satisfy the curiosity of the intelligence.

Again, I felt it was my duty to protect him against any overt surveillance that did no good to the image of the

country. One could only try, for in those days we were under military rule and police and intelligence officials enjoyed almost absolute power over the life and liberty of the citizens.

I guess because of my efforts to protect Dr Hamidullah from unnecessary bother and harassment I had become the odd man, in those very early days, as someone who they thought was not fully cooperating in their task of protecting the republic, though the Ustadh would not even hurt a fly.

It did not take too long for me to retire from the university, shortly after General Kenan Evren's coup in September 1980. My wife Gulhan who had also been a student of Dr Hamidullah and a lecturer in German language and culture at the same university was forced out of her job because she would not give up her *hijab*, the headscarf.

That was the occasion for me, too, to resign my university position as a dean as well as a professor because I had to stand up in defence of more than 60 of my students who were excluded from the university because they would not abandon their headscarves.

Later the university wanted me as a dean neither to admit nor to let female students with *hijab* into college. I resisted the directive that was patently wrong and unjust. The rector of the university was not pleased and I survived for a while being pushed around. I, therefore, decided to take my retirement, and moved to Ankara to practise law. I was, and still remain, a board certified lawyer in Turkey.

Years later our daughter Merve had the same problem with her headscarf, first at the university and then in politics, after she was elected to the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

As she went to the opening session, she was booed and shouted at by 'honourable' members of parliament, including no less than the prime minister himself, Bulent Ecevit. He was so worked up that he accused Merve of being an *agent provocateur*. Our Ustadh was deeply saddened and prayed God to give us *sabr* and the spirit to stand for our principle.

I visited him several times after he had come to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania; a few times I went together with my wife, my daughters, Ravza and Elif, and my granddaughter Erva. When he heard about all this, he smiled gently and made *dua* (prayer) for Merve and all of us.

He seemed visibly pleased when I told

him that Merve had memorised the entire Qur'an in 14 months, becoming a *hafiza* at the age of 27 and with two little children. He was happy seeing her with my grandchildren Fatima and Meryem at his Jacksonville, Florida residence (where he had moved from Wilkes Barre).

The Ustadh was very loyal to his friends. I remember accompanying him to Sandikli, a township in the province of Afyon, to say *fatiha* at the grave of Said Mutlu, who had been one of the translators of his books into Turkish. Said Mutlu had died young.

Dr Hamidullah was generous too. Although he did not draw a high salary, each time he came to Turkey, he privately distributed, through his students and assistants, almost half of the honorarium he received from the university to the low income staff of the university. Once he happened to be walking in the street when he learnt that an injured Pakistani was terminally ill in Erzurum Numune Hospital and his family wanted his body to be sent home after his death. He tried to help him as well.

Not that it mattered insofar as Dr Hamidullah was concerned, yet we did have a few loose-tongued people in Turkey who, whether out of pettiness or ignorance, did not mind saying some terribly irresponsible things about him: that he was not from the people of Sunnah (*ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*), that he wanted to 'reform' Islam.

A few even said he was an English spy. Little did they know that he was so unhappy with Britain for reneging on its defence treaty with his home country Hyderabad – allowing it to be occupied by an invading Indian army – that he travelled all over the world but never set foot on British soil.

The Ustadh, however, did not allow himself to be detracted by such smallminded talk: he kept both his humility and his dignity. One doubts if he ever took ill of any defamation or insinuation; he only took note if there was any scholarly criticism of his writing or work. Despite his reasons he remained open to those advanced by critics. The great majority of Turkey's educated Islamic community knew and admired him as a man of '*Ilm, Hilm and Taqwa* – Knowledge, Tolerance and Piety.

We in Turkey, especially, owe a great debt to Professor Hamidullah for helping us connect with our great academic and scholarly traditions and setting us on the quiet course of

intellectual liberation. There have been ups and downs but the Turkish *millat* remains on course. His legacy is a legacy of knowledge and scholarship, sincerity and integrity, loyalty and devotion – all dedicated to the pleasure of God and service to humanity.

While the righteous soul has returned to His Lord in peace, well pleased with itself and in His good pleasure, the gift of legacy shall continue to urge and inspire our present and future generations in Turkey, not to say the entire Islamic Ummah. Insha-Allah.

As the popular Turkish poet, Yunus Emre, wrote about himself, the Ustadh too had lived in *ghurbah*, died in *ghurbah* and was bathed and sent off by *gharibs*. The word *gharib* stands for one who is away from his or her home; *ghurbah* (myself among them) is being in the state of an alien or stranger, (*ghurbah*). The word *gharb* on the other hand means West. Professor Dr Muhammad Hamidullah was an Ummah by himself. ■

Dr Yusuf Zia Kavakci

Dr Yusuf Zia Kavakci is former dean and professor of Islamic Law at the College of Islamic Studies, Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey. He is now director, Islamic Centre, Dallas, Texas, USA.

(Edited from an over 9000-word article by the author.)

1. Following the military coup in 1960, some 147 academics were either expelled from their universities or shunted elsewhere and Sezgin left for Germany. Turkey had lost a great academic as Sezgin went to make his mark in exile. He has produced a very important research treatise on the written sources of Sahih al-Bukhari, *Bukhari'nin Kynaklari*. He has so far over 10 volumes of *Geschite des Arabicshen Schrifttums* in German to his credit. It is a work of scholarship and reference on Islamic Studies and an advancement on Brockelmann's *Geschite des Arabicshen Schrifttums*.

2. Professor Dr Salih Tug became dean at the college of theology (Ilahiyat Fakultesi) at Marmara University, a new university in Uskudar on the Asian side of Istanbul. Including myself, here at Marmara, he helped produce hundreds of young scholars. This college was originally the 'High Islamic Institute of Istanbul'. I graduated from this institute and briefly taught there as well. High Islamic Institutes were under the Ministry of Education at that time, but were later made part of universities. There were now 27 such colleges of theology all over the country. Both of us, Professor Dr Salih Tug and this writer, have since retired from their respective universities.

Confessions and conversations

Poet, politician and polymath

SHY and self-effacing as he was, posterity should thank Dr Hamidullah's great grand-niece Sadida for being able to engage him in some short conversations over a period of time, presumably, after he had moved from Paris to Wilkes Barre and later to Jacksonville in Florida. The only condition he laid down was that these should not be published in his life time. One can naturally look forward not only to an interesting record of an interesting life, but also to some rich new history or historical material about the long and eventful times he lived through.

What we publish now are some random selections from the conversations which Sadida was able to pick up in the first few grief-stricken weeks after her bereavement. She hopes to work on the recordings during the summer (she teaches as well as goes to university) and publish them by late autumn. Insha-Allah.

SADIDA: As the scion of a family dedicated to Islamic scholarship and famous for having produced teachers, writers and Qadis and Faqihs, did you always want to study Islamic Law and write as you have indeed spent most of your life doing so? Or was this God's Will?

DR HAMIDULLAH: [This was] God's Will.

Are you saying that having a grandfather, who authored more than 30 books; father who also wrote a significant number of books; and even sisters who were published writers, these had no influence on your choice of career?

My first choice was to be a poet [Laughs]; second to be a travel writer. You have read my first article titled 'Nilgiri' [1926] followed by [those about] Madras and Hyderabad [Deccan]. The plan was to write about all the different cities I visit but by then I had entered college and other things became more interesting.

You have had some of the most famous people of the 19th and 20th century as your peers or mentors, both from the east and the west. You had Mohammed

Marmaduke Pickthall (1875-1936) and Muhammad Asad (1900-92) as your editors. You have been able to exchange ideas and interact with Yusuf Ali (1872-1953), Sulaiman Nadvi (1884-1953), Abul 'Ala Mawdudi (1903-79) and T B Irving (1914-2002) as well as orientalists like Louis Massignon (1883-1962). Can you recall who among them influenced you most?

And many many more!

It was my good fortune to be in Madinah al-Munnawwarah before the Second World War and while there, I studied the Qur'an with a very old respected teacher. I made corrections on how I pronounced some words that used to trouble me at that time. He traced his teachers all the way to our beloved Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*.

Can you imagine! The Qur'an is passed on from God to Angel Gabrielle who conveyed it to the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, who conveyed it to the first generation of Muslims and so on; all the way down to us! Incredible! So this has never ceased to amaze and fascinate me to this day.

People say a lot of negative things about orientalists. You only focus on replying to their criticism. What's the reason for this?

Traditionally, Muslims have studied Islam with [the help of] a teacher. The teacher who learnt it from another teacher from an earlier generation, who studied it from someone from an even earlier generation. Sometimes information passed along is not written down, but communicated orally. Sometimes [when] a student is not able to grasp the concept, the teacher is able to clarify and explain.

The orientalists who decided to study Islam did not have access to this tradition; they had to depend on limited resources and their own reasoning. So [for them] focusing on questions that [may] stop them from embracing Islam is more productive [than knowing Islam itself].

A French writer calls you a great apologist for Islam. Do you agree with him?

[Laughs] Sounds kind of nice! Does it not? What people have to say about me does not really bother me. Islam, God and the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, don't need apologists. When people are not able to comprehend something, they think others who think differently have to be explained. Some people think I am paid by the Iranians, others think by Saudi Arabia and still others think I am a western agent. Everyone is entitled to their opinion.

And Allah knows best?

[Laughing] Yes. And you, too, since you have become my 'finance minister'.

Pickthall and some other scholars are of the opinion that when translating from Arabic to another language, [the word] Allah cannot be translated. You use the equivalent word such as God in English and Dieu in French etc. What is your reasoning for this?

My research shows that even in the days of the Prophet, *Sall-Allah alayhi wa sallam*, the Qur'an was translated into other languages. Salman al-Farsi translated it into Persian and the Persian word for the Deity was used. So I prefer it [using the non-Arabic equivalent of Allah]. I think, I [have] explained that in great detail in my introduction to the French translation of the Qur'an.

I hear you are a good poet and serious enough to have even adopted a *takhallus*, a poetic pen name. Then what happened?

I don't know who gave you this false information? [grins] You are allowed to change your mind about career choices. I was probably ten or 11-years-old when I wanted to be a poet. [In those days] There was a lot of discussion and celebration of Hali's poetry after his death, and I was fascinated [by his poetry].

Since Altaf Hussain Hali* died in 1914 it would mean you were about six then. I heard that your relatives made you memorise his poetry and you used to recite it with great fervour. You must have impressed everyone by the way you did this as people still remember it.

I don't remember being [any] impressive but the elders were encouraging [me]. You can date my poetical career as beginning sometime after his [Hali's] first death anniversary.

Tell me more about your pen name? Which one?

The one you used for writing poetry?

Kaldar? Hyderabad state's own currency, Hali, had already been taken [as pen name by Altaf Husain Hali]. So, I went for the British Indian currency which was called *Kaldar*.

It is very interesting, even amusing, that for someone who has absolutely no interest in money or wealth, you choose the name of a currency as your nom de plume.

Yes [Laughing], consult your sources on what Freud has to say about it.

What are the chances of publishing your *diwan*, a collection of your poetry?

Nil!. First, poetry is an expression [or statement] of the poets' feelings and emotions about the world that surrounds us. These feelings are not what I want to share with the world. I want to give those [who may be] interested an access to historical and current events, as accurately as possible, without colouring it with my feelings and emotions and let them make their own decisions. Second, very rarely I write it down, so where are you going to find my *diwan* to publish [it]?

Well, I have seen some things you have written down. While these are not your original works, they are still masterpieces, such as poetical works that you have translated from one language to another. The Urdu to French translations of Malik Ram's (1906-93) homage to Prophet Muhammad, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, Iqbal's (1876-1938) *Baal-i-fibreel* and the poem about the divorced woman from Bosnia, who is separated from her five children but dies after having had a glimpse of the children.

It is good, [but] my poetry is for your consumption only. That way I will create a masterpiece just for you.

Besides the pen name, *Kaldar*, which you for writing poetry, you have used four other pen names, too, Abul Muzaffar, Nouruddin, A H Kaldar and Caldor at various times. You have written books for others to be published in their names and I wish these beneficiaries of your generosity

would have at least acknowledged your contribution.

You also have original manuscripts that no one can decipher because you are using Arabic script with additional letters of your invention to write your thoughts in German! I say you are going to great lengths to remain anonymous.

I am so disappointed that you discovered only four [pen names]! [Laughing] I write and research to discover the truth in an attempt to please God, getting published is not of critical importance. When some people asked me to help them write a book, I did. When Muslims arrived in new lands they always used Arabic script to write the local language, so I am using the classical Islamic way of writing European languages [in Arabic letters].

It takes about a month to learn a new language. I know that if you are having difficulty because you do not know that language, you will take some time off to learn that language and come back to the papers.

I think it is going to take some 200 years to compile and catalogue your works, as you want it to be done. It looks so complicated. I wish you would help me before all my hair turn grey. Why have you taken these measures to hide your work?

[Laughing] The deal was you will work without asking for my help and not making these public until after my death. I have not used any particular measures to discourage you. I just did what was needed at that time.

Why do you spend such a lot of time proof-reading and correcting Muslim magazines you receive?

Muslim journalists are in short supply. All our news comes to us after being filtered through news agencies that are either ignorant or intentionally ignorant. So Muslim magazines need to be extra careful to provide accurate information.

Today you appear upset with your favourite magazine. Why is that?

Look at this picture and read what is written underneath. It is a picture of someone I know; underneath it says that this gentleman had issued a fatwa against taking pictures. Now that he is dead, they print his picture and his fatwa! How disrespectful! Muslim scholars really suffer at the hand of other Muslims.

You too don't like your picture to be taken or published.

Yes. I did have my picture taken in unavoidable situations such as for travel documents, but I don't like it published. Please respect that. We keep saying that everyone's ideas are to be respected, but we do it only if these ideas agree with ours. I am not imposing my ideas on other people. So respect mine and don't print my picture. [He gets very angry and upset when shown his photographs printed in a magazine or newspaper.]

I really like your picture from your Hyderabad travel documents. You look so fierce in that picture taken in 1945.

I can still look fierce, so don't play with my photographs. [the mood softens a little.]

What is your view about western style democracy?

It almost always degenerates into demo(n)cracy and anywhere up to 49% of the population is denied their rights. In comparison, an Islamic state allows this disfranchised population to have rights that they will not have in a western style democracy. Historical examples of peaceful coexistence where no one is denied their rights abound for those seek unbiased truth. [An obvious reference to Muslim political history.]

And about western feminism?

Western feminists have nothing to offer [to Muslims]. The Prophet of Islam, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, was the first 'feminist'. [The] Currently sad state of Muslims cannot be alleviated by giving one segment of the population, men or women, more power. Men, women, children, family, community, [these] all are interconnected and trying to empower one segment of the population while blaming another group for their problems will sink everyone into deeper problems and lead to the dissolution of Muslim society.

Western feminists started with good intentions, that of overcoming the limitations imposed on them by their men. But instead of seeking equity, they also want to achieve the same status their men have enjoyed. So, if these conditions were not fair when men were imposing them, then these same conditions are not fair when women are imposing them.

Exploiting one gender and treating other human beings with disrespect is not the way to achieve equity for everyone.

Tell us a little about the Khilafat Movement in India (1919-24)?

When Maulana Muhammad Ali (1878-1931) and [his elder brother] Maulana Shaukat Ali (1873-1938) launched the Khilafat Movement, it was a defining moment in my life, I was 13 or 14 then. The Khilafat Movement was really their mother's handiwork. When westerners and others ignorant of Muslim history say Muslim women were not allowed to participate in political movements, they should read about this lady [Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali's mother Abadi Bano, or 'Bi Amman' as she was popularly known. She was the greatest inspiration in their lives which was made legendary by the Urdu verse meaning: Said Mom Abadi Bano to Muhammad Ali/ Lay down your life for khilafat, Sonny.]

The British knew that if the Hindu-Muslim unity displayed during these years continued they would have to leave the Indian subcontinent; so they began a devious policy to cause ethnic and religious problems that continue to this day.

Why was the State of Hyderabad unable

to defend itself [against Indian aggression]?

Lack of defence capability. Hyderabad had no [proper] army to defend its borders because there was a Treaty with the British that they, who were the Paramount power, will protect the State from outside aggressors. The British went to great trouble to see that weapons and defence were not in place in Hyderabad for a long time before they left.

Therefore, attempts were made to prepare for defence. Hyderabad bought weapons from Italy, but instead of the state of the art modern equipment paid for and expected, Hyderabad received obsolete arms left over from the First World War. So our army would never see combat and fighting with weapons that did not work ...

When India embargoed Hyderabad and its army moved in, their soldiers were experienced, returning after fighting in the Second World War for the British with new and modern equipment.

Although many people then and now are upset that Hyderabad did not

defend its borders; [had it done so] it would have been the slaughter of the Hyderabad defence [forces], causing many more deaths. Another problem was that many Hyderabad citizens had already decided that being Indians was better than being Hyderabadis because they fell for the Hindu propaganda that they would have more access to power which they did not have in a feudal state.

I was disappointed with that attitude because our differences with the Nizam's government need not have destroyed the State of Hyderabad.

Without the ability to make their own weaponry, states cannot defend borders or protect their citizens; it is foolish to think that we can fight on imported weaponry. Muslim states continue to be dependent on others for weapons and technology and as long as this situation continues, we will face the problems we are facing. ■

* Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali was born in 1837 in Panipat, near Delhi, where he died on 30 September 1914. He was a disciple of another great poet, Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797 or 1798-1869) and the collection of his poetry has been published under the title *Diwan-e-Hali*.

**From the cradle to the grave
1908-2002**

**Dr Muhammad Hamidullah
1908/1326H**

Born in Mohalla Feelkhana in the old town of Hyderabad, State of Hyderabad. The youngest child in a family of three brothers and five sisters. Father, Abu Muhammad Khalilullah, was Madadgar Mu'tamid Malguzari (Assistant Revenue Secretary).

1909-13 Taught at home.

1913-28 Formal Islamic education: Maulvi Kamil and Darse Nizami from Dar-al-'Uloom, Hyderabad. Mother, Bibi Sultan, dies, 1928.

1930 MA and LLB degrees from Osmania University in International Law.

1933 D Phil from University of Bonn, Germany. Also European correspondent for the Quarterly Journal *Islamic Culture*.

1935 D Litt from Sorbonne, Paris.

First publication in German: *Die Neutralitat in islamischen Volkerrecht*.

1936 Father dies a few months before his return from Paris.

1936-46 Joins faculty of International Law, at Osmania University, rising to professorship.

1948 Travels to Paris as Constitutional Adviser to the

Hyderabad state delegation to the UN Security Council; decides not to return home, and stays in Paris after the State is invaded and occupied by India.

1948-67 Founds the Hyderabad Liberation Society to win the freedom of Hyderabad.

1949-50 Joins the Board of Talimat-i-Islamia, Pakistan, established to advise the Pakistan Constituent Assembly but returns to Paris within a year.

1954-78 Research Fellow at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, and Visiting Professor, at Turkish and Malaysian Universities.

1985 Awarded Pakistan's International Hijrah Award; he accepts the Award but donates the million rupees cash award to the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad.

1988 Illness leads to nearly total loss of hearing.

1992 Learns a new language, Thai, at the age of 84.

January 1996 Hospitalised [in Paris] for hypothermia.

October 1996 Arrives in Florida, USA for medical treatment.

December 2002 Died on the 17th.

(Source: Sadida Athaullah in *Islamic Horizon*, Plainfield, IN, USA, July-August 1999, and Rashid Shakeeb in *Mujalla Osmania Quarterly*, Karachi, April-June 1997).

Jihad and Ghazawat

The Conquest of Makkah

We know so very little about the earlier prophets, *Salam* on them. For instance, insofar as Prophets Adam, Noah and Idris, *Alayhim-us-Salam*, were concerned, The Qur'an makes no reference to any war effort in the course of their prophetic work. It should be so, for they wanted to guide and reform their own families or tribes. After them, those who had rebelled [against their religion] got their just deserts by way of divine punishment or natural calamity.

Thwarted in their work, Ibrahim and Musa, *Alayhim-us-Salam*, simply emigrated [from where they lived] and all through their striving [in the way of God], they never set eyes on a sword. In fact, these prophets did not have so many followers as would stand up in the face of their opponents. The disobedient Companions of Musa, *Alayhis-Salam*, did not even mind uttering the proverbially famous words, 'you and your Lord should do the fighting.'

The only prophet who we find The Qur'an testifying to be 'fighting in the way of Allah' was Shamweel (Samuel), *Alayhis-Salam*. He is mentioned towards the end of the Book2 of the Qur'an, *Sayaqool*, [Al-Baqarah, 2:246]. The Bani Israil say to him: 'Appoint for us a King, that we fight in the cause of Allah. ... Why should we not fight in Allah's way when we have been driven from our dwellings with our children?'

At the most, we can term it a war of defence or retribution. However, a war that was selfless, not for the tribe or the clan, wealth or riches, fame or pride, but only to uphold the Word of God in which everything, life, wealth and honour, is laid down in deference to the divine command, was not heard of before the [advent of the] Arabian Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*.

History is replete [with mention] of wars, but a war which is neither aimed at conquest nor motivated by lust for power, demanded extraordinary courage and commitment. The kind Messenger, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, has sanctioned only one type of war:

that which is in the way of Allah.

One of the companions asked him: 'Who is the one [who is fighting] in the way of Allah?'

He, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, answered: 'The one who fought only in order to uphold the word of Allah.'

True, the teaching of Jesus, *Alayhis-Salam*, as found in contemporary Gospels, is that if someone slaps you on one cheek, even for no cause, offer him the other cheek. It is indeed a lofty example of idealism. However, what would he have done, if he had happened to have come after David or Solomon, *Alayhis-Salam*?

In our times, too, some 'holy' people [politicians like M K Gandhi?] were trying to preach non-violence, but only as long they faced powerful adversaries, and they themselves did not possess any arms or armed forces.

Fighting in the way of Allah is not to feel tempted to pounce upon and grab the enemy, if it is weak. This is what a wolf does too.

Islam makes Jihad an obligation for its followers. The word literally translates as struggle, but the term is meaningful: it means reforming things through one's own hands, using the tongue to proclaim the word of truth, and, if powerless, at least to regard evil as evil within one own inner self. All these are included [in Jihad]. Each option has an appropriate timing of its own; as an individual one cannot but help exercise one or the other option. If a person is not realistic, he cannot achieve his objectives.

Before emigrating from Makkah al-Mukarramah, the most gracious Messenger, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, and his followers had gone through untold oppression and persecution. As they left, all their moveable and immovable properties were expropriated [by the polytheists of Makkah al-Mukarramah]. At the time the Prophet himself, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, made his *hijra*, he was holding in trust huge sums of money [kept with him by Makkans]. As a *quid pro quo*, he could have taken with him

all these gold and riches to Madinah al-Munnawwarah. But what he did instead puts to shame the 'civilised man' of 20th century, white or black.

He, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, is camping in Badr. Led by Abu Jahal, a force three-times larger in manpower, ten times more in arms and equipment, has come to raid [Madinah]. In his *Ansab-ul-Ashraf*, historian Baladhuri [d.279H/892] records a less well-known but important detail. He writes:

The Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, sent a message to the forces of Quraysh [the Makkan forces] that they can go back because he did not want to fight them. But he had to fight, because they had refused [to withdraw]. After inflicting a crushing defeat upon an enemy three-time stronger in numbers and taking 70 or 80 prisoners, there was nothing to prevent their being put to the sword – perhaps Muslim would have been justified had they done so [as was generally done in those times]. However, retaliation was not the objective, nor to be brutish or bloody.

Had they been simply let off, it might have defeated the very purpose [of having vanquished them] for people differ also in their nature and behaviour. Therefore, discrimination was shown in treating the prisoners.

The honourable ones were released simply on giving an undertaking that never again would they raise arms against the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*.

The rich arms merchants were asked to give arms in reparation. The capitalists had to pay money in reparation.

The educated ones were told to educate ten Muslim children each.

Only two prisoners of war who were mainly responsible for the invasion and for instigating and intimidating the people into joining the aggression and not expected to mend their ways – because of any concession or reprieve – were given the death sentence, lest they should be in trouble in the future.

The Jews of Banu Nadhir had gone beyond breaking a pact to committing

sedition. They had accepted of their free will the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, as the head of their City State. Once when he, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, went to their quarters and was resting under the shade of a turret, a large piece of stone was flung at him to kill him. They did not have the courtesy of seating their head of state inside a house to talk to him.

Despite their arrogance and militancy, the only punishment they were given was that they may [leave Madinah and] go elsewhere along with all their wealth and riches, even collecting all the money they had loaned to Muslims. Yet they repaid this indulgence by inviting all of Arabia to invade Madinah. In the [following] Battle of the Trench, Muslims' hearts reached to the throats.¹

During this grave hour and at the very last moment [when Muslims were facing] a life and death struggle, [another Jewish tribe] Banu Qurayzah within Madinah [itself] acted treasonably. They wanted to attack Muslims from within [the City] and destroy the trenches as well as the defence system. On the first day, prudently, they were stopped from acting on their plans. The next day was the Sabbath, during which the Jews in those day did not fight. On the third day began the Prohibited Months (Dhu al-Qa'dah to Muharram) during which the Arabs did not do any fighting. That is how this war came to an end.

Professor [A J] Wensinck (who was probably Jewish) posed a good question: that after the bitter experience with the indulgence that had been shown to Banu Nadhir, could Banu Qurayzah have been simply let off and left to bolster the might and power of the enemies [of Islam]? Still the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, chose to show some consideration and let the Jews [Banu Qurayzah] appoint a former friend and ally - and ally of theirs - as arbiter [Sa'ad Ibn Mu'adh, the chief of the 'Aws tribe,] and to enforce whatever he decided.

Had Banu Qurayzah chosen the Prophet himself, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, as an arbiter, he might have shown them mercy. In the event, the arbiter ruled that they should be treated the same way the Torah says Moses, *Alayhis-Salam*, is told to treat a defeated enemy (Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, 10-14): in other words, the Jews should be dealt with in the same way as they treated their enemies.²

The conquest of Makkah al-Mukarramah was perhaps the ultimate

model of Jihad. For 21 years, the Makkans had been persecuting Muslims ceaselessly and without any reason. The account of this [persecution] is known to everyone. When the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, returned home in triumph, from where he had been forced to emigrate, and the way he conducted himself is something which the modern 'civilised' man cannot even imagine. The [Muslim] armed forces approached the city [of Makkah] with heralds proclaiming:

'Whoso stays within his house shall have security. Whoso throws away his arms shall have security. Whoso goes inside the house of the City chief, Abu Sufyan, shall have security.'

After the City had been fully secured, the populace was asked to gather in one place and the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, asked them, what kind of treatment did they expect [from him]? The Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, could have ordered their execution, seized all their wealth and possessions, or decided to enslave the entire populace. But he simply said:

You may now go! There is no bar or ban against you. You have been reprieved.

Many embraced Islam, right away, at that very moving instant. The first among them was a notorious warlord, 'Attab [ibn Usayd]. Just before the [above] declaration by the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, Syedna Bilal, *Radhi-Allahu anhu*, had climbed up the roof of the Ka'abah and called the *adhan*. 'Attab reacted sharply to this and said: 'Thank God, my father is not alive, otherwise he would not have tolerated this braying (that is the *adhan* called by Syedna Bilal, *Radhi-Allahu anhu*).'

After the general amnesty was announced by the Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, 'Attab was the first person to come forward to say who he was and declared his Islam. m

The Prophet, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, said in response: 'Alright, I hereby appoint you as the governor of Makkah.'

So the newly conquered City is entrusted to a new Muslim, [who had been] a local and a bitter enemy [until the day of the conquest]. After a few days, they all go back to Madinah al-Munnawwarah. No need is felt to leave behind a single Madinan soldier, even as a precaution.

'For the like of this, let all strive, who wish to strive.' (The Qur'an, *Al-Saffat*, 37:61)

Kind, when powerful; brave and self-sacrificing³, when powerless: this is Jihad in Islam. ■

Muhammad Hamidullah

Translated from Urdu, *Jihad and Ghazawat* by Professor Muhammad Hamidullah in *Faran* monthly, Karachi, Special Issue on the Seerah, January 1956.

* *Ghazawat* (Singular, *Ghazawah*) are those battles in which the Prophet himself, *Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam*, personally took part.

1. 'Behold! they came on you from above you and from below you, and behold. the eyes became dim. And the hearts reached to the throats ... (The Qur'an, *Al-Ahzab*, 33:10, Translation of the meaning)

2. 10- 'In case you drew near to a city to fight against it, you must also announce to it terms of peace. 11- And it must occur that if it gives a peaceful answer to you and it has opened up to you, it must even occur that all the people found in it should become yours for forced labour and they must serve you. 12- but if it does not make peace with you and it actually makes war with you and you have to besiege it, 13- Jehovah your God also will certainly give it into your hand, and you must strike every male in it with the edge of the sword, 14- Only the women and the little children and the domestic animals and everything that happens to be in the city, all its spoil you will plunder for yourself, and you must eat the spoil of your enemies, whom Jehovah your God has given to you. (*Deuteronomy*, 20:10-14)

New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, 1984 (English)
Watchtower Bible And Tract Society of New York, Inc. International Bible Students Association, Brooklyn, New York

3. 'But those who before them had adopted the Faith show their affection to such as came to them for refuge. And entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the [latter]. But give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their [own lot]. And those saved them the covetousness of their own soul - they are the ones that achieve success.' (The Qur'an, *Al-Hashr*, 59:9, Translation of the meaning)

The last citizen of Hyderabad

The Scholar did not give up

ALMOST three quarters of a century ago, the Majlis-e-Ulama of the 'State of Hyderabad' set up an expert committee of Islamic religious scholars and scientists on the problem of 'Prayers and fasting in "abnormal" zones'. The problem being that as one moved into the Northern hemisphere, in winter the nights got longer and the days shorter, and in summer it was the other way round. So apart from places where the sun never set for days or months for which one could follow the Hadith and 'compute', there were situations of lesser abnormality. 'What to do if the day lasts 23 hours and 50 minutes and the night is only ten minutes long? Or when it is of, say, 20 hours or 16 hours duration?'

If in the year 1930 or about, the question was a remote one, affecting only a small number of Muslims in Norway, Siberia and Canada, by the 1960s and 1970s it had become all too real for the new Muslim communities in Europe and North America.

The first issue of *impact international* had come out on 16 May 1971. In the issue dated 9-22 June 1972 (Volume 2 Number 2), Dr Muhammad Hamidullah wrote a piece entitled *Three questions on science and Islam* about a treatise on the subject of 'abnormal zones' by a Turkish scholar, Haji Khalifa Katib Chelebi (d.1658/1069H). He then wrote another article (*Prayers and fasting in "abnormal" zones*) in *impact* 2:7, 25 August-7 September 1972) and drew attention to the recommendations of the expert committee unanimously approved by the Majlis-e-Ulama. Their opinion was 'shared by many a learned ulama in Mecca, Madina and Cairo', said Dr Hamidullah.

The suggestion was 'that the regions of the world be divided into normal and abnormal zones on the basis of the normality or otherwise of the day length and that the dividing line should be along the 45th parallels' and that 'the timings for Salat and fasting applicable on 45th parallels should be valid upto 90°. It meant that 'the timings of Bordeaux, for instance, can also be observed in England, Holland,

Sweden, Norway etc'. However, Dr Hamidullah added it was 'not yet an *ijma*' but 'I have not yet known any opposition to it'.

The subject of moon sighting as well as fasting and prayer timings has since become a real issue that confronts the new Muslim communities in the abnormal zones. However, the reason for revisiting the subject now is firstly, the importance of the question itself; secondly, in that it reflected both on Dr Hamidullah's multi-disciplinary scholarship as well as on his close involvement in the life of the western Muslim community of which he had himself become a part.

However, like Iqbal's dervish, he was confined neither by east nor west: he belonged as much to Paris, his Paris of books libraries and academies, as to Istanbul, Islamabad or Kuala Lumpur; yet if he had a 'domicile', it was the country of his birth, Hyderabad. His Hyderabad was not parochial, it was very much part of his worldview, as a home of culture and knowledge, pluralism and tolerance, and as the largest seat of Muslim power in the sub-continent after the end of the Mughal empire.

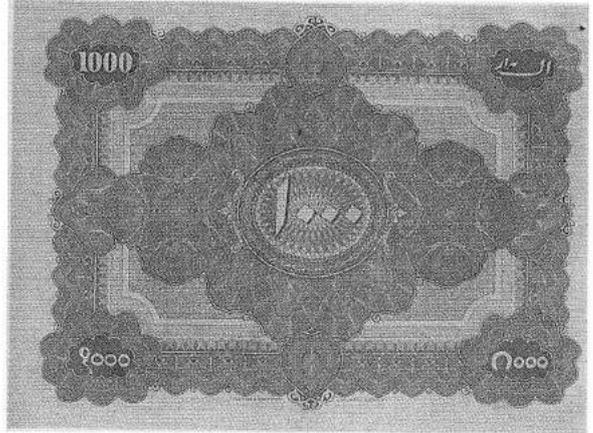
He could not accept the invasion and occupation of the State and vandalism of its finest cultural heritage and destruction of its intellectual traditions, not to mention the atrocities, killings and 'ethnic cleansing' after the invasion. His commitment to Hyderabad was a matter of principle; passions he could forgo, not principles.

And there he was.

The issue of *impact* that contained his article, *Prayers and fasting in "abnormal" zones*, had appeared on 25 August 1972 and, as we are still wont to, it had a few proof-reading errors. He, therefore, wrote back, chiding us for the error,



1,000 Rupee note of Hyderabad



but in a very friendly manner. He wrote in Urdu: 'Respected Mr Irfan, *Salam Masnoon* ... You are a fine editor, but your proof-readers are not. ... Anyway,' he went on to add, 'Take no offence, it's trivial. An Arab poet says, one may sometimes have a friendly fray, it is a sign of life.'

One doubts whether any scholar of his stature could have written a more sweet letter reprimanding a 'respected editor'. But that was Dr Hamidullah. I have yet to come across any piece of writing or even a private letter from his pen that could be termed less than polite.

He had not taken kindly, however, to something else in the article in question. It was an editorial insertion, within parenthesis, that the 'State of Hyderabad' was 'now annexed by India'.

This is what he wrote as post script: 'Do you accept the annexation of Hyderabad with Kufistan? (p.8, col.3) Occupation is *de facto* but to accept the annexation is another matter.' The letter was dated 23 Rajab 1392 - which would be 2 September 1972. He himself generally wrote only the Hijri dates.

To be honest, the import of the post script dawned on us only after he had

passed away.

On 21 August 1948, the government of Hyderabad had lodged a formal complaint with the UN Security Council about New Delhi violating their Standstill Agreement with Hyderabad as well as for trying to intimidate and provoke a border clash with Hyderabad forces. But as matters did not improve and it became evident that India was bent upon invading the State, the Hyderabad government decided to send a five-member delegation to the Security Council to follow up its complaint against the Indian Union.

The Security Council then sat in Paris where an incomplete delegation arrived on the morning of 14 September 1948: the delegation had flown to London via Karachi and Cairo with a forced eight-hour halt in Tripoli – then under British administration – due to ‘breakdown’.

Moin Nawaz Jang (d.1987), led the delegation. Of the other delegates, only three – Shyam Sunder (d 1976), Mir Nawaz Jang (d.1994) and Dr Yusuf Husain Khan (1903-79 – actually made it. Shyam Sunder represented the ‘depressed castes’; but the Hindu delegate, Sripat Rao, and the Muslim representative from Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, Abdur-Rahim, were not able to leave Hyderabad. The State’s foreign secretary, Zahir Ahmad (1905-58), was the secretary of the delegation and the French-speaking expert on international law Dr Hamidullah was an adviser to the delegation.

It is not clear whether Dr Hamidullah had arrived in Paris a few days earlier or with Moin Nawaz Jang. He had gone to Hyderabad from Pakistan and had taken a risky and roundabout route back to Karachi. However, by the midnight of 12/13 September, at least 24 hours before the delegation could land in Paris, Indian tanks and armed forces had begun to roll into Hyderabad from some 17 directions. New Delhi called it ‘Operation Polo’, and said it aimed at restoring peace and order in the territory!

However, according to the Indian commander, Maj-Gen J N Chaudhuri (1907-83), as early as the last week of March, the Southern Command had been ready with an invasion plan, duly approved by GHQ. In the first 18 days of Indian ‘Polo’ (13-30 September 1948), more than 200,000 Muslim civilians had fallen victim to their game of pillage and murder. The Hyderabad State had depended for its defence on its treaties with the British, and was in no position to repel the invasion by a well equipped and battle trained Indian

army.

Thus after five days of often brave but largely futile resistance, mostly by a hastily raised, ill-disciplined and ill equipped volunteer militia, the suzerain, His Exalted Highness Nawab Sir Mir Osman Ali Khan, GCSI (Great Commander of the Star of India), GCBE (Great Commander of the British Empire), the Seventh Nizam (1886-1967) had to acquiesce to Indian aggression. The date was 17 September 1948.

‘The march of the Indian troops on the capital of Hyderabad reminds me of the march of Italian troops towards the Abyssinian capital,’ said the Argentine delegate to the UN Security Council; otherwise the proceedings were largely perfunctory. Though the question of Hyderabad remained on the agenda, the occupation was a *fait accompli*.

The last message from the last prime minister of Hyderabad, Mir Laik Ali (1903-71)¹, to his Agent General in Karachi, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan, was that even though they had had to give up, those abroad should continue to struggle for the freedom of the State. Except, perhaps, for only Moin Nawaz Jang and Dr Hamidullah, most of the Hyderabad delegation members and officials took the time-tested and time-serving view that discretion was the better part of valour.

Mir Nawaz Jang denied having been a member of the Hyderabad delegation. Zahir Ahmad, who, it is suspected, was already in contact with the Indians slipped back into his civil service job now under Indian dispensation.²

So did Dr Yusuf Husain Khan who claimed he had gone to Paris merely as a French translator.³ He came to Karachi, where his elder brother, Dr Mahmud Husain Khan (d.1975), was a minister of state in Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan’s (1895-1951) government; from there he contacted his eldest brother, Dr Zakir Husain Khan (1897-1969), in New Delhi.⁴ Zakir Husain interceded for his ‘repentant’ younger brother with the Indian deputy prime minister and minister of home affairs, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (d.1950)⁵. He was ‘forgiven’ and allowed to return and resume his career.

For Dr Hamidullah, however, Hyderabad was not just a matter of emotion to be sighed for and forgotten. As a student of international law, he saw it as something very fundamental: his country was a victim of illegal aggression and illegal occupation. He was not a member of any government, nor did he have any forces at his

command. Yet he did what was in his power: not to give his personal recognition to the illegality and to continue challenging the illegitimacy.

That did not come easy though, it came at a price. For him there was no question of going back to his ‘occupied country’. Many Hyderabadis had chosen Pakistan as their new country, not Dr Hamidullah. His love for Pakistan was unquestionable but he did not want to give up his identity and his principle.

We do not have his version of what happened; what did he do or what others did during those short and fateful few weeks in Paris. As a student of history, he was a meticulous keeper of records and chronicler of events; so it would be unlike him if he has not left any.

He used to write under various pen names and keep notes in French, English or German, but in Arabic script. He strongly recommended that ‘new entrants to Islam should master the Arabic script and employ it – at least in their inter-Muslim correspondence – when writing in their local languages’. He said that ‘when the Arabic script is written with all its signs of vocalisation, it is incomparably superior to any and every script in the world from the point of view of precision and absence of ambiguity’.

His grandniece, Sadida (See: Confessions and Conversations p.37) mentions such difficult-to-decipher notes, which he used to keep, presumably on matters he did not want to share with others during his lifetime. However, there can be little doubt that when accessed these papers would provide a mine of precious historical material not only about Hyderabad but also several other events and episodes he had lived through.

That would, however, require all the boxes of Dr Hamidullah’s papers and documents brought by Sadida from Paris to Jacksonville in Florida – stored in two rooms from floor to ceiling – first to be opened, sorted and catalogued. And then to find serious and diligent students, able to read his notes in the European languages but in Arabic letters. The work would need both human and material resources: men, women, space and funds. And that was the proverbial million dollar question.

Dr Hamidullah had never given up his personal struggle for the freedom of Hyderabad. He issued a monthly bulletin in order to highlight the case of Hyderabad’s illegal military occupation by India as well as the huge,

unreported killings and persecution of Muslims after occupation. He mailed the bulletin to important international figures and thus to keep the question alive before world opinion. All this he did from his own pocket and with his old French typewriter.

Sometime in the early 1950s he visited Pakistan and had with him copies of the bulletins he had so far published. However, if he had assumed that these would help stimulate interest in the plight of Hyderabad, he was in for disappointment. Most of the elite, including the Hyderabadis Pakistanis, had almost written off Hyderabad as a lost cause.

Of course there was no case of Pakistani forces going to give Indians a taste of their own 'polo' and liberate Hyderabad, but nations that cherish freedom and miss having lost it never give up. They win freedom eventually. However, after the death of Quaid-e-Azam in 1948 and assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in 1952, those who happened to wield power – the children of the erstwhile British raj – had little vision, let alone a free mind.

The Hyderabad case had been mishandled not only by the Hyderabadis themselves; the diplomatic support they received from the Pakistan foreign ministry was half-hearted and not improbably insincere.

The Qadiyani foreign minister, Sir Zafarullah Khan (1883-1985), could hardly put his heart and soul into defending the interest of Pakistan, a country which was, according to the prophecy of his 'khalifa', a transient entity and would eventually be joining with India. As he did in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, Zafarullah bored the Security Council with overlong speeches but without impressing anyone, except the folks at home.

While Dr Hamidullah was in Karachi, officials from the Hyderabad State were engaged in discussing the question of setting up a government-in-exile, acting on the advice which they had received from both Mir Laik Ali and the Nizam. The problem seemed to be finding a suitable and eminent personality to head that government. Nawab Hasan Yar Jang (d. mid 1980s) who was from the royal family seemed the best person to lead the government-in-exile. He declined saying that he and his family were not in the good books of the Nizam.

The former president of Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, Maulana Mazhar Ali Kamil (d. 1972), was another eminent person who could head the proposed government. Though he was

willing to serve in the consultative committee, he felt unable to head the government. It was, therefore, decided to form the government but withhold the name of its head.

So one evening (date not mentioned in the source)⁶, the Bahadur Yar Jang Society, Karachi, issued a press release announcing the formation of an Hyderabad Government-in-Exile. The press release had been prepared by Shah Baluighuddin and seen by Dr Hamidullah. Next morning the news was prominently published in all major newspapers. The morning after, however, they were summoned by secretary of the Pakistan foreign ministry, Ikramullah (d. 1963), and told the government of Pakistan did not approve of the idea. Period.

It seems Dr Hamidullah had tried to argue with Ikramullah on the ground of constitutional law and international legality – to no avail, however. But there was no question of Dr Hamidullah himself abandoning the struggle for the freedom of Hyderabad.

He continued to pursue his cause through the Hyderabad Liberation Society, which he founded. His bulletins and the activities of the society did cause serious political embarrassment for the democratic pretensions of the Indian government.

In any case, Dr Hamidullah's was a one-man mission. He was not a professional diplomat, though; nor did he have any assistants or even skeletal office facilities. Yet he missed no chance to raise his cause wherever and whenever an opportunity presented itself.

After India invaded and occupied the Portuguese enclave of Goa in December 1961, he rushed to Lisbon to explore the possibility of reactivating the case of Hyderabad which had lain dormant on the agenda of the Security Council. The fact is that save the British, Americans and Nationalist Chinese, who were either indifferent to or complicit in the Indian occupation of Hyderabad, there was a significant body of European, Latin American and Arab opinion which seemed to take an objective view of the case, but it needed a member state to push the case. Hyderabad had only Hamidullah.

What else did he do beside publishing the monthly bulletin? We have little idea about the activities of the Hyderabad Liberation Society. Whatever these were, the Indians were taking it very seriously.

The Indian ambassador in Paris Ali Yawar Jang,⁷ an Hyderabadis and an acquaintance if not a friend of

Hamidullah, schemed to lure him to the embassy on some pretext and then have him 'crated' and shipped to India. Luckily, he got scent of the plot and Yawar Jang's project was aborted. ■

To be concluded

M H Faruqi

1. Mir Laik Ali died 'suddenly' in a New York hotel where he had gone to attend a UN meeting in October 1971. His body was buried in Madinah al-Munnawwarah.

2. Zahir Ahmad retired as India's ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1973-76). In a nostalgic account of life after the occupation and (dis)integration of the pre-1948 Hyderabad (*Hyderabad on the Eve of the State's Reorganisation in 1956*), he lets 'many relatives, friends [mostly non-Muslims] and acquaintances', he met during a four-day visit, speak for themselves. The last one, he concludes with his account, was a 60-year-old, Oxford educated, retired civil servant, Kabir Arsalan. Zahir Ahmad asks him how did he feel himself. 'Free and chained at the same time.' The article is reproduced in Omar Khalidi's insightful editorial collection, *Hyderabad: After The Fall* (1988).

3. Dr Yusuf Husain Khan's memoirs in Urdu, *Yadoon ki Dunya* (Darul Musannifin, Azamgarh, 1967), the world of memories, remembers little about his 1949 mission to Paris.

4. Dr Zakir Husain was a leading 'nationalist' Muslim, opposed to the Muslim demand for Pakistan. The latter were disparagingly dubbed 'communalists'. Zakir Husain was rewarded by being made governor of Bihar (1957-62), then vice president (1962-67) and he died in office as president (May 1967-May 1969) of the republic.

5. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is regarded as the real director of the Hyderabad tragedy. Patel was very unhappy when a two-member committee of inquiry, comprising one Hindu, Pandit Sundarlal (1886-1980), and a 'nationalist' Muslim editor, Qazi Abdulghaffar (1889-1956), recorded in their report large scale massacres, rape and destruction of Muslim property during and after the 'police action' in Hyderabad. But instead of acting on the findings, Patel reprimanded the authors of the report for rushing 'into a sphere which might have been more appropriately left to be covered by experienced statesmanship and administrative ability'. The inquiry had been authorised by Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru (1889-1964) personally.

The report was locked away in the Home Ministry and when a Union deputy minister for railways, Yunus Salim (1916-), referred to the document in an interview with a Delhi magazine, *Shabistan Urdu Digest* (May 1969), a fellow MP accused him of 'treason' and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1917-84) banned any further discussion of the report - in order to protect 'the national interest'.

6. Shah Baluighuddin in *Mujalla Osmania, Quarterly*, Karachi, April-June 1997.

7. Ali Yawar Jang (1905-76) had been a member of Nizam's inner court and author of a 1930 publication, *External Relations of Hyderabad* (Government Central Press, Hyderabad, 1930) which asserted the State's independence. A much enlarged three-volume version of the work (*Hyderabad's Relations with India*) was issued in 1948.