

IS GHAR KO AAG LAG GAI GHAR KE CHIRAGH SE

(The Lamp of the house burnt down the house)

By

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Preface

India is a vast country of the world and has an important place in the world. Late Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi had started a campaign of "Payam-e-Insaniyat Forum" which received high appreciation in the country. The message of humanity is a noble deed. All the countrymen like it. It creates sense of human service amongst the people. The progress of the country is linked with this campaign.

Getting encouragement from this, the great thinker, an eminent scholar, founder of "Payam-e-Insaniyat Forum" Hazrat Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has struggled a lot in propadgation and spreading this noble deed throughout the country. He got good response and was welcomed in all the states and even today the people welcoming his teachings. This convention of "Payam-e-Insaniyat Forum" was held on 22 May, 1975 in Ganga Parsad Memorial Hall, Lucknow. A

big gathering including V. I. Ps. representatives of Newspapers. educated and elite persons were present. This lecture was distributed by rendering in Urdu, Hindi, English and other languages throughout the country. It was published in several newspapers and Monthly magazines.

In the country. people took guidance from this mesage.

For your convenience, the translation of this lecture in computer composing in easy English is being sent to you.

We are glad to present this memorable lecture before you in a booklet so as to create the communal harmony which is the need of the hour.

IS GHAR KO AAG LAG GAI GHAR KE CHIRAGH SE

Introduction

We present here with the English version of a speech delivered by Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi at Ganga Prashad Memorial Hall, Lucknow on 25th May 1975, under the auspices of "Payam-e-Insaniyat" Forum to an elitist gathering of members of all communities. The speaker has made an analytical review of the multiple problems facing the country and outlined the ways and means to meet the challenges in his speech.

It is an appeal to scholars and intellectuals to seriously think over the present conditions and exert their utmost best to extricate the nation from the morass of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, etc. in which it finds itself.

English Version

Indore

Late Qazi 'Abdul Hameed

2nd June 1984

IS GHAR KO AAG LAG GAI GHAR KE CHIRAGH SE

Friends,

I would like to begin my talk with reference to a line of a couplet, which appears to me rather appropriate for the message that I want to convey today. It expresses, in a nut shell, my point of view of the canker which has entered into our society.

"IS GHAR KO AAG LAG GAI GHAR KE CHIRAGH SE" (the lamp meant to illuminate the house eventually set the house on fire)

This line is often quoted when a youngman of promise brings discredit to the family by some rash and indiscreet conduct committed by him. The conditions obtaining in the world these days are comparable to those mentioned in the above quoted line. The worsening conditions create an apprehension in selected quarters that the edifice of traditional human values has begun to crumble. It is not difficult to realize that most of the ills, which be set the present society, are our own creations and the unfortunate part of it is that the rich, the educated and the

civilized have brought them about. The poverty-stricken masses all over the world are engaged most of the time in their struggle for survival. They have neither the time nor the money to invent or produce weapons of war.

It is an irrefutable lesson of history that the downfall of nations does not come all of a sudden. It is, in fact, the moral decadence of a society, which saps its inner vitality and tends towards disintegration and ultimate extinction.

There are, again, very few examples in history that a nation dominated over another nation for a long time. Because whenever there was misrule and the weaker sections of the population were victimised than those who were sympathetic with the oppressed were given the charge of administration. Nobody could live under disturbed conditions for long. It should not be surprising either. This way the Creator redresses the grievances of the aggrieved. That is why Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said, 'fear the prayers of the oppressed for verily there is no veil between him and Allah.'

The Englishmen did not belong to this country. They established their sovereignty over it mainly to further their own ends. They looked upon it as a milch cow. It would not have been surprising if they had removed valuable installations or made them

unserviceable when they had to leave the country. Yet they did not do any such thing. It is shocking that inestimable loss and damage is being caused now-a-days to national property -both public and private- by its own people.

**"IS GHAR KO AAG LAG GAI
GHAR KE CHIRAGH SE"**

The dedicated leaders of yester-years made enormous sacrifices to win the country's freedom. The Hall where you have assembled at the moment provided a platform for their national activities. It is, in my opinion, the right place to take stock of the deteriorating conditions in the country at present. The Aminabad Park, which is not far away from here, still echoes with the inspiring speeches of our great leaders. When the Simon Commission came to India in 1927 our leaders gave a call to the nation to boycott it. A well-attended meeting was held in the Aminabad Park which was addressed by eminent leaders like Maulaa Muhammad 'Ali and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru among others. They made impassioned speeches overflowing with patriotic fervour. Afterwards a bonfire was made of foreign clothers. The spirit of patriotism was at its height in those days. I have been a witness to those memorable scenes.

It was expected that present leaders would steer the ship of state into the harbour safely; that they would bring glory to the nation and leave an indelible mark in the chequered history of our country. It was hoped that the people would be rid of the miseries through which they had to pass during the freedom struggle; that the Courts would be temples of justice; that lawlessness will be stamped out and poverty eradicated for all times and that various constituents of administration would function in the interest of the public and the nation in the post independence era. Nobody, even in the widest imagination, could have thought that after the alien rulers would "Quit India" conditions would deteriorate so rapidly into the present unsettled state. It is most deplorable that such conditions came to be created which weakened the moral fibre of our society.

**"IS GHAR KO AAG LAG GAI
GHAR KE CHIRAGH SE"**

I HAVE TO TELL YOUR OWN STORY

The way human rights are being constantly assailed all over the world is not hidden from any one. I need not dilate upon them as it is altogether a different subject. I would like to confine myself to the events occurring in our country at the moment. It is the right time to do a little soul-searching and, I would like you, to be guided by your own sense of discernment to reach your own conclusions. I am sure those stalwarts who were in the forefront of the freedom struggle and those who sacrificed their lives, could not have ever imagined that conditions would be so chaotic as they are today.

It is unfortunate that we have not been able to project a reasonably coherent picture of our country which we were capable of doing. It appears that the anti-social element who are actively engaged in our society have succeeded, in no small measure, in creating disturbances everywhere resulting in destruction and dislocation of public utility services and thereby retarding the development and progress of the country for quite sometime.

It pains me to dwell on all these unhappy incidents before such an elite gathering. But this had become necessary in order to present a true picture of the degeneration which has set in our society. It is greatly to be deplored that the crusted upper class is not yet prepared to treat our underprivileged countrymen as equals. The rich and the powerful exploit the poor and the weak. We seldom come across persons who met out human treatment in their dealings with less-favoured people. A large majority of people are motivated by self-interest. These shortcomings are unfortunate because under these conditions it is not possible to achieve any appreciable progress. The self-seekers, whose number is legion, never fail to give precedence to their interests, and not infrequently, to their party over that of the nation. This apathy and indifference towards common-man is rarely to be found in other countries.

CORRUPTING OTHERS FOR PERSONAL GAINS:

The practice of corrupting others for personal gains has become widespread with the result that malpractices, work-shirking, favouritism, nepotism and every conceivable corrupt practice appears to be on the increase. What has happened to bureaucracy is not

understood. The administrative machinery has been seen to move in a slow and sluggish manner never witnessed before.

WHAT KIND OF PATRIOTISM IS THIS:

There ought to have been exemplary cooperation and mutual goodwill in between different sections of population as democracy was on trial in a plural society as ours. It is sad that the former spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice has steadily diminished during post independence period. We had weaknesses but they were covered in our preoccupation with freedom struggle. When our abilities and capacities were put to test in the stupendous task of nation-building we did not acquit ourselves creditably.

It is not an uncommon phenomena that when the people do not have the means to indulge in ostentatious living, they take recourse to the alternative of becoming righteous. But when they get the means there is a complete change in their outlook and attitude towards life. We have behaved exactly in the same manner. When the struggle was over our inherent weaknesses came to the surface. During the freedom struggle the spirit of patriotism kept us together. There was no such misunderstanding in between different sections of the population as is to found today. Why there has been such a "volte face" baffles

my imagination. Maybe because most of our attention and energies were devoted towards nation-building programmes and projects and the required attention was not paid to reformation of society and character-building after the freedom struggle was over.

DISAPPOINTMENT FROM REFORMS IS RUINOUS:

I cannot say if there are many organisations, worth the name, which have made serious and persistent efforts to instil a sense of fellow-feeling, self sacrifice and a spirit of patriotism in our countrymen. There is a great anxiety amongst the elite about the falling standards in public life and it is a much talked of subject with them, yet no one is prepared to come forward to do anything substantial and meaningful to reform the society. The sporadic attempts that are being made by some organisations, are not sufficient for the herculean task to put the society back on firm moral footings. There is a feeling among our scholars and intellectuals that life today has lost its moorings. This frustration at the present conditions does not augur well for our society.

SINCE INDEPENDENCE:

The attainment of independence in the beginning raised high hopes of the fulfilment

of the dreams in the coming years. The hopes gave way to frustration because most of the gains after independence were cornered by the upper class and failed to reach our teeming millions living below poverty line for whom they were particularly meant.

IT IS A MATTER OF THIS OR THAT PARTY:

It may be pointed out that no attempt is being made to apportion any blame to any particular person or party for these failures. These observations are of a general nature. It is, however, a fact that the man in the street has lost faith in the loud-mouthed promises of political workers.

It is well nigh impossible for an individual or a party to corrupt the entire society if the elite are alert and vigilant and promptly nip the evil in the bud. There have been good and bad people at all times and it is not proper to hold them solely responsible for all the ills of today. The persons who are at the helms of affairs could not conduct themselves according to their whims and wishes unless the people in the higher echelon had become complaisant towards them.

THE PRESENT CONDITIONS ARE MAN MADE:

If there is anything which can keep the people away from malpractices and

misconduct it is the fear of God. When it takes root in the heart of any man and he sincerely believes that he is answerable to a Supreme Being for all his deeds and misdeeds then he abstains from such practices. The other is love of one's country. It was this love and pride in their countries which gave the European nations the requisite strength and motivation to survive the devastations caused by two World Wars and reconstruct their countries from ashes. Japanese people are another example of this devotion and dedication towards their country.

The Forum of "PAYAM-E-INSANIYAT" has raised its voice, knowing full well its limitations, in the sincere hope and fond expectation that all those persons who sympathise with these objectives would extend their whole-hearted support in our efforts for an all round regeneration of India.

Appendix

"Science, which has transformed the material world, gives men the power for transforming himself..... But will we be capable of using this knowledge..... to real advantage? To progress again, man must remake himself. And he cannot remake himself without suffering He will not submit to such treatment unless driven by necessity. While surrounded by the comfort, the beauty and the mechanical marvels engendered by technology, he does not understand how urgent is this operation. He fails to realise that he is degenerating. Why should he strive to modify his ways of being, living and thinking?

We have at our disposal all the might of science. There are still many men capable of using this power unselfishly. Modern

society has not stifled all the focuses of intellectual culture, moral courage, virtue and audacity. The flame is still burning. The evil is not irreparable. But the remaking of the individual demands transformation of modern life. It cannot take place without a material and mental revolution..... Do we have enough energy and perspicacity for gigantic effort?

Alexis Carrel, *Man the Unknown*, pp. 202-3