

ARTICLE

From the Depth of the Heart .. in America

By Shaykh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (Marhoom)

Brothers and Sisters,

It makes me very happy to be with you here in Washington, the capital city of the United States of America, which may be described as the hub of the world. Today its influence is felt everywhere, and in all spheres of life, social, political and economic. We may like it or not, but no one can deny it.

What is lacking here?

How did America acquire that position and what part has the skill, industry, unity of interests and capacity to organise and act jointly with one another of the American people, and their scientific, industrial and technological progress played in it, and how much of it is due to our own negligence and shortcomings is a very complex question, and I am sure, you will agree that it will be out of place to try to discuss it here. Thinkers, political scientists and historians have analysed it from various angles and offered their explanations.

From the material point of view, this country is a paradise on earth, and, excuse me, this is what has brought you to it from your native lands, India, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt. Saudi Arabia, and, so on. There is no harm in it either, for don't the pieces of iron collect around the magnet or the thirsty people rush to the place where water is found? I have seen America from coast to coast, both as an ordinary tourist and a student of the Quran and history, and the thing I have found wanting here is exactly what has been alluded to in the Quranic Verses we have just heard.

May God bless the learned friend who recited the verses from Sura-i-Kahf and reward him bounteously in both the worlds. He has brought us face to face with a world of truths and realities, and, at least, rendered a great service to me. I was wondering what I was going to say at this meeting. There are, of course, so many things one can talk about, but the difficulty lies in the choice. I was thinking what message could I deliver to you in the States, what would you like to hear from me that, suddenly, the Quran came to my rescue as it always does, and I felt that a wonderful portrait of the Modern Age, which had reached the pinnacle of material development, had been drawn in these verses.

'For one of them We provided two gardens of grapevines. Both the gardens gave their fruit and withheld naught thereof. And We caused a river to gush forth therein. And he had fruit. And he said unto his comrade, when he spoke with him: I am more than thee in wealth and stronger in respect of men.' (XVIII : 33-35)

Can a better portrait be possible of modern America? Gardens of grape-vines! Take any part of this great land and does it not present a spectacle of luxuriance and plentitude? What is lacking in it? What fruit is not found here? All the gifts of the Lord are abundantly available in this country. Still there is something that is sadly wanting and to which attention has been drawn by the thoughtful and believing friend in these words:

'When thou entered the garden, why did thou not say: That which Allah willeth (will come to pass)! There is no strength save in Allah!' (XVIII : 40)

Only *Masha Allah, laa quwata illa billaah* (that which Allah willeth: there is no power but in God) is missing. This *Masha Allah, laa quwata illa billaah* can turn the dust into gold, elevate materialism into worship of the highest order, and tame the rebellious horse of the carnal self so that it became a blessed mode of transport for taking man to his destination. It is the master-key that can open any lock. If the Western World does not possess anything, it is this. On the face of it, these are just a few words which we utter frequently in everyday life. *Masha Allah*, when did you come? *Masha Allah*, when you had this new suit made? And, so on.

In fact, we have lost appreciation of the ocean of eloquence and profundity that is contained in this short, pithy expression and the marvellous power it possesses of subduing the materialistic aspirations and conceit of man that lead him into the deception that whatever is happening around him is of his own choice and making. That is why, we utter it mechanically, without the faintest idea of its intrinsic significance. What *Masha Allah* denotes, in sum, is that whatever takes place in the world is at the command of God and by His power and authority; the credit for it does not go to man, nor does praise belong to him.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. (1:1)

And:

'But His command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He saith unto it: Be! and it is.' (XXXVI: 81)

What has been set forth in the two aforementioned verses and the supremeness that has been affirmed in *Allah is He who raised the heavens without any pillars*, (XIII: 2) have got compressed into the single phrase of *Masha Allah, laa quwata illa billaah*. Only that which Allah willeth will happen. He is the Author of all things, the Creator of all things. There is no power save in Allah.

Today, America is a living example of *He hath loaded you with His favours both without and within*, (XXXI:20), and *Abundantly supplied with sustenance from every place*. (XVI:112). Wealth is springing here from the earth and pouring down from the heavens. Then, why is it not giving the message of peace, good understanding and security to the world