

# Islam and the Modern Age

Volume, XLIX, Issue No 3, 4, 2022  
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Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies  
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

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## Note

Dear Esteemed Subscribers, Readers and Followers of the Journal Islam and the Modern Age are hereby informed that the editorial team has decided to consolidate all unpublished volumes and their respective issues into the current edition. This Issue, hence, includes the following:

Volume, XLIX, Issue No. 3, 4, 2022

Volume, L, Issue No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 2023

Volume, LI, Issue No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 2024

This decision has been made in order to ensure a streamlined publication for your convenience and ease of access. We appreciate your continued support and cooperation.

Regards,  
The Editorial Team  
Islam and the Modern Age



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## Editorial

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As we step into the New Year and celebrate our 76th Republic Day, Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), extends its heartfelt wishes to all the esteemed readers and subscribers of '*Islam and the Modern Age*.' The year 2025 is set to be a transformative chapter for JMI under the visionary leadership of our new Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mazhar Asif, who assumed office at the end of October 2024. With his dynamic approach and firm dedication to academic excellence, Prof. Mazhar Asif, along with his dedicated and seasoned team, spearheaded by Prof. Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, the Registrar, JMI, is committed to elevate JMI to unprecedented heights of scholarly and institutional achievements.

In his Republic Day address, Prof. Mazhar Asif articulated his ambitious vision for JMI, aspiring to transform the university into a world-class institution for learning and research. His commitment to advancing and achieving the goals of *Viksit Bharat*, as envisioned by the Government of India, and realising the aspiration of *Sare Jahan Se Achha Hindostan Hamara*, making India a global leader, is both inspiring and commendable.

Every New Year unfolds as a fresh chapter, bringing with it new aspirations, opportunities, and challenges that urge us to reflect on the past and chart a more purposeful course for the future. The year 2025 holds immense promise and profound significance for JMI, marking a pivotal moment in its journey of academic excellence and institutional growth. This year, the university stands at the threshold of transformation, poised to win laurels after laurels under the superb guidance of its progressive and principled Vice-Chancellor. With a renewed commitment to innovation, inclusivity and intellectual rigour, JMI is set to redefine its academic landscape, fostering an environment where tradition meets progress and education transcends boundaries.

The relentless pursuit of academic excellence of the Vice-Chancellor

and the Registrar, JMI, is not merely about enhancing institutional rankings but about creating a learning ecosystem that fosters critical thinking, research innovation and holistic development. With a focus on strategic planning, interdisciplinary collaboration and technological integration, they are steering the university towards becoming a beacon of knowledge that echo far beyond national borders. At the heart of this ambitious vision lies a deep-rooted commitment to education that is both progressive and principled. JMI is not just an institution that imparts degrees – it is a melting pot for shaping well-rounded individuals who are intellectually proficient, ethically grounded and socially responsible.

The essence of education here is not confined to textbooks and examinations but extends to nurturing a mind-set that embraces curiosity, integrity and a sense of duty towards the society and the nation. These values, embedded in the university's very foundation, continue to be as relevant today as they were over a century ago, guiding students towards meaningful contributions in academia, industry and public life.

What truly sets JMI apart is its firm belief that education must be a force for collective progress. Beyond academic excellence, the university has continuously fostered an environment where students and faculty engage in meaningful dialogue, cultural exchange and intellectual refinement. By creating platforms that encourage discourse on pressing global and national issues, JMI has solidified its role as an incubator of thought leadership. Whether through academic symposia, research initiatives or community outreach programs, the institution remains steadfast in its mission to cultivate individuals who are not only equipped with professional expertise but also deeply committed to the ideals of patriotism, peace and human solidarity.

It was with these very objectives in mind that this journal was conceived and an initiative that serves as more than just an academic publication. It is a testament to JMI's abiding tradition of integrating modern scholarship with ethical consciousness. Over the years, this journal has been instrumental in bridging the gap between theory and practice, providing a platform for students, scholars and faculty to engage in meaningful intellectual exchanges. More than a repository of research, it has become a medium for fostering social harmony,

encouraging critical inquiry and advancing progressive thought. As JMI continues its journey towards global academic excellence, in alignment with the national objectives of education, this journal stands as a symbol of its commitment to knowledge that is not only intellectually enriching but also socially transformative.

This shared commitment to intellectual growth and societal progress reflects not only in the vision of this journal but also in the broader narrative of India's journey, one that weaves together academic excellence, cultural heritage and the pursuit of a just and inclusive future. India, a land of profound cultural and spiritual heritage, transcends mere geography to embody unity, resilience, and progress. Inspired by Gandhian principles, the nation's historic struggle for independence united diverse communities into a harmonious mosaic, shaping a national ethos rooted in justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. As the Constitution completes 75 years, it remains a beacon of democracy, guiding India's journey of innovation and sustainability.

Our country has made remarkable strides in education, healthcare, technology and space exploration, integrating ancient wisdom with modern aspirations. Institutions like Jamia Millia Islamia exemplify this legacy, fostering inclusivity and global engagement while also promoting the Government initiatives such as Digital India, Skill India and Ayushman Bharat. These efforts empower citizens, advance gender parity and cultivate youth leadership to drive national progress. India's communal harmony, reflected in its diverse traditions and festivals, strengthens its democratic fabric.

Through Republic Day celebrations, JMI embodies the unifying spirit of our nation, proudly showcasing unity and national pride. Although challenges persist, India's forward-looking approach, utilising technology, education and sustainable development, ensures that the nation continues to inspire the world by embracing inclusivity, innovation, and collective responsibility. In this journey, JMI stands in solidarity with the nation, contributing to its progress and shared vision.

With heartfelt gratitude to the esteemed contributors, we present the insightful articles in this issue for your thoughtful perusal. Once again wishing you a Happy New Year and a joyous Republic Day!

A. NASEEB KHAN



## Introducing Islam and the Modern Age

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According to most of the modern scholars the initial period in the cultural history of man was the mytho-religious age. In those days people lived together in tribes. The individual was an organic part of the group and his consciousness was, so to say, merged in the group consciousness. He could not determine the course of his life but was swept along in the stream of the collective life of the tribe. The other main characteristic of the age was that life was not divided into distinct functional departments, but was more or less an integral whole cast in the mould of tribal mores symbolized in myths. From time to time there appeared, especially in Oriental countries, persons who drew their inspiration not from tribal mores but from what they felt to be divine revelation. They delivered the Message they were charged with, not to any particular tribe, but to the people of the whole region in which they lived and exhorted them to worship, instead of the mythical tribal deities, the one true God and to follow the law of life laid down by Him through His chosen prophets. Thus, it was the age in which human mind was not yet mature enough to think or act in the light of its own reason and experience but had to put implicit faith either in the traditions of the tribe or in the tenets of revealed religion.

During the next stage in Cultural Revolution called the philosophical age we find several instances of the endeavor to evolve ways of thinking and living independently of mythology and religion, based on man's moral consciousness and speculative reason which could be called humanistic philosophies. Gautam Buddha in India, Confucius and Laotse in China are the best known figures among the founders of such philosophies of life. But in course of time each of these early manifestations of humanism grew, more or less into a new religion with its own creed and ritual.

A fresh development of humanism is seen in the Greece of the classical period which represents the golden age of Greek art, literature,

philosophy and science. But this humanistic culture was confined to a small intellectual class of free-thinkers. So it did not come into conflict with the mythological religion which guided the lives of the bulk of the Greek people.

The latter phase of the philosophical age was marked by the appearance of Islam, the last of the series of the great revealed religions and its earnest endeavor to bring about an understanding between reason and revelation. Islam announced that the course of divine guidance through which man had been passing for thousands of years was now complete. The prophet of Islam was “the seal of the prophets” that is, the last of the line of messengers of God sent to show the “straight path” to man. This was a recognition of the fact that human mind had then come of age and could be trusted to seek spiritual and moral guidance from the accumulated treasure of divine revelation and to acquire knowledge of the physical world in the light of his own reason and experience. It was the first charter of freedom to the human mind and to secular science conceded by any religion.

The large measure of freedom given by Islam to its followers generated a powerful creative impulse, first in Arabia and then in other Muslim countries which led, during the next five hundred years, to remarkable progress in science and philosophy, in fine arts and useful arts, in trade and industry, in government and administration throughout the world of Islam. Another understanding between reason and revelation was worked out in Europe during the Renaissance – that is the rebirth of Humanism in Italy and Western Europe under the indirect influence of the classical Greek thought exercised through Arab Muslims in Spain and Sicily, followed by the direct influence of Greek scholars who migrated to Indian cities after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople. The reformed protestant Christianity and later the Roman Catholic Church, had to come to terms with the new humanistic movement. This was the beginning of what we call the Modern Age when man achieved a new faith in harmony with reason which gave him complete intellectual freedom and made him the architect of his own destiny.

The most fruitful use which the modern Western mind made of its newly acquired freedom was that it emancipated the empirical method in the physical sciences from the arbitrary rule of speculative reason and developed it into a more objective, controlled, and verifiable procedure

called the Scientific Method and thus inaugurated the third stage in the evolution of human culture – the age of science.

Armed with the new method of investigation, the Western mind made phenomenal progress in all departments of cultural life – in physical and social sciences, in art and literature, surgery and pharmacy, in agriculture, trade and industry, in navigation and exploration. In social life the principle of the freedom and dignity of the individual helped in promoting democracy, created in the minds of the people a sense of responsibility and self-respect, order and discipline, initiative and enterprise and a considerable measure of tolerance.

The modern Western culture continued on its course of material, social and cultural progress so long as it was guided by the spiritual light of Christianity and the moral insight of humanism. But in the last decades of the nineteenth century its faith in these two guiding principles began to decline and though outwardly life seemed to keep up its breath-taking pace of progress, inwardly its moral roots were exposed to decay. This was due to three main reasons. Firstly, the intoxicating success of science in revealing the secrets of Nature goaded the Western mind to use this talisman for unveiling the mystery of the ultimate reality as well. But the scientific method which was especially designed for the study of the phenomenal world failed to work beyond its limits and its failure opened the way for skepticism.

Secondly, the strictly objective attitude divorced from all consideration of moral ends or values, required for the use of the scientific method, conditioned the mind to see and accept things merely as objects of nature or facts of life, quite irrespective of their being right or wrong, useful or harmful, This gave rise to the fallacious notion that correspondence to empirically observed facts was the only form of truth and the imponderable religious or moral truth had no validity.

Thirdly, the unlimited possibilities of increasing material prosperity and power fanned the desire for these coveted objects which, in the atmosphere of unrestricted individual freedom, gave birth to Capitalism and Imperialism. These tyrannical forces played a leading role in undermining the moral and spiritual influence of Humanism and Christianity. On the other hand, Communism, which was a negative reaction to Capitalism and Imperialism not only carried skepticism to the logical extreme of unbelief by rejecting the idea of any objective



moral values but dealt the death blow to individual freedom, which was the foundation of modern culture, by using methods of violence for enforcing economic and social justice.

The cultural situation in the Western world today is that even in the democratic countries the tendency to reject all spiritual and moral values is growing apace and the loss of faith in God or any Universal Purpose has divested man of faith in himself. The older generations are through force of habit putting up with the purposeless life in the industrial society. But in the younger generation a tremendous wave of unrest has arisen and is threatening to assume the proportions of a mighty storm which, at this critical moment when life is without an anchor, spells utter destruction. Still there are people with a firm belief in humanism or Christianity or in a synthesis of the two, who are deeply concerned with the problem of arresting the course of the coming storm. In the communist countries the suppressed urge of individual freedom raising its head here and there, is being ruthlessly crushed. Moreover, nationalistic sentiments which had been temporarily overwhelmed by international communism seem to be reviving with a vengeance putting a great strain on the relations between neighboring countries and increasing the danger of the outbreak of atomic war of annihilation.

Turning to Islam which had in a way heralded the advent of the modern age, or the age of science, we find that as long as the impulse created by synthesis between faith and reason which had released the springs of the creative energy in the Muslim mind, lasted, the Muslim world continued to advance in its course of all round progress.

But when owing to causes which are too complex to be analyzed in the short space of a brief introductory article, faith in the Muslim mind lost its healthy, vigor and self-confidence, it shied away from reason, withdrew itself into its own shell and lost all contact with the outside world. This was the beginning of an era of cultural stagnation through which the great bulk of the Muslim community throughout the world is still passing.

The point we have made here needs some elaboration. It is a well-known phenomenon in history that a culture-group which has a healthy and firm faith in Divine Providence or in a benevolent moral world order, is not afraid of an encounter with other cultures, but welcomes

it not only as a challenge which shakes it out of its placid complacency and spurs it to greater initiative and effort, but also as a fertilizing influence which makes its own culture richer and more productive. But when faith grows weaker or ossifies into dogmatism, the culture-group develops an insular outlook and treads more and more to live in intellectual isolation, with the consequence that the mind stagnates, losing the capacity to adjust itself to the changing world. Instances of this are found both in the history of Islamic culture as well as in that of the Christian culture of the West. The culture-community created by Islam came into early contact with several highly developed civilizations – the Greco-Roman, the Iranian, the Buddhist and Hindu civilizations. As Islam had infused into the mind of its followers a healthy spirit of inquiry and assimilation, every encounter with an alien culture moved them to a new endeavor and a new initiative to assimilate all the healthy elements in the other culture which could harmonize with the spiritual and moral principles of Islam. Later when Islam had spread from North Africa to Central Asia, the Islamic world itself presented the spectacle of the unity of religious faith and moral belief along with a diversity of local cultures which made it possible for the process of cultural cross-fertilization to continue to exercise its refreshing and stimulating influence. But about the middle of the thirteenth century when the international Islamic culture community disintegrated into local communities as a result of Mongol invasion and the cultural contacts between them became fewer, they developed an isolationist tendency with the consequent intellectual stagnation.

Cultural relations between the Islamic world and West- European countries were maintained through Spain up to the middle of 15<sup>th</sup> century and helped them as we have already seen, in the development of a scientific outlook. When the local Christian population revolted against the last Arab state in Spain, annihilated or drove out the ruling community, and tried as far as they could, to obliterate all traces of the Arab Islamic culture, they had their punishment in being condemned to a life of intellectual backwardness for centuries. Still there was some contact between the Christian and the Muslim countries in the form of trade carried on between the East and the West through Arabia, until the end of the century when Vasco de Gama discovered the sea-route to the East round the Cape of Good Hope. After that the inter-continental

trade was diverted to the new route and Arabia as well as most of the other Muslim countries were completely cut off from the people of the West and their culture. Only Turkey under the Ottoman rule had constant hostile encounters with the West which could not lead to any cultural exchanges.

The following centuries represented the age of the phenomenal all round progress in the Western civilization to which we have already alluded. But the Islamic world was almost completely unaware of and uninfluenced by these wonderful achievements of the human mind. Only when European powers tried either under cover of trade, or openly, to bring Muslim countries under their political domination, did the Islamic world have, after a very long time, a fresh encounter with the people of Europe who were now in possession of the immense resources of the modern Western culture.

That was just the time when the Islamic world was passing through a period of disintegration. Even the cultural solidarity which had been maintained during the decline of the political supremacy of the Caliphate of Baghdad was lost after the dissolution of the Caliphate as a result of the Mongol invasion. The Muslims in the various nation-states had already assumed an isolationist attitude which had hampered the movement of thought and led to the stagnation of the mind. For centuries they had not been able to make any significant addition to their stock of physical and social sciences. In trade and industry, in political organization and military potential, they were far behind the Western powers. So they had lost the self-confidence which they had possessed from the beginning of the Islamic era to the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> and to some extent to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when they had unhesitatingly established contact with other cultures and opened their mind to the intellectual influences from the Greco-Roman, Iranian, Buddhist and Hindu cultures. It was their lack of self-confidence which made them incapable of having the right attitude to the modern West. Some abjectly capitulated to the onslaught of the modern Western culture, but the bulk of the Muslim community shut themselves up in the stronghold of isolation with the result that they developed a general attitude of alienation not only from non-Muslims in their own land but even from Muslims differing from them on minor points of religious belief or practice.

So the situation today is that both the modern Western civilization and the world of Islam are passing through a grave spiritual crisis. The West has by means of modern science and technology gained the whole world, but is in the danger of losing its own soul. In spite of their tremendous progress and their immense political and economic power, the Western people find their life without an anchor, being tossed about by the stormy waves of time. On the other side people in the world of Islam are clutching with both hands what is now left of their faith. But it is a passive faith without life or movement which instead of inspiring them with courage, confidence and the will to live, tends to induce depression, frustration and fear. They are afraid of reason, science, action, progress – afraid, indeed of life itself and are looking for a haven of safety which is nowhere to be found in the world of today.

As a matter of fact it is not the Muslims alone but all those peoples still believing in religion in the East and the West (where their number is not as small as one would suppose) whose faith shows this passiveness and this fear of the dangers of the modern age. The fear, however, is by no means unfounded as the world today is sitting on a volcano which may erupt any day and destroy the whole mankind and the whole edifice of human civilization built over many thousand years.

So many sensitive and sensible persons in the East and the West, who realize this horrible and imminent danger, are in search of a philosophy of life calculated to reconcile the conflict between individualism and collectivism and between material and moral values causing all this unrest and to restore peace not only in the outside world but also in the minds of men. Some of them think such a philosophy can only emerge out of a new synthesis of reason and revelation. They feel it to be the most pressing need of the modern age and a challenge to all the great religions to find, in their respective ways, and if possible, in cooperation with one another. To work out such a synthesis, followers of Islam who claim to be bearers of the universal Divine message, have a special responsibility to make their contribution to this collective effort by making a critical study, on the one side, of the modern Western culture and on the other side of Islam and the Islamic culture and to find out how far and in what way they can be brought into harmony with each other. The greatest emphasis has to be laid on the diagnosis of the maladies which have affected the robust corpus of the Western

culture and are now threatening to attack the not so robust bodies of other cultures and on the attempt to find out how far Islam offers a cure for them. With this purpose in view, a band of scholars including students of Islam and other religions, as well as of cultural history and philosophy, have organized themselves into. “Islam and the Modern Age Society”, which plans in addition to publishing books and holding seminars and conferences, to bring out two quarterly journals – “Islam Aur Asr-e-Jadeed” in Urdu and “Islam and the Modern Age” in English requesting Eastern and Western scholars Muslim and non- Muslim – to contribute articles on the following subjects:

- (1) Critical examination of various aspects of the modern Western culture pointing out the elements which are in harmony with the spiritual and moral spirit of Islam and other religions.
- (2) A study of the teachings of Islam and other religions with special reference to the points which can help in solving the problems of the modern age.
- (3) Contribution of world religions, especially Islam, to the common intellectual and cultural heritage of man.
- (4) Discussion of the ways in which Islam and other religions can cooperate to meet the challenge of the growing skepticism and unbelief throughout the world.
- (5) Study of the movements of liberalization and modernization in Muslim and other religious communities.
- (6) Review of books relevant to the objects mentioned above.

The Urdu journal started publication early in 1969 and has completed the first year of its life. The first issue of the English journal is being published with the prayer that it may, in its own humble way, be of some service to the cause to Islam of Humanity, and of Truth.

(Inaugural Issue of Islam and the Modern Age, May 1970)

## Religion and Human Mind in the Light of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine's Thought

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The life in this world has perplexed intellectuals and philosophers. There are numerous creatures in this world. Man is one of them. Some consider him a mere creature which is born, develops, spends a specific time in this world and disappears forever. Others consider this world as one the phase of a continuous life.

Man has used his mind to discover this life. Sometimes he is right in his thinking while otherwise he loses the way and is misguided. To Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine (1928–2012), the man who uses his mind in accordance with the divine guidance is successful. All animals have been given mind but the man has been bestowed with the super mind. Man can reason, inculcate and infer and reach a logical conclusion. To Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine there is no clash between religion and reason. All teachings of Islam are based on common sense. All people have got reason and mind but this mind may lead them to corruption and disaster. But if this mind is guided by the divine guidance, the holy Book, the man leads a life of purity and piousness. To him there are signs in the Quran to look into and there are signs in the universe to ponder upon. According to Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine, the holy Quran is the divine message of God to His mankind irrespective of their colour, race, tribe and region. It is the guidance to every person in the world whether he is rich or poor, white or black, and ruler and the ruled.

The world of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed some great scholars who had contributed extensively for the promotion of Islam and to establish it as a complete code of life. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine had secured a respectable place in them. He had shown in practical terms how Islam could be pressed into the service of the modern people and their day-to-day problems. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine started his mission at a time when all Muslim countries were under direct or indirect subjugation of the Western colonial rulers.

After a long period of decline of Muslim power, the Muslim mind also eclipsed. The supremacy of western civilization in the later centuries gave the impression that the revival of Muslims is almost impossible. Due to the erosion of knowledge and decline of scientific advancement in Muslim land after the fifteenth century, the Muslims fell prey to the superstition. But since the nineteenth century there have been some of the great scholars of Islam who managed to drag Muslims out of the deep sea of decline. One of these great saviors of Muslims was Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine who was able to emancipate Muslim mind from superstition and illusion on the basis of Qur'anic principles. He also managed to liberate Muslim mind from narrow-mindedness to openness. He presented a moderate image of Islam as the religion of Islam has been very easy and moderate religion but some of its followers have presented it as a very rigid and extreme one.

Born on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1928 in Marrakech, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine belongs genealogically to a great renowned Sharifian Idrissi family called Ait Bihi –a family of noble lineage as they descend from Mulay Idris I, one of the grand sons of the Prophet Muhammad (saws). He founded the Islamic movement *Usrat al-Jamā'a* in 1981 with the sole objective of establishing Islam in every aspect of life. This movement afterward took the motto of al-'Adl wal Ihsān. The followers of Hizb al-'Adl wal Ihsān are now not confined to Morocco alone, they are spread throughout the world.

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine was a man of versatile ingenuity. He showed in practical terms how Islam could be used today to solve the problems of Muslims in modern ages. It was his literature that provided the bases for Islamic political system, economic system, cultural system, social system and so on. In "A Dialogue with Honorable Democrats" 1994, "On the Economy" 1995, "Shūra and Democracy" 1996, "Dialogue of the Past and the Future" 1997, and "Dialogue with an Amazighit Friend" 1997, Sheikh Yassine sets forth the view of the school of the Prophetic Method as for a number of contemporary values and principles such as democracy, capitalist and socialist economy, Amazighism and other topics. This comprehension of Islam as a complete code of life, and straightforward expression earned him the hostility of many; while many others appreciated efforts and

enthusiastically followed him. His life was dedicated to unite various sects under the banner of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine's pen was prolific and forceful. His major contribution lies in presenting an up-to-date shariah system for the modern Muslims. His life was like an open book. He was a specimen of what a man in general and a true believer in particular should be.

To Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine, Islam is a religion based on Kitab wa Sunnah i.e. law and method. Kitab is the law given by Allah and Sunnah is the method practiced by the prophet. In his book *Mihnatul al-Aql al-Muslim*, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine says:

«الدين شرعة ومنهاج. الشرعة ما جاء به القرآن، والمنهاج ما جاءت به السنة كما قال حبر الأمة سيدنا عبد الله بن عباس رضي الله عنهما. الشرعة خاطبت الإنسان، والمنهاج حقق النموذج الإنساني.»<sup>1</sup>

*The religion is a Law and a Method. As the Companion Abdullah ibn Abbas (may God be well pleased with him and his father) explained: "The Law is conveyed by the Qur'an and the Method (al-Minhâj) is conveyed by the sunna." The Law addressed the human being and the Method realized the human model.*<sup>2</sup>

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine presented Islam in pristine, pure, plain and everyday language that appealed the mind and heart of the people without engaging in philosophical jargons and abstract ideas. The style he adopted was so forceful, rational and impressive that it captivates the readers. He drew examples from day-to-day life, which naturally convinces the people to the viewpoint of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine. He did not produce a new brand of Islam. He removed false imaginary obstacles between the Creator and mankind. He brought people close to their Creator. He presented a pure and holistic image of Islam – free from all kinds of distortions, *Jahily* images and superstitious beliefs. . In his book *Mihnatul al-Aql al-Muslim*, he says:

كسر الإسلام الأصنام الحسية والمعنوية خطوة خطوة ونقل العقل الإنساني من الولاء للأوثان إلى الولاء لله الواحد القهار.<sup>3</sup>

*Islam broke the sensory and conceptual idols, step by step, and transferred the human mind from devotion to graven images to allegiance to the One Omnipotent God.*<sup>4</sup>



Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine presented Islam as a complete code of life. It is a way of life, a culture and civilization that captivates peoples' hearts and convinces their minds easily. It encompasses all aspects of human life. He systematically presented Islamic political system, economic system, cultural system, social system, ethical system and so on. The modern man is preoccupied with materialistic things. He cares more for worldly affairs because he uses only secular mind. In economics he cares more for money and interest, in political system he is afraid of the modern dictators. He reminds people that Allah is the creator, neither dollar nor interest money. And neither the military power of the modern Pharaoh or the economic supremacy of the contemporary Karun. In his book, *Islam and modernity* he elaborates and says:

صعبُ تذكير الإنسان الحديث أن الله هو خالقنا لا الإله الدولار، لا الإله الفائدة الربوية ولا القوة العسكرية لفرعون اليوم، ولا الهيمنة الاقتصادية لكارون هذا الزمان.<sup>5</sup>

*It is difficult to remind the modern man that God is our Creator, not the Dollar God, not the usurious interest God, neither the military power of today's Pharaoh, nor the economic dominance of today's Qarun.*

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine uprooted the confusion that Islam was but the name of some scattered teachings. He underlined the fundamental principles for most of these aspects based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. He urged that a Believer in Islam should accept it as a whole. Accepting some part of Islam and rejecting some other is a sheer hypocrisy and perversity. Allah says in the Qur'an:

أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتُكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ.<sup>6</sup>

*Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement. And Allah is not heedless of what you do. (Al-Quran, Chapter 2, Verse 85)*

In his book *Mihnatul Aql al-Muslim*, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine says:

طغت المادية الكافرة على العقول المغزوة حتى شاع عند السفهاء من الناس أن الإسلام شرع رياضة عجيبة هي الصلاة وحمية ناجحة هي الصيام، وضرية هي الزكاة، وهكذا.<sup>7</sup>

*Infidel materialism has invaded minds to such an extent that some stupid people believe that the salât (ritual prayer) is nothing more than weird exercise, that siyâm (the fasting of Ramadan) is some kind of rigorous diet, that zakât (the alms-due) is a form of taxation, and so on and so forth.*<sup>8</sup>

Some people claim to be saviours of Islam and Muslims. They hold seminars, conferences and other religious gatherings. They spend money to establish Islamic Khilafah. But they do not give importance to the basic teachings of Islam like Salat, Sawm or Zakat. Without establishing the basic pillars of Islam, some people are of the opinion, that Muslim rule is more important than these basic pillars of Islam. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine criticises this kind of people and presents the basic and real teachings of Islam. He says:

الصلاة طاعة يطيعها الجسم والعقل. الصلاة وقفة العبد أمام ربه يناجيه ويدعوه ويتضرع إليه. نداء المؤذن إليها نفير إلى الفلاح. الصلاة فلاح. من أضعافها وأخل بشرط من شروط اعتدالها واطمئنانها وخشوعها نقص دينه، وسقط على أم رأسه ولو ناضل بكل ماله وقواه ليقيم في زعمه الخلافة الإسلامية. وهكذا الزكاة، وهكذا الصيام، وهكذا الحج.<sup>9</sup>

*The ritual prayer is an act of obedience performed by the body and the mind. The ritual prayer is the servant standing before his Lord, conversing with Him, appealing to Him and humbly submitting to Him. The muezzin's call to prayer is an appeal to salvation. The ritual prayer is a salvation. If someone neglects it or fails to meet any of the conditions of its correct performance, with tranquility and humility, his Islam is imperfect. His deeds will not be sanctioned, even if he strives with all his wealth and strength to establish his alleged Islamic Caliphate. The same applies to the alms-due [zakât], fasting [siyâm], and pilgrimage [hajj].*<sup>10</sup>

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine was not a blind follower of Islam. He was against all preconceived beliefs without critical evaluation. He clearly makes difference between the human reason and the revelation. To him human reason does not guarantee the true guidance but if it was accompanied with the light of revelation, the man certainly will be a successful in this life and the hereafter. In his book *Mihnatul al-Aql al-*

*Muslim*, he elaborates the difference between the divine revelation and the secular rationalism. He says:

يأخذ العقل الآلة علومه عن الكون بواسطة الحواس، وبواسطة البديهيات الفطرية، ثم بواسطة المنطق الناشئ، لديه من استقراء الثابتات والمترابطات والمستلزمات. ويأخذ العقل الكامل عن الوحي ما هو من عالم الغيب، وعن المدارك المشتركة ما هو من عالم الشهادة<sup>11</sup>.

*The instrumental mind obtains its knowledge of the cosmos by means of the senses and the natural instincts, and then by means of the logic that it develops from the investigation of invariables and inter-related consequences. The perfect mind obtains from Revelation knowledge of the Unseen, and from the common faculties knowledge of the visible realm.*<sup>12</sup>

Sheikh considers that every Muslim is a caller to Islam. He is upset to see a large number of Muslims everywhere in the world who have dropped their mission and are busy in worldly business. They have kept themselves away from the common man. They are pessimistic and self-defeated. Their forefathers travelled away from their homes holding the light of Islam spreading all over the world. He tried to encourage Muslims to come out of their secluded places and spread the light of Islam in the world. He says:

أما الآن فالمسلمون حاملو دعوة الإسلام قابعون في زاوية متواضعة منهزمة جدا من زوايا التاريخ المعاصر والواقع الحضاري المعاصر رغم أعدادهم الكبيرة<sup>13</sup>.

*Now, the Muslims, the bearers of the call of Islam, are in a very humble and defeated corner of contemporary history and contemporary civilizational reality despite their large numbers.*

He energized his fullest efforts towards propagating Islam and to clear up all confusions that have been labelled against it. His heart was convinced of its truthfulness and supremacy to all other religions and ideologies. It was only then that he accepted Islam in the true sense after comprehending it perfectly.

Under the influence of Western thought, the Muslims were driven away from Islam. They had three different reactions to the Western culture and thought. The first was that of total subservience to the Western thought, as done by Mustafa Kamal in Turkey. The second was the manifestation of defeatist mentality and having an apologetic

approach to the West. Islam was presented in a way that it conforms to the Western thought, culture and modern science. That was the approach of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of India and his followers. The third reaction was that of the fundamentalists, who rejected the Western thought and culture outright without having a critical evaluation.

In the crisis of ideological conflict, scholars like Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine adopted a new line of action. He categorically explained that Islamic culture and thought is much superior to the rest of cultures. It is supreme to the West and its ideologies. Muslims should not surrender to the Western thought. According to Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine, Islam was something to be rediscovered; it was not something to be invented; for it was already there, and had held the field for the last fourteen hundred years. He also criticized the approach of the traditionalists, who blindly rejected all what is western or invented by the West.

According to him, Islam is a society in motion and if any attempt is made to arrest the process of motion that would be damaging to the cause of Islam. He observed that the need of the hour was to re-think Islam in modern context and make Islam relevant to the special needs of today.

Through his writings, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine explained how reformation could be brought about in various fields, political, social, economic, and cultural and so on. He shaped the ideas of people into Islamic mould. He insisted the government of Morocco to establish Islam. He mobilized people's attention towards implementing *Shariah* in all aspects of human life. He put Umer Bin Abdul Aziz as role model for Muslim rulers.

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine "invited the king to the Islamic method of *shūra* (Islamic-born democracy), repentance, justice, and redemption by restoring to the Moroccan people the wealth he had amassed through plundering the country's abundant resources. To urge him to make the requisite change, the Sheikh set forth the illustrious exemplary model of 'Umar ibn 'Abdelaziz (may God be pleased with him)-the fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph- to be followed."<sup>14</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Islam and Muslims were harshly condemned by many orientalist and anti-Islamic groups. In the contemporary era any Muslim inviting people to the way of Allah, especially after 9/11 was considered a terrorist and could be imprisoned

without any crime committed by him. There was preconception that a devout Muslim was a fundamentalist and backward. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine says in his book:

يُحكَم على الإسلامي المتحدث عن الله مسبقاً بأنه متعصب وظلامي ومتخلف وإرهابي ومُدان فوراً دون محاكمة<sup>15</sup>.

*An Islamist who speaks for God is condemned in advance as a fanatic, oppressive, backward, terrorist, and is immediately condemned without trial.*

The Islamic Culture was made synonymous and equal to anti-human culture, barbarism and terrorism throughout the world. Backwardness, underdevelopment and anti-progress were equalized with Islam. It was claimed that Islam barred women from participating in the development of nation. Islam was accused of being advanced by the dint of swords. As a result, the modern educated Muslims had the illusion that their culture is inferior to that of the West.

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine used his prolific writings to remove those confusions and to establish the fact that Islam was and is always superior to all cultures of the world. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine fought against all fronts using his 'gifted' pen and forceful speeches and dispelled all confusions raised against Islam.

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine built his own character on Prophetic model (Minhaj) and tried throughout his life to mould others' characters as well in the same direction. The life example of the Prophet (saws) was the only model that he emulated and urged others to emulate. In doing so, he had to offer great sacrifices and face tortures and jails by ruling dictators. He was a symbol of courage, truthfulness, straightforwardness and simplicity. He never tried to mince matters. He always spoke a spade a spade. He raised his self-esteem so high that did not allow his head to bow before any tyrants, nor did he seek any advantage for his own person from them. His truthfulness sometimes caused him to face grave dangers even to face imprisonment. He was ready to accept death sentence happily than to offer an appeal of apology to them.

After writing a letter to his majesty the king asking him to follow Islamic *Shariah*, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine was tried in the Court and sentenced to imprisonment and later sent to mental hospital claiming he was not sane.

He worked whole of his life for the Sovereignty of Allah and to eliminate lordship of humans over others. His Iman (belief) in Allah was firm like mountains. His sole objective was to attain the Pleasure of Allah and forgiveness from Him. He did not allow himself to use harsh language against others' severe criticism. His life was full of forgiveness and love for others.

He was not the leader of the Muslims in Morocco alone, but was in fact a leader of the Muslims of the world. The Muslims remember him in great reverence. His books have been translated in different languages. The seminars and conferences on Islam cite his books as reference in high terms. Many research articles have been published on his life and works in esteemed journal worldwide. Many books are being written on him throughout the globe by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This is a clear reflection that Muslims of today need guidance and lessons from the life and mission of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine. We hope that his books would soon be translated into South Asian and South East Asian languages. We also hope that his message would be going now eastward.

Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine's thought has influenced many educated people especially the youth. They found in him the person of their expectation, the symbol of courage and determination, a true realization of word and deed, an ocean of knowledge, a devoted personality for the cause of Islam and capable of dealing with the present issues in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah. His magnum opus *Minhajun Nobowa* played an important role in captivating the hearts of the youth.

The movement of *Hizb-al-adl wal-Ihsan* that he established in 1985 is not confined now to Morocco alone. Its activities reached the larger part of the globe. Its literatures were widely circulated in many international languages. *Hizb-al-adl wal-Ihsan* is accepted as a moderate Islamic movement of the 20th century. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine did not resort to violence in his whole lifetime. He resisted the violence of anti-Islamic groups with wisdom, patience and forgiveness. He did not allow his companions to be aggressive for others. Therefore, *Hizb-al-adl wal-Ihsan* could work peacefully in many countries of the world.

Although Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine was born in a country where the majority was of Muslims, but he was open to all. He travelled to the different parts of the world. The people in this multicultural world belong to different religions and regions. Even in a religion, they belong

to different sects and schools of thought. The Almighty Allah has created the people and made them different in their colours, races and languages. But these differences are there not to fight but to recognise each other. Short-sighted are the people who use violence to dominate others. The intelligent is the one who is patient and uses reason to solve the confronting issues. This was how Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine addressed the issue of difference of opinion.

One of the most significant contributions of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine has been the gradual and continual elaboration of an impressive system of ideas. He could be considered one of the most systematic thinkers of modern Islam. It is because of the impact of Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine that even those who have differences with him have come increasingly to premise that there is a moderate and reasonable system in Islam. A person could disagree with many of his ideas with sound reasoning and proofs; but it should not exceed the limit of decency and moderation. He always kept silent and resorted to Allah in the face of all criticisms. He was rarely seen to be influenced or agitated by such criticisms. He always appreciated constructive remarks and had in fact changed or modified some of his writings by the suggestions of some critics.

May Allah forgive his shortcomings, as no one apart from the Prophets is free from errors, and rest his soul in the Highest Place in Jannah (the paradise) Aameen!.

#### NOTES

1. Mihnatul Aql al-Muslim, p. 31.
2. Muslim Mind on Trial, p. 19.
3. Mihnatul Aql al-Muslim, p. 17.
4. Muslim Mind on Trial, p. 8.
5. Al-Islam wal Hadasa, p. 15.
6. Al- Quran, Chapter Al-Baqara, Verse, 85.
7. Mihnatul Aql-al-Muslim, p. 41.
8. Musilm mind on Trial, p. 28.
9. Mihnatul Aql al-Muslim, p. 44.
10. Muslim Mind on Trial, p. 30.
11. Mihnatul Aql al-Muslim, p. 8.
12. Muslim Mind on Trial, p. 2.

13. Muqaddamat Fil Minhaj, pp. 10-11.
14. <http://yassineconferences.net/en/index/biography.shtml>.
15. Islam and Modernity, p. 13.



## Muslim Understanding of Hindu Religion

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In the light of the Qur'ānic declaration that God had sent to every community His messengers and prophets, Indian Muslims have from time to time, tried to find out who were the God's messengers sent to India. This question has often led to the discussion about the actual position of Hindu religion in the broader context of world religions. Such questions were raised even as far back as the time when Muslims entered the country. After the conquest of Sind, the Muslim jurists had to decide what status the Hindus were to be accorded. After due deliberation the *'ulama* (Religious Scholars) of the time agreed to consider the Hindu a people similar to the People of the Book that is *Shibh-i-ahl-i-kitab*. This title allowed them to remain in the Muslim-dominated parts of the country as Hindus after the payment of the protection tax (*jizyah*). However, that was apparently a decision mainly based on political expediency. There was no attempt to study the question in depth and come to a formal legal decision about the actual religious status of Hinduism. Nevertheless, questions were asked seeking clarification about the religious position of Hinduism. For example, the Muslims wanted to know what Scriptures were revealed to the Hindus, who their Prophets were. To such queries the answer was in most cases positive. The Muslims, in the light of the Qur'ānic declaration, that to every community Prophets were sent, could not categorically deny that the Hindus had received divine message. But since the names of many prophets, including those of India had not been mentioned in the Qur'an, they usually preferred to take a non-committal position about Indian prophets. On one hand, they could not deny the possibility of prophets having been sent to a large country like India. On the other hand, they did not like to commit themselves as to their identity. We give two typical statements by two eminent Indian sufi *alims*, Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janān, (1691-1781) and Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1823), to show how Muslim divines have been reacting to such questions.

In response to a letter asking what the religious status of Hindu religion was. Mirza Mazhar wrote:

*Hindu scriptures say that after creating the world Providence revealed for the purpose of guiding the inhabitants of India a book, called Vedas, through an angel who is known as Brahma and commonly believed by Hindus to be an instrument of the creation of the world.*

The Vedas are divided into four parts and contain divine commandments as well as account of the events of the past and the future. The Hindu seers and sages derived from the Vedas six religious systems and founded their faith and tenets on them. These systems are known as *Dharma Shastra*, the science of faith or theology, similar to our *ilm-al-kalam*. Further, they divided all members of the society into four groups, prescribing a separate way of life for each of them. This is called *Karma Shastra* and can be equated with our *ilm-fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). The Hindus do not believe in the (Islamic) philosophy of abrogation (*naskh*), whereas, logically speaking, change in religious faith and practice is inevitable due to the exigencies of time and changes in human nature. They have divided time into four periods, calling each of them a *yug* (age) and have assigned appropriate features to each of them. The later accretions to the systems are really of no importance. All Hindu sects fully agree on the question of the unity. They regard the universe as God's creation and believe that it will finally come to an end. They also believe that ultimately everyone will have to face the day of reckoning.

The Hindu sages are well-versed in rational and traditional sciences. They are abstemious and celibate, and prefer to live in ecstasy. Although the Hindus worship idols, yet it is not due to *shirk*, (associating someone with God). It has other reasons which will be discussed later.

The Hindu wise men have divided the span of human life into four stages the first is the stage of acquiring knowledge, the second is that of earning livelihood and raising a family, the third is that of reforming personal behavior and purifying the soul, and the fourth is that of practicing celibacy and seclusion. This later stage, they consider, to be the highest goal of human life. According to them, this leads to ultimate salvation (*najat-i-kubra*), which they call *Mahamukti*. The moral code of Hindu religion is of a high standard.

No doubt the Hindu religion had divine sanction in the past. But now, after the advent of Islam, it is no more valid. Although the Qur'an speaks only of Judaism and Christianity as having been repealed by Islam but, as a matter of fact, there were many such religions which were ultimately abrogated and repealed. It should also be noted that according to the Qur'anic verses India could not have been left without divine messengers and prophets. The account of life of Indian sage and seers found in Hindu scriptures suggest that they were men of high caliber and character. Certainly Divine Mercy did not forget this vast land.

Before the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), messengers were sent to various communities. People were bound to follow none but their own prophets. Since the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last in the series and is the prophet for the entire universe and for all time to come, he is now to be obeyed by everyone. His religion Islam has repealed all other religions. People coming after him, but not those who preceded him, can be considered infidels (Kafir) if they do not follow him.

According to the Qur'an, God has spoken only of a few of the prophets by their names, and has referred to many of them without mentioning their names. It is, therefore, advisable to remain silent with regard to the particulars of the unnamed prophets of India. We are not obliged to follow them, but we must think well of them. The same should be our attitude towards the prophets, of Persia and other places, who preceded the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is also contingent upon us to believe that those who in pre-Islamic days followed the unnamed prophets had reached the stage of *najat*, salvation, in the life hereafter. In short, we must remember that without full proof no one should ever be declared an infidel (*kafir*).

The underlying idea of what is regarded to be the idolatry of the Hindus is that they draw a picture or carve an image of certain angels whom God has given some controlling power over the world, or of some saints and seers whose souls are believed to exert some kind of influence over the affairs of the world, or some living people believed to be immortal like the saint Khidr, and turn to them in time of need. By doing so they gradually establish a relation with the person on whose picture or image they concentrate. This is very much similar to the *dhikr-i-rabitah*, common among Muslim Sufis, in which a disciple

draws inspiration from concentrating on the mental image of his spiritual leader *shaikh*. The difference between these two is that unlike the Hindus the Sufis do not draw a real picture or carve an image of their *shaikh*. Nevertheless, the Hindus in respect of belief are not similar to the infidels of Arabia. Unlike the former, the latter believed that the idols were independent powerful deities in opposition to Allah. Allah, in their eyes, was only the Master of Heavens whereas others, they believed, were gods of the earth. Undoubtedly this is *shirk*, the act of associating someone with God.

The prostration of the Hindus before their idols is not by way of worship. It is a way of greeting and salutation which they call *dandvat*, a form of respect common among them for elders, parents and teachers. Finally, it should also be noted that belief in *tanasukh*, transmigration of soul from one body to another, does not necessarily signify infidelity.

Shah Abdul Aziz also faced a similar question. He was asked: 'It is believed that in India there have been many *avatars*, God's incarnations. The Hindus regard some of them as creators and some as their spiritual leaders. Also there were powerful rulers and kings in India whom many people obeyed. However, the question is who were the prophets sent to the Hindus and what were the books, in their own or in other languages, revealed to them? And if the Hindus were not blessed with prophets or books, how could that be explained in the face of the Qur'anic declaration that no community was left without a warner.'

Answering the question Shah Abdul Aziz wrote:

*The meaning of the Qur'anic verse: "And there has been no community without a warner" is that all over the world God has sent warners whose duty was to prevent people from committing sin and neglecting their duties. But all of them were not called prophets. Some of them were known as learned people and preachers, and some as saints and sages. If we dig up the past of the people of certain countries like Greece or Ethiopia or Turkistan (or countries of Central Asia), we will hardly find there signs of any messenger or prophet. Most probably the concept of a messenger or a prophet would be found to have been unknown to them. But this does not mean that they did not exalt their ascetics and mystics to a very high place.*

Undoubtedly, according to the circumstances in which men are placed, God treats them differently. He judges them on the basis of the knowledge bestowed on them. For example, in the Arab countries

from Yemen to Syria and Egypt we find a similarity in the pattern of divine guidance. In that region God sent His messengers and prophets equipped with miracles and also revealed divine books to them. For, the people in these areas were accustomed to accept a message only if it was delivered to them personally by a holy man or was presented in a written form. The messenger had first to convince the people of his bona fides by presenting his credentials, as we find among the kings and rulers through trusted couriers, furnishing them with royal insignia like palanquin, elephant and troops. Thus for the guidance of the people of the Arabian region God chose the same method.

In India, however, that method was not fully workable because the Hindus believed that whenever God wished to guide people He incarnated Himself in the person of some mortal being, and spoke through him. Consequently, God was supposed to have frequently revealed Himself to the Hindus in this way. They recorded the preaching and parables of their 'godly' preachers for as long time as it appears from their renowned books like *Yoga Vashishtha*, *Ramayana* and *Bhagwatgita*, till a man named Vyas was born among them. He, under the influence of the devil, corrupted the religion of Hindus and introduced them to polytheism and idolatry. Thus, they became polytheists and took to image-worship.

The Hindus, on the basis of religious and social practice, have divided themselves into different groups like the *Kayasthas*, *Khattris* and *Mahajans*. Such a division is a common phenomenon in almost every religious community of the world. For example, in the ancient days there were separate commandments for different Israelite groups. In fact, the Hindu law is in this regard quite similar to our own *shari'ah* in which certain laws are applicable only to a specific group. For example, the Hashimites, the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are forbidden to accept *zakat* and *sadaqat*. Similarly, no Muslim but those belonging to the Quraish tribe, is worthy of becoming the Caliph of the Muslim world. Also, consider the case of the polytheists of Arabia who, unlike the Jews and Christians, were prohibited from setting in the Arabian Peninsula even though they might have been willing to pay the protection tax (*jizyah*). In their case, it was specifically declared that nothing short of their accepting Islam or their victory over the Muslims in the battle-field would guarantee their safety in the Arabian region.

To conclude, we may say that the avatars of the Hindus were manifestation of the Reality, whether they were in the form of human beings, or in the form of an animal – like a lion or a fish. Such avatars were very much similar to the staff of Moses or the she-camel of Salih. In the process of time however, the ignorant among the Hindus, because of their inability to distinguish between the real and the manifest, regarded every one of them as the real God and thus went astray. Their case is quite similar to that of *ta ziyah-makers*, saint-worshippers, *Jalalis and Madaris* among Muslims.

#### NOTES

1. “Khawaja Khidr enjoys a reputation that is as wide as the Muslim world itself... (He) goes by various names, such as Raja Kidar, where Hindu influence is strong. In Bengal his name is Kawaj or Pir Badr. There may also be other local corruptions of the name, which one most always be prepared to meet. Khawaja Khidr is a legendary saint of Muslim lore, who is said to trace his connection to Noah, and throughout the Muslim world he is associated with water. Thus he comes to be a saint of the sea....” (Murry T. Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, Calcutta. 1959, p. 146).
2. Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan, *Kalimat-e-Tayyibat*, compiled by Hafiz Mohammed Ali Moradabadi, Maktba Matla al-Ulum, Moradabad, 1894, letter No. 14, pp. 27-29.
3. According to Hindu belief the three-faced god *Brahmu* has in him the power of creation, preservation and destruction. But his power of creation is represented by god Vishnu who has been incarnating himself in various mortal bodies who are called *avatars*. In the first instance the *avatars* were in the form of animals, like a fish, a tortoise, or a pig. Then he came in the man-animal form. In the third stage he started incarnating himself in full human form, such as in the form of Rama, Krishna and Buddha. Now his final arrival is awaited when he will appear as *Kilki avatar*.
4. This is strange: On one hand Shah Abdul - Aziz considers *Bhagwatgita* as one of the important books of Hindu religion and on the other hand he condemns its author Vyasa.
5. “From the Suhrawardi order has arisen the Jalali order. founded by Syed Jalal Bukhari, of Uchch, who lived from A.D. 1307 to 1374. The *Malang faqirs* are said to have some connection with the order, but according to other authorities they are an offshoot of the *Madaris* which seems more likely (Titus, M.T. *Islam in India and Pakistan*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 134).

6. "Accounts differ as to the manner in which the order was introduced into India. According to one account, the founder's name was Shah Badi-ud-Din Qutb-ul-Madar; it is related that he was a disciple of Mohammed Tayfur Shami, who is said to have been a Christian at one time; that he came to India from Syria and during his travels in north India made many disciples and converts to Islam. This account fixes the date of his death as A.D. 1436. Another account indicates that he was a converted Jew of the 11th century, from Aleppo. In all probability, the former date is more correct." (Ibid. p. 134)
7. Shah Abdul Aziz, *Fatawa-i-Azizi* (Persian text). Mujtabai Press, Delhi, 1311/1894, Vol. 1, pp. 140-141.

(Islam and the Modern Age, November 1973)

## Inter-faith Dialogue and the Quran

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The modernity was taken by the theologians, Ulama and modern-educated Muslim intellectuals in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as a westernization process and everything modern was opposed. The modernist intellectuals like Rifā'ah Rāfi' Tahtāwi of Egypt (1801-1873),<sup>1</sup> Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of India (1817-1898),<sup>2</sup> and Khayruddin Pasha of Tunisia (1822-1889)<sup>3</sup> were criticized and rejected.

Now modernity is considered as an integral part of Islamization. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979), Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960), Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (1897-1976), Abdul Hamid bin Badis (1889-1940), Malek Bennabi (1903/1905-1973) all opposed the westernization strongly and supported the modernity without any reservation in the name of *tajdid*.<sup>4</sup>

The *tajdid* applies unavoidably the modernity along line the revival of religion in its original form, as the principle of jurisprudence, the *ijtihad* is explained by the Muslim scholars. The *ijtihad* applies to an overhaul of the religion in accordance with the needs to reconstruct the thought coping with both modernity and revivalism simultaneously as explained by Abul Ala Maududi.

Most people do not distinguish between innovator and revivalist and very innocently take every innovation for a *tajdid*, Maududi comments. To him, a *mujaddid* is characterized by:

- a) A clear mind and penetrating vision,
- b) Unbiased straight thinking,
- c) Special ability to see the right path clear of all extremes and keep balance,
- d) Power to think independently of the contemporary and centuries-old social and other prejudices,
- e) Courage to fight against the evils of the time,
- f) Inherent ability to lead and guide, and



- g) An unusual competency to undertake *ijtihād* and the work of reconstruction.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from these qualities, a *mujaddid* must have acquired a thorough and comprehensive grasp of Islam, must be a perfect Muslim in thought and attitude, must have the acumen to distinguish between Islam and other than Islam in the finest detail, and must possess the ability to extract the truth from the welter of long-established falsehood. Without these extraordinary qualities nobody can claim to be a *mujaddid*, Maududi further explains. It is categorically wrong to harbor the impression that any person who invents a new way of life and presents it with force is a *mujaddid*.

Islamic revivalism, Maududi explains, is neither striking compromises with un-Islam facts, nor preparing new blends of Islam and other than Islam, but it is cleansing Islam from all the un-Godly elements and presenting and making it flourish in more or less in its original pure form.<sup>6</sup>

#### DEMOLISHER, NOT RENEWER

Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qaradhāwi (1926-2022) after having differentiated *tajdīd* from the *tajaddud* (modernization), criticized those trying to modernize religion along the line of westernization. He writes:

*It is wrong to title such intellectuals as mujaddid (renewer); they are the demolishers of religion (mubaddids), and not the mujaddids. They are not qualified to tajdīd. The tajdīd requires a return to the original form suggesting changes and corrections as per the changed time and space while ensuring its distinct features and spirit. In this situation (of tajdīd) we cannot replace the original form and spirit with an entirely new one thinking that the substance and essence is also changed. Impossibly in the tajdīd, a new construction is suggested after the old building is demolished. These people, titled by me as the demolishers, plan to destruction and demolition of the mosque, reconstruct in its place a church and call it the mosque wrongly. Those who title these demolishers, the mujaddids (the renewers) are in fact the disciple and trainee of the orientalists. A real mujaddid is a person who renews the religion for the sake of religion in the purview of religion. But those who modernize the religion for the sake of the interests of the East or the West along the line of the ideologies of the orientalists or atheists have nothing to do with the tajdīd.*<sup>7</sup>

This modernization of religion (*tajaddud*), or *tajdid* in the words of Al-Qaradhāwī is made in the varying forms on the apparently “reasonable grounds.” The following forms of this modernization are however, common, suggests Dr Akhtar Hussain Azmi:<sup>8</sup>

- i. In the modern age of development, the Shariah being implemented in fourteen centuries ago in the simple Bedouin Arab society may not be executed as such especially the Islamic punishments were now declared as “inhumane and merciless”.
- ii. The western concept of women empowerment is advocated with the claim of gender equality without any division of work or without any consideration of the biological difference between the two sexes. An oppressive and unjust treatment with the women in Islam is complained of.
- iii. The legislative position of hadith is overlooked by claiming the Quran the only source of Islamic Shariah. Thus, an arbitrary interpretation of the Quran is theorized and some individual and strange explanations are justified in the name of *ijtihad*.
- iv. Every thought and ideology of the West is applied hurriedly on Islam as to be in agreement with the Quran, and thus an apologia is formed.
- v. The golden legacy of Islamic thought produced by the Muslim ancestors in Islamic sciences is discorded through a hermeneutic study of the Quran without any engagement with the context as well as the external sources, and thus the most valuable contributions in the fields of *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh* and *kalām* are disgraced and the historical continuity is, thus cut off.
- vi. The Muslim modernists turn the masses into confused and embarrassed one ideologically and cause them cut their relations practically from their community because the modernists make maximum use of print and electronic media.
- vii. The Islamic movements, religious groups, the ulama and sufis are specially targeted by the modernists and their good-looking image is tarnished because it is the presence and acceptability of the religious forces in the masses that make the useless and innovative interpretations ineffective.
- viii. Since the modernists are not usually acceptable by the Muslim

masses, they are easily trapped by others or by the opportunist elements in the government itself.<sup>9</sup>

#### MODERNITY AND THE *IJTIHĀD*

The modernity and the traditionalism are combined as the two methodologies of Islamic thought in the novel institution of *ijtihād*. The *ijtihād*, a source of Islamic Shariah, is defined by the Muslim scholars as a process of re-understanding and re-implementation of the revealed texts- the Quran and the hadith- in the society keeping in view the changed circumstances and coping with modernity. The Quran and hadith form the eternally unchangeable revealed texts and the prime sources of Islamic Shariah. The understanding and execution of these texts after the death of the Prophet of Islam (saws) has been the product of efforts and are therefore, liable to change as per the needs of hour. This was ensured by the *ijtihād* that always welcome the modernity unhesitatingly.<sup>10</sup>

While elaborating the reconstruction of legal thought in Islam, Professor Muhammad Taqī Amīni (1926-1991) has rightly observed that the ever-changing society accepts usually the new modes and techniques in the life and sometimes new phases of life after a phase is over more pervading and all- comprehensive. In the later situation no partial amendment in Islamic law suffices; the overhaul of the entire legal system is needed instead.

Professor Amīni has elaborated the following obstacles in the reconstruction of Islamic legal system in the entirely-changed new phase of life:

- a) The dominating mentality of feudal-capitalist representation of religion- the legacy of deteriorating period of history.
- b) Ineffective and superficial consideration of the changed time and space while dealing with the law in the administration, government and society.
- c) Imbalance in the modern development and excessive impact of the changed situations on the society.
- d) Lack of will power as well as of leadership to the balance and moderation.

- e) The penetrating religious divisions and groupings deeply-rooted in the Muslim mind had made a daring decision nearly impossible.<sup>11</sup>

Despite of these obstacles in the reconstruction of Islamic legal thought, Professor Amīni academically provides the arguments from the Quran, hadith and the life of the companions of the Prophet of Islam (saws) in favor of unavoidably considering the changed situation in Islamic legislation with the hope that any stormy situation in future would have wavered the mind and compelled the Muslim intellectuals to prepare the ship in advance for the safeguard of community.<sup>12</sup> Professor Amīni has cited here the following historic event from the Quran:

*And ask the people of Moses concerning the town situated along the sea: how its people profaned the Sabbath when fish came to them breaking the water's surface on Sabbath days, and it would not come to them on other than Sabbath days. Thus, did We try them because of their disobedience. And recall when a party of them said: "Why do you admonish the people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish severely?" They said: "We admonish them in order to be able to offer an excuse before your Lord, and in the hope that they guard against disobedience." Then, when they forgot what they had exhorted, We delivered those forbade evil and afflicted the wrong-doers with a grievous chastisement because of their evil-doing. And when they persisted in pursuing that which had been forbidden, We said: "Become despised apes."<sup>13</sup>*

The emphasis on coping with modernity may not be limited to Islamic legal thought and to the legacy of jurisprudence; it extends to the interpretation of entire religious thought instead. The nature of revival (*tajdid*) itself requires a re-interpretation in the changed situation. Crossing the boundaries of traditionalism, the modernity should be taken into account, so that the relevance, utility and adaptability of the religion should be proved practically. Islamic thought welcomes all the changes in its paradigm and forms a new narrative meeting the contemporary needs and offers a new interpretation of religion.<sup>14</sup>

#### QURANIC UNIVERSALISM

The Quranic narrative of inter-faith dialogue needs to understand its approach to universalism. Muslims are obligated religiously to believe in all the revelations made by God to any prophet in the history. The

Quran says that those rooted in the knowledge and the faithful have firm faith in all the revelations:

*Those among them who are firmly rooted in knowledge and the believers, they believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you. They establish the Prayer and pay Zakāh, firmly believe in Allah and the Last Day, to them We shall indeed pay a great reward.*<sup>15</sup>

The Quran then declared categorically:

*(O Muhammad), We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob, and the offspring of Jacob, and Jesus and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David Psalms. We revealed to the Messengers We have already told you of, and to the Messengers We have not told you of; and to Moses Allah spoke directly.*<sup>16</sup>

The list of the Messengers of God here given is in the three groups, says Abdullah Yusuf Ali:

- i. The first group, Abraham's family, is the same as in the chapter *Al-Baqarah*. The Quran commands the faithful:  
Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.<sup>17</sup>
- ii. Then we have the tragic figures of Jesus, Jacob and Jonah, and whose mission was from a worldly point of view unsuccessful.
- iii. Then we have Aaron the priest and Solomon the King, both great figures but each subordinate to another primary figure, viz., Moses and David.<sup>18</sup>

John L. Esposito,<sup>19</sup> the famous orientalist of modern times, has cited some other verses of the Quran too in support of religious diversity and pluralism as:

*And do not dispute with the people of the Book except in the best manner, save with those who are wicked among them and say to them, "We have believed in that which has been sent down to us as well as in that which had been sent down to you.*

*Our God and your God is One, and to Him we have surrendered (as Muslims). (O Prophet,) We have likewise sent down the Book to you; therefore, those to whom We gave the Book before this, believe in it, and so do many of these people, and none but the disbelievers deny Our Revelations.*<sup>20</sup>

*O mankind, We created you from one man and one woman, and then divided you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize one another. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious of you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise.*<sup>21</sup>

#### BANI ADAM DISCOURSE

Mohammad Fathi Osman (1928-2010) has referred to the Quranic discourse of 'Children of Adam' in this context. According to this, diversity seems to be a part of divine creation, and the Quranic discourse encourages people to learn to handle their differences intellectually morally, and behaviorally, both within a single community and among multiple communities. The following verses were cited in this regard:

*We have indeed honored the children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided for them sustenance out of the good things of life, and favored them far above many of Our creatures.*<sup>22</sup>

*There shall be no compulsion in religion. The right way is henceforth distinct from error. He who rejects false deities and believes in God has indeed taken hold of a most firm support that never breaks. God hears all and knows all.*<sup>23</sup>

*The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one of them believes in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say, 'We hear and we obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord; to You we shall all return.'*<sup>24</sup>

The learned scholar argues that the following verse of the Quran recognises ethnic and racial pluralism and this requires a mutual cooperation and understanding:

*And among His signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors. In this there are clear signs indeed for those who are endowed with knowledge.*<sup>25</sup>

Fathi Osman contends that the Quran appreciates the maintenance of universal relations and global pluralism including not only Jews and Christians, but also Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, and people of other faiths.<sup>26</sup> He cites the following verse of the Quran in this regard:

*Yet all the people of the Book are not alike: there are among them some who are steadfastly on the right path; who recite the Revelations of Allah at night and fall prostrate before Him; who believe in Allah and the Last Day; who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and remain earnestly engaged in good works; these are the righteous people, and whatever good they do, they will not be denied the just reward for it, for Allah knows full well the pious people.*<sup>27</sup>

#### ADDRESS TO MANKIND

The Quran directly addresses the mankind with the phrase of *yā ayyuhannās* twenty times in order to point out the fundamental issues confronted with humanity irrespective of creed, color or geography. These Quranic addresses also help understand the plural characteristics, the Quran implies.

In the *Surah al-Baqarah* two verses invite the mankind to worship God alone, and to enjoy all the clean and pure foods and to not follow the *Satan*:

*O Mankind, submit to your Lord Who created you and those who were before you; in this way only, you may expect to save yourselves.*<sup>28</sup>

*O people! eat of what is lawful and clean in the earth and do not follow the ways of Satan, for he is your avowed enemy.*<sup>29</sup>

In the fourth chapter, the Quran advocates the equality of mankind and the fundamental rights and preaches to maintain the relations of human beings especially between the kinsfolk:

*O mankind, fear your Lord, Who created you of a single soul, and of the same created his mate, and from that pair spread countless men and women over the earth; fear that Allah in Whose name you demand your rights from one another, and abstain from violating relations between kinsfolk; note it well that Allah is watching you very closely.*<sup>30</sup>

In the same chapter, the Quran leads humanity to the arguments

in favor of the last Messenger of Allah and invites people to accept the finality of Messenger-ship of Muhammad (saws):

*O people, this Messenger has come to you with the Truth from your Lord, so believe in him, for it will be better for yourselves; but if you disbelieve, you should know that all that is in the heavens and on the earth belongs to Allah, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*<sup>31</sup>

*O mankind, a clear proof of the Truth has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you the Light that shows the Way clearly to you.*<sup>32</sup>

*Al-A'raf*, the seventh chapter calls humanity to believe in Muhammad (saws) who was an unschooled man but brought the most supernatural Book from Allah as a clear sign of his prophethood:

*O Muhammad, say, "O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and entire earth. There is no deity but He. He bestows life and ordains death. So, believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His Commandments. Follow him: it is expected that you will be guided aright."*<sup>33</sup>

*Surah Yunus*, the tenth chapter includes four verses that uses the "O people" addressing the mankind directly:

*But when He (the prophet saws) delivers them, the same people begin to rebel in the land against the Truth. O people, this rebellion of yours is harmful only to yourselves. (You may enjoy) the transitory pleasures of this world, then you have to return to Us: then We will let you know what you have been doing.*<sup>34</sup>

*O mankind, there has come to you the Admonition from your Lord: this is the remedy for the diseases of the heart, and guidance and blessing for those who believe in it.*<sup>35</sup>

*O Prophet say, O mankind! if you are still in doubt concerning my faith, know that I do not worship those whom you worship beside Allah, but I worship that Allah alone, Who has the power to cause your death. I have been commanded that I should be of the believers.*<sup>36</sup>

*O Muhammad, tell them, "O mankind! the Truth has come to you from your Lord. Now, whosoever follows the Right way, he does so for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, he does so to bring about his own ruin; and I am not a keeper over you."*<sup>37</sup>

*Surah al-Hajj*, the twenty-second chapter in its two verses reveals the significance of Resurrection and provides rational arguments by



describing the natural phases of human life and by portraying the productive process of agricultural land:

*O people, save yourselves from the wrath of your Lord: the fact is that the earthquake of the Resurrection is a terrible thing.*<sup>38</sup>

*O people, if you have any doubt about Life after death, you should know that We first created you of clay, then of a sperm-drop then of a clot of blood, then of a lump of flesh, shaped or shapeless. (We are telling you this) so that We may make the reality plain to you. And We make those (sperm drops), which We will, remain in the wombs for a fixed period, then We bring you forth as a child; then (We nourish you) so that you may attain to your full youth. And there may be among you one who is recalled earlier and one who is returned to the most abject age so that he should know nothing even after knowing all he could. And you see the land lying dry and barren, but as soon as We send down rain water upon it, it stirs (to life), and swells and brings forth every kind of luxuriant vegetation.*<sup>39</sup>

In the remaining two verses of *Surah al-Hajj* that address the mankind directly, the idol-worship and polytheism is argumentatively demolished by setting forth a beautiful parable. Both the idols and their worshippers are described as to be poor, foolish and feeble creatures. The final revelation is prescribed as a clear warning to the mankind. The Prophet (saws) was not appointed to coerce people to obedience of God. He was assigned the duty of warning and preaching only:

*O, Muhammad, say to them: "O people, I am merely a warner who informs you plainly (of the coming evil time)"*<sup>40</sup>

*O mankind! A parable is related to you: so, listen to it. The deities, whom you invoke instead of Allah, cannot create a fly even though they may all combine together for this purpose. Nay! if a fly snatches away something from them, they cannot get it back from it. How weak are the suppliants and how weak those whom they supplicate!*<sup>41</sup>

## ELEVATING THE AMUSEMENT

The Quranic address to mankind in *Surah al-Naml*, the twenty-seventh chapter, has a special reference to Solomon and David, the Messengers of Allah who were miraculously given the knowledge of birds and animals' speeches. No doubt the means of communication between birds and animals are entirely different from that of humans.

The wisdom of Solomon consisted of understanding these things. This miraculous gift was described by the Prophet (saws) as a grace of God and that categorically shows the power of God as well as powerlessness of human being:

*We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they said, 'Praise is for Allah Who exalted us above many of His believing servants.' And Solomon succeeded David, and he said, 'O people, we have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been granted all sorts of things. This is indeed a great favor (of Allah).'*<sup>42</sup>

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960), the Turkish sufi scholar, while dealing with this God-gifted supernatural ability of knowing the language of birds and animals, as attributed to David and Solomon in the Quran, persuades human being to strive attain to the most agreeable and elevated amusement. Through the allusive language of these Quranic verses, Allah is communicating to the humanity the following message, Nursi says illustrating these miracles as the most advanced technology:

*O men! In order to honor his prophethood and the complete justice of his (Solomon's) rule, I subjugated to one of your fellowmen who was totally submissive to Me, the huge creatures in My dominions, causing them to speak, and I made most of My troops and animals his servants. In which case, since I have committed to each of you the Supreme Trust, from which the sky, earth, and mountains shrank, and I have given you the ability to be My vicegerent on earth, you should yield to Me, the one in Whose hand are the reins of these creatures, so that the creatures in My dominions may yield also to you, and you may obtain in the name of the One Who holds them, their reins, and rise to a position worthy of your abilities.*<sup>43</sup>

Nursi, then elaborates that mankind, rather than listening to the gramophone, playing with pigeons and making them deliver letters, and teaching parrots to speak, should strive to attain the most advanced amusement. Then the mountains may be huge gramophones for it like David's, and the harmonious recitations of Divine praises may reach humans' ears from the trees and plants at the touching of the breeze, and the mountains may show their true nature as wondrous creatures who recite the Divine praises in thousands of tongues, and most birds may be clothed in the form of intimate friends or obedient servants, like

Solomon's Hoopoe. Then they may entertain the mankind and drive it eagerly towards the perfections and attainments of which it is capable, and not make it fall from the position required by being a human being, like other amusements.<sup>44</sup>

*Surah Luqmān*, the thirty-first chapter pronounces the helplessness of every human being on the Day of Resurrection. The most loving father cannot help his child: each will have his own personal responsibilities. The chief Deceiver, the *Satan*, therefore must not deceive anyone in this world. The Quran says:

*O people! Avoid the wrath of your Lord and fear the Day when no father shall avail anything for his son, nor shall any son avail anything for his father. Allah's promise is surely true. So let not this world life deceive you, nor let the deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.*<sup>45</sup>

*Surah al-Fātir*, the thirty-fifth chapter concentrates on the unity of God as the fundamental teaching of Islam, and on the Divine attributes of Him:

*O people, remember the favors Allah has done to you. Is there beside Allah any other creator also, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? There is no god but He. From where then are you being deceived?*<sup>46</sup>

*O people, the promise of Allah is surely true. Therefore, let not the worldly life deceive you, nor let that great deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.*<sup>47</sup>

*O people, it is you who stand in need of Allah: Allah alone is Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.*<sup>48</sup>

## SUPERIORITY OF MORALITY

In *Surah al-Hujurāt*, the forty-ninth chapter of the Quran, mankind is being warned about the major erroneous notion that has always led to the spread of evil around the world, namely, the notion of prejudice based on race, color, language, homeland and nationality. The human being is taught the equality of individuals and groups since they all are created from a single pair, Adam and Eve. The Quran says:

*O mankind, We created you from one man and one woman, and then divided you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize one another. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious of you. Surely Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise.*<sup>49</sup>

Addressing all human beings, Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi explains, the Quran emphasizes three points:

- i. That all human beings have same origin.
- ii. It was natural for mankind to become divided into diverse national and tribal entities. These diversities were created to foster greater cooperation and enable these different entities to become mutually introduced.
- iii. There is only basis for regarding one as better than the other and that is on account of their moral excellence.<sup>50</sup>

In order to substantiate his argument, Sayyid Maududi has cited a number of traditions of the Prophet (saws). On the eve of conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (saws), after having circumscribed the House of Allah, delivered a sermon that includes the following:

*All praises are due to Allah who replaced from you the defects and arrogance of pre-Islamic Arabia. O people, men are divided into two only: i. Virtuous, God-fearing and honorable to God, ii, insolent, impudent and disgraced to God. All the people are descendant of Adam, and Allah created Adam out of clay.*

On the eve of the final pilgrimage (*Hajjat al-Widā*), the Prophet of Islam (saws) had performed in his life, in the midst of *Ayyām al-tashriq* (the three or four days following the Day of Immolation (10<sup>th</sup> of Zul Hijja during the Hajj) he delivered a sermon and pronounced:

*O people, beware, your Lord is One. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor is for a non-Arab over an Arab. And no black is better than a red, or a red than a black except by God-fearing. The most respectable to God is a person among you who is the most God-fearing. Did I communicate you? Those present replied: Yes, O Messenger of Allah! The Prophet then said: Those present should communicate to the absentees.*

According to another hadith, the Prophet (saws) is reported to have said:

*All of you are the descendants of Adam and Adam was created out of clay. The people must avoid pride on their forefathers: otherwise, they will be disgraced to Allah more than the insect.*

There are two other traditions of the noble Prophet (saws), Maududi has cited in length:

*Verily Allah will never make an enquiry into your descents on the Doom's Day. Surely the most honorable to God is the most God-fearing among you.*

*Allah does not take into account your figures or your wealth; He considers only your deeds and your intentions.*

Sayyid Maududi, then, explains that these did not constitute verbal statements without any actual implementation in the society; Islam practically established a universal community of faithful in the world without any discrimination of any kind. Maududi says, even the opponents of Islam had to recognize that the principle of human equality and fraternity was actualized successfully in the Muslim society so as it was unparalleled in any religion or law of the world.<sup>51</sup>

#### UNITY OF GOD AND THE PROPHECY

The Qur'ānic discourse *O Mankind!* (*Yā ayyuhannās*) as referred to above in the twenty verses covers mainly the issues and challenges of the humanity. It has no description of Islamic Shariah or the legalities of Islam and concentrates on the commonalities of all. They are as follows:

- i. Worship of God,
- ii. Using clean and lawful foods,
- iii. Equality of man and woman,
- iv. Maintaining the human relations specially among the kinsfolk,
- v. Avoiding the arrogance against God and fellow beings,
- vi. Faith in the Resurrection,
- vii. Criticism of polytheism,
- viii. Elevating the amusement through a sincere service to God,
- ix. Keeping oneself away from the *Satan*, (the cursed) and
- x. Superiority of God-fearing.

There are two points, more significant than those described above: the Divine Unity (*Tauhid*) and the finality of the Prophethood (saws) viz., the *nubuwah*. The *Tauhid* is referred to in the following verses as discussed above:

*O mankind! A parable is related to you: so, listen to it. The deities, whom you invoke instead of Allah, cannot create a fly even though they may all combine together for this purpose. Nay! if a fly snatches away something from them, they*

*cannot get it back from it. How weak are the suppliants and how weak are those whom they supplicate.*<sup>52</sup>

*O people it is you who stand in need of Allah: Allah is Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy. If He wills, He can remove you and bring a new creation in your place: this is not at all difficult for Allah.*<sup>53</sup>

The Prophethood of Muhammad (saws) is referred to directly or indirectly in the following verses:

*O mankind, a clear proof of the Truth has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you the Light that shows the Way clearly to you.*<sup>54</sup>

*O Muhammad, say, "O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity but He. He bestows life and ordains death. So, believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His Commandments. Follow him: it is expected that you will be guided aright."*<sup>55</sup>

*O mankind, there has come to you the Admonition from your Lord: this is the remedy for the diseases of the heart, and guidance and blessing for those who believe in it.*<sup>56</sup>

*O, Muhammad, say to them: "O people, I am merely a warner who informs you plainly (of the coming evil time)."*<sup>57</sup>

It means any initiative to inter-faith dialogue should necessarily include the Qur'ānic narrative of *tauhid* and *nubuwwah* and this was maintained by the Quran in its approach to multiculturalism and inter-faith dialogue.<sup>58</sup>

The Quran declared unambiguously the significance of only true faith and righteous deed in order to seek the pleasure of God and the deliverance on the Day of Judgement, and negated the mere affiliation to any race, nation, culture or religion as the means for success therein. The Quran, thus, addressing the Muslims, the Jews and the Christians altogether in one place stressed the true Faith and good deed as the universal phenomenon for deliverance including the faith in the finality of the message and mission of the Prophet Muhammad (saws):

*Whether they are the ones who believe, or whether they are the Jews, Christians or Sabians*<sup>59</sup> *-all who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and do righteous deeds - their reward is surely secure with their Lord; they need have no fear, nor shall they grieve.*<sup>60</sup>

The starting part of the verse reads: *whether they are the ones who*

*believe*, without any specification of the object, was debated by the scholars of the Quran in the history with varying arguments, as Dr M. Raziul Islam Nadwi explains.<sup>61</sup> Why not the object that is Muhammad (saws) was clearly mentioned? This was responded with the following arguments:

- 1) The word *āmanu* (who believe) is grammatically general (without any specification of the object) and includes all the fundamentals of faith that are unavoidable in all the religions including all the commandments.<sup>62</sup>
- 2) The reliability of the faith of the Jews required their faith in Moses, and in Jesus also when he came later on. The faith of the Christians, likely was inauthentic unless they believed in Muhammad (saws) when he was appointed by God as the final Messenger.<sup>63</sup>
- 3) The verse under discussion did not aim at providing the details of the faith; it, rather, nullified primarily the false claim of the *ahl al-kitab* to be the harbours of Deliverance on the Last Day. The context of the verse reveals the belief in the Quran unavoidable for the *ahl al-kitab* and that this was impossible without any firm faith in the final Prophet.<sup>64</sup>
- 4) The Muslims were addressed to negate their distinction as a group from the previous groups unless they had firm faith and sound good deeds with them. This was well elaborated by Amin Ahsan Islahi. He says that the verse contains a special warning for Muslims. All groups and peoples were described equal in the sight of God. Muslims, Jews, Christians or Sabians have no special rank or status with Allah except on the basis of their faith and good deeds. Islahi says:

*The Muslims appear at the head of the list of these groups, suggesting, as it were, that they are the ones as a community that could hope to gain access to Allah, because they have been raised as the last community to set things right on earth. However, in the absence of faith and good deeds, they too would have no chance or status in the sight of Allah. The Sabians, an unknown group, is mentioned last, to emphasise the fact that with faith and good deeds, any people can achieve the highest honour in the sight of Allah. With true faith and good deeds, nothing can prevent anyone, no matter how small or insignificant, from rising to the highest of ranks with their Sustainer.*<sup>65</sup>

DEFINING THE *KALIMAH SAWĀ*

The turning point of the Qur'ānic narrative of interfaith dialogue is however, its invitation to *Ahl-al-Kitab* (People of the Book) to *kalimatin sawāin baymana wa baynakum* (a word common between us and you) in the third chapter. The Quran says:

*Say, O people of the Book! Come to what is common between us and you, that we worship none but Allah; that we associate nothing with Him and that none of us shall make as our Lord any other than Allah. If they reject your invitation, then tell them plainly, Bear witness that we are Muslims (who worship and surrender to Allah alone).*<sup>66</sup>

The Qur'ānic phrase *kalimah sawā* has been defined by the scholars of the Quran differently. Nasim Zaheer Islahi<sup>67</sup> has cited three groups of the commentators of the Quran in this regard:

1. The word *sawā* means a word of justice without any tilting to anyone. Ibn Jarir Tabari (d.923),<sup>68</sup> Imam Raghīb Isfahani (d.1108), Imam Qurtubi (d.1273), Imam Shawkāni (d.1834), Abu Hayyān Andalusi (d.1344), Allama Khāzin (d. 1341) and others have adopted it. Among the Sahābah, Abdullah bin Abbās and Abdullah bin Masud are reported to have derived the same.
2. The word *sawā* was equated to *mustawiyah*, that means equal to and uniform. Allama Ālūsī (1854), Zamakhshari (d.1144), Abu al-Sa'ud (d.1574), Ibn Kathir (d.1373) and Farra al-Baghvi (d.1122) all have equated *sawā* to *mustawiyah*.
3. *Sawā* was taken as the *qasd* that means moderate and straight, free from all exaggerations and shortcomings. Ibn Atiyyah al-Andalusi (d.1151) has the same opinion.

Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149-1209) has explained the word *sawā* as if covers all the three meanings derived grammatically by the exegetes. He says:

*The Kalimatin sawāin applies to a word based on justice without any leaning to one against another. The word sawā is an impartiality and equity to be applied equally to each party. Rationally the avoiding of oppression against oneself and others is obligatory and this is possible only when a thing is derived into two parts equally and thus insāf is applied and zulm is avoided. In this situation one was equated to the other and the moderation was attained... It is because*



*of the word taswiyah was equated to the 'adl since the requirement of 'adl was necessary to that of the taswiyah... the Quran used the phrase kalimah sawā, that means a word that is just, straight and moderate. If both the parties believe in it, they are equal and moderate.*<sup>69</sup>

Apart from the three meanings, Nasim Zaheer Islahi has cited one more opinion about the meaning of *kalimah sawā* in the Quran, *Surah al-A'raf* verse 64. Ibn 'Atiyah al-Andalusi the great commentator of the Quran has applied the word *sawā* on the equal status of the two parties. This was described by him as *tafsir khāss* (special interpretation). The Quran invited Muslims and *ahl al-kitab* to be on equal footings. Since the *Ahl al-Kitab* had made their theologians their lords other than God (*arbāb min doon Allah*) they were not in the equal status; they were instead divided into superior and inferior.<sup>70</sup>

The learned writer has cited Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), the most towering personality of Islamism in the modern world, and famous interpreter of the Quran, who has explained the Qur'anic phrase of *kalimah sawā*, as was done by Ibn 'Atiyah al-Andalusi but in the different words, probably in the modern idioms:

*Certainly, this invitation was a just one, in which the Messenger of Allah does not aim at any superiority for himself or for his followers over these ahl-al-kitab; it was a word of truth in which all the parties were on equal footings, no one was superior or inferior, neither anyone was master or slave.*<sup>71</sup>

All these different literal and grammatical meanings of the Qur'anic phrase *kalimah sawā* do not affect the essence and spirit the verse intends to communicate. The Christians and Jews were invited to a word common to Muslims and the *ahl al-kitab*, which is clearly defined in the Quran but was neglected practically by the Christians and Jews or was distorted by them. The word common to all was:

- i. Worship of Allah alone,
- ii. No association in His attributes, and
- iii. No legislative power to be granted to anyone except Allah.

#### NOTES

1. Tahtāwi, Rifā'ah (1801-1873) compiled the two books in order to cope with the modernity namely: a) *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bāriz*, and

- Manāhij al-Albāb al-Misriyah fi Mabāhij al-Adāb al-ʿAsriyah*. See the *Manāhij*, Cairo. 1869, pp. 387-392, 442,444.
2. Khan, Syed Ahmad (1817-1898), his *Tabyin al-Kalam* is taken by the scholars as the pioneering work in the field of inter-faith studies, see my article, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Kā Siyāsi Nazriyah wa Minhāj- Islami Siyāsi Fikr Ki Tarikh Ke Siyāq Mein*, in: *Sir Syed Aur Uloom Islamia*, edited by Professor Muhammad Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui, Idara Uloom Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University, March 2001, pp. 174-209.
  3. Pasha, Khayruddin (1882-1889), his book *Aqwam al-Masālik fi Mʿarifate Ahwāl al-Mamālik* is considered to have laid foundation for modernity in the Arab world, see for an analysis Sami A. Hanna and George Gardner, “Khayr al-Din and Muhammad Abduh: Did They or Did not They?” *American Journal of Arabic Studies*, Vol.11, 1974, pp. 22-52.
  4. The *tajdīd* in Islamic literature is derived from the hadith cited by Abu Dawūd in his *Al-Sunan* and Hākim in his *Al-Mustadrak* as to be narrated by Abu Hurayrah. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: “Certainly Allah will raise for this community in the beginning of every century the people who will revive for them their religion.” *Al-Sunan, Kitāb al- Malāhim*, Chapter on what is described about the century, Vol. II, p. 233; *Al Mustadrak, Kitāb al-Fitan wa al—Malāhim*, Vol.IV, pp. 567-568.
  5. Maududi, Sayyid Abul Ala, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, translated by Al-Ashaʿri, Markazi Maktaba Islami Delhi, September 1981, p. 35.
  6. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
  7. Qaradhāwī, Yusuf. *ʿAsri Masāil ke liye Sharʿi Zawābit ke tabat ijtiḥād* (Performing the *Ijtiḥād* for the sake of contemporary issues under Shariah Rules), Monthly *Muhaddith*, Lahore, Vol. 32, No. 08, August 2000, pp. 56-57.
  8. Azmi, Akhtar Husian. *Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi -Hayat-o Aḥkār*, Nashriyāt, Lahore, 2008, pp. 15-52.
  9. For a categorical difference between the *tajdīd* and the modernization see, Falahi, Obaidullah Fahad. *Fikr-e Islami Ke Hijābāt*, Manshurāt Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, January 2018, pp. 159-169.
  10. For a thorough study of the revival-modernity debate in Islamic thought and their salient features as elaborated in Islamic scholarship see: Falahi, Obaidullah Fahad. *Tajdīd-e Din Aur Tajaddud*, Manshurāt Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, November 2022, p. 307.
  11. Amīni, Muhammad Taqī. *Ahkām-e Sharʿiyah mein Hālāt-o Zamāna ki Riʾāyat*, Nadwatul Musannifin, Delhi, December 1970, pp. 25-27.

12. Ibid., p. 26.
13. *The Quran*, 7:163-166. Professor Amīni has referred to few words of the verse 7:167 only, that read *m'aziratan ilā rabbikum* (in order to offer excuse to your Lord). The sincere and dedicated group from the followers of the Moses, the Prophet, performed their duty of admonition and preaching in order to be able to offer an excuse to Allah on the Day of Judgment, though the culprits were adamant to disobedience. The Quran clarified when the said town was struck by God's punishment, only those actively enjoined good and forbade evil so that the evil doers might make amends, were spared because they had displayed God-consciousness and performed their duties.

While referring to this verse of the Quran, Professor Amīni wanted to clear the significance of reconstruction of Islamic Legal thought though it had to face hardships, challenges and hindrances. The Muslim intellectuals and theologians are obligated by God to do their best to amend, revive and reconstruct coping with new demands.

14. Falahi, Obaidullah Fahad. *Fikr-e Islami Ke Hijābat*, Op.cit., p. 32.
15. *The Quran*, 4:164. Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-1997) has applied the Quranic phrase *al-rāsikhūna fil 'ilm* (those rooted in knowledge) to the God-fearing Jew theologians who were firmly grounded in the Shariah and rooted in the beliefs and practices and the morals of high standard. Most of the theologians amongst the Jews were decorator only who used to impress the masses by their superficial knowledge without having any touch to their minds and hearts themselves. These theologians shared all the crimes their followers used to commit, they were rather their leaders and teachers. Therefore, they opposed violently Muhammad (peace be upon him) and led their community in all the aggressive initiatives. There were however, few theologians firmly rooted in the Shariah who supported the Last Prophet and stood in opposition to the worldly theologians of their community.

This was the reason why the Quran did not use the term *Ulama* that might be applied to all the theologians of the Jews; it addressed specially those firmly rooted in knowledge and titled them *al-rāsikhūn fil 'ilm*. Islahi further elaborated the Quranic word *al-muminūn* and applies to the common faithful of Jews having the unpolluted nature. These were not titled as *al-rāsikhūn fil 'ilm* but were distinguished in the safe nature, qualified heart and pious character. Despite of Jew's disobedience of God and conspirational activities, they practiced the Shariah sincerely and welcomed wholeheartedly the Last Prophet when he was sent down in

due course of time. *Tadabbur-e Quran*, Faran Foundation Lahore Rajab 1402 AH/April 1982, Vol. 2, pp. 196-197.

16. *Al-Quran*, 4:163-164.
17. *Al-Quran*, 2:136.
18. Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, *The Holy Quran-Text, Translation and Commentary*, Aman Corporation. 1983, p. 232, Note 669.
19. Esposito, John L. *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World*, Oxford University Press, 2009, Vol. IV, pp. 379-384.
20. *Al-Quran*, 29:46-47.
21. *Al-Quran*, 49:13.
22. *Al-Quran*, 17:70.
23. *Al-Quran*, 2:256.
24. *Al-Quran*, 2:285.
25. *Al-Quran*, 30:22.
26. Osman, Mohamed Fathi. *The Children of Adam: An Islamic Perspective on Pluralism*, Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 65.
27. *Al-Quran*, 3:113-115. Contrary to the conclusion drawn by Fathi Osman from the verses 113-115 of the *Surah Aal-e Imrān*, Amin Ahsan Islahi, the famous exegete of modern India, has applied these verses to an insignificant section of the Christians who were God-fearing, the honestly believing in God and the Last Da, faithful and devotees and who always stood for the justice and righteousness. To Islahi, this section included the Christians who had embraced Islam during the Prophetic period and also those who could not do so at the time of the revelation but were true believers from the core of their hearts and later entered the fold of Islam. These Christian-converted Muslims were again referred to in the concluding verse of the same chapter. *Al-Quran* says:  
 And there are some even among the people of the Book, who believe in Allah and in the Book which has been sent down to you and in the Scripture which was sent down to themselves before this; they humble themselves before Allah and do not barter away Allah's Revelation for paltry worldly gains; they will have their reward from their Lord; for Allah is very swift in settling accounts. (*Al-Quran*, 3:199)  
 See for detail, Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Tadabbur-e Quran*, Vol.1, Markazi Anjuman Khuddam al-Quran, Lahore, August 1976, pp. 765-766.
28. *Al-Quran*, 2:21.
29. *Al-Quran*, 2:168.
30. *Al-Quran*, 4:1.
31. *Al-Quran*, 4:170.
32. *Al-Quran*, 4:174.

33. *Al-Quran*, 7:158
34. *Al-Quran*, 10:23.
35. *Al-Quran*, 10:57.
36. *Al-Quran*, 10:104.
37. *Al-Quran*, 10:108.
38. *Al-Quran*, 22:1.
39. *Al-Quran*, 22:5, Abdullah Yusuf Ali explains beautifully the verse under discussion. If anyone has doubts in his mind about the life after death, he has only to turn his attention, either to his own nature, or to the nature around. How wonderful is his own physical growth, from lifeless matter, to seed, fertilized ovum, fetus, child, youth, age, and death! How can he doubt that the Author of all these wonderful stages in his life here can also give him another kind of life after the end of this life? Or, if he looks at external nature, he sees the earth dead and barren, and God's fertilizing showers bring it to life, growth and beauty in various forms. The Creator of this great pageant of beauty can surely create yet another and a newer world. *The Holy Quran—Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit., p. 851, Note 2773.
40. *Al-Quran*, 22:49.
41. *Al-Quran*, 22:73.
42. *Al-Quran*, 27:15-16.
43. Nursi, Bediuzzaman Said, *The Words-From the Risale-I Nur Collections*, translated from Turkish by Sukran Wahide, Ihlās Nur Nesriyat, Ankara, Turkey, 2001, pp. 270-271.
44. *Ibid.*, p.271. Nursi has provided this beautiful explanation while dealing with the following verses of the Quran:  

We had subdued for him the mountains, which joined with him in praise morning and evening. The birds would gather together: they all turned to his (hymns of) praise. (Al-Quran, 38:18-20)
45. *Al-Quran*,31:33.
46. *Al-Quran*, 35:3.
47. *Al-Quran*, 35:5.
48. *Al-Quran*, 35:15.
49. *Al-Quran*, 49:13.
50. Maududi, Sayyid Abul Ala, *Towards Understanding the Quran—Abridged Version of Tafhim al-Quran*, translated and edited by Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, New Delhi, March 2009, p. 1065, Note 13.
51. Maududi, Sayyid Abul Ala. *Tafhim al-Quran*, Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, New Delhi, March 2017, Vol. V, pp. 95-99, Note 28. The

Learned scholar has clarified a misunderstanding here about the system of *Kufu* (match) in Islamic Jurisprudence. Some people have mistaken some racial group as superior and others inferior and any marriage between them objectionable. Islamic law sanctions marriage between every Muslim man and woman. The success of marriage, however, depends on the compatibility of habits, manners, life style, family traditions and socio-economic situations of the couple and this is the only objective of the principle of *Kufu* and no more.

52. *Al-Quran*, 22:73.
53. *Al-Quran*, 35:15-17.
54. *Al-Quran*, 4:174.
55. *Al-Quran*, 7:158.
56. *Al-Quran*, 10:57.
57. *Al-Quran*, 22:49.
58. For a detailed study see, Fahad, Obaidullah. *The Quranic Narrative of Multiculturalism*, Publications Division, Aligarh Muslim University, 2022, 312 pp. specially chapter seven: *The Abl al-Kitab in the Quran*, pp. 210-203.
59. Sabians are the people named in the Quran (2:59; 22:17) along with Christians, Jews, and Magians (the Zoroastrians), as having a religion revealed by God. Many religious groups, including various Christian branches, and various groups in India, have at one time or another been identified as Sabians.
60. *Al-Quran*, 2:62.
61. Nadwi, Muhammad Raziul Islam. *Quran Abl-e Kitab Aur Musalman (Quran Ki Roshni mein Abl-e Kitab Ke Halat Ka Jaizah, Musalmanon Ke Liye Ibrat-o Nasihat)*, Idara Tahqiq-o Tasnif Islami Aligarh, March 1997, pp. 290-291.
62. Al-Razi, *Tafsir Kabir*, Vol. I., op. cit., p. 381.
63. Ibn Kathir, Imaduddin Ismail. *Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim*, Egypt, al-Maktaba al-Tijariyah al-Kubra, 1356 A.H./1937 A.D. Vol. I, p. 103.
64. Maududi. *Tafhim al-Quran*, New Delhi, Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, Vol. I, August 2017, p. 82, Note No. 80. The learned scholar says that the Jews believed in the Deliverance and declared others to be in the fire. This misunderstanding was removed. It was clarified that their grouping and lobbying were not considerable to God, only the faith and good deeds were to be taken by.
65. Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Pondering Over the Quran* (English Rendering of the *Tadabbur e-Quran*) translation: Muhammad Saleem Kayani, Al-Kitab Publications London, 2006, Vol. I, pp. 245-246.

66. *Al-Quran*, 3:64.
67. Islahi, Nasim Zaheer, *Surah Āl-e Imrān mein Kalimah Sawā ki Dawat Aur Uski M'anawiyat*, in: *Ghayr Muslimon Ke Sath Rabt-o Ta'āwun-Quran Majeed Ki Roshni mein (Maqālāt Seminar)*, edited by Dr Muhammad Rashid Islahi under the supervision of Professor Ishtiaq Ahmad Zilli, Hidayat Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2019, pp. 226-287.
68. Tabari, Ibn Jarir, *Jāmi al-Bayān fi Tafsir al-Quran*, Beirut, Dar Ihya al-Turāth al-Arabi, 2001, Vol. III, p. 352.
69. Al-Razi, Fakhruddin. *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, known as *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, Dar Ihya a-Turāth al-Arabi, Beirut Vol. VIII, p. 86.
70. Al-Andalusi, Ibn 'Atiyah. *Al-Muharrir al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-Aziz*, Beirut, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1993, Vol. I, p. 449.
71. Qutb, Sayyid, *Fi Zilal Al-Quran*, Beirut, Dar al-Shuruq, 1398 AH/1978 AD, Vol. I, p. 406.

MARYAM AMINU ABDULLAHI  
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## The Concept of *Janazah* in Islam and its Application by the Muslims of Katsina State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Islam is an all-encompassing religion that provides Muslims with Divine guidance in all spheres of life. However, in Katsina, a predominantly Muslim society, there are emerging innovations associated with funeral rites (*Janazah*) and mourning of the dead. Such innovations include, among others, competitions among mourners, discriminatory treatment among the mourners, and sniffing and rubbing the head (especially by elderly women) with the textile material that was used in accompanying the corpse to the grave. These innovations contradict the teachings of Islam on funeral rites and mourning.

This paper, therefore, investigates the issues, analyzes them and proffers solutions from Islamic perspective. The paper used library and fieldwork methods. In the former, it widely consults relevant works in studying the teachings of Islam on the concept of *Janazah*. As for the latter, interview was conducted with relevant informants, and information related to origin, nature and effects of the innovations on the life of the Muslims in the study area were obtained. The paper finally emphasizes on the importance of the Islamic teachings on the practice of *Janazah* and suggested ways to eradicate the innovations associated with death, funeral rite and mourning in the study area.

### INTRODUCTION

Katsina, like other parts of the present Northern Nigeria, had witnessed the early introduction of Islam along with other Hausa states in the



defunct Hausaland. The Muslims in the area had received the teachings of Islam from Arab traders, who were considered important agents of Islamization of the area, and who travelled through the Tran-Sahara trade routes into the area.<sup>1</sup> The Arabs met the Hausa people with their traditional religion and customs. The customs were in all aspects of their life.<sup>2</sup> In the rites of passage, for instance, the people of Katsina used to keep a corpse of their dead for three days before burial, and at the time of burial, they buried the deceased with all their belongings. They also burnt the place where one died so as to prevent the re-occurrence of death in the family.<sup>3</sup>

However, after Hausa people had embraced Islam, they did not completely throw away their traditional beliefs on death as well as other traditional practices. This was among the reasons that made *Shaykh* Usman bin Foduye to wage the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Jihad* to revive the religion of Islam and restore the practice of *Sunnah* among the Muslims in Hausaland in all aspects of the religion including the *Janazah*.<sup>4</sup> But from that period to the present, new innovations have been created and practiced as a religious rite of *Janazah* by the Muslims in Katsina State.

The paper, therefore, studies the concept of *Janazah* and Islamic guidance on it. It also traces new emerging innovations, their nature, position and effects on the Muslims in the study area in a particular, and Islam in general. It also illustrates the significance of Islamic teachings on the proper way of *Janazah* and highlights ways. Muslims in the study area could not only avoid such innovations, but eradicate and ameliorate the effects of such innovative practices among Muslims in the study area and beyond.

#### THE CONCEPT OF JANAZAH IN ISLAM

The Arabic word *Janazah* or *Salat al-Janazah* is a part of the Islamic funeral rites. It is a prayer observed in congregation to seek pardon for the deceased and all Muslims dead or alive.<sup>5</sup> *Salat al-Janazah* is a collective obligation upon Muslims that is *Fard al-Kifayah*, which is, if some Muslims take the responsibility of doing it, the obligation is fulfilled, but if no one fulfills it, then all Muslim will be accountable.<sup>6</sup>

The issue of death which leads to the practice of *Janazah* has been properly addressed by both the Glorious Qur'an and *Sunnah* of Prophet

Muhammad (saws). Some of these are the saying of the Almighty Allah:

*Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).<sup>7</sup>*

In another verse Allah Almighty says:

*Tell those who are running away from death that one day they will be trapped unaware and you will be produced before the Almighty. They will be called upon to answer for their action by Him Who is All-Knowing.<sup>8</sup>*

By these two verses, the Almighty Allah is confirming to us, absolutely and inevitably that every soul (*nafs*) shall taste death. But each has a fixed time in which death shall come to it. When the time comes nothing will prevent it from returning to its Creator, Allah. Death can occur in sickness or in a state of health. But whenever it comes, Islam has provided comprehensive guidance for the dying person as well as those present at the time of the death, and what is obligatory on them up to the time of burial. On this, it is reported that Aisha, the beloved wife of the Prophet ( ) said:

*Allah's Messenger ( ) used to recite (the Supplication) as the words of incantation; "Lord of the people, remove the trouble, for the cure in your Hand, none is there to relieve him (the burden of disease) but only you."<sup>9</sup>*

From the above teachings, once death has occurred the following is required for a proper funeral rite:

### 1. **The Shabadah**

It is required that those present at the time of the death of any member of their family/relatives should encourage the dying person to say the *Kalima al-Shabadah* until he/she passes away. This is by repeating to him/her the statement: '*La ilaha illallah*' ('there is no god but Allah'). This is according to a *Hadith* reported by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri which says the Messenger of Allah says:

Exhort to recite: '*There is no god but Allah*' to those of you dying.<sup>10</sup>

As for those who received the news of the death of their relatives or friend are encouraged to invoke the Name of the Almighty Allah.

Thus, Allah says:

*Those who when afflicted with calamity say: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return".<sup>11</sup>*

After this is observed, those around the dead person should do their best to see that they did not mishandle the corpse. They should close the eyes of the deceased and straighten the limbs to avoid stiffing.<sup>12</sup> Islam permits the announcement of the death to far and near relatives, friends and the generality of the Muslims in order to let good people among them to attend the funeral prayer and the burial.

## 2. Washing of the Corpse

The next step is the preparation of a corpse for bath. Once a Muslim dies, male or female, Islam commands that he/she should be washed and prepared for burial without delay. It is reported that Aisha (RA), the wife of Prophet Muhammad ( ) said:

*Once the Messenger of Allah ( ) returned from Baqi' and found me suffering from headache and I was saying: "Oh my head!" on that he said: "Nay! It is I, Oh Aisha who has more claim to say: O my head", then the Messenger of Allah ( ) further said: "What is harm on you, O Aisha if you died before me, so that I would stand upon you, in order to wash your (dead body), shroud you, offer funeral prayer for you and then bury you."<sup>13</sup>*

It should be noted from the above tradition that once a Muslim dies it is upon his/her close relatives to prepare for his/her burial by first washing his/ her corpse. It is permitted that Muslim men should be washed by men, and women by women. But a husband is permitted to wash his wife and vice versa. The bath is not obligatory but a recommended act of worship.<sup>14</sup> Concerning the number of washing, the corpse is suggested to be washed three times, and camphor should be used at the last washing. The idea behind the command for washing is for hygienic measures to protect one against contagious disease.<sup>15</sup>

## 3. Shrouding of the Corpse

Shrouding is an important aspect of funeral rites in Islam, where the body of a deceased is to be covered. It should be noted that shrouding

is obligatory in Islam. This is based on the tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ) which says:

*... Wash him with water and Sidr and shroud him in two pieces of cloth.*<sup>16</sup>

It is also important to note that the shroud should be clean, most preferably white, thick and long enough sheets to wrap him/her up. The shroud should be bought from the wealth left by the deceased and should not be too expensive and lavish. The shroud should be sufficient to cover the whole body. The minimum number of ropes to be used as a shroud for men is five and for women is three, depending on what the money can buy to properly cover his/her body.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. The Funeral Prayer

The last but one stage of *Janazah* is the observance of prayer called *Salah al-Janazah*. The prayer is an obligatory act upon the entire Muslim community (*fard al-Kifayah*).<sup>18</sup> There is consensus among Muslim Jurists that funeral prayer is to be offered for all Muslims, male or female, young or old. It is not obligatory to pray *Janazah* for the children who died before attaining puberty.<sup>19</sup> Aisha (RA) reported that:

*Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet (ﷺ) died when he was eighteen months old, and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not pray for him.*<sup>20</sup>

Funeral prayer differs from the prescribed regular prayers. It has no fixed time but can be offered at any time. However, in performing *Janazah*, certain conditions must be met and where any of the conditions is not met, the prayer is invalid. The conditions are:

- i. Intention: There must be an intention and it should be said silently. This is according to the tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ) which says:

*Verily, all deeds (of a person) will be judged in the light of the intentions behind them, and every person will attain what he intends.*<sup>21</sup>

- ii. Standing in Prayer: The majority of the scholars regard it as an essential condition for a person performing funeral prayer to stand while praying, except where one is physically challenged.

- iii. Four *Takbir*: This is according to a report transmitted by Imam Al-Bukhari and Muslim: “On the Authority of Jabir who said: “Allah’s Messenger, peace upon him, offered a prayer for Najashy (Negus) and said four *Takbirs*”.
- iv. Raising of One’s hands during the *Takbirs*: it is *Sunnah* to raise one’s hands while saying the *Takbir*. This is only required during the first *Takbir*, while it is only recommended during the remaining three, except when one changes from one posture to another as in regular prayer.
- v. Recitation: it is required that *Surah al-Fatihah* must be recited as reported from authentic *Hadith*. Talha, the son of Abdullahi bn Awf said: “I prayed the funeral prayer behind Ibn Abbas for a dead person and he recited (aloud) the *Fatihah* and said you should know that (what I have done) is the *Sunnah*”.<sup>22</sup>

## 5. Burial

The final stage of *Janazah* in Islam is the burial. The majority of the Muslim Jurists are of the opinion that it is permissible in Islam to bury the dead anytime during the day and night. It is also a consensus among the Jurists that burial is a collective obligation upon Muslims (*Fard al-Kifayah*), that is when a part of the *Ummah* undertakes to bury the dead, the rest of the *Ummah* are free from this obligation.<sup>23</sup>

### JANAZAH AMONG MUSLIMS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

Katsina is a predominantly Muslim society and its people are diverse in their knowledge and practice of Islam. There are those who are educated or have good Islamic knowledge and tried to implement Islamic teachings in all their dealings including taking care of the sick at the time of dying. On the other hand, there are those who are less knowledgeable about the religion and their practice of religion is a mixed bag of traditional syncretism and innovations, even in their performance of the funeral rites. Such people used to treat their sick persons in ignorant ways or based on the tradition of the people or the environment in which they live devoid of any Islamic guidance.

Thus, despite the comprehensive teachings of Islam concerning *Janazah*, it is not difficult for one to observe that in some parts of

Katsina, people use different ways of conducting the funeral rites. Some are in tandem with Islamic teachings, while some deviate from the actual teachings of Islam. For instance, some relations of the sick, upon realizing that the sick is making unusual behaviour while dying, they hold tightly onto the dying the person in order to quieten or calm them, while some will decide to keep away from the sick at that moment in the belief that the Angel of death shies away from taking the life of children in the presence of their parents.<sup>24</sup> After sometimes, they will return to confirm whether the sick breathed their last. In doing that, some used cowries (*wuri*) by shaking it near the ears of the sick, to see whether they will respond by rising up their head. If the sick move their head, it indicates that the sick is still alive, but if they did not respond, then they will be presumed dead. There are those who used coins instead of *wuri* because of the belief attached to the love of money by human beings. At other times, they relied on the mucus coming out of the nose or unaudible speech for confirmation.<sup>25</sup> Others used either a stick (*tsinke*), by putting it into the nose of the dying or hair of the toe, or blowing the nose, or scratching the sole of the feet to confirm if the sick were actually dead, or sometimes await a doctor's confirmation. And once the sick is confirmed dead it will be announced to the relatives, friends and neighbours. Soon after the corpse will be prepared for funeral prayer and burial.<sup>26</sup>

At that moment, some will resort to respond in a manner Islam teaches by doing the *Istirja'* and mentioning the testimony. Others will respond negatively by wailing, crying loudly and beating parts of their bodies. Some will continue eulogizing the good qualities of the dead such that the listener would comprehend the lost person through such incantation like *Sun ra bangon guga*, and *sun bani sun lalace* which signifies that they are now finished. Some even tear their clothes, beat their faces, roll on the ground and pluck at their plaited hair (*Kitso*). All these practices are aimed at heightening the pains and sorrow accompanying the death, and this Islam strictly forbids.

As for the funeral, some used to stick to Islamic teachings by quickly preparing the dead and taking him/ her to the grave. Others used to delay the process, by keeping the corpse in the mortuary for some time/days so as to allow people to gather for a grand burial.<sup>27</sup> Some from that moment abstain from eating until the dead is buried

to indicate signs of grief and mourning and anyone who eats before burial is considered mindless and not mourning the dead. Once the corpse is taken to the grave, women would gather to pound millet and prepare porridge (*gumba ta biyan gawa*) which would be served to the people who conveyed the body to its grave as well as those who come for condolence. The millet-cake (*Gumba*) is meant to cool down the heart of the bereaved and to provide solace for those close to the deceased.<sup>28</sup> Another thing that is rampant and is related to funeral rites in Katsina is the mounting of canopies in and outside the house of the deceased. These canopies are often rented, and they are usually mounted whether there is the need for them or not.

In respect to funeral prayer and burial, it is not difficult to observe certain innovations that are being practised by some people of Katsina and particularly in Local Government Areas of Charanci, Dutsi and Batagarawa. One of such innovations is the insistence that the person to lead funeral prayer must be older than the dead person, and in case where the eldest person of a village died, the most elderly person must be sought from nearby villages.<sup>29</sup> This innovation is based on the assumption that elderly persons are the most knowledgeable in the society. In the aspect of the burial, it is also learnt that certain practices of some people of Katsina deviated from the core teachings of Islam, among which is the practice of placing a corpse in the western end of the outside of the grave before putting the corpse inside, They do this in the belief that the corpse is tired and therefore needs to rest before it is finally put to rest.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, one of the innovations that some people of Katsina used to observe as part of their funeral rites is keeping away from doing anything once a corpse is taken for burial until a bier or coffin is sent back from the grave to indicate the completion of the burial. Soon after other activities would then continue including the condolence greetings.<sup>31</sup> Some people also believed that the bier or coffin is medicinal and as such they used to sniff it to supposedly cure dizziness, forgetfulness (*makuwa*), obtain blessings (*tabarruki*), particularly if the deceased is a prominent scholar or an *Imam* or a noble from a royal family. Moreover, some used to, at the moment of the burial, bury the corpse with the stick or the thread with which the measurement of the corpse was taken so that nobody picks them, for they are believed to be used for magic

to kill members of the family of the deceased. Some members of the deceased family used to incarnate at the moment of the burial in order to prevent the deceased from transforming into a ghost. In some villages certain seeds (*Gurguzu*) and hundred needles are planted in the grave to stop the deceased from re-incarnating as a ghost.<sup>32</sup>

From the above practices of some Muslims in Katsina, one can see that there are lots of innovations that the people of the area introduced into the funeral rite which are not in conformity with the teachings of Islam, and their effects are pervasive in various aspects of the life of the Muslims in the area. To clearly understand the extent of the effects of the innovations in funeral practices in Katsina, the next pages address those effects.

#### EFFECTS OF THE INNOVATIONS ATTACHED TO JANAZAH (FUNERAL PRAYER) BY THE MUSLIMS IN KATSINA

Generally, the teachings of Islam on every aspect of life are blessings to the entire humanity on earth and way of salvation in the hereafter. Straying away from those teachings is an act of disobedience and innovation in the view of the religion. Such disobedience or innovations cannot continue without consequences on the life of those practising them. The consequences are the negative effects affecting the life of the Muslims. Therefore, the effects of the innovations in funeral rites by the Muslims in Katsina include the following:

##### **a. Religious Effect**

It is a clear teaching that the dead are tortured in their graves for the wailing of their living ones. Therefore, the way and manner some Muslims in Katsina were heedless of this guidance and continued to wail and cry loudly and sometimes mourn by slapping their cheeks or pulling on their hairs was as if they have given permission for the torturing of their deceased and a sign of being sinners on earth.<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, the practice of tearing one's clothes is against the teachings of Islam, and whoever persists in doing that despite clear warning against that in the religion, is not part of the *Ummah* (community) of Prophet Muhammad ( ) as mentioned in an authentic *Hadith*. Therefore, if people persist in not taking heed



of Islamic guidance and continue to recklessly respond negatively by their actions towards showing their grief on the death of their relatives may greatly affect the quality of their *Iman*, because their actions run contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Furthermore, the Islamic wisdom behind the processes of funeral prayer down to the burial is meant to instil in the minds of the Muslims Allah's consciousness and encouragement to do good deeds in what remains of their days on earth. But, looking at the innovations brought into every process of the funeral rites in Katsina, one may say that such wisdom is being perverted and thus adds less or no value to the actions of such people and their consciousness of the Day of Resurrection.

#### **b. Social Effect**

Death is certain and as such is meant to strengthen our unity and cement our relationships. But the innovations introduced into funeral rites are in one way or the other becoming factors of disunity and unhealthy relationships, thus weakening our cohesiveness as one family, one *Ummah*. For those who persevere to keep to *Sunnah*, their non-indulgence in such innovative practices in the course of mourning their dead may be perceived by other relatives as lukewarm or uncaring.

The manner some people of Katsina decorate places for receiving condolences and mourning through mounting canopies exclusively for the wealthy and well-to-do people of the society, devoid of consideration for others coming for the same purpose, is socially affecting the cohesiveness of the people of the area as one *Ummah* with one goal and aim, that is benefitting from one sign of Allah's existence (that is death). By this, some people of Katsina are losing one important avenue to use as means of uniting and strengthening the bond of their relationship. Instead, it becomes a means of showing off social and political status, and thus widen the gap that exists among the social strata of the society.

#### **c. Economic Effect**

Taking into cognizance the simple way Islam commands Muslims to conduct themselves in observance of funeral rites and the way some people of Katsina are observing theirs, one must admit that there

are economic effects on the practice of *Janazah* among the Muslims in Katsina State. This is of various dimensions. In the aspect of the deceased, his/her relatives may tend to over spend the wealth left in order to show his/her social status, knowing fully that once one dies all that he/she earned ceased to be important to him/her. The spending then becomes extravagant and meaningless. On the part of the heirs, they would be shortchanged if compared to what a heir could get if such spending did not occur.

Similarly, the innovations attached to funeral rites by some people of Katsina, and which has economic effects is the feasts allowed by the people to hold during the period of condolence. This seems to be a festivity instead of a mourning, and that gulps a huge amount of wealth whether from the estate of the deceased or that of the heirs. Also, the amount spent during the mourning period and the celebration organized by the family to mark the end of the period of *Iddah* (waiting period), where varieties of dishes and souvenirs are distributed, has equal economic effects on the deceased and his/her relatives. On the former, that may make the relatives refuse to take into consideration the *Shari'ah* legal requirements on the estate of a deceased and most importantly refuse even to pay off his/her debt and executing his/her wills (*Wasiyyah*), if he/she has any. That is why today, it is very difficult in most Muslim communities in Katsina to hear an instance where relations of a dead person seek and pay for the debt of their deceased or fulfill his/her will.

## CONCLUSION

Islam as a divine religion is meant to be practised as a whole and in all aspects of life without exception. Funeral rites are important aspects of life that require religious guidance for Muslims to benefit from the lessons embodied therein. Despite the clear teachings of Islam on that, it is observed that some Muslims in Katsina State do observe the funeral rite along the line of innovations they invented. The innovations are in all steps of the process of the *Janazah*, and vary from one community to another within the area under study. Thus, such innovations, by their essence, are not in harmony with the teachings of Islam. The long history of holding onto these innovations is what prompted this

paper to critically study the concept of *Janazah* in Islam and highlight the effects associated with such innovations. It is hoped that the study will help in reviving the proper way of Islamic funeral rites that will eradicate the innovative practices among the Muslims in the study area and beyond.

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BILAL AHMAD KUTTY

## Environment and Islamic Architecture: A Sustainable Synergy

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between the environment and Islamic architecture, focusing on how Islamic architectural principles incorporate environmental sustainability. It explores the integration of natural elements into architectural design, examines the principles of Islamic architecture such as harmony, balance, and stewardship (khilafah), and evaluates how traditional Islamic buildings embraced energy efficiency and environmental consciousness. The paper discusses examples of iconic Islamic structures, the use of materials, passive cooling techniques, and the role of religious principles in shaping environmentally sustainable architectural practices. Through this analysis, it argues that Islamic architecture reflects an intrinsic commitment to environmental stewardship, long before the advent of modern sustainability concerns.

### INTRODUCTION

Islamic architecture, from its inception, has always been about more than just aesthetic appeal; it is an expression of the Muslim worldview, particularly concerning human interactions with the natural environment. The Quran emphasizes humanity's role as steward of the Earth (Qur'an, 2:30), which implies a duty to protect and sustain the environment. Islamic architecture, as an embodiment of these principles, reflects a deep connection with nature and an understanding of environmental harmony.

This paper explores how traditional Islamic architecture was inherently sustainable, demonstrating respect for the environment

through its design, materials, and methods. The study focuses on the principles that guided Islamic architects and how modern interpretations of these principles can inform contemporary sustainable architecture. It also discusses various elements of Islamic architecture, such as courtyards, wind catchers, and the use of local materials, to show how they contributed to environmental sustainability.

### ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Islamic teachings provide a foundational perspective on environmental protection and sustainability. Central to these teachings is the concept of **khilafah** (stewardship), which emphasizes the responsibility of humans to manage the Earth wisely (Sanjotis, 2012). Islam views the environment as a divine trust that must be preserved and protected, a principle echoed throughout the Quran and Hadith. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have said, “The Earth is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you His stewards over it” (Sahih Muslim, 2742).

This ethos of environmental care is reflected in the Islamic concept of **mizan** (balance), which encourages harmony between humans and nature. The architecture of Muslim societies, particularly in pre-modern times, reflects this principle. Buildings were designed to integrate with the natural environment, using local resources and climate-responsive designs. This created structures that were not only aesthetically pleasing but also environmentally friendly (Dutton, 2000).

### THE INTEGRATION OF NATURE IN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

One of the defining characteristics of Islamic architecture is its seamless integration with nature. Courtyards, gardens, and water features are central elements in Islamic architectural design. These features are not merely decorative; they play a functional role in regulating temperature, creating microclimates, and fostering a sense of spiritual tranquility (Grube, 1995).

**Courtyards** are a prime example of environmental integration. Found in traditional Islamic homes, mosques, and palaces, courtyards serve multiple purposes. In arid and hot climates, they create shaded

spaces that reduce the temperature inside buildings. The central garden or water feature in a courtyard cools the surrounding air through evaporation, providing natural climate control without the need for artificial cooling systems (Fathy, 1986). The courtyard is also a space where nature is brought into the home, reflecting the Islamic value of connecting with the environment.

**Gardens** in Islamic architecture are deeply symbolic, representing paradise as described in the Quran. However, their environmental function is equally important. Gardens provide shade, cool the air, and create humid microclimates in hot, dry regions. The design of Islamic gardens, often characterized by symmetrical layouts, flowing water, and abundant greenery, demonstrates an understanding of ecology and sustainable land use (Rabbat, 2012).

#### PASSIVE COOLING TECHNIQUES IN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Traditional Islamic architecture demonstrates advanced knowledge of passive cooling techniques that minimize energy use while maximizing comfort. In hot climates, buildings were designed to utilize natural ventilation and cooling methods, reducing reliance on artificial cooling. These techniques include **wind catchers** (badgirs), thick walls, high ceilings, and the strategic use of water.

**Wind catchers**, or **badgirs**, are a distinctive feature of Islamic architecture, particularly in Iran and other parts of the Middle East. These structures capture cool breezes at the roof level and direct them into the building's interior. In combination with courtyards and water features, wind catchers effectively reduce indoor temperatures even during the hottest months (Foruzanmehr, 2015).

**Thick walls** and **high ceilings** are also essential elements of climate-responsive design. In hot regions, the thick walls of Islamic buildings provide insulation against the extreme heat of the day, while high ceilings allow hot air to rise, keeping living spaces cooler. These design principles minimize the need for energy-intensive air conditioning, making Islamic architecture both environmentally sustainable and cost-effective.

**Water** plays a crucial role in Islamic architecture, not only for its symbolic value but also for its environmental benefits. Fountains and



pools in courtyards and gardens serve as cooling devices, creating humidity and lowering the temperature of the surrounding air. This technique, combined with wind catchers and shaded areas, creates a natural cooling system that is both energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

#### MATERIAL USAGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The use of local materials in Islamic architecture is another example of sustainable building practices. Traditional Islamic buildings were often constructed using materials that were readily available in the surrounding environment. This reduced the environmental impact of construction and created structures that were in harmony with their natural surroundings.

**Adobe, mud-brick, and stone** were commonly used in many regions, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. These materials have excellent thermal properties, keeping buildings cool in the summer and warm in the winter. In addition to their practical benefits, these materials are biodegradable and have a low environmental impact, making them ideal for sustainable construction (Fathy, 1986).

In Islamic Spain, **Alhambra Palace** is a prime example of the use of local materials. The intricate stucco and tile work that adorns the palace were crafted from materials sourced from the surrounding area, creating a building that is not only beautiful but also environmentally responsible (Grabar, 1978). This principle of using local, sustainable materials is one that modern architects can learn from, particularly as the construction industry seeks to reduce its carbon footprint.

#### ICONIC EXAMPLES OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIVE ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Numerous examples of Islamic architecture illustrate the principles of environmental sustainability. The buildings which were designed centuries ago, offer valuable lessons for contemporary architects and planners.

One iconic example is the **Great Mosque of Córdoba** in Spain, which reflects Islamic architectural principles in its use of space, materials, and

environmental adaptation. The mosque's forest of columns and double arches not only create a striking visual effect but also serve to regulate temperature and airflow within the building. The use of local stone and tiles reduces the mosque's environmental impact, while the inclusion of a large courtyard with orange trees provides natural cooling and a serene space for reflection (Creswell, 1989).

Another remarkable example is the **Alhambra Palace** in Granada, Spain. The palace's courtyards, water features, and use of local materials demonstrate a deep understanding of environmental sustainability. The **Court of the Lions**, with its central fountain and water channels, creates a microclimate that cools the surrounding area. The intricate tile work and carved stucco not only enhance the palace's beauty but also reflect the use of local resources in construction (Grabar, 1978).

In Iran, the city of Yazd is famous for its use of **wind catchers** and other passive cooling techniques. The traditional houses in Yazd are designed to withstand the harsh desert climate, with thick walls, courtyards, and wind catchers that provide natural ventilation. These buildings are a testament to the ingenuity of Islamic architects in creating environmentally responsive structures that are both functional and beautiful (Foruzanmehr, 2015).

## CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAMIC SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

While traditional Islamic architecture was inherently sustainable, the principles behind it can and should inform contemporary architectural practices. The global emphasis on sustainability and the reduction of carbon footprints makes the lessons of Islamic architecture more relevant than ever. Islamic architecture's emphasis on local materials, natural cooling techniques, and integration with the environment offers a model for modern sustainable design.

In recent years, architects in the Islamic world have begun to incorporate these traditional principles into contemporary projects. The **King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center** in Saudi Arabia, designed by Zaha Hadid, incorporates passive cooling techniques and energy-efficient design, reflecting both modern technology and traditional Islamic architectural principles (Azzouz, 2020).

Moreover, there is a growing tendency within Islamic architecture to develop **green mosques** that embody environmental sustainability. These mosques use solar panels, water recycling systems, and energy-efficient lighting to minimize their environmental impact while serving as places of worship. The **Green Mosque** in Istanbul, for instance, utilizes sustainable energy sources and rainwater harvesting systems, reflecting the Islamic principle of stewardship of the Earth (Shah, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

Islamic architecture, both in its historical and contemporary forms, offers valuable lessons in sustainability and environmental stewardship. The principles of **khilafah** (stewardship), **mizan** (balance), and the seamless integration of nature into architectural design are central to the Islamic worldview. By using local materials, passive cooling techniques, and nature-inspired designs, traditional Islamic architects created buildings that were both environmentally sustainable and spiritually uplifting.

As the world faces unprecedented environmental challenges, the principles of Islamic architecture can provide guidance for creating more sustainable and ecologically and responsibly built environments by looking to the past and incorporating the skills therein.

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DR MOHD ARSHAD

## Impact of Gulf Migration on Indian Muslim Community (Observations from District Azamgarh of Uttar Pradesh)

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### INTRODUCTION

Migration is a global phenomenon. History of migration can be traced to the beginning of human history. People from one part of the world migrated to another part time and again for the sake of better life prospects or any other reason. India is a unique land in this regard. It is supposed that the first human being was from this particular region. According to Islamic traditions the first human being, Adam landed from Heaven to this place.<sup>1</sup> In Sri Lanka we have Adam's Peak also we have a bridge between India and Sri Lanka in the sea connecting today's Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. It is also said that Adam crossed the sea through that bridge from Sri Lanka to India to travel to Arabia where he met his spouse, Eve. Though India has a history of migration from ancient times, it never resulted in permanent settlements. No doubt India has religious and cultural influence in Southeast Asian region and some other places like Indonesia, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Tibet and parts of China, but migration from India in the modern time is wholly a creation of Britain. Prakash C. Jain writes in his article on abroad migration:

*It began in 1834 when slavery was abolished in the British Empire. Labour was needed to work on the sugar plantations in the various British colonies. Without dependable supplies of labour, survival of plantations would have been extremely difficult. Consequently, the British colonists followed the practice of Latin American and Cuban colonists who were importing Chinese indentured labour from the Portuguese settlement of Macao (Campbell 1969). Indian labourers had already*

*been found useful in various colonies where as slaves and convicted prisoners they were employed in public works-roads, harbours, offices and jails.<sup>2</sup>*

One of the latest migrations from Indian soil is Indian migration to West Asian countries specially Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This migration took place because of oil boom in the Gulf countries. This is basically labourers' migration and migrants in this case are mostly unskilled or semi-skilled labourers. They are staying there as contract workers and in most cases without proper facilities but with salaries better than in India. The migration towards GCC is mostly dominated by Keraliet people. But there are patches in other parts of the country from where a large number of such workers have migrated. One such patch is the district Azamgarh of eastern Uttar Pradesh from where a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled labourers of Muslim community have migrated. This Gulf migration has provided not only remittances to them but also influenced their social, educational and cultural life. This paper tries to study the impact of Gulf migration on the social and educational lives of the Muslim community of district Azamgarh.

#### INDO-ARAB RELATIONS

India and Arab are two great nations and they have a long history of relations. Arabs consider India as their father land.<sup>3</sup> This is because Arabs believe that their great-grandfather Adam landed in the country from the Heaven. Historically India and Arab have long trade relations. Even before the advent of Islam, Arab traders' settlements were present along with the sea shores of Kerala and other coastal areas. Also, there are historical proofs and evidences that the Arab traders were not only aware of coastal areas of India but also doing business through ports situated with these coasts like port of the Baluchistan, the port of Debal (Karachi) in Sind, the ports of Gujarat, Kathiawar and Khambait, the ports of Calicut, Madras and Bengal etc.<sup>4</sup> The relation strengthened with the passage of time. Basically Arab traders remained as main link in the trade between Asia, Africa and Europe for a long time. The Name of India (Hind) is also spread all over the world by the Arabs and the name was so loved and respected to them that they started

naming their girls after the name i.e. Hind. The name was also very much popular in Arabic poetry.<sup>5</sup> These relations continued during the Muslim rule in India. It is a fact that after the European dominance on the sea trade Indo-Arab relations suffered. It appears that for a long time it was limited only to pilgrimage purposes. But after oil boom in the Arab world a new era of Indo-Arab relations emerged. Though Indians were not much involved in the sea trade but evidences are available that some Indians businessmen, military men and other experts like physicians (Syed Sulaiman Nadvi has quoted from *Al Adab al Mufrad*, a book of famous Hadith expert Imam Bukhari (d. 256 AH) that during the period of Companions once Umm al Muminin Ayisha fell ill, her nephews hired an Indian Jat physician to treat her)<sup>6</sup> and mathematicians settled in the Arab region over the time.

#### MIGRATION FROM INDIA TO ARAB LAND

Though early and medieval Indian migration to the Arab lands is not well documented but there are significant evidences of Indian migration to this area. Besides trade Hajji pilgrimage to Makkah and Madina in today's Saudi Arabia, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in Palestine and Shiá Muslims' pilgrimages to Najaf and Karbala in Iraq were main reasons and attractions for the Indian migrants to travel to Arabia. One of the main reasons to go to Arabia was also higher religious education. Many scholars of medieval Muslim period from India travelled to Arabia to acquire higher education. We can name like Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi and Shah Waliullah Dehlavi, two famous religious scholars who travelled to Arabia for higher education. Similarly we find Indian merchants and traders sailing to and settling down in Arab areas such as Mocha (al Makha) and Aden ports of Yemen, Muscat in Oman etc. Many of these traders were from the modern-day Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

During the British occupation of India and Arabian coastal areas, India Arab relations came closer because Arab areas were under the control of British India. At that point of time most of the Arab trade was managed through or by India. During this period too, many Indian merchants settled in Arab regions to help the Arabs in their business activities. British India was the lone market for the Arab pearls.

After oil market boom and price hike during 1970s, Arab world became most favourite destination for many Indians because of its proximity to the region and also because of familiarity with the people and environment. Arab countries started developing their infrastructures and other programmes by the money earned by the oil price hike. They looked for Indian labour force for their increasing labour demand that was not available to them. India was struggling with unemployment crisis during the time and because of it India emerged as a big labour provider country specially unskilled and semi-skilled, to the Arab world.

#### AZAMGARH AND ITS MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Azamgarh is a district in Eastern Uttar Pradesh with a population of around 5 million of which nearly 1/6 is Muslims. It is one of the most populace districts of the state. Muslims are mostly settled in urban or semi urban areas. Literacy rate of the district is around 75% and the same is supposed to be the % of the Muslims in India.

Muslims in Azamgarh can be traced back to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries CE when Mahmud of Ghazni attacked Banaras. Syed Salar Masood Ghazi (1014–1034 CE) is believed to send many of his soldiers and companions to this region of eastern Uttar Pradesh to conquer and spread the message of Islam here. Even graves of his father, uncle and many of his companions are found here in the district. Historically this region came under Muslim rule after the battle of Kannauj<sup>7</sup> in the year 1194. Officially Muslims settled in this area after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in 1206 CE.<sup>8</sup>

Azamgarh is a relatively new establishment. Earlier it was a part of Jaunpur state.<sup>9</sup> local Muslim Population is of two types, one converted Muslims and the second those came from Muslim areas and cities and settled here but they are small in numbers.<sup>10</sup> The founder of this area is said to be one Daulat Khan who converted during the period of Mughal ruler Jahangir and got this title and a state of 24 Pragnas, mostly part of the existing districts of Azamgarh and Mau. One of the descendants of the family Raja Azam Khan was the founder of Azamgarh city after which the district is named. Azamgarh came under British rule in 1801 AD and was established as a separate district.<sup>11</sup> Azamgarh has a long history of migration inside as well as outside the country.



## GULF MIGRATION FROM AZAMGARH

Muslim population in Azamgarh is around 16/17% and a major chunk of their population lives in urban or semi-urban areas. During the British rule, Azamgarh remained economically and educationally backward. Similar case was with the Muslim community of the district. Even after the independence, the condition of Muslim community of Azamgarh did not change. The Muslims of Azamgarh could not reap the fruits of independence; their economic and educational status remained unchanged by the colonial British rule. They could not overcome their illiteracy, unemployment, backwardness and poverty in independent India. After a long time of independence Azamgarh is still looking for its dues to reshape its fortune specially the Muslim community. Situated away from big political and economic centres of the country, Azamgarh is a district without any considerable agro or any other industry. Densely populated and without local sufficient resources peoples from Azamgarh are compelled to migrate from their place to in or out side India to earn their livelihood. The Gulf migration from Muslim community of Azamgarh is mainly of two types. There are those who migrated from the district in search of better opportunity and to add in their family income, so they may generate other income sources. The others are those who have no sufficient or insufficient income sources in the district; they are compelled to leave their place. They are unable to find any job or work in the district, so they are going away from their place that may be economic centres of the country or abroad.

After the oil boom in the Gulf in 1970s, Muslims from the Azamgarh district got an opportunity to get employment in these countries as unskilled or semiskilled labourers. The money earned by hiked oil prices was spent on urbanization and industrialization activities in the Gulf countries. For these developmental activities they were in need of extra labour force. Areas like Azamgarh from India suffering from unemployment, poverty, flood and famine fulfilled this need because there was already a trend to travel outside the district to earn the livelihood.

Muslims from Azamgarh started migrating to the Gulf countries as early as in 1970s. They got jobs in construction sites, driving, helping in

agriculture and other services. Gulf migration has an immense impact on economic and social life of the Muslims in the district.

#### IMPACT OF GULF MIGRATION ON MUSLIMS OF AZAMGARH

Boom in oil energy demand and price increase in international market led the oil producing countries to accumulate or earn huge money in return. No doubt the GCC countries were the most benefitted nations because of hike in oil prices. When their earning increased, they started spending their surplus income into the infrastructure developmental activities. GCC countries began many infrastructural development projects in their respective countries. To accelerate the developmental works GCC countries required extra labour force that was not sufficient in their own countries. They looked for extra labour force for their development projects and invited offering them better wages or higher salaries in comparison with their respective countries. India emerged as a big labor-providing country and both unskilled and skilled workers migrated to the Gulf region. This happened because of wage inequalities and low growth in the formal employment sector in India. This was also because the local Indian labourers wanted to improve their economic condition. People from districts like Azamgarh utilized this opportunity to make their fortunes because they were already in a habit of migrating in and outside India. This was a win-win situation for all stakeholders because:

*Temporary labour migration is often touted as a triple-win: a win for labour migrant-receiving countries that can support a level of economic activity that would be impossible without foreign labourers; a win for labour migrant-sending countries because it lowers unemployment and brings in remittances and skills; and a win for the labour migrants, who can earn more income and ultimately move out of poverty.<sup>12</sup>*

Skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled laborers from Azamgarh Muslim community attracted towards the Gulf countries mostly because of economic reasons. Also, because they could meet out their financial needs or improve their incomes through migration. So, the Gulf migration from Azamgarh brought economic prosperity to the people of the district. Along with this a social change also could be observed in

the lives of district's Muslim population. We discuss below the economic and social impacts caused by the Gulf migration.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

(Remittances, Acquisition of Land, Housing, Consumer Durables, Education)

There is no doubt that Gulf migration has changed the economic life of Azamgarh Muslim community. The migrant people got benefitted from working in the region and it brought them and their families at home economic prosperities like remittances, acquisition of land, housing, consumer durables and education etc.

#### *Remittances*

Remittance is the income of a country whose migrants are sent to their home country from the host or destination countries. India's remittances' income is more than any other country in the world and half of that comes from the Gulf countries. Since the migrants from Azamgarh are mostly unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, they send a significant share of their income to their home district to manage their family maintenances. Though there is no such data to record the remittances coming from the Gulf but no doubt it is significant.

#### *Acquisition of Land/Other Assets*

After fulfilling the basic needs of family, the earnings from Gulf are spent on acquisition of land and other assets. Land acquisition is one of the important indicators of Gulf income because it is a safe way to not only invest the savings but also to increase it. Many of the Gulf migrants from Azamgarh prefer to spend their savings on land purchase and because of this trend in the district the prices of land are very high especially in Muslim dominated areas. It is also apparent that the land purchased by the Gulf migrants is much more than those having no Gulf income. Price hikes of land can also be observed because of increased demand. Land prices in rural and urban areas have gone up

because of the demand. Similar increase in other assets of Gulf migrants like buildings, gold ornaments, motor vehicles and consumer durables has been seen. A major trend from the Gulf savings is investment in the small scale industry of power looms etc. in places like Bhiwandi in Maharashtra.

### *Housing*

Housing is the sector where impact of Gulf migration is most visible. Before migration people were mostly living in Kachcha Makan or semi Pakka Makan made of bricks without plaster etc. Now it is the first preference in most of the cases of Gulf migrants usually to build a good house with necessary facilities. One would find in Muslim localities (villages, urban and semi urban areas) normally Pakka and good houses and in some cases very lavish buildings. In most of the cases people were living in Kachcha or semi Pakka Makan which turned into good living facility after Gulf migration. Houses are either big or double storied. In many cases now second and third generations are working in Gulf nations, in such cases houses are not only big with spacious rooms and facilities but also with inverter and generator to support proper electricity supply as the proper electricity supply has been a big problem in the district.

### *Consumer Durables*

Consumer durables or household amenities are another parameter to assess the Gulf migration in the district's Muslim community. Households purchased by Gulf migrants are more likely to have many kinds of home equipment and other consumer durables. Most of the Gulf migrants' houses possess home equipment like mixer, grinder, television with satellite connection, refrigerator, air cooler and washing machine etc. now having air conditioner (AC) is a new trend among Gulf migrants specially those having handsome salaries or other income sources over there. In many cases first time Gulf migrants purchase motor bikes after coming back home. Those with good income or those in second/third generation in the Gulf usually have four-wheelers.

*Education*

Though there is a debate among the sincere and thinking minds of the Azamgarh Muslim community that Gulf migration has brought down the education level in the district's Muslims. Their perception is that if there would have no Gulf migration, the education level among the community would have gone up. There is no doubt that prospect of getting jobs or work permissions in the GCC countries has affected the education of the community at a certain level but it is also true that after having degrees being unable to find a suitable job in the district or country has frustrated many Muslim residents of the district.

This is not the whole story of the district's Muslim community. In fact when the migrants to Gulf nations as unskilled or semi-skilled laborers encounter others possessing good education and getting good salaries in their home country or even in the host countries, they are suddenly stricken by the importance of education. Back home, they encourage their children to give priority to their education. If living in rural areas without good education facility hurdles the upbringing of their children, many of the Gulf migrants prefer to shift their families to places with better education facilities like semi urban towns of the district, district centre itself, state capital Lucknow, Aligarh and national capital Delhi.

Education is a sector where impact of the Gulf migration can be felt easily. Mushrooming of public schools here and there all over the area is an open proof to this. A considerable share of Gulf earning is being spent on the education of children or the earner's siblings. If the migrants are young and unmarried they spend money for the education of their brothers and sisters so they can get the education that they did not. Parents and brothers want to spend their hard earnings on the education of coming generation so they may not go through the hardship their elders have faced. Gulf migrants prefer to send their wards to English medium public schools also privately managed technical institutes and colleges and pay heavy fees for their education. Now impact of this consideration is visible. A large number of Gulf migrants' children, after completing their school education are either in professional education or in jobs in big cities. Number of degree and

diploma holder engineers has gone up specially and this could happen mostly due to the Gulf remittances.

#### SOCIAL IMPACT

(Family, Architecture, Food & Dressing,)

Gulf migration has brought a change in the social lives of Muslims of Azamgarh too. A terminology has been coined for this social change or impact that is 'social remittances'. Gulf migrants from the district got exposed to the citizens of different nationalities. Their encounter with these people broadened their world view as well as their attitude towards education, health, living style etc. It has changed their mindset to more professionalism and the improvement of the management quality etc. From family life to architecture of their houses, their consumption behaviour, their dressing and eating habits and many other things have been changed due to the interaction with the people of other nationalities.

#### *Family*

Gulf migrants from Azamgarh don't take their wives with them to the host country in GCC in most of the cases. This is because of high living cost with their small salaries. The families are generally left behind at their homes. These wives are termed as Gulf wives. Being a joint family system in the district's Muslim community, wives of the Gulf migrants live with the husband's family. These Gulf wives are the most affected segment of the society because of the absence of their husbands. They face many problems like loneliness, misunderstanding with their husbands, problems with in-laws etc.

Some other problems faced by Gulf wives are responsibility of taking care of education of the children, taking care of the aged family members such as mother-in-law and father-in-law, caring of sick family members and children, even taking care of husband's brothers and sisters and in many cases managing family finances and assets etc. Though this added responsibility causes an extra burden on Gulf wives but this has a positive impact on them also. This has made them more

empowered. In many instances they are having money in their pockets; they are looking after their children and elders and thus have a role in the decision making. Many a times they influence the decisions of the family because of their being well aware of the local situations. With these added responsibilities, Gulf wives have become more independent and empowered. Many of them go for shopping of grocery and other daily requirements of the household, manage family finances, go banks to withdraw cash, go to attend the PTMs at schools and also attend the sick in hospitals.

### *Architecture*

Migration of Azamgarh people especially Muslims started in 1970s. The main reason behind this migration was to earn livelihood and to add in household income. As mentioned above the remittances earned by these Gulf migrants were mostly spent on either family maintenance or on house buildings. Many of these migrants with handsome income brought back home the architecture of host countries. The impact of Gulf architecture can easily be sensed in the palatial houses of the big guns of the Gulf migrants. Another place where Gulf architecture impact is evident enough is the newly built mosques of the district. A number of these newly constructed mosques are designed on Gulf style, like with one Minatare or fully covered.

### *Food & Dressing*

Cultures and civilizations evolve through interaction and the exchange of various elements. Gulf migration offers migrants from Azamgarh district a valuable opportunity to engage with people of different nationalities, particularly with the Arabs. Food and dressing are the two more areas where Gulf impact is visible. Migrants from the district, when back at home, introduced many Arab dishes and clothing to the area.

## CONCLUSION

Indo-Arab relation has a very long history. Migration from one place to another is also a common phenomenon in both the sides and it has

happened again and again. One of the latest migrations from India to Arabia (especially to GCC countries) has occurred during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century CE. After the boom in oil prices in 1970s, the newly wealthy nations from the trance Arabian Sea attracted many Indians to work there as labourers, skilled and unskilled both. Azamgarh, a district in the Eastern Uttar Pradesh, is one of the places from where a large number of un-skilled and semi-skilled workers migrated to Gulf countries in search of their wellbeing. No doubt this migration brought them not only a good income but also many changes and challenges in their social lives. The hard-earned money from the Gulf countries did a great impact on the social, economic, cultural and educational scene of the district. On one hand this increased their dependency on Gulf remittances that is negative in the sense because they have lost their hopes in local resources, on the other hand this empowered them economically, educationally and socially and because of this they are living prosperous life at their native place.

#### NOTES

1. Nadvi, Syed Sulaiman, Arab-o-Hind ke Talluqaat, Darul Musannefin Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, U.P., 2010, pp. 1-2.
2. Sandhu 1969: 132-140; Tinker 1974: 44
- 3 Arab-o-Hind ke Talluqaat, p. 1.
4. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
5. Ibid., p. 11.
6. Ibid., p. 261.
7. This battle was fought between Muhammad Ghauri and Jaichandra, ruler of Kannauj in which Jaichandra was defeated.
8. Mubarakpuri, Qazi Athar, Dayar-e-Purab mein I'lm aur U'lama, Al-Balagh Publications, Delhi, 2009, pp. 51-52.
9. Nadvi, Syed Sulaiman, Hayat-e-Shibli, Darul Musannifin Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, UP, 2015, p. 113.
10. Ibid., p. 113.
11. Ibid., p. 116-117.
12. Prasad Hanuman. Migration to urban centres of India: A case study of Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh). In: space, populations, societies 1985.



LUBNA NAAZ

## Love and Service to Mankind: A Brief Study of the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

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### INTRODUCTION

Allah (SWTS) says in the Quran, “(Muhammad), we have sent you for no other reason but to be a mercy for mankind.” (Al Quran, Chapter 21, Verse 107) The life of Prophet Muhammad (saws) stands as a profound example of love and service to mankind, embodying the principles of compassion, justice, and humility. This study explores the key aspects of his biography, focusing on how his actions and teachings reflect a deep commitment to the well-being of humanity. The Prophet’s life offers a model of selflessness, where love for others is manifested through acts of kindness, charity, and support for the needy.

Through various incidents in his life, such as his care for orphans, his just treatment of both friends and enemies, and his emphasis on ethical conduct, the Prophet (saws) demonstrated that true love is not merely an emotion but a proactive force for good. His Farewell Sermon, which emphasized equality, human rights, and social justice, serves as a timeless guide for how love and service can transform societies.

This study also delves into how these principles have inspired countless individuals and movements throughout history, promoting a culture of service and altruism. By analyzing the Prophet’s life, this work aims to highlight the enduring relevance of his example in fostering a more compassionate and just world.

### BIOGRAPHY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (saws)

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) was born in 570 CE in Makka, now Saudi Arabia. He belonged to the respected Quraysh tribe though he

became orphaned at a young age. His father, Abdullah, passed away before his birth, and his mother, Amina, died when he was just six years old. Muhammad (**saws**) was then cared for by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, and later by his uncle, Abu Talib. Known for his honesty and integrity, he earned the nickname “*Al-Amin*,” meaning “the trustworthy.” At the age of 40, while meditating in the Cave of Hira, Muhammad (saws) received his first revelation from Allah (God) through the Angel Gabriel. This marked the beginning of his mission as the final prophet in Islam. Over the next 23 years, these revelations continued and were compiled into the holy book of Islam, the Qur’an. The Prophet Muhammad (saws) preached the oneness of God, social justice, and moral integrity. His teachings emphasized the importance of compassion, charity, and community. He advocated for the rights of the poor, women, and slaves, and condemned the injustices prevalent in Makkan society. His message was initially met with resistance, but gradually, a growing number of people embraced Islam. In 622 CE, due to increasing persecution from the Quraysh tribe, Muhammad (**saws**) and his followers migrated to the city of *Yathrib*, later known as Madina. This event, known as the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad (**saws**) established a strong, cohesive community based on principles humanistic in nature. He was not only a spiritual leader but also a statesman and military commander. In 630 CE, the Prophet (saws) led a peaceful conquest of Makka, after years of conflict with the Quraysh. Upon entering the city, he forgave his former enemies, setting an example of mercy and forgiveness. He then cleansed the Ka’ba of idols and rededicated it to the worship of the one true God.

#### DEATH AND LEGACY

The Prophet Muhammad (saws) passed away in 632 CE at the age of 63. His legacy continues to inspire over a billion Muslims around the world. He is regarded as the perfect example for mankind of how to live a life in accordance with God’s will. His teachings and life story have profoundly influenced the course of history, shaping cultures, legal systems, and civilizations. (Encyclopedia of Islam, p.153)

## LOVE TO HUMANITY

The Qur'ānic concept of *hubb* (love) incorporates a third dimension that expands the scope of honor and recognition for the Faithful. These three dimensions are clearly outlined in the Hadith. Anas bin Malik and Abdullah bin Masood reported that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said:

*The entire humanity is the family of God; and the most beloved to Him is one who is the most beneficial to His family. (Al Tabrezi)*

Similarly, Hazrat Jarir bin Abdullah narrates that the Prophet (saws) said:

*God does not show His mercy to one who is not merciful to the people. (Sahih Al Bukhari)*

Abdullah bin Umar reports that the Messenger of Allah (saws) declared:

*The Believers are the merciful, upon whom the Most Benevolent (God) bestows His mercy. Show your mercy to those living on the earth, then God who is in the Heaven will show His mercy to you. (Sunan Al Tirmidhi)*

The compassionate, caring, and fair treatment extends to non-believers as well, as emphasized in the Quran. The Quran advises the Faithful not to form alliances with those who are hostile to Islam, seeking to harm Muslims and their faith. Maintaining close ties with such enemies of Islam is considered by the Quran to be unkind and unjust. The Quran states:

*Allah forbids you only respecting those who fight you for religion, and drive you forth from your homes and help (others) in your expulsion, that you make friends of them; and whoever makes friends of them, these are the wrongdoers. (Al Quran, Chapter 60. Verse 09)*

## KINDNESS AND JUSTICE TO NON-BELIEVERS

In the following verse, the Quran instructs:

*Allah forbids you not respecting those who fight you not for religion, nor drive you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly. Surely Allah loves the doers of justice. (Al Quran, Chapter 60. Verse 08)*

Reflecting on the language and style of this verse from Surah *Al-Mumtahinah*, Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi explains that justice must also extend to non-hostile non-believers. This does not imply, however, that enemies of Islam are excluded from just treatment. Rather, the verse emphasizes that fair treatment is reserved for those who are themselves fair and just. It is unjust to treat hostile and non-hostile individuals alike.

Maududi further clarifies that the command in these verses to sever relations with the pagans was not due to their paganism itself, but rather because of their enmity and hostility toward Islam and the Muslims. Thus, Muslims are urged to distinguish between the belligerent and non-belligerent non-believers and treat them accordingly. In this context, Maududi cites an interesting example from the Prophet time.

Qutaylah bint Abdul Uzza, one of Abu Bakr wives, was a non-believer and did not migrate to Madinah. Her daughter, Asma bint Abu Bakr, was born to her. After the Treaty of Hudaibiyah was signed between the Makkans and the Muslims in 6 A.H. /627 AD, the communication between Makkah and Madinah was restored, allowing Qutaylah to visit Madinah with gifts for her daughter. According to a narration attributed to Asma, she asked the Prophet (saws), if she could visit her mother and maintain relations with her. The Prophet replied,

*Yes, you should maintain relations with your mother. (Maududi, Sayyid Abul Ala, pp. 173-174)*

Maududi concludes that the hadith validates visiting and providing assistance to non-believing parents and relatives, provided they are not hostile towards Islam. (ibid, pp. 433-434, Note No.13 (referring to al-Jassas and Alusi])

## THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL

The Qur'anic concept of *hubb* (love) includes a deep love for God as a primary requirement of faith. The faithful are expected to be full of love for God, which demands sincere adherence to the divine commands revealed to and followed by the Prophet of Islam (saws). Love for God and the Prophet is treated as one in the Quran, and thus, unquestioning obedience to the Prophet's guidance is a mark of true faith. The Qur'anic

*hubb* encompasses respect, affection, and acceptance of the faithful by others in this life and the hereafter. To convey this, the Quran uses the term *wudd* in Surah Maryam, which frequently highlights the attribute of *Rahman* (The Most Gracious), leading some scholars to call it the *Surah of Rahman*. This chapter provides a clear understanding of *Rahman* and repudiates misconceptions. The Qur'anic *hubb* also extends to encompass love for humanity without discrimination, as highlighted in *Surah al-Mumtahinah*. This chapter commands the faithful to differentiate between peace-loving and hostile non-believers and to practice justice and kindness toward all who show goodwill. (Op.cit, Fahad, Prof. Obaidullah, pp.56-59)

#### IMPACT ON HUMANITY

A third *Qur'anic* reference to the pride and honor of man is the conquest of the universe. Allah has created the universe for the service of mankind. For this, the Qur'an uses the term *Taskhir*, which means subjugation to make something submissive without any reward. When discussing the knowledge of the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*, and compensation in service, the meaning of subjugating the clouds between the heavens and the earth, as mentioned in *Surah Al-Baqrah*, verse 184, is that they are completely submissive and under the command of God. They are always ready to obey God's commands when, where, and in what form they are commanded. These elements are in the hands of God, and He uses them as instruments of mercy or punishment according to His Lordship and wisdom.

In the Qur'an, this concept can also apply to human beings. When it is mentioned that the wind is under control, it does not mean that humans have subjugated the clouds, the wind, or even the sun or moon. Rather, it means that the Lord of the worlds has subjugated these elements for the benefit and service of mankind, according to His wisdom and knowledge. These elements are engaged in serving humanity day and night, without seeking any reward from man. For this reason, wherever this concept is described, it is made clear that God has invested these things for your benefit. This does not mean that they are under your control, as obedience belongs solely to God. The most

that man can do is to utilize these things according to the laws of *physics* (Fahad, Dr Obaidullah, pp.74-75). The *Quran* says:

*In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between heaven and earth, there are surely signs for a people who understand.* (Al-Quran-Chapter 2:Verse, 164)

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah Sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they Trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;- (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise. (Fahad, Dr Obiadullah., op. cit. p. 76)

*Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you to run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you.* (Al-Quran., 14:32)

*And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon, pursuing their courses; and He has made subservient to you the night and the day.* (Al-Quran., 14:33)

It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rain from the sky and produced thereby some fruits as provision for you and subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea by His command and subjected for you the rivers. And He subjected for you the sun and the moon, continuous (in orbit), and subjected for you the night and the day.

*And even if We open to them a gate of heaven, and they keep on ascending into it.* (Al-Quran., 15:14)

The pages of the Holy Qur'an are filled with accounts of Prophet Dawood (pbuh) and Prophet Suleiman (pbuh) receiving strength, protection, and expressing gratitude. In Surah Sa'd, Surah Al-Anbiya,

Surah An-Naml, and Surah Saba, the significant events involving these prophets are narrated to encourage the holy Prophet Muhammad (saws) to remain patient in the face of his opponents' persecution and to find solace in the experiences of these prophets. (Fahad, Dr Obaidullah, p. 76)

On the other hand, the Quraysh were rebellious and barbaric, indulging pride and arrogance fueled by their power and unity. Concerning Prophet Dawud *David* (pbuh), the Qur'an explains that he used to glorify God at the foot of the mountain in the morning and evening. When he recited the verses of the Psalms in his unique tone, the mountains themselves would join in praising the Lord. Birds would also gather in flocks, resting their wings on their heads in reverence. Allah had instilled such an influence in Prophet Dawud's heart and voice that the entire atmosphere around him would resonate with his praise, with the plains, mountains, and birds all harmonizing with him. (Ibid., p. 77) The Quran says:

*Truly We made the mountains subject to him, glorifying (Allah) at nightfall and sunrise. And the birds gathered together. All were obedient to him. (Al-Quran, 38:18-19)*

The Qur'an mentions that Allah, out of His special grace, granted Prophet Suleiman (pbuh) dominion and control over many things, a feat that no one had achieved before him. His naval power was the greatest of its time, and the system by which he controlled the wind was highly advanced. His ships undertook long voyages across all kinds of seas, never lacking the necessary wind for their journey. (Fahad, op. cit, p. 77)

The intensity of the wind did not disturb them. They successfully withstood the fiercest stormy winds and continued their voyages without hindrance, demonstrating the strength of their naval power and the effectiveness of their naval system. The Quran says

*So We made the wind subservient to him; it made his command to run gently wherever he desired (Al-Quran, 38:36)*

## ASHRAF CREATION

The fourth *Quranic* reference to the respectability of mankind highlights the high abilities of thought, understanding, knowledge, and intellect that are not given to any other creature. The highest example of this grace and perfection in humanity is found in the Prophets (saws). There is no higher position for any creature than being chosen by Allah Almighty to receive the rank of Prophethood. Therefore, in acknowledgment of the best creation, Allah has sworn by the places associated with the Prophets in Surah At-Tin, as proof of creation. (Fahad, p. 78) The Quran says:

*By the fig and the olive! And mount Sinai! And this City made secure! Certainly We created man in the best make. (Al-Quran., Chapter 9, Verse:1-4)*

Here, the question naturally arises: Why are figs, olives, Mount Sinai, and Makka mentioned, and what is the significance of these things in the context?

Maulana Maududi, after quoting various interpretations from commentators, has taken the position that the three oaths refer to the production of figs and olives. It was common among the Arabs that an area known for the abundant production of a particular fruit would be called by the name of that fruit. Here, it refers to the region of Syria and Palestine, as this area was well-known among the Arabs of that time for the production of figs and olives. Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Zamakhshari, and Alusi have also adopted the same interpretation.

Maulana Maududi explains that the region of Syria and Palestine is the land where many prophets were sent, from Abraham (pbuh) to Isa (Jesus, pbuh). The mountain of Mount Sinai is the place where the prophet Musa (pbuh) was granted Prophethood. As for Makkah, its foundation was laid by Abraham (pbuh) and Ismail (pbuh). Thanks to them, it became the holiest center in Arabia. The great Abraham (pbuh) built the city and prayed for it to become a peaceful and secure place. (Fahad, op. cit., p. 78) The Quran says

*And when Abraham said: My Lord, make this a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I shall grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I shall drive him to the chastisement of the Fire. And it is an evil destination (Al Quran., 2:126)*

It was the blessing of this prayer that, amidst the unrest spreading



throughout Arabia, only this city remained a cradle of peace for two and a half thousand years. Thus, the meaning is that Allah created mankind with such a perfect structure that even a person of great status, like a Prophet, could be born from it. (Fahad, op. cit, p. 79)

The fifth reference to the excellence of man in the Holy Qur'an is the nobility of the sons of Adam and their inherent honor. The Quran says:

*And surely We have honoured the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We provide them with good things, and We have made them to excel highly most of those whom We have (Al-Quran., 17:70)*

Well known Islamic scholar Dr Nejatullah Siddiqui (1931-2023) states that the most important goal of Shariah is that everyone deserves human dignity and honor. In addition to the verse 70 of surah Bani Isreal, he had also argued from the following verse of the Quran. (Fahad., op. cit, p. 80) The Quran says:

*O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. Al-Quran, Chapter 49, Verse, 13)*

The Quran further says:

*O you who believe, let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better than they; nor let women (laugh) at women, perchance they may be better than they. Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoso turns not, these it is that are the iniquitous. (Al-Quran., 49:11)*

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, clarified the matter very well.

It is narrated on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said: "When the people who had migrated across the sea returned to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, he said: 'Do not tell me about the strange things you saw in the land of Abyssinia?' So some of them responded and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Once, while we were sitting, an elderly woman from among their monks passed by us carrying a pot of water on her head. As she passed by, a boy from her nation put his hand between her thighs and pushed her, causing her to fall to her knees and break her

ankle. After standing up, the woman said to the boy: "O wicked one! You will know on the Day when the judgment is made in the court of Allah concerning me and you, on the Day when Allah will establish His Throne, gather all people, both from earlier and later generations, and your hands and feet will testify to your deeds." Indeed, the woman spoke the truth.

Dr Siddiqui states that in Islam, it is the responsibility of the authority to protect the less powerful members of society from the oppression and exploitation of the more powerful. The distinguished author further explains that it would be a mistake to think that our relationship with ordinary people is solely to invite them to Islam. If someone believes that our relationship with them serves only as a means to an end that too is incorrect. In the light of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, maintaining good relations with ordinary people, serving them, helping them, comforting them, and sharing in their sorrows is also essential. At the same time, calling them to the worship of their Lord is also required, but our attitude toward them should not be influenced by their choice of religion or the faith they have embraced. (Fahad, Prof. Obaidullah, p.81)

#### THE INCIDENT OF THAMAMA BIN ATHAL

The Prophet exemplified the universal application of social service and concern for humanity, including non-Muslims, as best represented in the tradition known as \*hadith qudsi.\* Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah said:

*Almighty Allah will say publicly on the Day of Resurrection: "O Child of Adam! I was sick but you did not visit me." He will reply: "How it was possible for me to visit you while you are the Lord of all the worlds?" He will say: "One of my servants was sick but did never visit him. Did you not know that if you had visited him, you would have found Me near to him."*

*"O Child of Adam! I asked you the food but you did not feed me." The man will say: "How it was possible for me to feed you while you are Lord of all the worlds?" He will say: "One of my servants asked you the food but you did not provide him. Did you not know that if you had fed to him you would have found Me nearby."*

*"O Child of Adam! I had asked you water to drink, but you did not respond*

*Me. The man (in surprise) will say: "How it was possible for me to give you water while you are Lord of all the worlds?" He will say: "Did you not know that if you had given water to him, you would have found Me nearby. (Sahih Muslim, Hadith, No. 2569)*

## IDEALS OF THE PROPHET

The Prophet of Islam (saws) embodied the teachings of the Qur'an in both word and spirit, implementing them within society and ensuring that non-Muslims were granted their full rights in the city-state of Madinah. His exemplary character in this regard has been recognized and praised by non-Muslim historians and writers worldwide. Imam Muslim, in the *Kitab al-Jihad wa al-Siyar*, narrates a hadith that illustrates this.

*Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah sent a group of horsemen to Najd, where they captured a man from the tribe of Banu Hanifa, named Thumama bin Uthal. Thumama was the chief of the people of Yamama. The Muslims brought him back and tied him to one of the pillars of the Mosque. The Prophet, upon seeing him, asked, "O Thumama, what do you think?" Thumama responded, "I have a good opinion of you. If you choose to kill me, you would be killing a person guilty of shedding blood and deserving of such a punishment. If you show me kindness, you will be doing so to a grateful man. And if it is wealth you desire, ask, and you will be given whatever you demand." The Prophet left him without any further words for two days. On the third day, the Prophet again approached him and asked, "What do you think now, O Thumama?" Thumama replied, "I have already told you: if you show kindness, you show it to a grateful man; if you kill, you kill someone deserving of it; and if you want wealth, ask, and it shall be given." At this, the Prophet said, "Release Thumama." Upon being freed, Thumama went to a nearby grove, performed a ritual bath, and returned to the Mosque. There, he openly declared: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. O Muhammad, by Allah, there was no face on this earth more hated by me than yours, but now your face is the most beloved of all. By Allah, there was no religion more despised by me than yours, but now your religion is dearest to me. By Allah, there was no city I disliked more than your city, but now it has become the most beloved." Thumama continued, "Your horsemen captured me while I was on my way for the lesser pilgrimage (umrah). What is your advice?" The Prophet offered him good news and encouraged him to proceed with his pilgrimage. When Thumama reached Makkah, people asked him,*

*“Have you abandoned your faith?” He replied, “No, I have embraced Islam with the Messenger of Allah. And, by Allah, not a single grain of wheat from Yamama will reach you unless the Messenger of Allah permits it.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 1764)*

It is reported that after the supply of wheat from Yamama was halted, the people of Makkah faced a severe drought, leading to hunger and starvation. In response, the Quraysh of Makkah sent a delegation to the Prophet (saws), requesting him to resume the wheat supply. The Prophet (saws) instructed Thumama bin Uthal to continue supplying wheat to the Makkans as before and to show mercy toward them. Commenting on the Prophet’s compassion, Muhammad Iqbal (1876–1938) says:

*Khalq-o-taqdir-o-hidayat ibtida’s t  
Rahmatul lil’alamini intiba’s t*

*(The creation, the destiny and the guidance is the starting point of life; and the mercifulness to the entire world is its final stage.)*

Prophet Muhammad’s love for humanity was a defining aspect of his character and mission. His life is a testament to his deep compassion, selflessness, and commitment to serving others, regardless of their background, faith, or status. This love is manifested in various ways throughout his life and is evident in his teachings and actions. He emphasized the importance of caring for those in need and repeatedly encouraged his followers to show kindness and generosity. In one of his famous sayings, he remarked, “The best of you are those who are best to others.”

His own life was a reflection of this principle, as he often went out of his way to help those in distress. Prophet Muhammad’s deep concern for the welfare of vulnerable members of society was a defining feature of his character and mission. He was particularly attentive to the needs of orphans, widows, the poor, and the oppressed—groups often marginalized and neglected in pre-Islamic Arabian society. The Quran emphasizes supporting and treating orphans with dignity. The Quran Says:

*On this world and the hereafter, And they ask thee concerning the orphans. Say: To set right their (affairs) is good; and if you mix with them, they are your brethren. And Allah knows him who makes mischief from him who sets right. And if Allah*

*pleased, He would have made matters difficult for you. Surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. (Al-Quran, 2:220)*

or

*And a tongue and two lips. (Al-Quran, 90:09)*

The Prophet Muhammad (saws) blessed the guardian and sponsor of an orphan with Paradise, saying:

*I and the sponsor of an orphan will be in Paradise like these two, and he pointed with his two fingers, meaning: the index and middle finger. (Sahih Al-Tirmidhi – 1918)*

The Prophet (saws) emphasized the importance of caring for orphans in over ten authentic hadiths, highlighting the high status granted to those who take on the responsibility of supporting them. On the other hand, he also issued stern warnings against violating the rights of orphans and the serious consequences that follow.

## SUPPORT FOR WIDOWS

Widows were another vulnerable group in pre-Islamic society. The Prophet (saws) worked to elevate the status of widows, encouraging the community to support them and ensuring they had their rightful place in society. He emphasized the responsibility of the community to look after widows, not only through financial assistance but also through social support and inclusion. His teachings urged Muslims to provide for widows and to treat them with the same respect and care as they would their own family members.

*Most of the people in our society are least concerned about widows and their hardships but Islam has clearly stated the rights of widow in the Quran and hadith both. Narrated Safwan bin Salim that the Prophet (saws) said: The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person, is like a warrior fighting for Allah's Cause or like a person who fasts during the day and prays all the night. (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith. no. 78)*

Islam ensures that a widow receives her rightful share of her husband's inheritance, secures her financial well-being, and provides her with a permanent home for her own comfort. The Quran says:

*And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient, Who, when a misfortune befalls them say: "Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall return." Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord; and those are the followers of the right course. (Al-Quran, 2:155-157)*

He encouraged his followers to be mindful of the needs of others and to go out of their way to assist those in distress. Whether it was offering a helping hand to a neighbor, giving food to the hungry, or simply offering a kind word, the Prophet taught that every act of kindness counted. His own life was a reflection of this principle, as he often took the time to visit the sick, console the grieving, and support those in difficulty. His famous saying, *The best of you are those who are best to others*, encapsulates his belief that a person's worth is measured by their compassion and service to others. The Prophet Muhammad's deep concern for the welfare of society's most vulnerable members left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire millions of people around the world. The Prophet Muhammad's capacity for forgiveness and mercy, even in the most challenging circumstances, is one of the most remarkable aspects of his character. Throughout his life, he faced numerous hardships, including mockery, physical abuse, and attempts on his life by those who opposed his message. Despite these trials, he consistently responded with patience and compassion, embodying the principles of forgiveness that he preached. His actions during the conquest of Makkah provide one of the most powerful illustrations of his merciful nature.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHARITY AND GOOD DEEDS

The Prophet Muhammad (saws) encouraged his followers to engage in charity and good deeds as a means of expressing their love for others. He taught that charity was not just a financial act but could be expressed in simple gestures like a smile or a kind word. He once said, *"Every act of kindness is charity"*, *"The best charity is that which is given in secret and to the poor,"* emphasizing the importance of sincerity and humility in charitable acts. His life demonstrated that charity, in its truest form, is an expression of love and empathy for all of humanity. Prophet Muhammad's teachings on charity and good deeds emphasize

that everyone has the capacity to contribute to the welfare of others, regardless of their means. His inclusive approach to charity, which values even the smallest acts of kindness, has had a profound and lasting impact, promoting a culture of generosity and compassion that continues to inspire people around the world. (Fahad, op.cit, p.59)

## CONCLUSION

Prophet Muhammad's love of service to humanity was not just a personal virtue but a leading element of his life and mission. Through his actions and teachings, he demonstrated that true love manifests in service to others, in the pursuit of justice, and in a steadfast commitment to the common good. His legacy continues to inspire people of all backgrounds to strive for a better world, one rooted in the principles of compassion, equity, and care for all. The Prophet's life remains a shining example of how we can each contribute to the welfare of humanity, reminding us that the path to a more just and compassionate world begins with our own actions and choices.

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A. NASEEB KHAN

## Book Review

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Book Name: **Raat Samundar Khwab (Ghazalain, Nazmain)**

Author: **Kausar Mazhari**

Poetry of abiding worth and significance seeks to transcend the boundaries of mere aesthetic concerns, serving as a powerful medium for connection, insight and understanding. It delves deeply into the human experiences, engages and explores profound ideas, emotions and universal themes. With its unique ability, such poetry transforms the intricate and overwhelming aspects of life into something accessible and relatable. Kausar Mazhari's *Raat Samundar Khwaab* (Night, Sea, Dream) a compelling collection of poems aspires to belong to the realm of such poetry. Through its evocative imagery and emotional depth, the collection seeks to explore the complex intersections of human experience, imagination and reflection.

Consisting of both *ghazals* and *nazms*, the collection opens with an insightful foreword by Professor Shafey Kidwai, probing deeply into the intricate layers of Mazhari's poetry, and unravelling its thematic concerns, stylistic nuances and cultural relevance. The foreword by Professor Kidwai, along with brief overviews of Mazhari's poetry by Arshad Abdul Hameed, Jamal Owaisi and Nasir Abbas Nayyar, not only shed light on the poet's voice but also contextualise his poetry within the broader landscape of contemporary Urdu literature. Their critical insight helps the readers gain a richer understanding of the intellectual rigour and societal reflections that define Mazhari's poetry which strikes a chord with them.

Mazhari's poetry strives to leave a thoughtful impression while drawing readers into a realm of introspection and a deeper connection to shared sense and essence of humanity. His poems provoke thought and encourage the readers to turn inward with a meditative focus and reflect deeply on the contents and the meanings long after engaging



with them. For him, the journey within, marked by clarity, awakening and self-discovery, is inseparable from its outward reflection, where individual transformation cascades into societal renewal. This interplay of inner illumination and external radiance appears to form a recurring motif in his work, showing how the evolution of the 'self' ripples outward to shape and inspire the collective. In his view, the illumination within represents the awakening of the 'self', while the brilliance radiating outward reflects the manifestation of this inner light in the world beyond, fostering a shared brightness that transcends boundaries. He captures this in his following lines:

*kal jo us jaanib merey jaaney ki tayyarii huwee  
andarun raushan huwaa, baahar ziyabaari huwee*

*(Yesterday, as preparations were made for me to journey that way,  
A light illuminated within while brilliance poured outside in every ray)*

The act of personal readiness here becomes a metaphor for the broader principle that individual growth can kindle light in the world, illuminating both the 'self' and 'society' in its wake. Mazhari's poetry serves as a quiet rebellion against the encroaching tides of ambiguity and distortion that define several territories of contemporary existence. In an era where subjective perceptions overshadow objective realities, his poetry becomes a pursuit of genuineness, a delicate, but resolute, effort to illuminate individual truth amid the cacophony and disharmony of societal noise. Much like the solitary lamp in the following couplet, his poetry offers a glimmer of clarity in the world where many spheres are shrouded in complexity and confusion. It is a light that does not seek to overwhelm but to persist, carving a space where authenticity resonates gently, though powerfully with the readers.

*Baad muddat ek cheraagh-e raah kyaa raushan huwaa  
Zulmaton ke kaan bharney ko hawaa taari huwee*

*(After ages, a lamp on the pathway was lit, shining bright  
The wind swept in, seeking to poison the ears of darkness)*

In the above couplet, the lamp emerges not merely as a physical entity but as a profound metaphor for the fragile but steadfast nature of personal truth. Its light, though faint against the vast pathway enveloped

in darkness, signifies a moment of insight and self-awareness that defies the overwhelming forces of obscurity. The wind personifies societal and cultural currents that strive to suppress or distort this light, attempting to 'poison the ears of darkness' by intensifying confusion and muting genuineness. The wind's sinister whispering to the darkness deepens the poetic imagery. Mazhari's vision insists that even in the face of such resistance, the lamp burns on, bearing a testament to the enduring power of individual truth to pierce through collective uncertainty. This interaction between the lamp's illumination and the wind's attempts to stifle it mirrors the broader struggle of the 'self' to maintain clarity and sincerity in a world often hostile to such virtues. For the poet, the act of lighting this lamp, however fleeting or modest, is an act of resistance, defiance and hope, a gesture that invites the readers to pause, reflect and choose their own pathways toward authenticity amid the chaotic noise and disorderliness of the age.

It is evidenced that Mazhar's poetry poignantly reflects the fragility of enlightenment and the vulnerabilities of societal and individual truths in a world dominated by darkness, disruption and vagueness. The poet, with a sense of regret, reflects on how the disruptive forces, societal pressures and cultural currents rush in to fortify ignorance, whispering into the 'ears of darkness' to preserve its reign. The word 'ages' in the above couplet evokes a timeless wait, underscoring the rarity and significance of the lamp. His reflection on vulnerability extends further in his following couplet:

*shahr ki deewaar tuuti aur hawaayen aa gayeen  
dekhthey hi dekhthey saari balaayen aa gayeen*

*(The city's wall collapsed, and the winds swept in  
In the blink of an eye, all calamities rushed in)*

Here, the collapse of the wall—a symbol of collective stability and protection, shows anarchy, represented by the winds and calamities. This resonates with the poet's exploration of the fragility of societal structures where the collapse of boundaries, whether moral, cultural or existential, ushers in disorder and turmoil. In both couplets, the poet draws parallels between personal and societal struggles. The lamp's fragile glow and the city's broken wall mirror the precarious balance between individual enlightenment and societal stability. His imagery underscores

how moments of clarity and progress, though powerful, must steer an unstable, ever-changing world that often resists and disrupts them. His poems reimagine poetry as a medium to confront chaos, seeking connection and meaning amidst the collapse of traditional narratives. Through his verses, he portrays the resilience of light, no matter how faint, in the face of overwhelming darkness, offering the readers a space to reflect on their own journeys of clarity and authenticity. His poetry often explores the delicate interaction between personal resilience and the fragility of human relationships. One may quote another couplet to show how deeply he contemplates the need and importance of the well-knit relationship. He says:

*Duniyaa ke sitam, dil se na azaar uthaatey  
Rishton mein kabhi hum bhi jo deewaar uthaatey*

*(The world's torments would not weigh so heavily on the heart  
If only we had built walls within our relationships)*

This couplet captures a poignant reflection on susceptibility and the absence of emotional boundaries in relationships. Mazhari suggests that the weight of the world's injustices and hardships becomes unbearable not because of external forces alone but due to the openness and exposure within personal connections. The absence of walls, the metaphorical barriers to protection, leaves the heart prone to deeper wounds, as relationships, unfortified, become sources of pain and conflict. Weaving this sentiment with his broader exploration of brittleness, fragility and disruption, the poet's verses echo the interaction between the personal and the collective. Just as the broken city wall in the line quoted above symbolises the collapse of societal stability, the lack of boundaries in relationships becomes an emotional vulnerability, inviting torment and disorder into the heart. Similarly, the lamp in another verse serves as a delicate beacon of hope in the overwhelming darkness, mirroring the flimsy balance needed to preserve relationships and guard against external pressures.

Mazhari's poetry serves as a reminder that while openness and connection are essential to human bonds, boundaries, like walls, are equally vital to protect the heart from undue harm. Through this, he reflects a nuanced understanding of the human condition where

resilience lies not only in enduring the world's torments but also in fortifying oneself against weaknesses and vulnerabilities within.

In his couplet 'Sair-e duniya se jo laata to yeh jaana main ney / Asl mein markaz-e parkaar meree mitti hai' (When I returned from my journey around the world, I realized / The true centre of compasses is my own soil), he reflects on a journey of exploration, discovery and experience in the wider world, and comes back with the realisation that his essence and identity are rooted in his own soil and existence. In essence, the couplet speaks to the timeless human struggle of finding equilibrium between enduring external hardships and maintaining healthy relationships, a theme that is particularly relevant in today's emotionally charged and interconnected world.

Let us have a look at Mazhari's following couplet:

*Badi machhli ko chhoti khaa rahii hai  
Yehee ik khwaab aksar dekhta hun*

*(The small fish is eating the big fish  
This is the dream that I often see).*

These lines present a surreal image of a smaller fish eating a larger one, symbolising a reversal of natural order. It reflects the themes of unpredictability, irony and poetic-justice. The dream-like nature suggests the speaker's deep connection to this idea, whether as hope for the triumph of the underdog or a commentary on societal power dynamics. They suggest social justice, representing the marginalised groups challenging systemic oppression as also highlighting the unexpected disruptions and economic shifts and questioning the established hierarchies.

Kausar Mazhari speaks of the relentless pursuit of lofty ambitions, emphasizing the quest for greatness while recognising that the true transcendence lies beyond material achievements and conventional means. Through his couplet, 'Shikaar karkey sitaaron ka laut aaya hun / Sunaa thaa aasman teer o kamaan se aagey hai (I have come back after hunting the stars / I had heard that the sky lay beyond the reach of bow and arrow), he encapsulates the human urge to push boundaries and explore the unknown, only to discover the limitations of worldly tools and efforts. Even in his nazms, the poet reflects a deeply philosophical

and introspective exploration of existence, individuality and human relationships. Through profound contemplation, he reminds us that while ambition drives progress, true fulfilment often requires introspection, humility and a connection to something greater than the tangible world. His words carry a depth that promises to transform ordinary thoughts into extraordinary insights, making his book a collector's item.

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