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- All submissions should be in MS-Word, double spaced on single-sided numbered pages.
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- Both the hard and soft copy of the article/book review is to be submitted on the following address:
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Editorial

We are pleased to announce the publication of the twentieth issue of our annual journal *Insight Islamicus*. This journal is devoted to academic studies and research in Islam, and publishes scholarly papers on various themes of Islamic Studies in an interdisciplinary manner.

This year's issue comprises of nine papers. The first one is the thoroughly researched paper of Dr. Gulzar Mufti which revolves around the crisis of COVID-19 in Kashmir, its comparison with the social and health scenarios that existed in Kashmir in the late 19th century CE, and the need to tackle ignorance among the masses and imparting education in order to lead the community towards a better and sustained future. The article also provides critical insights into some oft-repeated queries regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and answers the common myths surrounding it that are usually seen circulating on the social media. In the second paper, Prof. Manzoor Ahmad Bhat and M. Azad have made a comprehensive review of the educational activities and learning endeavors that were initiated in the valley of Kashmir from the beginning of the rule of Shah Mir dynasty (1339 CE) until the end of the Dogra rule in 1947 CE. The authors have presented the main characteristics and features of educational centers, curriculum, and the contributions of major scholars towards the development of various sciences in Kashmir throughout this period in a systematic manner.

In his research paper, Dr. Burhan Rashid provides some valuable arguments highlighting the significance that the science of *tafsīr* holds for any scientific endeavor in Islam and the daily lives of Muslims. The author has explored the classification of *Tafsīr* works, as well as an introduction to several notable *Tafsīr* that fall into each category. In addition, this study highlights the achievements of the scholars of Muslim Ummah in the field of *Tafsīr* and *Tafsīr* sciences. In his analysis of Urdu *tafsīr* works, M. Mahboob discusses the early formulation and

spread of *tafsīr* science throughout the Islamic world and the translation of the Quran in the local languages of newly conquered territories. With a special focus on the development of *tafsīr* literature in the Indian subcontinent, the author enlightens us with an overview of the exegetical activities of Muslim scholars in this part of the world and their dynamic legacy which became manifest through their translations and commentaries on the Quran in Urdu language starting from the 16th century CE up to the modern times. This is followed by the erudite contribution of Dr. Bilal Ahmad Wani, who presents an outline of various approaches in the interpretation of the Quran in the modern world. In his paper, the author showcases the trends and themes that have formed the core areas of debate in the exegesis of Quran ever since the emergence of modernist thought and its related currents. The author emphasizes that the overwhelming influence of modern ideologies has only reinforced the need for imbibing Quranic guidance in our lives and the channelizing of Muslim intellectual activity towards presenting our religious sciences in the context of the modern challenges. In the next article, Dr. Abid Mushtaq further supplements this discussion by a succinct and fresh perspective on the teachings of Quran concerning Reason and Philosophy. The author conducts a thorough study of some relevant Quranic verses which have been fundamental concerning the intellectual discussions among the Muslims, and concludes that Revelation is the highest and the only infallible source of knowledge and that Reason should operate according to and under the parameters set by the divinely revealed precepts of God.

Then the next paper discusses very important theme related to the character building. This paper is authored by Shiekh Irfan ul-Islam who attempts to delve into the essence of character building from an Islamic perspective for achieving the goals of social justice as bequeathed to us by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The author also explores the various shades of interpretation of the term ‘**character**’ and the need to use the said approach in order to ensure the proper dispensing of

social justice throughout the world. This is followed by the eloquently crafted research essay of Prof. Abdul Majid Khan who sheds light on the development of Islamic Studies in the West and the urgent need to restore its legitimate position as an academic repository of the living culture and civilization of Islam. The author stresses on the requirement of putting forward a loyal and bonafide tradition of Islamic Studies scholarship which can be trusted to rescue mankind from the contemporary global crisis through the moral and material edifices and the edicts of the divine knowledge revealed by God.

In the last paper of this volume, Dr. G.H. Mir and Audil Umar have tried to bring to fore how the amusements and recreational activities in rural Kashmir have undergone a process of transformation since 1947 CE. Based on a variety of conventional and non-conventional sources, the authors have methodically discussed the traditional games and modes of recreation that were famous in the valley and the impact of modernization and globalization on their development.

Lastly, we express our sincere gratitude to all those contributors whose research articles and papers have been published in this volume. We are also thankful to those who sent their articles to us but could not be included in this issue. We hope to include their contributions in the forthcoming issues. We are optimistic that this humble academic endeavor of ours will encourage scholars, researchers, and intellectuals to further explore the various dimensions of religious sciences, social sciences, ethics, *tasawwuf*, comparative study of religions, thinkers, trends, movements, and history of various civilizations and regions.

Editors

Epidemics and Pandemics in Kashmir – What is Different Today?

Dr. Gulzar Mufti*

ABSTRACT

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has killed millions of people across the globe. The virus has afflicted thousands in Kashmir valley and at the time of compiling this paper, over two thousand people have died. A not too dissimilar scenario existed during the late 19th and early 20th Century, when beleaguered by the triple whammy of illiteracy, poverty and ignorance, thousands of our ancestors were swept away at regular intervals by epidemics of communicable diseases like cholera and smallpox. This article compares the social structure and public health scenario in the valley during these two eras. Reduction in illiteracy and poverty levels over the last 150 years have led to astounding improvements in healthcare indices but the dual concept of *dawa* (medicine) and *dua* (prayer) is as viable today in this *Sufi-land* as it was then. However, despite the extraordinary progress in education, pockets of ignorance still persist, which need to be tackled proactively with emphasis on imparting education as a tool to acquiring knowledge in order to distinguish fact from fiction, as commanded by the Almighty.

Keywords: Pandemic, Vaccination, Superstition, Prayer, Medicine.

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan, China, which turned out to be due to a virus referred to as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The illness, which was named as COVID-19, became an epidemic, spread across the globe and was designated as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. It infected 189 million humans worldwide inflicting wide-ranging hardship, suffering and grief. More than 4 million have perished due to it and the number is still rising. Regardless of the country or continent, healthcare systems reached a breaking point and there is hardly anyone who didn't lose a near or dear one. Because of the ability of the virus to modify its genetic profile the disease returned several times in different guises.

The devastating effects of the pandemic were also felt in Asia. Amongst the countries of the Subcontinent India fared the worst. By August 2021 thirty-one

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million were infected and the official figures suggest that more than 400,000 died. The images of human misery, suffering and death in Indian cities and suburbs due to Delta variant of the virus invoked fright and alarm all over the world.

The already traumatised Kashmir Valley also had its share of agony due to the deadly Corona virus. By August 2021, more than 400,000 people were infected and over 4000 have died in Jammu & Kashmir (excluding Ladakh). The worst periods were in May and June 2021 when the Indian Delta variant invaded in the valley. Even though the graph has troughed to a large extent, the uncertainty about the future course of the illness persists.

Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Kashmir

It is a sad fact that our history is inundated with distressing episodes of suffering and loss of life and property brought on by natural calamities in the form of floods, famines and quakes, fearsome onslaughts by warriors and marauders from outside and vicious attacks by powerful pathogens in the form of epidemics, which wiped off large sections of our population at periodic intervals. Europeans who arrived in the valley during the nineteenth and early twentieth century to teach and preach, or heal and preach, or as civil servants, recorded their perceptions and experiences which provide us glimpses of that era, in particular the challenges posed by various epidemics.

Cholera — known to Kashmiris as *Wobaah*, was a major killer not only in Kashmir but throughout the world. Of the seven cholera pandemics over the last 200 years, five originated from India and killed hundreds of thousands in the subcontinent alone.¹ Beginning from 1824, Cholera visited the valley ten times during the nineteenth century.² The Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh recorded '*no less than 23000 deaths . . . in the city of Srinagar alone*' in 1842.³ The Christian missionary William Elmslie, who was the first doctor to practise allopathy at Srinagar, recorded in his diary on 20 June 1867, '*Cholera has broken out in the city. . . my deep sorrow at the sad news that I hourly receive of deaths in the city. . .*'⁴

Shepherd portrayed Srinagar as the '*City of Dreadful Death*' during the 1892 epidemic and described the scenario along the banks of River Jehlum as follows, '*The ghats were deserted, the shops were closed, barges loaded and empty stood by the banks as though forgotten. Only now and again from within the owning of a barge came the low moan of suffering, or the wails of mourners, rising sometimes to a hideous shriek, could be heard from some house ashore.*'⁵ Lawrence narrated

a painful account of that outbreak in the following words: ‘*Men telling me how they had lost all members of their family would break into hysterical laughter and I have never seen such utter despair and helplessness as I saw in 1892.*’⁶

Cholera continued to torment the valley in early twentieth century. The official number who succumbed to the disease from 1911 to 1921 was 18064. The 1919 cholera epidemic which broke out in Kulgam, was apparently the ‘*severest ever experienced in Kashmir.*’⁷ The Annual Administration Report (AAR) from the office of the Director of Medical Services noted that following the “*Kumb Fair*” at Hardwar in 1938 cholera epidemic started at Jammu which then spread to Kashmir.⁸

Small Pox (*shutel*) was another major killer. Before the introduction of vaccination practically every child contracted small pox and 50% of children died of this illness and other causes.⁹ The disease caused widespread facial disfiguration; many became blind. 16405 deaths were reported during the decade 1911-1921.¹⁰ The valley was apparently free from plague (*taawoon*) until the close of 19th century but the illness overwhelmed the valley in 1903 after a patient coming from Rawalpindi died in Uri following which the disease continued in sporadic form till 1937.¹¹

To add to the misery, the Influenza (Spanish Flue/Bombay Fever) Pandemic of 1918 which killed 50 million people worldwide also came to Kashmir. The virus, known as the H1N1 Virus killed 15000 people in Jammu and Kashmir and at least 1000 succumbed to the illness in Srinagar.¹² Other life-threatening infections such as, measles, dysentery, parasitic infestations, leprosy and three Ts — tuberculosis, typhoid and typhus were also rampant and added to the overall suffering and the number of dead. It is, therefore, no surprise that in 1892 census the adult life expectancy from birth was only 19-21 years in Kashmir compared to 44-48 years in the UK, and nearly half of the children died during birth. Of those who survived, a third died during the first year.¹³

Dawa (Medicine) and Dua (Supplication)

The well-known Kashmiri historian Dr Ishaq Khan stated that, ‘*epidemics give us an idea of how people were steeped in superstition and how the ignorant masses were terribly scared.*’¹⁴ With sickness and death at every doorstep it was natural for people of the valley to be scared but their problems were compounded by illiteracy, ignorance and indigency. They drank unclean water and lived in

overcrowded and congested alleyways with no sanitary facilities. Within the social structure there were customs and superstitions, some of which have disappeared over time. Many of these were unfounded explanations regarding various illness. For instance, small pox was thought to be due to the ill-effect of an imaginary wicked old female named *Shutel Beid* (pox-lady). To counteract her spell the family would slaughter and cook a hen — alias *Shutel-kuker* (pox-hen), and offer it to the needy. The advent of small pox vaccination killed the lady and saved the hen. Similarly, the cause of diarrhoea in children was thought to be due to *schir-dhane dullen* (dislocation of testicles) and the child was treated with gentle testicular massage.

Kashmiris may have been superstitious but as far as disease treatment is concerned, they were certainly not neglectful. At the very onset of an illness they would seek specialist professional opinion from a *hakīm*, who would prescribe and dispense herbal remedies usually in the form of a *sharbat* (mixture of herbal extracts). He would also advise about *parhaiz* — which foods and drinks were to be avoided. The likelihood of recovery, however, depended upon the patient's own immunological defences.

With regard to disease prevention the natives and their treating physicians (*hakims*) living within the secluded valley, would not have been aware about life-changing medical discoveries that were being reported thousands of miles away, such as John Snow's epic finding that mixing of sewage water with drinking water was the cause of cholera epidemics, or Edward Jenner's postulation that vaccination by cow-pox pus can prevent small pox, or Joseph Lister's experiments with carbolic acid for antiseptis. To learn and understand about these scientific breakthroughs they needed education and the British missionary teachers and clinicians were the first to bring knowledge to them through literacy, and by application of knowledge to practice of Medicine in the valley.

The vast majority of inhabitants were devout Muslims with unshakeable belief in *Amr-i-Khuda* (will of the Almighty). Because of past influences of many notable Sufi saints who made Kashmir their place of abode, the concept of a *murshid* (preceptor) and a *mureed* (disciple), and the spiritual relationship between the two, which encapsulates the Sufi thought process, was firmly rooted in the religious spectrum of the valley. The equivalent Kashmiri word for *murshid* is *pīr*, which is actually a Persian word meaning old, and in most cases a *pīr* would be an old man. Working as a *pīr* was considered a virtuous profession. In 1895

the number of *pirs* in Kashmir valley was 4,005 and including their family members the total *pīr* population was 15,712.¹⁵ However, with the spread of education, their numbers declined progressively. For sickness, besides *dawa* (medicine), our forefathers relied heavily on *dua* (supplication to Allah for help and forgiveness), for which they sought the services of a *pīr* — and thus the proverb, '*Pir ne bod, yaqeen bod* (It is not the greatness of a *pīr* that matters, but the belief of the individual in the *pīr*).

Whenever a person became sick, the combination of *dawa* and *dua* would come into action straightaway. That was true of Kashmir then and that is true today. As highlighted elsewhere, the missionaries were unable '*to comprehend the mechanics of the interface between dawa and dua in this Sufi-land because of the visitors' insistence on the definition of right and wrong as perceived by them and them alone*'.¹⁶ Yet credit is due to them for developing the Western concept of allopathic medicine in the valley during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which saved thousands of lives during their time and thereafter.

Agenda for Change

The British missionaries initiated the change, the reigning Maharaja accepted it and reciprocated, and those who followed continued with the agenda. The essential driver of intellectual transformation was education and Kashmiris followed vigorously the Almighty Allah's directives '*Read in the name of your Lord who created you*' (The Holy Quran 96:01), '*And say, my Lord, increase me in knowledge. . .*' (The Holy Quran 20:114). Education made them knowledgeable as they shunned fiction and applied scientifically proven facts to everyday life.

Access to clean drinking water and immunisation were the two most important measures that changed the public health scenario. With the exception of safe water, no other modality has had such a major effect on mortality reduction and population growth,¹⁷ and WHO estimates that 2–3 million lives are saved each year by current immunisation programmes. Like everywhere else, in Kashmir too the availability of clean drinking water and improvement in sanitation were instrumental in controlling waterborne diseases. The uptake of vaccination was slow to begin with but as the populace got immunised the epidemics were brought under control. In parallel, numerous advances took place in science, Medicine, technology and other fields. As an example, in my own line of work (surgery) we

moved from a barber's *nistar* (incision) to pin-point robotics and it won't be long before human surgeons are replaced by humanoids.¹⁸

Over the last hundred years like the rest of the world the healthcare scenario in the valley has also changed. Today we have a range of primary, secondary and tertiary care, general and specialist, healthcare public institutions scattered all over the valley and in recent years there has been an exponential growth in the number of private sector clinics and hospitals. Our phenomenal accomplishments in disease prevention and treatment is reflected in recent (2012-2016) census data which shows the life expectancy at birth for Jammu & Kashmir as 73.5 years (71.5 for males, 76.2 for females) — second highest amongst all the states in India.¹⁹ Our figures are even higher than the individual averages for some sub-continental countries.

Science in Action

The human race perhaps became too boastful about its own achievements, as arrogance superseded wisdom. We disregarded the divine directive of more than 1400 years ago: “. . . do not walk proudly upon the earth. Surely Allah does not like whoever is self-deluded and boastful.” (The Holy Quran 31:18). The acclaimed philosopher and poet of the East Dr. Allama Iqbal was able to perceive the prevailing scenario and warned about it in his poetical collection *Jawab-i-shikwa* (reply to the complaint):

عفا فل آداب سے سگان زمیں کیسے ہیں
 شوخ و گستاخ یہ پستی کے مکین کیسے ہیں
 اس قدر شوخ کہ اللہ سے بھی برہم ہے
 ہتاجو مجھ کو ملائک، یہ وہی آدم ہے

How little do these beings of earth the laws of conduct know;
 How coarse and insolent they are, these men who live below.
 So great their insolence indeed, they dare even God upbraid!
 Is this the man to whom their bow the Angels had once made?
 And as we triumphed over old enemies such as infections and communicable diseases, new challenges emerged in the form of climate change, superbugs, new diseases and new infections such as Ebola and HIV, and here we are today fighting

a fierce battle against the COVID-19 virus. Over the last eighteen months the ghastly images of human pain and misery from the lands of the powerful and the rich, as well as from the poverty-stricken corners of the globe, with queues of bodies without souls waiting for their handover to the Creator, overwhelmed our television screens sending shivers across the human mind, and forcing it to reflect and ponder.

Whilst healthcare systems struggled to cope with the worsening pandemic, once again science came to our rescue. In record time scientists around the world utilised different platforms to develop vaccines against the disease and biopharmaceutical companies chipped in to ensure large-scale manufacturing and distribution of vaccines. A husband and wife team of Turkish German researchers were the first to use a novel mRNA technology for vaccine development and researchers at the University of Oxford used an adenovirus platform to develop another vaccine that prevents the development of severe disease and avoids hospitalisation. Other countries including China, India and Russia also developed their own brands. The news about the availability of vaccines was received with huge relief across the globe. The quest for the vaccine illustrated our Prophet's (PBUH) saying that, *"There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment."* (Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 71, Hadith 582). We didn't have the knowhow about COVID-19 vaccine but when we applied knowledge to process and practice, solutions evolved.

Vaccine Hesitancy

It was disheartening to read in the news that in Kashmir Valley '83% of healthcare workers avoid vaccine' (The Hindu, 12 February 2021).²⁰ Vaccine hesitancy is understandable when one is dealing with the uneducated or the uninformed, but its preponderance amongst front line staff is surprising and brings into focus the true sense of education. Having said that resistance to vaccination is nothing new. In 1895 Eugene Foster stated, *"Millions of human lives, as I shall show, have been preserved by the fruits of Jenner's genius; yet today, thousands upon thousands of men, some intelligent though designing, some intelligent though deluded, the great mass of them fanatical and ignorant, decry vaccination as not only being of no service to humanity, but positively a nuisance injurious to health and life, while millions of our fellow men are utterly ignorant of, or indifferent to the matter"*.²¹ It was no less a surprise to read that when small pox vaccination was introduced in British India in 1913, there was

stiff opposition to it from the au fait who described it as ‘*sacrilege*’, ‘*tantamount to partaking beef*’²² (The Indian Express, 24 February 2021).

Kashmiris also opposed small pox vaccination. Ernest Neve, the Christian missionary who worked as a surgeon at Kashmir Mission Hospital at that time wrote, ‘*I often wish the opponents of vaccination could be present in our consulting room to see the melancholy procession, day by day, of those who have lost their sight from smallpox.*’²³ However, if one compares Kashmir valley of today with that of the early 20th century, it is clear that our literacy rates have gone up by leaps and bounds and there has been a significant shift of the population to middle and lower-middle income families. One would therefore expect a better understanding of therapies that have undergone robust clinical trials. A major reason for the hesitancy could be the spread of false information through social media and the Internet where rumours and myths can be propagated and made to appear as credible. Some of the myths circulating about the COVID-19 vaccines such as the following, are either incorrect or exaggerated.

The vaccine was rushed and therefore is not safe: The technological innovation in biomedical research has been occurring quietly for years. Therefore, the technical part of vaccine development does not take long. However, the time-consuming part is funding the bottlenecks, participant enrolment for clinical trials and setting up of expert panels. All of these steps were fast paced for the COVID-19 vaccine development. Moreover, safety and efficacy elements were tested rigorously.

The vaccine affects your DNA: The foreign genetic material used in the vaccine to stimulate an immune response does not enter the nucleus, the compartment where our DNA is found in cells. Hence there is no interaction between our DNA and the vaccine’s genetic material.

The vaccine gives you the disease itself: None of the vaccines contain a live virus which means they cannot make you sick with COVID-19. Even Covaxin which uses a complete COVID-19 viral particle has been modified so that it cannot replicate in human cells. However, like the seasonal flu vaccine most vaccines cause mild side effects, which resolve in a few days. Allergic reactions to the vaccine may occur but these are very rare.

The vaccine can cause issues with fertility: There is no evidence to back this and that has been confirmed in a statement by the WHO.

I don't need the vaccine if I've already had COVID-19: It is not yet known how long after natural infection the protection lasts and therefore it is recommended to have the vaccine when offered.

The efficacy of the vaccines is doubtful because some have tested positive for the infection even after vaccination: No vaccines work instantly. COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognise and fight SARS-CoV-2 virus. After receiving the vaccine, it generally takes our body a few weeks to develop immunity against it. Therefore, a person can still get the disease just after receiving the vaccine. Importantly, an individual is not considered immune until a few weeks after the second dose of the vaccine. Moreover, vaccines cannot prevent the development of infection if a person is already infected at the time of vaccination.

The overall success of any vaccination program correlates with rates of vaccine uptake. The higher the number of vaccinated people in a population, the lower the number of susceptible individuals, and therefore less the chance for the virus to spread and mutate. Hence, logic dictates that if we have no definitive treatment for a disease, we must use every strategy at our disposal to prevent it. Therefore, taking the vaccine is the single most important step an individual can take to protect himself and the community at large.

Our Triumphs and Challenges

Kashmiris of 2021 are no longer the 'dumb driven cattle' as described by Maharaja Hari Singh's foreign and political Minister, Sir Albion Banerjee in 1929.²⁴ Over the last one hundred years we followed to the letter our Prophet's (PBUH) saying that: '*Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (men or women)*', and thereby we moved from darkness to light — which is the very motto of the University of Kashmir. The truth is that Kashmir Valley's response to the COVID-19 challenge has been better than many other areas of the globe. It was gratifying to watch our very own home-grown clinical workforce rising to the challenge of the pandemic in 2020-21 — hand in hand with the rest of the community. Those who survived were offered the most modern medical therapies and those who got a call from the Creator were treated with dignity and respect.

Notwithstanding the above, sadly, ignorance still prevails and that can be a precursor of arrogance. More than 700 years ago our very own Shah-i-Hamadan — Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA), who introduced Islamic faith in the valley,

under whose patronage this seminar was organised, counselled us to stay away from a fool and an ignorant.²⁵

اکابر دین گفته اند کہ عاقل باید کہ با پنج کس صحبت ندارد – اول احمق جاہل

(Religious scholars have stated that one should not have a discourse with five categories of people — firstly with a fool and an ignorant)

And the Kashmiri saying: “*Un kyah zaanih prun bateh!*” (Would a blind man know that the rice is white!), which I used to hear from my wise grandma from time to time, also points us in the same direction. It is, therefore, obligatory for our writers and broadcasters, clinicians, religious heads and imams, and the civil society to combat misinformation. The responsibility of combating ignorance amongst our youngsters through distillation of facts from bundle-loads of material that are bombarded continuously, and imparting them knowledge about our identity, history, heritage and culture, rests particularly with our scholars and teachers. As stated elsewhere, it is ‘*Kashmiri youngsters on whose shoulders rests the future destiny of this land.*’²⁶

Note:

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Education and Learning in Kashmir (1339-1947 C.E)

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ABSTRACT

Kashmir is one of the beautiful places on the globe endowed with charming climate, glorified mountains, rivers, lakes and gardens that still enjoy a great fame. Though there are charming voices for the beauty of Kashmir but its real beauty lies in its intellectual and learning tradition that has hardly been explored so far. Historically the people of Kashmir were more inclined towards the idea of seclusion to worship in comparison to procuring worldly possessions. With the establishment of centers for worship, meditation and religious places, people took keen interest in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.

Keywords: Kashmir, Education, Sultanate, Curriculum, Knowledge.

Education and Learning before 1339 C.E

Before the advent of Islam in Kashmir, there were about six religions that prevailed in this region, like Naga Worship, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shaivism, Jainism and Rishism. However there existed a continuous conflict between these religious groups like Brahmins and Buddhists in terms of concepts, thoughts and philosophy. In pre-Islamic era of Kashmir, the Hindu community was divided into different groups and castes like Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Being regarded as the supreme class, Brahmins controlled the whole scheme of things. They dominated the social, political and educational spheres with regard to the other castes. The lower castes weren't permitted to read religious texts but were allowed to listen from the Brahmins and therefore at the higher levels of education/learning, the Brahmin hegemony was evident. Thus historians regard this type of learning activity as caste based education.¹

Sanskrit has been the language of the Kashmiris in the pre-Islamic times. There existed many seminaries and *patshalas* that offered wide range of subjects in their curriculum like mathematics, history, poetry, philosophy, medicine, law and grammar. Among the Hindus, the philosophical and ideological factor surpassed over the practical perspectives in educational system.² Although the main focus

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was upon the Vedic education but technically prose, prosody, syntax, morphology, astronomy, art of war, administrative affairs, music, painting, drawing, engraving, stone-work and other allied sciences/skills developed till the decline of Mauryan rule.³ The remarkable feature of education in ancient Kashmir was its focus on the being (individual centric) and being religious in essence. The curriculum of the 7th century C.E was Vedic with oral method of teaching. The novice began his/her education at the age of five years that continued till the age of 30 years.⁴ So the land of Kashmir was fertile in terms of thought and philosophy to the extent that whosoever arrived here, its radiant beauty absorbed him. The scholars practiced the ascetic life purging their soul and desires, thereby turning Kashmir into a hub of intellectual and learning activities. The people came here to become acquainted with knowledge and sciences from distant places.

Buddhism in Kashmir was introduced during the rule of Ashoka, with its two famous monasteries at Harwan and Khandal Bhawan. As against the class rivalries, Buddhism strived to propagate ethical norms, justice, sympathy, brotherhood and equality. The adherents of Buddhism in Kashmir lit the light of knowledge and excellence during the reign of Ashoka and Kanishka, who established centers of education and monasteries. It was for about 400 years that Buddhism contributed in the intellectual awakening and eradication of social evils. It was after the famous Buddhist Council in Kashmir, the scholars of Buddhism were sent to Tibet, China and Central Asia as teachers and missionaries.⁵ The famous archeological site at *Sharda* served as a great centre of knowledge and education. The learners at this centre studied medicine, law, astronomy, geometry and languages.

Education and learning under Muslim rule

Education and learning under Shahmiri Sultans (1339-1561 C.E)

Before the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, the Muslims were revered and granted *jagirs* and endowments by the rulers from time to time. Historians express such patronage as:

و قصد نمود بخدمت ملک کشمیر در حوالی روستان بر سرحد رویم... پس از انجا رای جیتری بنشتند

This statement as recorded in *Chach Nāmah* about ‘Allafi, who wished to meet the ruler of Kashmir and wrote him for such wish. The raja endowed ‘Allafi, a *Jagir* of a place known as Shākalha and precious gifts to his Arab fellows. After ‘Allafi, Jahm bin Sā‘ah al Shāmi retained these *Jagirs*, who erected *masajid* there and was honored by the king and its people.⁶

From 8th century C.E to the beginning of 14th century C.E many powers around Kashmir tried to conquer several times but all ended in absolute failure. Mahmud Ghazni attempted to annex Kashmir several times but the unfavorable climatic

conditions concluded him to wind up his ambitions. All these failed expeditions forced the neighboring powers to abandon the idea of conquering Kashmir.⁷

In 720/1320 A.H/C.E Rinchana embraced Islam at the hands of noble Muslim scholar and Sufi, Syed Sharaf al din ‘Abdur Rahman Bulbul Shah (d. 727/1327 A.H/C.E). Rinchana took the name Sadr ud Din and built a special hospice for his mentor Bulbul Shah. Sadr ud Din endowed this *Khanqah* with number of villages to extract their income for supporting its fellows and needy. A *masjid* was erected near this hospice for the prayers. Being a person of inquisitive mindset and an awakened soul, Sadr ud Din always remained in touch with the scholars and learned men. To satisfy his learning attitude, intellectual temperament and his spiritual cravings, Sadr ud Din recognized the scholarly reflections and suggestions.⁸

The year 740/1339 A.H/C.E marks the Shah Mir’s accession to the throne of Kashmir and the establishment of Muslim authority. He assumed the title of Sultan Shams ud Din and his descendants as Shahmiri Sultans. Shams ud Din’s reign brought Kashmir peace, sovereignty, authority, freedom and restored its integrity. Though he ruled very short, for about 3 years, yet by his energy, resources and will, he was able to win the loyalty of the masses who thereby looked upon him as their savior and benefactor. He died in 742/1343 A.H/C.E. The historians honor him as:

در عدالت موشگافی کرد شاه شمس الدین
بود اندر شغل حق او بے نظیر و بے قرین⁹

‘Ali Sher took the name of Sultan ‘Ala ud Din (743/1342 A.H/C.E), he was a just, strong and able ruler who continued the work of reform and consolidation like his predecessors. He developed many towns like ‘Ala ud Din Pora in Srinagar and erected many seminaries, hospices and mosques. He ruled for about 12 years, 8 months and 13 days and died in 755/1354 A.H/C.E.

Sultan Shihab al din ascended to the throne in 755/1354 A.H/C.E. He was vigorous, energetic and ambitious in expanding the territorial borders of Kashmir beyond Central Asia and India. Being capable and talented administrator, he patronized the enlightened souls and learned men by opening network of educational seminaries. These seminaries imparted different sciences like *Quran*, *Hadīth*, *Fiqh*, language and literature. The sultan at the behest of Syed ‘Ali Hamadani (r.a) established a *madrasah* entitled *Madrasah tul Quran* (مدرسه القرآن) in Srinagar. This *madrasah* produced many scholars in different branches of knowledge and sciences. This seminary focused mostly on Quranic sciences like *Qirā’t*, *Tajwīd*, *Tafsīr* and *Ta’wīl*. Abul Masha’ikh Sheikh Sulaiman, a prominent graduate of this seminary

was given the title of *Imam al Qurra* (leader of *Qāris*) for his profound knowledge and comprehension in the sciences of Quran.

The period of Sultan Shihab ud Din witnessed the influx of great scholars from Persia, Turkistan and other Central Asian regions into Kashmir. Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani and his hundreds of learned companions arrived in Kashmir to direct the education and learning activities. Several seminaries, *Khanqahs* and *masajid* were established across the cities, towns and villages of Kashmir for disseminating the primary and secondary education.¹⁰

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) exclusively paid tributes to the Sultan Shihab ud Din in the following words:

عمر با گل رخت بر بست و گشاد
خاک ما دیگر شهاب الدین نژاد

For many ages the rose has packed and unpacked her baggage, yet our earth has not begotten a second Shihab al Din.¹¹

Sultan Qutb al Din became the ruler of Kashmir from 775/1373-791/1389 A.H/C.E. He was known for his concern to the general welfare with moderation, justice and toleration. He built many towns and places for the collective welfare of public like the town of Qutubdin Pora. Sultan Qutb al Din established different schools across Kashmir which includes *Madrasah Sultan Qutb al Din* (مدرسه سلطان) at Qutb al-din Pora. This *madrasah* was famous of all the seminaries for its residential nature where the teachers and learners from faraway places resided. The education at this seminary was primarily free with boarding/lodging provisions. The Sultan appointed Haji Pir Muhammad Qari as its first rector and this *madrasah* continued to exist till Sikh rule. Besides Qari, scholars like Mulla Jawhar Nath served as its head during the time of Jehangir. Mulla Muhsin Fani (Poet and Philosopher), Mulla Abdus Satar Mufti and others were the prominent teachers of this seminary, which produced hundreds of scholars. Due to the establishment of such type of educational institutions, historians/educationists regard Sultan Qutb al Din as the pioneer of residential system of education in Kashmir.¹²

Sultan Qutub al Din established another *Madrasah* at Fateh Kadal Srinagar *Madrasah ‘Urwatul Wuthqa* (مدرسة عروة الوثقى). This educational institution was established at the instance of Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani through Sayyid Jamal al Din Muhaddith (another scholar). This seminary was famous for the study of *Quran*, *Hadith* and other religious sciences. Jamal al Din was induced by Sultan to stay in Kashmir and enlighten the seekers of knowledge and tradition. This *madrasah* has

been regarded as the first institution that rendered the knowledge of purely religious sciences.¹³

Sultan Sikander succeeded his father Qutub al Din in 791/1389 A.H/C.E. He was a sponsor to the education and learning tradition. Sultan maintained cordial relations with the scholars/mystics and was very much generous in patronizing the learned class from different corners of Central Asia, Iraq, Khurasan and beyond Trans-oxiana to his court.¹⁴ He was benefitted from the companionship of Mir Muhammad Hamadani (son of Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani). Hamadani and his companions (scholars and experts) succeeded in promoting the culture of knowledge in Kashmir. Sultan established many colleges and schools for educating his subjects in Kashmir like his predecessors. On their footsteps, he established a college at Nowhatta Srinagar in memory of Qutb al Din. This *madrasah* got its fame as *Madrasah Sultan Sikander* (مدرسة سلطان سکندر)¹⁵. The Sultan appointed a scholar Qādi Mir Muhammad ‘Ali Bukhari from Bukhara as its rector. The *madrasah* had other teachers like Maulana Muhammad Afzal Bukhari¹⁶, who was *Shaikh al Hadīth* (Teacher of Hadīth), Maulana Muhammad Yusuf (teacher of Philosophy), Maulana Sadr al Din Hashmi (teacher of mathematics), Sayyid Hussain Mantaqi (teacher of Logic) and Sayyid Muhammad ‘Ālim (teacher of Meta-physics).¹⁷

Sultan Sikander appointed Maulana Muhammad Fādil Bukhari as the *Shaikh ul Islam* of Kashmir. For Sultan’s patronage to the learned fraternity, historians express their tribute as:

در ایام سلطنت دے اہل کمال و فضلاء از ولایت بسیار آمد...¹⁸

Besides these *madāris*, Sultan Sikander constructed *khanqah*’s and *masajid* across the towns and villages of Kashmir. He constructed *Jami’ Masjid* of Srinagar in 804/1402 A.H/C.E. The mosaic work of this mosque was done by the architect of eminence Sayyid Muhammad of Luristan and Sayyid Sadr al Din of Khurasan, both prominent fellows of Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani.¹⁹ Other scholars who arrived in Kashmir during Sikander’s reign were: Sayyid Muhammad Madani (foreign envoy and scholar), Sayyid Hasan Shirazi (former *Qādi*), Sayyid Ahmad of Isfahan (author of many books), Sayyid Muhammad from Khawarizm (poet), Baba Haji Adham and his disciples from Balkh.

It was Sayyid Mir Muhammad Hamadani who wrote exclusively for Sultan Sikander a treatise on Sufism in Persian entitled *Risalah Sikandari* and a book on logic in Arabic language. Hamadani guided the Sultan in all affairs ranging from political, religious, educational, moral, social and administrative aspects.²⁰

Of all the sultans among the Shahmiri dynasty, Sultan Zain al ‘Ābidin (823/1420-874/1470 A.H/C.E) was talented, liberal and most capable. His rule opened up an era of peace, prosperity and development. To boost education and learning activities, Sultan opened network of schools, *khanqahs* and *masajid*. The sultan himself was well versed in different branches of knowledge and sciences, and Sanskrit, Kashmiri, Tibeti and Hindi languages. Sultan Zain al ‘Ābidin established number of *madāris* in Kashmir like:

Dār ul ‘Ulum Nowshehra (دارالعلوم نوشہرہ) at Naushehr was established near the royal palace. The Sultan appointed Mulla Kabir Nahvi (*Shaikh al Islam* of Kashmir) as the rector of this *madrasah*. Nahvi was a learned scholar, who studied from the prominent teachers and seminaries at Central Asia. Nahvi taught sciences like *tafsīr* and *hadīth* to learners as well as to the Sultan. So Nahvi appointed talented teachers for this seminary like: Mulla Ahmad (scholar of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit), Hafiz Baghdadi, Shaikh Parsa Bukhari, Shaikh Jamal ud Din Khawarzimi (who later became chief Justice), Mir ‘Ali Bukhari, Shaikh Yusuf Rāshidi. The Sultan assigned the revenue of many villages for the maintenance of this seminary.

The Sultan procured books on different sciences from Central Asian and Arab countries. From Hijaz, Sultan succeeded in having books of *Hadīth* and personally studied them with spirit and vigor. From Makkah, he secured a copied manuscript of *Kashāf* of Al- Zamakhshari. The Sultan spent huge sums on the collection of books and manuscripts for the library of this famous seminary.²¹

The Sultan established another *madrasah* at Dachinpur Sīr, Islamabad which was headed by a great scholar Mulla Gazi Khan.²² For the promotion of learning and sciences in neighboring regions/countries, the Sultan donated six lakh rupees as a special grant to the *Madrasah tul ‘Ulum* at Sailkot. Even the Queen contributed her valuable necklace for the maintenance of this seminary.²³ Sultan also established a unique college/ *madrasah* at Zaingīr known as *Madrasah Zaingīr* (مدرسه زینہ گیر) between his royal palace and garden. This college at Zaingīr proved to be a milestone in the educational history of Kashmir for the dissemination of knowledge and sciences.

Translation bureau: In addition to the schools and colleges, the sultan established a special department for the translation of the manuscripts and books written in different languages. This department worked near *Dār ul ‘ulum Nowshehra* and translated the intellectual legacy from Sanskrit, Arabic and other languages into Persian and vice-versa. The Sultan officially procured manuscripts and books from Arab, central Asian and other countries.²⁴ The teachers as well as students of *Dār*

ul 'Ulum Nowshehra, regularly visited the bureau of translation and studied there to update their knowledge. The books on different sciences were translated such as *Yusuf Zulaikha* into Sanskrit, *Rajtarangini* of Kalhana was translated into Persian by Mulla Ahmad entitled as *Bahr al Athmār* (بحر الاثمار) and Mahabhartā was also translated into Persian. The sole objective of the bureau of translation was to endeavor history writing, developing sciences in Persian and Sanskrit, nourishing languages like Persian, Sanskrit, Kashmiri besides poetry and literature. The Sultan's patronage to learning/education was enjoyed by the Muslims and non-Muslims equally. Soma, a Hindu was appointed as the head of education department or bureau, who dedicated a treatise on the Sultan's life entitled *Zaina Charita*. For these provisions, the era of Sultan is regarded as the Golden era of Sultanate period.

After Zain al Ābidin, Sultan Hasan Shah (1471-1484 C.E) continued to sponsor the educational provisions in Kashmir. The Sultan established a *madrasah* at Pakhribal (مدرسه پکھری بل) on the bank of Dal Lake at the request of his daughter-in-law, Gul Khatūn. This *madrasah* was famous and spacious having about 360 rooms and offered sciences like *Quran*, *hadīth*, *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, philosophy and *tasawwuf*. The *madrasah* excelled under the rector-ship of Maulana Isma'īl Shamī.²⁵

Education and learning under Chaks (1561-1586 C.E)

After Shahmiri dynasty, Kashmir came under the Chak rule (1561-1586 C.E) and many of the Chak rulers were generous and kind in patronizing the learning activities. Sultan Hussain Chak (1563-1570 C.E) was outspoken, generous and mild about the well-being of his subjects. He succeeded in establishing many welfare institutions at different places and continued to support the existing educational institutions. Sultan Hussain Chak founded a *madrasah* at Koh-i-Maran, *Madrasah Dār al Shifā'* (مدرسه دار الشفاء). Also the Sultan established a seminary at the instance of his preceptor Baba Ismail Kubrawi and appointed him as its head and rector. This seminary had a huge library and a hostel attached to it that was provided to its wards free of cost. For the maintenance of this library/hostel, revenue from many places like Wandhama, Birhama, gardens of Daulatabad, Rainawari and Bagh-i-Anguri (Malkhah) were assigned. Famous Kashmiri scholar and Sufi, Shaikh Hamzah Makhdum was the student of this college.²⁶

The Sultan established a *madrasah* in Srinagar that was free of sectarian inclinations, as he appointed Shaikh Fathullah Haqqani (a Sunni Scholar) as its rector, while Shaikh Darwaish Shirazi (a Shia Scholar) as his deputy. The Sultan

appointed a Sunni scholar Sayyid Habibullah Khawarizmi as the *Shaikh ul Islam*, Qādi and head preacher of *Jāmi' Masjid* of Srinagar.

The other *madāris* established during the Chak rule were: *Madrasah Mulla Radi al Din* (مدرسه ملا رضی الدین) established at the instance of Mulla Radi al Din (former teacher at *Madrasah Sultan Qutb al Din*). He had the honor of being the teacher of scholars like Shaikh Ya'qub Sarfi, Muhaddith Shams al Din Pall and Baba Dawud Khaki. Mulla Radi al Din converted his house into *madrasah* due to the socio-political turmoil in Kashmir and continued to train and educate his disciples. Another *madrasah* was established by scholar Mulla Basīr al Din, *Madrasah Mulla Basīr al Din* (مدرسه ملا بصیر الدین). About him, Shaikh Ya'qub Sarfi observes that:

چه گوئیم حافظ بصیری که بود خبر دار اسرار کشف و شہود
رضی و بہ از و ہزاران ہزار پشاگردیش داشتند افتخار²⁷

Education and learning under Mughals (1586-1753 C.E)

Taking the advantage of the chaos in Kashmir, Akbar annexed Kashmir with the Mughal Empire in 1586 C.E on the request of Kashmiri nobles and scholars. Like Shahmiri Sultans and Chaks, the Mughal rulers in Kashmir established number of *makatib*, *madāris* and other educational institutions. *Madrasah Mulla Haider* (مدرسه ملا حیدر) was established by Mughal emperor Jehangir for the scholar Mulla Haider Charkhi (prominent disciple of Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi) at Gojwara Srinagar near poet's garden (Bagh-i-Shair Wari). This *madrasah* produced scholars like Muhaddith Jalīl, Maulana Inayatullah Shawl, Maulana Abdul Rashid Zargar, Mufti Muhammad Tahir, Shaikh Muhammad Hashti Radoo. After Haider's death, this *madrasah* was headed by his son.²⁸ The Mughal prince Dara Shikoh while he was in Kashmir established a residential school of Sufism for the acquisition of Moon (*Kasb-i-Mah*). He established it at the instance of his spiritual preceptor Akhund Mulla Muhammad Shah Badkhshani on the spur of Zabarwan Mountain at Cheshmashshi.

In 1125/1713 A.H/C.E Mughal governor Nawab Inayatullah Khan established a *Madrasah Sayyid Mansur* (مدرسه سید منصور). He personally supervised this *madrasah* and appointed Maulana Abul Fatah Kallu's son Maulana Sulaiman as its head teacher (Sadr Mudarris). Maulana Sulaiman was a great scholar of Arabic and religious science. The Mughal subedar assigned the income from the village of Wanigam for the maintenance of this *madrasah*.²⁹

Also another Mughal subedar Fadil Khan founded a *madrasah* near *masjid* Sangīn, known as *Dār ul 'Ulum Fādil Khan* (دار العلوم فاضل خان).³⁰ Another *madrasah* was established during Mughal rule by the famous scholar Mulla 'Ubaidullah in Srinagar. This *madrasah* was named as *Madrasah 'Ubaidullah* (مدرسه عبید اللہ).

There are ample historical evidence that suggest the presence of seminaries like *Madrasah Mulla Kamal* and *Madrasah Mulla Jamal*.it were all these educational seminaries which carved out scholars like Shaikh Isma‘il Chisti, Baba Nasib al Din Ghazi and *Qādi* ‘Abdul Qasim.³¹

Education and learning under Afghans (1753-1819 C.E)

After the decline of Mughal rule in Kashmir, the Afghans took the affairs of Kashmir (1752-1819 C.E). Ahmad Shah Durrani of Abdali tribe conquered the Kashmir in 1752. The earlier Afghan governors of Kashmir were the patrons of learning, poetry and to the men of letters. The Afghan governors like Sukh Jiwan was just who showed much favor to the Muslims and scholars.³² Generally the Afghan rule in Kashmir is regarded as an era of oppression, injustice and decline. The historians express their words with respect to Afghan rule in Kashmir as:

پُر سدم از خرابے گلشن ز باغبانی.....افغان کشید گفت کہ افغان خراب کرد
*I enquired of the gardener the cause of the devastation of garden,
 drawing a deep sigh, he replied “ . It is the Afghan who did it.”*³³

Majority of the historians attest the satire of Afghan high-headedness, their flawed administration and their harsh policies towards the subjects. ‘Abdullah Khan has been regarded as a man of good talents, courage and was liked by both the Kashmiris and Afghans. He is known for his love of justice and flawless administration through liberality, affable manners and princely magnificence. ‘Abdullah Khan encouraged scholars, poets and men of letters.³⁴ Correspondingly ‘Atā’ Muhammad Khan’s rule in Kashmir was somehow prosperous and he struck the system of coinage in the name of famous Kashmiri Sufi saint Shaikh Nūr al Din (*Shaikh ul ‘Ālam*). The end of Afghan rule in marks the end of Muslim rule in Kashmir (1320-1819 C.E).

Education and learning under Sikhs (1819-1846 C.E)

After witnessing the harsh Afghans for about 67 years, the Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir had a sigh of relief. In the words of Lawrence,

*“I don’t mean to suggest that Sikh rule was benign or good but it was at any rate better than that of the Pathans...”*³⁵

The Sikh rule (1819-1846 C.E) in Kashmir was about 27 years and was administered by 10 governors. During the Sikh rule in Kashmir *Jāmi* ‘ *Masjid* of Srinagar was closed to the prayers for public and other *masajid* were turned into Nazal property. The Jagir grants attached to the mosques and shrines were confiscated and the *adhān* was forbidden. The historian views the Sikh rule as:

جرم ما، ما را چُو دامن گیر شدقوم سنگان وارد کشمیر شد
*Our sins overtook us when the Sikh people entered Kashmir.*³⁶

The last two Sikh governors of Kashmir were Muslims, Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-al Din and Shaikh Imam al Din and they opened the *Jāmi' Masjid* for the prayers, restored the *jagirs* and repaired the temples. In terms of education and learning, both these governors extended their sponsorship to the scholars, poets, mendicants and religious teachers.³⁷

Education and learning under Dogra's (1846-1947 C.E)

The treaty of Amritsar in 1846 C.E made Gulab Singh as the complete master over Kashmir and thereby it came under the rule of Dogra's (1846-1947 C.E). Maharaja Gulab Singh (1846-1857 C.E) suppressed the crime, maintained Law and Order and restored peace. He was succeeded by his son Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 C.E), who was trained in the military style and re-established influence and authority over the frontier Districts. Maharaja Ranbir Singh re-organized various departments like revenue, military and judiciary (promulgated Penal code on the lines of IPC) on modern lines. From the educational and learning perspective, Maharaja encouraged the establishment of schools, *Patshalas* and *Makatib* at Jammu and Srinagar. He endowed these schools with libraries containing rare and historical manuscripts. Hundreds of Brahmin pupils were trained in different branches of Sanskrit learning. Maharaja established the department of translation to translate the religious scriptures like *Shastras*, *Darshanas* and other classical Hindu texts into Dogri and other languages. Special focus was given for improving/encouraging the Dogri language. The classical texts of Arabic and Persian language (religious, philosophical and historical) were translated into Sanskrit. The epitome of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's patronage towards education can be viewed from his donation of one lakh rupees besides endowments to the trustees of Punjab University Lahore and his sponsorship to the Sanskrit Institutions of Benars (India).³⁸ His liberal patronage to the art and learning attracted hundreds of scholars from neighboring countries. Maharaja often visited the *madrassah* and Sanskrit colleges that instructed oriental sciences to their disciples.³⁹

After Ranbir Singh, Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925 C.E) ascended to the throne and started an era that witnessed the beginning of modern governance, political and social advancement in Jammu and Kashmir. In comparison to his predecessors, Pratap Singh was highly educated and well versed in Dogri, Sanskrit, Persian and English. His reign saw the emergence of British Missionary schools at Srinagar and Jammu. Earlier the Dogra rulers were hostile to the foreign presence especially to Christian missionaries in Kashmir, but the attitude of authorities changed in the last decades of 19th century. Missionaries like Rev. Robert Clark

opened a school and dispensary for the intellectual and physical well-being of Kashmiris. These educational cum medical missionaries contributed much in the awakening of ruling class and common masses thereby changed the outlook towards them.

These schools imparted modern education and opened the gateways of knowledge and enlightenment. This period witnessed the establishment of medical missions, opening of hospitals and dispensaries in the valley of Kashmir to rescue people from health concerns. Several middle, high schools and degree colleges were opened across Jammu and Kashmir to boost modern education. The Mission Schools were established by Rev. J. S. Doxey in 1881 C.E, Rev. J. Hinton Knowles and by Rev. C. Tyndale Biscoe.⁴⁰ Biscoe became pioneer of socio-educational reform in Srinagar as he induced the spirit of human felicitation and courage against disasters, calamities and evils prevailing in the society. The overall impact of these efforts was the emergence of modern education that influenced both Hindu's and Muslims to initiate their efforts to retain their relevance and secure the community from backwardness.⁴¹

Maharaja Pratap Singh was succeeded by Hari Singh (1925-1947 C.E) who was educated under the supervision of qualified Indian and European teachers. In 1926 C.E, Maharaja Hari Singh promulgated the Compulsory Education Act that directed the primary education as compulsory for the boys in Srinagar and Jammu.⁴² The establishment of primary schools for girls in 1930 C.E both by the Hindus and the Muslims on priority basis as a result of missionary and official intervention gave impetus to educational scenario in Kashmir.

During Dogra period the Persian, Sanskrit and Kashmiri languages received much attention from the scholars of Kashmir. Mirza Mahdi Mujrim (d. 1856 C.E), Khawaja Hasan Shiri, R. K. Arzbeigi, Shankar Ju, Tabah Ram and Pandit Raja Kak Dhar were famous Persian poets during the Dogra rule. The Dogra rulers tried their best to revive the Sanskrit language and established *Patshalas* to teach Sanskrit by employing proficient Pandits in them. The famous Sanskrit scholars during Dogra period were, Mukund Ram Shastri, Govind Koul, Damodar Jotshi and Madhu Sudan Koul. The Kashmiri language and literature was enriched by the scholars like Mahmud Gami, Maqbool Shah Kralwari, Parmanand, Rasool Mir, Wahab Khar, Wahab Parray, Ahad Zargar, Samad Mir, Gh. Ahmad Mahjur and Abdul Ahad Azad.⁴³

Madrassa Education during Dogra rule

The educational scenario of Muslims of Kashmir in 19th and 20th presented very contemptible impression. It was after Sir Syed's Muhammadan Educational

Conference in 1886 C.E that the three prominent Kashmiri intellectuals/educationists Abdul Samad Kakroo, Molvi Abdus Salam Rafiqi and Khan Bahadur Gh. Sadiq persuaded Molvi Gh. Rasul Shah to upgrade his primary school/institution (founded in 1889 C.E) to higher level. This school was established by *Anjuman-i-Nusratul Islam* (ANI) an organization similar to *Anjuman-i-Himayat ul Islam* Lahore, to persuade Muslims for education (moral, religious and modern). This institution contributed greatly in the educational endeavor of Kashmiri's from religious, social, educational and moral perspectives. This seminary succeeded in proselytization, answering the challenge of Christian missionaries, and enabled Muslims to attain modern education. The educational mission as originated by Molvi Gh. Rasul is still in vogue and has produced thousands of graduates in different sciences which carved out educationists, religious preachers/scholars, leaders and social reformers.

Madrasah Nusrat ul Islam, known by other names like *Madrasah Islamiyyah Nūr ul Islam* or *Madrasah Islamiyyah* Oriental College at Rajouri Kadal Srinagar. This institution has modern schools as well as an oriental college for the dissemination of religious sciences. At present this works with the affiliation of University of Kashmir. This *madrasah* produced Molvis, 'Ālims, Munshis, Fāzils and scholars well versed in classical and modern sciences. However the socio-educational impact of this *madrasah* established by *Anjuman-i-Nusratul Islam* (ANI) can be witnessed from the fact that similar educational, socio-religious organizations and institutions were founded on this pattern by taking inspiration from this pioneering institution. These include: *Anjuman-i-Mu'in ul Islam* Sopore (estb by Syed Mirak Shah Andrabi), *Anjuman-i-Ta'lim ul Islam* Tral (established in 1940 by Moulana Nur ud Din Trali), *Anjuman-i-Mazhar ul Haqq* Beerwah (established in 1940 by Molvi Syed Shah and Molvi 'Ali Shah) and *Anjuman-i-Tabligh ul Islam* (established in 1932).

Madrasah Ta'lim ul Islam (مدرسة تعليم الاسلام), this *madrasah* was established by Moulana Nur ud Din Trali (1890-1990), an 'Ālim of great repute at Tral Pulwama. Moulana Nur ud Din was a graduate from *Dār ul 'Ulum Deoband* and served as a teacher at *Madrasah Nusrat ul Islam* Srinagar. In 1940, Moulana Nur ud Din established a *Maktab* (primary school) and from 1942 this school served as full-fledged Islamic school. Presently this school has an oriental college (boys and girls) besides the high school and higher secondary. As founded on the outlines of *Madrasah Nusrat ul Islam*, this institution has contributed in the socio-educational and religious awakening of Muslims in Kashmir and continues till date.

Madrasah Faiz ul Islam (مدرسة فيض الاسلام), this *madrasah* was established by Moulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d. 1933 C.E) at the request of famous Kashmiri educationist Abdul Samad Kakroo around 1920 C.E at Baramulla. This institution disseminated religious sciences till 1928 C.E and contributed to the great extent in the socio-religious and educational reform in North Kashmir. This institution excelled in Hanafi Jurisprudence, Hadīth and other sciences exclusively, as expressed by Anwar Shah:

فقر در قصبه باره موله بخيال خود بغرض اشاعت علم دين و اعانت مذهب امام اعظم طرح
تعليم فقه و حديث نهاده بود...⁴⁴

Madrasah Islamiyyah Arabiyyah Anwār ul ‘Ulūm (مدرسة اسلامية عربية انوار العلوم), this *madrasah* was established by Hafiz Muhammad Charagh Naṣīr Qasmi (1920-1994 C.E) at Dandipora Islamabad in 1944 on his arrival in Kashmir. Initially this institution was started as *Maktab, Taqwa al Islam* (تقوي الاسلام) to impart the elementary knowledge of *Quran*, *Hadīth* and knowledge of Islamic fundamentals. In 1973 C.E this *madrasah* was reorganized and named as *Jāmi ‘Anwār al ‘Ulūm* by Qāri Muhammad Tayyib Qāsmi (rector *Dār ul ‘Ulūm Deoband*). This *madrasah* contributed a lot in the dissemination of religious sciences from 1944 and still continues to direct socio-religious reform.⁴⁵

Jāmi ‘ah Madinatul ‘Ulūm (جامعة مدينة العلوم), this institution was established in 28th July 1948/ 21th Ramadan 1367 A.H at Dargah Hazratbal Srinagar. In context of partition of the sub-continent, to cater the religio-spiritual demands of learners in Kashmir, this *madrasah* was established. Currently this institution thrives in affiliation with the oriental faculty of University of Kashmir. From 1948, this seminary has produced thousands of scholars, intellectuals and leaders in Kashmir and despite tough times it contributes till date.⁴⁶

Educational Curriculum from 1339-1947 C.E

The structure of education during the Muslim rule in Kashmir was divided into three levels:

1. Primary Education
2. Secondary Education
3. Higher Education (Advanced and Specialization)

Primary Education

The primary education was provided to the learners at a specified place known as *maktab*. The primary education consisted of reading *Quran*, its recitation, writing, fundamentals of Islam and elementary mathematics in native language. Special focus was given on the basic Quranic education, elementary knowledge of Persian literature like *Karima*, *Pand Namah*, *Gulistan* and *Bostān*.⁴⁷ Separate provisions

were ensured for the education of learners from other faiths like Hindus and separate primary educational centers existed for them. The primary education began at an age of 5 years at the local *masajid* and *makatib*. These *Makatib* provided basic education to both boys and girls. The tradition of *Rasm-i-Bismillah* was organized for the novice of 4 years, 4 months and 4 days and was performed by his/her parents. The elementary education lasted for about 9 years and 6 months and consisted of following stages.

1st Stage: This stage took almost four years to complete and focused on *Nazirah* of Quran, its memorization, *Tajwid* and *Qirā't*.

2nd Stage: It remained for two years consisting of basic Persian literature, Islamic jurisprudence, syntax and morphology.

3rd Stage: It took about three years in which the study of mathematics, science of etiquettes and Arabic language/literature took place.

Secondary Education

This level of education was imparted in *masajid*, *makatib* and *madāris* with consideration upon Persian/Arabic sciences, *Quran* and *Hadīth*, language and literature, principles of *tafsīr* and Sciences of *fiqh*. The institutions that provided secondary education were known as *madāris* and College. The sciences that were imparted to the disciples were: history, ethics, Persian/Arabic prose, literature, philosophy, logic, astrology, physics, chemistry, geography, medicine/pharmacy and agriculture. The religious sciences studied by the learners were science of Creed (*‘Ilm al ‘Aqa’id*), *‘Ilm al Kalam*, *‘Ulum al Fiqh*, *‘Ulum al Quran*, *‘Ulum al Hadīth* and *‘Ilm al Siyar*. In addition to these sciences, some vocational or skill oriented courses pertaining to arts and craftsmanship were imparted. The secondary level of education continued for about 7-9 years.⁴⁸

Higher Education

At this stage of advanced level, the study of Humanities, theology and rational sciences was provided. The rational sciences included logic, philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, zoology, geometry, mathematics, politics and medicine. Famous Mughal historian Abul Fadl in his *Akbar Namah* makes mention of the sciences imparted in the educational seminaries of Kashmir during medieval times. The science of ethics, mathematics, geometry, politics, logic, physics and theology were imparted to the learners during the Muslim rule.⁴⁹

Specialization

This level was an extended form of higher education specified for the in-depth study of different sciences. The sciences studied by the learners at this level were: Principles of exegesis (*‘Ilm al Tafsīr wa Usulihī*), Science of names and

personalities (*‘Ilm Asma al Rijal*), history (*‘Ilm al Tarikh*), Science of Chains (*‘Ilm al Isnad*), Principles of Hadīth (*‘Ilm Usul al Hadīth*), politics (*Siyasah*), medicine (*‘Ilm al Tibb*), surgery (*‘Ilm al Jarahah*), pharmacy (*‘Ilm al Adwiyyah*) and administrative affairs (*‘Ilm al Mu‘amalah*). These sciences were learned for a period of 3-5 years at colleges like Quranic College of Shihab al Din, Qutub al Din College, Sultan Sikander College, Badshahi College, ‘Urwatul Wuthqa College and Dār ul Shifa College.⁵⁰ It was a comprehensive and all-embracing curriculum that aimed at addressing the pressing needs of the time. This education system was fully capable to produce scholars, preachers, philosophers, Qādis, administrators, Sufis and military officers.

Development of Religious Sciences in Kashmir

The development of religious sciences in Kashmir draws its commencement to the arrival of Muslim scholars like Bulbul Shah, Mir Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani and others. These earliest Muslim scholars centered their thought and action on the ethical teachings of Quran. Their sermons and lectures slowly disseminated the vehicle of Islamic sciences in forward direction. The establishment of Muslim rule supplemented by the influx of Muslim scholars from Central Asia (mostly experts of sciences) directed the introduction of Islamic/religious sciences. These scholars undertook the mission of educating the learners in different branches of knowledge and sciences.

‘Ulūm al Quran (علوم القرآن)

Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani has been considered as the first person who introduced the *tafsīr* literature in Kashmir. His remarkable contribution in the field of Quranic sciences pertains to *Al Risalah fi Nasikh wal Mansukh (الرسالة في النسخ و المنسوخ)*. The manuscript of this treatise has been preserved in the central library of University of Tehran Iran and at India Office Library London.⁵¹ This treatise deals with the science of abrogation and abrogated verses of the Quran. Apart from this treatise, Hamadani’s letters addressed to his contemporaries with Persian translation carryout wider explanation of numerous Quranic verses. Hundreds of companions of Hamadani were experts in different religious and rational sciences especially Quran and were instrumental in knowledge dissemination.

Shaikh Ya‘qub Sarfi (1521-1595 C.E) a distinguished scholar of 16th century wrote a great exegesis of Quran entitled *Matalib al Talibin Fi Tafsīr Kalam Rabbil ‘Ālamin (مطالب الطالبين في تفسير كلام رب العالمين)* for his friends and disciples in order to expose them to the hidden secrets of Quran.⁵² Similarly during Chak rule, a scholar Mulla Ahmad Mehr wrote a *tafsīr* of Quran in Kashmiri language. It was Shaikh Murad Naqshbandi (a prominent scholar and friend of historian Kh. Muhammad

‘Azam Dedamari) who compiled a dictionary of Quranic words *Jāmi‘ al Mufradat* (جامع المفردات). This dictionary comprising 1130 pages, was written in Persian language in 1169 A.H, and is preserved in the library of Al-Azhar University Egypt. This is a unique work on Quranic sciences that explains the meanings of Quranic words in Arabic, Persian and Turkish language.⁵³

Shaikh Mu‘in al Din Naqshbandi, an erudite scholar and Sufi of Naqshbandi order (prominent disciple of Shaikh ‘Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi), wrote an exegesis of Quran entitled *Zubdat al Tafasir* (زبدة التفاسير). The manuscripts of this *tafsir* are preserved in the Khuda Bakhsh library Patna and at Royal Asiatic society Bengal. He also wrote a Persian exegesis of Quran entitled *Sharh al Quran*, written in 1072 A.H. Maulana Abdul Rashid Shopyani, a scholar of Quran wrote *Āyāt al I‘jaz* at Bhopal at the instance of Nawab Sidiq Hasan Khan in 1878 C.E. Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (1875-1933 C.E) wrote a treatise on Quran entitled *Mushkilāt al Quran*, to elaborate the valid connotation of 190 Quranic verses. Maulana Yusuf Shah Kashmiri (Mrwa‘iz, 1895-1968 C.E) wrote a Kashmiri translation and *tafsir* of Quran entitled *Bayān al Furqān*.⁵⁴

‘*Ulūm al Hadīth* (علوم الحديث)

In Kashmir, the science of *Hadīth* was introduced by Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani. Having Sufi orientation, Hamadani represent one of the prominent schools of *Hadīth* in Kashmir. To his credit, scholars attribute the following works on the science of *Hadīth*.

1. *Al-Sa‘bīn’ fī Fada’il Amir Al-Muminīn*, a treatise comprising of seventy traditions on the virtues and excellence of *Ahl-bayt*, gathered from Musnad Al Daylami.
2. *Arba‘īn Amiriya*, a treatise that contains 40 traditions.
3. *‘Ayn Al ‘Ilm wa al Sab‘īn*,
4. Besides these, *Dhakhirat al Mulūk* contains numerous traditions that establish Hamadani’s mastery over the science of *Hadīth*.

His disciples like Syed Jamal-ud din Muhaddith, a teacher of *Hadīth* was appointed by Sultan Qutub din as teacher.⁵⁵ Hamadani’s other works that containing the traditions of Prophet are: *Al Awradiyyah*, *Chahal Hadīth*, *Risālah Rawdah al Fidaws*, *Al Muwaddah fil Qurba*.

Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, a great scholar of Islamic sciences, who wrote commentaries of *Hadīth* like – commentary on *Sahīh Al Bukhāri* and *Sharah Thulathiyāt Bukhari*. He compiled two treatises of *Arba‘īn*, *Arba‘īn Ali* and *Arba‘īn Ahl Al bayt*.

Maulana Haji Muhammad Al Kashmiri, an eminent scholar of *Hadīth* (a disciple of Ibn Hajar Al Makki). He wrote a commentary on *Hisn al Haṣīn*, commentary on

Al Shamā'il of Tirmidhi⁵⁶, commentary on the virtues of Al Quran, commentary on Mashariq Al Anwar, and a brief summary of Hadīth narrations entitled *Khulasah Al Jāmi' fi Jam'a Hadīth*.⁵⁷

Mulla Jawhar Nath Kashmiri was a teacher in Madrasa Sultan Qutub din as its *Sheikh-ul-Hadīth* and its rector. Being the student of Ibn Hajr Al Makki and Baba Dawud Khaki, he disseminated the sciences of *Hadīth* to hundreds of students like Kh. Haider Bin Feroz.⁵⁸ Baba Dawūd Khaki, a teacher, scholar, jurist and traditionist was known for his memorization of *Mishkat al Masabīh*.⁵⁹

In 17th century the students of famous Muhaddith Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq disseminated the sciences of Hadīth in Kashmir including Khawaja Feroz bin Haider and his sons like Maulana Tahir and Maulana Afzal. Other scholars were Maulana Mu'īn al Din Naqshbandi, Shaikh 'Abdul Rahim. All these scholars were instrumental in encouraging the sciences of Hadīth in Kashmir. In 18th and 19th century the students of Shah Wali Allah Dehlawi like Khawaja Amin Kashmiri, Shah Muhammad 'Usman Chisti directed the knowledge of tradition across Kashmir. The students of Shah 'Abdul Aziz who transmitted the sciences of Hadīth in Kashmir were Mufti Sadr ud Din Kashmir and Muhammad bin Inayat Kashmiri. Sadr ud Din wrote a treatise on the Hadīth of Sahih al Bukhari entitled *Muntaha al Maqal fi Sharh Hadīth La Tashadd al Rihāl* (منتهي المقال في شرح حديث لا تشدد الرحال). Muhammad bin Inayat Kashmiri wrote a treatise with a view to cast aspersions on the authenticity of narrators of 6 canonical books of Hadīth entitled *Tanbīh Ahl al Kamal wal Inṣāf 'Alā Ikhtilāf al Rijāl ahl al Khallāf* (تنبيه اهل الكمال و الانصاف علي (اختلاف الرجال اهل الخلاف). He also compiled an abridgement on *Kanz ul 'Ummāl* entitled *Muntakhab Kanz ul 'Ummāl* on the traditions of *Ahl al Bayt*. His other works on the science of Hadīth are the summaries of *Fath al Bāri*, *Irshād al Sāri*, *al Jam'a Bayn al sahihyan* and of *Musnad Ahmad*. Maulana Abdul Rashid Shopiyani, a scholar of 19th and early 20th century (an associate of Nawab Sidiq Hasan Khan) wrote a treatise on Hadīth entitled *Nuzūl al Mantaqi* (نزول المنطقي). Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (1875-1933), a leading stalwart of *Dār ul 'Ulum Deoband* and teacher of Hadīth contributed in the different branches of Hadīth. His scholarly contribution in this domain pertain to *Faiz al Bāri Sharh Sahih al Bukhāri*, *Anwār al Bāri*, *Anwār al Mahmud Sharh Sunan Abu Dawud*, *Al 'Uruf al Shazzi 'Ala Jāmi' al Tirmidhi*. Maulana Anwar Shah taught thousands of students that contributed in different domains of religious sciences. His famous Kashmiri students were Mirwa'iz Maulana Yusuf Shah (d. 1968 C.E) and Syed Mirak Shah Andrabi (d. 1975 C.E) (*Shaikh ul Hadīth* at Lahore).

‘Ulūm al fiqh (علوم الفقه)

The science of *fiqh* deals with the practical teachings of Islam concerning the daily lives of Muslims. With the arrival of Muslims in Kashmir, the scholars from different parts of the world arrived and settled in Kashmir. These scholars had expertise in different branches of knowledge and sciences especially the science of *fiqh*. With the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, the appointment of Mulla Ahmad Akhund as the *Shaikh ul Islam* of Kashmir proved a milestone in the development of science of *fiqh*. He arrived in Kashmir during the rule of Sultan Shihab al Din and wrote for him many treatises. His contribution in the domain of *fiqh* pertain to *Al Fatawā al Shihābiyyah* (الفتاوي الشهابية), a juristic treatise written with a view to guide the ruler and help him administratively. This book was instrumental in laying down the foundation of Islamic *fiqh* in Kashmir and the implementation of Islamic Law in Kashmir.⁶⁰ Another scholar from Central Asia who settled in Kashmir, Ahmad bin Mahmud al Sam‘ani wrote a treatise on *fiqh* entitled *Tanwīr al Sirājī*. This work on the Islamic Law of Inheritance was a commentary of famous book on inheritance *Al-Siraji* and was presented to the Sultan Sikander.

Shaikh Mu‘in al Din Naqshbandi, a jurist from Kashmir who headed the team of scholars during Mughal rule and compiled a book on Islamic Law entitled *Fatāwa al Naqshbandiyyah*.⁶¹ He also compiled another book in the science of *fiqh* *Kanz al Sa‘adah*.⁶² Baba Nasib al Din Ghazi wrote a treatise on the principles of Islamic Law in Persian entitled *Risālah zaruriyyah Khird*. Another scholar from Kashmir Maulana Karimullah Kashmiri was instrumental in compiling a volume of *Fatāwa al Aziziyyah* of Shah Abdul Aziz in 1253 A.H.⁶³

Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, a scholar of 20th century compiled the commentaries and treatises on the science of jurisprudence entitled *Ta‘liqāt ‘Alā Al Ashbah wal Nazā‘ir* and *Nīl al Farqadayn fī Mas‘alah Raff al Yadayain*.⁶⁴

‘Ulūm al Taṣawwuf (علوم التصوف)

The development of science of *Taṣawwuf* began just after the arrival of Bulbul Shah as he was pioneer of introducing the Sufism in Kashmir. Bulbul Shah was a disciple of Ni‘matullah Shah Farsi. His residence in Srinagar at Bulbul Langar became the first centre for preaching the sufi way of life in Kashmir. Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani, a saint of Kubrawi Sufi order wrote extensively on the science of *Tasawwuf*. He introduced the Kubrawi Sufi order in Kashmir and wrote treatises on *Tasawwuf* like *Sharh Fusūs al Hikam* and *Risalah Dah Qa‘idah*.

Similarly the first *Shaikh ul Islam* of Kashmir, Mulla Ahmad wrote a treatise dedicated to the Sultan Shihab al Din entitled *Shihāb al Thāqib* (شهاب الثاقب). This

book contains the themes pertaining to diverse aspects of *Tasawwuf*. The path of mysticism was continued by the hundreds of Sayyids in Kashmir especially by the son of Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani. They continued the work of spiritual endeavor through *Khanqahs*, *masajid* and *madāris* efficiently. In 16th century Shaikh Ya‘qūb Sarfi, a scholar of religious sciences, was initiated to Kubrawi order but his main contribution pertains to his poetical treatises *Risālah Zikriyyah* and *Dīwān-i-Sarfi*. These treatises by Sarfi have mystic orientation and often reflect the Sufi way of life.⁶⁵ Similarly Khawaja Mu‘īn al Din Naqshbandi, scholar/adherent of Naqshbandi Sufi order wrote a treatise entitled *Kanz al Sa‘adah*. This treatise was written on the similar lines of *Zakhiratul Muluk* of Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani containing mystical and political perspectives.

Muslim rulers of Kashmir built *Khanqahs* (Monastries), *masajid*, *madāris* (educational institutions) and other centers of public welfare. As a result new climate of intellectual passion was generated by its theologians, scholars, poets, artists and philosophers. Instead of having any break with the pre-existing system of thought, they instead initiated a process of integration in the sphere of religious experience through Quranic *maktabas* and *madāris* contributed by the scholars/Sufis of outstanding stature. These *madāris* made Kashmir the highest seat of learning and enlightened the whole empire. The curriculum of Central Asia and Indian Subcontinent such as physical sciences, medicine, vocational and technical education was incorporated in seminaries of Kashmir. The scholars and men of caliber used to be the rectors of these Institutions. After Sultanate period, Kashmir passed through the critical period with decline in educational system especially religious education. It was in the later Dogra period that some learned individuals paid attention towards the education of the Muslims and many institutions were established for imparting of religious as well as modern education.

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Exegesis of Qur'ān: Meaning, Development and Classification

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ABSTRACT

Tafsīr is the branch of knowledge which deals with the interpretation of the meanings of the Qur'ān. The fundamental base of this science was laid right in the earliest time of Islam. During the Prophetic period, this was done by the Prophet ﷺ himself. He explained the meanings of the verses of the Qur'ān to his companions (*Ṣaḥābah*) not only verbally but through his practical demonstrations as well. After his demise, this blessed task was shouldered by the *Ṣaḥābah* (companions of the Prophet) who taught their students (i.e., the *tābi'ūn*) whatever they had learnt regarding the *tafsīr* of the holy Qur'ān. This technique continued afterwards and is practiced even today. The method of teaching and learning in the time of the *Ṣaḥābah* and *Tābi'ūn* was that the teacher transmitted knowledge to the students verbally or by way of narration and the students used to memorize it. Then, in the third century after *Hijrah*, which is known as the beginning of the era of systematic book compilation in the Islamic civilization, books on different disciplines began to be written separately. In this time, *tafsīr* works were also compiled in a systematic way, i.e., from the beginning of this era complete *tafsīr* of the holy Qur'ān in the order of the written text began to be written. The process of writing systematic *tafsīr* works continues to date. In the period of these twelve centuries thousands of works on *tafsīr* have been written in different languages; mostly in Arabic. Against this backdrop, the present paper deals with the explanation of the literal and technical meanings of the term '*Tafsīr*'. An Attempt is made to present a synopsis of the different phases of its development; from the earliest times to the present time. Also, the classification of *Tafsīr* works is discussed along with an introduction to some prominent *Tafsīr* falling under their respective categories.

Keywords: *Tafsīr Characteristics, Tafsīr Development, Tafsīr Classification, Tafsīr bi al-Ma'thūr, Tafsīr bi al-Rā'y.*

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LITERAL MEANING OF TAFSĪR

The literal meaning of *tafsīr* (exegesis) is: to explain, expound, clarify, or interpret. Scholars have described the root (*ma'khadh/māddah*) of this word in different ways. There are three main points of view:

1. It is derived from the Arabic word *fasr*, which means *al-kashf wa al-bayān* (i.e., 'to uncover to view', 'to expose to view', 'to make clear', 'to make manifest', and 'to unveil').
2. It is derived from *al-tafsirah*, which refers to an instrument that a physician uses to diagnose patient's ailment.

Al-fasr and *al-tafsirah* also refer to a physician's examination of a patient's urine to determine the patient's ailment based on its color.

Al-tafsirah also means urine by means of which, or by means of the color of which, one seeks to obtain the diagnosis of the disease of a patient.

3. It is derived from *al-safar*, which means *al-zuhūr wa al-wuḍūh* (i.e., 'to expose/reveal/expound, to render plainly apparent/evident/obvious). When the morning rises, Arabs say: *asfara al-ṣubḥu*. Another phrase they use: *safarat al-mar'atu* (i.e., the woman removed the veil from her face).¹

After presenting a few meanings of the word '*tafsīr*', Dr. M. H. Dhahabi writes, "From this, it becomes evident to us that the word '*tafsīr*', in its literal sense, is used for the uncovering/revealing of physical things as well as meanings, and that its use in the second sense is more (common/relevant) than in the first."²

Thus, we can say that the meaning of the word *tafsīr* is: to explain, to clarify, to interpret, and so on. The *tafsīr* of the holy Qur'ān is so termed because the meanings of the holy Qur'ān are openly explained through it.

TECHNICAL MEANING OF TAFSĪR

Scholars have described the technical meaning of *Al-Tafsīr* or *Ilm al-Tafsīr* in a variety of ways as presented in the following lines:

1. According to Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad bin Yūsuf al-Andalūsī, the technical meaning of *Tafsīr* is that it is the branch of knowledge concerned with the method of pronouncing Qur'ānic words, their interpretation and significance,

as well as rulings on their individual and composite structure, actual meanings, and conclusions drawn from them, and the expediencies found in them.³

According to this definition, *tafsīr* is a broad subject that includes: science of various recitals of the words of Qur'ān (*ʿIlm al-Qirā'āt*), the science of lexicography (*ʿIlm al-Lughah*), the science of etymology and morphology (*ʿIlm al-Ṣarf*), the science of syntax and meanings (*ʿIlm al-Nahw* and *ʿIlm al-Ma'ānī*), the science of language, literature and eloquence (*ʿIlm al-Adab* and *ʿIlm al-Balāghah*), science of *Ḥadīth*, science of the principles of *Ḥadīth*, science of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), science of the principles of *Fiqh*, science of the causes of revelation (*ʿIlm Asbāb al-Nuzūl*), and so on.

2. 'Allāmah Al-Zarkashī says:

Tafsīr is the branch of knowledge by which the Qur'ān, the Book of Allah, is comprehended, its meanings interpreted, and its points of law and wisdom deduced. And in this subject the help is taken from the sciences of lexicography and philology, etymology, syntax and meanings, principles of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), the science of recitals, the knowledge of the causes of revelation, and the knowledge of the abrogating and abrogated.⁴

3. Some other scholars maintain that:

Tafsīr is that branch of knowledge in which the Qur'ānic connotations and teachings are discussed with respect to the meanings of its *Āyāt* as much as the humans are capable of.⁵

4. According to certain other scholars:

Tafsīr, in its technical sense, is the branch of knowledge that deals with the revelation of the Qur'ānic *Āyāt*, their meanings, the narratives related to them, their background, *Āyāt* revealed in Makkah and Madīnah, categorical *Āyāt* and allegorical *Āyāt*, abrogating and abrogated, specific and general, unconditional and conditional, concise and elaborate, valid and invalid affairs, annunciation and denunciation, command and prohibition, and lessons and examples.⁶

Although it appears from one of the above definitions that *ʿIlm al-Qirā'āt* (science of the recitals) is not a component of *tafsīr* science, when we examine the topic

more closely, it becomes evident that this science is an important part of *tafsīr*. Dr. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Al-Dhahabī, commenting on this definition, says:

From the last two definitions it appears that *ʿIlm al-Qirāʾāt* (science of the recitals) and *ʿIlm al-Rasm* (science of writing) are not included in *ʿIlm al-Tafsīr*. But the fact is that both of these disciplines are part of *ʿIlm al-Tafsīr* because with the difference in the *Qirāʾāt* the meaning of the *Āyah* changes.⁷

After quoting the above four views, Dr. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Al-Dhahabī concludes that:

All four definitions agree that *tafsīr/ʿIlm al-Tafsīr*, technically, is the branch of knowledge through which the Divine Word is explained to the best possible human capability. As a result, it incorporates all disciplines that are necessary for understanding the holy Qurʾān.⁸

The word *tafsīr* has occurred only once in the holy Qurʾān, Allah says:

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

And they (i.e., the caviling, carping infidels) come not to thee with a similitude but We bring thee (in answer, through the holy Qurʾān) the truth and an excellent interpretation (thereof). [*Al-Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Furqān, Chapter 25: 33*].

The term *mufasssīr* (pl. *mufasssīrūn*) refers to the person who carries out/writes the *tafsīr*. In English, this word is frequently translated as exegete or commentator.

DEVELOPMENT OF TAFSĪR (EXEGESIS) OF THE QURʾĀN

Tafsīr is a discipline that has existed since the beginning of Islam. Even, during the time of the holy Prophet (S.A.A.ʷ.S)⁹ if the *Ṣaḥābah (Raḍ.A.)*¹⁰ [Companions of Prophet Muḥammad] were perplexed by the meaning of certain *Āyāt* of the holy Qurʾān, they approached the Prophet for clarification¹¹. Sometimes, the holy Prophet, without any enquiry from the *Ṣaḥābah*, would himself explain the meanings of the *Āyāt* of the holy Qurʾān on appropriate occasions.¹² During the life of the holy Prophet, he was the solitary *marjaʿ* (source/competent authority) for all explanations and thus the sole *mufasssīr* of the holy Qurʾān, as Allah had entrusted him with the task of conveying the Divine Message to all people: “(O

messenger! Preach thou whatever has been sent down to thee from thy Lord.)” [Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5): 67]. At another place in the holy Quran, Allah says: “And We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them” [Sūrah al-Nahl (16); 44].

This duty of preaching includes the conveyance of the words as well as the meanings of the holy Qur'ān. The holy Prophet explained the *Āyāt* of the holy Qur'ān under the guidance of Allah (S.^w.T.)¹³ through his statements and practical demonstrations and applications (*Sunnah*). After the Prophet's demise, the scope of *tafsīr* widened as many people entered the fold of Islam who were in need of the *tafsīr* and explanation of the Quranic verses in order to get acquainted with the teachings of Islam.¹⁴ Therefore, they turned to the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) for this purpose.¹⁵ The *Ṣaḥābah* adopted three sources to understand the meanings and implications of the Quranic verses; the Quran itself – as there are many instances where one part of the Quran explains its other parts-, the statements and practices of the Prophet, and through their own *Ijtihād* and *Istinbat* (inference and deduction). For those issues whose understanding depended merely on the knowledge of Arabic language they didn't need to busy their minds or think deeper as they were pure Arabs and masters of Arabic language.¹⁶ In the field of *tafsīr*, some *Ṣaḥābah* gained increased significance. 'Allāmah Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (*Rad.A.*)¹⁷ mentions the names of ten *Ṣaḥābah* as the most famous *mufasssirūn* (commentators): (1) Abū Bakr (*Rad.A.*), (2) 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (*Rad.A.*), (3) 'Uṭhmān bin 'Affān (*Rad.A.*), (4) 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (*Rad.A.*), (5) 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (*Rad.A.*), (6) 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās (*Rad.A.*), (7) Ubayy bin Ka'b (*Rad.A.*), (8) Zaid bin Ṭhābit (*Rad.A.*), (9) Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (*Rad.A.*), and (10) 'Abdullah bin al-Zubayr (*Rad.A.*).¹⁸

There are also other *Ṣaḥābah* who are known to have contributed to a certain extent towards the development of *tafsīr*, such as: (11) 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr (*Rad.A.*), (12) 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ (*Rad.A.*), (13) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (*Rad.A.*), (14) Jābir bin 'Abdullah (*Rad.A.*), (15) Abū Hurayrah (*Rad.A.*), and (16) Anas bin Mālik (*Rad.A.*).¹⁹

Of these sixteen, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, and Ubayy bin Ka'b are the most prominent figures who have to their credit traditions of *tafsīr*, greater in number than anyone else.²⁰

The *Ṣaḥābah* taught their students i.e., the *tābi ūn* whatever knowledge they had regarding the *tafsīr* of the holy Qur'ān. In the time of *tābi ūn* the scope of *tafsīr* became wider than in the previous times. During their era, many schools (halaqat) of *tafsīr* emerged, and out of all these, three schools were the most prominent; one at Makkah headed by the students of Ibn 'Abbās, second at Madinah headed by the students of Ubayy bin Ka'b, third at Kufa headed by the students of Ibn Mas'ūd.²¹ As a result of the *Ṣaḥābah*'s teaching and training, a large group of their followers (*tābi ūn*) were able to render prominent service to the science of *tafsīr* (exegesis). The most notable among the *tābi ūn* in this field were:

Pupils of Ibn 'Abbās: Mujāhid bin Jabr/Jubayr al-Makḥzūmī (d. 103 A.H.), 'Ikrimah Maulā ibn 'Abbās (the freed slave of Ibn 'Abbās), Sa'īd bin Jubayr (d. 94 A.H.), Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭā'wūs bin Kaisān al-Yamanī (d. 105 A.H.), 'Aṭā ibn Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114 A.H.);

Pupils of Ibn Mas'ūd: Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 A.H.), 'Alqamah bin Qays (d. 62 or 73 A.H.), Al-Aswad bin Yazīd (d. 75 A.H.), Abū Amr 'Āmir al-Sha'bī (d. 109 A.H.), Masrūq (d. 63 A.H.), Marrah al-Hamadāni (d. 76 A.H.), Qatādah bin Dī'amah (d. 117 A.H.);

Pupils of Ubayy bin Ka'b: Zaid bin Aslam al-'Āmirī (d. 136 A.H.), Abū al-'Āliyah (d. 93 A.H.) and Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurazī (d. 108 or 120 A.H.); some other famous *mufasssīr tābi ūn* were: Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib/Musayyab (d. 91 or 105 A.H.), Muḥammad bin Sīrīn (d. 110 A.H.), 'Urwah bin Zubayr (d. 94 A.H.) etc.²²

The sources used by the *tābi ūn* for the *tafsīr* of Quranic verses and passages, according to Dr. Dhahabi, were: *the* Quran itself, Prophetic *Aḥādīth*, statements of the *Ṣaḥābah*, statements of the people of the book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*), and their own *ijtihād* and *nazar/ra'y*.²³ And there's no doubt that they were on an extremely high standard and level of knowledge and possessed a precise and accurate understanding (of texts and issues). All of this was possible due to their close proximity to the Prophetic era and how they connected the generation after them with that of the companions. It was also made possible by their lack of deviation in following the rules of the Arabic language, something which became rampant after them to the extent that it became defected, flawed and corrupted. The *tābi ūn* in turn taught their students i.e., *taba' tābi ūn* and this method of teaching and

learning of the Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*) became a continuous process in the Islamic civilization without any pause throughout centuries in the Islamic history.

In the time of *Ṣaḥābah* and *Tābi ūn*, the method of teaching and learning was that the teacher transmitted knowledge to the students verbally or by way of narration and the students used to memorize it. Writing down the things was not very common, however, some *Ṣaḥābah* had written down some explanatory notes on the margins of their personal copies of the Quran.²⁴ Then the scholars from among the *Tābi ūn* generation who are known to have written down *Aḥādīth* may also have attempted to pen down *tafsīr* and prepare treatises for posterity.²⁵

In the third century after *Hijrah*, which is known as the beginning of the era of systematic book compilation in the Islamic civilization, books on different disciplines began to be written. In this time the *tafsīr* work also began to be done in a systematic way, i.e., from the beginning of this era the complete *tafsīr* of the holy Qur'ān according to the order of the written text began to be written. The process of writing systematic *tafsīr* works continues till date. In the period of these twelve centuries thousands of works on *tafsīr* have been written in different languages; mostly in Arabic.

⊗ The most famous written *Tafāsīr* of the early period include: *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān (Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari)* of Muḥammad bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H.), *Baḥr al-ʿUlūm* of Abū al-Layth bin Ibrāhīm al-Samarqandī (d. 372 A.H.), *Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* of Abū Ishāq Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm al-Tha'labī (d. 427 A.H.), *Tafsir of Imam Ibn Majah* (d. 373 A.H.), *Tafsir of Abu Bakr bin al-Mundhir al-Nidaburi* (d. 318 A.H.), *Tafsir of Imam Ibn Abi Hatim* (d. 328 A.H.), *Tafsir of Abu al-Shaikh bin Hibban* (d. 369 A.H.), *Tafsir of Imam al-Hakim* (405 A.H.), *Tafsir of Abu Bakr bin Mardawaih* (d. 410 A.H.), etc.

⊗ That of the middle period include: *Al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq al-Tanzīl* of 'Allāmah Maḥmūd bin 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 A.H.), *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz (Tafsīr Ibn 'Aṭīyyah)* of 'Abd al-Ḥaqq bin 'Aṭīyyah al-Andalusī (d. 540 A.H.), *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl (Tafsīr al-Baghawī)* of Al-Ḥusayn bin Muḥammad al-Baghawī (d. 510 A.H.), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr)* of Ḥafīz 'Imāduddīn Abū al-Fidā Ismā'īl bin Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.), *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (Tafsīr al-Kabīr)* of Imām Fakhruddīn Muḥammad bin Ḍiyā'uddīn 'Umar al-Rāzī (d. 606 A.H.), *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* of 'Allāmah Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin

Abī Bakr bin Faraḥ al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 A.H.), *Irshād al-‘Aql al-Salīm Ilā Mazāyā al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* of Qāḍī Abū Sa‘ūd Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-‘Imādī al-Ḥanafī (d. 951 A.H.), *Al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān (Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī)* of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Makhlūf al-Tha‘labī al-Jazā’rī (d. 877 A.H.), *Al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bi al-Ma‘thūr* of Jalāluddīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), etc.

☞ And of the modern times are: *Tafsīr al-Manār* of Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1354 A.H. / 1935 C.E.), *Fī zilāl al-Qur’ān* of Sayyid Quṭub Shāhīd (1906-1966 C.E.), *Bayān al-Qur’ān* of Maulānā Aṣḥraf ‘Alī Thānavī (d. 1362 A.H. / 1943 C.E.), *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī* of ‘Allāmah Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī, *Aḍwā al-Bayān fī Īdāḥ al-Qur’ān bi al-Qur’ān* of Shaikh Muḥammad Amīn bin Muḥammad Mukhtār al-Shanqīṭī, *Tafhīm al-Qur’ān* of Sayyid Abū al-A‘lā Maudūdī, *Tadabbur-i-Qur’ān* of Maulānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī, *Ma‘ārif al-Qur’ān* of Muftī Muḥammad Shāfi‘ ‘Uṭhmānī, etc.

CLASSIFICATION OF TAFSĪR WORKS

The whole of this treasure of *tafsīr* works can be broadly classified into two categories; (a) on the basis of the approach and methodology adopted by the *mufasssīr* (exegete), and (b) on the basis of the dominant subjects dealt with in them.

☞ (a) On the basis of the approach and methodology adopted by the *mufasssīrūn* the *tafsīr* works are generally classified into two categories.

1. *Tafsīr bi al-Riwāyah* or *Tafsīr bi al-Ma‘thūr* (Tafsīr based on narrations).
2. *Tafsīr bi al-Dirāyah* or *Tafsīr bi al-Rā’y* (Tafsīr according to deliberation and opinion).

(1) *Tafsīr bi al-Riwāyah* or *Tafsīr bi al-Ma‘thūr*: is that type of *tafsīr* in which a *mufasssīr* after describing a summary of the *Āyah*, mentions whatever narrations and reports are available from the Prophet (S.A.W.) or the *Ṣaḥābah* (Rad.A.) or their followers (*tābi ūn*) to explain the meanings and message of the *Āyah*. This is not to say that such *Tafāsīr* are totally free from personal judgment and opinion but in this type of *tafsīr* personal opinion is kept to a minimum. Some of these *Tafāsīr* may contain all sorts of reports, i.e., authentic (*Ṣaḥīḥ*), weak (*Ḍa‘īf*), *Isrā‘iliyāt* (biblical narrations) and even *Mauḍū‘* (fabricated) *Aḥādīth* without making any discrimination between them or without analyzing them; like *Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr*

Ṭabarī, Tafsīr Ibn Mardawaih, Tafsīr Ibn Mājah, Al-Durr al-Manthūr of Jalāluddīn al-Suyūṭī, *Baḥr al-ʿUlūm* of Abū al-Layṭh al-Samarqandī etc. But some others (especially of latter times) are more refined; their authors have best tried to remove the maximum number of weak narrations and fabricated altogether; like *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr Baghawī*, etc.²⁶

(2) *Tafsīr bi al-Dirāyah* or *Tafsīr bi al-Rā'y*: in this type of *tafsīr* a *mufasssīr* takes into consideration the linguistic aspects in light of old Arab poetry, knowledge of *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (causes of revelation), grammar, syntax, etymology, rhetoric, philosophy, logic, knowledge of different recitals, and various other related disciplines to explain and interpret the *Āyāt* of the holy Qur'ān. In most of these types of *Tafsīr*, narrated explanations from the Prophet (S.A.W.), the *Ṣaḥābah* and their students (*tābi ūn*), which may or may not be authentic, are mentioned prior to the personal interpretations, where the *mufasssīr* tries to ensure that his deductions and opinions are in agreement with the narrated explanations, grammatical rules, and lexical meanings, and that they do not clash with the established rules of *Sharī'ah*. The most prominent works of this type are: *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl* of Qāḍī al-Baiḍāwī, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* of Abū Ḥayyān, *Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, *Tafsīr Bayān al-Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān* etc.²⁷

⊞ (b) On the basis of the dominant subjects treated, the *tafsīr* works can be classified into four categories:

1. *Tafsīr al-Fiqhī* (Jurisprudential *tafsīr*):
2. *Tafsīr al-Fannī* (Aspect-based/Discipline-centric *tafsīr*):
3. *Tafsīr al-Ishārī* (*Tafsīr* based on Ṣūfī statements):
4. *Tafsīr al-Bida'ī* (*Tafsīr* of the deviant groups / sects):

(1) *Tafsīr al-Fiqhī* (Jurisprudential *Tafsīr*): The holy Qur'ān is the first and primary source for a legal ruling on any matter. In *Tafsīr al-Fiqhī* the *Āyāt* which exclusively contain subjects of legal matters are discussed extensively. All the legal rulings that can be deduced and derived from such *Āyāt* are explained in these *Tafsīr* with the help of sciences like, *Ilm al-Ḥadīth* and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* etc. The most prominent *tafsīr* works of this type are: *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin 'Alī al-Rāzī al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370 A.H.), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Abū al-Ḥasan

‘Alī bin Muḥammad al-Kayyā al-Harasī (d. 504 A.H.), *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* by Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabi (d. 543 A.H.), *Al-Jāmi’ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* of Imām al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 A.H.), *Al-Tafsīrāt al-Aḥmadi fi Bayān al-Āyāt al-Shar’iyyah* of ‘Allāmah Aḥmad bin Abī Sa’īd Mulla Jeevan (d. 1130 A.H.), etc.

(2) *Tafsīr al-Fannī* (Aspect-based/Discipline-centric tafsīr): these are the *Tafsīr* in which the author either highlights only one particular aspect of the Qur’ānic passages or employs only one or two particular disciplines (sciences) to explain the Qur’ānic *Āyāt* or passages. The influence of the bent of mind of the *mufasssīr* or his expertise in that particular discipline/disciplines which he has employed in explaining the Qur’ānic *Āyāt* and passages is obviously felt throughout his work. It doesn’t mean that there are no other discussions in such *Tafsīr* but only that these other discussions are given comparatively less attention. For example, in *Tafsīr Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* its author ‘Allāmah Abū Ḥayyān mentions in detail the differences among grammarians and interprets the Quranic verses from a grammatical point of view to such an extent that it bears a closer resemblance to a grammar book than it does to a *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān. However, he does comment on other areas of *tafsīr*, such as *Fiqh* issues, recitations, Qur’ānic eloquence, and narrations from early orthodox scholars. In numerous places, he also refutes many of al-Zamakhsharī’s philosophical arguments as well as his grammatical positions.²⁸ Similarly, Al-Tha’labi and Al-Khazin wrote *Tafsīr* in which they incorporated a lot of historical facts and events.²⁹

In the same way, *Tafsīr A’rāb al-Qur’ān al-Karīm wa Bayānuhū* of Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Durwaish discusses the grammatical constructions of *Āyāt* and their different aspects. It also discusses the points of eloquence of the Qur’ānic passages and highlights the superiority of Qur’ānic eloquence over the entire Arabic literature.

In *Al-Jawāhir fi tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, its author Shaikh Ṭanṭāwī Jawāharī has accommodated information of almost all natural and physical sciences and philosophy. Qur’ānic passages have been interpreted in the light of the latest findings in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy, Medicine, Geology, etc.

Tafsīr of Sayyid Quṭub, titled as *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, discusses mainly the political aspects of Islam. The author has focused, in light of his interpretation of *Tawḥīd* (Monotheism), on Allah’s sole right to formulate the laws for the rule of human

society. His focus on this aspect led to the neglect of other facets of *Tawḥīd* and the dangers posed by the forms of *shirk* (Polytheism) other than *shirk* in legislation. His critics also say that he laid the seeds for modern-day *takfīr* (accusing someone of infidelity) movements with his blanket condemnation of contemporary Islamic societies as having nothing to do with Islam, and with his praise of revolutionary movements in Islamic history.³⁰

(3) *Tafsīr al-Ishārī* (Tafsīr based on Ṣūfīc statements): One may find some statements of the revered Ṣūfīs which they have uttered in the context of certain *Āyāt* of the holy Qur’ān or have been brought under the discussion of certain *Āyāt* by other scholars. A layman might take such statements as the *tafsīr* of the Qur’ānic *Āyāt*, while the fact is that neither these revered Ṣūfīs themselves believe these statements to be the real *tafsīr* of the *Āyāt* nor should others consider them so. The Ṣūfīs believe that the true *tafsīr* is that which is done according to the proper methodology and is proved from the original sources; they admit that it is this *tafsīr* which should be adopted, followed and practiced. These Ṣūfī statements are based on the deep mystical deliberations and the ecstatic feelings which they experience during the recitation of the Qur’ānic *Āyāt*. If these statements are in conformity with the principles of *Sharī’ah* they should be accepted. If they apparently seem clashing with the principles of *Sharī’ah*, an attempt should be made for the reconciliation of these statements with the principles of *Sharī’ah* but if they totally clash with the *Sharī’ah* they should be rejected out rightly. Even if these statements are in conformity with the *Sharī’ah*, either in the first instance or after the reconciliation is made, they are not be considered as the *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān.³¹

Closing off the chapter on: “the statements of Ṣūfīs in *tafsīr*” Mufti Taqī ‘Uṭhmānī says:

To sum up, the intuitive deliberations made by the Ṣūfīs are not against the Qur’ān or Sunnah, and to blame them for *Bāṭiniyyah* is not justified. In spite of that, we cannot resist quoting Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ:

Despite this, how I wish these people had not been so careless in delving upon these deliberations because there is much possibility of creating misunderstanding and doubt through them.³²

Some of the famous works in this category are:

(1) *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* by Abū Muḥammad Sahl bin 'Abd-illah al-Tustarī, the prominent Ṣūfī of his time (d. 283 A.H.). This is a compilation of al-Tustarī's lectures or table talks on various places of the Qur'ān, prepared by Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Baladi. Dr. Al-Dhahabī says that no statements of this work contradicts either the Islamic *Sharī'ah* or human reason.³³ (2) *Haqā'iq al-Tafsīr* by Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad bin al-Ḥussain al-Sullamī (d. 412 A.H.). (3) *'Arā'is al-Bayān fī Haqā'iq al-Qur'ān* by Abū Muḥammad Rozbahan bin Abī al-Naṣr al-Shīrāzī (d. 666 A.H.).

Besides these, there are some *mufasssīrūn*, like 'Allāmah Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī and Maulānā Aṣḥraf 'Alī Thānavī, who have quoted these statements under certain *Āyāt* for the benefit of the readers. Many people take advantage of these deliberations and statements of the Ṣūfīs in their spiritual journey. These *mufasssīrūn* have not mentioned these statements randomly and carelessly but have also criticized those statements and practices which have nothing to do with the *Sharī'ah* and Spirituality.

(4) *Tafsīr al-Bida'ī* (Tafsīr of the deviant groups / sects): These are the *Tafāsīr* of the unorthodox and astray groups or sects particularly Shī'ites, Khawarij, Murji'ah, and Mu'tazilah of this Ummah. The methodology and intention of their authors is totally different from that of the orthodox (*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*) *mufasssīrūn* (exegetes). These *Tafāsīr* contradict with each other, with the *Tafāsīr* of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* and with the established principles of Islam. These astray groups have developed their own theories on faith and actions. Their scholars concentrated on preparing *tafsīr* works supporting their respective views. To achieve their goal they have foregone the authentic and universally accepted methodology, principles and rules of deriving meanings from the Qur'ānic *Āyāt*. Some of the famous *tafsīr al-Bida'ī* are: *Gharar al-Fawā'id wa Durar al-Qalā'id* by Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī bin Ṭāhir (d. 436 A.H.)³⁴, *Tafsīr* by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 260 A.H.)³⁵, *Majma' al-Bayān* by Al-Faḍl bin al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrasī (d. 835 A.H.)³⁶, and *Al-Safī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Mulla Muḥsin al-Kāshī (d. 1090 A.H.)³⁷. Some famous Mu'tazilite *Tafāsīr* are: *Tanzīh al-Qur'ān 'an al-Matin* by 'Abd al-Jabbār bin Aḥmad al-Hamadānī (d. 415 A.H.)³⁸, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq al-Tanzīl* by 'Allāmah Maḥmūd bin 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 A.H.), etc.

Among all these classes of *tafsīr* (except the last one, i.e., except *Tafsīr al-Bida'ī*) there are some which can be considered as comprehensive exegeses (*Jāmi' Tafāsīr*). They have been written on the highly authentic and accepted methodology. The meanings they derive are in consonance with the spirit of Islamic *Sharī'ah* and are therefore unanimously accepted by the Muslim Ummah. They are comprehensive exegeses (*Jāmi' Tafāsīr*) in the sense that they have dealt with and used all the arts and sciences of the *tafsīr*, like: *Ḥadīth*, *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth*, *Fiqh*, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, grammar, syntax, etymology, rhetoric (*Ilm al-Balāghah*), science of meanings (*Ilm al-Ma'ānī*), history, philosophy, logic, *Ilm al-Kalām*, physics, astronomy, mathematics, and *Taṣawwuf* etc., to explain the meaning and message of the Qur'ānic *Āyāt*. Otherwise no one can claim or to nobody can it be ascribed that he has fulfilled the due right of *tafsīr*. The most prominent *Tafāsīr* of this category are: *Maḥāṭib al-Ghaib (Tafsīr al-Kabīr)* of Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* of 'Allāmah Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī and *Tafsīr Bayān al-Qur'ān* of Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī etc.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is evident that the science of interpreting the verses (*āyāt*) of the holy Qur'ān and explaining them is of immense significance to any intellectual and scientific endeavor in the Islamic conception of knowledge and to guide the daily spiritual and material life of Muslims. The foundations of this science were firmly established by the Messenger of Allah (S.A.A.^w.S) himself among whose primary duties was to explain the word of Allah in theory as well as in practice. His companions, their students, and the 'ulamā (scholars) who sincerely and methodologically followed their footsteps further developed and systematized this field and created a majestic edifice of *tafsīr* literature spanning over thirteen centuries. During this period, a classification of *tafāsīr* was also carried out based on the criteria including the approach of the *mufasssīr* (commentator) and the dominant subject treated by him in his work. The scholars of this *Ummah* (Muslim community) also worked tirelessly in their efforts to identify and wipe out all those interpretations of the Qur'ān which were in clear contradiction to the noble principles of Islam, as has been alluded to in this paper.

¹³ (*S.W.T.*): It is an abbreviation for Arabic “سبحانه و تعالى” which can be translated in English as “Praise and Glory to Him! Exalted is He!

¹⁴ Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 59.

¹⁵ Khan, op. cit. p. 313.

¹⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 53.

¹⁷ (*Rah.A.*): It is an abbreviation for Arabic “رحمة الله عليه \ عليها \ عليهما \ عليهم” which can be translated in English as “May Allah’s Mercy be upon him / her / both of them / all of them.”

¹⁸ Al-Suyūṭī, op. cit. vol. 2, p. 466.

¹⁹ Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 59; and ‘Uṭh̄mānī, Maulānā Muftī Muḥammad Taqī, *Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, Maktabah Thānvi Deoband (U.P.), India; Ed. 2004. p. 461, and Khan, op. cit. p. 308.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 60.

²¹ Ibid., p. 92.

Establishment of the school of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RA):

The school of tafsir in Iraq was established in the name of Ibn Masud/ the Iraqi school of Tafsir was founded by Ibn Masud. There were other scholars of tafsir from the Sahabah who resided in Iraq. However, Ibn Masud was considered to be the foremost among them, specifically for his expertise in this field of knowledge and the abundance of narrations attributed to him regarding the exegesis of Quranic Ayat. Another reason for this was that when Umar Ibn al Khattab RA made Ammar Ibn Yasir the governor of Kufa, he sent Ibn Masud with him as his minister and educator. Therefore, his appointment as the official teacher to Kufa by the Leader of the Believers is what made the people of Kufa attached to him and learn from him the noble sciences of the Quran more than they did from any other Sahabi in the region. The people of Iraq are renowned as the People of Ra'y. This phenomenon is found in abundance among them when it comes to the issues in which disagreement can occur. The scholars say: it was Ibn Masud who was the originator of (or who laid the base for) this style of deduction of juristic issues. Then it was inherited from him by the Iraqis, which is why it was natural for them to adopt it in the school/issues of Tafsir as well. It resulted in the accumulation of a good body of Quranic exegetical analysis that was based on reasoning and ijtihad, because the (existence and) deduction of the (differed upon) rulings of Shariah is actually one of the outcomes of applying reasoning in understanding the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. (Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 107)

The school of Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (Rad.A):

A very large number of the noble companions resided in the sanctuary of Madinah and unlike many others of them, they did not consider leaving this city and relocating to any other land throughout their lives. They always remained there, teaching their followers and students the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (*S.A.A.^{w.S}*) which ultimately led to the foundation of the Madinan School of Tafsīr in which a good number of the Tabiun learned from the most senior companions, at the top of whom was Ubay Ibn Kab himself. He was considered as the founder of this school and credited with being the most prolific and famous among the companions who taught tafsīr to the majority of those Tabiun students who themselves became authorities in the exegesis of the Quran. Like Ibn Masud, it so happened due to his fame and expertise in the field of tafsīr and the no. of narrations related from him regarding the Quranic exegesis. (Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 104)

The School of Ibn Abbas (Rad.A):

The Makkan School of tafsīr was founded by Ibn Abbas. He used to teach there his students from among the Tabiun, explaining to them the Book of Allaah and clarifying the meanings of that which appeared ambiguous and intricate. Thereafter, his students narrated and carried forward whatever the knowledge and narrations they learned and heard from him. (Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 93)

²² Uthmani, op. cit. p. 461-85.

²³ Ibid., p. 91.

²⁴ Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 89. What is ascribed to Abdullah bin Abbas by the title “tanvir al-miqyas” is not a genuine one. It is compiled by ferozaabadi, wherein he has given place to the narrations transmitted through the chain: Muhammad bin Marwan al-suddi from kalbi from Abi Salih from Ibn Abbas. This chain is considered as very weak by the muhadditun (p. 90).

²⁵ Khan, op. cit. p. 318.

²⁶ ‘Uthmānī, op. cit. p. 501, Philips, op. cit. p. 51-58, and Khan, op. cit. p. 327-30.

²⁷ Muftī Taqī ‘Uthmānī, in his famous book *Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, has wonderfully discussed the limits of reason and the conditions necessary to apply reason in the explanation and elucidation of the meanings of the Qur’ānic *Āyāt*. See *Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, p. 397-451. & ‘Allāmah Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī, in the preface of his Tafsīr (*Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī*), has scholarly discussed in detail the validity and importance of *Tafsīr bi al-Rā’y*. See *Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī*, vol. 1, p. 15-17.

²⁸ Other tafasir of this type are: The tafsīr of Al-Zajjaj, Al-Basit of Al-Wahidi, etc. (Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 133).

²⁹ Dhahabi, vol. 1, p. 133.

³⁰ Philips, op. cit. p. 27.

³¹ ‘Uthmānī, op. cit. p. 343 & 353, and Al-Ālūsī, op. cit. vol. 1, p. 17-18.

³² ‘Uthmānī, op. cit. p. 356. The author has quoted this quotation of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ from ‘Allāmah al-Suyūṭī’s *Al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 458. It is also mentioned in al-Zarkashī’s *Al-Burhān*, p. 430.

³³ Al-Dhahabī, op. cit. vol. 2, p. 335.

³⁴ Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī bin Ṭāhir was a senior Shī’ite scholar of Iraq. This is not a complete *tafsīr* of the holy Qur’ān but a collection of discussions on certain *Āyāt* to support Shī’ite views.

³⁵ He is recognized by the Shī’ites as their eleventh Imām. The entire *tafsīr* rotates around two themes: (1) confirmation of ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib’s succession as Imām, and (2) admiration of *Ahl al-Bait* (the prophet’s family through his daughter Fāṭimah).

³⁶ The author was a well-known Shī’ite scholar. This work explains and supports Shī’ite Fiqh and ‘Aqā’id. It accommodates unreliable traditions.

³⁷ The author, Muḥammad bin al-Shah Murtaza known as Mullah Muḥsin al-Kāshī was a Shī’ite scholar of eleventh century after *Hijrah*. This *tafsīr* seems to have been developed with a view to vindicate Shī’ite views and condemn prominent *Ṣaḥābah* of the Prophet (S.A.W.) like Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Ā’ishah, Ḥafṣah etc.

³⁸ This is not a complete explanation of the holy Qur’ān but only the ‘apparently’ controversial and equivocal *Āyāt* are interpreted in order to refute the position of Sunnī scholars.

An Analysis of the Urdu Tafsīr Works

Mohd Mahboob*

ABSTRACT

The literal meaning of *Tafsīr* is to express and to explain something. In conventional terminology, it stands for the explanation and elucidation of the *Qur'ānic* verses. It provides the exegete with a framework using which he can interpret the meanings of the Quranic verses and also present a sufficient and appropriate explanation of the verses. During the period of the pious caliphate, Islam reached different parts of the globe by crossing the boundary of the Arabian Peninsula. Different countries and several communities embraced Islam, the region of *Sindh* was also brought within the limits of the Islamic rule. The conquest of Sindh led to the establishment of the Muslim government in the region. Gradually, the population of Muslims increased throughout the Indian subcontinent and it naturally resulted in the dissemination of Islamic teachings, also keeping in mind the specific circumstances of this country, common ethos of its inhabitants, and their mental capacities, thereby calling for a new perceptual approach that needed to be employed in this regard. Several books related to the *Qur'ānic* sciences and the *Qur'ānic exegesis* were written apart from the books concerning *Ḥadīth* and Jurisprudence, histories, and biographies. Apart from Arabic and Persian languages, these works were also compiled in other local languages including Urdu. Although Urdu language is of a much recent origin than other languages of the world, a large number of the *Qur'ānic* translations have been written in this language. The *Qur'ānic* teachings, *Qur'ānic* commandments, anecdotes in the *Qur'ān*, miracles of *Qur'ān*, *Qur'ānic* sciences, *Qur'ānic* excellences, *Qur'ānic* arguments, history of *Qur'ānic* compilation and the history of *Tafsīr* writing and *Mufasssirun*, etc. are the major topics of interest in which contributions have been made in the Urdu language. Against this backdrop, the purpose of the present study is to present a comprehensive and concise analytical account of some major *Tafsīr* works that have been authored by Muslim scholars in Urdu from the emergence of this language till recent times.

Keywords: Tafsīr, Translations, Urdu, Modern Exegeses.

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Introduction

Even though Urdu is of a much recent origin in comparison to other Indian languages, due to its immense beautiful qualities and abilities, it has become deeply ingrained among the cultural and academic atmosphere of India in a very short period. Speakers of the Urdu language can be found throughout the country. Several Indian regions provided a conducive environment for its growth, and very soon, its clout and supremacy over other modern Indian languages were accepted. Muslims, in particular, developed a special affinity towards it, and since the people speaking it were present in every part of the country, it came to be seen as the *lingua franca* concerning religious matters as well.

The Quran is the actual Word of God (Allah) which has multiple aspects and its recitation is considered worship in Islam. It is the fundamental book that forms the basis and core of all Islamic sciences. Since it was revealed in the Arabic language, non-native speakers couldn't be expected to firmly grasp its meanings until they learned the language themselves or developed a medium to convey those meanings. Therefore, in order to propagate the *Qur'ānic* teachings to as many people as possible, an incessant effort was made to translate it and write its *Tafsīr* into other local languages.¹ The learned intellectuals and scholars of India focused on presenting its meanings to the masses in the common, simple, and intelligible language of Urdu so that a large group of the country could understand and benefit from it. However, the completion of this task demanded a daunting and unconditional sacrifice on the part of these exegetes despite which, out of natural curiosity, instead of unraveling its mysteries and finding solutions for social problems, new challenges surfaced ahead on account of faulty interpretations. To repudiate these misleading interpretations, the authentic scholars of the time paid heed to it and tried their best to remove the uncountable complications created by the people with vested interests, which were included in the name of *Qur'ānic Tafsīr*.

History of *Tafsīr* Writing in Urdu

It is reported that some Persian converts requested Salmān al-Fārisi, a prominent companion of the Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.), to translate some portions of the *Qur'ān*, which he then sent to them.² With the expansion of Islam in different non-Arab regions, the local people of those areas felt the need for the *Qur'ān* to be

translated and explained in their native languages. Consequently, scholars started writing commentaries of the *Qur'ān* for non-Arabs in their languages. These languages include *Persian, Turkish, Urdu*, and Central Asian languages, etc. The companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) had already endeavored the translations of the *Qur'ān* in other languages. Salmān Fārsi translated *Surah al-Fātiḥah* into the *Persian* language first, for the people of his nation. Now, this translation is not available.³ The earliest Hindi translation is reputed to be the one ordered by Raja Mahruk of Kashmir, in 270 AH, who ordered the Muslim ruler of *Sind*, 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar, to translate the *Qur'ān* for him. 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar sent a Muslim scholar who was an expert in many Indian languages and helped Raja Mahruk understand the fundamentals of Islam and translate one *Qur'ānic* chapter, *Sūrah Yāsīn*, only.⁴

The translations of the *Qur'ān* in the Urdu language started in the sixteenth century C.E. (10 century A.H.),⁵ initially of only a few verses or select *Sūrah*. In the seventeenth century C.E., the translations of the *Qur'ān* were supplemented by brief marginal notes as *Tafsīr*. These *Tafāsīr* are preserved in different libraries. Maulvi 'Abd-al-Haq⁶ has discussed some of these *Tafāsīr* in his book *Qadīm Urdu*. For example, the translation and interpretation of the last juz of the *Qur'ān*, i.e. *Pārah 'Ammā Yatasā'alūn* has been translated in the late 10th century A.H. or the beginning of the 11th century A.H. According to some scholars, it is considered the oldest translation of the *Qur'ān* (in Urdu). The features of this interpretation are not a significant and simple addition of some of the descriptive words. The translator is unidentified.

The translation of *Surah Yūsuf* is also estimated in the late 10th century A.H. or at the beginning of the 11th century. It is in the *Gujrāti Urdu* language.

Another *Tafsīr*, *Tafsīr-e-Ḥusaini* of Kāshif Hārwi has been translated into the oldest Deccan language. However, the translator and interpreters are unknown. It is estimated to have been written in the late 11th century A.H. or the beginning of the 12th century A.H.

Interpretation of the *Qur'ān* from *Sūrah Maryam* till the end along with *Chahal Ḥadīth* has been preserved in the *Āsīfīa library Hyderabad*. It includes the translation and interpretation *Surah Maryam, Surah Tāhā, Sūrah Yāsīn, Sūrah Sāffāt Sūrah Ṣād, Sūrah Zumar and Pārah 'Ammā*. It is estimated to have been

written in the 11th century.⁷ Maulvi ‘Abd-al-Ḥaq has discussed one more ancient *Tafsīr of the Qur’ān*, which is written in the 13th century A.H. by Shah Makhdūm Ḥusaini.⁸

The first scholar to translate the *Qur’ān* into the Urdu language is said to have been Maulānā Muḥammad Mu’azzam Sambhali in 1719 C.E. in Northern India. It was named *Tafsīr-i-Hind* and was incomplete. It got destroyed during the invasion of Nādir Shah.⁹ Some other scholars opine that the first *Tafsīr* was written by Shah Murādullah Ansāri in 1770 C.E. It is the interpretation of *Pārah ‘Amma*, entitled *Khudā’i Ni‘mat*, also known as *Tafsīr-e-Murādiyah*, but it also remained unfinished. After 26 years of Shah Walīullah’s *Persian Tafsīr Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān* (1837 C.E.) and before twenty-one years of Shah ‘Abd al-Qādir’s *Mūziḥ-al-Qur’ān* it acted as a foundation stone for other translators. *Tafsīr-e-Murādiyah* has emerged as a literary composition of great taste. This *Tafsīr* represents the exemplary language of that period (i.e., the end of the 18th century). Although Urdu prose used to be entirely rhythmic and throbbing during this period, yet it emerged with serene and facile language.¹⁰

The translation of Shah ‘Abd al-Qādir’s (d. 1814) *Mūziḥ-al-Qur’ān* is considered the primordial one among all the prevalent translations of the *Qur’ān*. It acts as a foundation stone for the other translators. The translation possesses a profound feature that while paraphrasing from Arabic, such appropriate words of Urdu have been used beyond which words are difficult to find. However, the meaning of the respective words below them, prosaic expression, and understandability are the main features of this work.¹¹

The translation of Shah Rafi’uddīn (1749-1817) is the third translation of the *Qur’ān* in Urdu. The translation of Shah ‘Abd-al-Qādir is considered to have maintained dexterity and tenacity in his work, despite the complaint with respect to the subjection to words. The translation of Shah Rafi’uddīn was published firstly with ‘Abd-al-Qādir’s *Tafsīr Mūziḥ-al-Qur’ān* in the year 1840 C.E. by one of the oldest publication houses of Calcutta, *Islamic Printers*. Later on, a number of its editions were published by various publications, and it is being published to date.¹²

Thus, it is worth mentioning the fact that *Mūziḥ-al-Qur’ān* is considered as the first phraseological translation of the *Qur’ān* into the *Urdu language*. It is a matter of coincidence that Shah Rafi’uddīn is the founder of the literal translation,

likewise, Shah ‘Abd al-Qādir is credited to be the originator of the idiomatic or phraseological translation. Therefore, the commendation of the paramount complete and full-fledged translation comes into these brothers.¹³

The translation of Shah ‘Abd-al-Qadir was published in the year 1829 C.E./1245A.H. from *Delhi* followed by the one of Shah Rafi’uddīn in the year 1840 C.E./1256 A.H. from *Calcutta*. The choice of decent, prevalent, and appropriate terms or words by Shah ‘Abd-al-Qādir made his translation gain the utmost popularity among the masses, and even its acquiescence can be seen. Moreover, Maulānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan has taken Shah ‘Abd al-Qadir’s translation as a foundation, which is a testimony to its preeminence and acceptance among all.

Later on, these translations, particularly that of Shah ‘Abd al-Qādir and Shah Rafi’uddīn became premier of work for other translators and interpreters. This is an astounding fact that Urdu, although, is a juvenile language among all the erudite language of the world, yet no other language gets the credit to have abundant translators of the Quran as Urdu has.

The colonial rule of *Great Britain* put an end to the movement of *Islamic sciences* by forming schools for modern education for *Qur’ānic Exegetics*. The important interpretations of the *Qur’ān*, compiled in the Sub-continent during thirteen century of *Hijrah*, are *Mūziḥ-al-Qur’ān* by Shah ‘Abd-al-Qādir, son of Shah Wali’ullah, *Fataḥu’l-Mannān* Known as *Tafsīr-e-Ḥaqqāni* by ‘Abd-al-Ḥaq Ḥaqqāni. Footnotes upon old Arabic *Tafsīr* were written like *Al-Kamālain* annotation of *Al-Jalālain* by Salāmu’llāh Rinpuri and annotation of *Al-Jalālain* by *Turāb ‘Ali*. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salām wrote a commentary of the *Qur’ān* in two volumes in the Pashto language.¹⁴

Nineteenth Century’s Works

One of the most notable *Tafsīr* in the nineteenth century C.E. is *Tafsīr-e-Qur’ān* written by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan. It deserves consideration on account of the revolutionary status of Sir Sayyid in the Urdu language and literature. Sir Sayyid undertook to write the commentary on the *Qur’ān* from a rational angle but could not complete it. His rationalist point of view was considered as an outrageous interpretation by the mainstream Muslim scholars. His commentary of the *Qur’ān* not only remained incomplete but also did not gain popularity among the people.

This commentary was published in seven parts. The first part was published in 1880, the second in 1882, the third in 1885, the fourth in 1888, the fifth in 1892, the sixth in 1895, and the seventh part was published after his death in 1904. Its second edition was published in two volumes by Dr. 'Ābid Raḏā Baydār in 1998 at the centenary celebration of Sir Sayyid from *Khuda Bakhsh Oriental public library, Patna*.

Tafsīr-e-Fatḥu'l-Mannān by Maulānā 'Abd-al-Ḥaq Ḥaqqāni ibn Muḥammad 'Amir ibn Shamshu'ddīn bin Nūru'ddīn, is also known as *Tafsīr-e-Ḥaqqāni*. This great work is not only a translation and explanation of the *Qur'ān* but also an encyclopedia of the *Qur'ānic* sciences. Maulānā is considered one of the most erudite scholars in this field. In his work, he not only deals with the meaning of the *Qur'ān*, *Hadith*, and *Fiqh* but also gives conclusive discussions on subjects like chemistry, history, geography, and so on. His *Tafsīr* can be divided into many sections of knowledge. He has used parentheses with skill, which has enhanced the continuity and clarity of his work. He has communicated his erudition in a simple style. The context of every revelation has been mentioned. He has discussed the beauties and opulence of the language of the *Qur'ān*. He has also answered the objections and the doubts of the detractors of the *Qur'ān*. The first seven volumes of this *Tafsīr* were published from 1887 C.E. /1305 A.H. to 1895 C.E. /1313 A.H. The eighth volume which comprises translation and explanation of "*Pārah 'Ammā*" was published from *Mujtabā'i Press* in 1900 C.E. /318 A.H. Subsequently, many editions were published. A concise *Tafsīr-e-Ḥaqqāni* with translation was published by *Matba'-e-Hāmi al-Islām, Delhi* in 1911 C.E. /1330 A.H.

In addition to the above *Tafsīr*, other important interpretations of the *Qur'ān*, compiled in the Sub-continent during the nineteenth century are *Tarjama wa Tafsir Ra'ūfi* of Shah Ra'ūf Ahmad Ra'fat.(1832), *Jam 'e-al-Tafsir* of Nawāb Qutbuddin Bahadur Dehalvi (1872), *Tarjama wa Tafsir Faiḏ-al-Karīm* of Qāzi Sibghatullāh Mufti C, Mufti Maḥmūd and Maulānā Nasīruddīn Muḥammad (1863), *Tafsīr Iksīr A'azam* of Maulānā Muḥammad Iḥtishamuddin Muradābādī (1898), *Tafsir-e-Qādri* of Maulānā Fakhruddin Aḥmad Qādri Firangi Maḥalli (1866), *Ghayat-al-Burhān* of Ḥakīm Sayyid Muḥammad Sayyid Ḥasan Amrohi (1894), *Khulasa-al-Tafsir* of Maulvi Fataḥ Muḥammad Tā'ib Lucknowi (1823), *Gharā'ib-al-Qur'ān* of Maulwi, Deputy, Ḥafiz Naḏīr Aḥmad (1890), etc.¹⁵

Twentieth Century's Works

Among the commentaries and exegeses of Qur'ān written in the twentieth century CE, *Bayān-al-Qur'ān* has an important and special vantage. It is a compelling and momentous feat of interpretation of the Qur'ān. It has been undertaken by Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Ṭḥānwī (1863-1943) with extraordinary clarity, whose only purpose is to make better Muslims out of good Muslims. He strived to transform Muslims towards excellence in faith. Ṭḥānwī realized that due to the impact of the *British* rule, the influence of western philosophy and civilization was spreading rapidly among the Muslims and impressing them with the western lifestyle. This was also due to the lack of religious education, which caused the authority of Islam to wane in their hearts. Western progress, culture, and civilization influenced them to the extent that it was taking them closer to ignorance. The pro-western free mind was causing them to turn away from the Islamic *Shari'ah* and the Islamic way of life. Another development that was troubling Maulana Ṭḥānwī was the emergence of some misguided pseudo-reformers, who were alienating many Muslims from the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* and bringing them towards un-Islamic practices.

Tafhīm-al-Qur'ān is another famous *Tafsīr* of our times, and a unique contribution to contemporary *Tafsīr* literature. The uniqueness of *Tafhīm* lies in the fact that it looks upon the *Qur'ān* as a Book of guidance (*Hidāyah*). As such, the *Qur'ān* has been approached as the mainspring for guidance, destined to play a decisive role in the reconstruction of thought and action of institutions and society, as was the case when it was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.). The function of *Tafhīm* is not to dwell primarily or mainly on literary beauties and legalistic niceties, which have not been ignored but to develop an understanding of the *Qur'ān* as the source of guidance.

Its author is Sayyid Abu'l-A'ala Maudūdi (1903-1979) who was a great scholar, revivalist, politician, thinker, as well as a leader of Islamic movements in the *Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*. Abu'l-A'ala Maudūdi's influence went far beyond the boundaries of *Indo-Pakistan*, where he made a very perceptible impact on the course of events. Besides making an important contribution to Islamic thought in this age, he inspired a whole new generation with the teaching of Islam. The movement for the revival of Islam, "*Jamā'at-e-Islami*," founded and launched by him in 1941 C.E. ranks among the foremost in the world. No student of modern

history can be indifferent to Abu'l-A'ala Maudūdi's status and contribution to the current Islamic revival that is steadily emerging in the world.

Abu'l-A'ala Maudūdi started translating the *Qur'ān* in February 1942 C.E. at the age of thirty-nine. It took him five years to complete the translation and interpretation up to *Surah Yūsuf*. After that, in October 1948, under the Public Safety Act, he was sent to the Central Jail in Multan. During this period, he got the opportunity to complete his work. The preface of the first volume of *Tafhim-al-Qur'ān* bears the date 11th September 1949. He completed his interpretation of *Qur'ān* in 1973 C.E. when he sought to retire from the leadership of the *Jamā'at*. *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* is the greatest product of his life which was dedicated to the glorification of the Lord and engaged in honest intellectual inquiry through a robust scholarship to establish the supremacy of the truth as revealed by *Allah* and as practiced by His Prophet ﷺ. *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* has been published in six volumes. The first volume appeared in 1950 when Abu'l-A'ala Maudūdi was in prison, and the last one appeared in 1973. His *Tafsīr* encompasses various significant, thought-provoking dimensions and issues.

Abu'l-A'ala Maudūdi emphasized that the *Qur'ān* is a book of a movement. It presents a message, invites the whole human race to the view of reality and social justice, organizes those who respond to its call into an ideological community, and enjoins upon this community the necessity to strive for the socio-moral reconstruction of humanity, both individually and collectively. The *Qur'ān* cannot be correctly understood unless it is viewed in the context of the proper framework.

In addition to the above *Tafāsīr*, from among the important interpretations of the *Qur'ān* compiled in the sub-continent in modern times, some more works of Urdu tafsīr are as follows: *Tarjama Muḥīdāt-al-Furqān wa Tafsīr-e-Wāḥīdī* written by Maulānā Waḥīduzzaman (1905), *Tarjama Furqān Ḥamīd* of Maulwi Muḥammad Insha'allah (1910), *Muḥīh Furqān Ḥamīd* of Maulānā Maḥmud-al-Ḥasan Shaikh-al-Hind (1918), *Kanz-al-Iman* of Maulana Aḥmad Raḥa Khan (1911), *Tarjuma-e-Qur'ān* of Khwaja Ḥasan Niḥāmi Dehalvi (1924), *Altāf-al-Raḥmān-bi-Tafsīr-al-Qur'ān* of Maulānā 'Abdul Bāri Ferangi Maḥalli (1925), *Tarjama wa Tafsīr e Muḥammadi* of Maulānā Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Juna Garhi (1933), *Tarjama wa Tafsīr Bayān-al-Subḥ'ān* of Maulānā Sayyid 'Abdul-Dā'im Jalāli (1939), *Tarjama wa Tafsīr Tashīl-al-Qur'ān* of Maulwi Firozuddin

(1943), and *Al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm-m'a Tarjama wa Tafṣīr* written by Maulānā 'Abdul Mājīd Daryābādi (1952).¹⁶

Conclusion

In the preceding pages, it was discussed how the process of *Tafṣīr* writing had begun during the time of the Prophet and his companions, and in the third century A.H., like other sciences, it also became an independent stream of Islamic science. Islam is a religion in which teaching and preaching occupy a central position. When it spread beyond the boundaries of the Arabian land, the Muslims there used the local languages for preaching and making the native population acquainted with Islamic teachings. Several books comprising Islamic teachings and *Qur'ānic* commandments were written in the local languages and the *Qur'ānic Tafṣīr* and books related to the elucidation of *Aḥādīth* were also compiled. When Islam arrived in Iran and Central Asia, the *Qur'ān* also was translated into Persian, and commentaries were compiled. In India also, the scholars wrote more books and *Qur'ānic* commentaries in Arabic and Persian. Later, the translations and commentaries of the *Qur'ān* were also written in the languages of this country. Due to the abundance of regional languages in India, translations emerged in every area and region here, which is why we now find commentaries and translations of the *Qur'ān* in Hindi, Gujarati, Deccani, Telugu, Malayalam, Kashmiri, Marathi, and Bengali. Since Urdu has been the most popular and developed language here, there has emerged a large collection of commentaries in this language. The work of translating the *Qur'ān* dates back to the 16th century C.E. when the Urdu language was still in its infancy and printing press was not yet established. In later centuries, it increased at a rapid pace. Even now, Urdu is one of the languages in which most of the translations, commentaries, and interpretations of the *Qur'ān* have been made.

Notes and References

¹ Tafsir refers to exegesis, usually of the Quran. A Quranic *Tafsir* attempts to provide elucidation, explanation, interpretation, context or commentary for clear understanding and conviction of God's will. Principally, a *Tafsir* deals with the issues of linguistics, jurisprudence, and theology.

² Al-Sarakhsi, *Al-Mabsūt*, Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1988.

³ Saud 'Alam Qasmi, *Minhaj Tarjumah wa Tafsir: Shah WaliAllah, Ibn e Taymiyah, Sir Sayyid, Farahi, Abul kalam Azad, aur Digar Mufasssirin wa Mutarjimin-i-Quran ka Mawaznah*, Aligarh: Faran Academy, 2002, pp. 18-19.

⁴ Khatoon, Uzma, *A critical Study of Select Urdu Tafasir of 20th Century*, 2015, Department of Islamic Studies Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh (India), p. 37

⁵ Salih Abd al-Hakim Sharf al-Din. *Qur'ān Hakim kay Urdu Tarājim*. Mumbai: Maktabah Sharf al-Din. 1984. p. 82.

⁶ Abdul Haq (20 April 1870 – 16 August 1961) was a scholar and a linguist, whom some call *Baba-e-Urdu* (*Father of Urdu*). Abdul Haq was a champion of the Urdu language.

⁷ Jamil Naqvi, *Urdu Tafasir (Kitabiyat)*, Islamabad: Muqtadrah Qaumi Zaban, 1992, p. 23

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.23

⁹ Maulwi Abd al-Haq, *Quran Number Sayyarah Digest*, Idarah Mutala'ah wa Tahqiq, vol. III, 1970, P.217.

¹⁰ Ikhlāq Husayn Qasmi, *Quran Majeed ki Tafsir Chaudah sau Baras Me*, Article: *Tafsir Muradiyah ek Jaizah*, Delhi: Maktaba Jamia Limited, 1905, p. 200; See also, Sayyid Hamid Shattari, *Quran Majid kay Urdu Tarajim wa Tafsir ka Tanqidi Mutala'ah 1914 tak*, Hyderabad, 1982, pp. 99-112.

¹¹ Sayyid Hamid Shattari, *op .cit.* pp. 140-147

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.175-180

¹³ Maulwi 'Abd al-Haq, *Purani Urdu me Quran Majeed kay Tarajim wa Tafasir*, Saiyyarah Digest (Quran Number), Vol.2, Lahore, 1970, p. 177.

¹⁴ Salih Abd al-Hakim Sharf al-Din. *op. cit.* pp. 169-198

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-266

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-364

A Brief Review of Modern Approaches in the Interpretation of the Quran

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Wani*

ABSTRACT

The Quran, the everlasting miracle, is the final message of Allah for the guidance of mankind in all aspects of life. It is the primary source of all the injunctions pertaining to various issues such as law, constitution, economy, society, politics or ethics etc. From the earliest days, people have delved deep into the treasure of this divine wisdom and spent their lives in search of the knowledge lying buried there. The first output of the intellectual activity of the Ummah, therefore, was the tafsir or the exegesis of the Qur'ān to explain and elucidate the norms of Shari'ah injunctions contained in the Qur'ān. However, modernity, with its complex socioeconomic, religious, political and cultural developments, presented unique challenges to the mufasssirun to contextualise the Qur'ānic message and provide guidance to modern-day Muslims and their worldview. Consequently, many exegetical trends emerged in order to address the emerging issues. This present article briefly reviews modern tafsir trends and how modern tafasir have shaped contemporary Islamic thought.

Key Words: Quran, Tafsir, Modernity, Approaches

Introduction

The term *tafsir* is the most commonly used word for the interpretation of the Quran. However there is disagreement among linguists regarding its origin. According to one opinion, the term *tafsir* is the verbal noun of the second form of the Arabic word *fasr*, and means 'to expound, reveal and make apparent the intelligible meaning'.¹ According to Ibn Manzur, *fasr* means revealing what is covered. Taking into consideration the above definition, *tafsir*, therefore, would be the revealing of what is intended or covered by a difficult word.² The Qur'an uses the word in chapter 25:

And no example or similitude do they bring [to oppose or to find fault in you or in this Quran], but We reveal to you the truth [against that similitude or example], and the better explanation (*tafsiran*) thereof.³

According to Ibn Abbas, here *tafsiran* means *tafsilan* — 'elaboration'.⁴

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Another view suggests that the origin of *tafsir* is not *fasr* but *safara* (to unveil or uncover).⁵ The phrase *safarat [al-mar'at] 'an wajhiha* means '[the woman] removed her veil from her face'.⁶ When the woman is thus unveiled she is referred to as *safirah*, which means that certain parts of her body are not covered. Thus the meaning of *tafsir* may be related to 'uncovering' or 'revealing' what is hidden. Whatever the origin, the meaning of *tafsir* appears to be closely related to 'revealing'.⁷

Genesis of Modern Interpretation of the Quran

The need for explanation and interpretation of the Quran was felt by Muslims in the formative period and thus a wide range of books on exegesis, with different focuses were produced to offer a good range of methods that could be employed for exegesis of the Quran. In the modern era new approaches have been presented to develop an insight into the Quranic interpretations, critically examining it through various methodologies. As a result new methods of enquiry developed, widening fields of discussion as well as adding a great value to this field of research. A modern *tafsir* only becomes modern when its explanation addresses the social, cultural and political realities of the current era. The more prominent modernistic methodologies of Qur'anic exegesis comprise textualist, contextualist, modernist, socio-political, scientific, thematic and feminist approaches.

Modern Approaches in the Interpretation of the Quran

Perhaps one of the major attempts to reinterpret the Quran in the modern period was by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of India (d. 1898), who published a six-volume work on the Quran.⁸ Khan believed that Muslims needed to reassess their tradition, heritage and ways of thought in line with newly emerging, dynamic and all powerful western knowledge, values and institutions.⁹ In his view, the gulf between Western and Islamic modes of thought was vast, and Muslims who had been educated in the West or influenced by Western education were no longer able to comprehend the religious discourse of the ulama of the time. This widening gap threatened the very relevance of Islam as a religion for many Muslims.

In the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, contact with Western civilization was rudely brought about by Napoleon's short-lived invasion (1798–1801). Debate emerged and continued on the relevance of certain institutions of Islam and the need for a degree of change. Advocates of reform and change faced fierce resistance from the ulama and scholars at influential traditionalist institutions, such as the Azhar seminary (later converted to a university) in Cairo, who suspected in

the views of reformists a hidden ‘colonial’ agenda to undermine Islam. Despite this resistance, in the late nineteenth century, Muhammad Abduh began expounding his views on the interpretation of the Quran. He gave a series of lectures on interpretation and dictated a partial commentary, which was later published by his pupil Muhammad Rashid Rida. This commentary, *Tafsir al-Manar*, though not as radical as Ahmad Khan’s tafsir, was nevertheless new in its approach. Abduh criticized some of the approaches and techniques employed in traditional *tafsir*. He dismissed the emphasis on philological and rhetorical features, saying that such an exercise is ‘dry and distances [one] from God and His Book’.¹⁰ Similarly, he was critical of the focus given to the legal content of the Quran by the jurists (for whom the main function of the Quran had become a legal one), saying that legal topics were the least-discussed themes (*aqallu ma jaa fi al-Quran*).¹¹ Going the grammatical, linguistic and legal approaches in the *tafsir* tradition, ‘Abduh attempted to relate his commentary to contemporary problems in the lives of Muslims. For him, Quranic *tafsir* should aim at clarifying the intended meaning – the underlying reasons in the legislation, belief system and rulings – in such a way as to attract people to the Quran.¹²

Textualist Exegesis

Exegetical work that is based on evaluating and interpreting Qur’ānic text is referred to as textualist exegesis. Abdullah Saeed defines the term textualist exegesis as Qur’ānic *tafsir* work relying on text and tradition, which approaches interpretation of the Qur’ān strictly from a linguistic perspective.¹³ Most modern *tafsir*, as expressed by Saeed, are written with a view that interpretation of a Qur’ānic verse, word or expression conveys its original meaning to scholars who adhere to the conventions governing a textualist approach. Development of the linguistic sciences of *nawh* (grammar) and *balagha* (rhetoric) profoundly refined this *tafsir* trend from a lexical explanation alone to a literary stylistic of comprehension and clarification. A few textualist works, such as those by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144 CE) and more modern scholar Amin al-Khuli, adopt a linguistic perspective as the foundation for their *tafsir* rather than contemporary context, which demands Muslims to adopt historic socio-cultural connotations.

Contextualist Exegesis

Another modern trend in *tafsir* is to let the Qur’ān speak for itself. It is argued by some that the Qur’ān should be understood in a similar manner as the Arabs did at the time of its revelation. To clarify such philosophy, it is further argued that traditional reports on the occasions of revelation are not unanimously agreed upon

and should only be considered when contextual circumstances are favourable. Furthermore, contextualists, such as Algerian scholar Muhammad Arkoun, Egyptian Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Kuwait-born scholar Khaled Abu Al-Fadl reject the imitation of earlier modes of thinking in Qur'ānic exegesis,¹⁴ like their modernist counterparts. These notions have led to contemporary philosophies in interpretation and contextualising the Qur'ānic message.

Thematic Exegesis

This modern genre of *tafsir* advocates Quranic exegesis in the forms of various themes and topics that are central to the Qur'ān. This is the approach for interpreting Quranic texts that emphasized the unity of Quranic text over the interpretation of verses in isolation. Thematic exegesis emerged during prophetic era and still exists, following three methods of analysis, words, ayahs and text. Iranian Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari (d. 1979), Egyptian writer Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad (d. 1964) and Pakistani scholar Fazlur Rahman have written extensively on the various themes in the Qur'ān, such as society, history, women's rights and fundamental liberties.¹⁵ Though this trend in explaining the Qur'ān can be traced back to the Companions,¹⁶ its application in modern *tafsir* work is unrivalled.

Modernist Exegesis

Qur'ānic *tafsir* exclusively based on and addressing challenges presented by modernity, and more specifically by the Western worldview, is said to reflect modernist or reformist exegetical work. A number of Muslim scholars with this mindset, such as Shah Waliullah quoted by Saeed,¹⁷ refute *taqlid* (blind imitation of early scholars) and favour *ijtihad* (independent judgement) to apply contemporary thought in interpreting the Qur'ān.

Scholars like Sayyid Ahmad Khan of India and Muhammad Abduh of Egypt stressed the importance of a responsive approach compatible with modernity moving away from imitation. Both scholars represent rationalist thinking in Quranic interpretation.

Scientific Exegesis

In modern societies, scientific education and development overwhelmingly hold a central role. Hence, the exegesis of the Qur'ān that involves examining Quran in the light of modern science (called scientific exegesis) emerged. Though scientific Qur'ānic exegesis has a long history, originating from the writings of al-Ghazali (d. 1111), its popularity in present time has reached unprecedented levels.¹⁸ An Egyptian scholar Tantawi Jawahiri wrote an encyclopedia on scientific exegesis

(*al-Jawāhir fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm*) that meant to link the Quranic text with modern scientific world view. The other approach in scientific exegesis is to demonstrate that modern scientific achievements were foreseen by Quran centuries ago, i.e. scientific miraculous nature of Quran'.

Socio-Political Exegesis

Tafasir that relate Qur'ānic interpretation particularly to social, economic and political aspects of modernity can be categorized as socio-political exegesis. One such acclaimed work is by well-known Egyptian scholar Sayyid Qutb. His life's mission of advocating social, political and religious reforms can be clearly seen in his *tafsir* work,³⁰ *Fi zilal al- Qur'ān* (In the Shade of the *Qur'ān*). Though Qutb's approach to *tafsir* of the Qur'ān was highly political,³¹ it contributed to a new genre of socio-political interpretation and understanding of the Qur'ānic message. Similar views were expressed by Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988),³² reiterating how understanding the social and political environment plays a foundational role in understanding the Qur'ānic message.

Feminist Exegesis

Since the second half of the last century, feminist exegetes have emerged to challenge patriarchal interpretations (as per their opinion) of the Qur'ān. Female scholars, such as Moroccan writer and sociologist Fatima Mernissi, American Muslim scholar Amina Wadud and Pakistani-American writer and academic Asma Barlas have produced major works in feminist exegesis using the conventional principles of *tafsir*, such as *tafsir* of the Qur'ānic verses in light of other Qur'ānic verses and the *sunna* of the Prophet ﷺ.¹⁹ One of the earliest and perhaps most challenging works, arguing against segregation of the sexes and notions of women's inferiority to men, is by Lebanese scholar Nazira Zain al-Din, who published *Al-sufur wa-l-hijab* (Unveiling and Veiling) in Beirut in 1928.²⁰ These modern female scholars have not only pointed out the patriarchal nature of traditional exegetic work, but have presented feminine perspectives to *tafsir* tradition.

Conclusion

Since modernity has nurtured a unique cultural, political, religious, scientific and technologically advanced social construct, the need for Quranic guidance is now more pressing than ever. The exegetic work from the past based on tradition and reason has a significant role in the formulation of modern trends in *tafsir*; however,

the rapid evolution in complex modern Islamic thought requires intricate yet fast-paced Quranic scholarship.

Modern trends in *tafsir*, from textualist to contextualist, modernist to scientific, socio-political to feminist or simply expounding themes of Qur'ān, address the societal evolution, cultural development and political realities of this modern era, which are based on various categories of Islamic worldview. Despite embracing the traditionalism and scripturalism of lastfourteen centuries, the *tafsir* work of modern *muffassirun* will have to adapt to the rapidly changing values of socio-religious tolerance, scientific and technological advancements, and rationalistic pluralism.

Notes and References

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- ² Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, Beirut, Dar Sadir, vol.V, 1955-56, p. 55,
- ³ Al-Quran, 25:33.
- ⁴ Qattan, *Mabahith*, p. 324.
- ⁵ Idem.
- ⁶ Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Ungar Pub. Co., New York, vol. IV, 1955–1956, p. 1370.
- ⁷ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Quran: Towards a Contemporary Approach*, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, p. 57
- ⁸ The work began in 1879 and was left unfinished at the time of his death in 1898. This *tafsir* faced fierce resistance not only from ulama but also from Sayyid Ahmad Khan's staunch admirers and friends.
- ⁹ A summary and analysis of Ahmad Khan's views on *tafsir* is given by Christian Troll in his *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*, New Delhi: Vikas Publ. House, 1978, pp. 144–170.
- ¹⁰ Muhammad Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh, *Tafsir al-Quran al-hakim al-shahir bi-tafsir al-Manar*, 12 vols, Bayrut: Dar al-Marifah, n.d., vol. I, p. 24.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 19.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 25.
- ¹³ Saeed, *Interpreting the Quran*, 50
- ¹⁴ Saeed, *The Qur'an*, 214.
- ¹⁵ Saeed, *The Qur'an*, 213.
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- ¹⁷ Saeed, *Interpreting the Quran*, 10.
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**Qur'ānic Emphasis on Reason and Philosophy: A Study of Relevant
Qur'ānic Verses**

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ABSTRACT

Intellect is one of the greatest gifts of God to humanity and it's a major source of knowledge. Animals mostly act and behave through their instincts and they are devoid of higher abstract thinking. Scientifically speaking, humans possess a sophisticated brain which becomes the store house of superior and stupendous conscious thought. Human consciousness is considered by many scientists and intellectuals as the most complex phenomenon in the entire universe. It is evident by these facts that the infallible Word of God must give importance and value to the human intellect and prompt us to use reason in a sound and unbiased manner to reach factual conclusions. In this paper we intend to study various Qur'anic verses which started the intellectual discussions among the Arabs who were devoid of any philosophical and metaphysical worldview and blindly imitated their forefathers engaging in superstitious idolatry.

Key Words: Quran, Intellect, Epistemology, Reason, Evidence

Introduction

When we study the basics of philosophy, we come to know that it is a peculiar human endeavor. Philosophical thought and contemplation leads men to conceptualize the percepts and think in an abstract manner. Many civilizations developed various philosophical thoughts and contributed in the development of Metaphysics, Ontology, Epistemology, Ethics, Aesthetics and Logic. Chinese, Indian, Greek and Persian cultures developed many philosophical ideas. Jewish people also had their religious philosophy based on the revelations and teachings of various prophets and scholars. But Arabs lacked any complex philosophical thought and most of the people could not read and write. Indeed, they were masters of language and poetry but their poetry was recorded/memorized orally and passed

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on to the next generations orally. Moreover there were no religious scriptures or revealed knowledge among the Arabs before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Arabs were blindly emulating their superstitious ancestors and they had forgotten Abrahamic Monotheism taught by Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Ismail (AS). The time was ripe for divine guidance and teaching so as to develop them mentally and spiritually. It was the Infallible Revelation of Allah which they received through Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which instigated them to rethink their beliefs, practices and values. Qur'an rebuked the idolaters for blindly following the previous generations and inspired them to think for themselves. Throughout Qur'an we find many verses which give high importance to higher abstract thinking, reasoning, contemplation, reflection and meditation. Time and again Holy Qur'an provided evidences for the Truth of Revelation and the Oneness of God Almighty. It also challenged the people to bring forth any evidence in support of their pagan practices which obviously they failed to provide. Qur'an also commanded people to ponder over the verses of this sublime revelation to grasp its true meaning and purpose. This proves that Qur'an engaged with the reasoning faculty of the people and did not support the blind imitation of ideas. We will assess the Qur'anic verses where importance of intellect is highlighted and evidences are provided in favour of the Absolute, Supreme and Ultimate Reality, Allah.

An Introduction to Philosophy

As already stated, Arabs lacked both, the Divine Revelation and philosophical thought. They were following their cultural superstitions without thinking over the truth or falsehood of their pagan creeds. To understand the development philosophical thinking in Arabs first we have to clarify the general meaning of philosophy and its contents. Philosophy is peculiar to humans because of our complex and sophisticated consciousness and conceptual thinking. We not only perceive things through our senses, we conceptualize the perceptions in a logical and meaningful pattern. Religiously speaking this is because we possess a higher form of soul or spirit which is absent in animals.

Philosophy is derived from two Greek words, 'philo' meaning 'love of' and 'sophia' meaning 'wisdom'. Etymologically it means 'love of wisdom'. Terminologically philosophy is the study of the fundamental nature of Existence.

It studies the concept of knowledge. It is a method of sound reasoning and logical thinking. There are various branches of Philosophy. Metaphysics studies the characteristics of Reality. It asks fundamental questions like; what is the purpose of the Universe? What is the meaning of life? What is the Ultimate Cause of the Physical Reality? Next important branch of Philosophy is Epistemology. Epistemology is the theory of Knowledge. It studies the nature and method of acquiring knowledge. It also raises these important questions; what is Knowledge? Is knowledge possible? What are the various means and methods by which we can acquire knowledge? Another important branch of Philosophy is 'Ethics'. It studies the moral principles which humans should abide by individually and collectively. The subject matter of Ethics is; is morality absolute and objective or relative and subjective? What is the best source of morality? How should we conduct ourselves in the society? What is the appropriate behaviour in a given situation?

Another prominent branch of Philosophy is logic. It is a systematic way of reasoning which helps us to reach sound and factual conclusions. It's the basis of Rational Thinking. Whenever we engage in meaningful discussions and debates, logic is knowingly or unknowingly used as a tool to substantiate our claims. A common form of logic mostly used is deductive method. The argument is started by the premises known by every human being. And finally a conclusion is derived from the known premises. An example will be appropriate to illustrate the method using in logical thinking. This is a famous syllogism used by the father of Western Logic, Aristotle and is as follows:

Premise 1: All humans are mortal

Premise 2: Socrates is human

Conclusion: Socrates is mortal

When the premises are axiomatic and known to all, the conclusion will be considered logically correct. The word logic is derived from the Greek word 'Logos' which literally means 'Word'. Hence when humans engage in meaningful speech they are using logic formally or informally. The haphazard speech of an insane person lacks logical pattern. In Indian Philosophy or 'Darshan' logic is

known as ‘Tark’. Arabs called it ‘Mantiq’ which is derived from the Arabic word ‘Nutq’ meaning ‘Speech’.

Western Philosophy has its origins in the Greek Thought. Most of the disciplines were studied under the banner of Philosophy hence the name, ‘Mother of all Sciences’. Afterwards different academic subjects made their own way into separate disciplines and Philosophy particularly studied Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics. The intent behind the study of Philosophy was neither entertainment nor amusement. It was a way of pursuing the truth. Will Durant eloquently describes the importance of this discipline in these words, “There is a pleasure in philosophy, and a lure even in the mirages of metaphysics, which every student feels until the coarse necessities of physical existence drag him from the heights of thought into the mart of economic strife and gain. Most of us have known some golden days in the June of life when philosophy was in fact what Plato calls it, “that dear delight”; when the love of a modestly elusive Truth seemed more glorious, incomparably, than the lust for the ways of the flesh and the dross of the world”.¹

Pursuit of Truth, God as the Absolute Truth

When the sages and seers of philosophy started this intellectual endeavor, their primary intention was the pursuit of truth. For most of the major world religions, God is the Absolute Reality and the Truth, and finding Him is the main purpose of the human life. Many great philosophers also came to the conclusion that there is a fundamental Being who is self-existing and necessary and everything depends on Him. When a human being begins his metaphysical journey to find the truth and discern the facts, he uses his intellect primarily. As an example, consider a person who is not raised in a religious environment but upon reaching adulthood he starts to think about the fundamental nature of reality. He has to apply philosophical and logical thinking to come to any conclusion. Islam propounds that the sound reasoning always leads a person to acknowledge the existence and oneness of God. This was the theme of the novel of a famous Muslim philosopher Ibn Tufayl. In his novel namely ‘Hayy bin Yaqzan’ Ibn Tufayl narrates the story of a man who was totally cutoff from humanity but through reason and mystical practices reaches to the conclusion that behind all this ephemeral physical reality, there is a Supreme Being who is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe.²

It is not strange that most of the philosophers in ancient Greece rejected the pagan beliefs of the masses and out rightly denied idol worship. The great philosopher Aristotle through his reasoning reached to the conclusion that God is One and the Prime Mover. He described God as the Final Causeless Cause. Ibn Rushd among the Muslim philosophers and Saint Thomas Aquinas from the Christians used Aristotelian logic and reasoning to describe and prove the existence and the unity of God. It is evident that Aristotle did not follow any revelation and that's why reason alone is not infallible and omniscient. But both Ibn Rushd and Thomas Aquinas believed in the Abrahamic revelations and they took help from Aristotle's philosophy in elaborating what was already stated in the Bible and the Quran.

Qur'an as a Divine Philosophy – Qur'anic Metaphysics, Epistemology and Ethics

What does it mean when we say Revelation from God or Qur'an is a Divine Philosophy? We are not using the term 'philosophy' here as an academic discipline or a way of knowing without Divine Guidance. It's here used in its literal and technical meaning suggesting, 'love of wisdom' and 'to know what is'. Qur'an has given a lot of emphasis on 'Hikmah' or Wisdom. Wisdom is defined as the ability to make sensible decisions and give good advice because of the experience and knowledge that one has.³ Quran mentions on several occasions that wisdom is an essential and inseparable part of the revelation. Teaching wisdom has been the mission of all the prophets of Allah. Quran mentions, "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and Wisdom – although they were before in clear error."⁴ The mission of the last and final Messenger of Allah is no different than the previous prophets in essence. Here we come to know that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was taught Revelation and Wisdom by God which he then taught to people. Wisdom is a faculty of reason and through it we understand and grasp the meaning of the Revelation of God. The best and infallible explanation of the Qur'anic verses were provided by the Prophet himself, that's why Sunnah and Hadith is a major source of wisdom or Hikmah. This shows that the literal meaning of the word 'philosophy' 'love of wisdom' is appropriate and as per the norms of revelation.

Now coming to the technical meaning of the word ‘philosophy’. “Philosophy is the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the real world and existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgement”⁵

Now let us apply these definitions of philosophy to the Qur’anic worldview. Qur’an at several places urges us to use our God given reason to understand the nature of the real world as the creation of God. Existence is a creation made by the Will and Volition of God. Qur’an also states that there are limits to knowledge as far as reason is concerned. The Holy Book also laid the foundation of objective morality by which individuals and society have to conduct themselves. There is major difference between revelation and reason as per the Qur’anic epistemology. Revelation is the highest and infallible source of knowledge as it is God Almighty communicating His Message to infallible persons known as prophets and messengers. Immediately after revelation Quran gives utmost importance to Reason as authority or Hujjah. Here are some verses highlighting the importance of reason in determining the truth or falsehood of the matter. Qur’an predicts the laments of the people in hell when they will say “And they will say: Had we listened or used our reason, we would not have been among the dwellers of hell”⁶

Allah the Exalted said also: “Have they not travelled through the land, and have the hearts wherewith, to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind”⁷

God in this verse instigates humanity to travel and experience, observe the conditions of the societies and see clearly what mistakes they made due to which they declined and fell into animalistic desires. Emphasis is especially given on understanding and reasoning. This verse clearly shows that al-Aql is an inherent nature and quality in person, a gift of God Almighty to him, by which he acquires knowledge of the nature of things, the knowledge of good and evil. His action in this regard is guided by the rule of wisdom. Al-Aql should not imply what philosophers speak of abstract intellects; it is illusions and conjecture of the peripatetic philosophy, diving without guidance. Islam puts limits on the faculty of reason as much of the unguided philosophy is based on the conjecture and speculation of the academic philosophers. So we see that thinking, reasoning and reflecting is the essential key that leads us to Allah- and He repeatedly instructs us in the Qur’an to reflect upon and ponder the universe. In Surah Aal-Imran it says:

“Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and day are signs for people of understanding, those who remember Allah while standing, sitting or reclining, and reflect in the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): “Our Lord! You have not created this in vain. Glory to you! Save us, then, from the chastisement of the Fire!”⁸

Reflection, contemplation, thinking and meditating on the creation of God is a method by which a person with sound reasoning and intellect infers the Existence and Oneness of God. This intellectual process is known as ‘tafakkur’ in Quranic terminology. Moreover, as the verses of the Quran are called ‘Ayaat’ or signs of God, similarly the animate and inanimate entities and things in the Universe are also called the signs of God. If Quran is the Word of God, Nature is the Work of God and both lead us to the Divine Truth. These Holy verses teach us that we can use the God given faculty of understanding, reflection and pondering over the universe which will specifically lead us to discover the reality of Allah’s existence. When we see the perfect order and balance in the creation, it leads to the conclusion that there must be a creator- who must have created all things, and hence, there must be an accounting.

Qur’an describes the main qualities of the believers in this verse, “When they are reminded of the signs of their Lord, they do not turn deaf”⁹ We have been also commanded to ponder over the historical events not as an amusement of storytelling, but to learn the important lessons from history and earlier civilizations. Holy Qur’an states, “Have they not traveled in the land that they may observe the end of those who were before them? Certainly, the abode of the Hereafter is much better for the God-fearing. Do you not then reflect?”¹⁰

An eminent Islamic Scholar, Dr. Yusuf Dalhat has provided a precise and thorough significance of Aql in Islamic Creed and Shari’ah in these words, “In Islam, the significance of al-Aql cannot be over-emphasized. It plays a key role in recognizing the prophetic mission of Prophets of Allah the Exalted. Moreover, people who are insane are exempted from religious obligations, the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said: “The pen has been lifted from writing the deeds of three (individuals): the one who is asleep until he awakes, a minor child until he reaches puberty, and the insane until he regains sanity” (Ahmad related). Meanwhile, al-Aql is the compelling force by which man understands life as a trust

as well as a gift, of which man is under obligation to use it as a capital to do righteousness by following the teachings of the Scripture. Those who believe in the oneness of Allah are surely wise and heedful to the Fitrah (the inherent nature of Islam) with which Allah created all mankind. The Prophet said: “Every newborn baby is born on al-Fitrah (inherent nature of Islam), but his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity or Zoroastrian, as an animal gives birth to a perfect young animal baby, do you find it mutilated?” (Bukhari related). This is a clear testimony that man is likely to believe in the oneness of Allah, unless his mind was corrupted by the beliefs of his society. This is because; knowledge of the oneness of Allah the Exalted is axiomatic truth which one naturally grasps. But due to the presence of illusions and temptations in this world which get mixed up with the truth, Allah the Exalted sends Prophets and Messengers to keep this Aql away from deviating and perversion.”¹¹

As already stated briefly, if the Divine Guidance has not reached an individual, the sole epistemic basis for acquiring knowledge for him is Intellect and Intuition by God’s Grace based on his honest pursuit of Truth and mental exertion. Once a person realizes the Truth of the Revelation of God, he has to accept it in its totality. Afterwards the reason will be secondary source of knowledge for him and Qur’an or the Infallible Revelation of God will be the Primary Source of acquiring knowledge. Let us consider an example of a person who is totally immersed in his religion, especially from an Abrahamic perspective, and does not study or even consider the possibility of the True Prophecy of Muhammad (SAW). If he decides, by the Grace of God, to search and go on a journey of discovering the True Faith, he has to examine the claims of Prophet Muhammad. He has to use his scriptural knowledge and intellect both to know the infallibility of this great Messenger of Allah. Similarly a person who believes in the Doctrine of Trinity has to use his intellect to see the clear contradiction in the Doctrine of a Triune God and come to the conclusion that God is only One Person, not three persons in One God. So both scriptural and intellectual study will lead him to uncompromising Monotheism and the Universal Prophecy of the Last and Final Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Let’s take another example of an avowed atheist who denies the existence of God. The personality who comes to my mind is a great philosopher of the 20th century,

Antony Flew. He was a hardcore materialist and atheist for forty years and debated with many theists and wrote philosophical books in support of atheism. But then he immersed himself in the study of DNA and came to the conclusion that DNA cannot be a product of unconscious nature and an intelligent designer should be the cause and author of this marvelous phenomenon. He accepted the existence of God and wrote a famous book, "There is a God" which shook the foundations of philosophical materialism, scientific naturalism and dogmatic atheism. This is a genuine example of applying mind, logic and reasoning and reaching to a valid conclusion. This is what Qur'an calls "Qalb al Saleem" and the correct use of the faculty of reasoning and the appropriate use and utility of the philosophical methodology.

About the Philosophical Teachings of the Holy Qur'an, famous scholar of Islam and an expert in Western and Muslim Philosophy, M.M. Sharif writes, "The Qur'an is a book essentially religious, not philosophical, but it deals with all those problems which religion and philosophy have in common. Both have to say something about problems related to the significance of such expressions as God, the world, the individual soul, and the inter-relations of these: good and evil, free-will, and life after death"¹²

But one important thing has to be added that Islam does not consider reason infallible and beyond mistakes. If reason reaches to the same conclusion and is compatible with Infallible Revelation, then it's called sound reasoning. Islamic Epistemology gives highest priority to Revelation as it is the direct communication of the Creator of the Universe. Humans are not omniscient and they necessarily have to rely on Divine Guidance. Revelation is the primal and infallible source of knowledge and reason comes next and it's not infallible. This can be demonstrated easily. We see that humans, who rely only on reason without any objective Divine Guidance, come to different and often contradictory conclusions by observing and analysing the same data. This proves that reason is not an unerring source of knowledge. In contrast the Revelation is always a composite whole and never contradicts itself. Humans who believe in Divine Command Theory are in agreement about the most fundamental and basic tenets of the Revelation. This necessarily has to be kept in mind while understanding the importance of reason.

Conclusion

In the above passages, we found similarities between the themes discussed in Religion and Philosophy and we shall conclude by emphasizing that Revelation is the highest and infallible source of knowledge and reason should be guided by the precepts of God Almighty. But there is no doubt that reason is peculiar to humans by which they can determine the truth and falsehood of many ideas and concepts. And if used correctly in an unbiased and unprejudiced manner, reason will always lead us to the Absolute Truth of the Divine Existence and Oneness. Furthermore, reason has such importance Islamically that an insane person is not bound by the shariah of Islam. Also a child whose reason is not fully developed yet is exempted from following the precepts of Allah the Exalted.

No doubt emotions play an important part in a human life but there should be a balance between emotions and reason otherwise if emotions are given a free hand our decisions and outcomes will be haphazard and chaotic. Islam fulfills both needs by satisfying the faculty of reason as well as emotions where both are regulated by the Divine Guidance. A person can reach to God through reason but then his emotions will be heightened in the love of God as our mystics have time and again showed. Reason devoid of the emotional attachment or love becomes a dry affair and love lights up and adorns the faculty of intellect. Companions of Rasulullah (SAW) acknowledged the Truth of the Prophecy of Muhammad (SAW) through reason as well as their emotional attachment with his loving personality.

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Understanding Essence of Character Building in the Prophet's (ﷺ) Concept of Social Justice

Shiekh Irfan Ul Islam*

ABSTRACT

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) presented Islam in the form of a movement that emphasized on practice rather than mere preaching. It aimed to create a class of people who will inspire others not by mere oration but with practical deeds. The important consequence of faith, as pointed out in Quran and later reiterated by the Prophet, is enactment of good deeds. The enactment of good deeds will create an underlying atmosphere for justice. Social Justice, one of the fundamental tenets of Islam, could have been achieved only, when the cadre as well as followers of Islam had a very strong character and were committed towards enactment of good deeds. The Companions of the Prophet were therefore, subjected to rigorous training owing to which they led their subjects by example. Character building based on learning by doing, was therefore bedrock of Prophet's training approach. The focus on Character building as a Prophetic proposition tended to diminish with time and reached an all-time low in various countries of Muslim world. This paper is an attempt to delve into the essence of character building for achieving the goals of social justice as enjoined upon by the Prophet. It will also explore the implications of not using the character building approach while dispensing social justice, and some possible remedies for character crisis in the Muslim world. The word 'Character' used in the paper is laden with meaning, which will unfold as the content of paper will progress.

Keywords Social Justice; Crisis, Character; Islam; Prophet Muhammad.

Introduction

Social justice has been one of the guiding principles of all civilized societies. Plato in his book '*Republic*' envisaged an ideal but class oriented society wherein people were naturally unequal, yet justice was a paramount virtue to be administered by the best men who could be trusted for not abusing their powers. The people making highest contribution to their society would have the greatest share of monetary reward, honor and political office; says Aristotle in his book '*The Politics*'. Social justice includes within its ambit the idea of fair treatment of all and just distribution of benefits in order to create an egalitarian society. It impels to establish a just

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social order by favoring the removal of structural and systemic inequalities to ensure equalization of opportunities to the weaker and vulnerable sections of society, which either because of being subjected to social suppression or being the victims of varied kinds of disabilities and handicaps become vulnerable to discrimination, abuse and exploitation. There are two main approaches of administering social justice i.e., protective and preventive. At protective level, people are safeguarded from abuse and exploitation and at preventive level, a set of conditions are created that may possibly ensure equality, freedom, fraternity and provide special opportunities to those who for some reason lag behind and are out of mainstream (Jose 2011: 17-19). In addition to these two approaches, restorative approach can be employed to provide resources to such people whose social functioning has got impaired and needs to be restored. Thus, Social justice in the narrowest sense means rectification of injustice in day to day transactions of people, while as in broader terms, it refers to removal of imbalances in political, economic and social life of people.

Islam as a complete socio-politico-economic system is no different when it comes to upholding principles of social justice. It combines social and legal aspects of justice through its moral teachings and calls for working towards raising the morality among people, as is implicit in its teachings (Hassan 1971; Dean and Khan 2016). It has a rich history of social justice where race, caste, and other forms of inherent inequalities have no place. The merit on accounts of piety and piousness is the fundamental criteria of ranking with Allah. All people have been created alike and irrespective of their lineage, they stand in one row. In principle, the whole world is supposed to be based on equity and justice (Khan 2011: 20-24). The principle of Justice is central to Islam (Qureshi, 1982) and there is a correlation between the idea of transgression and philosophy of justice. Essentially, every sinful activity results in some kind of injustice to victim as well as the perpetrator, besides having the tendency to result in social disorganization. Adultery, for instance, has been classified as one among the bigger sins that tends to destroy the age old institution of family, which is a basic unit of society. Thus, character has a strong relation with faith, especially with regard to person's belief about accountability on the Day of Judgment.

According to Ibn Khaldun¹ (d.1408), justice was central to the human society and in Muslim societies, its achievement depended on the application of *Shariah*² law to human affairs (Khaduri 1984). *Shariah* is essentially based on justice and if it appears otherwise, there must be some kind of faulty interpretation of it. According

to al-Afghani,³ only a society that possessed higher religion was capable of establishing and maintaining justice. This higher religion indicated a system of life guided by piety, truth and justice where an attribute of character was important. It is antagonistic to a system based on injustice, oppression and hegemony. Islam strongly denounces racism and has sought to make it irrelevant since its inception. It emphasized that nobody is born racist but is socialized to be so. It submitted to justice and discouraged personal whims and desires. Justice in Islam is an essential principle of social management and calls for minimizing and regulating natural inequalities through social security measures (Noor, 1998). It calls for bringing an improvement in living conditions of the dispossessed sections of society and offers them opportunities of social mobility. Islam came up with the institution of *Zakat*⁴ which provides a framework for economic justice and social security. To further strengthen this framework of economic justice, it was supplemented with the *Sadaqah*.⁵ Islam doesn't encourage concentration of wealth in few hands through its prohibition of paying interest or resorting to hoarding of commodities. In addition, idea of justice was also taken care of at political level by having the system of *Shura*⁶ in place, which provided scope for consultation amongst leaders as well as people.

Methodology

This study was broadly descriptive in nature and involved qualitative enquiry, predominantly making use of primary data from Quran and *Hadith* (corpus of Prophetic customs), constituting the primary source of knowledge about Islam. The published works on social justice and character building in Islam were employed to locate the primary data. A series of research papers and selected book chapters, relevant to the subject of the paper were perused through systematic review and constituted the secondary data. The verses of Qur'an and traditions of Prophet directly emphasizing on social justice and character building were analyzed for their meaning and interpretation and later used to support arguments and assertions. In order to comprehend the verses of Qur'an, the help of translations and exegeses was taken. The use of stray translations was avoided to do away with distortion of meaning of verses. Some of the prominent translations that were perused included the one authored by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Sahih International. The exegeses used included the ones authored by Ibn Kathir, Maulana Maududi and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. With regard to *Hadith*, six canonical⁷ books along with their explanations were used for reference. The broad research question of the paper was to find out if the focus on character building can help in realizing the objectives of

social justice, as ordained in Islam and if addressing the problem of character crisis can help in speeding up the reform process in Muslim world. Additionally, the paper also attempts to delineate the theoretical relation between social justice and character building; besides examining what went wrong with Muslim world that led to imminent character crisis. The study used Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for collection and utilization of data vis-à-vis the subject of study. The various published studies were listed on the basis of their relevance to the research question of this paper. The listing of studies was done on the basis of their titles. The studies so listed were subjected to examination of abstracts and conclusions and some were excluded on this basis. It was only after this examination that the next stage filtering of the selected studies was done through study of their full length contents. The studies finally selected after full length examination, were considered for reference throughout the course of this work. There were very less studies which had explored the relation of social justice and character building directly. This made the work of this author more challenging. However, good numbers of studies with thematic focus on social justice were found.

It must find a mention here that one can claim no authority when it comes to researching on Islam. It is based on the premise that truth is infinite and any attempt to reveal it will require use of multiple methodologies and the positivist scientific methodology offers no panacea for a problem at hand, although it may help in understanding a particular aspect of reality. The elements of objectivity and subjectivity cannot be strictly separated as is the case in positivist scientific research. The reality may be different from perceived reality (Nasr 1998). Thus, the lack of advanced training in Islamic Research methodology posed a serious challenge to this author, having studied general methodology in Social Sciences, which is essentially based on positivist scientific method. Another serious limitation this author faced during the preparation of this paper was lack of proficiency in Arabic language, which was the language in which the primary data of this paper was available. This author being a practicing Muslim had a very difficult task to avoid inherent biases and hence the clarity in methodology assumed extra importance.

Prophet's Concept of Social Justice

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was born in a society which was replete with ignorance, oppression and injustice. He therefore sought to establish order and harmony within which a distinct standard of justice could be achieved. His sense of justice

was broadly based on the pronouncements of Quran. It was under his leadership that the tribal areas of Arabia were organized into civilized society based on truth, liberty, equity, and fraternity. Qur'an, which was the focal point of Prophet's dawah⁸ mission, admonishes around two hundred times against injustice and oppression, expressed in Arabic words such as *zulm*, *bghyun*, *'udwaan*, etc. besides mentioning almost hundred times about notion of justice using direct words from Arabic such as *'adl*, *'qist*, *'mizan* and additionally referring to it indirectly as well (Khaduri 1984). Some of the selected verses of Quran directly calling for justice are as:

“You are the best community ever that has been raised up for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid wrong” (3:110).

“O mankind: fear your Lord who created you from a single being and out of it, He created its mate, and through both spread many men and women. Fear Allah in whose name you plead for rights, and honor the ties of kinship. Surely, Allah is ever watchful over you” (4:1).

“Indeed, God commands you to render back trusts to whom they belong, and when you judge between people, that you judge with justice” (4:58).

“O you who believe! Stand up firmly for Allah as just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety; and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is well acquainted with what you do” (5:8).

“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong”(3:104).

Prophet supplemented the idea of social justice enunciated in Quran with his traditions (*Hadith*). There are around 40 prominent traditions pertaining to different aspects of social justice narrated by various companions and documented in canonical books (Suleiman: 2017-18). In one of the traditions (narrated by Aisha) pertaining to a woman from *Banu Makhzum*⁹ seeking clemency for having committed theft, Prophet delivered a historic judgment, thereby setting standard of justice delivery for *Ummah*.¹⁰ The excerpted part of the *Hadith* reads as:

“What destroyed the nations preceding you were that if a noble person amongst them stole, they would forgive him and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah's legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima Binti Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hands⁷”. (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari* Vol. 4, Hadith No. 681).

In another tradition, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari quoted the Prophet saying that Allah told him:

“O my servants, I have forbidden oppression for myself and I forbid it between you as well, so do not oppress each other” (*Al-Tirmidhi* Hadith No. 2495).

Prophet mentioned about the ideal of social justice on the eve of his farewell sermon during Hajj. The excerpted part reads as:

Prophet thus, reiterated his unequivocal stand about the already much emphasized tenet of social justice. It was the magna carta of Prophetic justice. Sayyid Qutb¹¹ in his commentary on Quran said that Prophet has set the examples throughout life, for rest of believers in putting justice and equality to practice. The criteria to join the company of Prophet were piety and truthfulness. Prophet had a compassionate attitude towards poor who had a lofty character, which did not go well some *Quraysh*¹² leaders, who considered them as worthless. In fact, some of the leaders set a condition before Prophet stating that if poor slaves were ignored, they would accept Islam (Rahman 2000)¹³. Taking a moral high ground, during his stay at Medina, and at the conquest of Makkah Muslims were asked by Prophet to treat fairly the *Quraysh*, who had previously oppressed them and prevented them from worship. This was quite unprecedented in a society where people believed in revenge and fought endlessly for it. Thus, Prophet’s model of social justice was all inclusive and could deliver results across religious affiliations. Many non-Muslims would repose their trust in Prophet and prefer bringing their disputes before him for resolution.

Social Justice in Islam and Character Building

Character generally refers to the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. It is a state of soul which can be purified by means of ethical-religious knowledge, beliefs and practices (Omar, 2013). Some of the attributes of good character include truthfulness, honesty, goodwill, altruism etc. Character building is, therefore, an effort put in to strengthen or improve such attributes of a person. It is a lifelong process involving inculcating and practicing wisdom.

Character building was high on the agenda of Prophet and should therefore guide the worldly journey of *Ummah* (Abdullah, 2014). Prophet’s vision of social justice has not remained a reality in contemporary Muslim world due to a fair share of Muslims neglecting the true teachings of Islam and going astray. Delivery of justice during Prophet’s times and for some time thereafter was achieved because of the strong character of people who administered this system of justice. This character, after being allowed to get diluted over a period of time, had its impact on the delivery of justice. Since character as a variable, was at the center of this system; the meaning of word ‘character’ merits little elaboration. The word

‘character’ in Oxford dictionary means all the qualities that make the person, groups of people, places different from other. According to Imam Al-Ghazali¹⁴ (1993), character or ethics is an established state (of the soul) from which actions proceed easily without any need for reflection and deliberation. The word character though a noun is however more about action and practice. In Quran, the term used for meaning of character is ‘*khuluq*’. In one of the verses of Quran, the term ‘*Khuluq*’ appears as “And You (Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character” (68:4). The Prophet was awarded prophet hood not because he belonged to a particular community but had proven track record of qualities like truthfulness, trustworthiness, gentleness etc. Such qualities were even acknowledged by the adversaries of Islam. God was thus; very particular with this variable and it was a part of broad philosophy behind sending Adam on earth, to which angels had otherwise, very humbly enquired about. The Prophet further elaborated and said: “Nothing is heavier in the scale (on the Day of judgement) than having the good character”. (Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 2002).

“I have only been sent to perfect moral character”. (Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 8595).

Such character could be acquired and developed through constant training and practice (Mohd 2003). This training would continue throughout one’s life, especially during formative years. This development of character would also depend on dealing with one’s emotions and that of others (Abdullah 2012). A popular Kashmiri proverb loosely translates as “the greatest character is loftier than the highest heaven”. The heart, mind and body should work in synergy for virtuous conduct as demanded by an exalted standard of character. Man has been given the freedom of intention and choice. This freedom would be one of the important variables of evaluation on the Day of Judgment and it is therefore imperative to use it in a sensible and just manner. Thus the need to cultivate virtues and create strong immune mechanisms against vices has become stronger than ever. Abu Ali Miskawayh (d.1030), noted Muslim philosopher, said that attainment of ethics (character) to cultivate virtues is a lifelong process. He introduced four cardinal virtues viz. courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice (Ansari 1964). Without having courage and wisdom; people cannot have real sense of justice. The Companions of Prophet and many of their successors had imbibed this sense of justice. They wore character on their sleeves and derived endless wisdom from *Hadith*. It was because of this character building approach, the system of justice administered by Companions who received instruction and training from the

Prophet himself was worth emulating. However, with the passage of time, there began an era of complacency about this training and practice, resulting in character crisis. As a result, the ideal of social justice remained a mere rhetoric. It happened gradually with the decline in character of Muslims that the quality of justice delivery started deteriorating.

Character Crisis in Muslim World

Character crisis in Muslim world is essentially cumulative result of corrupt mindset that gradually developed among individuals over a period of time. Companions of the Prophet would waste no time in implementing what they heard of Quran or *Hadith* and exhibited deep sense of urgency in this regard. This made their lives meaningful and exemplary. There is a need to reinvigorate such sense of urgency amongst Muslims at individual level. There has to be an engineered attempt with regard to attempting positive change in mindset, for which the involvement of Islamic scholars, social scientists and religious leaders is to be sought. This may be difficult but it's not an impossible feat to achieve. Mosque, which happens to be the religious center of Muslims, can be employed as a platform in this regard.

The countries of Muslim world during their transition to statehood did not focus on the tenet of character building or at least, it did not remain the priority. The dismemberment of Caliphate resulted into political chaos thereby adding to problem. Had it been otherwise, many problems facing the member countries of Muslim world could have been avoided because it was not merely dismemberment of territory but also of history, culture, and heritage. Muslims would have never fought sectarian wars, spied against one another, played into hands of anti-Muslim regimes, hurt each other's businesses; had they acquired the kind of character as stated in Quran and later demonstrated by Prophet and his companions. This resulted in chaos and led to trust deficit, which in turn created disunity amongst the Muslims. There is an urgent need to initiate reconciliation process among member countries of Muslim world.

Ibn Khaldun's theory of development offers an insightful understanding of character decline in Muslim world and the consequences thereof. According to him, as far as Islam is concerned, it is itself a victim rather than perpetrator of malaise amongst Muslims. In the otherwise ignorant societies characterized by internecine feuds, paucity of resources and harsh climate etcetera, it developed quite rapidly against all odds. It was Islam that activated all the variables in positive direction, contributing to moral and material uplift of Muslims, which later constituted a primary force behind rise or fall of society (Chapra 2008). Ibn

Khaldun argued that the trigger mechanism of Muslim decline was political illegitimacy. It gave least importance to moral values, which were otherwise eternal to Islam. The reins of power did not remain in the hands of most upright and competent in the eyes of people as desired by Quran (49:13). There was no equitable distribution of public resources in accordance with *Shariah*, and free and fearless criticism of govt. policies. The poor and disadvantaged were in most cases not free to vote; as they wished and were poorly represented in the echelons of power (Besley and Burgess, 2003: 17).

A study was conducted to ascertain the adherence of 208 countries of world to Islamic principles of governance and rule of law; human rights and civil liberties; and international relations (Rehman & Askari: 2010). The results indicated that the self-declared Islamic countries have not adhered to Islamic principles by-and-large. If the countries belonging to OIC¹⁵ are compared with OECD¹⁶ countries, there are wide disparities. OECD countries have visibly performed better. Islamic countries do not even fare better in comparison to non-OECD i.e., middle income countries. The results of the survey have important lessons for Muslim world. If the OECD countries have ranked higher for their adherence to Islamic principles that indicates Islamic principles not only promote civil liberties and human rights; better and just governance and substantial contribution to International relations but are for strict compliance to such variables. Thus the Islamic law makes governments duty bound to provide good governance, uphold civil liberties and political rights and foster better international relations with the global community. However, in spite of this, OIC countries have failed to patronize such principles. Another study conducted vis-à-vis the compliance of Islamic economic principles by various countries of world including Muslim countries threw some very interesting results (Rehman & Askari 2010). Based on compliance to Islamic economic principles, countries among top 30 were not members of OIC but belonged to OECD, which is a unique forum made up essentially (but not exclusively) of the 31 most highly industrialized market democracies that produce around 60% of world's goods and services. Amongst the countries belonging to OIC; Malaysia (ranked 33) and Kuwait (ranked 42) figured in top 50. Rest of the OIC countries slipped below rank 50 and even 100.

This character crisis among other things is also attributed to lack of proper attention given to the system of education. Muslim world failed to carry forward the rich traditions of scholarship that had existed previously. During the times of the Prophet, mosque used to be centre of learning and education. Later, separate

*madrastas*¹⁷ began to be established near mosques and the tradition continues till date in many places. It is pertinent to mention that at least 60 major centers of learning spanned the Islamic Empire from Baghdad and Isfahan in the East to Cordoba in the West that courted the wisest and influential leaders of human knowledge (Nakosteen 1964). This culture of learning needs to be revived and promoted as religious duty, as learning in Islam is considered as an act of worship. The spirit of Quran is anticlassical and empirical method of knowledge has its roots in Quran (Iqbal 2015: 3). Decline in education is mainly attributed to closing the doors of *ijtihad*¹⁸ and encouraging *taqlid*. There has to be a renewed effort towards revitalizing the system of education on priority basis. It should be based on the assessment of inherent needs rather than blind borrowing from developed world.

Character Crisis: Some Remedies

Islam is “probably the most compelling spiritual and moral force on earth today” (Clark, 1997). As a powerful living reality in the Muslim world, it has the charisma to attract masses, unite them in spite of their great diversity and motivate them to act righteously in spite of centuries of degeneration (Etzioni 2004). Its strong stress on socio-economic justice, accountability of political authority, moral values and character building, combined with its strategy of education and dialogue for bringing a change, should prove to be a great blessing for Muslim world. It can help inculcate in the people a number of other desired qualities like honesty and integrity, conscientiousness, diligence, frugality, self-reliance and concern for rights and wellbeing of people. Such qualities in the long run pave the way for raising efficiency and equity.

Maximum stress therefore, needs to be given to the reform of human beings, who are main locomotive behind rise or fall of any civilization. They can help improve the development of their society if their character, upbringing and mental outlook are right. Raising the moral caliber will help to inculcate the qualities of honesty, integrity and conscientiousness. There is a need to revolutionize thought of Muslims in tune with Islamic injunctions. Reason cannot be the sole criteria to decide what is good and bad. The logic of nothing being wrong, as long as it doesn't hurt the personal freedom of others is flawed. Moral prescriptions cannot be decided on individual basis but have to be socially recognized, which in turn would be dependent on religion and culture. It may, however, be difficult to raise moral caliber unless justice, dignity and self-respect are ensured for every individual in the society.

In a mad race to catch up with West and Europe, Muslims ended up in bulldozing resilient institutions. Colonization of Muslim world by West and Europe played an important role in it. Muslims attempted no independent understanding of West and Europe; based on their indigenous intellectual tradition. On the other hand, West also failed to study Islam through the latter's primary sources and used secularized methodology. This added to the already existing misconceptions about Islam (Iqbal 2000). The responsibility of Muslims to produce scholarly works on Islam, based on its primary sources as Quran and Hadith and ensure its wide dissemination, has assumed urgency. Muslims look at their problems through the lens of others and end up working out faulty solutions. They read biased history written by colonizers which results in distorted comprehension of future problems. The popular historical narratives need to be deconstructed and if required, reviewed. This will dovetail a reasonable quantum of effort especially with regard to revision of educational resources. Muslims preferred to import alien economic models rather than creating indigenous ones. This served the economic interests of countries which exported these models. There is a need to undertake research studies to understand the causes for continued decline of Islamic institutions and also explore possibilities for their revival. The institutions imported from elsewhere need to be examined for their relevance and efficacy.

Education as an institution has a very strong potential for transforming Muslim mind. The knowledge transmitted via education will eventually determine the kind of human beings that Muslim world produces (Arriffin 2017). However, it hasn't received much emphasis as is needed, in govt. budgets. In 2002 (IDB 2005: 13), the average adult literacy rate in Muslim world was 32%, which meant that around 426 million people in Muslim world were illiterate. All these countries together have only 600 universities while as US alone has 1975, or more than 3 times as many, when its population is less than one-fourth of Muslim world (www.universitiesworldwide). After ensuring proper allocation for education in budgets, there is a need to ensure that people are being imparted education and not mere literacy skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Social justice should be one of the essential issues of Islamic Education System which must come up with ways and means required to achieve this ideal (Ramli, 2016). It should be supplemented by character education and the required modules should be incorporated within the mainstream curriculum of educational institutions. The systematic efforts towards creation of updated educational resources in this regard, have become imperative.

A kind of decline has emerged in Islamic intellectual space and the same can be gauged from the survey of related research publications. A huge quantum of scholarship available in Arabic language has become inaccessible owing to inability of about two thirds of contemporary Muslims to understand it. While learning of Arabic has become imperative, at the same time, projects of technically sound translations also need to be undertaken. The works to be translated should span across different genres such as theology, jurisprudence, sciences, humanities, social sciences etc with classics included. This will help in reducing the inferiority complex amongst Muslims who doubt the richness of their scholarly heritage (Iqbal 2003). Muslims need to undertake well designed research studies to understand the causes of their decline which would serve a good beginning for the reconstruction process.

Muslim society needs to be more open in terms of its ability to learn from experiences of people, regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity. There is a need to encourage critical thinking and creative pursuits amongst people involved in knowledge production and knowledge dissemination. Faculty of reasoning and questioning needs to be revived. Muhammad Iqbal argued that one of the factors behind the decline of *Ummah* is the closure of *ijtihad* which in turn contributed to academic decline. It also led to stagnation in thought and practice. He further argued that with the closure of *ijtihad*, fanaticism to juridical as well as theological schools of thought became widespread (Iqbal 2015). People not well versed with Islam, owing to lack of mandatory education, have started dominating the discourse of religion, thereby adding to confusion. Consequently, character building which was an important agenda of Islam became the casualty.

Priesthood has caused irreparable damage to the unity among Muslims and provided a fuel for growing sectarianism in Islam. A careful analysis of the situation will reveal that newer sects are creation of priests, who encourage personality worship and keep people confined to some issues of jurisprudence. Riding on an assumption that they are the only suitable people to interpret Quran and Hadith, priests have dangerously come up with flawed commentaries, without paying any heed to the science of interpretation and exegesis. The dangerously flawed interpretation of Quran especially is doing more harm. Priesthood as an institution would have worked only, if it had trained people in knowledge and character using 'learning by doing' approach, based on Quran and tradition. There is a need to infuse more and more scholarship into this institution of Islam. It remained confined to vested interests for the sake of power and prestige. Time has

come to fix some mandatory qualification for people engaged in teaching and propagation of Islam.

The tendency of Muslims to blindly attribute everything to destiny, without properly understanding the relationship between cause and effect, and its importance in the transactions of day to day life, has badly affected their progress. Western civilization has emerged successful especially in science, technology and industry because of their commitment to reason and logic; it would therefore be worthwhile to actually understand how to replicate their success and move ahead. There is no harm in adopting the best systems and practices from West and Europe, however, the strong emphasis on the values of Islam needs to be retained (Dien 2007).

In the postmodern world, Muslim identity seems to be at stake. With recent devilish political posturing of United States against Palestine, Muslim countries need to be calculated about their relationships with the western world. Economic interests should always be subservient to political interests which determine the very existence of community. Muslim world cannot afford to close eyes towards these glaring realities and 'myself first' attitude needs to be given up in the interest of *Ummah*. There is a need to rediscover the individual, collective and global identity through self-evaluation and knowledge of actual, not through retreat into past, through synthetic integration rather than simple transfer of knowledge, through active selective learning and sharing rather than nostalgic passivity and proud alienation (Ihsanoglu 2003).

Muslims need to re-imagine their identity and politics that is essentially based on justice. Violence as an instrument of politics by fringe elements should be strongly discouraged. As religious community besides having interfaith dialogues, they need to talk to each other, using existing religious spaces. There is a need to do away with sectarian jealousy and theological divisions besides initiating an uninterrupted and uninteruptible dialogue among themselves. There is a need to encourage unconditional dialogue with non-Muslims in order to do away with the misconceptions prevalent amongst them. Politics as an institution in Islam can then be an alternative to the existing systems of governance which essentially have capitalistic intent and are devoid of guarantees about social and human development/security.

Denying justice to people and expecting them to have character is unreasonable. People run the risk of getting dehumanized, due to prolonged oppression being inflicted upon them. It would be dangerous to deny them the sense of stake in

progress and development of society. The yardstick for determining character of people fighting for survival in conflict hit militarized zones cannot be same as those living in developed countries. It would therefore be naive to subscribe to any generalized definition of character in this regard. The US war in Iraq offers a very interesting example in this regard. David Miller in his book argued that the American & the British governments knowingly deceived their public about the Iraqi issue and mainstream media helped these governments in their campaigns of propaganda and deceit (Miller 2004). The United States ended up destroying Iraq without getting United Nations Security Council approval, and failed to produce any substantial evidence of the presence of weapons of mass destruction, which had been alleged at the time of attack. Now, US in the guise of acting big brother of world cannot fix standards of morality and character in Iraq or for that matter for the rest of world. The member countries of Muslim world need to ensure that they don't end up repeating such kinds of scenarios while preaching justice.

Muslim world needs to attempt recreating the idea of *Ummah* once again. The emergence of European Union after World War II offers a good analogy in this regard. This will obviously be a gradual process but thinking on these lines would be very important. The geography of Muslim world has natural unity in this regard. The process of reunification can begin with economic integration followed by social integration, which can finally pave the way for political integration. This can begin through initiation of free trade on the pattern of EU having tax free regimes and preferential trade agreements. There can be programs for people to people contacts. Education and employment can be the areas of intervention in this regard. Saudi Arabia which is centrally sanctified place for all Muslims can help in amplifying this process. Essentially, the social systems of Muslims also have a unitary spirit, based on the injunctions of Qur'an and Hadith. Following economic and social integration, the contours of political integration can be identified and worked upon. The already established OIC can coordinate the activities and provide all kind of support in this regard. There can be no strict blueprint with regard to the entire process however, it will evolve as and when the modalities are finalized and carried out.

Conclusion

The Prophet's model of social justice was practice based. The class of people required to administer this system of justice needed to have a very strong character in terms of commitment to truth, impartiality, and service of mankind. It was due to a constant decline in the degree of such qualities amongst people that such ideals

of social justice could not be achieved. There is thus an obvious need to understand and initiate the character building process. A thorough and consistent self-reflection can help in identification of grey areas. All this would need a serious attempt at soul searching, soul cleansing and self-introspection. This could begin by imparting right kind of education based on requirements of seekers and teachings of Islam. There is no scope for complacency and a need to work with renewed commitment towards reconstruction of promising future is inevitable. The opportunities to achieve Prophetic ideals of social justice need to be identified and worked upon. The time for trust building and reform of justice delivery systems among the members of Muslim world is now with no scope of procrastination. Muslim scholars from different fields of expertise such as Islamic sciences, Science and Technology, Philosophy, Politics and Society can be engaged to identify the contours of process. The variables in this regard need to be identified and activated. Political class will have to rise above petty considerations and facilitate the entire reform process. This may ultimately pave the way for progressive renaissance of Muslim world.

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¹Ibn Khaldun was an Arab historian and historiographer.

² Shariah is the religious law based on Quran and Hadith.

³Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was a political activist and Islamic ideologue in Muslim world particularly in South Asia, Middle East, and Europe.

⁴Zakat (mandatory charity) is a religious obligation for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of a minimum amount of wealth.

⁵ Sadaqah is a voluntary offering by Muslims, where the amount is at the discretion of benefactor.

⁶ Shura is an Arabic word for consultation.

⁷ Canonical books of Hadith are six in number and include Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan al-Nasa'i, Sunan Abi Dawud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, and Sunan Ibn-Majah.

⁸ Dawah means preaching Islam to people.

⁹ Banu Makhzum was one of the influential and richest tribes in Mecca.

¹⁰ Ummah is an Arabic word meaning supra-national community having common history.

¹¹ Sayyid Qutb was an Egyptian author, educator, Islamic theorist, poet, and the leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s.

¹² Quraysh was the leading tribe of Arabs, who were custodians of Ka'aba and to which the Prophet belonged.

¹³ Unpublished PhD thesis entitled '*The Concept of Social Justice as found in Sayyid Qutb's Fi Zilal Al Quran*' at University of Edinburg.

¹⁴ Al Ghazali was a prominent and influential Muslim Persian philosopher, theologian, jurist and mystic.

¹⁵ The Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an international organization found in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with a collective population of over 1.8 billion as of 2015, with 53 countries having Muslim majority.

¹⁶ The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a unique forum made up essentially of thirty one most highly industrialized market democracies that produce around 60% of world's goods and services.

¹⁷ Madrasa is an Arabic word literally stands for any type of educational institution, whether religious or secular.

¹⁸ *Ijtihad* as defined by Iqbal is “to exert with a view to form an independent judgment but not to be independent of Quran and tradition”.

Rural Society of Kashmir: Amusements, Recreation and their Transformation

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Audil Umar•

ABSTRACT

One of the primary concerns of this paper is to capture the process of changes in amusements and recreation that occurred in rural Kashmir since 1947 following the changes in governance, economy, education, communication and recent modernization and globalization. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the impact of these developments on amusements and recreation. It begins with a discussion on traditional games, amusements and recreation and there upon other changes have been documented in a systematic manner. The paper is based on both conventional and non-conventional sources. Census reports, vernacular literature and oral sources have been consulted for a holistic understanding of the theme under reference.

Keywords: Folklore, Recreation, Rural life, Transition, Modernity.

Introduction

Change is a universal phenomenon. No society remains static. The Rural society of Kashmir also underwent a change. The process of change started during the Dogra rule from 1890s onwards as a result of the role of Christian missionaries, spread of modern education, establishment of modern health institutions, certain tenancy reforms and establishment of communication links with outside world. However, it accelerated only after 1947, when the fetters of autocratic rule were thrown away. Measures initiated by the popular government in post 1947 era set the track for the spread of education, awareness, growth in income and employment of the inhabitants in a more vibrant form. Waves of this change manifested in the overall living conditions of the people. The amusements and recreation of the people did not remain immune to all these developments and as such, registered a significant change

Although the historical accounts written so far on Kashmir are mostly silent on this subject and there is little mention of games which were usually played by people during leisure time. Walter R. Lawrence, the keen observer of Kashmiri society, is also of the same view. He writes that ‘there are no games for young or old, and in

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the villages there is no leisure for games. Life is terribly earnest, and the child who can walk can work.¹ Even Earnest F. Neve who was on medical mission to Kashmir during Dogra time writes:²

With the village people, however, life is too serious for games; and children, beginning as early as their fourth and fifth year, fetch water, go into the jungle for firewood, supplement their scanty vegetable diet by digging up edible plants, and tend the cattle, taking them or the village flocks daily, in the early morning, up to the nearest pastures, and returning with them in the evening.

In fact there was the paucity of games for the grownups, old men and women, but it does not mean that people didn't possess the sense of games. Needless to mention, Kashmiris till recent past were living a life of servitude. They bore the atrocities and exploitation of several feudal regimes from time to time. During the Dogra times they were made to work from dawn to dusk either as bonded agricultural labourers or as petty worker in *Karkhana* (small scale industry). In view of this busy schedule and paupers life style a Kashmiri, of course, could not develop the taste of costly games, but he definitely played less expensive and simple games. Those games, however, failed to catch the attention of foreign travelers and they as such ignored them in their travel accounts. However, after consulting the nonconventional sources like folklore and other oral traditions following description of traditional games and recreation can be made.

A number of games were played by children during leisure. Some of the games were, *chep-chour*, *kaneh marven*, *zang tarr*, *guti* etc. The *chep chour*, also called as hide and seek, was played in late evening particularly in moonlit nights. A number of boys participated in this game. The game used to start with closing the eyes of one of the boy by another boy with his hands. In the meantime, others were required to run away and to hide themselves at different places so that they may not be easily traceable. After this the boy was let off to seek out the other players. If he succeeded to get any one of them, the latter was required to function as the next searcher. If he failed, he was to repeat the process and search absentees for the second time.³

Another game played was called as *kaneh marven* or stone striking. Only two participants, each holding a small stone, in his hand were required to play this game. One of the participant used to throw his stone over a distance of 4 to 5 yards and other was required to make it a target by striking it with the stone in his hand. If he successfully stroked it then the first player was required to lift him physically on his shoulders and carry him to the place where the striking stone was lying. If

he failed in this target chasing, then it was his turn to throw the stone and of the first player to chase and strike it.⁴ Add to this, the games like *guti* and *zangtarr* were also played by teenagers.

Zang tarr was played by about a dozen of children, who by majority selected one of them whose eyes were closed by another boy, sitting at his back, with his hands. He was required to spread his legs on the ground and the remaining boys were required to cross between them. Every boy who used to cross was touching the leg thereby giving an indication that someone has crossed between his legs. In case he quoted or uttered the incorrect name the practice was repeated and continued on the same boy till he used to quote the names correctly.⁵

The game of *gutti* was played by any number of children with nuts or pice.⁶ Similarly *Leth kig loth, tulay loungun, okus bokus, ate sawary istambaray, eny katar, kath shahey bam, saza long, gieer bachan, aaro barov.*⁷ *Kerkich mohul, Kul garm, tenchen gindun, dad dab,* were other games played by children.⁸ *Kabbaddi* was also played in leisure by young and old together.

During winters neighbours would gather in a house after dinner and listen to a man called as *Daleel-e-Gour* and *Kitab Paran Voul*. The former belonged to shepherd community and the latter a local villager having knowledge of Persian, Urdu and Kashmiri. The popular romantic *masnavies* and war epics like *Gulrez, Laila Mujnoon, Gule Bakawali, Dastan-e-AmirHamza, Sheereen Farhad, Shama-Poanpoor* were recited especially during the long winter nights. These tales were translated from Persian literature into Kashmiri. The local tales like *akanandun, hemal nagray* were also enjoyed. Besides, some other religious epics like that of *karballah* were also recited. *Kehwa* or *noon-chay* was served at the occasion. This would last till late night or for several nights till the whole story was completed. Some of the well-known epic or masnavi reciters of Kashmir were Wali Agur from Kulgam, Aziz Shah from Nambal, Mukhtar Mir from Chevdera, Subhan Shah from Darigan, Aziz lone Nanil, Nabi Thoker Aung Matipora Khalil Dar and Ghulam Usman from Sopore.⁹

Listening music and watching *Bande Pather* and *Dambali* was also a favorite pass-time. *Band Pather* served as a powerful and exciting source of entertainment and recreation. 'Their orchestra' [group], writes Walter R. Lawrence, 'usually consists of four fiddles with a drum in the centre, or of clarionets and drums, but the company often contains twenty members or more... Their acting is excellent and their songs are often very pretty... The *Bhaggats* are very pleasant people and their mirth and good humour form a cheerful contrast to the gloom of the Kashrniri

peasant... They relieve the sadness of the village life in Kashmir.¹⁰ Another group was that of *Dhamal fakir* who used to present dance called locally as *dhamel* at the shrines of Rishis and Saints at the time of their anniversaries, urs and fairs.¹¹ Dhameil is performed at shrines located at Darigam, Chadoora, Wathora, Zolar, Aushmuqam, Bijbehara.¹²

Ladishah was another folk entertainer who used to sing humorous and satiric poetic composition in a peculiar tune. With all astonishment and humor he used to criticize modern social changes, tensions of joint family, the *khanadamadi* institution, unusual events and even aggressive revenue officials, anti-social elements and religious exploiters.¹³

Rov also called as *rouf* was a popular traditional folk song-cum-dance of women and a source of entertainment. While performing *rov* women used to sing melodious songs particularly on festive occasions of Eid, *shabi qader*, *shabi mehraj* etc. After completing their routine work, women would assemble in any courtyard *angun* of the village after *magrib* prayers and would perform the *rov*. During the month of Ramadan it was performed during evening hours. Another important entertainment was *hikat*. It was performed by young girls by singing folk songs and holding hands firmly in a circle dance. It would last for few minutes.

At times young men would encourage bullfighting, ram fighting and even chicken fighting called locally as *koker jang jang*. Besides, people would attend festivals called *Melas* usually held on the anniversaries of *Sufi* and *Reshi* Saints in different villages across valley.

In 1948 Radio Kashmir was established at Srinagar. In addition to its routine programmes, it also broadcasted the programmes that were entertainment programmes meant for the people at large. Music remained the most popular form of entertainment for the listeners. *Chhaker teh Rouf*, *Sufiyana Kalam*, *Ladishah*, *Dramas*, and *Dastans* used to entertain the listeners. Ismal Mir, the famous *Dastango* (story teller) was a household name in Kashmir. Besides reciting the *Dastans* at radio for wider audiences, he along with his associates would recite *Dastans* in different villages as well. Different shows were held under shady trees and the large gatherings of people assembled to watch his performance. These events emerged as a popular source of entertainment in the period under study.

Such was the attachment with the modern means of entertainment that villagers began to take the radio sets along with them to their fields. Radio Kashmir produced a number of Dramas in Kashmiri and Urdu, and the popular ones which are being still remembered by the people are Pushaker Bahan's *machama*, Farooq

Nazki's *haba khatoon*, Sofi Ghulam Mohammad's *beech kath*, Shankar Raina's *bikus chi kus etc.*¹⁴ In early 1970s one of the famous programme broadcasted from Radio Kashmir Srinagar was *Zoondab* produced by Somnath Sadhu. *Zoon Dab* was aired for more than 19 years from Radio Kashmir Srinagar.¹⁵ This programme was both informative as well as a comedy. Radio Kashmir, Srinagar was also running a special drama on every Monday at 9:30 PM. During the month of January there used to be a Drama Festival in which popular plays of great content and value were aired. People in general used to love and enjoy listening such dramas.¹⁶

One of the important developments in 1970s was the establishment of television station in Srinagar. Though this Station used to broadcast its programmes only for few hours and its audiences were minimal as compared to that of the radio listeners, primarily because the cost of television set was so high that it was a luxurious item and choice of well to do households alone. Later on, Community Television sets were provided to villagers by government. Television set was kept in the *Panchayat Ghar* or a community hall where most of the villagers would assemble and watch the telecast. Gradually television emerged as the most important medium of entertainment and enjoyment. Different programmes with a variety of themes were telecasted from television. Folk songs, Hindi films of bollywood, songs, serials, and dramas etc; were included in routine telecast. The television emerged an important channel that influenced the life style of villagers in a significant way. That is why the mainstream religious section of Kashmiri rural society often resented the installation of television sets which, according to them were promoting immorality. Even some religious scholars resorted to *fatwas* against those who installed T.V sets and various other recreational instruments like Tape Recorder, V.C.P and V.C.R.¹⁷ A new trend that started in early 70s was that youngsters from the rural populace used to bring V.C.P and V.C.R on rent from the nearby towns along with cassettes of Hindi featured films and enjoyed their watching.

Due to the spread of educational sector a new literate public emerged from the so called *listening public*. This group of people started to read novels, magazines, papers and other periodicals and books for the sake of entertainment.

Modern games like football, cricket, volleyball, badminton, carom board, snake and ladder, chess, *kho kho*, hockey and tennis assumed much popularity during the later period of our study. Although, these games were introduced by Europeans during Dogra times in different schools of Srinagar, but these games assumed much

popularity only from 1970s and 1980s onwards. Besides, being expensive such games were time consuming as well.

Shure gindune (child amusement) has almost disappeared by now. *Hikt* and *rov* are now the things of bygone times. The invasion of television, internet and cinema has overtaken the tradition of *daleel goo* (story teller) and now the treasure of Kashmiri folktales is only a material for the study of our rich cultural heritage.¹⁸

References and Endnotes

- ¹ Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London: Oxford University Press, 1895, p. 255.
- ² Ernest F. Neve, *Things Seen in Kashmir*, London: Seely Service and Co. 1931, p. 157.
- ³ The game has been documented in the census report of 1961 as well. For details see *Census of India 1961: Aishmuqam a Village Survey*, New Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1969, pp. 51-52.
- ⁴ Ibid. Although it has been reported from Aishmuqam, a village in south Kashmir's Anantnag District, it would have been played in other rural areas as well.
- ⁵ This game has been documented in, *Census of India 1961, Vol. VI Part VI. No. 2 Village Survey Monograph of Mattan*, New Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1969, pp. 40-41.
- ⁶ In this game a hole of about 3'' diameter and 2'' depth was sunk in the soil which was called *guti* For a detailed description of this game see, *Village Survey Monograph of Mattan*, p. 40.
- ⁷ Nazir Gh Nabi, (Kash.) *Kashri Ginden Trai*, Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Language, 1972. The author has compiled a number of games *Shure Gindne* played by children in Kashmir since immemorial times. According to him there were some fifty games *Gindne* of male children, twelve games *Gindne* of female children and nineteen games *Gindne* were played by both the sexes.
- ⁸ Mohmmad Ahmad Indrabi, *Sein Ginden*, in Mohmmad Yousuf Taing, (ed.) *Kashir: Sun Adab 1977*, Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art culture and Languages, 1978, p. 330.
- ⁹ Atash Ghulam Nabi, *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir, Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, 2018, p. 78.
- ¹⁰ Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 312-313.
- ¹¹ Atash Ghulam Nabi, *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, p. 95.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Interview with Ghulam Nabi Atash, Nanil, Anantnag, 2017.
- ¹⁵ Such was the popularity of the programme that three of its characters namely Somnath Sadhu, Pushkar Bhan and Maryam Begum received *Padhma Shree* for their outstanding performance in the programme.
- ¹⁶ Radio Kashmir, Srinagar also broadcasted programmes for the entertainment of children and women. Besides entertainment, education and moral lessons were also communicated to the radio listeners.
- ¹⁷ During field visits this researcher came to know about the early resistance shown to installation of T.V sets and V.C.Ps.
- ¹⁸ Atash Ghulam Nabi, *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, p. 117.

Developing more Bonafide Versions of Islamic Studies: Some Points

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ABSTRACT

Scholarship and intellectual honesty demand persistent efforts and explorations to know the truer and more bonafide versions of a tradition and phenomenon, more so in presence of hostile environment to it. Islamic Studies entails the study of the methodologies and outputs of the study of Islam as a tradition, a culture and a civilization which encompasses wide regions of the world and long period of human history. It is the study of not only the past but also the present of a living civilization with a projected future.

As the discipline of Islamic Studies was developed in the Western European Universities as a part of the 'Orientalist Studies', it naturally inherits the biases, prejudices and political and religious agenda of Europe vis-à-vis Muslims, Islam and Muslim lands. Despite hyperbolic claims of objectivity and detached scholarship the 'Orientalist Project' on Islamic Studies aimed mostly at supplying material to the Christian Proselytizing Missions for demonizing Islam and Muslims and justifying the need for 'Colonization' and 'Civilization' mission by the self-acclaimed 'Civilized West'. The study of 'inferior' by 'superior' and dominant with strong cultural antipathy has seriously dented the empathetic and sympathetic approaches to the study of Islam and Muslims.

Looking for truer and more Bonafide versions of Islamic Studies is poised to usher in an era where commonalities and areas of convergence of traditional cultures civilizations can be explored. Further such studies shall provide the middle path for the humanity where man's basic world view is shaped by the 'Divine Knowledge' and his material engagements are modified and enmeshed in the moral and spiritual edifice of the religion towards a way of salvation from materialism, this worldism and its associate evils and act as a real tribute to rediscovering the worth of 'Oriental Studies'.

Key Words: Methodology, Authenticity, Orientalism, Islam, Revelation

Introduction

Contemporary world experiences have increased strife and tension among people at various levels. Inter and intra religious, and inter and intra cultural and civilizational conflicts have taken horrible shapes. The cry for peaceful co-existence and development of harmonious relations seem to carry no appeal and

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weight. Demonization of certain religions, cultures and their associated values, norms and symbols have become the mainstay of the dominant trait of the ruling culture and civilization. Sacred texts, personalities, values and cultural and civilizational assets of some are subjected to sustained vilification, resulting in the widening chasm between various sections of the population based upon various religious and cultural orientations. Islam, Muslims, their lands, values, norms, cultural and civilizational assets continue to be the target of demonization and vilification by the dominating Western Civilization.

West's development of 'Orientalist Project' regarding 'Islamic Studies' has been suffering from prejudice, bias and cultural antipathy. Edward Said has demonstrated through his scholarly works that the West has presented the Orient the way they liked it not as it has been. Further the Western attempts at an understanding of Islam generally proceeded from not only a position of dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy.¹ Crusades of the medieval period, colonization of the 'Era of Western Imperialism' and post-colonial 'needs' of the West in holding unchallenging sway over large tracts of Muslim lands and resources has further blinded it to see the beauty and worth of Islamic Civilization. The 'War on Terror' is the garb behind which the West has launched a new crusade to demolish Islam, Muslims, and their countries along with their cultural and civilizational assets.

Islam—Not a 'Problem' but a 'Problem Solving Mechanism'

The discipline of Islamic Studies was developed in the Western Europe to look for the 'deficiencies' of a religion and 'culture' the West despised and supply the material to the 'Christian Proselytizing Missions' to demonize Islam. West's imperialist machinery did not possess only highly trained militaries with modern weapons to conquer the countries of Asia and Africa but large Christian Missionaries also accompanied them to convert the subject races to their religion. The lure of the cheap resources of the occupied territories and exploitation of their human and material resources was concealed in the mission of 'civilizing' the 'uncivilized'. In order to ensure that the subject races suffer from inferiority complex and strip them of having the advantage of belonging to superior cultures, they were made to associate themselves with the educational system and scholarly tradition setup as a part of 'Orientalist Project'.

The general perception that 'Enlightenment' and 'Age of Science' has unleashed the forces of logic and reason and neutrality to appreciate others does not largely hold true in case of Islamic Studies. If Crusades in the medieval times reinforced the religious and cultural bias against Islam among Europeans for centuries,

colonial and post-colonial hegemonic and dominating discourses have created fresh hurdles in rescuing Islamic Studies from its otherwise historical baggage. Creation of Zionist State, control and manipulation of oil and other resources of the Muslim World has led to the ‘War on Terror’ syndrome in the garb of which many Muslim countries have been ruined and everything associated with Islam and Muslims is being demonized and ridiculed with impunity. The centers of Islamic learning are increasingly being manipulated to produce compliant scholars to collaborate with West’s and other anti-Islamic forces’ agenda on Islam and Muslims.

It is no wonder that the major function of the centers of the Islamic Studies at Cambridge, Oxford, Leiden, Sorbonne and Berlin Universities was to produce ‘Civil Servants’ trained in the art of colonial administrations, to arm Christian missionaries with arguments for conversion and produce a body of scholarship that justified European domination of Muslim lands.² The colonial legacy of these institutions of Islamic learning continues in the Western Universities with renewed vigor in the post-colonial phase as well. Islam and Muslims are studied as a ‘problem’ albeit from the perspectives of Western values and culture.

The problem of the orientalist scholarship has caused intellectual and spiritual disaster of high magnitude and serious distortions have been caused to Islam—its form and content. The languages employed for the purpose need urgent modifications to rectify the distortions and restore the brilliance of its form and content. Ismā‘īl al-Rājī al-Fārūqī comments:

The present situation of the English language—when it expresses matters pertaining to Islam, its culture, history and civilization, to the Muslim World or the Muslims, whether used by Muslims or non-Muslims—is chaotic. It constitutes an intellectual and spiritual disaster of the highest magnitude. And it carries a universal injustice against the human spirit.³

Traditional centers of Islamic learning in Muslim countries have been under pressure to update their syllabi and ‘widen’ their perspectives of religious studies to accommodate the ‘new’ perspectives on religious studies.⁴ A chain of departments of Islamic Studies and departments of Arab and Oriental learning flourished in the so called independent world, largely shaped on the pattern of the premier institutions in the West. Resources of Islamic World have been diverted to fund and maintain the institutions of ‘Islamic learning’ which follow the West’s agenda. Ahmad Ghorab has convincingly argued how ‘Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies’ is involved in subverting Islam and engaged in the creation of a legacy of scholarship that amounts to total betrayal of Islamic ethos and how compliant

scholars from the Muslim world are made to collaborate with the West in the development of the perverted scholarly trend.⁵

The world is in serious crisis. The crisis is in all fields of thought and action. West's paradigm has little to offer for solutions. Western man's rebellion against 'Divine Guidance' has landed him in serious trouble. The West has in its arrogance neglected and mocked at the serious offers of alternate paradigm of thought and action. Sayyed Hossein Nasr has complained that the West focuses its attention only on the slogans and emotional outbursts emanating from the Muslim world and ignores the serious intellectuals of the Muslim world who have demonstrated in a scholarly manner the relevance of Islamic world view as a basis for solving man's gigantic problems which have hitherto remained unsolved owing to the materialistic outlook of the West.⁶ The need of the times is to look at 'Islam' as 'Problem Solving Enterprise or Mechanism' and not a problem to be dealt with.

More Bonafide Versions Needed

The 'Orientalist Project' remains deficient in portraying the true worth of Islamic culture and civilization not only because it is sought to fulfill the unjustified needs of the West to have an "enemy" and look for 'new monsters' to serve certain functions.⁷ According to Noam Chomsky, "the Evil Empire" was invoked when needed for domestic economic management and for controlling world systems.⁸ The Western materialistic world view renders it incapable to appropriate and value a civilization and culture which is based on Divinely Revealed Knowledge. Islam is the only divinely revealed religion and possesses a particular world view accordingly, which contrasts and contradicts the western world view. Traditional religions based on divinely revealed knowledge have distinct metaphysics and their systems of culture and civilization cannot adequately be comprehended, appropriated and benefited if that metaphysics is not fully understood. For a proper correction in the distortion of Orientalists in Islamic Studies, one must access the authentic sources of Islamic culture and civilization where its traditional worldview, values and metaphysics are preserved and have remained untouched by the onslaught of Orientalists' invasions.

The need to look for rescuing a tradition and civilization from persistent distortion and manipulations is justified for upholding the value of truth and justice. Further, it shall facilitate the humanity to access it for solution to the problems it faces because of its hostile attitude to the divine sources of knowledge. Hence knowledge and value of Islam and its cultural, intellectual and civilizational worth must be acquired from its bonafide and loyal upholders and not from those whose loyalty

rests with its detractors and whose intellectual make up is primarily shaped by the Orientalist masters only.

Hence, accessing Islam through bonafide channels shall yield fascinating results and open up the gates of knowledge which have hitherto remained locked. A more loyal and bonafide scholarship is to seek the divine guidance to the ailing humanity which suffers from very serious crisis. In view of Richard Falk:

At present, it is mainly the consequence of globalization of western cultural influence, including its commitment to modernization, that has produced a world order crisis of multiple dimensions—nuclearism, industrialism, materialism, consumerism...⁹

Conclusion

Islamic Studies as a discipline which has emerged and developed as a part of “Orientalist Project’ needs to be rescued to assign the legitimate position of the repository of the last revealed religion and a living culture and civilization, which has successfully resisted the invaders of the past and present. Further, a more bonafide and more loyal tradition of scholarship is poised to play as a rescuer to the contemporary global crisis on the basis of its revealed knowledge and insights. Further, Islam has projected a ‘middle path’ needed for blending of ‘living a life on earth’ and preparing for a permanent abode in the eternal bliss in the Hereafter. The spiritual and ethical basis for material enterprises puts human life on the strong and healthy pedestal and builds up human life which earns him ‘goodness’ in this world and ‘goodness’ in the Hereafter—Material life is based on spiritual foundations and enmeshed in ethical and moral edifice and saves man from the perils of this worldism and its associate evils.

Notes and References

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²ZiauddinSardar, *Islamic Futures and Policy Studies*, New York: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1985, p. 311

³Ismā'īl al-Rājī al-Fārūqī, *Towards Islamic English*, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic thought, 1995, p. 8

⁴Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan are already seen affecting changes in the syllabus of Islamic studies in their religious seminaries. The other Muslim countries too are under tremendous pressure to act likewise. The Islamic seminaries in non-Muslim dominated countries like India too face pressure to affect changes in their system by governments and their sponsored institutions.

⁵Professor Ahmad Ghorab has stirred the intellectual world by his book *Subverting Islam: the Role of Orientalist Centres* (1995, the open press, Kualalumpur) he has served at many universities in the Gulf region as professor of Islamic Studies and has been expelled for criticising the nexus between the western powers and Muslim rulers.

⁶SayyedHossein Nasr in the Foreword to *Our Philosophy* by Allama Muhammad Baqir Al- Sadr, London, 1989, p. 8

⁷Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (Verso, 1991), p. 89

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 89

⁹Richard Falk, *Exploration at the Edge of Time: the prospects for World Order*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992, p. 48.