

Increasing Suicides in Kashmir: Perspective of Islamic Scholars

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Abstract

Islam does not allow/permit a person to kill himself or herself, as it believes that the life has been given to a person as a gift from God and he/she has no authority to waste it or finish it purposelessly. However it has been seen in the Kashmiri society that the number of suicides has been increasing and the majority of persons committing suicides are Muslims. Thus it is highly intriguing and a complex phenomenon as on the one hand Islam prohibits suicide and on the other hand Muslims constitute the majority of people who commit it. In this context, this paper highlights the perspective of local Islamic scholars (Sunni) about suicides in Islam, nature of suicides among Muslims in Kashmir and also explores the preventive strategies. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the information from the participants.

Keywords: Suicide, Islam, Muslim, Islamic Scholars (Sunni) and Kashmir.

I. Introduction

Human life is considered as the kindest and most valuable gift of God, which must neither be wasted nor finished purposelessly. It must be lived with proper identity, supreme dignity and lived in consonance with the laws- rules of the nature given by God in religious scriptures to all people of the world at different times and in different languages.

The word suicide is derived from the Latin word "***Suicidium***" which means "*the killing of oneself*". Suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's own death. Suicide is also called as the '*Completed Suicide*'. It has to be distinguished from '*Attempted Suicide*' or '*Non-Fatal Suicidal Behavior*', which refers to the self-injury with the desire to end ones life that does not result in death.

Beck et al (2000) have defined suicide, "*a willful self inflicted life threatening*

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act which results in death.”

Schneidman (1976) defined it as, “*the human act of self inflicted, self intentional cessation of life*”. It is an act committed out of constricted thinking, tunneled logic and acute anguish.

The World Health Organization defines suicidal act “*as the injury with varying degrees of lethal intent and suicide may be defined as a suicidal act with fatal outcome.*”

As per John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (1970), Suicide is a “*death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.*”

“*Le Suicide*” published by the French author Emile Durkheim in the last decade of the 19th century [1897] is a classical study about the causes of suicide and its relation to other social phenomena. According to Durkheim, “...where the rate (of suicide) increases rapidly, it is symptomatic of the breakdown of collective conscience, and of a basic flaw in the social fabric...”

He classifies suicide into three categories:

(a) Egoistic suicide: which results from lack of integration of the individual into society.

(b) Altruistic suicide: which results from a person taking his own life due to allegiance to ‘higher commandments’, which could be religious or political.

(c) Anomic suicide: which results from lack of regulation of the individual by society.

Thus, as per Durkheim it is the breakdown of social order and lack of social regulations, which results in the suicide.

To conclude, suicide simply means the act or an instance of taking ones own life voluntarily and intentionally. In other words, it refers to the act of killing yourself because you do not want to continue living.

The incidence of Suicide has increased globally and around 8, 00, 000 people die due to suicide per year or one death every “40 seconds”. It is estimated to increase to one every 20 seconds in 2020. It is ranked among the top ten causes of deaths. The leading methods of Suicide varies among countries which ranges from hanging, Pesticide Poisoning, firearms, Self immolation and others. Differences in part are believed due to availability of the different methods. A review of 56 countries found that Hanging was the most common method in most of the countries. The incidence of suicide varies from country to country. In some countries the rate of suicide is very high and in some parts of the world the rate is low. Therefore, it becomes imperative on the Policy

makers and Thinkers to take immediate measures to combat this problem. (WHO 2014)

Suicides In India

The incidence of suicides has increased over the last few decades. Some parts of the country witnessed high rates of suicide while other parts the rate was not so high. As per the official records of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2015), the total number of suicides in India in the year 2015 was 1, 33, 623 which saw an increase from 1, 31, 666 in 2014. The number of suicides in the country during the decade (2005–2015) has recorded an increase of 17. 3% (1, 33, 623 in 2015 from 1, 13, 914 in 2005). The increase in number of suicides was reported each year till 2011 there after a declining trend has been noticed till 2014 and it again increased by 1. 5% in 2015 over 2014 (from 1, 31, 666 suicides in 2014 to 1, 33, 623 suicides in 2015). The population has increased by 14. 2% during the decade while the rate of suicides has slightly increased by 2. 9% (from 10. 3 in 2005 to 10. 6 in 2015). All India Rate of suicides was 10. 6 during the year 2015, which means incidence of suicides per one lakh (1, 00, 000) of population.

Majority of suicides were reported in Maharashtra (16, 970) followed by 15, 777 suicides in Tamil Nadu and 14, 602 suicides in West Bengal, accounting for 12. 7%, 11. 8% and 10. 9% of total suicides respectively. Karnataka (10, 786 suicides) and Madhya Pradesh (10, 293 suicides) accounted for 8. 1% and 7. 7% of the total suicides reported in the country respectively. These 5 States together accounted for 51. 2% of the total suicides reported in the country. The remaining 48. 8% suicides were reported in the remaining 24 States and 7 UTs. Uttar Pradesh, the most populous State (17. 1% share of country population) has reported comparatively lower percentage share of suicidal deaths, accounting for only 2. 9% of the total suicides reported in the country.

‘Family Problems’ and ‘Illness’ were the major causes of suicides, which accounted for 27. 6% and 15. 8% of total suicides respectively during 2015. ‘Marriage Related Issues’ (4. 8%), Bankruptcy & Love Affairs (3. 3% each), Drug Abuse/Alcoholic Addiction (2. 7%) and Failure in Examination (2%)& Unemployment (2%), Property Dispute (1. 9%), Poverty (1. 3%) and Professional/Career Problem (1. 2%) were other causes of suicides. (NCRB 2015)

It was seen that the overall male: female ratio of suicide victims for the year 2015 was 68. 5:31. 5, showing a marginal increase of male and marginal

decrease of female ratio as compared to year 2014 (67.7:32.3). The proportion of Boys: Girls suicide victims (below 14 years of age) were 53.8:46.2 in 2015 as compared to 52.3:47.7 in 2014. Middle aged people (30 and above- below 45 years) and Youth (18 and above- below 30 years) were the most vulnerable groups resorting to suicides. These age groups accounted for 33.4% and 32.8% suicides respectively. Students and un-employed victims accounted for 6.7% (8,934 victims) and 8.2% (10,912 victims) of total suicides respectively. (NCRB 2015)

The data presented above gives an account of the distribution of suicides in various states, major causes, male-female proportion and the professional status of people committing suicide in India. This clearly reflects that suicide has its roots in different segments of the population having diverse professional status. This study is an attempt to highlight the causes and the preventive measures of suicide from the Islamic point of view.

Suicides In Kashmir

The phenomenon of suicide was nearly absent in the traditional Kashmiri society. But at present it has emerged as a disturbing social reality. High rate of suicide has been experienced in the Kashmir Valley in the last one decade. The incidence of suicide was almost nil or very low as the traditional Kashmiri society was cohesive and the social bonding was high. But with the outbreak of armed conflict in Kashmir, the entire social setup has undergone massive change and it has had its impact on the individuals and society as well.

The local print media in Kashmir published regular reports about suicides among the youth, especially among the students. The greater incidences of suicides were reported in the age group of 15-30 years that stands as the most active group of suicide victims. The suicide rate among the youth in Kashmir is unprecedented. It put forward the idea that this type of situation never prevailed in the entire recorded history of Kashmir. In general the local media argued that the situation occurred in Kashmir mainly due to the environment of conflict in continuity for two long decades. That environment was characterized by highest degree of tension, depression, stress, anxiety, fear, threat, insecurity etc. Moreover, the youth in Kashmir became the major target of security forces in this highly volatile environment. The prolonged conflict situation added fuel to the fire and frustrated, brutalized and de-humanized the entire youth. In this situation the youth felt that there was no alternative in life except to commit suicide. In this way, the act of suicide became more

common than before and many youth ended their lives. (Dabla, 2012)

The Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Kashmir's premier medical institute, recorded 248 suicides in 2010. In 2011, over 1000 suicide cases were registered at SKIMS and the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital which clearly shows an increasing trend of suicide in Kashmir that has raised alarm bells among all the stakeholders. The reports of NCRB clearly points out that there has been 44.3% increase in suicides in the year 2012 which clearly shows that the occurrence of suicide is much more frequent than ever before. Majority of the persons who commit suicide are the youths.

The rate of suicides in Kashmir has been alarmingly high during the last 22 years and has emerged as major problem in the society, a study said. Nations Premier Institute Bangluru had conducted a survey in 1989 wherein it was found that rate of suicide was 0.5 per 1,00,000 people, however, using the same tools, the survey was repeated in 2010 and rate of suicide was found to be whopping 15-20 per 1,00,000. Prolonged conflict in the valley stands as a major factor as it creates high level of depression in the society, opine experts. A study published in the *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research* (IJHSR) in 2012 says that "majority of cases of suicides in Kashmir are from Muslim group (95.02%). Younger people of 15-25 years of age (52.7%) predominated the study and females (54.7%) outnumbered the males (45.27%)."

Among the youth the dominant group composed of students, especially of medium and higher stages for one apparent reason or the other. According to a leading local daily newspaper (*Srinagar Times* 4th June 2009), one out of every five suicides belongs to the student community. They composed 33-36% of the total number of youth who committed suicide. They belonged to school, college and university level institutions. (Dabla, 2012)

Today the situation is such that suicide has become "second most" cause of unnatural deaths in Kashmir. As per NCRB 2015 report, number of Suicides in Jammu and Kashmir in 2015 was 372. It ranks higher than Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Bihar. The rates have surged from 0.5/1 Lakh (1989) to 20/1 Lakh people (2007). Thus, an average of 3.5 person report daily to SMHS causality with Suicide, Para suicide and Deliberate Self Harm since last three years.

However, it has to be pointed out that the total number of cases is much higher as these are not reported due to social stigma and victimization. The aim of

this paper is to have an Islamic scholar's perspective of this phenomena and explore its nature and reasons for its growing incidence in Kashmir.

Suicide in Islam

The religion of Islam considers the life of a person a gift from Allah and hence prohibits him/her to end or finish it purposelessly. Muslims scholars contend that suicide is considered a sinful and prohibited act. The references from Al Quran and Hadiths are given below which clearly puts forward the status of suicide in Islam.

- **Al Quran: Surah an-Nisa (Verse 29)**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَكَلَّمُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ كُونَتْ تِجَارَةً أَكَانَ بَيْنَكُمْ رَحِيمَةً إِنَّ لَا تَقْتُلُوا
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَعَنْ وَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ

O believers! Do not consume one another's wealth through unlawful means; instead do business with mutual consent; do not kill yourself by adopting unlawful means. Indeed Allah is Merciful to you.

In this verse it is mentioned that one should not kill oneself by adopting unlawful means. Various interpreters (*Mufassirin*) of the Quran while giving their views on this verse consider this as Suicide. Thus it becomes clear that the Quran clearly prohibits Suicide and warns Muslims to abstain from this act.

- **Ahadith**

- 1. Narrated Jundub:**

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "Amongst the nations before you there was a man who got a wound, and growing impatient (with its pain), he took a knife and cut his hand with it and the blood did not stop till he died. Allah said, 'My Slave hurried to bring death upon himself so I have forbidden him (to enter) Paradise.' "(Sahih Al- Bukhari- Book 60 Hadith 130)

- 2. Narrated Abu Huraira:**

We were in the company of Allah's Apostle in a ghazwa, and he remarked about a man who claimed to be a Muslim, saying, "This (man) is from the people of the (Hell) Fire." When the battle started, the man fought violently till he got wounded. Somebody said, "O Allah's Apostle! The man whom you described as being from the people of the (Hell) Fire fought violently today

and died.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “He will go to the (Hell) Fire.” Some people were on the point of doubting (the truth of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said) while they were in this state, suddenly someone said that he was still alive but severely wounded. When night fell, he lost patience and committed suicide. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was informed of that, and he said, “Allah is Greater! I testify that I am Allah’s Slave and His Apostle.” Then he ordered Bilal to announce amongst the people: “None will enter Paradise but a Muslim, and Allah may support this religion (i. e. Islam) even with a disobedient man.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 52 Hadith 297)

3. Narrated Thabit bin Ad Dahhak:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever intentionally swears falsely by a religion other than Islam, then he is what he has said, (e. g. if he says, ‘If such thing is not true then I am a Jew, ’ he is really a Jew). And whoever commits suicide with piece of iron will be punished with the same piece of iron in the Hell Fire.” Narrated Jundab, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “A man was inflicted with wounds and he committed suicide, and so Allah said: My slave has caused death on himself hurriedly, so I forbid Paradise for him.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 23 Hadith 445)

4. Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in the Hell Fire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the Hell-Fire.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 23 Hadith 446)

5. Narrated Abu Huraira:

We witnessed (the battle of) Khaibar. Allah’s Apostle said about one of those who were with him and who claimed to be a Muslim, ” This (man) is from the dwellers of the Hell-Fire.” When the battle started, that fellow fought so violently and bravely that he received plenty of wounds. Some of the people were about to doubt (the Prophet’s Statement), but the man, feeling the pain of his wounds, put his hand into his quiver and took out of it, some arrows with which he slaughtered himself (i. e. committed suicide). Then some men amongst the Muslims came hurriedly and said, “O Allah’s Apostle! Allah has made your Statement true; so-and-so has committed suicide.” The Prophet

(peace be upon him) said, "O so-and-so! Get up and make an announcement that none but a believer will enter Paradise and that Allah may support the religion with an unchaste (evil) wicked man."(Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 59 Hadith 515)

6. Narrated Anas bin Malik:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "None of you should wish for death because of a calamity befalling him; but if he has to wish for death, he should say: "O Allah! Keep me alive as long as life is better for me, and let me die if death is better for me." (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 70 Hadith 575)

7. Narrated Thabit bin Ad Dahhak:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever swears by a religion other than Islam, is, as he says; and whoever commits suicide with something, will be punished with the same thing in the (Hell) Fire; and cursing a believer is like murdering him; and whoever accuses a believer of disbelief, then it is as if he had killed him." (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 78 Hadith 647)

8. Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in the (Hell) Fire falling down into it and abiding therein perpetually forever; and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever; and whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his abdomen with it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever." (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 71 Hadith 670)

The Ahadith mentioned above clearly prohibits suicide and condemns it. Stringent punishment in the form of hell fire has been prescribed to those who commit it.

Thus based on the verse of Al Quran and Ahadith, Islamic scholars consider suicide as *haram* (forbidden) and ask the believers to strictly abstain and refrain from it.

Objectives of the Present Study

1. To understand the causes of Suicides among the Muslims in Kashmir
2. To explore Preventive/Intervention strategies of Suicides

III. Methodology

The discussion above clearly reveals that suicide has become an increasing phenomenon and has resulted in loss of precious lives. It has become the second most cause of un-natural deaths in Kashmir. In the light of these statements, it was found necessary on the part of the researcher to conduct a research study to explore the various dimensions of suicide in Kashmir from Islamic scholars perspective. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted to generate narratives, which were recorded properly. The interviews were conducted with many prominent scholars of Kashmir to gather their perspectives about the causes and preventive strategies of suicide. Interviews were transcribed and used as the primary source of data. Emergent themes were generated and these are summarized below using the illustrative examples from the interview transcripts.

IV. Results

The interviews conducted with the Islamic scholars led to the following themes which are which are presented as below:

Theme 1: Causes of suicide

The discussion with the Islamic scholars highlighted the below mentioned causes of suicides among the Muslims in Kashmir:

- **Failure to appreciate the Value of Life**

Interview with the participant revealed that in modern times, people have failed to understand the value of life and have forgotten that life is a gift from Allah.

People do not appreciate the fact that human life is precious and a beautiful gift from Almighty Allah. Thus when I say gift from Allah, it means that he/she is not the real owner of it and hence has no right to finish it. (Islamic Scholar)

- **Lack of Iman/Faith**

Lack of Iman or Weak Faith is another main cause of Suicide. Both the participants considered this to be the main cause of suicide among the Muslim's in Kashmir. The main reason for this is the absence of teachings of Islam and the value of worldly possessions.

It is the Weak Iman/Faith on Allah and His decisions that is the main reason for a person for committing Suicide. Whenever there are any issues, problems and crises in a person's life, he/she instead of reposing trust and having faith in Allah that it is He who has inflicted these problems and only He has the ultimate authority and power to solve these issues as well, he/she commits suicide giving proof of his/her weak Iman/faith. (Islamic Scholar)

The main reason for this weak Iman is the absence of teachings of Islam in our society and love of this world, When a person has weak Iman he can indulge in any immoral and sinful activity, suicide being one of them. (Islamic Scholar)

- **No/Weak trust in Taqdeer/Destiny/Fate**

People have lost trust in taqdir/destiny. A believer in destiny, accepts that good and bad is decided by Allah but with actions he/she completely negates it. Thus it is the lack or weak trust in destiny or Taqdir that is the root cause of this problem:

Taqdir is one of the main principles of Islam and a believer is supposed to believe in it. Taqdir in simple terms means, that good and bad comes from Allah. However when a person has weak trust in taqdir he/she tries to change situations and issues as per his/her will or does not want issues and problems in life at all. But Allah is the creator and He knows what kind of life a person is supposed to live and when he/she has to face issues and problems. (Islamic Scholar)

Life is full of ups and downs and a person is destined to see them. Thus a person with strong faith on taqdir will leave everything unto Allah and do his best in every situation he comes across. (Islamic Scholar)

- **All the wishes cannot be fulfilled**

All the wishes and desires of a person cannot be fulfilled in this world. Thus a person needs to understand this philosophy and move ahead with his life. However problem arises when a person wants all his

wishes fulfilled and when he fails to realize them he becomes upset and dejected and takes the extreme step of committing suicide. (Islamic Scholar)

In this world, all the wishes and desires of a person cannot be fulfilled hence it is foolishness to commit suicide when a person fails to achieve a desirable thing like success in examination, life partner, job etc. In one of the Hadith, Prophet ﷺ said that “The world is a prison for a believer and paradise for a non-believer” (Muslim 2956) meaning that a believer is ever mindful of Allah. Therefore he/she is not free to do what they please. Besides this also means that a believer cannot get everything he/she wishes just like a prisoner who has restrictions as against non-believers who have no restrictions and hence can do whatever they want. (Islamic Scholar)

- **Prophetic time was more harsh and difficult as compared to ours:**
Those who commit suicide often think that they have issues and problems that nobody has and life has been harsh to them. But if we look back to the Prophetic times, we can clearly see that time was more harsh and brutal to the believers. They did not have the facilities that we are enjoying, they faced danger from the non-believers, faced social boycott and many other problems but they remained firm and steadfast. (Islamic Scholar)
- **Failure to use mind and logic in tough times:**
People, often in the fit of rage or emotional instability, fail to use mind and logic. A person must keep in mind that he/she is not the only person who has problems in life. There are many who face the same problems if not more, but they don't commit suicide. If that had been the case then the entire human race would have become extinct. But this is certainly not the case rather. It is the failure of a person to use his mind and behave logically and rationally whenever he/she has suicidal impulses. (Islamic Scholar)

Theme 2: Intervention/Preventive Strategies

1. Awareness about importance and Value of life:

The first thing that could be done to prevent suicide is to create awareness among the people about the importance of life and how

precious it is. It will help in developing true love and significance of life (Islamic Scholar)

To prevent Suicide, the first step would be to make people understand the value of life. This life has been given to us in order to worship Allah and serve the humanity. Humans have been created as the best among the creatures; so wasting life by killing oneself is not the right thing to do (Islamic Scholar)

2. Fear of Allah:

Fear of Allah is the basic requirement to prevent oneself from indulging in wrongdoings and will go in a long way to prevent a person from committing suicide.

Some of the verses of Al-Quran where it is clearly mentioned to fear Allah and not to indulge in wrongdoings are:

- *"And My mercy encompasses all things, and I shall decree it for those who fear Me." (Quran 7:156)*
- *"Indeed, God is with those who fear Him and those who do good." (Quran 16:128)*
- *"And whoever fears God – He will pardon him his sins and grant him a great reward." (Quran 65:5)*

Thus, if a person truly fears Allah, then he/she would not commit sins and do anything that displeases Him. (Islamic Scholar)

Fear of Allah will surely prevent a person from doing this sinful act and the need of the hour is to instill this property among the believers by giving lectures on different occasions like Friday, Nikah ceremony, individual sessions etc. (Islamic Scholar)

3. Strengthening of Iman:

It is another preventive measure of suicide. The discussion with the Islamic scholars revealed the following

Iman is the main pre-requisite for protecting oneself from evil and wrongdoings. A person with strong Iman is fearful of Allah and will not do anything that displeases Him. Suicide being the wrong and evil act cannot be even thought of from a person with a strong Iman (Islamic Scholar)

Strong Iman will restrict a person, not to even think of committing suicide because of the fear of Allah. There is an urgent need to strengthen Iman of Muslims by doing various good deeds as prescribed

in Sunnah like, reading Quran, listening to Islamic lectures, spending time with the learned men etc. (Islamic Scholar)

4. Inculcating/Strengthening belief of Afterlife:

Another important means of preventing suicides is by inculcating or strengthening belief of Afterlife. This can be done by delivering lectures on this issue, making people read the Islamic literature, spending time with the pious Muslims etc

Belief in the life in the Hereafter (Aakhirah) is one of the six tenets of a Muslim's Faith. A believer is very well aware that he has to give account of his deeds in front of ALLAH. In the holy Quran it is mentioned in several ways as:

- *"...as compared with the life of the hereafter, the life of this world is nothing but a brief passing enjoyment" (Quran 13: 26).*
- *"...Are you pleased with the life of this world (dunya) rather than the hereafter (Aakhirah)? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared with the Hereafter" (Quran 9: 38).*

It is this weak belief in the hereafter and un-mindfulness of standing before Allah to give account of his/her life, that a person ends his life in a way that is displeasing to Allah. (Islamic Scholar)

5. Counseling/ Personal Attention to Vulnerable people:

Is very important to help people with suicidal tendencies and deal with them in a one to one basis and provide support that will help them in recovering.

Personal attention coupled with empathy and compassion is the right way to deal with such people. Besides, Counseling to vulnerable people to help them deal with their problems and make them self-reliant and emotionally stable will surely help in preventing suicidal tendencies. (Islamic Scholar)

6. Strengthening/ Inculcating Patience and Steadfastness:

There are more than ninety verses in the Holy Quran about the virtues and benefits of patience. Such number of verses indicate that virtues and excellence of this matter. Some of these verses areas under:

- *“They are those on whom are the Salawat (i. e. blessings, etc.) (i. e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones.” (Quran 2:157).*

In the above verse, Allah (SWT) gave three major and great glad tidings to those who endure patiently while they are afflicted with calamities and trials. They will receive blessings of Allah, His Mercy and they are the ones who are rightly-guided.

- *“Those will be rewarded with the highest place (in Paradise) because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect.” (Quran 25:75).*

In the above verse, the patient ones deserves to enter Paradise and the Angels will present them with greetings of peace and respect. (Islamic Scholar)

Some of the verses of Al-Quran that mention the benefits and virtues of Patience are as under:

- *“...And be patient. Surely, Allah is with those who are As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.).” (Quran 8:46)*
- *“...Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning.” (Quran 39:10) (Islamic Scholar)*

The Preventive/Intervention strategies mentioned above will go a long way in reducing the rate of Suicide in Kashmir if they are implemented with seriousness. These strategies are not only applicable to the Muslims of Kashmir but to the Muslim community worldwide.

VI. Conclusion

Suicide is becoming a serious global concern and has resulted in numerous deaths across the globe. As per the report of World Health Organization it is estimated that around 8, 00, 000 people die due to suicide per year or one death every “40 seconds”. Besides it is estimated to increase to one every 20 seconds in 2020. It is ranked among the top ten causes of deaths. In India, Suicide is also taking a

heavy toll on the people and in the year 2015 it has resulted in 1,33,623 deaths as per the reports of NCRB. In Kashmir, reports suggest that the incidence of Suicide has increased over the last two decades and the majority of them are Muslims. This study was an attempt to understand the perspectives of Islamic scholars on the issue of Suicide. The discussion with the Scholars revealed that suicide is a highly deplorable act in Islam and provides for stringent punishment. Besides, causes of suicide and preventive /intervention strategies are also given. The major causes of suicide among Muslims in Kashmir are the failure to appreciate the importance of life, lack of Iman, weak/no faith on *taqdir*, non-fulfilment of wishes, failure to use mind and logic in times of hardships etc. The discussion also revealed some preventive and intervention strategies of suicide which includes creating awareness among the people about the value of life, inculcating fear of Allah, strengthening of Iman, inculcating belief in afterlife, counselling to the vulnerable people and strengthening patience and steadfastness among the Muslims.

There is a strong need to implement these suggestion/preventive strategies in order to tackle the problem of suicide and help in saving lives of people in Kashmir. These strategies will not only be helpful for the Kashmiri Muslims but the entire Muslim community can benefit itself from these and will help in preventing and rehabilitating suicide victims in the long run. Thus a multi pronged and integrated approach is the right step towards curbing this growing trend among the Muslim's in Kashmir. Islamic Scholars, Psychiatrists, Counselors', Academicians and Policy makers should jointly prepare comprehensive model based on these suggestions to deal with this problem in a holistic manner.

World Suicide Prevention Day is celebrated on 10th September and this can be used to create awareness and spread knowledge with the aim of preventing suicide and rehabilitating those who have attempted it. This occasion can be used to bring experts from diverse fields that can discuss and highlight various strategies and interventions to tackle this problem in a holistic manner.

VII. Acknowledgement

This study was a sincere effort on the part of the researcher to highlight the status of Suicide in Islam and the preventive and intervention strategies to tackle this issue. I am highly thankful to Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi, Qazi Imran, other Islamic Scholars and Dr. Aadil Bashir for their valuable time and efforts for the timely completion of this paper.

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