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Contents

Editorial

Across the ages, it has been widely accepted and propagated that great accomplishments stem from the proper harnessing of our infinite resources, such as deep contemplation, sustained actions, focused strategies and dedicated efforts. When wisely exploited, these assets help us break free from mental ruts, unlock boundless potential and tap the vast possibilities within our reach. Obviously, such achievements do not come spontaneously without meticulous endeavours, nor do they grow on wild roadside trees. Instead, they are the fruits grown on the trees carefully cultivated and nurtured through constant labour, relentless care, steadfast perseverance, resolute commitment and determined confidence.

The farmers' genuine love and sincere concern for the growth of their trees not only keep them productively awake and active but also inspire them to rise above complacency. They know it well that to reap a rewarding harvest, it is imperative to protect their trees from threats posed by insects and locusts, and even by birds that peck at the fruits, leaving them to rot. Sometimes, the farmers fix scarecrows; sometimes they tie several empty boxes together with a rope and pull them to create a clattering noise, frightening the birds away. If the fruit trees contract some diseases, they also resort to sprinkling insecticides to safeguard their crops. In essence, they guard their orchards and crops diligently because they know that a fruitful harvest largely depends on vigilant and devoted care.

This demonstrates that with an unyielding belief in our innate abilities and the skill to dig and extract gold from the goldmine around us, we can achieve even the most challenging and formidable goals. At the same time, it is a sobering reality that the farmers' efforts sometimes succumb to the vagaries of nature. It comes to serve as a reminder that success can never be guaranteed. It is noteworthy that the

unpredictability of nature is not able to discourage the farmers to the point of abandoning their hopes of growing and nurturing plants and trees. Success cultivated through hard work, strict discipline and a clear vision reflects the understanding that nothing of true value and worth comes by chance.

It happens so that many of us lag behind because we fail to make it out that every step forward contributes significantly to building greater goals. It is crucial for us to believe in the power of gradual progress, understanding that remarkable achievements are rarely the result of sudden advancement but rather the small and regular improvement over time. Things of significance and merit emerge only when our minds are willing to step into uncharted territories, exploring new possibilities and breaking freeing from the constraints of distractions and complacency.

In some communities people appear to be satisfied with mere lip service. As a result, genuine and sincere effort seems to be scarce there, and progress is poorly inadequate. If a community truly wishes to outsmart others, it is vital to cultivate a culture of action and determination, where each individual is motivated to engage deeply with their thoughts and ambitions. It is high time that we should refuse to feel complacent with mediocrity. We should be keenly willing to discard smugness and create an environment where challenges are met with a true spirit of innovation, where everyone is ready to thrive on excellence and meaningful achievements.

True visionaries and righteous people are never lured by the easy route of inaction or the temptation of hollow words. They devote themselves to undivided focus, allowing their ideas to take form as novel and ground-breaking solutions that spark genuine transformation. For our community to flourish, we must nurture this mind-set of exploration and commitment, moving beyond mere rhetoric and empty promises, and embracing the disciplined, creative thinking that propels concrete actions. It is through this unfaltering pursuit of merits and the valour to venture into untapped domains and new territories that we can unleash our full potential and attain enduring impact. By boosting each other to push beyond comfort zones with purposeful efforts, we will build the foundation for a dynamic community which will bring laurels and honour to the nation.

On the other hand, we also find ourselves in an era where many

people prefer a world where success is accompanied by jarring noise, with social media magnifying, intensifying and amplifying every accomplishment, fiercely blaring for attention. This change shows not just a shift in how we achieve success, but also in what we value the most. However, amidst all this cacophony, there shines an enduring truth that the most lasting accomplishments still require moments of peaceful silence, where one can step away from the chaos, engaging in deep and reflective quietude that nurtures true greatness. Let's read and critically appreciate the thought-provoking articles by our perceptive contributors…

A. Naseeb Khan

MOHD FAHIM AKHTAR NADVI

Contribution of Dr. Usman Najati to Islamic Psychology

HUMAN BEING

The fact that human being is the noblest and the finest creature of the universe the message given in the Quran by Allah, the Creator of the universe[1]. Quran also states that God has created human being by His Hand, just to show the nobility and superiority of human upon others[2]. Since the human being is made honoured and exalted above all other creatures[3], he has been appointed as Allah's vicegerent on the earth[4]. To meet the requirements of this great duty, he is asked to acquire knowledge and utilise the abilities he is embedded with, in accordance with the Almighty's guidance and teachings[5].

The human being is made full of secrets and wonders, which come to fore day by day. Allah has put in human being many of His signs, to think upon[6]. Though the human knowledge has explored a number of these signs related to different fields of life and branches of disciplines, but it didn't come to an end, rather, every passing day is revealing new signs and disclosing new secrets and wonders. Almighty Allah has encouraged human being to give serious thinking on these signs and remain in continuous search for more. The Quran says:

(فصلت: 53)

سَنُرِيهِم آياتِنا فِي الآفاقِ وَفي أَنفُسِهِم حَتّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُم أَنَّهُ الحَقُّ

(We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.)

The signs of Almighty, referred to in the above verse, are basically of two kinds. They relate to human physiology and anatomy on one hand, and on the other, they belong to human minds and souls as the human being is a combination of the two, his material physic and his

spiritual soul. A great Indian scholar of 18th century, Shah Waliullah Mohaddis of Delhi (1703-1762 AD), has elaborated this combination, in his famous magnum opus in the following quotation:

''ثمَّ تعلم أَن الله تَعَالَى قد أودع الْإِنْسَان بِحِكْمَتِهِ الباهرة قوتين: قُوَّة ملكية تتشعب من فيض الرّوح الْمَخْصُوصَة بالإنسان على الرّوح الطبيعية السارية فِي الْبدن وقبولها ذَلك الْفَيْض وانقهارها لَهُ، وَقُوَّة بهيمية تتشعب من النَّفس الحيوانية الْمُشْتَرك فِيهَا كل حَيَوَان المتشبحة بالقوى الْقَائِمَة بالروح الطبيعية واستقلالها بِنَفسِهَا وإذعان الرّوح الإنسانيَّة لَهَا وقبولها الحكم مِنْهَا، ثمَّ تعلم أَن بَين القوتين تزاحما وتجاذبا، فَهَذِهِ تجذب إِلَى الْعُلُوّ دون تِلْكَ إِلَى السّفل، وَإذا برزت البهيمية وغلبت آثارها كمنت الملكية، وَكَذَلِكَ الْعَكْس،⁷

(Thus you should know that the Creator, may his state be exalted, deposited in man, through His splendid wisdom, two forces. One is an angelic force which branches out from the emanation of the spirit particularized for man into the natural spirit (al-ruh- al-tabi'iyya). This natural spirit pervades the body, and it receives that emanation and is subject to it. The second is an animalistic force (quwwa bahimiyya) branching out from the animating soul (al-nafs al-hayawaniyya) common to all animals, which is shaped by the faculties inhering in the natural spirit. It is self-sufficient and the human spirit submits to it and obeys its orders. Then you should know that competition and contention occur between these forces. The former pulls toward the high and the latter toward the low. Whenever the animal force becomes apparent and its effects dominate, the angelic side is concealed, and likewise the reverse.⁸)

The Quran has referred to this fact in the following verses:

أَلَم نَجعَل لَهُ عَينَينِ، وَلِسانًا وَشَفَتَينِ، وَهَدَيناهُ النَّجدَينِ⁹

(Have we not given him two eyes, and a tongue, and a pair of lips, and shown him the two paths?)

In another verse, the Quran says:

وَنَفسٍ وَما سَوّاها، فَأَلهَمَها فُجورَها وَتَقواها[10]

(By the soul and how He formed it, then inspired it to understand what was right and wrong for it.)

In the light of the above details, it could be understood that human being has in himself, tow forces, competing to each other. The first is animalistic force which always tries to pull him low, while the other is angelic force which pulls him toward the high. Along with these two forces, he has been shown the two paths, the wrong and the right. And he is inspired to understand what is right and wrong for him.

It should also be kept in mind, that both the above mentioned forces are human needs, and his worldly life couldn't skip either of them, in fulfilling his worldly obligations, which is also a divine obligation. A human being is required to maintain a balance in between the two, the animalistic force and the angelic force. This balance is actually the goal point of all the details given in the Quran and Hadith relating to psychology.

DR. USMAN NAJATI'S WORK ON PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Usman Najati, (1914-2000) an Egyptian contemporary Muslim Psychologist, has encompassed the contents of psychology mentioned in the Qur'ānic verses and in the Prophetic Traditions, in his books written. Dr. Najati, has authored several books on the subject. A few among them are as follows:

(Psychology and Life)	علم النفس والحياة	1.
(Perception in the writings of Avicenna)	الإدراك الحسي عند ابن سينا	2.
(Psychological Studies by Muslim Scholars)	الدراسات النفسية عند علماء المسلمين	3.
(The Quran and Psychology)	القرآن وعلم النفس	4.
(Prophetic Traditions and Psychology)	الحديث الشريف وعلَم النفس	5.
(Towards Islamic Psychology)	مدخل إلى علم نفس إسلامي	6.

The list shows that Dr. Najati did extensive research works on the Psychology in Islamic perspective.

Dr. Usman Najati wrote two books on psychology with reference to the Quran and Hadith. One is 'Al Quran wa Ilm al Nafs' (The Quran and Psychology), and the other is 'Al Hadith al Shareef wa Ilm al Nafs' (Prophetic Traditions and Psychology)[11] .

The first book of the Quran and Psychology consists of Ten Chapters. I am mentioning below the topics of these chapters, which will give the readers a glimpse about the content of the book. These topics are as follows:

Chapter - 1:	Motives of behaviour in the Quran	(دوافع السلوك في القرآن)
Chapter - 2:	Emotions in the Quran	(الانفعالات في القرآن)
Chapter - 3:	Perceptions in the Quran	(الإدراك الحسي في القرآن)
Chapter - 4:	Thinking in the Quran	(التفكير في القرآن)
Chapter - 5:	Learning in the Quran	(التعلم في القرآن)
Chapter - 6:	Divinely Inspired Knowledge in the Quran	(العلم اللدني في القرآن)
Chapter - 7:	Remembrance and Forgetfulness in the Quran	(التذكر والنسيان في القرآن)
Chapter - 8:	Nerve System and Brain in the Quran	(الجهاز العصبي والمخ في القرآن)
Chapter - 9:	Personality in the Quran	(الشخصية في القرآن)
Chapter - 10:	Psychological Treatment in the Quran	(العلاج النفسي في القرآن)

The other book of Dr. Najati talks on the psychology in the Prophetic Traditions. The book also has ten chapters, which are as follows:

Chapter - 1:	Motives of behaviour in the Hadith	(دوافع السلوك في الحديث النبوي)
Chapter - 2:	Emotions in the Hadith	(الانفعالات في الحديث النبوي)
Chapter - 3:	Perceptions in the Hadith	(الإدراك الحسي في الحديث)
Chapter - 4:	Thinking in the Hadith	(التفكير في الحديث)
Chapter - 5:	Learning in the Hadith	(التعلم في الحديث)
Chapter - 6:	Divinely Inspired Knowledge in the Hadith	(العلم اللدني في الحديث)
Chapter - 7:	Growth in the Hadith	(النمو في الحديث)
Chapter - 8:	Personality in the Hadith	(الشخصية في الحديث)
Chapter - 9:	Psychological Health in the Hadith	(الصحة النفسية في الحديث)
Chapter - 10:	Psychological Treatment in the Hadith	(العلاج النفسي في الحديث)

If we compare the topics of one book to that of other, we will find that eight topics out of ten chapters' are same. Only two topics are different from each another. The author discussed on "Remembrance and Forgetfulness in the Quran" (التذكر والنسيان في القرآن) in chapter no. 7, and on "Nerves system and Brain in the Quran" (الجهاز العصبي والمخ في القرآن) in chapter no. 8, in the book of "The Quran and Psychology". While in the book of "Prophetic Traditions and Psychology", he talked on "Growth in the Hadith" (النمو في الحديث) in chapter no. 7, and on "Psychological Health in the Hadith" (الصحة النفسية في الحديث) in chapter

no. 9. The comparison shows that the author has concluded that the major content of psychological aspects in both the Islamic sources i.e. Quran and Hadith, are similar.

ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY VERSUS WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY

In these two books, Dr. Najati tried to find out the psychological concepts described in the Quran and Hadith, to reach out to the correct and fine understanding of human personality in Islamic perspective. How the Quran and Hadith have defined a perfect personality. What are the basic factors for acquiring the psychological health? What are the reasons behind psychiatric diseases and mental illness and how to get treatment to correct the behaviour? Dr. Najati thinks that this information will pave the way to understand the human behaviour correctly and to make human life peaceful and prosperous in this world. This was the motive behind starting research on psychology in the light of the Quran and Hadith[12].

Dr. Najati felt that the kind of psychology which is being taught in the universities of Muslim world is basically driven from the west. The west has its own concept about human being, and a different philosophy about life, and sets its own culture and values. It is, therefore, the researches carried out in the west, reflect their own societies. These researches focus only on the materialistic aspects of life, and do not discuss or introduce the spiritual aspects. One can't find in western psychology the study of spirituality and its impacts on human behaviour, the role of belief and religion in human psyche and behaviour, and in getting the mental peace and psychological health[13].

Thus, the western psychology doesn't suit the Qur'ānic concept of human being. For this reason, we, the Muslims need to revisit the western psychology in the light of Quran and Hadith, and suggest correction and alteration in such a way that is in accordance with Qur'ānic concept. It should, at least, doesn't contradict with Islamic concept[14].

On this line, Dr. Najati started researching and collecting the contents of psychology from Qur'ānic verses and from the books of Prophetic Traditions[15], to present the Islamic concept of psychology, which can result in setting up a new school of psychology, which will be named as *Islamic School of Psychology*[16].

A look on the topics of the contents of both the books, clearly reveals that the Quran and Hadith have provided information on different aspects of human behaviour, emotions and feelings, thinking and learning, growth and personality, and psychological health and treatment.

EXAMPLES FROM ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

To elaborate more on the contents and details provided in the Quran and Hadith, it would be ample to shed some lights on the sub headings and themes of the topics of the chapters mentioned above, with reference to both the books. It will also reflect spiritual parts of human behaviour on which focus has been made in the Quran and Hadith.

In the book of Hadith Nabawi and Psychology, the author, under first chapter, provided information in details, on the motivation of religiosity in human being, the relation between motive and feeling, the conflict between motives and how to control them by permissible satisfaction[17].

Under chapter 9th, the author discussed the balance in personality and its role in psychological health, by way of strengthening the spiritual aspect by having faith in Allah, acquiring Taqwa, performing Ibadah, and by having self-confidence, feeling of personal responsibility, and believing in divine destiny[18].

On the role of belief in psychological health, Dr. Najati elaborates that, by having faith in Almighty Allah, one gets filled with satisfaction, happiness and blessing, and subsequently, he starts living with mental peace and psychological calms. Because, he then, feels that Almighty Allah is always with him, and he is under His powerful protection and support. Dr. Najati quoted here from the Quran:

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوٓاْ إِيمَٰنَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ ٱلْأَمْنُ وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ[19]

(It is 'only' those who are faithful and do not tarnish their faith
with falsehood who are guaranteed security and are 'rightly' guided.)

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ ٱلْقُلُوبُ[20]

(Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort.)

In the other book, The Quran and psychology, the author, while talking on the forgetfulness and remembrance in Quran, mentioned the forgetfulness by Satan, and its treatment by way of remembering Allah all the times and repeating this remembrance[21]. Dr. Najati quotes from Quran:

ٱسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنُ فَأَنسَـٰهُمْ ذِكْرَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ حِزْبُ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنِ ۚ أَلَآ إِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنِ هُمُ ٱلْخَـٰسِرُونَ[22]

(Satan has taken hold of them, causing them to forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Satan. Surely Satan's party is bound to lose.)

And to get rid of this forgetfulness, Dr. Najati mentions the Quranic treatment from the following verses:

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَا۟يْءٍ إِنِّى فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ غَدًا إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَٱذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَهْدِيَنِ رَبِّى لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَـٰذَا رَشَدًا[32]

(And never say of anything, "I will definitely do this tomorrow, without adding, "if Allah so wills!" But if you forget, then remember your Lord, and say, "I trust my Lord will guide me to what is more right than this.")

Likewise, the psychological treatments by Prayers, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Remembering Allah, Reciting Quran and asking Duaa, is elaborated by the author in chapter 10th of the book, with quotations from Qur'ānic verses[24].

CONCLUSION

Dr. Najati described different types of personalities mentioned in the Quran, such as the Believers, the Agonists, and the Hypocrites[25]. He also mentioned the growth of human beings described in the Quran, like growth before birth, growth after birth, and growth of infants[26].

This glimpse of sub headings from the chapters in the books with some examples from both the books reflects that the author has collected the verses from the Quran and examples from the Hadith, to establish the Islamic concept of human personality. He delved in the details of human feelings and behaviour, and the impact of spirituality on psychological health. The author has provided both the aspects

of human personality, the physical and materialistic aspect, and the spiritual and divine aspect, all from the basic Islamic sources of the Quran and Hadith.

In view of the above, he not only proposed to develop the Islamic Psychology, but also contributed a lot in this regard, to present the model for that.

Dr. Usman Najati has the opinion that there is a need to do more research works on psychology in Islamic perspective. By this way, a new school of psychology may be established based on the Islamic concept of human personality in the light of Quran and Hadith. This school will be *Islamic School of Psychology*.

NOTES

1. *We have indeed created man in the best of mould* (Quran: 95:4).
2. *What prevented you from prostrating yourself to what I created with My own Hand* (Quran: 38:75).
3. *We have honoured the children of Adam, and have borne them on the land and the sea, given them for sustenance things which are good and pure; and exalted them above many of Our creatures.* (Quran: 17:70)
4. *When your Lord said to the angles, 'Indeed I will make upon the earth a successive authority'.* (Quran: 02:30)
5. *He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it, so ask forgiveness of Him and then repent to Him.* (Quran: 11:61)
6. *On the earth, and in yourselves, there are signs for firm believers.* (Quran: 51:20)
7. الدهلوي، ولي الله، حجة الله البالغة، الجزء الأول، باب سر التكليف
8. The Conclusive Argument From God, pp 58, Transl: Marcia K. Hermansen, Brill, Leiden, 1995.
9. Quran: 90:8-10.
10. Quran: 91:7-8.
11. Both the books have been translated from Arabic into Urdu, by the author of this article, and published by Qazi Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi in 1999 and 1992 respectively.
12. Najati, Dr. Usman, Hadees Nabwi and Ilm al Nafs. Pp. 7, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2005.
13. Najati, Dr. Usman, Hadees Nabwi and Ilm al Nafs. Pp. 7-8, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2005.
14. Ibid, p. 9.

15. Dr. Usmani mentioned that he collected the psychological details from Eight Classical Hadith Books, namely: Bokhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Daood, Nasaee, Ibn Majah, Darmi and Musnad Ahamd bin Hanbal.
16. Najati, Dr. Usman, Hadees Nabwi and Ilm al Nafs. Pp. 9, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2005.
17. Najati, Dr. Usman, Hadees Nabwi and Ilm al Nafs. Pp. 19-70, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2005.
18. Ibid, pp. 271 onward.
19. Quran: 6: 82.
20. Quran: 13: 28.
21. Najati, Dr. Usman, Al Quran wa Ilmu al Nafs. Pp. 213-214, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2001.
22. Quran: 58: 19.
23. Quran: 18:23-24.
24. Najati, Dr. Usman, Al Quran wa Ilmu al Nafs. Pp. 280-300, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2001.
25. Najati, Dr. Usman, Al Quran wa Ilmu al Nafs. Pp. 237-245, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2001.
26. Najati, Dr. Usman, Al Quran wa Ilmu al Nafs. Pp. 254-264, Dar al Shurooq, Egypt, 2001.

YOGINDER SIKAND

Ritual and Popular Piety: The Urs at Dargah Dada Hayat in South India

According to popular accounts, Islam's first contact with India is said to date back to the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself, when Arab missionaries and traders arrived on the coast of Malabar in south India.[1] While this view has been countered, there is no doubt of a Muslim presence in south India well before the ninth century AD. One of the first Muslims to arrive in south India to spread Islam was Shaikh Abdul Aziz Makki, more popularly known as Dada Hayat. Today, his shrine (dargah) is one of the most popular centres of Sufism in south India. This article looks at the ritual performances associated with the annual celebration or Urs at his shrine at the village of Inam Dattatreya in Baba Budhangiri Hills of Chikmagalur district in Karnataka in south India.

DADA HAYAT IN THE HAGIOGRAPHIC ACCOUNTS

Although considered to be 'one of the earliest centres of Sufism in south India',[2] and also claimed to be among 'the first centres for the spread of Islam',[3] in the country, the history of the shrine as well as of Dada Hayat himself remains shrouded in mystery. As Srikanth notes, 'Much of the information available about Hazrat Baba [sic] Hayath Meer Khalandar is legendary …,'.[4,5] Likewise, Beary remarks that the 'historical truths' about Dada Hayat have become 'a casualty', owing to 'legends' woven around him over the centuries.

According to the principal hagiographical account available, Dada Hayat was a descendant of the Prophet Saleh and was a Christian but embraced Islam when Muhammad (PBUH)

declared his prophethood in Mecca.[6] He is said to have been such a devoted disciple of the Prophet that he was appointed the guard of his cell (*hujra*). He learnt the secrets of the *shariat*, the Islamic law, the *tariqat*, the mystical path, and the *haqiqat*, the Ultimate Truth, from him. He is said to have first taken the oath of allegiance from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and then, after the Prophet's death, from Caliph Ali. He is believed to have accompanied the Prophet on several of his campaigns, during which he was given the responsibility of carrying his flag (*'alam*). Because of this, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) bestowed upon him the title of *alambardar* or 'flag-bearer'.[7]

In his authoritative account of the history of Sufism in India, Rizvi writes that Shaikh Abdul Azia Makki (Dada Hayat) was indeed a companion of the Prophet (PBUH). He is said to have been 'so profoundly absorbed in asceticism' that he shaved off the hair on his head, and his beard and moustache. On seeing him thus, the Prophet (PBUH) is said to have 'greatly approved' and remarked that 'the people of Paradise looked just like him'. At his request, the Prophet allowed him to retire to a cave in a mountain and prayed for him to have a long life. Dada Hayat is said to have reappeared from the cave when H. 'Ali took over as khalifa, and, after swearing allegiance to him, returned to his hermit's life in the cave.[8]

It is believed that Dada Hayat was commanded by the Prophet himself to travel to India to preach Islam. He was told that he should head for the Chandradrona Hill and establish a centre for the propagation of Islam there. It is in a cave on this hill that his shrine stands today. This hill seems to have been an important pilgrimage centre in pre-Islamic times, and, according to local tradition, it was from the forests here that the monkey-god Hanuman is said to have fetched the life-giving *sanjivani buti* (herb) to revive Lakshmana, the brother of Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*, who had been injured in a battle against Ravana, the ruler of Lanka.[9] Given the significance of the Chandradrona Hill in the local religious tradition, it is not surprising that Dada

Hayat chose to make it his centre to spread Islam in the region. In fact, Sufis all over South Asia settled at key local religious centres and sought to spread Islam by operating from within pre-existing religious institutions and networks.

When Dada Hayat arrived at Chandradrona in the company of his *faqir* disciples he took up residence in a cave on the hill which was the seat of a brahmin and Lingayat Jangam where they used to decide cases of disputes among the local people. The locals believed that Dattatreya, the last incarnation of Vishnu, would one day appear inside this very cave to deliver the people from injustice and oppression. On the night that Dada Hayat arrived, a group of *pallekars* of local 'high' caste landlords, approached the cave, dragging along with them a captive whom they intended to kill for having trespassed into their territory. It is said that as soon as Dada Hayat looked at them, the chains that had bound their captive miraculously fell off. In gratitude the captive embraced Islam at Dada Hayat's hands and went on to join the community of his *faqirs*.[10]

Meanwhile, the *pallekars* regrouped their forces, and led by Kunj Rayya, *pallekar* of Kalhati, and his deputy, Biru, they marched on the cave to kill Dada Hayat. They slew several of the *faqirs* but in the end they were defeated, apparently because of Dada Hayat's miraculous intervention. When Kunj Rayya and Biru entered the cave, they saw Dada Hayat sitting in front of them in the form of the awaited messiah, Dattatreya. They fell at his feet, begging his forgiveness, promising him that henceforth no one would trouble him and his *faqirs*, and requested him to accept them as his disciples. Kunj Rayya then issued an edict that the 'idols of the temples, along with their palanquins, umbrellas and musical instruments, should appear before Dada Hayat and offer him their salutations (*salami*).[11] The brahmin and Jangam, too, appeared before Dada Hayat, believing him to be Dattatreya, and 'became his true followers'.[12] Word soon spread in the area that Dattatreya had appeared in the cave in the form of Dada Hayat. Large crowds flocked to the cave to get the blessing of

Dada Hayat. Some people converted to Islam at his hands, while others, who still retained their ancestral faith, incorporated him into their existing pantheon of deities as Dattatreya.

The cult of Dattatreya is particularly popular in parts of Deccan, and takes several forms, borrowing from a wide variety of traditions. Dattatreya is mentioned in the *Markandaya Purana* as an antinomian sage, while in other Puranas he appears as one of Vishnu's several *avatars*. In the non-Vedic tradition of the Manabhavs or Mahanubhavas, Dattatreya is venerated as the second member of their lineage of five ancient teachers and as an incarnation of Krishna. In large parts of central India, he is seen as the single incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the Hindu trinity.[13] The Dattatreya cult has also had a close connection with Tantrism, and the authorship of several Tantras has been attributed to the legendary Dattatreya.[14] The cult's association with Sufism, too, is striking, for as a leading figure in the Natha Sampradaya tradition, Dattatreya has been associated with Guru Gorakhnath, who is venerated by several Muslim groups in central India under different names.

The most intriguing connection between the Dattatreya cult and popular Sufism is to be found in the sect (*sampradaya*) founded by Narasimha Saraswati of Gangapur, a fifteenth century mystic. It is said that 'his main contribution … is that he bent this cult in such a manner as to be acceptable not only to various Hindu sects, but also to the Muslims'. Following his efforts, it is said, the Dattatreya cult became increasingly popular among the Muslims of the Deccan, who absorbed Dattatreya into their vast pantheon of saints as a *malang*, Shah Faqir or Shah Datta 'Alam Prabhu'. In turn, the cult of Shah Datta 'Alam Prabhu emerged as 'an instrument in bringing about a synthesis of devotional thought among various communities of the people of the Deccan, like the Lingayats, the Muslims, the Ananda Sampradayis and the Giri-Gosains'. There is also a striking correspondence between this figure and the Lingayat concept of their deity as Shah 'Alam

Prabhu'. All in all, then, 'the Dattatreya cult is still one of the most intriguing cults of the Deccan'.[15]

THE DARGAH OF DADA HAYAT

As Dada Hayat's popularity, as the much-awaited Dattareya, began to spread in the area, the cave in which he had taken up residence emerged as a popular place of pilgrimage. It is believed that owing to the special blessings of a long life that he received from the Prophet (PBUH), Dada Hayat is still alive in the cave. Once he was satisfied with the stability of the centre that he had established at Chandradrona Hill, he is said to have left through a tunnel in the cave for Arabia and Central Asia, from where he brought a group of men to look after the affairs of the centre. From among them he appointed a 'responsible elder' to run the centre according to his directions. On the death of this elder, he would appoint some other person in his place. Later, it is said he decided to appoint such 'capable' man to run the dargah whose descendants could inherit the responsibility of administering the affairs of the shrine. Accordingly, he chose Sayyed Shah Jamaluddin Maghribi, an inhabitant of Yemen, for the honour.[16]

Travelling through Arabia, Khurasan, Kashmir and northern India and the Deccan, Maghribi reached Chandradrona Hill sometime in the mid-sixteenth century. He stayed at the cave for some four years, after which he left on a long journey that took him to Iraq, Syria, Arabia and Yemen. On his return from Yemen he brought along with him some coffee seeds, and back in Chandradrona, began to popularize the cultivation of coffee in the area. Maghribi died on 22 Shaban, AH 1125.[17] Before his death, he nominated his nephew Sayyed Musa Hussain Shah Qadri as his spiritual successor and custodian (*sajjada nashin*) of the dargah. The custodianship of the shrine continues till this day to be carried on by descendants of this family. The fifth in succession of Sayyed Musa Shah Qadri, Baba Budhan Shah

Qadri, further spread the cultivation of coffee in south India. He despatched groups of his followers to spread coffee growing as well as Sufism to various far-flung places, including Coorg and the Nilgiris. As a result, the popularity of the shrine grew so much so that today the hills around the shrine are known after him as the Baba Budhan Range.

THE ANNUAL 'URS

Day One

In memory of Dada Hayat an annual three-day celebration or Urs is held at his shrine which attracts some 20,000 people from various parts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, including Muslims, Hindus, Dalits (so-called Untouchables) and others. This festival is held three days after the Hindu festival of Holi, generally in March. A significant feature of the Urs is the large participation of *faqirs* belonging to the Qalandariyya and Rifa'i orders, for whom Dada Hayat holds a place of special importance.

According to the hagiographical literature, Dada Hayat was himself the founder of the Qalandariyya order. His *faqirs* claim that there have been a total of three and a half Qalandar preceptors—Dada Hayat Qalandar, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar of Sehwan (Sind), Bu Ali Shah Qalandar of Panipat (Haryana) and Rabia Qalandar of Basra (Iraq). The last mentioned is regarded as only half on account of having been a woman. Because of the significance of Dada Hayat in the founding of the order, Qalandars from various parts of the country gather together at his Urs. Mendicants belonging to the Rifa'i order, who trace their spiritual origins to Sayyed Ahmad Kabir Rifai, nephew of the famous Sufi Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, and who in many ways are similar to the Qalandars, also come here in large number on the occasion of the Urs.

On the morning of the first day of the Urs, the *faqirs* as well as ordinary pilgrims walk to the natural spring at Manakdhara,

some five kilometres from the shrine. This is located high up in the hills, amidst thick forests. After taking a bath in the waterfall, one item of clothing is thrown away, signifying the purification of the self. Then, the *faqirs* return to the shrine for the morning prayers, visiting on the way, the spot near Manakdhara where Dada Hayat is believed to have meditated, and Moti Talab, a small lake where Mama Jigri, a female disciple of Dada Hayat, performed severe austerities.

When the *faqirs* return the *fajr* or morning prayers are held at the mosque located in the courtyard of the cave of Dada Hayat and the congregation is led by the *sajjada nashin*. After the prayers are over, the *faqirs*, both Qalandars and Rifais, begin a long procession barefoot to the village of Attigunde, also called Babu Budhan Nagar, some eight kilometres away, carrying with them staffs, spears, and maces with spikes (*guruz*). The Qalandars wear long saffron-coloured kurtas, lungis and turbans, while the Rifais dress in green. Both wear heavy necklaces and rings made of stones that are considered to be auspicious. The *faqirs* beat their tambourines in a throbbing rhythm, singing odes (*ratib*) in praise of God, the Prophet (PBUH) and the Qalandar masters. Some of them fall into a trance, a pierce their tongues, necks, throats and heads with sharp iron spears after taking the name of Dada Hayat. This is regarded as a miracle as no blood falls nor is any pain felt. This practice is known as *zarb* or *sultani*. *Faqir s*trace the origin of *zarb* to H. Ali and the early Qalandars, who, they say, used this as a means for *tabligh* or the propagation of Islam.

When the procession of the *faqirs* reaches Attigunde, they enter a house where a pot of sandalwood paste is kept, wrapped up in a green cloth. Incense is burnt and collective supplications (*dua*) are made. A *faqir* then places the pot on his head, while another accompanies him holding a richly-embroidered protective umbrella. The procession steps out of the house, with the *faqirs* singing and playing their tambourines and then returns to the cave of Dada Hayat. When the *faqirs* reach the *khanqah* of the

sajjadanashin in the vicinity of the cave, they stop for a while. Once again, some *faqirs* pierce themselves with spears. The pilgrims who have gathered here reached out to touch the pot of sandalwood paste and some throw coins over it as an act of blessing. Then, the *sajjadanashin* leads the procession into the cave.

Inside the cave, the seat (*chillah*) of Dada Hayat and his four disciples, and the graves of four Qalandars, Jan Pak Shahid, Malik Tijar Faruqi, Malik Wazir Isfahani and Abu Turab Shirazi, are washed and the silk yellow and green sheets (*chadar*) covering them are removed. The *sajjadanashin* offers *fatiha* and invokes blessings on Dada Hayat and his disciples. He puts some sandalwood paste on the new sheets that will be placed on the *chillah* and the graves and these are then carried around to the *faqirs*, who, in turn, do likewise. The same is done in the adjacent portion of the cave which contains the seat of Mama Jigri.

After the *sandal* ceremony, as it is called, concludes, pilgrims enter the cave. They first approach the *chillah* of Dada Hayat, entry to which is barred by an iron gate. They get a glimpse of his seat, the lamps that he used and a silver replica of his slippers, and then are given holy water to drink by the *sajjadanashin* or a person who stands in his place. This water is considered to be *tabarruk* (sacred) as it is taken from a spring that flows near Dada Hayat's *chillah* and which Dada Hayat is said to have himself miraculously produced. After this, they place flowers and sprinkle perfume on the graves of the four Qalandars, while a *mujawar* recites the *fatiha*. Then, they proceed to the *chillah* of Mama Jigni, where, once again, *fatiha* is offered and flowers are placed. Many pilgrims of collect mud in little packets from a recess near Mama Jigni's *chillah*, considering it to have special medicinal properties. When they emerge from the cave, they break one or more coconuts on a black stone at the entrance to the shrine. This custom is said to have been established by a Hindu ruler of Mysore, Sri Krishna Raja Wodeyar, in gratitude for a wish for a son that, it is said, Dada Hayat had fulfilled.[18]

In the afternoon, the *sajjadanashin*, dressed in a saffron-coloured kurta and turban, heads a procession to the entrance of the shrine. The green flag atop a tall flag-pole that was placed the previous year is brought down and a new one installed in its place. After this, *dua* is offered. This concludes the ritual ceremonies for the first day of the Urs. For the rest of the day, the *faqirs* gather at the makeshift *faqir chowk* just outside the cave, where they sing qawwalis and smoke ganja.[19] Pilgrims approach them with their problems and seek advice from them. Others walk up to Palang Talab, a lake some three kilometres away, where, it is believed, Dada Hayat had rescued Mama Jigni from a group of *pallekars* who had kidnapped her. Here, they bathe in the lake and then offer coconuts and sweets at a *chillah*, where Mama Jigni is said to have meditated. Some pilgrims, both Hindus as well as Muslims, also offer coconuts at the shrine of Biru Dev, also known as Kancherayya, the Hindu deputy of the *pallekar* Kunj Rayya who became a devotee of Dada Hayat. Biru is said to have been later appointed by Dada Hayat as his guard. His shrine, which is located on the other side of the lake, is shaped like a large Shiva lingam, and contains a recess in which a trident, the symbol of Shiva, is placed. It is painted with white and red stripes, in the manner of Hindu temples in south India. A priest, belonging to the Dalit community, officiates at this shrine.

DAY TWO

After the morning prayers are over, the *faqirs* emerge from the *faqir chowk* in a procession, singing and playing their tambourines. They proceed to a room in the *khanqah* for a ceremony known as *dakhila* or *'adalat*. This room contains a seat of Dada Hayat, which is draped in red and green sheets made of silk. Behind it, on the wall, is a big velvet curtain with the names of Allah and the *panjatan pak* (the five hole ones)—Muhammad (PBUH), Fatima, Ali, Hassan and Hussain—embossed on it in gold. When the *sajjadanashin* enters the room, the *faqirs*

stand up and pay their respects to him. Then, they all sit on the ground in a circle with the *sajjadanashin* at their head. Behind the *sajjadanashin* two *faqirs* stand with sticks decorated with tinsel and flowers. A *faqir* deputy of the *sajjadanashin* stands up and asks the assembly if they have any disputes among themselves which need to be resolved. Generally, such cases involve complaints by one or more *faqirs* against other *faqirs* on account of misdemeanor. If any such complaint is made, the *sajjadanashin* allows both parties to the dispute to speak out. At the end, he makes his judgement, after taking into account the opinions of the elders among the *faqirs*. In this way, justice is administered swiftly, and, since the word of the *sajjadanashin* is law, without any acrimony. When the *dakhila* session is over, the *faqirs* touch the feet of the *sajjadanashin* and then, singing and playing their tambourines, proceed back to the *faqir chowk*.

Once they return, they assemble for a collective meal which they cook themselves. The afternoon is usually reserved for the initiation of new disciples into the *faqir* order or the appointment of khalifa or deputy to any one particular *faqir*. In both cases, permission must be taken before hand from the *sajjadanashin*, who decides each case on the basis of its own merit. The person who wishes to join the Qalandar or Rifai order, as the disciple (*murid*) of a particular *faqir*, has to undergo an elaborate ceremony. He first must have spent considerable time in the company of the person whom he wishes to takes as his preceptor (*murshid*). At the gathering of the *faqirs* at the *faqir chowk*, they would be *murshid* makes known to his fellow *faqirs* that he wishes to initiate a new disciple. Then, a *faqir* gets up and asks the *faqirs* if he has their permission to go ahead with the initiation ceremony. This request is repeated three times, and each time, if the *faqirs* collectively agree, they answer, '*Alhamdulillah* (praise be to Allah)! Then, the initiation ceremony begins.

A pair of scissors placed on a clean white cloth is passed around the assembly. Each *faqir* picks up the scissors and after turning

them over, places them back on the cloth. Then, a junior *faqir* clips some strands of hair from the neopyte's beard, moustache and eye brows and leads him by the ear to village barber. His ear is held on to so that his attention does not wander but remains focused on God alone. The barber completely shaves off all his body hair, and this is interpreted as a new birth. As the *faqirs* put, it is 'as if he has just come out into the world from his mother's womb'. The neophyte is then brought back to the *faqir* chowk, and he kneels down in front of the *faqir* whom he has chosen as his *murshid*. A leather belt (*rasma*) is tied around his waist and he is given a new dress to wear. This consists of a white shroud (*kafan*) which must be used to wrap his corpse when he dies. The *murshid* now recites the *kalima*, the words announcing allegiance to the Islamic creed, and some Koranic verses, and the neophyte recites them after him. Then, the *murshid* gives him a new name. This act symbolizes the washing away of sins and the birth into a new life. The neophyte prostrates (*sajada*) in humble submission before the *murshid*. Then, the *murshid* takes an earthen cup containing sweet lemon juice, and, taking a sip from it, gives it to the neophyte to drink. At this point, a *faqir* thumps on a drum and another blows a horn made of the antlers of a deer. The neophyte is now a full-fledged member of the *faqir* fraternity.

The new *faqir* is now given his own tambourine and mace with spikes on it (*guruz*) the external symbols of the *faqir* order. A junior *faqir* places the sharp edge of the *guruz* on the eyes, throat and chest of the new *faqir* as a symbolic *zarb*. The new *faqir* then goes around the assembly, touching the feet of the *faqirs* present and seeking their blessings. Each of them puts his hand on his head and places some coins or tobacco in the folds of his cloak as a present (*hadiya*). For the next three days, the new *faqir* must observe strict austerities. He is allowed to eat only one meal a day consisting just of plain bread. He must also observe strict silence during this period. After this, all the various

ceremonies associated with death, such as the observance on the eleventh and fortieth day, must be followed, for he is considered to have actually died to the world.

A similar, though less elaborate, ritual ceremony is followed in the case of the appointment of a khalifa or a deputy of a particular *faqir*. A junior *faqir* stands up and asks if he has the permission of the congregation to allow the appointment ceremony to go ahead. He repeats the question three times, and if the *faqirs* agree, they loudly reply, *Alhamdulillah*. Then, a new red silk cloak (*khirqah*) is passed in a black coconut shell (*kashkul* or *kishtar*) to the *murshid* who is to appoint his deputy. He wears the cloak, while the would-be *khalifa* kneels before him. The *murshid* then recites the *kalima* and some Koranic verses, and the would-be *khalifa* recites after him. Then, the *murshid* gives him a new name, and places the *khirqah* on him. The event concludes with a *faqir* playing a drum and another blowing a horn.

DAY THREE

This day concludes the Urs celebrations at the shrine. After the morning prayers are over, the *faqirs* begin a long march to the village of Jannat Nagar, some seven kilometres away. This village, now in ruins, has the graves of some seventy *faqir* companions of Baba Budhan who were martyred in an attack by the *pallekars*. Most of these graves have disappeared in the thick jungle, and only five are still tended to. The route to Jannat Nagar passes through high mountains and dense forests, home to a number of species of wild animals.

The *faqir* procession starts off with collective *dua* being offered, and some *faqirs* pierceing themselves with swords and flagellating themselves with whips. One *faqir* carries on his head a pot of sandalwood paste, and the rest accompany him. The procession is led by a group of *faqirs* who carry green flags strung on long bamboo poles. When the procession reaches

Jannat Nagar, it stops at a wayside temporary stall where water is served. Then, the *sandal* ceremony for the graves of two *shuhada* (martyrs), Malik Dinar and Malik Kabir, each some twenty feet long, is performed, in the same way as the case of Dada Hayat's *chillah* described above. The *sajjadanashin's* son officiates at this ceremony. Like his father, he, too, wears a saffron kurta and turban, the distinctive colour of the Qalandariyya order. After this, *namaz* (collective prayer) is offered at a decrepit mosque dating back to the times of Baba Budhan but not in ruins, in the jungle.

After the *namaz*, the *faqirs* are given a simple lunch of rice, lentils, meat and salad. This is known as the *faqiron ka langar*. The others present eat after the faqirs have finished. This over, the *faqirs* gather with the *sajjadanashin* or his deputy at their head, and begin a qawwali performance to the accompaniment of rhythmic clapping and the playing of tambourines. In the qawwalis the *faqirs* sing the praises of allah, the Prophet (PBUH) and the Qalandar masters. A distinct strain of social protest against oppression, the plight of the poor and worldly luxuries can be discerned in many of these songs.

The qawwali performance lasts for almost two hours, after which the *faqirs* walk back in a procession to the *khanqah*. Then, sandalwood ash from the incense that is burnt in the shrine of Dada Hayat is distributed in little packets, along with sugar, as holy offerings (*tabarruk*) to the *faqirs* and others. Coconuts, wrapped in green cloth, are also given to the pilgrims at a nominal charge. The *faqirs*, along with other pilgrims, enter the *khanqah* to pay their respects to the *sajjadanashin* before they depart. They generally bend down to touch his feet, and some of them prostrate before him. He blesses them by placing his hands on their heads.

The Urs now formally concludes, and most of the pilgrims and *faqirs* prepare to return to their homes. The stream of pilgrims coming to the dargah, however, continues for some three months till June, when the rains start.

RITUALS AT THE URS: BLENDING OF TRADITIONS

A striking aspect of the celebrations during the Urs is the blend of local and Islamic influences in the rituals that are observed and the participation of Hindus alongside Muslims in offering their respects to Dada Hayat. The most visible local or what, for want of a better term, may be called 'Hindu', influences are the breaking of coconuts outside the cave of Dada Hayat and the *chillah* of Mama Jigni at Palang Talab and the worship by some, though not all, pilgrims at the shrine of Biru Dev. For centuries Hindus have been flocking to the *dargah* during the Urs. Most of the Hindu pilgrims belong to the non-Brahmin, particularly 'low' castes, although there are some Marathas, Reddys, Jains and Rajputs among them. One 'low' caste respondent, a Chamar from Pune, who has been regularly attending the Urs for the past twenty years, remarks that what he finds particularly attractive about the dargah is the fact that here he is treated as a brother and is welcomed into the *khanqah* and given food and a place to sleep along with other pilgrims. He ways that in his own village the Brahmins refuse to allow him and other members of his caste to enter the temple.

Interestingly, the *sajjadanashin*, in fact, has an elderly Brahmin disciple, a retired bank clerk, who lives in the *khanqah* along with the *sajjadanashin's* other disciples and plays an important role in making arrangements for the comfortable stay of the pilgrims. This Brahmin had been instructed by his own guru, one Sridharswamy from Wardahally, the mediate at the shrine of Dada Hayat and serve the pilgrims there.

In many of their practices, the *faqirs* appear to resemble Hindu sadhus. Like the sadhus, many of them keep long, matted hair, wear necklaces and rings, smoke ganja and observe strict austerites. Some *faqirs* remain celibate throughout their lives, while others wander from dargah to dargah in the company of their disciples. Many, though not all, *faqirs* and not particularly strict in the observance of the sharia, including the five daily obligatory prayers. Many of them seem to believe that God

reveals Himself in every religious tradition, and point out that except for belief in the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), there is little to distinguish them from the sadhus and mystics of other faith-traditions. They stress that God is to be found not in mosques and examples, but in the hearts of ordinary people. This is best summed up in a verse of qawwali that they sing:

Alla ko dhundo Allah ke pyaron main
Allah samaya hai in 'ishq ke maron main

Search for Allah among those who are dear to Him
Allah lives among those who are maddened by love.

NOTES

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10. Ibid., pp. 24-5.
11. Ibid., p. 32.
12. Ibid., pp. 26-7.
13. John Bowker, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 261.
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15. P.M. Joshi, ed., *History of Medieval Deccan [1295-1724]*, vol. 1, Directorate of Printing and Publications, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1973, p. 212.
16. Asri and Jabbar, op. cit., p. 59.
17. Ibid., p. 82.
18. Muzaffar Assadi, 'Threats to Syncretie Culture: Baba Budan Giri Incident', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. xxxiv, no. 13, 27 March 1990, p. 747.
19. The faqirs admit that smoking ganja is against the sharia, but defend it on the grounds that they 'purify it of its intoxicating effects before consuming it. They

first sprinkle water on the ganja, and then rub it in their palms 40 times reciting the *kalima*. They say that they continue ganja in order to focus all their attention upon God alone.

NAVIN GHULAM HADIER ALI

Fazlur Rahman and the Academic Study of Islam in the West with Especial Reference to His Thought on Qur'anic Studies

Research and study of Islam in the West by the Western Islamists have always remained a critical issue for debate and discussion, both in the West itself and, most importantly, in the academic and non-academic circles in the Muslim world. Although the contributions made by the western scholars in the field of Islamic studies is commended by many, the approaches that some western Islamists have often taken to argue their views on the origin and the early life of Islam is vigorously criticized both by the western Islamists and the Muslim scholars. Fazlur Rahman, one of the most respected scholars in the academic circle of the East and West for his academic and scholarly integrity and impartiality, also had his views on the western scholarship on Islam. The present work brings to light the views and arguments of Fazlur Rahman on this particular issue, especially his views on the Qur'anic studies.

Fazlur Rahman spent the last 20 years of his life in the USA as a teacher, scholar, and spokesperson for Islam and the Muslims. Although, he was familiar with the academic environment of the Western scholarship of Islam; in fact, his initial professional and scholarly grooming took place in England and Canada and, therefore, it was an easy task for him to relocate himself in that academic environment when he returned to it in the 1970s. However, it seems important to place Fazlur Rahman in the academic life of the USA in the backdrop of the state of Islamic Studies in the West.

THE ACADEMIC STATUS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES IN THE WEST, THE USA IN PARTICULAR

Here, the status of Islamic studies in the West and the USA during the decades of the 1950s through to the 1980s has been discussed to find what scholarship was being produced during that period, so as to assess

and place Fazlur Rahman's contribution to it, and also to ascertain his take on what was being produced by the Western scholars in the field, especially by the Orientalists.

A look at the entire period from the 1950s through to the 1980s is essential for two reasons. First, although his book *Islam* was published in the decade of the 1960s, he completed it in 1956/58. Second, it appears that it was in his book *Islam* that he first started challenging some aspects of Western scholarship on Islam and he took up these issues with the Western scholars once again during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

But, before going any further, it is important to elaborate two facts here: First, although the term 'Islamic Studies' has been used here as an all-encompassing term for the field of studies in the West about Islam and Muslims, this is not only the head under which the study of Islam and Muslims has been done by the West, in the West. In fact, the study has been carried out in diverse fields and through diverse approaches, e.g. Oriental Studies, Area Studies, Religious Studies, etc. All of these have been discussed at some length below to understand the situation better.

Secondly, it seems that it is a regular feature of the scholarship in the West and the USA to assess their field themselves at some regular intervals, to critically re-evaluate their conclusions and methods, and to adjust the field according to the changing situation; some of these adjustments arise out of some political events in their respective countries, for example, the 9/11 and its impact on the academic study of Islam.

The event of 11 September 2001, commonly known as 9/11 was a blessing in disguise for the field of Islamic Studies in the USA and the West, especially in Britain. Since there was a security threat to the people of the USA from the extremists/terrorists from the Muslim lands, more funds were made available, and there was more focus on the field of research and teaching of Islamic Studies. That increase of interest in all that was 'Islam' was evident in,

(A) New abundance in colleges and universities of faculty openings and curriculums that deal with the Islamic religious traditions. As a consequence, Islamic studies as a field in departments of religion in North America has recently become more apparent than in the past—in the classrooms, bookstores, professional societies, and conferences worldwide on Islamic topics.[1]

That urgent security pressure aside, most of the experts in the field of Islamic Studies, however, agree that the struggle for a proper place of

Islamic Studies in the broader fields of religious studies, social sciences, and humanities is not new and has nothing to do with that urgent surge. They maintain that 'While, Islamic studies as a field, has been powerfully affected by political events, debates within the academy have had a longer and more pervasive role in shaping, and sometimes ignoring, the area of inquiry'.[2]

Some examples of these internal academic debates, amongst the experts associated with the field, to improve the position of the discipline have been mentioned here, in brief. The earliest effort to critically evaluate the situation was made by an Islamist himself, Charles J. Adams (1924–2011), who did this in two of his articles of the same title, i.e. 'The History of Religions and the Study of Islam.'[3] In his first article of 1967, Adams mentioned that although there was emphasis at the University of Chicago on comparative studies in the history of religions; one could not really see any 'direct and fructifying relationship between the activities of Islamists and those of the historians of Religion'.[4]

Another work that evaluates the state of Islamic Studies in America is a recent one. This is in the form of a paper, co-authored by Kurzman and Ernst, and was presented at the Social Sciences Research Council's workshop on 'The production of Knowledge on World Regions: The Middle East,' on 30 September 2009. The title of the paper was 'Islamic Studies in US Universities'. As the title of the paper suggests, the discussion focused mainly on the contemporary situation of the field of Islamic Studies and its organizational position. One key point that the authors mention is the challenge that Islamic Studies was facing in the USA after 9/11 due to political attempts to link Islam with security threats. This, according to the authors, was creating hurdles for scholars who wanted to study the field.[5]

Nonetheless, the paper also throws light on the historical evolution of the field of Islamic Studies, and some of their categories have been helpful in the debate that follows. However, the paper concludes that, 'Over the past century, universities have experimented with several institutional formats for this field, and none of them has proved entirely satisfactory'.[6]

Another seminal work on the state of Islamic Studies in the West, especially in America, is entitled *Observing the Observer: The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities*.[7] The description of the book rightly represents the spirit of the book:

Over the last few decades the United States has experienced significant growth in the study of Islam and Islamic societies in institutions of higher learning duelled primarily by events including economic relations of the US with Muslim countries, migration of Muslims into the country, conversion of Americans to Islam, US interests in Arab oil resources, involvement of Muslims in the American public square, and the tragic events of 9/11. Although there is an increasing recognition that the study of Islam and the role of Muslims is strategically essential in a climate of global integration, multiculturalism, and political turmoil, nevertheless, the state of Islamic Studies in America is far from being satisfactory. The issue needs to be addressed.

This work is basically an effort to point out gaps and needs to fill them in the field of Islamic Studies. It not only gives a historical background of how and why the Islamic Studies could not get its due place, particularly in regard to its being a political, in the academic institutions of the USA, but also suggests ways to solve the issue. When experts in the field, like Seyyed Hossein Nasr and John O. Voll, pen down the issue, it has to be something worthwhile, since they, particularly Nasr, has not only witnessed the growth and the pace of growth of Islamic Studies in the United States and Europe, but they have practically worked and tried to shape it along non-ideological lines. Hence, the Introduction and the first two articles written by Nasr and Voll, respectively, are more important than the other entries and these have been referred to frequently in the discussion below.

The works of Richard C. Martin dealing with evaluating the field of Islamic Studies have consciously been left for discussion, because no other scholars of the field seems to have evaluated this field in such a deep and extensive manner as Martin did. Beside this, his work appears to be the most objective account of the state of Islamic Studies in America and it provides a deep insight into the continuing debates amongst the scholars of the field regarding its place and shape.

The first edited work of Martin on the subject of Islamic Studies, as a field of studies and its scope and limitation in the context of America, was the outcome of 'an international symposium on "Islam and the History of Religions", hosted by the Department of Religious Studies at the Arizona State University, Tempe, in January 1980'. The papers presented in the symposium were edited and published in a book form, entitled *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies,* in 1985, by Martin. The purpose of the conference, according to Martin, was,

to link Islamic studies with the history of religions' scholarship. The idea was to try to cross-pollinate Islamic studies, which until then had been deeply embedded in Oriental studies and Middle East area studies, with theories and ideas circulating in religious studies.[8]

   The significance of the book, in the context of Fazlur Rahman, is that, at the time of editing the papers for the book, Martin approached him, although he was not a participant in the symposium, to write a review on the papers included in the book. How Fazlur Rahman viewed these contributions have also been discussed elsewhere in this paper, but here, in Martin's own words, are his views on Fazlur Rahman's contribution: 'In his response, Fazlur Rahman demonstrated intellectual and thematic qualities that are now memorable in his work.'[9]

   In cooperation with another well recognized Islamist, Carl W. Ernst, Martin edited yet another book, entitled *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, in 2012. As the title of the book suggests, this was basically a sequel to, and a reappraisal of, the subject matter of his previous work, *Approaches to Islamic Studies*. In the preface of the book, the editors, Ernst and Martin, mention,

That volume, based on a 1980 conference, signalled a major transition from unself-conscious forms of Oriental Studies to a more reflexive application of religious studies approaches. The essays in the current volume are envisaged as a generational sequel and advance upon that earlier effort, taking full account of the critical developments in the understanding of Islam in recent years.[10]

   In yet another article, Martin evaluates the field of Islamic Studies as he observed it as a participant. In the article entitled 'Islamic Studies in American Academy: A Personal Reflection',[11] Martin states that he was invited by the editor to write an article on, 'The presence and development of Islamic Studies in the *Academy*', based on his 'personal experiences and observation, not an official history' [emphasis mine].[12] Thus, in this article he narrates his personal account, starting from 1970 to the first decade of the twenty-first century.

   Now let us turn to the evolution that all the above-mentioned works indicate in the field of Islamic Studies, and the rubric that covers the historical, traditional, and cultural aspects of Islam and Muslims, which Nasr describes in these words: 'At the heart of Islamic Studies stands not only the religion of Islam, but also the languages involved with the study of that religion and the civilization Islam created.'[13]

It was mentioned at the outset that the disciplines of Oriental Studies, Area Studies, and Religious Studies will be explored to track the presence of Islamic Studies, because it seems that 'The study of Islam has been, in effect, uneasily poised between Orientalism and area studies on the one hand and religious studies on the other.'[14]

ORIENTAL STUDIES

Defining Oriental Studies or Orientalism is not an easy task, especially after Edward Said's controversial thesis on the subject. However, it is not always that this term has been defined in a negative way. Since the first area of Islamic Studies, whether in Europe or America, was Oriental Studies, or as is commonly known Orientalism, some understanding about how it was conceived by some important authors is needed. Defining Orientalism in the European context, Edward Said says,

Orientalism, a way of coming to terms with the Orient, is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the others. [emphasis is in the original][15]

He further admits that 'the term *Orientalism* is less preferred by specialists today, both because it is too vague and general and because it connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European colonialism'. However, he maintains that, 'even if it does not survive as it once did, Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient and the Oriental'.[16]

In comparatively neutral terms, Orientalism is defined by Albert Hourani as,

The development of the scholarly tradition known loosely as 'Orientalism': the elaboration of techniques for identifying, editing and interpreting written texts, and the transmission of them from one generation to another, by a chain—a *silsila*, to give it its Arabic term—of teachers and students.[17]

However, Hourani was aware of the fact that culture, present and past, influences scholars' interpretation, and their selection and organization of thoughts and content.[18] Hence, simply put, Orientalism can be

defined as 'the erudite study of texts and ideas that became a highly developed field in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe and the United States'.[19]

Eschewing this debate any further, here the development of the discipline of Oriental Studies and how the field of Islamic Studies benefited or was affected under this discipline has been discussed.

In the European context, the roots of Islamic Studies are very deep, and are connected with the development, in the West itself, of the perspectives, modes, and methods of scholarship during such periods as the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. Despite these evolutionary developments, some particular thoughts and concepts were passed on from generation to generation.[20] Through the centuries, these 'established canons of Western interpretation of Islam developed and maintained a remarkably high degree of continuity'.[21] It was more or less on this conceptual foundation that Orientalism was adopted 'as the intellectual and scholarly mode for the study of Islam in the West'.[22] In England, the establishment of institutions like the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1917 reflects the dominance of the Orientalist approach to the study of Islam in the West until the middle of the twentieth century.[23]

According to Kurzman and Ernst, 'As in Europe, Islamic Studies in the US originated in the tradition of Orientalist scholarship and Christian theology, with its strong textual emphasis'.[24] But, the interest of the scholars of the US in Islam goes back to the eighteenth century; the first professor of Islamic Studies in the US is considered to be Duncan Black Macdonald, a professor of Semitic languages at the Hartford Theological Seminary, appointed as the director of the Muhammad department in 1911.[25]

Although the Orientalist approach was dominant in the study of Islam in the West, there seems to be agreement among the academicians about the limited scope of Orientalism as being the field for studying the Orient, especially Islam and Muslims. Some of the weaknesses mentioned are as follows:

- Initially, there was an absence of direct participation by Muslim scholars in the field, and the study of Islam by the West was totally a one-sided affair, without even direct contact with the people about whom the Western scholars were producing their scholarship.[26]

- Oriental Studies primarily involved text-based study and identified Islam with the 'great tradition' of urban literate civilization in the Muslim world.
- It paid little attention to what were viewed as the superstitions and perversions of so-called 'popular Islam'.[27]
- The philological method, the key method of the Orientalists, encouraged the notion armed with a dictionary and a grammar, the armchair scholar of Oriental languages could decipher all that was important about the culture and character of the Orientals.[28]
- Also, there were issues of power and colonialism associated with the institutional aspect of Orientalist study.[29]

Whatever the criticism on Orientalists or the Oriental Studies, and despite the fact that the Orientalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were, by and large, motivated by missionary and imperial motives, they were the ones who impressed and influenced early modernists like 'Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in India, who tried to articulate a modern understanding of Islam'.[30] Moreover, it is very important to note that they were the ones who helped initiate a dialogue between Islam and the West, by the early twentieth century.

AREA STUDIES

While considering area studies as the venue for the study of Islam, one should bear in mind what Martin said, that area studies covers both the departments of Near East studies and the Middle East studies. He further adds that both these departments be considered as parts of area studies rather than as separate academic disciplines.[31]

Whatever its geographical location, academicians agree that area studies was an offshoot of Oriental Studies. Also, that 'By the 1960s, 'Oriental Studies' was typically split into different sections, with the departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations emerging as the home of research of Islam and Muslim societies, alongside the study of the ancient Near East'.[32] Moreover, it is worth noting that 'If Near Eastern studies departments shared any intellectual perspective, it would be the Orientalism that was fostered by a reliance on philological methods and a nearly exclusive focus on texts'.[33]

Hence, agreeing on the fact that area studies, as a discipline, emerged

from Oriental Studies, and greatly benefitted from the methods and approaches of Oriental Studies, one must take note of the lines on which it developed:

Area studies developed as a methodological approach for the study of human societies. The approach emphasized the need to view societies as whole entities, and to give attention to the actual operation of societies, not just to the literature of the literate urban educated elite. Its advocates called for a multi-disciplinary methodology and, in practice, the core disciplines were the social sciences, including history understood as a social science.[34]

The basic reasons for the creation of these departments of Near and Middle Eastern studies in both Europe and America were almost identical. These centres of studies were created 'on the justification of the immediate relevance of the Middle East for security issues and policy users'.[35] Giving reasons for the creation of these centres in the American context, Nasr explains that with America becoming an active player on the world stage after World War II, 'Centres of regional studies began to develop in many universities throughout the country, from Harvard to UCLA, usually under the name of Middle Eastern but also occasionally Near Eastern studies'.[36]

It would only be a half-truth if it were not clearly mentioned here that this interest of the West, especially the US, in Muslim regions was reciprocated by the leaders of these countries also. In fact, a sizable amount of money was expended by countries like Saudi Arabia for the creation and promotion of such centres on the soil of the US, because both were against the communist ideology. Moreover, the Muslims feared Russian political ambitions, so to save their lands from communist takeover they decided to have strong ties with the US.[37]

Whatever the strategic and political reasons for the creation of these regional study centres in the West, the intellectual reasons for setting them up were based 'on the concept of an interdisciplinary approach to a given region'.[38]

Like Oriental Studies, the area studies too had some major shortcomings as the venue for studying Islam; some of these are as follows:

- Within the framework of area studies, Islam came to be identified with a particular area: the Middle East. Since the early abode of Islam was Middle East, and because strategically Middle East was more

important for the West, it was identified as a distinctive region; hence the Middle Eastern Islam was viewed as distinctive and definitive.

- The consequence was that the Islam practiced in the regions outside that geographical boundary, such as in Sub Sahara Africa, South and South-East Asia, etc., was considered to have deviated from 'pure' Islam.
- This importance of Middle East as the centre of pure Islam also made the culture of the area superior to other regional cultures where Islam became the home to the faith of the people subsequently.
- This approach reinforced the social science bias of area studies by viewing Islam as a social and cultural phenomenon rather than as a human faith experience.[39]
- The consequences were that area studies centres and departments generally considered religion to be a secondary subject of no major importance; this reflects the influence of the secularization theory on the social sciences.[40]
- Oriented mostly toward the present day and based in social sciences rather than theology, religion, or the humanities, these centres taught many subjects concerning the Islamic world but made minimal reference to Islam itself.[41]

The above-mentioned criticism aside, the fact is that 'some intellectuals and scholars resisted this marginalization of religion and, in the long run, helped to correct the gaps in area studies'.[42] Hence, 'Since the 1950s, there have been a number of phases in the evolution of area studies and in the development of scholarly studies of Islam'.[43]

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Despite Peter Burger's observation, that he could not see any reversal in the process of secularization produced by industrialization and that traditional religions were likely to be limited to few places and people, the 1970s witnessed a phase of religious revival.[44] One of the reasons was the growing protest against the Vietnam War and a developing urge for an alternative lifestyle among the people living in the US and Western Europe.[45] 'That led to a new interest in 'Eastern' religion, astrology, witchcraft, drugs, spiritualism, and other phenomena that were presumably incompatible with modern scientific knowledge.' However, contrary to the above-mentioned reasons, the interest in Islam in the

same decade, in the West, was due to the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978–9, which was quite violent in nature.

As far as the roots of religious studies in the West, especially in the US are concerned they are deeper than this particular decade, 'The academic study of religion in Euro-America emerged over the last century, first in Protestant seminaries, then in Catholic and, eventually, in Jewish institutions.'[46]

The Department of Religious Studies founded in Harvard University, in 1936, had a vital role in training the ministers in religion.[47] As a result, religious studies took a descriptive and analytical perspective, rather than performing a prescriptive or authoritative function, in the public regulation of religion.[48] Hence,

From its original typical concentration on Biblical studies and Protestant theology . . . the curriculum in these departments of religious studies began to expand in the 1960s. It was not long before Judaism, Catholicism, and the Asian traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Shinto began to be commonly encountered as academic subjects. Islamic studies have also been incorporated into religious studies curricula.[49]

The first University which took up Islamic Studies in its institution was the McGill University of North America, in 1954. The Institute was innovative in two respects. First, it treated Islam as the faith of millions in Southern Asia today, where the numerical majority of Muslims live, in contrast to the emphasis of most of the orientalist scholarship on classical Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature. Second, it strove to include roughly equal numbers of Muslims and Westerners in both its faculty and its student body.[50] Then, gradually, the religious studies department started to become a home for Islamic Studies in America.

However, as in the case with Oriental Studies and Area Studies, Religious Studies also had some limitations, as far as Islamic Studies was concerned. These are as follows:

- In America, there are, in fact, only a handful of institutions of higher learning, like the University of Chicago and the Temple University, where Islam is studied seriously in religion departments as a religion.
- Despite the rapid expansion of religious studies on this continent, during the past three decades (1980s through the first decade of the twenty-first century), to include 'non-Western' religions, and the establishment of centres for the study of religion on a wider scale,

such as those at Harvard, Colgate, and Claremont, Islam has not received due recognition as compared to Hinduism, Buddhism, or the Chinese religions.

- The discipline of comparative religion, in fact, has produced very few Islamists of note.
- Another drawback of hosting Islamic Studies within the department of religious studies is the perception that this site limits the interdisciplinary approach of the field.[51]

To conclude this part of the survey of the state of Islamic Studies in the various disciplines in the universities of the West, especially in the US, Seyyed Husain Nazr's observation seems quite appropriate:

The criticism made about Islamic studies in America is not intended to detract from the achievements in this domain by a number of American scholars in so many fields such as Islamic history, anthropology, sociology, the history of art and archaeology, music, literature, philosophy, the history of science, and several aspects of the religion of Islam itself. Yet, considering the importance of the subject, the distortions and high price in terms of practical matters that the Islamic world and America have paid, and continue to pay, as a result of the misunderstanding of Islam and the Islamic world in America, it is necessary to investigate how to improve the situation.[52]

With respect to the present work, this investigation becomes important because Fazlur Rahman was amongst one of the scholars who tried to bridge the gap of misunderstanding between the American (and the Western world at large) and the Islamic world.

However, the debate on the condition of Islamic studies in the academic field after post-modernism, post-Orientalism, and, above all, the post-globalism phenomenon, has consciously been avoided. This is because all these phenomena are generally post-Fazlur Rahman, i.e. these phenomena or the debates on these phases of the studies of Islam in the West had not yet taken a definite shape during Fazlur Rahman's life time; hence, one could not expect any observations from him on the situation.

QUR'ANIC STUDIES

It would be appropriate to comment here, separately, on the academic discussion on one of the central themes of Islamic Studies, the Qur'anic

Studies, at some length. The reason for this is that Fazlur Rahman took the study of the Qur'an in the West most seriously and started responding to Western scholarship on the subject. Besides, it was in the Qur'an studies that the Western scholarship questioned an aspect which could become a challenge to the very roots of the origin of the faith of Islam itself.

Writing a 'foreword' to a recent title on the Qur'an, published in 2008, Daniel A. Madigan observes,

Three decades ago, when a number of revisionist approaches[53] to the Qur'an and early Islamic history were proposed within the space of a few years, the questions at issue and the mutually incompatible answers proposed seemed of interest almost exclusively to scholars.[54]

Hence, the discussion that follows focuses on this scholarly debate.

Since the 1970s, there have been many scholars whose work falls in this category of revisionist approach; these include, Luling, Wansbrough, Nevo, Koren, and Luxenberg, to name a few.[55] Their main argument is that:

The master narrative of Qur'anic origins, which was developed in medieval Islamic literature, is historically unreliable. Contemporary scholars, they argue, should therefore be free to observe the Qur'an without gazing through the lens of that literature. Thereby, they might arrive at surprisingly novel interpretations of Qur'anic passages.[56]

The most representative of these novel interpretations of Qur'anic passages was in the writings of John Wansbrough (1928–2002). Attempts had earlier been made by scholars, such as Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), Theodor Noldeke (1836–1930), Tor Julius Efraim Andrae (1885–1947), Karl Ahrens, and some others, to question the 'unquestionable dependence of the Muslim scriptures upon several Judaeo-Christian motifs',[57] but these efforts were not as deep and far reaching as Wansbrough's, 'nor had they offered a systematic exposition of the whole matter within their writings, which becomes in Wansbrough a most complex historical and theoretical problem of the greatest importance in the study of Islamic origins'.[58]

Although Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht had also questioned the alleged historicity of Prophetic traditions on which, along with the Qur'an, stands Muslim *Shari'a*, they still had confidence in various other traditional records and data. There is no doubt that Wansbrough also

relied on them but he also took inspiration from Walter Baur (1877–1960), who provided him a model for the late development of orthodoxy. Others, like Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), Wilhelm Schlatter, and Chaim Rabbin (1915–96), were scholars who had either mentioned or explored the possible influences of Judaeo-Christianity upon formative Islam. But it was Wansbrough who 'moved a step further, questioning the pre-existence of an autonomous entity upon which influence could be exerted, and hence, settled the critical foundations of contemporary scholarship on Islamic origins'.[59] Several authors have since proceeded along similar paths, independently of Wansbrough's much debated insights; to name two: Patricia Crone (b. 1945) and Michael Cook (b. 1940).[60]

Here, it would be appropriate to throw light on some major aspects of Wansbrough's arguments and how it has been received by scholars in the field of Islamic studies, generally, in recent years, before coming to discuss how Fazlur Rahman reacted and responded to it.

Since Wansbrough's writing style is profoundly learned but often obtuse, it is often difficult to understand his thought. Hence, instead of picking them directly from his works, his arguments have been borrowed from secondary sources, for reasons of ease and clarity.

- First, Wansbrough uses a historical analysis, similar to that of biblical criticism, to arrive at his conclusions. He maintains that the Qur'an, as we know it, with all its literal and structural problems, could not have come into existence until 800 AD. The Qur'an, he suggests, is not a text which was handed to the world via one individual, but it involves the work of various writers from about the ninth century.[61]
- Second, expanding on the above claim, Wansbrough maintains that the entire corpus of early Islamic documentation must be viewed as 'Salvation History', a history which 'is not a historical account of saving events open to study by the historian, since salvation history did not happen, as it is a literary form which has its own historical context. In other words it was written keeping an agenda in mind. Thus, literary records of salvation history, although they present themselves as being contemporary with the events they describe, actually belong to a period well after such events, which suggests that they have been written according to a later interpretation in order to fit the ethos of that later time'.[62]

- Therefore, the conclusion Wansbrough reaches is that the Qur'an, the *Tafsir*, and *Sira* are all components of Islamic salvation history, which he suggests were written to point to God's role in directing the worldly affairs of humanity, especially during the time of Muhammad's life.[63]
- Wansbrough further argues that the rise of Islam was a mutation, rather than a simple cultural diffusion, of what was originally a Judeo-Christian sect trying to spread in Arab lands. As time evolved, the Judeo-Christian scriptures were adapted to an Arab perspective and mutated into what became the Qur'an, which was developed over centuries, with contributions from various Arab tribal sources.
- Wansbrough's research suggests that a great deal of the traditional history of Islam appeared to be a fabrication of later generations, seeking to forge and justify a unique religious identity. With this context, the character of Muhammad could be seen as a manufactured myth created to provide the Arab tribes with their own Arab version of the Judeo-Christian Prophet.[64]

As mentioned earlier, at the same time when Wansbrough was reaching the conclusions mentioned above, by applying the biblical-criticism method on the Qur'an, some other scholars of the field were reaching almost the same conclusions through other methods and materials. In 1977, Crone and Cook suggested a radically new approach in their book, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*. They adopted a different route for, they argued, there are no Arabic chronicles from the first century of Islam, therefore, they used several non-Muslim, seventh-century accounts. Without going into the details of their method and approach, suffice to mention here only the conclusions they reached from their new source materials.

According to them, first, their new sources suggested that Muhammad was perceived not as the founder of a new religion but as a preacher of the Old Testament tradition, hailing the coming of a Messiah. Many of the early documents, they say, refer to the followers of Muhammad as 'hagarenes', and the 'tribe of Ishmael'; in other words as descendants of Hagar, the servant girl that the Jewish patriarch Abraham used to father his son Ishmael.[65]

Second, Crone and Cook argue, in the earliest stages, the followers of Muhammad may have seen themselves as retaking their place in the Holy Land alongside their Jewish cousins (and many Jews appear to

have welcomed the Arabs as liberators when they entered Jerusalem in 638).[66]

Third, and most importantly, they conclude that the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition present a fundamental paradox. The Qur'an is a text soaked in monotheistic thinking, filled with stories and references to Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Jesus, and yet the official history insists that Muhammad, an illiterate camel merchant, received the revelation in Mecca, a remote, sparsely populated part of Arabia, far from the centres of monotheistic thought, in an environment of idol-worshipping Arab Bedouins. Unless one accepts the idea of the angel Gabriel, they say, historians must somehow explain how all these monotheistic stories and ideas found their way into the Qur'an. Hence, according to Crone and Cook, there are only two possibilities, either there had to be a substantial number of Jews and Christians in Mecca or the Qur'an had to have been composed somewhere else (the wider historical context of the religions of the Middle East rather than seeing it as the spontaneous product of the pristine Arabian desert).[67]

Another major contribution to the debate on the origins of Islam with new research material and sources is credited to Nevo. This Israeli archaeologist, working in the Negev (southern Israel) area, ahead of the Negev Archaeological Project,[68] thoroughly examined the archaeological and epigraphic evidence contemporary with the Arab conquest and reached some exciting conclusions.[69] About the origins of Arab religion and the Arab state, his study revealed that the latter (i.e. the Arab State), once established after the Byzantine withdrawal from the Near East, did not fully promote Islam until the rise of the Abbasides.[70] Nevo based his conclusions on the religious terminology in the inscriptions he found on the sites. He argued that the Arabic inscriptions found during his Negev expeditions, primarily at a site named Sede Boqer, reveal a progressive religious development—from an indeterminate monotheism to formal Islamic doctrine—during the first two Islamic centuries.[71] Like Wansbrough, Nevo deeply mistrusted the Islamic sources, which he believed were the products of a community creating, and not recoding, a history. Yet, unlike Wansbrough, Nevo believed that the actual succession of events that led to the Qur'an and Islam could be reconstructed.[72]

Thus, it can be concluded that the revisionist scholars,

(A) agree on one basic percept: the link between the Qur'an and the biography of Muhammad is illusory. The story of the Qur'an's origins must be seen in a much broader perspective. Only once the Qur'an is freed from the narrow category of that biography, can it be fully appreciated.

However, these revisionist scholars have very little in common except for that basic percept. 'Their theories form a cacophony, not a symphony, all of which contributes to the sense that Revisionists have provided no respectable alternative narrative.'[73]

As the above quotation suggests, the revisionists' narrative did not go without criticism. Therefore, before presenting Fazlur Rahman's criticism to this approach, let us look at some other major criticisms, by other scholars in the field of Islamic Studies, to this approach.

Daniel J. Sahas, reviewing the special issue of *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, devoted to an appreciation of Wansbrough's work,[74] severely criticized this approach of the revisionist scholars. According to him, 'By demythologizing as salvation history early Islamic literature, the Qur'an *tafsir*, and *Sira* (grouped together as coincidental and identical for some unexplained reason), Wansbrough mythologizes hypothetical "history" itself.' Referring to Adams article, he points out,

Adams finds Wansbrough's literary method of studying the development of early Islam 'problematic'. Ironically, Wansbrough's idiosyncratic language and methodology have not illuminated, according to Sahas, let alone undone, the reality of an oral, unstructured, popular process operating in the emergence and evolution of Islam within a naturally spontaneous, complex and religiously charged milieu.[75]

Sahas further criticizes Western scholars, including Wansbrough, for interpreting a 'complex phenomenon' from a fixed perspective, that of biblical criticism, without first familiarizing themselves with the context of that period. He also says that the terms that they have used, 'Mohammedan *evangelium*, (or evangelism)' and the way they have described the Qur'an as a 'series of uncoordinated periscopes to meet the liturgical and didactic needs of a group or communities in a sectarian milieu within mainstream Semitic monotheism' do not make much sense to both Muslim and many Western scholars today.

Furthermore, he argues that,

If the Qur'an is not to be read on its own terms and ground, then one *must,* accept that its exegesis has developed through haggadic, halakhic, masoretic,

rhetorical, and allegorical Judeo-Christian approximations—a safe way of destroying a priori the autonomy of the Qur'an and of the Islamic consciousness, and of venturing into speculation.[76]

He concludes that Wansbrough's treatment of the origins of Islam, as being historically vague, raises various questions. Moreover, says Sahas, his theories regarding the codification of the Qur'an have been challenged in Whelan's article, published posthumously.[77] Whelan has challenged Wansbrough's theories on the basis of historical and archaeological evidence.

In an evasive tone, the revisionist scholarship has also been criticized by Madigan,[78] who believes that: (a) the reconstruction of Islamic origins or of earlier layers of the Qur'an, will not answer all questions about the lived Islam, nor will it provide solutions for the conflicts afflicting the world.[79] (b) 'The "real" meaning of the Qur'an is to be found in what it actually says to actual people—in a privileged way to the community of believers for whom it is more than an ancient text.'[80] (c) 'significant "new readings" of the Qur'an will more likely emerge from an engagement with the "world in front of the text" than from the archaeology of the 'world behind the text.' (d) 'The popular . . . response to Luxenberg's work . . . seems to reflect two conflicting hopes—the more negative is a desire to see the foundations of the Qur'an discredited, and along with them the Muslim faith. The more positive is the hope for a new reading of the Qur'an that would form the basis of a constructive relationship between those who read it in faith and those who may not regard it as revelation.'[81]

In short, it can be concluded that the works of the revisionists authors have little in common, except their basic percept. They have not been able to present a methodology that can be a 'challenge to the current paradigm'. The result is that instead of adding to the paradigm of Qur'anic Studies, all these works have only added to the confusion and discord.[82]

FAZLUR RAHMAN AND THE FIELD OF ISLAMIC STUDIES IN THE WEST IN GENERAL AND THE FIELD OF THE QUR'ANIC STUDIES IN PARTICULAR

It must be mentioned here that the above statement was made in 2008, almost two decades after Fazlur Rahman's death in 1988. The discussion

that follows covers Fazlur Rahman's reaction and response to the earlier manifestation of this approach, the one that was under debate in his life-time.

Before coming to the Western studies of Islam and its impact on Muslims, both living in the West and in the Muslim world, Fazlur Rahman found it necessary to give a background of the state of religious studies in general, and Islamic Studies, in particular, specifically in the medieval history of Islam. According to him, 'Until relatively recently, the creation of a tradition was exclusively the work of the bearers of that tradition: the Chinese, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians.'[83] What Fazlur Rahman probably meant by this was that studying, modifying, adding, and subtracting anything from a traditional faith system and explaining what it actually meant was the responsibility of that very faith tradition. For example, it was supposed to be the exclusive responsibility of a Christian or a Muslim to explain what Christianity or Islam actually was, and, mostly, people of other faiths took that as the true meaning of that religious tradition, and would very seldom challenge it. If ever one tradition met another at any point in time they definitely influenced each other, 'although this process of creative assimilation sometimes produced considerable alteration in its internal structure'.[84] An example of this kind could be Medieval India when the Hindu and Muslim faith traditions met.

In addition to this natural assimilation and absorption, sometimes there were deliberate attempts to study traditions and cultures other than one's own. The example in this respect that Fazlur Rahman mentioned was the medieval Muslim geographer and historian Al Biruni, whose account on India he found very objective, as compared to the account of the modern Western scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarding areas and civilizations other than their own.[85]

About the medieval tradition of Islamic studies, created by the Muslims themselves, Fazlur Rahman had his own point of view, which it seems unnecessary to discuss here but in short, according to him, throughout history, in the hands of the theologians, lawyers, philosophers, Sufis, and even the orthodox *ulama*, the true spirit of the sources of Islam, i.e. the Qur'an and Sunnah, lost their originality.

As far as the modern west was concerned, Fazlur Rahman argued that since the nineteenth century, most people had held the view that Western civilization was the only option that the world had for the future. Hence, if other traditions were not to be wiped out by this dominant

Western civilization, they would have to undergo a major adaptation.[86] He contended that the core of this Western self-image was complex: it comprised new technology and secular-democratic values.[87]

As far as the Western encounter with the Muslim world was concerned, it was mainly the result of Western colonialism. With the above mentioned state of mind, that Western civilization was the only option, this political hegemony led to the creation of the kind of scholarship and study of Islam that was questioned by many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, including Fazlur Rahman; this will be discussed in detail, later. However, one interesting impact of this colonial period on the insiders, the makers of the tradition, i.e. the Muslims themselves, was that it blocked their ability 'to rethink their heritage with some rational distance and objectivity in order to reconstruct an Islamic future'. This resulted in renewed conservatism, and an increasingly harder approach with each passing day.[88]

Coming to the evolution of Islamic Studies in the West, Fazlur Rahman evaluated it with his sharp rational critical insight. He made it clear at the outset that he would keep the Christian polemical writings and arguments aside, as these were considered to be too anti-Islam by many people. However, he openly admitted that,

Christian attitudes to Islam have recently undergone and are in the process of undergoing fairly drastic change. Further, even many otherwise scientific writers on Islam, including historians, display at points a fanaticism that might cause even a hardened Christian missionary to pale.[89]

Fazlur Rahman was fully cognizant of the fact that misunderstandings and misinterpretations were a part of human approaches to everything, including natural science.[90] As far as the study of religious belief was concerned, he was of the opinion that here,

We are confronted with a phenomenon that consists in values, convictions, and feelings that involve the utmost depths of the human mind or, rather, the human psyche. Religions certainly have observable expressions and measurable vehicles or institutionalized manifestations, but it is precisely the meaning of these expressions, vehicles, and manifestations that is at issue.[91]

Moreover, he also realized that Western scholarship on Islam had various approaches and methods to observe these religious expressions, vehicles, and institutions; such as, historical, phenomenological, personalist, literary, etc.

Entering into one of the main debates, i.e. insider-outsider in Islamic Studies,[92] Fazlur Rahman's stand was that, 'an intellectual understanding and appreciation of Islam is quite possible for a non-Muslim who is unprejudiced, sensitive and knowledgeable'.[93] However, he considered that some checks were necessary on the scholars outside the particular tradition, for their observations to be as objective as humanly possible:

- The investigating subject should not be inimical to or prejudiced against the object of his or her study, i.e., Islam, but rather be open-minded and, if possible sympathetically attuned.
- Prejudice is not confined to religious or other emotional conditions. Intellectual prejudice may come in the form of preconceived notions or categories. Honesty is the only remedy to this kind of intellectual prejudice. And the best way is to admit that one's categories have broken down.
- However, some ways of intellectually constructing reality are such that even when they are grossly inadequate the subject cannot often easily recognize those inadequacies. One such example is 'historical reductionism, where a scholar may attempt to "explain" Islam's genesis and even its nature with reference to Jewish, Christian, or other "influences".'[94]

The Muslim scholars' protest against this last mentioned kind of scholarship was its show of brazen-faced cultural superiority—whether in the form of religious prejudice, cultural prejudice, or some form of intellectual prejudice. Fazlur Rahman believed that, 'Pre-nineteenth-century, Western treatment of Islam suffered from the first while nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship suffered particularly from the last two'.[95] Examples of criticism against cultural and intellectual superciliousness, at its earliest, can be found in Turkish modernist Namik Kemal's *Refutation of Renan*, and later on in Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Related to this debate of insider-outsider is the method of participatory research, commonly known as phenomenological approach.[96] Fazlur Rahman favoured this approach so long as 'its users recognize the Qur'an and sunnah as normative criterion-referents for all expressions and understandings of Islam'.[97] However, to make his point about 'Qur'an and sunnah as normative criterion-referents' Fazlur Rahman explained that even if outsider participatory observers have all the

qualities mentioned above, of a genuine, unbiased scholar, they should keep some major questions in mind before drawing any conclusions about a religious tradition. One such question was: whether or not all believers or followers of a given religion, that is, all members of a given religious community, understood their religion adequately, if not fully, or not? If not, as Fazlur Rahman believed was mostly the case, then in what sense could *their* attitude to their religion be participatory, in any meaningful way? [emphasis is that of Fazlur Rahman][98]

The reason why Fazlur Rahman put these kinds of cautious questions before the outsider scholars was that in most of the religious tradition, according to him, 'especially among religions with well-defined orthodoxies or concrete traditional cores, some followers continuously make statements that others—perhaps a majority—reject'. Moreover, 'what many Muslims may have regarded as being of great importance to Islam in one period may differ from what they may have emphasized in an earlier or later period'.[99] Therefore, Fazlur Rahman suggested that, 'We must distinguish between the religious communities as bearers of religious cultures and the normative truths or transcendent aspects of religions, as in the case of Islam'.[100]

Fazlur Rahman believed that the part of Islam which had become the property of the Muslims and had become a part of the culture of the Muslim community was amenable to the outsider through the 'structural-ascription analysis'.[101] Explaining this further, he said that, a historian or an ethnographer can only generalize an experience *as experience*, because, 'the experience of the Muslim community is something unique, non-transferable, and cumulative. It is cumulative because it is inherited, on-going, and in this sense it cannot be shared by an outsider historian or social scientist'.[102] This means that, 'an experience, as an integral whole, cannot be transferred but, through intellectual appreciation of it, the historian or social scientist can convey something of the immediate effect the experience had upon the subject or its significance for the subject'.[103] In this context Fazlur Rahman highly appreciated W.C. Smith's observation: 'a statement about a religion by an outsider would be correct (or adequate?) if the followers of that religion say "yes" to it'. This means that for a statement about a religion to be valid it must not only be acceptable to outsider scholars but it must also be true or valid for those inside that religion.[104]

However, while realizing this limitation of an outsider, that he needed

an affirmation from the participating individual from that very religious group, Fazlur Rahman believed that, in some manner, the outsider had an edge on the insider. 'When the historian or social scientist generalizes about the experience, he can also illuminate it by making comparisons, contrasts, and analyse it in a way the insider cannot, unless the latter becomes a historian or social scientist.'[105] Moreover, where there is an intra-faith dispute, like sectarian differences, it is the outsider who can judge the truth or the validity of the claims of differing groups. It is here that the 'normative Islam' of Fazlur Rahman, mentioned earlier in one of his quotations, that the Qur'an and sunnah should be the 'normative criterion-referents for all expressions and understanding of Islam',[106] comes in.

In addition to sectarian differences, Fazlur Rahman was also aware of that,

The differences of opinion within the 'orthodox' community are such that no single voice can hope to carry the entire community with it. Then there are differences between regions where forms of Islam are coloured by ecological conditions—some local conditions being not antagonistic to Islam while others are incompatible with it.[107]

In such cases also, he believed that an outsider could play a more important role than an insider.

According to Fazlur Rahman, social scientists divide Islam into a 'great tradition' and a 'little tradition,' but even when a social scientist's approach falls into the category of a 'little tradition,' he believes all manifestations in the name of Islam to be genuine and valid manifestations of Islam. However, Fazlur Rahman did not consider this division of 'great tradition' and 'little tradition' as genuine, because even what is considered to be a great tradition—an orthodox majority of Islam—this is not a monolithic entity. Besides, he believed that the process of 'orthodoxness' of a little tradition was always an on-going process. This is precisely the reason why Fazlur Rahman emphasized that the

Criterion, which must judge between the differences among Muslims and those among Muslims and non-Muslims, as to what normative Islam at the intellectual level is, must remain the Qur'an itself and the Prophet's definitive conduct.[108]

However, he made it clear that he was not against the work of the social scientists; in fact, he appreciated it to the extent that he considered it 'an essential prerequisite even for any would-be Muslim reformer.'[109]

His issue with the social scientists was that they considered the lived Islam as static and as normative.

As far as the historical and literary methods of studying Islam are concerned, Fazlur Rahman was more inclined towards the historical method, for his own reasons. According to him, those who upheld the method of literary criticism actually negated history and then applied what they called the 'literary method'.[110] For him, this kind of an approach led to severe repercussions. One such example quoted by him is that, 'it has been commonly held that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are historical religions because in the view of these religions God intervened in history in order to fulfil purposes'.[111] He realized that the historicity of this kind of claim was doubtful and hard to be proved through history, but he was convinced that a historical inquiry would at least confirm whether and when these religions ever claimed this to be the case.

Fazlur Rahman asserted that while some Islamists understood and made a distinction between the two, the actual claim and the historicity of that claim are still confusing to each other. One such person according to him, was Andrew Rippin (b.1950), who confused 'a religious view of history, and a historical view of religion'. Fazlur Rahman clarified that the first is the theology of history and the latter is the history of that theology. Thus, it was due to this confusion, he believed, that, 'after rejecting the claims of these religions, Rippin goes on to reject the historical inquiry into 'what really happened.' Fazlur Rahman thus concluded that by rejecting traditional history one tended 'to divest oneself, at a single stroke, of all the historical responsibility'.[112]

Another major argument that is often made in favour of the approach adopted by Rippin and others before and after him is that, 'no extra-literary corroboration in terms of archaeological data is available for Islam'. Again, Falzur Rahman considered this a part of the same confusion between historical and theological matters. He counter-argued that Hinduism and Buddhism had plenty of archaeological data, did that mean that these are historical religions, unlike Islam. Fazlur Rahman also did not subscribe to Rippin's view that 'to cure this theological problem of the origins of Islam, Wansbrough embarked upon a new method'.[113]

Let us now discuss Fazlur Rahman's objection to and rejection of Wansbrough's method and his arguments to prove his own method.

Fazlur Rahman observed in 1984 that during the previous decade there was a sudden increase in Western writing on the Qur'an, and the reason, according to him, seemed to be the fact that the Western world had begun to recognize Islam's place in the world affairs. This was probably because of advancement in the awareness about Islam in the Muslim world at large.[114] And because the Qur'an is at the centre of the Islamic way of things, it consequently received more attention.[115] Fazlur Rahman put all these Western works on the Qur'an into three major categories, i.e. the works that sought to trace the influence of Jewish or Christian ideas on the Qur'an; works that attempted to reconstruct the chronological order of the Qur'an; and works that aimed at describing the content of the Qur'an, either the whole or certain aspects of it.[116]

Fazlur Rahman put Wansbrough's works in the first category.[117] Although, he recognized all these categories as scholarly works, his inclination and appreciation was for the last category, i.e. describing the content of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, he considered the two earlier categories as very useful for carrying out the third task.[118]

Fazlur Rahman's general criticism of the first category was based on the fact that those who studied the Qur'an from this perspective tended to interpret the Qur'an as a mere 'echo of Judaism (or Christianity) and Muhammad no more than a Jewish (or Christian) disciple'.[119] Hence, he considered Wansbrough's book, *Quranic Studies* (1977), as the logical end line for Jewish apologists. Through this book, according to Fazlur Rahman, Wansbrough tried to establish that (1) the Qur'an is truly a work *a la'tradition Juive* because it was produced in an atmosphere of intense Judaeo-Christian sectarian debate (2) that it is a 'composite' work of several traditions (this theory being used to explain certain differences within the Qur'an, e.g. attitudes towards Abraham) and (3) that as it stands, the Qur'an is post-Muhammad.[120]

Furthermore, according to Fazlur Rahman, in another major book entitled *The Sectarian Milieu*, Wansbrough applied the same method of literary criticism; and his same preoccupation with the Jewish religious literature led him to conclude the Prophet's biography as 'salvation history'. Thus, the same eccentric conclusion was drawn about the lack of 'historicity' of early Islamic historiography.[121]

Fazlur Rahman took Wansbrough's points one by one and tried to reply to them according to his own understanding:

1. The Qur'an is a composite of several traditions and, hence, post-Prophetic. To this, Fazlur Rahman's general observation was that 'There is a distinct lack of historical data on the origin, character, evaluation and personalities involved in these traditions'. Here Fazlur Rahman seemed to be saying that no one could say anything for sure about what happened in what order. Wansbrough, on the contrary, seemed very confident in his narratives about the origins of Islam. However, having said this, Fazlur Rahman also tried to argue that the text of the Qur'an could only be made meaningful through its 'chronological and developmental unfolding within a single document'. Giving the example of the treatment of miracles in the Qur'an, he says, 'While the Qur'anic attitude toward miracles does evolve, it is always cohesive, affirming at later stages that while miracles are no longer necessary, they are always possible. The development is intelligible only in the context of a unified document gradually unfolding itself. It cannot be understood as a composite of different and contradictory elements.'[122]

2. Fazlur Rahman's second objection to Wansbrough's argument is on the latter's 'treatment of retribution, i.e. judgement in history, for he makes a definite disjunction between "historical" and "eschatological" significance in discussing the Qur'anic terminology'.[123] Fazlur Rahman firmly believed that there was no disjunction in the Qur'an; in fact there was a close connection. According to him, Wansbrough wished to equate the Qur'anic examples of 'destroyed nations and civilizations' with the pessimism of the Wisdom literature motif of the transitoriness of the world.[124] Fazlur Rahman believed that such dualism between the transitory and the true world did not exist in the Qur'an, and that 'The stories of 'Ād and Thamūd in the Qur'an do not illustrate the themes of the transitoriness of the world and of the destiny of the individual, but rather the fates of nations'.[125] Fazlur Rahman believed that the Qur'an itself was the best argument against Wansbrough's thesis, for it repeatedly admonished nations to learn from the experiences and mistakes of other nations.[126]

3. Fazlur Rahman also objected to the way Wansbrough had dealt with the substitution of certain verses by certain others (the *nasikh* and *mansukh* verses). He believed that Wansbrough did not deal well with this phenomenon, which 'the Qur'an itself recognizes and calls *naskh*, abrogation or substitution'. Fazlur Rahman argued that 'Clearly for

substitution, there must be a later verse to substitute for an earlier one, a chronological necessity which would be difficult to maintain if the Qur'an were merely an amalgamation of simultaneous traditions. In that case, there might be adjustments, but these could hardly be called *naskh*.'[127]

4. One interesting point that Fazlur Rahman made about Wansbrough's treatment of the Qur'an was his selection of some themes of the Qur'an as its major themes, namely, retribution, sin, exile, and covenant. According to Fazlur Rahman, there seemed to be no basis for his selection of these themes as being the dominant themes of the Qur'an. Moreover, neither the Muslims nor the Western Islamic scholarship have made any such assertions. Hence, argued Fazlur Rahman, the least Wansbrough could had done was to clarify why these were not adopted as the major themes by Muslims.[128]

5. Fazlur Rahman believed that Wansbrough had gone beyond any reasonable limits in making the Qur'an a completely Judeo-Christian sectarian manifestation. It was a fact that in Arabia the Judeo-Christian ideas were fairly widespread. The Qur'an affirms that there were attempts to proselytize the Makkans but that these were unsuccessful. The Makkans and the Arabs, however (and not just the Prophet as is commonly believed), had come to know a fair amount about the biblical traditions. Thus, a great deal of this tradition had already been Arabized; witnesses prophetology which, along with the biblical personages, included certain Arab prophets—and the tradition that the Ka'ba had been built by Abraham and Ishmael. Hence, argued Fazlur Rahman, the starting point of the Qur'anic teaching was not biblical controversies but existential issues within the Makkan society itself. During its course, no doubt, the Qur'an picked up a great amount of Judeo-Christian tradition. To insist, however, that the Qur'an is purely or even basically a result of that tradition was a manifest travesty of truth, for, basically, the Qur'an remains Arab to the core.[129]

Hence, according to Fazlur Rahman,

Such attempts, in the judgment of the Qur'an itself, are no more than *Ahwā'*, uncontrolled desires and wishful thinking with a singular indifference to cannons of sound scholarship and objectivity. While intellectual originality is a primary demand of all scholarly and scientific work, it has to be sternly

differentiated from weaving speculative cobwebs and arguing for preconceived ends.[130]

Fazlur Rahman openly admitted that his disagreements with Wansbrough were numerous and invited the readers to read both Wansbrough's *Qur'anic Studies*, and his own book, the *Major Themes of the Qur'an* to get a clear understanding of both and to understand the major difference between them. He also put forward the case for his book and how he thought his book was nearer, and truer, to the spirit of the Qur'an.[131] Fazlur Rahman seemed to agree with at least one point that Wansbrough made: 'The kind of analysis undertaken will in no small measure determine the results'; however, he says that 'this kind of study can be enormously useful, though we have to return to Geiger and Hirschfeld to see just how useful it can be when done properly.'[132] Here, Fazlur Rahman probably meant that the effort to study the origin of Islam was definitely a useful exercise but it should have been done properly, as done in the past by Geiger and Hirschfeld.[133]

Fazlur Rahman's engagement with Wansbrough's views on the Qur'an takes us back to the main argument of our paper; namely, that in the decade of the 1970s he again started the argument on Islam with his Western Islamist fellows from where he had left off in his book, *Islam*, way back in the 1950s.

In *Islam*, the major issues that Fazlur Rahman had with western scholarship on Islam was their views on the statutes of the Tradition of the Prophet, i.e., hadith and sunnah of the Prophet.[134] Here hadith and sunnah have been discussed separately, because, apparently, on hadith Fazlur Rahman agreed, in principle, with the findings of the Western scholars, although with some reservations. However, it was their views on the sunnah, the actual practices of the Prophet, supposed to have been reported in hadith, against which Fazlur Rahman argued.[135]

HADITH

As far as the ahadith are concerned, Fazlur Rahman's view was that Muslims believe 'the hadith genuinely represents the sayings and deeds of the Prophet'. While the Western Islamists find this difficult to accept and some suggest 'a wholesale rejection of the hadith as an index not only of the Prophetic example but also of the religious attitudes and practices of the Companions'.[136]

Admitting that Ignaz Goldziher's (1850-1921) *Muhammedanische Studien* was a fundamental work on the subject. Fazlur Rahman ascertained that even Goldziher had mentioned that from the large corpus of hadith it would not be possible to say which of them could be referred to the Prophet and which ones to the companions. Hence, he maintained 'that the Hadith is to be regarded rather as a record of the views and attitudes of early generation of his Companions and attitudes of early generations of Muslims than of the life and teaching of the Prophet or even of his Companions'.[137] However, Goldziher did not rule out the possibility of the existence of 'informal' hadith records' contemporaneous with the Prophet.[138]

Discussing Joseph Schacht (1902–69), Fazlur Rahman admitted that he assessed the hadith 'more systematically', due to 'his scholarly studies in Muslim law and the development of legal theory in Islam'.[139] But according to him, Schacht in his *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* admitted that his findings regarding the concept of hadith and sunnah were more or less the same as those of Goldziher and David Samuel Margoliouth (1858-1940). However, 'he goes beyond them only in finding that when for the first time Traditions began to find currency they were referred not to the Prophet but, in the first instance, to the 'Successors' (i.e. the generation after the Companions), then, in the next stage, to the Companions and finally, after a time, to the Prophet himself'.[140]

Coming to Fazlur Rahman's own position on hadith we find that he admitted that although he did not accept 'Hadith in general as strictly historical', he neither used the term 'forgery' nor 'concoction' with reference to them, rather, he used another term, i.e. 'formulation'. Explaining this further he says that, 'Although Hadith, *verbally speaking*, does not go back to the Prophet, its spirit certainly does, and Hadith is largely the situational interpretation and formulation of this "Prophetic model or spirit" [emphasis is that of Fazlur Rahman's].'[141]

This Prophetic model or spirit leads us to the debate of the concept of Sunnah, and, as mentioned earlier, it is here, on the concept of the Prophetic sunnah, that Fazlur Rahman differed from his western fellow Islamists.

SUNNAH

Overall, the Western scholarship on the subject of sunnah, as per Fazlur Rahman's findings, evolved like this. First came Goldziher who, according to him, 'maintained that immediately after the advent of the Prophet, his practice and conduct had come to constitute the sunnah for the young Muslim community and the ideality of the pre-Islamic Arab sunnah had come to cease'.[142] This position was quite close to Fazlur Rahman's own position but he discovered that after Goldziher, this picture imperceptibly changed.[143] And, noticeably, this change was evolutionary in a negative sense, unlike Fazlur Rahman's views.

According to Fazlur Rahman, the Dutch scholar, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1858–1936) maintained that the Muslims kept modifying sunnah until they justified all their thoughts and actions as being according to the Prophet's sunnah. Later,

Lammens and Margoliouth came to regard the sunnah as being entirely the work of the Arabs, pre-Islamic and post-Islamic—the continuity between the two periods having been stressed. The concept of the sunnah of the Prophet was both explicitly and implicitly rejected.[144]

While Schacht in his *Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence,* states 'that the concept "Sunnah of the Prophet" is a relatively late concept and that for the early generations of the Muslims sunnah meant the practice of the Muslims themselves'.[145]

Fazlur Rahman believed that the Western scholars basically concluded the following three major points:

'1. A part of the content of sunnah is a direct continuation of the pre-Islamic customs and mores of the Arabs.
2. By far the greater part of the content of the sunnah was the result of the free thinking activity of the early legists of Islam, who, by their personal *Ijtihād*, had made deductions from the existing sunnah or practice of their respective regions and—most important of all—had incorporated new elements from without, especially from the Jewish sources and Byzantine and Persian administrative practices.
3. Later, when the hadith developed into an overwhelming movement and became a mass-scale phenomenon in the later second and, especially, in the third centuries, this whole content of the early

sunnah came to be verbally attributed to the Prophet himself under the aegis of the concept of the 'Sunnah of the Prophet'.[146]

To this view Fazlur Rahman's counter argument is as follows:

1. While the above story about the development of the sunnah is essentially correct, it is correct about the *content* of the sunnah only and not about the *concept* of the 'Sunnah of the Prophet', i.e. that the 'Sunnah of the Prophet' was a valid and operative concept from the very beginning of Islam and remained so throughout.
2. The sunnah-content left by the Prophet was not very large in quantity and it was not something meant to be absolutely specific.
3. The concept sunnah, after the time of the Prophet, covered validly not only the sunnah of the Prophet himself but also the interpretations of the Prophetic sunnah.
4. The 'Sunnah', in this last sense, is co-extensive with *ijmā'* of the Community, which is essentially an ever-expanding process.
5. After the mass-scale hadith movement, the organic relationship between the sunnah, *ijtihād,* and *ijmā'* was destroyed.[147]

We can conclude from the above points made by Fazlur Rahman that while he essentially agreed with the Western scholars that the content of sunnah, which was later on formulated in the form of hadith, was by and large the product of later developments, he tried to maintain that the concept of the sunnah of the Prophet could not be denied, as it was not possible that a community whose teachings were basically dependent on the Qur'an and the Prophetic conduct would altogether part ways with the Prophetic conduct after the Prophet's death and would stop following or acting upon the way the Prophet used to act and behave.

It is interesting to note here that at the time of writing *Islam* and *Islamic Methodology in History*, the very concept of Prophetic sunnah, an essential part of the faith of the Muslims, was at stake. Hence, for Fazlur Rahman it was natural to respond, for the sake of his faith and the scholarship of Islam, in a manner that he could save this Muslim literature from any doubt regarding its status as a basic historical source for the genesis of Islam in history. It probably did not occur to Fazlur Rahman, by any stretch of imagination, that after a gap of just one

decade, the very basis of Islam, the Qur'an, would be attacked on the same ground, shattering the very origin of Islam in history altogether.

Fazlur Rahman's view regarding hadith was the reason why he disagreed with how Rippin analysed the approach of different critics. According to Rippin, Wansbrough's approach of delving into the early Islamic sources was not something new; this approach had earlier been adopted by Goldziher and Schacht for criticizing hadith.[148] However, Fazlur Rahman believed that Rippin was unable to see that 'Goldziher and Schacht had primarily relied on a historical method to show that certain ahadith had, in fact, originated after certain other ahadith. They did not rely on literary analysis like Wansbrough.'[149]

Fazlur Rahman made it very clear that his difference with Wansbrough and Rippin was methodological, as very early in his academic career, in his book *Islamic Methodology in History,* he himself had criticized some of the ahadith on the same ground. Explaining his view point he says,

It would seem that the efficacy of the historical method is proof enough that Muslim historical materials are basically genuine and do not need recourse to a purely literary-analytical method. Neither is it clear by what logic Rippin adduces the historical method of Goldziher and Schacht to support Wansbrough's method of literary-analysis, for the latter are so inherently arbitrary that they sink into the marsh of utter subjectivity.[150]

The weakness and/or the strength of the logic of the above argument aside, the researcher believes that Fazlur Rahman chose to defend Goldziher's and Schacht's methods as historical because for him not only the Qur'an, and through it the whole Islamic origin, was at stake, but all of his academic contributions and efforts were at stake. Because, the premise on which Fazlur Rahman and others, even Western Islamists, had been working through all their academic lives was pulled from under their feet, they reacted very sharply, some even more sharply than Fazlur Rahman. This was only natural; their whole thought and world had come crashing down around them. However, this was a reflexive reaction; with time, with the dust having settled down, people will probably start looking coolly at the arising scholarly situation, and will come to a more sensible, more reasonable solution to the problems posed by the revisionists; until then, one can only wait for non-textual evidence

for or against the revisionists' approach. After all, the onus of providing an alternative picture of early Islamic history is on the shoulders of the revisionists; vacuums are just not acceptable.

FAZLUR RAHMAN AND THE QUR'AN

Although, it is not within the purview of this study to discuss in detail Fazlur Rahman's methodology of the interpretations of the Qur'an, however, it would be appropriate here to discuss why Fazlur Rahman thought that his method was far more sound and better than the one adopted by Wansbrough and his followers.

According to Fazlur Rahman, the Qur'an is considered by Muslims to be the divine word, literally, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (between 710 and 732 CE), in a sense in which probably no other religious document is so considered. The Qur'an itself also declares that it is the most comprehensive guidance for man, both assuming and subsuming earlier revelations (12:111, 10:37, and 6:114). He further says that during just twenty-two years, which was the Prophetic career of the Prophet Muhammad, 'all kinds of decisions on policy, in peace and in war, legal and moral issues, in private and public life, were made in the face of actual situations; thus, the Qur'an had, from the time of its revelation, a practical and political application; it was not a mere devotional or personal pietistic text; Muhammad's prophetic career was, likewise, geared towards the moral improvement of man in a concrete and communal sense, rather than toward the private and metaphysical'.[151]

This method actually worked for the jurists and the intellectuals of the earliest period of Islam and they looked upon the Qur'an (and the model of the Prophet) as a unique repository of answers to all sorts of questions. But, more than that, it further strengthened the Muslim's belief that the Qur'an was the only source that could provide solutions for all of their problems.[152]

However, the dilemma that Fazlur Rahman faced was that, 'the basic questions of method and hermeneutics were not squarely addressed by Muslims'.[153] Hence, the Qur'an had been and was still being, treated in a piecemeal, ad hoc, and often quite extrinsic manner. This led Fazlur Rahman to believe that there was a dire need for a new approach to interpret the Qur'an correctly and coherently.

Before explaining his own method of the interpretation of the Qur'an, which Fazlur Rahman believed was one of the most genuine methods and very true to the spirit of the Qur'an, he explains that, 'the Qur'an and the genesis of the Islamic community occurred in the light of history and against a social-historical background. The Qur'an is a response to that situation, and for the most part it consists of moral, religious, and social pronouncements that responded to specific problems confronted in concrete historical situations'.[154]

Against this background Fazlur Rahman's methodology seemed to make sense, and this was probably why it was considered by him and others as a 'historical method'. Explaining his methodology, he said that it consisted of a double movement, from the present situation to Qur'anic times, then back to the present. He further divided the first movement into two steps: step one, 'understanding the meaning of the Qur'an as a whole as well as in terms of the specific tenets that constitute responses to specific situations'. Step two, 'generalize those specific answers and enunciate them as statements of general moral-social objectives that can be 'distilled' from specific texts in light of the socio-historical background and the often-stated *rations legis*'. In his opinion, the first step would inevitably lead to the second step.[155] The second movement was to go from these general principles, values, and long-range objective 'to the specific view that is to be formulated and realized *now*'.[156]

Hence, replying to Rippin's criticism of his method, wherein Rippin believed that Fazlur Rahman had criticized Wansbrough because he considered his own method better than the latter's, Fazlur Rahman defined why he thought his method was better. According to him, he had systematically shown how his, '[M]ethod makes sense of the Qur'an—as a body of doctrine that is coherent in itself and that fits into the life of the prophet. Wansbrough's method makes nonsense of the Qur'an, and he washes his hands off the responsibility of explaining how that "nonsense" came about'.[157]

Furthermore, he described his method as 'an adequate hermeneutical method of the Qur'an'. He explained why he considered it as being this. According to him tradition is evolving and for it to survive it will be subject to question and change; the questioning will either confirm the status quo or lead to change.[158]

CONCLUSION

The present study has taken account of one of the most challenging aspects of the new dimension, i.e., the historical presence of the Qur'an and the Prophet—where the Muslim tradition and faith actually belonged—was being challenged. Based on available literature it seems that though Fazlur Rahman faced the challenge, and to some extent he counter-argued it, he mainly confined himself to emphasize his own approach and method with more zeal and vigour and with added confidence. He probably took this approach because this was the initial period of what Wansbrough, and later on his followers, wanted to establish regarding the origin of Islam, and at that point in time it did not seem that this new approach would paralyse to a greater level of the development of the scholarship of the origins of Islam on traditional Western lines.

NOTES

1. Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin eds., *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, California, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2010, 'Introduction', p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. In *The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding*, Joseph M. Kitagawa, ed., Chicago, 1967, pp. 177–94, and *ACLS Newsletter*, vol. 25, nos. 3–4, 1974, 1–10, respectively.
4. As cited in Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin, op. cit., p. 2.
5. Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst, op. cit., p. 33.
6. Ibid., p. 6.
7. Sulayman S. Nyang, Mumtaz Ahmad, and Zahid H. Bukhari, eds., Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2012.
8. Richard C. Martin, 'Fazlur Rahman's Contribution to Religious Studies: A Historian of Religion's Appraisal,' in *The Shaping of an American Islamic Discourse: A Memorial to Fazlur Rahman*, Earle H. Haugh and Fredrick M. Denny, eds., Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998, p. 244.
9. Ibid., pp. 243-44.
10. Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin, eds., op. cit., the researcher believes that in this generational sequel Fazlur Rahman also played a role in the field of Islamic studies.
11 In *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 78, no. 4, December 2010, pp. 896–920.
12. Ibid., p. 897.

13. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'Islamic Studies in America', in *Observing the Observer: The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities*, op. cit., p. 16.
14. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 2.
15. Edward W. Said, op. cit., p. 1.
16. Ibid., p. 2.
17. Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 1.
18. Ibid.
19. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 2.
20. John O. Voll, 'Changing Western Approaches in Islamic Studies,' in *Observing the Observer*, op. cit., pp. 29–30.
21. Ibid., p. 30.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 31.
24. Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst, op. cit., p. 25.
25. Ibid., p. 27.
26. Annemarie Schimmel mentioned this isolation while narrating her study experience in the immediate postwar period: 'For the modern student of Oriental languages, it seems unbelievable that we never saw an Arab, let alone studied in an Arab country.' As quoted by John O. Voll, op. cit., p. 31.
27. Ibid., p. 31.
28. Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst, op. cit., p. 30.
29. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 3.
30. John O. Voll, op. cit., p. 31.
31. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 4.
32. Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst, op. cit., p. 27.
33. Ibid., p. 30.
34. John O. Voll, op. cit., p. 32.
35. Ibid.
36. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, op. cit., p. 14.
37. *Observing the Observers*, op. cit., p. 4.
38. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 4.
39. John O. Voll, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
40. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 5.
41. SeyyedHossein Nasr, op. cit., p. 14.
42. John O. Voll, op. cit., p. 33.
43. Ibid., pp. 33–4.
44. John O. Voll, op. cit., p. 36.
45. The counterculture of the 1960s was a cultural phenomenon that developed first in the United States and the United Kingdom and spread throughout much of the Western world between the early 1960s and the early 1970s. The movement gained momentum during the US government's extensive military intervention in Vietnam. At the same time, there was rising engagement in the African-American Civil Rights Movement, with important actions and protests taking place across the South in the 1960s, some with participation by students and activists from the North. As the 1960s progressed, widespread tensions developed in the US society that tended to

flow along generational lines regarding the war in Vietnam, race relations, human sexuality, women's rights, traditional modes of authority, experimentation with psychoactive drugs, and differing interpretations of the American Dream. New cultural forms emerged, including the pop music of the British band the Beatles and the concurrent rise of hippie culture, which led to the rapid evolution of a youth subculture that emphasized change and experimentation. In addition to the Beatles, many song writers, singers and musical groups from the United Kingdom and the US came to impact the counterculture movement. 'Counterculture of the 1960s', in *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterculture_of_the_1960s.

46. *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, op. cit., p. 4.

47. Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst, op. cit., p. 32.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50 Willard G. Oxtoby, 'In Memoriam', *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, vol. 21, 2001, p. v.

51. Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst, op. cit., pp. 32–4.

52. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, op. cit., pp. 18–19.

53. The revisionist approach can be explained as an academic approach to try to 'reconstruct what happened in History'. This is a fact that 'The revisionist school of early Islam has quietly picked up momentum in the last few years as historians began to apply rational standards of proof to this material.' Alexander Stille, *New York Times*, 2 March 2002. The historians of this approach are also known as the secular historians by many.

54. Gabriel Said Reynolds, ed., *The Qur'an in its Historical Context*, Routledge, 2008, p. xi.

55. Ibid., p. 8. G.L. Luling (*Uber den Ur-Qur'an: An size zur Rekonstruktionvor-islanixcherchristlicher Strophenlienderim Qur'an*, Ansätzezur Rekonstruktionvorislam, christlicherStrophenliederQur'ân, Erlangen: 1974) [A challenge to Islam for reformation: the rediscovery and reliable reconstruction of a comprehensive pre-Islamic Christian hymnal hidden in the Koran under earliest Islamic reinterpretation],` John Wansbrough (*Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, 1977, and *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, 1978), Yehuda Nevo 'Towards a pre-history of Islam', *JSAI*, 17, 1994, pp. 108–41 and Y. Nevo and J. Koren, *Crossroad to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State*, 2003, and Christoph Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramischeLesart des Koran,* 2000; *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Qur'an,* English translation 2007.

56. Ibid.

57. Carlos A. Segovia, 'John Wansbrough and the Problem of Islamic Origins in Recent Scholarship: A Farewell to the Traditional Account', in *The Coming of the Comforter: when, where, and to whom, Studies on the Rise of Islam and Various Other Topics in Memory of John Wansbrough*, Carlos Segovia, ed., Georgia Press, 2012, p. xxii.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., pp. xxii–xxiii.
60. 'In 1977, Patricia Crone and Michael A. Cook published a co-authored volume entitled *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, in which they sought to demonstrate the Jewish messianic roots of the Arab conquest'. Ibid., pp. xxiv–xxv.
61. Jan Smith, 'Is the Qur'an the word of God?', Text from Jay Smith's debate with Dr. Jamal Badawi, 9 August 1995, p. 29, http://www.inplainsite.org/html/quran_word_of_god_3.html
62. Ibid., pp. 29–30.
63. Ibid., p. 30.
64. John Wansbrough-*Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wansbrough
65. Alexander Stille, op. cit.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Explaining the project in one of their papers, Koren and Nevo write, 'The paper is an offshoot of our ongoing research into the archeology, epigraphy and history of the Arabs in the Negev and its neighbouring deserts during the Byzantine and Early Arab periods, carried out within the framework of the Negev Archeological Project for the study of Ancient Desert Arab Cultures. Our base for the project is the Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, Ben-Gurion College.' J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo, 'Methodological Approach to Islamic Studies', in *Der Islam*, vol. 68, no. 1, 2009, p. 87.
69. These findings of Nevo and his collaborator, Judith Koren, were published in articles and in book form between 1990 and 2003.
70. Carlos A. Segovia, op. cit., p. xxv.
71. Gabriel Said Reynolds, op. cit., p. 12.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 9.
74. Daniel J. Sahas, in *Studies in Religion*, a Canadian Journal, vol. 28, no. 3, 1999.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Estelle Whelan's article 'Forgotten Witness: Evidence of the Early Codification of the Qur'an,' in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 118, 1998.
78. In the 'Forward', of *The Qur'an in its Historical Context*, op. cit.
79. Ibid., p. xii.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid., pp. xii–xiii.
82. Gabriel Said Reynolds, 'Introduction'. Ibid., p. 8.
83. Fazlur Rahman, 'Islamic Studies and the Future of Islam', in *Islamic Studies: A Tradition and Its Problems*, Malcolm H. Kerr, ed., Malibu: Undena Publication, 1980, p. 125.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., pp. 125, 130.
86. Ibid., p. 125.
87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., p. 130.
89. Ibid., Here Fazlur Rahman does not give any example of a 'scientific writer', but cites Al-Biruni as an example of the tolerance of the Muslims.
90. Fazlur Rahman, 'Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: Review Essay', in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, Richard C. Martin, ed., Arezona:The University of Arizona Press, 1985, p. 190.
91. Ibid. Fazlur Rahman states this with reference to Jacques Waardenburg.
92. Explaining the basis of this phenomenon of insider-outsider Fazlur Rahman, by quoting John Wisom, explains that, 'the owner of an experience has privileged access to his or her experience, which cannot be shared by any other person'. Ibid., p. 191.
93. Ibid., p. 197.
94. Ibid., pp. 192–3.
95. Ibid., p. 193.
96. 'The recovery of the phenomena, i.e. encountering them, where they take place, and where they have their places. In the religious sciences, this means encountering them in the souls of believers, rather than in the monuments of critical erudition or circumstantial inquiries; it is to display what has shown itself to them [the souls], namely, the religious fact.' Quoted from Henry Corbin's (d.1978), *En Islam iranien*, by Mujiburahman, in 'The Phenomenological Approach in Islamic Studies: An Overview of a Western Attempt to Understand Islam,' in *The Muslim World*, vol. 91, Fall 2001, p. 428.
97. 'Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: Review Essay,' op. cit., p. 198.
98. Ibid., p. 190.
99. Ibid., p. 191.
100. Ibid., p. 194.
101. Ibid., p. 194. Fazlur Rahman borrows this term from the famous American sociologist, Robert King Merton (1910–2003).
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104 Ibid., pp. 192–3.
105. Ibid., pp. 194–5.
106. Footnote No. 98 can be referred.
107. 'Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: Review Essay', op. cit., p. 195.
108. Ibid., p. 196.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid., p. 198, the reference here is of John Wansbrough and one of the followers of his method, Andrew Rippin. In the same book, Rippin contributed an article entitled, 'Literary Analysis of *Qur'an*, *Tafsir*, and *Sira*: The Methodology of John Wansbrough'. In this article Rippin not only defended Wansbrough's method but criticized Fazlur Rahman's method of understanding the Qur'an, pp. 151–63.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid., p. 200.
113. Ibid., p. 199.

114. We believe Fazlur Rahman is here referring to the Iranian Revolution and the consequent increase in Islamic consciousness in other parts of the Muslim World, e.g., Pakistan.

115. Fazlur Rahman, 'Some Recent Books on the Qur'an by Western Authors', in 'Review Articles' section of *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 64, no. 1, 1984, p. 73.

116. Fazlur Rahman, *The Major Themes of the Qur'an*, Minneapolis, 1994, p. xii.

117. However, in his review article on 'Some Recent Books on the Qur'an by Western Authors', op. cit., he divides these works into different categories, namely, the works by Christian scholars, with some express Christian motivation and aim in view; works devoted to the formation and collection of the Qur'an text, includes all the works dealing with the history of the Qur'an; the works that deal with the meaning of the Qur'an; works that deal with the exegeses of the Qur'an; and the works which do not deal directly with the Qur'an but are either extensions or intimately related to certain Qur'an interpretation, or assume a certain specific view about the Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman puts Wansbrough's work into this last category.

118. *The Major Themes of the Qur'an*, op. cit., p. xii.

119. Ibid., p. xiii.

120. Ibid.

121. 'Some Recent Books on the Qur'an', op. cit., p. 74.

122. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, op. cit., p. xiii. Fazlur Rahman suggests to the readers to read chapters IV and VIII of his book to get a better idea of his arguments. However, it is not within the scope of this study to discuss fully his arguments, hence, the reference is limited to his criticism on Wansbrough.

123. Ibid., pp. xiii–xiv.

124. Ibid., p. xiv. According to the Free Online Dictionary, 'wisdom literature is any of the biblical books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus) that are considered to contain wisdom.'
    In section 1:1-6:21 of the bible, the 'Two Worlds' concept is: it 'contains the transitory world appearances ruled over by the devil, destined to pass away, which has its own citizens, the impious, and the true world created by God, destined to be immortal, which has its own citizens, the righteous. The Transitory world is the world of our daily experience.' *The Wisdom Literature: Interpreting Biblical Texts Series*, Richard Clifford, Abingdon Press, 1998, p. 143.

125. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, op. cit., p. xiv.

126. Fazlur Rahman suggests his readers to see chapter III of his book for his point of view on this issue in detail.

127. *The Major Themes of the Qur'an*, op. cit., p. xiv.

128. *Approaches to Islam*, op. cit., pp. 200–1.

129. Ibid., pp. 201–2.

130. 'Some Recent books on the Qur'an', op. cit., p. 75.

131. *The Major Themes of the Qur'an*, op. cit., p. xiv. At another place Fazlur Rahman mentions that, 'It was on some of these methodological grounds that I criticized Wansbrough's *Qur'anic Studies* in the introduction to *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, to which Rippin replies towards the end of his paper ('Literary Analysis of Qur'an, *Tafsir*, and *Sira*: The Methodology of John Wansbrough', in *Approaches to*

Islam in Religious Studies, op. cit., pp. 151–63). He suggests that my criticism of Wansbrough boils down to the fact that I simply regard my method to be better than his. The fact is, however, that I have advanced, both here and elsewhere, several basic considerations to show that my method makes sense of the Qur'an—as a body of doctrine that is coherent in itself and that fits into the life of the Prophet. Wansbrough's method makes nonsense of the Qur'an, and he washes his hands off the responsibility of explaining how that 'nonsense' came about.' *Approaches to Islam*, op. cit., p. 201.

132. Ibid., p. xiv.

133. The reference could be to Abraham Geiger's, 'Was hat Mohammed ausdem Judentumeaufgenommen?' Bonn, 1833 (translated as *Judaism and Islam: A Prize Essay*, F.M. Young, 1896), and New Researches into Compositions and Exegesis of the Qur'an, by Dr. Hartwig Hirschfeld, 1902.

134. Explaining the difference between the two, Fazlur Rahman says, 'whereas, a hadith as such is a mere report and something theoretical, the Sunna is the very same report when it acquires a normative quality and becomes a practical principle for the Muslim', *Islam*, London, New York, 1966, p. 45.

135. Fazlur Rahman's views have already been discussed in chapter three in another context. Here they have been discussed very briefly for a different purpose.

136. *Islam*, op. cit., p. 43.

137. Ibid., p. 44.

138. Ibid.

139. Fazlur Rahman also cursorily discusses the views of D.S. Margoliouth and H. Lammens, on the subject but his conclusion is that both have heavily relied on Goldziher, only adding more contradictions and confusions to the debate. Ibid., pp. 45–6.

140. Ibid., p. 46, Schacht as quoted by Fazlur Rahman.

141. *Islamic Methodology in History*, op. cit., p. 80.

142. Ibid., p. 4.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid., pp. 4–5.

145. Ibid., p. 5.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid., p. 6.

148. *Approaches to Islam*, op. cit., p. 199.

149. Ibid.

150. Ibid.

151. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, Chicago, 1982, p. 2.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid., p. 5.

155. Ibid., p. 6.

156. Ibid., p. 7.

157. *Approaches to Islam*, op. cit., p. 201. Fazlur Rahman's debate on the Qur'an is not limited to criticizing only Wansbrough's method. He has criticized and commended

all serious scholarly efforts on the understanding and making sense of the Qur'an on the basis of his own approach. This, however, is limited to only Wansbrough's work in order to avoid unnecessary lengthiness of the work and because Wansbrough's method forms a major part of Fazlur Rahman's criticism.

158. Ibid., p. 11.

FATIMEH RADAN

Fraternity Contract in Islam and Hinduism

The concept of social cohesion or correlation is based on the fact that the society members need and interrelate to each other (Biro 1366: 400). Social cohesion is a sense of relationship, orientation and interaction with others. In other words, it refers to the emotional commitment, solidarity and bonding expressed by society members to one another (Vaziri 1383: 118). The cohesion in a system is resulted from the common values. (Ghaffari 1385: 127–8). Social cohesion is a state in which the factors and forces unifying the society form and strengthen the integrity and harmony between the society members.

Social cohesion existed among society members is one of the binding factors of permanence, growth and development in society. Therefore, focusing on the factors effective on establishing and strengthening social cohesion is of great importance. Interaction between society members is one of the effective factors on social cohesion. Establishing widespread and deep relationships as well as interaction among society members require common values. The common religious-cultural values can prepare an appropriate ground for establishing mutual social relations in the society.

The study attempts to explain human relations in both Islam and Hinduism with a religious approach, emphasizing on fraternity contract named 'Islamic brotherhood' and 'Raksha Bandhan', respectively.

ISLAMIC BROTHERHOOD

Reviewing the event of fraternity contract concluded in early Islamic era we are trying to explain the origin of the formation of brotherhood contract in Islam.

To end the conflict between the two tribes 'Ouss' and 'Khazraj' and stop plunderer Jews from ravaging, the prophet (PBUH) made some plans with the guidance from Allah, such as fraternity contract through which the strongest basis for the progress of Islam was established. The

first Ramadan, ninth month of the first year of Hijrah (according to Islamic lunar calendar) reminds us of the most important event, since at the very day the prophet (PBUH) through concluding brotherhood contract between the 'Ansar' (the early Muslims from Medina) and the 'Muhajireen' (Muslims of Makka migrated to Medina in the beginning of Islam) prepared an extremely happy environment for the newly established Islamic community and called them towards peaceful coexistence; as the Almighty God has put emphasis on the fact that all believers are brothers to one another through the verse '*All believers are but brothers, therefore seek reconciliation between your two brothers and fear Allah so that you may be blessed with mercy*' (Al-Quran 49: 15). According to some Islamic texts the 12th or 13th of Ramadan of the first year of Hijrah was considered as the day of concluding the brotherhood contract.

According to another interpretation, the aforesaid verse says: it is required that all believers support one another like brothers do; as mentioned in the Islamic texts, there are two kinds of brotherhood, the biological or real brotherhood and spiritual or faith brotherhood (Rahimi 1386: 100).

Considering the fact that establishing fraternity contract between Muslims was based on the divine order, it can be said that the prophet (PBUH) established the Islamic brotherhood to prevent the 'Ansar' (the early Muslims from Medina) and the 'Muhajireen' (Muslims of Makka migrated to Medina in the beginning of Islam) as well as the two tribes 'Ouss' and 'Khazraj' from having any possible conflict and disharmony. That, in addition to strengthening the political and spiritual unity of Muslims and reducing, to a great extent the risk of internal conflicts that could be established, one of the important bases is required for society cohesion and the progress of Islam.

The Islamic brotherhood which had been planned with the aim of eliminating ethnic and tribal biases led to the political and economic outcomes and the social ones as well including social security (Hedayat panah, 1381: 269).

The Islamic brotherhood concluded by the prophet (AMA) has been mentioned twice in the history of Islam; initially in Makka among the members of a group of 'Muhajireen'; next after immigrating to Medina the prophet (AMA) due to the particular and difficult conditions

concluded the Islamic brotherhood between the 'Ansar' and the 'Muhajireen'.

As said before, the prophet (AMA) concluded the Islamic brotherhood among 'Ashab' (companions) several times on various occasions; however, it is emphasized on a certain day which is the day of Eid 'al Ghadir e Khom'. The late Muhaddith Feiz has quoted about practicing the Islamic brotherhood, in the book 'Kholasat ul Azkar' as follows:

Put your right hand in the right hand of your friend and say: I became your brother for the sake of Allah, I shook hands with you for the sake of Allah, I promised Allah and His angels and His prophets and His missionaries and the infallible Imams so that if I became of heaven and if I cannot intercede you, I will not enter the heaven without you then your friend says: I Accepted. Then you say: I nullified all brotherhood rights except intercession, well-wish and pilgrimage. As your partner accepts this, you will be spiritual brothers.

There is so much about the rights and obligations regarding brotherhood in the social system of Islam. Through stating a tradition quoted by Imam Ali (p) some part of the duties is mentioned here. Imam Ali (p) said: I heard from the Messenger of Allah (AMA) who said:

There are thirty rights that every Muslim has to observe towards his Muslim brother. These rights cannot be quitted unless by compensation or being pardoned. They are as follows:

1. To overlook his mistakes (Muslims towards one another)
2. To have pity on him when he is in a distress
3. To cover his faults
4. To forgive his lapses
5. To accept his excuses
6. To reject his backbiting (by others)
7. To keep on advising him
8. To observe his friendship
9. To help him fulfil his oath
10. To visit him when he gets sick
11. To follow his funeral procession
12. To reciprocate his visit
13. To accept his gift
14. To reciprocate his favours well
15. To appreciate his favours
16. To help him well

17. To safeguard his honour
18. To grant his requests
19. To intercede for him to meet his requests
20. To say 'May Allah be Merciful to you' when he sneezes
21. To guide him when he goes astray
22. To greet him whenever they meet
23. To talk kindly to him
24. To accept his witnesses
25. To make friends with his friends
26. To avoid bearing enmity against him
27. To help him, to prevent from oppressing, and support him when he is oppressed
28. Not to betray him
29. To avoid humiliating him
30. To wish for him what he wishes for himself and hate for him what he hates for himself. (Vatandoost 1384: 212)

The strongest relationship among people is that of blood; parent-child relationship is the most important relationship following which is that between a sister and brother. Note that the brother-sister relationship is based on equality and both are of the same level of importance. The pattern of fraternity and brotherhood and being friend with each other in the shadow of faith is one fundamental social pattern of Islam (Javadi Yazdi 1383: 124–7). Brotherhood in Islam is based on divine command and establishing such a relationship in life is necessary and strengthening it brings about independence and dignity for the Muslims (Mahdipur, 1384: 5).

RAKSHA BANDHAN[1]

'Raksha Bandhan' or *Rakhi* or sister-brother festival is one of the famous, ancient and traditional celebrations in the calendar and Hindu religion . The central ceremony involves the tying of a *rakhi* (sacred thread) by a sister on her brother's wrist. This shows the sister's love and prayers for her brother's well-being. The brother gives her some gift in response and vows to protect her encountering problems of any kind. 'Raksha Bandhan' is not merely a festival of the real siblings. Those who bond the sister-brother relationship, promise that they will never get married with each other, since they believe in the fact that sister-brother bonding is more important than that of marriage. In fact sisters and brothers, during

their lifetime, celebrate this ritual every year; which itself symbolizes protection, love and close relationship between them.

According to some historians the oldest reference to the *festival* of 'Raksha Bandhan' goes back to 300 BC; the festival falls on the full moon day (Poornima) of the 'Shravan'.

A legend says that Krishna after killing Kansa went to his sister Subhadra. Welcoming her brother kindly and pouring sweets and flowers on his head and shoulders Subhadra put red Tika (sacred mole) on his forehead. If on the last day of Diwali a brother goes to visit her sister and Tika is put on his forehead, it is said that he will never go to the Hell. Since that time brothers go to visit their sisters to enjoy from that day.

In Bengal, sisters practice a special ritual called 'Bhai Phota' to pray for health, success and welfare of their brothers. Diwali festival comes to an end the day when people start the New Year with a fresh spirit.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that one of the functions of religions in societies is to promote social cohesion and solidarity among the members. Increasing social correlation is achievable in different forms with the aim of facing the present situation of society and behavioural change of people. The behavioural change which is based on the change in attitude towards the values governing the society cannot be easily possible. In this regard the religious culture can be an appropriate motivation for such changes.

Islam and Hinduism, like other religions, include cultural values and norms proportionate to human nature; and the brotherhood relationship because of having the mental-emotional features accepted by the followers of Islam and Hinduism. Furthermore, establishing brotherhood relationship will increase protection and cohesion among society members, through which the economic, political and social problems can be solved; in the same way, the outcomes resulted from this relationship will reduce the economic, political and particularly social tension and strengthen the brotherhood relationship as well.

NOTE

1. Protection wristlet

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MOHAMMEDULLAH KKHALILI QASMI

Shāfi'i School of Fiqh in India

SHĀFI'I SCHOOL OF FIQH

Shāfi'i School of Islamic Jurisprudence is attributed to Imam Muhammad ibn-e-Idrīs al-Shāfi'i (767-820 AD). Imam Shāfi'i was a student of Imām Mālik (712-795) and he learnt the Māliki Fiqh and Hijāzi thoughts from him. Besides, he attended Imām Muhammad bin Ḥasan Shaibāni and learnt Ḥanafi Fiqh from him. Having acquired these two Fiqhs, he directly benefited from other Fiqhi trends and the Imāms. Thus, the Shāfi'i Fiqh accumulated all the virtues of all known schools of Fiqh and trends. Being a towering Islamic Jurist, Imam Shāfi'i was a great Muaḥddith. He had acquired the narrations of the Muḥaddith of Makkah, Sufyān bin Uainah and those of the Muḥaddith of Madinah, Imām Mālik.[1]

The Fiqh of Imām Shāfi'i was originated and developed at Makkah. Then, passing through Madinah, Iraq and Baghdad it arrived Egypt where it attained its peak.[2] As the Ḥanafi Fiqh is greatly influenced by Sayyidna 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd and Sayyidna 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib, and as the Māliki Fiqh has heavily benefited from the opinions of Sayyidna 'Umar and Sayyidna 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar, the Shāfi'i Fiqh drew its base from the views of Sayyidna 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with them all).

The Shāfi'i School of Fiqh is mostly followed in Egypt, as it has also gained followers in Iraq, Khurāsān and Transoxiāna. It is also practiced in Palestine, Yemen mostly in Aden and Hadhramūt. The dominant majority of Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia and it surroundings follow the Shāfi'i school.[3] In India, the followers of Shāfi'i School mostly live at coastal areas like Malabar, Kerala, Madras, Kokan and etc.[4]

SHĀFI'I FIQH IN INDIA

Islam was introduced in Sind in an undivided India in 7th century AD directly by the Arabs including the Ṣaḥābah (Companions of the

Prophet – peace be upon them)[5], but the Muslim rule in India was established by the conquests of Muhammad bin Qāsim in 711 AD when Muslims settled permanently in the Indian soil and the local people also strengthened the Muslim social units by embracing Islam.

The dominant majority of Muslims in India has always followed the Sunni creed while the majority of them have always adhered to the Ḥanafi School of Fiqh[6]. However, there have been some pockets of Muslims who also followed the Shāfi'i School at many places in the subcontinent. There has not been a considerable existence of the followers of Māliki and Ḥanbali Schools of Fiqh.

One of the most prominent reasons of the expansion of Shāfi'i School in India was the migration of Arab scholars chiefly from Yemen, Egypt and Ḥijāz to Indian coastal areas.[7] The inhabitants of these areas have also been the pioneering community to embrace Islam as they have more closely been connected with the Arab merchants and traders.[8]

The Muslim scholars from India benefited from the Shāfi'i scholars of Arabia and Egypt and mostly on the occasions of Ḥajj and 'Umrah. These academic exchanges also helped greatly to promote the Shāfi'i Fiqh in India. One of the most prominent of such scholars is 'Allāmah 'Abdullāh ibn-e-As'ad al-Yāfi'i al-Yemeni (696-786 AH). His books and disciples contributed significantly to the expansion of Shāfi'i Fiqh in India.[9]

Likewise, in the 10th Hijra century, Imām Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-Haithami al-Makki al-Shāfi'i (909-973 AH) visited India, though for a shorter period, but left imprints of his vast knowledge and academic excellence. Many of the Indian scholars learnt Ḥadīth and Fiqh from him of which the details we find in the book "*Nuzuhat al-Khawāṭir*" by Ḥakīm 'Abd al-Ḥayi al-Ḥasani, The book is published entitled: *al-'Ilām bi man fi Tārīkh al-Hind min al-'A'lām*. There are accounts of dozens of scholars, mostly Ḥanafi, who learnt Ḥadīth from Shaikh Ibn Ḥajar al-Makki.[10]

SHĀFI'I SCHOLARS IN EARLY CENTURIES

In the early centuries of Muslim rule in India, there was no clear distinction among the followers of different schools of Fiqh. The majority of the people followed the scholars of their area and the masses were not associated to a particular school.

In that age, multitude of Muslim scholars migrated from the Arab world and settled in India. Maulāna Qaḍi Aṭhar Mubārakpūri, in his masterpiece work entitled "*Rijāl al-Sind wa al-Hind ila al-Qarn al-Sābi*" has recorded the accounts of scholars who either visited India or were born therein. This book covers the personalities up to the seventh Hijri century. Here we find several scholars who adhered to the Shāfi'i School of Fiqh, like: (1) Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abu Ḥāmid al-Manṣūri al-Shāfi'i (2) Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abu al-'Abbās al-Daibali al-Miṣri al-Shāfi'I (3) Qāḍi Aḥmad ibn Naṣr Abu al-'Abbās al-Daibali al-Mosuli al-Shāfi'i (4) 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far Abu Muḥammad al-Manṣūri al-Shāfi'i (5) 'Ali ibn Aḥmad Abu Isḥāq al-Daibali al-Shāfi'i, the author of Adab al-Qaḍa (6) Fataḥ ibn 'Abdullāh Abu Naṣr al-Shāfi'i (7) Muḥammad ibn As'ad Abu Sa'īd al-Būqani al-Shāfi'i (8) Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Manṣūr al-Khalīli al-Būqani al-Shāfi'i (9) Muḥammad ibn As'ad Abu Sa'īd al-Būqāni al-Shāfi'i.[11]

Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazni (357–421 AH), who established the Muslim rule in Indian soil and extended it to the northern and western sides, also personally followed the Shāfi'i Fiqh. He was a scholar of Fiqh and authored several books. Among them is *al-Tafrīd* on Shāfi'i Fiqh of about 60000 rulings of Fiqh.[12]

PROMINENT SHĀFI'I SCHOLARS OF LATER CENTURIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Following the eighth Hijra century onwards, there was a spate of migrants who later immensely influenced the spread and consolidation of the Shāfi'i School in the country. There were two prominent groups of the migrants (Ḥaḍramis and Nawāyiṭ) who exercised maximum influence and contributed greatly to the spread of Shāfi'i Fiqh in India.

The Nawāyiṭ or Nāyiṭi (singular form) belonged to Quraish tribe (*Banu Naḍr*) in Hejaz and migrated to India from Basra (Iraq) around 752 AH/1351 A. D. due to subjugation and oppressions of the rulers. They were chiefly the followers of the Shāfi'i Fiqh. In India, they settled in coastal areas and nowadays they exist in Kokan, Bhatkal, Goa, Bijapur, Malabar, Ahmadnagar, Madras and Hyderabad. The Nawāyiṭ in India had a great history and produced towering personalities. The most prominent among them was Shaikh 'Ali al-Mahāyimi bin Shaikh Ahmad Nāyiṭi (1372-1431) who was a great scholar, author as well as a saint

and his tomb in Māhim (Mumbai) is still visited by scores of people.[13]

On the other hand, the scholars and mashāyikh belonging to Ḥaḍramūt in Yemen had a great impact in Gujarat and other places. They were called Ḥaḍrami and followed Shāfiʿi School of Fiqh. The Diaspora communities of Ḥaḍramis are found around the world. In India, they offered valuable services in the arena of the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth, Fiqh and spirituality.

IN MALABAR AND MADRAS

In Malabar, we find a chain of Shāfiʿi scholars who taught and promoted this Fiqh among the masses like Qāḍi Badr al-Dīn al- Malabāri (in 8th Hijra century) who was Qaḍi of Khūr al-Dunb in Malabar[14], as well as Shaikh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Multāni al-Malabāri (9th Hijra century) who was appointed as Qaḍi of Calicut.[15]

In 10th Hijra century, we come across Shaikh Zainuddīn ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Malbāri Makhdūm I, disciple of Shaikh Ibn Ḥajar al-Makki who was a well-known scholar of Ḥadīth, author, poet and a vehement champion of anti-imperialist struggles. He was also the author of books; specially *Qurrat al-ʿAin fi Muhimmāt al-Dīn* in Shāfiʿi Fiqh[16].
His grandson ʿAllāmah Zainuddīn ibn ʿAli al-Malabāri Makhdūm II (872–928 ah) was a great scholar and the author of several books. His work *Tuhfat al-Mujāhidīn* is a pioneering historical work in the sixteenth century ad which is the first authentic work on the history of Kerala and has survived in its original shape. He wrote many erudite works on several topics related to Islam. His work on Fiqh "*Fatḥ al-Muʾīn fi Sharḥ Qurrat al-ʿAin*" is well-known and published.[17]

In Madrās, there is a considerable size of Shāfiʿi community and numerous outstanding personalities arose from this soil in thirteenth and fourteenth Hijra century. Counting from Maulāna Bāqar ibn Murtuḍa al-Madrāsi (1158–1220 ah) who was a great scholar and a writer of many books in Arabic and Persian, like *Tanwīr al-Baṣīr and al-Dur al-Nafīs fi Qawl Muḥammad ibn Idrīs*.[18] Later, Madras produced personalities like Maulāna ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Madrāsi (1205–1268) the author of several books on ḥadīth[19], Al-Syed Isḥāq ibn Qāsim al-Madrāsi (1230–1311 ah)[20]. Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Madrāsi contributed two works in Fiqh: (1) *Kifāyat al-Mubtadi* (2) *Ḥāshiyah ʿala Mukhtaṣar Abi al-Shujāʿ*. His

son Qāḍi Ṣibghatullāh ibn Muḥammad Ghauth al-Madrāsi (1211–1280 AH) was the author of several books on ḥadīth and Fiqh like *ḥidāyat al-Sālik ila Muwaṭṭa Imām Mālik* and *al-Maṭāli' al-Badriyah fi Shar ḥ al-Kawākib al-Durriyah* etc[21]. Then his son Maulāna 'Abdullāh ibn Ṣibghatullāh al-Madrāsi (1236–1288 AH) authored several books on ḥadīth and Fiqh like *al-Fawāyid al-Ghauthiyah fi Fiqh al-Shāfi'yah* and *Ḥāshiyah 'ala Mukhtaṣar Abi al-Shujā'* etc[22]. Similarly, Mufti Muḥammad Saīd ibn Ṣibghatullāh al-Madrāsi (1247–1314 AH) was the author of several books in Farsi and Urdu[23]. Another great scholar Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Ṣibghatullāh al-Madrāsi (1267–1307 AH) who was the author of several books on Fiqh and ḥadīth wrote *al-Fawāta al-Ṣibghiyah* and *al-Mukhtaṣar fi al-Fiqh*[24]. In this very chain, another personality Qāḍi 'Ubaidullāh ibn Ṣibghatullāh al-Madrāsi (1270–1346 AH) wrote around 22 books, most of them on Fiqh[25].

In other parts of Madras, we come across Maulāna Fakhr al-Dīn al-Velori al-Madrāsi (13th Hijra century) in Velore[26] and Qāḍi 'Abd al-Rā ḥīm ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Madrāsi (1273–1349 AH) in Kurnul[27].

IN KOKAN AND BAMBAY

The present Mumbai and its neighbouring places specially Kokan had a sizable Shāfi'i community from beginning. The most famous scholar among them was Shaikh 'Ala al-Dīn 'Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Mahāyimi (776–835 AH/ 1372-1431). He was a saint and scholar of international repute. He lived during the time of the Tuglaq dynasty and that of Sultan Ahmed Shah of Gujarat. He is widely acknowledged for his scholarly works, liberal views and humanist ethics. He is considered to be the first Indian scholar to write an exegesis (*tafsīr*) on the Qur'an entitled *Tabṣīr al-Raḥman wa Taisīr al-Mannān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* which gained acclimation from numerous Islamic scholars. He wrote several other books on Shāfi'i Fiqh, specially *al-Mukhtaṣar fi al-Fiqh,* etc[28].

Among other prominent *'ulama* in Kokan there were Shaikh Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Kokani (1272–1320 AH)[29], Shaikh 'Abdullāh al-Jītkar al-Kokani (d. 1325) who was an Arabic poet[30] and Muḥammad 'Ali al-Kokani (b. 1279), the Qāḍi of Bombay[31].
Bombay had a series of Haḍrami scholars as well who served there as Qāḍhi, Khaṭīb and spiritual guide and they are to be mentioned under the next subtitle.

SHĀFI'I SCHOLARS IN GUJARAT

Gujarat was the heart of great Shāfi'i scholars and mashāyikh. Shaikh Ya'qūb ibn Aḥmad al-Nahrwāli al-Shāfi'i (7th Hijra century) visited Gujarat and taught there.[32] Al-Syed Abu al-Faḍl al-Astrābādi came to India in 9th Hijra century and stayed in Gujarat.[33] Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Badr al-Dīn al-'Abbāsi (903–992 AH) was another great scholar of Ḥadīth from Egypt who came to Gujarat and was buried in Aḥmadabād.[34]

The scholars and mashāyikh belonging to Ḥaḍramūt in Yemen also attributing to 'Īdrūs had great impact in Gujarat and offered valuable services in the arena of the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Fiqh and spirituality. Few of them are being mentioned here[35]:

1. Shaikh 'Allāmah Muḥammad ibn 'Umar Baḥraq al-Ḥaḍrami (869–930 AH) Aḥmadabād Gujarat, author several books.
2. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Abu Bakr al-Ḥaḍrami (10th Hijra century)
3. Shaikh ibn 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 990 AH)
4. Shaikh Abu Bakr ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1048 AH) in Daulatābād.
5. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1073 AH) stayed in Hyderabad.
6. Shaikh Abu Bakr ibn Ḥusain al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1074 AH), stayed in Bijapur.
7. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn 'Alwi al-Ḥaḍrami (11th Hijra century)
8. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1001 AH), stayed in Gujarat, Burhānpur and Lahore.
9. Al-Syed Shaikh ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1096 AH) stayed in Aḥmadabād and died in Sūrat.
10. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥaḍrami ibn Shaikh (978–1038 AH), lived at Aḥmadabād, was a famous scholar, authored books especially *al-Nūr al-Sāfir 'an Akhbār al-Qarn al-'Āshir*.
11. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Shaikh (d. 1024 AH) lived in Bharuch, Gujarati.
12. Shaikh Ja'far ibn 'Ali al-Gujarati (d. 1064 AH) lived in Sūrat and wrote several books.
13. Shaikh Muḥammad ibn 'Ali (1078 AH), great ṣūfi and author, stayed in Rander Gujarat.
14. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1008 AH) Surat.
15. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Sūrati (d. 1114 AH)
16. Shaikh 'Ali ibn 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami al-Sūrati (1045–1131 AH)

17. Shaikh ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAli al-Ḥaḍrami al-Sūrati (1067–1135 AH)
18. Shaikh ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAli al-Ḥaḍrami al-Sūrati (1131–1198 AH)
19. Shaikh ʿAli ibn Muḥammad Zain al-ʿĀbidīn al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1159 AH)
20. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1183 AH) Surat.
21. Shaikh ʿAli ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1193 AH), lived in Sūrat and died in Madīnah.
22. Shaikh Ḥusain ibn ʿAli al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1212 AH) lived in Surat and Bombay.
23. Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Ḥusain al-Ḥaḍrami ʿĪdrūsi al-Sūrati (d. 1241 AH)
24. Al-Syed Shaikh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍrami al-Surati (d. 1268 AH)
25. Shaikh Ibrāḥim ibn ʿAbd al-Aḥmad (d. 1282 AH) born in Surat and was Khaṭīb in Bombay.
26. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāḍi ʿAbd al-Aḥmad (13th Hijra century) lived in Sūrat and Hyderabad.
27. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn al-Qāḍi ʿAbd al-Aḥmad al-Sūrati (13th Hijra century)
28. Shaikh ʾAli ibn Ibrāḥīm al-Sūrati (d. 1269 AH)
29. Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ʾAbdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami al-Sūrati (1171–1256 AH)
30. Shaikh ʾAbd al-Qādir ibn Maḥmūd al-Sūrati (b. 1273) lived in Mubair and wrote several books on Fiqh.
    • Shaikh Ibrāḥīm ibn ʿAbd al-Aḥmad Baʾikẓah al-Sūrati (d. 1282 AH) author of *Tuḥfat al-Ikhwān*[36]
    • Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn ʿAbd al-Aḥmad Baʾikẓah al-Sūrati (b. 1293 AH) author of *Tuḥfat al-Mushtāq fi al-Nikāḥ wa al-Infāq*[37]
    • Mufti ʾAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Sūrati (d. 1308 AH) lived in Bombay.[38]

IN KARANATKA AND DECCAN

In the state of Karnataka, we find traces of Shaikh ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami (11th Hijra century) in Kunnur and Bijapur[39], Shaikh ʿUmar ibn ʿAli al-Ḥaḍrami (1002–1063 AH) in Bijapur[40], Shaikh ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 1066 AH) in Belgaum[41], and finally Shaikh Abu Bakr al-Madrāsi (12th Hijra century) who was appointed as Qāḍi al-Quḍāt (Chief Justice) of Karnataka by Nawāb Āṣif Jāh.[42]

While in Deccan, there were Maulāna Ḥabībullāh al-Albori (d. 1222 AH) Ṣadr of Adhoni in Deccan, author of *Āyīna Taujīh sharḥ of al-Tanbīh* in Shāfi'i Fiqh[43], Maulāna Karāmat 'Ali ibn Ḥayāt 'Ali al-Dehlawi al-Muḥaddith (d. 1277 AH), Qāḍi of Hyderabad[44] and Maulāna Ḥusain 'Aṭāullāh al-Hyderabadi (1260–1327 AH) who was the author of several books.[45]

SHĀFI'I SCHOLARS IN NORTHERN INDIA

In northern parts of India, the outstanding Shāfi'i scholars were: Shāikh al-Islām Farīd al-Dīn al-Awadhi (8th Hijra century)[46] and Mirza Ḥasan 'Ali al-Lakhnawi (d. 1255 AH), the author of books like Tuḥfat al-Mushtāq fi al-Nikāḥ wa al-Ṣudāq and compiler of Fatwas[47], while in Punjab Qāḍi Muḥammad Hāshim al-Anbalwi (12th Hijra century) was from the descendants of Imām al-Shāfi'i[48], Shaikh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥim Ṣafi al-Dīn al-Shāfi'i al-Armawi (644–715 AH) who lived mostly in Arab, was a prolific writer and great teacher[49] and Mirza Ra ḥīmullāh Darwesh Muhammad al-'Azimābādi al-Naqshbandi (d. 1260 AH)[50].

CONCLUSION

The Shāfi'i School of Fiqh has a considerable existence in India, specially along the coastal areas. It arrived India in the company of the Arabs who visited India for trade. The majority of these scholars belonged to Yemen, Egypt and Hejaz. The Shāfi'i community in India produced several great scholars and writers who are well-known in Indian history.

NOTES

1. Dr 'Umar Sulaimān al-Ashqar, al-*Madkhal ila al-Sharī'ah wa al-Fiqh al-Islāmi* (al-Dār al-Nafāyis, Amman, 2005) pp 240-43; Manna' al-Qaṭṭān, *Tārīkh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmi* (Maktaba al-Ma'ārif, Riyadh, 1996) p 363

2. Manna' al-Qaṭṭān, *Tārīkh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmi* (Maktaba al-Ma'ārif, Riyadh, 1996) p 377

3. Dr 'Umar Sulaimān al-Ashqar, al-*Madkhal ila al-Sharī'ah wa al-Fiqh al-Islāmi* (al-Dār al-Nafāyis, Amman, 2005) p 244

4. 'Abd al-Ḥayi al-Ḥasani, *al-Thaqāfat al-Islamiyah fi al-Hind* (Majm'a al-Lughat al-'Arabiya, Damascus, 1983) p 103

5. According to Ishaq Bhatti, there were at least 25 Sahaba who visited India during raids in India at different times. (See *Fuqaha-e-Hind* from 1st Century to 8th Century, vol 1, pp 11-13, pub. Lahore 1974

6. 'Abd al-Ḥayi al-Ḥasani, *al-Thaqāfat al-Islamiyah fi al-Hind* (Majm'a al-Lughat al-'Arabiya, Damascus, 1983) p 103

7. 'Abd al-Ḥayi al-Ḥasani, *al-Thaqāfat al-Islamiyah fi al-Hind* (Majm'a al-Lughat al-'Arabiya, Damascus, 1983) p 103

8. Shaykh Zainuddīn Makhdūm *'Tuhfat al-Mujahidin* (Islamic Book Trust Kuala Lumpur, 2005) pp 29-35

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MOHAMMAD ALI

Faẓl-i Ḥaq Khairābādī and the Problem of Imtinā'-i Nazīr

INTRODUCTION

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, two renowned scholars, Shāh Muḥammad Ismā'īl of Delhi (hereafter, Ismā'īl) and Faẓle Ḥaq of Khairābād[1], locked horns in one of the most complex and contentious theological issues in Muslim history. They debated on the possibility and the impossibility of the creation of a being similar in its essence (*māhīya*) as well as in its existence (*wujūd*) to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) along with all his distinctive qualities and attributes. This doctrine is known as *Imkān-i Nazīr* and *Imtinā'-i Nazīr* in the intellectual history of Muslims in South Asia. The conflict caused mayhem among Muslims and engendered many theological issues in the following decades, such as whether God could lie, etc., affecting the future course of the religious history of Muslims in the region. Even though it has lost its vibrancy in current Muslim discourses, especially because contemporary Muslim scholars view indulgence in such discourses as futile and tedious. Despite this intentional avoidance, the fact that this issue kept religious scholars busy for decades in pre-colonial and colonial India, cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, many among contemporary 'ulamā associated with different religious schools in South Asia and the South Asian global diaspora ascribe to one of the conclusions that were born out of this debate.

Since both contending parties were drawing their arguments from the Islamic intellectual traditions, they both attracted 'ulamā attention, creating a division in the Muslim community. The impact of the debate expanded with 'ulamā from both sides trying to validate their own views by exchanging polemical tracts and epistles, which later provided the basis for doctrinal foundations for many new sects that emerged

during the second half of the nineteenth century. Among them is the Barelvī School which traces its ideological lineage back to the doctrine of the impossibility of the creation of a being similar to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his essence and existence. This article discusses only one thread of the debate, i.e., the position of and the arguments offered by Faẓl-i Ḥaq. He was the first theologian to formulate the discursive basis for the doctrine of *imtinā‘-i nazīr* and argued against the postulation, *imkān-i kizb-i Bārī*, meaning, the possibility for God to lie, in his seminal work, Taḥqīq al-Fatwā fī Ibṭāl al-Taghwā (1825).

FAẒL-I ḤAQ: A BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Faẓl-i Ḥaq was born in 1797 AD, in Delhi, in the Fārūqī lineage that traces its descent from the prominent companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the second Caliph of Islam, ‘Umar Fārūq, thereby, Fārūqī. His father, Faẓl-i Imām, had earned a reputation by virtue of his scholarship in the traditional rational sciences and was recognized as exceptional among his contemporaries.[2] This was the time when, as Professor Moosa remarks, "many family franchises and networks of individual scholars dotted the geography of (India)."[3] The most notable among them were the families of Shāh Walīyullāh and Farangī Maḥall. They had established their madrasas in Delhi and Lucknow respectively, however, they remained distinctive in their approach to the study and interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah. The family of Shāh Walīyullāh, for instance, laid emphasis largely on textual tradition (*naql*) and had incorporated the reading of the Quran, ḥadīth, and *tafsīr* literature, in the major part of their curriculum, while the family of Farangī Maḥall, on the other hand, preferred reason based-discursive tradition, which had more to do with philosophy, logic, and reason in drawing religious and theological arguments.

Faẓl-i Imām is accredited with having established his own madrasa in Delhi. This madrasa took a particular interest in imparting lessons on the rational sciences.[4] At an early age, Faẓl-i Ḥaq was enrolled in the same madrasa and was instructed by his father. He later studied the science of ḥadīth with Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir, son of Shāh Walīyullāh. Faẓl-i Ḥaq is also said to have studied for some time at the feet of Shāh ‘Abdul

ʿAzīz, the eldest son of Shāh Walīyullāh. Faẓl-i Ḥaq graduated while he was still very young and started teaching, probably, in his father's madrasa. Faẓl-i Ḥaq then served at various offices administered by the Company and other princely states throughout his career. However, despite his engagements with official duties, he never stopped teaching and imparting knowledge of the traditional sciences he inherited from his father. Faẓl-i Ḥaq grew as a renowned and distinguished scholar of the rational humanistic tradition (*maʿqūlāt*) to such prominence that he could establish a separate school representing his unique approach to the tradition. This school is known as the School of Khairābād, named after his father's birthplace. The noted pre-partition Indian scholar, Syed Sulaimān Nadvī writes,

(Faẓl-i Ḥaq) revived Islamic rational sciences and was called Ibn Sīnā (the legendary Islamic philosopher) of his time. Students from distant lands travelled to him in order to study under his guidance. He popularized the learning of traditional logic and philosophy afresh in the country, (and because of his efforts) important books of annotations and expositions (of canonical works on philosophy) produced by the scholars of the late medieval period were introduced in the curriculum (of madrasas) … (Faẓl-i Ḥaq's) students and then their students dispersed across the country and brought the Islamic rational sciences to prosperity and served as excellent and great teachers.[5]

Faẓl-i Ḥaq is credited with numerous works on Islamic theology and philosophy in Arabic and Persian. His finesse over the Arabic language was impressive. He composed 4,000 verses that are considered the masterpiece of Arabic literature.[6]

As mentioned, Faẓl-i Ḥaq worked, like his father, for the British residency in his early career. However, the East India Company's anti-Muslim policies compelled him to leave Delhi very soon.[7] During the upsurge of 1857, he returned to Delhi and played an important role in the uprisings against the British. He was arrested and tried for sedition in the aftermath of the revolt. Faẓl-i Ḥaq was charged with being among the signatories of a fatwa that provoked Muslims to wage war against the Company. He, therefore, was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Cellular Jail, also known as Kālā Pānī, in the Andaman Islands, where he died on August 20, 1861.

THE BACKDROP OF THE DEBATE

Shaikh Muḥammad Ikrām's analysis of Indian Muslim history in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offers excellent insights. This was the time when Muslims started realizing that they had lost their political monopoly to a new emerging foreign power: the British Company. He writes,

The thirteenth century of Hijra was a difficult time for the Indian Muslims. This century witnessed the culmination of their political decline. Yet, it marked the beginning of the revivalist and reformist movements. By the time, Muslims had lost control over most of the Indian Territory, and the social and religious problems of their society that had not been heeded during their rule manifested themselves. The books that had been written at that time reveal that even though scholars like Shāh Walīyullāh were trying to unravel the more authentic meaning of Islam, the masses were ignorant of their religion. Though they had converted to Islam from Hinduism, it did not bring much change to their previous spiritual state.[8]

Amidst this distress, a general predilection towards Islamic mysticism prevailed. The Indian Muslims tried to find solace by directing their spiritual attention towards saints and tombs.[9] They believed in their curative power and thought that they could bring about a miracle that would resolve all their problems. Their excessive indulgence in various religio-cultural practices, such as visiting shrines, celebrating the death anniversary of saints ('urs), fastening amulets on arms or hanging them around their necks believing that they could cure or protect their bearers, believing in the supernatural power of saints whether dead or alive, etc. in the name of tasawwuf and Islam. These practices were later subjected to severe criticism and deemed as bid'at, thus 'un-Islamic', by scholars like Ismā'īl of Delhi. He actively condemned these practices in his sermons and writings.

Ismā'īl was a grandson of Shāh Walīyullāh, and a disciple and companion of Syed Aḥmed of Rāe Bareilly, a town located in the modern Indian State of Uttar Pradesh. Along with Syed Aḥmed, Ismā'īl launched an armed campaign against the British and the Sikhs of the Punjab. He caused a great controversy by writing, Taqwīyatul Īmān (1817), which he thought would help in bringing religious reform in the Muslim society. He wrote the book in the emerging vernacular Urdu

and addressed the masses. In the concluding paragraph of the preface of the book, Shāh Ismāʿīl writes,

Therefore, in this book, I have collected a number of Quranic verses and prophetic traditions wherein the Oneness of God and the imitation of the Sunnah are explained. And I have gathered (proofs on) the evil of practicing *shirk* and *bidaʿat*.[10]

He then goes on to identify the audience of this work by saying, "I have translated these verses and traditions into Hindi along with their explanation in order to make the book equally accessible for both scholars and common readers."[11]

Ismāʿīl adopts an accessible approach in his book. He enumerates and refutes almost every popular belief and practice that he considered violated the Islamic doctrine of *tawḥīd*. In order to substantiate his criticism, he cites Quranic verses and/or prophetic traditions characterizing, and then condemning, those practices as *shirk* and/or *bidʿat*. According to Shāh Ismāʿīl, people were indulging in the 'un-Islamic practices' because of their ignorance of the true precepts of Islam. He makes it clear by warning against the deteriorating sense of religious issues among Muslims,

Beware! Since Muslims have forgotten the true meaning of *tawḥīd*, *shirk* has become a common practice among them. Many Muslims are not able to differentiate between *tawḥīd* and *shirk*, yet they claim to be believers.[12]

Written in a coarse language, the book ridicules popular beliefs and practices. It compares the prevalent practices with those of the pre-Islamic Arab society and uses stark analogies when it needs to draw a line between the all-powerful majestic being of God and His prophets, angels, and saints, which later offended many of his contemporaries. For example, he writes,

The status of this sovereign of kings [God] is such that in a single moment He could deploy the command, '*be*,' if He so desired, in order to create millions of prophets, saints, *jinns*, and angels, even the equivalent of the archangel Gabriel and Muhammad (PBUH).

Shāh Ismāʿīl goes on to declare,

With a single breath, God can destroy both the heavenly throne and the earth,

if only to replace them with another universe. It only requires for God to will it and anything happens…God does not require any means or instruments to realize any act. And, if the entirety of humanity—those preceding us and those to follow—were to turn into paragons of virtue like the archangel Gabriel and the Prophet [Muhammad (PBUH)] then not a thing will supplement God's grandeur nor His dominion as the 'master of the universe'; and, if all of humanity turned into devils and the anti-Christ, they would be incapable of diminishing anything of His grandeur. He remains under all circumstances the most supreme of the supreme and the sovereign of kings.[13]

This passage perhaps agonized Ismāʻīl's critics the most and became the focal point of the controversy that followed. Ismāʻīl's characterization of the popular practices as *shirk*, the gravest sin in Islam, and *bidʻah*, received an intense response from his contemporaries. His Taqwīyatul Īmān along with the above-quoted passage caught the attention of one of his fiercest critics, Faẓl-i Ḥaq. His initial response, entitled Taqrīr-i Aʻitirāẓāt bar Taqwīyatul Īmān, came in the form of objections pointing out to a questionable statement from the above-quoted passage,

The status of this sovereign of kings [God] is such that in a single moment He could deploy the command, '*be*,' if He so desired, in order to create millions of prophets, saints, jinns, and angels, even the equivalent of the archangel Gabriel and Muhammad (PBUH).

Faẓl-i Ḥaq contended by arguing that the creation of a being like Muhammad (PBUH) was impossible (*mumtaniʻ biz zāt*) and that any belief in its possibility would be tantamount to believing that God can lie. The proposition that, 'it is impossible (*muḥāl*) for God to lie,' has unanimously been held as a theologically well-grounded position by Muslims for centuries. In addition to the sentence cited above, Faẓl-i Ḥaq also discussed other such statements from the book that, to him, displayed a lack of respect towards the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and were, therefore, regarded blasphemous.

Ismāʻīl promptly wrote a rebuttal to the objections raised by Faẓl-i Ḥaq. Abul Kalām Azād recounts the incident a century later,

While on his way to *Jāmʻ Masjid*, he (Ismāʻīl) found the tract consisting of objections (written by Faẓl-i Ḥaq). After the prayer, he stayed in the mosque and asked for a paper and pen. He wrote a whole treatise in response to it in a single day. Therefore, he named his treatise, Yak Roza."[14]

In this treatise, Ismāʿīl rejected Faẓl-i Ḥaq's charges against him and refuted his basic premise. He explained his position by arguing that believing in the impossibility of the creation of a being similar to Muhammad (PBUH) was incompatible with the creed of the omnipotence of God in Islam. He substantiated his reasoning with the verses of the Quran, which he called, *dalīl-i ʿaqlī* (textual proof) and *dalīl-i naqlī* (logical propositions). Ismāʿīl's logical reasoning runs as follows: the existence of a supposed being similar to Muhammad (PBUH) is *mumtaniʿ bil ghair*. This term in traditional logic and philosophy refers to a being whose existence is impossible not because it is unthinkable, but because it lacks external means which are essential for its coming into existence. He then contends that every *mumtaniʿ bil ghair* is thinkable and can possibly come into existence. As a corollary, his argument proceeds that the existence of the supposed being is possible and God has the power to create it. Furthermore, it is also not against the creed of *tawḥīd*, and of the omnipotence of God.

Setting aside logical reasoning and conclusions, Shāh Ismāʿīl imagined God as an unmatched and supreme Being Whose powers are unchecked and cannot be limited to any logical category. However, these conjectures did not convince Faẓl-i Ḥaq. He viewed, as Professor Moosa explained, that the theological speculations of his opponent have been painted

God in capricious and unpredictable colors, if left unchecked, this kind of theology can potentially drain religion of rational content and open the door to moral anarchy. An unpredictable God, Fazl-i Haq feared, could randomly turn good into bad and vice versa. From there it was a short distance into a moral morass.[15]

Faẓl-i Ḥaq was not only concerned about the idea of an 'unpredictable God', but he was also convinced that Muhammad (PBUH)is a special creation and holds a preeminent place in the entire creation of God. Believing in the possibility of the creation of a person identical to Muhammad (PBUH) would thus undermine his uniqueness. To address this problem, he developed a doctrine: the impossibility of a peer or *imtināʿ-i naẓīr*. Faẓl-i Ḥaq refuted the arguments offered by Ismāʿīl one by one, and this time in a rather thick volume, Taḥqīq al-Fatwā fī Ibṭāl al-Taghwā, published in 1825, seven years before the death of Ismāʿīl

in 1832. A legal questionnaire, *istiftā*, became a pretext for writing this book. In that questionnaire, he was consulted as to the articulation of the creed of *shafā'at* (intercession) propounded by Ismā'īl in his Taqwīyatul Īmān. In Ismā'īl's articulation, *shafā'at* is divided into *shafā'at-i wajāhatī* (intercession based on high esteem), *shafā'at-i muḥabbat* (intercession based on love), *shafā'at bi'l idhn* (intercession through permission).[16] According to Ismā'īl, only the third category is valid. *Shafā'at bi'l idhn* assumes a situation illustrated by an example of a king's court where a courtier of high esteem intercedes for a criminal only when the criminal has already repented and the king wants to forgive his transgression. However, the mediation of this intercessor is not sought after. Sher Ali Tareen offers interesting insights into Ismā'īl's articulation of the creed of *shafā'at*. He writes,

Most important to note here is that even in this third scenario, although the king exonerates the criminal only after receiving a petition from an exalted minister in his court, the decisive factor is that the criminal has already repented and has resolved to never commit a crime again. The petition of an intercessor only facilitates the process; it is not in itself the main cause of the criminal's exoneration. The sole cause is the sovereign authority of the divine, not the authority of any other entity…intercession (as is demonstrated in Ismā'īl's articulation) is legitimate only when it is not sought and when it plays a marginal role in the eventual exoneration of the criminal.[17]

The ensuing conclusion from this formulation was the trivialization of the authority of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which was deemed blasphemous by Ismā'īl's opponents. Therefore, the aforementioned questionnaire, after quoting the long passage expressing Ismā'īl's concept of *shafā'at*, asked about the validity of such a view along with the import of such conception: whether the upholder of such a view committed blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).[18]

Faẓl-i Ḥaq submitted his response addressing each question asked in the questionnaire. In the first part of his response, he explains the concept of *shafā'at* as it has traditionally been held by the *Ahl-i Sunnat* producing a number of Quranic verses, hadiths, and the statements of previous 'ulamā in order to substantiate his viewpoint. Occasionally, he also produces and criticizes Ismā'īl's responses to him from Yak Roza. In the second part, Faẓl-i Ḥaq explains the doctrine of *Imtinā'-i Naẓīr*,

which is followed by his analysis of Ismāʿīl's conception of the doctrine of *shafāʿat*, and whether it holds any validity in the Islamic intellectual and religious tradition. In the same section, he enumerates a total of fourteen reasons justifying the charge against Ismāʿīl's description of the doctrine of *shafāʿat* with blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Then he goes on to state what retribution Sharia enjoins against the person who has perpetrated blasphemy against the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). After elucidating his response supported by the verses of the Quran, hadiths, practices, and statements of the early and later generations of ʿulamā as well as the theological premises, Faẓl-i Ḥaq pronounces that Ismāʿīl's conception of *shafāʿat* does not have any basis in Islamic religious tradition. He further says since his descriptions of the very doctrine and his other statements scattered across the book imply blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the enunciator of such statements is rendered *kāfir*.[19]

Faẓl-i Ḥaq's categorical denunciation of Ismāʿīl had an extensive impact, for not only did it draw a line between Ismāʿīl's admirers and opponents in an already divided community but also provided principal arguments against him. Whatever Faẓl-i Ḥaq laid down against his opponents was picked up and expended by his contemporary and one of the fiercest opponents of Ismāʿīl, Faẓl-i Rasūl of Badāun, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Faẓl-i Rasūl wrote several treatises, each of them was devoted to a particular issue that he found in Ismāʿīl's writings. Through Faẓl-i Rasūl, Ismāʿīl and his followers and admirers' opposition continued in the writings of another illustrious jurist, Aḥmad Raẓā Khān of Bareilly. Since the beginning of the controversy, numerous polemical treatises and tracts were exchanged between the two groups that gave way to formulating and establishing different theologies, thus, widening the rift among Sunni Muslims in the pre- and post-divided India.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A PEER

Since the possibility or impossibility of a peer is a theological problem, Faẓl-i Ḥaq approaches the issue through the logical categories of ʿIlm al-Kalām. He begins by determining the implication of the statement of Ismāʿīl,

He could deploy the command, '*be*,' if He so desired, in order to create millions of prophets, saints, *jinns*, and angels, even the equivalent of the archangel Gabriel and Muhammad (PBUH)…

Faẓl-i Ḥaq argues that the apparent meaning of this statement refers to the creation of an individual who is equivalent to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) not only in his quiddity but also in his exalted qualities and attributes, including his being the Seal of prophets. Such a notion, he submits, is absurd and has no basis in Islamic religious tradition. Faẓl-i Ḥaq establishes his argument by laying down logical propositions. In order to explain this viewpoint, he illustrates by giving an example of an illiterate person. Such a person is not able to write because he does not know how to do it, and that is one reason for him not being able to write. But like any other human being, he has the potential to learn how to write. However, if there comes a circumstance that quashes this potential, he will never be able to write. The first proposition is categorized as *mumtani*, i.e., a contingent existence, and the second proposition as *mumtan' bil ghair*, that is, a possible existence that cannot exist because of an unavoidable cause. Logically, *mumtani'* cannot exist, and a statement that signifies a relation between *mumtani'* with *takwīn* (creation or producing something through an action) is absurd. So, for example, if a beggar says that he can incarcerate a so-and-so king, such a claim would fall into the category of *mumtani'*, rendering it absurd because a beggar does not possess the requisite capability to carry out this act.[20] A *tāwīl* in this statement, argues Faẓl-i Ḥaq, is not acceptable because it draws a listener to its apparent and immediate logical inference, which is, a beggar's claim of incarcerating a king.

After explaining the validity and absurdity of the meaning of a statement, Faẓl-i Ḥaq goes on to assert that Ismā'īl's aforementioned statement which consists of a claim that God can create a person equal to Muhammad (PBUH) is absurd. Faẓl-i Ḥaq states that Ismā'īl's statement implies that the creation of millions of people similar to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his quiddity, characteristics, and attributes is possible. Even if, Faẓl-i Ḥaq argues, that other person shares in Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) quiddity, the characteristics and attributes of the Prophet (PBUH) are unique. Believing in the possibility of the creation of a single person, let alone millions, who is

similar or equal to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his attributes and magnificence, submits Faẓl-i Ḥaq, is unthinkable. Because, among one of the characteristics of the Prophet (PBUH), as is pronounced in the Quran (33:4:), is his being the Final Prophet (PBUH). There can only be one final prophet. Faẓl-i Ḥaq elucidates his argument by articulating a logical proposition, and a conclusion:

    a) Being equal to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his characteristics and attributes is *muḥāl bil-zāt* (essentially impossible).

    b) And the thing which is *muḥāl bil-zāt*, its existence is inconceivable.

The logical inference that follows from the above-mentioned proposition establishes that the existence of a supposed individual equivalent to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his qualities and characteristics is *muḥāl bil-zāt* (essentially impossible).[21] Faẓl-i Ḥaq's logical formulations are based on the Quranic proclamation that Muhammad (PBUH) is the Final Prophet. The second line of argument provided by Faẓl-i Ḥaq ensues from this point. Believing in the possibility of the creation of a being equivalent to Muhammad (PBUH) would now mean that the supposed individual must be, not only *a* prophet but also *the* final prophet. So, if the supposed individual becomes the final prophet, the status of Muhammad (PBUH) as the final prophet, as stated in the Quran, would stand absurd. Here, Fazle Haq introduces another problem of logic, i.e., bringing two contradictories together (*ijtimā'-i naqīzain*).

The explanation of this proposition is as follows: two individuals or more can belong to the same quiddity, however, they cannot share their individuality. It is this individuality that makes a being distinct from the other. Likewise, a being equivalent to Muhammad (PBUH), Faẓl-i Ḥaq explains, must be in any of the two cases: he would either *be* the final prophet or *not*. If he is not the final prophet, he cannot be equal to Muhammad (PBUH). And in the case of his (the supposed individual) being the final prophet, Muhammad cannot be the final one. In the first case, he cannot be equal to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hence, the inevitable result would be that both cannot be the final prophets at the same time; the existence of one would necessitate the absence

of the other. It is so because the characteristic of finality belongs to individuality, not quiddity or essence, and cannot be shared by two individuals. So, the conclusion would be that believing in the creation of the existence of a being equivalent to Muhammad (PBUH) would amount to bringing two contradictories together, which is logically absurd.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE?

Once unleashed, the debate bred a series of theological problems that deepened schism within the South Asian Muslim community. The polemics over the possibility/impossibility of the creation of a peer engendered another complex theological problem: Can God lie?

As discussed earlier, one of the major components of Faẓl-i Ḥaq's argument relies on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) being the Final Prophet, which is stated by God in the Quran. Therefore, Faẓl-i Ḥaq argued that believing in the possibility of a peer goes against this very pronouncement of God necessitating the possibility of the proposition that God can lie. Ismāʿīl discarded Faẓl-i Ḥaq's concerns by arguing that God as an Omnipotent Being must be capable of lying. However, lying is against his *ḥikmat* (wisdom), therefore, He will not do that. Thus, the proposition that God cannot lie, for Ismāʿīl, falls into the category of *mumtaniʿ bil ghair*, meaning, the possibility of lying for God falls into the scope of the meaning of *qudrat* (omnipotence), however, acting upon it is deterred by His wisdom, thus making it *mumtaniʿ* (impossible) due to an external reason, i.e., God's wisdom. Furthermore, if this proposition is reversed, argued Ismāʿīl, it would entail that God is less powerful than humans, His own creation.[22] On the contrary of Ismāʿīl's arguments, Faẓl-i Ḥaq postulates that this proposition, like the proposition of the possibility of a peer, is also *mumtaniʿ biz zāt*. The foremost argument of Faẓl-l Ḥaq against Ismāʿīl's postulation is the characterization of lying as a defective and immoral trait, and the association of such a trait with God is theologically forbidden in Islam.

Faẓl-i Ḥaq identifies two problems in Ismāʿīl's notion of *qudrat* (omnipotence) of God. The first problem is that Ismāʿīl does not define what God's omnipotence means in Islamic religious tradition. Faẓl-i Ḥaq explains that God's *qudrat* includes only those existence that are

possible to come into being.[23] For example, among the theological problems is the question, can God create a being similar to Him? No, He cannot, argues Faẓl-i Ḥaq, for the opposite of it would undermine the fundamental tenet of Islam, that is *tawḥīd*. The things whose existence is both traditionally and rationally impossible are regarded *mumtaniʿ zātī*, and, therefore, are excluded from the definition of His *qudrat*. Similarly, associating the capacity to lie with God sabotages the holiness of the Divine, thus, it is also categorized as *mumtaniʿ zātī*.

Another problem with Ismāʿīl's notion of *qudrat* that Faẓl-i Ḥaq points out is his viewing God's incapacity to lie as His impotence in comparison with humans. Faẓl-i Ḥaq resolves this conundrum by arguing, first, if a thing does not have a potential to exist, meaning if it is *mumtaniʿ zātī*, it cannot necessitate *ʿijz* (impotence) either for God or for humans as well. Second, the absolute omnipotence of God implies His power to bring possible beings into existence. This postulation suggests that the power or the ability of God and humans to bring possible beings into existence has different meanings: humans' power is infinitely defective in comparison to God's perfect and absolute power. Since lying is associated with humans' defective ability, therefore, as a corollary God's incapacity to lie does not make Him impotent in comparison with humans.[24]

CONCLUSION

The debate that has been discussed here demonstrates two theological orientations at a time when India was increasingly being colonized. Against the backdrop of the downfall of Muslim power, Ismāʿīl's theology was deeply inspired by contemporary political developments and reformist ambitions. His theology aimed to establish a puritanical conception of *tawḥīd* that, to him, was tainted by the Muslim masses' ill-informed and wrongly placed devotion. It seems that Ismāʿīl analogized God's sovereignty with the sovereignty of a king. A king's sovereignty is weakened if his bureaucracy is infested by corruption, and if people start turning to lesser authorities, instead of the king, when they require something. It could be surmised that Ismāʿīl equated the current state of Muslims' faith with that of the Mughal state, which was steadily declining. Therefore, he ventured to propound a

theology that interestingly articulated the concept of *tawḥīd* in such a way that demanded complete submission to the sovereignty of God and did not recognize any mediation of either prophets or saints to encroach on His sovereign power. However, Faẓl-i Ḥaq detected flaws in Ismāʿīl's theological formulations. His contentions came as a protest against belittling the Prophet's authority that, he deemed, Ismāʿīl's theology was implying, and his explications of the creeds such as *shfāʿat* rendered the authority of the Prophet meaningless. In Faẓl-i Ḥaq's assertions, in contrast to Ismāʿīl's, Prophet Muhammad's pre-eminence in the creation does not do any harm to God's sovereign power, for this status was endowed upon the Prophet by God Himself. Similarly, Faẓl-i Ḥaq's idea of the omnipotence of God is defined and limited by logical constructions, which, of course, Faẓl-i Ḥaq would not go to describe as 'limited'. He would argue that if a thing's existence is rationally impossible and unthinkable, its association with God's power of creation is absurd. Furthermore, it does not imply ʿijz or limitation on God's power as some, for example, his opponents, would think.

As charged and complex as this debate has been, it gives an account of the innovative theological thinking of Muslim scholars as late as the early colonial period. Not only they were debating on the new possible avenues in Islamic theology, but their theology was also responding to current altering realities. However, their legacy of innovative thinking was tainted and then left inert by later polemicists on both sides.

NOTES

1. Khairabad is a small town, located in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.
2. http://lib.eshia.ir/23019/1/7290. Retrieved on October 2, 2013
3. Moosa, E. (2015). What is a Madrasa? Dev Publishers & Distributors. p. 77.
4. Haq, U. (2011). Khairābādyāt. Tajul Fuhool Academy. P. 23.
5. Nadvī, S. S. (n.d.). Ḥayāt-i Shiblī. Darul Musannifin. pp. 22-23.
6. Moosa, E. (2015). What is a Madrasa? P.98.
7. Haq, F. (2011). Bāghī Hindustān (Urdu translation, Muhammad Abdush Shahid Khan Shervani). al-Majma al-Islami. p. 135.
8. Ikram, S. M. (n.d.). Mauj-i Kauthar. Adbi Dunya. p. 13.
9. Akhtar, W. (1971). Khwajā Mār Dard Tasawwuf aur Shāʿirī. Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu. p. 20

10. Ismāʻīl, S. M. (n.d.). Taqwīyatul Īmān. Maktaba Naimia. p.6
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. p. 8
13. Ibid. p. 44; also see, Moosa, What is a Madrasa? p. 94.
14. Siddiqi, A. (1969). Ghālib aur Abul Kalām. Shahrah. p. 190.
15. Moosa, What is a Madrasa?. pp. 99-100.
16. Ismāʻīl, Taqwīyatul Īmān, pp. 43-45.
17. Tareen, S. (2020). Defending Muhammad in Modernity. University of Notre Dame Press. p.126.
18. See the *istiftā* in Haq, F. (2000). Tahqīq al-Fatwa fī Ibṭāl al-Taghwa (Urdu translation: Shafat-i Mustafa by Muhammad Abdul Hakim). al-Mumtaz Publishers. pp. 67-71.
19. Haq, F., Tahqīq al-Fatwa, 246-47.
20. Ibid, pp. 152-55.
21. Ibid. p. 156
22. Ismāʻīl, Yak Rozā, p. 17.
23. Haq, F., Tahqīq al-Fatwa, p. 159
24. Ibid. pp. 157-163

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Errata:

1. In previous Issue (February-April, 2022) of *Islam and the Modern Age*, the name of the author of the Article titled *MUSLIM CULTURE* was misspelled as MOHAMMAD ZAKIR. The correct spelling is MOHAMMED with an E after the M.

2. In before previous Issue (November-January, 2021) of *Islam and the Modern Age*, the Article (ISLAM) by Professor Mohammed Zakir is the translation from *Dunya ki Kahani* (The Story of the World), a collection of Prof. M.Mujeeb's talks broadcast on All India Radio in 1938 as published with additions by Maktaba Jamia Ltd., Delhi, 1965 (4th Edition) pp. 98-108. (Words in parenthesis are provided by the translator).

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