

Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization

Volume: 3 Issue: 2 Fall 2013 ISSN 2075-0943



**Department of Islamic
Thought and Civilization**

University of Management and Technology
Lahore, Pakistan

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ISSN: 2075-0943

Published by OCM-UMT

University of Management and Technology

C-II, Johar Town, Lahore-54770, Pakistan

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JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION

(ISSN 2075-0943)

Fall 2013

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

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Editor's Note

The diverse range of articles that comprise this issue of the Journal touch upon issues that affect the Muslim communities in this life as in the hereafter. Drawing upon knowledge gleaned from scholars across the world and in Pakistan, the editors have made an attempt to bring to the limelight pressing issues - such as Islamic economics and distribution of estates in Nigeria to religious dialogue, the concept of evil, and bridging the gap between religion and the modern sciences - to name a few. It is sincerely hoped that the readers would benefit from the scholarly endeavors and painstaking research conducted by the contributors.

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Table of Contents

Sr. No.	CONTENTS	PAGE No.
	Ismael Saka Ismael	
1.	<i>An Examination of Causes of Delay in the Distribution of Estates in Ilorin and Its Environs</i>	1
	Mohammad Dawood Sofi	
2.	<i>Knowledge—Toward Bridging Religious and Modern Sciences: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Approach</i>	13
	Nasir Nabi	
3.	<i>Islamic Economic Thought in the Medieval Times: Some Reflections</i>	21
	Muhammad Shahid Habib	
4.	<i>The meaning of Religious Dialogue: According to Christian-Muslim Theologians in Pakistan</i>	33
	Dr Ahmad F. Siddiqui	
5.	<i>A Statistical Analysis for Increasing Reward with Increasing Size of Jam'at</i>	39
	Azher Hameed Qamar	
6.	<i>The Concept of the 'Evil' and the 'Evil Eye' in Islam And Islamic Faith-Healing Traditions</i>	44
	Ms. Gull-i-Hina, Ms. Gull-i-Saba	
7.	<i>Taubat-un-Nasooḥ: Religious Implications among Families of 19th century Ashrafia of Colonial India</i>	54

An Examination of Causes of Delay in the Distribution of Estates in Ilorin and its Environs

Ismael Saka Ismael

Abstract

In the last two decades or thereabout, Area Courts and indeed other courts with jurisdiction to hear and determine Muslim matters in Ilorin have been inundated with cases involving distribution of estate of deceased Muslims who have died long time without having such estates distributed on time. Some of these cases dragged for a long time resulting into protracted litigation. The curiosity of the author to find out the cause(s) of these delays is the driving force for embarking on this research work. This paper is therefore, an indepth examination of the causes of delay in the distribution of estates of deceased Muslims of Ilorin specifically and the Muslims of Kwara State in general. Delay breeds litigation which most often becomes protracted. This paper is meant to serve as a clarion call to revert to application of pristine Islamic Law of Inheritance after identifying delay as a serious problem in the sphere of application of Islamic Law of Inheritance in the area under reference.

Keywords: Ilorin, Islamic Law, Estate Distribution, Inheritance

Introduction

Ilorin is both *de facto* and *de jure* a town inhabited by Muslims.¹ The inhabitants of the town consist of the Yoruba,² Hausa, Nupe, Baruba and Fulfulde speaking communities who form the major ethnic groups of Kwara State. Apart from these communities, there are other Yoruba and non-Yoruba speaking Muslims from the neighbouring Yoruba and non-Yoruba speaking States. The Muslim inhabitants of the town conduct their everyday life activities³ in accordance with the dictates, principles and doctrines of Islamic Law.⁴ Of all the activities of the Muslims of Ilorin, wedding, naming ceremonies and funeral rites receive a lot of prominence. The former two attract a lot of pomp and pageantry while the latter is observed with solemn soberness because it brings to an end the sojourn of man on this earth and marks the beginning of another chain of activities.⁵

The Muslims of Ilorin, while living, other Muslims elsewhere are naturally endowed with abundant insatiable instinct⁶ of acquisition of wealth⁷ which they exert some degree of absolute control⁸ over while they are alive. The Ilorin Muslim is a trustee⁹ of the wealth that he owns for the duration of his life.¹⁰ When his term of life expires, his trusteeship over his wealth and property expires too. No matter how much time the Muslim of Ilorin spend on this earth, one day, the end shall come by way of death.¹¹ Since death is the ultimate end of man in his sojourn on this earth, it can be said to be a global phenomenon which no one prays for, yet a reality to all human beings because every human being shall have a taste of it.¹² Upon the demise of a Muslim of Ilorin, he loses his right of ownership

and absolute control of disposal of his wealth or estate because he cannot decide who takes what and cannot equally decide how it is to be disposed except what is permitted.¹³ It has to be distributed in accordance with the directive¹⁴ of the Real Absolute Owner-Allah (SAW). So like any other place, in Ilorin, not until the inheritance is opened and the estate distributed, the heirs have no right whatever to the estate of their predecessor.

It is a general principle and practice of Islamic Law of Inheritance that a man is ceased of control over his assets as a result of death and as soon as the eight-day *fidau* prayer of a deceased Muslim is observed, his estate becomes due for distribution amongst his legitimate and legal heirs.¹⁵ This ought to be the practice and it is expected that any moment from this particular time, the estate of a deceased Muslim of Ilorin becomes due for distribution amongst his heirs in accordance with the Law of Intestate Succession in Islamic Law. However, in the last two decades or there about, it is observed that delaying distribution of estates has impacted and inhibited application of pristine Islamic Law in the area of estate distribution in accordance with Islamic Law (in Ilorin specifically and amongst the Muslims of Kwara State in general). This has brought about serious problem of inordinate delay and in some cases outright refusal to distribute estate amongst others with grave consequences. The socio-economic and religio-legal consequences of delaying distribution of estate of a Muslim provides the enabling environment warranting undertaking a research into the causes of delay in the distribution of estates in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general. This research is therefore based on field work conducted in the Ilorin Emirate between 2000 and 2011.

Causes of Delay in Ilorin and its Environs

A close study of some cases shows that variety of causes account for either ordinary¹⁶ or inordinate¹⁷ delay in the distribution of estate in Ilorin in particular and amongst the Muslims of Kwara State in general. These causes are:

1. Fear of the Use of Supernatural Powers

Delay in the distribution of estate of a deceased Muslim of Ilorin and among the Muslims of Kwara State is often caused by the customary belief, efficacy and general fear of the use of spiritual and supernatural power by the person in possession of the estate against the heirs in situations where the heirs are weak and of tender age.¹⁸ The fear of use of spiritual and supernatural power against them usually instills palpable fear in the minds of the heirs, thereby perpetually keeping them silent over the issue of distribution of estate. It will be recalled that many African Muslim Communities (Ilorin and indeed Kwara State inclusive) adopted Islam and Islamic ways of life and mixed it with traditional customs and practices especially in the preparation of charms and amulets¹⁹ which the people wear to protect themselves from evil misfortune, to bring prosperity and success against enemies and evil forces. This belief and practice is partly a result of the environment under which people live, where many things appear magical rather than logical because science has not affected the majority of the people's lives in any fundamental way.²⁰

2. Lawyers' Attitude

In Ilorin and among the Muslims of Kwara State, lawyers' attitude does not really constitute a major cause of delay in the distribution of estate because about ninety percent of estate distribution is done by the local *Mallams*, the *Alfas* i. e. *Ulamas*. Lawyers do not really get involved here. This is because generally, the Ilorin Muslim abhors court litigation and detests resorting to the courts by way of litigation to have estate distributed in deference to tradition. This is why it is a common adage amongst the people that "*Aa kii ti kotu bo so re*" meaning litigation breeds enmity rather than friendship. The Ilorin Muslim would rather prefer to suffer in silence by having the estate remain undistributed than resort to court litigation to effect distribution.²¹ This situation is slowly changing as a number of estate distributions are conducted through litigation, though the number is negligible.

However, in a few cases where estates distributed through court litigation, i.e., about ten per cent, lawyers' attitude comes to play in delaying distribution of

estates in form of either seeking for adjournments on one reason or the other or in filing all sorts of motions (both *ex-parte* and on notice) or foot-dragging in cases that require obtaining letters of administration before effecting distribution. Letters of administration take months, in some extreme cases, years to obtain.

Apart from this, delayed distribution of estate in Ilorin in particular and amongst the Muslims of Kwara State in general, is also attributable to "unnecessary" appeals²² against decisions of trial courts arising from either the lawyer's failure or inability to properly analyze the issues and or law involved in the cases or for mere "development" of the law. The case of *Madam Iyabo Imam v. Akanni Akibu & 5 Ors*,²³ amongst others illustrates the point. In this case, the Plaintiff is consanguine sister of the first Defendant while 2nd to 6th Defendants are children of late germane brother (Alhaji Garuba Kaduna who predeceased his father) of the Plaintiff. The father of the Plaintiff, first Defendant and Plaintiff's late germane brother is late Shaba Mohammed Umaru who died on 21st January, 1981 while 2nd to 6th Defendants are grand children of late Shaba Mohammed Umaru from Garuba Kaduna.

The case arose as a result of agitation from 2nd to 6th Defendants for distribution of estate of late Garuba Kaduna, the germane brother of the Plaintiff. Upon full trial to determine ownership of the properties sought to constitute the estate to be distributed, the Upper Area Court 1, Ilorin in the last paragraph of its judgment in the case under consideration provides:

The summary of the judgment therefore is that the Plaintiff is declared the owner of the property at Magajin Agbo Compound, Agaka, Ilorin and the two rooms at Opo-Malu. The properties at Magajin Gari, Idi-Ose, is to be shared according to Islamic Law of inheritance between the plaintiff and second to sixth (2nd - 6th) defendants while that at Magajin Gari, Surulere is to be administered in conformity with Sharia (Law of Succession) between the Plaintiff. **Any dissatisfied party has a right of appeal to the High Court within 30 days** (*Emphasis mine*).

In spite of the trial court stating in its judgment where appeal should go to, the defendants' counsel instead of appealing to the appropriate court,²⁴ filed on appeal before Kwara State Shari'a Court of Appeal, Ilorin²⁵ which was struck out²⁶ on 30/3/06 on preliminary objection raised by Plaintiff/Respondent's Counsel on the ground that the Shari'a Court of Appeal lacks jurisdiction to entertain the suit. The suit was subsequently transferred²⁷ from Shari'a Court of Appeal to the State High Court in its appellate jurisdiction.²⁸ On the hear-

ing date, 23/01/2007, the Appellants, realizing the futility of the appeal, withdrew²⁹ it. The withdrawal of the appeal and its striking out by the State High Court (in its appellate session) provided the enabling environment for the Plaintiff/Respondent to have part of the property adjudged subject to inheritance in accordance with Shari'a be distributed in *Madam Iyabo Imam v. Mrs Tinuke Akibu*.³⁰ The Defendant in this case is the eldest child of Akanni Akibu, the 1st Defendant in the withdrawn case. She was sued because by the time the case was eventually withdrawn from the High Court, Akanni Akibu had already died. The share meant for Akanni Akibu was distributed amongst his heirs because Garba Kaduna predeceased Shaba Mohammed Umaru, grandfather of 2nd to 6th Defendants.

A close study of the cases here will reveal that the attitude of lawyer(s) has contributed greatly to delaying the distribution of the estate which would have been carried out in 2005 instead of 2007, a delay of about two years or thereabout due to problem(s) associated with lawyers (earlier highlighted above) in the few cases that are resolved through litigation.

The Appellants' counsel's attitude in *Alhaji Saka Opobiye v. Layiwola Muniru*³¹ also buttresses the assertion that the attitude of lawyers constitutes one of the major causes of delay in the distribution of estates in the very few cases of inheritance that are determined by means of court litigation in Ilorin and Kwara State in general. In this case, the Court of Appeal, Ilorin Division, on 11th July 2002 delivered its judgment which was not palatable to the Appellants. The Appellants' counsel appealed to the Supreme Court of Nigeria in Abuja vide Notice and Grounds of Appeal dated and filed on 31st July 2002. Rather than pursue the appeal in Abuja to a logical conclusion, he decided to indulge in judicial window shopping by dissipating his energy on proceedings for stay of execution of judgment of 11th July, 2002 and interlocutory injunction which was filed on 31st July 2002 and concluded on 13th January 2004.³² The Court of Appeal, Ilorin Division, however refused to grant stay of execution of judgment but restrained and ordered both parties to maintain *status quo*.

In spite of the restraining order of the Court of Appeal, instead of pursuing the substantive suit, the Appellants' counsel initiated contempt proceedings against the Respondent, Layiwola Muniru, on 4th October 2004. This proceeding was dismissed for lack of merit on 6th February 2006. In its ruling of dismissal, the Court of Appeal, Ilorin Division, alluded to the assertion that law-

yers' attitude constitutes a cause of delay in distribution of estate as the court held inter alia that:

...In fact there is no clear evidence that this court's Order of 13th January, 2004 was in any way flouted by the Respondents. **Both counsel are to be blamed for unnecessary delaying the hearing of this matter to its logical conclusion.** It is clearly from the record that the land in dispute, which is the subject matter of inheritance, was in fact, unscathed and untouched...³³ (*Emphasis mine*).

After failure of all these unnecessary judicial voyage of discoveries, the Appellants' counsel by a motion (at the Supreme Court of Nigeria) dated 27th March 2008 heard and granted on 10th December 2008, decided to pursue the substantive suit.³⁴ From the above analysis, it is vividly clear that attitude of counsel has caused a delay of about seven years (from 11th July 2002 to 5th January 2009) in the course of having the case being decided finally.

3. Judges' Attitude

Judges of Courts³⁵ constitute one of the three³⁶ classes of distributors of estates of deceased Muslims in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general. The attitude of some of these judges contributes to the delay associated with cases of inheritance that are determined through court litigations. It should be borne in mind that cases of estate distribution in accordance with Islamic Law decided through litigation are very few in Ilorin due to reasons advanced earlier in this paper.

For the purpose of discussing this class of distributors, i.e., the judges of courts, emphasis would be placed on the Area Courts because they are the courts of first instance while the others³⁷ perform supervisory³⁸ and appellate³⁹ functions as the case may be. In reality, within this class of estate distributors, the Area Courts, being courts of first instance, are the ones involved in actual and physical distribution of estates of deceased Ilorin Muslims whose relations have to resort to them for resolution where distribution by either of the other two classes of distributors would not achieve the result due to one problem or the other. For the purpose of illustrating this assertion is the case of *Madam Iyabo Imam v. Mrs. Tinuke Akibu*⁴⁰ which is a case involving distribution of estate of late Shaba Mohammed Umoru which arose from the determination of property owned by the deceased (late Shaba Mohammed Umoru) and late Garuba Kaduna being subject to inheritance in accordance with Islamic Law in *Madam Iyabo Imam v. Mr. Akanni Akibu & 5 Ors.*⁴¹

The Area Courts used to be known and called Provincial Courts (Native Courts) during the colonial era. They were established then by Warrant under the hand of a Provincial Commissioner within his province as he shall think fit,⁴² subject to confirmation by the Minister. Today, in Kwara State, these courts are no longer called Native Courts but Area Courts and they are established by Warrants under the hand of the Chief Judge who may establish them as he shall think fit.⁴³ The Courts, during colonial era, had “alkali”, a person learned in Moslem Law as the *alkali*⁴⁴ and they hear and determine civil matters amongst others which involve questions of Moslem personal Law.⁴⁵ The alkali of that time, though they were not trained in the modern conventional legal education,⁴⁶ were however, very versed and experienced in Islamic Law and procedure. They attended the traditional *Makarantar Allo*, *Makarantar ilimi* and the Kano Law School. Today, in Kwara State, about ninety percent of judges in the various Area Courts (Upper Area Courts inclusive) possess a degree in either Islamic Law or combined degree of Common and Islamic Laws⁴⁷ while majority of them, in addition to possessing a degree in Islamic Law or Common and Islamic Laws, are also qualified legal practitioners⁴⁸ by the definition of Legal Practitioners Act.⁴⁹

At this juncture, it is pertinent to state that notwithstanding the volume of cases before the trial courts, the attitude of the judges, especially those of the Area Courts, including Upper Area Courts, and some other factors⁵⁰ contribute immensely to congestion of cases in these courts which account for the snail like pace of administration of justice in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general. The result of this is delay in concluding most of these cases which include the ones on estate distribution. The point the researcher is making here is most likely to be appreciated by using the case of *Abdullahi Ibrahim v. Baba Tapa & Ibrahim Koto*⁵¹ as illustration. In this case, the Grand Kadi of Kwara State Shari’a Court of Appeal, Ilorin, in a ruling written and delivered by his Lordship stated that:

...we want to take judicial notice of the fact that we had cause in 2004 to listen to the same complaint from the same party on the same matter and in the same manner. **We must confess that we are worried, sad and concerned that this suit, on the succession of two rooms, filed since 16th March, 2001 remains unresolved till today.** It is unfortunate to say the least. In the Upper Area Court I, it suffered seven adjournments before it was transferred to Upper Area Court II, Ilorin in December, 2003. Due to similar neglect the applicant filed a

motion KWS/SCA/CV/M/IL/ 14/2003 decided on 9th June, 2004 before us...⁵² (*Emphasis mine*)

Based on the researcher’s experience in legal practice in these courts, corruption, a cancer worm not peculiar to the judicial arm of the government is the most probable cause of the judge’s attitude and behaviour in this case. Public institutions in Nigeria today have lost their values due to corruption. The judiciary as a whole is no exception as it is replete with corruption. Many judges have conspired through their attitude and corrupt tendencies to bring the profession into disrepute. They have eroded the last hope of the common man.⁵³ Of recent, the Chief Justice of Nigeria was accused by the President of Court of Appeal of trying to interfere in a diabolic manner with the outcome of the Sokoto State Gubernatorial election tribunal decision.⁵⁴ As if that was not bad enough, it has also been reported that there has been a scam involving six billion Naira in the National Judicial Institute of which the Chief Justice of Nigeria is the Chairman.⁵⁵ Also, some years ago, the Administrator of the Institute, Justice Oyeyipo, a retired Chief Judge of Kwara State, was relieved of that position for financial impropriety. The incumbent Administrator of the Institute, Justice Umaru Eri, a retired Chief Judge of Kogi State who took over from Justice Oyeyipo is said to be at the centre of the alleged scam.⁵⁶ If these high ranking judicial personalities could stoop so low as to get themselves enmeshed in these unethical behaviours, what else do we expect from an Area Court judge?. Nemesis would certainly catch up with them one day as it did with judge Abdullahi who was charged for corruption in *C. O. P. v. Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi*⁵⁷ before an Ilorin Chief Magistrate Court in Kwara State.

By the First Information Report (F.I.R.) in the case under reference, the accused was the presiding judge of Upper Area Court, Ganmo. He was standing trial for the offence of “*public service in judicial proceeding acting contrary to law and public servant taking gratification in respect of Judicial Act contrary to Sections 125 and 115(2) of Penal Code*”. It was alleged against the accused that:

On 10th March, 2011, at about 1300hrs, on the strength of a letter of complaint with Ref. No. C.42B/Vol. IV/711 dated 3rd March, 2011 received from the Judiciary, Chief Registrar’s Chamber, Ilorin signed by S. T. Abdulkadir (Mrs) addressed to the Commissioner of Police and endorsed to this department for discreet investigation wherein it was reported that on 27th January, 2011 four suspects namely (1) Yusuf Abayomi (2) Busari Shehu (3) Usman Salami and (4) Olabode

Olabisi all of various addresses in Ilorin township were arraigned in Court on First Information Report before Upper Area Court Ganmo being presided over by you Hon. Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi and Hon. Ganiyu Mustapha for various Traffic Offences by the Nigerian Police, 'A' Division Ilorin. It was further reported that contrary to the regular judicial process, you Hon. Ibrahim Abdullahi, a Public Servant in judicial proceeding, acted contrary to the laid down rules, tried the suspects summarily convicted them without following the due judicial process, after which you allowed the convicts to go home to source for the fines imposed on them till on the 28th January, 2011 when they came back to the court to pay the fines. It is further alleged that contrary to the laid down laws, you personally collected the said fine and issued receipts to the convicts which did not reflect the actual amount of fines imposed on them by your court. Discreet Police Investigation revealed that you a Public Servant in judicial proceeding acted contrary to law and equally took gratification in respect of your judicial Act.

It is sad to state that this case got terminated through filing of a *Nolle* and the Area Court Judge was removed as one and made head of Court Interpreters. It is however not all the judges that are bad but the very few bad eggs amongst them are dragging the name of the judiciary to the mud. As observed earlier, the issue of corruption is not limited or peculiar to the judiciary; it is a cancerous worm afflicting all public institutions in Nigeria.

4. Ulama's Role in Society

In Ilorin and Kwara State in general, the *Ulama* are commonly known, referred to and called *Alfas* or *Afas*. From religious perspective, their role in the society is very vital and multi-dimensional to the extent that this cannot be over-emphasized. A few of their roles and responsibilities are leading prayers (*Imam*), public preaching on Islam, Islamic rites and Islamic religious way of life, conducting Islamic naming ceremonies, conducting Islamic *Nikkah*, conducting *Janaza* prayer and distribution of estates of deceased Muslims in accordance with Islamic Law amongst others. They are people well versed in Arabic, Islamic Studies, Islamic Law and a host of other fields of Islamic knowledge. The *Alfas/Afas* constitute the major class of estate distributors in Ilorin and Kwara State as a whole because majority of estate distribution is done through this means than through the courts as pointed out earlier.

Before delving into the role of *Alfas/Afas*, i. e., *Ulamas* (Local *Mallams*) with regard to estate distribution in Ilorin and Kwara State, the researcher wishes to cate-

gorically state that Ilorin⁵⁸ is a place of men of learning and knowledge in Islam and Islamic Education even before⁵⁹ and after⁶⁰ the coming of Sheikh Alimi⁶¹ and his *Jama'a* and subsequent settlement in Ilorin. From time immemorial to date, Ilorin has been blessed with men of great learning in a number of branches of Islam and Islamic Education. Majority of these erudite and distinguished scholars of repute in Islam and Islamic Education are of blessed memory⁶² while some others are still alive.⁶³

These erudite Muslim scholars of Ilorin (past and present) have the basic general knowledge of almost all the spheres of Islam and Islamic Education (including law) to qualify to be called and referred to as "*Alfas*" or "*Afas*" and to hold position of office of an "*Imam*" in some cases and in other cases, qualified to be even judges of an Islamic Court. In addition to having the basic knowledge of the various fields of Islam and Islamic Education, each and every one of them has his area of specialization such as:

Tafsirul Qur'an, knowledge of the interpretation and application of the text of *Qur'an*, its literature such as its diction, phraseology, Science of *Hadith*, '*Ilmul Fara'id*, Succession law, *Tarikh*, History of Islam and Muslim personalities, *Sufism*; Theory and Practice of mysticism, *Mantiq* logic in Islamic Studies, *Da'wah*, Science of propagation of the Faith, *Tawhid*, Science of the concept of the unity of Allah and many other branches of Islamic Studies known as *Funun*.⁶⁴

Each of these erudite and prominent Islamic scholars of Ilorin (past and present) are reputedly known and associated with possessing in depth knowledge and skills in one or more areas of the aforementioned areas of specialization. There is however, none of these scholars (past or present) prominently and reputedly acclaimed to have specialized in the knowledge and skill of distribution of estate or associated with the field and skill of '*Ilmul-Fara'id*. Even if there is, such scholar(s) has/have not been widely acclaimed in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general as it is with respect to other fields of specialization such as *Sufism*,⁶⁵ *Da'wah*, general Arabic and Islamic scholarship⁶⁶ to mention but a few areas.

From the above analysis, it is presumed and it ought to be that when it comes to the areas of specialization, it is the expert in the relevant field that takes the stage to handle the issue(s) at stake as the case may be. This is because each area of specialization has developed its jurisprudential science to solve any given knot, even

though they all have common primary sources,⁶⁷ i.e., the Glorious *Qur'an* and *Hadith/Sunnah*.

These days it is not uncommon in Ilorin and amongst the Muslims of Kwara State, to find *Alfas* who are not versed in the knowledge, skill and art of estate distribution indulging in estate distribution when called upon to do so by heirs.⁶⁸ The researcher, in the course of this research and as an active participant in the distribution of estate of XYZ in Share,⁶⁹ a suburb of Ilorin, a resident *Alfa* who was an observer in the distribution of the estate in question, informed me after the distribution exercise that, that was his first experience in life as an *Alfa* to witness actual physical distribution of estate even though he had been involved in the teaching of students of *Madrasat* Arabic and Islamic Knowledge (including theoretical rules of Islamic Law of Inheritance) for more than ten years or thereabout.

Similarly, during the course of this research, the researcher's experience, especially in a particular case⁷⁰ of estate distribution by some *Alfas* confirms that some *Alfas* who are not well versed in the knowledge of Islamic Law of Inheritance, skill and art of distribution indulge in estate distribution and find it difficult to turn down invitation to distribute estate.⁷¹ The particular case in question involved the distribution of ZYX estate. Inventory of the properties were taken as well as the list of the entitled heirs. Amongst the properties are two real properties. One being a modern building situated in commercial area of Ilorin while the other is made of mud walls situated in the traditional Ilorin set-up. By design and location, the two buildings do not have the same monetary and or commercial value. Without ascribing value to them, the *Alfas* went ahead to allocate the building with less commercial value to particular heirs and the other to other heirs. This singular act of the *Alfas* somehow infuriated the heirs because they are from different mothers and the heirs halted,⁷² further distribution of the estate. The distribution could not be carried out to a logical conclusion by the *Alfas* because of their in experience and lack of possession of the art and skills of estate distribution. The *Alfas*, though, did not leave without taking honorarium for a service not rendered.

Unlike the past great Islamic scholars of Ilorin, today the bulk of those within the class of *Alfas* of Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general, are people who do not go beyond the *Idadiyyah*⁷³ Schools yet they claim to be Islamic Scholars whereas in reality, their knowledge of Islam itself is shallow, bearing in mind the downward trend of knowledge (both mundane and religious) generally.⁷⁴ This, coupled with the fact that

'ilm ul-Fara'id is acclaimed to be one of the fields of knowledge that will fade away towards the end of the world,⁷⁵ contribute probably to the dearth of scholars versed in the knowledge, skill and art of distribution of estate in accordance with Islamic Law. There is no doubt that the field of Islamic Law of Inheritance is very technical and can only be handled by experts⁷⁶ only but regrettably today many self proclaimed *Alfas/Afas* in Ilorin and indeed Kwara State dabble into it.⁷⁷

Discussion on the role of *Alfas / Afas* in the society with regards to delay in the distribution of estate in Ilorin and Kwara State in general would not be complete without reference to the fact that they fail (by omission or commission) to emphasize the importance of early distribution of estate during the usual third, fifth or eighth day (as the case may be) *fidau* prayer of the deceased Muslim.⁷⁸ In almost all *fidau* prayers, *Alfas / Afas* do not or hardly make reference to this. What most of them do is to offer prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased Muslim and concentrate so much on matters that would enhance their personal gains in form of monetary income.⁷⁹ The researcher is not totally opposed to this since they do not have regular and consistent income nor other means of livelihood other than this service which is more of gratuitous community / religious service. They are however enjoined to always devote some time to stress the importance and the need for early distribution of estate of a deceased Muslim.

5. Ignorance of the Law

The researcher's interaction with some heirs (who plead to be made anonymous) during the course of this research work shows that lack of knowledge of Islamic Law of Inheritance and the nature of inheritance right in Islam on the part of some or all the heirs, in some cases, is responsible for delay in the distribution of estate amongst the Muslim communities of Kwara State. Majority of heirs interacted with do not realize that there is need for quick and timely distribution of estate. They do not see time as having any essence in distributing the estate of a deceased Muslim.

At times, ignorance is not limited to the law relating to the rules and principles of Islamic Law of Inheritance but also extends to the law relating to the legal system in respect of where, how and what method to adopt in seeking redress. The case of one princess Bilikisu Gambari illustrates this point. The princess, though educated, by a letter dated 19th August, 2007 to the Grand *Kadi*, Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal, Ilorin inviting him to distribute the estate of her late father

in their quasi-judicial function. The Grand *Kadi* declined the invitation because the invitation letter was signed by her alone. She was directed to get the other heirs to sign the letter. When she could not get other heirs to sign the letter, she got disenchanted.⁸⁰ The problem here is that she could not differentiate between the appellate judicial function of the *Kadis* of the Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal, Ilorin from their quasi-judicial function. They do not have original jurisdiction to hear and determine inheritance matters. What she ought to have done is to file a suit for distribution of estate at any Upper Area Court or any Area Court Grade 1 in Ilorin and it would go to the Shariah Court of Appeal on appeal where she is not satisfied with the distribution done at the court of first instance. Instead of doing this, she took the wrong step because of her ignorance of the law. From her action, she had wanted a court distribution and not a distribution through arbitration (*sulh*).

6. *Laissez-Faire Attitude*

Experience arising from the researcher's number of years⁸¹ in legal practice in cases involving inheritance in accordance with Islamic Law in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general, shows that "I don't care" attitude of heirs accounts for delay in the distribution of estates of deceased Muslims in the area under reference. This attitude stems from lack of zeal and courage amongst any of the heirs or even a non-heir to initiate the move to have the estate distributed. Absence of zeal and courage at times results from economic self sufficiency and or poverty. The combined effect of all these is that they provide enabling atmosphere for delay of distribution of estate to thrive.

7. Economic Self-Sufficiency/Poverty

Economic status of the heirs, in some cases, constitutes a cause of delay in the distribution of estate of a deceased Muslim of Ilorin and amongst the Muslims of other communities of Kwara State. By economic status is meant the economic buoyancy or otherwise of the heirs. Thus where the heirs of a deceased Muslim are economically buoyant, they may not bother to address their minds, for a very long time, to the issue of distribution of estate. Likewise, where majority of the heirs are economically self-sufficient and others are not and the estate is in the hand(s) of those who are economically buoyant, the heirs who are poor or weak, most especially on the part of the female heirs,⁸² would find it a bit difficult to initiate estate distribution, especially if the heirs are from a polygynous family.

The estate of one late *Alhaji Abdullahi* illustrates this point. The deceased was survived by both male and female children, wives and a mini-housing estate of six numbers of three-bedroom flats at Oke-Agodi Area of Ilorin amongst other assets. The flats in question were occupied by tenants who were paying just two hundred (₦200.00) Naira per flat per month prior to and after the death of the deceased. After the death of the deceased, the tenants were instructed by the heirs to pay rent to some old women including the widows of the deceased as a kind of up-keep allowance. For many years, the tenants were in default by owing accumulated rent running to years. The situation remained like that until one of the heirs (Musa Abdullahi) in 2001 volunteered and instructed the Law Firm of the researcher to commence action against all the tenants and eject all of them.⁸³ Upon conclusion of the cases and realizing the economic value of each flat,⁸⁴ the other heirs who had never shown any interest and were never willing to spend their own resources (if at all they have any) on the estate started agitating for distribution. Though, the flats were eventually distributed but without the self-less and volunteer efforts of the researcher's client, the asset in question would have probably remained undistributed till today.

8. Large Estate Involving Shares of Floated Companies Within and Outside Nigeria

Large estates involving shares of floated companies both within and outside Nigeria do constitute a cause of delay in the distribution of estates of deceased Muslims. This is due to the fact that ordinarily, where the estate of a deceased Muslim is large, there is no doubt that it will take some time to have the inventory taken and get the assets verified and where such estate involves shares of floated companies within and or outside the country, it will certainly take more time for the inventory to be taken and verified. Therefore, since these processes would have to be done before distribution takes place, this process would surely take a chunk of time and cause some kind of delay in the distribution of such estates.

Though, either as a researcher or as a private legal practitioner, in the course of this research work and within the area of study, the researcher did not come across any estate involving distribution of large estate involving shares of floated companies either within and or outside this country. It is however, not improbable and or not impossible that such estate exists or has existed in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general. The estate closest to what is being discussed here and found in the course of this research work is the estate

of late *Alhaji Adebayo Busari Alaya*⁸⁵ who died sometime in 2004 or thereabout. The real properties alone in the estate under reference were classified into A – F.

Properties in classification “A” consisted of five rooms and five room and parlours, i. e., A1-A10 at Ero-Omo, Offa Garage Area in Ilorin while properties in classification “B” consisted of six flats, i. e. B1-B6 at opposite Afro-Works, off Offa Garage Road, Ilorin. Within “C” classification are properties consisting of twenty shops, six numbers of 4-bedroom bungalows, nine numbers of 3-bedroom bungalows and a 2-bedroom bungalow, all at Adewole Estate in Ilorin. The properties in class “D” are buildings behind Petrol Stations (D1-D3). These are three numbers of room and parlour with separate kitchen and toilet behind Offa Garage Road Petrol Station, two numbers of rooms and parlour with kitchen behind Lagos Road Petrol Station, a parlour and three numbers of rooms with kitchen behind Lagos Road Petrol Station. Properties in classification “E”, i. e., E1-E6 consists of plots of undeveloped land. “E1” is 32 plots of land at New Yidi/Asa Dam Road in Ilorin while “E2” is 2 plots of land behind Olunlade Petrol Station in Ilorin. “E3” is 3 plots of land at Eiyenkorin Village while “E4” consists of 3 plots of land along Ballah Road. “E5” is 3 plots of land at Eiyenkorin-Ballah Road and “E6” consists of 45 plots of land near Lagos Road Super Moon Petrol Station in Ilorin. The last class, class “F”(“F1-7”) consists of Mercedes Benz Station Wagon car (“F1”), Toyota Corolla car (“F2”), Land Rover van (“F3”), Styre Lorry (“F4”), Bull dozer (“F5”), Low Bed with Volvo head (“F5”) nad Kama 3 Gane (“F6”) amongst others.⁸⁶ In spite of the volume of the properties involved in this estate, its distribution did not experience much delay as it was concluded on 26th July, 2006 by the then Grand *Kadi* and his two other brother Kadis in their quasi-judicial functions (arbitration-*sulh*).

9. Customs/Culture/Traditions

Customs and traditions⁸⁷ inhibit early distribution of estates of deceased Muslims in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State as a whole. The inhibition results from cultural belief that where either the father, uncle or a grown up son of the deceased controls everything left behind by the deceased, it is customarily and culturally a taboo for any of the heirs of the deceased to demand it from such head of the family, or to ask him to release the estate for distribution among the heirs. This is because the people believe that it is the duty and responsibility of the head of the family to maintain, manage and control the affairs of the dependants (in this case, including the dependants left behind by the deceased).

Therefore, to demand from such a person the immediate distribution of estate is more of an “abomination” and would amount to disrespect of the highest magnitude to an authority tantamount to undermining the authority of the head of the family. This practice seems to be a carry over of one of the practices of pre-Islamic period of the Arabs prior to the advent of Islam as exemplified in the case of estate of Aus bin Malik⁸⁸ (R. A.). These days, greed, love of materialism and desire to do justice leading to injustice is often the reasons why such persons hold on to estates of the deceased.⁸⁹

Today, when heirs wait endlessly for the estate to get distributed due to operation of customs and tradition or any other cause and the distribution is not forthcoming, by the time their patience is over stretched, the heirs resort to court litigation as a necessary tool of effecting distribution but unfortunately, this tool, eventually and in most cases, turns out to be another cause of inordinate delay due to our snail like pace of justice administration.⁹⁰ Most court litigations involving distribution of estate result from this endless waiting. Delay, whether ordinary or inordinate, can therefore be described as a keg of gun powder ready to explode at the appropriate time with very devastating effects and grave consequences.⁹¹

Conclusion

This paper has identified and analysed: Fear of the use of supernatural powers, lawyers’ attitude, judges’ attitude, *Ulamas*’ role in the society, ignorance of the Law, *Laissez-faire* attitude, economic self-sufficiency/poverty, large estate involving shares of floated companies within and outside Nigeria; and Customs/Culture/Tradition as causes of deday in the distribution of estates of deceased Muslims in Ilorin in particular and Kwara State in general.

References and Endnotes

- ¹ This fact is manifested in the number of mosques of various sizes and grades all over the nooks and crannies of Ilorin. If the number of these mosques are any thing to go by, then there is no doubt about the assertion above. Though, there are a handful of non-Muslims in Ilorin, their number is so negligible that they do not constitute a significant percentage of the people of the town.
- ² The Yorubas of Kwara State can broadly be classified into four: the native Yorubas of Ilorin (who are found in Asa, Ilorin West, South and East, and some parts of Moro Local Government Areas), the Ibolos (who are found in Offa, Erin-Ile, Ira, Igosun), the Igbominas (who are found in Oro, Omu Aran, Ajase-Ipo, Oke-Ode, Igbaja and Oro-Ago) and the Ekitis (who are found in Ekiti Local Government Area of the State). The dialects and the culture/custom of these four Yoruba speaking communities of Kwara State vary from one speaking dialect to the other. Apart from these native Yoruba communities of Kwara State, there are also Yorubas of the neighbouring Yoruba speaking States of Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti and Lagos. The dialects and culture/custom of these other Yoruba speaking communities of these States vary from those of the Yorubas of Kwara State.
- ³ The most prominent activities are: wedding (*Nikkah*) ceremonies, Naming ceremonies and *funeral rites* and their incidental issues such as divorce (*talaq*), paternity, inheritance which are done in accordance with the principles, doctrines and procedures of Islamic Law.
- ⁴ This probably accounts for provision of Area Courts, Upper Area Courts and Shar'iah Court of Appeal in the town and other parts of Kwara State to cater for disputes and controversies that may arise amongst the people, see Part II, Section 3, Area Court Law 1968 and Sections 275, 277, 278 & 279 of the 1999 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Cap. C23, Laws of Federation of Nigeria, 2007.
- ⁵ The death of an Ilorin Muslim, like in any other part of the world, brings to the fore the issue of inheritance amongst the heirs of the estate left behind by the deceased.
- ⁶ Man, whether Muslim, non-Muslim, humanist or atheist, white, Caucasian or negro, Nigerian or non-Nigerian anywhere in the Universe, has an insatiable instinct to acquire wealth. In buttressing this fact, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: "*If people are given in accordance with their claims, some people may claim the property and blood-shedding of others...*" to depict the tremendous insatiable instinct of possession and acquisition in human beings; see M.B. Sambo & H. Mohammad, *Islamic Religious Knowledge For WASC* (Book 3), (Islamic Publications Bureau, Lagos, 1974), 116.
- ⁷ The Muslims in Ilorin and of other parts of Kwara State, because of their Islamic and religious background are always mindful of the verses of Glorious *Qur'an* 2:198, 275 in their struggle to acquire wealth.
- ⁸ It is trite principle of Islamic Law that a Muslim adult is free to dispose intra-vivo any quantity of his wealth to any body of his choice by way of either a gift or outright sale.
- ⁹ "...*Unto Him belongeth what is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth...*" see *Qur'an* 1 : 2.
- ¹⁰ Islam and in fact Islamic Law does not frown at a Muslim (a Muslim of Ilorin inclusive) acquiring wealth, see *Qur'an* 4:32 where it provides: "*for men is the benefit of what they earn.*" However, it frowns at acquiring unlawful wealth through lawful or unlawful means. Islamic Law therefore enjoins acquisition of lawful wealth through lawful means because every person shall account for how and what he or she acquired and how he or she spent his or her wealth, see *Qur'an* 2 : 198, *Qur'an* 2 : 275, *Qur'an* 2 : 188, *Qur'an* 2 : 219, *Qur'an* 2 : 173, *Qur'an* 4 : 32.
- ¹¹ It is one of those pre-destined things which man has no control over. Equally, a person does not have control over when, where and how he or she will die.
- ¹² "*We have ordained death among you...*" *Qur'an* 56: 60, the Prophet is reported to have said: "*Be in this world as a stranger or as a wayfarer*" to show that death is eminent, see M.O.A. Abdul, *The Selected Traditions of AL-NAWAWI (The Forty Traditions of AL-NAWAWI Arabic Text, Transliteration, Translation & Commentary)* (Book 4), (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1974), 86-87.
- ¹³ Allah by His volition permitted the Muslim to act by his discretion in one third of his estate in his possession. Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (SAW) said: "*God Almighty did a favour to you at the time of Your death through one third of your property so that your good deeds might increase*" – Sunnan Ibn Madja, see Al-Asqalani, *Bulugh Al-Maram*, (Part 2) (Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1996/1416), Paragraph 822, 340-341. This discretion should however, not be exercised to the injury of the lawful heirs.
- ¹⁴ Directives regarding the distribution of estate after the demise of the provisional owner are explicitly detailed in *Qur'an* 4:11-12.
- ¹⁵ It is a common practice of the Muslims of Ilorin and indeed other Muslim Communities of Kwara State to announce to the public on the eight day *fidau* prayer for anybody indebted to the deceased or vice versa to the relations of the deceased for prompt settlement. This is to enable the relations to take inventory of the assets and liabilities left behind by the deceased. Whoever the deceased is owed and refuses to make the debt known to the relations of the deceased, such a creditor is presumed to have waived the debt for the deceased but this does not apply in a situation where the deceased is the creditor.
- ¹⁶ Re -Estate of *Alhaji Amusa Bashir*, (Ilorin: *Annual Report of Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal*, 1997), 159-165; Re-Estate of *Alhaji Mohammad Busari*, Ilorin: *Annual Report of Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal*, 1999), 140-147.
- ¹⁷ Re-Estate of *Alhaji Yahaya Gold*, (Ilorin: *Annual Report of Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal*, 2006), 308-320,

- Alhaji Alabi Opobiya Vs. Alhaja Senabu Abebi Masingba* (1982) C. A. 11 (Pt. I), 206.
- ¹⁸ Some years ago, in the course of the author's private legal practice in Ilorin, a client related a nasty and pathetic story on how his spiritually powerful uncle sat on real property of his father. Nobody amongst the heirs of his father had the gut to challenge either the said uncle while alive or the children of the said uncle even ten years after the death of the uncle in question despite the fact that the heirs were then grown up and of age.
- ¹⁹ M. H. Y. Kaniki, "Religious Conflict and Cultural Accommodation: The Impact of Islam on Some Aspects of African Societies", *UTAFITI Journal of the Arts and Social Sciences*, A Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1976): 95.
- ²⁰ In the case of Muslims of Ilorin and the Muslims of Kwara State, in most cases and in most of the situations, the Glorious *Qur'an* is the basis of the power behind Islamic magic and it allows the use of charms in averting evil, provided only names of Allah and words and phrases from the *Qur'an* and other invocatory books are used.
- ²¹ The few cases involving litigation cited are extreme exceptions to the general rule because distribution of estates in Ilorin are not usually done through court litigation.
- ²² Right of appeal is a constitutional right of litigants that should be utilized properly and not wrongly by their counsel. Hence, counsel should advise their clients properly in the best interest of the clients.
- ²³ Unreported Suit No. UACI/CVF/9/2002 delivered on 08-04-2005.
- ²⁴ State High Court in its appellate jurisdiction. See Unreported High Court (Appeal) Suit No. KWS/8A/06 where one Mrs Jibola Adebayo for herself and other appellants applied to withdraw the appeal and the appeal was thereafter struck out on 23rd January, 2007.
- ²⁵ *Mallam Akanni Akibu & 5 Others v. Mrs Iyabo Imam* (KWS/SCA/CV/AP/IL/05/2005), see also *Sharia Court of Appeal Annual Report* (Kwara State, 2006), 68.
- ²⁶ *Mrs. Iyabo Imam v. Mallam Akanni Akibu & 5 Others* (KWS/SCA/CV/M/IL/15/2005), see also *Sharia Court of Appeal Annual Report* (Kwara State, 2006) 55 at 67.
- ²⁷ *Mallam Akanni Akibu*, op. cit., 68 at 72.
- ²⁸ *Mallam Akanni Akibu & 5 Others v. Mrs Iyabo Imam*, unreported Suit No. KWS/8A/06.
- ²⁹ The withdrawal was probably as a result of Counsel realizing the fact that there is a fundamental defect in the notice and grounds of appeal and the relief(s) sought from the Court transferred from Sharia Court of Appeal to High Court are not tenable before the State High Court in its appellate jurisdiction but only tenable in the Sharia Court of Appeal. The State High Court in its appellate jurisdiction cannot distribute estate in accordance with Islamic Law.
- ³⁰ Unreported Suit No. CVFM/3/2007 delivered on 09-05-2007. Mrs. Tinuke Akibu is daughter of Mallam Akanni Akibu. Akanni Akibu died before the matters were disposed off, hence his daughter stepped in and she and her other siblings received Late Akanni Akibu's share in the estate.
- ³¹ Op. cit.
- ³² *Opobiya v. Muniru* (2004) 5 F. R. 43.
- ³³ Certified True Copy of Ruling of Court of Appeal, Ilorin Division, delivered by J. C. A. Muntaka Coomassie, (as he was then) [Monday, 6th February, 2006], 5.
- ³⁴ Appellants' counsel filed Appellants' Brief of Argument, a necessary step in hearing of the appeal.
- ³⁵ Within the class referred to as the courts are the Area Courts which include the Upper Area Court (in both original and appellate functions), the Shari'ah Court of Appeal, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court in their appellate jurisdictions.
- ³⁶ The other two classes are the *Ulamas*, i. e., *Alfas / Afas* (Local *Mallams*), and *Kadis* of the Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal in their quasi-judicial functions.
- ³⁷ Shari'ah Court of Appeal, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.
- ³⁸ Section 277 (1), *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999*. See also Section 242 (1), *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979* in respect of Sharia Court of Appeal.
- ³⁹ See Section 10 (1), *Sharia Court of Appeal Law*, Cap. S4, Revised Edition (Laws of Kwara State of Nigeria) Law, 2006 which is in *pari materia* with Section 10 (1), Cap. 122, Laws of Northern Nigeria, 1963, in respect of Sharia Court of Appeal and Sections 244 and 233 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, in respect of Appeal from Sharia Court of Appeal to Court of Appeal and from Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court respectively.
- ⁴⁰ Op. cit., a case conducted by the researcher, delivered on 9th May, 2007.
- ⁴¹ Op. cit., suit handled by the Law Firm of the researcher, delivered on 8th April, 2005.
- ⁴² Sections 3 (1), 70 (1) & (2) Native Courts Law, Cap. 78, *Laws of Northern Nigeria, 1963*.
- ⁴³ Section 3 (1) Area Courts Law, Cap. A9 Revised Edition (Laws of Kwara State of Nigeria) Law, 2006 which is in *pari materia* with Section 3 (1) Area Courts Law, Cap. 9, Annual Vols. of the Laws of Kwara State of Nigeria, 1967 and 1968. See also Section 3(1), The Area Courts Edict, Edict No. 2, Annual Vols. of the Laws of Kwara State of Nigeria, 1967.
- ⁴⁴ Section 2, Native Courts Law, Cap. 78, *Laws of Northern Nigeria, 1963*; See also Section 4 (1) (a) (b) and (2), Area Courts Law, Cap. 9, *Laws of Kwara State, 1968*.
- ⁴⁵ Section 61 (1) & 2 (a) & (b) Native Courts Law, Cap. 78, *Laws of Northern Nigeria 1963*.
- ⁴⁶ Majority of them attended *Makarantar Alo, Makarantar Ilimi* and or *Kano Law School*.
- ⁴⁷ Section 4A (2), Area Courts Law, Cap A9, Revised Edition (*Laws of Kwara State of Nigeria*) Law, 2006.

- ⁴⁸ Section 4A (1) (a) & (b), Area Courts Law, Cap A9, Revised Edition (Laws of Kwara State of Nigeria) Law, 2006.
- ⁴⁹ Section 2 (1) Legal Practitioners Act 1962, now Legal Practitioners Act, Cap. 207, Laws of the Federation, 1990; See also Section 24, Legal Practitioners Act which defines a "Legal Practitioner" as a "person entitled in accordance with the Legal Practitioners Act to practice as a barrister and solicitor either generally or for the purpose of any particular office or proceeding".
- ⁵⁰ Attitude of Court staff, attitude of lawyers (already discussed above), attitude of Court not sitting at times, poor condition of service and corrupt tendencies.
- ⁵¹ (2006) *Annual Report of Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal*, Ilorin, 262
- ⁵² Ibid, p. 269, see also *Funmilayo Ajoke v. Taiye Ile Balogun* (Suit No. KWS /SCA/CV/AP/IL/13/2001) case listed as No. 32 (disposed of after 3 ½ years, in 10 adjournments) in (2001) *Annual Reports of Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal*, Ilorin, at xx.
- ⁵³ Asemota, Solomon "Unhealthy State of the Nation", Opinion, *The Guardian*, Thursday, (April 14, 2011): 79.
- ⁵⁴ U. Lawani, "Salami vs. Katsina-Alu", Opinion, *The Guardian*, (Thursday, February 15, 2011), 67.
- ⁵⁵ Asemota, op. cit.
- ⁵⁶ Asemota, op. cit.
- ⁵⁷ MCIA/225/2011
- ⁵⁸ These were the former four semi-autonomous hamlets of Gaa Fulani, Gambari, Oke-Suna and Idiape which confederally formed Ilorin at that time. See L.A.K. Jimoh, (*ILORIN: The Journey So Far*, Ilorin: Atoto Press Ltd, 1994), 51.
- ⁵⁹ Solagberu, an itinerant Muslim preacher was the leader and head of Oke-Suna which was predominantly a Muslim settlement and around him "flocked Mohammedans from Gbanda, Kobayi, Igboho, Kuwo and Kobe. All in his quarters being Moslems" shows that Ilorin before the arrival of Sheikh Alimi had Islamic scholars; See Jimoh, Ibid., 52. See also A.S. Hassan, A.J. and Ibrahim, "Ilorin Emirate: Its People and Politics" in Jimoh, S. A. (Ed.), (n. d.), (*ILORIN: Centre of Learning*, Ilorin: Jimson Publishers), 8.
- ⁶⁰ After the arrival of Sheikh Alimi, the number of Islamic scholars in Ilorin continued to blossom because from far and near, all over Yorubaland and beyond, Muslims flocked to Sheikh Alimi and Ilorin became "a sort of Islamic lighthouse to which the Yoruba Muslim turned for study and guidance". See Jimoh, 53.
- ⁶¹ He is no doubt an Islamic scholar of repute, he is of "high intellect and wide experience in the different field of Islamic Science such as Jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis of Jalalayn especially of the second half of the Qur'an which no one else had in Ilorin". See A. S. Hassan and A. J., Ibrahim, op. cit., 8, see also Jimoh, op. cit., 50. See further S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lowe & Brydone Printers Ltd, 1921), 194.
- ⁶² A random sampling of very few of them are: Shaykh Abubakar Bube, Shaykh Abubakar Salekoto, Shaykh Sa'du Kokewukobere, Shaykh Muhammad Jami' Tajul-Adab, Shaykh Muhammad Kamaldeen al-Adaby, Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al- Ilori and a lot of them too numerous to mention here. For a more detail list, see Z. I. Oseni, "Arabic and Islamic Scholarship in Ilorin" in S.A. Jimoh, (Ed.), (*ILORIN: Centre of Learning*, Ilorin: Jimson Publishers, n. d.), pp. 56-65.
- ⁶³ Among those in this category are: Shaykh Abdul-Raheem Ameen Abata, Hon. Justice Abdul-Kadir Orire (retired Grand Kadi, Kwara State), Hon. Justice Mutallib Ahmad Ambali (retired Grand Kadi, Kwara State), Shaykh Muhammad Bashir Salih, Shaykh Safiyullah Kamaldeen, Dr. Isa Alabi, Dr. Hamzah Ishola Abdur-Raheem, Prof. Badamasi Olanrewaju Yusuf, Shaykh Waliyu Ali-Kamal, Prof. Abdul Baqi Agaka and a host of others too numerous to mention. For a more detailed list see Oseni, Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Interview with Hon. Justice Ambali, op.cit.; see also M. A. Ambali, *Islamic Law Principles of Reconciliation and Arbitration*, (Ijebu-Ode: Shebiotimo Publications, 1431 A. H./2010 C. E.), 35.
- ⁶⁵ For instance, Alhaji Abdus-Salam Oniwiridi Pakata, Shaykh Ahmad Rufa'i b. Abubakar Inda-Salati amongst others are acclaimed and known for specialization in *Sufism* of the *Tijjaniyyah* and *Kadiriyyah* sects respectively in Ilorin.
- ⁶⁶ Shaykh Abdul-Raheem Ameen Abata is known and acclaimed scholar with specialization in general Arabi and Islamic Scholarship and *Da'wah*. He is the Chief Missioner of Ansarul-Islam Society of Nigeria ("*Oni wasi agbaye*").
- ⁶⁷ Ambali, op. cit, 35.
- ⁶⁸ This is often not the fault of the *Alfas* because the layman or the ordinary man sees anybody in the position of an *Alfa* to be a person knowledgeable and versed in the law, skill and art of estate distribution.
- ⁶⁹ Op. cit., carried out on Saturday, 18th May, 2008.
- ⁷⁰ The researcher wishes to make the identity of the heirs and the estate anonymous in accordance with undertaking with one of the heirs on 26th July, 2008 not to make the particulars and details public.
- ⁷¹ Probably due to the anticipated honorarium they will get from such exercise.
- ⁷² To avoid disharmony among the heirs and to allow tempers to cool down in order to invite another set of *Mallams* to do the distribution.
- ⁷³ Equivalent of Junior Secondary School (JSS) while *Sana-wi* is the Senior Secondary School (SSS) equivalent.
- ⁷⁴ H. Abdulsalam, "*The Practice of Islamic Law of Inheritance: Correction of Some Anomalies*", NATAIS, Vol. 6, No. 2, (September, 2002): 42.
- ⁷⁵ M. B. Y. M. Q. Imam Abu Abdullahi, *Sunan Ibn -i-Majah* (Vol. IV), (English Version by Muhammad Tufai Ansari), Book of Fara'id, (Rules of Inheritance) Hadith No. 2717, (New Delhi: Nusrat Ali Nasri for Kitab Bhavan, 2005), 108.

⁷⁶ Experts as used here is not limited to Islamic Law experts alone but includes other professionals such as estate valuers, automobile engineers, motor mechanics, stockbrokers and a host of other professionals.

⁷⁷ A. A. Oba, "The Sharia Court of Appeal: Accounting to the Public in Kwara State", *The Jurist*, An Annual Publication of Law Students' Society, Vol. 10 (Ilorin: University of Ilorin, Ilorin, 2005), 165.

⁷⁸ Abdulsalam, op. cit.

⁷⁹ Abdulsalam, op. cit.

⁸⁰ *The Nation Newspaper*, September 13th, (2007): 8.

⁸¹ From 1998 to 2011.

⁸² This is what Ahaji Murtala Abdul-Ganiyu described as gender oppression in my interview with him on the 1st day of September, 2010.

⁸³ *Mr. Musa Abdullahi v. G. B. Amao*, unreported Suit No. MCI/1017/2001 concluded on 28-03-2002, *Mr. Musa Abdullahi v. Mr. P. A. Operemu*, unreported Suit No. MCI/138/2002 and *Mr. Musa Abdullahi v. Mr. A. Ibrahim*, unreported Suit No. MCI/1016/2001 concluded on 28-03-2002.

⁸⁴ A modern 3-bedroom flat with electricity and pipe borne water which was hitherto let out for a paltry sum of ₦200.00 per month, instantly attracted the sum of ₦2,000.00 per month with a year rent paid in advance by the same tenants who were in default of payment of two hundred Naira per month as at 2001/2002.

⁸⁵ *Annual Report*, (Ilorin, Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal, 2006), 338, especially at 366-403.

⁸⁶ *Alhaji Adebayo Busari Alaya*, op. cit., 366-403.

⁸⁷ The Yoruba custom is generally silent on the time frame within which to effect distribution of estate of a deceased. However, it is a common practice among the Yorubas, especially the *Ijebu*, to distribute the estate after the final funeral ceremony called *iwolefu*. The exact date of *iwolefu* is usually agreed upon by the family and the economic situation of the relatives play significant role in determining this date. Where the families of the deceased are economically strong, they fix it at forty days and in other cases, a year later to enable each member prepare adequately. See Y. Sodiq, "An Analysis of Yoruba and Islamic Laws of Inheritance" *The Muslim World*, Vol. 86, Issue 3-4, (April, 2007): 322.

⁸⁸ When Aus bin Malik (R.A.) passed away, he left behind a wife, two young daughters and an infant son. The cousins of the deceased took away whatever was left behind. The Widow of Aus bin Malik (R.A.) brought her complaint to *Rasulullah* (SAW) and informed him that she and her children were totally deprived of their inheritance. *Rasulullah* (P.B.U.H.) asked her to be patient until Allah *Ta'ala* revealed something in this regard and not long after this, a similar incident occurred with the Widow of Sa'ad bin Rabi' (R. A.). See *Qur'an* 4:7 where Allah provides that: "And for the males is a share of what has been left behind by the parents and relatives and for the females is a share of what has been left by the parents and relatives".

⁸⁹ Interview with Hon. Justice M. A. Ambali, (rtd), op. cit.

⁹⁰ So many factors account for the snail like pace of administration of justice in Ilorin. These include lawyers attitude, attitude of court staff and the court not sitting at times and too many cases in a particular court due to non conclusion as at when due.

⁹¹ See *Alhaji Alabi Opobiye v. Alhaja Senabu Abebi Masingba* (1982) C. A. (Pt. 1), 206; *Ahaji Saka Opobiye v. Layiwola Muniru* in Unreported Suit No. CA/IL/SH/3/99 delivered on 11th day of July, 2002 and *Alhaji Saka Opobiye v. Muniru* (2011) 12 MJSC (Pt. II).

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Knowledge—Toward Bridging Religious and Modern Sciences: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Approach

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Abstract

In the recent past, the world has witnessed massive progress and development in the field of science. So many factors like technological know-how, new inventions and discoveries, enhancement of health and hygiene, globalization, and others govern the current trend. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi expressed that the current period—dominated by the scientific developments—demands to weld religious knowledge and the one based on experiments—scientific knowledge—together. Said Nursi endeavored vehemently to revitalize the prevailing system of education and the proposal of the university—Madresatü'z Zehrâ was a step toward the accomplishment of the aforementioned dream. Nursi's own life as well as his writings (Risale-i-Nur) greatly contributed to the need and necessity of the integration of knowledge.

In this context, the current study is a humble effort to present besides the concept of knowledge, an overview of Said Nursi's attempts and approach towards the integration of religious and scientific knowledge for the prosperity and all-round development of humanity. The study also highlights that these efforts, meant to revitalize the concept of knowledge in a broader sense, were aimed to solve religion-science controversy or religion science compatibility.

Keywords: Said Nursi, Knowledge, Science, Religion, Revitalize, Civilization, Ulamâ, Skepticism

Knowledge: Understanding the Concept

In various Islamic discourses the term *'ilm* appears very frequently both in *Qur'ân* and *Hadith*. *'Ilm* derived from the root word *'-l-m* means the cognitive understanding of a particular thing and thereafter its acquisition.¹ The terms like *'ilm*, *hikmah*, *ma'rifah*, *fiqh*, etc—and their verbs and verbal derivatives—time and again find their representation in *Qur'ân* and *Hadith*² that further adds to the characteristic beauty of *'ilm*. *'Ilm* and *ma'rifah* seem to be synonymous terms “but because of the various derivatives of *ma'rifah* such as *'arif* or *arrâf* it intended to be used for the knowledge acquired through reflection and experience presupposing a previous ignorance.”³ In Islam, the scholars who are dedicated and pious come under the category of “those who know” and are assigned the title *'ulamâ* (sing. *'âlim*). Inquisitive seeking and search for knowledge is the prime duty assigned to the Muslims (*talab al-'ilm*).⁴ Yunus Gilani while defining the term *'ulamâ* says:

'Ulamâ (sing. *'âlim*) are the possessors of *'ilm* (knowledge, science, scholarship) of whatever kind and from whichever source, provided they work under the *hidāyah*, revealed divine guidance, communicated through the *Rusul* (Messengers of Allah (SWT)), final in the line being Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) and now finally contained in the *Qur'ân* and *Sunnah*. Thus, every scientist, scholar, intellectual and social engineer with the *salâiyyah* (capability) in his field along with *salîiyyah* (piety and virtue) derived from his *îmân* (belief in) and *'amal* (action)

according to the *Qur'ân* and *Sunnah* is an *'âlim* and all such leaders are *'ulamâ* on the path of righteousness.⁵

Said Nursi demonstrates that the *'ulamâ* are those whose actions are in complete harmony with what they propound and are also adorned with the pearls of sincerity. Validating the argument, Nursi quotes the *Hadith* of the Messenger (SAW)

All men will perish, except the scholars, and all scholars will perish except those who act in accordance with their knowledge, and all of them will perish except the sincere ...⁶

For Said Nursi, the term *'ilm* is not merely concerned with religious knowledge but it represents knowledge in the broadest sense. However, he has divided it into two broad categories viz. *aqli* and *naqli* wherein the former is connected with the religious sciences and the later with the physical sciences. Apparently, it looks as if Said Nursi's approach is dichotomous but he makes it clear by saying that in fact all the knowledge is religious, irrespective of its source or nature. According to him, religious sciences (*aqli*) and the physical sciences (*naqli*) are not antagonistic, rather they complement one another.⁷

Scholars, philosophers, and intellectuals have defined the term knowledge according to their own understanding and knowhow. For Sayyid Qutb, knowledge is something that is beyond mere understanding. Knowledge is in the real sense an absolute comprehen-

sion and understanding of a particular thing by the mind, linked and interlinked with the soul and conscience, and is finally realized by way of actions. In the general sense, knowledge means a total harmony between mind, soul, and the body.⁸ Plato, a famous Greek philosopher, articulates that “knowledge is of the world of forms or ideas which exist in the mind of a person.”⁹ Anis Ahmad while commenting on the concept of knowledge says that: “Knowledge (*‘ilm*) in the Islamic tradition primarily refers to revealed knowledge originating in *wahy* (revelation) and acquired through sensory experience.”¹⁰ As per Imām Ghazālī, “Knowledge is like the fruit of a tree and it flows from intellect, or like the light of the sun or like the vision of the eye. Why should it not be honoured when it is the cause of the fortune in this world and the next?”¹¹ One of the famous Muslim sociologists Ibn Khaldūn asserts that the knowledge can flourish only in a society that is civilized and the same is achievable through the faculty of reasoning. He further states: “Man is a social animal and his prosecution of learning is conditioned by the nature of the material, intellectual and spiritual forces of the civilisation in which he lives.”¹²

Said Nursi in a philosophical way endeavors to show that the fountainhead of all the knowledge is the one who has created this Universe—Allah. The same becomes apparent from the passage below, taken from ‘*The Rays*’ wherein he says:

All the beautiful creatures which display the manifestations of an eternal beauty and loveliness especially in the spring on the face of the earth, for instance the flowers, fruits, small birds and flies, and especially the gilded, sparkling flying insects ...show their craftsman’s wondrous proficiency, that they point decisively to a truly comprehensive knowledge . . . While the phrase “and careful decoration” means that those fine artefacts are adorned in a way so agreeable, are decorated in a way so sweet, display a beauty and art so attractive, that their maker could create these works only through an infinite knowledge. This attentive adorning and beautifying self-evidently point to a boundless and all-encompassing knowledge . . . Throughout the earth we see the making of wondrous living machines, some instantaneously and some in a minute or two, in orderly and measured fashion, each different from its fellows, with the greatest ease, arising from a thorough knowledge and skill, all of which point to an infinite knowledge and testify that the perfection of knowledge is proportionate to the ease resulting from the skill and knowledge in the art.¹³

It can be pointed out from the above discussion that the spring of all the knowledge is Allah which reaches to the Messengers through *wahy*. It is through the *wahy* that Allah invites and appeals the mankind to make use of the reason and perception (*‘Ayn al-Yaqin*). This has been illustrated in different *Ayāt* of the *Qur’ān*. For example:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ
مِنْ مِثْلِهِ

*And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down to Our slave (Muhammad ﷺ), then produce a Sūrah of the like thereof.*¹⁴

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ

*Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are Ayāt for those people who keep their duty to Allah, and fear Him much.*¹⁵

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ
اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي
الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَع النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ
مَاءٍ فَأَخْبَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ
وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed Ayāt for people of understanding.*¹⁶

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

*And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of yours mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allah).*¹⁷

Likewise, in many *Ahādith* one finds the significance and thus inevitability of the acquisition of knowledge coupled with the invitation to comprehend and understand the reality of the things by using the faculty of mind (*‘aql*). For example in a *Hadith* narrated by Abū Mūsā (R.A), the Messenger (SAW) said:

The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain-water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it

was hard and held the rain-water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, (making their animals drink from it) and to irrigate the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren, which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then the land was of no benefit). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and gets benefit from the knowledge, which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches it to others. The (last example is that of a) person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's Guidance revealed through me (He is like the barren land.)¹⁸

The first above mentioned *ayah* and the reference from the *Hadith* reflects that the *way* is the main source of knowledge and the subsequent three *ayāt* signify the fact that the very knowledge can be realized by making use of the faculty of mind, senses and as well as through empiricism. There is no harm at all if a person acquires knowledge by making use of his mind—rationality or reasoning—provided it is guided and enmeshed within the very knowledge revealed by Allah. The fact is that the faculty of mind (*'aql*) and thereafter its use in gaining knowledge either through rationalism, logic, or through empiricism, has undoubtedly serious limitations. Therefore, owing to this fact if the intellect is not made subservient to the revealed knowledge, then it can mislead and misdirect the entire humanity.

Emergence of Modern Science

Science is a term derived from the Latin word "*scire*" which means to know. It is not a phenomenon that is something fresh or new, rather it has a long history spanning from the time of classical Greece to the renaissance of the Europe. Therefore, science and its historical development are usually considered as the process of accumulation of techniques and the refinement of quantitative methods in the study of nature progressively.¹⁹

Muslim Contribution

It is an established fact that science and later on its advancement and development took place during the period of the Abbasids ruling the then Muslim World from Baghdad and the Umayyad reign in Spain (*al-Andalus*). This period besides witnessing the cementing of Muslim Civilization, also experienced the unprecedented development in the field of science. The development in almost every known field was indubitably unmatched in its creativeness, originality, and universality in the entire world. The overall contribution of the Muslims in the field of science is without any suspicion countless. The same has been acknowl-

edged and verified by George Sarton (*Introduction to the History of Science*, 1931) and a number of other writers as well.²⁰ In the same vein, R. Briffault while acknowledging the Muslim contribution holds:

Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world . . . which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and supreme source of its victory, natural science and the scientific spirit.²¹

George Sarton makes further exposition of the invaluable contribution of the Muslims to the scientific development by admitting that:

...It will suffice here to evoke a few glorious names without contemporary equivalents in the West: Jabir Ibn Hayyan, al-Kindi, al-Khawarizmi . . . If anyone tells you that the middle ages were scientifically sterile, just quote these men to him, all of whom flourished within a short period, 750-1100 AD.²²

The Legacy Shifts

Unfortunately, in the later period, Muslims—the vanguard in the field of science and technology—not only lost their way but also the long enchanted and cherished scientific supremacy as well, especially from the fifteenth century onwards. From then on, the status quo remained by and large the same in the whole Muslim world and continues to be so even now, thus, creating mayhem like situation. On the one side, with the passing of days, weeks, months, years, and centuries; the world witnessed the decadence of the scientific glory of the Muslims and on the other, the same world experienced the emergence of what is now called 'modern science'. The wholesome development did not take place all of a sudden; rather it materialized exclusively *via* the shift and transfer of the intellectual and scientific legacy of the Muslims from the East (Muslim World) to the West (European World). From then on, the West never looked back but made earnest and stupendous efforts for the refinement, progress, and development in the field of science and technology. N. Amir, O. Shuriye, and F. Ismail have highlighted the same facet in the following lines as:

With the transfer of Islamic science to the west the secular world developed monumental feat in scientific work ignited the thriving of renaissance and the flourishing of scientific revolution and advancement in Europe. This modern progress of the west in science and technology was gained from the transfer of Islamic civilization [from the East] to the west where the scientific and technological [knowhow] based in the Muslim world has completely lost and defeated.²³

In the post-Renaissance period, the society at large witnessed the emergence of 'Science' not only as the foundation stone but also cherished its values so much so that it formed the bedrock of the Western but Modern Civilization. The process of the advancement of the modern science—that thus emerged—had already started in the fourteenth century and the later as well as the current period represents the immense personification of the phenomenon. In the later period, it continued to evolve and progress with a colossal pace *via* Renaissance and Industrial Revolution. However, the basic fact about modern science is that it fundamentally lays much emphasis on the cause, reason, objectivity, and effect and also on the significance of systematic observation, experimentation and theory building.

In current times, it is making spectacular advancement in each and every sphere of life in one way or the other way and as a consequence, has raised the living standard of the masses hitherto to unknown heights.²⁴ Modern science, despite having an unrestricted but harmful ramification, continues to reverberate and awe-inspire the entire world.²⁵ However, at the same time, it also cannot be denied—as is the fact—that modern science and technology will form the very core of the future world developments.

Integration of Religious and Modern Sciences: Said Nursi's Approach

The unprecedented and unusual emergence of modern science and later on its encounter with the Islamic World during the colonial and post-colonial era created chaos, confusion, and uneasiness among the Muslim masses. Consequently, the Muslims got heavily engaged in defining their approach and methodology *vis-à-vis* Western Civilization. The new, rather alien Civilization for the Muslims was predominantly based on material knowledge, technical know-how, innovation, invention and dominance of the world markets with its products. However, dominating the entire globe, it still failed miserably to provide the human soul a ray of light, a hint of (spiritual) inspiration or a strand of faith. Though it achieved an unexpected economic and technological advancement, but at the same time failed to cure the anxious souls. Abū al-Hasan Ali Nadwi, who regards Western Civilization as one of the mightiest one, has artistically summarized the wholesome development of the Western Civilization as well as the threat it posed to the Muslims. In the following lines he has expressed:

Towards the middle of the Nineteenth Century the Islamic World was called upon to face a grave and intriguing problem [due to the encounter with the

fresh Civilization], on its approach to which hung the very question of its survival as a free and self-respecting unit in the world and possessing distinctive personality of its own.

It was the problem posed by the civilization that was fresh, energetic and ambitious and overflowing with the potentialities of expansion and progress—we mean, Western Civilisations which deserved to be ranked among the mightiest civilisation known to the history of mankind.²⁶

In modern times, Muslim thinkers were and still are engaged in presenting their views on the issue of modern science and its compatibility with religion. While observing the approach of the Muslims in tackling this problem, one comes across three significant methods and approaches. The first one is that of rejection and opposition to Western civilization in *toto* and complete refusal to enquire 'positives' and 'negatives' of this powerful civilization. The second approach is a neutral one; that neither supports nor opposes the above civilization (approach of indifference).²⁷ The third method is the moderate one in which one delves deep, enquires and explores fully the bedrocks of this civilization. What is significant in the approach is to take that ingredient from the Western Civilization which is fruitful and beneficial and accordingly, reject and refrain from that which is detrimental and fruitless.

The first two approaches are by far 'negative' in all the senses as they can only lead the Muslim World toward further backwardness and remoteness. So, what is needed is to implement the third approach for having far reaching consequences and if desiring to solve the problems the Muslim World is currently experiencing. One finds, while comprehending what Said Nursi has said in *Risale-i-Nur*, the advocacy of the aforementioned third method, thus, therein rests the uniqueness of the reformative activities of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.

Before reflecting on the views and approach of Said Nursi regarding the problem, it is demanding to briefly mention the environment in which he lived. Said Nursi encountered a period in which scientific advancements, technological development, materialism and communism were at their climax. On the other hand, these very developments were used as a tool for spreading immorality as well as for raising doubts in the minds of the Muslims *vis-à-vis* Islam. Also, in his homeland—Turkey, in the late Ottoman period attempts were made aimed at large to modernize the country. The situation presented such a picture as if the Western Civilization was the only model left to be imitated in

order to achieve success.²⁸ Isra Yazicioglu writes:

While the nineteenth and early twentieth century was a time of great enthusiasm about science and technology in both the Western and the Muslim worlds, it was also a time when the ideas of atheism and materialism were becoming much more pronounced than ever before. In fact, many of the Western-educated elite in Nursi's milieu of late Ottoman and early Turkish period saw the successes of science and technology as lending support to a materialist and an atheistic worldview.²⁹

In the times of Said Nursi, a good number of Muslim intellectuals stood for the integration process of religious and modern sciences "in such a way that sheds light not only on the relevance to the present situation, but also in a way that defines universal principles."³⁰

Among them, the prominent one was Muammad Abdūh, who believed that "Science was a way of life rooted in freedom and progress; in its pure form, science, when properly married to religion, brings society to fulfillment."³¹

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi—the Turkish religio-spiritual reformer—was greatly "interested in reconciling faith and reason, and Islam and science."³² His early life which he refers as 'Old Said' represents a figure who is excited more than enough about scientific progress and technological advancement. It proved to be this period, wherein one observes Said Nursi welcoming modern science with lot of enthusiasm and passion, "albeit not without exhortations on maintaining faith and serving humanity in God's name."³³ The 'Old Said' besides highlighting the significance of reason invited Muslims to study meticulously modern science and its underpinning values so as "to appreciate the Creator better."³⁴

Said Nursi displayed a complete dissatisfaction toward the division of education system between *maktab* and *madrasah* in the country. *Maktab* system dealt with the modern sciences and the *madrasah* with the religious sciences. His showing of discontent represents in some way or the other that the union and inseparability of religious and modern science is in the current times an obligatory act.³⁵ It is this principle that should form a basic starting point in terms of education policy. In an endeavor to weld and reform these two seemingly conflicting systems, Said Nursi dreamt of establishing a University³⁶ in eastern Anatolia namely *Madresatü'z Zehrā*, with an intention to endow the seekers with both religious and modern education and accomplish his dream thereof.³⁷

Initiating a dialogue between science and religion, Nursi attempted to develop a theological understanding of nature, as he revealed that the theology shared if not totally but to a great extent, the same domain as the natural sciences.³⁸ He does not consider science as something that is alien or something that is beyond the realm of religion. According to him, "... man has been awakened and aroused by modern sciences in particular; he has understood the true nature of humanity."³⁹ It means that Said Nursi tried to manifest that all the knowledge is religious, irrespective of the source. Going into the *Risale-i Nur* of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, one finds at large no opposition or dichotomy between science and religion. This is further explicated and elaborated in 'The Damascus Sermon' as below:

Bediuzzaman thus demonstrated in the form of easily understood stories, comparisons, explanations, and reasoned proofs that, rather than the truths of religion being incompatible with the findings of modern science, the materialist interpretation of those findings is irrational and absurd. Indeed, Bediuzzaman proved in the *Risale-i Nur* that science's breathtaking discoveries of the universe's functioning corroborate and reinforce the truths of religion.⁴⁰

At one more place, Said Nursi says that "[a]ll science and human progress outside religion and belief is worth nothing, like the heroism of Rustam and Hercules."⁴¹ He further says that "at the end of time, mankind will pour into science and technology. It will obtain all its power from science. Power and dominion will pass to the hand of science."⁴² Said Nursi further holds that "the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences, and the mind is illuminated by the physical sciences and wisdom occurs through the combination of these two."⁴³ Before him, religious education is the 'light of conscience' and modern education the 'light of mind,' and when both are combined together the 'truth' is revealed and if alienated then the former gives rise to 'skepticism' and the later to 'fanaticism'.⁴⁴ The whole discussion makes it quite evident that as per Said Nursi there is no valid contradiction between the two sciences; and that any perceptible disagreement between them is only due to the misunderstanding of either one. In this case, it is very much fitting to quote hire verbatim:

Indeed, far from contradicting them, in uncovering the order and working of the universe, science broadens and deepens knowledge of the truths of belief. In the *Risale-i Nur* many descriptions of the Divine activity in the universe are looked at through the eyes of science, and reflect Bediuz-

zaman's knowledge of it. The Risale-i Nur shows that there is no contradiction or conflict between religion and science.⁴⁵

To sum up, Said Nursi's *weltanschauung* and polemics displays that he was very much keen and interested in salvaging a sense of cooperation and integration between religion and science. It must also be borne in the mind that in the later part of his life (Old Said), he never supported modern science unconditionally and unequivocally, rather necessitated that for the sprouting of a real spiritual development, in addition to embracing modern science, sticking to the religious principles is inevitable. To be at variance with the teachings of Islam on one side and think of prevailing on the other side is to live in a fool's paradise. History is the testimony to the fact that the Muslims progressed, advanced and reached the zenith of their glory as long as they stuck to the teachings of Islam. Its reverse happened not because the Muslims lacked the resources (intellectual or natural) but solely because we pulled off ourselves from the teachings of Islam.

Conclusion

The onslaught of Western Civilization has not only created conflicts and tensions especially among the Muslims, but has also resulted in unbalancing the human behavioral and thinking patterns. Europe's subjugation of the Muslim lands cemented the way for imbibing of the 'alien thinking' by the Muslim masses, thus paving the way to 'religion-science controversy.' Such a process ultimately led to the division of the knowledge into religious and modern on the one side and condensed the probabilities—if not fully but to a great extent—of bridging the gap between the two on the other. It was primarily this factor which forced Muslim intellectuals and reformers to make zealous endeavors so as to hook up the two systems.

In the same vein, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi pioneered the movement both practically as well as intellectually so as to integrate and reconcile the religious and modern sciences, and thereafter establish a unitary education system through the revitalization of knowledge. His practical approach coupled with the writings on this issue was closely associated and connected with what he himself witnessed in the world in general and in Muslim countries in particular. The main objective of his what we call 'inventiveness' was to produce such a generation of Muslims who would be totally sincere, devoted, and committed to the advancement of the Islam and Muslims. To sum up, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi without any doubt deserves all the credit, appreciation, and admiration for revitalizing and reconciling these two apparent

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Islamic Economic Thought in the Medieval Times: Some Reflections

Nasir Nabi

Abstract

In early Islamic economics, five different dimensions of analysis are broadly identified. First, economic issues have been discussed by Mufassirin in the light of the Holy Quran. For instance, discussions on the prohibition of usury and the encouragement of economic activities for human welfare. Second; economic issues have been discussed in the light of Fiqh. For example the legal aspects of Mudharibah and Musharikah have been dealt within this discipline in great detail. Third; economic matters have been discussed by Muslims in the light of ethical system of Islam for moral development. The works of Ulama, Sufis, Muslim philosophers and reformers come under this category. Fourthly, some good pieces of works, related to economics have been written by some great scholars of Islam in response to the needs of their times while holding important government offices. The works related to public finance, public revenues, land tax, public expenditure fall under this category. The book Kitab al Kharaj by Imam Abu Yusuf is one such example. Finally some Islamic Scholars and philosophers have provided objective analysis in the field of economics. The analysis made by Imam Ghazzali, Ibn Taimiyah, Ibn Khaldun and lately by Shah Waliullah Dehlwi fall under this category.

Keywords: Islamic Economic Thought, Abu Yusuf, Abu Ubayd, Al Ghazzali, Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Khaldun Shah Waliullah

Introduction

The economic activities practiced in the early Islamic period had a clear basis in the overall ethical and social philosophy of Islam. It was based on the guidance of Islamic Shariah with the aim of promoting public interests. The general principles were derived from the verses of the Holy Quran and the necessary details and guiding principles were provided by the Prophet (SAW). The economic system at the time of the Prophet (SAW) was not very complex. The Prophet (SAW) lived in the tiny state of Madinah and his economic policies were simple. After his demise (d.632 C.E.) the Islamic state crossed the boundaries of Arabian Peninsula, especially during the reign of Caliph Umar (d. 644 C.E.), this made imperative the need for an organized system which could effectively tackle the new economic challenges. Thus, in the light of the verses of the Holy Quran and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW), various rules were adopted after mutual consultation (*Shura*) and consensus (*Ijma*) of the companions of the Prophet (SAW). The main thrust of the consensus was that policies adopted must be based on the basic principles of Shariah and guided for the public interest. Thus two more sources on Islamic economics were developed besides the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW). These were consensus of opinion and analogical reasoning of experts in Islamic law for the public interest. Afterwards, society expanded and gradually became more complex, newer and newer problems of personal, social, political economic and international nature raised their heads. The need then

arose to carry an earnest research to find the solutions of these problems in the light of the Quran and the *Hadith* and so was evolved al-Fiqh. The Fiqh did not remain confined to ablution, fasting, Hajj and Zakat but also encompassed other aspects of society including economics. This state of affairs continued during the period of *Khulafa al-Rashidin* and Umayyads till the advent of Abbasids, when economic matters were given due importance and were attended with great care. It was in this period that many books on economic matters particularly on financial policy of Islam were written.

The Quran and *Hadith* being the divine sources have been taken into consideration by Muslim thinkers while discussing the economic matters throughout Islamic history.

Economic Teachings of the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran provides a series of values, guidelines and rules which serve as the basis for developing an appropriate economic system. Many positive values discussed in the Quran include justice, honesty, moderation and kindness to the disadvantaged whereas injustice, greed, extravagance, miserliness and hoarding are termed as negative values. The Holy Quran permits trade and identifies some prohibited economic practices such as usury, misappropriation and gambling. There are more than two hundred verses in the Quran which in one way or another concern economics; including Zakat, permissible and prohibited goods, wealth, ownership of property, trade, credit and debt,

fraud, associations and contracts, etc. There are five areas of economic behavior which are prominently mentioned in the Quran. These include Justice and social responsibility, acquisition of wealth, distribution of wealth, the protection of the disadvantaged and regulation of transactions through contracts.

The Holy Quran lays much emphasis upon maintaining justice in society. Justice (*Adl*) is to be upheld in all aspects of life including the economic one.¹ Those who pursue economic affairs are exhorted to act fairly, truthfully, honestly and in a spirit of co-operation. They are being emphasized to provide a fair description of the goods involved in transaction and ensure that proper standard of measure are used.² Those who commit acts of injustice are required to repent³. They are being warned that their punishment in the life hereafter will be severe⁴ and they will have to suffer even in this world.⁵ Many of the prohibited acts in commerce and finance are described as unjust such as dishonesty, cheating, fraud, misrepresentation of things and theft.⁶

Muslim society is held responsible for maintaining economic justice both at individual and collective levels. This responsibility functions through the institution of "Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong." (*Al-amr bi-al maruf wa nahi an-al munkar*) and is regarded by the Holy Quran as essential to social cohesion.⁷

The Holy Quran highly encourages economic activities and directs Muslims to enjoy fully the bounties of Allah.⁸ The Holy Quran emphasizes repeatedly that all things in the universe belong to Allah. It is He who created them and allowed man to exploit them and placed them at his disposal.⁹ However, men should distinguish between things lawful and unlawful. The Holy Quran ordains that wealth should be acquired by lawful means only and that unlawful ways and means should be discarded altogether: "O you who believe, take not your wealth among yourselves in wrongful ways, but let there be trade among you by mutual agreement..."¹⁰

These "wrongful ways" have been dealt at length by the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the great jurists of Islam have elucidated them in the books of law. Some of them, however, have been described in the Holy Quran as under:

- a. "And do not eat one another's property among yourselves in wrongful ways, nor seek by it to gain the nearness of the judges that may sinfully con-

sume a portion of other men's goods and that knowingly."¹¹

- b. "If one of you deposits a thing on trust with another let him who is trusted (faithfully) delivers his trust, and let him fear God, his Lord."¹²
- c. He who misappropriates (the public money) will come on the Day of Judgment with what he has misappropriated; then shall everyone be given in full, what he earned."¹³
- d. "The thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands."¹⁴
- e. "Those who devour the property of orphans unjustly, devour fire in their bellies, and will soon endure a blazing fire."¹⁵
- f. "Woe to the defrauders who, when take the measure from men, exact full measure, but when they measure or weigh for them, give less than is due."¹⁶
- g. "Those who love that indecent thing should spread among the believers, for them is a painful chastisement, in the life of this world and the hereafter."¹⁷
- h. "Force not your slave-girls to prostitution that you may enjoy (some) gain of the present life, if they desire to live in chastity."¹⁸ And approach not fornication, surely it is shameful deed and an evil way."¹⁹ "The adulterer and the adulteress, flog each of them with a hundred stripes."²⁰
- i. "O ye believers, wine and gambling and idols and divining arrows are an abomination-of Satan's handiwork; so avoid them that you may prosper."²¹
- j. "God has permitted trade and forbidden usury."²² "O ye believers fear God and give up what remains (due to you) of usury if you are believers (indeed). If you do not so, take notice of war from God and His Messenger. But if you repent you shall have your principal. Neither you wrong, nor shall you be wronged. If the debtor is in straitened circumstance, give him time till it is easy (for him to pay), and that you remit (the debt) by way of charity, that is the best thing for you, if you only knew."²³

Thus, the Holy Qur'an prohibits the following ways of acquiring wealth: taking one's property without consent, bribes, forcible acquisitions, fraud, taking or giving wrong measure, business which spreads indecency, prostitution, manufacturing, buying, selling and carriage of wines, gambling, manufacturing, buying and selling of idols, and business like astrology, foretelling of faith, divination and usury.

The Holy Quran lays down a broader expenditure policy for fair distribution of wealth among the various

sections of society. The main objective of the Qur'anic principle of distribution is to avoid the concentration of wealth in a few hands.²⁴ The Holy Quran repeatedly commands the faithful to give to the poor and needy,²⁵ to one's parents and relatives.²⁶ Further, it states that the reward for such a deed is great.²⁷ It links this giving to belief and warns of severe punishment for those who do not act generously.²⁸ Distribution of wealth and prohibition of the concentration are further reinforced by the laws of inheritance that the Holy Quran explains.²⁹ Therefore, the Holy Quran wishes that the wealth should always remain in circulation. The Quran criticizes stinginess and miserliness³⁰ while moderation is encouraged,³¹ hoarding of wealth is strongly prohibited and those who disobey are warned of hell fire.³² Similarly, squandering property is also prohibited; in fact society must prevent individuals from wasting their wealth.³³ Likewise, extravagance is linked to corruption³⁴ with severe punishment to follow.³⁵ In the same vein individuals should not spend on prohibited goods or acts such as illicit sex, alcohol or anything that leads to the corruption of society or injury to others.

Economic Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

There are numerous *Ahadith*, of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which deal with various aspects of economics. Some of the chief economic issues discussed in *hadith* include ownership of property, earning one's livelihood, development of land, wages, profit, capital, consumer behavior, market mechanisms, partnerships and business transactions. Most of these *ahadith* are the explanation of the Qur'anic verses related to economics. Both the Quran and the *ahadith* provide necessary guidelines and rules which can help in developing an economic system based upon equity and justice.

The Prophet (SAW) actively participated in supervising economic activities in society. He would often visit market places in order to find out the real nature of transactions occurring there. He would advise his companions to be fair while making any business deal.

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) happened to pass by a heap of edibles (corn). He thrust his hand (in that heap) and his fingers were moistened. He said to the owner of that heap of eatables (corn). "What is this", He replied, "Messenger of Allah, these have been drenched by rainfall." He (the Prophet) remarked, "why did you not place this (the drenched part of the heap) over the eatables so that the people could see it? He who deceives is not of me (is not my follower)."³⁶

In another *Hadith*, Prophet (SAW) has remarked that the defects of goods should be clearly revealed.

Uqba bin Amir reports, I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, "Muslims are brothers to each other. It is not lawful for a Muslim to sell something (to his brother) which contains some defects except what he reveals to him".³⁷

In fact Prophet (SAW) remarked that one who does not wish for his brother as he wishes for his own self is not a true believer.

It is narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik that the Prophet (SAW) observed, "No one amongst you believes (truly) till one likes for his brother or for his neighbor what he loves for himself".³⁸

Islam guarantees the right to ownership of private property and the Holy Prophet (SAW) has ordained Muslims to safeguard their property. He has also made a distinction between private and public property.

Abu Huraira reports that a person came to the Messenger of Allah and said. "Messenger of Allah, what do you think of a man who comes to me in order to grab my possession?" He said: "Don't surrender your possession to him. He (the inquirer) said: if he fights with me?" He (the Prophet) remarked; then, fight (with him)". He (the inquirer) again said: "what do you think if I am killed?" He (the Prophet) observed: "you will be a martyr." He (the inquirer) said, "Messenger of Allah, what do you think of him, (if) I kill him?". He (the Holy Prophet) said, "He would be in the fire."³⁹

In another *hadith*, Abdullah bin Amir says that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "He who dies in protecting his property is a martyr."⁴⁰

To prevent cheating, injustice, dishonesty and exploitation, the Holy Prophet (SAW) has forbidden certain unethical trade practices, these practices were prevailing in *jahiliya* Arabia.

Abu Huraira reports that Allah's Messenger has forbidden (two types of Transactions) *Mulamasa* and *Munabatha*.⁴¹

Abu Huraira also reports that Allah's Messenger (SAW) has forbidden a transaction determined by throwing stones⁴² and the type which involves some uncertainty (*Bay al Gharar*).⁴³

Abdullah Ibn Umar narrates that, Allah's Messenger (SAW) forbade the sale called *Habalil-Habala* which was a kind of sale practiced in the *Jahiliyah* period, in which one would pay the price of a she camel which was not born yet, but was likely to take birth.⁴⁴

The Qur'anic teachings on economic matters are specific and few in number. The Holy Qur'an mostly gave principles and stressed on the use of mind and application of reasoning. This led to the appearance of a chain of scholars who derived rules to solve new problems and created a juristic logic (*usul al fiqh*) applicable to a wide variety of social patterns. Their methodology was to refer first to the Holy Qur'an, and practices of the Prophet (SAW), and precedents of his companions and immediate followers who were trained by him. Not finding anything there, they applied analogy and other inferred rules to deduce the Shariah injunctions for the new situation. Gradually, a number of schools of thought in jurisprudence emerged. They were named after their leading scholars and creative thinkers (*Imam* or *Mujtahid*), most famous among them are (in chronological order) Zayd bin Ali, Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i, Ahmad bin Hanbal, etc. These schools of jurisprudence were firmly established within a period of less than 300 years after the passing away of the Prophet (SAW). An important reason why masses had faith in them and followed their path is that they were experts of the basic sources of Islam and free from any alien influence. Reflection on economic issues was only one aspect of their pronouncement of rulings over a host of complex problems of life. People addressed them to seek their guidance in their everyday life. If it involved an economic aspect, their analysis used to be economic analysis. There is no doubt that Islamic economic analysis owes a great deal to legal inquiry of this age.⁴⁵

Writings on economic topics and collection of the Prophet's traditions on financial matters started by the end of this phase and in the early period of the next phase by the students of the leading jurists (*Imams*) and their contemporaries. But due to the nature of their works, they are apt to be considered part of this phase. For example, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad al Shaybani authored *Kitab al-Kharaj* and *Kitab al-Kasb* respectively. Yahya b. Adam al-Qurashi compiled traditions of the Prophet related to taxes and other financial obligations, while Abu Ubayd al-Qasim bin Sallam and later his student, Ibn-Zanjawayh, authored *Kitab al-Amwal*. Ibn Abi al-Dunya wrote on *Islah al-mal* and Abu Bakr al-Khallal on business and economic activities in general.⁴⁶

Muslim economic thinking is distinguished from early economic thought by paying increasing attention to public finance and exclusive writings on the subject. This was but natural in the wake of expanding territory of the Islamic state, availability of new sources of income, confronting new heads of expenditure and fac-

ing other socio-economic challenges. Works on taxation in Islam (*Kitab al-Kharaj*) and public finance (*Kitab al-Amwal*) first appeared in 2nd/8th century and within the next few centuries more than two dozen treatises were written. The works that could survive include those of Abu Yusuf, al-Qurashi, Abu Ubayd, Ibn Zanjawayh, al-Dawudi, Ibn Rajab, and portions of Qudamah b. Ja'far, and al-Makhzumi. In addition to exclusive works on the subject, issues of public revenue and expenditure constituted parts of juristic and political writings.⁴⁷

Economic Thinking of Eminent Jurists, Sufis and Philosophers up to 450 A.H.

In this period, economic issues were discussed by *Fuqaha* followed by sufis and philosophers. Since the focus of *fiqh* is what is required by Shari'ah, therefore, the *Fuqaha* have discussed economic issues in the light of that context only. They have focused upon the principles of permissions (*Halal*) and prohibitions (*Haram*) rather than providing descriptions and explanations of economic events in life. Some of the chief economic issues discussed in this period include; *Mudaraba*, *Musharika*, *Muzariah*, *Mulamatha*, *Munabatha*, *Bay al-Gharar*, etc.

Some of the important jurists of this period are Zaid b. Ali (d.120/738), Abu Hanifa (d.150/767) Awzai (d.157/774), Imam Malik (d.179/798), Abu Yusuf (d.198/798), Muhammad bin Hassan al Shaybani (d.189/804), Yahya bin Adam (d.203/818), Shafi'ee (d.204/820), Abu Ubayd (d.224/838), Ahmad bin Hanbal (d.241/855), Yahya bin Umar (d.289/902), Qudama bin Ja'far (d.337/948), Abu Ja'far al Dawudi (d.402/1012), Mawardi (d.450/1058), Ibn Hazm (d.456/1064), Abu Yala (d.458/1066) and al-Imam al-Haramain al Juwayni (d.478/1085).

The sufis have talked about economic life in terms of *zuhd* (asceticism). They have given less importance to the material world and have focused upon unselfish service to Allah's creatures. Some of the important sufis of this time include Hassan al-Basri (d.110/728), Ibrahim bin Adham (d.161/874), Fudzyl bin Ayad (d.187/802), Maruf Karkhi (d.200/815) and Dhunun Misri (d.245/859).

Among the philosophers, mention may be made of Ibn Miskawiyh (d.421/1030), al-Kindi (d.260/873), al-Farabi (d.339/950) and Ibn Sina (d.428/1037).

a. Imam Abu Yusuf (113-182 A.H./731-798 C.E.)

An emphasis on the economic responsibility of the rulers has been a recurrent theme of Islamic economic

thought since the early times of Islam. This happens to be the focal point of Imam Abu Yusuf who served as the Chief Justice under the Abbasid Caliph Harun al Rashid.⁴⁸ His book titled *Kitab al Kharaj*⁴⁹ is written in response to the caliph's queries on the state of religious percepts dealing with taxation problems, revenue administration and public expenditure. He writes, "The commander of the faithful (Amir al Muminin) asked me to prepare for him a comprehensive book to be used for the purpose of the collection of legal taxes, a book for him to study and act upon designed to overt oppression on his subjects and serve their interests".⁵⁰

While writing on the subject of revenue collection, Abu Yusuf prefers the state to take a proportional share on agricultural produce from the cultivators rather than levy a fixed rent on agricultural land. This was more just and likely to yield larger revenue by facilitating the expansion of the area under cultivation. Advocating the need for adopting the proportional method, he writes, "In my view the best system of taxation for generating more revenue for the treasury and the most adequate one to prevent injustice to the tax payers by tax collectors is the proportional agricultural tax. This system will alleviate injustice to the tax payers and benefit the treasury."⁵¹ He also put emphasis upon the ruler to adopt such policies that could secure the well being of the people and increase the general prosperity and welfare of his subjects. He observes that the work for general utility should be provided publically and free of any direct charge. He holds that all expenses occurring on the provision of public works such as construction of walls, bunds on the river banks to prevent floods and other developmental projects should be borne by the state. For the provision of better irrigation facilities to agriculture, his suggestion to the ruler runs thus. "If these projects are likely to result in improvement and increase in Kharaj, you should order digging of these canals, all expenses are to be met out of the public treasury. Do not charge the expanses from the people of the area because it is better that they should be developed rather than ruined. Every request from the kharaj paying people for repairs etc involving improvements and betterment in their lands and canals should be granted as it does not harm others".⁵² However, if the project is for the benefit of a particular group, in such a case the cost will be properly charged. In regard to the cleaning works on privately owned canals, he recommends, "the whole canal is to be cleared first and expenses should be charged from those who own it, in proportion to their shares in the canal."⁵³

Abu Yusuf has a detailed discussion on the growth and development of the economy. He suggested various policy measures to be adopted by the state in order to increase the productivity of the land. According to him it is an obligation upon the ruler to arrange for the cleaning of ancient canals and excavation of new ones. He should also construct dams in order to increase the productivity of the land and income of the state. He clearly states, "The expenses of the upkeep of the walls on the river banks to prevent floods and expenses of the dams and of the water locks must be borne by the state treasury and that they should be kept in order, as any malfunction will cause damage to agriculture and decrease the income from taxation."⁵⁴

Abu Yusuf provides a detailed discussion on the reclamation of dead and unclaimed land. About the ownership rights of these lands, he holds that he who revives a dead land acquires the right of ownership to it and may continue to cultivate it or let it for cultivation, dig canals in it or otherwise, develop it for his benefit. He will have to pay *ushr levy* if the land is from *ushr* category and *kharaj* levy for *kharaj* land.⁵⁵ He highly emphasizes upon the cultivation of these lands and categorically recommends that these unused lands must not be kept idle. He holds, "These resources (un owned/waste lands) are like wealth which does not belong to anyone. A just ruler should grant them to someone who promotes the interests of Islam and spends the wealth for a good purpose."⁵⁶

b. Abu Ubayd (d.838 C.E.)

Abu Ubaid's *Kitab al Amwal* is a comprehensive work on public finance in Islam.⁵⁷ This book is not only a treatise on fiscal system of Islam but it is also a treasure of information concerning laws, history, geography, administration and jurisprudence. The book contains ninety three chapters in total. It is a good source of authentic traditions from the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the reports from his companions, and those who followed them, on economic matters.

While dealing with any issue, Abu Ubayd usually refers to the verses of the Holy Quran, narrates Traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and practices of the pious caliphs and examines their various interpretations, putting out their strength or weakness, then gives his own opinion. While expressing an opinion, he gives reasons for preferring one opinion over the other. Overall the entire book can broadly be divided into two major parts,

Part first starting from item number 1 to 895 deals with revenue that is imposed upon and received from non

Muslim citizens of the Islamic state, that is 1/5th of the spoils of *Jizya*, *Kharaj* and different forms of *Fay*. It also discusses the related problems. Part second; (paragraph number 895 to 1988) undertakes *Zakat*, (the compulsory religious obligation upon the rich Muslims for their poor and needy brethren) and its different forms.

The second phase (450-850 A.H. /1058-1446 C.E.)

In the second phase of the development of economic thought in Islam, Muslims started with the rich intellectual heritage left by their predecessors besides being directly influenced by the Quran and the *Sunnah*. At the same time, they faced a political reality characterized by the disintegration of the central Abbasid rule and the division of the Islamic realm into regional powers largely based on force rather than people's consent. There was high level of corruption which was followed by moral disintegration. With the decaying moral fabric of the society, the gap between the rich and the poor was also on an increase. Muslim rulers were less serious in terms of their economic responsibilities towards their subjects. Therefore, they were often reminded of their duties towards their subjects by the Muslim scholars. This age is also characterized by the prosperity of the people with brisk trade practices between the people. People in this age were paying huge taxes and levies to the government with little curb on economic enterprise.

This age, also witnessed a good number of jurists, sufis and philosophers. Some of the noteworthy jurists of this period include; Shamsuddun al Sarakshi (d.483/1090), Nizamul Mulk Tusi (d.485/1093), Imam Ghazzali (d.505/1111), Ibn Mas'ud al Kasani (d.578/1182), Shirazi (d.589/1193), Fakhruddin alRazi (d.606/1210), Najmuddi (d.654/1256), IbnTaimiyah (728/1328), IbnUkhuwa (d.729/1329), Ibn al Qayyam (d.751/1350), Muhammad bin Abdur Rahman al Habashi (d.782/1300), Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d.790/1388), Ibn Khaldun (d.808/1404) al Maqrizi (d.845/1441).

Similarly, some of the great sufis of this time who also made a deep impact on successive generations of Muslims are al-Qushayri (d.465/857), al-Hujwari (d.490/1096), Abul Qadir Jilani (d.564/1169), Farid al-din Attar (d.622/1252), Ibn Arabi (d.638/1240), Jalalu-din Rumi (d.672/1274). This period is also known for its towering philosophers like Ibn Baja (d.533/11380), Ibn Tufayl (d.581/1185), Ibn Rushd (d.595/1198).

All these jurists, sufis and philosophers have touched the economic issues in one way or the other in accordance with their times and situations. However, the present work will only focus upon the few economic in-

sights of Abu Hamid al Ghazaali, Taqiuddin Abul Abbas Ahmad Ibn Taimyah and Ibn Khaldun.

a. Al-Ghazzali (451-505 A.H. /1055-1111C.E.)

Economic thinking of the author of *Ihya-al-ulum al din*,⁵⁸ Abu Hamid al- Ghazzali,⁵⁹ is an integral part of his vision of a rejuvenating Islamic life. In his book *Ihya al Ulum al din*, he devotes a separate chapter for economic teachings of Islam under the title, "Earnings and trade and commerce."⁶⁰ Some of the important economic issues that he discusses in this book include buying and selling, advance payment money, lawful and unlawful ways of earnings, economic justice, economic behaviour and relation between economics and religion. According to Ghazzali, four things are necessary in earnings; earning through lawful means, justice, kindness and fear of religion.⁶¹ While discussing the principles of buying and selling, Ghazzali observes that no transaction is valid with a minor, insane, slave or a blind man.⁶² However, transaction with the slave becomes lawful with the permission of his master. Similarly, transaction with the blind man is lawful with the consent of his representative. It is also lawful to have transaction with unbelievers but it is unlawful to sell arms to them.⁶³

While analyzing the characteristic features of commodities for sale, Ghazzali observes that the things for sale must be fit for transfer and must be known, fixed and certain. The contract for buying and selling must be expressed in clear and unambiguous terms. Intention plays an important part in it and no condition can lawfully be imposed by one party after the agreement is final.⁶⁴

Ghazzali also discusses advance payment of money and things. He observes that the conditions necessary in it are as follows.

1. The quantity and the kind of thing for which advance payment is made should be fixed.
2. The time and place of its delivery should be ascertained.
3. It should not be a precious or a rare thing like a precious jewel.
4. It should be an exchangeable commodity.
5. Its weight and time of delivery must be fixed.⁶⁵

While discussing the prohibition of interest, Ghazzali states that interests arise only in two cases, in transactions of cash money, gold and silver and of food stuffs. Interest occurs in these two cases under two conditions; first sale is held on credit and not in cash; that is not to hand in hand transaction and second, more quan-

tity is taken in lieu of the same kind of things. On account of this, it is unlawful to sell fixed quantity of gold or silver for a fixed quantity of more gold or silver. There is however, no fault in selling silver in more quantity in lieu of gold of less quantity, because they are different kinds of things and not of the same kind. It is also unlawful to receive in cash the value of a certain thing which is to be delivered in future. Similarly it is unlawful to exchange food stuffs of the same kind in cash or on credit. For instance, a goat cannot be exchanged with mutton nor can wheat be exchanged with bread. It is also unlawful to exchange milk with milk products.⁶⁶ Ghazzali highly emphasizes upon maintenance of justice in business transactions. He strongly opposes ill economic practices like hoarding and monopolization of wealth. These practices lead market imperfections and hurt the interests of common people. He cites many *ahadith* of the holy Prophet (SAW) and stories of the pious persons in respect of the prohibition of hoarding. However, he allows, hoarding of such kind of things which are not principle food stuffs for livelihood like saffron and medicines. He also allows hoarding of food stuffs provided their hoarding does not affect the general public. In this way, Ghazzali has provided due regard to the interests of the common people.⁶⁷

Ghazzali regards trade and commerce as a trail for believers. He emphasizes that one should do good to others while pursuing any economic activity. He remarks that one should not make much profit in business and considers it an *Ihsan*.⁶⁸ However he is not against making much profit. It is better to buy at a higher price from a poor person and while purchasing from a rich person one may search for additional profit. He also regards payment of debt in a good manner as *Ihsan*.⁶⁹ It is better to go personally and pay the debt than, to wait till it is demanded. He also remarks that one should not forget ones religion and hereafter, while one is in a state of business with others. If he forgets, he will be ruined and will be one of those who sell their next world in lieu of this world. His real capital is his religion and matters relating to the next world.⁷⁰

b. Ibn Taimiyah (661-728 A.H/1263-1328 C.E.)

Taqiuddin Abu al Abbas Ibn Taimiyah was primarily an author on *hadith*, but his contribution to *Tafsir* and *Fiqh* are no less significant. He also wrote extensively on logic, philosophy, mysticism and comparative religions. His economic ideas are reflected from his works *Al Hisbah fi al Islam*⁷¹ (public duties in Islam), *Al Siyasah al Shariah fi Islah al Ra'i wal Ra'iyah*⁷² (Shariah policies on reforming the affairs of the ruler and

the ruled). In his *Al Hisbah fi al Islam* (public duties in Islam), Ibn Taimiyah envisioned a well provisioned society organized on the basis of freedom of enterprise and private property with limits set by moral considerations and supervised by a just ruler enforcing *Shariah* and working for the welfare of the people. He describes the characteristic features of the *Muhtasib* in the following words, "The Muhtasib not only ordains the Friday congregation and other communal prayers. He also exacts truthful reports and the discharge of truths. He proscribes such abominations as lying and deceit, including the giving of small measure and weight and fraudulent practices in history commerce and religious matters etc."⁷³

In the third chapter of the book, he discusses the issue of price control in detail. He observes that it is wrong to control prices if it involves injury to people and forces them without any justification to sell goods at a price not agreeable to them. He quotes Anas bin Malik (The companion of the Prophet), who narrates, "The market price rose in the time of the messenger of God, on him be peace, and they said to him: Messenger of God; if only you would fix the prices! But he replied: God is The Taker, The Disposer, The Scourer and The Controller of prices. I very much hope that when I meet God, no one will claim against me for an injury, I have caused him in blood and property."⁷⁴ Ibn Taimiyah however, remarks that if the controlled prices involve just dealings between people and prevents them from doing unlawful activities, then it is not merely permissible but indeed obligatory. For instance, when the owners of merchandise refuse to sell except for more than the reasonable value at a time people are in urgent need or when certain people have monopoly of particular commodities and goods are sold only to them and retailed by them. In these situations, Ibn Taimiyah emphasizes that prices must be controlled, so that people will not suffer.⁷⁵ Another unique contribution of Ibn Taimiyah to Islamic economics is his emphasis upon partnerships based upon proportional shares, for example, one third or one half. To take a fixed amount according to him would not constitute equity but rather injustice.⁷⁶ Ibn Taimiyah also vehemently condemns improper economic practices that involve cheating, fraud or speculation. He quotes many sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) against trade practices like *Mulamasa*, *Munabatha* and *Bay al Gharar*. Similarly, he also condemns hoarding and other ill economic practices that lead market imperfections.⁷⁷

c. Ibn Khaldun (732-808/1332-1404 C.E.)

Ibn Khaldun⁷⁸ was a historian and a social analyst. His

Muqaddimah⁷⁹ is one of the greatest works in social, political and economic analysis in the Islamic tradition. Some of the main economic issues that he discusses in this book are division of labour, money and prices, production and distribution, international trade, capital formation and growth, trade cycles, poverty and prosperity, population, agriculture, industry and trade and macro economics of taxation and public expenditure. He defines commerce as a means to attempt to make a profit by increasing capital, through buying goods at a low price and selling them at a high price.⁸⁰ He regards profit as the value realized from human labor. He writes, "The part of the income that is obtained by a person through his own effort and strength is called profit."⁸¹

According to Ibn Khaldun, prices are determined in the market by the interplay of both supply and demand. He writes, "When goods are few and rare, their prices go up, on the other hand, when the country is near and the roads safe for travelling, there will be many people to transport goods, thus they (goods) will be found in large quantities and the prices will go down."⁸² He regards continued low prices as the main cause of business decline. He writes, "When the prices of any type of goods; food, clothing material or anything else that may bring in capital remain low and the merchant cannot profit from any fluctuation of the market affecting these things, his profit stops, if the situation continues for a long period. Business in this particular line slumps, no trading is done and the merchants lose their capital."⁸³

Ibn Khaldun observes that the division of labour plays a very important role for growth and development. He observes that civilization and its wellbeing as well as its business propensity depend upon productivity and propelling efforts of people in all directions according to their own interest and profit. The way in which the productive powers of people can be utilized is through cooperation. He notes that production of staple diet like wheat requires six to ten different kinds of services. By coming together to supply all these services, men are able to produce a quantity many times more than the quantity needed for their consumption.⁸⁴ In this way the surplus can be exchanged by the goods produced by others, thus leading to prosperity. He notes that the countries which have a surplus to trade with other countries are more prosperous than the countries that have little to offer for international trade. He observes that more profit can be secured by withholding goods till the market prices are again high and by foreign trade.⁸⁵ He strongly discourages hoarding. He ob-

serves that it can cause loss of profit. He writes, "Intelligent and experienced people in the cities know that it is inauspicious to hoard grain and wait for high prices...the reason may perhaps lie in the fact that people need food and they are forced to spend money on it. For things that are traded other than foodstuffs, people have no compelling need...On things not really needed they spend their money willingly and eagerly and feel no attachment to the money they have spent."⁸⁶

Ibn Khaldun has a wide range of discussion on economic growth. He talks about different types of crafts and their development. According to him crafts can improve and increase only when people demand them. If the demand for a particular craft decreases, the people engaged with that craft become disheartened and their interest decreases, and if the situation continues, this results into the disappearance of that craft. In fact development of civilization and the refinement of crafts are complementary to each other.⁸⁷

The Third Phase (850-1350AH/1445-1932 C.E.)

As we enter this period, the decline in independent thinking had already yielded to stagnation. But there is a fresh stirring during the last two centuries in which a number of thinkers and reformers called for a return to the Quran and Sunnah for inspiration and guidance. Notable among these are Shah Waliullah (1114-1176A.H. /1703-1762C.E.), Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (d.1206A.H. /1787C.E.), Jamaluddin Afghani (d.1294A.H. /1897C.E.), Muhammad Abduh (d.1320A.H./1905 C.E.), Iqbal (d.1356A.H. /1938C.E.).

The jurists in this period were generally speaking content with writing footnotes on the works of their eminent predecessors and issuing *fatwa* in the light of standard rules of their respective schools. Although the gates of *Ijtihad* had long been closed, there are numerous insights to be found in the works of jurists like Ibn Nujaym (d. 970/1562) and Ibn Abedin (d.1252/1836).

Similarly, this period also witnessed the works of eminent sufis like Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1034/1624) and a host of other writers. Among all the above mentioned scholars Shah Wali-ullah Dehlvi has significantly contributed in the field of Islamic Economics.

Shah Waliullah (1114-1176 AH-1703-1762 C.E.)

Economic ideas of Shah Waliullah⁸⁸ are found in different works by him such as Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, al-Budar al-Bazigah, al-Tafhimat al-Illahiyah and his numerous letters that he addressed to different rulers, notables and friends.

Starting from simple primitive village life to an international community, Shah Waliullah divides human society into four stages. These stages he calls the stages of *irtifaqat*. All his economic ideas are related to some way or the other to his concept of *Irtifaqat* or stages of socio-economic development.

a. *Al-Irtifaq al Awwal* (The First Stage of Socio-Economic Development)

In the *Irtifaq al Awwal*, man becomes acquainted with food stuff suited to his physical constitution and learns how they are to be eaten and digested, besides the ways of preparing and cooking them. He also becomes aware about different methods of cultivation, irrigation, harvest and preservation. He learns how to benefit from animals, their domestication and their use for different works such as ploughing the land, riding over them and benefiting from their milk, meat and wool. He also learns how to manufacture garments out of animal skin. In short this is an age of fulfilling the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. In this stage the social organization is led by the person who possesses a higher quality of sound judgment and powers to subordinate others. There is a set pattern of rules to resolve the disputes among people. On intellectual level there are people who discover ways of socio-economic development according to their condition and other people become their followers.⁸⁹

b. *Al-Irtifaq al Thani* (The second stage of Socio-Economic Development)

In this stage, various occupations of people are agriculture, grazing animals, acquiring natural products of sea and land such as metals, trees, animals; different industries emerge such as carpentry, iron work, weaving, etc. There is division of labour and specialization of work among people. The division of labour arises due to diverse needs of people which they cannot satisfy individually.⁹⁰ The division of labour and specialization may be on the basis of one's ability for doing a particular job or it may be incidental. For instance, the son of a blacksmith takes up iron work. Similarly, the person living close to the sea may take the profession of fishing.⁹¹ Shah Waliullah emphasizes that one should be very selective in choosing one's job. He should not follow blind tradition of his family.⁹² He advises municipal authorities that they should be vigilant to people's selection of jobs and should exercise some type of control if necessary to ensure that they do not concentrate on few jobs, leaving others unattended, and to check engagement of more people in production of luxuries and their involvement in socially undesirable production.⁹³

Division of labour and specialization lead to the need for exchange which can be done easily through an object that can be used as medium. This leads to the invention of money. Thus, it is the second stage of socio-economic development in which the use of money appears. According to Shah Waliullah, money should be a durable object and commonly accepted by people in their transactions.⁹⁴ He mentions that of Gold and of Silver are most suitable to be used as money. They are easily divisible into small pieces, their units have similarity, are of great benefit to human physique, and may serve as adoration.⁹⁵

While explaining the rationale of Shariah rules for prohibiting wrong ways of earning wealth, Shah Waliullah particularly takes up gambling and interest.⁹⁶ He notes that gambling amounts to acquiring wealth on the basis of people's ignorance, greed, false hopes and exposure to risks and uncertainties produced by these conditions. Similarly, interest is prohibited because it creates disputes among people and is a source of hatred and envy among them. It also causes decline in agriculture and industry which are fundamental means of earning a living.⁹⁷ Shah Waliullah considers interest in lending as the actual one (*al-Haqiqi*). He also takes note of barter exchange with inequality in terms of quantity or time of delivery termed as *Riba al-fadl* and *Riba al-nasiah* in the Shariah. He regards these interests in similitude (*Mahmulalaih*).⁹⁸ Prohibition of this kind of interest is known by a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet (SAW) stating that gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates salt for salt, be exchanged, the same for some, in equal quantity and hand in hand. Incase these groups are different, and then sell them as you like (with unequal quantity).⁹⁹

c. *Al Irtifaq al-Thalith* (The Third Stage of Socio-Economic Development)

With the completion of second stage, human society develops into a city stage. Shah Waliullah emphasizes that the city does not mean walls, buildings and market. The city represents relations between different groups of people based on mutual dealings and cooperation.¹⁰⁰ The integrity, interest and independence of the city are maintained through the Institution of *Imam*, who acts as a physician to maintain a healthy body of the city.¹⁰¹

In this stage, it will be the duty of the government to see that proper allocation of employment is done in different industries and services. Traders and farmers are encouraged in their professions and arrangement for their proper education is also made. He emphasizes

that the city develops with easy taxation and employment of necessary number of officials.¹⁰²

d. *Al-Irtifaq al Rabi* (The fourth stage of socio-economic development)

In this stage the human society and the institution of the government adopts an international character and the need arises to have a government of all the governments (*Khalifat al Khulafa*).¹⁰³ This is the final stage of socio-economic development. Shah Waliullah does not assign any economic role to the government in this stage, except that it will need a lot of men and material to perform the duty of keeping peace, providing justice and check exploitation.

Conclusion

Muslims had practical experience of dealing with the economy and state, spread over many centuries. Their ideas bore pragmatic orientation. The scope and subject matter of their economic thinking was not confined to satisfaction, economy of self sufficient household, division of labour, barter and money. They discussed a host of other problems and developed many new ideas. As Muslim scholars based their ideas on both revealed knowledge and human reason, they were more suited to scholastic scholars. In the Islamic tradition two sets of works – *al-hisbah* and *al-siyasah al-shar'iyah* – appeared that proved to be a rich source of economic thought of past Muslim thinkers. Works related to *al-hisbah* generally discussed socio-economic control, moral and market supervision, prevention of monopolies, check on cheating and fraud and other such corrupting practices, standardization of products, facilitation of the supply of necessities, etc. As far as works pertaining to *al-siyasah alshar'iyah* are concerned, they generally deal with the rules of governance, economic role of the state, sources of public revenue, public expenditure (in addition to works exclusively devoted to public finances), maintenance of law and order, internal and external defense etc.

References and Endnotes

- ¹ Al Qur'an, 4:58, 6:1523, 11:84, 16:76, 42:15
- ² Ibid, 6:152, 7:85, 11:84-85, 12:59
- ³ Ibid, 5:39
- ⁴ Ibid, 39:24
- ⁵ Ibid, 29:21
- ⁶ Ibid, 3:16, 82:1-6
- ⁷ Al Qur'an, 7:152, 9:71
- ⁸ Ibid, 7:10, 7:32, 34:15
- ⁹ Ibid, 2:29, 7:10, 13:3
- ¹⁰ Ibid, 4:29
- ¹¹ Ibid, 2:188
- ¹² Ibid, 2:283
- ¹³ Al Qur'an, 3:161
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 5:41
- ¹⁵ Ibid, 4:10
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 83:1-3
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 24:19
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 24:33
- ¹⁹ Ibid, 17:32
- ²⁰ Ibid, 24:2
- ²¹ Ibid, 5:93
- ²² Ibid, 2:275
- ²³ Ibid, 2:278-80
- ²⁴ Ibid, 2:83
- ²⁵ Ibid, 2:271
- ²⁶ Ibid, 2:83
- ²⁷ Ibid, 92:5-7
- ²⁸ Al Qur'an, 74:42-44
- ²⁹ Ibid, 4:7-12
- ³⁰ Ibid, 53:33-34
- ³¹ Ibid, 17:29
- ³² Al Qur'an, 9:34
- ³³ Ibid, 4:5
- ³⁴ Ibid, 2:60, 7-74
- ³⁵ Ibid, 7:86, 13:25
- ³⁶ Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Arabic English, Tr. English, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, Vol, 1, (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2006), H. no. 186.
- ³⁷ Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn-e-Majah*, Bk.12, (*al-Tijarah*), CH. 15; Muhammad Akram Khan, *Economic Teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW* (Delhi: Noor Publishing House, 1992)
- ³⁸ Imam Bukhari, *Sahih Bukhari*, Arabic English Tr. English, Muhammad Muhsin Khan, (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar al Salam publishers and Distributors, 1994), H. No. 13.
- ³⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, Op.cit., vol.1, H. No.259
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., H. No.260
- ⁴¹ "Mulamasa", means that a man touches another's garment or cloth or anything else without turning it over and Munabatha, means that a man throws his cloth to another, and the other throws his cloth to the first, thus confirming their contract without inspection or mutual agreement. *Sahih Muslim*, op.cit.,5, H. no. 1511

- ⁴² This is a type of transaction which was prevalent in the markets of Jahilia Arabia. The transaction was done by throwing a stone either by the seller or by the purchaser and whatever the stone touched, its transaction became binding.
- ⁴³ Bay al Gharar; one might translate this as arbitrary contract of sales, but this is not the only term to which it is applied. This type of transaction intended, is one in which there is no guarantee that the seller can deliver the goods for which he receives payment. It could include such items as selling a runaway slave or fish which one has not caught.
- ⁴⁴ *Sahih Bukhari*, Op.cit., H. No. 1022
- ⁴⁵ Abdul Azim Islahi, *Contribution of Muslim Scholars to Economic Thought and Analysis*, (Jeddah: Islamic Economics Research Centre, King Abdul Aziz University, , 2004), 12
- ⁴⁶ *Contribution of Muslim Scholars to Economic Thought and Analysis*, Op.cit,13.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, 61.
- ⁴⁸ Yaqub ibn Ibrahim Abu Yusuf (731-798 C.E.), was a scholar of high degree and served as chief justice under Abbasid Caliph Mahdi (d. 785 C.E.) and his son Harun (d. 809 C.E.)
- ⁴⁹ The book *Kitab al Kharaj* of Imam Abu Yusuf was first published in 1885 from Cairo-Egypt. It has been translated into English, French, Italian, Turkish and French languages.
- ⁵⁰ Abu Yusuf, *Kitab al Kharaj* (Beirut: Dar al-M'arifah, 1979),3
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 50.
- ⁵² *Kitab al kharaj*, Op. cit, 109
- ⁵³ Ibid, 11.
- ⁵⁴ ibid, 110.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 65.
- ⁵⁶ *Kitab al kharaj*, Op. cit, 58.
- ⁵⁷ Abu Ubayd al Qasim bin.Sallam (774-838 C.E.) was an eminent scholar of Quran, Hadith and Islamic law. His book is the most comprehensive work on the subject of economics. It contains about two thousand (1998) items on fiscal issues.
- ⁵⁸ Imam Ghazzali, *Ihya al-Ulum al Din*, Tr. English, Fazlul Karim, (New Delhi:Islamic Book Services 1995).
- ⁵⁹ Abu Hamid b. Muhammad al Ghazzali (1058-1111 C.E) born in Khurasan, is one of the eminent scholars of Islamic Science including logic, philosophy and sufism (mysticism).
- ⁶⁰ *Ihya al-Ulum al Din*, Op. cit, 45 .
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 48.
- ⁶² Ibid., 49.
- ⁶³ *Ihya al-Ulum al Din*, Op.cit,
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 50.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid, 51
- ⁶⁶ *Ihya al-Ulum al Din*, Op.cit. 48.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 53.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 57.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.,
- ⁷⁰ *Ihya al-Ulum al Din*, Op.cit, 58.
- ⁷¹ Ibn Taimiyah, *Al-Hisbah, fi al Islam* Tr. English Muhtar Holland ed. Khurishid Ahmad, (The Islamic foundation ,1982)
- ⁷² Ibn Taimiyah, *Al-Siyasah al Shariah fi Islaha al Rai wa'l Ra'iyah*, (Damascus: Maktaba Dar al-Bayan, 1985)
- ⁷³ Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Hisbah fi al Islam*, op.cit. 29.
- ⁷⁴ Abu Daud and al Tirmidhi, Quoted from *al-Hisbah fi al Islam* op.cit. 35 .
- ⁷⁵ *Al Hisbah fi al Islam*, op.cit. 36.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, 40-41.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid, 160.
- ⁷⁸ Ibn Khaldun was born in 1332 C.E. in Tunis into an old Arab family of the Hadramout which had emigrated first to Spain, then to Morocco and finally settled in Tunisia. He received a thorough education in the theological and philosophical disciplines, taught at Madrasa of Tunis by outstanding scholars.
- ⁷⁹ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah (An Introduction to History*, Tr. English, Franz Rosenthal, ed. N J Dawood, (London: Rout ledge and Paul, 1967).
- ⁸⁰ *Muqaddimah*, op.cit., 309
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Ibid, 310.
- ⁸³ Ibid, 311.
- ⁸⁴ *Muqaddimah*, op.cit, 46
- ⁸⁵ Ibid, 310.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid, 311.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid, 316-317.
- ⁸⁸ Qutub al Din Ahmad b.Abdur Rahim,more commonly known as Shah Waliullah Dehlwi (1702-1763 C.E.), lived during the Mughal rule in India. His economic ideas are mainly reflected from his *Hujjat Allah al Balighah*. In this work, he explains the rationale of shariah rules for personal conduct and social organization.
- ⁸⁹ Shah Wali Allah, *Hujjat Allah al Balighah*, Vol.2, (Beirut, Dar al Fikr), 40.
- ⁹⁰ Shah Waliullah, *al Budur al Bazighah, al Majlis al Ilmi*, Dabhel, 50.
- ⁹¹ *Hujjatullah Balighah*, op.cit., vol. 1, 43
- ⁹² *Al- Budur*, op. cit., 60.
- ⁹³ *Hujjatullah Balighah*, op.cit, Vol. 2, 105.
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- ⁹⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, 43
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 106
- ⁹⁷ *Hujjatullah Balighah*, op.cit, Vol. 2, 106.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 107 .
- ⁹⁹ Imam Bukari, *Sahih Bukhari*, op.cit.,H. no. 1027-1029
- ¹⁰⁰ *Al-Budur*, op. cit, 51
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 71-72 .
- ¹⁰² *Hujjatullah Balighah* op. cit 45-47.
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The Meaning of Religious Dialogue: According to Christian-Muslim Theologians in Pakistan

Muhammad Shahid Habib

Abstract

The study is the presentation of different forms of dialogues in Pakistan. Dr. De Souza has analyzed briefly how in an Islamic state, Christians are enjoying equal rights with a spirit of social service and sharing. Jan Slomp's viewpoint is that dialogue is difficult to take place in Pakistan because of Muslims' arrogance, as they are a majority and Christians are also not prepared for dialogue because of their Hindu background. According to John O'Brien, secular system in Pakistan would favor all the communities. If Islamic system is implemented, it would have negative effects on promoting dialogue. Dr. Ansari proposes that Muslims could spell out and, together with Jews and Christians, strive for such values that would please God. Dr. Khalid Alavi says about the inter-religious dialogue, "it is the new tactic which is used to confuse the Muslims in inter-religious dialogue. In diplomatic language, it is called "engagement". According to Khalid Jameel, the dialogue should be based on equality. The dialogue is useless if we do not reach up to their level of growth, advancement and development.

Keywords: Pakistan, Dialogue, Christian, Muslim and Religion

Introduction

It is a fact that Pakistani Muslims hardly played a role in dialogue whenever and wherever it was organized. There are some misunderstandings regarding dialogue in Pakistan. There is a huge gap between the followers of Islam and others. No proper interaction is found among the people. The followers of every religion have their own ideologies, which obstruct them from mixing with others. Many critics have viewed the situation from different angles. They have highlighted some problems, which create difficulties in carrying out dialogue in Pakistan.

Christian Theologians and Dialogue in Pakistan

a. Jan Slomp and Dialogue

Jan Slomp in an article "problems and possibilities for dialogue in Pakistan" has narrated a brief history of dialogue. He has discussed at length why dialogue does not thrive in Pakistan. To him, there are certain reasons for that.

First of all, the Christian community was not ready for that as it carries with it the Hindu background. Secondly, Muslims had never accepted non-Muslims in Pakistan as equal partners. There had always been difference in that. Another reason may be that the Christian Church had no people for dialogue at an academic level. The well-trained ones unusually migrate to Europe or are too busy with their own work to go for extra activities. The arrogance of majority and ghetto mentality of minority is also a hurdle in dialogue.

Beside these problems, Jan Slomp¹ has pointed out

some other reasons for the failure of dialogue in Pakistan. To him there are deeper religious and political reasons embedded in the Islamic culture. To Muslims, the final book, The Holy Quran has settled all the issues. To revise them would mean that Muslims have doubts in the final revelation. In other words, dialogue is dangerous for their faith. The Pakistani scene provides a gloomy picture of conflict among the Muslims themselves. There have been made some fruitless efforts in this regard. Beside this, in Pakistan, people view the Christian mission as enemy of Islam.²

To conclude Jan Slomp's viewpoint, it can be stated that dialogue was difficult to take place because of Muslims' arrogance, as they are a majority. The Christian Church had no academic personalities for dialogue. Christians are also not prepared for dialogue because of their Hindu background. Dialogue is also difficult because of deeper religious and political reasons. All these problems can be overcome only when misunderstandings are removed and there is religious liberty for every sect.

b. John O'Brien and Dialogue

John O'Brien³ has also discussed dialogue in different forms in Pakistan. Regarding this, he says that Muslims and Christians go for shared struggle for many achievements. They come closer to each other at work places, educational institutes, hospitals, etc. They are also seen together for prayers. Besides, in the matters of daily life, they meet to facilitate each other. All this has led the Muslims and Christians to religious harmony. They have developed respect for each other. John

O'Brien while discussing dialogue has on the contrary also highlighted some areas that could not be accepted by Christians. These are the issues that have created difference between Muslims and Christians. In an Islamic state, Christians are bound to study some part of the Holy Quran at school. The punishment for blasphemous remarks about the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) is death. This has negatively affected inter-religious dialogue. Similarly, non-Muslims could be witnesses of any incident in the court of law. But they could not be equal to the Muslims. In short, the government of Pakistan has tried to implement Islamic law in the country. If it is so, then people of other religions are bound to follow Islamic system of life. John O'Brien has pointed out this important aspect that has silenced Christians and made them suffer in certain respects. To him, there should be a secular system in Pakistan that would favor all the communities. If Islamic system is implemented, it would have negative effects on promoting dialogue. Christians in that case would have to become quite passive and remain silent. They cannot have freedom to express themselves.⁴

c. Dr. De Souza and Dialogue

Discussing the condition of dialogue in Pakistan Dr. De Souza,⁵ says that Christians and Muslims have been living together in Pakistan since 1947. There is a dialogue of life between them in many fields. They are neighbors, co-workers, classmates, colleagues, etc. and have mutual respect and harmony. This dialogue has been at the common level and had no deeper roots. It can be seen as a form of co-existence. Secondly, with the passage of time, both Muslims and Christians have been getting closer to each other on humanitarian basis. The social, political and economic activities are carried out together for the welfare of the people and the state. This has been going on throughout the whole of Pakistan. Thirdly, finally, the proper form of dialogue is that when the scholars of the two religions meet and discuss religious matters. This dialogue is limited to selective people. There has been a growing interest in various parts of the country in this form of dialogue.⁶

The above-mentioned forms of dialogues really are found in Pakistan. Dr. De Souza has analyzed briefly how in an Islamic state, Christians are enjoying equal rights. In the social setup of the country, life runs with no difference among the people regarding religion. A spirit of service and sharing is found in the society. There are certain organizations also which are working for the betterment of relations of different religions. Scholars of Islam and Christianity meet to share their views about different issues.

In the editorial of "Focus," the situation of dialogue is discussed in detail. In the same writing, the difficulties and results of conducting dialogue in Pakistan have been highlighted.

Both Muslims and Christians face difficulties. The Muslims think that there may be a hidden agenda behind dialogue. The most notable notion is that this is a mean to convert others. The government's determination to implement Islamic Laws worries the Christians. Thus, they hesitate for dialogue and consider themselves as second-class citizen. Most of the Christians struggle to survive and cannot spare time for dialogue. They often blame Muslims for their problems.

It means that dialogue has been obstructed because of misunderstanding about its very nature. Both Muslims and Christians are afraid of being converted. Christians are worried about their survival so they cannot go for dialogue.⁷ These are the views from Christian scholars. As far as Muslims are concerned, they resist dialogue as a part of Christian Mission. To them, dialogue is a platform where the Christians try to explain their own problems and superiority, hence trying to convert the people. Some of the examples to clarify this view can be stated as under:

In the first Pakistan Conference for Christian Education that was held in Multan it was said, "Christian minorities could not survive without meaningful inter-religious dialogue in Pakistan. So it should be the duty of Christian teachings that the Christian children and adults should be prepared for the inter-religious dialogue".⁸

A conference titled, "Asian Journey 1997" was held in Pakistan by Pastoral Institute, Multan continued from January 20-30, 1997. The participants were from ten countries of Asia, Europe and Australia. The participants of the conference were given the chance to visit Pakistan, see the people and know the present situation themselves for two days. After that, these participants gathered in Pastoral Institute, Multan, and had a sitting for a goal and had a commentary and social analysis according to their experiment and observation.⁹

The conference participants decided keeping in view their observations that for the Muslim-Christian relationship, Christian preachers should concentrate on their education. Especially, the Christians should be encouraged for their treatment towards Muslim neighbors, have a positive voice towards Islam and have a critical view towards distinctive governmental policies. The participants of the conference had in their mind that "there is no difference between the inter-religious dialogue and Bible". It is the two in one.¹⁰

Muslim Theologians and Dialogue in Pakistan

a. Dr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari and Dialogue

Dr. Ansari¹¹ in his article "Reflections on Islamic Bases for Dialogue" proposes that Muslims could spell out and, together with Jews and Christians, strive for such values that would please God.

According to Ansari, "The need for dialogue with people of other religious convictions arises from the concern of Muslims with the welfare of their fellow beings. Muslims are under the obligation to bear witness to the truth revealed to Muhammad (SAW) and prompter to share it with the rest of humanity. Ansari suggests that the Muslim's attitude towards people who decline to identify themselves with Islamic doctrines ought to be one of mutual fellowship and cordiality (without compromising the Muslim duty to make the word of God prevail), if such persons refrain from active hostility to Islam and Muslims".¹²

Ansari's point of view is also remarkable. Dialogue with People of the Book is needed for the welfare of fellow Muslims. Muslims are obligated to share the truth with others. Through dialogue, non-Muslims can be refrained from active hostility towards Islam.

b. Dr. Khalid Alavi and Dialogue

For these reasons, some Muslim scholars think that dialogue is a secret agenda of Christians through which they are achieving their aims. As Dr. Khalid Alavi¹³ says about the inter-religious dialogue, "it is the new tactic which is used to confuse the Muslims in inter-religious dialogue. In diplomatic language it is called "engagement". According to this, a relationship is maintained with the opposition to know their planning, their intentions and psychology and thus mould their own line of setting. According to this, the opposition has no way out".¹⁴ In the last three centuries, Christians shaped themselves in a colonialism that targeted Islam, Muslim and the Muslim world. The Church started dialogue to engage the Muslims and through this they are achieving their different aims. On the one hand, Muslim-Christian relationship is popularized in Muslim societies while on the other hand, they are clearing the way for Christianity through this, and different sects of Christians are holding a dialogue with Muslims. Further explaining the dialogue, Dr. Khalid Alavi says that the church has an advantage that it is an organized religious institute while in the Islamic world except for the Shi'a; there is no organized religious group. Saudi Arabia and Libya have maintained some organizations that are working under their government and representatives of their government but the Islamic

world does not have any organized system. So the question is: to what end should one conduct a dialogue and with whom? No one knows the answer to this.¹⁵

Churches choose the Muslim members who are called in for dialogue and then a policy statement is issued. In such activities of dialogue, the churches and European States' policies are prepared and enforced. The topics of the dialogue are those which the European countries set to pressurize the Muslim societies, such as freedom of women, human rights, non-Muslim minorities, Islamic states secularization and enforcement of Shariah. In these dialogue meetings, the behavior of the Christian participant is aggressive and instructive while the Muslims behavior is defensive and apologetic.¹⁶

c. Khalid Jameel and Dialogue

Khalid Jameel, the director of the department of publications of Karachi University said "we should not have dialogue with these Christians because the western powers are supporting them, and they are well organized in their political, economic and defensive systems.

The dialogue should be based on equality. The dialogue is useless if we do not reach up to their level of growth, advancement and development.¹⁷

Thus, dialogue according to Muslim theologians, is to confuse the Muslims as it is a kind of engagement in order to know their planning and intentions. Church is an organized religious institute while there is no organized religious group of Muslims. Churches choose the Muslim members and just inform them of their policy statement. Through dialogue, the European countries pressurize the Muslim societies through aggressive and instructive behavior. Dialogue is part of The Christian mission in Pakistan. The churches and Christians are funded by foreign countries promoting the agenda of Christians and European secular powers. They have better political, economic and defensive systems and dialogue is possible only on the basis of equality.

Conditions and Purposes for Dialogue in Pakistan

The most important thing to keep in mind is that dialogue should never be used as a tool for conversion or as a means for evangelization. This not only prevents dialogue from happening but also causes the participants to approach each other mistrustfully.¹⁸ As Christians struggle hard to promote their mission, the Muslims too want to preach the message of Islam to all mankind. But the important point is that none of them should try to force the others to accept their respective religion. Another condition for dialogue is that the par-

ticipants should accept each other as they are. Both Muslims and Christians should be aware of similarities and differences.¹⁹ They must be respectful to each other. During dialogue, the parties should learn more about each other. This would guide them for mutual understanding. This is the only way for dialogue.

The controversial issues cannot hold the dialogue to continue. The participants should avoid controversy as much as possible. If Christians and Muslims look for conflicts between them, there are many. Sorry to say, these do not lead them to dialogue. It means that Muslims and Christians should meet to discuss the issues helpful for the betterment of mankind and for the establishment of a peaceful society.²⁰

There are certain common points such as God's will and dignity of human beings. Only these can only make Muslims and Christian come closer to each other. Beside these conditions, the participants of dialogue should be clear about the meaning of dialogue. It is not a debate. Dialogue is a means to learn, i.e., change and grow in perception and understanding of reality.²¹

According to Prof. Dr. M. M. Dheen Muhammad,²² dialogue here does not mean doubt in the faith as in dictionary, but it means non-violence scientific method in comparative religions which was not known before except after the ascendant of the Holy Quran.

Previous religions or people do not find this method in their holy books or resources. Western people in the Medieval Age, or in the age of Islam never knew as the term of dialogue in their religious faith, nor do they do they believe it.²³ S. W. Ariarajah also points out that:

Dialogue by nature is a two-way traffic; those who insist and behave as though they are the only ones on the road are bound to meet with accidents and the purpose of dialogue will be lost.²⁴

These are some of the basic conditions for dialogue. If both sides follow these, then dialogue can be fruitful. Besides, Muslims and Christians should also overcome ignorance, bias and misunderstandings. Each community of faith should be encouraged to have an open mind towards other faiths. It should also get knowledge about it. Religions must be taught in the right manner. Both quantity and quality must be so that the learner can easily get true picture of that religion. For the Muslims, it is necessary to train the people in all fields of western knowledge. The Christians have highly qualified people who enter into dialogue. They have many Islamologists who are experts in matters of Islam.²⁵ On the other hand, Muslims have not only been far away from other religions, but have no real Muslim christia-

nologist. To have dialogue in its true sense, it is necessary to train the people, as communication necessarily needs to know how and what to communicate.

Conclusion

Dialogue can only be possible if the participants are open minded. They should not try to convert each other. Both Muslims and Christians should learn about each other's religion as much as possible. They should remain respectful to each other. The controversial issues must be avoided in dialogical discussions. Muslims should train their scholars in all fields of knowledge. The importance of any particular religion for its followers must be accepted. Only these conditions can lead to a fruitful dialogue. Islam is the religion that first of all started dialogue and taught the principles and conditions for it. It is obligatory for Muslims to prepare themselves according to Quranic teachings and propagate the message of Islam. It must be made clear that Islam is the only religion, which guarantees world peace, brotherhood, tolerance, human rights and religious harmony. It is undoubtedly a code of life for mankind.

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- ¹ John, Slomp (1932) had been a prominent figure among the Western Christian scholars who worked hard to promote relationship between the Muslims and Christians. He belonged to a Dutch reformed Church as a missionary. John Slomp was brought up as a missionary who would be able to serve the mission among the Muslims. He studied Islam and Arabic language and literature. After the early education, John Slomp chose Pakistan where he could propagate the Christian mission. He learnt the Urdu language and came to Pakistan in 1974 as a missionary. Here he joined a Church in Sahiwal and took great interest in the affairs and problems of local Christians. He got many chances to work with the other European ecumenical and dialogical organizations. The representative of the Christian Study Center "Al-Mushir" has published numerous articles of John Slomp. See, 'Alam-e- Islam and 'Isayyat', (January 1995), 29-30; See for more details of his life and missionary work: *Muslims and Christians in Europe: Breaking new grounds*, Ch: 3, (Netherland, 1993).
- ² Dayanadan Francis (ed.). *New Approaches to Inter-Faith Dialogue* (Sweden: The Church of Sweden Mission, 1972), 83-88.
- ³ Johan, O'Brien, was born in Ireland and studied science, education and theology. He worked as a teacher in Sierra Leone, as a community activist in inner city Dublin and has lectured on theology in many countries. He first came to Pakistan as a missionary in 1977 where he continues to live and work among marginalized minorities. His books include *Theology and the option for the poor* (Collegeville), *Seeds of a new Church* (Colombia) and *Naia Mashra Naia Insan* (Karachi), Urdu.
- ⁴ See, Johan, O'Brien, "Our presence to the world of Islam in Pakistan". In *Encounter*, (Documents for Muslim Christian understanding), (Italy, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Di Studi Arabi E D'Islamistica Viale Di Trastevere, 2004), 7-9.
- ⁵ Achilles De Souza, a Pakistani priest of the Archdiocese of Karachi, was born in Karachi in 1942. He holds a PhD from the Gregorian University (Rome) and his doctoral thesis was entitled "Mediation in Islam: an Investigation". For more than twenty years he has been teaching philosophy, Islamic studies and Christian-Muslim relations at Christ the King Seminary in Karachi.
- ⁶ De Souza, Achilles, "Dialogue in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan." In *Islam Christiana*, (Italy, Rome: Pontificio Istituto Di Studi Arabi E D'Islamistica, Vol. 4, 1988), 215-217; See also *The Christian Voice*, (Karachi: Vol. XVI, No.42, Sunday, October 1995).
- ⁷ See, *Focus*, (Multan: Pastoral Institute, Vol. 2, 1988), 102-103.
- ⁸ Ibid. (July 1997), 7.
- ⁹ See, *Focus*, (Multan: Pastoral Institute, vol. 3, 1988), 80-82.
- ¹⁰ See, *Alam-e-Islam ovr Esayait*, (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1995, (May 1997), 17.
- ¹¹ Dr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari (born 27 December 1932) is a scholar of Islamic Studies. He is the Director General of the Islamic Research Institute of the International Islamic University. Previously, he has also been the President of the International Islamic University Islamabad. He has published a number of books and articles, and has spoken at international conferences on Islamic Studies and inter-religious dialogue. Dr. Ansari obtained his M.A. and PhD from the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada in 1966. His main thesis for his PhD program was titled "The Early Development of Fiqh in Kufah with special reference to the works of Abu Yusuf and Shaybani".
- ¹² Von Denffer, Ahmad, *Some Reflections on Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, (UK, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1989), 18.
- ¹³ Dr. Khalid Alavi was an Ex-Director of Dawah Academy, International Islamic University, Islamabad
- ¹⁴ See, *Dawah* (monthly), (Islamabad: Dawah Academy, International Islamic University, July, 2005), 47.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 48.
- ¹⁶ See, *Dawah* (monthly), (Islamabad: Dawah Academy, International Islamic University, July, 2005), 48.
- ¹⁷ Taken an interview on 25th November, 2005, Islamabad.
- ¹⁸ Talbi, Muhammad, *Islam and Dialogue* (UK, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1997), 88.
- ¹⁹ See, *Inter-religious Documents 1: Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, Prepared by Maurice Borrmans, (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 31-32.
- ²⁰ W.M. Watt, *Islamic Revelation in the Modern World*, (Edinburgh, 1969), 121.
- ²¹ See, *Guidelines On Dialogue*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 8-9.
- ²² Prof. Dr. M. M. Dheen, Muhammad who was the head of Department of Comparative Religion in the Faculty of Islamic Studies (Usuluddin) IIU, Islamabad.
- ²³ Dheen Muhammad, "Min Manahij-il-Ulama-e-Muslimeen fi Dirasat-i-Adyan," In *Al-Howliya*, Al-Jamia Al-Islamia Al-Alamia, Islamabad: International Islamic University, Vol. 3, 1995), 93-94.
- ²⁴ Ariarajah, S. Wesley, "The understanding and Practice of Dialogue: Its Nature, Purpose and Variations." In *Faith the Midst of Faiths*, S. J. Samartha, ed., (Geneva; W. C. C., 1977), 54-56.
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A Statistical Analysis for Increasing Reward with Increasing Size of Jam'at

Ahmed F. Siddiqi

Abstract

The concept of jam'at is one of the most intrinsic concepts of the social edifice of Islam. The reward of a salaah, as enunciated by Holy Prophet (SAW) is multiplied by saying it in jama'at. There are sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) which can be made to show that the reward of a jama'at is a mathematical function of that of a salaah said individually. This paper is an attempt to find that function. It is being established here that this function is parabolic, with a very sharp slope in nature, and may be deduced to extrapolate the divine reward one may have by saying a salaah in jama'at, at one hand, and to appraise the increase in reward with the size of the jama'at. The same function also connects different, apparently conflicting sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) regarding the comparisons in this reward.

Keywords: Least Square, Reward for Salaah

1. Introduction

The concept of *jam'at*, congregation, is one of the basic and the most cited concepts in Islam. The Holy Quran ordains "...bow down your heads with those who bow down..."¹. The essential part of every obligatory prayer, *salaah*, called *fardh*, are said in *jama'at*. The whole Muslim body that can assemble in one place, both men and women, must gather at the appointed time, praise and glorify God, and address their petitions to Him as a single body. All people stand shoulder to shoulder in a row, or in several rows, as the case may be, their feet being in one line, and one person, chosen from among them, and called *Imam*, leads the *salaah*, and stands in front of all. Such a formation develops a unique social cohesiveness among the members of this formation. And perhaps, this social cohesiveness is the most important earthly reward of this *jam'at* which promotes connectedness in the community.

The *salaah* is one of the most important duties of a Muslim, after one has reached faith in one God and in Prophet Mohammad (SAW). It is the most special act of divine worship, which a Muslim is called upon to practice five times a day. There are numerous verses of the Holy Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet (SAW) enjoining the *salaah* on us. It has been described as the pillar and the foundation of the faith. *Salaah*, if offered with a sincere heart, proper devotion and mental concentration, is particularly vested with the property of cleansing the heart, reforming one's life and ridding it of sins and impurities. It generates love for piety and truth and promotes fear of God in man. It is further ordained that the bounties of *salaah* are multiplied when said in *jama'at*. The Holy Quran has clear verdict on the *jama'at*. The Prophet (SAW) was very particular about it; once while condemning the conduct of Muslims those who

avoided coming to the mosque to say their prayers in *jama'at* due to laziness or indifference, he observed with anger that he felt like burning down their homes.

There are several traditions in which the Prophet of Islam, Mohammad (SAW), dilated upon the value and rewards of *salaah*, especially *salaah* said in *jama'at* from different dimensions. Followings are a few of these holy sayings of the Prophet (SAW) comparing the reward of a *salaah* said individually and in *jam'at*;

1. Saying *salaah* in *jam'at* is better than saying individually. *Jam'at* of three is better than that of two and the liking of Allah increases with the size of *jam'at*.²
2. Two persons performing *salaah* together, with one as *imaam*, are liked by Allah more than four persons saying *salaah* individually; similarly, four persons performing *salaah* with *jama'at* (congregation) are liked by Allah more than eight persons saying it individually and (again) eight persons performing *salaah* with *jama'at* are liked by Allah more than one hundred persons saying it individually.³
3. Saying *salaah* in *jam'at* is 25 times more reward giving as compared to a *salaah* said individually in home and/or market place.⁴
4. *Salaah* in *jam'at* is 27 times more reward giving as compared to that in individual.⁵

All these holy sayings, bullet 1 to 4, show numerical comparisons between the *salaahs* said individually and in *jama'at*. The holy saying in bullet 1 show the liking of Allah for a *jama'at* as increased by increasing the size of *jama'at* from two persons to three. But it does not quantify the increase in this liking. The saying in bullet 2 discusses the value of reward, as a proxy of Allah's liking. It does quantify and show the details of the

arithmetic for the value of reward as increased with the size of the *jama'at*. The sayings in bullet 3 and 4 are again a comparison of the reward but without the details and seem to be in conflict with what is being said in bullet 2 and even in bullet 1. The conflict as it appears, or the difference in the numerals is quite perplexing, especially for staunch believers who cannot even think of any difference in the holy sayings. The religious literature of Muslim is silent in this regard. No academic research is available either. Qurashi⁶ opines however, that it is related, or specific, to higher sizes of the *jama'at* while discussing these sayings in the study of motivation.

Let's explore the arithmetic given in holy saying in bullet 2. In tabular form, the arithmetic is given in Table 1.

Table 1: The Value of Reward as Increased by the Size of the Jam'at				
Persons in Jam'at	1	2	4	8
Total	1	more than	more than	more than
Reward		4	8	100
Reward for Each Individual	1	more than $4/2=2$	more than $8/4=2$	more than $100/8=12.5$

The ratios in the last rows are not part of the holy saying and are deduced by dividing the total rewards by the number of participants of the *jama'at*. A graphical depiction of these statistics is given in Figure 1; where 1(a) in left panel shows the dynamics of the total reward of the *salaat* as the number of participants grow, while 1(b) gives the dynamics of the reward for each participant of the *salaat*. The value of the reward, in both cases, increases very sharply as the size of the *jama'at* grows. One may be curious to find the value of reward for other numbers of participants. The current article is an attempt in the same direction. It should be noted here that the attempt is mere by a mathematical deduction of the holy saying and not in any way an inductive interpretation. It is simply an effort to extrapolate the value and amount of reward for other higher sizes of the *jama'at*.

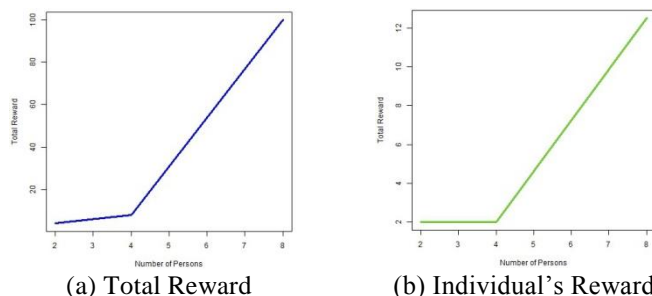


Figure 1: Graphical Depiction of the Hadith

So, the reward of the *salaat* in *jama'at* (congregation) is proportional to the reward of the *salaat* said individually. Mathematically, this proportionality may be written in the form of a function;

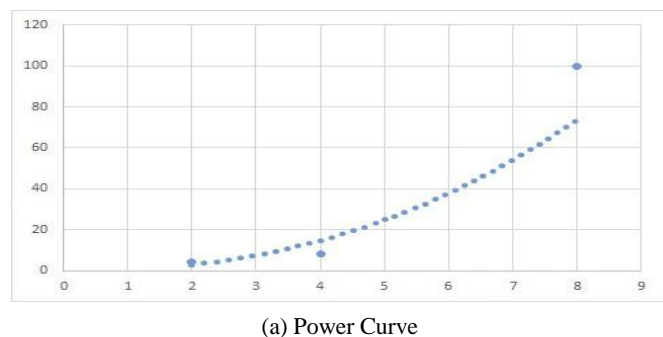
$$\text{Reward of } jam'at = f(\text{Reward of Individual } salaas) \quad (1)$$

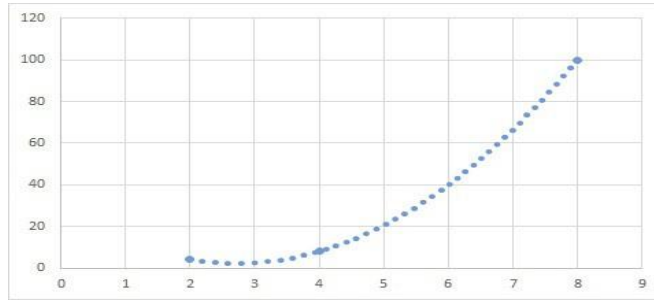
The form and the shape of this function f is interesting enough to forecast the value of reward for the whole *jama'at* and for the individual. The following sections suggests different approaches to mimic, in the first hand, the curve in the form of a mathematical function which may further be used to extrapolate, or forecast, the value of reward for any number of participants of the *jam'at*.

2. Exploring the Mathematical Function

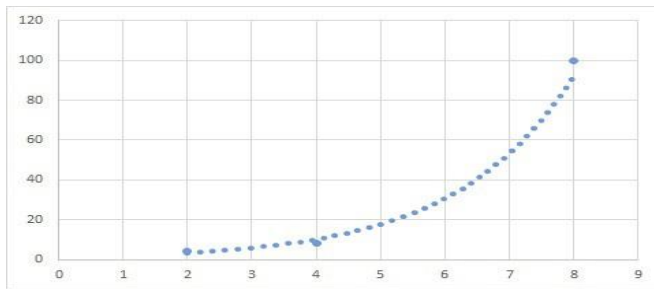
The saying of Holy Prophet (SAW) may be deduced into a value of total reward for the *jama'at* when the size of the *jama'at* increases continuously. Similarly, the value of the reward for each individual person in the *jama'at* may also be deduced.

Let's use the principle of least squares⁷ to fit an appropriate curve to the data which may be used to extrapolate or forecast the value of reward for any number of persons. Figure 1(a) suggests it either to be a parabolic, power or an exponential curve (and absolutely not linear) which may well represent the data. Figure 2 gives few choices for the possible curves for the data including power, parabolic and exponential curve. Figure 2 (a) is a power curve for the data in the *Hadith*. It appears to miss two data points which obliterate its representativeness. Figure 2(b) is a parabola and uses all the data points. The right most panel, Figure 2(c), shows an exponential curve which is also missing the last data point and which results in its lesser representativeness. Qurashi (1983) uses a power curve to derive formula for motivation, cooperation and achievement of a team. The parabolic curve, Fig. 2(b) seems to be more representative for the data.





(b) Parabolic Curve



(c) Exponential

Figure 2: Possible Curve Choices for the Data

Symbolizing the individualistic reward of each persons by p (with $p > 0$) and the value of reward (in terms of this individualistic reward) by r , the data can be composed into Table 2 for the application of the principle of least squares; The first two columns are simply a re-written form of the saying as columns in Table 1 while the rest of the columns are different products of these columns, as per the principles, to be used for the composition of normal equations.

The three normal equations are thus given by:

Table 2: Fitting a Parabola by Using Principle of Least Squares

P	R	PR	P ²	P ² R	P ³	P ⁴
2	4	8	14	16	8	16
4	8	32	16	128	64	256
8	100	800	64	6400	512	4096
Sum	14	112	84	6544	584	4368

$$112 = 3a + 14b + 54c$$

$$840 = 14a + 84b + 584c$$

$$6544 = 84a + 584b + 4368c$$

Solving these equations for the unknowns a , b , and c , using the method of matrices,

$$\begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \\ c \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 & 14 & 84 \\ 14 & 84 & 584 \\ 84 & 584 & 4368 \end{pmatrix}^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} 112 \\ 840 \\ 6544 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 28 \\ -19 \\ 3.5 \end{pmatrix}$$

So the parabolic equation, or the functional form of Eq. 1, turns out to be

$$r_t = 3.5p^2 - 19p + 28 \quad (2)$$

which shows that the reward of a *salaat* said in *jama'at* is exalted by a function, as defined in the right hand side of the Eq. 2. The same equation may also be used for extrapolation and forecasting. Table 3 shows the extrapolated values and how the size of the *jama'at* increases the value of the reward of the whole *salaat*. The first column of the table shows the size of the *jama'at* in terms of number of its participants while the second column shows the value of the reward in terms of individuals saying their *salaat* individually. For example, the reward of a *jama'at* said by 10 persons is more than $3.5 \times 10^2 - 19 \times 10 + 28 = 188$ times that of a *salaat* said by a single person. Similarly, the reward of the *jama'at* said by 100 persons is increased by 33,128 times than that said by a single person. The reward goes up exponentially.

Table 3: Extrapolated Values of the Reward

Size of Jam'at	Total Reward	Individual's Reward
5	20.5	3.3
10	188	23
15	530.5	64.6
20	1048	128
25	1740.5	213.3
30	2608	320.5
40	4868	600.5
50	7828	968
100	33128	4118

A similar analysis for the reward per person can also be deduced from the Holy saying. Figure 1(b) suggests again a parabolic curve for the data being the most representative curve mimicking the data in the holy saying. The method of least squares gives an equation for the value of reward per person.

The forecasting equation turns out to be

$$r_i = 0.4375p^2 - 2.625p + 5.5 \quad (3)$$

which shows that the value of the reward per person is given by a function on the right hand side of the Eq. 3. The same equation may also be used for forecasting.

The last column of the Table 3 shows how this equation may be used for different sizes of the *jama'at*. For example, the individual reward of each person in a *jama'at* of 15 persons is more than $0.4375 \times 15^2 - 2.625 \times 15 + 5.5 \approx 65$ times than that of a *salaat* said singularly.

The same table seems to be solving the confusion which arouses while reading holy sayings, in bullets 1 through 4, one after the other. The saying in bullet 2 goes up to 8 persons while the value of individual reward of each person in a *jama'at* of 10 persons is deduced to be more than 23 times that of a *salat* said singularly, as per column 2 of Table 3. And this is very near to what is being said in the sayings at bullet 3 and 4. So, there is no confusion in these sayings as bullet 2 talks in terms of total reward of the *jama'at* while the later two sayings talk in terms of individual's reward. In other words, the sayings at bullet 3 or 4 is/are a continuation of the saying in bullet 2.

A general view of these equations is shown in Figure 3, which is a graphical presentation of these two equations, Eq. 2 and 3, and shows how the holy saying in bullet 2 can be deduced to extrapolate the value of reward for different sizes of the *jama'at*. The left panel, 3(a), shows the extrapolation of the total reward with the size of *jama'at* while the right panel, 3(b), shows this extrapolation for the value of reward for each individual participant of the *jama'at*. An exponential curve with a very sharp slope is the characteristic feature of both of these figures which shows how rapidly the reward of a *jama'at* increases with the size of this *jama'at*.

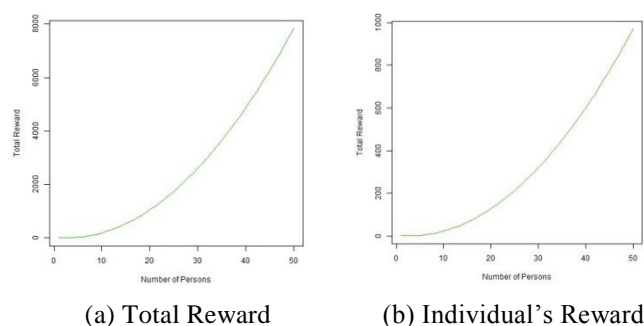


Figure 3: Forecasted Reward for Jam'at

3. Conclusion

The concept of *jama'at* is among the most important concepts in Islam. It has been ordained, in the Holy Quran, to "bow down heads (for salaas) with those who bow down." There have been many traditions and sayings of Holy Prophet (SAW) exalting the status of the *salaas* said in *jama'at*, in terms of its divine reward. Further, it has been told (by Holy Prophet (SAW)) that

the reward increases with the size of *jama'at*. However, these sayings portray apparently only a fragmented figure, especially when one wants to read them for the relationship between the value of reward and the size of the *jama'at*. Further, different sayings seem to be at odds with each other. It has been attempted in this paper to make deductions and extrapolate the value of this divine reward and connect these, seemingly different and conflicting, sayings to complete the picture.

It has been derived here that the relationship between the reward of a *salaas* said in *jama'at* and the size of the *jama'at* is parabolic, as narrated by the Holy Prophet (SAW), in nature. This parabolic function can thus be used to deduce and extrapolate the value of reward for different sizes of the *jama'at*. The same parabolic function connects different apparently conflicting sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW)

It should be kept here in the mind that the analysis presented here is simply a deduction of the saying of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the actual reward of the *salaas*, either said singularly or in congregation, is known only to Allah, (SWT), who may exalt the reward many times higher than the figures deduced here.

References and End Notes

- ¹ Quran, 02:243; And be steadfast in prayer; Practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship).
- ² Imam Abu Dawood Sulaiman b Ash'ath, *Sunan Abi Dawood*, chapter 02, "Prayer" Hadith numb, 2554.
- ³ Ahmad bin 'Amr al Bazzar and Sulaiman b Ahmad al Tabrani, *Musnad of Imam Bazzar and Tabarani*, 1352; Ali ibn Abu Bakr al-Haythami, *Majma al-Zawa'id*, Mu'assasah al-Ma'arif, Beirut
- ⁴ Muhammad bin Ismail al Bukhari, *Sahih Bukhari*, 8466.
- ⁵ Muslim ibn-e-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, 1477.
- ⁶ M. *Qurashi*, "A Statistical Analysis of Motivation, Cooperation & achievement- part iv Formula for increase of value/reward with increasing size of *jama'at*/congregation, vis-a-vis mutual interaction". *Science & Technology in the Islamic World*, vol 1, no. 4 (1983):227-235.
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The Concept of the 'Evil' and the 'Evil Eye' in Islam and Islamic Faith-Healing Traditions

Azher Hameed Qamar

Abstract

Evil is a power that may possess a human to commit sins. Evil is all negative, conflicting and opposing to the all positive 'good'. Religious descriptions of evil and good often relate it to the opposing forces led by the Devil and God respectively where human is weak and vulnerable. Arrogance and envy are two satanic traits that occupy human nature to deviate him from the 'good'. Islam describes a variety of evil acts that cause destruction, disobedience, tyranny and hopelessness in human societies. According to Islamic traditions, arrogance and envy are satanic obsessions. The evil eye is one of the evils triggered by envious self of the human under the influence of the Evil (Satan). Humans, under the obsession of this evil, may bring harm to their fellow men, intentionally or unintentionally. Since health and prosperity is valuable for survival, the evil eye can destroy them. Humans can overcome these obsessions only with the blessing of God and invoking their innate righteousness. Humans can protect themselves from the harmful and destructive effects of the evil eye, if they trust in God and seek His refuge. Islam emphasizes the Quran having healing and protective powers, and recommends following the Islamic traditions set by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and advised in Quran to gain protection and cure.

Keywords: Evil, Evil Eye, Religion, Islam

Introduction

The definition of 'evil' varies across cultures and religions but a general understanding of the concept 'evil' is "something/someone that brings harm". Synonyms of the word 'evil' in several dictionaries describe it as "wicked, malevolent, sinful, malicious, criminal, immoral, harmful, and damaging". 'Evil' as all negative gives meaning to the 'good' as all positive. Since health and prosperity are two valuable aspects of a peaceful human society, any harm or damage to these two aspects can bring disaster and despair. Religious beliefs hold a special place in societies where faith-healing is popular. The belief in the power of evil working and affecting the objects it falls on is universal and rooted in prehistoric times¹. Religions that influence majority of the world population define evil and evil practices in their respective human-God, human-devil and God-devil relationships. Almost all religions have a consensus on the power of the evil that occupies humans to influence other creations. The 'evil eye' is one of the distinct forms of evil related to the belief that a glance may have powers to inflict injury, harm and even death upon whom it falls. Religion, as an important part of culture, describes the working of the evil eye, its effects and recommends preventive and curative measures. Islam is the second major religion of the world after Christianity. Islamic education and information is primarily based on the holy book Quran and *Sahi Ahadith*, an authentic record of the words and

deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)². To explain the Islamic perspective on the belief in the evil eye and recommended preventive and healing measures, I selected the most authentic collections of *ahadith* (Sahi Bukhari, Sahi Muslim, and Sunan Abu-Dawood) and famous Quran translation (The Noble Quran) and interpretation (Ibn Kathir). Since I used Arabic/ Urdu version of *ahadith* collection, for English translation, I used online source www.sunnah.com. To provide a better understanding of the content described in this section, I interviewed (telephonic interviews) three religious scholars from India and Pakistan about the evil eye and Islamic protection and healing. Authentic Islamic sources confirm the power of the evil eye that, initiated by Satan, may overcome human beings if not encountered by seeking protection of Almighty God. The fertility of the evil eye lies in the exploitation of human weaknesses (like jealousy, evil suspicions and greed) by Satan. Islamic traditions describe the harmful influences of the evil eye and recommended protection and cure.

Discussion

Belief is "a state of mind that embodies trust and confidence in something"³. Human beings attain this state of mind from the belief systems to which they belong. The belief system guides them to understand the abstract and mysterious concepts related to their life in all aspects. Islam, as a belief system, describes the vulner-

ability of the human in his/her mortal surroundings, the power that evil (satan) exercises on him/her to bring harm, and the methods to seek Divine (God) protection. The evil targets health and prosperity to disturb peace and harmony and cultivate disbelief (in God). A believer, who is firm in his/her faith, invokes blessing of Almighty God to fight against the evil. The Quran describes the story of Prophet Ayyub (Job) (AS) who invoked God's blessing in these words;

And remember Our servant Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship (by ruining my health) and torment (by ruining my wealth)."⁴

Before discussing the evil eye belief in Islamic traditions, a description of evil' as depicted in Islamic sources of knowledge will explain the evil eye belief in Islam.

The 'Evil', as depicted in Islamic Sources of Knowledge

According to Miller⁵, The Quran gives 43 different terms for evil and sin. He specifically mentions seven words describing evil;

Evil – shame, vice and wickedness

Darkness – ignorance, failure to acknowledge the Almighty and turn to Him

Wrong-doing – wrong action resulting from unbelief and nonacceptance of God

Error – intentional, deliberate sins

Offence – wrong attitude to others and injustice

Disobedience – breaking God's command, being unrighteous

Transgression – breaking social laws, crossing limits set by God

The Quran describes several acts as evildoing; polytheism, unbelief, hypocrisy, and arrogance are the greatest ones. The actions that result in disobedience to God, cruelty, hatred, injustice, selfishness, greed, violence and disharmony in the society are evil acts⁶. Evil is a satanic plan that he uses to encourage human beings to do what Allah Almighty has forbidden. God declares Satan an open enemy of human-beings⁷ and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) mentioned Satan too close to hold a human-being that he said, "Satan runs in the body of Adam's son (The Man) as his blood circulates in it"⁸. It means that Satan holds the power of the evil' that humans cannot overcome without seeking refuge from God Almighty and following His commandments. The

Quran comments several evil doings that Satan inspired humans to do, for example;

[*Shaitan* (Satan)] commands you only what is evil and *Fahsha* (sinful), and that you should say against Allah what you know not.⁹

Why do not the rabbis and the religious learned men forbid them from uttering sinful words and from eating illegal things? Evil indeed is that which they have been performing.¹⁰

Give full measure and weight in justice and reduce not the things that are due to the people, and do not commit mischief in the land, causing corruption.¹¹

And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a *Fahishah* [i.e. anything that transgresses its limits (a great sin)], and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him).¹²

Shaitan (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah.¹³

Another important aspect of the power of evil in Islamic sources of knowledge is its limitation when compared to the power of good. Satan may provoke evil in many ways, but he does not hold powers to control natural phenomenon (usually named as natural evils); thus natural destructions (like floods, earthquakes, storms) are not natural evils controlled by an evil authority. The Quran describes these natural destructive powers controlled by God either as a test to mankind or a punishment for their wrong doings;

No calamity befalls, but with the Leave [i.e. decision and *Qadar* (Divine Preordainments)] of Allah.¹⁴

And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to *As-Sabirin* (the patient ones, etc.).¹⁵

And We tried them with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) in order that they might turn (to Allah's Obedience).¹⁶

Verily, We sent against them a violent storm of stones (which destroyed them all), except the family of Lout (Prophet Lot).¹⁷

And when they were seized with a violent earthquake, he (Moses) said: "O my Lord, if it had been Your Will, You could have destroyed them and me before; would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? It is only Your Trial by which You lead astray whom You will, and keep guided whom You will."¹⁸

Islam considers Man weak and vulnerable against the power of the evil that Satan holds and practices to ex-

plot human weaknesses against God unless Man does not recognize God, the most powerful and seek His protection and forgiveness.¹⁹ Man has divine knowledge of the good and evil, and a free will to choose between the two paths. This worldly life is a test of how Man practices his free will, either in obedience of the Creator or following the evil.

Verily, We have created man from *Nutfah* drops of mixed semen (discharge of man and woman), in order to try him, so We made him hearer, seer. Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.²⁰

And shown him the two ways (good and evil).²¹

He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him.²²

There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path.²³

Hence, Man can distinguish between evil and good with his/her innate knowledge. In the story of Adam and Eve, The Quran describes arrogance and envy as two hostile evils. When God created Adam and asked the angels to prostrate to him, only Iblis refused because of his arrogance and envy. God declared him as Satan, the evil, the humiliated and disgraced one.

And surely, We created you (your father Adam) and then gave you shape (the noble shape of a human being); then We told the angels, "Prostrate yourselves to Adam", and they prostrated themselves, except Iblis (Satan), he refused to be of those who prostrated themselves. (Allah) said: "What prevented you (O Iblis) that you did not prostrate yourself, when I commanded you?" Iblis said: "I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay." (Allah) said: "(O Iblis) get down from this (Paradise); it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced."²⁴

Satan, in arrogance and jealousy, vowed to lead astray human beings from the right path and plant evil in their hearts and lives in every way.²⁵ He claimed that a majority of human beings will disobey God and follow the evil way. Then God declared Hell for those who will follow Satan and engage themselves in evil doings.

(Iblis) said: "Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your Straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You)." (Allah) said (to Iblis): "Get out from this (Paradise), disgraced and expelled. Whoever of

them (mankind) will follow you, then surely I will fill Hell with you all."²⁶

Satan committed jealousy and arrogance. After being disgraced and cursed, he showed his intention to use these evils as powerful weapons against Man. He uses these weapons to spread distrust and insecurity among humans, consequently destroying peace and patience. Hence, jealousy and arrogance are those powerful satanic instincts that Satan uses to take revenge from Man for the loss of that exalted position that Man holds and Satan has lost.

The 'Evil Eye'

The 'evil eye', one of the popular and common beliefs (like sorcery), is a distinct form of evil associated with the belief that a glance may have powers to inflict injury, harm and even death to those upon whom it falls. The immediate effects the evil eye may cause range from misfortune to serious diseases leading to death. Children, being weak and vulnerable, are at serious risk. Mothers, before and after childbirth, are also easy victims. Problems during pregnancy, infertility, abortion, birthmarks on the child, dried breasts are common effects supposedly caused by the evil eye.²⁷ The belief in the evil eye is a belief in the power of envy and jealousy that can mysteriously cause harm and destruction leading despair and hopelessness in Man. Similarities in the fear of the evil eye and presence of a particular word for this belief in many languages make the concept universal. The belief in the evil eye as a destructive power triggered by envy is prehistoric and widespread across cultures.²⁸

The 'Evil Eye' in Scriptures

Looking into major religions in the world, Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and Hinduism confirm the evil eye belief. In Hinduism, the evil eye (*Drishti* in Sanskrit) is rooted in jealousy and most of the harms are caused by it. Children (at birth and in puberty) are particularly vulnerable²⁹. In one of the myths, the goddess *Parvati* (mother of elephant-headed god *Ganesha*), brought her new born son to god *Shani*, whose evil glance burnt the *Ganesha*'s head and then god *Vishnu* replaced the burnt head with that of an elephant head³⁰. Another tradition is that probably the Hindu belief in the evil eye has been derived from the third eye of god *Shiva* who can destroy the whole universe with a single glance.³¹ There are hymns and charms in Vedas to get cure and protection against the evil eye. For example, "The evil eye of the hostile-minded, and the evil-doer I have approached. Do thou, O thousand-eyed one, watchfully destroy these! A ref-

uge art thou, O *gangida*.”³²

In Abrahamic religions, there are references in earliest Jewish texts describing the evil eye (*ayin hara* in Hebrew) as a result of envy and jealousy. Ulmer, referring to rabbinic literature, describes evil eye as “a value concept in which a person’s ethical behaviour is concentrated. In other instances, the evil eye is a concept of power that enabled people to affect their surroundings.”³³ Rabbis describe good eye (*ayin tova*) belonging to a humble spirit and the evil eye (*ayin hara*) as an arrogant and envious spirit.³⁴ Two examples from the Jewish text verify this belief in Judaism. First, Sarah gives Hagar an *Ayin Hara*, causing her to miscarry her first pregnancy. Second, Yaakov warns his sons not to be seen together so as not to incur *Ayin Hara*.³⁵ The Bible describes ‘evil eye’ as one of the evils and dark side of human nature that occurs because of envy and corrupts a man.³⁶ Aquaro in his book ‘Death by Envy: The Evil Eye and Envy in the Christian Tradition’ quotes old and new testaments to explain the envy and the evil eye relationship.³⁷

The ‘Evil Eye’ Belief in Islamic Traditions

Before giving Islamic perspective on the evil eye, I shall give a brief note about the Islamic birth rituals that Muslim parents perform to keep the devil and evil away from the child. According to *hadith*, Satan tries to influence with his evil even before the fetus is conceived. Therefore, on the wedding night before establishing a relation with the wife, a Muslim should say;

“O Allah! Protect us from the mischief of Satan and keep Satan away from the children You grant us.”³⁸

Similarly, when a child is born, Satan touches the child on both sides (except Jesus, the son of Mary. Satan failed to touch him).³⁹ Therefore, when a child is born, calling *Adhan* (Islamic call for prayer) in the ears of the newborn is the first birth ritual that is desirable to perform. The baby hears *Adhan*, the first words as a confirmation of *Tauheed* (oneness of God) and it keeps Satan away who tries to harm or influence the human since the beginning of life. Then *Aqiqah*, sacrifice of a goat in the name of Allah⁴⁰ and *Sadaqa* (charity) are two rituals that remove calamities and sufferings and an expression of thankfulness to Allah.

Islamic sources of knowledge reveal the evil eye is a reality. Islam considers envy and jealousy as satanic tactics that he uses to plant evil in the hearts of the people against each other. Later it stimulates the evil eye to cause harm. This is also evident from the Quran (as described earlier) that Satan himself was envious and jealous of Man (Adam) when God ordered angels

to prostrate to Adam.⁴¹ When God expelled Satan disgracefully from paradise, Satan vowed to lead the human beings from the right path in all possible ways. Jealousy is the first sin that was committed in heaven and also the first one committed on earth. Iblis was jealous of Adam in heaven, and the latter's son Qabil (Cane) was jealous of his brother Habil (Abel) on earth.⁴² Hence, envy and jealousy are the satanic obsessions that overcome humans and *jinn* (supernatural creatures) and result in bringing harm to someone. Satan instigates human and *jinn* to make evil suggestions. Last two chapters of the Holy Quran (chapter 113 and 114) contain prayers for believers to seek refuge with God Almighty from all the evils that Satan instigates; the evil of envious ones and the evil whisperings of Satan.

Say: “I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of the daybreak, From the evil of what He has created; And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or goes away). And from the evil of the witchcrafts when they blow in the knots, and from the evil of the envier when he envies.” Say: “I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind, The King of mankind, The Ilah (God) of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one's heart after one remembers Allah),...who whispers in the breasts of mankind, Of jinns and men.”⁴³

The Quran narrates the danger of being envious and jealous on different occasions. For example, jealousy was the cause of the first murder on earth. In the story of Habil and Qabil, Qabil because of jealousy, murdered Habil.⁴⁴ Another example is the story of Yousaf (Joseph). When Yousaf told his father Yaqoob (Jacob) about the dream he saw (the dream about his prophethood), Yaqoob forbade Yousaf to describe his dream to his brothers, so that Satan may not inspire them to get envious to harm Yousaf⁴⁵. Similarly, when Yousaf invited his brothers to visit Egypt, Yaqoob advised them to enter one by one from different doors to the palace⁴⁶. Yaqoob feared that the people might affect his eleven handsome and good-looking sons with the evil eye.⁴⁷ Another verse directly addresses to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) informing him about the evil eye that nonbelievers try to cast at him due to their extreme jealousy and hatred (Ibn Kathir, 2003);

“And verily, those who disbelieve would almost make you slip with their eyes through hatredness when they hear the Reminder (the Quran)”⁴⁸

The Quran illustrates envy and jealousy as evils that

may overcome human beings be harmful for others. There are prayers in the Quran and *Ahadith* to seek refuge with Allah Almighty from the satanic tactics that attack the hearts of the people to corrupt them (e.g. evil whispers in the heart).

And if an evil whisper comes to you from *Shaitan* (Satan) then seek refuge with Allah.⁴⁹

And say: "My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the *Shayatin* (devils).⁵⁰

And if an evil whisper from *Shaitan* (Satan) tries to turn you away (O Muhammad) (from doing good, etc.), then seek refuge in Allah.⁵¹

A verse from the Quran⁵² is a worldwide spoken Islamic phrase (i.e. *Masha Allah*) used to appreciate or praise anything or anyone. The Muslims believe that saying *Masha Allah* (whatever Allah wills, will come to pass) protects from the evil eye⁵³. Other prayers, recommended by the Prophet (SAW) that Muslims should say while looking or touching someone/something for appreciation or praise are; "O Allah! Bless him" or "May Allah blesses him/it".⁵⁴

Ahadith strongly establish the concept of the evil eye as a reality. Different authentic books of *ahadith* prove it as an agreed reality in all Islamic schools of thought. Authentic *ahadith* confirm the effect of the evil eye as a fact⁵⁵. Umm Salama reported that Allah's Messenger saw a girl whose face had black spots. He said, "She is under the effect of an evil eye; so treat her with a *ruqya* (incantation from Quran)."⁵⁶ *Ahadith* describe the severity of the evil eye so much that "if anything would precede the destiny it would be the influence of an evil eye."⁵⁷ Therefore, the evil eye can bring serious harm to anything or anyone. Generally, it attacks the health of the valuable living beings (for example, crops, domestic animals, human beings). Prophet Muhammad (SAW) advised specific prayers to seek refuge with Allah against the evil eye, and to do *ruqya* (incantation from the Quran) to cure the evil influences.

Protection and Cure against the Evil Eye in Islam

Before Islam, Arabs used figures of animals, men and gods as amulets to protect themselves, but after converting to a monotheistic religion they abandoned this practice. In Islam, treatment of harmful influences of the evil eye is based on the concept of *Tauheed* (Monotheism – Oneness of God) and *Tawakkul* (trust in one God only). The Quran says;

And whosoever puts his trust in Allâh, then He will suffice him.⁵⁸

Put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed.⁵⁹ Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us).⁶⁰ And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them⁶¹.

Therefore, following *Tauheed* and *Tawakkul*, Muslims believe that the book of God has ultimate protective and healing powers. The Quran says;

And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.⁶² And We sent down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers⁶³.

In addition to *Sadaqa* (giving charity or goat sacrificing), the prayers stated in Quran and *Ahadith* are used as incantation (*rukya*) or writing amulets (*tawiz*) for protection and cure against the evil eye. The most basic of all these treatments is to trust in one God and seek refuge with Him from all evils.

Seeking Refuge with Allah

Seeking refuge with Allah is the most important aspect of Islamic traditions to fight against all evils. As evils come from Satan, possess powers over human and *jinn* (supernatural creatures), seeking refuge with Allah protects from the harmful influences of witchcraft, evil, eye etc., whether they are from human or *jinn*. This tradition also indicates that any prayer recited or practiced in any way to seek refuge with other than Allah Almighty (The One) is *Haram* (unlawful in Islam). Following are some of the prayers narrated in *Ahadith* that describe Islamic way of seeking refuge against evils.

The Prophet (SAW) used to seek refuge with Allah (declaring it deed of Abraham) for his grandsons Hassan and Hussain and prayed in these words: "O Allah! I seek Refuge with Your Perfect Words from every devil and from poisonous pests and from every evil, harmful, envious eye"⁶⁴. When the Prophet (SAW) fell ill, Gabriel recited these verses. "In the name of Allah. He may cure you from all kinds of illness and safeguard you from the evil of a jealous one when he feels jealous and from the evil influence of eye."⁶⁵

Seeking refuge with Allah gives a powerful feeling of security that acts like a psychological shield. The last two chapters of the Holy Quran (as mentioned earlier) are specific prayers to seek refuge with Allah against sickness, satanic obsession, witchcraft, envy and jealousy. Many *Ahadith* report these two chapters (known as *al-Mu'awwidhatayn*) as the best protection and cure.⁶⁶ These two chapters specifically describe the dangers of darkness of ignorance and evil, magic and witchcraft, and evil thoughts and desires that destroy.⁶⁷

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used to recite and do *rukya* with last three chapters of the Quran when he fell ill.

Doing *Rukya* (protection and cure against the evil eye)

Rukya means to recite prayers (described in Quran and authentic *Ahadith*) as incantation. Many *Ahadith* report the use of incantation (*rukya*) for cure and protection against diseases, poison, and the evil eye. Ayesha (wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW) reported that Allah's Messenger commanded the use of incantation for curing the influence of an evil eye and Anas reported that Allah's Messenger granted him sanction to use incantation (as a cure) for the influence of the evil eye.⁶⁸ How to do *rukya*? Following hadith narrated by Ayesha describes *rukya* as an Islamic healing method;

Whenever Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) became sick, he would recite *Mu'awwidhat* (*Surat Al-Falaq* and *Surat An-Nas*) and then blow his breath over his body. When he became seriously ill, I used to recite (last two chapters from Quran) and rub his hands over his body hoping for its blessings.

Whenever the Prophet (SAW) went to bed every night, he used to cup his hands together and blow over it after reciting *Surat Al-Ikhlās*, *Surat Al-Falaq* and *Surat An-Nas* (last three chapters in Quran), and then rub his hands over whatever parts of his body he was able to rub, starting with his head, face and front of his body. He used to do that three times.⁶⁹

Therefore, recitation of certain verses from the Holy Quran and prayers mentioned in Sahi *Ahadith* and blowing it on the child, generally three times, is the most common and agreed upon Islamic healing method. *Rukya* can also be done on water, and the effected person can drink that water. As children are vulnerable, the parents should know this method and do it themselves. They can take the child to some religious teacher⁷⁰ or pious man to do *rukya*.⁷¹

***Sadaqa* (something given as charity)**

Sadaqa is a charity in the name of Allah. Money, goods, or even an animal can be slaughtered as *sadaqa*. It is believed that *Sadaqa* removes calamities and suffering.

Sadaqa is a charity in the name of Allah. *Sadaqa* is not obligatory (like *Zakat*, a religious obligatory tax on well-to-do Muslims), yet it is highly desirable according to Quran and Sunnah. Giving *sadaqa* for children and ourselves protects us from worldly sufferings and loss. Therefore, if there is any problem with the child

for any reason, parents should give *sadaqa*. *Sadaqa* is to give something (goods, food, clothes) in the name of Allah to needy or poor around you or to sacrifice an animal and divide meat among the poor people. Amount and object for *sadaqa* depends on what one can afford.⁷²

Sadaqa is a valued virtue in Islam. It protects from the evil influences, sufferings, loss and calamities. Anyhow there are some traditional ways to give *sadaqa* that may be questioned if they are Islamic. Putting these questions to the scholars, they describe clearly the Islamic way to give *sadaqa*.⁷³

Q. Some people feed the birds in the parks or on the roads or free the caged birds as an act of *sadaqa*. Is it Islamic?

A. To free the caged birds, it is a *sadqa* as you are letting the birds free in their natural environment where they belong. But so far to feed the birds as *sadaqa* is concerned; it is good only if you have not any human around you who is hungry or needy.

Q. Some people take *sadqa* money or other things to some shrine and distribute it to the poor. Is it good?

A. It depends on the intention. If they are giving *sadaqa* paying reverence to someone (saints, prophets, angels etc) other than Allah, it is strictly forbidden, as it is *shirk* (polytheism) contrary to *Tauheed* and *Tawakal*.

Further, scholars mention three fundamental aspects of *sadaqa*;

- It is in the name of Allah.
- *Sadqa* is a charity that must be given to the needy and poor.
- *Sadqa* is given from the *halal* (Islamically legal) source of income.

In addition, praying to Allah for forgiveness is a virtue that wards off evils and protects the person from sin and loss.

***Tawiz* (Talisman – Amulets)**

Using *tawiz* (amulet) is another religious healing tradition to seek protection and cure against the evil eye. An amulet writer writes Quranic prayers on a piece of paper or a tablet to invoke divine powers. *Tawiz* or talisman (amulets) is a pouch (normally made of leather, cloth or some metal) containing prayers written on a piece of paper. This pouch is hanged in a string (usually black), and the effected person wears it around the neck or ties it on the arm. People using *tawiz*, believe that it has powers to protect and cure against diseases, sufferings and misfortunes. Although a group of the Muslim scholars does not agree with this healing tradition as Islamic, in the majority of Muslim world (for

example Muslims of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), wearing *tawiz* is a common practice to seek protection against the evil, harm and destruction. There is a significant number of scholars who agree on using *tawiz* for protection and healing, but belief in *tawiz* as a source to invoke Allah's mercy and blessing is debated. In Islam, *tawiz* does not have powers in itself. Religious scholars have different opinions about writing and using a *tawiz* for protection or cure. There are two important points I will discuss here. First, the Islamic way of writing *tawiz* and second the difference of opinion regarding its use.

An Islamic *Tawiz*

Tawiz must include verses from the Holy Quran and the prayers mentioned in authentic *Ahadith*. An Islamic healer can write a *tawiz* only in Arabic language. My discussion with religious scholars concludes that a *tawiz* is Islamic only if;

- It is written from the Quran and the prayers mentioned in authentic *Ahadith*.
- They are in Arabic only. (Some religious healers write Arabic *abjad*⁷⁴ numerals of the verses, scholars differ on using Arabic *abjad* instead verses)
- *Tawiz* should not consist of anything that is *Kufr* (disbelief) or *Shirk* (idolatry or polytheism).
- The user and the *tawiz* witer must believe that only Allah holds the powers to protect and cure. *Tawiz* is just a source to get Allah's blessing through prayers.
- *Tawiz* must be used with respect and honour as it contains verses from the Quran and *Ahadith*. Therefore, *tawiz* must not be hanged or tied on legs or feet, etc.

Using *Tawiz*, Islamic or Not

The scholars have slightly different opinion about using *tawiz* but the common opinion is that use of an Islamic *Tawiz* is not *haram* (forbidden), although no authentic *hadith* confirms it as a practice done by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). There are oral traditions that describe some of the companions who used or advised the use of *tawiz*, but there are also *ahadith* that forbid wearing strings or amulets round the neck to ward off the evil eye⁷⁵. Scholars commented on these *ahadith* and described forbidden *tawiz* or *rukya* that was not written or recited according to the Quran. Instead, Arabs adopted them as pre-Islamic traditions based on *Shirk*. The argument is convincing because in one of the *ahadith*, there is an assurance for paradise for those who do not practice *rukya*.⁷⁶ But (as mentioned earlier), Prophet Muhammad (SAW) practiced and advised

rukya and according to a *hadith*,⁷⁷ he allowed *rukya* provided that they did not contain the words of *Shirk*. It means, there were forms of *tawiz* or *rukya* that were not Islamic and some people adopted them as pre-Islamic tradition. For example, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) ordered to break the strings or necklace that the people used to hang around the camel's neck to ward off the evil eye⁷⁸. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) prohibited all pre-Islamic traditions that were based on *Shirk*. He asked to seek refuge with Allah with the help of the Holy Quran while firmly believing in *Tauheed* and *Tawakal*.

After fulfilling the Islamic requirements for an Islamic *Tawiz*, the difference of opinion among scholars is regarding the preference of the Islamic protective and curative measures to ward off the evil eye. Scholars accept *rukya* and *sadaqa* as the most authentic way of protection and cure against diseases and evil influences. About using *tawiz*, one of the scholars said;

It is not *Sunnah* (sayings and life of Muhammad); therefore we should avoid it because if it might be something preferable then it would be in practice by the holy Prophet along with *rukya* and *sadaqa*. But as an Islamic *Tawiz* has Qura'nic verses, therefore is not *haram*. Anyhow hanging beads, wearing stones or other kind of amulets with a belief that they contain powers is *haram*.⁷⁹

Other two scholars believe the Holy Prophet's (SAW) companions used or advised *tawiz*; therefore *tawiz* is also an effective cure and can be used along with *rukya* and *sadaqa*. *Tawiz* can be hanged around the neck or arm. Al-Jawzīyah (2003) also reported some traditions that described the healing power of a *tawiz* when soaked in water to drink that water later. While *tawiz* with Quranic prayers is Islamic according to scholars, its use seems more traditional. People soak it in water (to drink or sprinkle around later), wrap it in leather or silver, hang it in blue or black thread or wear a metal amulet with Quranic verses written on it. Nevertheless, after Quranic incantation (*rukya*) and charity (*sadaqa*), Islamic amulet (*tawiz*) is a popular healing and protective method against evil eye practiced in Muslim societies.

Islamic faith healing purifies the soul and spiritually heals the body. They strengthen the firm trust in God and promote virtuous deeds (in the form of *sadaqa*) to counter the evil forces.

Conclusion

Islamic philosophy about the evil describes all evils from Satan who after being cursed vowed to lead the evils in the world. On the other hand, Man who is born with weaknesses but God granted him/her with innate knowledge of good and evil to practice free will accordingly. Arrogance and jealousy are the diseases of the heart that spread like cancer when taken up by Satan. He exploits the human weaknesses and thus overcomes the human negative energies. Human-self (*Nafs*) is inclined to evil.⁸⁰ Man under the influence of evil forces deviates from his innate good and chooses the wrong path. The evil eye is a kind of negative energy that emits from the human envious self and may affect others harmfully. The universality of the evil eye belief and the way different religions and cultures constitute it, make it hard to declare it a mere superstition. Today, this belief may not be justified scientifically, but as all the religions believe in good and evil as two opposing powers, they also believe that 'mysterious' does exist and it is beyond human powers. Islam, in this respect, identifies human as a weak creature occupied with 'desires' but also the best of creation blessed with knowledge and wisdom to recognize Almighty God and win over the evil by turning to his Lord. To maintain peace in human societies, Islam discourages arrogance and envy and promotes humility and goodwill. The protective and curative tactics against the evil eye, as advised in Islamic traditions, indicates two fundamental components of the basic Islamic philosophy; first, *Tauheed*, i.e., none has the right to be worshipped but He (the One God), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists⁸¹ and second, *Tawakal*, i.e., Allah is sufficient, and when Allah helps, none can overcome.⁸²

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² Peace be upon him

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⁹ al-Baqara, 2:169

¹⁰ al-Ma'idah, 5:63

¹¹ Hud, 11:85

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¹³ Al-Ma'idah, 05:91

¹⁴ At-Taghabun 64:11

¹⁵ al-Baqara, 02:155

¹⁶ al- 'Araf, 07:168

¹⁷ Al-Qamar, 54:34

¹⁸ Al-A'raf, 07:155

¹⁹ An-Nisa, 04:28

²⁰ Al-Insan, 76:2-3

²¹ Al-Balad, 90:10

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²³ Al-Baqarah, 2:256

²⁴ Al-A'raf 07:11-13

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- ⁴⁴And (O Muhammad) recite to them (the Jews) the story of the two sons of Adam [Habil (Abel) and Qabil (Cain)] in truth; when each offered a sacrifice (to Allah), it was accepted from the one but not from the other. The latter said to the former: "I will surely kill you." The former said: "Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are Al-Muttaqun (the pious)". (Al-Ma'idah, 5:27)
- ⁴⁵He (the father) said: "O my son! Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they arrange a plot against you. Verily! Shaitan (Satan) is to man an open enemy!" (Yusuf, 12:5)
- ⁴⁶And he said: "O my sons! Do not enter by one gate, but enter by different gates, and I cannot avail you against Allah at all. Verily! The decision rests only with Allah. In Him, I put my trust and let all those that trust, put their trust in Him." (Yusuf, 12:67)
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Taubat-un-NasooH: Religious implications among families of 19th century Ashrafia of colonial India

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Abstract

NasooH starts the discussion on religious matters as is the trend in traditional Muslim families of Ashraf. His way of thinking had already seen a sea change. The reason behind this mental transformation is his dream, but after observing the spoiled ways of his home he did not mention these religious issues in front of his siblings. The character of NasooH as the head of the family of Ashrafia, represented the conventional school of thought. Nazir Ahmed highlighted the socio-political circumstances of Ashrafia and their religious state of mind, doubts and misunderstanding of the youth of the Ashrafia about religion in those times.

Keywords: Colonial India, Conventional and Liberal Ashrafia, Religious

Introduction

Novel *Taubat-un-NasooH* (The Penitence of NasooH, 1877)¹ not only has a symbolic religious theme but also represents the highly cultured society of Delhi during the nineteenth century, in the context of the tussle between conventional and liberal *Ashrafia*. The character of NasooH represents the *conventional* element while the character of Kaleem is reflective of the liberal stream among the *Ashrafia*. Nazir Ahmed depicts the evil of bad upbringing of children and shows the necessity of careful training and discipline in early years.² The ensuing conflict between NasooH and Kaleem is a contradiction between two tendencies or two attitudes in the collective character of the north Indian Muslims. The collective identity the Muslims purport to have, harbours a NasooH in it as well as a Kaleem. At any given time, one may begin to dominate the other without reaching a resolution. This conflict is at the heart of *Taubat-un-NasooH* and the manner in which the novel has recaptured and dramatised it, makes this book one of the seminal narratives of the nineteenth century India and representative of the *Ashrafia*.

The story opens with a dangerous epidemic of cholera raging in Delhi. Among its countless victims is NasooH. In spite of all the care he takes to avoid the disease, NasooH himself becomes infected. Under the influence of a sedative, NasooH falls into a deep slumber. In a dream he meets his father who recounts in vivid detail all that befell him after he departed this earth, including the grilling he had to face for his sins. Horrified, NasooH awakes as a born-again Muslim and morphs into a religious zealot³. He confides his dream to his wife Fahmidah and enlists her support to reform

the family. They decide to talk to the children; he to the sons; she to the daughters. The two younger sons and the younger of the two daughters fall easily in line. The entire atmosphere of the household is soon transformed. The playful pastimes of the idle rich are replaced by prayers at regular hours and other religious chores.

Character of NasooH : Critique on Liberal Attitudes

Nazir Ahmed painted the character of NasooH as the representative of the conventional class of *Ashrafia*. After the mental makeover, NasooH was not only confined to pray and fast but also as a husband, father and common man emerged as a noble human being. Previously, he was such an infuriating personality that everyone at home whether young or old thought of him as a tyrant even on trivial issues. His wife and kids used to bear the brunt of his harshness. This conduct of his kept the house uncertain and in a tumult. After his illness, the people at home were terrified, expecting that he would become even more irritable and stubborn, but after recovery from the illness the obverse happened and he was transformed into a humble and noble soul.⁴ The effectiveness of the novel is also enhanced because it makes us aware about the true values of Islam intend to promote nobility and shunning sinfulness and profligacy. As a matter of fact, the novel's religious implication is extraordinary and to present the religion in a social context is a unique idea for the representation of *Ashraf*.

NasooH starts the discussion on religious matters as is the trend in the traditional Muslim families of *Ashraf*. His way of thinking had already seen a sea change. The

reason behind this mental transformation is his dream, but after observing the spoiled ways of his home he did not mention these religious issues in front of his siblings. The character of Nasooch as the head of the family of *Ashrafia*, represented the conventional school of thought. Nazir Ahmed highlighted the socio-political circumstances of *Ashrafia* and their religious state of mind, doubts and misunderstanding of the youth of the *Ashrafia* about the religion in those times.

Through his letter, Nasooch expressed his own views to Kaleem:

*My beloved son,
May Allah guide you along the righteous path!*

"I sent for you first through Aleem and then through Rasoolan. You neither came nor sent word why you would not, from which it is apparent that you do not care for me and attach no importance to my instructions. In my view there can be no preoccupation so urgent that it can serve as a reason for a son not to obey his father's summons. Still, if there was an urgency which took precedence over my call, it was your duty to explain it to me to my satisfaction, not only because I am your father and you are my son, but also because the norms of civilized living and social conduct require it. You cannot say you are ignorant of the rules and regulations that underlie the running of the world's business. Every house has a master, every locality has a chief, every bazaar has a supervisor, every city has an administrator, every kingdom has a king, every army has a commander-in-chief, every task has a responsible officer, and every sect has a head. In short every house is a small kingdom and the senior inmate of the house is its king and the others in the house are his subjects. If negligence and malpractice on the part of the ruler of a country leads to its disorder then I must say this house is in bad shape. The blame for this attaches to me and I confess with great sorrow that I have hitherto been a very unconcerned and uninformed ruler. This has ruined my country and shattered my rule. My ignorance has not only impaired my authority but has also reduced the subjects to such a wretched state that there is not much hope of their redemption. Just as minor nawabs and rajwadas are answerable to the Ruler of the time for misrule in their respective territories, and just as they are punished for such misrule, so was Wajid Ali Shah deprived of his kingdom and the ruler of Tonk was dethroned. I too am answerable to the Lord of the both Worlds for order in my house. Seeing others punished (for such a lapse), I am now truly and fully warned (of the consequences), and I am fully resolved (in the kingdom that is my house) to plug all

cracks, do away with all obstructions, to remove all defects and eliminate all blemishes.

One very dangerous aberration present in my house is that I, and my subjects, that is, all of you, have been bent upon rebelling against the King of Both the Worlds, and the homage that must be paid to Him lies overdue through default. The homage that we are required to pay, I see, is quite light and lenient. Had we so desired, no instalment need have been overdue and the required tribute paid into the treasury on time, without any hardship being incurred. The lapse of which we are guilty in this respect cannot be reasonably justified. There are now two courses of action possible: either we make good all of the overdue homage, ask for forgiveness and resolve not to repeat the lapse, or we confront the sovereign, fight against Him and if possible free ourselves from His bondage.

The might of the Power Royal and our own weakness are quite apparent. We do not count for much in this respect. We have the examples of powerful and mighty despots like Fir'on and Namrood, Shadad, Hamaan and Qaroon. When they rebelled, they were reduced to naught. There is thus no alternative to obedience and submission. Believing you to be the most distinguished and senior most among the subjects in my realm, I had called you in order to discuss the situation with you. From your refusal to comply it is obvious that you have no fear of authority... My involvement and instruction must doubtless seem to you unjustified and improper. But if you fairly compare your responsibility with mine, you will realise your mistake. The conditions to which I wish to subject your conduct are exactly those from which I do not allow exception to myself or to anyone else. Young men of your age sometimes have doubts about religion. This is not a vice. Doubts are evidence of the search in attainment: One who seeks, finds. If you have such doubts, I am here to clear them. As far as I know the principles of religion are so true, definite and eternal that there can be no vacillation or refusal concerning them. However, from the very beginning of consciousness we have been leading a life of neglect, laziness and procrastination and of opposition and disobedience to the dictates of God Almighty. Sinning and guilty living have become our second nature...from this and no other consideration, what would you have lost? You have at the very outset displayed a degree of stubbornness, which I had not expected even towards the end. I am not unaware of the difficulties that I must face. If it were possible for me to give up the idea (of reforming the family) I would not even have talked about it. But I am aware that I am no different from other men in that I must die

one day. I was close enough to death when I contracted cholera recently. But miraculously God gave me a new lease of life. Still, who can live forever? Should one survive to doomsday, he too must die on that day just as death is inevitable, it is likewise certain that I will have to answer for my actions and deeds before God. Not just for my deeds but for those of all of you. I have therefore no choice but to transform the way you and I, and all of us live. Had you come to me and had we discussed the matter among ourselves, I would have spoken to you in a certain way after ascertaining your views. Now I do not know which of the things I have written is acceptable to you and which you find unacceptable. I consider it pointless and of no use to write further. I have written down whatever was in my mind. I do not require an answer from you for two reasons. Firstly I cannot make a demand, knowing it will be fruitless and ineffectual. Secondly, there is only one answer that can satisfy me, which is that you accept my conditions. In order that I may save myself from being penalised in the life hereafter, I will not allow myself to defer to temporary, worldly relationships. This is my attempt of the last resort and I pray to Allah, supplicating that I may not need to have resort to this measure.⁵

After receiving this letter, Kaleem came to his father and announced his rebellion by saying that he had no right to interfere in their personal matters. Freedom is their right from birth. After the threat of father that whoever fails to disobey Allah's command will no longer have the right to stay in his home, the son got ready to leave the house. Nasooh on this point showed his firmness and did not stop Kaleem from leaving.⁶ On previous occasions whenever Kaleem had left home in anger, it was due to a quarrel over food, clothes, money or differences with his mother or siblings. This time it was over religion, not over money, with his father and not with his brothers and sisters. Kaleem's situation, and how different it was from days gone by was so aptly described by Nazir Ahmed: "This time, too, he left the house with the expectation that even before he reached the end of the lane, servants would come running after him; With this hope in his heart, he must have looked back over his shoulder hundreds of times, on his way to his friend Mirza Zahirdaar Baig. However, here he was wrong."⁷

As Naeemah had said, except for Kaleem, the entire household had undergone a total transformation. The mother was no longer the mother of former days, The father was quite different from what he used to be.⁸ The scene of burning the books in the room of Kaleem is also the reflection of the mindset of the conventional

Ashrafia towards the so-called Azad khayal young Ashrafia. When he entered his room, apart from the usual paraphernalia of items of luxury, he found so many books in the book shelf. But all books whether in Urdu or Persian, were almost similar in content: false stories, inanities, vulgar themes, obscene implications, in short, everything that characterised them were immoral and brazen. When Nasooh considered the beautiful binding of the books, their fine calligraphy, the quality of paper, the beauty of language and the excellence of writing, the books appeared to him to be a treasure trove. But as far as their content and substance were concerned, every book appeared to be fit for burning. He gathered the whole lot in a pile and set fire to them. When Nasooh wants to justify his book-burning frenzy, he describes these books, as more dangerous than snakes, and the proceeds from their sale haraam (illegal), like stolen or looted goods. He declares that the devil has put his mark over Kaleem and declared this collection as a work of a savage. He burnt the books Kuliyat-e-Aatish, Diwan-e-Sharar, Diwan of Mir Dard and Diwan-e-Sa'adi. All these books did not Nasooh's new found conventional ideas.

Leaving his home, Kaleem sets off for Mirza Zahirdaar Baig's⁹ house without any forethought, much like a willful horse returning to his stable. Mirza's facade had kept him in the dark about the real Mirza to such a degree that Kaleem believed him to be more of a well-wisher and friend to him than his own parents, brothers and sisters. The trust he put in him, without ever having experienced or tested the reality behind his pretences, a wise man would hesitate to place in a friend of long standing and proven loyalty.

The fact of the matter was that Kaleem was totally deficient in his understanding of men. He was under a greater delusion about himself than about Mirza. He thought he was so highly endowed that all the princely courts in the country were waiting for the opportunity to spread the red carpet for him, whereas the reality was that innumerable talented persons were going round at the time seeking employment, without much success. Kaleem had persuaded himself that he had only to step into a principality, for its prince himself to welcome his arrival with great fervour.

When he left home he was quite empty handed, but in his imagination he was about to acquire great wealth. He trudged on his two legs, but under the delusion that a gigantic elephant fitted with a royal *howdah* was on its way for him to ride. On one hand was a city like Delhi, and on the other, a *spendthrift* and short-sighted man like Kaleem, with a windfall of easy money. What followed was therefore no surprise. In no

time at all flooring and carpeting chandeliers and lamps, furniture and fixtures, servants and helpers, all were installed. A *mushaira* was arranged for the very next day. It was to be followed by a spell of dance. All Kaleem's old friends and acquaintances received invitations to attend, even Mirza Zahirdaar Baig! Mirza was devoid of any sense of shame to such a degree that he came running as soon as he got wind of the developments. Kaleem on his part proved to be such a simpleton, that once again he received him with open arms, despite having been recently deceived blatantly by him.

Gradually the demand for settling the dues intensified from all sides: Kaleem awoke from his stupor only when he was reduced to selling goods that he had just bought, in some cases without their having been used at all. But by now it was already too late. As usually happens under such circumstances, his friends stopped visiting him. The servants absented themselves. Those that remained had become so arrogant due to non-payment of their salary, that not only had they stopped working, they had even taken over as their own those of Kaleem's belongings which were in their care while they were in his service.

That was no such time when two or three creditors were not parked at the door. Under the circumstances, Kaleem wanted to slip away from the house. But his servants, who were now his enemies, exposed his plans. As soon as he left the house disguised as a servant, he fell into the clutches of the bailiffs of the court. The heedless man now learnt that several ex parte decrees were under simultaneous execution against him. The night Kaleem spent in the custody of his captors was so intolerable that he recalled the night he had spent in Zahirdaar Baig's mosque with longing.

I wonder who I am and to whom I write this letter. And I expect you will wonder more than I when you receive it. After such impudence, such disobedience, such brazenness, so much opposition, that this good for nothing, wicked rogue, deserving of the punishment of death, disgrace to the family, bringer of a bad name to good people, has been guilty of, neither I nor any one else can claim that I have a right to call myself your son. Thus this letter is neither a letter, nor is it from a son, nor again is it addressed to a father. It is a message of apology, an admission (of guilt), a document of penitence, and a supplication for forgiveness, a confession of repentance and a request for help, from a sinful, cruel, destitute Kaleem addressed to a kind, merciful in the extreme, virtuous, harmless, benefactor. Although I have reached a state of base notoriety, been affected by ills of various kinds, subjected to degradations of all

sorts, it would be wrong to believe that I got a fill of what I deserved. If my misdeeds added up to a measure of thousand than my punishment amounted to no more than a measure of one."

About the matter of Nasooh's daughter, Nazir Ahmed tries to explore the different dimensions of young ladies from the families of Ashraf. The ladies in the extremely conservative society of the nineteenth century were unaware of the cultural uplift and entertainment which was quite common for the women in the West. But with his sophisticated vision he did not let Saleha go beyond the spoiled and conflicted and other womanly traits. He let Kaleem go beyond the ways of a spoiled young man because the youth of that time was the victim of new and old ways. Nazir Ahmed's sophistication and social consciousness is also proved from the fact that he presented Naeemah as a married girl who after quarrelling with her in-laws came back to her parents. In our society, unmarried girls are very strictly monitored. In front of her parents, Naeema like the lady in an English novel, could not display rudeness and boldness. Besides this, it was not extraordinary to slap a girl on which Naeema would have protested.

Kaleem as the Representative of Azad Khayal/Free Minded Youth of Ashrafia

Nazir Ahmed presented the character of Kaleem as the representative of that wayward young generation, who appears to be an Azad khayal (liberal) of that age and his opinions may well have been the voice of the liberal school of thought. Nazir Ahmed through the character of Kaleem criticized the liberal and broadminded youth of the nineteenth century Ashrafia. He exposed the negative aspects of modern norms, which were prevailing like bad sores among the new generation and caused negligence to religious obligations and social norms.¹⁰ After the war of 1857, although the economic condition of the Muslims was destroyed but their social structure did not change by much. The ways of the Ashraf and nobility remained the same; their princely airs and splurging in a royal manner remained the same as in the past. Kaleem also represented the light-minded young generation of the Ashafia who did not take part in constructive activities. In the chapter nine, Kaleem's Khilwat Khana (the private abode) and Ishrat Manzil (the pleasure house) are described¹¹ in a manner that how they spend their time in leisure.

The character of Kaleem also reflects non-serious attitude of the nineteenth century youth who took pride in their frivolous leisure pastimes like chess, clique, kite flying and pigeons. Nasooh introduced Kaleem in such

a way during his conversation with Fehmeedah before the beginning of his amendatory struggle: "See him, who remains stiff like the flour of beam. He has become muscle of fantail while being the human being flaunts so much."¹² About the religious obligations of the Nasoooh, Kaleem condemns the attitude of his father and dismisses his religious enthusiasm as that of mullahs, which to him is deplorable. He responded to the religious ideology of Nasoooh and said to him: "I am aware that since some time past now, you have been wanting to introduce new procedures, new regulations and new ways in our home in the name of faith and religion and the importance you attach to the effort is not unknown to me or anyone else living in the house. Everyone in the house has realized that he or she cannot oppose the new arrangements and continue to live in the house at the same time. I tried my best therefore to avoid having to express my opposition to your plans. But your insistence has now forced that situation on me. Now I must tell you perforce that I was opposed of your agenda from the very beginning. My evasion was sufficient to make my views known. I cannot change my lifestyle by a hair's breath. If I were to surrender my freedom of thought to force and coercion then cursed be my lack of courage and detested be my vaunted sense of honor. I don't question your right to make any arrangements you wish to make in the house. But those arrangements are binding on only those who consider them to be reasonable or those who do not have the power to oppose them. Since I do not belong in either of these categories, I considered it prudent to leave home." He further said to his father "I am not so foolish as to accuse you of unkindness. You say what you consider to be in my best interest. Nevertheless, please forgive my impertinence in saying that I do not considered myself to be in need of education and instruction. As for going back home, I can only do so on the condition that you promise not to have anything to do with my activities... be they (in your opinion) virtuous or evil, good or bad."¹³

Kalim develops a problem with his father's attitude because of his rootedness in the cultural ethos, and he describes himself to be so deeply embedded in the norms of that culture that he cannot get himself to change. In his character, self-praise and self-centeredness were prominent, which was symbolic of the youngsters of the new educated class but this generation was accordingly oblivious of religious and social standards of the Muslims society. Kalim, as representative of this new generation thinks of himself as superior, open-minded and arrogant. Even when his father tried to atone his children after his recovery from a disease and calls Kalim to modify his ways and adopt

the conventional lifestyle of the *Ashrafiya*, Kaleem's reaction was so discourteous and harsh to his younger brother that he said: "I understand that father has a fault in his brain. I was not in favour of that medicine prescribed by the doctor that **has** affected his brain badly and he has become insane".¹⁴ When his mother tried to make him cognizant of the difference between sin and virtue, he replied: "This is a new issue of beating and teaching an old parrot, I can myself recognise what is good and what is bad for me, I am not a kid, please no one should try to interfere in the affairs of my life."¹⁵

When Nasoooh summons him for a meeting¹⁶, Kaleem left home. But instead of offering him shelter, his friend, Mirza Zahirdar Baig¹⁷, hands him over to the police as a thief. Upon learning his identity the police officer hands him back to his father. But when Nasoooh tried to counsel him and take him home, Kaleem bolted again. Having run into debt and jailed for default Kaleem writes to Nasoooh for money. The dues were promptly paid. After being released from jail, Kaleem goes to Daulatabad, a native state, to seek his fortune. There he enlists in the security force. Kaleem is brought home after suffering serious injury in a battle. His condition worsens and he breathes his last. But, just before his life ends, he shows a sudden surge of energy and expresses contrite penitence for his sinful life.¹⁸

Hence Kaleem is the representative of such a society, in which a mental stress takes place owing to disregard for values and customs. Kaleem and the similarly educated youngsters were unequipped to deal with complications of life. Most of them gradually set themselves free from the religious and social values. Indulging in self-praise and lack of discipline was second nature to them. Kaleem is a victim of social complications. He looked down upon the lower class people of the society and didn't like his father socialising with them or offering prayers with them. He makes fun of Muslims with regard to their religious obligations. In short, Kalim is a difficult 'character'. He is a strange mix of good and evil. He had a first-class mind and was a man of wide reading, literary taste and a gifted poet. He could brook no criticism and was of a very independent nature, yet he had allowed himself to become financially dependent on his father. We hear that he was frequently in need of money, that his friends were degenerate, idle, good-for-nothing fellows, and so forth.¹⁹

Naeemah as a Representative of a Free Minded Ashrafia Female

Naeemah is a representative of the young and fashionable among the female *Ashrafia* folks. She was the elder daughter of Nasooh, and a spoiled child given to stubbornness and flaunting. And like Kaleem she is open-minded and free-spirited but as she is a female from decent family, therefore, her reluctance and spoiled nature is confined within the four walls of the house. However, Kaleem being from the opposite gender, both his positive and negative traits could be seen within and outside the house. Her mother was responsible for spoiling her and her rudeness also destroyed her marital life as she could not adjust with her in-laws. She was not in touch with religion and religious obligations. One day, in the morning she handed her five-month old baby to her younger sister Hameedah who went on offering prayers as time was running short. The child started crying; as Naeemah heard his voice she ran to him and saw Hameedah offering her prayers. Naeemah pushed Hameedah so hard that she fell down, and bleeding profusely from nose. In the meantime her mother came and Naeemah started saying: "She is so careless, I handed her the child and went over to wash my hands, she couldn't take care of the child, after all, and I had n't gone to die in the well. She went off to offer prayers leaving the child crying; when I came back I softly placed my hand on her shoulder and she fell down. When the mother asked Hameedah, she told her the importance of prayer and said: "What one can do if the house is like hell, we were thrown in the well blindly. Naeemah is suffering from un-socialized disturbance of conduct.²⁰

In the sixth chapter, her cousin Saleha came to reconcile her on the request of her mother. Naeemah is deeply impressed by her affectionate and logical conversation but still does not want to apologise to her mother. She went to her aunt without meeting her mother. In the company of her friend, her habits slowly improved and after a few months, she came back to her mother's place. When her husband heard about her religious inclination, he took her back to her in-laws.

References and Endnotes

¹ *Tuobat-un-Nasooh* is the third of the series of novels of Nazeer Ahmad regarding education and reformation of the Muslim Ashrafia. There is contradiction about the year of publication of *Tubat-ub-Nasooh* among the Urdu critiques. It is indicated from the preface of *Binat-un-Nash* that Nazeer Ahmed already had its outline in his mind and he wanted to write a story regarding the kids training and religious education. That's why in the last lines of *Binatun*

Nash he promised that: "If I have still life ahead and find some leisure time then *Inshallah* I will present the readers another book next year and that story will be presented in that book." According to this project, he published *Tobat-un-Nasooh* in 1873 and in the same year he presented it for the government prize. Its first edition was published in Agra but the strange thing about it was that there was tremendous contradiction in this publication. In *Hayat-e-Nazir*, there is only indication of place of publication as Azam Garh. In book *Dastan-e-Tareekh-e-Urdu* the year of publication of *Tobat-un-Nasooh* is mentioned as 1877. In recently published books and columns the year of publication written is also wrong. For example, in a column of 'Urdu Nama' second edition by Begum Shaista, the complete list of the publication of Deputy Nazeer Ahmed, the date of publication of *Tobat-un-Nasooh* in the twelfth line is 1877. Dr Syed Latif in the thesis of his PhD, 'Rattan Nath Sarshar Ki Novel Nigari', has written 1877 as the date of publication of *Tobat-un-Nasooh*. Professor Akhter in his column 'Fun Novel Nigari' and Nazeer Ahmad Dehlavi, the place where he has given the list of Nazeer Ahmad novels, indicated 1866 as the year of publication for *Tobat-un-Nasooh*. Dr Sohail Bukhari writes that *Tobat-un-Nasooh* was written in 1877. In 1873, when *Tobat-un-Nasooh* was presented for the government prize, Mr Campson as the Mayor of North and West Province, wrote detailed comments on it and referred it to the government for first prize. This commentary was published in 1874 as 37 reminders in the edition of the government gazette and at the end of that the date written is 1873. Sir William Mayor, as lieutenant governor of north and western province, announced a prize for it with a strong liking, and the date written on that is 17 January 1874. In the initial editions of *Tobat-un-Nasooh*, the detailed commentary of Mr Kampson and William Mayor has been published in government gazette. Professor Garsan De tasi also indicated *Tobat-un-Nasooh* in his address of 1874. This has been proved from the creative effort done by Dr Mohammad Sadiq that the extract of Nazeer Ahmed, knowledge is from the Daniel Defoe novel 'Family Instructor'. Nazir Ahmed in his preface did not mention any of this fact but it seems that the religious perspective of the novel indicates his own religious thoughts (values). Dr Mohammad Sadiq indicated this while commenting a little bit on the English extracts of *Tobat-un-Nasooh*, on the novels written by Nazeer Ahmed under the caption of 'Nazir Ahmed Aik Jaeza', in the edition of magazine 'Mahe No'o' in May 1951.

² (Saksena 1975,9)

³ Nazir Ahmed, *Tubat-un-Nasooh*, (Lahore: Feroz Sons, 1988) for detail see Chapter -1.

⁴ Ibid. chapter no 2 reflects the changed attitude of Nasooh and he calls all the family Members to convey his religious issues.

⁵ Ibid, 45.

- ⁶ Ibid. in chapter no seven and tenth, detailed description mentioned about the dialogue of Kaleem with his mother and brother.
- ⁷ Ibid,
- ⁸ Ibid, 140
- ⁹ Deputy Nazir Ahmed portrait his outlook in these words “Mirza, he had hemmed Shoes on his feet, an expensive, heavily embroidered cap on his head, not [one but two *angarkhas* on his body, over which he would wear a *tanzeb*, jand underneath a garment made of *naino*”.
- ¹⁰ (Nazir Ahmed, *Tubat-un-Nasooch*, 105-126)
- ¹¹ Ibid., The two rooms he occupies in the house are named Pleasure House and Private Abode respectively. One is used to entertain his friends while the other houses his collection of books.
- ¹² Ibid, 54.
- ¹³ Ibid, 67.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 105.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 126
- ¹⁶ Nasooch sends him an advisable letter, in which he mentions the responsibility as the head of the family. He warns him about the religious obligations and suggested a rightful way.
- ¹⁷ He was belonged to poor family but pretend himself as wealthy and resourceful person. Kaleem went to him, but he arranged his stayed in a mosque, where a thief stole his cloth and bed sheet,
- ¹⁸ Ibid., chapter no twelve deals with the character and behavior of the Mirza Zahir Dar Baig.
- ¹⁹ Shaista Suherwardi. *Critical Survey of the development of the Urdu novel and short story* (London: longman's Green, 1945), 47.
- ²⁰ Nazir Ahmed, *Tobat-un-Nasooch*. For detail see Chapter no eight.

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