Islamic Tradition and its Defining Characteristics

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Abstract

Tradition conveys the meanings of connectedness to past and transmission of knowledge, practice, laws, and many other elements of both an oral and written nature. "Islamic Tradition" is no different from the general definition of 'tradition'. Understood in three different meanings, though interlinked, Islamic Traditionis a big circle which engulfs many traditions grown over some fourteen centuries inhabited nearly in every corner of the globe. Originating from the roots of divine transcendent, it spreads like a tree having many branches ranging from intellectual to mystical and from law to art and culture. Exhibiting the characteristics of assimilation, flexibility and adaptability, Islamic tradition has maintained its uniqueness and distinction among the world's religious traditions. Despite political fragmentation, theological differences, and ethnic distinctions, Islamic tradition has maintained its unity of the Islamic community. This article aims to introduce the various aspects of Islamic tradition and their development over the time. It is also an effort to highlight the distinctive features of Islamic Tradition and different "Traditionalist Schools".

Keywords: Hadith, Qur'an, Transcendent, Islamic Tradition, Traditional Schools

Introduction

Tradition means many things. In its plain sense, it means simply a *tradium*[92]; it is anything which is transmitted, passed or handed down from past to the present, from one generation to another generation, is considered authoritative, or deferred without argument.[93] Tradition includes all that, a society of a given time possesses and which already existed.[94]

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an eminent representative of "Traditionalist School" [95] in modern and postmodern world has put tradition on much higher place than confining it to customs and norms only. He has defined tradition as having its "origin in divine"[96]

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[92] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Tradition."

[93] Edward Shils, *Tradition* (London: Faber & Faber limited, 1981), 12;Harry B. Acton has defined tradition a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and or accepted as authoritative, or deferred without argument. (Harry B. Porter, "Tradition and some other forms of Order," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, LIII [1952-54], 2); "It is handing down, delivery, especially oral delivery, fact handed down from one to another, or from generation to generation; transmission of statements, beliefs, rules, customs, or the like." (*The Oxford English Dictionary,*s.v. "Tradition.")

[94] Ibid.

[95] Around the 19th century in Europe there rose a reaction against modernism and it took various forms. One form of this reaction was due to the inspiration of the orient and this motivated many thinkers to peruse the concept of esoteric dimension of tradition which was more prevalent in the Orient. Thinkers in this School of thought advocated that "tradition is the continuity of revelation: an uninterrupted transmission, through innumerable generations, of the spiritual and cosmological principles, sciences and laws resulting from revealed religion: nothing is neglected, from the establishment of social orders and codes of conduct to the canons regulating the arts and architecture, ornamentation and dress. Personalities in this School of thought include Rene Guenon, Ananda Commaraswamy, Martin Lings, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, etc.

[96] "Tradition means truth or principles of a divine origin revealed or unveiled to mankind and, in fact, a whole cosmic   sector through various figures envisaged as messengers, prophets, avatars, the Logos or other

The one who adheres to tradition is called 'traditional'[97] and the system where adherence to traditional doctrine or theory or submission to the authority of tradition is known as "traditionalism."[98] One who belongs to traditionalism is nominated as 'traditionalist.'[99] The word traditional, traditionist and traditionalist are used in same meanings.[100]

Tradition is closely linked to religion. A religion is founded first by revelation and it is passed on through tradition. All religions are traditions in this sense. Tradition in its meaning contain the element of transmission and religion implies in its root meaning "binding." [101] In this sense religion can be considered as the origin of tradition which through revelation manifests certain principles and truths through revelation and whose application then comprise tradition.[102]

A society is nominated the traditional one which is occupied with traditions. Almost every society is equipped with certain traditions whether modern or traditional. However, the distinction between "modern" and "traditional" lies in the functional authority of tradition in the traditional society.

The differentiation between modern and traditional society does not necessarily mean that modern or modernizing societies are tradition-less or within them there is no attachment to customs and norms of the past or to various symbols of collective identity with strong orientations to the past. "It means, rather, that modernization has greatly weakened one specific aspect of traditionality---namely, the legitimation of social, political, and cultural orders in terms of some combination of "pastness," "sacredness," and their symbolic and structural derivatives.

Before the advent of modernity and modernism almost all societies were called as traditional with little difference of more or less role of tradition (either the role of religious tradition or role of local norms, customs and folks).The epoch of modernity changed the ways of thinking and approach to different domains of life and religion. This transition from traditional to modernity entailed a break from the past; in some conditions it was not a radical one though as it added new paradigms to the tradition and defining the values and norms in new contexts which did not imply disappearance of the past. But in some conditions it completely overthrew the past. It is important to note that in all of these conditions traditionalists in societies undergoing rapid change understood themselves to be conservators of values and what is valued from the past. However they always tended to oppose the break that would decisively overthrow the authority of the past. Hence in the opinion of Graham, "traditionalism does not necessarily involve the attitude of conservatism or opposition to change in political, social, or religious life;

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transmitting agencies, along with all ramifications and applications of these principles in different realms including law and social structure, art, symbolism, the sciences, and embracing of course Supreme knowledge along with the means for its attainment" [*Knowledge and Sacred*, 67-68; Victor Danner, "Religion and Tradition," in *Quest of the Sacred: the Modern World in the Light of the Tradition,*ed. S.H. Nasr & K. O Brien, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2001), 22-23]

[97] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v."Traditionalism."

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 354-355.

[100] Ibid., 354-355.

[101] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Religion."

[102] Schuon says, "Religion is that which binds man to Heaven and engages his whole being; as for the word 'traditio,' it is related to a more outward and sometimes fragmentary reality, besides suggesting a retrospective outlook. At its birth a religion 'binds' men to Heaven from the moment of its first revelation, but it does not become a 'tradition', or admit more than one 'tradition', till two or three generations later." (FrithjofSchuon, *Light on the Ancient Worlds,* "144); *Knowledge and the Sacred,* 78-79.

traditions may serve equally well as the bases of reform and innovation or as the grounds for defense of the status quo." [103]

Even though no society in the modern age is without an element of tradition and traditionalism, still, Muslim society is the one in which tradition plays a remarkable role from the advanced industrial societies that have cultivated "modernity" and perceive themselves as nontraditional, modern or postindustrial.

In what meanings Islamic Tradition is being understood? What features do constitute Islamic Tradition and how it is distinctive from the other religious traditions of the world? The following discourse is an effort to answer these questions.

Islamic Tradition

The term 'Islamic Tradition' is usually understood in three meanings; firstly, main streamline of orthodox beliefs in all aspects of Islam whether exoteric or esoteric; secondly, narrations of the Holy Prophet's (SAW) sayings, deeds are also known as traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW);[104] thirdly, Islamic tradition has acquired special meanings in the writings of the traditionalist school. Here, Islamic Tradition would be dealt with in all of these meanings. Islamic Tradition must be distinguished from words like fundamentalism, conservatism and fanaticism used in popular media to portray Islamic Tradition these days.

"Islamic tradition is al-din at once, which embraces all aspects of religion, based upon sacred, divine models. In its every aspect and streamline, there is a chain which relates each period, episode stages of life and thought in the traditional world to the Origin. Islamic tradition, therefore, is a like a tree, a single tree of Divine Origin, the roots of which are sunk through revelation in the Divine nature and form which the trunk and branches have grown over ages. At the heart of the tree of tradition resides revelation, and its sap consists of that grace or barakah which, originating with the revelation, makes possible the continuity of the life of the tree. Islamic tradition implies the sacred, the eternal, the immutable Truth; the perennial wisdom, as well as the continuous application of its immutable principles to various conditions of space and time."[105]

The "sense of connectedness," or *ittisaliyah* --- the need or desire for personal connection (*ittisal*) across the generations with the time and the personages of Islamic origins makes Islamic Tradition very distinctive and pervasive among other traditions. This is something that has been a persistent value in Muslim thought and institutions over the centuries.[106]

Islam is the last revealed religion which established a religion on earth for all[107] and would be manifested before the closing of the ages. It is the greatest representative and personification of monotheistic traditions in the world. At the heart of the Islamic tradition stands the reality of God, "the One,[108] the Absolute [109] and the Infinite,[110] the

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[103] William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," 499.

[104]*TheOxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Tradition."

[105] Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World,* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1997), 13.

[106] William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3, *Religion and History* (1993):507; Islamic Tradition in all its forms requires the connectedness whether in *Hadith*, Jurisprudence or history. It is all about continuity and this chain of continuity is linked to transcendent.

[107] al Baqarah, 2:133; al-An'ām, 6: 14

[108] al Baqarah, 2:163 ;al An'ām, 6:102; Tā hā, 20: 98; Hajj, 22:62; Al-Qasas, 28 :70; Al-Ghafir, 40:62.

[109] al-Ikhlas, 112:1-4.

[110]Ibrāhīm, 14:34; An-Nahl, 16:18.

Infinitely Good and All Merciful,[111] the One who is at once transcendent and greater than all we can conceive or imagine [112] as mentioned at different places in the Qur'ān."[113] The idea of *tawhid* (monotheism, oneness) makes Islam distinctive from other monotheistic traditions of Judaism and Christian tradition as in Jewish faith, salvation is reliant upon a certain ethnocentrism revolving around the Chosen people*[114]*, and this is in turn confines monotheistic concept to them; in Christianity salvation is bound up with a certain Christocentrism that leads to the worship of the God-Man, who in his turn detracts, from the absoluteness of the One.[115] The concept of oneness of Allah or *tawhid* is a radius around which the whole Islamic tradition is centered and this concept is the only reason of uniqueness, idealism, authenticity and dignity of the Islamic tradition.

Qur'ān is that last divine revelation,[116] which is the spoken word of God, revealed on Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*)[117] and is the fountainhead of Islamic tradition. Both the meanings and the text are considered to be the eternal word of God,[118] uncreated, as everything else is connected with it.[119] In every way, the soul of the traditional Muslim is like a mosaic made up of phrases of the Qur'ān, which are repeated throughout life. It is transmitted from the Prophet (*SAW*) to us in its original form and everything of Islamic Tradition ushers from the Qur'ān.

While Islam considers itself the last religion to be revealed to mankind on earth, it also sees in the Messenger and Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*), the Seal of the Prophets.[120] Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) as the seal of Prophets brings to an end, in his own person, the entire line and chain of prophets stretching back to Adam. Muhammad (*SAW*) was not just a reformer of society as present day modernists consider, but as the Qur'ān asserts that Prophet (*SAW*) was a man [121], not divine, that he was given the most exalted and noble character,[122] and that he was chosen as a model for Muslims to imitate.[123] For Muslims, the Prophet (*SAW*) is a mortal man,*[124]* but also Allah's most perfect creature on earth or in the terminology of the universal man (*al-insan al Kamil*).[125] It is the basic aspect of Islamic religious life to have an unconditional love for the Prophet (*SAW*). It might be said that this love is the key love for the love of God, for in order to love God, God must first love us, and God does not love a person who does not love His messenger.[126] A Muslim is also required to love other prophets and messengers. A devout

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[111] al Baqarah, 2:208; al An'ām, 6 :12 ; al An'ām, 6 :54; al-Hijr, 15:49;Ash-Shu'arā', 26:9.

[112] Tā hā, 20:110; Luqmān, 31: 26-31

[113] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004), 3, 5.

[114] al-Mā'idah, 5:18.

[115] al-'Imrān: 79-80; Abd al Jabbar Danner, *The Islamic Tradition: An Introduction* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1991), 6.

[116] Tā hā, 20: 4; an- Naml, 27 :6; Az Zumar, 39:1;41:2; al-Jāthiya, 45:2.

[117] al-Kahf, 18:110 ; Az Zumar, 39: 2 ; Ibrāhīm, 14:1.

[118] Al-Wāqi 'ah, 56:80 ; Al-Hāqqah, 69: 43

[119] An- Nisā', 4:174; al-'Imrān, 3:138 ; Qāf, 50: 37; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity,* 22.

[120] al-Mā'idah, 5:3; al-ahzāb, 33:40.

[121] al-ahzāb, 33:40.

[122] at-Tawbah, 9:128; al Qalam, 68 :4

[123] al-ahzāb, 33:21.

[124] al-'Imrān, 3:144.

[125] The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity, 18, 28.

[126] al-'Imran, 3: 132; at-Tawbah, 9: 24; al-ahzāb, 33: 6; al-Fath, 48 :10

Muslim will not disgrace the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) particularly mentioned in the Qur'ān.[127]

The *Sunnah* and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (*SAW*) are fundamental to the Islamic Tradition. *Sunnah* and *Hadith* have maintained their position in Muslim society as something which is passed on to us from transmission of chain of narrators.[128] The system of transmission of the *Hadith* has been based upon the use of the *isnad* (chain of transmitters), or "support," that accompanies the text of every individual *Hadith*.[129] The *isnad* takes the form of a list or "chain" (*silsilah*) of individual transmitters who cover the generations from the most recent reporter back to the Prophet (*SAW*) or the Companions.[130] The *isnads* exist in order to confirm the authenticity of a given report by confirming that it has come down via a *silsilah* composed of trustworthy persons - preferably a "high" chain made up of a minimum number of links.[131]

William Graham describes the defining elements of the *isnad* paradigm as: "(1) derivation of authority primarily or even, in extreme cases, solely from (2) linkage to a sacred, but historical, time of origins of the tradition through (3) a chain of personal transmission, the individual human links of which represent all intervening generations between that of the original source (ideally the Prophet (*SAW)* or one of his Companions) and that of the latest reporter. This paradigm is, in turn, the mechanism or explicit vehicle for the realization of *ittisaliyah* (connectivity), the personal connectedness which substantiates a report as valid tradition."[132]

This *isnad* paradigm is the most important model of Muslim traditionalism, which has most clearly and consistently expressed its need for connectedness.[133] "Correspondingly, "Qur'ān and *Sunnah*" early on became the dual catchphrase of Islamic traditionalism as passed on and elaborated by the '*ulama*', or religious scholars.[134] Whether identified as "orthodox," "orthoprax," or "scripturalist," the tradition of the '*ulama*' has always been characterized by reliance on "these two sources" of scripture and *Sunnah*. "Islamic traditionalism is also to speak about the widespread Muslim emphasis upon the primary, dual authority of the revelations of the Qur'ān and the tradition or practice (*Sunnah*) ascribed to the Prophet (*SAW*) and the first few generations of Muslims (the "pious forebears," *as-salaf*)."[135]

Consequently, Islamic Tradition is a big circle which engulfs many traditions grown over some fourteen centuries inhabited in nearly every corner of the globe. All prevalent traditions based on these two fundamentals of the Qur'ān and *Hadith* among Muslims either living in the Muslim world or in any other country as minority is considered Islamic, whether intellectual or mystic or artistic (Islamic architecture manifested in mosques buildings, calligraphy, etc). Qur'ān and *Hadith*, watchwords of Islamic

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[127] al-baqarah, 2:133; An- Nisā', 4:150, 152.
[128] M. Mustafa Azmi, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2002), 35-65.
[129] Muhammad Mustafa A'zami, "*Isnad* and its Significance," in *Hadith and Sunna: Ideals and Realities,* ed., P.K. Koya (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1996), 58.
[130] A. Rahman I. Doi, *Introduction to Hadith* (Nigeria: Arewa Books, 1981), 14; Muhammad Zubair Sidiqui, *Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 76.
[131] Muhammad Zubair Siddiqui, "The Science and the Critique of Islam," in *Hadith and Sunna: Ideals and Realities*, 72-73.
[132] "Traditionalism in Islam,"502.
[133] Ibid., 521-522.
[134] Ibid., 504.
[135] Ibid., 500.

Tradition provide basis for orthodoxy in Islam as earlier it was studied that the concept of orthodoxy is of capital importance in every religious tradition. The very word orthodoxy means "correctness of belief or doctrine" [136] and Islam is also called the "religion of the straight path"[137]. Thus, in Islamic Tradition, orthodoxy can be understood as the state of being on the "straight path." Orthodoxy provides the basis of Islamic traditionalism which in turn is grounded in Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, *Sharia* law as well as its esoteric elements as Sufism.

As stated earlier, *Sunnah* was the key element in interpreting the Qur'ān for the development of Islamic Law. Jurists also relied on *Ijmaa* or consensus of the Muslim community; the third source of Islamic Law and the principle of authority.[138] Jurists of the second and third centuries after the *Hijra* illustrated the revealed law from these three sources and "roots of Islamic jurisprudence." [139] They also mobilized the *Ijmaa* or consensus by equating it with unanimity among those pious ancestors who constituted the first generation of Muslims.[140] "On the basis of these sources, Muslim jurists built a system of law which, from the point of view of logical perfection, has been described as one of the most brilliant systems of human reasoning."[141]

The different ways of interpreting the Qur'ān and applying different ways of *qiyas and ra'y* on *Sunnah* of various jurists laid down the foundation of *madhabs.[142]* Some of these *madhabs* or schools died out during the course of time,[143] but four have been accepted by *Ijma* as orthodox and practiced during the past millennium. They constitute the main body of traditional *Sunnism*[144] and traditional Muslims all around the world adhere to either of these. The teachings of these four schools were recognized as orthodox and traditional by the Muslim community. These schools were named after their founders, the Imams Malik (*Maliki*),[145] Abu Hanifa (*Hanafi*),[146] Ahmed Ibn Hanbal (*Hanbali*)[147] and Shaf'i (*Shaf'i*).[148] Though they differed in various issues but fundamentals and the basics remained the same throughout the Islamic World. In Islamic Tradition, *Sharia* is defended as the divine law which has been crystallized in these classical and orthodox Schools of Law. Moreover it also accepts the possibility of giving fresh views on the

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[136] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Orthodoxy."

[137] Al-Ana'm 6:161.

[138] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966), 72-75; Saba Habachy, "Islam: Factors of Stability and Change," *Columbia Law Review*. 54, no. 5, *Community Security vs. Man's Right to Knowledge* (1954):712.

[139] Islam, 68-70.

[140] Ahmad Hassan, *The Doctrine of Ijma' in Islam: A Study of the Juridical Principle of Consensus* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1978), 3-5.

[141] Saba Habachy, "Islam: Factors of Stability and Change," 713.

[142] *Islam,* 81.

[143] *Islam,* 83; Muhammad Hameedullah Khan, *The Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence: A Comparative Study* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2001), 131-134; *Zahiris*, the Literalist, School of Tabari, Auzai, etc.

[144] *Islam,* 8; Ahmad Hassan, *The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, 1994), 21-28.

[145] Malikism, founded by Imam Malik ibn Anas (d.179/795), is based mostly on the practice of Medina and is very conservative in its approach to Law.

[146] Hanafism was founded by a Persian, Imam Abu Hanifah (d.150/767), who was a student of Imam Jafar Sadiq, the sixth Imam of Shi'ite Law, which is called Ja'fari law.

[147] The Hanbali School, founded by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855) from Baghdad, based itself solely on the Qur'ān and *Hadith* and gave a very strict interpretation of the Shariah.

[148] The Shafi'i School was founded by a student of Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Muhammad Idris al Shafi'i (d. 204/819). He was the one who completed and perfected the methods of jurisprudence in Islamic Law.

basis of legal principles *ijtihad,*[149] as well as making use of others according to such traditional legal principles as *qiyas*[150] *and istihsan*[151] and *istislah*[152], etc. In Islamic Tradition, all morality is derived from Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and in a more concrete manner from *Shariah.*[153]

Shariah or Orthodox Islamic Law Schools constitute the exoteric aspect of Islamic Tradition. Also, there are orthodox esoteric elements of Islamic Tradition. Although in most Western studies, orthodoxy is limited to exoteric elements but there is also an exoteric orthodoxy and orthopraxy and there is esoteric orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Traditional and orthodox Sufism is not only a part of Islamic orthodoxy [154] but it also constitutes the inner dimension of the Islamic Tradition. The sense of connectedness or *ittisaliya* which is the distinctive characteristic of Islamic Traditionalism also plays a key role in mysticism as in *Hadith*, in law and history.

"Sufism is the name of Islamic mysticism which is an attempt to reach an individual salvation through attaining true *tawhid.*"[155] The Sufi tradition or *tariqah* has played such a major role in shaping Muslim values, worship, theology, conversion, and social order that it has functioned almost as an equal partner with the "ulama tradition" of "normative" religious and legal learning in defining actual Muslim piety and practice.[156] Sufism traces its origins to the Holy Prophet (*SAW*) and his companions. Some of the Prophetic traditions are taken as mystical traditions as the one known as "*Hadith-e-Jibraeil.*"[157] The concept of 'Ihsān' mentioned in this *Hadith* has become the foundation

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[149] Ijtihad is defined as, "expending of maximum effort in the performance of an act. Technically, it is the effort made by the *mujtahid* in seeking knowledge of the *ahkam* (rules) of the *sharia* through interpretation." (Imran Hassan Khan Nyazee, *Islamic Jurisprudence* [Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2007], 263)

[150] *Islam,* 71; The term *qiyas,* according to the Muslim jurists, means analogical reasoning, i.e., concluding from a given principle embodied in a precedent that a new case falls under this principle or is similar to this precedent on the strength of a common essential feature called the 'reason'(*illa*).

[151] *Istihsan* was the form of *ray* in the School of Abu Hanifa. It was a unique method of exercising personal opinion by setting aside the apparent and strict analogy in the interest of public benefit, equity or justice. (*The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence,* 145-151)

[152] *Istislah* means a deduction of law based on consideration of public good or public welfare. Imam Malik sanctioned this doctrine. (*The Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence: A Comparative Study,* 56)

[153] *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, 15.

[154] *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*, 85-86.

[155] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 23.

[156] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam,* 130.

[157] Umar ibn Khattab (*RA*) said: "As we were sitting one day before the Messenger of Allah (*SAW*), a man suddenly appeared. He wore pure white clothes and his hair was dark black—yet there were no signs of travel on him, and none of us knew him. He came and sat down in front of the Prophet (*SAW*), placing his knees against his, and his hands on his thighs. He said, "O Muhammad! Tell me about Islam."The Messenger of Allah (*SAW*), replied, "Islam is to bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God; and to perform the prayer; pay zakat; fast Ramadan; and to perform Hajj to the House if you are able."The man said, "You have spoken the truth," and we were surprised that he asked and then confirmed the answer. Then, he asked, "Tell me about belief (*iman*)."The Prophet (*SAW*) replied, "It is to believe in Allah; His Angels; His Books; His Messengers; the Last Day; and in destiny—its good and bad."The man said, "You have spoken the truth. Now, tell me about spiritual excellence (*ihsan*)."The Prophet (*SAW*), replied, "It is to serve Allah as though you behold Him; and if you don't behold him, (know that) He surely sees you." "Now, tell me of the Last Hour," asked the man. The Prophet *(SAW)* replied, "The one asked knows no more of it than the one asking." "Then tell me about its signs," said the man. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, "That slave women give birth to their mistresses; and that you see barefoot, unclothed, beginning shepherds competing in the construction of tall buildings." Then the visitor left, and I waited a long time. Then the Prophet (*SAW*) asked me, "Do you know, Umar, who the questioner was?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best."He *(SAW)* said, "It was Jibril. He came to you to teach

for Sufism. Companions of the Holy Prophet (*SAW*) *Salman al Farsi* (*RA*) and *Owais-e-Qarani* (*RA*) are also symbolized as mystics.[158] Mystic tendencies did develop after the martyrdom of *Ali b abi Talib* (*RA*) in the period of the Ummayads as the government was more involved in worldly desires and luxuries. The resistance of the pious circles to the government during this period significantly shaped Sufism.[159]

Sufism in the beginning remained limited to individual circles but with the development of formal disciplines of Islamic law and theology, it has grown into institution or paths (*tariqas*) with a mass appeal.[160] From about the sixth and seventh centuries (AH), there developed orders from these paths.[161] In each of the orders continued particular inner or esoteric teachings traced back to a master teacher, from whom the *tariqah* often took its name and this *isnad* was traced back to Companions of the Holy Prophet, most often *Ali ibn Abi Talib* (*RA*).[162] Sufis are of the view that prophecy (*nubuwwah*) was replaced after the death of the last Prophet (*SAW*) with sainthood or the state of nearness to God *(wilayah),* which has its own succession. Thus it can be noted that "at the center of systematized Sufi thought the key concept of an initiatory *isnad* of spiritual guides or masters (*murshids, shaykhs, pīrs*) that is most commonly referred to as a "chain," or *silsilah*.[163] The spiritual power (*barakah*) of charismatic religious figures is thus achieved in a line of spiritual descent that links each new generation and lay followers of an order to the spiritual authority of the Prophet (*SAW*) and ultimately to God-through the Companions and the best of their successors."[164] The notion of the *silsilah* is so much pivotal in Sufism that it is used generally in many Sufi traditions throughout the Islamic world to designate an entire order and/or its tradition of teaching and initiation.[165] The induction of the Sufi into a particular "path" receives its and authority through the *silsilah* into which he or she gains acceptance and it is also noteworthy that almost all *tariqas* have traced their *silsilas* back to Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) through his son-in-law and cousin, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (*RA*), most often through the famous, *al-Hasan al-Basri* (d. 110/728) and from Sufi, *al- Junayd al-Baghdadi* (d. 298/9I0).[166]

It can also be observed that there has been a conflict between *ulama* the guardians of *Sharia* and Sufis due to inclusion of heterodox elements in Sufism[167] which were being corrected and removed by emergence of orthodox Sufism. This orthodox Sufism culminated in the works of Imam Ghazali "who not only reconstituted orthodox Islam, making Sufism an integral part of it, but also a great reformer of Sufism, purifying it of un-Islamic elements and putting it to the service of orthodox Islam."[168] His influence throughout the Islamic World is incalculable as Sufis of Africa, Central Asia and India derive their doctrines from his teachings.[169]

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you your religion." [Imam Mulism ibn Hajjaj bin Muslim alQushairi Nesaburi, *Jami' as Sahih,* Kitab ul Imān, babul Bayan al Imān wal Islām wal Ihsān wa Wajub al Imān bi Ithbāt Qadar allah hi Ta'ala- wa Bayan ad-Dalīl al al Tabarri mimman la Yu'minu Bilqadar wa ighlath al qawl fi Haqqihey, *Hadith*, 1.]

[158] *Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* 28.
[159] Ibid.,29-30.
[160] *Islam,* 132.
[161] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, 132.
[162] "Traditionalism in Islam," 515.
[163] Mystical Dimensions of Islam, 231, 239-240; Islam,156.
[164] "Traditionalism in Islam," 515.
[165] *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 26-28.
[166] Junaid Baghdadi and Hassan Basri
[167] *Islam*, 129-130, 134.
[168] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, 140.
[169] *Islam*, 140.

Another side of Islamic Tradition that developed during the period of *Ummahyds* is philosophical. The emergence of *Shi'a*, *Khawārij* and other similar movements promoted philosophical debates like divine will, nature of divine attributes and reason, etc. The development of Muslim philosophy and parallel to this the development of theology constituted the intellectual side of Islamic Tradition. Islam created the richest philosophical tradition, one which possesses great significance for Islam itself and has survived as a continuous tradition to this day.[170] In the Abbasid period, translation of the Greek philosophical texts into Arabic contributed to the development of Muslim philosophy.[171] Islam created a powerful and original philosophy within the intellectual universe of monotheism and the *Qur'ānic* revelation, while incorporating those elements of Greek philosophy which conformed to the Islamic perspective. "Being traditional philosophy based upon supra individualistic opinion, Islamic philosophy developed schools and perspectives which were followed over centuries, rather than being changed and overthrown and opposed by one philosopher after another. Some of the philosophers as Averroes and Avicenna were criticized by theologians who developed another paradigm of Islamic Tradition."[172] Still, Islamic Philosophical Tradition despite its diversity, variety and richness, shares some common features. It is dominated by the word of Allah, Qur'ān and Prophetic (*SAW*) traditions *(Hadiths)*, assures harmony between reason and revelation, and provides within the context of a religious tradition dominated by monotheism, metaphysics centered on the Supreme doctrine of One.[173] Muslim philosophy is not only rich in religious and ethical philosophy, but also in the philosophies of nature and mathematics as well as of art. In fact, Islamic sciences were cultivated in the Islamic philosophy and almost always by men who were not only scientists but also philosophers.[174]

In the development of different intellectual and mystical streamlines of the Islamic Tradition, the role of *madrasa* education cannot be ruled out which also constitutes a significant portion of the Islamic tradition. The quest for knowledge and its true celebration were dominated from beginning to end by its sacred quality and nature. In Islam, knowledge was never divorced from the sacred presence. Islamic education is related to holiness and wholeness and is concerned with the whole being of the men and women whom it sought to educate.

In the early period of Islam, *khuttab* were setup as the institutes for imparting elementary education to the young for learning Qur'ān and its message.[175] The rise of Islamic jurisprudence gave way to higher learning. *Madrasa Nizamia* under patronage of Veizer Nizam ul Mulk around 1064 AD was the next step in the evolution of higher learning and education in Muslim World.[176] This *madrasa* can be nominated as college. The opening of this school was also a transition from mosque to schools.[177] Established in the time of

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[170] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Role and the Meaning of Philosophy in Islam," *Studia Islamica*, vol. XXXVII, 1973, 57-80.

[171] C. A. Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 32-34.

[172] *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, 133.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Charles Michael Stanton, *Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period A.D. 700-1300* (Mary Land: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1990), 14-15.

[176] George Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24, no. 1 (1961): 1-56, http://www.jstor.org/.: *Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period A.D. 700-1300*, 37.

[177] Mehdi Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education* (Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1964), 39.

the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*), the *madrasa* has maintained its integrity as the source of religious learning as well as other disciplines of knowledge. *Madrasa* has provided a special atmosphere; it combined the academic and social lives of students and teachers residing in it and formed a community of scholars.[178] These *madrassas* were established on the principle of transmission of knowledge from teacher to disciple and then a formal *ijaza* (a letter certifying the proficiency of student in that particular subject) was granted to transmit this knowledge to others.[179] The radiance of such institutions and their significance was so great that soon they were being noticed throughout the whole of the Islamic world and in fact played a fundamental role in the foundation of the European centers of higher education, a role that is only now fully recognized.[180] *Madrassas* founded by Nizam ul Mulk were very famous all over the world and in the words of Shalabi, "no single village lacks one of these schools."[181] The main activity of the *madrassas* was instruction in the religious sciences, especially Divine Law *(al Shariah)*, its principles *(al-usul)*, jurisprudence *(al-Fiqh)*, and theology, etc.[182] These disciplines together were referred to as the transmitted *(naqli)* sciences and they dominated the educational activity of most *madrassas*.[183] Another important feature of the *madrasa* was its beautiful architecture which served the needs of boarding for students and faculty.[184] To this day, in most Islamic cities, after the mosques, the *madrasas*, which in fact were always related geographically to mosques, are the most notable architectural masterpieces to be found.

Tradition of Islamic architecture manifested through mosques and domes, tradition of Islamic calligraphy and painting also constitute the big circle of Islamic Tradition.[185] These various forms of art insist upon its relation to the inner dimension of the Islamic revelation and its crystallization of the spiritual treasures of the religion in visible or audible forms.[186] Islamic architecture has made full use of light and shade and heat and coolness, of wind and its aerodynamics.[187] The ecological harmony in Islamic architecture is the result of Islamic spirituality guided by Qur'ān and *Sunnah*.[188] In the Qur'ān, the terminologies related to modern architecture is mentioned at many places.[189] Islamic architecture though is unique and distinct from other forms of architecture as it has assimilated elements of local culture and made them own the characteristic of Islamic tradition. This characteristic is true for all forms of Islamic Tradition. Historical analysis shows that Islam is the religion of adaptability, wherever it was embraced in any part of the world, it assimilated in it the local norms and traditions while remaining within the limits of orthodoxy.

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[178]*Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period A.D.* 700-1300, 47.

[179] Ibid.*,* 49.

[180] Nakosteen sums up the outcomes of Muslim education as, "The Muslims passed on the experimental method of science, however imperfect, to the West… They stimulated European thought, reacquired it with the Greek and other classical Greek cultures and thus helped to bring about Renaissance. They contributed knowledge of hospitals, sanitation, and food to Europe" (*History of Islamic Origins of* West*ern Education*, 62).

[181] Ahmad Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education* (Karachi: Indus Publication, 1952), 58.

[182]*Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, 126.

[183] Ibid.

[184]*Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, 125.

[185]*The Islamic Tradition: An Introduction*, 178-179.

[186]Ibid., 179.

[187] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Islamic *Art and Spirituality* (Cambridge: Golgonooza Press, 1987), 56.

[188]*Islamic Art and Spirituality*,57.

[189] Prof. Gelani Ikram Ali Shah, *Architecture and Town Planning in the Holy Qur'ān* (Lahore: Ferozsons Ltd, 1991)

This particular feature of adaptability and flexibility of Islamic tradition makes it distinct from the world traditions. The fundamental reason behind this uniqueness is the prohibition of the spirit of exaggeration in all aspects of life mentioned in the Qur'ān[190] and *Sunnah* of the Prophet *(SAW)*.[191] Islamic tradition declares the right path for the orthodox community where its adherents keep the forces of conservatism and the forces of progressiveness in equilibrium.[192] Both these factors are necessary for the preservation and continuity of Islamic tradition. Without the former, Islam would lose its character and yield to dangerous heresies; without the latter, it would lose touch with the changing conditions of life. [193] A necessary balance has always been maintained between traditionalism and innovation in Islamic tradition. Over the centuries, with the advent of new inventions, new changes were welcomed and legitimized after close scrutiny and critical analysis of *ulama*, religious scholars and jurists. The process of exercising legal opinion in case of not finding any legal evidence from the past also continued throughout the history of Muslims supported with the strong source of consensus of the Muslim community which laid down the basis of collective *Ijtihad*.[194] There were of course, continuous renewals from within that must not, however be confused with reform in its modern sense. Many great scholars of law continued to appear and Sufism was also rejuvenated in several areas.[195] In the words of Nasr,

"New ways of conceptualizing the Sharia, efforts to reach new audiences, new conceptions of religion and of the 'ulama's position in society and polity, and new roles of religious and political activism are, some of the many facets of change that continue to sweep through the world of ulama. Such changes are not the product of some grand blueprint for bringing them about; nor are they necessarily recognized as "changes. Many, indeed are the paradoxical product of the 'ulama's very effort to conserve their tradition in a changing world. Whether or not, they acknowledge this, such an effort necessarily entails continuous redefinition of themselves, their stances and their intellectual sources."[196]

The entire Islamic history is full of these examples since the time of the Holy Prophet (*SAW*) when changes were made in Islamic law according to the contemporary conditions without entailing a break with tradition.[197] The process of exercising *ijtihad* for the

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[190] al-Mā'idah 5:77 ;An-Nisā'4:171.

[191] The Apostle of Allah (*SAW)* said: "Do not impose austerities on yourselves so that austerities will be imposed on you, for people have imposed austerities on themselves and Allah imposed austerities on them. Their survivors are to be found in cells and monasteries…" [Sulaiman Dawood bin Asha'as,*Sunan Abi Dawood,* Kitab ul Adab, Bab, fil Hasad, 4886.]

[192]al-Baqarah, 2 : 143.

[193] *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*, 84-87.

[194] Examples of collective ijtihads can be observed during the reigns of Abu Bakrτ and Umar RA. They used to call upon the companions and used to take their opinions in any new matter, faced by Muslim *Ummah*. They issued judgments after the consensus of these companions. There are many examples of this kind of judgments which laid down the basis for collective *Ijtihad*. ; Examples of these judgments can be found in Abu Yusuf, Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim al-Ansari, *Kitab al-Kharaj* (Cairo: al-Matba'at al-Salafiyah, 1325), 26-27; al-Qasim ibn 'Abd al-Salam Abu 'Ubayd, *Kitab al-Amwal*, ed. Khalil Harras (Cairo: Maktabah Kulliyah al-Azhariyah, 1975/1395), 61-62; Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Bahram al-Darimi, *Sunan al-Darimi* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 1:58, Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, n.d.), 2:720-21; al-'Ayni, *'Umdat* (n.p.: n.d.), 23:266; Yunus ibn 'Abdulah Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, ed. Abu al-Ashbal al-Zuhayri, *Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi*, 1st ed. (Dar Ibn al-Jawzi: 1994/1414), 2:56.

[195] *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*, 101-106.

[196] Ibid., 124.

[197] Aznan Hasan, "An Introduction to Collective Ijtihad (Ijtihad *J*ama 'i): Concept and Applications," in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (20:2): 29; Taha Jabir al- 'Alwani, *Ijtihad* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), 6-9.

legitimization of new changes emerging in the world of Islam gained momentum during the nineteenth century. Throughout the Muslim world, reforms were made within the divine limits to meet the local norms and traditions. For instance, the Ottoman reforms of *Tanzimat* including the commercial code of 1850 were similar to European commercial and criminal code. The *Majalla* of 1870 based on the rulings of Hanafi School of law provided greater degree of regularity required in complex economic transactions, including trade with non-Muslim powers. This was the first and most successful attempt to codify Islamic Law.[198] This *Majalla* was also the beginning of the era of collective *Ijtihad.*[199] There are many other examples of the local variety of *ijtihad* conducted in different parts of the Muslim world. Now it has become a matter of routine practice that reforms are made in Islamic legal practices on the basis of *ijtihad*. In Saudi Arabia, reforms occur on routine basis on the invocation of *masala mursala* (Public Welfare).[200] For further legislation based on the *ijtihad* of *ulama*, a Jurisprudence Academy of the Organization of Islamic Conference is working to cater for the needs of modern period.[201] There are many other many academies, organizations and councils working at local level to conduct the process of *ijtihad*.[202] Other than varieties of individual *ijtihad*, numerous international institutions are performing this noble task of exercising *ijtihad* at collective level. The collective *ijtihad* ensures harmony and unity among Muslims belonging to different ethnic groups, different tribes living in different parts of the world.[203] These

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[198] Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Islamic Law, Concept and Codification* (Lahore: Islamic Publishers, n.d), 89-105.

[199] *First Encyclopedia of Islam,* 1913–1936, 1ˢᵗ ed., s.v. "Medjelle."

[200] *Muslim Politics,* 26; The author of the *Muslim Politics* has given the example of Social Insurance Law of 1970 which was a departure "from the classical laws of inheritance as in the case of deceased worker: Inheritors of his governmentally guaranteed insurance would now be principally his wife and children and not simply ---- as might be expected – male agnatic relatives."

[201] King Fahd Abdul Aziz's inaugural address on the eve of the establishment of the Academy of Ijtihad is quoted here when he said, "Such Ijtihad must be validated by the ulema after due research in and consideration of old and new jurisprudence. In this regard, the call for the establishment of this academy reflects an imperative need at this stage of development of the Muslim Ummah. Indeed it provides the truly Islamic response to questions raised by the challenges of modern life. This requires the pooling of the efforts by jurists, scholars, sages, thinkers throughout the Muslim world with a view to seeking answers to the questions posed by the challenges of our time, based on the reality of our tolerant Shariah." [Dale F. Eickelman, James P. Piscotri, *Muslim Politics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 26-27]

[202] Aznan Hasan has listed some prominent Muslim countries and the institutions for performing Ijtihad on collective level.; *Egypt:* The Academy for Islamic Researches (Majma' al-Buhuth al-Fiqhiyah), and The High Council for Islamic Affairs (al-Majlis al-A'la li al-Shu'un al-Islamiyah), *Saudi Arabia:*The Organization of Great Jurists of Saudi Arabia(Hay'at Kibar al-'Ulama' fi al-Mamlakat al-Arabiyat al- Sa'udiyah); The Permanent Committee for Scientific Researches and Ifta' (al-Lajnat al-Da'imah li al-Buhuth al-'Ilmiyah wa al-Ifta'); The General Commission for the Administration of Scientific Researches, Ifta' and Missionary Works and Preaching (al-Ri'asat al-'Ammah li Idarat al-Buhuth wa al-Ifta' wa al- Da'wah wa al-Irshad); The International Fiqh Academy (Majma'al-Fiqh al-Islami al-Dawli); and The Fiqh Academy (Majma' al- Fiqh al-Islami).*Kuwait:* The General Administration for Ifta' (Kuwait); The Islamic Organization for Medical Researches (al-Munazzamat al- Islamiyat li al-'Ulum al-Tibbiyah); The Islamic Council for Fatwa and Shari'ah Supervisory in the Kuwaiti House of Finance (Hay'at al-Fatwa wa al-Riqabat al-Shar'iyah fi Bayt al-Tamwil al-Kuwayti); and The International Shari'ah Council for Affairs Related to Zakat under the House of Zakat in Kuwait (al-Hay'at al- Shar'iyat al-'Alamiyat li al-Zakat al-Tabi'at li Bayt al-Zakat fi Dawlat al-Kuwayt). *Sudan:* The Board for Shari'at's Ifta' in Sudan (Majlis al-Ifta' al- Shar'i fi al-Sudan) and The Supreme Council of the Shari'ah Supervisory Board for Banking and Financial Institutions in Sudan (al-Hay'at al-'Ulya al-Shar'iyah li al-Jihaz al-Masrafi wa al- Mu'assasat al-Maliyah fi Sudan). *Pakistan:* The Council for Islamic Teaching in Pakistan (Majlis al-Fikr al-Islami bi Bakistan). These Institutions hire scholars only from their respective country. However there are other institutions which hire scholars from all over the world as International Fiqh Academy, The Islamic Organization for Medical Researches and the International Shari'ah Council for Affairs Related to Zakat under the House of Zakat in Kuwait. (Aznan Hassan, "An Introduction to Collective Ijtihad (Ijtihad *Jama* 'i): Concept and Applications," 39-41)

[203] These institutions do not only stick to the opinion of any specific school of thought.

international organizations work on the principle of minimizing the juristic and theological differences among the Muslim *Ummah*. Their main aim is to cater for the needs of the traditional Muslims living in the modern and postmodern world.[204]

There is of course, a visible unity in Islamic civilization. Despite political fragmentation, theological differences, and ethnic distinctions, Islamic tradition has maintained its unity of the Islamic community and a constant desire for political unity within the *dar al-Islam* in the hearts of all Muslims.[205] The central factor in the creation of unity among Muslims is the Qur'ān. Then there are the *Sunnah* and *Hadith* of the Prophet (*SAW*), which are very powerful unifying factors. Although there are local varieties in the understanding of the twin sources of the Islamic religion, that is, the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah,* there are three central doctrines upon which all schools of Islam agree, namely *tawhid,* or Divine oneness, *nubuwwah*, or prophecy, and *ma'ad*, or eschatology.[206] Hossein Nasr, while discussing the unity and diversity of Islamic Tradition states,

"The vast majority of Muslims still breathe in a universe in which the Name of God is associated above all with Compassion and Mercy, and they turn to him in patience even in the midst of the worst tribulations. If one looks at the extensive panorama of the Islamic spectrum, it becomes evident for the vast majority of Muslims, the traditional norms based on peace and openness to others, norms that have governed their lives over the centuries and are opposed both secularist modernism and "fundamentalism" and central concern. And after the dust settles in this tumultuous period of both Islamic and global history, it will be the voice of traditional Islam that will have the final say in the Islamic world."[207]

The significant role of tradition in Islamic societies is strengthened by the presence of different Schools of Tradition. These Schools adhere to different forms of Islamic Tradition in one way or the other.

Islamic Traditionalist Schools

The broader term used for the cluster of traditional Muslims is Sunni Muslims [208] all around the world. The Sunni Muslims follow and adhere to either of the orthodox legal schools[209] and constitute different schools of traditional Islam. They follow the doctrines of orthodox legal schools and are divided on the basis of doctrines.[210] There is a group of traditionalists who share the doctrine, emphasizing the study of law and the traditions attributed to Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) as well as a self consciously Muslim belief and practice.[211] The other traditionalists affirm not just the authority of the Prophet (*SAW*) but also of religious saints and holy people, whom they revere as source of religious guidance

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[204] Aznan Hasan writes on the importance of collective Ijtihad, "Its role is essential to Islam's continuity and survival in the modern world. It is a viable way to accommodate all Muslims, organizations, or even authorities who are concerned with a more utilitarian solution that suits the exigencies of modern life and business." ("An Introduction to Collective Ijtihad (Ijtihad *J*ama 'i): Concept and Applications," 37)

[205] *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*, 108.

[206] *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*, 108.

[207] *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity,* 108-112.

[208] The Islamic term that was generally applied to this cluster of traditional Muslim groups within Islamicate society during the first few centuries was *ahl al- Sunna wal-jama'a* "the people of the Sunna and the Community," from which the term "Sunni" is derived. This term is also used to distinguish from the Shi'i Muslims all over the world.

[209] Hanafi, Shafii, Hanbali, Maliki.

[210] Here the names of these schools would not be mentioned because it would be very difficult to cover the whole Muslim world. However these traditional Muslims follow orthodoxy in different ways.

[211] In the sub continent it is called the Deoband School.

and vehicles of mediation between God and human beings.[212] Another traditional school, for its part, denies the legitimacy not just of all practices lacking a basis in scriptural texts, but even of the classical schools of law, stringently insisting on the Qur'ān and *Hadith* as the exclusive and directly accessible sources of guidance.[213]

The term traditionalist is also referred to reformist religious movement primarily associated to *hanbaliya,* the followers of Ahmad bin Hanbal.[214] They were nominated traditionalists in opposition to *Mu'tazila* who were called rationalists.[215]

There are a considerable number of traditional *ulama* who are also working as modernists and advocate the traditional themes and doctrines in a modernist way. Hence, they also constitute the larger circle of Islamic tradition. Presently *Shi'a* follows their legal school of Imam Jafar Sadiq and orthodoxy are also nominated as traditionalists. After the Iran revolution in 1974, the Iranian Government follows *Shi'a* orthodox doctrines. They are nominated as traditional.

There is another significant school which is recognized with the name of 'traditionalist.' It arose mainly in the West in reaction to the destruction caused by Western modernism and modernity. From the 1960s onward, it began to manifest itself in the public intellectual arena and challenged both the modernists and the secularists. Rene Guenon was the pioneer in this School.[216] He studied deeply the traditions and histories of the West and East and was impressed by the occult of the orient. He challenged the premises of Western modernity and synthesized the crisis of modern man.[217] Along with him many other followers' advocated certain common doctrines called tradition. "They considered tradition as the continuity of revelation: an uninterrupted transmission, through innumerable generation, of the spiritual and cosmological principles, sciences and law resulting from a revealed religion: nothing is neglected, from the establishment of social orders and codes of conduct to the canons regulating the arts and architecture, ornamentation and dress; it includes mathematical, physical, medical and psychological sciences, encompassing moreover those deriving from celestial movements."[218] They also emphasized that all religions have some common transcendent unity and originally all religions are good and divine.[219] The followers of this School referred all things back to superior planes of being, and eventually to ultimate principles.[220]

The use of tradition in the writings of these traditionalists is equated with *Philosophia Perennis* or primordial tradition.[221] All of the followers of this School criticized the West and its technological advancement which destroyed traditional culture in a profound

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[212] In sub continent, this school of thought is known as *Brelwi* (both Brelwi and Deobandi are followers of the Hanafi School of Law).

[213] Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in the Contemporary Islam*: *Custodians of Change* (UK, Oxford University Press, 2004), 1; They are called *salafi* the followers of Adul Wahhab and Ibn-e-Taymiyya.

[214] Richard C Martin, Defenders of Reason in Islam, 14.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Rene Guenon, *East and* West (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2002); William W. Quinn Jr., *The Only Tradition* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 3.

[217] Rene Guenon, *Crisis of the Modern World* (London: Luzac & Co., 1962), 34-56.

[218] Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "Why I am not a Traditionalist", 2002; http://www.religioscope.com/pdf/esotrad/legenhausen.pdf.

[219] Frithjof Schuon, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions,* trans. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, n.d), 23-65.

[220] Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "Why I am not a Traditionalist", 2002; http://www.religioscope.com/pdf/esotrad/legenhausen.pdf.

[221] The Only Tradition, 3.

way.[222] Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984), Marco Pallis (1895-1989), Martin Lings (1909-2005), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b.1933) and Huston Smith (b. 1919) [223] are the most prominent names of this school. These scholars were not only deeply rooted in the local religious tradition whether Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist, but were also well acquainted with the West. They insisted on participation and regular initiation in a living tradition in order to understand and assimilate the first principles and the esoteric teachings.[224] They began to defend the integral Islamic Tradition, the *tariqah* as well as the *sharia*, the intellectual disciplines as well as the traditional arts.[225] Such scholars base themselves on the universality of revelation stated in the Qur'ān. These scholars and leaders sought to preserve the rhythm of traditional Islamic life as well as its intellectual and spiritual traditions and find allies in Judaism and Christianity in confronting the challenges of secularism as well as globalization.[226] But one thing is important; they all emphasized the exoteric dimension of religion.

One thing should also be kept in mind while observing all traditionalist schools; once the people who were nominated as modernists or liberal by their contemporaries became traditional for the later ages as happened in the case of the *Hanafi's* as they were called as *'Ahl ar raaye'* by their contemporaries, and now they are nominated as traditional school, part of Islamic traditionalism. So it is not necessary that modernists of one period would be called traditionalist for the coming time ahead.

The development and refinement of Islamic Tradition is evident from these different schools built up over a period of time. The opposite elements deviating from tradition play an important role in the crystallization and maturity of Islamic Tradition.

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[222] Guenon states, "As the danger of the inventions, even those that are not designed to play a final role for humanity but that nevertheless cause many catastrophes---not to mention the unsuspected troubles they create in the terrestrial environment---as this danger, we say, will doubtless continue to grow to proportions difficult to determine, it is permissible to think without too much improbability that it is perhaps by this method that the modern world will achieve its own destruction if it is incapable of stopping this process while there is still enough time; (Rene Guenon, *Crisis of the Modern World* [London: Luzac & Co., 1962], 144.

[223] Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1981), 12-45.

[224] *The Only Tradition*, 303.

[225] The name of Martin Lings, Seyyed Hoseein Nasr and Frithjof Schuon is particularly mentioned in this regard and are described in *tariqa*.

[226] *The Islamic Tradition: An Introduction*, 222-224.

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