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**Maulana Azad Ideal Educational Trust**

Bolpur, West Bengal, India (Reg. No. IV01697/14)

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Editor: *Dr. Aurang Zeb Azmi*

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## Editor's Note

The second issue of the Journal is in your hands. We were so late in printing the first issue of our journal though we had already finalized it in the month of January 2016. The delay happened due to some legal formalities. Sincere thanks to Allah Who bestowed upon us desire and courage to serve Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Like the previous issue this one also contains eleven articles both original and translations with one book-review and one long poem. This time we have introduced one new topic and that is obituary of the great scholars of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

The first article is second and last part of the article of Maulāna Waḥiduddīn Khān. Maulāna Khān has proved through ample examples that the Qur'ān has remained an eternal miracle and will forever remain so *in sha Allah*. His systematic and scientific approach of the topic is well-known to the academic circle.

The second article is second part of English translation of the Arabic thesis '*Tarjamāt Ma'āni al-Qur'ān al-Injiliziyyah al-Mukhtārah munḍu 1930 ḥattā 2001*'. It is also an introductory discussion where the author has discussed how the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) pondered upon the Qur'ān to understand its contents. In this sub-chapter the author figured out the sources from which the companions of the Prophet benefited directly. Through several examples the author proved that these companions benefitted from all existing sources for thinking on the Qur'ān.

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The third article is on emergence of interest-free finance with special reference to India. After discussing the social and legal importance of interest-free finance the author has indicated how it was approved by India- a non-Islamic country.

The fourth article discusses harmony of religion with philosophy. Many Muslim philosophers like Fārābī (d. 950 A.D) and Ibn Sīnā' (d. 1037 A.D), thought that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy. But there are some other Muslim philosophers like al-Kindī (d. 873 A.D) and Sajistānī, who were of the opinion that religion and philosophy are two separate domains of knowledge, and for that reason, they cannot be reconciled. Ibn Rushd (d. 1198 A.D) supported the view of first group. The author, Prof. Alṭāf Aḥmad A'ẓmī, has discussed, in his paper, the attitudes of religion and philosophy to some basic issues related to metaphysics, and their harmony and conflict in this regard with special reference to Ibn Rushd's thought.

The fifth article is on the origin and development of Arabu-Tamil language. It has been written by Dr. K M A Ahmed Zubair, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Arabic (The New College, Chennai). The Arabu-Tamil language emerged as an Islamic classifier but now it is among the dead languages. The writer, who knows the language well, has discussed the matter elaborately.

The sixth article is second part of English translation of the book '*Arab-o-Hind 'Ahd-i-Risālat men*' [(India and Arabia during the Period of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)]. This part deals with old trade relations between Arabia and India.

The seventh article is a critical survey of the book "*The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature to the End of the*

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*Umayyad Period*". Cambridge University Press is famous for printing several significant voluminous books of Arabic and Islamic Studies. But what the orientalist intend by their works on Islam and Arabic language is not unknown to the Muslim scholars. Professor Faizanullah Farooqi who is a great scholar and critic of Arabic and Islamic Studies and a poet of Arabic, Persian and Urdu took this book into notice and studied it critically. He has pointed out its slips, mistakes and distortions made on one way or the other. It is a balanced critical study whose first part is in your hand.

The eighth article is on Islamic history written and compiled in Urdu language. Urdu language, like other living languages, is not only a language of fictions and novels but also it has in its garb a considerable collection of books of humanities and sciences. The writer Dr. Ashfaque Ahmad Islahi is my class-fellow and a good researcher. This article is a thorough study of the topic.

The ninth article sheds light on the history of the madrasas in Gujarāt during the rule of the Sultans. It is a good article written by the famous historian Maulānā Sayyid Abū Ṣafar Nadwī who wrote a marvelous book on the topic 'Gujarāt kī Tamaddunī Tārīkh'. The book mostly refers to the manuscripts on the topic.

The tenth article is on Maḵhdūm family and its contribution to Arabic language and literature. The Maḵhdūm family which lived in Mālābār, acted as the centre for literary and religious studies. Many scholars who composed numerous works in Arabic in different disciplines, belong to this family. This article is a good attempt to highlight the contribution of this family to the Arabic language and literature.

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The eleventh article is on contribution of Ḥakīm Muḥammad Ajmal Khān to the Arabic studies. Ḥakīm Muḥammad Ajmal Khān about whom ‘Allāmah Shibli Nu’māni said, “*To me none is more respectable than Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān throughout India and that’s because he is peerless in respect of knowledge and leadership.*” was a great scholar of Arabic studies. He was an honorary member of the famous Arabic Academy in Damascus ‘*Mujamma’-ul-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah*’. But this side of his life has not been highlighted so far. The article in your hand is a humble effort to fill this gap.

These papers have been entailed with the obituary of a great Indian scholar of Islamic Studies, *Maulānā Sulṭān Aḥmad Iṣlāḥī*, who breathed his last in the mid-night of 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. Maulānā Iṣlāḥī (1950-2016) was the author of 65 books and a think-tank of Jamat-i-Islami, Hind. He introduced new topics to the readers of Islamic Studies in Urdu. He wrote on third world, civil line, joint family system, life of those who work in foreign countries, child labour and sex in Islam. All his writings are full of references of the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. He was also an expert of Islamic Jurisprudence.

This time Miss. Pruba Banerjee has reviewed another book of Maulāna Waḥiduddīn Khān entitled ‘The True Face of Islam’. It is a collection of his essays on the topic compiled and edited by Raamish Şiddīqui. The book has been published from Harper Element (Harper Collins) in 2015. It is a thorough book-review as per the motto of our journal.

This issue ends at two one long poems. First was composed by my father Layeeque Aḥmad who breathed his last on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. My dear father wrote this poem so that I could reply to the question most probably to be asked in the question paper of English during my madrasah education. My

father was not only a poet of English language but also he did several researches on Mathematics which will be published soon *in sha Allah*. The second poem was composed by Nazik Sadiq al-Mala'ikah. Dr. K M A Ahmed Zubair rendered it into English.

At the end I wish to express my gratitude to all those who encouraged me and extended their help and support in preparation and publication of this issue including the members of the advisory, editorial and review boards of the Journal. May Allah bestow upon us more and more desire and courage to serve Arabic and Islamic Studies!

**Dr. Aurang Zeb Azmi**

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## The Qur'ān: An Abiding Wonder

✎...Maulāna Waḥīduddīn Khān<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: Prof. Farīda Khānam<sup>2</sup>



### Chapter Two: The Qur'ān—The Prophet's Miracle

Every Prophet was given a miracle – a sign. The miracle of the Prophet of Islam is the Qur'ān. The prophethood of Muḥammad, on whom be peace, is to be valid until the Last Day. It is imperative, therefore, that his miracle also be one which would last for all time. The Qur'ān was, therefore, assigned to the Prophet as his everlasting miracle.

The Prophet's opponents demanded miracles, such as those performed by previous prophets, but the Qur'ān stated clearly that such miracles would not be forthcoming. (17: 59) The Qur'ān even had this to say to the Prophet:

“If you find their aversion hard to bear (and would like to show them a miracle), seek if you can a burrow in the earth or ladder to the sky by which you may bring them a sign. Had God pleased, He would have given them guidance, one and all. Do not be ignorant then. (06: 35)

Instead, the revealed Book of God (the Qur'ān) was made into the Prophet's miracle:

“They ask: ‘Why has no sign been given him by his Lord?’ Say: ‘Signs are in the hands of God. My mission is only to give plain

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<sup>1</sup> Great Indian Thinker of Arabic & Islamic Studies

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islami, New Delhi

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warning.’ Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Surely in this there is a blessing and an admonition to true believers. (29: 50-51)

There are many different aspects of Qur’ān’s miraculous nature. Here we are going to concentrate on just three:

1. The language of the Qur’ān – Arabic – has, unlike other international languages, remained a living form of communication over the ages.
2. The Qur’ān is unique among divine scriptures in that its text has remained intact in the original form.
3. The Qur’ān challenged its doubters to produce a book like it. No one has been able to take up this challenge, and produce anything comparable to the Book of God.

The languages in which all the ancient scriptures were revealed have been locked in the archives of history. The only exception is Arabic, the language of the Qur’ān, which is still current in the world today. Millions of people still speak and write the language in which the Qur’ān was revealed nearly 1500 years ago. This provides stunning proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān, for there is no other book in history which has been able to make such an impact on its language; no other book has moulded a whole language according to its own style, and maintained it in that form over the centuries.

Take the *Injīl*, known as the New Testament, of which the oldest existing copy is in Greek and not Aramaic, the language which Jesus is thought to have spoken. That means that we possess only a translated account of what the Prophet Jesus said and did; and that too, in ancient Greek, which is considerably different from the modern language. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the

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Greek language had changed so much that the meaning of at least 550 words in the New Testament - about 12% of the entire text - was not known. At that time a German expert, Adolf Deissman, discovered some ancient scrolls in Egypt. From them it emerged that biblical Greek was in fact a colloquial version of classical Greek. This language was spoken in Palestine during the first century AD. Deissman was able to attach meanings to some of the unknown words, but there are another fifty words whose meanings are still unknown. (*The Gospels and the Jesus of History*, by Xavier Leon-Dufour S.J.)

Ernest Renan (1823-1894) carried out extensive research on Semitic languages. He wrote a book on their vocabularies, in which he had this to say about the Arabic language:

“The Arabic language is the most astonishing event of human history. Unknown during the classical period, it suddenly emerged as a complete language. After this, it did not undergo any noticeable changes, so one cannot define for it an early or a late stage. It is just the same today as it was when it first appeared.”

In acknowledging this ‘astonishing event of human history’ Renan, a French orientalist, is in fact acknowledging the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān. It was the Qur’ān’s phenomenal literary style which preserved the Arabic language from alteration, such as other languages have undergone. The Christian Jurgī Zaydān (1861-1914) is one of the scholars to have recognized this fact. In a book on Arabic literature he writes:

“No religious book has had such an impact on the language in which it was written as the Qur’ān has had on Arabic literature.”

World languages have changed so much throughout the ages that no expert in any modern language is able to understand its

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ancient form without the aid of a dictionary. There have been two main causes of language alteration – upheavals in the social order of a nation and the development of a language’s literature. Over the centuries these factors have been at work in Arabic, just as in other languages. The difference is that they have not been able to change the structure of the Arabic language. The Arabic that is spoken today is the same as that which was current in Mecca when the Qur’ān was revealed. Homer’s Iliad (850 BC), Tulsī Dās’ Rāmāyan (1623 AD), and the dramas of Shakespeare (1564-1616), are considered literary masterpieces of their respective languages. They have been read and, in the case of the Rāmāyan and Shakespeare’s plays, performed continuously from the time of their compilation until the present day. But neither their literary worth nor their form has been able to prevent the languages in which they were written from being altered. The Greek of Homer, the Sanskrit of Tulsī Dās and even the English of Shakespeare, are now classical rather than modern languages. The Qur’ān is the only book to have moulded a language and maintained it in that same form over the ages. There have been various intellectual and political upheavals in Arab countries, but the Arabic language has remained as it was when the Qur’ān was revealed. No change in the Arab social order has been able to alter in any way the Arabic tongue. This fact is a clear indication that the Qur’ān came from a supernatural source. One does not have to look any further than the history of the last 1500 years to see the miraculous nature of the Book revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad.

**Social Upheavals:**

The example of Latin shows how social upheavals affect languages. Though in latter days Italy became the centre of Latin, it was not originally a product of that country. Around

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the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, during the Iron Age, many central European tribes spread out into surrounding regions. Some of them, especially the Alpine tribes, entered Italy and settled in and around Rome. Their own language mixed with the language of Rome, and that was how Latin was formed. In the third century BC Livius Andronicus translated some Greek tales and dramas into Latin, thus making it a literary language. The Roman Empire was established in the first century BC, and Latin became the official language. The strength of Latin was even further reinforced by the spread of Christianity. With the support of religious and political institutions, and backed by social and economic forces, Latin continued to spread until eventually it came to cover almost the whole of ancient Europe. At the time of St. Augustine, Latin was at its peak, and right up to the Middle Ages it was considered the main international language.

The 8<sup>th</sup> century AD was an age of Muslim conquest. The Romans were forced to take refuge in Constantinople, which became the capital of the eastern half of the Empire, until in 1453 the Turks took Constantinople and banished the Romans from this, their last stronghold. The decline of the Roman Empire enabled various local languages to flourish, notably French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Latin had a strong influence on all of them, being the language from which they were all derived, but itself survived only as the official language of the Roman Catholic Church. No longer a living tongue, it was ultimately only of historical interest, although it did continue to provide the linguistic bases for technical, legal and scientific terms. Without a good grasp of Latin, for instance, one cannot read Newton's *Principia* in the original.

Every classical language followed much the same pattern,

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changing along with social circumstances until, eventually, the original language gave way to another, completely changed one. Ethnic integration, political revolutions, and cultural clashes have always left a deep imprint on the languages of the affected peoples. These factors have been at work on the Arabic language over the last 1500 years, but amazingly it has remained intact. This extraordinary resilience of the Arabic language is entirely due to the miraculous spell the Qur'ān has cast on it.

After the advent of Islam, Arabs settled in many parts of Africa and Asia where other languages besides Arabic were spoken. Their intermingling with other races, however, did not have any effect on the Arabs' language, which remained in its original state. There are also instances of other peoples changing over to Arabic, such as the Jewish tribes who left Syria in 70 A.D. and settled in Medina where, having come in contact with the Arabic speaking 'Amāliqah tribe, they adopted Arabic as their language, although the Arabic they spoke was different from common Arabic, retaining, a strong Hebrew influence.

In the very first century after the revelation of the Qur'ān, Arabic was exposed to the sort of forces which cause a language to alter radically. This was when Islam spread among various Arab tribes, who began to congregate in major Muslim cities. Intonation and accent varied from tribe to tribe. So much so that Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Ulá was moved to remark that the 'Himyar tribe do not speak our language; their vocabulary is quite different from ours.' 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb once brought before the Prophet an Arab whom he had heard reciting the Qur'ān. The Arab had been pronouncing the words of the Qur'ān in such a strange manner that 'Umar was unable to make out what part of the Book of God he was reading. The Prophet once spoke to a visiting delegation from some Arab

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tribes in their own dialect. It seemed to 'Alī as if the Prophet was speaking in a foreign tongue.

The main reason for this difference was variation in accent. For instance, the Banū Tamīm tribe, who lived in the eastern part of Najd, were unable to say the letter 'j' (Jīm) and used to pronounce it as 'y' (Ye) instead. The word for mosque (*masjid*), they used to pronounce '*masyid*', and instead of '*shajarah*' (trees), they would say '*shyarah*'. 'Q' (Qāf) they pronounced as 'j', (Jīm) calling a '*ṭarīq*' (road) a '*ṭarīj*', a '*ṣadīq*' (friend) a '*ṣadīj*', '*qadr*' (value) '*jadr*' and '*qāsim*' (distributor) '*jāsim*'. According to normal linguistic patterns, the coming together of tribes who spoke such varying dialects should have initiated a fresh process of change in the Arabic language, but this was not to be. The supreme eloquence of the language of the Qur'ān guarded Arabic from any such transformation. What happened instead has been explained by Dr. Aḥmad Ḥasan Zayyāt:

“After the coming of Islam, the Arabic language did not remain the monopoly of one nation. It became the language of all those who entered the faith.”

Then these Arab Muslims left their native land, conquering territory extending from Kāshghar in the east to Gibraltar in the west. Persian, Qibṭī, Berber, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Aramaic and Suryānī were among the languages spoken by the peoples they came into contact with. Some of these nations were politically and culturally more advanced than the Arabs. Iraq, bastion of an ancient civilization and the cultural centre of major tribes, was one of the countries they entered. They mingled with the Iranians, masters of one of the world's two great empires. The highly advanced Roman civilization, and an expanding Christian religion, were two of the forces that they

clashed with. Among the countries they occupied was Syria, where Phoenician, Ghassanid, Greek, Egyptian and Cana'ānian tribes had left behind outstanding traditions in literature and ethics. Then there was Egypt, the meeting place of oriental and occidental philosophy. These factors were more than enough to transform the Arabic language, as had been the case with other tongues exposed to similar forces. But they were rendered ineffective by the Qur'ān, a specimen of such unrivalled literary excellence that no power could weaken the hold of the language in which it had been written.

With the conquests of Islam, Arabic no longer belonged to one people alone; it became the language of several nations and races. When the "Ajamīs", (non-Arabs) of Asia and Africa accepted Islam, they gradually adopted Arabic as their language. Naturally, these new converts were not as proficient in speaking the language as the Arabs of old. Then the Arabs in their turn were affected by the language spoken by their new co-religionists. The deterioration of Arabic was especially evident in large, cosmopolitan cities, where there was more intermingling of races. First it was the rank and file, those who did not pay much attention to the finer points of linguistics, who were affected with. But the cultural elite did not remain immune either. A man once came to the court of Ziyād ibn Umayyah and lamented. 'Our fathers have died, leaving small children,' with both 'fathers' and 'children' in the wrong grammatical case. Mistakes of this nature became commonplace, yet the Arabic language remained essentially the same. Shielded by the Qur'ān's supreme eloquence, written Arabic was not corrupted by the degradation of the spoken version. It remained cast in the mould of the Qur'ān.

For proof of the Qur'ān's miraculous nature, one has only to

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look at all the traumatic experiences that Arabic has undergone through over the last 1500 years. If it had not been for the protective wing of the Qur'ān, the Arabic language would surely have been altered. The unsurpassable model that was established by the Qur'ān remained the immutable touchstone of standard Arabic.

The fall of the Umayyad dynasty in the second century Hijrah posed a great threat to the Arabic language. The Umayyads had been a purely Arab dynasty. Strong supporters of Arab nationalism, took their promotion of Arabic language and literature almost to the point of partiality. Their capital was situated in Damascus, in the Arab heartland. In their time, both the military and the civil administration were controlled by Arabs. But when the Abbasids took over the reins of power, it was Iranian support that had brought the caliphate to the Abbasids, it was inevitable that the Iranians should maintain a strong influence on their administration. This influence led to the capital being moved to Baghdād, on the threshold of Persia. The Abbasids gave the Iranians a free hand in affairs of government, but looked down on the Arabs and their civilization, and made conscious efforts to weaken them, unlike the Umayyads who had always preferred Arabs for high posts. With the wane of pro-Arab favouritism, Iranians, Turks, Syrians, Byzantine and Berber elements were able to gain control over all affairs of society and state. Marriages between Arabs and non-Arabs became common practice. With the mixing of Aryan and Semitic civilizations, Arabic language and culture faced a new crisis. The grandsons of the emperors and lords of Persia arose to resurrect the civilization of their forefathers.

These events had a profound effect on the Arabic language. The state that it had reached by the time of the poet

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Mutanabbī (915-965 AD) is expressed in the following lines:

“The buildings of Iran excel all others in beauty as the season of spring excels all other seasons. An Arab youth goes amongst them,

His face, his hands, his tongue, a stranger in their midst.

Solomon, they say, used to converse with the jinns.

But were he to visit the Iranians, he would need a translator.”  
(Dīwān al-Mutanabbī)

It was the Qur’ān’s literary greatness alone which kept Arabic from being permanently scarred by these upheavals. The language always returned to its Qur’ānic base, like a ship which, after weathering temporary storms on the high seas, returns to the safety of its harbour.

During the reign of the caliph Mutawakkil (207-247 AH), large numbers of ‘Ajāmīs (non-Arabs)– especially Iranians and Turks– entered Arab territory. In 656 the Mongolian warrior Hulākū Khān sacked Baghdād. Later the Islamic empire received a further setback when, in 898, Andalusia fell to the Christians. The Fāṭimid dynasty, which had held sway in Egypt and Syria, did not last long either: in 923 they were replaced by the Ottoman Turks in large stretches of Arab territory. Now the centre of Islamic government moved from Cairo to Constantinople; the official language became Turkish instead of Arabic, which continued to assimilate a number of foreign words and phrases.

The Arab world destined to spend five hundred and fifty years under the banner of ‘Ajāmī kings. Persian, Turkish and Mughal rulers even made attempts to erase all traces of the Arabic language. As a result of which Arabic libraries were burnt,

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schools were destroyed; scholars of the language found themselves in disgrace. The Ottoman emperors launched an anti-Arabic campaign, fittingly called “Tatrīk-ul-‘Arab” (Turkisation of Arabs), but no effort was strong enough to inflict any permanent scar on the face of Arabic. Fierce attacks were launched on Arabic language and literature by the Tartars in Bukhāra and Baghdād, by the Crusaders in Palestine and Syria, then by other Europeans in Andalusia. According to the history of other languages, these assaults on Arab culture should have been sufficient to eradicate the Arabic language completely. One would have expected Arabic to have followed the path of other languages and merged with other Semitic tongues. Indeed, it would be true to say that if Arabic had not come up against Turkish ignorance and Persian prejudice, it would still be spoken throughout the entire Muslim world today. Its very survival in the Arab world was due solely to the miraculous effect of the Qur’ān whose greatness compelled people to remain attached to Arabic. It inspired some Arab scholars – Ibn Manzūr (630-711 AH) and Ibn Khaldūn (732-808 AH) being two that spring to mind – to produce, in defiance of the government of the day, works of great literary and academic excellence.

Napoleon’s entry into Cairo (1798) ushered in the age of the printing press in the Middle East. Education became the order of the day. The Arabic language was invested with new life. Yet the centuries of battering that Arabic had received was bound to leave its mark: instead of pure Arabic, a mixture of Arabic and Turkish had been taken as the official language in Egypt and Syria.

The situation changed again with the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. They opposed Arabic with all their strength, prescribing compulsory English in schools and eliminating other

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languages from syllabi. The French did the same in areas over which they had gained control. With the colonial powers forcing their subjects to learn their languages, Arabic lived in the shadow of English and French for over one hundred years. Yet it still remained in its original form. Certainly, it assimilated new words – the word “dabbābah” meaning tank, for instance, which had previously been used for a simple battering ram. New styles of writing emerged. If anyone were to write a book about why people adopt Islam today, he might call it. “Li mādhā aslamna?” (Why we accepted Islam?), whereas in the old days rhythmical and decorative titles were preferred. Many words were adopted by the Arabic language – the English word “doctor” for example. But such changes were just on the surface. Proper Arabic still remained the same as it had been centuries ago, when the Qur’ān was revealed.

**Literary Advancement:**

Once in a while, writers of outstanding status appear on a language’s literary scene. When this happens, the language in which they write undergoes some changes, for their literary masterpieces influence the mode of popular expression. In this way languages are continually passing through progressive evolutionary stages, until eventually they become quite different from their original form. With Arabic this did not happen. At the very outset of Arabic history, the Qur’ān set a literary standard that could not be excelled. Arabic maintained the style set for it by the Qur’ān. No masterpiece comparable to the Qur’ān was destined to be produced after it; so Arabic remained cast in the mould of that divine symphony.

Take the example of English. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD it was just an ordinary local dialect, not geared to the expression of profound

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intellectual thought. For another five hundred years this situation continued. The Normans conquered England in 1066 and, when the founding father of the English language – Geoffrey Chaucer – was born around 1340, the official language of their court was still French. Chaucer himself had a command of Latin, French and Italian, besides his native English. This, along with his great gifts of scholarship, enabled him to make English into an academic language. To use Ernest Hauser's words, he gave the English language a 'firm boost' with his *Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer transformed a dialect into a language, paving the way for fresh progress in times to come.

For two hundred years English writers and poets followed Chaucer's guidelines. When William Shakespeare (1558-1625) appeared on the scene, English took another step forward. His dramas and poems set a new literary standard, enabling English to march further forward. The coming of the scientific age two hundred years later had a tremendous impact on every stratum of society. Language now began to follow the dictates of science. Prose became more popular than poetry, factual expression more effective than story telling. Dozens of poets and writers from Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) to T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) were representative of this trend. They were the makers of the modern age of English literature through which we are now passing.

The same thing happened with other languages. Writers, or groups of writers, kept on emerging who became more popular than their predecessors. Whenever they appeared, they steered the language on a new course. Eventually every language changed so much that it became impossible for a person to understand the ancient form of his own tongue without the aid of dictionaries and commentaries.

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There is only one exception to this universal trend, and that is Arabic. The claim of the Qur'ān, that no one would ever be able to write a book like it, has been borne out to the letter. For further proof of this fact, one need only to look at the various attempts to produce a work equal to the Qur'ān that have been made over the centuries. All attempts have failed dismally. Musailima ibn Ḥabīb, Ṭulaiḥah ibn Khuwailid, Nadhr ibn al-Ḥārith, Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū al-'Ala al-Ma'arrī, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Al-Mutanabbī, and many others, have tried their hands at it, but their efforts, like Musailima's extraordinary reference to 'God's blessing upon pregnant women, extracting from them a sprightly life, from between the stomach and the foetal membrane look ridiculous when compared with the literary majesty of the Qur'ān.

But the greatest substantiation of the Qur'ān's claim that no one would be able to write a work like it (17:88) comes from what Ernest Renan has called the 'linguistic miracle' of the Arabic language. As with every other language, masters of Arabic - great poets and writers - have appeared over the ages. But, in the 1500 years since the Qur'ān was revealed, no one has been able to produce a work that excelled it. Its standard has never been improved upon and Arabic has remained on the course set for it by the Qur'ān. The impact that the Qur'ān has had on Arabic is like that of a writer who produces a work of unsurpassable literary excellence at the very beginning of a language's history. After such a figure has made his mark, no lesser writer can change the face of the language. The Qur'ān, revealed in the Arabic current at the time was cast in a more elevated literary mould than had ever been seen before or afterwards.

By making vital additions to traditional modes of expression,

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the Qur'ān opened the way for expansion of the Arabic language. The use of the word 'one' (*aḥad*) in the 112<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Qur'ān, entitled 'Oneness', is a good example. Previously it had been used in the genitive to express 'one of us' for example, or for the 'first day' of the week, Saturday or Yaum al-Aḥad. It was used for general negations, as in 'Ma Jā'nī aḥadun' 'no one came to see me.' But in using *aḥad* as an attribute of Almighty God, the Qur'ān put the word to an entirely novel use. The Qur'ān brought many foreign words into Arabic usage, for instance *istabraq* from Persian, *qaswara* from Abyssinian, *ṣirāt* from Greek, 'yamm' from Syrian, *ḡhassāq* from Turkish, *qistās* from Latin, 'malakūt' from Armaic and 'kāfūr' from Hindi. The Qur'ān tells us (25:60) that the idolators of Mecca were baffled at the word 'rahmān'. They used to say 'What is this 'rahmān'? This is because the word was not Arabic: it has been taken from the Sabean and Hamiri languages. The Christians of Yemen and Abyssinia used to call God 'rahmanan'. The Meccans considered the word foreign when it appeared in the Qur'ān in an Arabicized form. They enquired what 'rahmān' meant, being unaware of its linguistic background. Over one hundred non-Arabic words of this nature were used in the Qur'ān, taken from languages: Persian, Latin, Nabataean, Hebrew, Syrian, Coptic and many others.

Although the Qur'ān was revealed mainly in the language of the Quraysh, words used by other Arab tribes were also included. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, a Qurayshi Muslim, was puzzled when the word *fāṭir* appeared in the Qur'ān. 'I did not know what the expression 'Originator of the heavens and the earth' meant,' he explained. 'Then I heard an Arab saying that he had 'originated' a well, when he had just started digging it, and I knew what the word 'fāṭir' meant.' Abū Huraira said that he had never heard

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the word '*sikkīn*' until he heard it in the chapter, 'Joseph', of the Qur'ān. 'We always used to call a knife '*mudiya*', he said.

As Jalāluddīn Suyūtī has pointed out in *Al-Itqān*, many words were pronounced differently by various Arab tribes. The Qur'ān took some of these words, and used them in their most refined literary form. The Quraysh, for instance, used the word *a'atá* for 'he gave', while the Ḥimyarīs used to pronounce it '*anta*'. The Qur'ān preferred *a'atá* to *anta*. Likewise it chose '*aṣābi*' rather than *shānātir* and *dhi'b* instead of *kata*. The general trend of preferring Qurayshī forms was sometimes reversed, as in the phrase 'layalitkum min a'amālikum' - 'nothing will be taken away from your actions' which was borrowed from the Banū 'Abbās dialect.

In giving old Arabic words and expressions new depth and beauty, the Qur'ān set a standard of literary excellence which no future writer could improve on. It revised certain metaphors, rephrasing them in a more eloquent form than had been heard before. This was how an ancient Arab poet described the impermanence of the world:

"Even if he enjoys a long period of secure life, every mother's son will finally be carried aloft in a coffin."

The Qur'ān put the same idea in the poignantly succinct words: 'Every soul shall taste death' (3:185). Killing and plundering presented a major problem in ancient Arabia. Certain phrases had been coined to express the idea that only killing could put an end to killing, and these were considered highly eloquent in pre-Islamic days. 'To kill some is to give life to the whole,' one of them went. 'Kill more, so that there should be less killing,' and 'Killing puts an end to killing,' were some other examples. The Qur'ān expressed the idea in these

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words: 'In retaliation there is life for you, O men of understanding.' (02: 179).

In pre-Qur'ānic days, poetry held an important place in Arabic, as in other languages of the world. Poetical expression of ideas was given pride of place in the literary arena. The Qur'ān, however, left this beaten track, and used prose instead of poetry. This in itself is proof that the Qur'ān came from God, for in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD who, except God – knows the future just as He knows the past – could know that prose rather than poetry should be chosen as the medium for divine scripture that was to last for all time. The Qur'ān was addressed to future generations, and soon poetry was going to become less important as a mass medium of communication. Rhetorical language was also very much in vogue before the Qur'ān, but for the first time in literary history, the Qur'ān introduced a factual rather than a rhetorical style. The most famous topics for literary treatment had previously been military and romantic exploits. The Qur'ān, on the contrary, featured a much wider spectrum, including matters of ethical, legal, scientific, psychological, economic, political and historic significance within its scope. In ancient times, parables were a popular mode of expression. Here too, the Qur'ān trod new ground, adopting a more direct method of saying things. The method of reasoning employed in the Qur'ān was also considerably different from that used in pre-Qur'ānic times. Whereas purely theoretical, analogical proof was all that the world had known prior to this, the Qur'ān introduced empirical, scientific reasoning. And to crown all its achievements, the Qur'ān expressed all this in a refined literary style, which proved imperishable in times to come.

There was an ancient Arab saying that 'the sweetest poem

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was the one with the most lies'. The Qur'ān changed this, introducing a new mode of 'articulate speech' (55: 04) based on verifiable facts rather than on hypothetical fables. Now Arabic followed the Qur'ān's lead. Pre-Islāmic Arabic literature was collected and compiled, keeping the preservation and understanding of the language of the Qur'ān in mind. Great departments of learning, facilitating understanding of the Qur'ān and explaining its orders and prohibitions came into existence. The learning of Arabic grammar, syntax and etymology, Islamic theology and traditions, as well as Qur'ānic studies, were all aimed at helping us to understand the message of the Qur'ān. Even the subjects of history and geography were originally taken up as part of the Arabs' attempt to understand and practice the teachings of the Qur'ān. There is no other example in the history of the world of any single book having such an enormous impact on a people and their language.

Through its development and improvement of the Arabic language, the Qur'ān became a superb literary masterpiece. Anyone who knows Arabic can appreciate the unique quality of the Qur'ān's style as compared to that of any other work of Arabic literature. The Qur'ān is written in a divine style vastly superior to anything humans can aspire to. We will close this chapter by relating a story which clearly portrays the difference between the work of God and that of man. It is taken from Sheikh Ṭanṭāwī's commentary of the Qur'ān, *Al-Jawāhir fi Tafsir Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*.

'On 13 June 1932,' Ṭanṭāwī writes, 'I met an Egyptian writer, Kāmil Gīlānī, who told me an amazing story. One day he was with an American Orientalist by the name of Finkle, with whom he enjoyed a deep intellectual relationship. 'Tell me, are you

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still among those who consider the Qur'ān a miracle?' whispered Finkle in Gīlānī's ear, adding a laugh to indicate his ridicule of such belief. He thought that Muslims could only hold this belief in blind faith. It could not be based on any sound, objective reasoning. Thinking that his blow had really gone home, Finkle was visibly pleased with himself. Seeing his attitude, Gīlānī too started laughing. 'Before issuing any pronouncement on the style of the Qur'ān,' he said, 'we should first have a look and see if we can produce anything comparable to it. Only when we have tried our hand, shall we be able to say conclusively whether humans can produce anything comparable to the Qur'ān or not.' Gīlānī then invited Finkle to join him in putting a Qur'ānic idea into Arabic words. The idea he chose was: Hell is extremely vast. Finkle agreed, and both men sat down with pen and paper. Between them, they produced about twenty Arabic sentences. 'Hell is extremely vast,' 'Hell is vaster than you can imagine,' 'Man's intellect cannot fathom the vastness of Hell, ' and many examples of this nature, were some of the sentences they produced. They tried until they could think of no other sentence to express this idea. Gīlānī looked at Finkle triumphantly. 'Now that we have done our best, we shall be able to see how the Qur'ān stands above all works of men,' he said. 'What, has the Qur'ān expressed this idea more eloquently?' Finkle enquired. 'We are like little children compared to the Qur'ān,' Gīlānī told him. Amazed, Finkle asked what was in the Qur'ān. Gīlānī recited this verse from Surah *Qāf*: 'On that Day We will ask Hell: 'Are you full?' And Hell will answer: 'Are there any more?' (50: 30) Finkle was startled on hearing this verse. Amazed at the supreme eloquence of the Qur'ān, he openly admitted defeat. 'You were right, quite right,' he said, 'I unreservedly concede defeat.' 'For you to

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acknowledge the truth,' Gīlānī replied, 'is nothing strange, for you are a man of letters, well aware of the importance of style in language.' This particular Orientalist was fluent in English, German, Hebrew and Arabic, and had spent all his life studying the literature of these languages. (Sheikh al-Ṭanṭāwī al-Jauhari, *Al-Jawāhir fi Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 23/111-12).

### **Chapter Three: Qur'ān—The Voice of God**

Recently I have been studying Marxism in considerable detail, and have formed the impression that Marx was a man of extraordinary intellect and spirit; few men of such talent can have appeared in the annals of history. Yet, when he gave his mind to the improvement of the human condition, the remedies he offered were unparalleled in their foolishness. Why should this have been so? The principal reason is that he had made no study of the Qur'ān. He had not gone to that great source of knowledge, without which no sound and definite opinion can be arrived at on the vicissitudes of human existence. It must be conceded that the universe is a mystery and that the only book which can unveil that mystery for us is the Qur'ān. No mere mortal can solve the mysteries of life and the universe without the revelations of the Book of God.

Medicines are accompanied by leaflets explaining what illnesses they are designed to cure, how they should be used and what their basic formulae are. But man is born into the world in such a condition that he knows neither what he is nor why he has been put here. No convenient handbook accompanies him, neither are there any signboards fixed to the summits of the mountains to give him directions or to provide him with answers to his questions. Man has, in consequence, formed strange opinions about himself, the earth and the sky,

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being ignorant of the essential reality of life. When he examines his own being, it appears to him as an amazing accumulation of intellectual and physical powers. Yet, he did not will himself into being, nor did he play any part in the making of himself. Then he looks at the world outside himself and a universe of such extreme vastness, that he can neither encompass nor traverse it, nor can he count the innumerable treasures it contains. What is all this, and why is it there? Where did this world start from and where will it all end? What is the purpose of all this existence? He finds himself completely in the dark on these subjects. Man has, of course, been given eyes, but all his eyes can do is to see the outside of things. He has intelligence, but the trouble with human intelligence is that it does not even know about itself. Up till now, man has been unable to find out how thoughts enter the human mind or how the mind functions. With such inadequate faculties, he is neither able to arrive at any sound conclusion concerning himself, nor he is able to understand the Universe.

This riddle is solved by the Book of God. Today, the Qur'ān is the only scripture beneath the heavens about which we can say with complete conviction that it gives us definite knowledge concerning all the realities of life.

Those who have tried to understand the Universe without recourse to the Book of God are just like those blind people who try to find out what an elephant is by touching different parts of its body. One will touch its leg, and think he has found a pillar. Another will feel its ear, and think it is a winnowing basket. Its back will be proclaimed a platform, its tail a snake and its trunk a hosepipe. But where in all this is the elephant? No matter how these blind people put together their findings, they cannot arrive at the correct answer. This is the eternal

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predicament of all atheist philosophers and thinkers. In their attempt to fathom the nature of reality in the universe, they have failed to be guided by true knowledge. As a result, their conclusions have been like those of a man, fumbling in the dark, and just hazarding wild guesses as to the nature of his surroundings, without ever truly understanding it.

There have been people in this world who have devoted their entire lives to the quest for Truth, but who, in their desperation at being unable to find it, have even taken the extreme step of putting an end to their lives. And then there have been others who sought the Truth but who, having failed to find it, settled for a concocted philosophy based on pure conjecture. While the latter, mistaking conjecture for reason, compiled their conclusions and presented them to the world as Truth, the former saw speculation for what it was, rejected it, then – anguished at their own ultimate helplessness – opted out of this mysterious world.

Both groups were denied True Knowledge, for, in reality, no one can understand the secret of life without the help of the original Keeper of the Secret. True, man has been given the capacity to think and understand. But this capacity is little better than an eye which can see only so long as there is some external source of light. In pitch darkness, this self-same eye cannot see anything whatsoever. Only when a light is switched on, does everything become clearly visible. The human intellect, like the eye, needs the light – the light of God's revelation – if it is not forever to grope in the dark. Without God's revelation, we can never arrive at the truth of things.

A scholarly acquaintance of mine once remarked that learning – so it is held – is not acquired by reading book after book and possessing a string of degrees from colleges and universities, but

consists, in its supreme form, of faith. The Qur'ān likewise states that, 'in fact, it is those who fear God who are learned.' But he failed to grasp the significance of this, he said. I replied, 'Karl Marx is considered a 'prophet' in the field of economics, but he did not have one whit of the True Knowledge which, today, by the grace of God, you possess. Faced by a world in which a small number of feudal lords and industrial magnates had taken possession of a disproportionate share of the available wealth, while most people lived in abject poverty, Marx concluded that what lay at the root of these disparities was the present system of ownership which caused articles to be produced, not for their utility to the producer, but for the profit they would yield when sold to others. This permitted the privileged few to behave as plunderers, heaping up profits and increasing their own property to the detriment of their fellow men. The remedy proposed by Marx was to abolish ownership rights altogether, and to transfer the means of accumulating wealth to the public sector. The government was then to be entrusted with the organization of a public system of creation and distribution of wealth which should serve the interests of all.

At that particular point in time, it was those who possessed the necessary capital who were in a position to profiteer. The question now arose as to the actual advantage of having the government take complete control of these funds in order to turn them into a public treasury. Would not this new group of people – the members of government – be tempted, as individuals, to do the same as their capitalist predecessors, considering that they would also be vested with military and legislative powers? Karl Marx's analysis was that the system of ownership was flawed by jealousy and the opportunities it gave for outright plunder. According to him, such social

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defects would disappear in a communist society. 'Now, tell me,' I asked my friend, 'was Karl Marx correct in thinking so?' 'Certainly not,' he replied, 'The idea of accountability in the Hereafter is the only thing in this world that can cleanse a man of cruel and selfish tendencies.' 'That is the real answer to the problem,' I said. 'For Karl Marx's self-made theory resulted in even greater oppression and cruelty than in the days when political and economic powers were shared by the Czars and the capitalists. Now, under the communist system, the powers of Czars and capitalists have all been rolled into one, and it is the common man who suffers.'

All those philosophers who have attempted – without God – to solve the riddle of the Universe have fallen into the same pitfalls as Marx. As to their thinking, one is struck by how such great intellects could produce such infantile suggestions. They are like so many blind people, trying, gropingly, to identify an elephant and declaring, with finality, that it is four pillars, or four tree trunks. It is only when life and the universe are scrutinized in the light of the Book of God that everything appears clearly in its true form; then even a person of very average ability has no trouble in understanding the truth of things; at the very first glance, he goes straight to the heart of the matter. To a person who does not possess this Knowledge, however, the universe is but a labyrinth in which he wanders, lost and distraught.

We owe much to the human sciences. Yet the absolute maximum that we can learn from them is *what* the universe is. Till now, they have not given us one iota of knowledge on the subject of *why* the universe is as it is. Bring together a few gases, minerals and salts, and you have a moving, conscious human being. Put seeds in the ground and up spring plants and trees. Just make a change in atomic numbers and

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innumerable elements come into being. From just two gases, water – that most precious of commodities – is prepared. Steam, produced by molecular motion within water, gives inanimate engines the power to move. The electrons within an atom are too tiny to be seen through a microscope, but they too are a vital source of colossal, mountain-shattering power. These are all matters of fact. Scientific events do take place as described. But this *description* is the *outer limit* of our scientific 'knowledge.' When we ask why things are as they are, and why things happen as they do, human science gives us no guidance whatsoever.

Studies in astronomy show that the number of stars in the sky is as numerous as all of the sand grains on all the sea-shores of our planet, many of the stars being vastly greater in size than our earth, some even being of such enormous girth that they could accommodate hundreds of thousands of earths inside them and still have room to spare. A few of them are even big enough to contain millions and millions of earths. The universe is so vast that an aeroplane flying at the greatest speed imaginable, i.e., at the speed of light, (186,282 miles per second) would take about ten billion years to complete just a single trip around the whole universe. Even with such a huge circumference, this universe is not static, but is expanding every moment in all directions. So rapid is this expansion that, according to an estimate by Eddington, every 1300 million years, all the distances in this universe are doubled. This means that even our imaginary aeroplane travelling at the speed of light would not ever be able to fly all the way around the universe, because it would never be able, to catch up with this unending expansion. This estimation of the vastness of the universe is based on Einstein's theory of relativity. But this

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is just a mathematician's guess. To tell the truth, man has yet to comprehend the vastness of the universe.

Human studies bring us face to face with this astonishing universe. And there they leave us. They do not tell us the true meaning of the universe. They do not tell us who causes events to take place. Neither do they tell us whose hand it is that controls the great spheres revolving in the vastness of space. If we wish to have the answers to these questions, it is to the Qur'ān that we must turn. If we want to know how things came into existence, how they are sustained and what their future will be, it is the Qur'ān alone which will tell us. In so doing, it will acquaint us with the Lord and Master of the Universe, opening out before us the sublime nature of His works.

The Qur'ān bears verbal witness to the sovereignty of God. It describes, with great force and clarity, the great, hidden, determinative force at work throughout the entire world, and gives us definitive information on those metaphysical realities which elude the hand and the eye. Not only does it spell out the facts of existence, but it also builds up an astonishing gallery of word-pictures which bring a hitherto unseen world before our very eyes.

The Holy Book not only tells us that God exists, but also paints an incredibly vivid picture of the Being who sustains and directs the Universe. Not only does it tell us about the Hereafter, but describes the Day of Judgement so graphically that its horrors become deeply etched on our consciousness. There is a well-known story of a Greek artist who painted such a realistic picture of a bunch of grapes that birds would come and peck at it. Just think that if a painting executed by an ordinary mortal could have such an extraordinary effect, what heights of consummate artistry could not be reached by the

Lord of the Worlds in His creation of the Qur'ān? Could any mere mortal truly appreciate the perfection of such art?

The Qur'ān opens with the words: 'Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. 'This invocation is of great significance. It means: 'Thanks be to God, Maker and Sustainer of all creatures in the world.' A master and sustainer is one who is filled with profound concern for his subjects and provides for all their needs. Man's greatest need is to know what he is, where he has come from, and where he will go. He also needs to know where he will gain and where he will lose. If he were to be taken to some region of space in which there was neither air nor water, this would not be such a great calamity for him as finding himself in the world without any accurate knowledge of his origin or ultimate fate.

God has more compassion for His creatures than a father has for his own son. It is inconceivable, therefore, that He should have seen this need on the part of His servants and not provided for it. By means of revelation, He has sent down whatever knowledge a man must have in order to understand himself, and He has sent it in a form which could be conveyed by the human tongue. This is the greatest favour that the Lord has done upon His servants.

A man who realizes to what extent he needs his Maker's help in acquiring True Knowledge will feel his heart simply overflowing with gratitude to and praise for his Lord, when he sees what favour He has shown him in sending him the Qur'ān; The words: 'Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!' will spontaneously burst forth from him. These are the words of a true servant of God having been inspired in him by God Himself. Even when it is a question of how a man should serve his Lord, he needs the guidance of his Maker. The desire to

serve may itself be quite instinctive, but the would-be devotee does not know in what manner to give expression to it. The Qur'ān, however, is explicit on this subject, and even provides him with the exact words he should use. In this respect, the prayers of the Qur'ān are the most sublime gifts.

The Qur'ān is not a book in the ordinary, accepted sense of the word. It is more an account of the final struggle to convey the message of Islam. From the most ancient times, God has been sending down knowledge of the truth through His specially chosen emissaries. In the seventh century of the Christian era, it was God's will that the inhabitants of the Earth should quite finally be provided with Knowledge of Truth and that a society should be founded on the basis of that Knowledge which would be a source of enlightenment and an example for the whole human race until the Last Day.

In accordance with this aim, God raised His final Prophet in Arabia, and charged him with the mission of propagating this message among the Arabs. Those who came under the influence of his preaching were then set the task of spreading the message throughout the world. In spreading True Knowledge, and in establishing a society based upon it, the Holy Prophet was working under divine guidance. God sent His Word down to the Prophet, revealing to him what he should preach, and providing him with the proofs he required to make his preaching effective. When his opponents raised objections, he was, therefore, able to give them answers which silenced them. And when those who accepted the message later showed some weakness, he was able immediately to bring them to book to reform them.

Moreover, the Qur'ān formulated rules for war and peace, and laid down principles for education and guidance. It gave solace

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to its adherents in times of adversity and, when they ultimately triumphed, it provided the legal framework on which society could be built anew. Twenty-three years elapsed between the beginning and the conclusion. At every stage during this period, Almighty God, Light of the World, sent guidance in the form of commandments for mankind. These guidelines were later compiled, in accordance with His plan, in a particular sequence. It is this collection which is called the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān is the most authentic record of the True Call, raised in Arabia by the Final Prophet, who was guided right throughout his prophethood by God Himself. It is a collection of divine instructions, issued for the guidance of this movement at different times over nearly a quarter of a century. But the Qur'ān is not merely a historical record. It is a divine proclamation, valid for all time, and cast in historical mould in order to be presented meaningfully to mankind. It is also a permanent proclamation in that it will decide the fate – good or bad – of human beings in every epoch, in accordance with the will of God.

The various parts of the Qur'ān were separately conveyed over a long period of time, depending upon local exigencies. These different portions did not, therefore, come into existence as a mere matter of chance. They were parts of a well-ordered scheme perfect in its conception – which had its origin in the supernatural world. Because they were sent down as circumstances demanded, they were not originally in any regular sequence. But when the scheme reached its conclusion, it was brought together as a complete whole, according to a definite pattern, which is unrivalled in its consistency. In that way, it is distinctly different from the type of anthology which presents selections of the speeches made

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by the political leaders of the day.

We can have a clearer picture of how the Qur'ān was assembled if we imagine the parallel of a factory under construction in India, for which the equipment is being manufactured in some country overseas.

This equipment for the factory has to be manufactured in separate parts in different production units. These parts have then to be loaded on to different ships and sent off to India. Throughout the various stages of its construction, our factory will necessarily appear to the uninitiated as a mass of heterogenous and incomplete objects. But as soon as all the parts of the equipment brought in different shipments are properly assembled, they will take on the shape of a complete factory, all ready to be put into commission. It was in very much the same way that the Qur'ān was assembled in order to produce a complete and permanent moral code for all human beings. That is why, although formed of such disparate elements, it is of such astounding uniformity. It was because it bore a message urging man to turn a hostile environment into a favourable one that it had to be revealed in a gradual manner, thus meeting the needs of differing circumstances. Historically speaking, it is a compilation of a great diversity of injunctions, but the divine scheme of an Omnipotent and Omniscient God has made it into a well-ordered and uniform whole.

So many books have been written on all branches of learning and on every conceivable allied subject – till date, millions of books have been printed and published – that it would take more than one's entire lifetime to read them all. But the Qur'ān is a book of such a kind that, even if one could study all the books in the world, its guidance would still be a prime necessity. Indeed, one can only truly benefit from the study of

other books if one has first gained from the Qur'ān that depth of insight which is at the basis of genuine discernment in all matters of importance. Without the Qur'ān, the human individual is like a ship adrift on a vast ocean without a compass. Just as the ocean liner is lost without its compass, so does man need divine revelation to steer him through the entanglements of human existence. Only one who has received his share of divine light will be able to navigate his way across the ocean of this life.

Those who are denied, or who have denied themselves God's enlightenment, will be roughly tossed on the seas of life and are likely to founder on hidden reefs without ever having been able to bring their affairs to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Qur'ān fills that vacuum in human nature which, in all periods of history, has set man at variance with himself. Rousseau said that man was born free, but that everywhere he found 'him tied up in chains'. I would say, on the contrary, that man has been born a slave, but seeks, in unnatural ways, to make himself a master. Outwardly, man appears to be self-sufficient, but in his innermost self, he is a complex web of needs. In order merely to survive, man needs air, water and the produce of the land. In the same way, in order to sustain the life of the spirit, he stands in need of external support. Man instinctively requires a prop on which he can lean in times of difficulty; he needs one, close to himself, to whom he can bow his head in reverence; one to whom he can address his needs when he is in trouble; one before whom he can prostrate himself in gratitude when happiness comes his way. A man drowning in the ocean needs to have a lifeline thrown to him. Similarly, a man, adrift in a vast and fathomless universe, needs a spiritual rope to which he can cling. No one, however great, is

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free of this necessity. It is a vacuum which must be filled. If we fill this vacuum with the Divine Being, we are following the principle of monotheism. But if we abandon God and look to some other for support, we descend into polytheism.

In every period of history, man has been forced to have recourse to one or other of these two props. In ancient times, those who subscribed to monotheism depended on one God for support and, today, they still depend upon Him and Him alone. But the direction of those who subscribe to polytheism has kept changing. Ancient man, and many people, even in more recent times, worshipped countless objects, ranging from the bright stars that shine in the sky to trees and stones and other randomly chosen objects. Today, objects such as nation, country, material progress, political power have taken the place of earlier objects of worship. Such then are the people's gods, fashioned by them specifically to fill the aching void in their hearts. But even with all this, people still need an ultimate destination in life's struggle which will transcend the plane of pure materialism. They still need someone or something to love. They still yearn for one in whose remembrance they can warm their hearts and revitalize their spirits. But just as idols made of stone have never given any true support or help in the past, neither do the more resplendent idols of today, for, fragile and ephemeral as they are, they do not give a nation any real strength.

The Germans, for example, idolized their nation, but, far from standing by them, it brought them to the point of destruction in World War II. Italy and Japan did likewise, but their respective idols could not save their countries from becoming the graveyards of the people. Britain and France also made idols of their material resources, but even then, the empires of both

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countries rapidly shrank, the sun finally setting on the British Empire, an empire on which it was said 'the sun never set'.

The Qur'ān shows us where strength in this world really lies, giving us a handhold on a rope that never breaks. Without this, we have no real support in life. Moreover, it is only through our attachment to God that human beings can retain their hold on the cord that binds each to each.

The Qur'ān explains that it is this One God alone who sustains us throughout our lives here on this earth. Through Him our hearts are set at ease, for it is He who provides true warmth in life. He rescues us in times of peril, assists us in the hour of need. All power rests in His hands: honour and glory will be the rewards of any nation who looks to Him for support, while only disgrace and humiliation will be the lot of those who abandon Him. To know this is to hold the key to all the treasures in life. He who possesses this key gains all; he who loses it, loses all.

We attach great importance to the scientists who discovered electric and steam power, providing human civilization with opportunities for progress. But the greatness of the reality which this Book lays before us is immeasurable. It does not just give us knowledge of machines, but of the human beings for whom all these machines have been made. It tells us of Man, and Man in turn learns from it the secret of successful living.

The Qur'ān, first and foremost, is the Proclamation of God. Just as every enlightened sovereign has a Constitution, so is the Qur'ān the 'Constitution' of the Almighty, Master of Man, King of kings. To put it very simply, the Qur'ān is a book of directions, showing man the right path to tread. It is a Light which guides his faltering steps, giving him timely reminders of God's will, awakening his sleeping nature and conveying the Lord's

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admonition. It is a book that, in giving him the moral sense to distinguish right from wrong, cures him; and his society, of all ills. In that sense, it is a book of wisdom, full of every expression of correct understanding. More, it is a book of laws, laying down for us the very foundations on which to build and organize society. In short, it provides everything that man- as an individual and as member of society – can ever need. Without this, man can never be the gainer, no matter how hard he tries.

How can a man gauge whether he has actually developed a relationship with God or not? There is only one answer to this question: by turning his eyes inward, and judging how his inner self stands related to the Qur'ān. For how one relates to the Qur'ān is a true reflection of one's relationship with God. The degree to which a man adheres to the tenets of the Qur'ān will be a sure indication of his attachment to his Maker. If the Qur'ān is the book he values most, it goes without saying that God is dearer to him than any other. But if some other book is held in greater esteem by him, then the most important person in his life will be its author, and not his Maker. Just as it is impossible to find the true God anywhere but in the Qur'ān, so is it impossible that, after finding God, any book other than the Qur'ān should be more precious to him. For the Qur'ān is the book of God. It is the means through which the Almighty converses with His servants, His living representative on this earth. It is a scale on which man's devotion to his Creator may be measured.

When man fears to stand alone, without support, in an unfathomable universe, the Qur'ān sets his mind at rest by making his destination clear to him, and directing him towards it. In the Qur'ān man thus meets his Lord, beholds His promises and rejoices in His good tidings. In this way, the

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Qur'ān fills a man with sufficient conviction to define his place in the world. Giving concrete form to the instinctive feelings which swirl in man's subconscious about his Lord and Master, the Qur'ān sets his feet well and truly on the path of submission to Him. In so doing, it brings him closer to God.

In seeking to ascertain God's will, just to read through the Qur'ān is not enough: one has rather to become deeply engrossed in it. It is only when one has formed a strong degree of attachment to the Qur'ān that one has access to all the advantages it offers. One has to be bound to the Qur'ān as one is by a contract – *ta'āhud* (the word used by the Prophet) in order to reap its benefits. This awareness of the greatness of the Qur'ān, and consequent adherence thereto, cannot come about at second hand. That is, one may hear a commentator or man of letters discourse upon the Qur'ān and may form a high opinion of the speaker and his attainments, but that is not the way to form a genuine attachment with the Qur'ān itself. A real bond with the Qur'ān can be forged only if one reads the Holy Scriptures oneself, thus having direct access to the contents. Only then will its wisdom be engraved upon one's memory. Only then will it be appreciated for what it actually is.

This is not a mere figment of the imagination. It is supported by basic psychology. For example, it may be contended that the difference between cotton wool and stone is merely relative, that, in fact, they are the same thing, both in the last analysis being accumulations of the same kind of electrons. But this contention is purely academic. In the real world, cotton cannot be thought of as anything but soft, and stone as anything but hard. It is not superficial or abstract definitions which determine the impression one shall have of the matter at hand, but the knowledge that one gains of it by direct or personal experience.

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## Part Two: Safeguarding of the Qur'ān

### Chapter One: The Preservation of the Qur'ān

The very first injunction given to the Prophet – 'Read in the name of your Lord who created', stresses the importance of knowledge (96: 01). And the last words of revelation pertain to the life hereafter (02: 281).

The Qur'ān was revealed over a period of twenty-three years and was written down in its entirety during the Prophet's lifetime, although the verses were not gathered together in one volume at that time (Al-Katani, 2/384).

For the first twenty-three years the Prophet himself was the fountainhead of Qur'ānic learning. Then he appointed certain of his followers to convey the message of the Qur'ān after him. These were men who, having memorized the entire Qur'ānic text with complete accuracy, were fully competent to impart its teachings. During the caliphate of 'Umar Fārūq, the second caliph of Islam, a man who had come from Kūfa to Madīna told the caliph that there was someone in Kūfa who was teaching the scriptures from memory. At this Caliph 'Umar was enraged. But when he found out that the person was none other than 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, he regained his composure, (Istī'āb, 1/377) the reason being that 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd was one of those appointed by the Prophet himself to perform this service. Other more prominent scholars of the Qur'ān were as follows: 'Usmān, 'Alī, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Thābit, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Dardā', Abū Mūsā Ash'arī, Sālim Maulā Abī Ḥudhayfa.

However, these Muslims, who had been assigned this task, could not survive forever. Undoubtedly, they were going to

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leave the world one by one, and then there would be the risk of the Qur'ān falling into the hands of less responsible, less knowledgeable people, who might not preserve it intact and who would almost certainly differ as to its true meaning. There was even the danger of its being entirely lost to posterity. With the death of 700 of the Prophet's Companions in the Battle of Yamāmah in 12 A.H., this danger began to loom large.

It has been recorded in the annals of history that “when Sālim Maulá Abī Ḥudhayfa was martyred, 'Umar felt the danger of the Qur'ān being destroyed and came to Abū Bakr, the first Caliph, to discuss this” (Fath-ul-Bārī, 9/5). Sālim was one of the few surviving companions who had been selected by the Prophet himself to spread the teachings of the Qur'ān. The solution suggested by 'Umar to Abū Bakr was to preserve the Qur'ān by making a formal compilation of it in written form.

As has been established, the Prophet always arranged for each passage of the Qur'ān to be recorded in writing as soon as it was revealed. This *kitābat* (writing down on paper) was so meticulous a procedure that after verse 95 of chapter 4 had been revealed, and the words “except those who are disabled” were revealed again as an addition to the same verse, it was arranged that this phrase – according to Imām, Mālik – to be written at the same moment by the transcriber. (*Durr Mansūr*, 2/203)

It was customary for the Prophet to ask the transcriber to read out the verses after writing them down. According to Zayd ibn Thābit, if any part was missed out in the writing, he would correct it. And only after this written work was fully completed the Prophet would allow the propagation of those verses (*Majma'uz Zawā'id*, 1/60).

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The number of transcribers who worked at different times is put at forty-two. According to Ibn 'Abdul Bar, Ḥanzala ibn Rabī' was the chief transcriber. He was asked to remain in the company of the Prophet at all times (*al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, 4/114), a foolproof arrangement whereby a number of the companions possessed passages of the Qur'ān in written form by the time of the Prophet's death. A sizeable number, four of whom are worth mentioning: Abū Dardā', Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thābit and Abū Zayd even possessed the complete Qur'ān in its present arrangement.

It has been established from authentic traditions that the angel Gabriel, who conveyed the revelations of God to the Prophet, himself arranged these verses: each year during the month of Ramaḍān, Gabriel would come to the Prophet and recite before him all the Qur'ānic verses revealed up till that time in the order in which they exist today, after which the Prophet would repeat the verses in exactly the same order. This dual process has been termed *al-'Arḍa*, 'mutual presentation,' in the books of Ḥadīth.

It has also been established that in the last year of the Prophet's life, when the revelations had been completed, Gabriel came to the Prophet and recited the entire Qur'ān in the existing order twice, and similarly the Prophet also recited to Gabriel the entire Qur'ān twice. This final presentation is called *al-Arḍah al-Akhīrah* in the books of Ḥadīth. (*Fathul Bārī*, P. 659-663)

When by the help of Gabriel the Qur'ān was fully and systematically arranged, the Prophet recited it to his companions on different occasions in the order with which we are familiar today. The Qur'ān was thus preserved in its pristine form in the memories of tens of thousands of the

companions during the Prophet's lifetime.

The preservation of the Qur'ān passed through three stages: transcription, compilation and collection. In the first stage, as soon as a chapter or a verse was revealed, it was committed to writing. The following items are mentioned in books as examples of the writing materials used:

- *Riqā'a* - Thin leather piece
- *Likhaf* - Thin slates of white stone
- *Katf* - The round bone of the shoulder of the camel
- *'Asib* - The wide part of the root of the date branch.

In the Ḥadīth, the second stage of this process is referred to as "compilation". That is, first the verses were written down at the time of revelation. Then, when one chapter was completed, the whole chapter (often it took several revelations to complete one chapter) was written in compiled form, i.e. arranged in proper order on *riqā'a* (leather). Such copies of the compiled Qur'ān (complete or incomplete) were in the possession of a large number of people during the lifetime of the Prophet. We have the well known incident of 'Umar who beat his own sister and brother-in-law mercilessly for having accepted Islam. Finally, when his anger had subsided, he asked them to show him the book they were reading from. His sister replied that he could not touch it in a state of impurity and only after he had bathed himself did his sister give him the book (Ibn Hishām).

The third stage of this process is termed "Collection" that is, writing down the entire Qur'ān together in one volume. The form of the bound volume consisting of pages of the same size was not prevalent in the Prophet's time. According to a

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narration recorded by Bukhārī, only four companions Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, Abū Zayd, and Zayd ibn Thābit had the entire Qur'ān put together during the life of the Prophet. In *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, referring to Muḥammad, Ibn Ka'b Al-Qurẓi gives us the names of five such collectors of the complete Qur'ān. However the status of their collections was that of a personal possession. The official version was produced under the direction of the caliph Abū Bakr, who had it bound after arranging for all the verses to be written on square papers of the same size. Imām Mālik has also recorded (citing as his source, Shāhāb Zahrī, who had learned it from Sālim, son of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar,) that Zayd ibn Thābit wrote down all the verses of the Qur'ān on *al-Qarāṭīs* (papers of the same size) at the command of Abū Bakr. This volume was called *Raba'a* (square). (*al-Itqān*, 1/84-85)

It is said that during the caliphate of 'Umar Fārūq there were more than one lakh copies of the Qur'ān in circulation in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, etc.

In later times the written Qur'ān became the main source of Islamic learning. But one danger was still lurking. In sacred books even very minor differences can become a source of great controversy. It was feared that if people wrote the Qur'ān on their own, differences in transcribing (*kitābat*) e.g. writing 'eether' for 'either' and in recitation would create widespread dissension and there would be no way of putting an end to it. For instance, just one word in the first chapter of the Qur'ān was written in different ways according to the pronunciation of different dialects: *mālik-i-yaumuddīn*, *malik-i-yaumuddīn* and *malik-i-yaumuddīn*, etc.; with the passing of time and changes in the style of writing, the differences in the manuscript would have become a source of great contention.

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Therefore, on the advice of ‘Umar, Abū Bakr decided to have an authentic copy of the Qur’ān prepared under state patronage and thus put an end forever to the possibility of phonetic differences obscuring the true meaning of the text.

For this purpose Zayd ibn Thābit was the most competent, as he was the *kātib* (subscriber) of the Prophet. Zayd and Ubayy ibn Ka’b both had joined in the ‘last recitation’ having heard the Qur’ān directly from the Prophet in the order still extant today. Not only had they memorised the entire Qur’ān, but they also possessed the whole text in written form. The first caliph commanded them to collect all the available parts of the scriptures and to compile them. (Bukhārī). After this decision had been taken, ‘Umar made an announcement in the Mosque that whoever had any piece of writing from the Qur’ān should bring it and hand it over to Zayd.

During the first caliphate, the Qur’ān not only existed in written form on the bark of date palms, stones, leather, etc, but was also preserved in the memory of the companions. The Qur’ān, when made into a book, was arranged in the order memorized by the companions, and the verses have been preserved in that same order right up to the present day.

Zayd ibn Thābit’s work was more a process of collection than of compilation. That is, the scattered bits and pieces of the Qur’ān in written form were collected by him, not just to be assembled and bound in one volume, but to be used to verify the authenticity of the Qur’ān as memorised and passed on in oral tradition by countless individuals. Once this exact correspondence between the oral and written forms of the Qur’ān had been established beyond any reasonable doubt, Zayd proceeded to put the verses of the Qur’ān down on paper in their correct order.

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Ḥārith Muḥāsibī writes in his book, *Fahm al-Sunan*, that the transcription of the Qurʾān was nothing new, because the Prophet himself had arranged for it to be written down. But it was written separately on *Riqaʿa*, *Likhaf*, *Katf*, *ʿAsib*, etc. All the materials on which the Qurʾān was written were available in the Prophet’s house, but had not been put in any special order. What the collector did was to assemble all these parts and then bind them together so that no part was destroyed. (*al-Itqān*, 1/40)

This elaborate arrangement of the Qurʾān was made so that there should not be even the minutest discrepancy vis-à-vis the original revelation. If this extraordinary care had not been taken, differences would have resulted from the slightest lapse in memorising and transcription. For instance, when ‘Umar recited this verse to Zayd ibn Ṭhābit, “As for those who led the way, the first of the muḥājirs and the Anṣār, those who nobly followed them,” Zayd said, that he remembered this verse with *waw*, that is, with ‘and’ after Anṣār. So the investigation started, and finally the other memorisers of the Qurʾān came and confirmed that the opinion of Zayd was right. So in the volume the verse was written with the addition of ‘and’.

In former times, when the accepted way of disseminating the subject matter of a book was to memorise it, then recite it, it was quite exceptional that the Qurʾān should have been preserved in writing as well as memorised. This was like having a ‘double checking’ system, whereby memory plus written words and written words plus memory could be constantly compared for verification.

After Zayd ibn Ṭhābit had prepared the entire Qurʾān and bound it in the form of a book, all other materials collected from different companions, for the purpose of checking and rechecking, were all burnt. Now this volume was handed over to

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the caliph. After Abū Bakr's death it remained with 'Umar, the second caliph. After the death of Caliph 'Umar it remained in the custody of Ḥafṣa, daughter of 'Umar and wife of the Prophet.

During the caliphate of 'Uthmān, Islam had spread far and wide, and the number of Muslims was legion. Moreover, the companions who taught the Qur'ān had gone to different countries that had come within the fold of Islam. For instance, the Syrians learned the Qur'ān from Ubayy ibn Ka'b, the Kūfans (the inhabitants of Kūfa, a city in Iraq) learned the Qur'ān from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and the Iraqis in general from Abū Mūsá Ash'arī. However, due to differences in accent and styles of writing, controversies again began cropping up. People even called one another heretics owing to such differences.

Ibn Abī Da'ūd writes in his book, *Al-Maṣāḥif*, quoting Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah Nakḥa'ī, that once when Ḥuḍayfa ibn al-Yaman was present in the mosque of Kūfa, he found a group reciting the Qur'ān. One of them recited a certain verse and said: "This is the way of recitation of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd." Another recited it with a different accent and said that was how Abū Mūsá al-Ash'arī recited it. Ḥuḍayfa, enraged on hearing this, stood up and admonished this group: "Those before you (people of the book) differed just like this. By God, I will go riding to the leader of the believers, 'Uthmān, the third caliph."

Ḥuḍayfa was a military officer posted in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and had just come back from doing battle. But when he reached Madina; and witnessed the scene in the Prophet's mosque, instead of going straight home, he went directly to the third caliph and addressed him thus: "O Leader of the believers! Take care of the people, before they fall victim to the differences regarding the book of God just as the Jews and the Christians did."

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During the caliphate of 'Uthmān there entered the fold of Islam peoples whose mother tongue was not Arabic, and who were not able to speak the language with the proper accent and pronunciation. Even the various Arab tribes themselves had different accents and pronunciation. Hence the variations in the recitation of the Qur'ān happened. As a result of which the Qur'ān also began to be written according to varying pronunciations. Ibn Qutayba writes that the Banī Hudhayl tribe used to pronounce 'ḥattá' as 'attá'. Since Ibn Mas'ūd belonged to this tribe, its members saw no reason to deviate from this pronunciation. Such differences in recitation came to be reflected in the transcription of the Qur'ān, this being only one of many such examples. Given this state of affairs, 'Uthmān, as advised by Hudhayfa ibn Yaman, had copies made of the volume prepared by Abū Bakr, then sent one copy each to all cities. This task was again entrusted to Zayd ibn Thābit Anṣārī, who was provided with eleven people to assist him. As per the order of the third caliph, the committee wrote down the Qur'ān in accordance with the spelling of the Quraysh, so that it should conform to the accent (*lehja*) of the Prophet of Islam. Caliph Uthman subsequently ordered that all other copies of the Qur'ān, which people had written on their own, should be handed over to the government. These were all then burnt by his order.

By this method, all the copies of the Qur'ān were made uniform as far as writing was concerned. However, taking natural differences into consideration – since all the people were not able to pronounce the Qur'ān uniformly – permission was given for the Qur'ān to be recited with seven different pronunciations and accents. The collection prepared by Abū Bakr was done one year after the death of the

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Prophet. The copies ordered by 'Uthmān were produced fifteen years after the Prophet's death.

These copies of the Qur'ān, made with extraordinary care and precision, were passed on from generation to generation until the age of the press dawned. Many printing presses were then established in the Muslim world, where the beautiful calligraphy of the scripture was reproduced after its content had been certified by memorisers of the Qur'ān. Thus, once again, with the help of the memorised versions and written texts, correct, authentic copies were prepared; then with the publication of these copies on a large scale, the Qur'ān spread all over the world.

It is an irrefutable fact acknowledged by the orientalist, that any copy of the Qur'ān found in any part of the world at any time will be exactly the same as that handed down to the Muslims by the Prophet in his last days, arranged in the form still extant today.

### **Chapter Two: Divine Arrangement**

The Jews were commanded by God to preserve their holy book, the Torah. The responsibility for preserving these early divine scriptures thus fell to their followers, and so they underwent several changes and alterations whereas the Qur'ān is free from all such danger of mistakes because God Himself shouldered the burden of keeping the Qur'ān intact: 'We have, without doubt, sent down the Message, and We will assuredly guard it.' (15: 09) Earlier scriptures were books of God just as the Qur'ān was. The only difference was that the bearers of those books failed in their task of preserving them, and hence they lost their original qualities. As for the Qur'ān, God having taken it upon Himself to provide His special divine succour for its

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safeguarding, it remained in its pristine state.

This, however, does not mean that angels will descend from heaven in order to keep the Qur'ān under their protection. The present world being one of trial, the realities of the next world remain hidden from us in this life. It can therefore never happen that the angels will virtually come down in order to guard the Qur'ān. All such things are achieved in this world under normal and not extraordinary circumstances. Here this task is to be performed by us normal human beings, and through historical processes, without the veil of the unseen being lifted. Events throughout human history bear out God's fulfillment of His promise- Muslims as well as non-Muslims, individuals as well as communities have been pressed into this service by God. So far as the former prophets are concerned, they were unable to secure sufficient numbers of followers to provide a strong guarantee of the preservation of the book of God. But the case of the Prophet of Islam is distinctly different from that of the other prophets. On the occasion of Ḥajjatul widā', the last pilgrimage, which the Prophet performed two and a half months before his death, he was accompanied by one lakh and forty thousand Muslims on the plains of Arafāt. One can guess from this that by the end of his life the number of believers, both men and women taken together, must have been around five lakhs. This number is quite extraordinarily large, considering that the world population in ancient times was much less than it is today. After the death of the Prophet this number went on increasing as nation after nation embraced Islam. In this way a vast human group came into being as had never previously existed for the guarding of any other revealed scriptures.

Another helpful event that followed was a series of conquests

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both in and outside of Arabia by which the Muslims progressively gained dominance over a vast inhabited territory of the ancient world and established the great and the glorious empire of the time. This empire, too strong to be overcome by any other power, was well able to guard the authenticity of the Qur'ān, resisting all onslaughts for over a thousand years. Then with the advent of the age of the press, the possibility of the Qur'ān ever being destroyed was finally ruled out.

In the age of the press it became possible to print a million copies from just one manuscript – something which had been an impossibility in ancient times, when each copy was separately hand-written. That was why one copy differed from another to some extent. This happened with all ancient books. It was only in the case of the Qur'ān, of which tens of thousands of copies had been separately hand-written before the age of the press, (a large number of copies are still available in museums and libraries) that, amazingly, there was not the slightest difference between one manuscript and another. If Muslims became so alert and sensitive to maintaining the perfection of the Qur'ān, it was because of God's special divine succour.

Besides this, there was another God-inspired arrangement. That is, the unique method of committing all of the text to memory, which came to be practiced in the case of the Qur'ān—a method which had never before been applied to any other book in the history of mankind. Hundreds of thousands of people were motivated (by God) to learn by rote the text of the Qur'ān from beginning to end. Right from the beginning of the Qur'ān down to our own day, thousands of people known as *ḥāfiẓ* (those who commit the whole Qur'ān to memory) have existed in every generation. History tells us

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that there is no other book whose followers have shown such extreme care in memorizing its text. It was this custom of remembering the Qur'ān by heart that made its preservation possible. This unique system was termed by a French orientalist as 'double-checking', i.e. first matching the contents of one copy with another and then checking it again from memory.

Every procedure followed for the protection of the Qur'ān for 1500 years of Islamic history was assisted by God. However, in order that this world should remain a testing ground for mankind, all this took place under a veil (that is, although it was God who influenced events and motivated the people, He remained hidden, because man is on trial in this world). On Doomsday, when all realities are laid bare, people will observe how God Himself was directly performing the task of guarding the Qur'ān right from the beginning of the Islamic revolution to the advent of the age of the press, which with its more sophisticated method of replication, facilitated the rapid propagation of God's message.

There is another vital aspect of this special divine arrangement for the eternal continuance of the Qur'ān: God requires the Muslims to preserve not just its wordings but, more importantly, its meanings. Whereas the test of former people of the book lay in perpetuating the exact wordings of their scriptures, the real test of the Muslim *ummah* lies in the guarding of their scripture's meaning. Apart from it God also Himself undertook the responsibility of keeping the Qur'ān intact.

As a matter of divine trial, Muslims have to prove that they do not deviate from the text in their explanations and interpretations, and of having kept everything in the exact place designated by the Qur'ān. In their commentaries, they

must take the greatest care to make no shift in emphasis, for that would be tantamount to altering the goals of the sacred text. When presenting the Qur'ān to others, they should convey exactly what it asserts, no less and no more.

The failure of Muslims as the people of the Qur'ān lies in their forgetting its spirit and using the Qur'ān simply as a book of blessing rather than a book of guidance. When Muslims' degeneration reaches this stage, their activities become directed away from the basics of Islam. They refer to their religion, their holy book, as being matters of national pride. Others engage themselves in show business in the name of Islam. Yet others exploit it for political gain.

All these activities, even if they are indulged in the name of the Qur'ān and Islam, are all deviations from sacred principles. If Muslims persist in engaging themselves in such activities, they will not escape the wrath of God. If they feel satisfied that they will be saved on the ground that they have spared no effort in preserving the words of the Qur'ān, they are grossly mistaken. God will hold them responsible for having distorted the meanings of the Qur'ānic text out of all recognition.

It should be clearly understood that the Muslims will be taken to task for the meaning of the text just as the earlier peoples of the Book had been taken to task for having altered the wording of their scriptures. It is on this point that the Muslims are perennially tested. Having changed the meaning of the Qur'ān by their self styled interpretations, they cannot escape the wrath of God simply because they have made no change in the text.

No man can be tested unless he be given freedom of action as well. Muslims are free to interpret the text, but not to alter it. One must fully grasp this point that the punishment meted

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out to other peoples of the Book for altering the *wordings* of the divine text will be meted out to Muslims for altering the *meaning* of the text. Herein lies the gauge of the Muslims. If by their self-styled interpretations they change the meaning of the sacred text, they cannot be spared divine punishment by the mere fact of not having changed the actual words. It is because the test of man lies in his sphere of power. Now, forbidden to change the words of the Qur'ān, Muslims can change only its meaning. So it will be on this very point that they will be taken to task.

### **Eternal Truth**

The Prophet Moses, born in Egypt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C., was chosen by God to be His messenger. In those days, Egypt was under the dynastic rule of the Pharaohs, who were idolaters. The Prophet Moses encountered two of the kings of this dynasty: one was appointed to be his guardian by God, while the other was one with whom he came into confrontation during his missionary struggle.

When Moses presented the Divine Message of Truth before the latter Pharaoh, he turned against him. To prove the genuineness of his prophethood, the Prophet Moses showed the miracle of his rod turning into a serpent. Pharaoh said that it was mere magic, and that his people too could perform such feats. So Pharaoh ordered all the magicians of Egypt together on the occasion of a national festival in order to nullify the miracle of Moses by demonstrating their superior skills in magic. At the appointed time the most renowned magicians from all over the country duly gathered in the royal court. When the Prophet Moses arrived, he not only surpassed the performance of the court magicians with further miracles, but he also made a very

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significant speech, a part of which is as follows:

“What you have brought is deception. Surely God will render it vain. God does not bless the work of the evil-doers. By His words He vindicates the truth, much as the guilty may dislike it’ (10: 81-82).

What the Prophet Moses said at that time was in fact a proclamation of God’s eternal verdict. In the present world man has been granted freedom so that he may be put to the test. In consequence, untruth has had the opportunity to mar the human condition. But this rise of falsehood is only a temporary phase, for the system of the world is so perfect that it does not accept untruth for long. After a period of time, it rejects all falsity. It is truth and truth alone which will endure.

This law of God was manifest in ancient times just as it is manifest today. That is why, in the time of the Prophet Moses, the sorcery of the magicians was set at naught by the miracle granted to Moses. This phenomenon of truth finally conquering untruth has been repeated many times throughout the ages in different forms. In present times God has ordained this through human knowledge itself, advances in knowledge and science having made it possible to prove with finality the unassailability of divine Truth. With the revelation of the Qur’ān, the events that were to unfold found expression in these words:

“We will show them Our Signs in all the regions of the earth and in their own souls, until they clearly see that this is the truth. Does it not suffice that your Lord is watching over all things? (41: 53).

The commentator, Ibn Kathīr has explained this verse in these words:

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“Soon We shall make manifest the truth of the Qur’ān through the external arguments of reasoning.”

This verse of the Qur’ān needs to be looked at in the context of posterity. These are the words of a Being before whom are ranged not only the generations of that time, but all succeeding generations.

Addressing itself to all the peoples of the present, past and future, this verse declares that whatever is presented in its own times on the basis of revealed knowledge, will in the future have its authenticity proven by advances in human knowledge itself. What is merely a matter of assertion today will become a confirmed reality tomorrow.

This prediction of the Qur’ān has been proved true in the fullest sense. In ancient times when the magicians countered Truth with magic, God demolished their magic. In present times when the case for atheism was projected without its having any basis in truth, God made all the arguments in its favour vanish into thin air. By the same token, whatever is raised up against Truth will in like manner be demolished, – as has happened in all ages. God’s word, its veracity intact, will be perpetuated, for all time to come.

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## Selected English Translations of the Qur'ān, A Critical and Analytical Study (1930–2001 A.D)

Dr. Aurang Zeb Azmi<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: Abū Ādam Farīd bin 'Abdul Ḥafīz al-Hindī<sup>2</sup>



### Sub-Chapter-2

#### Study of the Qur'ān during the Companions' Period

As I have discussed in the previous sub-chapter of the first chapter that the companions used to ponder upon the verses of the Qur'ān and its chapters. When the readers and researchers felt difficulty to understand any sort of vague or complicated things, they asked the companions or the Prophet directly about them. Such questions before the Prophet have been previously mentioned. As far as the question among the companions of the Prophet is concerned, it was briefed by the narration of the Caliph 'Umar when he read out the following Qur'ānic verse on the podium: Allah says: "أَوْ يَأْخُذْهُمْ عَلَىٰ تَخَوُّفٍ" and he asked the gathering about the meaning of the word "تخوف" (Takhawwuf), then a person from Hudhail tribe answered saying that it means for us the imperfect sort of things. Then he read out the following Arabic verse:

تخوف الرجل منها تاممًا قردًا      كما تخوف عود النبعة السفن<sup>1</sup>

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Likewise, the commentator Mujāhid narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās who said: I did not know what does "فاطر السموات" (Fāṭirussamāwāt) mean. In the meanwhile, two Bedouins came who were quarreling over a well. One of them said, "I dug it" while the other said, "I started it."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the above examples, there were some other scholars [of the early period of Islam] who were particularly engaged in learning and teaching the Qur’ān. They are the four rightly-guided caliphs including Ibn Mas’ūd, Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Ubaid bin Ka’ab, Zaid bin Thābit, Abū Musā Ash’arī and ‘Abdullāh bin Zubair who used to learn the Qur’ān in some particular places in different parts of the Islamic domain.

#### **The Sources of the Study of the Qur’ān in the Early Period of Islam:**

There were four primary sources according to which the companions used to study the Qur’ān and ponder on it:

**a) The Qur’ān:** The companions had already known that some parts of the Qur’ān explains the other parts and likewise if some parts are too shorts to be explained, the same are explained by another similar parts and vice versa. And similarly, if any matter is discussed in different places or it is too short then Qur’ān explains the same points in detail in another place which removes the vagueness of the former parts.

This was the only parameter in the first phase of the commentary of the Qur’ān upon which the companions

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Muwāfaqāt, n.d., 2/88

<sup>2</sup> Jalāluddīn al-Suyūṭī: al-Itqān fi ‘Ulūm al-Qr’ān (Etd, by: Muḥammad Abul Faḍl Ibrāhīm), al-Haiāh al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1974, 2/113

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used to understand the meaning of the Qur'ān, explained the brief accounts and unclear phrases of the Qur'ān. It indicates that they considered the Qur'ān an organized and complete book [of Divine Directives] not a mere book of unorganized and unarranged chapters. This can be understood in the light of the companions' commentary:

1. "Mubārak bin Fuḍālah reported to us and said: Yazīd al-Faqīr reported to me saying, I was sitting beside Jābir bin 'Abdullāh while he was reading the Ḥadīth and he said that some people would be taken out from the Hell." The narrator said: I declined to embrace this view by that time so I got angered and said: How wonderful people they are. But you are more wonderful than them, oh the companions of Muḥammad! You claim that Allah would take out some people from the Hell while Allah says: *يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرِجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا* "يريدون أن يخرجوا من النار وما" *هُمْ يُخْرِجِينَ مِنْهَا*<sup>1</sup> (They will log to get out of the Fire, but never will they get out therefrom.) The companions scolded me who were the most gentle and wise? He said they claimed that the Hell will be for the deniers [of the Divine faith] and he read out this verse: *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِثْلَهُ* "إن الذين كفروا لو أن لهم ما في الأرض جميعا ومثله" (Verily, those who disbelieve, if they had all that is in the earth, and as much again therewith to ransom themselves thereby from the torment on the Day of Resurrection, ---) even he read: *وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ*<sup>2</sup> "وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ" (--- theirs would be a painful torment.) Don't you read the Qur'ān? I said why not? He said, "Does Allah not say: *وَمِنْ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدُ بِهِ - نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا*"<sup>3</sup> (And in some

<sup>1</sup> Al-Mā'idah: 37

<sup>2</sup> Al-Mā'idah: 36

<sup>3</sup> Al-Isrā': 79

parts of the night offer the prayer with it as an additional prayer. It may be that your Lord will raise you to *maqām-i-mahmūd*). This is not the only place where Allah will hold some people in the Hell owing to their sins till He wills and He will not talk to them. But when He intends to take them out, He will take them out. He said thereafter that I did not deny this view.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of the above opinion one of the companions argues by the Qur'ān that is with accordance of the contents of the Qur'ān.

2. Abū Ja'far bin Jarīr narrated through various sources that Ibn al-Kawā' asked the fourth Caliph of Islam 'Alī bin Abū Ṭālib: Oh, The leader of the Muslims! What kind of spot is there in the moon? 'Alī replied: Woe unto you! Do you not read the Qur'ān? wherein Allah says: "فمحونا آية الليل" (We removed the sign of the night.) This is the sign of its removal.<sup>2</sup>

The above reply with citing the Qur'ānic verse was given by 'Alī and in this way the meaning of the Qur'ān was explained as it was given to the person who questioned.

3. And Allah says: "وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ لَيْسَ ظَنُّهُ فَأَتَّبِعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ"<sup>3</sup> (And indeed Satan did prove true his thought about them: and they followed him, all except a group of true believers.)

Ibn 'Abbās says in the explanation of this verse that this verse is like the verse of the Qurān when the Satan

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<sup>1</sup> Ismā'īl s/o Kathīr: Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Dār al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1986, 2/56-57

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 3/39

<sup>3</sup> Saba: 20

declined to prostrate before Ādam: "أرأيتك هذا الذي كرمت عليّ لئن  
"أرأيتك هذا الذي كرمت عليّ لئن (He said: See this one whom  
You have honoured above me, if You give me respite to the  
Day of Judgment, I will surely seize and mislead his  
offspring all but a few).

Then the Satan again said: "ثم لآتينهم من بين أيديهم ومن خلفهم وعن  
"ثم لآتينهم من بين أيديهم ومن خلفهم وعن  
أيمانهم وعن شمائلهم ولا تجد أكثرهم شاكرين"  
(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)<sup>1</sup>

**b) The Ḥadīth:** The second important source to study the Qur'ān, to explain its meaning and to interpret its verse, is the collection of prophetic traditions that are considered to explain the contents of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> These traditions are indeed countless and I do not mean by the Ḥadīth the traditions which are prescribed in the chapters of the Qur'ānic commentary (كتب التفسير) because they are few. I mean by the Ḥadīth all the traditions which explain the meanings of the Qur'ānic verses and are related to academic, lingual and religious problems. These are countless and perhaps that is the reason behind what the Prophet said:<sup>3</sup>

"Oh, I was given the Qur'ān and the things like it. So the contentious person sitting on his bed may not say: Hold this Qur'ān fast what is lawful, consider it as lawful and what is there unlawful consider it as unlawful.

<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 3/543

<sup>2</sup> Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, Tafsīr Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān, Tāj Company, Delhi, 1989, 1/30

<sup>3</sup> Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, 1/37

If you have studied the collections of the Ḥadīth, you will find them containing the following kinds on the Hadith.

- 1- They explain any word or term of the Qur'ān.
- 2- They elaborate what is concise and summarize what is in detail.
- 3- They confine the meanings of the Qur'ān and mention the confinement of its rules.
- 4- They certify what is in the Qur'ān. And such traditions are plenty.
- 5- They mention the nullified verses and rules.
- 6- They give additional rules in respect of the Qur'ānic rules.
- 7- They mention proverbs and wise sayings extracted from the Qur'ān.

From this point of view the Ḥadīth is the best primary source to interpret the Qur'ān, explain its contents and to sort out its problems. Here some examples are given to conclude the concept.

1. Allah says: "إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ" (If you (two) turn in repentance to Allah (it will be better for you), your hearts are indeed so inclined but if you help another against him (Muḥammad), then verily, Allah is his Protector and Gabriel and the righteous among the believers, and furthermore, the angels are his helpers.)

The commentators have differences in respect of determining the meaning of the word "صغت" (Ṣaghat) and

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<sup>1</sup> Tahrīm: 4

they have given different opinions. If they had explained the above word in the light of the following tradition, they would not have deviated from their source. The evil people will go for evil omen, they will neither know the right things nor they will oppose the wrong things:

"... فيبقى شرار الناس في خفة الطير وأحلام السباع لا يعرفون معروفاً ولا ينكرون منكراً فيتمثل لهم الشيطان فيقول ألا تستجيبون فيقولون فما تأمرنا؟ فيأمرهم بعبادة الأوثان وهم في ذلك دار رزقهم حسن عيشهم ثم ينفخ في الصور فلا يسمعه أحد إلا أصغى ليتها ورفع ليتها وأول من يسمعه رجل يلوط حوض إبله..."<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: --- In this condition, the Devil guide them and he will say that why don't you reply? They will ask what order you are giving to us, so he will order them to worship the idols and like this they will earn their livelihood happily. Then the trumpet will be blown which none can hear except the one who turns his neck and raises his neck and the first person to hear it, will be the one who digs a water basin for his camel.

lṣghā' (إصغاء) here means to incline and "Ṣaghw" (صفو) means inclination that is that your hearts have inclined towards him.<sup>2</sup>

2. In another place Allah says: "مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا"<sup>3</sup> (Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets. And Allah is Ever All-Knower of everything.)

We can understand the term "خاتم النبيين"

<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 3/389

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 2/389

<sup>3</sup> Al-Aḥzāb: 40

(Khātamunnabiyyīn) in the light of the bellow Ḥadīth.

“Abū Hurairah narrated that the Prophet said: Indeed my example and examples of the former prophets before me is like a person who built a house and gave it the ultimate finishing except a brick that is not found in one of the corners then the people will start to move around it and they will wonder about it asking: Why the brick was not put here? The Prophet Muḥammad said: I am that brick and I am the last prophet”.<sup>1</sup>

3. In order to explain the brief contents we would take into account the explanation of these matters like “صلاة” (Prayer), “زكاة” (Islamic tax) and “حج” (Performance of pilgrimage). As far as the confinement of religious duties is concerned, we would take into account this verse. Allah says: *وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالاً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ*<sup>2</sup> (And (as for) the male thief and the female thief, cut off (from the wrist joint) their right hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise).

“If the stolen thing is equal to 4<sup>th</sup> Dīnār or more than the 4<sup>th</sup> Dīnār then the hand of the thief would be cut off.”<sup>3</sup>

There is another Ḥadīth which directs that the hand would not be cut off if the stolen thing is less than the price of the 8<sup>th</sup> portion of the shield.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḫḫārī, No. of the Ḥadīth: 3535

<sup>2</sup> Al-Mā'idah: 38

<sup>3</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 2/58

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

4. Allah says: "أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ"<sup>1</sup> (Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: "We believe," and will not be tested? And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars.)

The concept of any distress can be understood in the following Ḥadīth that renders best explanation.

"Anas narrated from the Prophet who said: The greater reward is with the greater distress. And when Allah loves any people, He examines him. So the one who is pleased with this trial, he has Allah's pleasure and favour and the one who is displeased with trial, he has Allah' displeasure and wrath."<sup>2</sup>

5. Allah says: "وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءٍ" (And (remember) when the angels said: "O Mary! Verily, Allah has chosen you, purified you (from polytheism and disbelief), and chosen you above the women of the world.)

In this verse the Qur'ān has described the concept of choosing Mary to be the best woman in the world. The Prophet added to its saying in this way. The prophet said:

"The best women in this world are four: 1– Maryam bint Imrān (Mary) 2- Āsiah wife of the Pharaoh 3- Khadījah bint

<sup>1</sup> Al-'Ankabūt: 2-3

<sup>2</sup> Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, No. of the Ḥadīth: 2396

<sup>3</sup> Āli 'Imrān: 42

Khuwailid and 4- Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad."<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet says in another instance:

"Many men have become perfect and complete but none of the women has become perfect and complete except the three. They are: 1- Maryam (Mary) bint 'Imrān, 2- Āsiah wife of Pharaoh and 3- Khādījah bint Khuwailid. The preference of 'Ā'shah to the entire women is like the preference of meat and borth (Tharīd) to the entire food."<sup>2</sup>

6. In this verse Allah says: *وَإِذْ قَالَ آدَمُ لِبَنِيهِ إِنَّهُمَا لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ لَئِن بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسٍ بِكَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ*<sup>3</sup> (And (O Muhammad!) recite to them the story of the two sons of Adam in truth; when each offered a sacrifice, it was accepted from one but not from the other. The later said to the former: "I will surely kill you." The former said: "Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are the pious. If you do stretch your hand against me to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you; for I fear Allah, the Lord of the world. Verily, I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours, then you will be one of the dwellers of the Fire; and that is the recompense of the wrong-doers." So the self of the other (later one) encouraged him and made fair-seeming to him the murder of his brother; he murdered him and became one of the losers.)

<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 1/371

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Al-Mā'idah: 27-30

The Prophet has derived the concept from the above verse and he said:

“When two Muslims fought each other with the sword, the killer and the victim both will be in the Hell.”<sup>1</sup>

He again says:

“There will be *fitnah* (riot) in the world where the sitting person will be better than the one who is standing, the standing person will be better than the waker and the waker will be better than the runner.”<sup>2</sup>

**c) The Literature of the Ancient Arab:** The third important source to study the Qur’ān is the eloquent Arabic itself that is because the Qur’ān was revealed in this language and the holder of this Qur’ān is the Prophet Muḥammad who himself is the best eloquent among the Arabs. The literature of ancient Arab is composed of different historical perspectives of the Qur’ān apart from containing lingual and literal aspects.

The Caliph ‘Umar says about it:

“Oh the People! Hold the poetry of the ancient Arab, it is because it has the commentary of your book (the Qur’ān).”<sup>3</sup>

Ibn ‘Abbās said:

“The Qur’ān has four types of contents. One content is known by the literature of the ancient Arabs, the second content is not easy to be explained by any one, the third content is known by the scholars and the forth content is not known except to Allah.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 2/45

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Al-Muwāfaqāt, 2/88

<sup>4</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 1/7 and 354

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Ibn Kathīr said:

“As far as the Qur’ān is concerned, its entire part is the most eloquent composition for the person who knows its brief and detailed contents and may understand the literature of the Arab and its style.”<sup>1</sup>

As for its being a source for the history of the Arabs, it is sufficed to be concluded by the remark of the celebrated author ‘Umar Farrūkh who said:

“We accept the entire pre-Islamic poetry as the source of the pre-Islamic civilization and culture.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Naṣīruddīn al-Asad said:

“The poetry is the most authentic source to study the life and culture of the (ancient Arab).”<sup>3</sup>

These above significant factors of the ancient literature compelled the companions of the Prophet to interpret their religious book (the Qur’ān) in the light of the ancient literature. These are best examples of the commentary of the Qur’ān which was carried out in the light of the poetry and the best speeches of the ancient Arabs. Few of them are cited below:

1. It is narrated that ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb asked Ubai bin Ka’ab about Taqwá (Pious deed), He answered: Have you not walked on the thorny place? He said: Why not? He replied I stood up and tried to walk. Then he (‘Umar) said: This is the Taqwá (pious deed).

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P. 63

<sup>2</sup> Dr. ‘Umar Farrūkh, *Tārīkh-ul-Jāhiliyyah*, Dār-ul-‘Ilm lil Malāyīn, Beirut, 1984, P. 15

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Naṣīruddīn al-Asad, *Maṣādir al-Sh’ir al-Jāhili wa Qīmatuha al-Tārīkhīyyah*, Dār-ul-Jīl, Beirut, 1988, P. 6

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We can understand the meaning of the word ‘Taqwá’ in the following couplets as the pre-Islamic Nābighah said:

سقط النصيف ولم ترد إسقاطه      فتناولته واتقنتنا باليد<sup>1</sup>

Another poet said:

فألقت قناعًا دونه الشمس واتقت      بأحسن موصولين كف ومعصم<sup>2</sup>

2. It is narrated that when the companions of the Prophet asked about the meaning of the word “Takḥawwuf” used in the Qur’ān in the following verse where Allah says: “أَوْ يَأْخُذْهُمْ”<sup>3</sup> (Or that He may catch them with gradual wasting (of their wealth and health)? Truly your Lord is indeed full of Kindness, Most Merciful.)

An old man from the tribe of Hudhail stood and explained its meaning through the following couplet:

تخوف الرجل منها تامكا قرداً      كما تخوف عود النبعة السفن<sup>4</sup>

“تخوف” (Takḥawwuf) means “تنقص” (Tanaqquṣ)- shortage of wealth and fruits and loss of lives and even their destruction.

- d) Other Heavenly Books:** The companions of the Prophet like the Prophet himself used sometimes to excerpt quotations from the sons of Israel when they needed to explain the Qur’ānic verses.

Ibn Kathīr pointed out towards it and said:

<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 1/42

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> Al-Naḥl: 43

<sup>4</sup> Al-Muwāfaqāt, 2/88

“--- But sometimes the quotations were derived from the people of the Book<sup>1</sup> which the Prophet himself certified saying: Derive quotations from the sons of Israel and there is no harm to do it.”<sup>2</sup>

Few quotations are given below to explain our view.

1. Al-Ḥasan says about the ant which has been mentioned in the chapter of ant (سورة النمل) of the Qur’ān, citing the narration of the People of the Book.

“The name of this ant is Haras that is from a tribe called Banū Shiṣān which was lame and was like a wolf.”<sup>3</sup>

2. Ibn ‘Abbās describes few things about the commentary of the following verse. Allah says: *قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ قَالَ عَفْرَيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ*<sup>4</sup> (He said: “O Chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me surrendering themselves in obedience.” A strong one from the jinn said: “I will bring it to you before rise from your place. And verily, I am indeed strong, and trustworthy for such work.” One with whom was knowledge of Scripture said: “I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye”. Then when he (Sulaimān/Solomon) saw it placed before him, he said: “This is by the grace of My Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whosoever is grateful, truly, his

<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 1/5

<sup>2</sup> It has been narrated by Abū Dā’ūd and Aḥmad bin Ḥambal

<sup>3</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 3/371

<sup>4</sup> Al-Naml: 38-40

gratitude is for his ownself, and whoever is ungrateful, certainly my Lord is Rich and Bountiful.)

“Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that Sulaimān said, “I need the job to be completed quicker than this”. So the person who has knowledge of divine book said, “I will look into the book of my Lord and I will bring it to you before shutting your eyes”. He narrated that then Sulaimān looked at him and when he finished his talk Sulaimān shut his eyes and in the meanwhile the throne grew from beneath the feet of Sulaimān from the chair on which Sulaimān had put his legs to sit on the throne. The narrator said: When Sulaimān saw her throne he said that it was the grace of my Lord. Then he ordered to make little changes into the throne. And when she came she was asked whether it was her throne. She replied: It is very similar to that of mine. The narrator said: Then she asked him about two things when she came: (1) I want water which doesn’t come from the earth nor from the sky. When Sulaimān was asked about anything, he first asked it from the people then from the jinn then from the Devils. So the devils replied him that it was very easy. Simply run the horse and take its sweet then fill the pot by it so he ordered (the forces) to run the horses and to take a pot full of water from its sweet. (2) The narrator said that she also asked about the colour of Allah. Then Sulaimān jumped from his throne and fell in prostration and said: O Allah! She asked me about the thing which I cannot tell her”. Allah replied: Go back to your throne. I am enough for you. The narrator said: Then he went back to his throne and asked her what she asked. She said: I didn’t ask you except about the water. Then he asked his forces what she asked about. They replied: She didn’t ask you except about

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water and in fact they forgot what she had asked. The narrator mentioned that the devils said that Sulaimān wished to marry with her. And if Sulaimān married with her and she got birth to a baby, we would not be freed from his slavery. The narrator said: Then they made a palace of mirror with pool full of fish. Then she was told to enter it. When she saw the palace, she thought it as waves and then opened her leg. Her leg was hairy. Then Sulaimān said: It is disgusting. And is there anything to remove it? They replied: It can be removed with eraser. But he told that the affect of eraser will be also ugly then the devils invented a glow. The narrator said: It were the devils who invented the glow first.”<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Kathīr commented on this narration: This type of narrations have been taken from the scriptures of the People of Book. May Allah pardon their narrators who narrated all strange and distorted narrations of the People of the Book.”

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 3/378

## Emergence of Interest-free Finance in India

✎...Mr. Ashham<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Interest-free finance is the form of ethical investing. Investment is the backbone of any financial activity; hence for starting a business investment is necessary. The interest-free financial institutions follow the norms of Islamic Shari'ah where the investment or lending process is purely based on interest-free techniques. The interest-free financial system works for the elimination of '*riba*' which means something in excess. The word *riba* stands for interest. Therefore we can say that Islamic finance is interest-free and the investment or lending process which is done through this process, is called 'Interest-free Finance'. Interest-free institutions never invest their funds in those companies that involved in gambling, alcoholic beverages or porcine food products.

*Riba* is the Arabic term stands for interest rates or usury, and it refers to a situation where a predetermined return is guaranteed for just lending money (interest-based financing). An example for *riba* can be understood in a way where a lender receives payments in excess of the principal. Thus, under the concept of *riba*, the rate of return is considered a function of money itself. In the religion of Islam, such practice is prohibited and condemned because the rate of return should not be guaranteed for just lending money. It is also worth-mentioning that it is not only the religion of Islam that condemns and prohibits practices that deals with *riba* or usury but all heavenly religions also do so.

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### **Emergence of Interest Free Finance in India**

The Interest free finance is one of the most emerging trends in the global financial market. The tools and modules of *riiba* (interest) free are gaining greater importance and much appreciation in the financial industry. The flow of liquidity has been a considerable key point in financial markets which regulates different strategies and working conditions of the industry. Today the interest free industry has achieved a growth of trillion dollar within a short span of time. Most of the countries are into practicing or they have a window in their financial sectors. The Shari'ah (Islamic law) compliant products are very much in demand as they appear for a significant developing and constructive elements to the society. The interest free industry widely recommends those products which are ethical in nature. The industry prohibits the products engaged in uncertainty and gambling.

The global market especially the Middle East countries are into non conventional banking. The method of these financial sectors is to eliminate *riba* (interest or usury). The global trend involves international markets to expose their activities. The globalization process has made the market very much close. In the present world the activities of interest free industry are open and the growth reflects its success. Nowadays the banks play a significant role in our society, and it is not even possible to imagine the life without banks, in other words the banks have become a blood vein of our economy. Banking institutions have emerged as very necessary for everyone, poor as well as rich. It is needed to deposit and protect the saving however meager it may be. Poor laborers, construction workers and others migrating to the urban centers of the country from remote corners must have access to banking to transfer their earning to the families in far off places.

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Also several social initiatives, welfare programmes and schemes of the government both state and central do require bank accounts of those targeted - below poverty line segments - to receive money safely in their account. Also credit is provided to people through banks. All these requirements have made banking an inevitable part of life for men and women these days.

Even after forty years, since nationalization of the banks about 60% population do not have access to formal banking and only 5.2% of villages have bank branches. Marginal farmers, land less labors, oral lessees, self employed and unorganized sector enterprise, ethnic minority and women, **AAM AADMI** of our great country continue to form the financially excluded class. The recent government has tried their level best in opening accounts of individuals living in rural areas. The financial exclusion of a large segment of the population has far-reaching implications for the socio-economic and educational upliftment of the masses. These financially excluded classes would not hesitate in sharing a “return” on their investment but they often find it difficult to meet the demand of a pre-determined return unrelated to the yield. If finance is available without the burden caused by pre-determined interest rates, it will be a welcome development for the marginalized and also especially for SME’s. Interest-free banking can fill up this gap.

Defining the word interest -“Interest is the price of money or the opportunity cost of holding money in the narrow form”, interest as it is the credit price the lender takes as a compensation for lending money to a borrower, or it is the output of dividing the amount of money that will be paid for the credit over the actual amount of the credit obtained. Interest rate determination theories are divided into two

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major types the first type focuses on the equilibrium level of interest, the equilibrium level is the rest state where forces that can change the economy are absent, and the second type is that which relies on several assumptions. The interest rate is composed of risk free real interest rate which is the adjusted return on the government bonds added to risk premium which simply compensate lenders who accept loans.

Loan pricing is most difficult task in lending process, due to the lender's will to increase the interest rate to make the loan more profitable in the same time the lender must maintain the low interest rate to satisfy the customer. There are many methods for pricing the loan like the cost-plus loan pricing method where the interest is calculated through the sum of the marginal cost of raising the fund to lend to the customer, operating costs, compensation amount for default risk and the desired profit margin this sum can easily calculate the interest rate through the cost-plus method, another method that can calculate the interest rate avoiding the drawback in the cost-plus method is the price leadership method which is adding the cost-plus components to the default risk premium and the term risk premium paid by the long term borrowers which will give better value.

The credit risk loan pricing is calculated through interest rate by adding the market interest rate to the risk premium and the fees. These calculations of interest shows that the interest and risk are positively related to risk takers will rush for high interest loans.

Banks are taking good care with the amount of loans given to customers or business firms because the loan is a risky process that must be repaid to avoid any problems that can face either the bank or the customer. In interest free finance the concept

of personal loan is not found, it puts emphasis on the regular development of the economy which engages the people in trade and business activities. Some of the interest free industry tools and modules are listed below:

1. Muḥārah: Simple Partnership (Profit according to investment and loss have to be observed. One cannot lose what he hasn't invested).
2. Muḍārah: Special Partnership (between two people *rabb-ul-māl* and *muḍārib*).
3. Mukḥaiyyaḍa (Restricted) – Investment in a particular project.
4. Ghair Mukḥaiyyaḍa (Unrestricted) – Investment in any *ḥalāl* project.
5. Murābahah: Cost+Markup value (payment can be spot or differed, cost has to be disclosed before sale, spot payment can be lesser than differed payment and price cannot be increased or decreased later).
6. Musāwamah: Negotiated (Payment can be differed or spot and cost may not be disclosed).
7. Ijārah: Leasing/renting out (one cannot rent something that he doesn't own).
8. Salam: Forward sale, meant for agriculture purpose (Quantity, quality date of supply must be defined. Spot payment has to be made-no differed payment).
9. Istithnā: Made to order (Quality, quantity should be mentioned and payment can be differed).

The above items are regulated through a shari'ah board. Every interest-free sector has governing body which is audited by the AAOIFI. Shari'ah board is a panel of experts which recommends the product. It justifies the current scenario and

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need for the product eventually. The detailed summary of the governing body is as follows:

**The Role of AAOIFI:**

AAOIFI, founded in 1990, based in Bahrain, is an independent organization that prepares accounting, auditing, governance, ethics and Shari'ah standards for interest-free financial institutions and the industry. Compliance with the AAOIFI Shari'ah and accounting standards is mandatory in some jurisdictions and voluntarily observed in others. AAOIFI's goal is to steer the interest-free finance industry towards best practice standards. Members of AAOIFI's Shari'ah board also sit on the Shari'ah supervisory boards of the many of the largest interest-free financial institutions so its views are taken seriously by the industry.

**The Role of the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB):**

IFSB, founded in 2002 and based in Kuala Lumpur, is an international standard setting body for regulatory and supervisory authorities that seeks, within the interest-free finance industry, to complement the work of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, International Organization of Securities Commissions and the International Association of Insurance Supervisors. This involves producing international Shari'ah compliance standards for regulatory and supervisory authorities to adopt and thereby to promote a prudent and transparent interest-free financial services industry.

**The Role of Shari'ah Scholars:**

It is the role of Shari'ah scholars to opine on the Shari'ah compliance of interest-free products. In an interest-free finance industry context, Shari'ah scholars are individuals who

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possess relevant industry expertise coupled with knowledge of the Shari'ah. AAOIFI has issued a standard requiring every institution providing interest-free financial services to seek a Fatwa or Shari'ah legal opinion on each of its products from a suitably qualified Shari'ah supervisory board.

In the recent years the wave of **Interest-free Finance** has started in India too. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has almost paved the way for Shari'a-compliant, interest-free or Islamic banking in the country. The measure, if implemented, is expected to give a boost to the economy and increase "Financial Inclusion". The total interest-free financial assets were estimated at around \$2 trillion in 2015, practically a 10-fold increase from a decade ago and outperforming the growth of "Conventional Finances" in many countries. An RBI committee on "Medium-Term Path for Financial Inclusion", headed by Deepak Mohanty, has recommended "Interest-free Windows" in existing conventional banks. It has sought comments on the report from people till 29 January 2016.

Commercial banks may be enabled to open specialized interest-free windows with simple products like demand deposits, agency and participation certificates on the liability side and cost-plus financing and differed payment, differed delivery contracts on the asset side", the committee has recommended. The committee has also recommended that "in the event that interest-free banking is allowed in India, the extant regulatory guidelines in respect of capital and liquidity as applicable in the case of commercial banks would have to be made applicable to those as well".

The government, on the other hand, also appears to be keen on implementing the interest-free banking. The government had advised the RBI that before taking a decision, the

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legal/technical/regulatory issues need to be clarified by the RBI. Following this, an inter-departmental group on alternative/interest-free banking was set up within the RBI to examine the issues for introducing interest-free banking. The group has already submitted its report. The central concept in interest-free banking and finance is justice, which is achieved mainly through the sharing of risk. Stakeholders are supposed to share profits and losses and charging of interest is prohibited. This type of banking has four important features — *riba*, *ḥarām/ḥalāl*, *gharar/maysir* and *zakāt*. *Riba* is the most important aspect of interest-free banking, and means prohibition of interest. *Ḥarām/ḥalāl* is a strict code of “ethical investments” for interest-free financial activities. Such investment gives priority to the production of essential goods which satisfy the needs of the population such as food, clothing, shelter, health and education. Under *Gharar/maysir*, gambling in all forms is prohibited. *Zakāt* is a system for the redistribution of wealth in the form of a compulsory levy. Another feature condemned under interest-free banking is economic transactions involving elements of speculation.

The Mohanty report says: “One area that has not been adequately addressed is the role of interest-free banking in financial inclusion. Globally, interest-free banking has witnessed a significant increase, especially in the wake of the financial crisis”. The report cites a survey saying “the evidence suggests that Muslims are less inclined to access formal finance, in general, although they might be accessing long-term formal finance”.

Interest-free banking has witnessed a lukewarm response in India and now it is time for change. The Committee on Financial Sector Reforms (CFSR) is headed by the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF),

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Raghuram Rajan, who was the RBI governor, had in 2008 talked about the need for a closer look at the issue.

The Indian Centre for Islamic Finance (ICIF) has welcomed the RBI committee's recommendations on interest-free windows in existing banks. Its general secretary 'Abdur Raqīb said that it would give a boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. For the first time, the RBI has come out with a concrete document on Interest Free banking. I hope the government will implement the Mohanty committee's recommendations at the earliest," by Mr. Raqīb in a January 2016 Press report.

India will get its first taste of Shari'a-compliant banking when the Saudi Arabia-based Islamic Development Bank launches operations in the western state of Gujarat. The IDB, an international investment organization based in Jeddah, was established to channel funds into infrastructure in the Islamic world, as well as social and educational development. Though India is not typically seen as being part of the "Islamic world", its 180 million-strong Muslim population makes it an attractive place for the IDB to set up shop.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Saudi Arabia in April 2016 and his delegation signed an extensive agreement with the bank, which included its launch in India. Under the agreement, the IDB will establish its first Indian branch in the Gujarat city of Ahmedābād and go on to open more branches in India in the future.

A fair practicing of the interest-free module has already been applied in various parts of India such as the Kerala government has got a go-ahead from the Reserve Bank of

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India to launch a financial institution following the principles of Interest-free finance.

Cheraman Financial Services Limited (CFSL) will be floated by Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation to function as a non-banking finance company (NBFC). A formal announcement on CFSL, the latest incarnation of Al-Baraka Financial Services, was made on Saturday. Industries minister PK Kunhalikutty and CFSL chairman P Moḥamad 'Alī told reporters here that the firm would function as a non-banking finance company with an authorised capital of Rs 1,000 crore.

The Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) will be the single largest shareholder in the company, holding 11% shares. The other individual shareholders can hold a maximum of 9% shares.

Counting on the state's traditional Gulf links, the previous government had hoped to raise Rs 40,000 crore. The Shari'a-compliant CFSL will launch road shows in various cities of India and the Gulf countries from next month.

The body will desist from charging interest on loans or give interests on deposits. It will target sectors like infrastructure, services and manufacturing sectors and keep off taboo areas including liquor, tobacco and gambling or speculation. Financing start-up projects is one of its pilot programmes.

The firm will float an alternative investment fund under the banner of Cheraman Fund, with a corpus of Rs 250 crore. The fund will focus on manufacturing and service sectors, mainly in Kerala. Initially, the fund will raise about Rs 50 crore and one of the early projects to be taken up will be to provide support to startup schemes, managing director APM Moḥammed Hanish said.

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After refusing to allow interest-free banking in the country for long, the Reserve Bank seems to have moved closer to changing its stand by permitting the state-run Kerala Industrial Development Corporation to launch an NBFC that will offer services compatible with Shari'ah law.

Under the interest-free banking norms, depositors do not get interest on deposits, nor can the banks charge interest to its borrowers. Banks can invest the money, but keep off taboo areas like liquor, tobacco and gambling or speculation. Similarly, interest-free banks also cannot invest in bonds, treasury bills, and commercial papers, or lend to finance inventory or projects for interest.

Kerala, a remittance-driven economy, has been requesting the RBI to allow interest-free banking for nearly a decade. It now becomes the first state to start a Shari'ah-based NBFC. As there is a wide scope for the growth of economy hoping that the Indian government and RBI will allow a full-fledged option for starting regular interest-free banking sector soon all over Indian.

### **Conclusion:**

Under the interest-free banking norms, depositors do not get interest on deposits, nor can the banks charge interest to its borrowers. Banks can invest the money, but keep off taboo areas like liquor, tobacco and gambling or speculation. Similarly, interest-free banks also cannot invest in bonds, treasury bills, and commercial papers, or lend to finance inventory or projects for interest. Derivatives such as "Futures and Options" are also not a practicing module in interest-free finance sector.

Kerala, a remittance-driven economy, has been requesting the RBI to allow interest-free banking for nearly a decade. It now becomes the first state to start a Shari'ah-based NBFC. Gujarat

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government has also taken this initiative ahead and is into agreement with IDB-Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. As there is a wide scope for the growth of economy hope the Indian government and RBI will allow a full-fledged option for starting regular interest-free banking sector soon across Indian.



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## Religion and Philosophy-Harmony and Conflict

(with special reference to Ibn Rushd)

✎...Prof. Alṭāf Aḥmad Aẓmi<sup>1</sup>

When we go through the literature on the Muslim philosophy, we find conflicting views on the subject. Many Muslim philosophers like Fārābī (d. 950 A.D) and Ibn Sīnā' (d. 1037 A.D), were of the opinion that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy; they are contemporary to each other. Philosophy confirms the fundamental doctrines of religion through its own terminology and way of exposition, and in the same way, religion verifies the truth revealed by the philosophical speculations. Reason and revelation both belong to the Almighty God, therefore they cannot contradict each other.

On the other hand, some other Muslim philosophers like al-Kindī (d. 873 A.D) and Sajistānī, held the view that religion and philosophy are two separate domains of knowledge, and for that reason, they cannot be reconciled. Ibn Rushd (d. 1198 A.D) had the view that true religion and philosophy are not at loggerhead; they can be brought together.

This paper aims at the attitudes of religion and philosophy to some basic issues related to metaphysics, and their harmony and conflict in this regard with special reference to Ibn Rushd's thought.

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As a principle, there is no conflict between religion and philosophy because both the disciplines have unity in ultimate purpose. The fundamental aim of philosophy is to comprehend the Ultimate Reality, viz. Almighty God. Ibn Rushd has elaborated this point and says, “We say that if the work of philosophy is nothing but to ponder over the world of existence, which is a wonderful art (craft), pointing out at a great maker (creator). There is no doubt that if the craft is fully understood, the maker would be also understood and identified”.<sup>1</sup>

Religion also aims at the same target as Ibn Rushd has remarked: “Religion emphasized to understand the Reality of beings by reflecting over the world of existence”.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, he has quoted several verses of the Qur’ān, which invite the people of learning and instigate them vehemently to contemplate the world of nature so that they could unequivocally recognize their real Lord.<sup>3</sup>

Here a question arises as to what is the perfect source of knowledge to conceiving the world of existence as the Qur’ān has demanded? Ibn Rushd has replied that the real source of knowledge to contemplating the world of nature is the reason and logic, and therefore the acquisition of philosophy is obligatory.<sup>4</sup>

This assertion of Ibn Rushd is not wholly correct. Perhaps, he did not make a serious attempt to encompass all the verses related to the study of world of existence owing to his obsession with philosophy. These verses in the Qur’ān are categorized into three (i) Verses which are concerned with

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Kitāb Faṣl al-Maqāl, P. 12

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, P. 13

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

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senses,<sup>1</sup> (ii) Verses which are reasonable contemplation,<sup>2</sup> and (iii) those which are related to empirical sciences (Ta'lim); and such verses are more in numbers than the second category of verses. The following three verses suffice to prove the point:

1. "In the creation of the heavens and earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the ocean with what is beneficial to man; in the water which Allah sends down from the sky; and with which He revives the earth after its death; dispersing over it all manner of beasts; in the movements of the winds, and in the clouds that are hanging between earth and sky; surely in these there are signs for people who understand". (al-Baqrah: 164)
2. "Do they not reflect on the camels, how they are created; the heaven, how it was raised up; the mountains, how they were set down; the earth, how it was leveled out". (al-Ghāshiyah: 17-20)
3. "Do they not see how Allah initiates the creation, and then reproduces it? That is easy enough for Allah. Say: roam the earth and see how Allah initiated the creation. Then Allah will create a later creation". (al-'Ankabūt: 20)

The last mentioned verse is more categorized in this regard. Here it should be kept in mind that the Qur'ān contains a theoretical knowledge of God and His attributes in a human language that has its own limitation. But the world of existence, a well ordered and well arranged work of mathematical nature, is the practical aspect of His all embracing knowledge. Therefore, the work of God cannot be comprehended in letter and spirit by more philosophical reasoning; it requires the

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<sup>1</sup> See chapters 'Abas: 24-33, al-Wāqī'ah: 63-73, Yāsīn: 71-73, Qīṣaṣ: 71-73

<sup>2</sup> See chapters Qāf: 6-8, Fāṭir: 28, Naḥl: 15, Ra'd: 4

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empirical source of knowledge, and Ibn Rushd like other Muslim philosophers, has missed the point.

The conflict between religion and philosophy is confined not only to the source of knowledge but it has a more wider area including several metaphysical issues. Imām Ghazālī, the famous scholastic theologian, has mentioned twenty such issues in his famous book, *Tahāfat al-Falāsifah*. The following three issues, on which Ghazālī has called some Muslim philosophers as blasphemous,<sup>1</sup> are worth discussing here:

1. The eternity of the world.
2. God takes cognizance only of the Universal.
3. The soul alone is immortal, and therefore resurrection of the body is ruled out.

**Eternity of the World:** On this issue even Greek philosophers have differed. Plato opined that the world is not eternal but accidental, and therefore time is also accidental. But Aristotle contested this view and said that the world and time both are eternal.

Ibn Rushd has sided with Aristotle on this issue, but has not rejected the dogma; he has elaborated it in such manner as religion be brought into conformity with philosophy. He has argued that the world consists of three kinds of existence: (1) Sensual beings, which have a specific cause, like water, air, animals and plants etc; and there is no difference of opinion between theologians and old philosophers; (2) Unsensual being, not existent by any cause but self-existent, and that being is eternal God. All scholars too agree to it; (3) Between these two beings there is another being (*Wajūd*), quite different from the above two beings. This is the world (*'Ālam*)

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<sup>1</sup> *Tahāfat al-Falāsifah*, P. 91

itself; it existed but without an external cause, and time did not precede it, and it is contentious.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Ruṣḥd has further discussed the matter but the whole discussion is ambiguous,<sup>2</sup> he could not escape from the concept of dualism despite all effort,<sup>3</sup> and the reason was the theory of cause and effect, to which he blindly adhered.

The view-point of religion in this regard is very clear and is no ambiguity. The Almighty God is the only eternal Being and nothing else. Everything, whether material or immaterial, owes its existence to the will of God. In other words, God is the Sustainer (Qayyūm) of all the universe. The Qur'ān says:

“There is no god but Him, the Living the Sustainer”. (al-Baqarah: 255)

So far as the creation is concerned, namely how the world was created, the approach of religion to this problem also is very simple but logical. The whole world is a manifestation of the absolute will of God. His will and the act of creation take place simultaneously as the following verse says:

“When He decrees a thing He needs only say: ‘Be’, and it is”. (Yāsīn: 82)

How the will of God takes the form of creation has not been elaborated. However, it appears from other verses that before taking the present shape, the world of existence has passed several stages of beings.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the creation of the universe is not a single act in the life of God; it is a continuous

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<sup>1</sup> Faṣl al-Maqāl, PP. 23-24

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, also see: Muḫtaṣar Urdu Dā'irah Ma'ārif-i-Islāmiyyah, P. 39 (art, Ibn Ruṣḥd)

<sup>4</sup> Chapter Fuṣṣilat: 11 (Then He turned to the sky, which was made).

but varied process of creation and annihilation or in other words, an unending act of expansion and contraction as the following verse throws light:

“On that day, We shall roll up the heaven like a scroll of writing”. (al-Anbiyā’: 104)

But one question still remains to be answered as to what was the real creative substance and what was the first being created by God? It has not been dealt anywhere in the Qur’ān because of its complexity and incomprehensibility to human intellect.

**Knowledge of Particular:** The second controversial issue is whether God knows Universal (Kulliyāt) and Particular (Juziyāt) as well. The Muslim scholastics believed that God knows both General and Particular equity, but the Muslim philosophers like Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā’, were of the view that God does not know Particular; He knows only Himself and Universal.<sup>1</sup>

They argued that the human knowledge is subjected to space and time, and with the passage of time it changes; even changes occur in man himself during the process of acquiring knowledge. This kind of knowledge cannot be applied to God Who is unchangeable and transcends space and time. Therefore, it would be right to say that God knows only Universal that does not accept changes.

Imām Ghazālī refuted this argument and blamed the followers of Aristotle for degrading the knowledge of God.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ruṣhd rejected this blame and said that Ghazālī did not understand Aristotle.<sup>3</sup> He clarified that God knows Universal as well as Particular but His knowledge, through which He knows all things, is not like that of

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<sup>1</sup> Tahāfat al-Falāsifhah, PP. 52-53

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, PP. 53-56

<sup>33</sup> Al-Faṣl al-Maqāl, P. 22

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man. In reality, God's knowledge does not directly take in either Universal of particular, for the Divine thought transcends both of them. He is the cause of all things, therefore He knows them ever since they did not embrace existence.<sup>1</sup>

If Ibn Ruṣhd has correctly interpreted the views of Aristotle about knowledge of God, then there is no conflict between religion and philosophy on this issue. According to religion, God knows everything, be it open or secret; His vast knowledge embraces the whole world and all its beings. The Qur'ān says:

"He is the first and the last, the visible and the unseen. He has knowledge of all things". (al-Ḥadīd: 03)

But, His act of knowing is not like that of man; He is incomparable:

"Nothing can be compared with Him; he alone hears all and sees all". (al-Shūrā: 11)

**Resurrection of Soul with Body:** According to Aristotalian philosophy, the resurrection of soul with the present body is not possible because once a thing is annihilated, it is not reborn in its identity. This argument is based on a philosophical notion that creation is not possible out of nothing. Theologians are opposed to this principle, for it negates the idea that God is all powerful. Therefore, they believe that the resurrection of soul will be with the present body.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Ruṣhd held the view that the resurrection of soul is an undeniable fact but body will not be the same; either it will possess a lighter form with the changed place and a new

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, PP. 22-23

<sup>2</sup> Tahāfat al-Falāsifah, PP. 81-91

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environment or it will take a higher form than the present one, for the resurrection meant a higher degree of existence.<sup>1</sup>

Religion, as the present writer understands, does not contradict the above mentioned idea. A question was often raised in the days of the Prophet that when a man died and in due course of time his flesh and bones were corrupted and intermingled with dust particles of the earth, how would he be raised again? The Qur'ān replied:

“He asks who will give life to rotten bones? Say: He will give them life again Who created them at first, He has knowledge of every (kind of) creation”. (Yāsīn: 78-79)

This argument of the Qur'ān about resurrection of the dead is satisfactory to a common man and a learned person as well. So far as the form is concerned, in which the dead will be raised, God knows better what it would be. However, the following verse connotes that the present form of soul might be changed.

“It is We that ordained death among you. Nothing can hinder Us from replacing your (present) forms (Amthālakum)<sup>2</sup> into other ones or transforming you into beings you know nothing of”. (al-Wāqī'ah: 60-61)

But, religion does not support the idea of Aristotle-Ibn Rushd held the same view-that survival is for collective soul instead of individual.<sup>3</sup> According to religion, every man will be raised

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<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia of Islam, (art, Ibn Rushd), 2/412

<sup>2</sup> Most of the commentators of the Qur'ān have translated the word 'Amthālakum' wrongly. For example, the translation of Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī is quoted here:

“Creating others (men) like yourselves”. (al-Wāqī'ah: 61)

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedia of Islam, 2/412

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in his individual capacity at the time of resurrection as the Qur'ān says:

“And now you have returned to Us individually as We created you at first”. (al-An'ām: 94)

The whole concept of reward and punishment, hell and paradise given in the Qur'ān would be pronounced meaningless and absurd if the survival of individual soul is denied.

On the basis of foregoing discussion, we can say that religion is not incomplete harmony with philosophy, particularly metaphysical issues, unless it is interpreted as done by Ibn Rushd and other Muslim philosophers. But their method of interpretation is objectionable.

Ibn Rushd believed that philosophy is the highest form of truth,<sup>1</sup> and its rational inference (Burhān) provides knowledge of existence beyond any doubt. This firm conviction in philosophical reasoning led Ibn Rushd to say that if the Law (Shariyat) apparently is not in conformity with the reasonal inference (Burhān), the law would be interpreted according to the basic principles of interpretation<sup>2</sup> in the light of Burhān which always leads to truth.<sup>3</sup>

It is meant that knowledge about the universe offered by religion is ambiguous, and this ambiguity will be removed by philosophy. This is not a correct approach to understand the revealed facts of religion. Shariyat (Law) is not against the rational interpretation of revelation if it requires exposition. But it should be done in the light of revelation itself, because it is self-explanatory. In other words, God Himself has

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<sup>1</sup> History of Philosophy in Islam, P. 199

<sup>2</sup> Faṣl al-Maqāl, P. 19

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, also see: Encyclopedia of Britannica, 17/749

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explained His verses as the Qur'ān says, "We shall Ourselves explain its meaning". (al-Qiyāmah: 18); another verse says, "This is a book with verses, most compact, then made well expounded from Wise, the Aware". (Hūd: 01)

This exposition by God has been termed in the Qur'ān as Taṣrīf-i-Āyāt (al-An'ām: 65); it is applied to both kinds of verses, viz, Muḥkamāt and Mutashābihāt. Muḥkamāt are those verses that are precise in meaning and there is no ambiguity for a learned person, while some verses are not so precise in meaning; they are allegorical having the possibility of more than one interpretation; and they are called Mutashābihāt. Metaphysical issues are related to this category of verses (Mutashābihāt). Therefore, all possible care should be exercised while extracting their real meaning as the Qur'ān has cautioned:

"Those whose hearts are infected with disbelief follow the allegorical part, so as to create dissention and to interpret it. But no one knows its interpretation except Allah. Those who are well-grounded in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord". (Āli 'Imrān: 07)

Despite the warning of the Qur'ān, Ibn Ruṣhd attempted to interpret the holy verses with the help of philosophy, and subsequently he made religion a subservient to reason. Now, it has been established beyond any doubt that reason is limited and it may commit errors. The book of Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, has shown that reason is not such a reliable source of knowledge for understanding the truth- the Ultimate Reality, as previously was thought of.

No doubt, the perfect and reliable source of knowledge with regard to the Almighty God and His attributes (the world of

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existence) is religion, provided it is revealed and uncorrupted, rather than philosophy. Religion, as conceived by philosophy, is not a blind obedience or a kind of knowledge which contained truth of an inferior order,<sup>1</sup> it is a kind of learning, an authentic source of knowledge of high order for understanding the Truth.<sup>2</sup> Religion needs not the guidance of philosophy as Ibn Rushd thought, but vice versa. Here the words of Bonaventure, a Franciscan, are worth quoting:

“Philosophy needs the guidance of faith; far from being self-sufficient, it is but a stage toward the higher knowledge that culminates in the vision of God”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> History of Philosophy in Islam, P. 168

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Ibrāhīm-1: “We have revealed to you this book so that, by the will of their Lord, you may lead men from darkness to light; to the path of the Mighty, Glorious One: the path of God”.

<sup>3</sup> The New Encyclopedia Britannica (Micropaedia), 1974, 14/259

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## Origin, Development, Rise and Decline of Arabu-Tamil Language: Language as an Islamic Classifier

Dr. K M A Ahmed Zubair<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The Arab Muslim traders and the native Tamil converts to Islam in Tamil Nadu state of India, and Sri Lanka came into closer contact as a result of their commercial activities. They were bound by a common religion, but separated by two different languages and cultures. Hence, they felt the necessity of a language to be linked for commercial as well as religious affairs. Therefore they started to write Tamil in an adapted Arabic script called *Arabu-Tamil*. The *Arabu-Tamil* or *Arwi* script represents the Tamil language using an Arabic style of scripts. From 8<sup>th</sup> century to 19<sup>th</sup> century, this language enjoyed its popularity among Tamil speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. The valuable and useful ideas of Tamil Muslim minds were conveyed in Arabicized Tamil called *Arabu-Tamil*. It rendered the most useful service for the advancement and progress of Arab and Tamil cultures. However, the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the decline of *Arwi* language. And no step was taken to arrest this decline. This study analyses its rise and decline as a language of Tamil Muslims in an Islamic perspective.

**Key words:** Arabu-Tamil, Tamil, Arabic, Tamil Nadu and Muslims.

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### 1. Introduction:

*Arwi* or *Arabu-Tamil* is an Arabic-influenced dialect of the Tamil language written with an extension of the Arabic alphabet, with extensive lexical and phonetic influences from the Arabic language.

*Arabu-Tamil* was used extensively by the Muslim minority of Tamil Nadu state of India and Sri Lanka. This language was devised as a means of communication and interaction for the settled Arabs of Tamil Nadu and the Tamil-speaking people. It is an outcome of the cultural synthesis between seafaring Arabs and Tamil-speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu. It was popular in Tamil Nadu and Ceylon. It has a rich body of literature of which little has been preserved. There are historical records of the prevalence of *Arabu-Tamil* in far Eastern countries, such as Indonesia and Thailand, till the 1970s (“Arwi Language”).

*Arabu-Tamil* language served as a medium of transformation of the Muslim Tamil society of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka in their daily affairs to write many religious, literary and poetry texts for communication. The *Arabu-Tamil* script represents the Tamil language (having left-to-right script) using an Arabic style of script (having right-to-left script). The *Arwi* or *Arabu-Tamil* script was widely used by the Tamil Muslims of Asia for their daily communication. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this language enjoyed its popularity among Tamil-speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Ceylon. It continues to enjoy the same popularity with the Muslims of Ceylon even today. The Tamil-speaking Muslims of Ceylon consider this *Arabu-Tamil* literature as their most beloved literature (Rahim, PP. 415-16). However, after the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it began to lose its popularity primarily because of its old style and colloquial

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expression. As a spoken language it is now about to be extinct, though a few *Madrasas* still teach the basics of the language as part of their curricula.

The primary objective of this study is to share the magnificent literary history and the Islamic legacy of *Arabu-Tamil* language and literature to the Islamic world. This paper makes an analysis of its origin, development, rise and decline as a language of Tamil Muslims.

## **2. Tamil and Muslims:**

Tamil is a Dravidian language spoken predominantly by Tamil people of the Indian subcontinent. It has an official status in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Tamil is also an official language of Sri Lanka and Singapore. Tamils are a linguistic and ethnic group native to Tamil Nadu, a state in India and the north-eastern region of Sri Lanka. The term 'Tamil Muslim' refers to the Muslims who have Tamil as their mother tongue. Apart from India and Sri Lanka, large populations of Tamil Muslims also live in some countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius and also in the Gulf countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Tamil is also spoken by these Tamil minorities in these respective countries.

## **3. Islam in Tamil Nadu:**

In the pre-Islamic period, there were frequent contacts between Arabia and Tamil Nadu, and there were Arab colonies in South India. The classical Tamil literature, like in the literary works, such as *Paththu Pattu*, *Ettutthogai*, bears evidence to the Arab contact with Tamil Nadu. But when Islam emerged as a religion in Arabia, it influenced it influenced the neighbouring countries as well as far and wide countries. In this course, it came to Tamil Nadu and Sri

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Lanka through the commercial contacts. After the rise of Islam, the Arabs continued to remain in contact actively not only as traders but also as missionaries. So both trade and Islam flourished actively and the Muslims were permitted to follow their religion freely. The source available to us says that the companions of the Prophet Muḥammed (PBUH) namely Saint Tamim al-Dari al-Ansari and Saint Ukkaza were buried in Tamil Nadu.

It is to be noted that the Tamil Muslims of Tamil Nadu are considered among big contributors of Tamil society because they contributed their best to the Tamil culture and civilization. The rulers of these areas patronized Islam and Muslims to flourish in Tamil Nadu. Some of them even donated lands to the Muslims for their mosques. They include the kings of Chera, Chozha and Pandyas. Muslims built *Masjids* in various places of this country. The first and foremost among such *Masjids* is the one which can be seen even today near the railway station in Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, though it is now in a dilapidated condition. The Arabic inscription stone available in that *Masjid* indicates that it was constructed in the year 734 (corresponding 116 AH, Islamic Era), and it was built by Muḥammed bin Hamid bin Abdullah. This proves that Muslims lived in this region in the 8<sup>th</sup> century liberally with all proprietary rights in this land (Samuel, P. 271).

#### **4. Islam in Sri Lanka:**

The Muslims are the second largest minority in Sri Lanka approximating to 8 percent of its population. In Sri Lanka, the Arab settlements lived along the coast of Jaffna, Mannar, Kendremalai, Puttalam, Colombo, Beruwala, Galle and at the eastern port of Trincomalle. A large population of the Moors

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in Sri Lanka is said to be descended from the traders who arrived from Arabia and the lands around the Persian Gulf (Maharroof, PP. 407-08).

The similarities of the socio-religious paradigms of the Muslims of South India and Sri Lanka are quite enormous. These may be summarized as follows (Maharroof, P. 409):

- a. The home language of Sri Lankan Muslims and those of Tamil Nadu is Tamil.
- b. The Muslims in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu is a dialect that has substantial number of Turko-Perso-Arabic loan words
- c. There is close cultural synthesis between the Muslims of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu
- d. Muslim Missionaries in Tamil Nadu for the ages have entered Sri Lanka and assisted to shape the religious thinking of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. These Muslim missionaries also helped in the establishment of Tariqa. Most of the Qadiriyyah sub-fraternities in Sri Lanka originate from their headquarters in Kilakarai, Kayalpattanam and Kottaru. Kilakarai and Kayalpattanam are ports in Ramnad and Tirunelveli districts respectively. Kottaru is a town in Tamil Nadu, close to the Kerala state.

##### **5. Origin:**

*Arabu-Tamil* dialect was used by the Arabs who came and settled in Tamil Nadu. The settled Arabs in Tamil Nadu learnt Tamil through Arabic Script and wrote Tamil in Arabic script. It is believed that the origin of *Arabu-Tamil* is as old as contact of Arabs with Tamil Nadu (Rahman, P. 23). The Muslim communities of Sarandib (Sri Lanka) and Tamil Nadu were able to use this language as an effective tool for the preservation of

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their cultural identity. They were able to safeguard their culture without sacrificing their religion (Shuaib, P. 91). *Arabu-Tamil* was the product of the cultural synthesis between the Arabs and the Tamil speaking Muslims. It is a combination of Arabic and Tamil, but it seemed to be written in Arabic script. After the advent of Islam the Arabs who already settled down in these areas, they naturally became the representatives of Islam there. In course of time, the native population also joined them by embracing Islam. When two communities, bounded by a common religion despite of their different languages and cultures, came into closer contacts, owing to their commercial activities, and they felt the necessity for a link-language. This ultimately gave birth to the *Arabu-Tamil* language. *Arabu-Tamil* represents the fusion of two great languages, belonging to the great ethnic groups, one being the Semitic-Arabic and the other the Dravidian-Tamil.

The Arabs of Tamil Nadu wanted to learn Tamil, which was also an ancient language like Arabic. They started learning Tamil with the help of their own Arabic script. Having learnt this, they started conveying their ideas in this newly originated and newly blended language. In early days, the Arabs were accustomed with colloquial style, when they adopted this they completely ignored Tamil Grammar. They used Tamil Language in their daily life as the English men used it in later days. It must be noted that the Arabs before writing the Tamil in Arabic script, used to remember orally most of the words of daily use. Later they put the same in Arabic script. This way the *Arabu-Tamil* language was originated in Tamil Nadu (Samuel, P. 273). In the beginning, the Arabians conveyed their ideas in words and the Tamilians absorbed, grasped and adopted these words and used them in their daily life and

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these words were considered to be most important ones for commercial purposes. Even today most of these words are in use. They are used not only by the Tamilians but also by the people of India. The Arabic words which are in common use are as follows (Rahman, P. 25):

'Amul (عمل), Aṣal (أصل), Aajar (حاضر), Kaidi (قيدي), Kajāna (خزانة), Mahajar (مهاجر), Jāmin (ضامن), Dīwān (ديوان), Dawā' (دواء), Jilla (جिला), Ta'luk (تعلق), Nakal (نقل), Mile (ميل), Jabthi (ضبط), Amīna (أمينة), Masoda (مسودة), Munṣif (منصف), Wakkil (وكيل), Inam (إنعام), Sharathu (طرش), Maḥṣūol (محصول), Waṣūl (وصول), Mirasa (ميراث), Varisu (وارث), Lāyak (لائق), Bāqi (باقي), Jawābu (جواب), Kamm (كم), Sharbat (شربت), Jubba (جابت), Faiṣal (فيصل), Thakarāru (تكرار), Raṣīdu (رصيد), Pasali (فصلي), Ma'amūl (معمول), Maidanam [(Maidan) (ميدان)], Vagaiyera (وغيره)...etc.

It is worth mentioning that Tamil words lack the capacity to convey the full significance of the Islamic terms like Rasūl (رسول), Saḥābah (صحابه), Wājib (واجب), Jannath (جنة), Jahannam (جهنم), Īmān (إيمان), Taqwá (تقوى) etc., (their respective meanings are Messenger, Companions of the Prophet, Obligatory, Paradise, Hell, Belief, Piety...etc). That is the main reason that *Arabu-Tamil* words are used in these cases for better expression and understanding. Hence the Tamil Muslims naturally preferred the *Arabu-Tamil* Language. The new language was shaped in a manner that retains all the basic aspects of the finest spoken Tamil, and all of its grammatical forms, put on the beautiful garb of the Arabic script. Arabic letters with suitably added diacritical marks were devised. *Arabu-Tamil* still has a place among the more traditional Indian Tamil Muslim and Sri Lankan Moor families.

Today, it exists only informally in the speech of the Tamil spoken Muslims, as many words unique to it are used in their spoken Tamil. Some of these words that constitute daily conversations among Muslims for example are: Muṣībah (مصيبة), Maut (موت), Janāzah (جنازة), Rāḥat (راحة), Shifā' (شفاء), Khair (خير), Wallāhi (والله), Ta'līm (تعليم), Kitāb (كتاب), Shaiṭān (شيطان), Sharbat (شربت), Saḥan (صحن), Bait (بيت), Bī'at (بيعة), Shirk (شرك), Ṭayyib (طيب) and Ikhlāṣ (إخلاص).

#### **6. Place of Origin:**

The fact that *Arabu-Tamil* prevalent in Colombo, Kayalpattinam, Kilakarai indicates that it was in use, as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian era (Samuel, P. 275). The Arabs and the Tamil Muslim, according to sources available to us, have played their role equally in the formation of *Arabu-Tamil*. It is the result of joint efforts of the Arabs and the Tamil Muslims. It originated in South-West Coast of Ceylon as well as in the South-East Coast of India, more particularly in Kayalpattinam. This language was enriched, promoted and developed in Kayalpattinam. It rendered the most useful service for the advancement and progress of Arab and Tamil cultures.

#### **7. Arabu-Tamil Script:**

The *Arabu-Tamil* consists of 40 letters, out of which 28 letters are from Arabic and 12 letters are devised by adding some marks and dots to the original Arabic Alphabet. 18 Arabic letters do not have their equivalents in Tamil from the phonetic point of view and similarly 10 Tamil letters and two vowel sounds have no equivalents in Arabic. Thus the *Arabu-Tamil* alphabet is the Arabic alphabet with the devised twelve additional letters to represent the Tamil vowels and several Tamil consonants that could not be mapped to Arabic sounds.

|   |   |   |      |   |
|---|---|---|------|---|
| ا | ب | ت | ث    | ج |
| چ | ح | خ | د    | ڊ |
| ڇ | ذ | ر | ڙ    | ز |
| س | ش | ص | ض    | ڙ |
| ڍ | ط | ظ | ع    | ڃ |
| ڳ | ڦ | ڻ | ڦ    | ڪ |
| ک | ل | م | ن    | ڻ |
| ڻ | و | ه | لاءِ | ی |

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8. Specimen of Arabu-Tamil writing (Hand written):

شُونَكَ إِسْلَامِي كَلَّا چَارِ نِلِيمِ  
(اَمِيكِيَتِيَت)

تَجْكَضُكَ اِمَتِ نَلِ وَاَضْتَمَّ سُوْفَنَمِ  
 كُوْرُوْثُوْدُ كَضْمَبُ كُوْدِي بِرِسْتَلِ وِنِي  
 ۲۷ مَ نَبْرُ اَلْمَا كِي شُونَكَ إِسْلَامِي كَلَّا چَارِ  
 نِلِي مُشْكِدِ دَتْرَفِ وِضَاوُكَ ۱۹۶۵ - مِني مَاتَمِ  
 ۳۰ مَ تَكْتِ حَجْرَةَ ۱۳۸۵ مُحَرَّمِ فَرِي ۲۸ پَا پِرِ  
 فِرْمَلُ ۴-۱۵ مَنِيكَ شَمُكَمَضِ كَمَارِ تَجْكَضِي  
 اَنْبَدَنِ اَصْبِيكِرُوْمِ  
 كُوْرُوْثُوْدُ نَبْرُ دِي دِي سِنِنَانَايِكَ اُوْرِكِضِ  
 پَا مَكَارِتِ مَلِكِي تَرِي نِيكَمِ شِينُوْرِكِضِ  
 نَلِيَتَلِيُوْرُ جَنَابِ سِنِرِ لَارِفِ فَرِيْدِ اُوْرِكِضِ  
 مُشْكِدِ دَتِي تَرِنْتِ وِنِي قَارِ كِضِ

(Transliteration of the above Invitation in Tamil)

சோனக இஸ்லாமிய கலாச்சார நிலையம்  
(அமைக்கப்பட்டது)

தங்களுக்கு எமது நல்வாழ்த்தும் சோபனமும் கூறுவதோடு  
கொழும்பு கோட்டை பிரிஸ்டல் வீதி, 27 ஆம் நம்பர்  
இல்லமாகிய இஸ்லாமிய கலாச்சார நிலைய புதுக்கட்டிட  
திறப்பு விழாவிற்கு 1965, மே மாதம் 30 ஆம் தேதி, ஹிஜ்ரா  
1385 முஹர்ரம் 28 பிறை ஞாயிறு பிற்பகல் 4:15 மணிக்கு  
சங்கமிக்குமாறு தங்களை அன்புடன் அழைக்கிறோம்.

கௌரவ பிரதமர் திரு. டி. வி. சோனானாயக அவர்கள்  
ஞாபகார்த்த பலகையை திரை நீக்கம் செய்வார்கள்.  
தலைமை நிலையத் தலைவர் ஜனாப் சர் ராஜிக் ஃபரீத்  
அவர்கள் புதுக்கட்டிடத்தை திறந்து வைப்பார்கள்.

(Translation of the above Invitation in English)

Sonaga<sup>1</sup> Islamic Cultural Centre (Established)

We send you our felicitations, greetings and cordially invite  
you to attend the opening ceremony of our new building at  
No. 27 Bristol Street, Fort, Colombo, on the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1965,  
the 28<sup>th</sup> Day of Muharram 1385, Sunday afternoon, 4:15 pm.

Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Dudley Senanayake will unveil  
the commemoration block. The President of the centre, Sir  
Razik Fareed will open the building.

#### **9. Specimen of Arabu-Tamil writing (Computer encoded):**

The following are the few couplets of an *Arabu-Tamil* poem  
written by Sayyid Muḥammed Imam al-Arūs (1816-1898 A.D):

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim Tamils of Sri Lanka were referred by the pejorative term Sonaga  
or Sonagar



**11. Development of Arabu-Tamil Language and Literature:**

This new language became the mother tongue of the Muslim community. It is developed as the medium for their daily affairs including business, property dealings, correspondence, and all other social transaction.

Literature produced in prose and poetry in this unique language covers a vast field of subjects like:

|                 |                        |                          |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Architecture | 2. Astronomy           | 3. Creed                 |
| 4. Biography    | 5. Commentary on Quran | 6. Dictionary            |
| 7. Elegy        | 8. Fiction             | 9. Islamic Jurisprudence |
| 10. History     | 11. Horticulture       | 12. Logic                |
| 13. Medicine    | 14. Moral science      | 15. Satire               |
| 16. Sexology    | 17. Sports             | 18. Mysticism etc.       |

This language developed during the early medieval ages. Its literature is mostly of religious character. Tamil scholars, through their works, contributed immensely to the development of this language and literature. In the words of Edgard Thurston, *Arabu-Tamil* is a literature which was developed for the purpose of the education of Labbai<sup>1</sup> and Maraikayar<sup>2</sup> children. The Koran and other books were published in this language.

<sup>1</sup> *Labbai* is a distinctive Islamic community from Southern India. A Trading Community spread throughout the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Labbais follow either the Hanafi or Shafi'i School of Fiqh.

<sup>2</sup> Maraikayar is a distinctive Tamil- and Malayalam-speaking Muslim people of the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in India. Some of the places abundant

The origin of this literature may be traced to Kayalpatnam<sup>1</sup>, Melapalayam and other unimportant Labbai Towns in the Tirunelveli District (Samuel, P. 271). The orthographic practices adopted by the many authors who wrote in *Arabu-Tamil* were not all alike. The consequent variations are noticeable in their writings. In linguistic term the language is composed of more than one set of grammars and vocabularies that a speaker may switch back and forth, depending on the situation. As a written language it employs an invented orthography for a creolized, or mixed, system of speech patterns. The structure and principles of its development are possibly related to similar systems known for other similar Islamic speech and writing systems such as Swahili language of Tanzania of East Africa, Jaawi language of Malaysia and languages of other countries namely Turkey, Uzbek, Berber, Somali and Malay.

Four hundred years ago, a particular procedure and a new literary style was adopted in *Arabu-Tamil* writing. This new literary style was adopted by Hafiz Amir Wali Appa, a saint of Kayalpattinam. He is considered to be the first person who re-introduced *Arabu-Tamil* after the Portuguese devastation in around 1600 (Zubair, P. 189). His tomb is available in the weaver's street, in Kayalpattinam. The style of Hafiz Amir

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with Maricars are Kayalpatnam (which is thought to be the ancestral hometown of the early Maricars), Kilakarai, Adirampattinam, Muthupet, Nagore, Nagapattinam, Karaikal and various other coastal towns. Traditionally, the Maricars engaged in mercantile commerce. They generally dealt with gems, precious stones, jewels, timber and the textile trade.

<sup>1</sup> Kayalpatnam is a town in the Tuticorin (formerly of Tirunelveli) district of Tamil Nadu, India. Kayalpatnam is an ancient historical city. It lies in the southeast part of Indian peninsula, on the shore off the Bay of Bengal. It is a Muslim dominant town. It is situated about 400 miles from Madras (Chennai) and about 100 miles from Trivandrum and Madurai. Kayalpatnam was an important trade emporium even before the advent of Islam.

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Wali Appa perfected the *Arabu-Tamil* to a large extent. Method of its writing and speaking, though existed even before Hafiz Amir Wali Appa, was not systematic. It was purely a colloquial one. Amir Wali was the first man who promoted this language through systematic style of writing and rendered a great contribution to make it a standard literature. Thereafter, its literature flourished in Burma and the Far Eastern countries where the Tamil Muslims lived. A book in *Arabu-Tamil* by the name "*Haqiqatul Insan*" was printed in Rangoon, in 1882. The book contains 174 pages. Three more books were written and published from Akyab, Mohmein of Burma (Presently Myanmar). According to A.M.A. Azeez of Sri Lanka, the Leiden University in Holland has several *Arabu-Tamil* books written by Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. There are *Arabu-Tamil* schools functioning on a large scale in Malaysia, Singapore, Burma and Pakistan (Karachi) even today. According to Aziz, out of 15,000 books kept in the Indian Office Library in London, nearly 60 are in *Arabu-Tamil*; famous among them are Nondi Nadagam (1872) and Sira Nadagam (1878).

*Arabu-Tamil* Periodicals were as follows (Shuaib, P. 103):

- a. *Allamat Lankapuri* – A Journal which was published in Colombo from 1869.
  - b. *Ajaibul Akhbar* - A Weekly which was published in Madras (Chennai) in 1870's.
  - c. *Muslim Nesan*- A Newspaper which was published in Colombo from 21-12-1882.
  - d. *Kashfuran an Qalbil Jan* which was published in Colombo from 1889.
-

## **12. Contribution of Arabu-Tamil:**

The religious revival of the Muslims was made possible because of this voluminous literature in *Arabu-Tamil* produced by the Muslim Savants after the devastating cultural onslaught by the Portuguese in this area in 16<sup>th</sup> century. This onslaught took place in 1528 and in 1537. Literature produced in this language covered the fields of Jurisprudence, Sufism, Law, Medicine, and Poetry. *Arabu-Tamil* was also used as a bridge language for Tamil Muslims to learn Arabic. Compositions of devotional songs used in certain Islamic ceremonies were originally written in *Arabu-Tamil* by their authors. *Thalai Fathiha* - a well known *Arabu-Tamil* song is devotionally sung by women in ceremonies.

There are thousands of *Arabu-Tamil* books on different subjects. Names of the various books on different subjects with their authors are systematically organized, in the Madras Archives Catalogues. These catalogues are maintained from 1890. Periods of the catalogues are as follows: 1890-1901; 1901-1910; 1911-1915 and 1921-25. According to the catalogues, there are more than 3,000 *Arabu-Tamil* books. The most important book is *Arabu-Tamil Dictionary* in four bulky volumes written by Hakkim Muhammed Abdullah Sahib. This literature helped the Tamil Muslims to know about their religion and their culture on one hand and on the other it also made the Arabic literature simpler (Samuel, P. 277).

## **13. Decline of Arabu-Tamil Language:**

*Arabu-Tamil* language originated in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, flourished during the medieval ages and saw its decline from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Era of Globalization, no step was taken to arrest this decline of this language which had the south Asia based cultural and historical background.

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Today *Arabu-Tamil* is known to be a matter of least scholarly interest in some parts of Tamil Nadu state of India and Sri Lanka. This literature did not receive much attention in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other languages such as English replaced it in many contexts. One most important reason for its decline is the lack of competitive printing facilities. Printing of *Arabu-Tamil* books is a very complicated and tedious process. Therefore, people preferred printing their religious books in Tamil rather than in *Arabu-Tamil* language. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the adoption of Urdu as the dominant Islamic school curriculum, which is ethnocentrically unconcerned with *Arabu-Tamil* which has a different South Asia based cultural and historical background, is also another reason for its decline.

#### **14. Conclusion and Remarks:**

In the age of modern education, Muslim children failed to learn *Arabu-Tamil* language, as it was out of the school curriculum. In the religious educational institutions, a systematic north Indian syllabus known as *Silsilatun Nizamiyyah* was adopted by the *Madrassahs* in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Tamil Nadu. *Arabu-Tamil* as a language and subject did not find a place in that syllabus.

The decline of *Arabu-Tamil* language is a great loss to the Tamil Muslim community as this was their religious language. It had safeguarded the interest of this community. It was fondly and reverently nurtured by noble savants. Therefore, its necessity must be felt by the present Tamil Muslim community. Its revival and renaissance is badly needed. The following steps are suggested to arrest its decline and revitalize its literature for the cultural benefit of particularly the Tamil Muslim Community:

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- a. All the *Arabu-Tamil* language books available should be collected and re-printed. Unpublished manuscripts also should be collected and printed.
- b. *Arabu-Tamil* language should be made compulsory in all the *Madrasahs* of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka.
- c. *Arabu-Tamil* books must be taught to children attending schools as a part of school curriculum.
- d. *Arabu-Tamil* community must be encouraged to use it in their daily affairs.
- e. Periodicals and magazines in this language should be re-introduced.

With these measures taken we may witness the period of renaissance in *Arabu-Tamil* language and literature in the years to come.

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## The Old Trade Relations between India and Arabia

✎...Abū al-Ma'ālī Qāḍī Aṭhar al-Mubārakpūrī<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: Mohd. Mo'ataşim Azmi<sup>2</sup>



Though much has been written on this topic, the point which I want to deal from my view requires further more research. For instance, the Prophet and his companions have used several Indian products but the available sources are very few and unsatisfactory about them which needs to be discussed in detail and that has been elaborated extensively in this chapter.

### What was imported from India to Arabia?

Though there witnessed different relations between India and Arabia till the period of the Prophet Muḥammad, there had been sigficant trade relations between them since time immemorial. In this regard, when we examined the existing sources we found that sifferent kinds of Indian products were imported from different places of India to Arabia and then they were sold in different markets and regions. A brief list of these products quoting from the book of old Arab geographer Ibn-i-Khurdādhbih "Kitāb-ul-Masālik wa al-Mamālik" is given below:

Ibn-i-Khurdādhbih mentioned briefly that every kinds of aloes-wood, sandal, camphor, tavern, coconut, clove, saltwort,

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<sup>1</sup> Celebrated Indian scholar of Arabic and Islamic Studies

<sup>2</sup> Guest Teacher, Department of Arabic, Persian, Urdu & Islamic Studies, Visva-Bharati, W.B

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tumbler, cotton clothes, silk clothes and elephants were exported to Arabia. Similarly rubies, pearl, beryl and whetstone were imported from Serendip (Ceylon and Sri Lanka). Likewise pepper was brought from Mallī and Sanjān (Sandān). Lead was taken from Kella and *baqm* and date-wine from south. As for the costus, bamboo and wood of willow they were sent to Arabia from Sindh.<sup>1</sup>

Then he mentioned the places from where the things were exported. They are as follows:

Sindh produces costus, bamboo and willow. The distance from Sindh River to Otkin is four days' journey. The whole mountainous region produces bamboo. The teak and bamboo are cultivated in Sandān. KumKum (Kau kan) is the region of teak while the Rāmī island produces rhinoceros and willow. Kullah has also jungle of willow. The rice is produced in Babṭīn, Sanjalī and Keshkān while Kanja and Lāwā produce rice and wheat the both. But the rice is produced in great quantity in Samandar, Balu and Kimār. The clove is produced in Shalhuṭ, (Sylhet). The incenses is imported from Kimrān etc. to the place Samandar. The mountains of Serendip (Sri Lanka) produce aloes wood. The velvet clothes and Indian incenses are produced in Parmī (Bengal). Similarly it is found in Tayūmā Island, Kimār and Sinf. The incenses of Sinf is better than the incenses of Kimār. It does not float on the water but it sinks in it because of good quality and weight. The Musk and Civet are found in Serendip also. Camphor is found in the mountains of Zubij. It is also found in Tayūmā. But the camphor found in the Balu Island is the best. Serendip gives different kinds of perfumes. Jābā is the centre

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik, P. 71

of scent. Sandalwood and hyacinth are found in Shalhuṭ. Kella is the mine of lead. The inhabitants of Rāmī Island come to the ships of Arabia by swimming or on the boat and sell ambergris against iron. The wealth of the Nicobar Island is iron. Every kind and colour of rubies are found in the mountains of Serendip and its surroundings. Its vallies have diamond while its mountains have incenses, pepper, scent, fragrance, musk, animal of civet, coconut and ivory. Its rivers are full of crystals while the sea nereby it has pearls. Willow, *Buqqam* {medical herbaceous plant (antidote)} and sum sā'ah (a poison that affects within an hour) are found in Rāmī Island. This antidote is tasted by the travelers to kill the poison of snake. Nashīn has elephant, buffalos and other animals. Ubaina, which is beyond it, produces elephants. The rhinoceros is found in Rāmī Island. The rhinoceros and gold are found very much in the regions of Kimān while the mountains of Zubij have reptiles and dragons.<sup>1</sup>

This is not a complete list of the Indian products that were exported to Arabia but there were many other products which were exported to Arabia, for example, Indian swords, Sindi cloths, Sindhi hen, Pala camel (Huge camel with two humps) one kind of camel from which the famous Bakhtī camel of Arabia came into existence. Likewise Indian incenses were brought from Mandal, Bharūchī spears and bamboos were taken from Bharūchs and its bamboo from Bharūch, the Kambaiti shoes and coconut were sent from Kambait and Sandān and fine clothes were exported from Thānā. Similarly different types of goods were sent to Arabia from different places of the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, PP. 60-65

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### **Four Coastal Markets of Indian Goods in Arabia; Ubluh, Şuḥār, ‘Adan and Jār:**

Though Indian products were common among the Arabs and they were sold in all markets during the pre-Islamic period, there were some particular markets for them where they were available in large quantity. As if these were the godowns of Indian products. They are Ubluh, Şuḥār, Jarr and ‘Adan etc. where the trading ships and ships from the coastal areas of Arabian cities even from India and China were being anchored. Ubluh was known as Arḍ-ul-Hind and Farj-ul-Hind wa al-Sind since ancient period. When Utbah bin Ghazwān conquered Ubluh in 14<sup>th</sup> A.H. he wrote a letter to ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb which is as follows:

“أما بعد فإن الله وله الحمد فتح علينا الأبله وهي مرقى سفن البحر من عمان والبحري وفارس والهند والصين.”

Tr.: All praise be to Allah Who made us victorious upon Ubluh. It is a port of the ships coming from Oman, Bahrain, Persia, India and China.

When Baṣra city was established near Ubluh in 14<sup>th</sup> A.H. some companions of the Prophet decided to do business for its being a centre of trade and commerce. So Nāfi’ bin Ḥārith bin Kildah al-Thaqafī approached ‘Umar and said:

“يا أمير المؤمنين إني قد أفليت فلاء بالبصرة فاتخذت بها تجارة.”<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: O the Commander of the Believers! I have chosen one place for me in Baṣra and I started my business there.

So ‘Umar (RA) wrote a recommendation letter to ‘Utbah bin Ghazwān in this regard.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, P. 117

Apart from Ubluh, Ẓafār and Ṣuḥār were the old centers of Indian maritime trade on the coastal areas of Arabian Gulf. It came in the book "Fajr-ul-Islām":

"وفي شرقي حضرموت ظفار وهي من قديم مصدر للتوابل والطيب وبخور المعابد ولا يزال إلى اليوم يرسل فيها إلى الهند".<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: In the East of Ḥaḍramaut, Ẓafār is a market of spices, perfumes and temples' incenses since ancient time, and the Indian products are still sent there.

Suḥār Market and Daba (Dubai) Market of Oman were very famous among the special markets of pre-Islamic period wherein the foreign traders of Sind, India, China and East and West got together. Their supervisor was the local governor Hākim Jalandi bin Mustakbir who used to collect 'ushr from the traders.<sup>2</sup>

Yemen was the important center of maritime trade of Indians in southern Arabia. It included big cities like San'ā', Qaṣr, Ḡhamdān, Ma'ārib, Bakhrān, and 'Adn. Ibn-i-Kḥurdadhbīh wrote about 'Adan:

"وبها العنبر، والعود، والمسك ومتاع السند والهند، والصين والزنج والحبشة وفارس والبصرة وجدة وقلزم".<sup>3</sup>

Tr.: Ambergris and Incenses are found here. Goods of Sind, India, China, Zunji, Abyssinia, Persia, Baṣra, Jeddah and the Red Sea are also kept here.

The abundance of Indian goods and its consumption in the ancient trade of Yemen could be estimated by the following statement:

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<sup>1</sup> Fajr-ul-Islam, P. 3

<sup>2</sup> Kitab-ul-Majr, P. 266 and Kitab-ul-Amkinah wa al-Azminah, 2/163

<sup>3</sup> Al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik, P. 61

"وكانت التجارة قديماً في يد اليمنيين وكانوا هم العنصر الظاهر فيها فعلى يدهم كانت تنتقل غلات حضرموت وظفار وواردات الهند إلى الشام ومصر".<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: The trade was run by the Yemenis in the ancient period. They were dominant over the trade. The products of Ḥaḍramaut and Ṣafār, and the goods of India were sent to Syria and Egypt by them.

The famous old port of Red Sea Jar was an exposition in the western part of Arabia like Ubluh, Ṣuḥar, and 'Adan. The ships of Bahrain and of far away East up to China were anchored here like Egypt and Abyssinia. Since Jār was the port nearer to Medina, its goods were sold very much in Medina and its outskirts. There were rich Jew settlements in the nereby areas and the markets were held there apart from the main city of Medina so the Indian goods were imported to the seaport of Jār in a large quantity. The trade of Medina and surrounding areas was very successful. So when the Companions of the Prophet migrated to Medina, most of them started their business and progressed in it. 'Uram bin al-Aṣḥba' Silmī was one of the eminent geographers who wrote about Jār in his famous book "Asmāu Jibāl-i-Tihāmah wa Sukkāniha wa mā fihā min al-Qurā":

"والجار على شاطئ البحر، ترفأ إليه السفن من أرض الحبشة، ومصر، ومن البحرين والصين وبها منير وهي قرية كبيرة أهلة وشرب أهلها من البحيرة وبالجار قصور كثيرة ونصف الجار في جزيرة من البحر ونصفها على الساحل، وبحذاء الجار جزيرة في البحر تكون ميلاً في ميل لا يعير إليها إلا في السفن، وهي مرفأ الحبشة خاصة يقال لها قراف، سكانها تجار كنحو أهل الجار، يوتون بالماء من فرسخين".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fajr-ul-Islam, 1/13

<sup>2</sup> Kitab-u-Asmai Rijali tahamah wa Sukkaniha wa ma fiha min al-Qura, PP. 9-10

Tr.: Jār is a coastal colony on the Red Sea where the ships of Abyssinia and Egypt and from Bahrain and China are anchored. There is a regional center of the government. This is a big and populous colony. Its inhabitants get drinking water from the pond. There are many forts in Jār. Its half population is on an Island of the sea while the second half is on its coast. There is another Island in the sea alongside of Jār, which is one square mile. People reach there through boats. This Island was a port for Abyssinia and is called Qurāf. Its natives are traders like those of Jār. They bring drinking water from the distance of eight kilometers.

According to the old distance system this port of Medina is situated on a distance of one day and one night from Medina.

Most probably the Indian goods sold in Medina were brought here via Bahrain through sea because it was easier than the long ways of dessert. And when ships of China were anchored at this port, Indian goods had reached here directly.

### **Mecca; the Most Important Trade Center of Arabia:**

Yemen and 'Adan were the old markets of the eastern world from where goods were sent to other countries by the Arab traders. But later on, due to the interference of Persians and Romans, their trade seemed to be declined. And when the Romans took control over Red Sea, the trade of the Yemenis began to decline and they started their business in foreign countries through land routes of Arabia. This route was started from Ḥaḍramaut and reached to Mecca avoiding the deserts of Najd passing by the Red Sea. Thus Mecca became a great market among Egypt, Syria and Yemen. And the trade flourished very much among the Ḥijāzis especially the Qureish who started their trade journey towards Yemen in South and

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Syria in North. The Qur'ān has mentioned these journeys in this verse "رحلة الشتاء والصيف". The people of the outskirts came to Mecca; the trade center of Hijāz easily got all kinds of national and international goods. The biggest annual market of Mecca was held in 'Ukaz that was established in the way of Ṭā'if at the time of Ḥajj. And near to it one market was held at Dhulmajāz at the time of Ḥajj too. Thus great trade caravans went from Mecca. According to the explanation of Ṭabrī, sometimes these caravans had 1500 camels loaded with the goods. Sometimes the Prophet (PBUH) also accompanied these caravans. So he (PBUH) travelled to Syria first time when he was 12 years old and at the second time he went there when he was 25 years old. An Egyptian scholar says:

"كانت مكة محطاً لأصحاب القوافل الآتية من جنوب العرب تحمل بضائع الهند واليمن إلى الشام ومصر ينزلون بها ويسقون من بئر شهيرة بها تسمى بئر زمزم ويأخذون منها حاجتهم من الماء."<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: Mecca was the destination of the caravans coming from South Arabia. These caravans carried goods of India and Yemen to Syria and Egypt. They stayed at Mecca quenching their thirst from the well of Zam Zam as well as they took necessary water from it for their next destination.

Arabia had become the centre of Persian and Byzantine powers a little before the birth of the Prophet (PBUH). Byzantine emperor was increasing its influence with the help of Abyssinia while the Persian government was busy in its political game. Due to this conflict the trade of Syria started to decline, and things of the best quality began to disappear from the Arab markets for the Byzantine government and the

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mujmal fi tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi, P. 27

best quality of silk clothes also began to be out of stock for the churches of Europe and their Popes. So the Romans captured the markets of Ḥaḍramaut and Yemen through the route of Red Sea. And since the religion of Abyssinia and Rome was Christianity, the Romans called upon the King of Abyssinia and its people for their help in the name of religion:

"وأرسل الامبراطور البيزنطي جوستنبان (527-565) سفيراً إلى ملك الحبشة أهاب (ج) باسم الدين والمصلحة أن يقوم هو والسميفع حاكم حمير بقتال الفرس وأن يتولى الأحباش شراء الحرير من الهنود، ثم يبيعونه بدورهم إلى بيزنطة فيجنون ارباخاً طائلة".<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: The Byzantine empire sent an Ambassador named Josantban to the King of Abyssinia and asked him in the name of religion and social cause that he and the King of Ḥimyar Sumaifa' should fight against the Persians on our side and that the businessmen of Abyssinia should purchase silk clothes from the Indians and go to Rome to sell them with huge benefits.

The people of Mecca got the opportunity during this conflict and started their trade with Yemen and 'Adan through land routes. In this regard the Quraish tribes started two trade journeys; in winter they travelled to Yemen to purchase and in summer they went to Syria to sell their goods.

In the beginning only the Quraish tribe Maḥzūm did business. But when it flourished, Ḥāshim tribe also took an active part in it. Mecca had become a complete trade centre till the childhood of the Prophet (PBUH).

Since Mecca had become a commercial center, its civil life also developed and their language became rich. And finally the language of Quraish was destined to be as the language of the

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<sup>1</sup> Majallah al-Arabi, Dhul Hijjah, 1281 A.H

Qur'ān and Islam. Several Indian words are found in the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. So the words Kāfūr (Kapūr: Camphor), Zanjabīl (Zanjabir: Ginger), Misk (Moshka: Musk) etc. used in the Qur'ān have been Arabiacised by the Quraishites. Similarly, the words Quṣṭ (Kuth: aloeswood), Zut (Jāt) 'Ud-i-Hindī (Indian incenses) Musk found in the Ḥadīth, are of Indian origin. Also Indians lived in Mecca as the Jāts have been mentioned in the Ḥadīth of 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd while Indian blacksmiths have been mentioned in a verse of Ka'b bin Mālik.

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## A Critical Survey of the Book

### ***“The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period”***

Prof. F. U. Farooqi<sup>1</sup>

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The history of Arabic literature, as it is seen today, is almost a non-Arabic style of work introduced by the European scholars of Arabic studies. The contents of this newly emerged art however had long existed in the Arabic literature in various forms.

After the compilation of the Qur’ān, Muslim scholars devoted themselves to collect the sayings and deeds of the Prophet, as it was the only source after the Qur’ān for the Islamic Shari’ah. At the same time, some of the scholars undertook another sort of academic business that was compilation of the biography of the Prophet with special reference to the wars and battles fought by the Prophet and his companions. This kind of work was named ‘al-Maghāzī wa al-Siyar’ (المغازي والسير). These Maghāzī are the first concept of history in the Islamic world. The religious value of such works in respect of authenticity is much less than the Ḥadīth. These are collections dealing with the day to day life, though they are also a very important source of information for the history of early Islam and its people. The earliest biography of the Prophet is the one composed by Ibn-i-Ishāq (d. 765 A.D),

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which is not available in its original form but only in the recension of Ibn-i-Hishām (d. 833 A.D). Though recently the original compilation has been discovered which has been edited and published by Dr. Ḥamīdullāh, in Paris, France. Kitāb-ul-Maghāzī (كتاب المغازي) by Wāqidī (d. 822 A.D) bears the same status as a source of information though the authenticity of Wāqidī, as *muḥaddith* (Traditionalist) is debatable. We may also place Futūh-ul-Buldān (فتوح البلدان) by Aḥmad bin Yaḥyá al-Balādhurī (d. 892 A.D.) in the first category of the Maghāzī.

The later development of history amongst the Muslims is to be found in the form of 'Ṭabaqāt' (طبقات) writings - every practice and saying of the Prophet is a religious law to be followed by a Muslim in day to day life. In the first century of Islam there was a multitude of living witnesses from whom traditions (حديث) were collected, which were memorised and orally transmitted. Written records and compilations were comparatively rare during the early period. In the same period, exploitation of traditions for political and religious purposes became a common practice. As a result, forging of traditions prevailed all over the Muslim world. It was a very dangerous development that was being taken place. But the traditionalists of the second and third century A.H. took it very seriously and tried their best to strain out the genuine traditions from the forged ones. One of the preventive measures taken in this direction was the critical examination of the narrators (راوي). In this regard they collected all the necessary information about such narrators. The process led to the emergence of a new genre of writing called the 'Ṭabaqāt' (طبقات: Classes). Ṭabaqāt-i-Ibn-i-Sa'd (طبقات ابن سعد) is regarded the earliest work in this field. It was

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compiled by Ibn-i-Sa'd (d. 844 A.D). The Ṭabaqāt writings were, in the beginning, confined to the biographies of the narrators of the Ḥadīth i.e. the companions of the Prophet and those who came after them. But it also covered the other academic fields, such as literature, language, medicine and philosophy etc. Muḥammad bin Sallām al-Jumuḥī (d. 232 A.H) was the first to classify and systemize the Arabian poets in this work entitled 'Kitāb-u-Ṭabaqāt al-Shu'arā' (كتاب طبقات الشعراء), Mukhtaṣar-u-Ṭabaqāt al-Shu'arā' (مختصر طبقات الشعراء) by Abbās 'Abdullāh bin al-Mu'tazz (d. 296 A.H), Abū Zaid Qarshī's Jamharat-u- Ash'ār al-'Arab (جمهرة أشعار العرب) and Kitāb al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'arā' (كتاب الشعر والشعراء) by Ibn-i-Qutaibah (d. 276 A.H.) are primary works covering the same theme. During the following centuries, compilation of the biographical history of literary figures, mainly those of the poets, became a common practice. Some works of this kind are Wufyāt-ul-A'ayān (وفيات الأعيان: Obituaries of Eminent Men) by Ibn-i-Khalkān (d. 681 A.H). This work is a general index that records the births and deaths of eminent personalities in various fields including the art and literature. Two other outstanding works on similar subject are 'al-Aghānī' (الأغاني) by Abū-al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356 A.H) and 'al-'Iqd al-Farīd' (العقد الفريد) by Ibn 'Abdi Rabbah (d. 940 A.H). The former may be regarded as a history of all the Arabian poetry that had been musically composed till the author's time. Although al-Aghānī is a book of music and songs, ample information about the poets and their narrators have been recorded therein which make the book a historical-biographical work rather than a work on music. Al-'Iqd al-Farīd is divided into twenty five sections, each of them bears the name of a different gem and contains valuable information about the Arabic literature and

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culture. We must not forget the contribution of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626 A.H) by his celebrated work Mu'jamu al-Udabā' (معجم الأدباء: The Dictionary of Literary Figures). These books are some of the primary sources for the literary and biographical works of later periods.

Ibn-i-Sallām al-Jumuḥī, again is the first who introduced criticism in Arabic poetry, though the oral criticism in the form of personal views existed even before the rise of Islam. Kitāb al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'arā' by Ibn-i-Qutaibah (d. 276 A.H) developed the art of criticism to a considerable extent. He defined poetry and its outlines in his work 'Naqd al-Shi'r' (نقد الشعر). Al-Āmidī (d. 371 A.H) wrote a book in which he compared and evaluated the two great Arabic poets al-Buḥturī and Abū Tammām. This work should also be regarded as one of the best writings on the Arabic criticism. 'Abdullāh al-Khawarzmī devoted a separate chapter in his book 'Mafātīḥ al-Shu'arā' (مفاتيح الشعراء) on poetic discussions and the objectives of poetry. I believe that Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl al-Tha'ālibī's (d. 429 A.H) work 'Yatīmatud Dahr' (يتيمة الدهر) should be taken as a valuable contribution to the Arabic criticism, although the work is not essentially devoted to that.

The emergence of the art of Balāghat (Rhetorics) played an important role in developing Arabic literary criticism. Rhetoric was introduced in Arabic only to evaluate the literary value of the Qur'ān. But first, it examined all external and internal merits of a literary piece, and mainly that of poetry. Leaving behind some less significant works, we take into consideration the most celebrated work in Arabic criticism, that is, 'al-'Umdah' (العمدة) by Ibn-i-Rashīq (d. 456 A.H). He tried in this work to collect and incorporate all the

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views of earlier writers regarding the merits and demerits of a poetic work. There is a detailed analysis of the impact of poetry on human sentiments in the work.

The criticism of prose appears during the same period. Ibn-i-Qutaibah's 'Adab-ul-Kātib' (أدب الكاتب) is the first considerable work in this regard. Since this work focuses mainly on various aspects of words, it would be more appropriate to regard it as a criticism of Arabic lexicon. A deeper study of the subject makes it clear that the criticism of prose writing evolved in the course of efforts that were made to establish the literary value of the Qur'ān in its style and selection of words. Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqilānī's (d. 403 A.H) 'I'jāz-ul-Qur'ān' (إعجاز القرآن: The Miracle of the Qur'ān) is a notable work in the criticism of Arabic prose. The author has discussed the prose writings from a critical point of view. In a later period the scholars of Rhetoric took over the complete charge of prose criticism. 'Abdul Qāhir of Gorgān's (d. 1413 A.D) 'Asrār-ul-Qur'ān' (أسرار القرآن) is a distinguished work of this kind. Sakkākī's (d. 626 A.H) 'Miftāḥ-ul-'Ulūm' (مفتاح العلوم) acquires the same status.

I didn't aim to furnish a systematic historical record of the development of biographical, historical and critical literature in Arabic. What I intended in fact is to show that the basic material of the modern history of Arabic literature was in existence far long in Arabic literature under different names. The concept of literary history was confined to the biographical history, called, 'Tarājim' (تراجم) which explored literary figures like poets, historians, philosophers etc. in the light of their contributions. But there was no effort to evaluate their works under their cultural and historical surroundings. The works on 'Tarājim' furnish a lot of information about the

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subject but they lack the critical insight, involvement of research analysis and a critical examination of the events is seldom noticed in these writings.

Such was the state of literary history in Arabic when European scholars appeared on the scene during the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In the beginning, they studied Arabic and Islamic sciences with a view to increase their own knowledge and during the first phase of their studies, a good number of Arabic and Islamic works were translated into European languages. But soon they began to return what they had borrowed from the Arab world. They did it in a well-skilled research based manner, they began to edit and publish rare Arabic books which were still in manuscript forms. They compiled books on various Arabic and Islamic studies. But it seems that, barring a few, most of their studies were meant mainly to benefit their own countrymen in various ways. To facilitate the study of Arabic books for their people, books on Arabic grammar and lexicon were compiled in the first phase. I am not dealing with the contribution of the orientalist and the development of Arabic studies in Europe. What I would like to say here, instead, is the history of Arabic literature, in its existing form, is indebted to the efforts of the orientalist. In fact due to various political, cultural and religious factors, the European had a great desire and enthusiasm for oriental studies (See for detail the preface of Arberrry's English translation of the Qur'ān). Moreover, the European libraries had a lot of manuscripts in Arabic and on Islamic subjects which are yet to be published. The scholars of the Eastern world either had to trace those manuscripts or they were simply unaware of their values and importance. Apart from this, the European scholars possessed a unique quality of research, based on recepticism in examination. A great interest and

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desire for discoveries, analysis and comparative study contributed a great deal to the value of their works. Consequently, they introduced some new aspects to the Arabic and Islamic studies, and a number of fresh views and ideas emerged as a result of their researches. Their contributions are of such a great significance that leads me to the conclusion that during the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the seat of learning and compilation in Arabic and Islamic studies had shifted from the East to the West, leading to the dawn of a new era in the studies of Arabic and Islamic arts and sciences.

The discoveries and research findings enriched the history of Arabic literature to such an extent that the works of orientalists of the later period became something new in this field, almost unknown to the contemporary scholars of the Eastern world. They tried to study literature in the light of the natural process of events and critically examined the information supplied by the predecessors. The History of Arabic literature in English is the best represented, though not confined to, by two works, one, *The Literary History of the Arabs* by R. A. Nicholson, first published in 1907, and the second, *The Arabic Literature* by H. A. R. Gibb, published in 1926. As I have mentioned earlier, the works of the European orientalists were mainly intended for the benefit of their own people, the above mentioned works reflect the same tendency. And hence these works may be regarded as an introduction to the Arabic literature. Nicholson writes in the preface of his work "This work is a sketch of ideas in their historical environments rather than a record of authors, books and dates. (P. VIII). Gibb's works has more lacunae than that of Nicholson's. P.K. Hitti's work 'The History of Arabs' is of course an addition to the previous works, yet a detailed work on the subject was the need of the hour. Apart from this, the results of

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researches and discoveries of the later periods were yet to be included in the history of Arabic literature. To fulfill this requirement, the Cambridge University planned to compile and publish a series of detailed history of the Arabic literature, the first part of the series is presently before me.

Before proceeding with the main task, I believe, it would not be a misfit to give a brief account of the impact of the works and researches done by the orientalists on the Eastern world. No doubt, the orientalists had a great influence over both the writing and thinking of scholars of Arabian and other Eastern countries. Consequently the style of writing and thinking of the Arabian scholars changed and a good number of Arab writers followed the same pattern. But the fact remains to be made clear that views and findings of the orientalists are not acceptable in its totality.

The European scholars devoted themselves to the Islamic studies especially to the history of Islam and its Prophet, more than they did to any other branch of Arabic studies. As these kinds of studies were mainly intended for religious purposes, the orientalists did not hesitate to deviate from the academic honesty in their efforts to find at least some faults in Islam. In fact, it was an unhealthy way of studying the events and matters which naturally resulted in the lack of confidence in the scholarship of the orientalists and their works. As consequence, their writings were not welcome, as expected. I personally believe that the critical examinations of the events, research and analysis are, no doubt, a healthy and very useful way of study. But the misuse of historical material, misrepresentation of references and distortion of facts and historical events to establish a prefabricated view will certainly diminish the academic status of a writer, on one

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hand, and will provoke those who are aware of the facts to point out their faults and fallacies, on the other.

The book as stated in its Editorial introduction was “the need for a more extensive history to make in new fields and survey the results of our half a century of research, that promoted the Cambridge University Press to establish, in several volumes, a new history of Arabic literature on a much larger scale.” It is indeed a systematic and planned history of Arabic literature produced in series, and the book under discussion, is the first volume. This book is a compilation of articles written by various authors and not a one-man task.

This is a brief introduction to the book which is indeed a very useful work in respect of coverage of even minute details about the subject, as well, with regard to the area of its coverage all incorporated in a skilful style. But, unfortunately, some of the entries cannot be accepted in their existing forms.

Now, a detailed critical examination of such entries is brought into lime light so that the errors committed by the authors of respective chapters can be rectified. I would request the learned authors as well as the members of the Editorial Board of the Cambridge University Press, to take note of my comments in order to make necessary amendments in the work. The Cambridge University Press carries a reputation which should not be tarnished by publication of such inaccuracies.

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## Tradition of Indo-Islamic History-writing in Urdu

✎...Dr. Ashfāque Zafar Işlāhī<sup>1</sup>

History itself is as old as the existence of human being on the earth. It is human nature that it preserves all significant developments and changes around. As far as the Indo-Islamic history writing in Urdu language in India is concerned, it started and picked pace in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as we find several history books composed about the Muslim rule and different Muslim rulers across India. Such as we find names of “Rustam ‘Alī Bijnaurī” who wrote “Tārīkh-i-Rohila” (History of Rohilas) and Mon’am Khān’s “Tārīkh-i-Deccan” (History of Deccan) and “Tārīkh-i-Hind” (History of India).

There were many books on this subject in Persian but these were focusing on individuals and mainly full of praises and appreciations to get financial aids from the ruler. This was the period when Urdu was prevailing over Persian, and research works were being done and transformed into Urdu. History along with other subjects was being composed within frame work of research and analytical methods. Few books on Indo-Arab history were written in this period but a very broad foundation was laid for future research works on this subject.

19<sup>th</sup> century is considered the golden period of Indo-Islamic history writing in Urdu. Several modern methods and means were adopted. Historians in this era adopted some principles for reliable and transparent approach to history writing. A number of history books were composed or translated. There

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<sup>1</sup> Delhi-based Freelance Journalist

were individual and collective efforts for preserving history especially Indo-Islamic history in Urdu. When it comes to collective efforts, the two institutions “Fort William College Calcutta” and “Dilli College” played a significant role in the development of history writing in Urdu.<sup>1</sup> After all, there was Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān who not only extended this tradition of history writing but established a scientific society to introduce new methods of research, approaches and styles. He also tried to attract people towards history. At this stage, it seems that personalities like ‘Allāmah Shiblī Nomānī got influenced by his thoughts. Moreover, presence of modern history books by European scholars in Sir Syed’s library changed Shiblī’s approach to history. Though, Shiblī was not agreed with European historians on different points but he was highly impressed by their way of expression and research methods.

### **Contribution of Fort William College**

“Fort William College” which was a premier institution of its time to introduce modern education and learning in regional languages like Urdu. Some valuable books on Indo-Islamic history were composed under its umbrella. Its contribution to the promotion of Indo-Islamic History writing during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in India is considered a landmark in this field.

The rulers of British India established Fort William College on 10/7/1800 A.D. in Calcutta. The focus and objective of the college was to teach newcomer British officers and staff Urdu and other regional languages. There was a pressing need for composition of some books that could meet the requirements. So, the college authorities decided to set up a department of

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<sup>1</sup> Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn ki Tārīkhī Khidmāt, P. 12

translation and creative writings. This department translated and composed many books on different subjects.

Here is the brief introduction of history books that came under the banner of Fort William College in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(i) **Intikhāb-i- Sultānia:** This book is written by Khalīl 'Alī Khān Ashk in 1805 but unfortunately it could not be published due to some unknown reasons. This book has 153 pages and is preserved in manuscript section of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata. It begins with the history of Sultan rulers of Delhi till the period of Shāh 'Ālam the Mughal Ruler. After a brief introduction of Delhi, the writer has mentioned about Sultān Mo'izzuddīn Shāh, his arrival in India, his victory over local rulers and his system of governance. The writer has presented accounts of a number of rulers till the period of Quṭbuddīn Aibak. He has highlighted slave dynasty along with Khiljī, Tughlaq, Lodhī, Pathān and Mughal dynasties. The book is distinctive with its description of events in a sequence.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Obaida Begum writes that "Intikhāb-i-Sultānia" is a very short but compact history book. Mr. Ashk has mentioned all valuable and considerable developments of the period covering all traditions, and rites & rituals, policies, governance and administrative skills of Sultans<sup>2</sup>. The merit of this book is that the author has quoted events and developments from reliable and well-known historical references. Though, the book has been written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but the sources and references are well known and its style of writing is within parameters of standard research book avoiding a philosophical or literary style.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P. 14

<sup>2</sup> Fort William College ki Adbi Khidmāt, P. 517

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- (ii) **Ārā'ish-i-Maḥfil:** It is summary of a Persian book named “Khulāsat al-Twārīkh” written by Munshī Sajan Rai. This summary was composed in 1805 by Mīr Sher 'Alī Afsos and published in 1808 from Hindustān Press Calcutta with the title of Ārā'ish-i-Maḥfil giving a detailed history of India through authentic sources.<sup>1</sup>
- (iii) **Tārīkh-i-Sher Shāhī:** This is the Urdu translation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of the book “Toḥfa-i-Akbar Shāhī” of 'Abbās Khān Sherwānī. This book was written on demand from the Mughal emperor Akbar. The author of the book was a contemporary of Sher Shāh that adds importance to his work. He has covered all major happenings of Sher Shāh's life and his rule. The third volume of the book was translated from Persian into Urdu by Mazhar 'Alī Khān on demand from Captain Mount in 1805. Scholars say that there is no way of denying reliability and authenticity of the book but translation appears to be unable to express everything in letter and spirit. The word to word translation has made the text ambiguous.<sup>2</sup>
- (iv) **Tārīkh-i-Āsām:** This book is a comprehensive history of military mission commanded by 'Umda-tul-Mulk Mīr Moḥammad Sayīd who was a very close noble of Aurangzeb in Assam. This mission was carried out in 1444 and ended with the fall of Assam under the Mughal Empire. The writer Shahābuddīn Tallish was accompanying the Nawab during the mission. So in the book he has gone through all accounts of the mission as witness. This book has been composed in two parts. The first one deals with factors that led to this military mission in the area, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn ki Tārīkhī Khidmāt, P. 16

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, P.57

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second part is basically an account of political situations, social status, and way of life in the region as “Dr. Obaida Begum herself highlights:<sup>1</sup>

اس سے وہاں کی آب و ہوا، پھولوں، پھلوں اور پیڑ پودوں وغیرہ کا حال معلوم ہوتا ہے۔ اسکے علاوہ طرز معاشرت، رسم و رواج اور رہن سہن کا بھی پتا چلتا ہے۔

Tr.: The book mentions weather, atmosphere, fruits, flowers, society, rights & rituals and life styles.

There was a general trend in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that books mostly comprised of details of wars, acts of bravery and praises for the ruler. But in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the writers have covered all major aspects such as society, life style and political situation. In “Tārīkh-i-Āsām”, the author has authenticated events with references and mentioned reasons behind every development. The real importance of the book is that besides political history it has elaborated social and cultural history of Assam.

- (v) **Tārīkh-i-Nādirī:** This is the Urdu translation of the book “Tārīkh-i- Nādirī” written in Persian by Mehdī bin Moḥammad Naṣīr. The book has been translated by one of the most prominent writers of Fort William College Mr. Syed Ḥaider Bakhsh Ḥaidrī in 1908 covering different aspects of Nādir Shāh, his rule and condition of Iran during his rule. It has specially highlighted the infightings in the region and some major developments that occurred in Iran.
- (vi) **Iqbāl Nāmah:** This book is also the Urdu translation of one volume of Siyar-i-Muta’akhhirīn by Munshī Ghulām Ḥussain. The translation work was done by Syed Bakhsh ‘Alī Faizābādī. The book begins with political and social conditions in the

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<sup>1</sup> Fort William College ki Adabi Khidmāt, P. 321

period of Sirājuddaulah. It provides some informative details about political and ruling class and major happenings in battle ground. This book has appreciated British policies and their talents. It also has a chapter on treason of Mīr Ja'far, East India's victory over Mīr Qāsim, the battle between Sirājuddaulah and Britishers and the peace pact between them in addition to Najmuddīn's rule over Bengal and East India Company's interference in the state. This book is a comprehensive history of Bengal. Although, the college contributed only to the translation of major books but by this way history of this era was presented and transferred to the next generation.

### **Dilli College**

At a time when the Fort William College was at its last stage and was officially abandoned in 1854, the Dilli College in Delhi flourished with its outstanding scientific and literary works. Dilli College was established as Madarsa by Nawab Gāziuddīn Khān Fīroz Jung Thānī in 1872.<sup>1</sup> In 1925, the British government converted this Madrasa into a college to educate Indians modern subjects in Urdu Language. A translation society was formed to achieve this goal because the books on modern subjects and sciences were not available in Urdu at that time. History was considered as one of the modern subjects. So many books on history were written or translated by the society.

**Contribution of Dilli College to History-writing:** Here I present a brief introduction of Dilli College's contribution to the promotion of history as a modern subject in Urdu. Most of the books covering different subjects were prepared as per

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<sup>1</sup> Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn ki Tārīkhī Khidmāt, P. 24

college curriculum so these are not huge but fulfill what was required at that time. As we find:

- (i) **Tārīkh-i-Abul Fidā:** This book is the translation of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> volumes of the book written by Abul Fidā. Maulvi Karīmuddīn has translated it into Urdu. It was published in 1847 by Aṣhrāf ‘Alī from a publishing house “Maṭba-ul-‘Ulūm”. In fact, Dilli College had aims to provide students books in their mother tongue. A few books on history as well as on other subjects were translated or composed. There were some reference books of history, which were summarized or translated by some scholars of the college. These are:
- (ii) **Tārīkh-i-Bengāl:** This book is a translation by Mualvi Subḥān Bakhsh, the original writer of the book is unknown.
- (iii) **Tārīkh-i-Agra:** We could not get much information about this book also; the only thing about this book is that it is translation work by Maulvi Karīmuddīn.
- (iv) **Qīṣaṣ-i-Hind:** This book is not a translation work. It was written by Master Pyāre Lāl Āshob in three volumes. It covers nearly all major events occurred in India till that time.<sup>1</sup>

These books were composed specifically for the syllabus of the college. So, their language is very simple and easy to understand in comparison with the books of Fort William College.

Some eminent personalities were associated with the special center for research and analysis of Dilli College who played

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P. 25

remarkable contribution to the promotion of history in Urdu. Some of them are:

- (i) **Rām Chandra:** One of the Urdu persona is Master Rām Chandra, though Mr. Rām Chandra is not an author of any specific book but his articles on history are considered very important and precious. Master Rām Chandra was the editor of a fortnightly magazine namely Fawā'id al-Nāẓirīn, and he was in charge of history related portion of that magazine and wrote many articles. His articles are specilized on Sultanat period and Mughal kings. It is said that these articles played big role to create high taste of history in general public.<sup>1</sup>
- (ii) **Munshī Zakā'ullāh:** He was one of the eminent personalities of Dilli College and has more research work than his other contemporaries. He authored books on subjects other than history. His most famous book on history is "Tārīkh-i-Hindustān" comprising of 14 or 15 volumes. This book is still considered important for Indian History. The most important thing about his history writing is that his language is very simple and easily understood, and above all, he has applied some principles and standards of history writing in this book.

### **Revolt of 1857 and History**

The year 1857 witnessed first serious struggle for India's independence which was named as "Ghadr". There were many writers who compiled books on these events such as Fazl-i-Ḥaq Khairābādī's "Bāghī Hindustān" is considered an important book on this topic. The most reliable and widely

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<sup>1</sup> Māster Rām Chandra, P.71

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known important book on this topic is “Asbāb-i- Baghāwat-i-Hind” by Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān. This revolt against British occupation had deep impacts on all spheres of life in India. After quelling this uprising British government made propaganda to ensure Indians that they only can provide good governance and nobody is able to do that. They also made efforts to make the masses believe that former rulers of India were cruel brutal and oppressors.

At this crucial juncture, the conscience of Indian intellectuals could not agree with this propaganda and they raised their objections to this false and fabricated propaganda by presenting many authentic books on this issue.<sup>1</sup> During the same period Munshī Naval Kishore, who is also considered a prominent historian of this period, established a publishing house in Lucknow, capital of the Awadh province. This press got eternal fame by publishing many more books on religion, sciences and history. Apart from these history books published by Naval Kishore press, he himself wrote “Twārīkh Nādir-ul-‘Aṣr” which was published in 1863. The book is a detail account of Nawabs of Awadh, their life style, the system of governance and the culture. It is also considered an important and valuable document on the history of Awadh.

The second important book of this period is “Twārīkh Swaniḥ Salātīn-i-Awadh”. This valuable book of history is written by Syed Kamāluddīn Ḥaider. The First time it was published by Naval Kishore press in 1879. The book mainly discusses the political and cultural history of Nawabs in Awadh. It has two volumes. The second volume has been named “Qaiṣar-ut-Tawārīkh” in the 2<sup>nd</sup> addition of the book. It is considered the most valuable book of

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<sup>1</sup> Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn ki Tārīkhī Khidmāt, P.34

history in Urdu.<sup>1</sup> In fact these individual efforts in the field of history writing during the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century paved the way for standard history writing in Urdu language.

### a) Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān

In the same period, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) paid his attention towards history writing in Urdu and composed many important books on the subject. He not only promoted history writing but also gave it new dimensions and adorned it with modern approach, methodology and styles. He formed a scientific society to write or translate scientific or historical books. In fact, he had deep interest in history as the writer of "Mauj-i-Kauthar" Sheikh Moḥammad Ikrām points out.<sup>2</sup>

تاریخ اور مذہبی مباحث سے انھیں خاص دلچسپی تھی اور انکی اکثر مشہور کتابیں انھیں مضامین کے متعلق ہیں۔ اسلامی ہندوستان کی اہم ترین تاریخی کتب کی اشاعت اور بادشاہان دہلی کے آثار باقیہ کی یادداشت اور بقا کے لیے جو کوششیں انہوں نے کیں شاید ہی کسی اور فرد واحد سے بن آتی ہو۔ بلکہ شاید ہی کسی اور کو اس کی ضرورت کا پورا احساس ہوا ہو۔

Tr.: He had special interest in religious and historical discussions and most of his famous books deal with these two subjects. He has done a great job by publishing some important books on the history of Muslim India, monuments of Delhi. He did this at a time when nobody had ever thought about the need to do these valuable works.

Besides this, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān had great zeal in historiography, its principles and methods. As we see in the preface of "al-Ma'mūn" of 'Allāmah Shīblī Nomānī in which Sir Syed writes:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P. 37

<sup>2</sup> Mauj-i-Kauthar, 1/82

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ma'mūn, P. 3

ہمارے لائق مصنف نے اس بات کا بہت کچھ خیال رکھا ہے اور باوجود تاریخانہ مضمون ہونے کے ایسی خوبی سے اسکو ادا کیا ہے کہ عبارت بھی فصیح اور دلچسپ ہے اور تاریخانہ اصلیت بھی بدستور اپنی اصل صورت پر موجود ہے۔ جو خوبصورت ہے خوبصورت ہے۔ جو بھونڈی ہے بھونڈی ہے۔ نہ خوبصورتی کو زیادہ خوبصورت بنایا اور نہ بھونڈے پن کو بھونڈ اور حقیقت یہی کمال تاریخ نویسی ہے۔

Tr.: Our respected writer has committed to some principles and has taken the subject like history in a manner that the content is interesting and the historical facts have come in their real and actual faces and shapes. He has neither extolled goodness of good nor exaggerated the negative things, in fact this is the perfection of historiography.

These lines of Sir Syed Ahmad Khān clearly indicate that he justified the truth, balance, simplicity and seriousness as the most important and integral part of history writings. He also viewed that research, analysis and impartiality must be the essential part of this subject. Sir Syed Ahmad Khān has expressed his view points on historiography in his book “Tārīkh-i-Sarkashī Zila Bijnaur” where he has expressed his view on the issue as he writes:<sup>1</sup>

ابھی مجھے توفیق دے کہ یہ تاریخ میری پوری ہو اور صحیح بات لکھنے کی ہدایت کر۔ کیوں کی طرفداری کی تاریخ لکھنا ایسی بے ایمانی کی بات ہے کہ اسکا اثر ہمیشہ رہتا ہے اور اسکا وبال قیامت تک مصنف کی گردن پر ہوتا ہے۔

Tr.: May Allah bless me to complete this part of history, and guide me to present right things because partiality in history writing has been practiced having always its deep impacts, and the writer would be accountable and responsible for all negative impacts till the dooms day.

<sup>1</sup> Tārīkh Sarkashī Zila Bijnaur, P. 37

Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān was also committed to the principle that historians should try to find out reasons and causes in every historical event and the historians have moral obligation to analyze important events in history keeping in view all social aspects. He has appreciated the book “al-Ma’mūn” by Shiblī because of the author’s obligation to principles of historiography.<sup>1</sup>

تاریخانہ واقعات لکھنے چنداں مشکل نہ تھے مگر وہ باتیں لکھنے کا اس زمانے کے مورخوں کو بہت کم خیال تھا۔ یا انکی قدر نہیں کرتے تھے۔ اور اس زمانے میں انھیں کی تلاش اور انہیں کی قدر کی جاتی ہے، تلاش کرنی مشکل تھی۔ مولانا اسمیں پوری یا جہاں تک ممکن تھی کامیابی حاصل کی ہے۔ پہلے حصے میں انہوں نے تاریخانہ واقعات لکھے ہیں۔ اور نہایت خوبی و اختصار سے دکھایا ہے کہ خلافت کا سلسلہ کیوں کر اور کیوں خاندان بنو امیہ کو برباد کر کے عباسی خاندانوں میں پہنچا۔ اور کیا اسباب جمع ہوئے جس سے امین اسکا بھائی اور مامون تمام مملکت اسلامی کا مالک اعلیٰ شریک نہ بن گیا۔

Tr.: There was no problem in writing about the historical events but things, which seldom came in the minds of the historians of the past, and the same are being searched for and have importance in present time, Maulana Shibli has achieved all possible success in this regard. In the first part he has showed very successfully the causes which led to the decline of Ummayyad Empire and transfer of power and governance to Abbasid dynasty and what were other reasons which made Amin and then Mamoom the sole controller of power.

Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān started this mission of writing correct and balanced history in Persian language and his first book on the subject is “Jām-i-Jamm”. This book presents brief introduction of 43 Mughal kings from Prince Taimore to the last Mughal emperor Bahādur Shāh Zafar. This is his only history book in Persian after that he concentrated on Urdu which was also in

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ma’mūn, P. 7

accordance with his reform works, and a guidance to the changing trends of history writing in that period.

Here I am giving a brief introduction of some of his books on history.

1. **Āthār al-Ṣanādīd:** This is a very important book on history and especially on monuments of Delhi. It has status of a primary source to study about 150 years history of Delhi and its monuments.

Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān completed this book in 1847 and it was published in the same year from “Mo’āsir-ul-Akḥbār Press” in Delhi. The book is divided in 4 chapters; the first chapter deals with 130 monuments and buildings, which were out of Delhi at that time. It includes all monuments built by Hindu or Muslim Kings. It has sketches and maps of several buildings which adds authenticity to his work. The second chapter focuses on Lāl Qila and the buildings inside it. This chapter gives us details about 32 buildings with their sketches and photographs. The third chapter specially covers buildings, Havelies, mosques, temples, markets, ponds, and wells which were inside the then city of Delhi. The fourth and the last chapter of the book gives brief geographical and historical conditions of Delhi. It also provides details of nearly 120 nobles, Ulemas, Saints, Doctors, Huffaz (those who have memorized the Qur’ān by heart), special authors, photographers and musicians. This book has been translated in many languages which got global significance and mark has been published from some very famous international press houses.

2. **Tārīkh Sarkashī Zila Bijnaur:** In this book Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān has covered all events and conditions that led to the first Indian uprising against the British rule in India, which was named “Ghadr”. He has maintained balance and
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impartiality in describing these events. Though this book has only one aspect of 1857, which was full of chaos and uncertainty, but as a subject it is important because it is considered one of the reliable sources of 1857's events. First, it was published in 1858 from Mufasalyat Press Agra, and then Dr. Mo'īn-ul-Ḥaque published with some comments and footnotes from Salmān Academy Karāchī.

3. **Asbāb Baghāwat-i-Hind:** This book is considered a commendable research and a great work by Syed Aḥmad Khān. He chose this topic at a time when it was impossible to write on such sensitive issues. He adopted a critical approach on government's actions and policies. He showed courage by highlighting some mistakes on part of British rulers.

Although, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān had great interest in history and composed many books but there are some writers who differ to the idea that Syed Aḥmad Khān had a better understanding of history.

One of these writers is Syed 'Abdullāh who has raised some questions about his understanding of history. He has given proof for his particular view by stating that Syed Aḥmad Khān had pursued Maulānā Shiblī not to write "al-Fārūq". The critic has quoted some lines from his book "Tārīkh-i-Bijnaur" to prove that Syed Aḥmad Khān had not realized the importance and benefit of history.<sup>1</sup>

#### b) 'Allāmah Shiblī Nomānī

'Allāmah Shiblī was a very learned scholar and a versatile figure of his period. He was well versed in Persian, Urdu Arabic, logic and other contemporary subjects. His inclination towards history began when he associated himself with M.A.O. College

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Syed aur unke Nāmwar Rofaqā', P.44

Aligarh as an Assistant Professor of Arabic. Sir Syed, his library and Professor Arnold gave different dimensions to his thoughts and ideas. He turned towards studying Islamic history with an open mind analyzing all aspects and trends.

According to Syed Sulaimān Nadwī:<sup>1</sup>

جب وہ علی گڑھ پہنچے اور سرسید کے کتب خانے میں عربی تاریخ و جغرافیہ کی وہ نادر کتابیں نظر آئیں جو یورپ یا مصر و شام و قسطنطنیہ سے چھپی تھیں تو انکی آنکھیں کھل گئیں اور ہمیں سے تاریخ اسلام کے مطالعے کا نیا دور شروع ہوا۔

Tr.: When he arrived in Aligarh and got access to Sir Syed's library where rare books of Arab history and geography published in Europe, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey were available, he was immensely impressed by it. This is how he adopted a new approach to study Indo-Islamic and Arab- Islamic history.

Although 'Allāmah Shiblī had his presence felt in different areas as he was a good poet a well-known and widely read writer and a master of Persian literature. But his real field of work and interest was history as we see.<sup>2</sup>

علامہ شبلی کو اگرچہ فطرت نے گونا گوں اوصاف سے متصف کیا تھا جس کی وجہ سے وہ علوم اسلامیہ کے منفرد عالم و محقق ہوئے۔ لیکن درحقیقت انکا اصل میدان فن تاریخ تھا۔

Tr.: Though the nature had bestowed him different skills and arts and because of that he was considered the scholar and researcher of the Islamic sciences, indeed his real field was history.

**Objectives of Maulānā Shiblī:** It was a very decisive period when Shiblī decided to write an authentic and clean Islamic history because Islamic history and other Islamic sciences were confined to Persian and Arabic. No doubt that these two

<sup>1</sup> Hayāt-i-Shiblī, P. 136

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, P. 86

languages were also our own languages but now they had lost their importance and the language which replaced them had evolved as a language of masses and it was still not being adopted as language for research on subjects like Islamic history and philosophy. Shiblī came to the conclusion that now Urdu should be adorned with these materials.<sup>1</sup>

Shiblī had a view that Urdu has become the language of commoners replacing Persian. But it is deprived of its rights of new official language because of Ulema's negligence to use it in their writings. They are great scholars of history but they do not show interests in Urdu even they dislike to write letters in Urdu.

One of his main objectives was that his history books should be a complete answer in the same way and style to those who tried to distort face of Islam through false allegations against principles of Islam, its belief, Islamic arts and sciences, Islamic culture, Muslim rulers and illogical accusations against the Prophet Moḥammad (PBUH). So, Shiblī was committed to pull down veils of research and analysis from those allegations against Islam, and to highlight orientalist's intentions behind these accusations. It was also a part of his plan that the new young Muslim generation, which was crazy to everything that comes from Europe, should be properly informed that their past was shining, their history is glorious and full of commendable and high profile works and their forefathers have played key and unforgettable roles in the development of culture, arts and sciences.

In 1857, the rebellion was crushed by the British government. Muslims were perceived the main force behind that. The curse of the British government fell on Muslims. Many were

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ma'mūn, P. 7

beheaded, hung from trees and punished severely. The severe crackdown and constant harassment demoralized the Muslim community. So, it was also one of Shiblī's main objectives that Muslim's morale should be boosted by presenting their glorious past in the shape of history books.

On the other front, British rulers were propagating their own agenda through rewriting history in a way that could create rifts and differences between Hindus and Muslims making any united struggle impossible against the British rulers. They forged allegations against Muslim rulers specially Aurangzeb to achieve their goal. Shiblī resolved to defend any attack on the communal harmony of India.

**Shiblī's Plan for History-writing:** When Shiblī decided to write a standard history of Islam, Muslim rulers, Islamic culture and biography of the Prophet Moḥammad (PBUH), he chalked out a complete plan. He preferred in his plan to write a detailed and comprehensive history of Islamic rules in different parts of the world. He prepared a list of some famous Muslim rulers. This included names of second Caliph 'Umer al-Fārūq, Walīd bin 'Abdul Malik from Umayyad dynasty, Ma'mūn al-Rashīd from Abbasids, 'Abdul-Raḥmān Nāṣir of Spanish Umayyad rulers, Saifuddaulah from Ḥamdān, Malik Shāh from Saljūq, Nūriddīn of Nūrya dynasty and some others. But when he analyzed this plan thoroughly, he reached the point ehre he concluded that it was practically not possible to render this large amount of work. Therefore, he decided to write only the history of some Abbasid caliphs.

He himself mentions:

ایک مدت سے میرا ارادہ تھا کہ اسلامی حکومتوں کی نہایت مفصل اور بسیط تاریخ لکھوں، مشکل یہ تھی کہ نہ میں تمام خاندان کا استقصا کر سکتا تھا نہ کسی خاص سلسلے کے انتخاب کی وجہ مرچ ملتی تھی۔ آخر میں نے یہ فیصلہ کیا کہ رائل

ہیروز آف اسلام یعنی نامور فرمانروایان اسلام کا ایک سلسلہ لکھوں، جس کا طریقہ یہ ہوا کہ اسلام میں اب تک خلافت و سلطنت کے جتنے سلسلے قائم ہوئے ان میں سے صرف وہ نامور انتخاب کر لیے جائیں جو اپنے طبقے میں عظمت حکومت کے اعتبار سے اپنا ہمسر نہ رکھتے ہوں اور ان کے حالات اس ترتیب سے لکھے جائیں کہ تاریخ کے ساتھ لائف کا مذاق بھی موجود رہے۔<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: For a long time, I had intention to write a detailed and comprehensive history of Muslim rulers. But I was unable to cover all dynasties, and there was no logic to opt any special dynasty. Finally, I came to a conclusion that I should opt only royal Heroes of Islam. I adopted a method that I will choose only those rulers of Muslim dynasties who were second to none in their status and good governance. I also decided to write their biographies in a style that makes history touching the taste of life.

### c) Syed Sulaimān Nadwī as a Historian

Syed Sulaimān Nadwī was a sincere and obedient pupil of 'Allāmah Shiblī, his real successor and a great historian. He got real taste of history from his teacher. His personality was a collection of different perfections. He was writer, poet, biographer, researcher, critic, educationist, commentator of the Qur'ān, and above all he was writer of the biography of the Prophet Moḥammad (PBUH). Due to this perfection and scientific approach to these subjects, 'Allāmah Iqbāl described him as a teacher of every subjects and statesman of Islamic sciences.<sup>2</sup>

Syed Sulaimān Nadwī had view that history is the spirit of nation and country. He composed a number of books and wrote hundreds of articles on history related issues. He had a plan for a complete series of Indian history. He often criticized the wrong

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P. 8

<sup>2</sup> Mashāhīr ke Khutūṭ, P. 98

aspects of history and gave precious advices to historians. Whenever there were wrong and misleading explanations of Islamic or Indian history, he always prepared himself to correct it through reliable references. He has highlighted different aspects of Islamic arts and sciences and Islamic civilization.

**His Approach to Indian History:** There were constant efforts by British government in India to prove their colonial establishment as real, God gifted and a just system of governance. They presented previous Muslim rule and its rulers as oppressors, barbaric and uncivilized. They also fabricated some stories in accordance with their agenda where they tried to portray Muslim rulers as killers of Hindu and breakers of idols. This propaganda was only to create hate and anger in a particular community against Muslim rulers getting the ultimate result in favor of the British rule. The other target through this fabrication of the indo-Islamic-history was creating a rift between Hindus and Muslims so they could not be united against the government.

The British government included history in school curriculum and added its version of history in the course. That particular type of history was severally damaging the communal harmony of the country. Muslim students felt ashamed and had sense of inferiority after reading these stories while Hindus were getting sense of hate against Muslim rulers.

Syed Sulaimān Nadwī sensed the dangerous impact of this conspiracy. As he mentioned in "Ma'ārif"<sup>1</sup>

سرکاری مدارس میں تاریخ ہند کی تعلیم کا اضافہ بظاہر علم کے اضافہ کے لیے ہے مگر درحقیقت جیسا کہ "معارف" میں بار بار کہا گیا ہے کہ یہ اقدام ہند کے قدیم اختلافات و نزاعات کے اضافہ کے لیے کیا گیا ہے۔ حالانکہ اگر ہندوستان کو

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<sup>1</sup> Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn ki Tārīkhī Khidmāt, P 181

آگے چلنا ہے تو پیچھے مڑ کر نہیں دیکھنا چاہیے۔ آج اس بحث سے کہ سلطان محمود کا حملہ ہندوستان پر جائز تھا یا ناجائز، شہاب الدین غوری نے کتنے مندر غارت کیے اور عالمگیر نے ہندوؤں پر کیا کیا ظلم کیے۔ سوراہ کی منزل میں ایک قدم آگے نہیں بڑھ سکتا۔ ہند کی کتابوں میں ڈھونڈ ڈھونڈ کر ایسی ہی باتیں جمع کی جاتی ہیں جس سے ان دونوں قوموں کے جذبات میں مزید اشتعال ہو اور اس کا اتفاق آئندہ مشکل سے بڑھ کر محال ہو جائے۔ حالانکہ اس ملک کی تاریخ میں ایسے واقعات کی کمی نہیں جن کے پڑھنے سے ان دونوں قوموں کے درمیان اختلاط و محبت پیدا ہو۔

Tr.: The addition of history subject to the government school curriculum seems to be an addition to the education. But in fact, as it is mentioned again and again in “Ma’ārif” that this addition is only an addition to the old controversies and differences between different societies of India. If India wants to march forward it should not see behind. The discussions on legality and illegality of invasion of sultan Moḥammad on India or how many temples were destroyed by Shahābuddīn Ghaurī, or about Aurangzeb’s treatment with Hindus can’t take us forward towards our independence. The books on Indian History which are being studied in universities are filled with all possible things which might cause more tension between Hindus and Muslims. There is no dearth of such stories in the history of this country which can create sense of love and harmony between the two communities.

He further says in this regard:

اسمیں کوئی شک نہیں کہ ہندوستان کی ایک محقق تاریخ لکھنا آج مسلمانوں سب سے بڑا فرض ہے۔ دار المصنفین اپنے مقدور بھر اسکے لئے سب کچھ کرنے کو تیار ہے۔ لیکن ضرورت ہے کہ دوسرے درد مند اہل علم بھی ہمارے کاموں میں حصہ لیں۔ اور اپنی سعی و تحقیق سے ممنون فرمائیں۔ ہمارے نزدیک یہ مناسب ہے کہ تاریخ ہند کے مختلف حصے کر دیئے جائیں اور ایک ایک حصہ ایک ایک ایسے شخص کو دیا جائے جس نے اس دور تاریخی پر کچھ تلاش و جستجو کی ہے اور اگر سرمایہ اجازت دے تو انکو اسکے کاموں کا مالی معاوضہ بھی دیا جائے۔

Tr.: No doubt, it is the biggest obligation for Muslims to write the real and correct history of India. Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn is ready to do its best for this plan. But other sincere and learned persons should participate in our works and give us due opportunity to thank them on their efforts and research in this regard. In our view it is suitable to divide Indian history into different parts and every part should be handed over to a person who has some research works and specialization on that particular period and topic, and if conditions approve they should be given financial assistance on their works.

Then, Syed Sulaimān Nadwī prepared a complete plan to compose a complete Indian history. He presented this plan before the nation as saying:

“The need, for a detailed and complete history of advent of Islam in India, rule of Muslim sultans and their contribution to Indian culture and civilization, is felt more and more every day at all levels.

Finally, Syed Sulaimān Nadwī started this mission in Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn and some books like *Tārīkh-i-Sind* were composed. But despite strong sense of its importance, need and benefit. There was no practical participation in this mission from other sides.

As *Shāh Moʻīnuddīn Aḥmad Nadwī* writes:<sup>1</sup>

This proposal for a real and just Indian history had been published for long time back. But it could not be executed with collective coordination and cooperation. Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn took the assignment to the point where its resources permitted it to do. But due to some unavoidable reasons this assignment could not be completed as per the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P. 182

plan. Dār-ul-Muṣannifīn has published more than the two dozen books on different aspects of Indian history, and this is still going on.”

In December 1944 “Historical Congress” conference held in Madras. Syed Sulaimān Nadwī was offered to preside over the session on Medieval India History. He accepted that offer and gave a precious, informative and thoughtful lecture before the participants on Medieval Indian History. He highlighted several sources of Medieval India History. During the address, he said:<sup>1</sup>

مجھے کہنا ہے کہ تاریخ کے فن کو قوموں کے پھوٹ اور میل میں بہت کچھ دخل ہے۔ اسلئے وہ لوگ جن کی نظر میں اس ملک کا مستقبل ہے۔ اور جنکے ہاتھوں میں اسکے مستقبل کا بنانا اور بگاڑنا ہے۔ انکو اپنی ذمہ داری کو سمجھنا چاہئے۔ اور اس حالت میں جب کہ ہم سب کو معلوم ہے کہ ہم کو اب اسی ملک میں جینا اور مرنا ہے تو عداوت اور نفرت کی پچھلی باتوں کو اس طرح دہراتے رہنا جس سے یہ جذبہ اس طرح پلتا اور بڑھتا اور پھیلتا پھولتا ہے اپنے ملک کے ساتھ بڑی بے وفائی ہے۔

Tr.: I want to say that history has its own role in differences and unity within nations. So those who, foresee the future of this country or those who can play role in the future of this country, should understand their responsibility, and in this condition when everyone knows that we have to live in this country, It is unfair to repeat past stories of hate and enmity which evolve negative feelings.

At the end of his address Syed Sulaimān Nadwī gave some suggestions to historians:<sup>2</sup>

ہندوستان کی جو تاریخ لکھی جائے اسکا مقصد ہندوستان کے متفرق اجزاء کو باہم جوڑنا ہو توڑنا نہ ہو۔ حال کو ماضی کی ناگواری کی تلخی کو بڑھا کر کیوں برباد کیا جائے۔ اور کیوں مستقبل کے لئے یہ کوشش جاری رہے کہ وہ خوش گوار نہ ہو۔

<sup>1</sup> Mqālāt-i-Sulaimān, 1/283

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, P. 283

Tr.: The history of India should have a target of unifying different aspects of India and not to divide it. Why should we destroy the present by including bad things of the past, and why should we not stop efforts that will never make our future prosperous.

This is a brief presentation of the glorious tradition of the Indo- Islamic history writing in Urdu. There are many other writers who played a commendable role but i have avoided them and highlighted only the key figures of this field.



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## Madrasas in Gujarāt during the Muslim Rule

✎ Maulānā Sayyid Abū Ṣafar Nadwī<sup>1</sup>

Tr.: Dr. Heifā' Shākrī<sup>2</sup>

The Muslims started to visit Gujarāt during the period of the Caliph 'Umar in 15 A.H/636 A.D<sup>3</sup> and they established their colonies at its coastal areas. Some of them were counted around ten thousand Muslim visitors<sup>4</sup> including the Arabs. The generation grew from the Indian Arabs was called as 'Bayāsarah'. It is plural of Baisarah which means two heads-Arabs and Indians. They were called so because they were of two different origins. But today this word means, in Gujarāti language, illegal issue or fool guy. From the story of Muslim visit to Gujarāt we can assume that these Indian-Arab generations might have established Islamic schools in order to educate their children but we don't have their details in the history books.

The famous place Rāshtra Kote had majority of the Muslims during the period of the *rājās*. Thereafter the Sulankis inhabited there who welcomed their settlement and thus they got mutual cooperation and prosperity, so seeing this friendly environment other Muslims in large number also joined them in the settlement. Since then Muslims started to establish schools in Gujarāt. At first one of the Muslim sects-Shia Bohra established their primary Islamic schools in the period of Sudhrāj Singh<sup>5</sup> but

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<sup>1</sup> Author of 'Gujarāt kī Tamaddunī Tārīkh' in Urdu

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Editor and Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

<sup>3</sup> Al-Balādhūrī (Egypt)-Victory of Sind

<sup>4</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī (Egypt), Vol. 01

<sup>5</sup> Mausam-i-Bahār (Ṣafdari, Mumbai), Vol. 03

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they were specified for the Muslim children. These schools functioned with this system till the period of Sultan Tughlaq. As far as Hindu employment during the Muslim rule is concerned they began to be employed in the Govt. departments during the Sultans of Gujarāt and afterwards they began to get benefited directly from these schools like the Govt. departments, and Nāgar cast competed all the Hindus in attaining education and they continuously benefitted from it till the end of the Mughal rule.

The Muslims established different types of schools in their periods and paid attention to the teaching of almost all available arts. Details of some of these schools are given below:

In 655 A.H/1257 A.D a beautiful mosque was built with stones in Nahrwala Pattan. Several couplets were written about its history. Following is one of such couplets:

به سن شش صد و پنجاه و پنج بود      ز هجر سید سالار محشر  
رسانده در مه ذیقعدہ اتمام      الف خان نامور سلطان سنجر

At that time Pattan was ruled by the Hindu *rājās*. One madrasah was also established there wherein all religious subjects were taught. Its Manager was Maulānā Abū Yūsuf Muḥammad Ya'qūb.

In 795 A.H/1292 A.D when Muẓaffar Shāh was crowned, Maulānā Makḥdūm 'Ālam the grandson of Maulānā Abū Yūsuf Muḥammad Ya'qūb was the Manager of this madrasah.

Several madrasahs were established during the period of Sultān Aḥmad I as Ḥalwī Shīrāzī has stated in his book 'Aḥmad Shāh'.<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr Makḥzumī was the Senior Teacher of

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<sup>1</sup> Aḥmadshāhī (cit. Mir'āt-i-Sikandarī, Mumbai)

one of these madrasahs. He was famous with the title of Dumainī. He was born in Alexandria and got his education in Cairo and Makkah. He was well-versed in Arabic Grammar, Arabic literature and Islamic jurisprudence. He also composed poems. In the beginning he taught in the schools of Alexandria then he proceeded to Cairo and after serving the profession of teaching for a short time he got the chance to be appointed in the Govt. department. Then he marched to Yemen for pilgrimage. This account was written in 819 A.H/1416 A.D. In 820 A.H/1417 A.D he arrived Gujarāt.<sup>1</sup> Here the people welcomed him warmly wherein he was appointed as the Head Teacher of this madrasah by the government. He taught here for several years. In his time the famous book Kitāb Dānī was specially taught. While he was teaching, the students asked him to write its commentary. As he thought to start this work as a project, he had to debate with the Banbātī family which created so much hatred between him and this family and even they became bitter enemy of each other. Banbātī family had very much influence in Gujarāt because its members were holding great posts in the government. So they put him in jail because of their high source. When he was freed from jail, he went to Sultān Aḥmad Bahmani in Deccan who honoured him very much and when he found this place friendly and full peace, he stayed at the island of Mahā'im and wrote the commentary of the book Dānī which he accomplished in Gulbargah and named it as 'al-Manhal' with which it is famous till the date.<sup>2</sup>

**Madrasah of Sarkhez:** Ḥaḍrat Sheikh Aḥmad Khattawī (d. 849 A.H/1445 A.D) built a khānqāh (shrine), one mosque and one

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ḍau' al-Lāmi' (Egypt), M

<sup>2</sup> Preface of al-Manhal, manuscript of the library of Darḡhāh Ḥaḍrat Pīr Muḥammad Shāh, Aḥmadābād

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pool in Sarkhez. When he died, Muḥammad Shāh II built his tomb and a madrasah in his name. It had one hostel for the students which remained for a long time. The debris of its rooms was found till 1931. The author himself had visited it. During the period of Maḥmūd and his son Muẓaffar Ḥasan al-Arab was its In-Charge.

**Madrasah of Khān Sarwar:** There was a famous madrasah for religious sciences and arts in the vicinity of the pool of Khān Sarwar in Nahrwāla Pattan in 855 A.H/1415 A.D, was 'Madrasah of Khān Sarwar'. It produced several great scholars and researchers. When Sultān Quṭbuddīn Gujrātī went to fight Maḥmūd Khilji the Sultān of Mālwah, the students of this madrasah prayed to Allah sincerely for his victory. Its senior teacher was Maulānā Qāsim bin Muḥammad Wadhar.<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah Shami' Burhānī:** Sheikh Muḥammad 'Uthamān known as Shami' Burhānī (d. 863 A.H/1458 A.D) the spiritual heir of Ḥaḍrat Quṭb-i-'Ālam (d. 857 A.H/1453 A.D) was a great spiritual scholar. Aḥmadābād was then recently built and there was no population over the bank of River Sabarmati where there 'Uthmānpūrah is situated now. This scholar put his tent there and settled down. Then he encouraged one Hindu merchant to settle beside him. Gradually its population increased so much that it was named after him as 'Uthmānpūrah. In the later period its population increased so much that around one thousand houses inhabited by the carpenters only.<sup>2</sup> One beautiful mosque and one big madrasah were built there. Therein religious subjects were taught specially the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, the commentary of the Qur'ān and Islamic jurisprudence. There were several rooms built

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<sup>1</sup> Zafar-ul-Wālih, 1/6 (Leiden)

<sup>2</sup> Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī (End of pūrahs)

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adjacent to the mosque for the students. Moreover, the Sultān granted scholarships to its students and the members of the Sheikh who were either teachers of this school or its manager.<sup>1</sup> Often books were provided by the royal library to be studied by the students and teachers. After Sheikh this madrasah was run by his son Muḥammad followed by his (Muḥammad's) son Aḥmad and then it was run by Maulānā Abū Yūsuf the heir of Aḥmad. It is that Maulānā Abū Yūsuf who translated Tārīkh Ibn Khalkān into Persian by the order of Sultān Maḥmūd Begdu. Copies of its manuscript are preserved in the libraries of Rājah Salīmpūr, Lucknow, Ḥyderābād and London. The caretaker of this madrasah was Sayyid Ḥākīm during the rule of Sultān Maḥmūd bin Laṭīf Khān (d. 61 A.H/1553 A.D)<sup>2</sup> but when 'Uthmānpūrah was destroyed due to the attacks of Marāthās, this madrasah was also destroyed. Now it has remained like a small village with a tomb and mosque only.

**Madrasah Mazār Sheikh Ḥusāmuddīn:** There was a madrasah near the tomb of Sheikh Ḥusāmuddīn Multānī at Nahrwāla Pattan wherein Maulānā Tājuddīn used to teach. After him his son Muḥammad bin Tājuddīn became the Head Teacher. Both of them were among the celebrated scholars of Gujarāt.

**Madrasah of Qāḍī Ṣāḥeb:** Qāḍī Burhānuddīn Nahrwālī was a renowned scholar. His mastery over the Islamic sciences became so famous that students from far-away places used to come to learn from him. His madrasah was always full of the students. The author of Ẓafar-ul-Wālih states that he was the first spiritual scholar who tried his best to promote knowledge, and after his death his students also promoted this tradition

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<sup>1</sup> Ẓafar-ul-Wālih, 1/23

<sup>2</sup> Mir'āt-i-Sikandarī, P. 696

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greatly in Gujarāt while before him his father Shahābuddīn Aḥmad known as Maḥdūm Bada had also tried his hard to promote such knowledge. His students were recruited on high official posts; ‘Abdul ‘Azīz Āṣif Khān the Wazīr-i-Muṭṭlaq, whose scholarship was recognized in India and across Islamic and Arabic countries, was his pupil. When he reached the court of Sultān Sulaimān of Turkey as an Ambassador, the Sultān became very much influenced with his high morals and scholarship. When the news of his martyrdom reached Makkah, several poets wrote mourning poems on him. His madrasah was very much famous in Pattan and thousands of students were benefitted from it.

**Madrasah of Sheikh Matah:** Sheikh Matah was a great scholar of Pattan. His real name was not known. He had one madrasah where students studied from nereby places. ‘Allāmah Sheikh Muḥammad bin Ṭāhir of Pattan was the graduate of this madrasah. Apart from him several other famous scholars graduated from here.

**Madrasah Shāh-i-‘Ālam:** This madrasah was built by the heir of the celebrated spiritual leader of Gujrāt Shāh-i-‘Ālam (d. 880 A.H/1475 A.D). All kinds of arts and sciences were taught here. Several great scholars were graduated from this madrasah. It had one hostel whose boarding students were granted scholarship. Numerous villages were endowed for its expenditure. Maulānā Sheikh Nūruddīn Sheikh-ul-Kul was the graduate of this madrasah. This madrasah was in full swing in the period of Sayyid Maḥbūb-i-‘Ālam but unfortunately when Marathas attacked the city it was also destroyed.

**Madrasah Muḥammad bin Ṭāhir:** There was another madrasah in Nahrwala Pattan in which all kinds of arts and sciences were taught though it was very famous for teaching

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the Ḥadīth. ‘Allāmah Muḥammad bin Ṭāhir of Pattan (d. 986 A.H/1578 A.D) was its Head Teacher. This ‘Allāmah was expert of the Ḥadīth. Among his books are ‘Tadhkīra-tul-Mauḍū’āt’ and ‘Majma’ Biḥār-ul-Anwār’. He was the contemporary of Akber the Great. He was very active in refuting the Mehdawi faith so he was killed. After his death this madrasah was run by his son and then by his grandson for a long time, and when a new madrasah was built in the period of Alamghīr this madrasah was merged to it.<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah of Mangalore:** Mangalore is a famous port in Kāthiyāwār. At present it is called as Māngrole which is under a Muslim Nawab. It was captured in the period of Fīroz Shāh Toghlaq at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> century AD and its viceroy laid the foundation stone of one mosque which completed in 785 A.H/1383 A.D. One madrasah was also attached to it. But unfortunately we could not find information about it. I visited it in 1926. The mosque is in a very poor condition that needs to be renovated. Two story-rooms were built adjacent to the mosque for the stay of the students.

**Madrasah ‘Āliyah ‘Alawiyyah:** This madrasah was established near the Rauḍah Shāh Wajīhuddīn opposite the royal palace of Aḥmadābād (where now Pārsī Club is situated) in the period of ‘Allāmah Shāh Wajīhuddīn (d. 998 A.H/1589 A.D). In fact it was a university by that time to which madrasahs of Khāndes, Kāthiyāwār and Deccan were affiliated. In this madrasah logic, philosophy, sufism and religious sciences were specially taught. There was one hostel attached to it, whose debris is still to be found. In the period of Jahāngīr scholarship was granted to its students. Several villages were endowed for its

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<sup>1</sup> Qāḍī ‘Abdul Wāhhāb, Tadhkīrah Muḥammad bin Ṭāhir Pattanī (manuscript)

expenditure. Shāh ṣāhib himself ran it from 950 A.H to 998 A.H then his son and grandson ran it. This madrasah was in its full swing till 11<sup>th</sup> century but when Madrasah Hidāyat Bakhsh was established it gradually began to decline.

**Madrasah Hidāyat Bakhsh:** Its Manager was Maulānā Sheikh Nūruddīn. One government physician was appointed for it, who rendered free treatment to the students. One rich library was also attached to it.<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah Ishāq Bharoch:** Maulana Ishāq was the student of 'Allāmah Shāh Wajīhuddīn. After graduating from it he himself built a madrasah at Bharoch, to which one hostel was attached. Some villages were endowed by Jahāngīr for its expenditure. This madrasah functioned for some periods after Maulānā Ishāq then it started to decline which later turned into a primary school. In 1921 when I went to Bharoch for my research project I found this madrasah closed. Its rooms were empty. It was established in about 1052 A.H/1612 A.D. Recently one boarding hostel has been built for the students. It is said that there was one madrasah before it. Perhaps this madrasah was the new shape of its predecessor.

**'Ālamgīrī Madrasah:** One higher Islamic madrasah was built at Nahrwāla Pattan during the period of 'Ālamghīr. It was named as 'Faiḍ-i-Ṣafā'. All kinds of existing arts and sciences were taught there. One mosque was built adjacent to it on which this Persian verse was written:

بنا شد مدرسه ومسجد بر فیض صفا در هزار ونسود وروز عنایات خدا

One hostel was attached to it where students lived peacefully. There was one bathroom of old design for the students

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<sup>1</sup> Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī (Kolkata), P. 68

outside the boundaries of the school and the mosque. Students were also granted scholarships. Though it was closed, it has been reopened recently and it was renamed as 'Kanz-i-Marghūb'. There are some teachers who serve here free teaching. It receives some aids from the state of Baroda as well as some donations and rents of its established shops. It has one rich library of the manuscripts which is now at a spacious hall. Would the people of Pattan pay attention to it!

**Madrasah of Ṣadr-i-Jahān:** There was one famous family in Gujarāt called as Banbānī. Most of its members were scholars and writers and whose books were prescribed in the curriculum of all the madrasas in Gujarāt. The head of this family was Malik-ul-Quḍāt Ṣadr-i-Jahān Ḥusāmuddīn Banbānī s/o Qāḍī Ṣadruddīn. He was a great Muslim scholar. He had one madrasah which was till the period of Sultān Maḥmūd A'zam. Most of the books of its members are either on principles of the commentary of the Qur'ān or on Arabic grammar, literature, Ḥadīth and Sufism. It can be ascertained from the available sources that the same subjects were taught in this madrasah. This family had less interest in rational sciences. This family produced great scholars like Maulānā Faiḍullāh, Maulānā Zain-ul-'Ābidīn, Maulānā Ḥusāmuddīn, Qāḍī Ṣadruddīn and Maulānā Minhājuddīn bin Ṣadruddīn.<sup>1</sup> This madrasah provided teaching to the students of the noble families also and several great scholars of the time graduated from this madrasah. Qāḍī Ṣadruddīn was from Jānpānīr but he settled down in Aḥmadābād and established his own madrasah here. Miyān Makḥdūm who was one of his close neighbours of Ḥaḍrat Shāh-i-

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<sup>1</sup> Maulānā Minhājuddīn Banbātī was the contemporary of Sheikh Aḥmad Kathwī (d. 849H/1445AD) in the period Sultān Aḥmad Shāh I

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‘Ālam was the graduate of this madrasah. Şadr-i-Jahān died in Aḥmadābād and was buried in Nūrganj.<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah ‘Imādiyyah:** Maulānā ‘Imāduddīn Muḥammad bin Maḥmūd Ṭārimī was a great scholar. He hailed from Ṭārim, a village near Shīrāz. After completing his education he came to Gujarāt to meet Ḥaḍrat Shāh-i-‘Ālam due to whose prayer he was born. But Shāh-i-‘Ālam had died before he reached here. The Gujarātis rendered him so much respect that he settled there permanently. He was expert of traditional and rational sciences specially the latter on which he had mastery. He was also aware of one kind of magic (علم السيمياء) and chemistry. He had also interest in Sufism. To his credit were several books. There was a large number of students who studied in his madrasah and several great scholars were graduated from it. Ḥaḍrat Shāh Wajīhuddīn and Qāḍī ‘Īsā are among his pupils. He witnessed periods of several sultans of Gujrāt-Maḥmūd A’zam, Muẓaffar Shāh and Bahādur Shāh. He was the spiritual pupil of Ḥaḍrat Malik Quṭbuddīn Khalīfah Ḥaḍrat Shāh-i-‘Ālam. He was in Nahrwāla Pattan before Humāyūn attacked Gujarāt. He died on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jumādā al-Awwal 941 A.H/1534 A.D and was buried there. On this day his ‘urs (death anniversary) is celebrated.<sup>2</sup>

**Madrasah Kurdīyyah:** This madrasah is related to Maulānā Aḥmad bin Sulaimān who hailed from Kurdistān. First his father Maulānā Sulaimān came to Delhi and benefitted from Maulānā ‘Abdul Ḥaḍiq Muḥaddith Dehlawī then he went to Gujarāt. Maulānā Aḥmad attained education from Maulānā Muḥammad Sharīf, Maulānā Walī Muḥammad and Sheikh Farīd Diyānat Khān

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<sup>1</sup> Mir’āt-i-Aḥmadī (Kolkata), P. 98

<sup>2</sup> Zafar-ul-Wālih, 1/246 and Mir’āt-i-Aḥmadī (Kolkata), P. 101

Shāh Qubād. As for the Ḥadīth he learnt it from his father. He was celebrated scholar of his time and had mastery over traditional sciences. His madrasah was full of students. Numerous students benefitted from him in education. And a large number of great scholars graduated from his madrasa, of whom Gujarāt deserves to be proud. Maulānā Nūruddīn who was perfect in Islamic sciences was his close pupil. He was author of different books among which 'Fuyūḍ-ul-Quds' is very famous. The author of 'Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī' appreciated it very much. He says that this book should be considered as heavenly. He had a rich library some of whose books are yet preserved in the library of Dargāh Ḥaḍrat Pīr Muḥammad Shāh, Aḥmadābād. He died on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> Jumādā al-Thānī 1000 A.H/1591 A.D in the period of Akber the Great while Khān A'zam was the viceroy of Aḥmadābād. His date of demise can be ascertained from this part of the couplet:

شمعے کہ بود انجمن گل شدہ<sup>1</sup>

The graves of Maulānā Sulaimān and Maulānā Aḥmad are at the western side behind Mūsā Suhāg Mosque. He had one younger brother whose details will be given soon.

**Madrasah 'Āliyah Kutayyānah:** One madrasah was established in Kutayyānah (Kāthiyāwārd) in 1019 A.H/1687 A.D. Its founder was Sheikh Makhḍūm Ibrāhīm bin Sulaimān. He was the youngest brother of Aḥmad bin Sulaimān but he lived longer than all of his brothers so he lived for about 125 years. There was one hostel for the students attached to the madrasah. Some agricultural lands were endowed to it as well. My friend 'Abdul Majīd Qādrī Sajjādah Nashīn provided me its detailed information but it was lost for the carelessness of one

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<sup>1</sup> Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī (Kolkata), P. 102

of my relatives because of whom my several selected books were also lost. When I visited Kutayyānah, I was informed that this madrasah was closed in the beginning of 14<sup>th</sup> century.

**Madrasah of A'zam:** In 1052 A.H/1642 A.D A'zam Khān was the Governor of Gujarāt. He built one palace, one inn and one night madrasah at the capital of Aḥmadābād. This madrasah became famous in the later periods. Building of the earlier general post office close to the fort Badar in Aḥmadābād was the inn of A'zam Khan. Now there is a court and a jail. The madrasah was also in its vicinity but now it is in the books only.

**Madrasah of Ṣaif Khān:** In 1032 A.H/1622 A.D Nawab Ṣaif Khān inaugurated this madrasah in an unprecedented towering building opposite the Fort of Aḥmadābād. It was named as Madrasa-tul-'Ulamā'. Perhaps it was destroyed by the attack of Marathas and now it is completely unknown.

**Madrasah of 'Aidrūs:** In 1041 A.H/1631 A.D when Sheikh Ja'far Ṣādiq was the care-taker of the tomb of Sayyid Muḥammad 'Aidrūs, Ḥājī Zāhid Beig built a madrasah in Sūrat, in which Islamic arts and sciences were taught for a long period.<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah of Marjān Shāmī:** One madrasah was established in the mosque of Marjān Shāmī for which Nawab Zafaryāb Khān made one separate building that was completed by his grandson Ḥājī Miyān.<sup>2</sup>

**Madrasah of Amānat Khānī:** In 1123 A.H/1711 A.D Amānat Khān Mutaṣaddi of Sūrat established a madrasah in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ḥaqīqat-us-Sūrat (Mumbai)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

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Khānqāh of Ḥaḍrat Khājah Dīwānah. Its date of completion is seen from the following Persian couplet:

خانه که امانتش بدین داد جلا      بهر علما مدرسه فرمود بنا  
سال تاریخش از خرم پرسیدم      فی الحال بمن گفت مقام الفضلا<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah of Shujā'at Khān:** Shujā'at Khān was a far-sighted and genius Governor of Gujarāt during the period of 'Ālamghīr with whom 'Ālamghīr was pleased till his death. The people of Gujarāt were prosperous in his period. He laid corner stone of a grand madrasah near his tomb, which was completed in his life in 1104 A.H/1692 A.D. All kinds of religious subjects were taught in this madrasah. It had one hostel with free lodging and fooding. But when this facility was over the madrasah was shut down. Now it has been replaced by an orphanage and the building has been made as double story. It facilitated the Muslim students who were deprived of boarding but number of the boarders is still less. It was run by Maḥbūb Miyān Qādrī who died in 1848.

**Madrasah Hidāyat Bakhsh:** The madrasah of Sheikh-ul-Kull Maulānā Nūruddīn was very famous. This madrasah was built by his spiritual pupil Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ikrāmuddīn Khān Sheikh-ul-Islām specially for the Sheikh-ul-Kull at Storiya Moḥalla in Aḥmadābād and named it as Madrasah Hidāyat Bakhsh. In 1697 one mosque was built adjacent to it. In 1102 A.H/1690 A.D these buildings were started to be built and then in 1111 A.H/1699 A.D the madrasah, mosque and the hostel were built completely. The date of completion of the madrasah is ascertained from this Arabic sentence 'فيها الهدى للعاملين' and one lac and forty four thousand rupees were spent on its construction. One hostel was

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<sup>1</sup> Ḥaqīqat Balban, P. 611 manuscript of library of Yakhshū Miyān

constructed for the students, and for its expenditure several villages were endowed.<sup>1</sup> The students from remote areas also got education from this madrasah. Sheikh-ul-Islām himself was its manager till 1155 A.H/1742 A.D. After that it was run by his sons and grandsons and it turned into a prominent college at that time. Apart from religious subjects standard logic, philosophy and mathematics etc. were taught therein. A rich library was attached to it. This college functioned till 1174 A.H/1760 A.D then it was destroyed by the attack of the Marathas except the mosque which is still under the care of the Muslims. As for the hostel it was deteriorated and its rooms were given on rent. Aḥmadābād has no spacious hostel for the Muslim students, so if the Muslims use it again for the hostel it will be very useful for them.

In the same madrasah Maulānā Sayyid Sa'dullāh bin Sayyid Murtaḍā Bilgrāmī stayed after offering his pilgrimage. He spent his night in the worship of Allah while he spent his day in teaching the students. Among his famous students is Sheikh Muḥammad Ṭāhir Aḥmadābādi. He died here in 1119 A.H/1717 A.D and was buried in the graveyard of Shāh Bhekan. His date of demise is ascertained from the following Qur'ānic verse 'يشربون من كأس كان مزاجها كافوراً'.<sup>2</sup>

There was no any management for the annual expenditure of the madrasa so the students as well as the teachers were disturbed very much. In 1112 A.H the students sent a letter to the sultan through the recommendation of Sheikh Ghulām Muḥammad the office-bearer of the sultanate. Its copy is still available with my close friend Ḥakīm Bahā'uddīn Ṣiddīqī of Hardoi. Sheikh Ghulām Muḥammad was his ancestor who was

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<sup>1</sup> Ma'āthir-ul-Kirām (Agra), 1/108

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, P. 108

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employed with the Prince A'zam Shāh the Governor of Aḥmadābād. It is historically not clear that on which post he was employed and which duties were assigned to him but the books and decrees preserved by his heirs include such letters which were presented by him to the king. It appears from the accounts of the available sources that he was the office-in-charge of the king. He died in 1116 A.H and his dead body was brought back to Gopā Mau (Hardoi District) where he was buried. After him his son Ghulām Ḥasan and his grandson Ghulām Nabī were employed on his post.

Among these decrees and letters there is one letter written by the students of Madrasah Hidāyat Bakhsh, which is now before me and with its help I am adding the following lines. For this information I am indebted to Muḥammad Bahā'uddīn Gopa Maui the grandson of Sheikh Ghulām Muḥammad.

At that time there were seven expert teachers in that madrasah, whose names are as follows:

1. Mullā Muḥammad Ḥussain
2. Mullā Sheikh Muḥammad
3. Sayyid Ḥāshim
4. Sayyid Aḥmad
5. Mullā 'Abdunnabī
6. Sheikhullāh Bakhsh
7. Maulānā Sheikh Farīd Gujarātī the pupil of Sheikh Nūruddīn Ustād-i-Kull

But unfortunately he (Sheikh Ghulām Muḥammad) had died before he forwarded this letter to him. Sheikh Nūruddīn Ustād-i-Kull himself was its Office-in-Charge. Its teachers also have written their letters on the request of the students.

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One of them has written: This grand madrasah is full of the students and scholars who need the favour of generous sultan." Another scholar wrote: This strong building is full of the people who need the help of the sultan who is beyond praise." One of them stated: This premier madrasah is full of the students and scholars who need the favour of the viceroy of Allah." One teacher wrote: This great madrasah is the abode of the scholars of Islamic sciences who are poor men and careless of their bread and butter due to their interest in the Hereafter." Mullā 'Abdunnabī wrote: This madrasah bears high standard in degree and there live poor teachers and students who need the help of the viceroy of Allah who is struggling to propagate the Godly mission." Sheikh Aḥmad stated: This is a strong madrasah and full of the students who need the help of the sultan who is beyond any praise." Each of them regards himself student and spiritual pupil of 'Allāmah Nūruddīn. It seems from this point that he was the graduate of this madrasah and he was also recruited by his teacher to teach in this madrasah. Verily, he was distinguished from his contemporaries in knowledge and teaching.

It also appears from these letters how Muslim scholars took care of their dignity and honour while they recommended to seek help from the king and they also avoided begging sort of request. It may also be noted that every teacher put three things in his recommendation (1) the madrasah is big, (2) it is full of the students and (3) they need the royal patronage. It should also be noted that these teachers expressed one thing in their letters differently which shows that they were able to express one thing in different ways.

This madrasah has seventy students most of them were borders while the day scholars have been excluded here. It had students from foreign countries like Iran, Syria and other

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foreign countries. Some villages were endowed for its expenditure. It was destroyed by the attacks of the Marathas.<sup>1</sup>

**Madrasah of Firoz Jung:** In 1120 A.H Ghāziyuddīn Khān Bahādur Fīroz Jung was appointed the Governor of Gujarāt. He was one of the bravest Mughal governors. Once he tightened the administration, he inclined towards the social works. He built a madrasah. And when he died there in 1122 A.H he was buried in this madrasah temporarily.

**Madrasah of Waliullāh:** The mosque near Teliyāmil at Aḥmadābād is the memoir of this madrasah. There was a prominent madrasah here. And because Aḥmad bin Sulaimān had mastery over philosophy, logic, geometry, mathematics and astrology, his students also mastered over these subjects. These subjects were taught in this madrasah at a higher level. Maulānā 'Imāduddīn, Maulānā Nūruddīn and Maulānā Waliullāh were head teachers of this madrasah in their times. There was one rich library attached to it. It was also destroyed during the attacks of the Marathas. Then it was revived in the mosque of Kālūpur (recently Masjid of Waliullāh) but it also could not function for a long.

**Madrasah Khairiyyah:** Its founder is Khairuddīn Muḥammad Zāhid Sūrtī who was the student of Maulānā Muḥammad bin Abdurrazzāq Sūrtī. When he went for pilgrimage he learnt the Ḥadīth from Maulānā Sheikh Ḥayāt Sindhī. Since 1156 A.H/1743 A.D he started teaching in this madrasah. The Ḥadīth was taught in this madrasah at higher level. He died in 1206 A.H/1791 A.D. Sayyidī Murtaḍā Bilgrāmī Zabīdī benefitted from this madrasah in his journey to Makkah.

**Dār-ul-Irshād:** One madrasah was established with the name of Dār-ul-Irshād at Aḥmadābād. Religious sciences were taught

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<sup>1</sup> Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī (Kolkata), 1/344

there. We do not have details about it except that it was successfully functioning in 1112 A.H/1700 A.D. It had one library. One book of this library 'Makhāzin-ul-Ma'rūf' is still preserved in the library of my friend Qāḍī Nūruddīn Bharoch. I have directly got information from Qāḍī Nūruddīn.

**Madrasah of the Bohras:** Shia Bohras had their madrasahs in Pattan, Sidhpūr, Kunbhāyat, Bharoch and Sūrāt but before 813 A.H/1410 A.D they had only one higher madrasah in Pattan. Then it was shifted to Aḥmadābād wherein it was considered one of the prominent madrasahs during 830 A.H/1426 A.D. Students from remote areas used to come to get education here. Its manager was their religious leader of Gujarāt.<sup>1</sup>

In 975 A.H/1567 A.D the Bohras laid stone of a grand madrasah in Aḥmadābād wherein all kinds of old and modern sciences including logic, philosophy, engineering, astronomy, medical science, debate, history and geography etc were taught apart from religious sciences. It was a self-dependant madrasah. Moreover Bohras often contributed to it. Apart from poor students rich one also studied here. Great scholars like Sayyidna Badruddīn Jāmnagari were its graduates. In 1065 A.H/1654 A.D this madrasah was named as 'Madrasah of Jām Nagar' then it was shifted from there to Sūrāt and it is still functioning with the name of Madrasah Saifiyyah. It is famous among all madrasahs. Its graduates are appointed religious leaders across the country and are called either 'Āmil, Mulla and Sheikh.

### **Technical Schools**

There were also some technical schools and colleges in Gujarāt but they were not like today's technical institutions

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<sup>1</sup> Mausam-i-Bahār (Mumbai-Maulā'i Ḥasan Ṣafdarī, Vol. 03

and colleges. In fact there were some factories where some literate and illiterate boys worked and learnt how to manufacture the products. Generally illiterate boys competed the literate one. These students were generally sons of businessmen and workers. It is wonderful that these children did some inventions which astonished the whole country.

Similarly there were several schools of Engineering, Music and other professional and technical schools where Hindu students learnt side by side the Muslim students. Their graduates were the employees of the government of Gujarāt. In 890H/1484AD Ganeshiya was a great Engineer of his time while Īshwar of Dās Nagar (Pattan) the author of 'Futūḥāt-i-Ālamghīrī' was a great literary man of his period. All of them were the graduates of these madrasahs and schools.

### **Schools of Music**

There were several schools of music which flourished in the period of Bahādur Shāh whose generosity encouraged several persons to learn this art. Daryā Khān vazir of Maḥmūd III was interested in it. He developed this art. During his time numerous musicians gathered in Gujarāt.

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## The Makhdūms and their Contribution to Arabic Literature

✎...Fāṭimatuz Zahrā'<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The famous place to which the Makhdūm family belongs is Mālābār. It had trade relations with the Arabs since ancient times. It appears from the study of the history of Arabs that Islam reached here during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and families of the Muslim Arabs settled here for trade as well as for preaching of their religion. Moreover, local kings facilitated their settlement here. The family of Mālik ibn Dīnār who came and settled here, constructed mosques in ten different centres. Ponānī was the centre of Islam and Arabic studies during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The family of Makhdūms living here acted as the centre for Arabic and Islamic studies in those days. Many scholars belonging to this family composed numerous works in Arabic in different disciplines. Al-Sheikh Zain al-Dīn ibn 'Alī and al-Shiekh Aḥmad Zain al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad al-Ghassālī are the celebrated scholars among them. The following article is an attempt to shed light on the contribution of these Makhdūms to the Arabic language and literature.

**Introduction:** Mālābār situated on the West coast of India, had trade relations with the Arabs for ancient period.<sup>2</sup> Evidences show that Islam must have reached here during the time of

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<sup>1</sup> Author of 'Qur'ān aur Munāfiqīn ka Kirdār'.

<sup>2</sup> Sardar K. N. Panikkar: A History of Kerala, Anna Mala University, 1959

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the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).<sup>1</sup> Families of Muslim Arabs came and settled here for trade along with missionary work. Local kings provided facilities for the settlement of the Arab families here. The family of Mālik ibn Dīnār who came and settled here, constructed mosques in ten different centres.<sup>2</sup> In course of time two important centres of Islam developed and flourished. They were Ponānī and Calicut.

Ponānī was the centre of Islam and Arabic studies during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. That Ponānī then was known as the “Small Mecca” speaks well of its importance in the history of Kerala Muslims. The family of Maḵḥdūms acted as the centre for Arabic and Islamic studies in those days. People from different parts of Kerala came to Ponānī for advanced studies in Arabic and on Islam. Those who completed their higher education in Ponānī they were honoured in a ceremony around a big mosque which is known as “Wilakkattirukkal” (Sitting before the Lamp).<sup>3</sup> Many scholars belonging to this family composed numerous works in Arabic in different disciplines. Al-Sheikh Zain al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī and al-Shiekh Aḥmad Zain al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad al-Ghassālī are the celebrated scholars among them.

Maḵḥdūm means ‘Master of’ and ‘Worthy of Service’ which is a title of honour conferred upon the hereditary Qāḍīs of the great Jumu’a Masjid of Ponānī. Al-Sheikh Zain al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī al-Ma’barī who constructed the great Friday Masjid in 925 A.H, was the first Maḵḥdūm.<sup>4</sup>

**Their Title al-Ma’barī** Ma’barī which indicates that their ancestors belonged to Mālābār. Ma’bar is an Arabic word used

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<sup>1</sup> Futūḥ al-Buldān, PP. 423-424

<sup>2</sup> Tuḥfatul Mujāhidīn, P. 13

<sup>3</sup> A Manual of Mālābār, P. 108

<sup>4</sup> Article on Maḵḥdūms in al-Iṣlāḥ Journal, Ponānī, 1966

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for the first time by Yāqūt (1171-1229) in his geographical dictionary to denote the West Coast of the Indian Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Abul Fiḍa says that Ma'bar begins at about three or four days' journey to the east of Guilon and the first locality from the side of Mālābār is Cape Comorine.<sup>2</sup>

The fore-fathers of Zain al-Dīn ibn 'Alī, who might have come from Arabia and settled in Ma'bar, came to be known as Ma'barī.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Battuta records in his Riḥlah that when he visited Mangalore, he visited Qāḍī Badruddīn al-Ma'barī.<sup>4</sup>

**First Makhdūm:** Al-Sheikh Zain al-Dīn ibn 'Alī Aḥmad was born in Cochin in Kerala after the sunrise on Thursday, the 12<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān 871 or 872 A.H. His uncle Qāḍī Zain al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad shifted their residence to Ponāni when he was a small boy.<sup>5</sup> He had his primary education in 'Naḥw' and 'Fiqh' in Ponāni itself. Then he learnt 'Tafsīr' and 'Ḥadīth' from al-Sheikh Shihābuddīn Aḥmad ibn 'Isā al-Zamānī. For his higher education he went to Calicut which was the centre of Muslim culture at that time. He continued his studies under Qāḍī Faḥr al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Qāḍī Ramaḍān at Chaliām. Then he joined the 'Dars' of Qāḍī 'Abdul Raḥmān 'Adamī al-Mierī and got permission for teaching the Ḥadīth. After that he became a pupil of al-Sheikh Jalīl Khwāja Quṭbuddīn and Khwāja 'Izzuddīn Chishtī and specialized in Chishtiyyah and Qādiriyyah paths. Later he got permission for Tablīgh and Talqīn from Thābit ibn 'Ayn ibn Maḥmūd al-Shāhidī. Shams al-Dīn al-Jawahitri and Zakariyya al-Anṣārī were among his teachers.<sup>6</sup> It was during his life time that the Portuguese stepped in the Mālābār soil. He wrote to the kings

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<sup>1</sup> Tuḥfatul Mujāhidīn, P. 6

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Article on Makhdūms in al-Iṣlāḥ Journal, Ponāni, 1966

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Salālim al-Fuḍālah, P. 3

<sup>6</sup> Masālik al-Atqiyā', MSS, P. 01

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of the Muslim countries asking their support for the Muslims who fought against the Portuguese under the Zamorines of Calicut. He composed poems in Arabic instigating the Muslims to fight against the aggressors.<sup>1</sup> He breathed his last on Thursday, the 16<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān, 928 A.H/1521 A.D and was buried near the mosque of Ponāni.<sup>2</sup> He has 17 works to his credit. They are the following:

1. **Hidāyat al-Adhkiya ilā Tarīqat al-Awliyā'**: This is the most important book among his works. It is a long poem on Taṣawwuf containing 188 lines. Mentioning the reason for composing this work Muḥammad al-Nawawī says that the author was confused regarding the path he should choose- Fiqh or Taṣawwuf. Then one day he saw a man in his dream on the night of 24<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān, 914 A.H advising him to adopt the path of Taṣawwuf.<sup>3</sup> The poet says that Shari'ah is like a boat, Tarīqah like an ocean and Ḥaqīqah like a precious pearl. Whenever one aspires for the pearl, he must embark on the boat and dive into the ocean. He further clarifies that Shari'ah means to hold fast to the religion of the Creator and to establish it by adopting the good and avoiding the evil. Tarīqah is adherence to God-lines and mental control like abstinence from desires. Ḥaqīqah is attaining the goal and witnessing the light of Allah's revelation which can be obtained only through Shari'ah. He goes on to say that if anyone intends to travel in the path of the Auliyā', he has to follow the nine pieces of advice. They are repentance, renunciation, contentment, acquiring religious knowledge, careful observance of the traditions of

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<sup>1</sup> Zain al-Dīn ibn 'Alī: *Taḥrīd ahl Īmān 'alā Jihād 'Abdat al-Sultān*

<sup>2</sup> 'Abdul 'Azīz al-Ma'barī, *Opp. Cit*

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad al-Nawawī, P. 03, *Opp, Cit*

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the Prophet, entrusting everything unto Allah, speculated life and punctuality in prayer.

This poem was much appreciated and copiously commented upon by two scholars. Muḥammad al-Nawawī of Java has written a commentary on it with the title of “Salālim al-Fuḍālah” and Abū Bakr Shā of Dimyūt with the title of “Kifāyat al-Atqiyā”. Both of these works were published from Egypt on many occasions. The poet’s own son ‘Abdū al-Azīz al-Ma’barī has written a commentary on it entitled “Maslak al-Atqiyā” and another commentary of the same work with the title “Irshād al-Alibbā”. Both of these works have been published.

2. **Taḥrīḍ ahl al-Imān ‘alā Jihād ‘Abadat al-Sulṭān:** This long poem urges the believers to fight against the alien aggressors. The Portuguese had to face stiff opposition from the Kerala Muslims who fought against them with the help of the local kings. After praying to Allah for the protection of the Muslims he describes the atrocities that Muslims had suffered under the Portuguese. The Portuguese sowed the seeds of oppression, sorrow and hardship in the land and Muslims were the soft target of all their conspiracies. They were taken captives. Their houses were plundered and mosques were burnt down. Their property was destroyed; the chastity of women was violated. The faithful were enslaved, pilgrims were murdered and their leaders were humiliated and were forcibly converted to Christianity. The poet also describes the necessity for jihād, the reward for jihād and the punishment for the accomplices of the oppressors.

This poem illustrated the role played by the Muslim scholars in the war against the foreign aggressors. They took all the forces at their command to persuade the Muslim scholars to root out

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the enemy by spending their wealth for the cause and fighting against them as illustrated in the following couplets:

فإن تنفقوا مألًا وتغزوا أعثتم      جميع عباد الله من كل عاهة  
وصنتم عباد الله عن شرِّ ماكر      صميم صغير والنساء تغيرة

Tr.: If you spend your wealth and fight, you will protect all the servants of Allah from calamity and will save the dignity of the land of Allah and the women from the harsh and mean deceivers.

3. **Murshid al-Tullab:** Murshid al-Ṭullāb ilá al-Karīm al-Wahhāb is a published work in Taṣawwuf and is in the wide circulation in Kerala. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries the mass conversion to Islam necessitated preaching and admonition on a large scale. The scholars came forward and composed works to meet the requirements of the day. Murshid al-Ṭullāb is a book written in this field. This book is divided into twenty one chapters starting from Īmān (Faith) and ending in Taubah and Istighfār (Repentance and seeking forgiveness). Each chapter opens with relevant quotations from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Then he refers to the opinion of the theologians. He has quoted 650 traditions most of which have been taken from the Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah (The Six Cannons). The verse quoted in different places makes the description, elegant and forceful. This book written five centuries ago is still popular among the students of Islam. A commentary of this work has been written by Kaipatta Muḥammad Kutty (1949). Its title is "Mu'lim Ulil Albāb".<sup>1</sup>
4. **Sirāj al-Qulūb wa 'Ilāj al-Dhunūb:** It urges the believers to obey Allah and suggests remedies for their sins. It abounds

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<sup>1</sup> Published by Bayaniyya Press Faoppanangadi

in Qur'ānic verses and traditions of the Prophet. A manuscript of this work is available in the library of Janāb Aḥmad Koya at Chaliām. Shams al-Ḥudá and Dhikr al-Maut are two works in the form of admonition. Tuḥfat al-Aḥibbah deals with Adhkar (Remembrance) and Du'ās (Prayers). Irshād al-Qāṣidīn is a summary of Minhāj al-'Ābidīn of Imām al-Ghazzālī. Shu'b al-Imān is the translation of a book with the same title composed in Persian by Nūr al-Dīn Zil. Kifāyat al-Farā'iḍ is an abridged form of al-Kāfī fil Farā'iḍ of Imām al-Sardani. Al-Safa min al-Shifā' is a summary of al-Shifā' of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ al-Mālikī. Tashīl al-Kifāyah is a polemic on the Kifāyah of Ibn al-Ḥājjib. Kifāyat al-Ṭālib fi Ḥalli Kifāyat ibn al-Ḥājjib is another commentary on Kifāyah. He has written a ḥāshiyā (footnotes) on Alfiyah of Ibn Mālik which was completed by his son 'Abd al-Azīz al-Ma'barī. Two ḥāshiyas were written by him on 'Tuḥfah' of Ibn al-Wardi. Another ḥāshiyah was written by him on 'al-Irshād' of Ibn al-Muqrī.<sup>1</sup>

**Second Makhdūm:** 'Abdula 'Amīm al-Ma'barī was succeeded by his father Zain al-Dīn ibn 'Alī as the second Makhdūm. He upheld this aristocratic position till his death in 994 A.H. He has written a polemic on his father's work Hidāyat al-Adhkiyā with the title of Maslak al-Atqiyā' which was completed in 993 A.H/1585 A.D.<sup>2</sup> He has written a commentary on the same work with the title of Irshād al-Alibbā'. His father's commentary on Alfiyah of Ibn Mālik was completed by him. A poem which is known as 'Qasīdat al-Aqsām' also was composed by him.

**Third Makhdūm:** Since 'Abd al-'Azīz had no children, his cousin Aḥmad Zain al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī was

<sup>1</sup> Kunhi Bava Kusliar Mavlid Zain al-Dīn al-Ma'barī, PP. 10-11

<sup>2</sup> Mentioned by the author in the work

succeeded by him as Makhdūm of Ponānī in 994 A.H/1586 A.D.<sup>1</sup> He attained his primary education in Ponānī itself. Afterwards he went to Mecca and received his higher education under the eminent scholars such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥajr al-Haythamī, ‘Abdul Raḥmān al-Zammānī, ‘Abdul Raḥmān ibn Ziyād, ‘Abdul Raḥmān al-Sūfī, his uncle ‘Abdul ‘Azīz ibn Zain al-Dīn and others.<sup>2</sup> He was in Mecca during 966 A.H as appears from his book Ajwibatul ‘Ajībah. His works are popular in India and even in Arab countries. He has seven known works to his credit most of which are of great importance. He is one of the great scholars Kerala has ever produced. He died in his mother’s village known as Kunhipalli and was buried in the mosque there.<sup>3</sup> The dates of his birth and death are not known.

The most important among his works is the famous Tuḥfatul Mujāhidīn which is so famous that it does not need to be introduced. It has the unique distinction of being the first authentic source of its kind in Kerala history, to be composed by a Keralite. It is intended as gift to ‘Alī ‘Ādil Shāh son of Ibrāhīm ‘Ādil Shāh. He was the sultan on Bijāpūr between the year 1558 and 1580. The book starts with Jihād and passion to the advent of Islam and depicts the customs and practices of the local Hindus. The last chapter gives an account of the Portuguese in Kerala since 904/1498 right upto the 991/1583. The value of this work may be judged from the fact that it was translated into English by Lieut. Rowlandson as early as in 1833. Afterwards, it was edited and rendered into Portuguese by David Lopea in 1895 A.D. The remarks made by Lieut.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix to Fath al-Mu’in, Tallicherry

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, PP. 8-9

<sup>3</sup> Prof. K. V. ‘Abdurrahīm, Opp, Cit

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Rowlandson deserve mention in this context. It is creditable to this author that the testimony of the Western authors establishes the fidelity of this narrative, since besides a very minute and extraordinary agreement on many a minor points of details, in this relation of leading events, it is seldom found such at variance with their accounts.<sup>1</sup> The Arabic text was edited by Shomeulla Qādrī in 1931 A.D. Ans S.M.H. Nainār has translated it into English giving foot notes, which was published from Madras in 1942. A.D. It was translated into Malayalam by K. Moosan Kuttyn Moulavi in 1995 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Another work composed by him is Qurra-tul-‘Ain and its commentary Faḥ al-Mu‘īn. It was completed on 24<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān in 982 A.H/1574 A.D as stated by the author himself in the book. This is the only text book on Shafi’i Fiḥ, available in Kerala. It is said to be popular in Yemen and Ethiopia. The importance of this book can be understood from the fact that two detailed commentaries were written on it by the Arab scholars. They are (1) I‘ānat al-Ṭālibīn ‘alā Ḥalli ‘Alfāz Faḥ al-Mu‘īn written by al-Sayyid Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arif al-Sayyid Muḥammad Shāh and (2) Tarshīh al-Mustafidīn ‘alā Ḥāshiyati Faḥ al-Mu‘īn written by al-Sayyid ‘Alawī al-Saqāf. Both of these works have been published from Egypt.

Iḥkāmu Aḥkāmunnikāḥ was written by him on marriage and divorce. He himself has written a commentary on this work titled ‘al-Manhaj al-Qadih’. Another work by him is ‘al-Ajwibat al-‘Ajībah’ which contains answers for different problems given by eminent scholars including his teachers. It was published from Mu‘īn al-Islam Press by Kodanchari Kunhi Muḥammad in 1349 A.H. ‘Irshād al-Alibbā’ is on Naṣīḥah. In

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. H. Nainār, Opp, Cit

<sup>2</sup> Published from Firurangadi in 1954

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addition to it he has written a summary of 'Sharḥ al-Sujūd' with the title 'Mukhtaṣar Sharḥ al-Sujūd'.<sup>1</sup>

**Other Makhdūms:** Al-Sheikh Aḥmad Zain al-Dīn often remained out of the state. So his duty used to be entrusted to al-Sheikh 'Abdul Raḥmān ibn 'Uthmān who acted as acting Makhdūm. After him the place was inherited by the most senior member of the two houses- "the old house" and the "new house" according to the matrilineal system. The chain of the Makhdūms is not traceable without break. The following are said to have become Makhdūms after 'Abdul Raḥmān ibn 'Uthmān and before Aḥmad Kutty Makhdūm (d. 1801 A.D). They are 'Uthmān, 'Abdul 'Anīs, 'Abdul Raḥmān, 'Abdul 'Azīz Kutty Ḥājī, Koyamu, Muḥammad, 'Alī Ḥasan, Kutty Ḥasan, Nūruddīn, Kunhi Ḥamīd, Aḥmad and Muḥammad. After Aḥmad Kutty Makhdūm, Zain al-Dīn, who was the Makhdūm, said to have claimed in a statement issued by him in 1812 that he was the 29<sup>th</sup> Makhdūm. After him the 31<sup>st</sup> Makhdūm is now in office. They are in the following order:

Sendor Avaran Kutty (New House), 'Alī Ḥassān (New House), Kutty Ḥassān (New House), Sayyid 'Alī Koya (Old House), Muḥammad (Small New House), Ghariya Beva Musliar (d. 1908), Aḥmad (Old House, d. 1915), Mammy Ḥājī (Old House), Koya Kutty Thangal (Old House), Cheriya Futhiyakath Beva, Attakoya Thangal (Old House), Cheriya Futhiyekath Thottingalakath Beerum Kutty Alias Beva (d. 1959), Beva (Old House, d. 1961), Cheriya Futhiyakath Thottingalkath Avaran Kutty (d. 1966) and Fezhayakath Fookoya Thangal the Present Makhdūm.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mentioned at the end of the book

<sup>2</sup> Prof. K. V. 'Abdurrahīm, Opp, Cit

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Many members of this family who did not hold office of Maḵhdūm have contributed greatly to Arabic literature. Details about all of them are not available. The available details are given below:

**Al-Sheikh ‘Uthmān ibn Jalāluddīn:** He is said to have married a daughter of Zain al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī. He died in 1951 A.H/1585 A.D. His grave is close to the southern extension of Friday Masjid. He has written a commentary on “Qatarunnadā” of Ibn Ḥishām. It is a popular work in grammar among the students.

**Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz:** He died in about 1874 A.D. He has work to this credit with the title of “Riyāḍ al-Ḥikmah”.

**Aḥmad ibn Zain al-Dīn al-Jubā’ī:** He worked as Maḵhdūm for some time. He died in 1314 A.H/1896 A.D.<sup>1</sup> He composed two works. They are “Tabāshīr al-Wa’ad” and “Dhakhā’ir al-Ikhwān fi Mawā’idi Shahr Ramaḍān”.

Of these the former work was completed in 1304 A.H<sup>2</sup> and published from Hidāyatul Islam Press, Ponāni in 1307 A.H. As the very title indicated it stresses the importance of the month of Ramaḍān and consists of speeches to be delivered on four or five Fridays of the month.

The second work was completed in 1312 A.H/1894 A.D.<sup>3</sup> It was lithographed at Matb’a al-Hidāyah Press, Ponāni on 1328 A.H. It deals with Nasībah.

**‘Abdul Azīz ibn ‘Abdullah al-Ma’barī:** He was a prominent scholar and a member of the Maḵhdūm family. He died in 1322 A.H/1904 A.D.<sup>1</sup> His important works are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Reported by Pin Muḥammad Moulvi-Falaki

<sup>2</sup> Mentioned by the author at the end of the book

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

1. 'Umdat al-Ta'rīf Naẓm Mukhtaṣar al-Ta'rīf li al-Zanjānī
2. Naẓm al-Risālat al-Samarqandiyyah fi 'Ilm al-Bayān
3. Manāqib al-Sheikh 'Abdul Qādir al-Thānāī al-Belafatnī
4. Qaṣīdatu Nuzhat al-Asmā'

Of these works "'Umdat al-Ta'rīf" was completed in 1296 A.H

**Ibrāhīm al-Ma'barī:** He is also a prolific scholar belonging to the Makhdūm family. He died in 1323 A.H.<sup>2</sup> He has written a number of books in Malayalam. His works in Arabic are the following:

1. Hāshiyat al-Tathabbut lil Imām Jalāluddīn 'Abdul Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī
2. Qaṣīdat al-Adhar al-Mughṭafirah lil Ma'mūm fi al-Takhallufi 'an al-Imāni
3. Risālah fi Masā'il al-Ḍahb
4. Manāqiba-Nafist al-Miṣriyyah, Fāṭimat al-Zahrā', Ashāb al-Kahf, Ahl al-Kisa

**Muḥammad Bambichi al-Ma'barī:** He died in 1349 A.H. He has written a mawālīd on "Yaum al-Ḥaṣhr".<sup>3</sup>

**Aḥmad Zain al-Dīn al-Ma'barī:** The date of his death is not known. His important work is "Taḥdhīr al-Ikhwān 'an Makā'id al-Niswān". It was completed in 1312 A.H/1894 A.D and was lithographed from Maṭba' al-Hidāyah press, Ponāni in 1326 A.H/1908 A.D. In this work he warns Muslims to depend on women folk since it is insecure.

**Present Condition of Ponānī:** A few years ago the lectures in the Great Friday Masjids of Ponānī were stopped. It has to give way to modernization in this field. An Arabia college has

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abdurrahmān Sheikh Asyan Maliabard, MSS, P. 12

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, P. 8

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, P. 13

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been established in 1379 A.H/1959 A.D in a separate building adjacent to the Great Friday Masjid under the management of Ma'ūnat al-Islam Association. The beautiful three stories permanent building was completed in 1386 A.H/1966 A.D. The present institution is an amalgam of the traditional lecture system and the modern Arabic College system. The syllabus includes religious subjects like Tafsīr, Ḥadīth, Taṣawwuf, Fiqh, Mantīq, etc. and secular subjects like history, mathematics, English and Malayalam.

The spirit of the Makhdūms will be felt by one who visits this traditional centre. Their contributions will be ever cherished with admiration by any student of Islamic religion, history or Arabic.

**Conclusion:** It appeared from the study of the lives and works of the family of the Makhdūms that they not only constructed mosques where they preached their religion and trained the Muslims for missionary work but also they built centres for teaching Arabic language which is the language of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. They composed poems in Arabic both long and short as well as they wrote books and treatises in Arabic on different topics of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Their books got appreciation from the Arab scholars so they wrote notes on them and also they criticized them. Some of their marvelous works were published from Egypt and other Arab countries which is a strong evidence that they left great impact upon the Arab intellectuals. It is the blessing of their selfless service of Arabic language and literature that the people of Kerala are still nurturing this language on their soil.

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## Masīḥ-ul-Mulk Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān and His Contribution to the Arabic Studies

✎...Dr. Aurang Zeb Azmi<sup>1</sup>

It is the privilege of India that its scholars and experts of different streams served Arabic and Islamic Studies on large scale in India and abroad. They are Maulāna ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādi, author ‘Tafsīr-e-Mājīdi who was a Graduate of Psychology, Muḥammad al-Ḥasani, Editor of Arabic monthly ‘al-Ba’th al-Islāmi’ was not admitted to any Arabic *madrasa*, Sultan Jahān Beghum, author and translator of different books, was the Wāliah of Bhopāl, ‘Abdul Ḥalīm Sharar, Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl and many others even the non-Muslim scholars and thinkers did not lag behind in serving this field. Similarly, numerous celebrated Unani Physicians served Arabic and Islamic Studies namely ‘Allāmah Faiḍul Ḥasan Sahāranpūri, ‘Abdul Ḥamīd Farāhi, Ḥakīm Mohd. Mukhtār Iṣlāhi, Prof. Altāf Aḥmad Aẓmi, Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān and many others. They contributed greatly to the Unani medicine apart from their contribution to the Arabic and Islamic Studies. In the following pages I will shed lights on the contribution of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān to the Arabic Studies.

**Introduction of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān:** Descending from a family of Unani physicians Ḥakīm Mohd. Ajmal Khān was born on 17<sup>th</sup> Shawwal 1284H/1868 A.D. He completed his primary education at home. After that he memorized the Qur’ān under the guidance of Maulawi Dā’im ‘Alī one of the pupils of his

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elder brother Ḥāziq-ul-Mulk Ḥakīm ‘Abdul Mājid Khān (1850-1901), then he learnt Persian. He learnt Arabic and other Islamic sciences including commentary of the Qur’ān, the Hadith, Islamic Jurisprudence, Philosophy and Arabic literature etc. under the care and guidance of great scholars of his time. He learnt Arabic grammar from Pīr Jee Ṣiddīque Aḥmad of Delhi while he studied philosophy from Maulawi ‘Abd-ul-Ḥaqq of Delhi and Maulawi ‘Abdur Rashīd of Rāmpūr. He also benefited from Mirza ‘Ubaidullāh Beg. As far as Arabic literature is concerned he learnt it from the great scholar and poet of his time ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Ṭayyib Makkī. Ḥakīm Mohd. Ḥussain Khān Shifā’ said about him: Maulāna Muḥammad Ṭayyib Makkī wrote books for him specially”.<sup>1</sup>

Qāḍī ‘Abd-ul-Ḥaffār said: Ḥakīm *ṣāhib* learnt most of Arabic literature from Muḥammad Ṭayyib Rāmpūrī. It was the result of his teaching and training that Ḥakīm sahib spoke Arabic fluently”.<sup>2</sup>

‘Allāmah Ṭayyib Makkī was so much impressed with Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān that he named some of his treatises after him like ‘al-Nafḥah al-Ajmaliyyah fi al-Silāt al-Fi’liyyah’.

He inherited Unani medical science from his father Ḥakīm Maḥmūd Khān (1820-1892), his elder brother Ḥakīm ‘Abd-ul-Mājid Khān, his cousin Ḥakīm Ḡulām Raḍa Khān<sup>3</sup> and Ḥakīm Jalaluddīn (d. 1936).<sup>4</sup> Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān continued his relation with Arabic as Unani medicine was taught in Arabic in that period and what Ajmal Khān wrote in this science was also in Arabic.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Māhaul daily, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1998

<sup>2</sup> Dilli aur Ṭibb-i-Unānī, P. 244

<sup>3</sup> Ḥayāt-i-Ajmal, P. 33

<sup>4</sup> Dilli aur Ṭibb-i-Unānī, P. 292

<sup>5</sup> Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān anu Arabi Zabān-o-Adab, PP. 17-19

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Moreover he was the Chief Physician in the court of Nawab Rāmpūr, President of Indian National Congress, first Muslim Chairman of Hindi Mahāsabha's Reception Committee and Chancellor of Jāmia Millia Islāmīa till his death in 1927. It is he who revived Unani medicine in India contributing a lot to its promotion through writing books and booklets and teaching and practicing Unani medicine and establishing Unani *dawakhana* and institutions.

### **Contribution of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān to the Arabic Studies**

Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān served Arabic Studies in different ways as he taught Unani medicine in Arabic, prepared catalogue of Arabic books, wrote books in Arabic, composed *ghazals* & poems in Arabic, wrote letters in Arabic and enriched Arabic with his wise sayings. All these are summarized as below:

- a) **Catalogue of Rāmpūr Library:** Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān was fond of reading books and treatises 'even sometimes he cut himself from others to read books'.<sup>1</sup> This interest benefited him so much that when he stayed at Rāmpūr, he was made in-charge of Rāmpūr library. He kept himself busy in studying the books on one hand and on the other he started preparing catalogue of Arabic books of this library. He completed one volume of this catalogue which was published by Aḥmadi Press (Rāmpūr) in 1902. Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad 'Alī wrote in his preface:
- "Ḥakīm Mohd. Ajmal Khān made several changes in this library and brought many rare books to it. He prepared the first volume of its Arabic books and got it published in 1902."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ḥayāt-i-Ajmal, P. 34

<sup>2</sup> Fihrist Kutub-i-Arabi Kutubkhānā Rāmpūr, 2/4

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This volume begins with the preface of Ḥakīm Ajmal in seven pages in which he focused on the importance and utility of the libraries. He also compared Rāmpūr library with the libraries of Bhopāl and Patna. Pointing out to its distinction he said, “This library got flourished in the period of His Highness the Nawāb Muḥammad Ḥāmid ‘Alī Khān Bahādur. It contains 12451 books of different languages.”<sup>1</sup> Besides, he introduced several rare books and manuscripts.

b) **Books in Arabic:** Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān wrote different books in Arabic on Unani medicine which are as follows:

1. **Al-Qaul al-Marghūb fi al-Mā’ al-Mashrūb:** This is the first booklet of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān which he wrote in 1887 when he was studying Unani medicine under the guidance of his elder brother Ḥakīm ‘Abdul Mājīd Khān. It contains 12 pages and was published first from Aḥmadi Press, Rāmpūr in 1902. It was reprinted from Afḍal-ul-Matābi’, Delhi in 1904. It lays comments on the discussion of nutrition of water in the famous book of Ibn Sīnā ‘al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb’. Ḥakīm Ajmal wrote about it, “I have completed study of some parts of al-Qānūn and the major parts of ‘Sharḥ-e-Asbāb’.”<sup>2</sup>

This booklet was published with his other booklet titled ‘al-Sā’ātiyyah’ having a different title of ‘Hādha Ma Tayassara li’. The view presented during the commentary was refuted by Shifā-ul-Mulk Ḥakīm ‘Abdullaṭīf Falsafi (1901-1970) in an Arabic booklet titled ‘al-Taḥqīq al-Maṭlūb fi al-Mā’ al-Mashrūb’ (published from Nāmi Press, Lucknow in 1923).

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<sup>1</sup> Abid, 1/5

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qaul al-Marghūb fi al-Mā’ al-Mashrūb, P. 2

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2. **Al-Tuḥfah al-Ḥāmidīyah fi al-Sinā'ah al-Taklīsiyyah:**

Indian physicians, specially physicians of Lucknow, differed each other regarding the use of calcinations. They opined that calcinations are harmful for the human nature so its use for human being is not useful but Ajmal Khān refuted this opinion and proved that calcinations were discovered and used by the Unani physicians. This booklet is in 32 pages and was published from Mujtabā'ī Press, Delhi in 1899.

This booklet contains one preface, two chapters and one conclusion. The preface gives the history of the use of calcinations throughout the world. The first chapter gives careful use of calcinations in medicines while the second chapter replies to the questions raised in this regard. The conclusion counts benefits of calcinations.

3. **Al-Bayān al-Ḥasan bi Sharḥ al-Ma'jūn al-Musammá bi**

**Iksīr al-Badan:** It is the commentary of the ma'jūn 'Iksīr-ul-Badan' made by his forefather Ḥakīm Sharīf Khān of Delhi (1725-1807). It is in 16 pages and was completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1903. It is in Arabic except 'way of making the ma'jūn'. It was published from Afḍal-ul-Maṭābī', Delhi in 1911. The famous Ḥadīth 'تداووا يا عباد الله فإن الذي أنزل الدواء أنزل' 'الدواء' has been written on the top of the title.

4. **Aurāq Muzhirah Muṭḥmirah:**

This is the collection of some six queries regarding some viral diseases along with its replies. It was compiled by Ḥakīm Mohd. Ibrāhīm of Ramaḍanpūr who raised these questions to Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān. It is in 24 pages and was published from Aḥmadi Press, Rāmpūr in 1902. It was reprinted from Jee and Sons Press, Delhi.

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5. **Al-Sā'ātiyyah:** This is on the preference of sweets to other tastes. Ḥakīm Jee criticized this view in this booklet. It was dictated by Ḥakīm Ajmal within one hour which is why it was named 'al-Sā'atiyyah'. It contains six pages and was dictated in 1900 but it was published in 1902 from Aḥmadi Press, Rāmpūr. The booklet begins with different views on sweets and inclination of human being towards it but Ḥakīm Ajmal refuted it and said that a man can use spicy things longer than sweet dishes.
6. **Khamsu Masā'il:** Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān was a revolutionary Unani physician. He differed from other Unani physicians in many issues. Among such issues are five issues in which he differed from others. In fact he wished to compile a book on his differences from the other physicians but his busy life did not give him chance to do so.<sup>1</sup> These issues were published in the name of 'Khamsu Masā'il'. These issues are (1) The flux and reflux cannot be related to the stars (2) There is no existence of bilious fever (3) The blood in the veins do not get stink (4) Bile is not bitter and (5) There is no existence of absolute nutrition.
7. **Al-Wajīzah:** This booklet contains thirty pages and explains the 'Nabḍ-e-Mustawī' and 'Nabḍ-i-Mukhtalif' of 'Kulliyyāt' of Ibn Sīnā'. In fact Ḥakīm Ajmal wrote it for his son Ḥakīm Jamil Khān and other students of Unani medicine. He says: For my busy life I could not study the books of Unani medicine but when I came to know that my son Ḥakīm Jamīl Khān had some commands over the medicine I started to teach him and other students staying in Delhi. When I reached this discussion I wished to solve it because it remained centre of discussion for students and teachers the both."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rumūz-ul-Aṭibbā', P. 96

<sup>2</sup> Al-Wajīzah, P. 01

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It was published from Fārūqī Press, Delhi in 1916. Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān did not explain these two types of pulses but he also explained some other types of pulses citing great Unani physicians.

8. **Muqaddamah al-Lughāt al-Ṭibbiyyah:** In fact it is the forward of his incomplete book 'al-Lughāt al-Ṭibbiyyah' about which nothing is known except what Ajmal Khān himself wrote in the forward. The forward was published from Mujtabā'i Press, Delhi in 1915. It consists of 34 sub-chapters in which he discussed different types of Arabic words used in Unani medicine. They are either original or Arabiacised or coined or have different meanings from old meanings etc. It is very useful and informative forward. It paves way to the medical linguistics in Arabic language. During his discussions he criticized several scholars as well as he quoted some of them.
9. **Risālah fi Tarkīb al-Adwiyah wa Istikhrāj Darajātiha**
10. **Al-Muḥākamah baina al-Qarshī wa al-'Allāmah**
11. **Ḥāshiyah Sharḥ al-Asbāb (up to al-Sarsām)<sup>1</sup>**
12. **Al-Lughāt al-Ṭibbiyyah<sup>2</sup>**

All these books of Ajmal Khān have been indicated by the historians but they are unavailable these days.

- c) **Arabic Poetry:** Like some famous poets of India Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān was a poet of three languages. He composed poems in Arabic, Urdu and Persian. Collection of his Urdu and Persian poems has been published with the title of 'Dīwān-e-Shaidā'. But what he composed in Arabic is not found except a few. It appears from the study of these poems that he wrote *ghazal*, general poem and clergy of

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<sup>1</sup> Rasā'il Masīḥ-ul-Mulk, P. 16

<sup>2</sup> Muqaddamah al-Lughāt al-Ṭibbiyyah (Urdu Translation), P. 05

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great men of his time. And also it is clear from the study of these creations that he was capable of composing good poems in Arabic. Here are some examples:

|                           |                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| سعاد سافرت وبقيت وحدي     | أقاسي نار هجر وابتعاد                |
| وكتّافي الحديقة في اجتماع | قضينا بعد ذلك بانفراد                |
| فغابت شمسها في الغرب حتى  | بهت وعينها صارت فؤادي                |
| كأنّي ذات ليل في منامي    | طويل الفرع مجتمع الوداد <sup>1</sup> |

Regarding Unani medicine he says:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| الويل للطب القديم ونجمه    | فقد اعترته غمامة سوداء                 |
| من بعدما كانت شمس نهاره    | فيها لمن ضلّ الهدى استهداء             |
| أسقًا على أهل الزمان لأنهم | قد أهملوا ما شأنه استقصاء <sup>2</sup> |

He also says in praise of Nawāb Hāmid 'Alī Khān:

|                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| فصيح إذا ما تصدّى لنطق      | أمير إذا همّ أمرًا قضاه           |
| صدوق إذا قال شيئًا وفي      | شجاع إذا رام صيدًا رماه           |
| نجده كريمًا لقوم جياح       | إذ الخطب فهم بدى ناجذاه           |
| لقد جاء بالخلق والحسن جمعًا | وإن زدت وصرقًا ففيه تراه          |
| وأدعو الإله السميع بقلب     | ليسمح له كل أمر رجاه <sup>3</sup> |

d) **Arabic Letters:** Ḥakīm Ṣāhib was fond of Arabic writings. He used to write in Arabic and often he wished that the scholars of Arabic should write to him in Arabic only so when Mufti Kifāyatullah, with whom he exchanged Arabic

<sup>1</sup> Rumūz-ul-Aṭibbā', 1/92

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 92

<sup>3</sup> Al-Tuḥfah al-Ḥāmidīyah, P. 02

letters, wrote to him in Urdu but he replied in Arabic and also complained about his writing letters in Urdu. But unfortunately his Arabic letters got lost except one that was quoted by Ḥakīm Mohd. Ḥasan Qarṣhi in his book. The sample of his letter-writing is given below:

"سيدي الأجل أدام الله حياتكم نافعة للإسلام والمسلمين.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد!

فقد حكي لي حامل هذا الكتاب عما جرى بينه وبين تلك الفئة التي تلعب دائماً بالإفساد حول المسئلة المعلومة، وإني أرى أن السكوت في الظروف الحاضرة يجلب أخطاراً هامة لا ينبغي لنا أن نعدّها من الأمور العادية، فأرجو منكم يدًا تقيم هذا المعوجّ وتصلح هذا الفساد.

كنت أودّ أن أزوركم والأخ مولانا محمد علي، ولكني بقيت ههنا وحدي أراقب أهل البيت، فلا أستطيع أن أتركهم بغير أن يقوم أحد مقامي، فاضطرت إلى قيام هذه البلدة، فهل لي أن أتمس منكم سدّ ذلك الخلل الذي وقع مني اضطرارًا.

سيدي! الأمر يحتاج إلى الشورى، فأشكركم على قدومكم إلى هذه البلدة لكي نتشاور في حلّ هذه المعضلة، ونخطّ خطة فيها خير لجماعة المسلمين، وهو وليّ التوفيق.

والسلام خير الختام.

خادمكم

محمد أجمل<sup>1</sup>.

e) **Medical Sayings in Arabic:** During his writings Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān uttered some sayings as they became the wise medical sayings. Such sayings are numerous but some of them are as follows:

1. إذا عرض للإنسان كدورة في حواسه مع امتلاء المعدة وبقي مبهوئًا فأنذره بالصرع وبادر بالتدريج إلى الاحتقان

2. إذا ضعف عضو لا عن عارض خارجي بل عن نقصان في قوته فإنه لا يعود إلى حالته الأولى وإن عولج سنين عديدة

<sup>1</sup> Tazkirah Masīḥ-ul-Mulk, PP. 152-153

3. إذا رأيت الحمى ناكسة مرة بعد أخرى ودامت على هذه الحالة فولّ وجهك إلى إصلاح الكبد
4. النزلة الدائمة تحتاج إلى تقوية الدماغ لا إلى نضج البلغم واعتدال قوامه
5. عظم الكبد أكثر خطرًا من ورمها الحار وإن لم يكن ذلك الخطر عاجلاً
6. الصداع الذي يكون بالأدوار يحتاج إلى تنقية المعدة وتقويتها مع تقوية الدماغ
7. النساء اللواتي أخذتهن الحمى المتطاولة بعد الولادة فإنهن يحتجن على الأغلب إلى أدوية تزيل أرحامهن وإلا يقعن في حمى الذبول
8. إذا نفع تدبيرك من مرض وإن كان ذلك النفع قليلاً فلا تعدل إلى تدبير آخر حرصاً على النفع الكثير العاجل فإنه كثيراً ما يزيل النفع القليل أيضاً
9. لا تجمع بين المقوية من الأدوية وبين المليئة منها في وقت واحد فإن أثر الأولى حينئذ يذهب جفًا
10. أحسن أوقات استعمال الأدوية المقوية بعد زوال المرض الذي يخلف ضعفاً وأما أوقات المرض فلا ينبغي استعمالها إلا في الانحطاط وأشدّ أوقاتها خطرًا هو التزبد والمنتهى فإن التقوية حينئذ تعاند الطبيعة وتصادق المرض<sup>1</sup>

**Conclusion:** It is clear from the above short discussion that Ḥakīm Muḥammad Ajmal Khān took active part not only in national politics and Unani medicine but he also played great role in the development of Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages specially his contribution to the promotion and development of Arabic and Islamic Studies cannot be forgotten- he taught Unani medicine in Arabic, authored several books in Arabic, prepared catalogue of Arabic books of Rāmpūr library, composed *ghazals* and poems in Arabic, wrote letters in Arabic and enriched Arabic proverbs with his wise sayings. His mastery over the Arabic literature both prose and poetry was accepted by the Arabs themselves who made him honorary member of their great organization of Arabic in Damascus 'Mujamma'-ul-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah'. And 'Allāmah Shibli

<sup>1</sup> Rumūz-ul-Aṭibbā', P. 97

Nu'māni righteously said, "To me none is more respectable than Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān throughout India and that's because he is peerless in respect of knowledge and leadership."



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## Obituary

### **Maulānā Sulṭān Aḥmad Iṣlāḥī**

#### ✎...Fāṭimatuz Zahrā<sup>1</sup>

A great son of A'zamgarh, a think-tank of Jamā't-i-Islāmī and an author of 65 books Maulānā Sulṭān Aḥmad Iṣlāḥī breathed his last in the midnight of 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. Maulānā Iṣlāḥī was not only a great Muslim writer of modern India but also a great sympathizer of lower section. He had deep knowledge of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. He had also grip over the Islamic jurisprudence. Moreover, he was well-versed in Arabic, English, Hindi, Persian and Urdu languages. His writings are full of primary and secondary sources. He always introduced new topics to the field of Islamic Studies.

A son of late 'Abdus Sattār Maulānā Sulṭān Aḥmad Iṣlāḥī belonged to a very small and unknown village of A'zamgarh, Bhormau which falls in the *taḥṣīl* of Phūlpūr. He was born in 1950.<sup>2</sup> He received his early education in a primary Islamic school of the village Bhātinpārah (A'zamgarh). Then he got admission in Madrasa-tul-Iṣlāḥ (Sarā'imīr, A'zamgarh) in 1963 and remained there till 1971. He studied here the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth and Islamic jurisprudence including Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. The credit of his sound knowledge of Arabic and Islamic Studies goes to this madrasa which produced several great writers and researchers of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Author of 'Qur'ān aur Munāfiqīn ka Kirdār'.

<sup>2</sup> His date of birth is registered 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1953 in the register of Madarasa-tul-Iṣlāḥ and 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1952 in the Certificate of Adīb but he told that he was born in the middle of 1950.

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After completing his Islamic education he went to Aligarh and gained training of writing in the institution of 'Idārah-i-Taḥqīq-o-Taṣnīf-i-Islāmī'<sup>1</sup> at Aligarh from 1972 to 1974. After completing this training he joined the same institution as a researcher in 1974 and remained there till he resigned on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 due to some differences between him and the authorities. During his Islamic education at Madrasa-tul-Iṣlāḥ he did 'Adīb', 'Adīb-i-Māhir' and 'Adīb-i-Kāmil' courses in Urdu language and literature in 1966, 1967 and 1971 respectively. He also passed only English (High School) examination from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh in 1969. And in 1970 he did pre-University course and in 1977 he passed B.A from the same university.

In 2004 he established a research institution at Aligarh with the name of 'Idārah-i-'Ilm-o-Adab' and issued an Urdu quarterly with the title of 'Ilm-o-Adab' whose most of the articles and papers were written by the Maulānā himself.

Maulānā Sulṭān Iṣlāḥī was the member of some great academic and Islamic organizations and research institutions such as Idārah 'Ulūm-ul-Qur'ān (Aligarh), All India Muslim Majlis-i-Mushāwarat (India), Majlis-i-Numā'indagān of Jamā't-i-Islāmī (India) and Majlis-i-Shurā of Jamā't-i-Islāmī (U.P). He established Kulhind Taḥrik-i-Fkr-o-'Amal at Aligarh. His active participation in all meetings and seminars made the debates and discussions interesting and useful. It is to be noted here that Maulānā Iṣlāḥī believed in the political empowerment of the Muslims so he actively participated in Parcham Party of India (PPI).

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<sup>1</sup> This institution was named 'Idārah-i-Taṣnīf-i-Jamā't-i-Islāmī' till 1981 but later it was separated and was named as 'Idārah-i-Taḥqīq-o-Taṣnīf-i-Islāmī'

Maulānā Iṣlāḥī especially got training of writing on Islamic issues from the two great scholars of India-Maulānā Ṣadrudḍīn Iṣlāḥī and Maulānā Jalāluddīn Anṣar ‘Umrī at Idārah-i-Taḥqīq-o-Taṣnīf-i-Islāmī. After getting trained he started writing on Islamic issues under the banner of this institution as an in-house research-fellow. Most of his master works are credited to this institution.

Maulānā Sulṭān Aḥmad Iṣlāḥī kept on writing on issues related to Islam and the Muslims till his last breath. He has deep knowledge of the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth. Most of his writings have references from these two sources. He had also keen interest in the Islamic jurisprudence. He wrote on recent affairs and problems of the humanity like freedom, minorities, sex, child labour and other social burning issues, all in the light of the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth.

Apart from being a seasoned writer he was a good speaker. He always breathed a new life by his meaningful and living speeches during the academic sessions of national and international seminars and conferences. With a turban on his head and a small stick in his hand Maulānā Sulṭān Iṣlāḥī always silenced the debaters of the issues related to Islamic jurisprudence.

Maulānā Iṣlāḥī has written and translated a total of 65 books and treatises most of them have been published. To his credit are hundreds of articles and research papers published either in *Zindagi-i-Nau* monthly (New Delhi), *Taḥqīqāt-i-Islāmī* quarterly (Aligarh), ‘*Ulūm-ul-Qur’ān* bi-annual (Aligarh), ‘*Ilm-o-Adab*’ quarterly (Aligarh), ‘*Ulūm-i-Islāmiyyah*’ bi-annual (Aligarh) and ‘*Da’wat*’ half-weekly (Delhi). Some titles of his books are given below which would justify his imminent personality:

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1- Mazhab ka Islāmī Taṣawwur (Concept of Religion in Islam), 2- Waḥdat-i-Adyān ka Nazriyyah aur Islām (Islam and the View of Unity of Religions), 3- Islam ka Taṣawwur-i-Masāwāt (Concept of Equality in Islam), 4- Islam ka Nazriyyah-i-Jins (Sex in Islam), 5- Mu'minānah Zindagi ke Auṣāf (Qualities of Life of a Believer), 6- Muṣhtarkah Khāndānī Nizām aur Islām (Joint Family System and Islam), 7- Pardes ki Zindagi aur Islām (Islam and Life in Foreign Countries), 8- Azādi-i-Fikr-o-Nazr aur Islām (Freedom of Thought in Islam), 9- Hindustān men Madāris-i-'Arabiyyah ke Masā'il (Problems of Islamic Madrasas in India), 10- Islām ek Najāt-dehandah Taḥrīk (Islam as a Saver Movement), 11- Bachchon ki Mazdūrī aur Islām (Islam and Child Labour), 12- Kamsini ki Shādi aur Islām (Islam and Child Marriage), 13- Madāris men Science ki Ta'līm (Modern Sciences in Madrasas), 14- Civil Line-Ek Jā'izah (Civil Line-An Analysis), 14- Tisrī Dunya Qur'ān ki Roṣhnī men (Third World in the Light of the Qur'an) and 15- Madāris-i-'Arabiyyah ka Muthbat Pahlū (Positive Side of Islamic Madrasah).

May Allah forgive the slips and mistakes of this great scholar and translator of Islamic Studies and bestow upon us with a better alternate to him.



**Book-review:**

**THE TRUE FACE OF ISLAM: ESSAYS**

**Written by: Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān**

**Compiled and Edited by: Raamish Ṣiddīqui**

**Published by: Harper Element (HarperCollins), 2015**

**Price: Rs. 325**

**Reviewed by: Miss. Purba Banerjee<sup>1</sup>**

The book *The True Face of Islam: Essays* written by Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān and edited by Ramish Ṣiddīqui is a series of essays which testify to a broad reading of Islam as a complete religion and also deals with the various discrepancies that can be observed within the House of Islam or the Islamic world. This appraisal of Islam is extremely significant in a world where religious tolerance seems to be retreating and distorted understanding of religions taking a decisive lead.

Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān, President of the Islamic Center, New Delhi, founded the Center of Peace and Spirituality (CPS International) in 2001. These organizations are dedicated to presenting Islam in the modern idiom. The Maulānā is the author of *The True Jihad, Islam Rediscovered, Islam and Peace* and numerous other best-selling books on Islam.

*The True Face of Islam* opens with a chapter titled 'An

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<sup>1</sup> Vice-Chairperson, Review Committee, The Indian Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies

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Introduction to Islam’ in which Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān makes a strong justification of the existence of God, specifically, in the binary of science versus religion. He argues that the entire design of the world and the universe cannot be a matter of mere accident and that the precision with which everything in the universe has been organized that the existence of God needs no further proof! But even after this, it is entirely upon the human beings whether or not to believe in God and submit to the Almighty. The submission in itself, according to him, sets off a continuous process of revelations, which, in his words, “is that hidden chain of communication which remains constant between God and His creation.”

In the second chapter the Maulānā deals with the teachings of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). He opens the chapter by dividing the Prophet’s teachings under three heads:

1. The right concept of God
2. The purpose behind man’s creation and his relation with the universe
3. What man should do to establish his relationship with God

The Maulānā conveys it to us that the Prophet was blessed with the conscious level of revelation, with the knowledge of reality and the way to lead one’s life on earth, which is sent by God. The Qur’ān makes it clear that human being was born to be tested on this earth and was, thus, granted freedom of action. God would always want to see who obeys His will and who does not. At the same time, he argues, it is absolutely necessary for human beings to be conscious of accountability to God, and thus, must avoid oppression and exploitation of others to realize themselves. The most important thing the Maulānā tells us is what the Prophet (PBUH) has provided as

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an answer to what man should do to establish his relationship with God. It is based on three concepts: Zikr, 'Ibādat, Qurbānī. Zikr (remembrance) means to keep God in mind all the time; 'Ibādat (worship) means the acts set out in the Shari'ah; and Qurbānī (sacrifice) means sacrificing one's feelings, emotions and wealth for the cause of God.

The third chapter of the book explains the Five Pillars of Islam, which are Īmān (faith), Ṣalāt (prayers), Zakāh (almsgiving), Ḥajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) and Ṣaum (fasting). Īmān is the faith and belief which can only be achieved through realization, and there is no greater a realization than the realization of God. Ṣalāt means prayer and it constitutes the most important part of Islamic worship. A Muslim is obliged to pray five times a day, comprising of different prayers at different times of the day: at dawn, ṣalāt-ul-fajr; at noon, ṣalāt-ul-zohr; at mid-afternoon, ṣalāt-ul-'aṣr; at sunset, ṣalāt-ul-maghrib; and in the night, ṣalāt-ul-'ishā'. The purpose of ṣalāt is submission. Zakāt means purity, and in the context of Islam it means the purification of one's earnings by giving away a part of them to the cause of God. Ḥajj is a symbol of Islamic unity and it is through Ḥajj that interaction takes place between the Muslims on an international scale. Ṣaum is the Arabic term for fast, which means to abstain, which is to be observed during the month of Ramaḍān. It constitutes abstinence from eating, drinking and even from having lawful sex from morning till sunset, and aims at weakening the material wants of man and strengthening the spirituality in him. In continuation of the third chapter, the Maulānā talks about the ultimate spiritual goal of Islam in the fourth chapter, as to achieve a human soul at rest – to attain a state of perpetual peace and alignment.

The fifth chapter of the book is dedicated to the philosophy of

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Sufism. He says that the Sufis consider the renunciation of the world as a prerequisite for achieving the state of spiritual progress and developing a higher consciousness of reality. He also mentions that even though there might appear some apparent differences between Sufism and puritan, orthodox Islam, the reality is that, to quote the Maulānā, “Sufism is merely an intensified expression of the inner spirit of Islam.” Moreover, he mentions that the early Sufis concentrated on spiritual rather than social or political issues, but later, under the Persian influences, there were changes in the thoughts and opinions of the Sufis. And finally, with the spread of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, the Sufis found a very fertile soil to expand and practice their philosophy. It got mixed with the yogi practices and became an independent discipline.

The chapters six to nine have been dedicated to the relations between Islam and other major religions of the world – Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. According to the Qur’ān, the most important principle of any dialogue between two or more religions is to pursue to find a mutual basis for peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, the Qur’ān also says that any religious matter needs to be settled on practical grounds rather than its theoretical aspects. Every human being needs to be given space to practice his/her own religion, giving way to successful religious coexistence. As an example, Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān analyses the coexistence of both Islam and Hinduism in the Indian subcontinent as a result of continuous social interactions and intellectual exchanges between them for centuries. On the other hand, as far as the establishment of peace between Islam and Judaism is concerned, the Maulānā gives very important examples from the life of the Prophet of Islam, which can be considered relevant even today. The

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Prophet (PBUH) had organized a tripartite conference in Madīnah between Muslims, Christians and Jewish representatives for peaceful negotiations between the three communities. Even in his daily life, the Prophet (PBUH) was extremely responsible in his dealings with the members of other religions. In regard to Christianity, Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān tells us that both Islam and Christianity have the same Semitic origin, and the Qur'ān has repeatedly mentioned Christianity to be a great religion. Finally, the Qur'ān had also predicted that these two religions will eventually emerge as the greatest communities in terms of number.

Chapter ten deals with a very sensitive issue the world of Islam faces today: the issue of Israel and Palestine. The Maulānā begins the chapter with a word of caution that both the Muslims and the Jews must understand that their battle cannot go on forever, and that both will need to give peaceful political negotiations a fair chance, instead of fighting forever with tanks and suicide bombers! To derive his conclusions in favour of a peaceful solution, the Maulānā has cited various examples from the reading of the Qur'ān, beginning with the Ḥudaibiyyah agreement, in which, the Prophet (PBUH) had unilaterally agreed to the terms set by his opponents to achieve peace. Moreover, the Qur'ān has always advocated for peaceful methods to achieve one's goals rather than violent course of action. Thus, both the Arab Muslim leaders and the Israeli Jewish leaders need to come to a point of reconciliation to resolve one of the gravest political deadlocks of the last century.

Chapters eleven to sixteen of this book are dedicated to the understanding of education and knowledge under Islam. Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān has uncompromisingly challenged

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the popular belief that Islam discourages scientific education, which directly attributes to the lagging behind of Muslims all over the world in the field of education, particularly that of scientific research. He is of the opinion that both Islam and the Qur'ān urge Muslims to devote themselves in the study and investigation of nature, which is created by the Almighty. It would be a great service to God to engage oneself in such investigations, which, in turn, is the study of science. On the other hand, to successfully pursue the study of science, he emphasized that the modernization of the Madrasa education is compulsory. He has given the example of the Indian Madrasas which has fundamentally aligned its courses at par with the mainstream educational influences, keeping intact the religious studies. He also argues that to modernize the education under Islam it is equally important to respect intellectual freedom, which has been encouraged not only by Islam but also by Islamic rulers all over the world for the past one and a half millennia. In relation to the intellectual freedom of man, Islam has also justified the freedom of speech, because without a constructive expression of one's intellectuality, it is impossible for the human civilization to progress. The Maulānā has argued that to achieve intellectual freedom and freedom of speech, it is essential that no religion puts unnecessary bars on individuals to deprive them from expressing their thoughts freely, including in matters of religion. Religious freedom under Islam has always been one of the pillars of its successful spread across the globe – both religiously as well as politically. With their political and religious spread across the world, the Muslims also carried a legacy of enquiring about local knowledge, and later become transmitters to other parts of the world. The practice of enquiry has always played a pivotal role in spreading and

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establishing Islam in different parts of the world, which were varied geographically and culturally from the land of its origin. Because, in Islam, the persuasion of knowledge has been given a very high priority - as a path to serve God and to realize God.

Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān distinctly explains the relation between Islam and Muslim, the term 'Kāfir', the importance of the implementation of the Shari'ah Law, and also the relevance of Fatwas in Islam in the chapters eighteen to twenty-one. He has argued that the commonest mistake people make in regard to the study of Islam is that they try to make an idea of Islam looking through the behavior of Muslims, while ideally it should be the other way around! Muslims should be judged in the light of Islamic teachings. The Maulānā also pointed out that the use of the term Kāfir is only permissible to be used against an individual who denies the truth of God, and not against a race or community or religious group other than that of Muslims. In regard to the implementation of the Shari'ah Law, the Maulānā has categorically warned that a unilateral coercion of either the rulers or the rebels to establish the Shari'ah Law can never be successful because Islam demands the intellectual purification of a given society before the practical enforcement of the law – if the minds of the people are not prepared first to understand the importance of the law, then a forceful implementation will only breed discontent. In the context of the Fatwas, Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān has clearly mentioned that they are individual opinions by the muftis, and are not legally binding, either by Shari'ah or otherwise. He also distinguishes between the Fatwas and the Qaḍā – if fatwas are only individual opinions of the Muftis, then the same muftis do not have any jurisdiction to issue a Qaḍā. A Qaḍā is a

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judicial verdict which is a prerogative of a court, authorized by the State and is obligatory for everyone to follow.

In chapter twenty-two, titled 'Islam and Politics', Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān has defined the difference between the Islamic 'Ibādah, the form of worship, and the Islamic politics. The Qur'ān or the Prophet (PBUH) has always set a fixed form of worship, the 'Ibādah. But it neither says anything about the political system to be followed. The Maulānā explains that it is so because the Prophet always understood that politics is directly dependent on social and economic conditions of the people during a given period of time. Thus, Islamic politics has to adapt itself according to these realities. In continuation of the same subject, the Maulānā also explains the relation between Islam and democracy in chapter twenty-three, arguing that if democracy reflects the principle of majority rule in secular affairs, and does not enforce majority religious community's will on other religious groups, then democracy is in perfect tune with Islamic teachings. Because, Islam has always advocated in favour of governance with mutual consultation.

From chapter twenty-four to chapter twenty-seven, Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān has explained the Indian subcontinent and the situation of Muslims in relation to the Indian nation. In the beginning of chapter twenty-four, the Maulānā has reiterated on his belief that India is a potential spiritual superpower, that from the ancient times it has been the land of spirituality! But at the same time he holds that the fact that India has not yet evolved as a developed country, is because it lacks a coherent sense of nationality. The immense diversity amongst people in India pushes the national identity to the margins, and the individual or group interests reign supreme. Though he lauds the diversity of India, he also stresses that to build a sense of

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nationality the only way forward is to instill patriotism among the people of a particular nation – everyone who would believe that their collective fate is entwined with the progress of the whole country. In an elaboration of this point, he has invoked the issue of Article 370, pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir. He has insisted that India being a secular democracy, any action taken either by the government or any group must not jeopardize this basic constitutional principle. He has vigorously criticized the actions of the Muslim groups in Kashmir over the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board issue by advocating that any matter pertaining to the Constitution should be settled by the Supreme Court of India and not acted upon by any political group. Though he has been criticized for taking such a secular stand, he has always maintained that the Muslims in India have a brighter future, only if the attitude of the Muslims in India will become an assertive one. He is also of the opinion that if the Muslims in India positively participate in the political process, they can constitutionally maintain the balance of power towards a more democratic political space.

The Maulānā has dealt with the issue of Women in Islam in the chapters twenty-eight and twenty-nine. This is a very sensitive issue because the Islamic world is predominantly criticized by the international community for the treatment of women in these societies. He mentions of the high status that has been given to women in Islam and also the traditions followed by the Prophet (PBUH) during his own time in regard to women. The Islamic teachings make it clear that although man and woman differ from one another biologically their human status is the same in the society. The second chapter of the Qur'ān also instructs a man to do good deeds to his

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wife, pursue a strong intellectual partnership with her and consider her as the pillar of strength in his life.

The next eight chapters of the book, that is, from chapter thirty to thirty-seven, are granted to clear the misunderstanding that Islam, as a religion, supports violence and hatred. The Maulānā begins his argument by mentioning a teaching from the Ḥadīth: 'God grants to gentleness what He does not grant to harshness.' He further explains that Islam always supports peaceful activism instead of violent course of action. There are numerous instances in the teachings of Islam where violence was deliberately avoided through mutual understandings and compromises. War or aggression has been permitted in Islam only under the circumstances of self-defence and never otherwise. In fact, Islam does not promote or propagate war against one's enemies just to express their enmity. If only the enemy attacks, the individual is permitted to retaliate. In this context, the Maulānā has severely criticized the culture of suicide bombings within the Muslim political discourse in recent times, arguing that the practice is nothing sort of a heinous crime in the eyes of Islam and absolutely un-Islamic! Islam gives a high pedestal to human life – war, thus, has been strongly criticized in this religion, and peace has always been given the foremost priority. Thus, any individual or group trying to establish themselves through violence and hatred is as un-Islamic – the Maulānā has given the example of the 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS) in this context and has firmly mentioned the illegitimacy of such a State according to Islam. The fact that the ISIS and also other Muslim political groups or even individual terrorists justify their actions under the blanket-term of Jihād, has been challenged by Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān. He has explained that in Islam the term Jihād has been used for peaceful ideological and political

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struggle. Refusing to be drawn into any activity that does not withstand the teachings of any religion is also Jihād – because restraining oneself against greed, anger and hatred is a great struggle in itself. But, the way the term is used in today’s political context shows how far the term is misused for selfish and violent ends! Similarly, terrorism in the name of Islam is another duplicitous activity by individuals and groups to accumulate illegitimate power in their favor. Such actions can only emanate from a culture of extremism, which, in itself, is vigorously refused and criticized in Islam – extremism is to be spurned and condemned under any circumstance in the teachings of Islam. In order to emphasize this important point, the Maulānā has directly quoted from the Qur’ān: ‘Do not go to excess in your religion.’ (4:171).

In the concluding chapter, Maulānā Waḥīduddīn Khān has reiterated on his assessment of Islam as the religion of peace – where peace is the rule and war a very rare exception. He states that it has been unambiguously mentioned in the Qur’ān that peace, above all, is the greatest concern of the God Almighty – through peace, God wants to make people aware of their duties and responsibilities, thus, articulating His creation plan regarding mankind. The Qur’ān has emphasized on peaceful engagement by insisting that only peaceful conditions can achieve positive and constructive goals.

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## Madrasa-tul-Iṣlāḥ<sup>1</sup>

✎ Layeeque Ahmad<sup>2</sup>

Our school's name is Madrasa Iṣlāḥ,  
Founded by Shafi' having keen.  
Later was shaped a few years after,  
By the great lover of Islam, Ḥamīduddīn

To the north of the market Sarā'imīr,  
A suitable place for teaching was selected.  
The contribution of the public, the Muslims,  
So fine a building soon got erected.

A big field in the middle and to offer *Namāz*,  
South-western corner has a mosque beautiful.  
The mu'azzin as well as the worthy *imām*,  
Are well mannered, civil and most dutiful.

A library enriched with rare Arabic books,  
A thirsty one-roomed, well accommodated hostel,  
Has the school, the students to stay and,

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<sup>1</sup> This poem was composed by my father for me when I was a student of fifth class Arabic to be written to the question about the favorite school. (The Editor)

<sup>2</sup> Father of the Editor and Retired Headmaster, Junior High School, Majawān, Phūlpūr, A'zamgarh

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To feed, a big and well arranged hotel.  
Boys nine hundred in *maktab* section read,  
Hundred three with fifty one in university.  
Islamism and science they study the both,  
The subjects that have unity in diversity.

Teachers, thirty one, well experienced,  
Learned, noble, well behaved and civil,  
Teach us, guide us, encourage us enough,  
Remove difficulties before readers with a will.

Leave no stone unturned, untouched,  
In explaining the matters in the course,  
Do create interest much, more and the most,  
Require no order, no advice, no source.

Eḥtishāmuddīn, the Principal, the Father of  
Arabic Grammar, the product of the chapel, raises,  
The thinkers, writers, orators, the preachers in gust,  
The Holy Book, in Islam, deserves unique praises.

So is our school, we are grateful to those,  
Great men whose footsteps before us lie,  
Who enable us to win this world present and,  
To achieve the world eternal, the Heaven on sky.

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## Myself

؎...Nāzik Ṣādiq al-Malā'ikah<sup>1</sup>

Rendered into English: K.M.A. Aḥamed Zubair<sup>2</sup>

The night has asked me,  
questioned my presence.

Who am I?

What I would like to be?

I passed by its unrest,  
black, deep-rooted secret,

I am its revolutionary silence,

I have covered my nature  
with silence.

My heart was wrapped

with assumptions,

I am remaining here,

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<sup>1</sup> Nāzik Ṣādiq al-Malā'ikah (1923-2007) is one among the three great women poets; the modern Arab world has ever produced. Born in Baghdād in 1923, in a rich and literary family, she has produced three well-known volumes of modern Arabic poetry. Mournful romanticism of Keats, Schopenhauer's pessimism and the psychological atmosphere of Eliot were reflected in her poems. She is chiefly noted for pioneering the free verse movement in Arabic. Her heightened feelings of bewilderment can be seen in this translated poem.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic, New College, Chennai

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Looking and pledging these things,  
While the decades asked me,  
Who am I?  
Who is myself?  
What, I would like to be ?

The wind has asked me,  
questioned my presence,  
Who am I?  
What, I would like to be?  
I am its ambiguous spirit,  
Its time has rejected me,  
I am like wind,  
Not resting,  
Without ending,  
No place to dwell.  
I wish to travel like wind,  
Still travelling without end  
Still moving without any break  
Should we reach a core?  
Should we reach an essence?  
Should we reach a destiny ?  
We think it "the end",

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We deem it "the end"-  
Of our endless sufferings,  
And then void and vacant.

The time has asked me,  
questioned my presence,  
Who am I?  
What, I would like to be?  
I am like time.  
I am gigantic, tyrant  
Concealing many centuries,  
I will return and  
I will provide termination,  
I will create the great past,  
From the power of expected hopes.  
And I will return to bury the past.  
Its burial will fabricate,  
A new yesterday for me,  
Whose tomorrow is ice.

Then myself has asked me,  
questioned my presence,  
Who am I?

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What, I would like to be?

I am like myself,

I am perplexed,

Peeping into shadows.

Nothing has granted me peace.

Still I am asking...

The answer remained-“Nil”,

Meanwhile the answer was wrapped

By illusion,

The answer remained in illusion alone...

I am going on thinking deliberately,

Now myself has come close to me,

When I reached it,

When I attained it,

Then....

Myself is vanished,

Myself is dead,

Myself is absent,

Myself was disappeared.

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