

Monthly

October 2023

# ISHRAQ

United States

## Caravan after Caravan

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, the founder of GCIL, recounts his dream to establish Dairah al-Fikr and its realization through al-Mawrid, the state-of-the-art institute of Islamic sciences, pays tribute to contributors for the cause, and relives the memories of his association with and departure from Syed Abul A'la Maududi's Jamat Islami, a prominent religious and political party of Pakistan

## Splitting of the Moon (III)

Syed Manzoor ul-Hassan

Syed Manzoor ul Hassan produces a compelling discussion on the historic event of the Splitting of the Moon as a divine sign for the polytheists of Makkah. The author elaborates on various meanings and explanations of āyah, a Quranic terminology, as perceived by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, the prominent researcher and interpreter of Islamic teachings.

## The True Meaning of the Lifeless Body on Solomon's Throne

Naeem Ahmed Baloch

Naeem Ahmad Baloch reproduces a variety of interpretations of the Quranic verses 34-35 of Surah 38 offered by traditional and contemporary scholars. The author highlights elements causing controversy and identifies procedures of correctly interpreting the Quranic text.

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United States

UNDER GUIDANCE OF

**JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI**

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# COHERENCE IN THE QUR'AN: ANALYSIS OF A CRITIQUE



Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

Aḥmad Javed's [disjointed] speech on the concept of coherence in the Qur'ān practically demonstrates his viewpoint on the subject. Undoubtedly, it is a collection of disjointed thoughts, a combination of scattered thoughts, and a mixture of incoherent impressions. The speech clearly shows that Aḥmad Javed does not believe in any interconnectedness of human speech as well as divine speech. He discussed Javed Aḥmad Ghamidi's thoughts in a speech titled "Critique of one Concept of Qur'an ic Coherence" and mentioned some isolated criticisms.

**Of these points, a few salient ones follow:**

1

Ghamidi's interpretation of the religion [of Islam] is founded on his concept of Qur'anic Coherence. This concept has caused the birth of a unique comprehensive and exclusive narrative of the religion. As a consequence, the authentic, acknowledged, and well-received tradition of the religious scholars proves to be unreliable.

2

In Ghamidi's Qur'anic hermeneutic, the concept of coherence overrules the Qur'an itself. Therefore, he (that is, Ghamdi) understands the divine book in the light of this concept and follows the same concept while deriving the rulings from the Book. It means that a concept that lies outside and beyond the Qur'anic text has been hailed as the only necessary condition for correct understanding of the Qur'an. This approach amounts to injustice to the Book of God.

This mistake is the issue of taking the Book of God to follow the form of human compilations. Apparently, it is believed that the way human discourse is presented in a set order and arrangement, the divine speech has also been revealed after organizing and ordering it in the same way. This is a dangerous fallacy, as a result of which, the divine speech becomes hostage to our arbitrary principle. These types of principles may be applied to human speech, yet they can have a perilous effect on our understanding of the divine speech.

3

4

Ghamdi's statement that "each Sūrah of the Qur'an has a definitive coherence scheme." Similarly, Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī is wrong to declare that "whoever approaches unguided by the coherence in the Qur'an will at best obtain a few individual injunctions and isolated guidelines." What proves this to be wrong is the well-acknowledged fact that a defined thing cannot be hidden from the readers. Such a well-defined concept should be obvious and unambiguous. Every scholar must understand it without research and going through an interpretive process. In this perspective, the factual evidence from our religious scholarly tradition negates the concept of coherence in the Qur'an. The works of the earliest and the later generations of the scholars prove that they could correctly derive rulings and guidance from the Qur'an without recourse to any such supposed or arbitrary concept of coherence in the Qur'an.

## 5

This mistake originally results from the reception of the knowledge and thoughts of the dominant nations in today's world. One can easily and plausibly appreciate this understanding by analyzing legal applications and interpretations of the divine text concluded by Mr. Ghamidi. His applications and interpretations correspond to the views, customs, and dispositions of the Western nations. This understanding gains further support by the practical inclinations of those who agree with Mr. Ghamidi's thoughts.

Keeping these isolated points in consideration, I find it imperative to offer a few critical observations of the entire discourse of the respected critic, Aḥmad Javed.

First, the speech of the respected critic does not clearly reveal in which system of thought he stands while delivering the sermon. Is it the philosophical school, Sufism, scholasticism, linguistics, or the Islamic disciplines from the perspective of which he speaks?

This explanation is imperative because each system of thought has different premises, different styles of reasoning, and unique scholastics. It is not useful to discuss and argue about one system while taking the perspective of another. In this way, neither an academic principle can be formed, nor any communication of the matter is possible, nor soundness and unsoundness can be determined. Such discussions only lead to general speculation which has no value other than soliloquy.

Secondly, the critic initiated commenting upon Ghamidi's standpoint on the Coherence in the Qur'an without bothering to state his position. Positive criticism requires that one begins by fully and clearly stating the position one needs to criticize. This way of positive critique ensures to clarify whether the critic has a clear understanding of the point of view that he is attacking or he is professing to present research without understanding that specific view.

Thirdly, the critic has not chosen the correct part of Ghamidi's discourse on the Coherence in the Qur'an to begin a critique on it. He has selected a section from Ghamidi's *Mīzān*, entitled "Coherence in the Discourse." However, a first glance at the discussion under the title shows that it is not an isolated article. Rather, it is the eighth of the ten premises making up the introduction to the Book, titled "Fundamentals of understanding the Qur'an." Seven premises precede it. The entire set of premises is interconnected and unfolds in a specific argumentative progression. Some of these preceding premises work as foundations to the discussion on the coherence in the Qur'an. To embark upon critiquing the propositions about the coherence in the Qur'an while ignoring the rest of the connected discussions cannot be useful in imparting the criticism.

For the sake of making this point clear, a little elaboration is offered here. The first of these ten points on the fundamentals of understanding the Qur'an explicates the reality that the Book of God has been revealed in the language of the Arabian tribe Quraysh. Therefore, the Almighty has not used the language in which He corresponds with, for example, the angels or the jinn, or the heavenly bodies or the various different types of creations in the heavens and the earth. Nor has God coined a new language for the purpose. On the contrary, God has used the language of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his tribe. It was a human language that the Arabs had developed over the centuries using their natural linguistic ability. It means that God communicated His Guidance through the same words, stylistics, metaphors, metonymies, similes, and literal and figurative expressions which were coined by humans and were in use for communication among the Arab tribe of Quraysh.

The second discussion in the fundamentals of understanding the Qur'an offers those source texts in which the Almighty has declared that the Qur'an has been revealed in "ʿarabī mubīn", the clear Arabic language.

The Almighty guarantees that He has kept the language of the Qur'an pure of every shortcoming and pure of every circumlocution. The third issue highlights the reality that the style of the Qur'anic expression is entirely unique and distinct from the conventional prose and poetry.

The fourth issue exposes the reader to the clear religious source texts describing the fact that the text of the Qur'an is a criterion and differentiator between the truth and falsehood. It is also the guardian over the entire corpus of the [previous] divine revelations. This means that it is the only criterion and scale to differentiate between the truth and falsehood. The fifth discussion offers the Qur'anic definition of itself as *kitāb mutashābih*, that is, it is a book which presents its discussion and themes repeatedly in such a way as to work as interpretation or explanation of each other. The sixth point highlights the reality that the Qur'an is the last book of divine guidance.

It explains that the realities ingrained in human nature, the religious rites and customs of the Abrahamic religion, and the scriptures of the Prophets precede it in order of appearance. The seventh point brings to the fore the fact that the subject of the Qur'an is that it is a saga of the Prophetic mission of warning and admonition by the Prophetic Muhammad. It is only after detailing these seven points, that we find the discussion on the coherence in the Qur'an in *Mīzān*. This discussion starts as follows:

The eighth point is that each Sūrah has a specific coherence in it. A Sūrah is not a collection of isolated & separately issued guidelines from the Almighty. Rather, a Sūrah has a specific theme & all of its verses relate to that theme in a very wise order & correspondence (Ghamidi, *Mīzān*, 51).

Fourth, the critic has not bothered himself to note the approach of the traditional thought on the subject. It needs to be noted that it is the same tradition upon which the learned critic has based himself in

his endeavor to criticize, falsify, and reject the concept of coherence in the Qur'an . As a result, the points related to the issues “preferred over the Qur'an ” and “external to the Book of God” used against the rejection of Ghamidi's thought prove the rejection of the traditional approach and thoughts as well with equal force.

It is as if the sword of argument unleashed against the concept of the coherence in the Qur'an has also cut apart the traditional principles of Qur'anic disciplines including the Makkan and the Madinan sūrahs, abrogated and the abrogating verses, the clear and the ambiguous statements, styles and parallels, miraculous nature of the Qur'an , and interpretation of the Qur'an in the light of its parallels.

In reality, it is a mere accusation to say that the concept of the coherence in the Qur'an has been externally imposed upon the Book of God. Never indeed. The concept is derived from the text of the Qur'an the way the above-mentioned traditional concepts of the Qur'anic disciplines have been gleaned from the Qur'an itself. They have been compiled after being derived from the Qur'ān. It means that the text of the Qur'an evidences through its very existence that it is not a collection of isolated parts. Rather, it is a masterpiece of a coherent and well-connected discourse.

For the sake of argument, we say that if the learned critic finds time he must please apply the issues of “preceding the Qur'an ” and “external to the Qur'an ” to the principle of tafsīr based on tradition (tafsīr bi al-maṭhūr). Let us see how does it relate to the “internal” of the Qur'an?

Fifth, in his zeal to falsify the concept of the coherence in the Qur'an, the learned critic has offered arguments which lack water from an academic point of view. The most salient example of such empty claims is the argument that specification [of a meaning] in the Qur'an necessarily implies its general explication. Similarly, ambiguity necessarily accompanies concealment of the meaning. It means that if something is specifically known then it must be equally clear to all and sundry. If all the people cannot explicate that point, then it must be unspecified and unidentifiable. Rather, it is ambiguous.



This form of argument implies that, for example, if all the eyewitnesses of a specific incident differ in their narration of the event, then the reality of the incident becomes questionable. Taking another example, we can say that if the audience of a speech or discussion differ in their report of the statements, it must mean that the speaker was ambiguous. Yet another example is that if the readers or explicators of a book do not agree on the meaning of its content then it must be a collection of ambiguities. In all these examples, the fallacy in the argument lies in that the sole criterion of specification of meaning or a fact has been granted to the receivers/target audience. Subsequently, the mistake has been confined and ascribed to the messenger. That is, the witness, the audience, and the reader hold the position of the judge. However, the ambiguity, concealment, shortcoming, and mistake have been charged upon the witnessed fact, speaker, and the writer.

It would not be out of place to mention that according to the scholars of the Farāhī School, two factors play a decisive role in ascertaining and defining the realities. One, the source, [that is, the divine text] Second, the arguments and evidences. The addressees do not have any role to play in this regard.

Therefore, if the source is the speech of God or the saying and action of the Messenger, peace be upon him, or the consensus of the Companions, then these sources will be the final word rather than all the rest of the humans.

If the readers differ among themselves in understanding the statements in the above-mentioned sources, then the soundness or otherwise of an interpretation will rest not on the majority or minority of the upholders of the different interpreters but in the light of rational & reported arguments.

The same is the viewpoint of the pious elders on this issue. A careful deliberation on the works of the Muhaddithun & the jurists on the discipline of the Ḥadīth, our submission becomes abundantly clear.

In the process of determination of a Ḥadīth or lack of it, its

acceptance and rejection, and its explication and clarification the decisive role is attached to its source, that is, the person of the Prophet, and collective corpus of his sayings and actions. Mis/understanding of the narrators, the researches of the Muhaddithun, the explications of the commentators, and the applications of the jurists do not enjoy this status. In the case of a difference of opinion, the issue is decided in the light of rational and reported knowledge.

The acceptance by the individuals or lack of it cannot be a criterion in this matter. Therefore, in this discipline, it is customary that a Ḥadīth which a party of the scholars declares Ṣaḥīḥ or Ḥasan in the light of their research, yet another scholar comes and rejects it because he finds it going against the Qur'an , or contradicting the concurrently reported (mutawatir) act of the Prophet, or at times militating against reason, being proven rationally improbable.

The same process can be reversed at times. I mean a report declared weak (ḍaʿīf) due to the weakness of the narrators can be accepted as the word of the Prophet, peace be upon him, because of support from rational argument and other validating indicators. It means that the soundness or the unsoundness of a Ḥadīth report rests on two points: First, ascription to the source and second, rational and reported arguments. Majority or the minority of the people or their agreement or disagreement or their isolated or consensus views have no role to play in this validation process.

The above constitute the exceptions I take to the isolated points raised by Mr. Aḥmad Javed. I have mentioned these points in order to point out those perplexities and anxieties which clearly issue from Mr. Aḥmad Javed's speech. I intended to highlight the issues missing which would turn any critique of the concept of coherence in the discourse a futile exercise. This is what I offer, and the true knowledge rests with Allah.

To sum up the discussion, it would be appropriate to offer a few points delineating my perspective on the question of the coherence in the Qur'an .

**1**

The divine speech, that is, the Holy Qur'an has been revealed to communicate certain meanings. The objective to communicate meaning necessarily requires coherence in the speech. The reason is that the audience of this speech, that is, man, can understand only a coherent discourse. That is, only such speech has access to his understanding and comprehension that is clear in its subject & explicit in meaning. Such speech must have a background, context, order, a beginning & a conclusion. A collection of words devoid of these elements is not understandable to man. The reason is that such a collection of mere words does not contain direction of the speech, is void of an indication of the addressee, & fails to help identify eclipses and unstated parts. There is no possibility of appreciating the similitudes, metaphors, and metonymy. Nor can one distinguish between the foundation and the extensions, principle and its application, and the literal and the figurative. In consideration of these human limitations and needs, Allah Almighty has given us a coherent and arranged text.

The purpose of the divine speech is not limited to the communication of a message. Rather, it aims at bringing this communication to the point where there remains no room for an excuse to reject the message. That is, it needs to communicate to the level of certainty as a result of which the rejectors from among its addressees are to be annihilated in this very world & made to deserve eternal hell in the Hereafter. Therefore, it is important that the words of the revelation fully signify the intended meaning upon the addressee. This speech should not only be free from illusions, ambiguities, conceitful loftiness, & exaggerations, which are generally considered an integral part of poetry & literature, but also its presentation of themes should be properly coherent & fully organized.

**2**

## 3

Allah Almighty has not only sent the Qur'an in Arabic but in the clear Arabic (ʿarabī mubīn). He has purified its text from all kinds of crookedness and complexities. The following two verses from the Qur'an and their parallels in the Qur'an bring to light this fact fully.

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ، عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ، بِلسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ-

“The Trusted Spirit has brought it down to your heart so that you also become a warner like other prophets in very lucid Arabic.” (al-Shuʿarāʾ: 193-195)

قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرِ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ-

“In the form of a Qur'ān that is in Arabic in which there is no flaw so that they can be secure from God's torment.”(al-Zumūr, 28)

Both these verses prove the coherence in the Qur'anic discourse. The reason is that no incoherent speech can be termed mubīn, that is, clear, and “ghayr dhī ʿiwaj”, that is, circumlocutionary. It must suffer from blanks, discontinuity, concealment of meaning, circumlocutions, and unresolvable complexities. Due to these problems, such a discourse will at best be an enigmatic puzzle, utterly failing to communicate the intended message. While commenting on the above-quoted verse from Sūrah al-Shuʿarāʾ, Mawlānā Amīn Ahsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

These verses express God's favor upon the people of Arabia. They are told God has done a special favor to you by revealing His speech in a very clear and lucid Arabic language. The implication is that there is a distinction and honor for you in this fact at the one hand and it serves as

a culmination of the truth to you, leaving you with no excuse to deny it, on the other hand. You can no more seek an excuse and claim that you could not understand it. If you did not value it after this great and elaborate blessing, then it will be you who will be held responsible (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an , 5:558).

**4**

The principle statement “the Qur'an does not admit of more than one interpretation” issues naturally from the coherence in the Qur'an . It means that when, due to the coherence in the discourse, the meaning is no more ambiguous, and the message is communicated with consummate certainty then there remains no possibility of more than one interpretation of the text. To the reader, the significance of the speech to its meanings becomes certain.

A general objection to this view of the univocity of the Qur'an by those who read it at the surface: if the Qur'an is univocal, then why do the exegetes differ on the meaning of certain words, expressions, and verses? This objection presupposes that the difference of opinion negates certitude and necessarily implies probability. This supposition has already been analyzed and refuted in the above discussion. Still, however, it is important to preempt and address a few implied questions:

- If an exegete concludes a single interpretation of a verse in the light of the coherence, does it mean that his interpretation exactly corresponds to the meaning intended by God? The answer to the question is in the negative. It is very much possible that his interpretation corresponds to the meaning God intended by the verse just as it is possible that it does not. There is no way to know whether the meaning given by the exegete and the meaning intended by God are identical before the Day of Judgment.
- If the final word on the soundness or unsoundness of an interpretation is deferred till the Last Day, then why is it termed consummately certain? The answer to this question is that this

interpretation takes the stead of an absolutely certain interpretation by the two agents involved in communication: God Almighty and the human addressee. There is no doubt in that it is certain in the sight of God. As for man, he can term it certain because he understands it to be the intended meaning of the Almighty without a doubt.

- Does the single definitive interpretation of one exegete hold the same level of certitude for others and therefore a conclusive argument for them or not? The answer to this question is in the negative. Every scholar or commoner is bound to what he accepts as a divine command based on his own knowledge and understanding. No one is obliged to accept and follow the knowledge and research of another person.
- If the certitude in interpretation obtained by a person is limited to that person alone, then why is it not termed as probable rather than certain? We respond that we do not call the interpretation of a person [who follows, in his interpretive exercise, the proper principles of understanding] as probable because doing so implies two unwelcome implications:
  - (i)** It implies that the speech of the speaker, that is, Allah Almighty, is probable. It is essentially false.
  - (ii)** considering one's understanding as probable cuts the possibility for an addressee of the Qur'an to consciously adopt the knowledge and practice of the religion
- Do we have an example from the Qur'an to support the explication of the concept of univocity of the Qur'an and the related ideas of certitude and probability? The response to this question is in the affirmative. According to the Sharī'ah of Islam, it is allowable to have privacy with one's wife during the nights of Ramadan. Some people during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, were not aware of this allowance. They believed that Allah has forbidden sexual intimacy during the nights of Ramadan. That is, they had an incorrect interpretation of the Sharī'ah ruling on the question. Still, however, some of them had sexual relations with their spouses during the nights of Ramadan. The Almighty Allah termed this step by them as

dishonesty with themselves and declared it wrong. This example demonstrates that the divine ruling was that the act was allowable. However, some people believed with certainty that it was now allowable. They had adopted an incorrect interpretation of the divine ruling due to their lack of knowledge. Now the question is, whose certitude God Almighty considered valid and binding upon those individuals? Was it the divine certitude with God or the certitude that those individuals carried with them? In fact, as is clear from the Qur'an , the Almighty applied the certitude in the minds of those individuals. He declared their deviance from their factually incorrect interpretation as cheating because what they opposed militated against what they believed to be true. This example shows that whenever we apply the term certain (qaṭʿī) to human interpretations, that does not mean that the said interpretation is permanently certain in the eyes of Allah Almighty as well. The certitude we talk of is related to the limits of human knowledge and understanding. This understanding is based on collective conscious understanding of the human class. This consciousness lends support to the certitude and marks the differentiation between the sound and the unsound for humans. This is the human certitude upon which the system of the world works. It is this human certitude which works as the criterion of knowledge and actions of humans in the sight of God.

# WHY GOD TESTS MAN

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas



This world was created on the principle of trial. For this purpose, Allah has employed diversity in every part of the world and developed the highest level of harmony within this diversity.

Everything is different yet carries an element of harmony with other counterparts. The entire universe is a miraculous combination of harmony and diversity. Therefore, when we look around, we find that the universe is replete with colors of diversity and wonders of innovation. Its diversity is an epitome of beauty and grandeur. Its differentiation is a miracle of discipline and sequence. The diversity not only marks the appellation of the universe but also of the existence of humans.

Our face and color are different from other humans. Our sound, cadence, gait, and appearance are also different. The difference is not restricted to our external features but also exists in our inner being.

Differences are clear like broad daylight in our tastes, interests, habits, attitudes, disposition, and moods. All these differences are means of trial. Trial implies that every individual faces the test of maintaining the highest level of purity in his words and actions.

The result of this test will arrive in the Hereafter, and rewards and punishments will be awarded according to the performance in the worldly life.



This is the case with religion. It raises a question in the mind of every rational person, that is, why the opportunities for performance are not equal for all, upon which the reward and punishment of the Hereafter will be imposed? If trial is a test of knowledge and practice, then why have not all human beings been given equal abilities, equal conditions, and equal opportunities in terms of both? Moreover, Allah has opened the way for the knowledge of the heavens on the one hand by appointing some human beings to the position of prophethood and on the other hand has protected their actions by guarding them from the devils. When philosophers ponder over the divine scheme of reward and punishment based on performance in knowledge and practice, they feel disenchanted towards religion. Similarly, when Sufis face the same problem, they find consolation in creating alternative worlds for the attainment of different statuses. The panic persuades philosophers to declare the universe synonymous with God and feel satisfaction in interpreting its changes and actions as coincidences. Sufis target the perfections of prophethood and try to peer through the heavens by resorting to diverse activities, secluded meditations, and mystic exercises to satisfy their increasing desires for direct communication with God.

The response to this action from our traditional religious scholars is that no doubt opportunities for performance vary for people, but the principle is that the harder the test, the better the reward, and the minor the test, the minimum the reward. A simple example of this is that, though the punishment of rejection is harder for the direct addressees of a prophet,

obedience also brings the reward through the status of a prophet's companion. The question is, why did people of other times not get the opportunity to take a big risk to get a big prize? The answer is that the distribution of opportunities in the world and then the reward and punishment accordingly are man's own choice. Hence, man has no right to object to it. Humans themselves have suggested these testing opportunities for themselves.

And the Qur'an explains it claiming that man himself chose to carry the burden of this trust. Moreover, it states that each human being existed individually at that time.

Therefore, apparently there is no reason not to believe that every human being was given the right to choose the level of the trial.

We believe that this answer is not satisfactory enough. If we ponder over the book of Allah, the answer we get is that everything that exists on the earth has been created for the sake of this test. In the words of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, our great mentor, "it (the world) is a means of a test. By placing man on this earth, Allah Almighty is seeing whether a man utilizes it to gain recognition of his Creator and resultantly earns success in the Hereafter or loses his way falling prey to its deceptions.

Allah Almighty says in Surah al-Kahf (18):

'Whatever is on the earth, We have made it its adornment so that We test people to see who among them does good deeds.'

Explaining the above Qur'anic verse, Mawlānā Amin Ahsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

'The world is a place for a test. In it, we see who seeks success in the Hereafter by using reason, and who pursues his desires by falling in love with this world. As per the requirement of the test, we have put a deceptive cloud of beauty on the face of this world. There is great attraction and charm in wealth and children, in its fields, gardens, and fireplaces, its cars and rooms, its palaces and houses, and its presidencies and ministries. Its pleasures are urgent and quick, and its hardships are hidden. Conversely, the achievements of the Hereafter are distant, and those who seek those achievements have to face a variety of hardships in this world in a regular flow. It is a tough test. It is not easy for any slave of desires. Only those who have such a deep insight that no matter how many different beautiful shapes the world takes

before them, they recognize its truth, like an old lady who has seen thousands of husbands. They never fall in love with it to lose the permanent rewards of the Hereafter. As for those who have blinded the eyes of their minds and hearts and embraced slavery to their desires, they will never be ready to lose the immediate bounties for the distant but lasting reward of the Hereafter despite every particle of this world proving it a reality (Tadabbur e Qur'an 4/558).'

# TREASURE OF PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE



Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

Abū Hawra Sa'dī recounted an interaction with Hasan bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, during which he inquired, "Can you recall specific words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)?"

Hasan responded, "I remember an incident when I was in a room where charity (Sadaqah) was stored. I took a date from there and placed it in my mouth. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) noticed and removed it, along with saliva, placing it back with the dates.

An onlooker commented, 'What difference would it make if this date was consumed?' The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) replied, 'We do not consume charity.'

Hazrat Hasan reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) often emphasized,

"Abandon questionable matters and embrace certainty. Truth brings tranquility, while falsehood fosters doubt and restlessness." (Masnad Ahmad, 1723)

Additionally, Hazrat Abū Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) shared a saying of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), affirming,

"Pride and arrogance are prevalent among camel owners, while serenity and dignity are found among sheep owners."

*(Muslim, 80)*

Hazrat Abū Saʿīd Khudrī and Hazrat Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them both) relayed a teaching of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"Pride and honor are attributes belonging to the Lord. Allah declares: I will punish those who contend with Me regarding these attributes."

*(Muslim, 4758)*

# CARAVAN AFTER CARAVAN



Javed Ahmad Ghamidi

When I reached an age of consciousness, it was the era of organizations and institutions clustering to pave the way for the Islamic revolution. Surroundings influence every individual.

Hence, during my college years, some friends and I, among whom dear friend Dr. Sajid Ali was the most prominent, decided to establish an organization to be named Dairah al-Fikr. Currently, Dr. Sajid Ali is the head of the Philosophy Department at the University of the Punjab. At that time, I had rented a room on Link Macleod Road, Lahore. I wanted to publish a monthly journal titled Khayāl from there. The room became the foundation for the current organization (Al-Mawrid).

The purpose was to start a movement for the Islamic revolution for which the organization would work as a center of knowledge and guidance. Later, I intended to establish a school of learning (dar al-'ulūm). We wanted to ensure that the leadership of the movement is selected from those who complete their education from that school. It was a romantic idea. We believed that it was the only way to make up for the shortcomings in Syed Abul A'la Maududi's Jamā'at-e-Islāmī.

For two to three months, we continued our studies in that room. However, we realized that to achieve our goal, we had to spend more time together.

Therefore, the students who lived in the hostel decided to leave it and, using their pocket money and hostel expenses together, rent a house to use as a center for the movement. The name we chose for the school we wanted to establish was At that time, I resided in Muhallah Sulṭān Pūra near Lahore Railway Station. After a little search, we found a house in the vicinity, and all of us moved to that house.

Jāmi‘ah al-Ḥamrā’. Keeping that in mind, we started to issue a journal entitled ‘al-Ḥamrā’. After consultation, we decided not to use a handwritten manuscript and instead compose the copy in type, a form of publication in which letters are put together to form a text. People who have experienced this method of publication know very well that it causes a lot of proof errors, correcting which requires extremely careful proofing.

The tragedy we faced was that we just proofread the text, corrected the errors, and handed over the manuscript to the printer. We took it for granted that the mistakes would be removed. However, when the issue went through the print and came into our hands, we learned that not a single marked mistake had been corrected. We could do nothing but discard the copies of the journal. This was the first accident that we faced because of our inexperience.

Before we could recover from this worry, we found another trouble staring at us. Within a few months, we were forced to vacate the house where we had

established the center of our movement. It took months of effort to find a new house. It was house 29 in Block J of Model Town, Lahore. We were thankful to God that the period of suspension of work did not prolong, and we restarted the work. In June 1971, we met Chodhary Muhammad Anwar, a renowned advocate of Lahore. He was accompanied by one of his elderly friends, Sayyid Badar Bukhari.

Both were impressed with our mission. They recommended that we should further our mission by starting a dars-e-Qur‘an circle Qur‘an in his neighborhood at Allama Iqbal Road. The study circle was launched on July 7.

Due to this circle, we, who were still students, were blessed with the guardianship of a few senior people, among whom Sayyid Arshad Bukhari and Shaykh Muhammad Arshad were the most prominent. The two were close friends and employees of WAPDA. They had been attending lectures of Dr. Israr Ahmad regularly. Dr. Israr would call them Arshadayn (two Arshads). The program of teaching and learning continued for 1.5 to 2 years. By then, many people were ready to work with us. Therefore, we officially organized the movement under the headship of Sayyid Badar Bukhari.

Mawlānā Abdul Rahman Madani, a distinguished Ahl-e-Ḥadīth scholar who lived near our residence, also joined the movement. A few other participants of the Dars-e-Qur'an circle program also joined the movement.

However, the movement did not last long. Badar Bukhari was at a stage of his life when he could not manage to discharge the functions related to leading such an organization. Therefore, with mutual consultation, the organization was abolished.

In March 1973, we published *Ishtraq* magazine as the organ of *Dā'irah al-Fikr*.

We believed that after obtaining a declaration from the government, we could publish it as a monthly journal to communicate our message to the public. However, we realized soon that obtaining a declaration is not easy. So, this scheme remained a distant dream. A few months later, the landlord demanded an increase in house rent. In those circumstances, it was not possible for us to meet his demand.

As a result, we had to vacate that house in Model Town. Afterward, we, the friends, remained disconnected for months. The organizational activities also came to a halt.

After a long struggle, we found a house in Ahmad Block, Garden Town, Lahore. The friends came together, rearranged the paraphernalia, and restarted the teaching and learning activities. Some friends did not like the title *Dā'irah al-Fikr*, so we changed it to *Dār al-Ishrāq*. From the group that had initiated the mission, only two were left, Dr. Sajid and I. Shaykh Afzaal Ahmad, Mustansar Mir, Chouhdary Ilyas Ahmad,



and Choudhary Muhammad Rafiq were new associates.

Our friend, Zulfiqar Ahmad Khan, is also a part of the memories of those times. He lived in the neighborhood. Though he was not associated with the organization, still he was considered as one. The same was the case with Asghar Niazi and Muhammad Tariq Maykan. The duo stayed with us because of friendship.

During those days, I had the opportunity to frequently meet Mawlānā Syed Abul A'lā Maududi. One day, I went to meet him, and during our discussion, the topic of the movement was raised.

Mawlānā asked for details and learned about my friends. I told him about the difficulties and hurdles that repeatedly halted our progress. I requested him to become our guide. Mawlānā was kind enough to accept my request. Hence, as per his advice, we opened a joint bank account for the organization in the name of Mawlānā and myself in Habib Bank Limited, Ichra. Mawlānā started depositing 1,000 rupees from his pocket every month. Relocating from Ahmad Block, we moved to a building arranged by Mawlānā, located in A-1 Zaildar Park Ichra.

Mawlānā wanted to convert the organization into a branch of Idārah e Ma'ārif Islāmī or an independent institution. At the suggestion of Mawlānā,

I had already become a member of Jamā'at-e-Islāmī (JI) but some of the senior members of JI did not like this decision.

Therefore, a campaign was launched against me, due to which I realized within 7-8 months that it was not possible for me to work there in those circumstances. Aslam Salimi, a senior member of JI, had conveyed the message of the party that they wanted to convert the building, which housed our organization, into an election office. The situation made clear what we had to do.

We consulted with each other, sought Mawlānā's permission, and moved to Muridke, near Lahore, at the request of Ilyas Ahmad Chaudhary, who was a

resident of that village. We relocated there at the end of the year 1976, and on January 11, 1977, I received a letter from Mawlānā Fateh Muhammad, the Emir of JI Punjab. Through this letter, he informed me that my membership of JI had been cancelled. It was a mere two-liner, which included the announcement of the decision of my removal from the party without explaining the reasons.

Mian Tufail Muhammad was the Emir of JI Pakistan at that time. I wrote a letter to him inquiring about the reasons behind the decision but never got a response.

For me, this union and separation were an important experience of my life. During that period, I observed a great man of his time very closely. I offered prayers with him in the same rank, talked to him, learned the etiquette of life from him, took lessons of patience and wisdom, understood the delicacies of language and expression, learned about the details of the incidents before and after the Machigot incident directly from him, and shared my opinions with him regarding his academic differences with Mawlānā Amin Ahsan Islāhī.

I listened to him expressing veneration for Imam Farāḥī and narrating stories of his love for Abū al-Kalam Azad, Muhammad Ali Johar, and Allama Iqbal.

These interactions & company form one of the greatest assets of my life. I still remember Mawlānā Maududi as a son separated from his cherished memories of his father. I also consider his party (JI) as my tribe and despite all the differences on policy and approach, I feel the same emotional bond with the party that a person feels for his family.

The individuals [from the JI] who led the campaign against me perhaps did not know me. Hence, I have no complaints about them. I have a positive opinion about them, believing that what they did to me, they did, in their perception, for the betterment of their party.

In our last meeting, occurring just before his departure to the United States, Mawlānā said to me: My dear, I have great expectations in you. Always listen to your critics very attentively.

If they stoop to lowliness, remember to follow the divine command: “When they have to pass by a frivolous thing, they pass with dignity.” If they seek to infuriate you, refuse to be excited despite their slandering and allegations. If you do so, God will be with you and you will be able to defeat them in your field, God willing. In the ups and downs of my life, I have always firmly adhered to this advice by the Mawlānā.

Because of this very advice,

“Day and night, in this desert of darkness, I create cypress and jasmine from every gum-acacia tree.”

I was talking about my relocation from Lahore to Muridke; I remembered the company of I. “Since the story was so delicious, I told it at great length.” Malik Muhammad Ashraf, a new colleague of ours, was a married man.

After shifting to Muridke, Mir Sahib and I also got married. Now it was no longer possible for us to live a hostel life. The changes in the circumstances had made it imperative for me to arrange for financial support for our colleagues.

We tried our best but could not get enough resources. After a struggle for survival at Muridke for almost two years, we realized that we had no option but to wind up the institution. It was an evening in April 1978 when, after several days of discussion, we finally reached this decision and the long-time companions unwillingly started leaving for their homes.

Meanwhile, we had fortunately obtained approval for the journal *Ishraq* in the name of Mustansar Mir. The first issue of the journal was published in January 1979. The editorial of the volume covered this very topic.

I wrote: The academy, “Dār al-Ishrāq”, was established in November 1970 and continued to function until April 1978 in Muridke, a small town lying 26 kilometers away from Lahore. However, it has been dysfunctional for several months now. Some of my friends have already returned to their homes after years of struggle, and others will go back

sooner or later. It was a mission that kicked off, went through different stages of struggle for survival, and then came to an end. My comrades insist that I should write and highlight the nature of our work and the causes and reasons behind its suspension so that people who are interested in giving new life to the mission and have the will to do something may come forward to rescue it.

I do not know when we will be able to restart the mission, but I can surely say that my determination has not waned. I have a firm belief that this is what we should really be doing. I believe that I can undertake this mission. If God permits, this troop will stand up to march again. I do not believe that the caravan has disintegrated. I just feel that it has stopped on the way for a while to take rest, perhaps seeking to gather required resources or to start a new journey.

I can hear the ringing of the bell, and I have taken up my pen.

Further, I wrote: I had realized at the beginning that it is not a part-time work. Those planning to join it will have to devote their days and nights and embrace it as a lifelong mission. I knew that ultimately the institution will have to provide for the financial needs of those joining it with the intention of sacrificing everything they have.

For this reason, I embarked upon this mission, working on two fronts. I started my quest for the individuals working for the mission and initiated the struggle for resources

Simultaneously. Now I believe that

my personal disposition is perfectly compatible with the first cause but is hardly compatible with the second task.

As a result, I enjoyed significant success in finding the right people for the mission but failed to succeed in gathering resources. This is not the right place to detail the issue. It is the tale of Farhad and the Mount Bistoon and a narrative of irrigating the acacia thorn with one's blood.

I am narrating an abridged version of this tale here. I know it may be troublesome for my

readers, but it is the right time to express myself briefly on this issue. *Phir iltifāt-e dil-e dostān rahey an rahey* Not sure if I will ever be able to draw the attention of my friends.

I have already talked about the beginning of the mission. It was difficult to start. However, once started, friends gradually joined the mission. By 1975, the number of team members reached 7. Among them were Afzal Aḥmad and Malik

Muhammad Ashraf, who had master's degrees in economics; Sajid Aḥmad in philosophy; Ilyas Ahmad in politics; Muhammad Rafiq in Arabic; and Mustansar Mir in English. Mansoor al-Hamid was an MBBS doctor. Mustansar Mir had completed CSS and joined the team after training at the Civil Service Academy, just a few days before his appointment. Instead of joining the civil service, he decided to be a part of the circle of the selfless.

The sacrifice of every single team member is matchless. These youngsters were equipped with great capabilities. Their determination, love for knowledge, beautiful nature, and passion were unparalleled treasures in the history of this academy.

I believe that I have learned a lot from them, and they could give a lot to the coming generations. However, during their stay at the organization, they could hardly work with ease for a few months.

The lack of financial resources led to frequent suspensions of the project. The history of the academy is the history of continuous crises. We were forced to start and end the educational activities repeatedly. Despite all these difficulties, with the blessing of Allah, we have accomplished some of the work, and what remains to be done is much less. In my assessment, an uninterrupted two-year opportunity would have led to the completion of the first phase of this effort.

While I write, all operations are suspended. We, the weak servants of the ever-living God, are trying our best to revive it with new enthusiasm in the barren land of Muridke.

I do not know when this discontinuity will come to an end. However, I hope that Allah Almighty will not let our efforts go to waste.

The first stage of my struggle ended there. I was thinking that after returning to Lahore, I would restrict myself to publishing the journal. The declaration of Ishraq in the name of Mustansar Mir had already been obtained.

However, after publishing only two issues of the journal, Mustansar Mir decided to move to the United States. Secondly, we two had a few differences regarding the policy of the journal.

Therefore, my dream remained unfulfilled, and we were forced to stop the publication of Ishraq yet again.

During those days, some students would come to learn Arabic literature from me. Abu Shoaib Safdar Ali and Masood Akbar Pasha were the most prominent figures among them. Abu was the son of Mawlānā Ghulam Naqshband, a religious scholar from Sargodha, and a student of Mawlānā Hussain Ali of Wan Bhachran.

Considering his extraordinary talent, I wanted him to move to Lahore. During the hard times at Muridke, the people who offered extraordinary support and cooperation included Doctor Farrukh Hussain Malik, an elderly person from our extended family.

When I drew his attention towards the need for support, he established an institution in the name of the Farrukh Foundation.

Safdar Mir, the father of Mustansar Mir, was appointed the first managing director of the institution. On my recommendation, he decided to publish a journal titled al-I'lām. Although my name was included in it, Abu Shoaib was made the editor of this journal to fulfill all practical needs. I was so glad to see that this arrangement paved the way for Abu Shoaib's relocation to Lahore. However, we could not continue the publication of this journal for long. Within 2 years, Mawlānā Shoaib got a job at the University of the Punjab, and the journal was discontinued.

Those were the days when I told my respected teacher Imam [Amīn Ahsan Iṣlāḥī] to convert the Tadabbur e Qur'an Circle into a proper institution. Tadabbur e Qur'an Circle was established after his departure from Jamā'at-e-Islāmī. Mawlānā liked my suggestion. At his advice, I composed the constitution of the institution, and the organization was established in the name of Idārah Tadabbur e Qur'an o Hadith.

The Quarterly Tadabbur is still published under this institution. I intended to work with this institution to pursue the goals I had set for myself. However, it took no time to become clear that the leading people of the circle would not like my attachment to the organization. Therefore, the best option was to continue my struggle separately without stirring discord in the institution.

During those days, I was teaching a group of students. Naeem Rafi was among those students. He would come to meet me and repeatedly insisted on reviving the project that had been closed in 1978. Considering the past experiences, I was not ready to revive it. Later, when people like Khalid Zaheer and Aftab Shamsi stood by him, I had no option but to change my mind. Saeed Nawaz was the eldest among our friends.

We established a management team under his leadership. The inauguration ceremony of this program was held in Jinnah Hall Lahore and was presided over by Mawlānā Amin Ahsan Iṣlāḥī. Many known scholars and renowned personalities attended the ceremony.

In June 1983, we finally established the institution, which is now known as Al-Mawrid and is currently located at 51 K Model Town Lahore. Soon after, we also revived Ishraq in 1985. For 18 to 24 months, it was published as a series of volumes. In 1987, I got a declaration for this journal.

With the blessing of God, it has been publishing uninterrupted since then. The publication of Renaissance started in 1990 and is still being published regularly. Since day 1, Shehzad Saleem has overseen this journal. I kept Ishraq under my supervision.

However, now I have passed this responsibility on to Jawad Ahsan, my eldest son. I hope that, with the blessing of God, the publication of the journals will continue.

During the past twenty-five years, I was also involved in the establishment of two other organizations, namely, Anṣār al-Muslimūm and Danish Sara. Leaders like Mawlānā Wasi Mazhar Nadvi and Doctor Muhammad Farooq have led these organizations at different times.

However, these organizations did not survive for more than a few years. Al-Mawrid, however, has been functional for a quarter of a century. It will continue to work with the blessing of God.

Though this organization also went through a difficult phase when it faced suspension for a short time after 1987, after its revival in 1991 with the help of our friend Altaf Mahmood, it has been fully functional with the blessing of God.

The org. was established, believing that among Muslims, , the process of gaining a sound

understanding of the religion has deviated from the right course. Lost in the maze of sectarian prejudices & political wrangling, the true message of Islam, based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, has become alien to the Muslims.

The Qur'an, which is the foundation of this religion, is rarely approached for purposes other than oral delivery or rote learning. In the madrasas, those disciplines of learning that were at best a possible means to understand the Qur'an have become an end in themselves.

The Hadith has been isolated from its foundations in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the primary focus now is on the foundational principles and the emanating discourses of a particular school of thought and on the polemics to establish their superiority over those of others.

As an institution, Al-Mawrid is a name that symbolizes the effort to redress this problem. Therefore, the basic objective of this institution is the facilitation and perpetuation of explanatory and research work on the true understanding of Islam, the



publication and mass communication of this understanding through all possible means, and the augmentation of people's knowledge and education through its dissemination.

*Following are the salient features of the strategy we have adopted to achieve the objective outlined above:*

**1**

A global movement of Tazkīr bi al-Qur'an (reminding people through the Qur'an) shall be initiated.

People shall be educated on the divine law, articles of faith, and moral principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

**2****3**

Researchers and scholars adhering to the true understanding of Islam shall be affiliated with the institution through the fellowship scheme, and their research, education, and dawah work be facilitated as far as possible.

People shall be motivated to set up, wherever possible:

- Institutions of Islamic learning to produce religious scholars and researchers with a true vision and understanding of Islam.
- Schools (up to the intermediate / high school / A levels) to provide students with high-quality education and training in an environment where their creativity is encouraged and due attention is given to developing sound awareness of their religious and cultural heritage.
- Weekend schools to provide students from other schools with instruction in the Qur'an through the Qur'an itself in such a manner as enables them to remain committed to their religion from the depth of their hearts, minds, and souls in their later years.

**4**

- Religious and spiritual sanctuaries where people can find a break from their worldly and mundane routines to benefit from the company of scholars and pious people, learn religion from them, and focus on worship and prayer to purge their hearts and minds.

This institution is the center of my entire struggle and effort. I have decided to devote every day of my remaining life to this institution apart from my academic activities. I pray to God to grant us sincerity in our knowledge and action.

Indeed, the kings may generously bestow upon the beggar!

# SPLITTING OF THE MOON (III)



Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

The Holy Quran refers to the splitting of the moon incident as an "āyah." God Almighty says:

"The hour which they are being warned of has drawn nigh and the moon is cleft asunder. [But they will not accept the hereafter] and whatever sign they see, they will only evade it and remark: 'This is a magic that is being handed down from the past.'"

(Q 54:1-2)

The term "āyah" is a very common Arabic word. It implies a symbol and a sign. The term is used to mean physical manifestations indicating a hidden object or reality, or incident. For example, signposts direct routes to take, archaeological remains remind us of ruined towns, and artifacts and products tell us about their creators and manufacturers.

The interrelation between such things and the facts they lead to is that of a sign and the signified, both of which are correlative and reciprocal.

At some instances, the Holy Quran uses the term "āyah" in this literal sense as well. Surah Yunus (10) mentions the divine decree of retaining the Pharaoh's body to keep it as a sign of the event of divine retribution for future generations.

God Almighty says:

"Thus, today We shall preserve your body so that you can become a sign [of God's punishment] for those who come after you. In reality, many people only remain heedless to Our signs."

(Q 10:92)

In Surah al-Shur'arā' (26), Allah Almighty declares that 'Ād's feat to erect high buildings, as a sign of their grandeur, was a fruitless activity. The verse reads:

"[What is the matter with you?] Will you keep building useless memorials in this way on every high ground? And keep constructing large palaces in this manner as if you have to live forever?"

Going beyond using the word "*āyah*" for a sign, symbol, and relic, the Holy Quran has also used the term as its own coinage. From that perspective, the term has been used for the arguments derived from the human self and the external universe (*anfus-o-āfāq*) that bring to light the attributes of the sustainer of the world.

These divine attributes comprise of greatness, creation, authority, mercy, lordship (*rabūbiyyat*), justice, knowledge, and wisdom. Human reason and nature are endowed with the ability to know these attributes.

If man applies this ability correctly, he can set foot on the path of knowing Allah. Human capabilities that guide him in this regard include deliberation, reason & understanding, and remembrance & The Holy Quran describes these capabilities as *yata fakkarūna* (deliberate/reflect), *ya'qilūna* (use their intellect), and *yadh dhakkarūna* (get warned).

It reads:

"[If you want to come close to Him, then know that] the straight path reaches God, whereas there are deviant paths as well. And had He wanted, He would have guided all of you to that one path.

It is He Who has sent down water from the skies which you drink and also through which that pasturage sprouts in which you graze animals.

From it, He grows for you crops, olives, dates, grapes and fruits of all types. Surely, in it, there is a great sign for those who reflect.

It is He Who has put the night, the day, the sun and the moon into your service, and it is at His behest that the stars also serve you. Surely, in it are many signs for those who use their intellect.

And these things of various types that He has scattered for you in the earth, also undoubtedly have a great sign for those who can be reminded." (Q 16:9-13)

These verses clearly demonstrate that God's signs play a crucial role as a source of guidance in recognizing God's Being and attributes. The relationship between divine attributes and divine signs can be likened to an 'illah (cause) and ma'lūl (effect). Attributes manifest themselves through signs, and signs can help recognize these attributes. Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi has not only elucidated the Quranic stance regarding the Being and attributes of God but has also explained the interrelation between attributes and signs.

Below are some relevant excerpts from his explanation:

The Qur'an has explicitly stated that no mind can comprehend the being of God. The reason for this is that the being who has created these means of comprehension can certainly comprehend human beings, however, these means can in no way comprehend Him who comprehends these means.

Contrary to the person of God, His attributes can be comprehended to some extent by a human being. The reason is that man himself finds some of these attributes within him, though at a very small scale.

God has granted man some portion of His knowledge, power, providence, wisdom, and mercy. Man can thus analogously have some idea of the attributes of God. However, it is essential for this that a person keeps his intellect alive and that he, under the guidance of divine revelation, keeps reflecting on the signs of God within him and in the world around him.

For this very reason, the Qur'an has repeatedly called upon its addressees to exercise ta'auqul, tafakkur, and tadhakkur.

If one deliberates on one's surroundings and on the world within him, everything bears testimony that God is not merely the first cause and an eternal entity; He is, in fact, a being who has intention and knowledge and has all noble attributes (Mīzān p. 96-99).

The above details explicitly establish that when the word "*āyah*" is attributed to God, it implies the signs within the human nafs (anfus, self/being) and the external universe (āfāq) that point towards the different attributes of God. These "*āyah*'s" i.e. signs, testify that God is the creator of the universe, the owner of the heavens and the earth, and the lord of the east and the west.

However, if they still cannot comprehend them, Allah Almighty has further explained them in detail in His book to remove any chance of ambiguity or misconception. He says:

"He makes the signs clear for people of knowledge." (Q 10:5).

"He makes the signs clear so that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord." (Q 13:2).

Explaining the above verse of Surah 13, Mr. Ghamidi writes:

Allah is Most Subtle, All-Aware, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Gracious, Merciful, Almighty, All-Wise, Most Capable of everything, and has perfect knowledge of all things.

Therefore, when the Holy Quran seeks to direct human attention to these divine attributes, it employs these obvious signs as evidence. This is how it provides them with a reminder and encouragement, a cause of fear and a threat, and a warning and retribution.

These signs of God found in the human nafs and the external universe (anfus-o-āfāq) are evident and obvious from all aspects. Eyes can see them, rational minds can understand them, insightful hearts can recognize the Lord through them and learn about their eventual outcome.

"[It] provides their details in His Book so that the facts which it presents are understood by its addressees. The consequence of this understanding should be that the Being Who has created this world with His immeasurable power and perfect wisdom will not let it end without any meaningful culmination; on the contrary, He will necessarily make it reach the fate which has been prescribed for it." (al-Bayan, 2:573).

To sum up the above detail, the literal meaning of the word "āyah" is a sign or symbol. It implies something that is obvious and identifies some hidden reality or an object. For example, a creation points to its creator, an artifact leads to its maker, and an image indicates the artist. In the terminology of the Quran, "āyah" refers to those arguments and evidences from within individuals nafs and throughout the universe (anfus-o-āfāq) that play the role of signposts in the path to recognize God's being and attributes and forewarn humans about their fate in the hereafter.

According to this use of "āyah " as a term, four applications of the word can be defined:

**1**

The divine signs that commonly appear in human nafs and the universe (anfus-o-āfāq).

Signs that miraculously appear in human nafs and the universe (anfus-o-āfāq).

**2****3**

Signs appearing through the divine prophets in humans nafs and the universe (anfus-o-āfāq).

Such Quranic verses as interpret all forms of the divine signs appearing within human nafs and the universe (anfus-o-āfāq).

**4**

Let us try to understand these applications of the word "āyah " in the light of the Holy Quran in detail. It will help us understand to which application the event of splitting of the moon corresponds to.

# TRUE MEANING OF LIFELESS BODY ON SOLOMON'S THRONE



Naeem Ahmad Baloch

The real meaning of several instances in the Holy Quran has been a subject of wide difference of opinion. This factor may give rise to the following questions in some minds:

1

The Holy Quran claims that it is easy to understand. Why, then, is it so difficult to understand many of its parts? Do not these difficulties contradict the Quranic claim to be an easy book?

Some new interpretations of differed upon Quranic statements seem to make sense. But the question remains: did the scholars not really ponder over the Quran before these sound interpretations appeared? After all, what skill do the contemporary scholars possess that helps them undo the centuries-old knots?

2

3

Why should we not accept the interpretations of the people of the early days of Islam who knew the language of the Quran very well? Their interpretation clearly indicates that the Holy Quran was a made-up book of that time. Its reality is becoming clear now. However, some backward people or those whose financial needs are connected with Islam and the Quran are luring the people through artificial interpretations.



Obviously, the original and true meaning of the Quran is the one the earliest people gave it. And according to those earliest interpreters, the Quran is nothing more than the stories of the old.

For our discussion here, we have chosen such topics from the Quran that attract such questions. One such example comes from verses 34-35 in Surah 38 of the Holy Quran. Regarding these verses, Mawlānā Syed Abul A'la Maududi writes:

"Indeed, this particular Quranic passage is one of the most difficult in the Qur'an. We find no firm and certain basis to offer a final interpretation of this part." (Tafahim-ul-Quran, 4/338).

In this write-up, we will offer the results of our study on these verses.

The simple translation of the text of the verse is as follows:

"We had put Solomon (peace be upon him) through [another] trial and rendered him like a body (jasadan) lying on his throne. Then he repented [and] prayed: 'Lord! Forgive me and bless me with a kingdom which does not befit anyone but me. Indeed, you are very forgiving.'"

Some exegetes have considered the word 'jasdan' as an object of the verb 'al-qaynā' (we put) to translate the verse as follows:

"We put Solomon (peace be upon him) through a test and placed a body on his throne."

This translation invites the following questions:

- What type of body was placed on the throne? What does the word jasad really mean?
- In what sense was it a trial in this act?
- How does this trial connect with the prayer following it?

Basically, the verse has been interpreted in two ways. The exegetes who tried to understand it with the help of the traditions considered the word jasad as an object of the verb and in their interpretive exercise subjected the verses to the traditions. Several traditions have been reported about it. The exegetes could not find a consensus on any one of these traditions. However, three interpretations can be considered as representative of the entire tradition.

Two of those interpretations are based on *Isrāʿīliyyāt* (reports based on the eastern folklore regarding the Jewish and Christian milieu), and the third one is housed in a narrative accepted by Bukhari and Muslim.

It is claimed that the first opinion was held by scholars, including Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujāhid, Saʿīd bin Jubayr, Ḥassan, and Qatādah. Commenting on this opinion, Ibn Kathīr writes that it has been reported from Ibn ʿAbbās with a sound *isnād*. Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (b. 224 AH), the first exegete of the Holy Quran, also upheld this interpretation. The summary of his interpretation follows:

"In these verses, 'body' refers to an evil Jinn. He took the form of Solomon (peace be upon him) and grabbed the ring wearing which Solomon (peace be upon him) used to run the government system. This happened because in the palace of Solomon (peace be upon him), one of his favorite queens along with some of the king's concubines continued to worship idols for forty days. Solomon (peace be upon him) remained oblivious to it. He faced the consequences of this ignorance through the loss of the ring. The Jinn captured Solomon (peace be upon him)'s throne and separated him from his kingdom. The Jinn ruled the kingdom for forty days. He also entered Solomon's (peace be upon him) harem. When people started doubting him, they asked him to recite Torah. This entirely exposed him. He ran away and threw the ring in a river. A fish swallowed the ring. By chance, the fish fell into the hands of Solomon (peace be upon him). After his removal from the throne, Solomon (peace be upon him) had started working as a fisherman. He got the fish as remuneration for his labor. He found the ring in the belly of the fish. The ring reinstated all his powers and made him regain his kingdom. Thus, the evil Jinn was the body that was placed on the throne of Solomon (peace be upon him).

After this, Solomon (peace be upon him) prayed that he be given a kingdom that no one could take away from him."

Many exegetes, including Imām Rāzī, have criticized this opinion, stating that if satans were to take the shape of divine messengers, the entire religion would become subject to doubts.

They have also declared it against the Quranic statements. According to this opinion, Solomon committed a mistake or negligence. How can it be considered a trial? Moreover, this group of exegetes have rejected it, stating that it is based on *Isrā'īliyyāt*.

Ṭabarānī has introduced the second interpretation in his Quran commentary titled "*Al-Awsaṭ*". Ibn Marduyah narrated this tradition from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him). Al-Imāmiyyah narrated it from Abu 'Abdullah. The same has been narrated on the authority of Sha'bī. It is acknowledged that its isnād is weak. Nevertheless, it is described in the form of an opinion in the commentaries.

According to this interpretation, a son was born to Solomon (peace be upon him) after twenty years. The devils assumed that if the boy lives and takes over the throne after Solomon (peace be upon him), they will be enslaved by him too. So, they conspired to kill him. Solomon (peace be upon him) somehow learned about this conspiracy. He hid his son in the clouds. This action of Solomon (peace be upon him) was the sin and trial which he suffered, that is, he trusted clouds instead of God. God did not like that. Therefore, at one occasion, when Solomon (peace be upon him) was busy on an expedition, the dead body of the boy fell on his throne from the clouds. The incident made Solomon (peace be upon him) realize that he had not trusted God. He repented and sought forgiveness. Thus, the body mentioned in the verses under study refers to Solomon's son who had fallen dead on his throne.

This interpretation too has been rejected considering it unsound and contradictory to the Holy Quran. Moreover, no such historical event has been ascribed to the reign of Solomon (peace be upon him). Besides, it does not establish the connection between the incident and Solomon's supplication following it.

The most famous interpretation in this regard which gained acknowledgment of most of the exegetes is based on an agreed-upon (*muttafiq alayh*) narrative. The narrative reads:

"Abu Hurayrah narrated: Solomon (peace be upon him), the Prophet, swore that he would certainly sleep with ninety wives.

Each one will conceive a male child destined to fight for Allah's Cause. A companion of Solomon (peace be upon him), an angel according to Sufyān the narrator, advised him to say, 'If Allah wills.' However, Solomon (peace be upon him) forgot to utter those words. Consequently, he slept with all his wives, but not a single woman gave birth to a child, except one who gave birth to a disfigured boy. Abu Hurayrah further added: The Prophet remarked, 'Had Solomon (peace be upon him) said, "If Allah wills," his oath would not have been wasted. Rather, saying "God willing" would become a means of securing his intended objective.'" (Bukhari 34:24)

On the basis of this Ḥadīth, it was assumed that this body was actually this incomplete child. This is the view taken by most commentators in general. But this opinion has been strongly criticized by Syed Abul A'la Maududi, the author of Tafahīm-ul-Quran. He writes:

"This Ḥadīth has been narrated by Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (peace be upon him), and it is recorded by many Ḥadīth compilers, including Bukhārī and Muslim, through a number of chains of narrators. In Bukhārī itself, the different chains through which this narrative has been mentioned differ among themselves in the number of wives mentioned. Numbers between 60, 70, 90, 99, or 100 have been mentioned in this context. In terms of the transmission chains, most of the traditions have robust chains, and their authenticity cannot be challenged in the light of principles of Ḥadīth acceptance and rejection in terms of isnāds."

"However, the content of the Ḥadīth clearly contradicts reason and strongly suggests that such words could not have been spoken by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as they are put in the reports. Instead, it is plausible that he mentioned this as an example of the illogical and fictitious tales prevalent among the Jews. Listeners might have misunderstood, thinking that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had conveyed it as an actual event. Forcing people to accept such traditions solely based on the strength of their transmission chains would reduce religion to a subject of mockery and jest."

"Anyone can calculate that even during the longest winter night, the time between the Isha and Fajr Prayers does not exceed ten to eleven hours.

If the minimum number of wives is considered to be 60, it would imply that Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) engaged in continuous intercourse with them for 10 to 11 hours that night, at a rate of six wives per hour, without a moment's rest. Is this practically possible? Can it be believed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated this as an actual event?"

"Moreover, the Ḥadīth does not state anywhere that the body placed on Solomon (peace be upon him)'s throne, as mentioned in the Quran, was the malformed child. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recounted this event as an interpretation of that particular Quranic verse. Additionally, while it is understandable why Solomon (peace be upon him) sought Allah's forgiveness upon the birth of the child, it remains unclear why he also prayed, in addition to seeking forgiveness, for a kingdom unparalleled by anyone after him (Tafhīm al-Quran 4/337-8)."

Hafiz Salāḥ al-Din Yusuf, a famous Ahl e Ḥadīth scholar, defends the interpretation in the following words:

"Some people have objected to this interpretation employing logic and reason. They argue that it is not possible to have intercourse with such a large number of wives in one night. However, we believe that Allah gives miracles to His Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them). The power of manhood is one of those miracles. Moreover, their timings are also full of benediction. In this sense, it is completely wrong to measure the incident of Solomon (peace be upon him) on normal human standards and declare it irrational."

"Shedding light on this argument, Hafiz Ibn Hajr writes: The incident also describes the special characteristic of the divine messengers which is provided to them through exceptional power of intercourse and warrants their health, physical strength, and perfect manhood despite that they have a special knack for knowledge and worship. This miracle was also bestowed upon our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with greater strength. He had extraordinary interest in worship, knowledge of the divinity, and well-being of the creatures of God. Moreover, he was a low eater, a habit which causes physical weakness to a person who has frequent intercourse.

Despite that, he would at times have sexual intercourse with his 11 wives on the same night with a single bath. It is also said that more pious people have greater sexual strength." (Fatḥ al-Bārī, vol. 6 p. 563, Tab' Dār al-Salām, al-Rayād).

"It is true this incident of Solomon (peace be upon him)'s sexual intercourse has not been mentioned in this Ḥadīth as an explanation of the Quranic verse in question. Many exegetes have connected this incident to the interpretation of the verse according to their understanding. However, we believe that compared to other interpretations and explanations that are mostly based on Israeli traditions (Isrā'īliyyāt), this application seems sounder and gives a more reasonable explanation of the verse. God knows the best." (Muhaddith Magazine, journal 251, August 2001)

According to Hafiz's statement, it is clear from his defense that he has found this interpretation better than other interpretations. He does not declare it completely certain or conclusive.

Mawlānā Syed Abul Ala Maududi is the most prominent of those exegetes who have considered "Jasadān" to be the object of the verb and did not accept any tradition in the interpretation of the verse. Interpreting the verses, he writes:

"But if the words of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him)'s prayer: 'My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me', are read in the light of the Israelite history, it appears that probably he cherished in his heart the desire that his son should succeed him on the throne so that His kingdom and sovereignty should continue in his own race after him. This same thing has been called a temptation for him by Allah, and he realized this when his heir Rehoboam grew up into an unworthy young man, whose ugly manners clearly foretold that he would not be able to sustain the mighty kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) even for a few days. Placing a mere body on his throne probably means that the son whom he wanted to succeed him on the throne was an unworthy person. Therefore, he restrained his desire, asked for Allah's forgiveness and prayed that the kingdom should end with him, and he would curb his desire to have it continued in his dynasty.

The Israelite history also shows the same thing. Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) did not make any will about his successor, nor made it binding for the people to obey a particular person." (Tafhīm al-Quran, 4/338)

On one hand, Mawlānā is using the word probably to support this interpretation and on the other hand, the very next verse contradicts this opinion mentioning Solomon's supplication of expressing his desire for an unparalleled kingdom. No such report in the history is available regarding Solomon (peace be upon him)'s succession, and Mawlānā is offering this interpretation as his personal assessment. Moreover, assuming that the body refers to a prince destined to be a future king is also not conceivable at all.

The exegetes who upheld that the body refers to Solomon (peace be upon him) himself and refused to accept any narrative include Imām Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī, Allāmah Ālūsī, and others. In Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Imām Rāzī writes:

"I say that it is not beyond the possibility that Allah Almighty tested him enshrouding him in fear or an anticipated adversity (26/393)."

It indicates that Imām Rāzī is not presenting a detailed explanation of the verse. He is merely describing a possibility which can be correct as well as incorrect. However, he interprets the body as the condition of Solomon (peace be upon him). He does not even address the question of its connection with the supplication in the next verse. Another interpretation of these verses has been given in Tafsir Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī as an opinion of Abu Muslim and some other scholars. Here, the word "jasadan" has been employed as an adverb of state (ḥāl) qualifying the pronoun for the object (maf'ūl ḍamīr) to imply that it depicts the illness and subduedness of Solomon (peace be upon him). ). Imām Rāzī has ascribed this interpretation to a group of researchers. The issue with this interpretation is that the Quranic verses do not mention any illness, nor do we find any indication of his suffering in historical sources. The interpretation also fails to answer the question of the connection between the event and the subsequent supplication. Having detailed all these interpretations, we turn to the interpretations given by Mawlānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī and Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi.

As far as the grammatical position of the word "jasadan" is concerned, these scholars agree with many other past commentators. They try to understand the verses in the light of the immediate context of the discourse and the coherence of the Holy Quran. They translate the text of the verses as follows: "We had put Solomon (peace be upon him) through [another] trial and placed him on his throne like a [lifeless] body. Then he repented and prayed: 'Lord! Forgive me and bless me with a kingdom which does not befit anyone but me. Indeed, you are very forgiving.' (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/529-30)."

Commenting on the verse, Mawlānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes: "This describes the second incident related to Solomon's repentance. The historical works indicate that once Solomon (peace be upon him) faced a severe test. His enemies invaded and took control of the majority of his territories. They also spread such disturbance and unrest in the remaining part of the kingdom that the entire governance system got disrupted. Only the center of the kingdom remained intact where Solomon (peace be upon him) was left besieged and helpless. It was a test from Allah. Solomon (peace be upon him) was a God-fearing king, so he thought that Allah had punished him for some mistake. This feeling doubled his grief, and he remained lifeless on his throne in this state of grief and helplessness. At that time, he prayed to Allah with great devotion and humility, saying: 'Lord, forgive me my sins, and though I am no longer entitled to Your grace and reward, You are Oft-Forgiving. Therefore, in spite of my non-privilege, give me a kingdom which cannot be and will never be bestowed upon people with such sins.' (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/533)."

Explaining the statement "we put Solomon (peace be upon him) through a trial," he writes: "It means we tested Solomon (peace be upon him). Such tests and trials are Sunnah of Allah. It is not necessary that Allah put Solomon (peace be upon him) through a test just as a punishment for a mistake. All prophets and messengers face tests which weigh the level of their patience and gratefulness. One such test was imposed on Solomon (peace be upon him) too. Since he was a king, his test also occurred in connection with his kingdom (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/533-4)."



In this interpretation of Mawlānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, it is important to see the verse from the specific perspective of Solomon (peace be upon him) to better understand it. For this reason, the connection of the test can be established with his kingdom rather than illness, just like Allama Ālūsī in his Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī and other exegetes have pointed out.

The Holy Quran describes the trial of Solomon (peace be upon him) in the following words: "We placed Solomon on his throne like a lifeless body." Mawlānā explains this Quranic statement in the following words: "This is a very brief yet comprehensive description of Solomon (peace be upon him)'s test. He was the most powerful king of a vast kingdom, and then we put him on his throne as a completely lifeless body. The word 'jasadan' (body) is used here as a metaphor to describe the helplessness and sorrow of Solomon (peace be upon him). This means that his government was reduced to the center, and the situation made him so helpless and sad that as if only the body was left, and the soul had disappeared. Consider that there can be no better picture of a helpless and grieving king who is confined to his center (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/534)."

Interpreting the words "thumma anāba" (then he repented), the author writes: "That is, Solomon (peace be upon him) was not disappointed with his Lord even in such circumstances. Rather, he felt that he was being tested for his mistakes. So, he returned to his Lord for repentance and forgiveness (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/534)." Explaining the meaning of the supplication, Mawlana writes: "He prayed: 'Lord! Forgive me and bless me with a kingdom which does not befit anyone but me.' It does not mean to ask for a kingdom which no one else should get after me. Instead, it implies that he wanted to say: though I no longer deserve a kingdom because of my sin, I plead you to bestow upon me a kingdom which neither I nor anyone else after me deserves.... You are very forgiving, that is why I also hope that you will not deprive me despite my mistakes (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/534)."

Interpreting the words "lā yabtaghī li ahadin," he further writes: "The real emphasis in this prayer is not on the unparalleled glory of the kingdom. Instead, the emphasis lies on granting a kingdom without deserving it.

He intended to plead: give me a kingdom despite my sin, a kingdom that no one after me would deserve. The intense feeling of guilt in this prayer is proof of Solomon (peace be upon him)'s humility and repentance (Tadabbur e Quran, 6/534)."

Talking about the incident, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi writes: "Solomon (peace be upon him) was made so helpless and sorrowful that it seemed that only a soulless body was lying on the throne. This is a reference to the situation in which his enemies had occupied most of his territory and spread such disorder in the remaining ones that the system of governance was afflicted with great disruption. It is evident from history that during that time Solomon (peace be upon him) stayed confined to his capital city. The Quran has depicted this whole situation in a very eloquent way by saying that a [lifeless] body was placed on the throne by the Almighty (Al-Bayān 4/306)."

The historical events mentioned by Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī and Javed Ahmad Ghamdi have been described in the eleventh chapter of the Book of Kings of the Bible. The chapter discusses the story of Hadād, the Edomite, and Rezon bin Eliadah, who created many problems for Solomon (peace be upon him).

Similarly, John Bright has mentioned the same incident in his book "A History of Israel". He has referred to the incident identifying the same two enemies of Solomon (peace be upon him). Thus, we can conclude that:

1. These verses were not difficult to understand at all. The complication occurred when people tried to understand the verses in the light of the traditions recounted above. That is why we see that there was no difference of opinion in this regard during the time of the Companions. No doubt the Quran claimed that its message was easy to understand. However, it also stipulated a condition that it should be understood in the light of the lucid Arabic language of the Qur'an and the internal evidence of the Book, instead of banking on probable (ẓannī) stories.

2. When the Isrā'īliyyāt (Israelite traditions) were narrated, the grammatical structure of the relevant Quranic expressions was altered by commentators.

It was possible to give the words a new grammatical structure as their context admitted of it too. And when the practice to understand the Qur'an in the light of the tradition, instead of the internal coherence and the language of the Book, prevailed all kinds of different interpretations surfaced.

3. Chronologically, the verses were first interpreted with the help of *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Afterward, when *Ḥadīth* literature was compiled, the new interpretation was adopted extensively in the light of the tradition found in the two *Saḥīḥs*.

4. However, it did not deprive the entire academic history of Muslims of the true understanding of these verses. In fact, in the first two centuries, there is no commentary or tradition in this regard showing that the Quran has said something beyond the understanding of its direct addressees. Despite the absence of relevant facts, *Imām Rāzī* and other exegetes almost understood the meaning of these verses. They strongly rejected irrational and unrealistic traditions. However, they could not definitely ascertain some of the relevant facts as the tradition of interpreting the Quran in the light of its internal evidence had weakened.

5. The claim that modern commentators have tried to interpret these verses in accord with their personal inclinations and desires is also against the reality. In fact, they defined its meaning in the light of recognized elements of conventional linguistic expressions, and validated their understanding with vivid examples from history. If they had done so, their opponents would have pointed it out. But they could not deny the fact that taking the word "jasadan" as *ḥāl* (adverb of state) is grammatically correct and the evidence from the text of the Quran and the testimony from history validate this interpretation. The reality is that it is not against the norm to understand the Quran from its internal textual parallels, the language and style of the time of its revelation, and the coherence in the book. Instead, every book is understood in this manner. If a scholar understands the Quran in this way, he follows the method of the direct addressees of the Book. Moreover, this exercise involves understanding the Quran by putting it in the context and time in which it was revealed. It does not mean understanding it while placing it in an alien background or modern times.

# FORCED EDUCATION

Dr. Irfan Shehzad



Education has been a fundamental concern during the industrial and nation-state era, aiming to supply the industry and state with a sufficient workforce. However, this approach has been unbalanced in the modern era. Not everyone naturally inclines towards education, and despite significant investments in education in certain countries, not all children can be effectively educated through formal means. Natural tendencies cannot easily be altered.

Forcing children who don't have an inherent interest in education into the educational system is unfair, just as it is unjust to involve children inclined towards education in jobs, professions, or skills instead of allowing them to pursue education. Children who lack an educational inclination struggle to develop an interest in education despite having favorable conditions and resources. This inclination isn't their fault, and it's not detrimental to have a less academic orientation.

Many of these children excel in co-curricular and non-academic activities. Some display technical prowess, excelling in tasks like fixing things. Others demonstrate athletic abilities. Some are drawn to farming, animal husbandry, or entrepreneurial ventures. Among girls, similar trends manifest in skills like housekeeping, photography, fashion designing, or beautification.

When allowed to follow their natural tendencies, these children often succeed in their chosen fields.

However, the current education system mandates a formal education of 10-12 years for every child, even for non-academic roles, setting matriculation as the minimum education standard.

Consequently, children without an educational inclination are compelled to undergo undesired education for a low-level job for more than a decade. The potential psychological effects of enduring such unenjoyable work for 10-12 years are often overlooked. Many skillful individuals excel in their desired field without completing the formal educational cycle, indicating that the rigid 10-12 year formal education requirement to learn a skill or profession is unnecessary and, in fact, detrimental and painful for those with limited interest in formal education.

When these children resist forced education, they are labeled rebellious and unintelligent, suffering from negative psychological effects. Even if they're compelled into education, their performance often remains average despite their efforts. Higher education becomes unattainable due to their limited educational background, robbing them of the opportunity to nurture their natural talent and achieve success through it.

Such students with limited educational tendencies often resort to supplementary books, copying assignments, cheating in exams, and searching for shortcuts. They struggle with depression and dissatisfaction due to low grades. A significant portion of teachers' and institutions' time and resources are consumed addressing these students' educational deficiencies and dealing with plagiarism, with limited success.

Eliminating the compulsion for degrees can accurately assess the percentage of individuals who wish to bypass the challenges of formal education.

These students possess alternative skills and abilities that can substitute for formal education. If they invest their time wisely, they can avoid the mental anguish of formal education and quickly secure a place in professional life. Vocational education or skill development is of lesser importance compared to education in sciences and social sciences. By the time students consider professional education or business due to failure in these subjects, they have already wasted considerable time.

During primary education, based on a child's tendencies, it's crucial to determine whether they should continue with education and what kind of education is suitable for them. Providing alternatives that align with a child's skills and strengths is vital if formal education doesn't resonate with them. Historically, education was primarily accessible to the middle class, with the elite and the poor lacking access to formal education. The educated middle class, supported by the affluent, contributed to

society with their knowledge and skills. However, with the linkage of honor and livelihood to formal education, both the elite and the poor began pursuing education, increasing the burden on national resources.

The greatest casualties in the pursuit of educational certificates were the poor, who endeavored to educate their children to improve their economic standing and gain respect in society. They invested their all in their children's education, striving for extraordinary abilities and luck — a rare combination — for significant success. After completing basic education like matriculation, FA or BA, the children of the poor aspired for more than menial jobs in shops or vending. The unfulfilled dream of an office job haunted them throughout their lives.

Forced education could also pose challenges for the children of affluent business families. Despite completing education and securing good jobs, they remained dissatisfied with their relatively low income compared to the family business's profits.

If they chose to start their own businesses, they faced the difficulty of wasted time and significant challenges in starting anew. Notably, a strong business acumen can align with education, but academic excellence doesn't guarantee business sense.

A misconception prevails that education increases an individual's social and political awareness. However, an excess of academic engagement can disconnect children from the practical challenges of life. Those less inclined towards education often demonstrate a more practical understanding of life. Genuine awareness comes from knowledge and experience, not solely from formal education. Specifically, education in natural sciences doesn't inherently enhance consciousness. Conversely, subjects like sociology, anthropology, and history, when taught in relation to practical life, contribute to developing consciousness.

The misunderstanding of "education for all" among Muslims is partially based on a tradition attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), emphasizing the obligation for every man and woman to acquire knowledge. However, this primarily referred to religious knowledge, and the Prophet didn't need to stress the importance of worldly knowledge, as people have always been inclined to learn according to their needs without external motivation. The Quran itself acknowledges the sufficiency of a few people to acquire knowledge of the religion.

It was not possible that all Muslims should have come out; but why did this not happen that a few from each of their groups could come forward to obtain sound understanding of religion and warned the people of their nation [about these attitudes they had adopted] when they returned to them so that they could remain secure from God's grasp? (Q 9:22)

It's essential to reject the concept of using educational degrees as status symbols.

Individuals should be respected for their skills, services, and character rather than their attainment of educational degrees.

Given the scarcity of available resources, the most viable option is to provide education only to those naturally inclined towards reading and writing.

A suggested approach is to make primary-level education mandatory for all children to acquire essential skills.

Following this, a comprehensive assessment should be conducted to determine a child's inclination. Accomplished educationists and psychologists should lead this effort.

Only children displaying interest in formal and professional education should proceed to the next stages based on their tendencies. This strategy would significantly reduce education costs and produce better results with fewer resources.

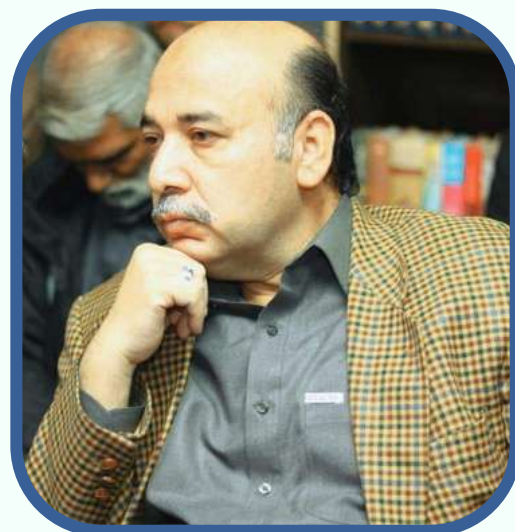
Conversely, children excluded from formal education would benefit themselves and society by utilizing their professional and business skills aligned with their talents. It would also alleviate the pressure on governments to create jobs.

Education should be practically linked to social activities to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical life. Practical activities within the education system and beyond educational institutions' walls should be integrated into the curriculum.



# EXCOMMUNICATION (TAKFIR) OF SHIBLI AND FARÁHI

Hassan Arif



Aṭiyya Fayḍī, a well-known figure from an affluent Mumbai family, was a distinguished scholar. She holds the distinction of being the first Indian woman to travel to England for higher education. Passionate about arts and sciences, she deeply admired Shiblī's extensive academic prowess and Iqbal's exceptional poetry and literature.

During that era, Samuel Rahamin, a renowned Jewish artist, fell in love with her and proposed marriage. However, Aṭiyya, being a Muslim, rejected his proposal, stating, "I am a Muslim and you are not. There is no connection between us. I cannot even imagine marrying a disbeliever." Rahamin, earnest in his intentions, promptly embraced Islam. The news of Rahamin's conversion and marriage to Aṭiyya brought joy to Shiblī Nu'mānī, who exclaimed in excitement with the following verse:

"Idols of India would convert Muslims into disbelievers. Fortunately, Aṭiyya has converted a disbeliever into a Muslim."

Shiblī's faith was so profound that news of a disbeliever converting to Islam would stir uncontrollable excitement within him. However, unbeknownst to him, other Indian scholars would vehemently accuse

him and Imām Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī, an accomplished scholar of Quranic teachings and a symbol of piety and God-consciousness, of adulterating religion through al-Kalam and 'Ilm al-Kalām.

Mawlānā Ashraf Ali Thanvi and Mawlānā Shabbīr Ahmad Uthmānī were among the scholars who initially signed a 32-page fatwa against Shiblī and Farāhī. Later, they retracted their stance, realizing their misunderstandings.

Winds come and go, and similarly, this fatwa against Shiblī and Farāhī amounted to nothing more than a futile effort. The fatwa stormed in like a tempest and disappeared in the annals of time. In response to this fatwa, the writings produced by the scholars of truth not only revealed the treasures of profound knowledge but also illuminated the distinction between disbelief and faith.

While it's not prudent to resurrect past disputes, one must endeavor to unearth the truth. The statements upon which the allegations against Shiblī were based will be scrutinized later. For now, let's delve into the story of Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī to understand why some of his companions, particularly religious scholars, issued a fatwa of disbelief against him for a transgression he never committed:

"He was killed for something he never did."

Some individuals find it convenient to label someone a disbeliever. The term 'disbeliever' is harsh, and despite being aware that labeling a Muslim as a disbeliever is a greater sin than declaring a disbeliever a Muslim, we Muslims have stubbornly clung to the belief that our school of thought is the only correct version of Islam. Anyone opposing it is deemed a disbeliever devoid of faith.

What constitutes kufr (disbelief) and who are disbelievers? Linguists have attributed various meanings to the term kufr, such as concealment, spread of darkness, ingratitude, forgiveness, atonement for sins, denial of the oneness of God, prophethood, and Shariah, or all of these. Considering the above meanings, it is evident that "concealing" is the common factor and serves as the focal point for interpreting the word. One must clearly understand that the literal meaning of the word kufr is to conceal.

Arabs often refer to farmers as *kāfir* simply because they bury seeds in the soil. According to Shari'ah, denying any fundamental aspect of the soundest religion constitutes disbelief. A person who follows any religion other than the religion of the last messenger of God is a disbeliever. After the Holy Prophet's death, Hazrat Abū Bakr Siddīq, the first Caliph, fought against Muslims who refused to pay *zakāh*, just as Muslims would fight against infidels. A true disbeliever is someone who rejects the truth in his heart and with his tongue. Whoever openly proclaims disbelief in Allah is also a disbeliever because one's tongue is a reflection of their heart.

Imām Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī stands as one of the eminent scholars produced by the Islamic world of the 20th century. His critical analysis, precision, insightful perspectives, and scholarly thinking style are widely acknowledged. According to Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, Farāhī was a master of the Arabic language and could be compared to a 'Nightingale of Shīrāz' when it came to the Persian language. He was a treasure trove of Arabic language and an art and literature critic. He embodied the knowledge and style of Imām Razi, Ghazālī, Ibn Taymiyah, and Zamaḥsharī of his time.

What wrong had Farāhī committed that led some scholars to go to such lengths as to declare him a disbeliever? This was attributed by so-called learned scholars to an article written by Farāhī intended for his personal memoirs. Through this article, Farāhī aimed to highlight the challenges people face while translating the Quranic text. The article was merely a fragment of his memoirs, not intended for publication, and lacked proofreading, editing, revision, and organization necessary for writings intended for a general audience. However, reading between the lines, every sentence in the article glorifies the magnificence and grandeur of the Holy Quran.

The monthly magazine "Al-Iṣlāḥ" represented Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ, Azamgarh. It was a well-respected publication where high-quality religious articles were featured. Another distinctive feature of the journal was the publication of thoughts and ideas of Farāhī. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, a notable student of Imām Farāhī, served as its editor.

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī published all of Imām Farāhī's private memoirs in "Al-Iṣlāḥ" in February 1936 under the title. "Thoughts about translation of Quranic Text" and cautioned that the article was "incomplete, had incomplete sentences, and carried multiple ambiguities. Hence, the audience should read it carefully." This warning implied that while translating the Quran, one should derive meaning from the valuable portions of this article, leaving what was not understood, considering the writing as incomplete. If any flaws were found in the words and texts, they were to be overlooked, awaiting the author's revision and correction.

From this article by Imām Farāhī and quotations from al-Kalām and 'Ilm al-kalām, two books by Allama Shiblī, some clerics extracted elements to formulate a 32-page fatwa of takfīr. They declared not only Shiblī and Farāhī as disbelievers but also teachers, students, and workers associated with Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ. Even if we were to suppose that Shiblī and Farāhī were disbelievers, how could the teachers and others associated with Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ be declared as such? The fatwa claimed that the scholars and teachers of Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ were infidels because they held respect for Maulana Shiblī and Farāhī. If they disassociated themselves from these individuals and condemned them, they would be considered believers again. It was heartening to note that the Muftis left an avenue open for the redemption of the scholars and teachers of Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ.

However, the muftis engaged in deception and dishonesty while building a case against Shiblī and misrepresenting his words. The original text of Shiblī was describing the viewpoints of atheists. The excommunicators used these views and presented them as Shiblī's beliefs. While Shiblī was representing the views of others, the excommunicators declared them as his own.

In some instances, he accepted the views of his opponents for the sake of argument. However, the excommunicators used these instances as his personal views. In short, all the excerpts were taken out of context, completely distorted, & were presented to merciless excommunicators to enable them to issue a fatwa of takfīr against a person who not only authored al-Kalām and 'Ilm al-Kalām but also wrote al-Fārūq and Sīrah al-Nabī.

The heartless Muftis mercilessly attacked the epitome of knowledge and research.

The indictment of Imām Farāhī was based on his incomplete memoirs published in “Al-Iṣlāḥ” under the title “Athnā’i Tarjumah al-Quran.” Two aspects were considered for Farāhī’s takfīr from this article, neither of which justifies excommunication. One aspect that caused the controversy was Farāhī’s statement that, considering the fluency of the text and the requirement of the rhyming scheme, the Holy Quran sometimes deviates from the traditional grammatical approach or reverses the word order. Imām Farāhī emphasized the need to follow the order adopted by the Holy Quran while translating its text. The memoirs indicated that some people wished to study each Sūrah of the Quran as a complete, coherent, and unified topic. Additionally, they believed that the title of each Surah described the subject matter of that Surah. This often led to confusion among average readers because, in reality, the titles of Surahs have no correlation with their subject matter or meaning. The titles of Surahs serve to differentiate them and are derived from a specific subject discussed within them. This was the traditional approach of Arabs in assigning titles to Quranic Surahs.

Similarly, the division of the Quran into parts and Rukū’s was misconstrued by some students who believed that this division marked the start or end of a topic. However, the Quran is divided into thirty parts, and each Rukū’ consists of around ten verses. This division is not based on semantics but is a literal division.

Its purpose is to help people read a fair amount of Quranic text in each prayer. Many articles in Imām Farāhī’s memoirs were based on similar scholarly topics, and some self-proclaimed scholars found it difficult to comprehend them.

To interpret the articles of Shiblī and Farāhī, “Al-Iṣlāḥ” published articles by Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, Mawlānā Badr al-Dīn Iṣlāḥī, Abu al-Layth Iṣlāḥī Nadvi, and Mawlānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī.

Mawlānā Abd al-Mājid Daryā Ābādī extensively addressed the issue in his publication "al-Sidq." Some scholars rightly pointed out that the excommunicators of Shiblī and Farāhī did not deliberate on the context of Farāhī's articles. Had they paid sufficient attention to the context of the text, they would not have faced such confusion.

The news of the fatwa against Shiblī and Farāhī shook the entire Muslim community in India. Mawlānā Syed Hussain Ahmad Madani visited Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ along with other Deoband scholars. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī welcomed the Deoband delegation to the madrasah with the following words:

"Come, if there is someone like-minded, someone of the same heart, someone to speak for me, O people, bring them before me, Because in this foreign city, there are many things to say and hear for this stranger."

Mawlānā Madanī addressed the audience at Madrasah, appreciating the madrasah's services and management. He offered valuable advice and suggestions to the students, teachers, workers, and other attendees of the event. He also shared his views on the writings of Shiblī and Farāhī, which were later published in "Al-Iṣlāḥ". The compilation of Mawlānā Madani's writings, titled "Maktūbāt Shaykh al-Islam," was published in four volumes. The compilation was organized by Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn Iṣlāḥī during Mawlānā Madani's lifetime. In one of the letters within this compilation, Mawlānā Madani expressed his views on the issue of excommunication (takfir):

"Your responses have completely satisfied me, and the doubts and ambiguities that formed in my mind after seeing the assumptions of Mawlānā Farooq and other scholars have completely vanished. I wonder why these people have taken such a hard line as to resort to excommunication of believers despite being aware of strict warnings and admonitions against such an act. Do personal grudges allow for fabrications and slander to be used to obtain fatwas of excommunication?"

To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return. I have seen the articles published in al-Iṣlāḥ and could not find anything for which we could not find a solution (Maktūbāt Shaykh al-Islam 2/319-20)."

After mentioning this letter from Mawlānā Madani, Mawlānā Najm ul-Dīn Iṣlāḥī wrote a footnote, stating:

"This decisive statement from Mawlānā Madani has uprooted every pillar and brick of the grave of takīir. It entirely destroyed the noise of excommunicators and the tradition of declaring others disbelievers. Mawlānā Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Mawlānā Shabbir Ahmad Uthmānī, and some other Muftis of India read the explanatory articles and reverted from their stance on takfīr following Mawlānā Madani's decision (Maktūbāt Shaykh al-Islam 2/319-20)."

Mawlānā Abd al-Mājid Daryā Ābādī was an intimate friend of Ashraf Ali Thanvi. He was a renowned exegete, author, and editor of the monthly "Sidq." Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī wrote a letter to him, stating:

"Mawlānā Thanvi's fatwa has arrived, stating that Mawlānā Shiblī and Mawlānā Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī are infidels. Since Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ is based on their mission, it is a school of disbelief and heresy, and all its affiliates are heretics and disbelievers. Even the scholars who attend the meetings of this madrasa are atheists and unbelievers. Sadly, I could not find the original text of the fatwa. Otherwise, I could have sent it or a copy of it to you. The complaint by the common clerics is futile. Nothing better was expected from them.

However, Mawlānā Thanvi has caused great disappointment. Though the two passages upon which excommunication of Farāhī are very clear to me, I have published their explanation as per your advice in the recent copy of al-Iṣlāḥ (Ḥakīm al-Ummat az Mawlānā Abd al-Mājid Daryā Ābādī 418)."

After receiving the letter from Iṣlāḥī, Abdul Mājid Daryā Ābādī wrote a detailed letter to Mawlānā Ashraf Ali Thanvi. In this letter, he expressed his inability to accept the fatwa against Shiblī and Farāhī. Mawlānā Thanvi responded to the letter and informed about his new stance on the fatwa.

Daryā Ābādī included this story in his book "Ḥakīm al-Ummat." In this book, he took credit for making Thanvi change his mind about the excommunication of Farāhī and Shiblī. It is possible that both Mawlānā Madani and Mawlānā Daryā Ābādī may have played a role.

Upon learning about the fatwa, Mawlānā Abu al-Kalām Azād expressed his annoyance and wrote: "The late Maulana Hamid-ud-Din Farāhī, on whose text this uproar has been made, was one of those scholars whose specialty is not only knowledge but also their actions. Particularly, the rarity of the people who excel in the piety of their action is not hidden. Whenever I met him, I was influenced more by his practical piety than by his knowledge. He was a pious and upright man in all senses. The purity of his heart and the purity of his soul inspired awe."

Mawlānā Syed Sulaiman Nadvi stated:

"Mawlānā Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī was not only unique in knowledge and grace but also a rare personality of the ummah in terms of his health, faith, and piety." This fatwa was not only regrettable but also a matter of shame for Muslim scholars.

Mawlānā Maududi openly opposed this fatwa. In his article "Tarjumān al-Quran" (July 1936), he wrote:

"Excommunication of a believer should follow as much care as one takes while issuing an edict to kill a believer. Instead, the fatwa of takfīr is far more serious. It is because while killing someone, one does not incur the sin of disbelief. However, in declaring a believing person a kāfir, it is feared that if the targeted person is not actually a disbeliever and there is even an iota of faith in his heart, then the slander will bounce back to the issuer of the fatwa. Therefore, whoever fears Allah in his heart and has any sense of it, can never dare to declare a Muslim a disbeliever.

The person who excommunicates a Muslim actually runs scissors on the rope of Allah through which Muslims have been united into a nation. Now we see that Muslims are less interested in converting non-Muslims into Muslims than declaring other Muslims infidels."



Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī wrote in his article published in "Al-Iṣlāḥ" (September 1936):

"How painful it is that our scholars have completely lost their greatest strength through their carelessness. There were times when turning away by the Messenger of Allah and his companions from someone meant that the heavens and the earth would also turn away from him. Dozens of such incidents are mentioned in hadith literature and biographies. Now is the time when people make fun of fatwas of takfīr issued by our scholars, and the people who are excommunicated receive congratulations and appreciation from others. We do not look at this matter as a matter of an individual. Rather, we consider its collective outcome. It is very sad to see this revolutionary change. It is not our desire that issuing fatwa should lose its importance, but it is our heartfelt desire that the scholars should attain their rightful position and establish the right dignity of fatwa among the Muslims. But what can be expected from those who have not yet been able to decide the disbelief and faith of Mawlānā Shiblī and Mawlānā Farāhī? I don't want to write anything about this issue at the moment. Insha'Allah, when finding enough time on disposal, we will discuss in detail the status of issuing fatwa in the light of the Book and Sunnah and its conditions. For the time being, we will only ask the scholars to consider themselves as representatives of the Court of Allah and should announce their decisions in the light of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger. God has declared Quran and the Messenger as decisive authorities (Ḥakam). He did not command us to follow Alamgiriāh and Tarkhania."

Fortunately, later Mawlānā Thanvi and other scholars realized their shortcomings and withdrew the fatwa. Imām Farāhī and Shiblī (may Allah have mercy on them) have taken refuge in the mercy of Allah, and their case is entrusted to His court, who knows the secrets of the hearts and is the most just of all judges.

# WITHOUT A SHADOW OF DOUBT: THE WORD OF GOD

(Dhālika al-Kitābu lā rayba fīhi)

Mawlānā Syed Munāzir Ahsan Gilani

Human hands have taken the ideas conceived in minds and spread them onto paper. These ideas have been disseminated and will continue to be disseminated to the point where written material can bridge the gap from one end of the Atlantic to the other. The volume of content in the form of books, journals, and newspapers is so vast that it could wrap the entire hemisphere of the Earth, creating multiple layers and still leaving an abundance of what we, with our fingers, have created. Who can measure the ink, weigh the paper, count the pens made of wood or iron that have been spent or will be spent in this manner? But among the writers and readers of these writings, who can claim to have the highest level of certainty? Whether it's Bernard Shaw's allegorical tales, Sherlock Holmes stories, Hoshierba's tales, Premchand and Sudarshan's fables, we are engaging in falsehoods and being fed lies. Do both the writers and readers possess any certainty other than the fact that these are all fabrications?

If Mirza Dagh didn't base himself on the foundation of truth, how can you be sure that Mr. Shakespeare's literature stands on anything solid? Historians themselves acknowledge that what they write is based on conjectures and speculations. Even the readers of history are aware that history books offer nothing more than the outcomes extracted haphazardly from analysis and conjectures.

This is the nature of words and uncontrolled statements that we have composed and disguised as knowledge. As for true knowledge that underpins countless aspects of life, its results are undoubtedly sound. However, the laws formulated by human minds to present these conclusions as fundamental principles may not be true. Those who grasp the principles know very well that the formulators of these laws have neither truly understood their formulations nor can ever truly understand them to the extent that can be termed 'ilm al-yaqīn (certain knowledge).

Who can label this unenlightened and non-philosophical mind as a philosopher's mind unless, in its philosophical pursuits, it has arrived at the thorny ground of doubt and skepticism, hesitance, and vacillation? The thorns of "doubt" and the embers of "hesitation" are the greatest and, indeed, the most valuable products of philosophical efforts. Who denies the discoveries of science and mathematics?

Who claims that there is no day, or that night doesn't fall? Who believes that the seasons don't change, and the weather remains constant? But why does this happen? Ask Einstein about the interrelationship of principles and the conclusions drawn by different minds from various linguistic cultures. Did they not firmly believe in the accuracy of deriving these conclusions from those principles, or did anyone have the right to apply the term certitude to these derivations?

Various groups among humanity claim to possess certain knowledge. Christians assert that the Gospels contain certain knowledge. Jews assert that there is certainty in the Torah. Hindus proclaim that there is certain knowledge in the Vedas. They contend that the uncertainty of knowledge finds solace in the Gita as these are the Omniscient God (ʿallām al-ghuyūb). Their author is the one who knows those who have passed away, those who are passing by, and those who are about to pass. He knows the realities that we know and the ones we do not.

Undoubtedly, the one with such all-encompassing knowledge must be the author of the book that can genuinely claim to have no doubt in it.

But can anyone prove that these nations are left with the original form of the teachings handed over to them by God's representatives and apostles? Whether it is the Vedas or the Ushas, the Torah or the Gospels, the teachings of the Vedas or the Teachings of Confucius, does anyone have the original form of the teachings handed over to them?

Why do people turn a deaf ear to the call of the internal evidence of the books and the external evidence [proving adulteration in them]? It is due to their self-interest or national egoism that they do not wish to acknowledge or hear about the mishaps that befell their books through their own hands or the hands of their religious elders. The element of human desire has intertwined with God's words. Who has the power to separate them? So, among the extensive shelves of the British Museum, the grand libraries of Paris and New York, the libraries of Berlin and Vienna, and of course, all the book collections of the East and the West, there is only one book on the face of the earth that can rightfully claim, "There is no doubt in it being the Book of God." It is the book found in the "house" of every Muslim but not "inside" any of them except a few of those Allah wills.

# SHEHR-E-ASHOB (BAGHDAD: AN ELEGY)

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi



اٹھتا ہے یہ ہر لفظ سے جو دل کا دھواں ہے  
پھر اس میں عجب کیا کہ غزل مرثیہ خواں ہے

“The essence of anguish billows from every word I pen. Each song I compose becomes an elegy, a lament for a heart’s smoldering sorrow.”

سینے میں کوئی درد ہے، پنہاں کبھی پیدا  
پہلو میں دھڑکتا تھا جو آنکھوں سے رواں ہے

“A concealed ache resides within, once nestled in my chest, now cascading through my tearful eyes.”

وہ دن ہے کہ ویرانی دل کھانے کو آئے  
وہ شب ہے کہ ہر سانس پہ اک بار گراں ہے

“The day trudges on, weighed down by desolation, devouring my heart, and nightfall burdens each breath.”

تہذیب نے کچھ اور بھی سفاک بنا کر  
آدم کو بتایا ہے کہ یہ تیرا جہاں ہے

“Civilization, once believed to elevate humanity, has sharpened our savagery, echoing that the world is our dominion.”

دنیا کی سیاست میں کوئی حق ہے نہ باطل  
ہر چیز یہاں معرکہ سود و زیاں ہے

“In this realm, politics cares not for right or wrong; it’s a battlefield of profit and loss.”

اٹھتی ہے صدا کوئی تو اربابِ سیاست  
اُس کو یہ سمجھتے ہیں کہ غوغائے سگاں ہے

“Protest voices, valiantly raised, fall upon the deaf ears of political leaders, dismissed as mere barking.”

افسوس کہ پڑمردہ ہے انصاف کا چہرہ  
اور ظلم کو دیکھیں تو وہ پہلے سے جواں ہے

“It’s a bitter truth: the visage of justice has turned lifeless, while injustice thrives.”

بغداد میں یہ آہن و آتش کا تماشا  
روتی ہے زیں اور فلک اشک فشاں ہے

“In Baghdad, the spectacle of fire and iron leaves heaven and earth weeping.”

خورشیدِ جہاں تاب تو ہے اب بھی افق پر  
اس شہر میں لیکن شبِ تیرہ کا سماں ہے

“Though the world’s sun still graces the horizon, within this city, darkness reigns.”

والہ کہ تم درپے بربادی جاں ہو  
یہ شہر مری عظمتِ رفتہ کا نشاں ہے

“By God, you pursue the annihilation of life—this city bears witness to my faded glory.”

اڑتا ہوا خاشاک، یہ بکھری ہوئی لاشیں  
انساں ہیں، مگر اُن پہ بھی سایوں کا گماں ہے

“The swirling dust and strewn remains render fellow humans like oblivious shadows.”

بارود کی بارش ہے شب و روز یہاں اب  
بچوں کو اماں ہے، نہ بزرگوں کو اماں ہے

“Gunpowder rains down incessantly, and both the young and old yearn desperately for peace.”

یہ ماؤں کی آغوش میں آزرده نگاہیں  
سنتا ہو اگر کوئی تو اُن کی بھی زباں ہے

“Even within the laps of grieving mothers, eyes brimming with pain possess voices, if only someone would heed.”

میں عاجز و درماندہ اسے دیکھ رہا ہوں  
دینے کو اگر ہے تو یہی سوزِ نہاں ہے

“I watch helplessly, drowning in melancholy, offering only the inner torment I endure.”

ابلیس کے ہاتھوں میں ہے دنیا کی حکومت  
یہ تیرا جہاں ہے تو خدایا، تو کہاں ہے

“The world is gripped by malevolent forces. Oh God, if this is your creation, where do we find solace?”

# HAYĀT-I-AMĪN THE BIOGRAPHY

Stories of Amīn  
Ahsan Iṣlāḥī



In his childhood memories, Mawlānā also vividly recalls that his grandfathers wanted to groom him to become a clerk. Despite his deep love for his grandfather, he strongly disliked the idea of becoming a clerk. The reason for his aversion was his admiration for the esteemed position and respect that scholars held in his home and community. He aspired to attain a similar position and status. Mawlānā explains, "Because of Mawlawī Shiblī, Mawlawī Ḥamīd Uddīn , and Mawlawī Shiblī Motakallim, our family was recognized as a family of religious scholars. This distinction granted them a unique status within the community."

He further recounted that during his school days, when Mawlānā recited verses from Saadi's Karīmā, people would listen attentively, appreciating his recitation. Some would even request him to recite these verses. He would melodiously sing the following verses:

"O Forgiver, have mercy on us, for I am a prisoner of the captivity of desire. None other than You can hear our pleas. Only You, the Forgiver of sinners, can grant us pardon. Guard us from straying onto the path of error, forgive our missteps, and guide us rightly."

People not only listened attentively to him but also joined in singing the verses. Speaking about these Karima verses, Mawlānā remarked, "For a while, we remained captivated by these verses, but as we grew older, we realized that it contains the essence of mysticism." He was likely referring to the words "asīr e kamand e hawā" (captive of desire).



### **His association with the Local Hindu Community**

Discussing religious conservatism in the social conditions of that time, Mawlānā explained, "We used to actively participate in Hindu customs and rituals, such as weddings and other ceremonies, and they would reciprocate by attending ours. This cultural integration between the two communities was well-preserved." Muslims did not partake in Hindu religious ceremonies, but Hindus attended Eid al-Azḥā celebrations by Muslims. During this occasion, they would don traditional attire like Muslims, including large turbans, a distinctive dress of Rajpoot Hindus. They would also exchange gifts with Muslims. Mawlānā did not recall any childhood or adolescent memories indicating animosity or bitterness between Hindus and Muslims, despite both communities belonging to the same fraternity from which Mawlānā's ancestors had embraced Islam. The conversion of religion did not breed enmity or hatred. According to Mawlānā, the conversion merely changed their beliefs and informed them about what is lawful (Ḥalāl) and unlawful (Ḥarām). There was no shift in social and cultural dynamics, customs, and traditions. Instead, as Mawlānā asserted, the sense of pride and superiority, reminiscent of the Rajputs, was present among Muslims as well. Mawlānā acknowledged a significant transformation in this regard during his time at the Madrasah. He stated, "I had a sense of pride. Mawlānā Ḥamīd Uddīn helped me overcome it."

Reflecting on his teacher's sensitivity to this matter, Mawlānā added, "We observed that he would refer to his sons as Mirza, one as Mughal, and one as Shahid Khan, which signifies Pathan. I found it very intriguing." One day, they inquired about the reason behind this practice. He explained, "I gave them these names considering their temperaments." He believed that each nation possesses a specific temperament reflected in the conduct of its individuals.

Rajpoot, the children of rulers, are considered the elite of India, enjoying a superior status in society politically, religiously, and socially. Thus, the sense of priority among them is quite natural. Commenting on this situation, Mawlānā noted that although changes in times may have diminished their societal values and social status, or other nations may have emerged to challenge their supremacy, their sense of superiority remained steadfast.

Mawlānā refuted the presence of any social movement targeting the removal of social deprivation, conflict, or oppression. He believed that the social structure of his society was firmly bound by the values of peace, harmony, and brotherhood.

### **The Background of the Establishment of Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ**

Mawlānā discussed the establishment of Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ specifically while narrating the story of his admission to it. He delved into the incidents and events that paved the way for the establishment of the Madrasah, highlighting the crucial role played by Mawlānā Shiblī in its founding. Mawlānā explained Shiblī's eagerness for this role, recounting the series of life-altering events that influenced Shiblī's decision.

Shiblī Nu'mānī relocated to Azamgarh after a period of extensive travel across various cities, seeking stability. He had relinquished all his previous engagements, particularly those in Lucknow, and had even suffered the amputation of a leg. This, however, was not a mere metaphorical statement—Shiblī had literally undergone this amputation. Subsequently, he faced another unfortunate incident in Kanpur. The mental turmoil caused by the restrictions imposed by religious scholars deeply affected him. Additionally, he had to cope with the loss of his brother. All these life-changing events left a profound impact on every aspect of his life, including his poetic endeavors.

Upon settling in Azamgarh, he refused to remain inactive, displaying his virtuosity as a blessed scholar (faizyab hasti). Wherever he went, he catalyzed growth and transformation, akin to orchards flourishing and rivers flowing in abundance. The idea of establishing Dār al-Muṣannifīn was already germinating in his mind, a vision he successfully translated into reality. Notably, he transformed National High School into Shiblī College and simultaneously harbored the ambition to establish Madrasah Iṣlāḥ al-Muslimīn. The catalyst behind this ambition lay in the Nadwah incident, which had left him disheartened. Shiblī was not the kind of person to live a life of idleness; he embodied a dynamic force. Recognizing the necessity for a religious school in the area, he shifted his focus to the realization of Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ.

These accounts aren't mere sentences; they are intricate metaphors that vividly depict the painful past events and anticipate future occurrences. The depth of these succinct statements is undeniable.

Following the humiliating defeat of 1857, the intellectual elite of the Muslim community in the subcontinent realized that armed struggle was not the path to improving their circumstances. This realization birthed three distinct schools of thought. The first materialized as Dārul 'Ulūm Deoband in 1866. According to Javed Ahmad Ghamdi, one school of thought believed that understanding religion purely from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, adhering to the principles of their specific school of thought and the guidance of their elders, was essential. They dismissed the idea of adopting the Western civilization and its sciences as beneficial for the religious community. Prominent leaders of this school included Qasim Nanotvi, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Mahmood ul Hassan Deobandi, Anwar Shah Kāshmiri, Hussain Ahmad Madani, Ashraf Ali Thanvi, and Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (Selected Essays of Javed Ahmed Ghamdi 55).

This group was countered by another faction that viewed Western civilization and its sciences as the standard for truth and falsehood, which had led to the downfall of the Muslim community. They believed that success could only be achieved by embracing not only knowledge and science but also the culture and development of Britain. This group was led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who established Muhamadan Anglo and Oriental College in Aligarh in 1857.

In opposition to these two groups, Mawlānā Shiblī introduced a third school of thought. Discussing the fundamental principles of this school, Javed Ahmad Ghamdi writes: "The group subscribed to two fundamental principles: first, the best method of development was to trace back to the time when the Holy Qur'ān was revealed and the divine messenger directly communicated his message to his audience. The other principle emphasized staying current with modern developments while maintaining a strong connection with our past, similar to how one values anything old.

The leaders of this group included Syed Sulaiman Nadavi, Abū al-Kalam Azad, Abū al-Ala Moududi, Ḥamīd ul Din Farāhī, and Amin Ahsan Iṣlāhī. I refer to this group as 'Dabistan e Shiblī' (Muqamat, 55)."

Thus, Shiblī initiated his academic journey as a student of Maulvi Farooq Chiryakoti. Under this mentor, he developed a deep respect for Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, adopting the title of Nu'mānī as part of his name. Although law was the most renowned and prominent discipline of his time, his passionate nature drove him beyond the confines of just the Fiqh of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. The legal profession did not entirely satisfy him. Impressed by his remarkable abilities, Sir Syed Ahmad hired him as a teacher for his institution. Out of dedication to academic pursuits and respect for his association with Sir Syed Ahmad, Shiblī continued teaching at Aligarh College until Sir Syed's passing.

In his pursuit of knowledge, he taught Arabic to Professor Arnald and, in return, learned Persian from him. He then journeyed to Europe, visiting Egypt and Arab countries. In addition to delving into a vast ocean of knowledge, he gained practical exposure to the world of his time. He met notable figures such as Muhammad Abdah of Egypt and Sultan Abdul Ḥamīd II of Turkey.

Mawlānā Shiblī shared Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's belief that the survival and progress of their community depended on education. However, their political and social beliefs diverged, as reflected in the words of Syed Sulaiman Nadvi,

one of Shiblī's capable students. They perceived that when a foreign power occupied a nation, the most effective strategy to maintain authority was to sow discord among the people and classes of the occupied nation.

The British rulers in India exploited existing differences, particularly linguistic and cultural, between Muslims and Hindus. They replaced Persian with Urdu in government offices and, at Fort William College, developed a new language curriculum, associating Urdu with Muslims and Hindi with Hindus. This deliberate differentiation, they believed, gradually fragmented the unity that had developed

over centuries among the people of India (Hayāt e Shiblī, 400-401).

Mawlānā Shiblī and Syed Sulaiman Nadvi viewed Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's two-nation theory and the Urdu-Hindi conflicts as a British conspiracy against the national unity of Indians. They also believed that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan played a role in the success of this conspiracy.

They held contrasting views with Sir Syed Ahmad Khan regarding religious interpretations and policy, as detailed in Ḥayāt e Shiblī. Notable among these differences was their interpretation of Umar Farooq. While Sir Syed saw him as a representative of the government and sultanate of a divine messenger, Shiblī viewed him as a person possessing qualities of excellence. They also differed on the approach to assimilating into English culture. Sir Syed believed in thorough assimilation into English culture, excluding religion, as a remedy for the difficulties faced by Muslims. Conversely, Shiblī stressed the importance of preserving true Islamic beliefs and ethics while embracing beneficial aspects of the modern era.

Their differences also extended to their perspectives on progress. Shiblī emphasized going back to the time of the Companions as the key to progress for Muslims, a view that displeased Sir Syed, who advocated moving forward in line with English culture. This disagreement led to sharp criticism from Sir Syed (Ḥayāt e Shiblī 268).

Moreover, when Sir Syed asked Shiblī to translate his commentary on the Qur'ān, Shiblī declined due to a busy schedule. When asked to suggest Imām Farāhī, his nephew and student, for the translation, both Shiblī and Farāhī refused. Farāhī cited ethical reasons, refusing to cooperate in the publication of what he perceived as falsehood (Ḥayāt e Shiblī 268).

Mawlānā Shiblī's lack of interest in Sir Syed's Aligarh movement was also influenced by Sir Syed's authoritarian nature, which contrasted with Shiblī's strong sense of integrity and democratic temperament. This divergence in their political, managerial, and intellectual perspectives was apparent in various aspects of their beliefs and actions.

For example, while Sir Syed staunchly opposed the Indian National Congress, Shiblī viewed it as a symbol of national unity and a crucial tool for pressuring the British government to address Indian demands. Sir Syed advocated for Hindu-Muslim unity and remained committed to this stance until his death.

Despite these differences, Shiblī maintained an association with Sir Syed due to the latter's excellent upbringing and nobility, which were exemplary even by today's standards. However, this association did not negate the fact that Shiblī belonged to a different philosophical thought and ideology from that of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. This contrast in their ideologies was also evident in Shiblī's involvement with institutions like Jamia Usmania of Hyderabad and Nadwah al-Ulamā of Lucknow.

Shiblī's academic accomplishments at Aligarh College solidified his reputation as an exceptional poet, writer, critic, and prodigious scholar in the fields of religion and education across India. After leaving Aligarh College, he accepted the position of advisor at Jamia Usmania at the request of the Governor of Hyderabad.

Nadwah al-Ulma was established in 1992, primarily initiated by alumni of Aligarh University in Kanpur. These scholars opposed the ideology of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, believing that educational institutions influenced by his ideas were detrimental to Muslims due to their one-directional policy. They believed it was crucial to unite religious scholars on a single platform to provide Muslims with accurate educational and religious guidance. Shiblī joined this initiative with an impressive speech during its inaugural meeting.

The institution held biennial meetings, and Shiblī consistently participated with great enthusiasm. The scholars eventually decided to establish a moderate Dārul 'Ulūm based on both modern and traditional ideologies. However, the practical establishment of Dārul 'Ulūm occurred during the fourth meeting, leading to the formation of Nadwah al-Ulamā in 1998, six months after the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Shiblī vested his hopes and dreams in this institution. Eminent scholars from various schools of thought across India, including Deoband, participated in the council of Nadwah.

They believed that through unity and consensus, Nadwah could become a significant educational institution not only for the Indian subcontinent but also for the entire Muslim world. Consequently, in 1905, Shiblī became a part of this institution as its secretary.

When the institution was initially established, there was no resistance. However, as signs of development began to emerge, opposition from various religious scholars suddenly surfaced, as predicted by Nawab Muhsin al-Mulk. Shiblī realized that Nadwah was not entirely aligned with his vision, particularly in the matter of including English as a subject in the curriculum. While the general public was no longer prohibited from learning English by that time, religious scholars considered it a grave sin. Shiblī believed it was mandatory for everyone. He also sought to include Sanskrit and Hindi in language studies, but these proposals were rejected. Despite the criticisms and objections he faced, Shiblī, as the secretary, managed to incorporate these languages into the syllabus.

As he continued his reform efforts, Shiblī encountered opposition from a group of jealous individuals and opponents who accused him of being an agent of Sir Syed and of eliminating symbols of Islam. These critics labeled him responsible for eroding Islamic values and employing rationality in religion, which they deemed contrary to the principles of 'Sawad-e-Azam.' Despite his sincerity and dedication to human dignity, Shiblī was disheartened by this unfair criticism. Eventually, he resigned from the journal of the Madrasah in 1912, which had transformed into a university by that time, and then from Darul 'Ulum in 1913. His departure prompted protests from admirers across the country, and students expressed their dismay. Mawlānā Khalil ul Rahman, who held traditional views, was appointed as manager of Nadwah, a decision at odds with the fundamental principles and objectives of Nadwah. This marked a significant turning point in the institution's trajectory.

These are the specifics of Mawana's account: "Shiblī Nu'mānī relocated to Azamgarh after becoming weary of his frequent moves to various cities. He made the decision to settle there, leaving behind all his engagements—especially those he was involved in while in Lucknow."

Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī then recounted the incident in which Shiblī lost his leg. The incident unfolded when Mawlānā attended a gathering in Azamgarh on May 17, 1907. After coming from his office to the drawing room, he sat on a chair and extended his legs. Beneath the seat was a gun. His son Ḥamīd Hassan had purchased the gun to ward off crows that were damaging fruit in his garden. The gun was loaded. Mawlānā attempted to hand it over to his daughter-in-law for safekeeping. However, in the process, he accidentally triggered the gun. Although the gun's muzzle was pointed downwards, the opening of the muzzle was facing his feet, and that too at a distance of several inches. According to Sulaiman Nadvi, Mawlānā's foot was crushed, hanging by only two straps from his shin. While trying to remove it, the ankle got stuck in the shoe. Consequently, the foot had to be amputated from the shin. Mawlānā lived the rest of his life with an artificial leg.

The accident had a significant impact on Mawlānā's life and compelled him to stay in Azamgarh for 3 months. Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī referred to this stay as itikaf. During this period, Shiblī composed poetry and reconsidered his future plans. Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī particularly admired the following verse by Shiblī:

Shiblī, burdened by sin, suffered the loss of his leg as atonement. Nevertheless, a celestial decree declares that this is insufficient and calls for his head.

The Kanpur incident and the chaining of religious scholars reveal that the Indian government opted to widen a road in Kanpur city within the U.P. state in 1913. The map showed the removal of a mosque situated in Machli Bazar as part of the expansion project. When Muslims voiced their objections, the English government decided to limit the demolition to the eastern part of the mosque, which included washrooms. They also pledged to provide a replacement for this portion of the mosque. Some impassioned Muslims did not accept this decision and proceeded to file a court case, but the court ruled against their plea. Subsequently, the government demolished the eastern section of the mosque and initiated road construction. The Muslim community resolved to rebuild the demolished segment of the mosque. When they began moving the road equipment, the security forces responded with gunfire.



Although the Muslims' emotions were running high, and their decision was against the law, the government's reaction was excessively harsh. The incident resulted in numerous casualties, including children. Shiblī composed an extensive poem about the incident. Due to his injured leg, he could not join the protest at that time, as he was in Bombay for medical treatment. Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī commended the following verses from Shiblī's poem:

عجب کیا ہے جو نوخیزوں نے سب سے پہلے جانیں دیں  
 کہ بچے ہیں سو برے ان کو سو جانے کی عادت ہے  
 شہیدان وفا کی خال سے آتی ہیں آوازیں  
 کہ شبلی بمبئی میں مرہ کے محروم سعادت ہے

“It's not surprising that children were the first to sacrifice their lives. After all, they are the ones who go to sleep early. The voices echoing from the souls of the devoted martyrs affirm that Shiblī's absence from Bombay has denied him a profound blessing”.

The details regarding Shiblī's brother's passing and the transformation of the school into a college uncover that Mawlawī Ishaq was the younger brother of Shiblī Nu'mānī. He was a successful lawyer and a political activist, affiliated with the Muslim League. However, he vehemently opposed separate elections, considering them a British government conspiracy against national unity. Similar to Shiblī, he believed in this stance. He purposefully kept Shiblī away from family and household matters to enable him to focus on his academic and political pursuits uninterrupted. On August 5, 1914, Mawlawī Ishaq passed away, leaving Shiblī in one of the most profound shocks of his life. Though Shiblī had already settled in Azamgarh, his brother's demise compelled him to stay there permanently. Despite the profound grief over his brother's death, he undertook the unfinished matters that his deceased brother had left behind.

The Shiblī family had established a modest educational establishment called the National School in Sarai Mir. The institution received government backing. However, for undisclosed reasons, it was downgraded from a high school to a middle school. Mawlawī Ishaq took charge and successfully reinstated the institution to the high school level. He shared with his brother his aspiration to elevate the institution to the status of a college. Following his brother's passing, Shiblī took on the responsibility to fulfill this vision. Tragically, before accomplishing this objective, Shiblī passed away. The Shiblī family persisted in their efforts, and in accordance with Shiblī's wishes, they ultimately succeeded in transforming it into Shiblī College in 1940. Mawlānā was discussing this institution.

The account of the establishment of Dar al-Musannifīn and Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ unfolds with the formation of an association called Iṣlāḥ al-Muslimīn (Reformation of Muslims) in 1906 AD near Phariha village, initiated by Mawlānā Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī's relatives and other compassionate Muslims. This association became a platform where religious scholars from across the country would periodically address the public. Eminent scholars such as Sanaullah Amritsari and Abdulhaq Haqqani were active participants in these gatherings. In 1909, the association evolved into Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ, with the construction of a small building containing unfurnished rooms.

As the institution gained popularity, Shiblī Nu'mānī was summoned to lead the Madrasah due to increased interest. During that period, Shiblī was situated in Nadwah. He organized a significant gathering and invited Mawlānā Ubaidullah Sindhi as the chief guest. Mawlānā Sindhi's presence was linked to Imām Ḥamīd al-Din Farāhī, who was teaching in Karachi under Shiblī's guidance. Imām Ḥamīd al-Din Farāhī frequently met with Mawlānā Sindhi for Qur'ānic education during his time in Karachi. This gathering helped enhance the organization's reputation, extending its influence to neighboring regions.

Following the 1910 gathering, Shiblī penned a letter to Farāhī, inviting him to Sarai Mir for a few days to enhance the organizational performance. Reflecting on this letter and Farāhī's visit, Iṣlāḥī reported that the organizational efficiency began to improve.

Shiblī took the step to remove the Madrasah's administrator, Maulvi Faiz-ul-Hasan, due to numerous complaints against him (as mentioned by Mawlānā Sulaiman Nadvi).

Shiblī reached out to two more intelligent and capable students, Abdul Rahman Nagrami and Mu'īn Uddīn , from Nadva. Nagrami, whom Iṣlāḥī later introduced as his Arabic teacher, will have his details discussed shortly.

Upon leaving Nadwa, Shiblī decided to connect his aspirations with this educational institution. Therefore, prior to the passing of his brother Mawlawī Ishaq, he penned a significant letter to Hāmīd Uddīn Farāhī. During this time, Farāhī was in Hyderabad, and his selection process was underway with Shiblī's endorsement. The circumstances strongly suggest that Farāhī adhered to Shiblī's guidance throughout his life regarding employment and involvement with educational establishments. In his writing, Shiblī expressed:

The debate centers on whether our national strength should be centralized in Siraj-e-Meer or Azamgarh. I believe our nation is not robust enough to endure such concentration. At the very least, we should strive for both institutions to maintain their connection and distinctive status. Sometimes, I contemplate that one of these establishments should be designated as a hub for religious and secular education. It should focus on nurturing religious scholars dedicated to serving the faith and act as a center for advanced religious education—a unified group, so to speak. I value your perspective on this notion. If we encounter resistance in implementing our plans at Nadva, we should explore alternative strategies. We should reside and operate collectively. Additionally, the facility should house a well-stocked library. If you're committed to this project, I am here to provide guidance.

Today, I must persuade the director of education to decide in your favor. I perceive this as the final step. Even if a favorable decision is reached, I believe it should align with national service. However, this endeavor requires financial backing, which we will arrange according to the needs. Ultimately, our shared ambitions align. Principalship and substantial salaries may be temporary, but this service holds a lasting impact (Maktūbāt e Shiblī, Ḥamīd 67).

Subsequently, after the passing of Mawlawī Ishaq, Shiblī returned to Azamgarh to consolidate the dispersed responsibilities. Having solidified the plan in his mind, a plan discussed with Farāhī, he commenced the search for a capable educator to lead the organization established in Sarai Mir. When Imām Ḥamīd inquired why he wasn't willing to lead the institution, he responded in a letter dated September 21, 1914:

Due to my physical weakness and a shattered heart, I am unable to efficiently lead the Sarai Mir institution. Please consider appointing someone else. I am willing to offer assistance wherever possible (Makātīb e Shiblī, Ḥamīd 75).

After careful consideration, he invited Mawlawī Masood Ali to Azamgarh in October 1914, who then appointed Mawlawī Shiblī Mutakallam for this role. Shiblī envisioned the establishment of a comprehensive and excellent Islamic university by amalgamating Darul Muṣannifīn, Darul Takmīl, and Siraj-e-Meer. To realize this vision, he summoned his students. Unfortunately, when his students arrived, Mawlānā Shiblī was on his deathbed. Three days after Shiblī's passing, Mawlānā Farāhī assembled a team from among Shiblī's pupils, titled Ikhwan al-Safa, with the objective of completing the unfinished projects of Mawlānā Shiblī. The team included individuals such as Mawlawī Mas'ūd Ali Nadvi, Mawlawī Shiblī Mutakallam Nadvi, and Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, alongside Farāhī.

Mawlānā Ḥamīd Farāhī relinquished his position in Hyderabad to dedicate his entire life to this cause. Making education and the dissemination of the Holy Qur'ān its primary objective, Farāhī crafted a specific curriculum for the institution. Thus, just as Allah intended, Shiblī's dreams regarding the establishment of a Madrasah were realized in his final days. These were the events that Mawlānā has briefly referred to, emphasizing that the detailed account of these events is in your hands!

# RIGHTS OF GOD UPON HIS SERVANTS



Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

پوچھا یہ پیمبرؐ نے معاذؓ ابن جبل سے  
اللہ کا حق کیا ہے بھلا بندوں پہ اُس کے؟

“The Prophet (s) inquired of Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal: “What is the rightful claim of Allah upon His servants?””

بولے یہ معاذؓ آپ پہ جاں میری فدا ہو معلوم ہے  
یہ بات نبی اور خدا کو فرمایا پیمبرؐ نے: ”سنو بات حقیقی اللہ کا حق ہے کہ عبادت ہو اُسی کی  
خالق ہے وہی سب کا، وہی سب کا الہ ہے

“Mu‘ādh responded: “My life is devoted to you, Known solely to God and His Messenger.” The Prophet said: “Allow me to impart the truth. The right of God is that his servant worships none but Him.”

پوجا کا سزاوار فقط ایک خدا ہے  
ساجھی نہیں اُس ذات کا دنیا میں کوئی اور  
بچتے ہی رہو شرکِ الہی سے بہر طور

“He is the Creator and Lord of every being, The sole entity deserving of worship. None in this universe is equal to Him, Thus, humanity must abstain from polytheism.”

پھر آپ نے پوچھا یہ معاذ ابن جبل سے  
کیا حق ہے بھلا بندہ مومن کا خدا پر؟

“The Prophet then queried Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal anew: “What is the rightful claim of a true believer upon Allah?””

بولے یہ معاذ آپ پر جاں میری فدا ہو  
معلوم ہے یہ بات نبیؐ اور خدا کو

“Mu‘ādh replied: “O Messenger, my life is at your service. Only God and His messenger hold this knowledge.””

یہ سن کے نبیؐ پاک بڑی شان سے بولے  
رحمت کے، محبت کے نئے در کئی کھولے:  
جو بندہ خدا ہی کے لیے سر کو جھکائے”

“Upon hearing this, the Noble Prophet spoke with great reverence, Revealing new doors of mercy and love: For one who bows before none but Allah.”

معبود کسی اور کو اپنا نہ بنائے  
اللہ نے حق اُس کا کیا خود پر یہ قائم  
“دوزخ کی سزا سے رہے محفوظ وہ دائم

“Ascribing no partner or associate to Him, God has bound Himself to protect them, Eternally guarding them from the fires of Hell.”

پیغام نبیؐ سے یہ ہمیں درس ملا ہے  
توحید پر ایمان میں انساں کی بقا ہے

“This message from the Prophet has enlightened us, In faith in monotheism rests the salvation of humanity.”

جن ہو یا فرشتہ ہو یا انسان کوئی ہو  
اللہ کا پیغمبر ہو یا اللہ کا ولی ہو

“Be it a jinn, an angel, or a human being, A Prophet of Allah or a friend of Allah.”

محتاج ہے ہر نفس فقط اپنے ہی رب کا  
سب دست نگر اُس کے ہیں، رازق ہے وہ سب کا

“Every soul is solely reliant on its Lord, All hands are under His dominion, He is the provider for all.”

افلاک میں اُس کا کہیں ہم سر نہیں کوئی  
معبودِ حقیقی سے بلند تر نہیں کوئی

“In the heavens, none stands higher than Him, No entity surpasses the true deity.”

گر بندے مصیبت میں خداوند کو بلائیں  
مشکل کوئی آئے تو مدد اُس کی ہی چاہیں

“Those who invoke God in distress, If difficulties arise, seek aid from Him.”

حاجت کوئی دل میں ہو، کریں اُس سے دعائیں  
سب درد و الم اپنے خداوند کو سنائیں

“If a need resides within the heart, pray to Him, Unveil all pain and sorrow before their Lord.”

پھر اُن کا خدا اُن کے گناہ معاف کرے گا  
محشر میں بھی رحمت کی نظر اُن پہ کرے گا

“Their God shall forgive their sins, And on the Day of Judgment, His mercy shall illuminate them.”

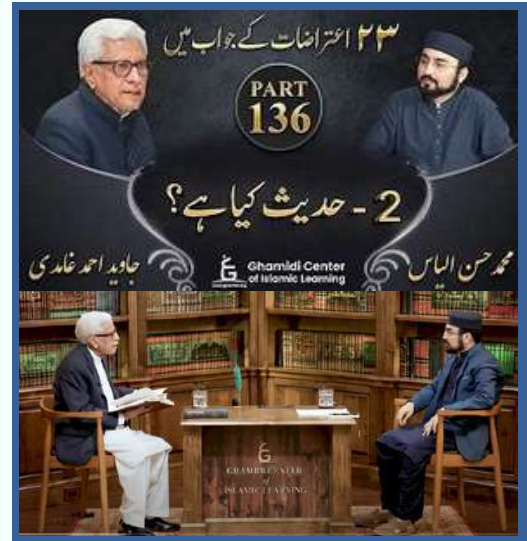
# NEWSLETTER GCIL AL-MAWRID US

October2023

## Start of “In Response to 23 Objections: What is Hadith” on YouTube

The discussion on what hadith is continues in the video series “In Response to 23 Objections.” These interactive sessions revolve around issues concerning hadith compilation during the era of the successors of the companions of the Holy Prophet, principles for investigating the credibility of hadith reports, standards

for accepting or rejecting hadith reports, and the traditions of muhaddithūn. Four interactive sessions were conducted in September 2023, which are available for viewing on the YouTube channel of Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning.



## Hassan Ilyas Visits Pakistan

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, the Director of Research and Communications at GCIL, is on an international tour with Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. During this trip, he also visited Pakistan and addressed a public event in Islamabad. The event was attended by a significant number of people from diverse religious backgrounds. Hassan Ilyas, while responding to various academic, moral, and religious questions posed by the audience, also spoke about social oppression in Pakistan, the evolution of religious thought, and his academic and intellectual journey.



Emphasizing various aspects of the Quran, he stated that none of our scholarly traditions have accorded the Quran the status and importance it deserves, as demanded by the Book of Allah itself.



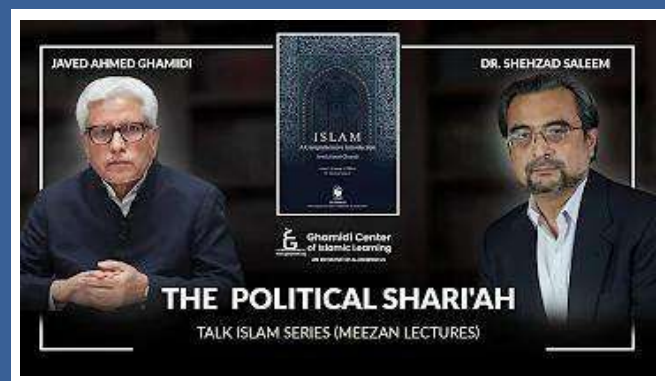
In response to a question, he explained how the mosque pulpit has been utilized for promoting sects in our country and what steps we should take to combat sectarianism. Additionally, he commended the contribution of Pakistanis in The Ghamdi Center's mission in the United States. The event lasted several hours. The video of the event is available on Ghamdi Center's YouTube channel.

### **How to Educate Modern Generations**

Muslims in the United States and Europe express great concern about the religious education of their children. Islamic education is not readily available in schools, at the state level, or within the social environment. This issue has been repeatedly raised with Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Ghamidi's ideas and suggestions for solving this problem are presented in an article by Syed Manzoor-ul-Hasan, available in the September 2023 issue of *Ishraq America*. An audio version of this article is also accessible on the company's YouTube channel.

## Teaching of "Al-Bayan" and "Mīzān" in English

Al-Bayan, Ghamidi's commentary on the Quran, and Mīzān, his book on Islam, are being taught in the English language by Dr. Shehzad Saleem. In September 2023, he completed four sessions discussing verses 83 to 121 of Surah Baqara. Dr. Shehzad Saleem also recorded two lectures titled "The Political Shariah" and "The Economic Shariah" under the "Mīzān" series. These lectures can be viewed on the YouTube channel of the Ghamdi Center.



## Kuch Naye Kuch Puranay I'tirādāt (Old and New Objections)

During his visit to Pakistan, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas recorded a program with Syed Muhammad Shah Kazmi titled "Some New, Some Old Objections," addressing questions raised on atheism and the existence of God. He mentioned that a video series on atheism will soon be launched with Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi Sahib under the auspices of the Ghamdi Center, where questions regarding the existence of God and various aspects of atheism will be discussed. This program can be viewed on the YouTube channel of the Ghamdi Center. Additionally, he met with traditional scholars, university professors, and scholars in Pakistan.

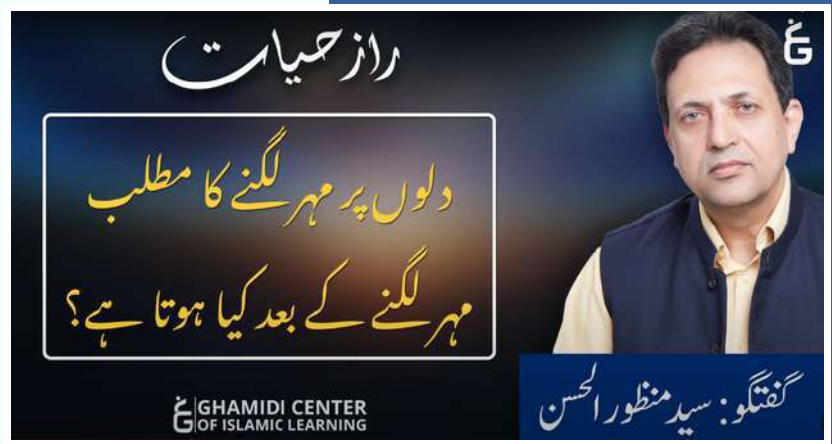
## Weekly Quran and Hadith Classes

GCIL is organizing live lectures on the Quran and Hadith by Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi. In the Dars-e-Hadith, various hadiths on many topics falling under "ethics" were explained. The videos of these lectures on the Quran and Hadith are available on Ghamdi Center's YouTube channel.

### Rāz e Ḥayāt (The Secret of Life)

Syed Manzoor-ul-Hasan Sahib, a research scholar of the Ghamdi Center of Islamic Learning and editor of the monthly "Ishraq" USA, has been working to promote and expand Islamic teachings for a long time. The scope of his writing is the explanation of Ghamdi Sahib's thoughts. Now he has also started a series of discussions on selected topics. "Rāz e Ḥayāt" is a weekly program of the same series, which airs on the YouTube channel every Monday at 7 pm Pakistani time. It aims at developing human morality and character. Every issue is explained in simple language in brief discussion sessions.

The episodes aired last month were titled: "Who are responsible and irresponsible people?" & "What is sealing hearts?" These programs can be viewed on the YouTube channel of The Ghamdi Center.



### Rabi ul Awwal

In this article, Mr. Hasan Ilyas pointed out some misconceptions about the Prophet's personality. He stated that notions like "this universe was created by Allah for the Messenger of Allah", "Love for the Messenger of Allah will lead to Paradise", "All the prophets are helpless before the Prophet", and "(the Prophet is) Omnipresent and Omniscient" are not valid. He opined that these concepts have nothing to do with religion and are mere inventions of Muslims' own minds. He further clarified that the relationship of love and devotion to the Holy Prophet should be built according to the guidance available in the Quran and Sunnah and in the light of the Prophet's exemplary character. This article can be found in the September 2023 issue of Ishraq America.

**SECRET TO  
INNER PEACE!**

**LESSONS OF LIFE SERIES  
WITH DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM**

**LECTURE NO 10**

**Ghamidi Center  
of Islamic Learning**  
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AN INITIATIVE OF AL-MAWRID US

**THE DECORUM OF  
CRITICIZING OTHERS**  
LESSONS OF LIFE SERIES  
WITH DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM  
**LECTURE NO 11**

**TEARS OF OLD PARENTS  
FOR THEIR CHILDREN**  
LESSONS OF LIFE SERIES  
WITH DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM  
**LECTURE NO 14**

**TURNING FOES  
INTO FRIENDS**  
LESSONS OF LIFE SERIES  
WITH DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM  
**LECTURE NO 09**

### **Recording of Various Lectures by Dr. Shehzad Saleem**

In September 2023, Dr. Shehzad Saleem Sahib recorded two lectures on "Political Rulings of Islam" and "Islamic Punishments". Six lectures were recorded under the title "Lessons of Life Series" on the topics "Manners of Criticizing Others", "Tears of Parents", "Promises of Children", "Levity and Self-Projection", "The Secret of Inner Peace", "Converting Enemies into Friends". The lectures are in English and can be viewed on the Ghamdi Center's YouTube channel.

### **Ghamdi's Four-Day Stay in Bahrain**

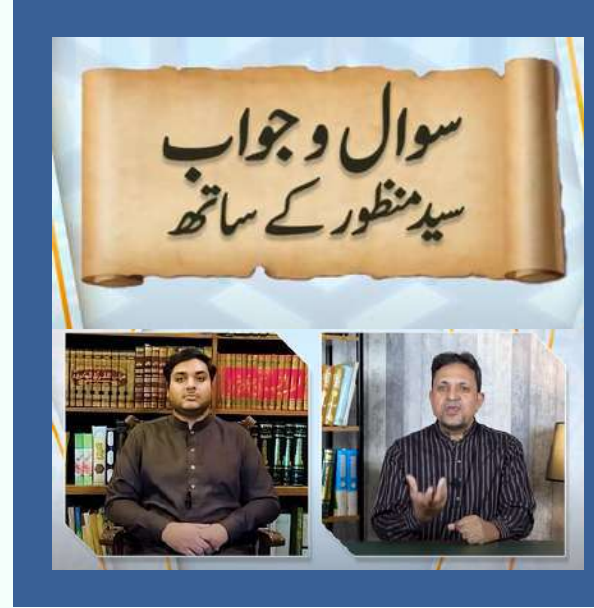
Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi and Mr. Hassan Ilyas also visited Bahrain last month. They were accompanied by Farhan Syed, Executive Director, Ghamdi Centre of Islamic Learning, USA. Ghamdi had a four-day stay in Bahrain. Five different meetings were held during the visit, attended by people from Saudi Arabia as well. Discussions were held regarding organizing various religious and preaching programs in Bahrain in the future. This was Ghamdi's first visit to Bahrain.

### **Ḥayāt e Amīn**

This is the biography of Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi, a great scholar, exegete of the Quran, and a significant researcher of the Farahi Seminary. It aims to educate future generations about Maulana's personal life as well as his intellectual and academic legacy. The services of Naeem Ahmed Baloch, a scholar of "Al-Mawrid America," have been enlisted for this project. Its first episode has been published in the monthly "Ishraq America". The article informs the readers about Maulana's birth, history of birth, family, home environment, early education, and events of Maulana's childhood. This article is available in the September 2023 issue of Ishraq America.

### Questions and Answers with Syed Manzoor-ul-Hasan

A new weekly program, "Question and Answer with Syed Manzoor-ul-Hasan" by Ghamdi Center is being aired every Friday at 21:00 PST. In this program, Syed Hasher Hasan asks questions that arise in the minds of youth concerning social and political issues, and Manzoor ul Hassan answers them in the light of religion and ethics. Four programs titled "Why are educated youth losing faith in religion and who is the culprit?",



"Is the Quran really God's book?", "What are the reasons for young people's distance from religion?", and "Why is Urs celebrated?" were aired last month, which can be viewed on Ghamdi Center's YouTube channel.

### Ghamdi's Brief Stay in the Philippines

Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi and Mr. Muhammad Hassan Ilyas visited different countries in the month of September for da'wah activities. After their visit to Pakistan, they made a brief stopover in Bahrain and stayed in the Philippines for a few hours on their way to Australia. Local Pakistani friends in the Philippines welcomed Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi to express their selfless love. A question-answer session was held which concluded with a lavish dinner. Local Deobandi scholars also showed great respect to Mr. Ghamdi. All the friends of the Pakistani Embassy were also present on the occasion.

### Religious Training of Youth

The young generation is our future. It is the responsibility of scholars to address the religious and intellectual questions that arise in their minds. For this purpose, the Ghamdi Centre of Islamic Learning occasionally invites scholars and intellectuals to interact with the youth. In this regard, several programs hosted by Muhammad Bashar Ilyas were recorded with Dr. Khalid Zaheer Sahib on the topic of "Quran and the Mystery of Life".

The programs included candid answers to the questions raised by the new generation on the Quran & religion. Dr. Khalid Zaheer discussed the same topic with Shariq Butt in English so that English-speaking youth can also benefit from it. In September 2023, two programs were broadcast on the subject, which are being broadcast on the YouTube channel of GCIL.

### **Bhalā Tū Nay Dekhā thā Dil Chīr Kar (Did you tear his heart (to check his faith?))**

A series of interpretations of hadiths of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) has also started at the GCIL. Syed Manzoor al-Hasan has adapted hadiths based on virtues of morality into poetry. The poems are also being overseen by Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Since the project aims at the religious education of children, the style of these poems is simple and easy to understand. In September's "Ishraq America", a detailed interpretation of a tradition of Sahih Muslim has been published. The title of the poem is: Bhalā Tū Nay Dekhā thā Dil Chīr Kar (Did you tear the heart?) and its concluding verses are as follows: Anyone who calls himself a Muslim and expresses his faith in prophethood, We have no right to declare him a disbeliever. This is the message of the religion, be it in primary text or secondary interpretation.

### **Weekly Question and Answer Session**

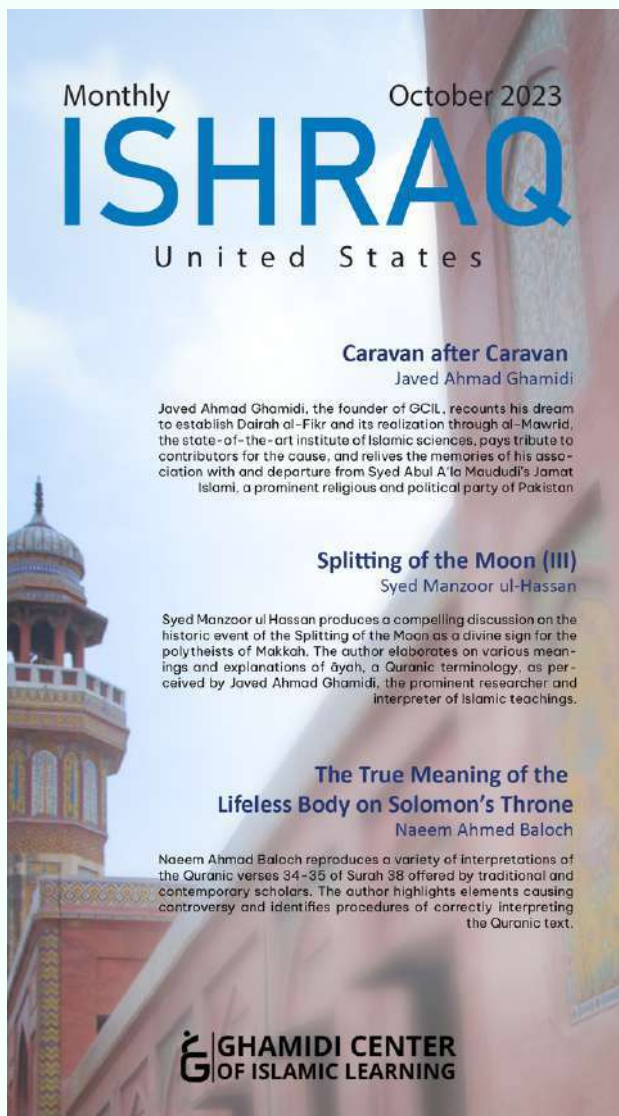
A weekly question and answer session for the month of October was held at Ghamdi Center. In this question and answer session, important topics such as "Syedinā Ali and Amīr Mu'āwiyah, Yazīd and the incident



of Karbalā", "Appointing Successors: The Appointment of Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd" were discussed. Weekly recordings of these Q&A meetings can be viewed on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

### Private Consultation Session with Dr. Shehzad Saleem

In September 2023, various individuals met Dr. Shehzad Saleem Sahib privately and sought his valuable input regarding parental issues, child and adolescent behavior, and complications of marital relations.



### English Version of "Ishraq America"

All academic and promotional activities of The Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning are aligned with modern means of communication. Currently, the English language is considered the most important medium for communication globally. In view of this importance of the English language, "Al-Mawrid America" has decided to publish "Ishraq America" in English as well so that a large number of English-speaking people can also benefit from the academic and intellectual literature of Farahi school of thought. The program is already in progress, and the English version of the journal will be available soon.

### Ask Dr. Shehzad Saleem

This is a live monthly question and answer session in which Dr. Shehzad Saleem answers questions related to various religious, moral, and social issues. In this session, people can ask their questions in both Urdu and English languages. The recordings of the session are available on GCIL's YouTube channel.

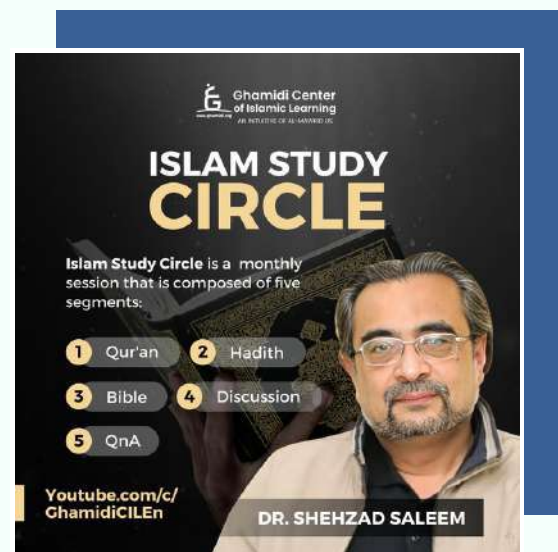
### Issuance of Fatwas

People often contact the Ghamdi Center of Islamic Learning regarding the legal applications of Sharia. They request conclusive opinions on issues associated with marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other social and economic concerns. Three fatwas were issued by GCIL on similar issues last month under the guidance of Muhammad Hassan Ilyas and Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi.

### Islam Study Circle

Dr. Shehzad Saleem has started a session, "Islam Study Circle," in which he discusses various religious, moral, and social issues in the light of the Quran and Hadith. The session consists of three parts. The first part involves the selection of certain verses of the Quran to be explained in detail. Selected hadiths are discussed in the second part of the session. The third part of the session is specified

for a discussion on excerpts from the Bible. The session concludes with a brief question-answer session about the topics. The session is conducted in the English language. Topics such as "truth," "compassion," "forgiveness," and "overcoming arrogance" were discussed in last month's session.



### Ask Ghamidi

The GCIL program "Ask Ghamidi" had its 32nd session in August 2023. It's an online session that aims to allow people to get answers to various questions related to religious and moral issues directly from Mr. Ghamdi. A large number of people attended the session.

### Introduction to the English Translation of the Quran

Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi's translation of the Quran is the first in the history of translation for its unique quality of elaborating the coherence of the Quranic verses. In view of the importance of the English language in the present time, Al-Mawrid America decided to convey the great



discovery of the Seminary of Farahi, i.e., the coherence of the Quran, to the English-speaking community. For this purpose, Dr. Shehzad Saleem, a scholar of Al-Mawrid America, has translated Ghamdi's translation of the Quran into the English language. Al-Mawrid America organized a meeting in Chicago last month in which Dr. Shehzad Saleem gave a detailed introduction to the translation of the Quran in English and highlighted specific aspects that make it stand out from the rest of the translations. Its recording can be viewed on Ghamdi Center's YouTube channel.

### **Recording of "Ilm o Hikmat (Knowledge and Wisdom)"**

Programs for Dunya News "Ilm o Hikmat: Ghamidi Kay Saath (Knowledge and Wisdom: With Ghamidi)" is a well-known program of Dunya News Channel Pakistan, which has been broadcast for many years. It is hosted by Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, recorded in Dallas, and aired weekly. In September 2023, four episodes of this program were recorded and aired by Dunya News. These programs discussed important topics such as the ethics of protest, the establishment of the nation-state and its elements, and the nature of government in the nation-state. Questions from the audience were also answered in detail.

### **Altaf Ahmed Azmi passed away**

Altaf Ahmad Azmi was a graduate of Madrasat-ul-Islah, Sarai Mir, Azamgarh. He was also a doctor. He received his Ph.D. from Hamdard University. Madrasat-ul-Islah is associated with Imam Hamid-ud-Din Farahi, a renowned scholar of the region. Azmi passed away in August 2023. In the September issue of Ishraq America, articles by Khursheed Nadeem, Muhammad Ghatriif Shahbaz, and Muhammad Mursalin Islahi were published on his death. The authors mentioned the scholarly, literary, and religious services of the deceased, as well as his ideologies, literary works, and poetry collections. Describing Azmi's personality and characteristics, the authors stated that the deceased was naturally inclined to think and raise questions. Moreover, he openly expressed his ideas without hesitation. For this reason, despite having limited academic humility, he had exceptional self-confidence and immense courage. These articles can be found in the September 2023 issue of Ishraq America.

**Dr. Shehzad Saleem's Lecture in Osaka, Japan**

Dr. Shehzad Saleem delivered a lecture on "Islam and the State: Common Misconceptions" to students in Osaka, Japan, last month. A large number of students attended the lecture.