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No human knowledge is ever purely truth. There is always some admixture of falsehood with truth. Hence, before a person departs from this world, errors in his knowledge, information, inferences, and assumptions start to become apparent. This is the fate of every thinker, be they Socrates or Plato, Newton or Einstein. No exception to this phenomenon has ever been observed in the entire history of knowledge and literature.

~ *Javed Ahmad Ghamidi*

Islam lays its social structure on the basis of a permanent relationship between a man and a woman. This relationship comes into existence in the form of an everlasting marriage bond and the two constitute the basic ingredients of a family. On the permanence and well-being of the institution of the family stands the whole fabric of a society.

~ *Dr. Shehzad Saleem*

The wisdom behind not specifying the exact date of Laylah al-Qadr in apparent is to encourage people to seek it earnestly. This search leads people to spend many nights in worship and earn rewards for themselves.

~ *Syed Manzoor ul Hassan*

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UNDER GUIDANCE OF
JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI

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BELIEF IN GOD

JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI

Humans are a creation. The discourse of religion commences with the realization of this fact. This is an existential reality observable directly by us whenever we wish. Thus, we know from which lifeless elements human creation occurs. These elements are ingested through food, and we know where and how they are processed inside the human body, which acts as a factory. We are aware that these elements do not contain human sperm nor anything that transforms matter into life and life into consciousness. Yet, this food, when it reaches a certain location, transforms into semen, which contains the seeds capable of forming a human. These seeds, in the millions, are found in the semen released by a man at one time. Each of these seeds has the potential to join with a woman's ovum and develop into a complete human, a process that occurs in another kind of factory. We can see that when it joins with the ovum, the initial form that comes into existence is so tiny it cannot be seen without a microscope. Yet, this insignificant entity, over nine months and a few days, transforms from a drop of water into a clot, from a clot into flesh, then flesh onto bones, and with flesh-covered bones, emerges from the mother's womb as something entirely different, to display its amazing powers and capabilities in knowledge and reasoning, intellect and wisdom, art and craft, the excellence of which can be seen everywhere in the world today.

We observe creation and, due to the inherent structure of our consciousness, find ourselves compelled to seek its creator. This inclination arises not simply because every entity must have a creator, but because every act of creation necessitates a creator. This fundamental aspect of creation drives our search. Embedded within us is this urge; thus, we are never truly satisfied with ceasing our quest to understand the cause behind an effect and the agent behind an action. Upon examining the great thinkers in philosophy, science, and mysticism, it becomes apparent that none have been able to forsake this pursuit. Consequently, the entire chronicle of knowledge serves as

evidence to the fact that every creation has a creator; humanity, being a creation, therefore has a Creator. Furthermore, the act of creation we witness is deliberate, with each facet showcasing immense power, and unparalleled knowledge and wisdom. Just as we cannot dismiss the act of creation, we cannot overlook the nature of this action. For the nature of this act stands as a reality of existence, just as the act of creation itself does. As we behold the act, we also perceive this truth, thereby recognizing that the creator of humanity possesses purposeful intent, boundless power, and profound wisdom.

Human intellect leads us up to this point. In this journey, it requires no external guidance. The capacity for knowledge and perception granted to humans at birth is sufficient for guidance in this journey. Yet, beyond this point, the question of who the creator is cannot be resolved with equal certainty and conviction. Typically, the human intellect contemplates the two responses that have been offered throughout human history, either selecting one or remaining undecided.

The first answer posits that the universe, in whose embrace humans awaken to consciousness, is their creator. This is the perspective of atheism.

Typically, this viewpoint is articulated as follows: The universe is endowed with self-consciousness, embodying a power that inherently possesses creative capabilities. Beyond it, nothing else exists. The concepts of "inside" and "outside" are also confined within its bounds. Each segment of the universe harbors both an internal and external existence. While the universe operates as a nexus of causes and effects, in its totality, it is regarded as the initial cause.

This answer is merely a claim.

First, the purported self-awareness of the universe has never been substantiated through observation. We understand the universe's essence to be matter, and matter lacks intent, as well as knowledge and intellect. If such attributes exist, they are observed in the entity referred to as the creator of this universe. Moreover, if such a power exists, it resides in the very creation, without which concepts like knowledge, intellect, and purpose would be devoid of meaning.

Second, what is perceived as the manifestation of creative power in the universe is actually just the display of characteristics and effects attributable to an entity. This type of power manifestation is evident in the components of automated machinery designed by humans and in artificial intelligence, which currently astounds us with its level of sophistication.

Third, if the universe embodies anything, it represents the aggregate of effects and characteristics that forge causal relationships. It bears no relation to the creative act that necessitates knowledge, intellect, purpose, and the capability to act at each juncture. This realm is governed by causes and effects, methodologies, and laws, without embodying deeper significance.

Who is the creator of humanity? This question has received its second answer from those who identify themselves as prophets. This profound response was imparted to humanity at the time of their creation. Therefore, the first human was not only humanity's initial member but also its inaugural prophet. This answer reveals that the creator of humanity is a knowledgeable and wise entity, transcending the confines of our universe.

Human creation commenced from the depths of the earth. The very elements found in soil, which enter our bodies as food and transform into a simple extract of water, marking the commencement of our journey to becoming human, had already undergone a similar process within decayed clay. This process continued until the creation reached completion, at which point the clay dried from the surface and became a hardened mud. Upon breaking, it revealed a living creature, representing the primal form of human existence.

Subsequently, the same transformation observed within the earth started to unfold within this rudimentary animal, which initially lacked knowledge and perception. Through the interbreeding of several generations, which refined this primal form of human existence, it gradually evolved to a state ready to receive a human personality. This personality was bestowed through a gentle breath, marking the final step in the creation of humanity as we understand it:

بَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ، ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَّهِينٍ، ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ، وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ۔

“

[It is He] Who has excelled in the creation of everything. He began creating a human being from clay; then carried on his progeny from an insignificant fluid; then perfected it and blew into it from His spirit and for you made ears [for hearing], eyes [for seeing] and hearts [for understanding] – seldom are you grateful. (Al-Sajdah 32: 7-9)

”

This response was last provided through the Quran, the verses of which are quoted above. The prophet who delivered this message asserts that these are the words of the Creator Himself, revealed to him. As these revelations were received, he recited them to the people without any modifications. Not a single letter or detail was altered by him, nor will anyone dare to make changes until the Day of Judgment.

This assertion is made within the Quran itself, and a very clear criterion has been established therein. This criterion allows us to determine whether the Quran genuinely represents the word of the Creator or if it has been mistakenly or falsely attributed to the Creator by a human being.

What is this criterion? We can present it in the following three points:

Firstly, the process of human knowledge creation, encompassing both words and meanings, invariably involves numerous stages of trial and error. No individual is born with the innate wisdom of philosophers like Socrates or Plato, nor with the poetic genius of Ghalib or Shakespeare, nor yet with the scientific brilliance of Newton or Einstein. This learning journey is marked by a constant cycle of understanding, making mistakes, and then rectifying those errors. We witness how individuals draw from the works of their predecessors, diligently hone their skills, and gradually progress until they reach the zenith of their craft, producing masterpieces of knowledge or literature. This progression is a fundamental aspect of the human condition, inherent from birth. Throughout the annals of knowledge and literature, there has never been a deviation from this pattern, nor is such an exception anticipated in the future.

However, the Quran stands as a notable exception to this universal rule. The individual through whom it was revealed was observed by his community day and night for forty years in a modest village comprising a few hundred dwellings. Throughout these years, his every action was visible to them, yet they never detected any indication of the customary trial and error process that is the lot of every human being. It was, therefore, astounding to them that this man, known in their midst for his truthfulness and trustworthiness, could have conceived such profound knowledge and articulate discourse on his own. Baffled, they speculated that perhaps his revelations were the work of a learned foreigner feeding him information. In response to such allegations, the Quran itself addresses this skepticism and provides clarification:

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ، فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ، أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ؟ فَسَنُ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَيَّ اللَّهُ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ، إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُبْرِمُونَ۔

“

Say: Had God willed, I would neither have recited this Qur'ān to you nor would God have informed you of it. It is His decision alone because I have spent a whole life among you before this. [When have I uttered such words?] Then, do you not use your intellect? So, who will be more unjust than the person who imputes falsehood to God or denies His revelation? In reality, such wrongdoers shall never succeed. (Surah Yunus 10:16-17)

”

The point was that, 'O fools, when have you ever seen me engrossed in such discussions, expressing thoughts and ideas about them, engaged in practicing and refining them, or acquiring any knowledge or art related to the subjects now being discussed in the verses of the Quran? For forty years, I have lived among you; have you ever detected anything in my words and actions that could hint at the message I am now conveying? Have you observed any signs of the development and evolution of what I proclaim today in my previous life stages? You are aware that the human mind cannot produce something at any life stage without evidence of its development and evolution in earlier phases. You accuse me of lying about God. Have you ever noticed the slightest inclination towards dishonesty, deceit, forgery, or cunningness in my behavior and demeanor? Until this moment, you have acknowledged me as truthful and trustworthy. How, then, can you suddenly declare that the same person has become a liar and a fabricator overnight? O servants of God, why do you not apply your intellect?'

Secondly, human knowledge is invariably marred by contradictions. The narrative of 'I crafted, I admired, I broke' initiated from day one persists till the end. This, upon reflection, is a manifestation of the aforementioned process of trial and error. Moreover, should this knowledge transform into literature, the same pattern emerges. Examining human works closely reveals variances in poetry, eloquence, and meanings. At times, a speech may seem a marvel of expression, yet at others, it appears insignificant, even trivial. Hence, it is undeniable that no human has ever been capable of consistently delivering speeches of unparalleled eloquence on a multitude of topics and under varying circumstances, such that when these speeches are gathered from beginning to end, they compile into a coherent and cohesive collection without any ideological conflicts, devoid of the speaker's fluctuating emotions and psychological states, and free from shifts in opinions or perspectives.

The exception to this is solely the Quran. It is thus proclaimed:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا-

“

[Why are they hesitant about your prophethood?] Then, do these people not ponder on the Qur'ān? Had it been from someone other than God, they would have found in it many contradictions. (Surah An-Nisa 4:82)

”

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

"...Every aspect of the Quran, in its principles and branches, is so firm and interconnected that even the formulas of mathematics and Euclidean geometry cannot match its solidity and coherence. The beliefs it teaches are so intricately linked that removing even one would disrupt the entire chain. The acts of worship and obedience it commands spring from these beliefs as branches sprout from a trunk; the actions and ethics it advocates emerge from its principles as naturally as the inherent properties of an object manifest themselves; the system of life that emerges from its collective teachings is like a well-built edifice, each brick so firmly joined to the others that removing any one would create a void in the entire structure." (Tadabbur-e-Quran 2/347)

Thirdly, no human knowledge is ever purely truth. There is always some admixture of falsehood with truth. Hence, no person departs from this world without the errors in their knowledge, information, inferences, and assumptions beginning to emerge. This is the inevitable outcome for every thinker, whether it be Socrates or Plato, Newton or Einstein. No deviation from this pattern has been recorded in the entire annals of knowledge and literature. However, the Quran stands as a remarkable exception. For nearly fifteen hundred years, it has withstood rigorous examination, yet no philosopher, sage, or scientist has succeeded in disproving any of its assertions or discrediting any of its teachings. In the past three centuries, despite significant advancements, not a single discovery has contradicted the truths the Quran presents; no scientific development has challenged its knowledge, and no experiment or observation has undermined the guidance it provides. What it proclaims as truth has never been found false, and what it identifies as falsehood has never been validated as true. These are incontrovertible truths concerning the Quran. It is stated:

وَأَنَّهُ لَكَتَّابٌ عَزِيزٌ، لَّا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ، وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ، تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ-

“

Evil can neither enter it from its front nor from its behind. It is revealed in a very thorough manner from the Being Who is an embodiment of wisdom; has praiseworthy attributes.

(Ha Mim As Sajdah 41:42)

”

The Quran has informed humanity, after proving its own truthfulness by this standard, that the universe you mistakenly believe to be your creator is also a creation of the One who is your Creator. Do you not see that everything in this world is a miraculous manifestation of the art of creation, deep in meaning, meticulously arranged, full of wisdom, planning, benefit, and astonishing order and harmony, incredibly appropriate and in perfect harmony, unparalleled in its Euclidean and mathematical perfection, with no explanation other than that it has also been created by the All-Knowing, All-Wise who created you. He is the One who made the earth a cradle for you and the mountains its pegs, created you in pairs, made your sleep a source of rest, the night a cover, and the day the time for livelihood, created seven firm heavens above you and placed a burning lamp within them. He is the One who sends down rain from the clouds and produces with it vegetation, crops, and dense gardens:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ، عُلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ، هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ، هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ، الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّبُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ، سُبْحَانَ
اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ. هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ، لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى، يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ-

“

[They should always keep in mind that] it is God besides whom there is no deity. Knower of the Unseen and the Seen; He is the Most Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful. He is the very God besides whom there is no deity, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy, the Embodiment of Peace, the Giver of Tranquility, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Extremely Powerful, the Most High; exalted is God above what they state as partners! He is God, the Designer, the Creator, the Shaper. All good names are His. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. (Al-Hashr 59: 22-24)

”

The Quran has stated that acknowledging the lordship of this Creator is something that has been innately placed in human nature from time immemorial. It describes this matter as a covenant and pact, referring to it as an actual event. Man has been sent to this world for a test, hence this event has been erased from his memory, but its truth is etched on the page of his heart and ingrained in the recesses of his mind, immune to obliteration. When external influences do not interfere, and when reminded of this primal covenant, humans are instinctively drawn to it. This attraction is as natural as a child's instinctive rush to its mother, despite never having witnessed its own birth. This acknowledgment of the Creator satisfies a fundamental human need, aligning with the psychological requirements of the individual. The Quran articulates that this deep-seated acknowledgment is so profound that, concerning the Lordship of God, every person stands accountable before God based solely on this inner testimony. It is said:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ، وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ، أَلَسْتُ
بِرَبِّكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: بَلَىٰ، شَهِدْنَا نَحْنُ أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ-

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ، وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ، أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ
الْمُبْطِلُونَ؟ وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصِلُ الْآيَاتِ، وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ-

“

[O Prophet!] Remind them of that time too when your Lord had brought forth from the loins of Adam's children their progeny and had made them testify to themselves. [He had asked:] "Am I not your Lord?" They replied: "Yes, [You alone are our Lord.] We bear witness to it. This We did lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: "We had no knowledge of this," or present this excuse: "Our forefathers had already adopted polytheism and we later became their children; then, will You destroy us on account of what these wrongdoers did?" In this way, We explain Our revelations so that people are left with no excuse to deny the truth and so that they may return to the right path. (Al-A'raf 7:172-174)

”

This acknowledgment forms the essence of the universe. It satisfies the human intellect and enlightens the heart. Thus, one might exclaim with conviction, "Without a doubt, Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.":

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ، الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ،
الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ، يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ، لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا
غَرْبِيَّةٍ، يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ، نُورٌ عَلِيٌّ نُورٌ، يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ-

“

[The parable is that] God is the light of the heavens and the earth. [In the heart of a person,] the example of this light of His is as if there is a niche which has a lamp. The lamp is in crystal. The crystal is such as if it is a shining star. It is lit up by oil that comes from a lush olive tree which is neither eastern nor western. Its oil is [so transparent] as if it will light up even without fire touching it. Light upon light. God grants this light of His guidance to whomsoever He wills. God mentions these parables to guide people and God is aware of everything. (An-Nur 24:35)

”

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

"...This universe, indeed the entire cosmos, is a world of darkness, a city of blindness, for those who do not believe in God or who believe in Him but do not accept His attributes and their implications. Such a person cannot know where this world came from nor can they understand the ultimate purpose and goal of its existence. They are unable to determine their own purpose of existence: Are they free and unbridled, or bound and subdued? Are they accountable or not? What is good for them and what is

evil? Should they choose a path of injustice or justice? Should they follow solely their own interests and desires, or aim for a higher purpose? The correct answers to these questions are crucial for a successful and righteous life. However, one who does not believe in God cannot find the correct solutions to these questions. They wander like a blind buffalo in darkness, ultimately falling into the abyss of destruction, reaping the consequences of their deeds. On the other hand, one who believes in God with His true attributes finds both the essence of the universe and its ultimate end becomes clear to them. The answers to all those questions, which are unsolvable for the disbeliever, become evident to them. Thus, the world no longer remains a place of darkness for them; instead, every aspect of it shines brightly with the light of faith, and every direction is illuminated for them. Every step they take is in full daylight, and the light of faith in God guides them in every direction. This reality is clearly stated in this passage: the light of the heavens and the earth is Allah. One who has this light is in brightness and on the straight path, while one who is deprived of this light wanders in a realm of darkness, and no one else can provide them light. 'And whomsoever Allah does not grant light, for him there is no light.'” (Tadabbur-e-Quran 5/409)





TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS

MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS

[1]. It is narrated from Ummul Mu'mineen Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

"When Allah intends to create someone, He sends an angel. That angel enters the womb and says: 'O Lord, what will this be?' Allah informs whether it will be a boy or a girl, or whatever Allah wishes to create in the womb. Then the angel asks: 'O Lord, will this one be wretched or fortunate?' Allah also reveals whether the person will be wretched or fortunate. The angel further inquires: 'O Lord, what will be his provision?' Allah also reveals that, detailing the amount. Then the angel asks: 'O Lord, when will this one die?' And Allah gives the answer, specifying the time. After this, the angel inquires about the person's nature, to which Allah responds: 'It will be what is destined with him in the womb.'" (Mushkil al-Athar, Tahawi, Number 3278)

[2]. Abu Tufayl reports that he came to Abu Sariyah Hudhayfah bin Usayd Ghaffari (may Allah be pleased with him), and he said:

"I have heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) with these two ears of mine saying: 'The sperm stays in the womb for forty nights, after which the angel begins to mold its form.' Zuhair says: 'I believe he also said: The same angel is designated for its creation. The angel asks: 'O my Lord, will it be a woman or a man?' Then Allah determines whether it will be male or

female. Then it says: 'O my Lord, will this be complete in every aspect or will there be a deficiency?' Allah also decides whether it will be complete or deficient. Afterwards, it inquires: 'O my Sustainer, how much will be its provision? What will be the duration of its life and how will be its character?' In response to these, Allah also decrees whether the person will be wretched or fortunate.'" (Muslim, Number 4790)

[3]. Abdullah bin Umar says that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

"When Allah decides to create a soul, the angel present in the womb asks several questions, such as 'O Sustainer, will it be male or female?' Allah decides in response to this. Then it asks, 'O my Lord, will it be fortunate or wretched?' Allah also makes a decision regarding that. Afterward, it writes down between the person's eyes every event that will occur to them, even including the calamity that will befall them." (Sahih Ibn Hibban, Number 6312)





SPLITTING OF THE MOON VII

SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN

Fourthly, the true reasons for granting miracles to the prophets, peace be upon them, are to culminate the argument against their people and to serve as final warnings prior to the punishment in response to their demands. Hence, generally, these miracles are provided towards the end of their mission of completing the argument, but in some cases, they are equipped with these from the very beginning of their call. On such occasions, the purpose is to awe the addressees so that they refrain from any oppressive actions and show readiness to listen. Prominent examples of this are the miracles of the staff and the white hand given to Prophet Moses, peace be upon him. The grand miracle given to the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, peace be upon him, in the form of the Glorious Quran also shares this aspect. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi, mentioning the miracles given to Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, highlights this very aspect in the following words:

"...The known divine practice in the case of miracles has been that they were given to prophets at a time when their nations forcefully demanded them, and the only purpose of giving these miracles was to complete the argument against those who were not using reason and intellect, and stubbornly insisted on a miracle, so that they are left with no excuse to turn away from the truth. Then why was this special treatment done with Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, that he was given two miracles right at the start of his prophethood? In our view, the reason is that Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, was sent as a messenger to a tyrannical and stubborn ruler, who was a personal and national enemy of Moses, peace be upon him. To even consider listening and understanding his message was one thing; there was a fear that upon finding out that it was Moses, peace be upon him, the ruler would immediately order his execution. Indeed, the ruler had already

ordered his execution after the incident involving the killing of the Coptic, but Moses, peace be upon him, escaped to Midian secretly and thus the ruler's plans were thwarted. If Moses, peace be upon him, had gone to such a vengeful and tyrannical person simply to warn him, then how could he ever be willing to listen! He could only be prepared to listen to something if Moses, peace be upon him, presented something that could awe him. Hence Allah endowed him right at the start with two such miracles, with the help of which he could stay protected from any aggression by his enemy, and as will be clear from the following verses, Moses, peace be upon him, demonstrated his miracles to be wary of taking any wrong step, for he was not empty-handed, but in his hands was the staff which could shatter all pride and arrogance." (Tadabbur-i-Quran 5/36)

Fifthly, God takes into consideration the conditions and inclinations of the addressees while determining the nature of the clear signs or the prophets' miracles. That is, Allah causes such supernatural events to occur through the prophets that correlate with their understanding and reasoning, way of life, culture and civilization. Consequently, the miracles appeal to them, invoking attention, amazement, and astonishment, and serve as a means of completing the argument. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

"The divine practice in the issue of miracles seems to be that they are granted in consideration of the tastes and inclinations of nations so that they may become a reason for completing the argument against them. In Egypt, history shows that during that era there was a great emphasis on sorcery and magicians held a high status in society, so Allah gave Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, such miracles that could nullify the spells of magicians. In contrast, in Arab society, the greatest respect and esteem were given to eloquence and oratory, and society was impressed by speakers and poets. Hence, our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was granted the miracle of the Quran, whose eloquence and rhetoric left all the great orators and poets awestruck and helpless." (Tadabbur-i-Quran 3/343)

Sixthly, it is also an established fact concerning these signs that although they are produced by the hands of the prophet, they are not essentially related to the official responsibilities of the prophet. They are purely from Allah. Thus, prophets do not decide whether these signs should occur or not and when they should appear. Nor are they revealed in response to the demands of the addressees. The Glorious Quran has clarified this with utmost clarity in Surah Ar-Ra'd, It is stated:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ-
 اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحِيلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيصُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُوا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِقَدَارٍ-
 (87:13)

“

These disbelievers say: “Why was not a sign [of punishment] revealed to this person by his Lord?” [Tell them: “This is not your responsibility because] you are only a warner and for each nation there was a guide who came to it in this manner.”

”

[When will a sign of punishment be revealed to them? Only God knows this the way] God knows about the foetus in the womb of every female and also knows whatever increases or decreases in the wombs. Everything is in a measure with Him.

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes in the explanation of these verses:

"The word 'آیت' (āyat) here refers to a sign of punishment. It refers the hastening of the punishment described in the previous verse for which the people had asked. They questioned why the Prophet did not show them any sign of the punishment he constantly warned them about. In response, the Almighty says: your job is merely to alert people about this punishment; it is not your job to show them a sign or bring about that punishment. That is Our task. You do your job and leave Our task to Us. Do not worry about their nonsensical talk... It is unreasonable to establish doubt about a matter that is definitely going to occur—based on the fact that you cannot specify its timing or show it upon their demand. For instance, a pregnant woman—only Allah knows whether there is a boy or a girl in her womb, He knows the details of what's happening within, and only He knows the exact timing of the birth. The ignorance of these matters doesn't deny pregnancy itself, nor does any rational person deny the pregnancy of a woman on these basis. The same is the case for the divine punishment for those oppressors. They have borne this 'pregnancy' of punishment due to the corruption of their beliefs and actions, and this pregnancy will inevitably manifest at the right time. However, when it will come and in what form will be is known only to Allah; no one else has this knowledge. In Allah's domain, every matter follows set rules, predefined measures, and appointed times. Human impatience does not change the Divine practice He has established for everything." (Tadabbur-i-Qur'an 4/274)

Seventhly, the Quran clarifies that although miracles are out of the ordinary and against normal habits and laws, they occur within the realm of causes and through them. This is why Allah Almighty rejects such demands that are beyond the scope of causes. In Surah Al-Ma'idah, where Allah mentions His signs regarding Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), there is also the question of the disciples asking if Allah can send down a feast from heaven. Prophet Jesus warned them, and Allah did not approve of this request. The relevant passage is as follows:

At the time, when the disciples said: "O Jesus, son of Mary! Can your Lord send down to us from the heavens a table-spread [of food]?" Jesus said: "Fear God if you are true believers."

They replied: "We only want to eat from this table-spread and, as its result, our hearts receive satisfaction, and we are able to know that what you said to us is true and we become witnesses to it."

At this, Jesus, son of Mary, prayed: "O God, our Lord! Send down to us from the heavens a table-spread which becomes a memorable thing for our successors and for our predecessors and a sign from You. [Lord!] Provide us! And You are the best of Providers.

“

God replied: "I shall definitely send it down to you; but after this those who disbelieve from among you, I shall give them such a stern punishment that I would not have given to anyone in the world." (5: 112-115)

”

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes about the clarification of the phrase 'هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ' (Does your Lord have the ability):

"Regarding the question 'هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ', it should be noted that the disciples' question was not about the power of God but rather about His wisdom. They wanted to know whether showing such an overt sign would accord with His wisdom or not. The disciples were believers and could not have been unaware that their request resembled the demand of the Children of Israel who wanted to see God, which resulted in them being struck by a thunderbolt. Even though miracles are extraordinary, they occur within the guise of causes and not by lifting all the veils. That is why Allah Almighty has never encouraged such demands that exceed the limits set for the appearance of miracles in the Divine practice. Thus, Jesus (peace be upon him) also discouraged it, and when the disciples persisted in their request, Allah was not pleased but said that He would send down the feast yet warned them to remember that those who disbelieve after seeing such clear signs will receive a punishment like none other. It seems that after this, the disciples retracted their request. A group among the exegetes also believes that the feast was not sent down. Even in the Gospels, there is no mention of it." (Tadabbur-i-Qur'an 2/608)

[Continued]





SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS IN UNDERSTANDING OF RIBA AND RIBA-FREE FINANCE

SALMAN AHMED SHAIKH

This article discusses the contemporary understanding of the scope and application of Riba in modern forms of banking and finance. The schools of thoughts in the understanding of Riba and Riba-free finance can be classified into the mainstream school and the heterodox school. The mainstream school represents classical scholarship whose views are grounded in Classical Fiqh. The mainstream school can be further classified into conservatives and realists. The heterodox school can also be further classified into assimilative and interpretive school. Figure 1 gives an illustration of the schools of thought related to contemporary understanding of Riba and Riba-free finance.

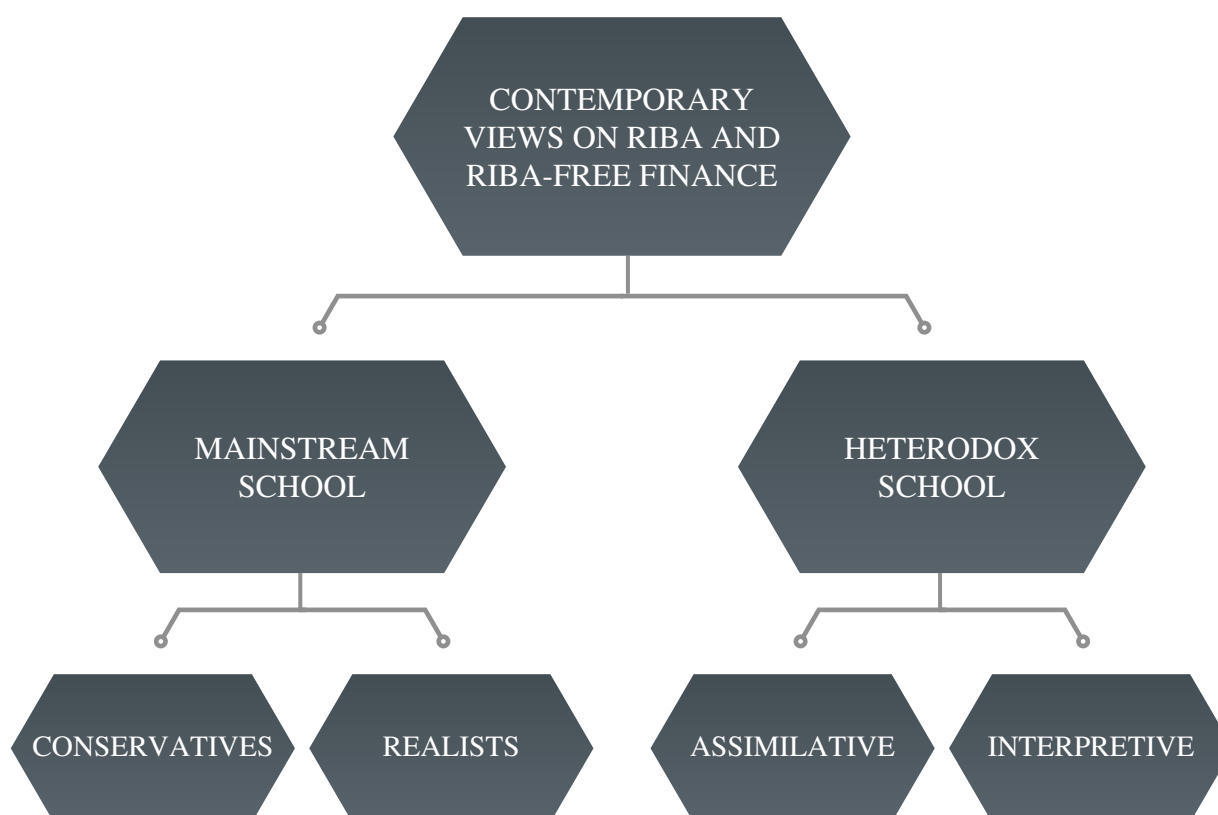


Figure 1: Schools of Thoughts in Contemporary Understanding of Riba

Conservatives are the scholars who want to avoid not only Riba, but also want to stop backdoor ways of indulging in Riba as Sadd-e-Zariya (a precautionary step). They suggest caution and emphasize that it is vital to ensure safety from Haram (impermissible activities) than to engage in Mubah (a lawful activity). Safety from impermissibility is a must while engaging in a lawful activity is only permissible at best.

The conservatives include two kinds of scholars, i.e. those following any major school of jurisprudence in Classical Fiqh in all matters and those who take inspiration from Classical Fiqh schools and scholarship, but do not bind themselves and others to follow one particular Classical Fiqh school in particular. The former scholars are known as Muqallid (binding themselves to follow one particular Classical Fiqh school) and the latter are known as Non-Muqallid (not binding themselves to follow one particular Classical Fiqh school).

In the context of South Asia and especially Pakistan, the former includes scholars which hail from mainstream religious schools, such as Jamia Farooqia, Jamia Uloom-ul-Islamia and Jamia Ahsan-ul-Uloom, for instance. It is known that Rector of Jamia Farooqia, Maulana Saleemullah Khan and Chancellor of Jamia Uloom-ul-Islamia, Maulana Abdul Razzaq Iskandar had been critical of Islamic Banking. They had expressed their views in a jointly published Fatwa, i.e. legal opinion (Jamia Uloom-ul-Islamia, 2008). Likewise, Principal of Jamia Ahsan-ul-Uloom, Mufti Zar Wali Khan had also written a critique of Islamic banking (Khan, 2014). These scholars not only condemn conventional banking interest, but also criticize Islamic banking on the premise that it uses Hiyal (legal stratagems) to achieve the economic results of conventional banking transactions. Thus, in their views, Islamic banking merely mimics and serves the objectives of financial capitalism by compromising on the higher goals and ideal objectives of Islam (Maqasid-e-Shari'ah).

In the context of South Asia and especially Pakistan, conservative scholarship also includes scholars who do not hail from any particular Classical Fiqh school; but who, nonetheless, align themselves with classical scholarship overall. Maulana Maududi, Dr. Israr Ahmed and Sheikh Imran Hosein are few examples of scholars in this group. Maulana Maududi regards bank interest as Riba and condemns interest no matter how small or large it is and whether it exists in personal or commercial loans (Maududi 1960, 1969). Dr. Israr Ahmed (1985) and Sheikh Imran Hosein (2001) have similar views, but both are also apprehensive of allowing differences in cash and credit prices in prevalent Murabaha transactions in Islamic banking. These scholars and the scholars which hail from religious seminaries in conservative school regard bank interest as Riba and they suggest Mudarabah and Shirkat as modes of Riba-free finance. Therefore, in summary, the scholarship in conservative school in mainstream scholarship condemns Riba and emphasizes on the use of Mudarabah and Shirkat for Riba-free finance instead of using Hiyal (legal stratagems) to mimic conventional banking in essence.

The realist school in mainstream scholarship represents scholars who spearhead Islamic banking. Respected scholar Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani is the most prominent scholar among them who has explained the views of this school eloquently in his writings (Usmani 1983, 2004a, 2004b, 2007). This school condemns bank interest as Riba, but suggests a wide array of Islamic alternatives for Riba-free finance including trade-based modes of financing (Murabaha, Salam, Istisna), lease-based modes of financing (Ijarah and Musharakah Mutanaqisa) and equity-based modes of financing (Mudarabah and Musharakah).

This school is not categorized as a liberal school since it provides the basis for developing Islamic finance products from the principles of Classical Fiqh. Even though conservative scholars and realist scholars differ in the application of Classical Fiqh principles and their relevance and validity in the context of banking, they share the same source of binding knowledge, which is Classical Fiqh.

In the heterodox thought, there are two sub-branches, i.e. the assimilative school and the interpretive school. The scholars in assimilative school are impressed with contemporary developments in socio-economic milieu in an age dominated by West. They think that it is best for Muslims to assimilate the institutions developed by West to avoid reinventing the wheel and lagging behind in the race for development as long as the primary Islamic sources of knowledge do not have a single, clear and direct meaning regarding prohibition of those contemporary institutions. For instance, Rahman (1964) argues that it will be suicidal for the welfare of the society and the financial system to abolish bank interest. In South Asia, this thought was originally shared by Syed Ahmed Khan. In Egypt, this thought was put forward by Shaikh Abduh and his disciple Rashid Rida in some contemporary issues.

Among the contemporary scholars and economists in South Asia, Phulwari (1959), Shah (1959), Rahman (1964), Saeed (1996), Khan (1998), Farooq (2009) and Khan (2020) contend that bank interest is not Riba on the grounds that modern bank interest rate is determined in a competitive market and it cannot be usurious and exploitative. Shah (1959) in his correspondence with Maulana Maududi takes refuge from principles like creating ease for people and keeping in view public interest. However, these are not solid grounds and justifications when explicit guidance on prohibition of Riba is stated in Quran and Hadith.

In their views, a nominal competitively determined interest rate in commercial borrowing does not involve exploitation, which was severely condemned by Quran (Pal, 1994). These writers contend that scope of Riba prohibition excludes market based commercial lending on interest. They think that Riba is an exorbitant increment whereby the capital sum is doubled several-fold, against a fixed extension of the term of payment of the debt. These writers draw attention to the fact that since Quran was even asking to forgive loans of debtors, it suggests that such loans were taken by people who were not taking productive loans and thus were unable to repay the principal, let alone interest.

In the court case against Riba, the advocates of the viewpoint that 'bank interest is not Riba' put forward following four arguments taking inspiration from the interpretation of Riba in the assimilative school:

- Riba was prohibited in very late stage of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) could not explain its scope clearly. Hence, the scope of Riba shall not be extended to anything not specifically identified by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Himself.
- Mostly, debts were taken for personal needs. Interest-based commercial loans were uncommon. In loans taken for personal needs, the borrower does not earn from the amount of loan received. Hence, the borrower in personal loans shall not be burdened with interest, especially if it is exorbitant and usurious.
- The charging of interest upon failure of payment at maturity was prohibited in Riba Jahiliyya (Riba in Prophet's (PBUH) time), but the initial increase over the principal amount was not prohibited. It implies that compounded interest may be considered as prohibited, but the simple interest seems to be allowed.
- The wisdom behind prohibition as per Quran seems to be injustice. Therefore, if interest rate as price of capital is determined in market through competitive forces, it would not be allowed to become usurious. Corporations and industrialists which are provided with finance expect to earn money. The person or institution taking the loan expects to earn more than the interest which has to be paid on the borrowed amount. Hence, charging market determined interest should not be equated with interest on personal loans.

Renowned Scholar Maulana Taqi Usmani (2004a) academically answered these criticisms. On the first argument, Usmani (2004a) mentions that Riba had been prohibited in earlier nations as well, such as in Judaism and Christianity. Among the four verses on prohibition of Riba, only the last verse was revealed in later years after Hijra. Condemnation of Riba dates back to second year of Hijra. It is not correct to say that Islamic sources did not explicitly define Riba. When Quran mentions that one can only take back the principal amount of loan, Riba is indirectly defined and that definition is what is reported in a hadith.

On the second argument, through careful analysis of Arab history, Usmani (2004a) explains that most of the loan transactions in Arab at that time were done for commercial endeavors. Tribes used to take loans from other tribes for business purposes. Therefore, it is unthinkable that all loan

transactions in Arab at that time were done for personal needs and that Riba prohibition only applies to high interest rate charged on emergency loans for personal needs.

Sometimes personal loans for homes and cars are taken by wealthy people as compared to the commercial microenterprise loans provided to the entrepreneurs. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that personal loans are always taken up by the poor people who are unable to afford and commercial loans are always taken by the wealthy people and institutions who are able to afford. Hence, it cannot be argued that charging interest on consumer loans is incorrect while charging interest on commercial loans is allowed. There is no reason why such an anomaly shall be introduced which is not warranted in Islamic sources of knowledge.

On the third argument, Usmani (2004a) rightly mentions that if excess in wrongdoing is prohibited, it does not mean that if the wrong act is not excessive, it will be allowed and tolerated. Quran warns that one should not sell Quranic verses and message for a very small sum of money (Al-Baqarah: 41). It does not imply that the same can be done if huge sum of money is involved. Therefore, the condemnation of compound interest shows the intensity of crime and does not imply that small amount of interest is tolerable. It is confirmed by the fact that several Ahadith categorically condemn taking even one dirham of Riba. Quran only allows taking principal amount back meaning that anything asked over the principal amount of loan is prohibited.

On the fourth argument, Usmani (2004a) explains that Islamic directives are based on clear basis (Illat), rather than on wisdom (Hikmat) alone. Wisdom may not be visible in clear form in every matter and in clear terms. Some prohibitions may not affect the direct parties involved as much as they affect the collective society in an adverse way. Consensual relationship outside wedlock among opposite genders may not harm their utility; but, for a society as a whole, it is detrimental to have broken family system as a result.

Coming to the last school of thought on Riba in contemporary times, the interpretive school is another contemporary school that can be categorized under the heterodox school. The scholars in this school are not classified as realists as the realist school takes inspiration from Classical Fiqh. There are differences in views among conservative and realist schools when it comes to the interpretation of Classical Fiqh. The interpretive school is also distinctly classified and not clubbed under assimilative school since it does not argue for merely assimilating contemporary institutions without critical inquiry. Though, the interpretive school does not necessarily want to provide Classical Fiqh basis of developing Riba-free finance, it nonetheless resorts to the primary sources, i.e. Quran and Sunnah (ways of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) to interpret and form views about contemporary institutions and develop Islamic alternatives.

In the interpretive school, there are thinkers, such as Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, founder of Al-Mawrid School, who regard stipulated profit taken on loan as Riba. However, he allows mortgage, hire-purchase, and lease financing where an asset is involved. He also thinks that the Quranic prohibition of Riba does not prohibit or condemn taking loans on interest (Ghamidi, 2014a, 2014b). He also allows a pre-determined profit rate agreed between the financier and the client in financing contracts as also suggested by Shaikh Tantawi (2002).

To summarize, increased penetration of Islamic finance requires clarity on what is Riba and confidence in Riba-free alternatives. On one hand, there are very few writers who advocate a

separation between bank interest and Riba in the assimilative school. Others in the conservative school are apprehensive of Riba-free alternatives. The interpretive school through its interpretations unintentionally narrows the scope of Riba prohibition and also provides alternate Riba-free solutions. The realist school provides practicable Riba-free alternatives without narrowing the scope of Riba prohibition. To transform the economy on Riba-free basis, the realist school has practicable alternatives and hence, its solution has prevailed in the practice of Islamic banking in the world. In a nutshell, Table 1 summarizes the views of different schools of thoughts in the discourse on Riba and Riba-free finance.

Table 1: Summary of Viewpoints Regarding Riba and Riba-Free Finance

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES ON RIBA & RIBA-FREE FINANCE	MAINSTREAM SCHOOL		LIBERAL SCHOOL	
	CONSERVATIVE	REALIST	ASSIMILATIVE	INTERPRETIVE
	Usurious loans are Riba-based and are prohibited	Yes	Yes	Yes
Riba includes bank interest	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (in non-asset based loans/credit)
Credit price can be different than cash price	Difference of opinion	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inflation adjustment in monetary loans is allowed	No	No	Yes	Yes
Predetermined profit rate in commercial loans is permitted	No	No	Yes	Yes
Riba-free finance options	Mudarabah, Musharakah	Mudarabah, Musharakah, Salam, Istisna, Ijarah, Murabaha	Bank interest is not usurious or Riba	Inflation-indexed loans, principal secured financing, mortgage, lease, hire purchase etc.



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THE RIGHT TO BEAT WIVES

DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM

It is a common observation that every human individual born on this earth has to remain dependent on a number of relationships throughout his lifetime and without these he cannot embark on the tempestuous voyage of his life. In the prime of his youth, he might consider himself to be the king of the world but during his childhood and old age he needs the love and affection of the near ones which must not cease with time. In both these periods of life, he must be looked after by those who have warmth and compassion for him. In other words, his life demands relationships which should be permanent in nature so that his parents, children, brothers and sisters – all can play their role in his life. Keeping in view this all important aspect, Islam lays its social structure on the basis of a permanent relationship between a man and a woman. This relationship comes into existence in the form of an everlasting marriage bond and the two constitute the basic ingredients of a family. On the permanence and well being of the institution of the family stands the whole fabric of a society. In other words, if this institution loses its stability, the whole society is shaken from its roots and reduced to a state of communal anarchy. Islam wants to preserve this set-up as much as possible. For this very reason, the Prophet (sww) has regarded the severing of marital ties in the form of divorce as a most unpleasant happening. The right granted to a husband to physically admonish his wife in a certain situation is a last resort to preserve this set-up. It needs to be appreciated that this right has been given to the husband as the head of the family. As such, it is a requisite of authority. In other words, it is not “gender specific” it is “authority specific,” that is whoever has the authority to head a family must be given this right. In other words, had a wife been made the head of the family, she would have had this right.

However, there are several details regarding this right which must be understood.

According to the Qur'ān, men are more suited to head a family because of the fact that they are physically and temperamentally more suited and because they are entrusted with the responsibility of earning for the family. As a result, the Qur'ān urges pious women to adopt two attitudes in order to promote harmony and well-being within the set-up of a family:

“

So, pious women are obedient [to their husbands] and keep their secrets for Allah also keeps secrets. (4:34)

”

Firstly, they should adopt an attitude of submissiveness and docility before their husbands. Just as law abiding citizens obey the rules and regulations of the state they are a part, wives should follow the code of conduct of the family set-up they constitute. Generally, all differences of opinion should be resolved in an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. The husband and wife should try to win over one another through love and affection and convince each other through arguments and reasoning. A husband who tries to impose his opinion on his wife is a long way from the art of governing a house, and a wife who makes it a point to differ with her husband is a long way from the art of dealing with him. However, whenever there arises a situation of anarchy and disorder which threatens to disrupt the whole family set-up, the wife, according to the Qur'ān must adopt an attitude of submission and adjustment.

Secondly, women should be very faithful to their husbands as far as keeping secrets is concerned. The shortcomings of a husband's personality need to be concealed. Women who hide the flaws and mistakes of their husbands promote an atmosphere of mutual trust in the family and many a time are able to reform them. Men, of course, should reciprocate in this attitude.

After mentioning the attitudes which promote a healthy family set-up, the Qur'ān then goes on to vest a husband with the authority of gently chastising his wife. This admonishment, as mentioned earlier is a last resort to preserve the family structure since breaking up a family has many serious consequences for both parties, the children and the society. A house which has two masters is a house which is bound to doom. Whenever a wife begins to stand up against her husband, the only way out perhaps is to separate the two. This right of chastisement is a final step to avoid this separation. However, as pointed out before there are several details regarding this matter which must be understood.

Firstly, this right should only be resorted to, if the wife begins to adopt a rebellious attitude and starts to challenge the authority of her husband as the head of the family. The Qur'ān terms this attitude as nushūz. It says that only when a husband fears such an attitude from his wife which threatens to disrupt the whole family set-up should he adopt this procedure. It should be noted that the Qur'ān has not used the word “disobedience.” Any difference of opinion or altercation is not to be resolved by this procedure. Disagreements and disputes must be settled mutually. It is only when the wife stands up against the authority of her husband should this procedure be employed. Anything less than this does not pertain to this procedure of admonishment.

Secondly, the Qur'ān has laid down a complete procedure which must necessarily be followed in this regard. It says:

“

As for those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them [first] and [next] refuse to share their beds and [last] beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. (4:34)

”

It is clear that a good time should elapse in each of the stages mentioned in the verse. The husband should first of all admonish his wife and convince her to give up her defiant behaviour. He should exercise all the patience he can muster to urge and beseech her to change her stance. If after repeated pleas and continuous admonition in a considerable span of time, the wife continues to persist in her rebellious attitude, he has the authority to go on to the second stage by avoiding marital contact with her. This detachment, it is clear, is a form of reproof, and a very strong appeal to the wife to correct herself. Again, this attitude should continue for a substantial period of time so that the point is driven home. It is highly unlikely that most wives would persist in their arrogance after these two initial stages. In all probability, patience, forbearance, and restraint would have conquered their hearts. However, even after this stage, if a wife refuses to accept the authority of her husband, the husband has the right to finally resort to gentle physical affliction.

Thirdly, if the husband is left with no alternative but to physically punish his wife, he must be very careful in this regard and must not wound or injure her. He should bear in mind that the Prophet (sws) in his last sermon has emphatically directed the husbands to refrain from striking severely (ḍarbaṅghayramubbariḥiṅ).¹ He should remember that this physical chastisement is similar to the one a mother gives to a rebellious son or the one a teacher gives to an unruly student. He must be aware that in case he misuses this authority in any way, he will be held responsible before the Almighty on the Day of Judgement. In this world also, his wife has the right to report his behaviour to the authorities who can punish him for any misconduct in this regard.

Also important to note is that exercising the right of beating a wife after all these stages is always a choice and never an obligation. A husband must prudently exercise this right. If he thinks that it will prove counter productive, he should never go for it.



Reference:

[1]. Muslim, Al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ, vol. 2, 890, (no. 1218).



DEATH OF SOLOMON (PBUH)

ALLAMA SHABBIR AHMAD AZHARI MEERTHI

[This article is being republished. Due to an oversight on our part in the February 2024 issue, some sections of it were omitted. We apologize to the esteemed author and our respected readers for this.
- The Editorial Team]

Solomon (PBUH) controlled Jinns throughout his life. He had also imprisoned several rebellious jinns in chains as mentioned in the following verse of Surah Sad:

وَأَخْرَيْنَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ

Until the end of his time, not even the mightiest of the jinn could dare to oppose him. However, when he passed away, the imprisoned jinns were released from their chains, and the other jinns engaged in various tasks were freed from their duties. They did not realize his death on time as they were busy building fortresses and towering structures in the outskirts of the kingdom. But, when they became aware of the chaos that had spread within the kingdom due to Solomon's unfit successor, "Rehoboam," similar to the decay that befell the vast and firm empire of Emperor Aurangzeb in India because of his unfit successor 'Mu'azzam Shah,' and just like the vast empire of Muawiya, may God be pleased with him, failed to be managed by his son, Yazid, the jinns sought the cause of the disorder and found out that Prophet Solomon had passed away, and his son Rehoboam had succeeded him on the throne. Upon learning this, they withdrew from their tasks and freed their fellow kin from imprisonment.

They regretted that if they had known about Solomon's death earlier, they would not have endured such hardships. Solomon's son Rehoboam was like a termite or rot that was consuming Solomon's staff, i.e., his authority. As a result, and was bringing his illustrious rule to dust. Eventually, the glorious palace of Solomon's rule collapsed. The kingdom was split into two rival nations, Judah and Israel. And both Jewish states, abandoning monotheism, fell into the pit of polytheism and immorality until both Israel and then Judah were eradicated from existence.

In short, the jinns became aware of Prophet Solomon's death through 'Rehoboam,' his unworthy son, who like a creature of the earth was devouring his father's unparalleled rule. As commanded:

فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَى مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنْسَأَتَهُ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ أَنْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ-

“

So when We decreed for him (Solomon) death, nothing informed them (the jinn) of his death except a terrestrial creature eating away his staff. And when he fell down, the jinn realized if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating torment. (Surah Saba 34:14)

”

Note: I believe, in this command, 'دابة الارض' metaphorically refers to Prophet Solomon's incompetent son, Rehoboam, who became the heir of the kingdom after his demise. Just as a brave man is metaphorically called 'lion,' likewise, a low-spirited and harmful person is referred to as 'a creature of the earth,' and the 'staff,' or 'منسأة,' is metaphorically known to mean authority. 'تَبَيَّنَتْ' here means 'تَفَرَّقَتْ,' which comes from the root 'بَيَّن,' meaning separation; and 'الغَيْب' refers to the knowledge of Prophet Solomon's death, which the jinns did not have in time since they were engaged in construction services in remote locations from the capital, Jerusalem.

Indeed, this interpretation I have mentioned differs from other scholars, but a comparative analysis will prove it the best and the most accurate interpretation. All praises are due to Allah for that.

Here, I would like to critique the statement of Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, may Allah's mercy be upon him, by quoting it as an example. May Allah grant success. He writes:

"Prophet Solomon was having the jinns renovate Al-Aqsa Mosque. When he sensed his death approaching, after assigning tasks to the jinns, he secluded himself in a glass chamber for worship, as was his habit to spend months in solitude in worship. In that state, the angel took his soul, and his blessed body remained erect, supported by wood. No one realized his death. For a long duration after his death, the jinns continued the construction. Once the construction was completed, the staff he leaned on, eaten by termites, fell, and then everyone learned about his death. This incident revealed the truth about the jinns' own claim of knowing the unseen, and it also informed the humans who esteemed them that if the jinns had knowledge of the unseen, they would not have remained in such disgraceful suffering. They would have stopped working immediately upon sensing Prophet Solomon's death."

Here, it must be noted that the said narrative is a fabricated story by some myth maker from the era of the Prophet's successors (Tabi'een) or their followers, which has been transmitted without investigation. The reasons for the falsity of this story are:

(a) There are only two sources of knowledge about the conditions of the previous Prophets: first, that they are mentioned in the Holy Quran or in authentic Hadith. Second, that they are mentioned in the Israeli scriptures. The first source is certain, while the second is speculative. And a story about any prophet prior to Jesus (peace be upon him) that is neither found in the Quran and Hadith nor in Israeli scriptures is certainly incorrect, and this tale is such that it is found neither in the Quran, nor in the Hadith, nor in the Bible.

(b) Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was not a hermit who lived in seclusion from the world in a forest, so his illness and death could remain hidden for a long period of time. He had wives, maids, and servants in his palace. It is impossible that all of them were so indifferent to him that even after his death, none of them would know about it for an extended period.

(c) The claim that it was his practice to engage in worship in seclusion for months requires proof. Is this mentioned in the Quran or was it stated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)? Absolutely not. So, can it be found in the Bible or any other Israeli scripture? Absolutely not. Thus, this is an unsubstantiated claim, and sound reason cannot accept that Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) would seclude himself for months without any contact with people, without any worldly concerns, without eating or drinking, without excreting, without sleeping or lying down, only to remain constantly engaged in worship. God Almighty had made him the ruler of a great kingdom. It was his duty to govern with justice and to look after his subjects, it is unimaginable that he would neglect this duty for months and embody the adage "nekibarbadgunahlazim (The good forgotten and evil returned)." Pilgrims from across the kingdom and delegations from other countries were constantly coming to his service. To ignore them for months cannot even be conceived of.

(d) It's not possible for a person to stand supported by a staff and remain in that position when death overtakes him. Because at the time of death, there would certainly be some movement in the body, even a slight movement would disrupt the balance and inevitably the body would fall.

(e) Even in the time of Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), jinns were concealed and hidden from the eyes of ordinary humans. Think that during his era there was interaction between jinn and humans is entirely nonsensical.

(f) Although Jews do not include Prophet Solomon (PBUH) among the respected prophets, they do consider him a mighty ruler, very wise and a noble monarch. They have written many things in their scriptures that indicate his grandeur, and various situations and conditions he encountered. Had Prophet Solomon's death occurred in a glass house and his corpse stood propped up by a staff for a long period and nobody had known about his death for an extended time, it would have been a significant and strange event. Undoubtedly, Jews would have written about it with even more elaboration. But there is no mention of this in the Israeli scriptures, which is a clear proof that this event did not happen at all. Instead, some myth makers have fabricated this story and spread it among Muslims.

Thus, in the Bible, there is no detailed account of the death of Prophet Solomon (peace be upon

him); only a brief mention of his death has been made. “The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. Solomon rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David his father; and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.” (Book 11, Verses: 42-43, Old Testament, p. 342) And in Chronicles, it is stated: “Solomon (PBUH) reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. Then Solomon (PBUH) rested with his father and grandfather, and he was buried in the city of David his father; and Rehoboam, his son took the throne as a king.” (Book 9, Verse 13, Chronicles, Old Testament, p. 432) It is also noteworthy that in both places in the Bible, there is mention of his death and burial, as evident from these excerpts.





THE BLESSED NIGHT (LAYLAH AL-QADR)

SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN

The system of the world is organized according to morning and evening, day and night, and months and years. This is a reflection of the great wisdom of Allah. As a result, humans become aware of time and space, past and future, and the sense of direction and organization helps them advance their life affairs. Allah has considered His power, His mercy, and His blessings in relation to this world through this order and control, and its determinations. The Noble Quran refers to the Day of Judgment, the Hereafter, the Day of Reckoning, " وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ اللَّهِ " (And remind them of the days of Allah) and " وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ " (And We made the night and day two signs), indicating this reality. Therefore, we know that times and days for worship are fixed, occasions and places are designated for increasing proximity to Allah and for His grace, and moments and periods of demise and survival, fate and destiny, reward and punishment are determined.

Among these occasions, Allah has given extremely significant importance to those moments that are related to His blessings, and one of them is the Night of Decree (Laylah al-Qadr). The Noble Quran interprets it as the Blessed Night. Regarding the nature, blessings, and virtues of this night, the summary derived from the Quran and Hadith is as follows:

Revelation of the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran was revealed on Laylah al-Qadr. Allah Almighty says:

“

We have revealed this Qur'ān in the night in which fates are decided.
(Surah al-Qadr 97:1)

”

Undoubtedly, We have revealed it in a blessed night because We wanted to warn people. (Surah al-Dukhan 44:3)

Associating the revelation of the Quran to Laylah al-Qadr is not an insignificant issue. This means that the Lord of the Universe has chosen this night to bestow eternal guidance upon humanity. Allah's decree ensures that His message reaches humans in the most preserved manner. Therefore, He has taken every measure to safeguard it. In this regard, He has sealed off all routes from the heavens to the earth that could have been exploited by the devils for interference.

Design and distribution of worldly matters

The Quran has interpreted this night as Laylah al-Qadr, meaning the Night of Decree. By this, it refers to a night of decisions, i.e., Allah Almighty determines His decrees regarding worldly matters on this occasion and entrusts responsibilities to the angels of destiny in light of His guidance. It is stated in Surah Ad-Dukhan:

In this night, all affairs of wisdom are allocated. (al-Dukhan 44:4)

Maulana Ameen Ahsan Islahi writes:

"The greatness and blessings of this night are due to the fact that significant decisions regarding the universe are made in it. When the small governments of this world consider certain days highly important, during which they plan their projects for the whole year, then who can estimate the importance of that night in which the divine program for the entire universe is decided and the fate of the whole world is determined." (Tadabbur-e-Quran, 9/476)

The descent of the angels and Gabriel, the Trustworthy, also occurs from this perspective. Allah Almighty says:

“

There in descend the angels and the Spirit by the permission of their
Lord with a directive in every affair. (Surah al-Qadr 97:4)

”

It means that the angels descend from Allah Almighty to implement the decrees ordained by Him in the world. On this occasion, the closest angels to Allah, including the Archangel Gabriel, also descend to the earth.

The Night of Great Blessing and Peace

In Surah Al-Qadr, the greatness and blessings of this night have been described from two

perspectives. From one perspective, it is stated that "this night is better than a thousand months." It is apparent that this expression has been chosen to illustrate the abundance of its blessings and favors. The purpose is to make it clear to humans that this is no ordinary night to be passed by sleeping. Instead, when seen in the light of Allah's attention and mercy, it surpasses thousands of months in importance.

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi writes in the commentary of this verse: "'Thousand months' is mentioned to illustrate abundance, and the purpose is to indicate that due to the special occurrence of significant events ordained by Allah, the blessings, favors, and opportunities for closeness to God that occur on this one night cannot be compared to thousands of nights."

From another perspective, it is stated that "this night is all peace until the emergence of dawn." This means that during this period, Allah prevents celestial calamities, restricts the activities of devils, and opens the doors of His proximity, mercy, and blessings for humans. In light of these blessings, the Noble Quran has also referred to it as the Blessed Night.

Specification of Laylah al-Qadr

It is evident from the Quran and Hadith that Laylah al-Qadr is indeed a night in the month of Ramadan. However, which specific night it is, is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran. Nevertheless, from the Hadith, it is known that it falls within the last ten nights of Ramadan.

According to a narration by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) in Sahih Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

“

Search for the Night of Decree in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan. (Bukhari No: 2021)

”

Some narrations specify the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th nights, while others mention the 21st, 23rd, or 25th nights. However, considering all the narrations on this topic, it becomes apparent that it is one of the odd nights among the last ten nights of Ramadan. This understanding is also evident from a narration by Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), where he reported: "The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'Search for Laylah al-Qadr in the last ten days of Ramadan, on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th.'" The wisdom behind not specifying the exact date of Laylah al-Qadr in apparent is to encourage people to seek it earnestly. This search leads people to spend many nights in worship and earn rewards for themselves.

Worship on the Blessed Night

After understanding the greatness and blessings of Laylah al-Qadr, it can be inferred that there is no better opportunity for the forgiveness of sins than this night. Therefore, no person should be indifferent to seeking it. Every believer should be attentive to the boundless blessings of their Lord on this night and express gratitude from the depths of their heart. They should present their needs and desires before Him, place their worries before Him, and seek the ability to endure with patience, requesting His remedy for their ailments.

The best action on this occasion is worship. From various hadith narratives, it is obvious that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) spent most of his time in worship during the last ten days of Ramadan. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

“

When the last ten days of Ramadan began, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would tighten his waist belt (i.e., dedicate himself to worship). He would stay up at night and wake his family up too.
(Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 2024)

”





THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND TALENT

DR. IRFAN SHEHZAD

Discipline is essential for a better life, serving as a source of beauty and a guarantee of success. However, inflexible adherence to it can turn life into a prison where thought and creativity suffocate and die. Rules and regulations are established for the service and convenience of humans, not to enslave them. Therefore, wherever they become harmful to humans, they should be changed, suspended, or relaxed.

This is indeed the way of Allah Almighty. If He had willed, He could have made it obligatory for humans to carry out His commands under all circumstances. However, Allah is not just powerful, He is also wise. He alters His command according to the varying conditions of humans. If difficulties arise in performing regular prayers, shortening (Qasr) and combining prayers (Jam') is permissible. Prayers can be offered while standing, walking, or riding. If fasting feels too burdensome, exemption from it is provided. Eating the forbidden under compulsion and saving one's life by verbalizing disbelief is allowed. All this shows that individuals will not be sacrificed for the sake of rules; the rules will be altered for them.

People with great talent and capability are usually free-thinkers. Rigid enforcement of discipline harms their exceptional abilities. Such individuals often exhibit a kind of self-admiration, egoism, and sensitivity which, if not handled with care, can result in the waste of talent. It can be observed

that departments where no compromise is made on discipline, despite having all facilities, fail to produce any good players, writers, or experts in various fields.

The inability to compromise on discipline is a sign of a narrow mind. Such a mind lacks the capacity and courage to think and act outside a set path. A devotee of routine and the norm sees repetitive work on the same path like a beast of burden carrying bricks as a matter of pride. These individuals are deemed successful administrators on paper, but under their management, no constructive or creative work can be accomplished. When such people attain a position of authority, it spells death for talent and creative intelligence.

Countless excellent players, scholars, researchers, and experts in various fields fall to waste due to the inflexible enforcement of discipline, despite being deserving of having the rules changed for them.

Rules and regulations are servants, not gods. They should be followed, not worshiped. If necessary, they will be changed for the sake of humans, but humans will not be sacrificed in their stead.





PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE!

DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM

This life is but a fleeting story
Hands of death end our glory

One day we must go away
Short it be or long a stay

As sudden as a door chime
Death may come any time

Prepare then we must to depart
But before our heavens fall apart

Let's not leave our kin confused
Unsure, puzzled and bemused

About assets and money we may owe
And transactions only we may know

Files, bills and documents of lease
Records, passwords, codes and keys

So a memo we must write
In words black and white

A will also we should jot down
Of the wealth we leave around

So that they know what to expect
And carry on from where we left!



FASTING

JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI

After prayer and alms-giving 'Zakah', fasting is the third important form of worship. In the Arabic language, the word for it is 'صوم' which means to restrain oneself and leave something. In the terminology of the Sharia, this word is specifically used for abstaining from eating, drinking, and marital relations within set boundaries and conditions. In the Urdu language, it is referred to as 'Roza' (fasting). Since humans have a practical existence in this world, when their spirit of worship relates to their practical existence, obedience also becomes a part of worship. Fasting is a symbolic expression of this obedience. In fasting, a person declares some permissible things as prohibited for themselves by the command of their Lord and in pursuit of God's pleasure and satisfaction, thus becoming an embodiment of obedience, and in a manner of speaking, declares through the language of their condition that there is nothing greater than Allah and His command. If he delineates even the permissible things of the natural law as forbidden for His sake, then it is befitting for them as His servants to bow their heads unhesitatingly in obedience to this command. This state of acknowledging and realizing Allah's greatness and majesty and His supremacy and sublimity, if considered carefully, is also a true expression of gratitude towards Him. Consequently, the Quran has deemed fasting as an act of glorifying God and being grateful to Him, stating that the month of Ramadan was specifically chosen for this purpose because, through the Quran, Allah has granted guidance during this month which contains clear and conclusive evidence for the guidance of reason and for distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Therefore, the believers must glorify Allah for this guidance and be grateful to Him. The pinnacle of perfection in fasting is when a person imposes additional restrictions on themselves and, withdrawing from others, stays in the mosque for a few days to worship Allah more devotedly. This practice is known as 'I'tikaf' in Islamic terminology. Though it is not made mandatory like the fasts of Ramadan, it holds significant importance from the standpoint of purification of the self.

The special condition that arises out of combining fasting, prayer, and recitation of the Quran, as well as the state of detachment and dedication to Allah that settles on the soul, fulfill the true purpose of fasting at its highest degree.

The History of Fasting

Like prayer, the history of fasting is very old. The Quran states that fasting was prescribed for Muslims in the same way as it was for previous nations. Thus, it is a fact that fasting has been present as an important form of worship for the training of the soul in all religions.

The Purpose of Fasting

The Quran states the purpose of fasting is for people to adopt the taqwa of God. In Quranic terminology, the meaning of piety ('تقوى') is that people spend their days and nights within the limits set by Allah and live their lives in fear deep within their hearts that if they ever break these limits, then nobody except Allah can save them from the consequences.

The Law of Fasting

The following are the regulations of fasting: Fasting is abstaining from eating, drinking, and conjugal relations with the intention of fasting and solely for the pleasure of Allah. This abstention is from dawn until the beginning of the night; therefore, eating, drinking, and conjugal relations are completely permissible during the nights of Ramadan. The month of Ramadan has been specifically designated for fasting, so anyone present during this month must observe fasts throughout. If someone cannot complete the fasts of Ramadan due to sickness, travel, or any other genuine constraint, it is obligatory to make up for the missed fasts on other days and complete the count. Fasting during menstruation and postnatal bleeding is prohibited. However, these missed fasts must also be completed later. The ultimate perfection in fasting is 'I'tikaf.' If Allah grants someone the opportunity for it, they should spend as many days as possible in seclusion in the mosque for the worship of Allah during the month of fasting and not leave the mosque without an essential human need. When a person is in the state of 'I'tikaf,' there is no restriction on eating and drinking during the nights of fasting, but it is not permissible for them to have conjugal relations with their wives. Allah has forbidden this for those observing 'I'tikaf.'





MAULANA ABUL ALA MAUDUDI II

SYED ABUL HASSAN ALI HASANI NADWI

The following year in 1941, presumably at the request of the Jama'at which had been established in Lucknow under my supervision, he visited again. Before his arrival, as usual, he wrote a letter. I probably had requested him to prepare an essay for a lecture at the Lucknow University. His letter, dated September 29, 1941, is in response to this reads as follows.

*"Mubarak Park, Poonch Road, Lahore - September 29, 1941
Respected and Honored Sir – AssalamuAlaikum*

I had already responded to your first gracious letter, and later received your card. The topic 'New World Order' is not something new, it is quite trampled upon, and lately it has become somewhat fashionable for everyone to say something or the other about it. As a result, neither will my lecture have any specialty, nor will it attract any attention. Instead, a better topic for the lecture would be 'The Economic (or Financial) Problem of Humanity and Its Islamic Solution.' Please inform the Secretary of the University accordingly.

*Yours sincerely,
Abul A'la"*

Maulana came to Lucknow and was warmly welcomed by the youth. He delivered his scholarly lecture at the Lucknow University Union on the given topic, which has been published in his articles. Along with this, he had also written an essay titled "The New Educational System" at my request for Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, which was read at the student association 'Al-Islaah'. My association with Maulana and the Jama'at continued. I participated in the Jama'at's Amila (Executive Council) meeting, which was held in Lahore in February 1942. At this meeting, based on the opposition that had started against Maulana's writings and certain views by some famous scholars and literati of India, the issue was whether at the time Maulana should step down from the leadership of the Jama'at, and Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi should be elected as the leader. This was a very important phase in the life and history of the Jama'at. My vote was in favor of Maulana, based on the fact that it would be an artificial change that wouldn't bring any significant benefit. The Jama'at's existence occurred because of the influence of Maulana's writings, and the affiliation and dedication would still remain directed towards him. That is what was decided, and the structure of Jama'at system remained as it was.

I participated in the Jama'at's second administrative council meeting in Delhi in October 1942, and on this occasion, I accompanied Maulana to Aligarh and stayed at the Old Boys Lodge for a day or two. I assessed Maulana's popularity in the university circle.

During that time, there was a strong demand for Maulana to launch an Arabic periodical that could represent the call and community. I mentioned the difficulties in this regard and it was agreed that for the time being, the translation of the articles into Arabic should be started and sent to the esteemed journals and magazines of the Arab world. Maulana wanted to entrust this task to me, but I suggested the respected Maulana Masood Alam Nadwi for this role, which Maulana approved. As a result, the organization 'Darul Urubah' was established, later shifting from Eastern Punjab, Jalandhar, to Western Punjab, Gujranwala, and the late respected Maulana Masood Alam Nadwi performed these responsibilities with such excellence that in the Arab world, Maulana's and his call and movement's introduction could not have been better, even if Maulana had personally written for Arabic journals regularly. These books became the cornerstone of Maulana's popularity and introduction in the Arab world and paved the way for benefits to be reaped later. In the history of the community and movement, the services of the late respected Maulana Masood Alam Nadwi cannot be forgotten.

During a trip to the province of Sarhad (Frontier) and Punjab in March 1944, I had the chance to visit Darul Islam Pathankot (where Maulana was permanently settled and which was proposed to become the center of the movement), and I was fortunate to be his guest for some days. After that, for a long time, there was no opportunity for a personal meeting. In 1954, when I first went to Pakistan after the partition, during my stay in Lahore, I met Maulana in Lahore Central Jail. In that meeting, my dear friend and guide, Mr. Nasrullah Khan Aziz, was with me. The late respected Maulana Masood Alam Nadwi had recently passed away, and we both shared our condolences.

Later in June 1956, I met him when he came to Damascus at the invitation of our friend Dr. Sa'id Ramadan, to participate in the Islamic Conference session that he had organized. I had been in Damascus upon the invitation of Damascus University a month or two beforehand. On this occasion, from Pakistan, the late respected Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi and Maulana Zafar Ahmad Ansari were also present. In the conference, Dr. Muhammad Nasir, the former Prime

Minister of Indonesia, was elected as President, and Maulana and I were selected as Vice-Presidents. The conference continued for several days, and twice I had the opportunity to translate Maulana's speech into Arabic, per his wish and insistence.

Then in 1962, when the establishment of the Islamic University of Medina was actualized and both of us were elected as members of its Shura Council, I had continuous meetings with him and participated in the committee. That year, during the Hajj season, the Muslim World League was established, and both of us were elected as founding members. Many times during the annual sessions of this league, I had the opportunity to meet and sit close to Maulana in the sittings – until joint pain stopped Maulana from traveling. Presumably, the last session in which we both participated was in 1967.

The last meeting took place on a date in July 1978 at Maulana's mansion in Lahore. Maulana met me with great manners and warmth, and we discussed the current situation in Pakistan. I had arrived in Lahore after participating in the first Islamic Asian Conference held by Rabita in Karachi and briefly touring Pakistan. We both agreed that the ongoing revolution was a welcome and blessed one. Maulana said it was clear that those who are fond of religion should lead, their leaders should be supported, and they must not be allowed to fail. That was our last meeting.

I hadn't been connected to the Jama'at systemically since 1943, but I maintained friendly and dear relationships with Maulana and the former comrades of the Jama'at, and there was no difference in our mutual respect and recognition. In March 1944, when I was a guest at Dar al-Islam, he was already aware of my mental shift and my unease with the Jama'at's thinking, but it had no effect on our relationship or coordination. We also discussed Arabic da'wah literature, and Maulana reviewed and liked my Arabic article with the title 'Da'wataynMutanafisatayn' (Two Rival Da'wahs). He, along with all comrades, accompanied me to the station to see me off.

My impression and attachment to Maulana's writings and the Jama'at's literature were based on his scholarly and critical articles against Western civilization, its philosophy of life, and the current materialistic viewpoint, many of which were included in his collection 'Tanqihat'. Herein lay the same difference as can be between an apprentice and an experienced author. I wasn't particularly interested or in need of that modern interpretation and explanation of religion found in Maulana's other books such as 'Qur'an Majid ki Char BunyadiIstilahain', 'Tafhimat', and 'RasailwaMasail', because my approach to understanding religion was completely different from an English-educated youth who gains concept of religion and understanding from Maulana's or any other Muslim thinker's books rather than the original sources (Quran and Sunnah, and religious environment and upbringing). Given my direct religious studies and benefiting from those early and some later scholars who had vast and deep knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah, and who demonstrated independent thought and depth, I found it hard to consider Maulana as a unique thinker of Islam, the like of whom is not found in centuries. I recognized and still recognize his real distinction in his intelligence, clarity and scope of mind, and distinctive capability and power of expression and understanding. However, after a while, I began to feel that the intellectual and critical aspect of the Jama'at related to Western civilization and current material philosophies could not be separated from that understanding and interpretation of religion, which, in the view of Maulana and the leaders of the Jama'at, held foundational and origin status. As my awareness matured and my study and experience expanded, the mental conflict within me grew. It reached a turning point when

I had more frequent interactions with the founder of the renowned Indian missionary movement, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas. Deeply impressed by his life, his spiritual states, and his call for faith and accountability, the mental divide deepened and widened, and I realized the temper and characteristics of the Prophetic call and its bearers, and how drastically it differs from a movement whose foundation rests on pure study, intelligence, and reaction to a philosophy or system... Once, writing from Lucknow to Maulana Maududi, I shared my mental conflict and the deep impression of Maulana Ilyas and my growing involvement in the missionary work, to which Maulana Maududi permitted and even advised me to fully engage.

I always exercised caution when expressing my dissatisfaction with the Jama'at and its reasons, and whenever proponents or opponents of the Jama'at inquired through correspondence about the reasons for my separation and my opinion on Maulana or the Jama'at, I always refrained from giving such answers that could be published for wrongful purposes. The reasons for dissatisfaction cannot be articulated as precisely as the rules of mathematics or Euclidean geometry. They can vary greatly, linked to education and upbringing, environmental differences, personalities that one is influenced by in their variety, personal experiences, hereditary and familial influences, mental development, and results of study. It is difficult to capture all these in the grip of words (especially in the form of brief letters). Usually, in response, I would suggest that they read my books 'Arkan Arba'ah', 'Mansab Nabuwat aur Us ke Aali Maqam Haamilin', 'TareekhDawat o Azimat', and the Arabic 'Rabaniyyah La Rahbaniyyah' to understand this.

This series continued until I sincerely reached the conclusion that I should now write something about the understanding and interpretation of the religion by Maulana, which is based on his book "The Four Fundamental Terms of the Holy Quran" and which, like the elements of Euclid, is prevalent and effective in his thought and call. And I have seen the influence of this understanding and interpretation in a pronounced way in the thoughts and writings of the youth in the Indian subcontinent and Arab countries, who have derived their understanding of religion from Maulana and his renowned Arab admirers and my dear beloved friend, martyr Syed Qutb's religious translations and interpretations, and understood the religious truths and objectives through them. I felt that the track of thought, action, and struggle is changing and I feared that it may gradually turn into a purely material political and organizational movement, which could come into existence for some noble and elevated purpose. I first briefly noted this in the third edition of my Arabic book "النبوّة والأنبياء في ضوء القرآن" and the second edition of its Urdu translation "Mansab Nabuwat Aur Us Ke Aali Maqam Hamelein". Then, after considerable thought and prayer, I took the pen in Ramadan 1398 AH (August 1977) on this topic, considering it a religious duty, and felt it was necessary to acknowledge Maulana's services and his individuality in writing while also expressing my concerns and fears, as a large number of those who join the Jama'at are indeed seekers of religion and desirous of serving it and exalting the word of Allah and will benefit from sincere advice in the light of the Book and Sunnah. It is because its constitution says, 'Let no one elevate any human as the criterion of truth except the Messenger of God, consider no one beyond criticism, and do not succumb to anyone's mental slavery.' Also, Maulana's literature, which is based on this principle, had shaped its mindset, which would rarely be done by a few parties in the present era. I read the manuscript of the book repeatedly with the thought that there should be no sentence or word of sarcasm that could be detrimental to this purpose and deleted any sharp word that I wrote accidentally.

I intended that after the book was printed, I would send the first copy to Maulana with my letter. I wrote this letter from Ahmednagar on October 30, 1978, but the journey of the person who was to send the book and the letter was postponed, and the book reached him a bit late. Maulana's reaction to this book was very different from that seen among the general sympathizers and agreeable members of the Jama'at in India. My book probably reached Maulana in mid-January 1979, and on January 23, he wrote the following gracious letter in response.

"Zaildar Park Ichhra, Lahore, Pakistan

Respect and Honor to you. Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

Your gracious letter dated 5th Safar 1399 H was received, and with it a copy of your latest book "Understanding and Interpretation of Religion in the Present Age." I am thankful that you critiqued what you thought was a cause of concern for me, and I invite you to freely critique further anything which you find to be harmful or a possible threat to the religion and its people. I have never considered myself above criticism, nor am I secretive about it. However, it is not necessary that I accept every criticism as valid and acknowledge the concerns and fears expressed by the critics as correct.

Yours sincerely,

Abul A'la"

Now that he is no longer in this world, I acknowledge, as an author, speaker, thinker, and preacher, his distinctive and individual characteristics and greatness with not only generosity but also pleasure and pride due to many common links and characteristics; and I pray that Almighty Allah rewards him fully for his Islamic services, overlooks his slip-ups - from which no human except the Prophet, who is infallible, is free - and guides and supports the Muslim Ummah rightly.

اللهم اغفر له ولأتفنا بعده





HAYAT-E-AMIN VI

NAEEM AHMAD BALOCH

Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi re-affiliated with Madrasah al-Islah in 1925. He became a teacher at the madrasah and was particularly a disciple of his esteemed teacher, Imam Hamiduddin Farahi. He remained associated with his academic mentor until 1944. This association can be divided into two periods:

First: The period until the life of Imam Farahi, which extends until November 11, 1930, the day of his teacher's demise.

Second: Until 1944, the period of affiliation with the madrasa. During this time, he conducted the publication of the monthly Al-Islah under the supervision of Darul Musannifeen Shibli Academy and translated the works of Imam Farahi into Urdu. He also served as the editor of this journal and as the president of the madrasa.

Direct Disciple of Imam Farahi

Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi informed us that originally Imam Farahi's plan was to personally teach him the Quran in his village Phariya. For this purpose, Farahi had instructed him to reside at his place. Dr. Sharfuddin Işlāhī, describing the residence stated that Amin Ahsan was asked to stay in that prestigious house which Imam Farahi had specifically built near his residence for research and study purposes. He himself designed the layout of the house.

When this news reached other teachers and senior students of the madrasa, they felt deeply deprived. They formed a delegation and approached Imam Farahi. This delegation included Maulvi Saeed Ahmad and Ustaad Akhtar Ahsan Islahi. Initially, Imam Farahi did not respond positively, but when their insistence increased, he agreed. This incident, among many others, signifies Imam Farahi's high expectations regarding Amin Ahsan.

Thus, this special course commenced in the madrasa. However, Amin Ahsan was assigned to a special mission in Malaysia. This trip aimed at gathering financial resources for the madrasa. Amin Ahsan was selected for this journey. Previously, when he worked for the newspaper "Madina", Imam Farahi had specifically invited him to accompany him to Burma for a special purpose. It has been mentioned how, despite his desire, Amin Ahsan couldn't accompany his teacher at that time. Now, when a similar tour was needed, Imam Farahi couldn't find a more reliable disciple than him, and thus, Amin Ahsan was chosen for this journey. There could be multiple reasons for this choice, surely his excellent oratory skills and his ability to effectively communicate must have played a significant role. It is just like a poet has said:

مکتب عشق کا دستور نرالا دیکھا
اس کو چھٹی نہ ملے جس کو سبق یاد رہے

“

I have seen the extraordinary order of the school of love,
The one who learned a lesson did not receive a holiday.

”

In this delegation, along with Amin Ahsan, his other teachers Shibli Motakallam and Abdul Ahad Islahi were also present. This trip lasted for six months. It is presumed that this trip wasn't initially intended to be that long. When it prolonged, Amin Ahsan's friends and companion Akhtar Ahsan Islahi wrote a letter expressing concern for his well-being. In response, Amin Ahsan wrote:

سمندر کی سرجوشی کے ایام بہار ہیں، آج کل سفر ممکن نہیں۔

“

"These are days of high tide in the ocean; travel is not possible these days."

”

Since this journey was to be made by sea route, Amin Ahsan clarified that due to the sea storm, travelling was not possible. However, Imam Farahi picked up on this literary statement and commented, "Amin seems to have become a linguist."

At this point, it was not suitable to continue the Quran teaching for an extended period. Besides, the teacher had complete trust in his brilliant and capable student that he would easily fulfill this shortfall. The student who had become a top-notch Urdu scholar without studying it formally, and who had surpassed everyone by starting his education three years late, how could there be any doubt about his capabilities!

Upon returning, Amin Ahsan saw that the Quran teaching had begun.

Foremost in Taking Precedence over Predecessors

Amin Ahsan's in-laws lived in a village quite near Azamgarh, but according to the tradition of Rajpoot caste, staying there was not appropriate. That's why he decided to reside in the Madrasah itself. His room was towards the south from Imam Farahi's room. Imam Farahi had specifically chosen this room for him. It is evident from the circumstances that this decision was made so that Amin Ahsan could spend maximum time with him.

Dr. Sharfuddin Islahi had a particular attitude towards Maulana Islahi due to some reasons, and in "Zikr-e-Farahi," he engaged in some biased discussions by including some unrealistic impressions at various places. Surely, this detailing is not a pleasant action, but if necessary, it can also be commented upon. Despite joining this lesson late, the way Amin Ahsan displayed the warmth of his heart is an established fact. While retaining his natural inclination, he also finds himself compelled to admit that:

"Despite joining the class late, due to his intelligence, hard work, natural affinity, and interest, he quickly surpassed everyone. Witnessing this situation, Maulana Farahi often recited this saying of Jesus Christ, 'Many who come last will be first, and the first last.'" (Zikr-e-Farahi 510)

Daily routines

Amin Ahsan taught the subjects of Arabic literature and Quranic exegesis in the madrasa. He recounts his daily schedule during those times, saying that his routines were well-defined and he adhered to them at any cost. He would wake up at three in the morning and engage in study after praying Tahajjud. He kept busy with three to four hours of daily teaching in the madrasa. After the Zuhr prayer, he would spend some time in Maulana Farahi's room and ask questions about various Quranic topics. He had a close friendship with Farooq Naumani, the son of Maulana Shibli Naumani's brother, Isaac Naumani. He would play football and volleyball with him in the evening. On days when playing sports wasn't possible, he would make sure to go for a walk for an hour after Asr. He strictly adhered to going to bed at nine o'clock at night. In addition, he did not sleep during the day.

Amin Ahsan was a very serious kind of student. He had no habit of chatting with friends and acquaintances. He admitted that he was very miserly in meeting people. When someone came one day and complained to Imam Farahi, he said:

“

He is a man preoccupied with himself. (As narrated by Maulana)

”

Service to the Teacher

Along with receiving abundant scholarly benefits from Imam Farahi, Amin Ahsan also considered serving him a privilege. Whenever possible, he would tidy up Imam Farahi's room personally. Maulana says that Maulvi Akhtar Ahsan also tried to perform this service. Therefore, both were striving to obtain this privilege. Imam Farahi, on the other hand, did not like this at all. He would

tell them that they themselves deserved to be served. Imam Farahi had appointed a servant for cleaning, but the service from his students was merely an expression of affection and respect for the teacher.

Maulana explains that Imam Farahi would write annotations on his drafts with a pencil. He would sharpen the pencil himself such skillfully that the tip of the pencil would be sharp as a needle. Amin Ahsan desired to sharpen in the same manner or at least perform this service for his teacher. He mentions that once, when he tried to sharpen the pencil, the tip of the led broke.

While narrating this incident, he also pointed out that Imam Farahi's refinement and good taste were evident from his general habits. It is said that the biggest demonstration of someone's sophistication occurs when he eats mangos. When Imam Farahi ate mangos, he did so neatly with just three fingers, it was astonishing that even a fruit like a mango could be consumed with such finesse!

Scholarly Successor

Amin Ahsan was also aware that his teacher had great confidence in him. He says that he used to compile his drafts and arrange them under the relevant titles, especially at his teacher's command. Hence, when shivering because of Parkinson disease affected his handwriting, he began to get this job done by someone else under his supervision. Now when the teacher Imam revisited the arranged draft, he recognized someone else's handwriting. He said: I really liked your handwriting; why did you get someone else to do it? After clarifying the reason, he was satisfied. Obviously, this question was not merely about the beauty of the script. Certainly, it was a matter of trustworthiness, competence, and insight in which Amin Ahsan had no match in his teacher's view. Keep in mind that later Maulana's hand trembled significantly due to shaking, and he became completely unable to write. Some interesting incidents related to this will be mentioned later. (Insha' Allah)

The scope of Discipleship

The question is, to what extent did Amin Ahsan acquire knowledge from Farahi, his beloved teacher? Maulana himself answers this question in the following words:

"I stayed with him day and night for six full years. Perhaps there was hardly a morning or evening during these six years that I didn't get the opportunity to have an open discussion with him about scholarly, religious, literary, and political issues; to understand his thoughts; and to present my doubts before him." (Majmooah Tafseer Farahi 31)

Dr. Sharafuddin Islahi describes this oral narration from Maulana as follows:

"It was Allah's favor on me that he personally invited me to learn the Quran from him. I spent complete five years with him. After his death, the path to understanding the Quran opened for me. Since then, the Quran has remained the center and focus of my interest. At the same time, I also studied those discussions of Arabic literature and philosophy related to the noble Quran. Alhamdulillah, I read the entire Quran, from Al-Fatiha to An-Nas. It was because of me that he started teaching in the madrasa." (Zikr-e-Farahi 570)

The two statements show a difference of one year. It seems that Dr. Sharafuddin Islahi thought that Maulana spent six months in Malaysia, so it didn't constitute a full six years. Thus, he subtracted a year from that period himself. However, counting both the years 1925 and 1930, it amounts to as many years. Therefore, Maulana wrote it as six years. Moreover, reducing the degree of elevated status is disrespectful and in poor taste, hence Maulana instead of mentioning five and a half or five and three-quarters years, stated it as six full years.

Maulana's statement that he discussed every topic with his teacher is very clear. However, if we understand this with an example of an incident, the scenario becomes more obvious.

Maulana narrates: I was studying an Arabic Qasidah (ode). At one point, I couldn't understand the 'la'. I looked at all the commentators, including the commentary by Adib al-Hind Maulvi Faizul Hasan Saharanpuri, but I wasn't satisfied with any interpretation. I took the book and presented myself before Imam Farahi. He was standing outside his study. I narrated my difficulty; he paused for a moment, took out the pencil from his pocket, and wrote on my book:

“

La hiya nadirat.' My dear, just as you people don't say that may my death
'not' come at this hour, this is the same kind of 'la'.

”

This narration is conveyed in the words of our respected teacher Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. The story indicates that while studying a collection of classic Arabic poetry, Maulana encountered the word 'la' in a verse that he couldn't understand correctly. He was interpreting 'la' as it is generally understood to mean 'not'. However, Imam Farahi explained to him that in that verse the word did not mean 'negation'; rather, it was used to intensify the meaning.

In Urdu, we can understand this example from Ghalib's verse:

کیا فرض ہے کہ سب کو ملے ایک سا جواب
آؤ نہ ہم بھی سیر کریں کوہِ طور کی

“

Is it obligatory that everyone receives an identical response?
Let us also go for a stroll to Mount Sinai.

”

In this verse, 'na' is used in the same sense Imam Farahi referred to.
From this, we can well estimate that:

Amin Ahsan had no barrier in asking questions to his teacher, neither scholarly nor from the pressure of rank and status.

Observe the informality and sincere engagement, as the teacher himself recorded the solution to a student's problem in his book.

For example, consider the fact that in the same literary style, the student was provided the answer in the same language, making the understanding quite explicit like 'Qat'i al-dalalah'.

While narrating this incident, Maulana Amin Ahsan commented:

“

The style of reaching the depths of language was solely a quality of my teacher alone.

”

I vividly remember that he narrated this incident several times and to many friends. When he recounted it, it seemed as though he was standing right beside his teacher and visualizing those moments with the eye of imagination. From this, one can well gauge the high standard of Amin Ahsan's scholarly, literary, and ethical training.

This is why Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi writes:

"In his later years, the foremost endeavor of the deceased (Imam Farahi) was to prepare a few capable students according to his taste. Thus, he mentally trained at least two students in particular." (Maarif: Issue January 1998, Maulana Ziauddin Islahi)

These two students are meant to signify Maulana Amin Ahsan and Maulana Akhtar Ahsan. Elsewhere, Maulana Ziauddin Islahi in the same article in 'Maarif' further clarifies that:

"It is enough for the pride and distinction of Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi that he had the honor of succeeding Maulana Farahi and getting reputation of his most distinguished student, a right he adequately fulfilled. Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi's statement is that some capable students fully benefited from Maulana Farahi's lessons, among whom Moulvi Amin Ahsan Islahi is notable. Our future expectations are very much tied to him."

Education in Politics and Philosophy

Apart from religious studies and Arabic, Amin Ahsan also studied some English books and political subjects with Imam Farahi. He mentions that he read Johann Kaspar Bluntschli's book 'Theory of the State' chapter by chapter.

This book, by the German scholar Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, was first published in German in 1875 and then translated into English in 1895. It presents scholarly debate about the concept of the state and its development over time. Reading this book, which is about five hundred pages long, word for word means that the subjects within it were discussed thoroughly, with not only understanding its philosophical content but also language in focus. Maulana Islahi states that teaching from this book greatly helped him in writing his own book 'Islamic State.'

In regards to philosophy, Maulana Islahi said that he studied several philosophical debates with the help of Imam Farahi. Dr. Sharafuddin Islahi testifies that:

"In the same era, besides the Quran, Islahi also studied certain branches of Arabic Literature and

Philosophy that were related to the Quran and its understanding. And obviously, this benefit must have been taken outside the regular circle of Quranic lessons." (Page 510)

Study of Hadith

It seems that Amin Ahsan also benefited from Imam Farahi in understanding Hadith, in addition to the Quran, philosophy, and political science. He often narrated an incident regarding this. He said while reading Jamia Tirmidhi, with full confidence, he read 'عَرَفَ' with 'kasra' under 'ر'. The teacher, Imam Farahi, interrupted:

'أنا لا أعرفُ عرفُ' (meaning, I do not know of it being read with 'kasra' under 'ر').

Amin Ahsan insisted and confidently replied: 'أما أنا فلا أعرفُ عرفُ' (And I do not know of it being read with 'fatha' on 'ر').

Imam Farahi said: 'راجع اللُّغَةَ' (Check the dictionary).

Upon opening the dictionary, "Sihah" by Al-Jawhari, the teacher's words were indeed found written there. Islahi felt taken aback a little, to which the teacher smiled and said: 'استأنف، ولِّجَوَادٍ، زَلَّةٌ' (Carry on, for even the finest horse may stumble).

Surely, the nature of learning was not as it was with the Quran. It is possible that he might have been reading Tirmidhi as a reader or looking at some excerpts from it.

The Conundrum of Predestination and Free Will

This is a problem that any student who prefers a satisfactory answer to suppressing his question might encounter. Maulana says that he too faced such confusion: If Allah Almighty knows the future actions of every human being, then how can He hold them accountable, knowing whether a person will commit a sin or perform a good deed? The knowledge of Allah certainly cannot be imperfect. Without a doubt, the person will do that action. So how can the person be held responsible for it?

Whether this question presented itself to him during his Madrasah student days or the period of tutelage under Imam Farahi is not made clear from the narrative by Dr. Sharafuddin Islahi or his recount before us. However, according to Dr. Sharafuddin, when Maulana informed that he went to Imam Farahi's room and sat at the foot of his cot, Imam realized that there was some trouble, it suggests that it was probably a question from his second phase.

Maulana narrates that the teacher simply explained that Allah's knowledge entails that the servant would perform that work out of his own choice, hence he will be answerable. Maulana says that this answer cleared his mind completely regarding this issue by the mere mention of a few words, namely 'out of his own choice.'

Maulana highlighted an admirable trait of his teacher at this occasion. He said that Imam Farahi was so wise that he could easily address the confusion that was in the mind of the person he was speaking with.

Countering Atheistic Beliefs

Perhaps it was this occasion, or some other, when we asked Islahi about atheism, if he ever experienced any confusion in his mind regarding the existence of Allah the Almighty. He said that even in this matter, he had similar thoughts to that of his teacher, Imam Farahi. He said that at one point in his life, he had a fleeting doubt. When the question arose, he thought whether the universe can exist without God. The answer came that if this world was not bound by order, then it could be pondered upon. Just this argument made atheism an inconceivable matter for me. And I too was faced with this question just for a moment in life, and reason gave the answer that atheism is irrational. Similarly, on many occasions, Maulana would articulate his definitive statement: "Cause and effect are not arguments with reference to the existence of Allah the Almighty. This effect might appear 'chaotic.' However, I believe in a Living, Self-Subsisting, and All-Powerful Entity, whose attributes He has revealed to us in His Book, and which we can clearly observe in the universe."

Affectionate Relationship with the Teacher

In this chapter, we find it sufficient to quote just one passage from our respected teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi:

He used to tell ... in the last days of Imam Farahi's life, a prominent scholar in India declared one of his writings as blasphemous. This caused a wave of anxiety throughout the region. All the students and teachers of Madrasah al-Işlah were disturbed. It was a major incident for me as well. In this state of anxiety and disturbance, I ran in search of Imam Farahi towards his study. I saw the teacher Imam standing on the stairs. I ran to him and told him right there. Expecting some reaction from him in light of the distress I was in, he paused for a moment on the stairs, then moved forward saying: "Okay, the person you are talking about, he doesn't know me." I stood there, dumbfounded, watching him. Perhaps no more eloquent comment on this fatwa could ever be made than this. He would say with great passion: "Such was the personality of Imam Farahi, where will you find someone of his stature?"

Please note, the renowned fatwas of disbelief against Maulana Imam Farahi were issued twice. Once during his lifetime and the other after his death. The second fatwa will be discussed later.

To be continued





THE CONCESSIONS OF TRADITIONAL EXEGETES AND MAULANA FARAHİ III

ABU SAAD AAZMI

[20]. Regarding the explanation of Surah Al-Haj, Ayah 52

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ

He writes:

"The exegetes state that 'تَمَنَّى' means recitation as in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 78 'يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ' لا يَغْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ' where it is mentioned. Qazi Ayad has called this the best opinion. This is also what Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani stated. In my view (and true knowledge is with Allah alone), this is evasion and a way of escaping from addressing the core issue. The verse from Surah Al-Baqarah referenced here does not mean recitation because the context of the verse denies it. Ibn Jarir has included lengthy traditions in the interpretation of which are entirely baseless¹. He hasn't written anything about the ineffectiveness of these traditions in this context. This clearly shows how flawed the method of those who rely on hadith traditions is. The falsehood of these traditions is evident from both the Quran and human intellect²."

Imam Farahi here negates the understanding of the verse based on exegetical traditions, but hasn't been able to indicate what the correct understanding would be in the footnotes.

However, he has tried to clarify the correct meaning of the verse in his incomplete commentary on Surah Al-Haj, which has been published for the first time by Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Tunis, under the supervision of Ubaidullah Farahi. Maulana Farahi writes:

"Although the style of expression here is general, the allusion in the context of Satan's suggestions refers to the books of the previous prophets. This ayah is mentioned in the context of abrogating those parts of the past commands which had been included as a result of Satan's suggestions. Surah Al-Haj, Ayah 54 ' وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ' , 'And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord,' refers to the truth that has been revealed in the Quran. This interpretation of the Quran is according to the Quran itself. Adopt it as a shield, hold on to it firmly, and pay no attention to those traditions in which the satanic imposters have mixed absurdities and by means of which, many simple-minded and weak-minded have been led astray³."

Following this, through references to Al-Araf 203, Yunus 15, and Surah An-Najm 3-4, he has clearly stated, "See how Allah has commanded His Prophet to declare that the Messenger only follows the revelation that comes to him from his Lord." This is the testimony from Allah and His Messenger.

Ibn Jarir Tabari has narrated numerous traditions under the interpretation of this verse, but the researchers of Tafsir Tabari have deemed most of these traditions weak, though some have been authenticated, yet considered to be mursal (disconnected). Moreover, the authentic traditions that have been narrated in this context are devoid of the tale which mentions the idols of the disbelievers and pagans and their hopes for intercession. Therefore, relying on these traditions in interpreting the verse would not be correct.

[21]. In Surah Al-Mu'minun, Ayah 67, on the word 'بِهِ سَمِرًا', while challenging Baydawi, Maulana Farahi writes:

"As for the reference of the pronoun in 'به' and the singularization of 'سَمِرًا', the commentators have encountered problems. Baydawi, explaining the reasons, writes that the pronoun 'به' is for the Kaaba. Due to their reputation for arrogance and haughtiness as its guardians, it was not necessary to mention it. Or that the pronoun refers to 'آيَاتِي' (My verses), which implies 'كِتَابِي' (My book), and 'ب' is a conjunction for the word mustakbireen, meaning those who deny (the truth). Or 'ب' is used in the sense of cause, because their arrogance against Muslims was instigated upon hearing the Quran, or because they perceived the reminders of the Quran as storytelling and mocked it. 'سَمِرًا' is originally a verbal noun that has come in the form of the active participle like 'عَافِيَةٌ'. There is another reading 'سَمِرًا', which is the plural of 'سَامِرٌ'.

All of the reasons described by Baydawi are far-fetched. The best option is to consider 'سَمِرًا' as the direct object of 'تَهَجَّرُونَ'. In that case, it would imply that turning away from listening to My verses in arrogance is like leaving a storytelling session without any concern for its content. The following verse clarifies this meaning. Another interpretation close to this is to consider 'به' as referring to 'سَمِرًا'. Taking the pronoun as masculine indicates that they did not regard the words spoken by the Prophet as Divine revelations but rather as a storyteller's tales. Both of these interpretations are similar to each other. And Allah knows best⁴."

maulana Amanatullah Islahi noted in the Urdu translation "Imam Farahi's Quranic Marginalia":

“

Most likely the correct interpretation is that the masculine pronoun refers to 'آياتي' which is understood from 'تَتْلُو' (you recite), and that is what 'سَمِرًا' refers to, which is a singular active participle and not a verbal noun, and the plural reading is deemed weak ⁵.

”

[22]. Explaining Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayah 19,22

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ... وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ-

Maulana Farahi writes:

"This decisive sentence is articulating the reality that Allah dealt justly with the past nations. Hence, He subjected the corrupt to punishment and bestowed mercy on the believers. Besides Him, there is neither a guardian nor a helper, thus one should place trust in Him alone. As for the notion that He punishes whom He wills without cause and has mercy on whom He wants, one should seek refuge with Allah from such a misinterpretation, which disrupts the order and neglects the correct interpretation ⁶."

[23]. Explaining Ayah 72 of Surah Al-Ahzab,

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا-

Maulana Farahi writes:

"... Had there been no trial and no matter of fulfilling the trust, then the greatest aspect of Allah's mercy would have remained hidden and dormant. Hence, this truth requires contemplation. Because those who have not understood it have fallen into the pit of pure determinism ⁷."

[24]. In the context of explanation of verse 8 of Surah Fatir,

فَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ-

Maulana Farahi notes:

"The commentators have committed a mistake in understanding the omitted part in this noble verse. The same is true for this verse *فَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ* which means, after Allah has misguided someone based on His knowledge and sealed that person's heart and ears and covered his vision, can you guide him? Who after Allah can honor him with guidance, do you not understand? ⁸"

The translation of the entire Arabic text titled "Maulana Farahi's Annotations on the Quran" has been omitted from the Urdu translation for reasons unknown⁹.

[25]. In the explanation of Ayah 22 of Surah al-Fatir,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ-

Maulana Farahi writes:

"I believe that those who are in the graves do not hear; however, Allah allows to be heard by whom He wills, as is explicitly stated in this Ayah. Thus, whoever hears from among them, does so by the command of Allah¹⁰."

[26]. Interpreting the verse 24 of Surah Sad,

وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ-

Maulana Farahi writes:

"Regarding the trial of Prophet David, may peace be upon him, historians have concocted a useless story¹¹. The actual incident was that a wealthy brother expressed the desire to include his weaker neighbor brother's ewe into his own flock, which is something commonly found in the nature of the wealthy. In that epoch, sheep and ewes were considered symbols of wealth, and they used to stamp them with the figure of an ewe. This was why their coins were imprinted with their image and even called by the name 'na`jah'¹²."

Ibn Jarir also has conveyed various exegetical narratives in the explanation of this verse without engaging in any discussion about their authenticity. The learned editor of Tafsir Tabari, Mansur Abdul Hamid, has clarified in a footnote that these narratives are baseless and weak. Despite that, to this very day, some exegetical books continue to propagate these weak and baseless narratives, and their lack of authenticity is overlooked.

[27]. Explaining verse 23 of Surah Ash-Shura.

قُلْ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ-

Maulana Farahi writes:

"Asking for a reward is contrary to the dignity of prophets as seen in the verses of Surah Ash-Shu'ara which are uttered by Prophets Noah, Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Shuayb, peace be upon them all... This is not an exception for اجرا, but is an additional remark. 'القربي' means from the angle of kinship just like الحب في الله means 'love for the sake of Allah'. Muslims belonging to certain sects interpret the verse to mean that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, demanded love for his relatives. This means that the possessive pronoun (mudaf) is omitted. The language does not support this interpretation because love does not demand any reward, nor does reason accept it. Some of the Prophet's close relations were fierce enemies of Allah, and you know that prophets never seek any reward from people¹³."

Summary

The examples highlighted clearly indicate that Imam Farahi had a distinctive philosophy regarding the coherence of the Quran, which was reflected in his strict adherence to the interpretation of Quran by Quran itself. Because of this, the true purpose and understanding of the verses would become apparent to him. Conversely, traditional exegeses sometimes redirected the interpretation and reasoning of verses completely differently, causing difficulty in understanding for the scholars. It is due to the outright reliance on traditional narratives and the disregard of the textual coherence that scholars copied baseless narratives about the stories of David and Solomon, and Zainab, which are clearly invalid—a fact that even Ibn Jarir al-Tabari would narrate without commentary. Imam Farahi disregarded such interpretations as inconsequential and critiqued Ibn Jarir Tabari's approach in several places. Similarly, he also criticized Imam Razi for some of his interpretations. Shah Abdul Qadir Dehlvi, may Allah have mercy on him, also took liberties in explaining some verses, which did not escape Imam Farahi's scrutiny. Likewise, respected exegetes like Zamakhshari and Baydawi faced challenges with the explanation of certain lexicon and grammatical structures of verses, and Imam Farahi endeavored to provide proper reasoning.

However, it is not necessary that all the liberties pointed out by Maulana Imam Farahi are actually flaws; possibly due to this reason, when comparing the Arabic annotations of Imam Farahi's Quranic commentary with the Urdu version, there are several instances where his critiques are mentioned in the Arabic notes but omitted in Urdu, focusing exclusively on interpretation. In some places, Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi has given preference to the interpretations of other scholars regarding grammatical constructs or pronoun antecedents. Clearly, these notes were merely reminders and had Maulana Imam Farahi's life been prolonged, it is possible he would have revisited and potentially revised some of these points. This is because contemplation and reflection carried a great significance throughout his academic career. Unfortunately, his esteemed life did not grant him enough time to complete his exegesis.

From these annotations, it can be asserted with full confidence that Imam Farahi acknowledged the entire body of traditional exegesis and was well-versed with the reality of exegetical traditions. While aiming to reach the correct meanings of the verses, he deemed it necessary to consider the coherence of the text when meticulously compiling his interpretation of the Quran by the Quran. This is why his commentary contains very few narrations (hadiths), but this should not be misconstrued as a devaluation of hadith. He clarified this in his preface:

"My objective is to compile a book that serves as a foundation and central reference, emerging as a point of equilibrium and decisive word. Therefore, I have confined myself to what is found in the Quran. However, this does not mean that I deny whatever I have left out. Imam Bukhari collected in his book only those narratives that met his criteria, leaving aside many correct narratives, but this doesn't mean he denied them¹⁴."



References:

- [1]. Tabari, Ibn Jarir, Jami al-Bayan, 8/230-8
- [2]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat, 1/423
- [3]. Al-Farahi, Abdul Hamid, Nizam ul Quran wa Tawil al-Furqan bil Furqan, 1/434
- [4]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat, 1/434
- [5]. Farahi, QuraniHawashi 327
- [6]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat Fi Tafseer al-Quran al-Kareem 2853
- [7]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat 2/99
- [8]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat 2/116
- [9]. Farahi, QuraniHawashi, 404
- [10]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat 2/119
- [11]. Tabari, Ibn Jarir, Jami al-Bayan 9/597-604
- [12]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat 2/147
- [13]. Al-Farahi, Taliqat 2/209
- [14]. Farahi, Tafseer Nizam al-Quran 36



THE SECRET KEEPER

JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI

فضا خموش، سوادِ فلک ہے تیرہ و تار
کہ لٹ گئی ہے کہیں آبروے چرخِ بریں

“

The atmosphere is silent, the sky is dark and gloomy
As if the honor of the highest heavens has been snatched away somewhere

”

نگاہِ قلب کے تاروں میں اختلالِ سرود
مرے وجود میں شاید مر او وجود نہیں

“

In the strings of the heart's gaze, there is a discord of melodies
Perhaps in my being, there is no existence of mine

”

شروعِ وادیِ کاغان میں مقامِ جنوں
مقامِ حاصلِ ایماں، مقامِ الٰہو

“

At the start of the Kaghan Valley lies the abode of madness
The place of attaining faith, the place of declaring 'There is no God but Allah'

”

مری حیاتِ پریشاں کی رفعتوں کا مقام
مری قبائے دریدہ کی آرزوے رفو

“

The exalted station of my disheveled life
The desire for mending my torn robe

”

یہی مقام ہے اُس کاروانِ حق کا مقام
گواہ جس کی صداقت پہ عصمتِ جبریل

“

This is the very station of that caravan of truth
Whose authenticity is testified by the integrity of Gabriel

”

مری نگاہِ تمنا کی جستجو کا کمال
نواحِ مشہدِ احمد، مقامِ اسمعیل

“

The pinnacle of my hopeful gaze's pursuit
The peripheries of Muhammad's shrine, the station of Ishmael

”

میں اس مقام کے ذروں کو آسماں کہہ دوں
زمیں پہ عرشِ معلیٰ کے رازداں کہہ دوں

“

I'd name the particles of this station as the sky
On Earth, I'd call them the knowers of the Throne's secrets

”

NEWSLETTER AL-MAWRID US

MARCH 2024

Is It Permissible to Build Temples in Abu Dhabi?

Last month, Ghamidi Center received a question regarding the construction of temples in Abu Dhabi. It was asked whether it is still impermissible for non-Muslims to have permanent residence and build their religious sites in Arab Peninsula. Hassan Ilyas recorded the answer. While answering the question in the light of the teachings of the Quran and Hadith he said that in his point of view, the construction of any type of idolatrous worship places in these countries is an impermissible act from a religious perspective. Our Prophet, upon the guidance of our God, has specifically designated the Arabian Peninsula for monotheism, so permanent residence there is only for Muslims. Only religion of God, i.e., Islam will dominate in these lands, which will be evident with its symbols, no one else is allowed to establish their worship places. This answer consists of two parts, which can be viewed the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Presentation Day in Sunday School

Last month, the GCIL Education Committee organized the first Presentation Day for all levels of Sunday School on February 3rd and 4th. More than 170 individuals participated in it, including students from 18 sections, faculty members, parents, and guests. The event was well-received by the attendees. In this competition, students presented their presentations on various topics, and prizes were announced for the students who showed the best performance. The winning students from the first day of the competition included Ahmed Nadeem, Anaya Khan, Safi ur Rahman, Imaan Rahim, Linta Usman, Shaan Imam Ali, Sharique Syed, Sharique Sadiqi, and Fatah Sahil. The winning students from the second day of the competition were Romeeza Fatima, Armaan Shehzad, Zaidan Khan, Durran Ayub, Mohsin Abidi, Imaan Khurram, Syed Adeel, Waiza Arshad, Zaina Sadat, and Zainab Ali.



Worship and Self-Purification

The article titled "Worship and Self-Purification" by Syed Manzoor ul Hassan was published in the February 2024 issue. In this article, he elaborates on worship and how it enhances the closeness of a person with Allah, resulting in the purification of the soul, i.e., through worship, self-purification achieves its perfection. He writes that the most important form of worship is prayer, which purifies a person by distancing him from sins. Although Zakah is spent on social needs, it remains a form of a worship. It is a portion of wealth that purifies the giver along with the wealth. Fasting is a special worship of self-restraint and divine obedience, aiming to attain piety. The worships of Hajj and Umrah symbolize the struggle against Satan and signify success in that struggle. Sacrifice is also an expression of worship to Allah, and its purpose is to thank Allah. As a result, piety is cultivated within a person, which eases the way to attaining Allah's pleasure.

Defining the word *Tabyeen*

In the sessions of the video series "What is Hadith?" held last month as part of the 23 Objections, various meanings of the word "*Tabyeen*" were discussed. While exploring the concept, the question also arose whether the concept of specification, editing, alteration, addition, and abrogation are included in the meaning of the word "*Tibyan*" or not. Furthermore, the instances in the Quran where the word "*Tabyeen*" is used were also discussed. Additionally, responses to objections raised regarding the opinions on the meaning of the word "*Tabyeen*" by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi were provided. The recordings of these sessions can be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Moiz Amjad Visits Ghamidi Center

Last month, Moiz Amjad arrived in the United States upon the invitation of Ghamidi Center. Moiz Amjad is a student of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and has been associated with him since 1988. He is also the author of several books and the founder of a website called "Understanding Islam". During his stay at Ghamidi Center, he will participate in various academic and intellectual gatherings and will also tour different cities in the United States. Additionally, he will record a special series in Ghamidi Center's studio on Ramadan.

Weekly Quran and Hadith Lectures

In February 2024, during Javed Ahmad Ghamidi's live Quran and Hadith lectures, the lessons on Quran covered verses 33 to 41 of Surah Bani Isra'il, while the Hadith session discussed the topic of "Elegance in Dressing and Arrogance" based on various hadiths. These sessions of Quran and Hadith lectures can be viewed on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Naeem Baloch Arrives at Ghamidi Center

Naeem Ahmed Baloch has been associated with various projects initiated by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi since 1981. Currently, he is working with GCIL as an editor, scriptwriter, and researcher. His purpose of visiting Ghamidi Center is to conduct recordings on different topics and present various projects for the future. His visit extends from February 21st to April 1st.

Education as a Business

In his article titled "Education as a Business" published in Urdu and English versions of Ishraq US, Dr. Irfan Shehzad challenges the common misconception prevalent in our society that turning education into a business is not a commendable practice. Criticizing this notion, he argues that people generally believe that teaching and education are prophetic professions, hence they should not be monetized or considered for financial gains. However, the reality is that the task of the prophets was to convey the message of God to people and impart religious education, not to teach scientific, social sciences, and vocational skills. He writes that it is regrettable that due to the lack of resources, standard education cannot be provided. According to him, the solution lies not in demanding sacrifice from private educational institutions, but rather in improving resources and the quality of government schools. This article is available in February 2024 issue.

Religious Freedom in India and Pakistan

Last month, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas gave an interview to a TV channel in India, during which he was asked about religious freedom in India and Pakistan. Expressing concerns about religious freedom for Muslims in India, Hassan Ilyas stated that Indian Muslims do not have the freedom to practice their beliefs freely, and there are many restrictions on Muslims in terms of state, society, and law regarding religion. He also mentioned that both Pakistan and India have not fully embraced the principles of a nation-state. The recording of this interview is available on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Islam Study Circle

Dr. Shehzad Saleem conducts sessions under the name of "Islam Study Circle," where various religious, ethical, and societal topics are discussed in the light of the Quran and Hadith. These sessions consist of three parts. In the first part, a topic is selected from the verses of the Quran and elaborated upon. The second part involves discussions on selected Prophetic traditions. In the third part, a passage from the Bible is discussed. At the end of the program, questions related to the topic are also answered. These sessions are conducted in the English language and recordings of these sessions are available on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Maulana Islahi's Daily Activities

In the recent episode of "Hayat e Amin," Naeem Baloch writes about Maulana Amin Aslahi's daily activities after embarking his professional career. He mentions that Maulana woke up at three in the morning and engaged in Tahajjud prayers before immersing himself in reading. He spent three to four hours teaching at the madrasa every day. After Zuhr prayers, he often went to Maulana Farahi's room for discussions on various Quranic topics. During the evening, he played football or volleyball. On days when there's no opportunity for sports, he took a walk for an hour after Asr prayer. He went to bed at nine in the evening and refrained from sleeping during the day. This article can be read in the March 2024 issue of "Ishraq, US."

Lectures on Miscellaneous Topics by Dr. Shehzad Saleem

Under the banner of the "Lessons of Life Series," Dr. Shehzad Saleem recorded four lectures in March 2024, with the following topics: "Everything is Good," "Remembrance of Allah," "The Sword of Moderation," and "The Trial of the Rich." In addition to these, he also delivered lectures on "Humanity" and "Successful Marriage." These lectures can be watched on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Religious Discourse of Change

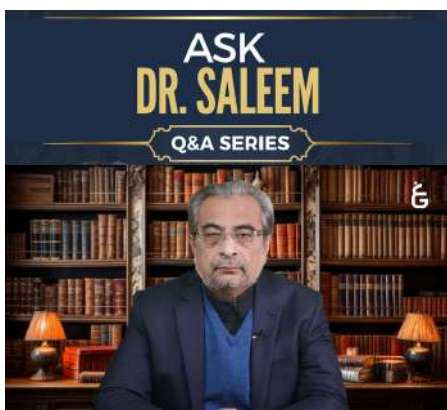
Under the auspices of Ghamidi Center, a series of discussions titled "Religious Discourse of Change" is ongoing in the weekly question-and-answer sessions. Last month, discussions covered topics such as manifestos, claims, and practical implications of religious, revolutionary, and political groups. Recordings of these sessions can be found on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Teaching of Al-Bayan and Meezan in English Language

Last month, Dr. Shehzad Saleem conducted 5 lectures in English on Javed Ahmad Ghamidi's Quranic interpretation "Al-Bayan" and his book "Meezan" on Islam. In the 4 sessions of "Al-Bayan," verses 224 to 260 of Surah Al-Baqarah were discussed, while under the series of "Meezan," a lecture titled "The Social Shariah" addressed issues related to divorce. These lectures can be viewed on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Audiobook of al-Bayan

Under the Ghamidi Center's Tazkir Bil Quran project last month, the recitation and translation of verses 1 to 55 of Surah Al-Ma'idah and Surah Al-An'am were presented. The translation of the Quranic text by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi was read by Shahnawaz Zaidi, while the recitation of the Quran was presented in the melodious voice of Mishary Rashid Alafasy. Each week, a new episode of this audio book is released on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Ask Dr. Shehzad Saleem

"Ask Dr. Shehzad Saleem" is a monthly live question and answer session where Dr. Shehzad Saleem addresses various religious, ethical, and societal issues that arise in people's minds. In this session, people can ask their questions in both Urdu and English languages. The recordings of these sessions can be viewed on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Ilm-o-Hikmat with Ghamidi

"Ilm-o-Hikmat: With Ghamidi" is a well-known program on Dunya News Channel Pakistan, which has been airing for many years. It is recorded on a weekly basis and broadcasted every

Saturday. The responsibilities of hosting are carried out by Hassan Ilyas. In February, one program titled "Question and Answer" and three programs titled "Fundamental Elements of Islamic Culture" were aired. These programs discussed topics such as preservation of chastity, preservation of ranks, servitude, religious sensitivity, teaching of cultural traditions, flaws in the educational system, and the significance of prostration in reverence. The recordings of these programs are available on Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Issues of Parenting, Youth, and Marital Life

Dr. Shehzad Saleem conducts online private counseling sessions with people every month. In these sessions, individuals seek advice from Dr. Shehzad Saleem regarding various personal and familial issues. Last month, people consulted Shehzad Saleem for solutions to issues related to parenting, youth, and marital problems.

