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United States

We tried to confine the ocean within a well, to bring the desert into a courtyard, and to make the sky into a cloak. But his companions—Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Bilal, and Abu Dharr (PBUT)— saw the ocean as an ocean, the desert as a desert, and the sky as the sky. They realized that the one whose remembrance should illuminate every heart, and whose name should echo from the minarets of every mosque as each day breaks, could not be reduced to the figure of a mere birthday or a month like Rabi' al-Awwal.

~ *Javed Ahmed Ghamidi*

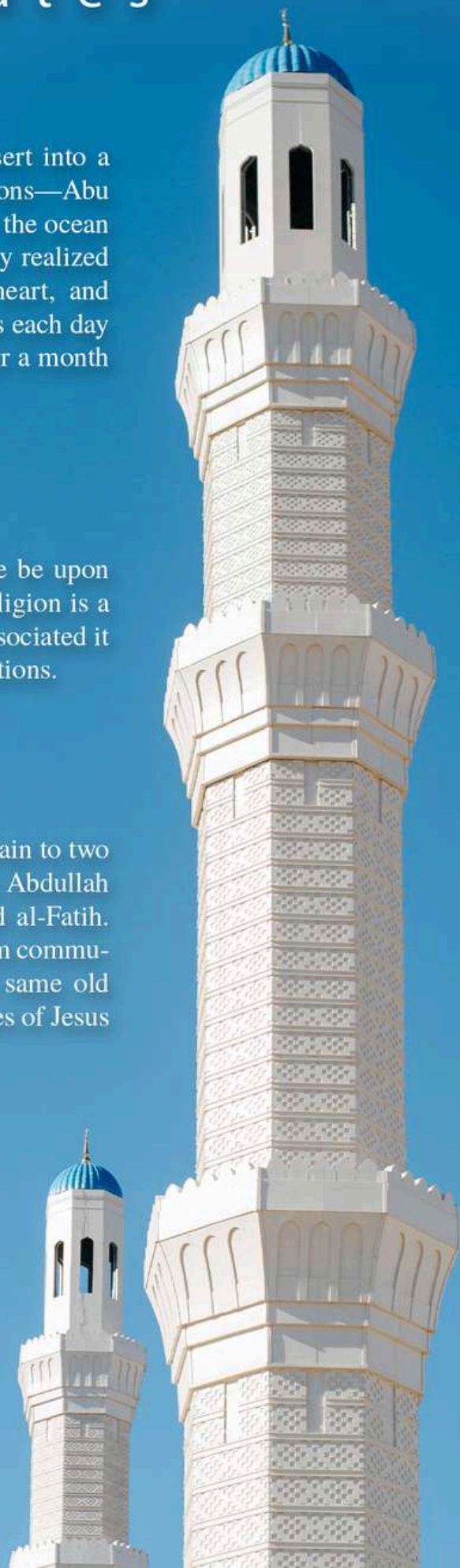
The Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are very clear that introducing changes or additions in religion is a grave sin. It amounts to slandering Allah, and the Quran has associated it with the severe crimes of polytheism and denying divine revelations.

~ *Rehan Ahmed Yusufi*

The narrations related to the appearance of Mahdi actually pertain to two different rulers, not just one. The first set of narrations refers to Abdullah ibn Zubayr (RTA), while the second set refers to Muhammad al-Fatih. Therefore, both events have already occurred, and for the Muslim community to continue awaiting them is merely a repetition of the same old mistake made by the People of the Book in identifying the figures of Jesus and Muhammad (PBUT).

~ *Adnan Ejaz*

 Ghamidi Center
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OUR SUPERFICIAL GAZE

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

This is the month of Rabi' al-Awwal, the month in which that blessed figure came into existence, whom the Lord of the universe Himself declared as "Mercy for all the worlds" (*Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen*). The one whose garment and thigh bore the name that Jesus, son of Mary, saw inscribed: "Lord of lords and King of kings." He is the leader of the world until the Day of Judgment, whose rule extends to the ends of the earth, who was granted the *jawami' al-Kalim* (concise, comprehensive speech), for whom the entire earth was made a mosque, whose awe made disbelief tremble, who was given the scale of justice (*mizan*) along with iron to establish God's proof over people. On him, prophethood was sealed, the Qur'an was revealed, and it was decreed on the tablet of existence that until the dawn of resurrection, God's immutable guidance will only be found in the book he brought.

This blessed figure graced the world in this very month. There is no doubt that, because of his connection, this month is the envy of all others, and one feels that every moment of it should be spent in celebration and joy. But what is truly astonishing is that the likes of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Bilal, and Abu Dharr (PBUT) — whose love and devotion for him was their most precious possession—did not turn this month into a "month of celebration," nor did they declare the day of his birth as the "Festival of the Prophet's Birth" (*Eid Milad*). Despite this day dawning multiple times while they were alive, and this month returning year after year, their daily lives

continued as usual. The river of their routine flowed uninterrupted, without even a ripple to disturb its course. How astonishing is this! What is the reason behind it?

Days like "Iqbal Day" and "Jinnah Day" are commemorated for people far lesser than him. If their admirers can arrange such celebrations on their birthdays, why not for the Dana-e-Subul, the Seal of the Prophets, the Master of all, who:

غبار راه کو بخشا فروغ وادی سینا

Bestowed the dust of his path with the radiance of Mount Sinai.

For years, I was perplexed by this dilemma, but thanks to Allah, I finally found the answer. Once the truth became clear, another truth also revealed itself: that all the shortcomings in our thinking arise from the way we look at things:

برچہرہ حقیقت اگر ماند پرودہ
جرم نگاہ دیدہ صورت پرست ماست

If the face of truth is veiled,
The fault lies with our superficial, image-worshipping eyes.

The reality is that we accepted him as the greatest, but as one among the figures we were familiar with—yet, he was not from among that category at all. As a result, all the days of the earth were his, but we confined him to being born on a single day; he was the radiant moon of every month, yet we only saw him rising on the horizon of Rabi' al-Awwal. In God's divine calendar, every year was named after him, but in our human calendar, his birthday fell in 570 CE, after the birth of Christ:

جرم نگاہ دیدہ صورت پرست ماست

The fault lies with our superficial, image-worshipping eyes.

We tried to confine the ocean within a well, to bring the desert into a courtyard, and to make the sky into a cloak. But his companions—Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Bilal, and Abu Dharr (PBUT) — saw the ocean as an ocean, the desert as a desert, and the sky as the sky. They realized that the one whose remembrance should illuminate every heart, and whose name should echo from the minarets of every mosque as each day breaks, could not be reduced to the figure of

a mere birthday or a month like Rabi' al-Awwal. He, beloved beyond life and beloved by the world, could not be the figure of just one day or one month. He belongs to every day, every month, and every year. Thus, instead of an "Eid Milad-un-Nabi" or a "Rabi' al-Awwal celebration," there is but one call and one melody from dawn until dusk, (from the decline of the sun to the darkness of the night):

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

یہ نغمہ فصل گل ولالہ کا نہیں پابند
بہار ہو کہ خزاں، لا الہ الا اللہ

This melody is not bound to the season of flowers and tulips:
Whether spring or autumn, the cry remains: La ilaha ill allah. (1990)



THE TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

1. Abu Qatadah narrates that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say:
"A good dream is from Allah, and it brings glad tidings. So, if any of you sees something in a dream that pleases him, let him share it only with someone he loves. Similarly, a bad dream is from Satan. If any of you sees something in a dream that displeases him, he should not mention it to anyone. However, upon waking, he should seek refuge from Satan's evil by spitting lightly three times on his left side and be assured that it will not harm him."
(Jami' Ma'mar bin Rashid, Hadith 965)
2. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:
"Dreams are of three types: glad tidings from Allah, inner conversations of the human self, and frightening whispers from Satan. So, if any of you sees a good dream, he may share it if he wishes. But if he sees something in a dream that he does not like, he should not mention it to anyone; instead, he should get up and offer prayer." (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Hadith 29917)
3. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah

(peace be upon him) once lifted the curtain of the door, and people were lined up behind Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) in rows for prayer. Seeing this, the Prophet said:

"O people, the only remaining form of prophethood's glad tidings is true dreams. These will be seen by Muslims themselves and shown to others. Beware! I have been forbidden from reciting the Qur'an while in bowing (ruku') and prostration (sajdah). As for ruku', proclaim your Lord's greatness in it, and as for sajdah, make plenty of supplication, for this is the best time for your supplications to be accepted." (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 743)



SPLITTING OF THE MOON X

Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Stance

[Taken from a dialogue with Mohammad Hassan Ilyas]

4. Verses of the Quran Describing All Signs of God in the Universe and the Self (Anfus wa Afaq)

One of the purposes of the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was the recitation of divine signs. This means that Allah sent His messenger equipped with the proofs and evidences mentioned in the Quran. The Quran uses the phrase 'يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ' (recite unto them Your signs) for this purpose. This refers to the act of reciting the signs of Allah. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the contents of the Quran, he was fulfilling this purpose. In essence, he was reciting the speech that conveys the signs of Allah's power, wisdom, creation, and other attributes through the evidence in the universe and the self. Every sentence of the Quran serves as proof and evidence that informs us about Allah's attributes, His commands, and His will. In this respect, the words and statements of the Quran are also considered signs and are thus referred to as 'ayat' (signs).

The phrase 'يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ' appears in Surah al-Baqarah as part of the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). It is stated:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ....

Lord! And send forth to them a messenger from amongst them who reads out to them Your revelations, instructs them in the law and in wisdom and in this manner purifies them. Truly, You alone are the Mighty, the Wise One. (Q 2:129)

In explanation of this, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes: "The term 'ayat' in Arabic refers to something that serves as evidence for something else. Every sentence of the Quran serves as proof and evidence for a certain truth. The word 'ayat' is used in this sense. The term 'يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ' (recite to them) actually highlights the authority and power with which the messenger of Allah, as His ambassador, reads out His command to people and then, as God's judge, enforces His decision upon them." (Al-Bayan 1/131)

Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi, while explaining the words 'وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا' (those who disbelieve and deny Our signs) from Surah Al-Baqarah, highlights this aspect of the term 'ayat.' He writes:

"The original meaning of 'ayat' is a sign or mark that leads to something... In some places, the verses of the Book of Allah are referred to as 'ayat' because they not only guide towards truth and righteousness but in fact, the contents of any divine book, including its words, style of expression, and mode of composition, vividly reflect the personality of its glorious Author." (Tafheem-ul-Quran 1/69)

Thus, there are numerous examples in the Quran where Allah uses the term 'ayat' for both the signs in the universe and the self, as well as for the sentences and statements of the Quran. For example, in Surah Al-Ahqaf, it is stated:

When Our clear revelations are recited out to them, these disbelievers say about the truth when it has come to them: "It is plain magic." (Q 46:7)

However, it should be noted that when the Quran uses this term for its own sentences, the original meaning and concept of 'ayat' (sign) remains intact. That is, when the Quran uses the word 'ayat' for its text, the meaning of proof and sign is inherent within it and is not separated from it.

Consider the following passage from Surah Al-Jathiyah. It will become evident that the word 'ayat' is used for the verses of the Quran, but it fully encompasses the meaning of the signs in the universe and the self:

These are God's revelations which We are reciting out to you with the truth. So, what thing will they believe in after God and His revelations! Devastation is for every liar and wrongdoer who hears God's revelations being recited out to him; still he arrogantly adheres to his stubbornness, as if he has not even heard them. [This is his attitude.] So, give glad tidings to him of a painful

torment. And from Our revelations when he [similarly] comes to know of anything, he makes fun of it. It is for these people for whom there is a humiliating punishment. In front of them is Hell and whatever they have earned [in this world] will not be of slightest benefit to them. And neither those who they have made guardians besides God will be of any avail to them and for them is a great punishment. This Quran is the real guidance and those who disbelieve in the revelations of their Lord, for them is a painful punishment; such which causes shudders.

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi has elucidated this passage in such a way that the true meaning of the Quranic term 'ayat' (sign) becomes fully apparent. He writes:

"'بَلَاغٌ' refers to the very signs in the universe and within ourselves (anfus wa afaq) mentioned in the preceding verses. It is stated that these are the signs of Allah's oneness, His power and wisdom, and His retribution, which We recite to you through this Quran, explaining their true outcomes and implications. These signs are so clear that no rational person can deny them. The Quran invites you to acknowledge the real implications of these signs. If your opponents are not ready to accept the obvious conclusions of these signs, then what could be more rational and convincing for them to believe in?

'نَتَلُوْبَا عَلَیْكَ بِالْحَقِّ' means that these are the definitive and true outcomes that emerge from pondering these signs. This phrase indicates that although others may also contemplate these signs, they do so from a very limited and specific perspective, often failing to reach the inherent truths within them. Even if they do reach them, they avoid acknowledging them because these truths contradict their desires. For example, astronomers and geologists study the signs in the heavens and the earth, anatomists investigate human creation, zoologists research various aspects of animals, and meteorologists study the rotation of day and night, the timing and effects of rain, and the changes in wind. However, their narrow-mindedness often limits their vision to the minor details they observe through their telescopes and microscopes, failing to see the greater reality beyond.

Meteorologists might predict that the weather will remain hot and dry for the next twenty-four hours and might offer some explanation for it, which may be correct in many cases. However, they confine their understanding to the immediate causes and effects of the weather changes without considering the ultimate cause behind these phenomena and the responsibilities that come with recognizing this cause. All these changes and variations in the universe occur to lead humans to this fundamental question: to identify the true orchestrator behind these changes and to fulfill the responsibilities toward Him. If a servant of God provides a satisfactory solution to this question, it should be accepted and acted upon. The Quran exposes these very aspects of the signs that shed light on the ultimate truth, hence it is described as '*natlu uhaalay kabil-haqq*'.

This brings to light a significant fact that the Quran's invitation is not based on coercion or authoritarianism but on the clear evidence from the universe and the self, and on the obvious truths of reason and nature. Those who do not accept them do so not because they are hidden, but because they find them against their desires and thus want to avoid them. People afflicted with this malady will not accept anything contrary to their desires, even if it is as evident as the sun.

Another fact that becomes clear is that the most evident and fundamental truths in this universe are Allah and His signs. Those who deny them are not capable of accepting any truth. They are mere slaves to their desires, worshippers of their stomachs and bodies. The demands of such people for new signs and miracles are not worthy of attention. Even the greatest miracle cannot open the eyes of such blind individuals."(Tadabbur-e-Quran 7/306-307)

To be continued.....





THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION

Rehan Ahmad Yusufi

Recently, I had a conversation with a dentist about his experiences. He shared an interesting point that many people come to him with dental issues, even though they have been brushing their teeth regularly their whole lives. The reason for this is that these people do brush their teeth, but they don't do it correctly. They believe that brushing means quickly moving the toothbrush over the teeth. After rubbing the brush on their teeth for a few seconds, they rinse their mouth and feel fresh because of the toothpaste's fragrance, thinking they have done enough. However, their teeth, especially their molars, remain unclean.

The dentist then explained the correct way to brush. He mentioned that there are sixteen parts of the upper and lower teeth in the mouth. Each section of the teeth has a different structure, and the brush should be moved back and forth, side to side, or up and down according to that structure. While explaining, he pointed out that the molars on both sides of the upper and lower teeth have four sections. Each molar has three surfaces: the smooth surfaces at the front and back, and the sharp surface at the top, which we use to chew food. Therefore, the brush should cover all twelve areas.

The correct brushing method is to move the brush from the root to the top on the front and back

surfaces, ensuring that any particles stuck in the roots and crevices are removed. On the top surface, the brush should be moved side to side to clear away any particles.

Then there is the front part of the teeth, which becomes visible when we smile. There are four surfaces in total, two on the upper teeth and two on the lower teeth, both front and back. The brushing technique for these surfaces is to move the brush in a long stroke from the root to the edge. By brushing each surface fifteen to twenty times, that part typically becomes clean of particles, preventing toothaches, cavities, bad breath, or yellowing of the teeth. If any of these problems do occur, the reason will be something else, not poor dental hygiene.

After listening to this detailed explanation from the dentist, I realized how deceiving it is when a person appears to be doing something, but if not done correctly, it does not yield the desired results. The same applies to religious duties. The fundamental principle in religious commands is that one should do what is asked and, secondly, do it exactly as instructed, without changing or adding anything. Any alteration or addition is equivalent to deceiving oneself. This is especially critical in matters of faith and worship.

For example, in religion, there are five core beliefs. Adding to this list of beliefs will lead to divine accountability on the Day of Judgment. Similarly, in Worship, Prayers, Zakat, Sadaqah al-Fitr, Fasting, I'tikaf, Hajj, Umrah, and Sacrifice have been prescribed. Adding new forms of worship on one's own or deviating from the prescribed ways of performing these acts will once again be a cause for accountability on the Day of Judgment.

The Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are very clear that introducing changes or additions in religion is a grave sin. It amounts to slandering Allah, and the Quran has associated it with the severe crimes of polytheism and denying divine revelations. Unfortunately, people, with good intentions, introduce changes and additions in religion, forgetting that there can be no ijihad (independent reasoning) in matters of faith and worship. This is the fundamental principle of religion.



JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI'S CONCEPT OF COHERENCE: A REVIEW OF DR. MUHAMMAD MUSHTAQ AHMAD'S CRITICAL ESSAY

Dr. Irfan Shehzad

Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmad has written a critical essay titled "Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Concept of Coherence: A Critical Review," which was published in the research journal *Izaah*, June 2024 issue. Dr. Mushtaq's article suffers from technical flaws, rendering both his argument and the associated criticism misplaced.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's concept of coherence (*nazm*) has multiple dimensions. One aspect is the internal structure of Surahs (chapters) and their interconnections, while another is the use of syntactical and contextual analysis to derive the intended meaning of a verse or command, leading to what Javed Ahmed Ghamidi calls *ta'weel-e-waahid* (a singular interpretation). The former relates to literary and academic nuances and thus never claims absolute certainty, while the latter is a purely linguistic and academic matter where, based on recognized standards of language, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi asserts that a definitive interpretation can be reached within human understanding. Dr. Mushtaq addressed the first aspect Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's coherence of the Qur'an—yet criticized it based on the second principle, which focuses on achieving certainty in interpretation, thus making his critique incorrect.

In his essay, Dr. Mushtaq quotes Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's book *Meezan*, combining two

different statements into one. One excerpt states that coherence in the Qur'an makes it possible to derive a singular interpretation, and the other explains that because of this coherence, the Qur'an is structured in Surahs rather than scattered individual statements. Beyond these quotes, there is nothing in Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's writing that supports the critic's claim.

The two passages are as follows:

"The aspect that makes the Qur'an a decisive proof and resolves all interpretative differences, affirming Imam Farahi's statement that 'the Qur'an does not allow for more than one interpretation,' is coherence (*nazm*) alone."

"It is this coherence in the Qur'an that, when it challenged its audience to produce something like it, the challenge was not to present scattered verses, but rather one or more Surahs."

The real area where Dr. Mushtaq could have placed his critique was on the issue of attaining a singular interpretation through contextual analysis. He briefly touched upon this point but failed to provide any substantial argument. This was the moment where he could have highlighted any errors using examples. Instead, he moved on, acknowledging that no one disputes the principle of deriving meaning through context. This principle is central to Farahi's thought, which emphasizes that understanding the meaning of a verse cannot yield multiple interpretations simultaneously and that a preference must be established for one meaning over others. Additionally, this principle suggests that Hadith and narrations should be examined under the lens of coherence. This foundational approach is not foreign to the Islamic jurisprudential tradition (*usul al-fiqh*), where it is widely accepted.

While this methodology of establishing meaning does not eliminate the possibility of interpretive differences, the shared framework of interpretation helps resolve disputes and makes it easier for the reader to establish a reasoned preference based on the coherent structure.

The quote Dr. Mushtaq cited at this point is irrelevant. It pertains to the coherence of Surahs and briefly mentions that the internal structure of the Surahs helps guide the determination of their purpose (*mud'aa*). The excerpt from Meezan that Dr. Mushtaq quoted is:

"This is the structure of the Qur'an. If one looks at it carefully, the background and the time of revelation of the Surahs, along with the identification of the addressees and the subject matter, become clear, offering guidance that cannot be derived from any external source."

Here, the reference is to receiving guidance for determining the purpose (*mud'aa*) of a Surah, not for attaining certainty in the interpretation of meanings (*ta'yeen-e-ma'na*). The certainty in determining meaning relates to the meaning of words, the composition of sentences, and the context, although at times the coherence of Surahs may also provide guidance for this purpose.

Dr. Mushtaq raised a question about what is meant by context (*siyaaq o sabaq*) and how far its scope extends. If this question was unclear, it should have been clarified before the critique.

Context refers to the well-known concept that the content before and after the specific verse under discussion is considered when determining the meaning. Sometimes, the context is found within the verse itself, and sometimes it is spread across connected verses. This is a practical aspect, and every coherent discourse is read and understood by keeping this aspect in mind. As for the scope of context, the Farahi school of thought has clearly articulated it. This principle ranges from determining the meaning of a word to identifying the central theme of a Surah, to the interconnection and grouping of Surahs.

Dr. Mushtaq's conclusion—that according to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's interpretive principles, most of the Qur'anic rulings are limited to their original addressees, and only a "handful of rulings" are general—is incorrect. This conclusion is not only based on a flawed premise but is also factually inaccurate. The issue of specifying the addressees and limiting the application of rulings is a separate topic, which Dr. Mushtaq did not even address. However, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi does not hold the principle that identifying the addressees necessarily limits the application of a ruling. Rather, it provides one (indication), but the actual basis for rulings depends on determining the underlying cause and the context. Contrary to Dr. Mushtaq's claim, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi identifies only a handful of rulings as specific, while the rest of the Shariah is considered general. These few specific rulings are as follows:

1. The right to fight against a nation for rejecting Islam was specific to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Ordinary Muslims do not have this right. However, jihad against oppression and aggression is a general obligation.
2. After the Prophet (pbuh) had completed his mission, relations and treaties with disbelievers were terminated. Thus, the prohibition against friendship with disbelievers and the People of the Book was related to this specific context of boycott.
3. The distinction between the testimony of Muslims and non-Muslims was also specific to the time of the Prophet due to this boycott.
4. The separation of Muslim and non-Muslim spouses was also a result of this post-mission boycott.
5. The differentiation between Muslim and non-Muslim in inheritance laws was also a result of this same boycott.
6. The death penalty for apostasy is not a ruling of the Shariah. Apostasy itself was equated with disbelief (kufr), and the punishment for disbelief, as outlined in Surah Al-Tawbah, was death for the polytheists.
7. The restriction of a one-third limit on bequests in inheritance is not a ruling of the Shariah. The one-third limit was a recommendation from the Prophet (peace be upon him), not a binding command.
8. A woman's testimony is not inherently worth half that of a man. The ruling of two women's testimony equaling one man's was specific to financial matters in a particular context.

Apart from these, all other rulings of the Shariah are general due to the underlying causes. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's approach to specifying or generalizing rulings is governed by the same principles recognized in Islamic jurisprudence: rulings are based on causes. While there may be differences in determining the causes and applications, these should be addressed within an academic framework.

To gain a deeper understanding of how rulings in Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's framework achieve general applicability, a serious study of Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir's significant book "Quran o Sunnat ka Bahami Ta'alluq" would be useful. This book offers a valuable attempt to place Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's scholarly contributions within the broader Islamic intellectual tradition.

Additionally, Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir's article Meezan: Tauzeehi Mutaliah (A Detailed Study of Meezan) can also prove helpful in this regard. Both works provide insights into Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's approach and help contextualize his interpretations within the wider discourse of Islamic scholarship.



IMAM MAHDI – NOT ONE, BUT TWO!

Adnan Ejaz

[This column, "Nuqtah-e-Nazar," is dedicated to the writings of various thinkers. The publication of articles in this space does not necessarily reflect the views of the institution.]

The concept of the "Appearance of Mahdi" or "Imam Mahdi" is one of the significant beliefs of the Muslim Ummah, which is typically classified by our traditional scholarship under the category of faith (Aqeedah). There is no disagreement that this belief is entirely based on hadith, some of which are authentic, while others are graded as good (hasan), weak (da'if), or even fabricated (mawdu). The Qur'an, however, remains silent on this subject and contains no direct references or indications. Nevertheless, irrespective of whether this belief should be included in matters of faith, the broad outlines of the concept do emerge from the relevant Ahadith. Hence, it would be neither entirely appropriate to reject the belief outright nor reasonable to insist that every detail is accurate and exhaustive.

Before delving into a discussion of this belief, two preliminary points must be kept in mind:

1. Evidence exists in reality, and it is through the combination of this evidence that we formulate theories. This principle holds true not only in the realms of the natural world and the self but also

in history and literature. Thus, it is entirely possible that the same body of evidence, when assembled one way, may lead to one theory, and when combined in another way, may lead to a different theory. It is important to understand that a theory is merely an interpretation of evidence, created by applying principles formulated by the theorist, and therefore, despite the validity of the evidence, the theory itself may still be subject to strengths, weaknesses, and the potential for error.

2. Muslims are not the first nation to be chosen by Allah. The Jews and Christians underwent a similar selection process before them. In fact, when the Muslim Ummah was established, this reminder was given right at the beginning so that the mistakes of previous nations could serve as lessons and prevent them from being repeated. Just as errors occurred in matters of faith and law among these earlier communities, similar mistakes also occurred in the realm of prophecies. By analyzing these, we can gain wisdom on how to understand prophecies and how to identify their fulfillment.

Therefore, we can observe that by combining different prophecies concerning Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them both), the previous communities created "dramatic" scenarios that neither matched reality nor ever will; they remain in anticipation of their fulfillment to this day. The case of Imam Mahdi in the Muslim is not vastly different from this.

Without going into too much detail, the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah regarding Imam Mahdi can be summarized as follows:

"In the end times (1), there will be a leader or caliph (2) among the Muslims (3). He will be from the family of the Prophet (pbuh) (4), and his name will be the same as that of the Prophet (peace be upon him) (5) (and his father's name will also be the same as the Prophet's father). He will fill the earth with justice and fairness just as it was filled with oppression and tyranny. His reign will last 7-9 years (7), during which time Islam will prevail (8), there will be economic prosperity, and he will be extremely generous. He will be the one to whom Jesus (peace be upon him) will defer to lead the prayer upon his descent (9)."

Although people might already be aware, it still seems beneficial to provide a reminder that this entire theory has not been derived from a single narration. Rather, it has been constructed by gathering partial information from multiple narrations. So, let us take a closer look at the individual components that, when combined, give shape to the theory of Mahdi, in order to better understand the discussion ahead.

1. Original Phrases: "Aakhiruz-Zaman" (the last era), "Aakhir Umati" (the last of my Ummah), "Lo lam yabq min ad-dahr / al-dunya illa yawm/laylatun" (if not more than a day/night remained of this world), "la tadhhab/tanqadi al-dunya" (the world will not end). In traditional understanding, these phrases, which appear in different narrations, are often interpreted in a very limited sense, meaning "in the final days" or "in the last part of the Ummah," leading to the conclusion that these pertain to the generations immediately preceding the Day of Judgment. This interpretation is incorrect. Whether it is the word "Aakhir" or the phrase "the world will not

end," they contain a broader meaning that has often been overlooked. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to the entire time from his own era until the Day of Judgment without specifying a particular period, he would use such phrases and expressions. This expansiveness is present in the word "Aakhir" as well as in the phrase "the world will not end." Therefore, the time implied could be any period after the Prophet (peace be upon him), not just the few generations before the world's end.

2. Original Phrases: "Ummah" and "Arab." Sometimes the term "Ummah" (nation) is used, and other times "Arab." This indicates the possibility that the ruler mentioned could be either the ruler of the entire Muslim Ummah or just of the Arab lands.

3. Original Phrases: "Amir," "Khalifah," "Malik," "Rajul," "Imam." These different terms are used to convey the idea of a political leader. Although the word "Imam" has religious connotations in our context, in Arabic, it is commonly used to mean simply a ruler or leader. Furthermore, the term "Imam" does not even appear in most of the relevant narrations, with other terms being used instead.

4. Original Phrases: "Minni," "min ahl bayti," "Min Itrati." These phrases mean "from me" or "from my family and lineage." Although some narrations contain just the term "Ahl al-Bayt" (the Prophet's household), other narrations express uncertainty about whether the phrase was "from me" or "from my household." Thus, the expression "from me" introduces a broader meaning that goes beyond the restriction of "Ahl al-Bayt."

5. Original Phrases: "His name will be after my name" and in some narrations, "and his father's name will be after my father's name." Although these two details appear together in some narrations, many narrations suffice with "his name will be after my name," and only in a few do we find the mention of the father's name. This is why I placed the second phrase in parentheses.

6. Original Phrases: The term "Al-Ard" is used, which means "the land" or "the earth." It is generally understood to refer to the entire planet, leading to the conclusion that Imam Mahdi will be a global ruler. However, in Arabic, this word is often contextually limited, so translating it as "the part of the land he rules over" is not only acceptable but more accurate and preferable.

7. Original Phrases: Some narrations mention "seven years," others "nine years," and still others mention "eight."

8. The dominance of Islam is mentioned in some narrations but not as frequently as other phrases. Moreover, in traditional scholarship, we find excessive elaboration on the extent of this dominance, much like the interpretation of "Al-Ard," which has a weak basis.

9. The Imam mentioned in the narrations about the conquest of Constantinople, the descent of Jesus (peace be upon him), and the Dajjal. Readers can see a deliberate full stop before this phrase, separating it from the earlier phrases. This is because this sign belongs to an entirely

different set of narrations that contain no mention of the signs listed in the previous narrations, and vice versa. What has happened is that early scholars combined these two different sets of information to formulate a single theory. In reality, these are so distinct that they should never have been merged into one.

The word "Mahdi" does not appear in most narrations. However, there is no reason to object to the central role that this word has come to play in the overall theory. This is because the leader referred to in the narrations was considered to be guided by Allah, which is signified by the word "Mahdi." There is no issue with this, but over time, the term "Mahdi" has gained an almost mystical significance in our culture, even though it was originally a common word used for the rightly-guided caliphs as well. The same kind of confusion that the term "Messiah" caused in the knowledge of the People of the Book has occurred with the term "Mahdi" in our tradition. The reality was likely simpler: when a ruler was to be described as righteous and obedient to the Sunnah, the term "Mahdi" was used, and that was all.

Note: The idea that "there is no Mahdi except for Jesus (peace be upon him)" is a weak narration. Similarly, the hadith about the twelve Imams is highly debated, which is why they have not been included in this summary.

Now that the moving parts of this theory have been clarified, and the possible different interpretations of these phrases have been explored, it should be easier to understand the components of the alternative theory of Mahdi presented below:

- 1.** The various scattered signs found in the narrations actually refer to at least two Mahdis or rulers, not just one. One is the one prophesied to be the ruler of the Arabs, who would be generous and fill the land with justice after it had been filled with oppression. The other is the one mentioned in the narrations regarding the conquest of Constantinople, the Dajjal, and Jesus (peace be upon him).
- 2.** The signs of the first type were mostly, if not entirely, fulfilled in the person of Abdullah ibn Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him). He was born to Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (may Allah be pleased with him) and Asmabint Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her), close companions of the Prophet (pbuh). He was given the Prophet's blessing at birth, did not pledge allegiance to Yazid, migrated from Medina to Mecca, was given allegiance at the Kaaba, faced armies from Syria sent to kill him, ruled as the leader of the Arabs for nine years, and his era saw prosperity. Thus, most of the major signs appear to have been fulfilled in him.
- 3.** The second conqueror of Constantinople was Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih, who captured the ancient capital of the Roman Empire in a historic battle, permanently ending any chance of its recovery and causing the remnants of the Roman Empire to crumble forever.
- 4.** The names of both of these figures are also noteworthy. One had the same name as the Prophet's father, and the other had the same name as the Prophet (pbuh) himself. Thus, if the

narrators confused the two, it would not be surprising to students of history. It is entirely possible that the Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to each of these individuals at different times, but the narrators, and later scholars, combined the two sets of signs into one person.

However, despite the fact that most of the signs were fulfilled, there are still signs that were not fulfilled, and these too require an explanation, which is as follows:

1. The sign of being from the Ahl al-Bayt or a descendant of Fatimah was not fulfilled in these figures. A possible reason for this has already been hinted at above—namely, that some narrations contain the phrases "minni" (from me) or "min ahl bayti" (from my household). It is possible that the narrators were confused between "from me" and "from my household," and the original meaning might have been "from me," while the "Ahl al-Bayt" version became more widespread later. As mentioned earlier, insisting on the fulfillment of one or two specific signs when the majority of the signs have been fulfilled is an incorrect approach, and we can see from the history of the People of the Book how this approach led to errors in their interpretation of prophetic figures.

2. The signs regarding the appearance of the Dajjal and the descent of Jesus (peace be upon him) did not occur during the reign of this leader. The reason for this is that these events have not been properly understood. A superficial reading of the relevant narrations gives the impression that this same leader—whom we have interpreted as Muhammad al-Fatih—would supposedly confront the Dajjal and, at the same time, be honored by the descent of Jesus (peace be upon him). However, this interpretation is incorrect. Since this point relates to the identification of the Dajjal and Jesus (peace be upon him), which is a complex matter in itself and requires a detailed separate discussion, we are compelled to postpone the discussion of this point until the next part. Other than this point, however, the discussion on the remaining signs is complete 1 .

In summary, the narrations related to the appearance of Mahdi actually pertain to two different rulers, not just one. The first set of narrations refers to Abdullah ibn Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him), while the second set refers to Muhammad al-Fatih. Therefore, both events have already occurred, and for the Muslim community to continue awaiting them is merely a repetition of the same old mistake made by the People of the Book in identifying the figures of Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them both).



REFERENCE:

[1] Further discussions on this and other signs of the Day of Judgment are ongoing on the author's YouTube channel, and related articles are also being published on Patreon. Those seeking more details can refer to those platforms to explore the discussions.



THE QURAN AND TRADITIONAL SUFISM

Muhammad Zakwan Nadvi

[This column, Naqd-o-Nazar, is dedicated to the writings of various thinkers. The publication of articles here does not necessarily reflect the views of the institution.]

Shah Muhammad Yaqub Mujaddidi (d. 1970) was a renowned spiritual leader and mentor from Bhopal. Many prominent scholars of his time were associated with him, including Maulana Abdul Shakoor Lakhnavi (d. 1962), Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Nomani (d. 1997), Maulana Imran Khan Nadvi Azhari (d. 1986), and Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi (d. 1999).

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi has compiled the teachings of Sheikh Mujaddidi in a book titled *Suhbat-e-Ba-Ahl-e-Dil*. In this book, Maulana writes that, upon asking, Sheikh Mujaddidi said:

"In my youth, when I was in Hyderabad, Sufi books were read and taught in the gatherings of the mashaykh. In particular, *Futuh al-Makkiyah* and *Fusus al-Hikam* were frequently discussed, and *Mathnavi* of Maulana Rumi was recited day and night. The ideas of *Wahdat al-Wujud* (unity of existence) were explained in depth, and intricate discussions on this subject took place. However, my eyes were always searching for the explanation of the Qur'an and the teachings of

Hadith, and my ears were eager to hear them. I longed for at least one verse of the Qur'an to be explained or one Hadith to be interpreted, but these gatherings had no such content. There was no lack of enthusiasm, spiritual states, chants, or ecstasies, but the straightforward teaching of the Qur'an and Hadith was absent. The reason is that the Qur'an breaks down the concept of hierarchical spiritual leadership (Pir-Muridi) and brings everyone down to the level of servitude and humanity. It eliminates all distinctions and privileges. As a result, when a Bedouin from the desert entered the Prophet's gathering, he had to ask, 'Who among you is the Messenger of God?' because there were no outward marks of spiritual distinction in the Prophetic assembly." (p. 48)

In another gathering, he said:

"The Qur'an denies buzurgi (elevation of ranks based on spirituality) and spiritual leadership. It proves that everyone is a servant and dependent on God. It clearly declares: 'O mankind, you are the ones in need of Allah, while Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy' (Surah Fatir 35:15). This is why, instead of the Qur'an, books of Sufism are read and taught in the (khanqahs). In these, people are given titles like Qudwat al-Salikeen (Leader of the Seekers) or Zubdat al-Arifeen (Essence of the Gnostics), and disciples hold their mentors' feet as a sign of submission. When poetry is recited, the whole gathering is swayed, but no one experiences ecstasy upon hearing the Qur'an." (p. 152)

The institution of the khanqah (Sufi lodge), in its original essence, was established as a place of spiritual training, with the murshid (spiritual guide) serving as a mentor. The need, importance, and respect for a true mentor, guide, and teacher are absolutely unquestionable. However, just as every institution has undergone decline, the institution of the khanqah is no exception. Nowadays, it is generally either caretakers or grave-diggers who remain in these places. Shah Mujaddidi's aforementioned remarks critique precisely this type of mystical mashaykh (spiritual leadership).

This undesirable form of institutionalized, monastic-like mysticism is undoubtedly foreign to Islam. It not only alienates its followers from the true religion of Allah (the Qur'an and Sunnah), but it has also led them into a self-invented notion of religiosity, where they are distanced from the spirit of faith and practice, drifting instead towards a path of indulgence in mystical experiences devoid of true substance.





PAKISTAN: A NATIONAL STATE OR A RELIGIOUS STATE?

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Position

Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's position regarding the state of Pakistan is that it is neither a religious state in the way Allah established through His Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Arabian Peninsula—where non-Muslims were not granted citizenship—nor is it a conquered state in which the religion of the ruler or monarch becomes the state's official religion. Pakistan is, instead, a modern national state, formed based on international treaties. In such states, nationality is determined not by race, ethnicity, or religion, but by the country itself. For instance, Muslims living in India are referred to as Indians and enjoy equal citizenship rights as Hindus, while Hindus living in Pakistan are called Pakistanis and are considered first-class citizens, just like their Muslim counterparts. Being Indian does not affect one's identity as a Muslim, just as being Pakistani does not affect one's identity as a Hindu.

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, this is the reality that the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, expressed in his address to the first Constituent Assembly:

"We should keep this as our guiding principle, and you will see that over time, Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is a personal matter of belief, but in the political sense, as citizens of the state." (Quaid-e-Azam: Speeches and Statements, 4/359)

This clarification shows that, according to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, Islamic identity and Pakistani identity are neither contradictory nor mutually dependent. Just as a Muslim can be Arab, American, Iranian, or Afghan while still being Muslim, they can also be Pakistani. However, being Pakistani does not mean that one must necessarily be a Muslim. Pakistani Muslims were Muslims both before and after the partition of India, but in national terms, they were Indian before and became Pakistani afterward. Therefore, it would be incorrect to assume, based on Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's stance, that he rejects the "Two-Nation Theory" in the context of the Pakistan movement. He fully acknowledges the legitimacy of the demand for a separate nation based on religious identity. However, he views it as a purely political demand, having no direct connection to religion or Shariah. He argues that this is why neither the founder of Pakistan presented it as a religious requirement, nor did the Muslim scholars of the Congress deem it to be against the Shariah. He writes:

"... If Muslims, during the Pakistan Movement, insisted that they were a separate nation from the Hindus and, based on this, demanded a separate country in India, there was nothing wrong with this. Likewise, the day after Pakistan was formed, when they declared themselves as part of the Pakistani nation, there was no objection from a religious or Shariah perspective either. From a political standpoint, one might argue whether Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's stance was correct or Quaid-e-Azam's, and we may agree or disagree with either. However, from a religious perspective, there is no criticism of either position. Hence, Quaid-e-Azam never objected to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's stance in this regard." (Muqamat, p. 223)

This is Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's stance regarding the state of Pakistan and its national citizenship—that it should not possess a religious identity. However, as far as governance is concerned, if the government is elected by Muslims, it not only reflects an Islamic identity but is also obligated to adhere to all the commands that the Shariah has made obligatory for it. In other words, the system of governance must be based on the principle of "Amruhum Shura Baynahum" (their affairs are decided by mutual consultation). The government must demand prayer from its Muslim citizens, organize the Friday and Eid prayers, establish a system of Zakat, and be responsible for enjoining good and forbidding evil (amrbil ma'roof wanahianil munkar). It must also set up institutions to carry out this responsibility, implement the Islamic hudood (prescribed punishments) and ta'zirat (discretionary punishments) on its Muslim citizens, and use its resources to propagate Islam globally. If any power attempts to obstruct this propagation, the state must remove this obstruction to the extent of its capability, even if it requires jihad or combat.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has explicitly stated these points regarding religion and Shariah in his counter-narrative, and he has also emphasized the warning from Surah Al-Ma'idah regarding rulers who fail to implement these Shariah commands. He writes:

"These are the Shariah commands related to collective governance, and they have been given with the warning that those who believe in God's book and do not rule by the law revealed by God will be declared as oppressors, sinners, and disbelievers on the Day of Judgment."
(Muqamat, p. 208)





VALLEY OF KASHMIR

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

ایہاں رنگ بہاراں ہے جوانوں کا لہو
سرخ روہیں وادی کشمیر میں کوہ و دمن
سر برہنہ بیٹیوں کے پیرہن بکھرے ہوئے
مرثیہ خواں ہر درو دیوار پر مرغ چمن

Now the hues of spring are painted with youth's blood anew,
In the valley of Kashmir, mountains blush a crimson hue.
Tattered garments of bare-headed daughters lie astray,
Lamenting birds sing elegies on every door and way.

موسم گل زرد پتوں کی ردا پہنے ہوئے
ڈھونڈتا ہے دختر گل مرگ کا عہد شباب
آبجوؤں کا ترنم نوحہ غم کی صدا
سر قلندہ وادیوں میں آبشاروں کے رباب

The season of flowers wears a shroud of yellow leaves,
The daughter of the bloom seeks death's embrace and grieves.
Streams murmur laments, their tunes of sorrow rise,
Waterfalls bow their heads, their harps weep through the skies.

چھوڑ جاتی ہے ادھر بھی وادی نیلم کی رات
ہر طرف بارود گولوں کی تباہی کے نشاں
ہند کے اربابِ دانش اب بھی سنتے ہوں اگر
آگ میں جھلسے ہوئے معصوم بچوں کی فغاں

The night of Neelum Valley leaves its trace on this land,
Everywhere are signs of shells and destruction so grand.
O wise men of India, can you still hear the cries,
Of innocent children scorched by the flames that rise?

پوچھیے اُن سے کہ جمہوری سیاست ہے یہی!
عہدِ حاضر میں بھی آزادی کی قیمت ہے یہی!

Ask them, is this what democracy means today?
Even now, does freedom bear such a price to pay?

~ (Khial o Khama)



THE MUBARAK SANI CASE: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DEOBANDI LEADERSHIP

Ammar Khan Nasir

In February, when the Supreme Court delivered its verdict on the Mubarak Sani case, it felt like a bombshell for the religious community. The reason was that the religious circles had never truly attempted to understand the state and judicial perspectives on the legislation concerning Ahmadis. Despite repeated clarifications from the judiciary, the religious groups continued to pursue their own interpretations. In this case, the principle of religious freedom in private domains appeared to be applied to a new issue, namely the publication and distribution of religious literature by the Ahmadi community. However, this principle had been well-established in the legal and judicial framework from the beginning. For religious groups in general, and particularly for the religious leadership, this situation felt like an unforeseen disaster. The immediate response from the religious and political leadership was aggressive and based on ignorance of the case's details.

In this context, the religious circles had no immediate option but to resort to protests, condemnations, and accusations of conspiracies to salvage their public image. In March, after a

request for a review of the case was filed, certain leaders, particularly from the Majlis Tahaffuz Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (International Council for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood), like Maulana Allah Wasaya, launched a negative propaganda campaign against the Chief Justice and his secretary, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad. They employed the familiar and tested strategy of issuing fatwas to pressure the judiciary. However, this strategy failed, and by the end of July, the reviewed decision, even more detailed and clearer than before, ruled against the traditional religious stance.

At this stage, various Deobandi organizations escalated their personal attacks and issued more severe fatwas. Some Deobandi leaders went as far as to declare that the Chief Justice was no longer eligible for the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as though these individuals had been assigned the role of screening candidates for the Prophet's intercession—God forbid. The situation worsened when Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and its allied elements joined the fray, issuing fatwas of apostasy and calling for the Chief Justice's assassination, attempting to steer the matter in the same direction as the Salman Taseer and Aasia Bibi cases.

Amid this turmoil, the senior Deobandi leadership faced three major challenges that required simultaneous attention:

1. Representing the religious viewpoint before the judiciary,
2. Navigating a path of dialogue with state institutions amidst the hostile environment created by the factions within their ranks, and
3. Preventing the situation from being hijacked by extremist groups like Tehreek-e-Labbaik.

The Deobandi leadership gradually took charge of representing the religious perspective on a national level, presenting a more balanced stance and appropriately reprimanding irresponsible elements for their personal attacks and abusive language. In this regard, my father, Maulana Zahid al-Rashidi, published an important article on June 29 in Roznama Islam titled "Non-Muslim Citizens of the Islamic State of Medina," in which he drew upon the Prophet's life to emphasize different aspects of prudence and wisdom. He conveyed the message that religious leadership and state institutions should seek a resolution to this crisis through mutual consultation, keeping these considerations in mind. During this discussion, my father also shared the following statement on social media titled "A Bitter Experience and Observation":

"During the 1974 Khatm-e-Nabuwwat movement, when I was the General Secretary of the Gojranwala All-Party Council for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood, a senior religious leader and I went to the Assistant Commissioner of Gojranwala to request permission for a Khatm-e-Nabuwwat rally in a nearby town. When the Assistant Commissioner hesitated, my companion immediately asked, 'You're not an Ahmadi, are you?' The AC responded, 'Respected sir, don't insult me like that; I'll grant the permission.' After we left the office, I said to my companion, 'What did you just do?' He replied, 'Without that, we wouldn't have gotten permission.' At the time, I considered it an individual disposition and overlooked it. But after half a century of continuous experience and observation, I've come to realize that in certain circles, this approach may even be systematically trained. Consequently, this "art" has now grown into a widespread problem for the entire nation. May Allah have mercy on us all."

Following the Supreme Court ruling, various scholars from different schools of thought presented their detailed stance, led by Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani and Mufti Muneeb ur Rehman, which encompassed both legal and religious arguments. In their concluding remarks, they also urged emotional and irresponsible individuals:

"We humbly request the scholars and orators to engage with dignity, decorum, and Islamic ethics when discussing the court's decision. Insulting and abusive language tarnishes the image of religious figures and harms our greatest cause."

These actions fostered an environment conducive to meaningful dialogue with state institutions, resulting in a key outcome: during the August 22 hearing, where the federal government sought clarification on the Supreme Court's decision, Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and Mufti Taqi Usmani played a prominent role. Without any inappropriate behavior or harsh language, the Deobandi leadership successfully persuaded the court in favor of their viewpoint, and the court announced the removal of the controversial paragraphs from the earlier ruling in a brief order.

After the decision, many legal experts raised concerns about the ruling, which may be technically valid. However, the matter also has a political dimension. From a political standpoint, it appears that state institutions and the Deobandi leadership have managed the situation with wisdom and maturity, preventing it from escalating into a major crisis. It can be said that the Deobandi leadership successfully navigated the three challenges it faced in this case.

As for the legal implications of the ruling, since the specific paragraphs removed from the previous decisions have not been identified in the brief order, it is premature to comment on them. The specific paragraphs mentioned on some news channels have not been explicitly stated in the order and may simply be speculation, though possibly accurate. However, the real situation will only become clear when the detailed judgment is issued. Only then will it be possible to assess how the removal of those paragraphs affects the overall interpretation of the law and whether it differs from or aligns with the judiciary's previous interpretations. Nevertheless, it can be said that if the responsible religious scholars present in court were consulted in making the decision, the major objection from religious circles—that some paragraphs seemed to permit Ahmadis to proselytize to Muslims in their private homes—will likely be addressed, as this is clearly against the law.

At this stage, it seems appropriate to draw the attention of the senior Deobandi leadership to some important considerations.

in my 2019 article, I highlighted one particular strength and capability of the Deobandi leadership in the following words:

"For any group to play a leadership role in society, it must possess certain intellectual and practical qualities. One of the most important of these is the ability to maintain a relationship with other groups, despite differences, and to recognize and accept common grounds for mutual interaction. This characteristic is perhaps most evident in the Deobandi disposition, as demonstrated by several examples, and is a key reason for the distinction they have achieved in the field of religious thought and practice." (Monthly Al-Shariah, January 2019)

In light of the recent Mubarak Sani case, it is pertinent to refer to a brief but important letter written by Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi (may Allah have mercy on him) to Maulana Sami-ul-Haq (may Allah have mercy on him) in response to his query. This letter was published in the special edition of the magazine Al-Haq. Maulana Hazarvi offered three fundamental pieces of advice to the religious circles regarding the Ahmadi issue:

1. The constitutional decision taken (in 1974) is sufficient. This meant that there was no need to burden the state with unnecessary demands regarding this matter.
2. Refrain from targeting state officials with religious accusations, curses, and fatwas.
3. Do not turn this issue into a matter of personal prestige, meaning that it should not be used as a tool to strengthen political or religious influence.

The text of the letter is as follows:

"Dear brother Maulana Sami-ul-Haq,
Assalam u alaikum wa Rahmat ullah wa Barakatuh,

I received your esteemed letter. Allah Almighty has dealt with the Qadiani issue. Now, their status is like other disbelievers—such as Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, and Hindus. Issues like marriage have been resolved, and they cannot become members of our parliament, among other matters. We should hope that the remaining issues will also be resolved. I am strongly opposed to the rhetoric of some self-interested individuals who claim that the government has become pro-Qadiani or is delaying action. My dear brother, what has been done is sufficient. As for the rest, I believe that the Qadiani issue has ended. We cannot turn this issue into a matter of personal prestige. We will act according to the needs of the religion as they arise. May Allah give us the strength to do so.

May Allah grant us the ability (to do good).
(18th October 1974)"

These three pieces of advice were timely and crucial, yet unfortunately, religious circles largely ignored them. The situation deteriorated because the senior religious leadership's attention was not consistently focused on the issue, allowing lower-level organizational structures to become increasingly autonomous in determining their strategies and objectives.

Throughout various stages of the Mubarak Sani case, I consistently tried to draw the attention of the responsible religious leadership to this aspect. For instance, on April 25, I wrote on social media:

"The issues of Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (Finality of Prophethood) and blasphemy have, in essence, slipped out of the hands of senior and responsible scholars and have fallen into the hands of organizational adventurers. For quite some time now, different factions have been attempting legal or judicial 'achievements' on their own to gain applause, forcing responsible forums or personalities to stand by them.

Last year, when an attempt was made to prevent Ahmadis from keeping copies of the Quran in their homes, the Supreme Court ruled against it—this was a similar case. The current case, which sought to criminalize the distribution of Tafseer-e-Sagheer, follows the same pattern. I can say with responsibility that none of the elders or scholars who are now criticizing the court ruling were familiar with this case or its details beforehand. ... I appeal to the responsible leadership to take control of such matters and establish a consultation forum, so the entire religious community does not have to repeatedly face embarrassment due to the rash actions of a few individuals."

Before the revised Supreme Court decision was issued, on June 1, I posted another message on social media, saying:

"Courts often take political situations into account. Therefore, we believe that the religious groups should be offered some face-saving options to prevent them from getting caught up in a win-or-lose battle and instead give them a chance to pause and reflect on the entire situation. There are certainly elements within the religious groups who understand the situation correctly, but in an atmosphere of emotional tension and confrontation, it becomes difficult for them to play any role. I believe that the senior Deobandi leadership, in the event of some easing of this crisis, could play a role in determining the future strategies of the semi-autonomous lower-level organizations and impose certain restrictions. If the leadership realizes the seriousness and delicacy of the situation, it is hoped that positive pathways will emerge from this crisis. InshaAllah."

In light of the recent experience with the Mubarak Sani case, we believe that the senior religious leadership must now seriously address this aspect and take appropriate measures to prevent further escalation of such issues in the future.

The behavior and discourse of religious groups must reflect an understanding of the reality that, while all Muslims agree on the belief in the Finality of Prophethood (Khatm-e-Nabuwwat), there is clear disagreement on how to politically and legally deal with those who deny it. Religious scholars or organizations cannot monopolize this issue and impose their perspective on the state and society. In this matter, the state is also a stakeholder, as are the religious scholars as "one" stakeholder, other segments of society, and the Ahmadi community itself, which is a stakeholder as citizens and a minority group in the country. For a balanced and workable resolution of this dispute, the perspectives of all these parties must be given due importance.

In this regard, we must always remember the lesson of our national history and politics, particularly since the 1980s, that promoting various forms of political or religious radicalization and using this process to maintain power has been a tried-and-tested method of our establishment. In the religious sphere, Sunni, Shia, Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, and Jamaat-e-Islami groups have all, in one way or another, been through this process, and the possibilities are not yet exhausted. The price of this process is borne by society, and in some cases, even the establishment becomes affected, but the situation remains beneficial for them as long as a group can be used for their objectives. When that group begins to overstep its bounds, the establishment reappears as the savior to protect the state.

The price that religion must pay, as a civilizational force—and this price has already begun to be paid—is that, at the societal level, religion faces alienation or atheism, and at the state level, secularization increases. When religion becomes an active, angry force, it loses its appeal to thoughtful and constructive minds. When one religious group after another becomes radicalized and insists on imposing its will on the state and society, the state’s tolerance will eventually reach its limit, and secularization will gain strength.

(With thanks to: www.madrasadiscourses.org)



HAYAT-E-AMIN VIII

Naeem Ahmad Baloch

After the demise of Imam Hamid al-Din Farahi, the responsibility of the Madrasah was entrusted to his younger brother, Haji Rashid al-Din. On December 14, 1930, this responsibility was handed over to him as an honorary position.

Acquisition of Education in Hadith

After the demise of his beloved teacher, while maintaining the affiliation with Madrasah Al-Islah, Amin Ahsan decided to pursue education of Hadith literature after completing the study of the Quran. Generally, it is believed that his initial motivation for this move was the command of his father. However, the truth is that Maulana had already decided to seek knowledge of Hadith from a reputable scholar after completing the Quran. So, he sought advice from his respected father and proceeded accordingly. He took discipleship of Maulana Muhammad Abdul Rahman ibn Abdul Rahim Mubarakpuri, the commentator of Jam' al-Tirmidhi. (Reference: Mabadi Tadabbur-e-Hadith)

Maulana Abdul Rahman Mubarakpuri excelled in the field of Hadith literature during his time. He was a student of Muhammad Nazir Hussain Dehlvi, a prominent Hadith scholar from Delhi. His chain of narration reached Shah Waliullah through Maulana Is'haq Dehlvi and Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlvi. Eventually, Abu Tahir Muhammad ibn Ibrahim had granted permission to Shah WaliUllah in Mecca to narrate Hadith using his chain of narration.

When the respected scholar of Hadith, Maulana Mubarakpuri, learned that a young man, a graduate from Madrasa hal-Islah, desired to be his student, he graciously granted him permission to narrate the chain of Hadith after teaching him just one hadith. However, Islahi requested that he had not come to receive permission; he wanted to study Hadith in detail, lesson by lesson. Maulana Islahi explains that he requested, "Since you specialize in Jamiat-Tirmidhi, please teach from it." Consequently, Maulana Mubarak puri taught the entire Jami at-Tirmidhi and also taught the explanation of Nukhbat al-Fikr in the principles of Hadith. Additionally, he imparted the skill of investigating the narrators.

It should be noted that Nukhbat al-Fikr is a book written by Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani on the science of Hadith, which is considered a classic in the field. And 'rijal' refers to the narrators from whom the Hadiths were transmitted.

Upon the completion of studies in the science of Hadith, MaulanaMubarakpuri awarded a copy of Jami` at-Tirmidhi, signed by himself, as a certificate to the young Amin Ahsan Islahi.

Maulana explains that after this studentship, a passion arose within him to write a commentary on one of the Sahihayn (Sahih Bukhari or Sahih Muslim) in the light of all the Sahih books, which would pave the way for learners to confidently reflect on and research Hadith narratives. It was this determination and passion that led him to teach the complete Muwatta Imam Malik and selected parts of Sahih Bukhari in the later part of his life, after having written Tadabbur-e-Quran. This will be discussed in detail at the appropriate place later.

A teacher who changed lives

Maulana Islahi, during his tenure as the principal of Madrasahal-Islah, marked what is considered the golden era of the Madrasah. Among the students who acquired knowledge from this institution during this period was the distinguished religious scholar and author, Maulana Wahidud din Khan. He acknowledges that the education he received at the Madrasah played a fundamental role in changing his life. He has mentioned several of his teachers. Here, we recount some memories related to Maulana Amin Ahsan.

He says that Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi was his teacher for Tafsir (Quranic exegesis) and was also the principal of the Madrasah. One day, during a Quran lesson, they were discussing Verse 17 of Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88), "Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?" During the discussion, he asked the students whether the camel's hoofs are split or fused - are they like those of cows or like those of horses?

MaulanaWahiduddin Khan says that at the time, there were twenty students in the class, but no one knew whether camels' hoofs were split or not. Everyone was answering based on his whims without being certain of his answer.

Afterwards, the respected teacher made a speech. He said, "Your answers indicate that you do not know about the nature of camel's hoofs." Then he quoted an Arabic saying, "La adrin isf al-

'ilm" (Not knowing is half of knowledge). Explaining this, he stated: If you were aware of your ignorance about the camel's hoofs, you would have half the knowledge because this realization would spur a desire to complete your knowledge about how their hoofs are formed.

Maulana Wahidud din Khan says that this incident at the Madrasah was so impactful that it became a general disposition for him to recognize his ignorance in all matters so that he could convert it into knowledge. This passion for scholarly pursuit was instilled in him from the beginning at the Madrasah, and later, he read some books by Western scholars on the subject, such as 'Spirit of Inquiry.' From this recount, it becomes apparent that the very spirit of curiosity is the foundation of all scholarly advancements. A famous example is that thousands of people had seen an apple fall from a tree, but they were not aware of their ignorance in this matter. Therefore, they remained unaware of its reality. Newton was the first person who acknowledged his conscious ignorance in this matter, and as a result, he moved from not knowing to knowing. Maulana Wahidud din writes in his autobiography "Ayyam e Zindagi(Days of Life)" that this was an extremely important lesson he received from his life in the Madrasah (p. 194).

In the book, he goes on to explain: I am entirely a product of the Madrasah. If someone considers me a successful person, they should know that my success is entirely due to the Madrasah. Here, I received the consciousness and values that guided me at every step in the struggle of life. (Al-Risalah, September 2000, pages 60-61)

At another place, he writes:

When I was studying in the Madrasah, the supervision of congregational prayers was carried out by a senior teacher of the Madrasah, the late Maulana Akhtar Ahsan Islahi. He would come to the hostel immediately after the Fajr call to prayer and wake up the students. It was during my youth. I used to have difficulty waking up. Hence, the late Maulana used to say about me: 'He sleeps very deeply.'

I remember that one day, worshippers stood in rows in the spacious and open courtyard of the mosque. It was probably the Isha prayer. Suddenly, a snake entered the mosque. It was passing through the rows from behind, where shoes were kept. Although the snake wasn't very large, a snake is a snake. But I saw that the entire congregation didn't panic. People stood firmly in their places, and the snake passed through the midst of the people and went out.

In this incident, it seemed to me as if I experienced an observational experiment that how prayer instills discipline within a person." (Awraq-e-Hayat, 194)

Describing how he developed this quality, he writes:

Once, after prayers, the head teacher, late Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi stood up to speak in the mosque. He said that the prayer teaches mankind to act collectively. This is not only limited to the mosque, but people are also supposed to live their life outside the mosque with the same order and unity. He was an excellent speaker. While speaking, he quoted a few nouns constructed on the verb form tafā'ul (Form 3), a form which gives the sense of participation

by more than one person in the act. For example, the terms taking this form include: tawāfuq (mutual harmony), tashāruk (sharing), ta'āmul(interaction), etc. Then like a rhetorician, Islahi said: Repeat all the derivatives of the verb form Tafa'ul.

Those familiar with my temperament know that I possess a considerable degree of organization and discipline within me. Discipline has become inherent to my nature. This temperament of mine is largely the result of the continuous training I received during my time at the madrasah (Awraq-e-Hayat, 199).

To be continued...





THE IMPORTANCE OF NAZM-E-QURAN IN UNDERSTANDING THE COMMANDMENTS OF HIJAB (1)

Syed Muhammad Rizwan Ali

In Surah Al-Ahzab (33), the commandments regarding hijab are addressed to the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) (may Allah be pleased with them). Additionally, general guidelines are given to all women in times of potential fitnah (mischief or temptation), advising them to take special precautions. Ignoring the context of the Surah or viewing these commandments as scattered instructions has led to irrelevant interpretations. However, when these commandments are understood within the framework of the Surah's overall theme, as part of a coherent discourse, their meaning becomes clear, and the wisdom behind the commandments is revealed. This article attempts to clarify the relationship between the commandments of hijab and the Quranic structure (*Nazm-e-Quran*), demonstrating the significance of the latter in interpreting the Quran. To this end, the perspectives of Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi are presented.

Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi's Opinion

Maulana Maududi and some other scholars consider the commandments of hijab to be universally applicable to all Muslim women. According to them, the reason for addressing the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) (may Allah be pleased with them) was that if this pure way of life started in the household of the Prophet (pbuh), then other Muslim households would naturally follow¹. Based on this, they argue that a woman's primary sphere of activity is her home, and

she should fulfill her duties within this sphere². Furthermore, under the verse of Jilbab (verse 59), they deduce that covering the face is an eternal obligation³. In our humble view, this interpretation of the hijab commandments overlooks the overall theme of the Surah and treats the commandments as isolated instructions.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Opinion

In contrast, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and the some other scholars as well view these commandments as special instructions given in a specific context of fitnah, intended only for the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) (may Allah be pleased with them) and having no direct relevance to the general Muslim women⁴. Additionally, according to them, the purpose of the verse of Jilbab (verse 59) is not to make face-covering obligatory for women but rather to provide a temporary measure of identification during times of fitnah, aimed at protecting women from the mischief of hypocrites⁵. According to them, the general etiquettes for the interaction between men and women are outlined in Surah An-Nur (24:27-31), which are unrelated to the special commandments mentioned in Surah Al-Ahzab⁶.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, in his discussion on the topic of hijab, has argued that when the theme and content of Surah Al-Ahzab are taken into account, there is no room for extending these specific commandments to all women⁷. In this way, he has used the clear evidence of the Quranic structure to support the majority opinion of scholars. Below, the details of his perspective are presented.

The Theme and Content of Surah Al-Ahzab

Reflecting on Surah Al-Ahzab, it becomes evident that this Surah addresses the situation of fitnah (mischief or temptation) created by the hypocrites against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Muslims. The hypocrites had targeted the homes of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims to damage their moral standing in society. They made every possible attempt at conspiracy to achieve this evil goal. They were the ones who accused Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) of adultery, as detailed in Surah An-Nur⁸. Furthermore, they turned the Prophet's marriage to Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her) into a matter of severe propaganda⁹. This propaganda was so intense that even some of our books of tafsir (exegesis) were not spared, and false and fabricated stories were recorded in them¹⁰.

In addition, to damage the moral standing of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims, the hypocrites targeted his wives, daughters, and female companions, hoping to create a scandal. If such a false scandal had been created, it would have severely damaged the Prophet's reputation and caused irreparable harm to the religion. This is the situation that Surah Al-Ahzab addresses, and it is in this context that the commandments being discussed here were given.

The Context of the Hijab Commandments

The discussion on the hijab commandments begins in verse 28 of Surah Al-Ahzab. This verse is

also known as "Ayat Takhyir" (The Verse of Choice) because it offered the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) (may Allah be pleased with them) a choice between the world and its adornments or Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter. If they chose separation, the Prophet (pbuh) would have parted with them gracefully. However, if they chose to remain with the Prophet (pbuh), the laws of reward and punishment would apply to them based on their special status. The Quran states:

أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْن أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأَسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا. وَإِن كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا. إِن نِّسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَعَّفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا. وَمَن يَّقْنُتْ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِيهَا أَجْرًا مَّرْتِينٍ وَاعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا. (الاحزاب 33:31-33)

"O Prophet (pbuh), say to your wives: 'If you desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and release you with a gracious release. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter, then indeed, Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward. O wives of the Prophet (pbuh), whoever among you commits a clear immorality will have her punishment doubled, and that is easy for Allah. But whoever devoutly obeys Allah and His Messenger and does righteousness, We will give her reward twice; and We have prepared for her a noble provision¹¹.'" (Al-Ahzab 33:28-31)

From the gradual development of the Surah's content, it becomes clear that these verses were meant to address the situation of fitnah. The hypocrites sought to ensnare the Prophet's (pbuh) wives in their plots, making them believe that, despite belonging to noble households, they were enduring difficult circumstances with the Prophet (pbuh). They suggested that if the wives wished, they could marry into high-ranking families. In this atmosphere, the purpose of granting the Prophet's wives the choice to separate was to end this fitnah. It was expected that the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) would choose to remain with him, thereby causing this fitnah to die out on its own. This is exactly what happened, as all the wives chose to stay with the Prophet¹²(pbuh).

Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, summarizing these verses, writes¹³:

"In these verses, there is no reprimand against the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) for any crime of materialism, as some have misunderstood. Rather, they were given a certificate of freedom by Allah and His Messenger to display their high moral character so that the hypocrites, who harbored vain hopes of ensnaring the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) with worldly desires, would be disheartened forever. After the declaration of choice, it was as if everyone was given a chance to test their hopes, but it became clear that the selection of the Prophet's household was made by Allah Himself, and there was no room for intrusion into this sacred household." (Tadabbur-e-Quran 6/207-208)

The preceding verses make it clear that by choosing to stay with the Prophet (peace be upon him), the wives no longer remained ordinary women. Therefore, special commandments were given to them in consideration of their status and to protect them from the hypocrites' plots. The Quran says:

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet's (pbuh) wives were given the choice in the "Ayat Takhyir" to separate from the Prophet (pbuh) and live like ordinary women if they wished. This was essential from a standpoint of fairness, as their status as the Prophet's (pbuh) wives imposed certain restrictions on them, which made their lives very different from those of ordinary women. Therefore, it was necessary that if they chose to remain with the Prophet (pbuh), they did so willingly. Otherwise, they could have parted ways gracefully. However, when they chose to stay with the Prophet (pbuh), it was made clear that their status would no longer be like that of ordinary women, and the laws of reward and punishment for them would be in accordance with their unique status.

After clarifying these facts, the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) (may Allah be pleased with them) were given the above-mentioned instructions, which required them to cease all external activities, stay within their homes, engage in worship, and make the propagation of Allah's religion their life's purpose. It was made clear to them that, as the Prophet's wives, they now had to stay in their homes and counter the hypocrites' plots by focusing solely on the responsibilities of preaching and propagating Islam, so that no moral blemish could be associated with them by the hypocrites.

The instruction for the Prophet's wives to remain at home had the specific intent that, unlike ordinary women who would still have to go out and attend to their affairs according to the norms of the time, it was better for the Prophet's (pbuh) wives, considering their status and the prevailing conditions, to remain permanently in their homes.

In explaining the verse "وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ" (And remain in your homes), Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes:

"This directive is also in view of the status and responsibilities that the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) held. They should not go out displaying their adornments, like the wives of prominent men during the age of ignorance. In the circumstances they were facing, it was better to avoid going out altogether, because the hypocrites were constantly attempting to create a scandal involving them. This instruction has no connection to ordinary women. According to their circumstances and needs, they could go wherever they wished during that time, and they can do so even now. Displaying adornments in front of strangers is forbidden for them too, however, as Allah has given this command separately in Surah An-Nur, what is further clarified here is that displaying adornments in front of strangers is a practice of ignorance and has no place in Islamic culture."

(Al-Bayan 4/131-132) To be continued.....

REFERENCES:

- [1]. Tafheem ul Quran 4/88
- [2]. Tafheem ul Quran 4/90
- [3]. Tafheem ul Quran 4/129
- [4]. Al-Bayan 4:31-160, 132
- [5]. Al-Bayan 4/163
- [6]. Meezan 464-465
- [7]. 23 Objections Series: Hijab
- [8]. Al-Noor 24:11-26
- [9]. Al-Ahzab 33-37
- [10]. Zia ul Quran 4/59-64
- [11]. In this article, all the translations of the Qur'anic verses have been taken from Ustadh Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's translation of the Qur'an, "Al-Bayan."
- [12]. Tafseer al-Quran al-Azeem Ibn Kathir 3/628
- [13]. Maulana Islahi has critically examined the narrations related to the asbab al-nuzul (occasions of revelation) concerning this chapter. He writes:

Our commentators have mentioned that the background of these verses is that after the conquest of Khaybar, when Muslims experienced some degree of financial ease, the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) also requested that they too be given the opportunity to enjoy the comforts and adornments of life. It is said that these verses were revealed in admonishment of this request. In our view, this interpretation is weak for several reasons. First, the context and circumstances suggest that the events being referred to here pertain to the fourth or fifth year of Hijrah, specifically related to the Battle of the Trench and the situation involving Banu Qurayzah. Further ahead, there is an allusion to the incident involving Hazrat Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) and Hazrat Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her), all of which occurred in 5 AH. Khaybar had not yet been conquered. Even the commentators themselves have clarified under verse 27, particularly the phrase 'waardan lam tata'uha' (and land which you have not yet trodden), that this is a pre-announcement of the conquest of Khaybar.

Second, if the request was merely for a modest increase in sustenance, this would hardly be a matter warranting such a stern notice, wherein they are told they could be given wealth and then dismissed forever. Such a request hardly deserves reprimand, and even if it did, the most it warranted was advice that, if they wished to remain in the company of the Prophet (pbuh), they must embrace a life of patience and simplicity.

Third, it is difficult to entertain the notion that the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them) could, at any point, become so enamored with worldly comforts and adornments that they would make such demands, to the extent that Allah Himself had to intervene and issue such a stern notice, as mentioned in these verses. Therefore, in our opinion, this occasion of revelation is not worthy of attention. Neither the words of the verse support it, nor do the historical circumstances.

(Tadabbur-e-Quran, 6/205-206)



BEATING CHILDREN FOR NOT PRAYING

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

In some books of hadith, it has been narrated in relation to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that if children do not pray by the age of ten, they should be beaten until they start offering prayers.

The narration conveying this message is as follows:

عن عمرو بن شعيب، عن أبيه، عن جده، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "مروا أولادكم بالصلاة وهم أبناء سبع سنين، واضربوهم عليها وهم أبناء عشر سنين، وفرقوا بينهم في المضاجع". (سنن ابو داؤد، رقم ٢٩٥)

"Amr bin Shu'aib narrated from his father, who narrated from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: When your children reach seven years old, instruct them to pray, and when they reach ten years old, beat them for not praying, and separate their sleeping beds¹."

In this article, we will try to understand this narration in light of the standards of authenticity established by the scholars of hadith.

This narration has been transmitted through only two companions in the hadith collections:

1. Sabrah bin Ma'bad al-Juhani
2. Abdullah bin Amr

Regarding the first companion, Sabrah bin Ma'bad al-Juhani, all the narrations transmitted in this context are considered "weak" by the scholars of hadith. The main reason for the weakness of these narrations is a narrator named Al-Rabi' al-Juhani. The ruling of the scholars of hadith on this narration is as follows:

'Its chain of narration is weak due to the presence of Abdul Malik bin Al-Rabi' Al-Juhani, who is weak in hadith.'

These narrations are recorded in Musnad Ahmad, Abu Dawood, and Sunan Tirmidhi.

As for the second companion, Abdullah bin Amr, the earliest source in which this narration is found is "Al-Mudawwana al-Kubra" by Imam Malik. The words of this narration are:

وقال مالك: تؤمر الصبيان بالصلاة إذا أثغروا. قال سحنون، عن ابن
 وهب، عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص، وسيرة الجهني أن رسول الله
 ﷺ قال: "مروا الصبيان بالصلاة لسبع سنين، واضربوهم عليها
 لعشر سنين، وفرقوا بينهم في المضاجع". (١/١٣٢)

"Malik said: Instruct children to pray when they lose their milk teeth. Sahnun narrated from Ibn Wahb, who narrated from Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As and Sabr al-Juhani that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: When your children reach seven years old, instruct them to pray, and when they reach ten years old, beat them for not praying, and separate their sleeping beds 2."

Here, both companions are mentioned together, suggesting that the incident is the same. However, the issue with this narration is that it is narrated by Ibn Wahb, whose birth was in 125 AH, while the two companions he narrates from had both passed away before 65 AH.

Thus, this is also a disconnected narration, and due to the break in the chain, it is not acceptable. This is why, despite being aware of this narration, Imam Malik did not include it in his "Muwatta."

The earliest book in which this narration from Abdullah bin Amr appears is the "Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah." The words of this narration are:

عن داود بن سوار، عن عمرو بن شعيب، عن أبيه، عن جده، قال: قال
 نبي الله ﷺ: ”مروا صبيانكم بالصلاة إذا بلغوا سبعا واضربوهم
 عليها إذا بلغوا عشرة وافرقتوا بينهم في المضاجع“.(رقم ٣٣٩٢)

"Daud bin Suwar narrated from Amr bin Shu'aib, who narrated from his father, who narrated from his grandfather that the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) said: When your children reach seven years old, instruct them to pray, and when they reach ten years old, beat them for not praying, and separate their sleeping beds³."

This chain of narration is the one that has been adopted in later books, and some scholars have accepted it, declaring it "hasan li ghairihi⁴" (good due to corroboration), thus making it widely known. It was accepted as an authentic saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The general ruling of scholars on this narration is:

‘Its chain of narration is sound for corroboration and testimony, and its narrators are trustworthy and reliable, except for Suwar bin Daud al-Mazini.’

However, in our view, a closer examination of these narrations in light of the standards of the chain of narration raises a few questions:

First, all of these narrations include 'Suwar bin Daud,' about whom many scholars of hadith criticism are not satisfied. For instance, Hafiz Dhahabi declared him weak. Similarly, the author of "Taqreeb at-Tahdhib" also does not consider him reliable, stating:

‘He is weak but his narrations are considered, though only Ahmad thought well of him.’

Thus, solely due to this one narrator, all the narrations in this chain transmitted from Abdullah bin Amr can be deemed "weak." This is why many contemporary scholars of hadith have not accepted this narration as authentic.

The second question that arises from these narrations is regarding Amr bin Shu'aib, who narrates either from his father about his grandfather, or his father narrates from his grandfather (عن عمرو بن شعيب، عن أبيه، عن جده). The narration does not clarify this. If it is the first case, then the narration has a gap (mursal), and if it is the second, then there is a disconnection.

The third point is that in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, where this narration first appears, Ibn Abi Shaybah also separately narrates this entire statement as a saying of a Tabi'i (a follower of the companions). This strengthens the possibility that this was not a hadith at all, but rather a saying of a Tabi'i. "Musannaf" itself contains the following:

حدثنا وكيع، عن سفيان، عن أبي رجاء، عن مكحول، قال: ”يؤمر الصبي بها إذا
 بلغ السبع ويضرب عليها إذا بلغ عشرة“.(رقم ٣٣٠٢)

"Waki' narrated from Sufyan, who narrated from Abu Raja, who narrated from Makhool that when your children reach seven years old, instruct them to pray, and when they reach ten years old, beat them for not praying⁵."

Thus, due to the weakness in the chain and the above-mentioned flaws, this narration cannot be accepted.

This was probably the personal opinion of a companion or the reasoning of a Tabi'i that was transmitted. This is also supported by another narration from "Musnad Bazar," which Imam Shawkani, a great scholar of hadith, pointed out in his book "Nayl al-Awtar." He indicated that there is another narration where it is clearly mentioned that this entire narration was found written on a piece of paper after the Prophet's death, without being attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Instead, it was attributed to someone else who believed children could possibly be beaten at the age of nine.

The narration is as follows:

عن عبید الله بن أبي رافع، عن أبيه رضي الله عنه، قال: وجدنا صحيفة
في قراب سيف رسول الله ﷺ بعد وفاته فيها مكتوب: "بسم الله
الرحمن الرحيم، فرقوا بين مضاجع الإخوة والأخوات لسبع سنين،
واضربوا أبناءكم على الصلاة إذا بلغوا أظنه تسعا". (رقم ٣٣٣٢)

"Ubaidullah bin Abi Rafi narrated from his father that after the death of the Prophet (pbuh), we found a paper near the Prophet's sword on which it was written: 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Separate the beds of brothers and sisters at the age of seven, and beat your children for not praying when they, as I recall, reach the age of nine⁶.'"

Conclusion

By accepting this narration, some scholars interpret beating children for not praying as mere disciplinary training. However, in our humble opinion, the attribution of this narration to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not proven, and it is a "weak" narration.

This is why even Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim did not include this hadith in their collections.

Besides the issues with its chain of transmission, this narration also seems to contradict the established principles of knowledge and reason, as well as the overall spirit of religion. When prayer becomes obligatory only upon reaching puberty, beating a ten-year-old for not praying is incomprehensible. Furthermore, psychologists can explain how this kind of strictness in childhood can affect one's disposition and relationship with religion. On the other hand, how

could someone like the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), known for his kind and gentle nature, who spent his entire life teaching religion with patience, reasoning, and gentleness, give a command that could lead to physical punishment, psychological pressure, and forced religious practices? Allah knows best.



REFERENCES:

- [1] Sunan Abu Dawud (no. 495)
- [2] Al Mudawwana al Kubra (1/132)
- [3] Musannaf ibn Abi Shaybah (no. 3394)
- [4] Meaning, 'fair due to external evidence'
- [5] Musannaf ibn Abi Shaybah (no. 3402)
- [6] Musnad al Bazzar (no. 3332)



MARRIAGE

Dr. Shehzad Saleem

Marriage is many a gamble
Alas today in many a shamble

Yet sanity must always prevail
Revive, start again, never derail

Imperfect people are united
Flaws must not be highlighted

Spouses must accommodate
Understand and appreciate

Forgiveness, friendship, fidelity
Are needed in spirit and reality

Truthful they must always be
Mutual trust builds naturally

Marriage will then be a bliss
Relax, smile and blow a kiss



THE NARRATIVE OF AHARON AND THE GOLDEN CALF: HARMONIZING TANAKH AND QURANIC PERSPECTIVES (PART-1)

(Isabel) Ayesha Khalid

Introduction:

In the Quran, Allah Almighty uses different pedagogies to advise, caution, remind, and reprimand the believers. For this purpose, Allah uses parables¹, stories of past nations², direct and indirect warnings, and tidings. When He narrates a story, it is often related to Arab history or well known to them. These tales are depicted in various ways. For example, Allah may narrate only the fragment of the tale³ that concerns the addressed topic or the point He intends us to perceive. Secondly, Allah may portray the *akhbar* at length⁴, or thirdly, He may simply provide an anecdote or a brief indication toward the entire event. In the first two cases, we find no difficulty in comprehending the basic message, but in the third instance, it may involve some technicalities.

This does not suggest any vagueness in the Quran itself because the intended history was well understood by the original audience, i.e., the Arabs of that time. Similarly, as Muslims, we share a mutual source of these ancient facts with the Ahl-e-Kitab, in the form of the Bible, and if there are significant errors in historical documentation, they are corrected by the Quran. These

corrections address any changes that affect the Abrahamic faith. For example, the narrative in the Gospels claims that Jesus was crucified.⁵ This alteration deeply impacted the concepts of Tawheed, Sunnah of Allah, and salvation (Maghfirah).

The story of the Golden Calf holds a prominent position in both the Tanakh and the Quranic perspectives. The Quran reflects a strong reference to the historical narrations found in the Book of Exodus, Chapter 32, in the aforementioned custom of reference. However, upon contemplation, we find strong contradictions in the commonly perceived interpretation of the Bible. These contradictions not only affect historical facts but also raise direct questions about the Sunnah of Allah and the revered status of a Prophet, as Aaron (Harun) is accused of initiating idolatry among the Abrahamic people. The Quran, on the other hand, does not directly support these allegations (as commonly perceived/interpreted). Instead, the Quran hints at the Exodus while explicitly preserving the innocence of Harun (peace be upon him).

Why doesn't Allah correct these mistakes? Why doesn't the Quran openly expose those who accused the revered Prophet (if he is indeed being accused within the scripture) and make amendments in favor of both the Prophet's esteemed status and the justice of Allah as Al-Adl?

This article aims to demonstrate the unity and absolute harmony between the Biblical and Quranic narratives, both historically and religiously. The evidence presented will be based on direct references from the scriptures, supported by strong linguistic analysis, while maintaining the context and background of the text.

The arguments will suggest that both the Quran and the Bible defend and uphold the innocence of Aaron.

Origin of Conflict:

The concept of Aaron (Aharon) as a criminal and the initiator of idol worship among the Israelites does not originate in the scriptural texts themselves. On the contrary, this corruption is found in the interpretation of the texts. This article aims to identify the exact factors that have led to the deviation from the mutual correspondence of scriptural truth, starting from the common points of error and misconception.

Since the story is to be examined from the Bible, we will address these points by drawing from the biblical chronicles, explaining each one within the context of the verses, highlighting the weaknesses in their interpretations, and clarifying why such interpretations should not be accepted:

1. The Israelites' urge for a new god in the unexpected absence of Moses (Moshe).
2. The alleged initiation of idolatry through Aaron (Aharon).
3. The pardoning of Aaron for the great sin (chata'ah gadola).

The third point (pardoning of Aaron) leads to three further questions:

- i. Moses' forgiveness of Aaron regarding the great sin.
- ii. The absolution of Aaron by Y-H-W-H (יְשׁוּעָה אֱלֹהִים) and according to Sunnat Allah.
- iii. The breaking of the tablets made by God (אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה) and inscribed by His words (מִכְתָּב אֱלֹהִים).

1. The Israelites had endured centuries of atrocities and oppression under the tyrannical rule of the Egyptians⁶ After this prolonged period of slavery, Elohai Yisroel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) delivered them from the hands of their captors. This liberation did not happen in the blink of an eye but was a gradual process. When Pharaoh was reluctant to free the Israelites, Egypt was subjected to devastation, famously remembered today as the Ten Plagues of Egypt. Consequently, the Israelites became firsthand witnesses of the wrath of their Y-H-W-H (יְהוָה).

They had heard tales of divine power from their ancestors, but now, they themselves experienced it. Thus, they knew what would befall them if they knowingly defied their Lord. Afterward came the parting of the Red Sea, where, once again, the Israelites experienced the salvation of their El. They witnessed how the Lord shelters those who abide by His laws and place their trust in Him.

To accept the notion that the Israelites would urge for a new god immediately after the "Lord of Israel" had delivered them from Egyptian captivity, we must also accept the idea that the Israelites knowingly defied Ha'Shem despite being fully aware of His might (גְּבוּרָה) and power. This defiance is said to have occurred at a community-wide level (יְשׁוּעָה אֶם), without any reasonable cause, while they were continuously wrapped in the mercy of the Most Merciful (רַחֲמָנִים).

As a result, this narrative breaches basic human rationality and sound psychology, especially on such a large scale. This inconsistency reflects the weakness and lack of authenticity in the very idea that the Israelites, after witnessing such divine acts, would suddenly and knowingly commit idolatry.

2. The corruption of a Prophet would undermine the very foundation of divine guidance, leaving believers in disarray⁷ Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, in his book *Meezan*, highlights that Prophets are chosen for their righteousness and remain free from major sin and temptation. He cites Surah Al-An'am [6:85] and Surah Sad [38:45-48], emphasizing that Prophets are selected because of their exceptional qualities of leadership and spiritual strength.

The protection of Prophets from sin is evident in the story of Prophet Yusuf. Despite being tempted by the wife of the Egyptian ruler, Yusuf's purity and Allah's divine intervention saved him from committing sin, as detailed in Surah Yusuf [12:24]. This divine protection exemplifies the heightened moral and spiritual clarity that Prophets possess, even before their appointment to prophethood.

Regarding Adam's lapse, the Quran clarifies that it occurred out of forgetfulness, not intentional disobedience (Surah Taha [20:115-122]). Satan misled Adam and his wife, but they immediately repented, and Allah accepted their repentance. This shows that any misstep by a Prophet before prophethood is not a deliberate act of rebellion but rather a result of human vulnerability, quickly rectified through sincere remorse and divine forgiveness.

Similarly, Prophet Musa's unintended killing of a man was an accident, for which he sought immediate forgiveness, and Allah pardoned him (Surah Al-Qasas [28:15-16]). These examples highlight that Prophets, while human and susceptible to mistakes before prophethood, are absolved by their repentance and the divine protection bestowed upon them thereafter (Surah Al-Jinn [72:27-28]).

When analyzing the Golden Calf incident, the accusation against Harun must be carefully reconsidered. Some interpretations suggest his complicity in the Israelites' idolatry, but a deeper understanding reveals his innocence. After Hur's murder, Harun likely faced immense pressure, torn between preventing further violence and keeping the people united. Viewing his actions through Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning, Harun initially acted to avoid further violence, motivated by self-preservation and the welfare of the nation, aligning with Kohlberg's pre-conventional moral reasoning.

As the situation progressed, Harun's decisions reflect a more nuanced moral reasoning. At Kohlberg's conventional level, his responsibility as a leader may have driven him to reluctantly comply with the people's demands, hoping to maintain social order while avoiding greater chaos. Yet his refusal to embrace idolatry demonstrates his internal conflict and dedication to God's commandments.

Furthermore, Harun's behavior aligns with the post-conventional level of Kohlberg's framework, where moral integrity transcends societal pressure. Despite the overwhelming demands from the Israelites, Harun did not fully participate in idolatry. His actions reflect a higher commitment to universal ethical principles and the preservation of faith, reinforcing the argument for his innocence. His reluctance, coupled with his efforts to steer the community back to the worship of the One God, reveals his firm dedication to religious values, even under dire circumstances.

Thus, a psychological analysis of Harun, in light of Kohlberg's stages of moral development, provides a robust defense of his innocence. Despite the Israelites' rebellion, Harun's actions were those of a leader attempting to balance a fragile situation without betraying his loyalty to Allah and Musa. His efforts to guide the people back to the straight path, as mentioned in Surah Al-A'raf [7:142], are a testament to his steadfastness.

In conclusion, Harun's moral reasoning and actions demonstrate that he had no part in the creation of the Golden Calf. The framework of Kohlberg's moral stages reinforces his innocence, highlighting his commitment to divine values and his role as a protector of faith in an incredibly volatile situation. This analysis affirms that Harun was neither complicit nor responsible for the idolatry of the Israelites, underscoring his purity as a Prophet.

REFERENCES:

[1] Al-Baqarah (2:26-27) Al-Ankabut (29:41) Al-Zumar (39:29)

[2] The people of Aad: Surah Al-A'raf (7:65), Surah Hud (11:50). The people of Thamud: Surah Al-A'raf (7:73), Surah Hud (11:61). The people of Lut (Lot): Surah Al-A'raf (7:80-84), Surah Hud (11:77-83). The people of Pharaoh (Fir'aun): Surah Al-A'raf (7:103-136), Surah Yunus (10:75-92). The people of Noah (Nuh): Surah Al-A'raf (7:59-64), Surah Hud (11:25-49). The people of Shu'aib: Surah Al-A'raf (7:85-93), Surah Hud (11:84-95). The people of Saleh: Surah Al-A'raf (7:73-79), Surah Hud (11:61-68). A'raf (7:73-79), Surah Hud (11:61-68).

[3] Al-Qalam (68:48)

[4] See footnote number 2.

[5] **Matthew:** 27:35, 27:50.

Mark: 15:24, 15:37

Luke: 23:33, 23:46

John: 19:18, 19:30

[6] Exodus: 1:8-14, 15-22, Exodus 2:23-25, Exodus 3:7-10

Talmud: Sotah 11a-11b, Sanhedrin 91a, Shabbat 87b

[7] **Meezan: The Innocence of Prophets**

Only those people are chosen as prophets who are able to shield themselves from the lures of their inner selves as well as those of Satan. They guard themselves against sin and are the righteous and pious among their people. In Surah An'am, after enumerating many prophets, it is said: "All of them were among the righteous" (6:86). As a reward for exercising caution and displaying piety, the Almighty also protects them.

Even before being designated as a prophet, if a situation arises in which it becomes difficult for a person to protect himself, the Almighty intervenes with His special Burhan (sign). This Burhan is the divine spark present in every human being. However, according to divine law, in people who honor it and follow its guidance in the trials of life, this spark becomes stronger and brighter. In delicate situations, it shines even more, illuminating the darkness that may obscure a person's path. As a result, they are able to persevere in doing what is right.



MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT JIHAD IN ISLAM

Salman Ahmed Shaikh

In Islam, Jihad is a broad term and it encompasses academic, diplomatic and moral support and contribution to the righteous causes. In the specific meaning of armed struggle, the Quran says that Jihad in the meaning of armed struggle can only be undertaken for the sake of eliminating injustice and persecution (Hajj: 39-40). The translation of the verse is as follows:

“Permission to fight is granted to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged-God indeed has the power to help them. They are those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly, only because they said, ‘Our Lord is God’. If God did not repel the aggression of some people by means of others, monasteries, and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is much invoked, would surely be destroyed. God will surely help him who helps His cause – God is indeed powerful and mighty.”

Thus, it is not a fight against non-Muslims. It is a fight against injustice and persecution. It can only be undertaken as a last resort to eliminate injustice and persecution. It can only be undertaken by the government and cannot be done privately. Jihad cannot be undertaken for the expansion of the state, against innocents, against non-combatants, and against the contract of peace if it has been signed.

According to the Islamic worldview, Allah sent His messengers to invite mankind towards Tawheed (the belief in only one Creator), belief in accountability in the afterlife, and the adoption of morally righteous conduct in all spheres of life. Some of these messengers were sent as Rasool, who could not be subjugated or rejected without consequences (Al- Mujadilah: 21).

The mission of these messengers, sent as Rasool, progresses through several stages: i) propagation, ii) the conclusive establishment of truth (Itmam-e-Hujjat), and iii) divine appraisal.

Itmam-e-Hujjat refers to the situation where truth is explained in its complete sense and whereby, further denial of the truth could only remain due to prejudice, pride or communal interests. After Itmam-e-Hujjat, the direct recipients have to accept the message received. If they refuse the truth, then they have to face divine appraisal in this world.

According to the Islamic worldview, this world is a place for a test where the objective of the creation of humans is obedience to Allah. Those who disbelieve without any reason and remain disobedient and thankless to their Creator, they will not be successful in the afterlife. Those who remain obedient, steadfast, and morally upright, they will succeed and be rewarded in the afterlife.

The direct recipients get the message of truth first-hand, so if they deny the truth after Itmam-e-Hujjat, they get the divine appraisal in this very world. The establishment of this divine justice serves as a lesson for all future generations, reminding them that they will face accountability in the afterlife for all their actions.

This scheme of providing divine appraisal in this world as an experimental proof was not just specific with progeny of Prophet Ismail (pbuh), but also happened consistently with the nations of Noah, Aad, Thamud, Lut, Shoaib, Yunus, Moses and Jesus before Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Non-believers of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were also dealt in the same way by Allah. The only difference was that in the case of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the divine punishment for the deniers of truth came in the form of the defeat of non-believers in the armed struggles with the believers. It is because in the case of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), there were enough followers and these armed battles also became a way to distinguish true believers from Munafiqun (hypocrites) (Al- Anfal:17).

As a matter of fact, less than 800 non-believer combatants died altogether who fought in actual wars with the believers in the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In the Hdaybiah treatise, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) accepted even those unfair terms which were one-sided against Muslims in order to welcome and ensure peace. At the time of entering Makkah as the victor, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) forgave all those who persecuted Muslims and who banished Muslims from their native lands.

At various times, messengers of Allah came to their nations with undeniable signs. When a nation chose not to accept the message, despite receiving it directly and conclusively with clear

signs, Allah punished the disbelievers. This punishment took the form of natural calamities when the believers were few in number, or through the triumph of believers over disbelievers, as in the case of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The specific verses in the Quran referring to Jihad as an armed struggle against the disbelievers of that time are clearly contextualized as part of the divine scheme of justice explained above. This history is a shared heritage of all Abrahamic religions, which collectively represent nearly two-thirds of the world's population. However, these Quranic verses about Jihad are often misunderstood, both by the West and by some minority Muslim groups, when they are generalized out of their original context.

In the twentieth century alone, more than 200 million people lost their lives in wars, which means an average of 5,500 people died each day due to conflict. This is comparable to a pandemic like the Coronavirus, causing over 5,000 deaths every day, year after year, throughout the entire century. Some estimates suggest that communist regimes in the twentieth century were responsible for around 100 million deaths. In this current century, we have witnessed the colossal persecution of Muslims in Myanmar, Kashmir, Palestine, and Xinjiang.

Yet, Sam Harris who apparently denies free will still has this to say about a community of 1.6 billion Muslims and about Islam in his 2004 book 'End of Faith' (p. 31):

“While it would be comforting to believe that our dialogue with the Muslim world has, as one of its possible outcomes, a future of mutual tolerance, nothing guarantees this result— least of all tenets of Islam. Given the constraints of Muslim orthodoxy, given the penalties within Islam for radical (and reasonable) adaption to modernity, I think it is clear that Islam must find some way to revise itself, peacefully or otherwise. What this will mean is not all obvious. What is obvious, however, is that the West must win the argument or win the war. All else will be bondage.”

And in specific reference to the Afghan war, Harris adds (End of Faith, p.53):

“There is in fact no talking to some people. If they cannot be captured, and they often cannot, otherwise tolerant people may be justified killing them in self-defence. This is what the United States attempted in Afghanistan, and it is what we and other Western powers are bound to attempt, at an even greater cost to ourselves and to innocents abroad, elsewhere in the Muslim world. We will continue to spill blood in what is, at bottom, a war of ideas.1”

He further goes on to say in public that “if an Islamist government acquired nuclear weapons, then ‘a nuclear first strike of our own’ may be ‘the only course of action available to us’”.

With such extreme and fundamentalist position, Atheism, the way it is presented by New Atheists appears very much like a religion. In political landscape, Atheism has shown tremendous atrocities in communist regimes. The imperialism by secular democracies to wage transnational and proxy wars since the dawn of twenty first century has also jeopardised world peace. As an example of political assertiveness in atheistic worldview, Article 37 of the Albanian

constitution of 1976 stated: “The State recognizes no religion, and supports and carries out atheistic propaganda in order to implant a scientific materialistic world outlook in people.”

It is deeply saddening that from a community of 1.6 billion people spreading in 7 continents of the world, individual instances from a small minority of deviants are picked in an effort to embarrass and tease peaceful mainstream Muslims. Close to 100 million Muslims now live in developed countries alone. There has to be acknowledgement and understanding of this fact that Islam and Muslims are two different things.

There can be a difference of opinion, but selectively picking particular types of arguments, people and actions and generalizing over 1.6 billion people is unjustified. The primary objective of the religion of Islam is not its political enforcement. The basic thesis of religion is to inform people about their role and relation with the Creator and what moral attitudes, behaviour and actions can lead them to success in the life hereafter.

Faith must never be studied from the followers’ actions. Christianity is not to be studied in the light of holocaust, colonization, slavery in Africa and crusades. In the light of the teachings of Jesus (pbuh), these events were wrong and in contradiction with the true teachings of Jesus (pbuh).

Likewise, we shall not judge liberal democracy or secular humanism based on world wars, invasions, transnational wars, undue sanctions, embargoes, political interference to topple democratic governments elsewhere, advancement in race to produce ever more destructive weapons of mass destruction, and paying lip service to thousands of people suffering from persecution in Myanmar, Gaza, Kashmir and at other places. Indeed, these actions by the particular authorities do not represent the aspirations, values and views of a common man in the West.

The Quran states that there is no compulsion in religion (Al-Baqarah: 256), which reflects the universal stance of Islam in the contemporary world. Islam does not promote hate or violence; rather, it is a source of spiritual contentment and fulfillment for a quarter of the world’s population. It teaches believers to refrain from causing harm—whether by words or actions—regardless of the presence or enforcement of laws. According to the Islamic worldview, all people will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for their intentions and actions.

There are several misconceptions about the rights of non-Muslims within an Islamic socio-political framework. Non-Muslims are free to worship in their places of worship, and the government is responsible for safeguarding these religious sites. No non-Muslim can ever be forcibly converted to Islam. In fact, Muslims believe in all Prophets sent by Allah, including Ibrahim (pbuh), Moses (pbuh), and Jesus (pbuh).

In Muslim Spain, Christians and Jews coexisted peacefully. The advent of Islam made it possible for people to retain their beliefs, even when they differed from the state religion. Islam, therefore, opposes all forms of religious and socio-political persecution and discrimination.

During the early Islamic period, non-Muslims were active participants in the socio-economic life of society, owning property and engaging in business. Those unable to earn a livelihood received financial assistance from the Bayt-ul-Maal (national treasury) and had access to services provided by Islamic public endowments.

In its interactions with people of different beliefs, the Qur'an instructs Muslims to present its message with wisdom and kindness. As it states: 'Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and debate with them in the most respectful manner' (Al-Nahl: 125).

Thus, it is clear that armed struggles led by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had a particular context and scope in connection with Allah's principle of establishing divine justice in the presence of Rasool on his nation. The universal scope of Jihad for now is limited to ending persecution and injustice and it is not a war with non-Muslims to force them to convert to Islam.



NEWSLETTER AL-MAWRID AMERICA

October 2024

Summary of the "23 Objections" Video Series in Urdu

The "23 Objections" video series discusses criticisms and objections raised against Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's thoughts from traditional religious perspectives. Hassan Ilyas, Director of Research and Communication at the "Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning, USA," presents a simple and clear summary of all the topics covered so far. This series will be released sequentially on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel with modern editing techniques.



Dr. Muhammad Akram Nadvi's Visit to the Ghamidi Center

Islamic scholar and Hadith teacher, Dr. Muhammad Akram Nadwi, visited the Ghamidi Center last month from the UK. Dr. Nadvi is the Dean of Cambridge Islamic College, Principal of "Al-Salam Institute," and author of numerous books. During his stay, Hassan Ilyas interviewed him about his religious and scholarly background, his journey from India to the UK, and key questions related to Islamic thought. The interview is available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Ghamidi Center's Book Stall

Last month, the Ghamidi Center participated in ISNA's annual gathering in the USA and set up a book stall. Some authors were present and signed books for buyers. A large number of people visited the stall and purchased books.

Conversing Islam

In this program, questions related to religious, moral, and social topics are discussed. The show is hosted by Hamza Ali Abbasi, with Hassan Ilyas as a guest. Last month, key topics such as "Takfir in Islam," "Tawhid, Shirk, and Sufi Stages," "The Debate on Rights and Proper Attitude," and "From Differences to Respect" were discussed. The recordings of these programs can be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Jamaat-e-Islami: Past, Present, and Future

This topic was discussed during the weekly live Q&A sessions held by the Ghamidi Center last month. The discussion shed light on the past, present, and future of Jamaat-e-Islami and various aspects of Maulana Maududi's life. Key points discussed included "The History and Challenges of Jamaat-e-Islami," "The Objectives Resolution: A Major Achievement of Jamaat," and "The Death Sentence of Maulana Maududi." Recordings of these sessions can be watched on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Mosque Management in Pakistan: Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Stance

This article by Manzoor ul Hassan explains Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's position on mosque management in Pakistan. He highlights three essential points from a Shariah perspective: First, it is the government's responsibility to organize Friday and Eid prayers. Second, these prayers should be conducted in grand mosques or designated places under government supervision. Third, the ruler or their representative should deliver the sermon in these prayers. This article can be read in last month's issue of Ishraq America (Urdu).

Tafhim al-Athar Project

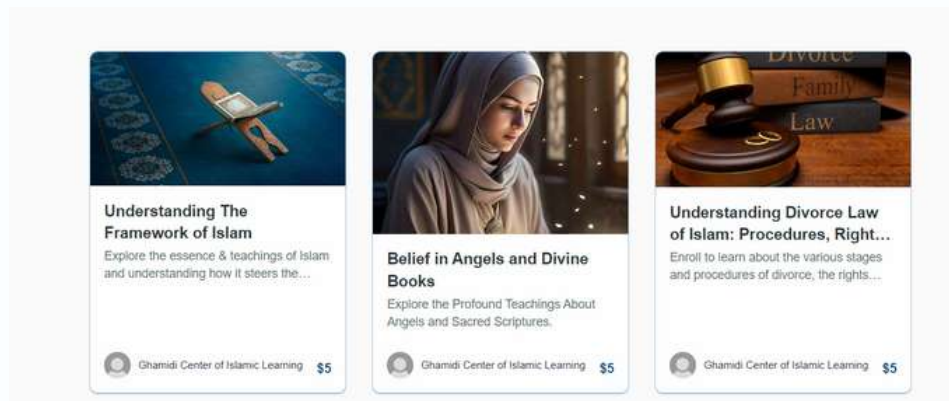
In the program titled Tafhim al-Athar under the Ghamidi Center, the sayings and actions of the Companions (PBUH) and Successors (Tabi'un) are explained, along with Q&A sessions on selected narrations. Dr. Syed Mutiur Rehman hosts the program, with Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir as a guest. Last month, the program focused on the status and ranks of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Companions based on the sayings of Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, and Imam Baqir (RA). Additionally, discussions were held on the glad tidings for the Companions in the Quran, their avoidance of innovations, and the consequences of neglecting their knowledge and actions. These programs can be watched on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Ghamidi Center’s Online Spiritual Training (Khanqah)

The Ghamidi Center’s online spiritual training program continues. This program primarily focuses on self-reform, with Muaz Amjad discussing issues related to personal spiritual development and answering relevant questions from the audience. Last month, four sessions were held, and their recordings are available on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

Ghamidi Center’s Online Educational Courses

In September 2024, Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning produced two courses in English for its online learning platforms Udemy and Teachable. Lectures for the course "Principles of Understanding the Quran" were recorded by Dr. Shehzad Saleem, while the "Belief in the Hereafter" course's audio was created using AI. The video editing and modern animation for these courses are ongoing, after which they will be available on the Ghamidi Center’s Teachable website and Udemy.



Lectures on Hijab by Dr. Shehzad Saleem

Last month, Dr. Shehzad Saleem recorded three lectures in English on the subject of Hijab, which was previously discussed in the "23 Objections" series. One of these lectures has been released on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel, while the other two will be aired soon after editing.

Ijma— Javed Ahmed Ghamidi’s Perspective

The topic of “Ijma” (consensus) was discussed in the "23 Objections" video series. In recent episodes, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi explained his view on Ijma, stating that it applies not only to collective matters but also to individual ones. The differences between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and other scholars regarding Ijma were also discussed, particularly how collective matters were examined during the rule of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Additionally, the Quranic verses presented by scholars in support of Ijma were addressed. These programs can be viewed on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

Teaching of Al-Bayan in English

Dr. Shehzad Saleem is responsible for teaching Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Quranic commentary, Al-Bayan, in English. In September 2024, he discussed verses 131 to 185 of Surah Al-e-Imran. The recordings of these sessions are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Islam Study Circle

In September 2024, Dr. Shehzad Saleem discussed the topics of "Revealed Books," "Avoiding Deception," and "Justice-Based Behavior" in the "Islam Study Circle" program. He also answered questions at the end of the session. The recording can be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Weekly Quran and Hadith Lessons

In September 2024, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi completed the lessons on Surah Kahf and began discussing verses 1 to 14 of Surah Maryam in the live Quran and Hadith lessons organized by the Ghamidi Center. In the Hadith lessons, after answering a question regarding the punishment of the grave, he discussed the Hadith of Gabriel, touching upon topics such as "What is Faith?" "What is Islam?" and "Definition of Destiny." These sessions can be watched on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Teaching of Meezan in English

Last month, Dr. Shehzad Saleem recorded lectures in English on the topic of "War Prisoners and Spoils of War" from Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's book Meezan. This lecture is available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Ilm o Hikmat with Ghamidi (Ilm o Hikmat: Ghamidi Kay Saath)



In September 2024, the renowned program Ilm o Hikmat with Ghamidi aired on Dunya News, featuring discussions on "Questions from Christians to Muslims," "Film, Drama, and Acting," and viewer-submitted questions. Important questions, such as "Is it permissible to perform acts of polytheism as part of acting in films or dramas?", "What is the connection between the rise and fall of nations and morality?" and "What was the wisdom behind the miraculous birth of Jesus (AS)?" were explored. These programs are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Private Online Consulting Sessions with Dr. Shehzad Saleem

Dr. Shehzad Saleem conducts private online consulting sessions every month, where people seek advice on various personal and family-related issues. Last month, more than 30 sessions were held, during which individuals sought advice on parental challenges, adolescent issues, and marital problems.

Issuance of Fatwas Based on Religious Opinions

People often contact the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning, USA, for legal applications of Sharia, particularly regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other social and economic aspects.

Last month, two fatwas were issued in response to various needs, guided by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and issued by Hassan Ilyas.

Ask Dr. Shehzad Saleem

This is a monthly live Q&A session in which Dr. Shehzad Saleem answers questions related to religious, moral, and social topics. People can ask questions in both Urdu and English during this session.

