

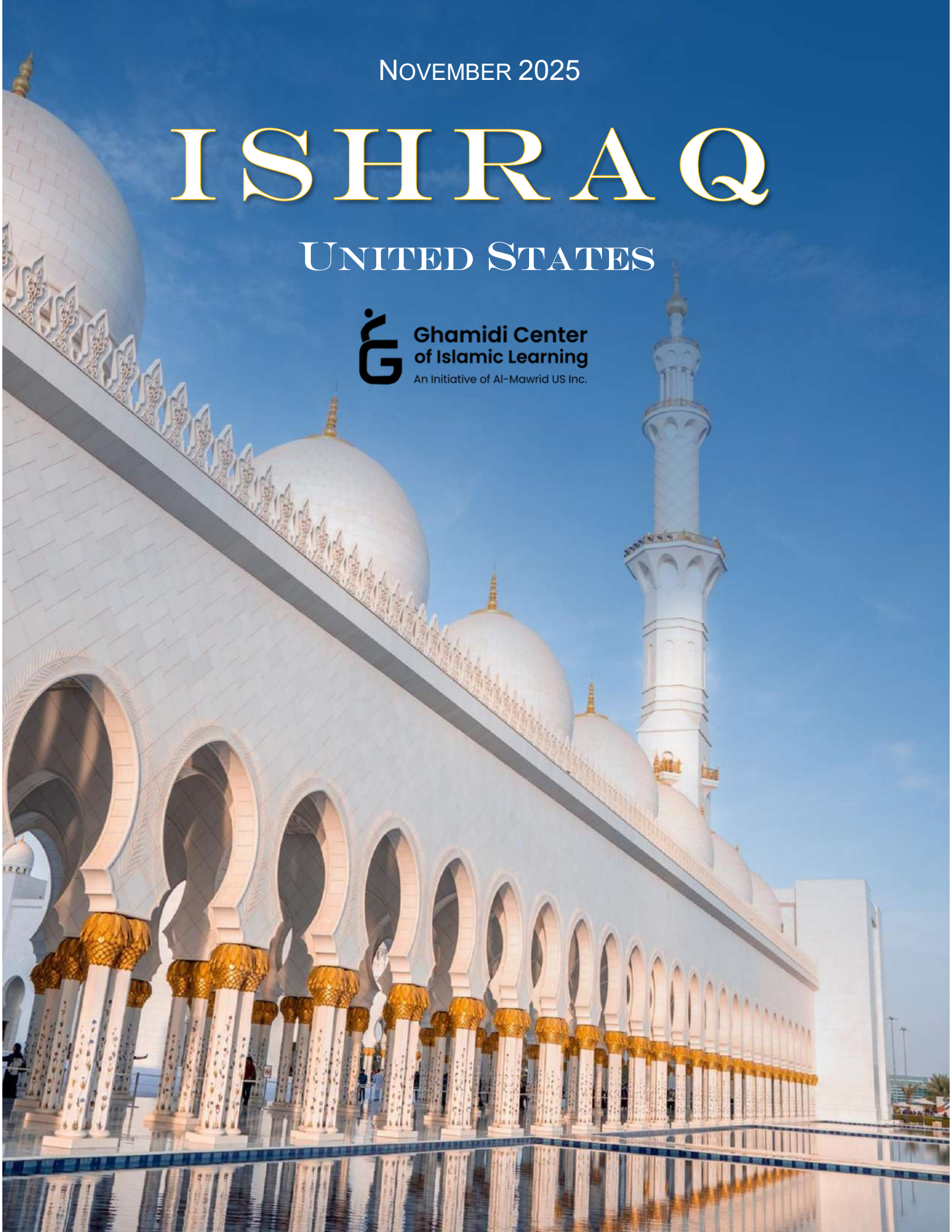
NOVEMBER 2025

ISHRAQ

UNITED STATES



**Ghamidi Center
of Islamic Learning**
An Initiative of Al-Mawrid US Inc.



NOVEMBER 2025

ISHRAQ

UNITED STATES

UNDER THE GUIDANCE
OF
JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI

EDITOR
ABID MEHMOOD HASHMI

HONORARY EDITORIAL BOARD

MUKARAM AZIZ
AJAZ-UL-HAQUE
MEHMOOD-UR-RASHID
MALIK ELLAHI
MUHAMMAD AMMAR MALIK

DISCLAIMER

GHAMIDI CENTER OF ISLAMIC LEARNING IS AN ACADEMIC PLATFORM THAT EMBRACES DIVERSE SCHOLARLY DISCUSSIONS. WHILE WELCOMING ALL FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISCOURSE, ITS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HERE MAY NOT NECESSARILY ALIGN WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S OFFICIAL STANCE. THE PLATFORM ENCOURAGES RESPECTFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOG FOR INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE AND EXPLORATION.



**Ghamidi Center
of Islamic Learning**
An Initiative of Al-Mawrid US Inc.

IN THIS ISSUE

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAM SHAH WALIULLAH'S WORK SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN	1
THE TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS	3
IJTIHAD – INDEPENDENT REASONING JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI	5
THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN	7
TAFHEEM AL-ATHAR (UNDERSTANDING THE TRADITIONS) DR. AMMAR KHAN NASIR	12
A REVIEW OF THE 'HONEY' NARRATIVE REPORTED IN THE SAHIHAYN - 2 DR. MUHAMMAD GHATRIF SHAHBAZ NADWI	17
SIR SYED'S THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND METHODOLOGY: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY WARIS MAZHARI	24
THE CORRECT CONCEPT OF AL-KHARAJ BI AL-DAMAN MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS	32
WERE THE QURAYSH AFRAID OF THE CALIPHATE OF BANU HASHIM? DR. IRFAN SHEHZAD	34
SALAT AL-TASBIH: IN THE LIGHT OF FIQH AND HADITH - 2 DR. AMIR GAZDAR	39
UNVEILING OVERLOOKED SYMBOLS: HOW ESCHATOLOGICAL SIGNS IN HADITH ALIGN WITH HISTORICAL EVENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN DR. MUHAMMAD SAAD SALEEM	46
THE NARRATIVE OF AHARON AND GOLDEN CALF - 5 (ISABEL) AYSHAH KHALID	60
A STUDY OF THE MUSNAD AHMAD – 2 DR. AMMAR NASIR; DR MUTI SYED	65
HAYAT-E-AMIN - 26 NAEEM AHMAD BALOCH	69
LIFE STORY: DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM – 2 DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM, MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS	74
AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE WITH CHATGPT SAQIB ALI	79
NEWSLETTER AL-MAWRID US	83

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAM SHAH WALIULLAH'S WORK

Syed Manzoor-ul-Hasan

Adapted from a discourse by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

Within the intellectual tradition of Muslims, there have generally existed two distinct methodologies for understanding and presenting religion: first, the Salafi methodology; and second, the methodology of juristic reasoning and reflection (*fiqh wa tadabbur*).

The Salafi methodology is fundamentally based on the principle of obedience. In this approach, religion appears as a collection of divine injunctions—a set of commands and prohibitions that become binding upon all morally responsible individuals. The rulings of what is obligatory and what is forbidden are derived from the Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), and adherence to them is made incumbent upon people. For this purpose, reference is also made to the sayings and practices of the Companions (*Athaar* al-Sahabah).

Once a ruling is established as being attributable to the Prophet (PBUH), the question of its original source becomes secondary, implying that it is of lesser importance whether the ruling originates from the Quran and Sunnah or from Hadith and *Athaar*. As a result of this mode of thinking, rulings appear in a fragmented form, each as an isolated command. No effort is made to discern their interrelationship as principle and branch or whole and part. Similarly, the underlying causes and rationale of the rulings are not usually explored.

By contrast, the methodology of *fiqh* and *tadabbur* is founded upon the principle of reflection and reasoning. In this approach, religion is viewed as a *coherent intellectual system*. It seeks to understand the divine injunctions not merely as isolated commands but as a unified structure; examining the foundational philosophy, wisdom, and order that underlie them. In this perspective, mere obedience to a command is not deemed sufficient; rather, its basis and rationale (*illat*) must also be established. Consequently, this approach reveals multiple dimensions among the rulings—text and explanation, division and unity, whole and part, principle and branch—all seen as interrelated and harmonious components of a single system.

These two methodologies may be understood through the analogy of a building and its constituent materials. In the Salafi method, things appear as if the building materials—bricks, stones, mortar, and paint—are scattered and separate before the structure is built. Each component is viewed in isolation. Conversely, in the *fiqh* and *tadabbur* method, these same elements appear assembled into an architectural whole, where every component occupies a defined place within a coherent structure.

In my view, throughout Muslim history, it is the methodology of *fiqh* and *tadabbur* through which religion has been rightly understood. The Hanafis, the Shafi'is, and the theologians (*Mutakallimun*) all followed this approach. Their interpretations and conclusions may differ, but they share this common perspective of viewing religion as a complete system of thought. One might say that this reflective approach constitutes the common intellectual thread among them.

Viewing religion from this perspective brings about a remarkable transformation. It reveals the philosophical foundations of the rulings, their wisdom, their classification and order, their interconnection, and their value within the broader framework of religion.

The founder of this *fiqh and tadabbur* methodology is Imam Abu Hanifa. Although he did not author a formal treatise outlining its principles, he clearly laid its foundations and firmly instilled them in the minds of his students. His disciples then developed upon those foundations, constructing a vast intellectual edifice. After Imam Abu Hanifah came Imam al-Shafi, who holds the distinction of organizing this methodology systematically. Furthermore, he made an additional contribution by attempting to reconcile the *Salafi* methodology with that of *fiqh and tadabbur*. This synthesis deeply influenced later scholars, and it is therefore no coincidence that many of the great thinkers who followed were the followers of Shafi school of thought.

Within the Farahi school of thought, this reflective methodology assumes such significance that when one seeks to understand religion through it, that very process becomes evidence of the divine origin of religion. The intellectual system that emerges from such reflection is, in itself, a miracle—its coherence and depth bear witness to its divine source. It becomes evident that this system of thought is so well-ordered, so firmly structured, and so intricately interwoven that no human philosophy or intellectual framework can match it.

Imam Shah Waliullah stands as one of the greatest scholars of this second methodology—that of *fiqh and tadabbur*. He understood religion through this reflective lens, standing firmly within the long scholarly tradition that arose from this very approach. This is the tradition through which the Shariah was systematically studied, particularly by the Hanafis and Shafis, who developed general principles to clarify the coherence and order among the divine injunctions. Hence, neither Shah Waliullah nor his work can, in any respect, be disregarded.

While Shah Waliullah was deeply rooted in the *fiqh and tadabbur* tradition, he did not turn away from the *Salafi* methodology. Especially after his journey to the *Haramayn* (Makkah and Madinah), a significant transformation is noticeable in him—a renewed awareness of the exceptional importance of the transmitted reports (*riwayat*). It may be said that he reinterpreted the *Salafi* tradition within the framework of his own intellectual system. Accordingly, he wrote commentaries on *Muwatta Imam Malik* in both Arabic and Persian, and in his masterpiece *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, he examined religion as it appears in Hadith.

In this respect, one may say that he successfully connected the *Salafi* tradition with that of *fiqh and tadabbur*, striving to unite the two into a single intellectual stream. In other words, he sought to ensure that these two great methodologies would no longer be seen as distinct or conflicting. Thus, he fashioned a single strand of religious thought, stringing together the pearls of *fiqh and tadabbur* and *Salafi* traditions upon it.

In essence, Shah Waliullah discovered the underlying thread that binds these two methodologies together and presented his entire intellectual framework upon that unity. In my opinion, this is his truly extraordinary achievement. His intellectual stature thus stands as a *meeting point of the two seas* (*Majma al-Bahrayn*). It is for this reason that, after him, both those who follow the *fiqh and tadabbur* approach and those who adhere to the *Salafi* method trace their intellectual lineage back to him. Scholars from both traditions acknowledge him as their Imam.¹

¹ He accomplished the same task in the field of *Sufism* as well, striving to reconcile the concepts of *Wahdat al-Wujood* (Unity of Being) and *Wahdat al-Shuhud* (Unity of Witnessing). In his *Maktub Madani*, he explained that these two are merely different expressions of the same reality, and that, in essence, there is no significant difference between them.

THE TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

— 1 —

Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) narrated that once, during a solar eclipse, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) led the people in prayer. The Companions prayed along with him. When the prayer concluded, the eclipse had already passed, and the sun had cleared. The Prophet (PBUH) then delivered a sermon and said:

“The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah. They do not eclipse because of anyone’s death or life. Therefore, when you see such an event, remember your Lord.”

The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah, during the prayer, we saw you reach forward as though to take something, and then we saw you withdraw.”

He (PBUH) replied: “I saw Paradise, and I wanted to pluck a bunch of its fruits. Had I taken it, you would have continued to eat from it as long as the world remained. Then I was shown Hell, and I saw a scene in it the like of which I had never seen before. I saw that the majority of its inhabitants were women.”

The people asked, “Why is that, O Messenger of Allah?”

He (PBUH) said: “Because they are ungrateful.”

They asked, “Do they show ingratitude toward Allah?”

He (PBUH) replied: “No — they are ungrateful to their husbands and deny favors. You may do good to one of them for a lifetime, yet if she sees something from you (that displeases her), she will say, ‘I have never seen any good from you.’”

(Muwatta Imam Malik, No. 441)

— 2 —

Jabir (RA) reported: On the day of Eid, I attended the prayer with the Prophet (PBUH). He began the prayer without adhan or iqamah before delivering the sermon. After completing the prayer, he leaned on Bilal (RA) and stood up, exhorting the people to fear Allah, obey Him, and reminding them with advice and admonition. Then he moved forward to where the women were and likewise addressed them with exhortation and remembrance. He (PBUH) said: “Give charity, for I have seen that the majority of those who are the fuel of Hell are women.”

Upon hearing this, a woman with dark reddish cheeks stood up and asked, “Why is that, O Messenger of Allah?”

He (PBUH) replied: “Because you complain too much and show ingratitude to your husbands.”

Jabir said: Hearing this, the women began giving charity. They started removing their earrings and rings and throwing them into the cloth that Bilal (RA) had spread out for that purpose.

(Sahih Muslim, No. 1473)

— 3 —

Abu Saeed al-Khudri (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) once went out to the place of prayer on the day of Eid al-Adha or Eid al-Fitr. On his way, he passed by a group of women and said: “O women, give charity, for I have seen that most of the inhabitants of Hell are women.”

One of them, who seemed intelligent, asked, “Why will that be so, O Messenger of Allah?”

He (PBUH) replied: “Because you frequently curse and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intellect and religion who can overcome a wise, sensible man more than you.”

The women asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what is the deficiency in our intellect and religion?”

He (PBUH) said: “Is it not the case that a woman’s testimony is half that of a man’s?”

They said, “Yes.”

He (PBUH) said: “That is the deficiency in her intellect.”

He (PBUH) added: “And is it not that when a woman is in her period, she neither prays nor fasts?”

They said, “Yes.”

He (PBUH) said: “That is the deficiency in her religion.”

(Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 296)

IJTIHAD (INDEPENDENT REASONING)

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

The term *ijtihad* originated from a Hadith. According to the scholars of Hadith, the narration is *munqati'* (disconnected), yet a single sentence from it became the basis of this important juristic concept in Islam. It is related that when the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) appointed Muadh ibn Jabal (RA) as governor of Yemen, he asked him, "How will you judge (between people)?" Muadh (RA) replied, "I will refer to the Book of Allah." The Prophet (PBUH) asked, "If you do not find (a ruling) there?" He replied, "Then I will look to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (PBUH) asked again, "And if you find nothing there either?" Muadh (RA) responded, "*ajtabidu rayi, la alu*" — "I will exert myself to form an opinion, leaving no effort untried."

It is from these words — *ajtabidu rayi* — that the term *ijtihad* has been derived. The scholars of *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) have always employed it within the limits set by this Hadith: *ijtihad* pertains only to those matters about which the Quran and Sunnah are silent. It has no relevance to issues that the Quran and Sunnah have explicitly addressed. This is because the texts of the Quran and Sunnah are subjects for *tadabbur* (reflection), not for *ijtihad* (independent legislation).

The scholars may repeatedly return to these texts to ascertain their intent, and they may differ with their predecessors in interpretation, but they cannot alter or suspend any ruling or judgment established by them through their own reasoning. This is the precise scope of *ijtihad*.

If the narration of the Prophet (PBUH)'s conversation with Muadh (RA) is authentic, it clarifies exactly this reality. The Prophet (PBUH) asked: "If not in the Quran? If not in the Sunnah?" Once something is found in the Quran or Sunnah, a Muslim has no right to deviate from it. His faith requires that he submit to it without hesitation. The very meaning of Islam is to surrender oneself in obedience before Allah and His Messenger.

Some great modern thinkers have misunderstood certain rulings of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. In truth, none of them could ever have conceived of altering or suspending any divine command. What people sometimes perceive as abrogation or alteration is, in fact, an elucidation of the implications and consequences of divine commands, which the Caliphs made clear through their practical judgments. Rather than seeing in this a justification for modification or suspension, one should learn from it how to reflect upon the Quran and Sunnah and understand their modes of expression.

Within this defined sphere, *ijtihad* is as essential to a Muslim's life as air and water. Its door can never be closed — and in reality, it never has been. Despite assertions by some that it was shut after the fourth century Hijrah, scholars, jurists, and experts in various disciplines have continued to engage in *ijtihad* in every age — and continue to do so even today. Allah Almighty has endowed human beings with intellect and knowledge precisely so that they may use these faculties to make judgments in their affairs. Human affairs are numerous and ever-changing. Man is neither blind nor deaf that he must always rely on direct heavenly guidance for every matter. The divine law was revealed only in those areas where intellect and reason required direction, and that is why its injunctions are few and limited.

Hence, *ijtihad* is indispensable — it is the key to progress. Without it, life cannot advance. One major reason for the decline of Muslims is that, as a community, they have lost the capacity for scientific inquiry in the natural sciences and for *ijtihad* in the social sciences.

It must also be clarified that *ijtihad* has no fixed preconditions. People must engage in it. Some will err, but others will critique and correct them — and it is through this process that human understanding advances and great *mujtahids* eventually emerge.

Indeed, if one accepts the principle of *taqlid* (blind following), then all the so-called conditions for *ijtihad* become necessary — because in that case, the focus shifts from the reasoning itself to the authority of the jurist whose opinion is followed. However, if, like the Companions and their successors, both the learned and the layperson base their decisions upon evidence, then it is the *ijtihad* itself that must be evaluated — not the personality of the *mujtahid*.

In such a case, even if a non-Muslim proposes a rational and effective solution to a problem, there would be no objection in accepting it. It would be treated as *dallatul mumin* — “the lost property of the believer,” which he is entitled to reclaim wherever he finds it.

Indeed, in the modern age, most *ijtihads* concerning political systems, economic organization, administration, and principles of citizenship have been made by non-Muslims — and Muslims, by and large, have accepted them. A clear example of this is democracy, its values, and the institutional frameworks that arise from it. The Quran gave the principle of consultation (*shura*), yet Muslims never succeeded in constructing a concrete system upon it. That system was developed by non-Muslims. Despite this, one can observe that Muslim scholars, jurists, and most religious parties have not only accepted it but have also actively worked for its promotion and preservation.

In all matters on which the Quran and Sunnah are silent, this is the correct attitude — and it is upon this that Muslims must continue to stand firm.

[2011]



THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION (ISRA AND MI'RAJ)

Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

From the book Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Stance On Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascension - Derived from a dialogue with Muhammad Hassan Ilyas. This book is part of '23 Objections Series'.

1. The Event of *Isra* (Journey to Masjid al-Aqsa)

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ.

Flawless is the being who one night took His servant from the Sacred Mosque to that Distant Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed so that We can make him observe some of Our signs. Indeed, only He hears and knows all. (17:1)

وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ وَآتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخَوْفًا. وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَنُحُوتَهُمْ فَمَا يَزيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا

What has stopped Us from sending signs of punishment is that the earlier generations had denied them. We had given the Thamud a she-camel [in a similar way] as an eye-opening sign but they were unjust to themselves and denied it. [What then is the use to send signs?] We only send signs to frighten [people before punishing them]. Remember when [for such an admonition and warning,] We said to you: Your Lord has surrounded these people; [and they were making fun of this]. The dream We showed you We made it a trial too for these people [because of this attitude of theirs] and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Quran. We are only frightening them of their fate, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness. (17:59-60)

Background

In verse 1 of Surah Al-Isra, 'Sacred Mosque' refers to the Kaaba in Mecca and 'Farthest Mosque' refers to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Both mosques were constructed by Allah's command and designated as the centers for the call to monotheism. Consequently, they have always remained under the custody of the descendants of Prophet Abraham (PBUH), including the surrounding areas of Mecca and Palestine. Custodianship and trust of the Kaaba and Mecca, the mother of towns, was conferred upon the Ishmaelites, and the administration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the authority over the land of Palestine was given to the Israelites. When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was sent as a messenger among the Ishmaelites, and the Israelites were relieved from the

duty of calling to religion and bearing witness,² Allah decided to entrust both Mecca and the land of Palestine to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his nation, the Ishmaelites. This is the historical background in which the Prophet (PBUH) was taken to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Details

The Quran narrates the incident of the *Isra* briefly, without mentioning specific details except for the nature and purpose. The stated points are as follows:

Firstly, that one night, Allah took His Prophet from the Sacred Mosque to the Al-Aqsa Mosque—a mosque far distant³, hundreds of miles away.

Secondly, Allah’s purpose in taking him there was to show him some of His extraordinary signs. This meaning is implied in the words *li nuriya hu min ayatina* (to show him some of Our signs) without detailing these signs⁴. However, based on the contextual indicators and other parallels in the Quran, it is plausible that these include the divine signs, evidence, heavenly lights, and blessings that filled these two abodes. Presumably, the intent of showing these to the Prophet was to give him the good news that the guardianship of these centers of monotheism was about to be entrusted to him. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi comments:

The apparent purpose of displaying these (signs) is to make it clear that it is the will of Allah Almighty that from then on, this trust would be taken away from the ungrateful and the betrayers and entrusted to him (Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)). (Tadabbur-e-Quran 4/475)

The third point is that the event of the Prophet’s (PBUH) journey from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa and the presentation of the signs of Allah to him occurred in a dream. The words from Surah Al-Isra, verse 60, *Wa ma ja’alna ar-ru’ya allati araynaka* (The dream We showed you....) support this.

The summary can be outlined in a few key points as follows:

1. This event occurred at night.
2. At that time, the Prophet (PBUH) was in Masjid al-Haram.

² In Surah Aale Imran, verse 26, Allah Almighty instructed the Prophet (PBUH) to pray in this context. The verse states:

[Their era has ended; so, now] pray you: “God! The Sovereign of all sovereignty, You grant sovereignty to whomsoever You please and take it away from whomsoever You please. And You grant honor to whomsoever You please and humiliate whomsoever You please. All good lies in Your control alone; Indeed, You have power over all things.

Under this verse, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes in the commentary:

This appears to be a prayer, but upon reflection, it contains a profound glad tiding for the Ishmaelites. This is because the prayer clearly indicates that the Lord of all good, the Sustainer of the worlds, has decided to grant sovereignty of the world to the Ishmaelites, and no opposition from the Israelites can overturn this decision. For them, there is nothing but disgrace. Thus, if they are to remain in this world, it will only be under the subjugation of the Ishmaelites. There is no other way of survival left for them. (Al-Bayan 1/335).

³ It was located approximately 1,300 kilometers from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah, about a 40-day journey. It is introduced with the words ‘al-Masjid al-Aqsa’—meaning “the farthest mosque”—to easily direct the audience’s attention toward it.

⁴ The reason is that neither can those signs be comprehended by human knowledge and intellect, nor can words bear the burden of describing their details.

3. Allah Almighty transported him from Masjid al-Haram to a distant mosque, namely, Al-Aqsa Mosque.
4. The purpose was to exhibit some of the signs of Allah to him.
5. This journey, which would normally require about 80 days of travel, and the witnessing of Allah's signs, were both completed within a single night.
6. This journey took place in the realm of a dream, meaning that the Prophet (PBUH) was asleep in Masjid al-Haram, and Allah Almighty made him experience this journey in this state⁵.
7. The dream signifies that the entire journey and the accompanying observations were not physical but were manifested spiritually and emotionally.

The points that are not mentioned in the event are as follows:

1. It is not mentioned whether Allah Almighty Himself guided the Prophet (PBUH) to the journey or if He assigned the task to His angel.
2. There is no mention of whether the Prophet (PBUH) traveled on any physical means of transportation or if his spiritual existence carried out Allah's command.
3. No details about the signs shown to the Prophet (PBUH) have been mentioned.
4. No mention of the events happening inside Al-Aqsa Mosque has been made.

Explanation

The important points for the explanation and understanding of the verses are:

Firstly, verse 1 commences with the words *SubHana-lladhi* and ends with *Innahu buwa-ssami'u-lbasir*. The terms translate to "Exalted is He" and "Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing." These attributes of 'hearing and seeing' essentially expound the term SubHan. They explicate the ultimate purpose of the event of *Isra* with great precision. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi states in *Al-Bayan*:

These attributes explain the way the word SubHan occurs at the beginning of the verse. The implication is that since God hears and knows all, hence it is His responsibility to bring to account the people who had gone back on their promises and who in the words of Jesus (sus) had made his House "a den of robbers," (Matthew, 21:13). This had to happen after hearing and reading what the Israelites said and did in it. Thus the Almighty decided that this House was to be entrusted to the custody of His last prophet. It was because of this reason that he was brought here from the Sacred Mosque in one night. God is free of all defects; hence He cannot in the slightest tolerate that He choose a nation to conclusively communicate the truth to people and leave it unaccountable in spite of such rebelliousness from it. It was essential that He make some other arrangement to realize this objective. He thus chose the Ishmaelites to carry out the obligation of preaching and conclusively communicating the truth at the global level. (Al-Bayan 3/63)

Secondly, the phrase *Alladhi Baarakna Hawlahu* (Whose precincts We have blessed) from the same verse implies that it is not merely the charge of Masjid al-Aqsa being referred to, but also the governance over the region wherein this mosque stands. Similarly, the words *Linuriyahu Min Ayatina* (to show him of Our signs) suggest that among

⁵ A detailed discussion on the topic of *Ru'ya* (dream) is presented in the following pages under the heading "The Event of *Isra* and the Interpretation of *Ru'ya*: The Traditional Perspective."

the signs, authority over the land of Palestine is also encompassed. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes:

After the migration of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) from Babylon, Allah Almighty selected two places, at which, by His command, two mosques were established, and they were designated as centers for the propagation of monotheism for the entire world. One is located in the land of Arabia and the other in Palestine. The first spot is a valley that is barren, and the second is exceedingly fertile. For this reason, it has been called the 'Land of Milk and Honey' in ancient scriptures. The Quran alludes to this with the expression Alladhi Baarakna Hawlabu, specifically denoting that the remote mosque being mentioned is the one in Jerusalem. ... (Linuriyahu Min Ayatina signifies that) it is indicative of the fact that along with the Holy Sanctuary of Mecca, the custodianship of Palestine and its sanctuary will also be given to the descendants of Ishmael. (Al-Bayan 3/62)

Third, in verse 59, Allah has made clear the reasoning behind not sending down additional signs to warn and threaten the disbelievers of Quraish. The reason, as told, is that whenever such signs were dispatched, rather than paying attention and becoming alarmed, people would reject them and ridicule them. For illustration, the text mentions the sign of the she-camel sent to the people of Thamud, and their subsequent denial of it.

Fourth, verse 60 continues in the same vein. It cites three instances of signs provided to the Quraish. These are the besiege of Mecca⁶, the occurrence of the Night Journey (*Isra*), and the accursed tree⁷. The Quran details that the Quraish's reaction was no different than that of earlier communities—they too engaged in the worst behavior by denying and making fun of God's signs. As a result, these warnings did not foster faith and submission in them; rather, they only escalated their transgression.

Among the three signs outlined previously, the second instance involves Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) journey to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This indicated that the guardianship of both Mecca and the Sacred Mosque, as well as Palestine and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, was to be handed over to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The disbelievers of Quraish mocked it, transforming a significant warning and a threat into a *fitnah* (trial) for themselves. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes:

This is a reference to the incident of the night journey with which the surah began. Since there was also a warning in it for both the Quraysh and the Israelites that besides the Sacred Mosque, the Bayt al-Maqdis too is now being entrusted to the Prophet (saws) it was made fun of. Mocking words like "see now they are trying to forcibly occupy the Bayt al-Maqdis" were cracked. So much so that in the words of Imam Amin AHsan Islahi, the thing that was meant to warn and admonish them and to inform them of the future became a trial for

⁶ It is a reference to the verses where the Almighty gave the glad tiding of closing in on Meccans from all sides. It was an explicit prediction of the fate the Quraish of Mecca had to meet at the conquest of Mecca. For more details, please read verse 41 of Surah al-Rad and the verse 44 of Surah al-Anbiya

⁷ It refers to the Zaqqum tree mentioned in the Holy Quran. A note about this tree in al-Bayan reads:

The tree of zaqqum, which neither gives shade nor fruit, is referred to here. It will be a heap of thorns which the dwellers of Hell will eat in distress. It will burn their bellies as if boiling water is circulating in them. It is because of these characteristics of this tree that it is called Mal'oonah (accursed) by the Quran. In other words, God has not granted it with the benefits of flowers, fruits and shade. On the contrary, He has deprived it of all these things and thereby made it a symbol of His curse. When the Quran mentioned it to warn and frighten people, the miscreants of the Quraysh made it also a subject of making fun. They would mockingly say: Look at this person! On the one hand, he says that Hell will contain fire which will burn down stones and on the other hand, is informing us with the same tongue that trees also exist in this fire. (Al-Bayan, 3/94-95)

them because of their misdeeds. (Al-Bayan 3/94)

Fifthly, the word *Ru'ya* is a very common and widely utilized term in Arabic. It corresponds to 'dream' in English, Hindi, and Urdu, implying the act of seeing something in one's sleep. It is widely used in poetry and prose to connote the meaning of dream. Its meaning is established as such in Arabic lexicons. It appears around seven hundred times in Hadith literature, carrying the same meaning. In the Holy Quran too, this term has been used seven times across chapters, and on every occasion, it implies nothing else than a dream. Given the usage and connotations of this term, it is imperative that in the mentioned verse it should be interpreted as a dream, thus, the journey of *Isra* ought to be regarded not as a corporeal expedition but as a spiritual experience.

Sixthly, however, the dream referred to here is not the mundane dream that is a regular experience for humans. It is not by means of that nature. Instead, this vision is a kind of divine revelation, exclusively accessible to the honored prophets. Ordinary people have no connection to it. What is revealed in this type of dreams to the prophets is true, aligns with reality, and is fact-based. Sometimes, these dreams are clearer and more vivid than what one sees with their eyes when awake. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi discusses this type of vision:

...The dreams shown to the prophets, peace be upon them, are visions of truth. They have several distinctive characteristics. First, a true dream is one of the channels of divine revelation. Just as Allah Almighty conveys His guidance to His prophets and messengers in the form of words through an angel, in some instances, He also communicates guidance through dreams.

The second characteristic is that this vision is exceedingly clear, unambiguous, and luminous like broad daylight (Ka-Falqi As-Subh), providing the prophet with complete satisfaction and tranquility of heart. Even if there are symbolic elements in the vision, Allah Almighty makes their interpretation clear to His prophet.

The third characteristic is that when the purpose is to show events and realities, this mode is more reassuring for a divine prophet because it allows for the full details of events to be observed, along with the representation of meanings and realities that are otherwise difficult to capture in words.

The fourth characteristic is that the insights gained through these dreams are more definitive, comprehensive, and thousands of times deeper and more extensive than what is seen with the naked eye. Eyes might be deceived, but a true dream is devoid of any deceit. The eyes can only see within a limited scope, but a dream can encompass a substantially wider range. Eyes are limited to observing only visible forms, whereas a dream grasps meanings, truths, and enlightenment as well. Prophet Moses, PBUH, desired to see the divine manifestation with his own eyes but found it unbearable. By contrast, through the visions shown to our Noble Prophet, PBUH, during the Night of Ascension, he observed all of them without his vision being overwhelmed. (Tadabbur-e-Quran 4/475-476)

From this explanation, it is clear that this was a formal journey, organized by the command of Allah Almighty, and during this journey, everything the Prophet (PBUH) observed was real, definitive, and certain.

Seventhly, the language and structure of the aforementioned verses from Surah *Isra* indicate the completion of the discussion. The Quran does not provide any further or related details about this matter elsewhere. Therefore, one must regard this as a distinct, unique, and complete event, and avoid trying to relate it to any other incident mentioned in the Quran and hadith literature.

[To be continued...]

TAFHEEM AL-ATHAR (UNDERSTANDING THE TRADITIONS)

Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir

The narrations of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt concerning the Companions

The narrations of Ali (RA) regarding Abu Bakr (RA) and Umar (RA) (13)

(9)

عَنْ أَبِي السَّفَرِ، قَالَ: رُئِيَ عَلِيٌّ عَلِيٌّ عَلِيٌّ عَلِيٌّ بُرْدٌ كَانَ يُكْتَبُ لِبَيْتِهِ، قَالَ: فَقِيلَ لَهُ: إِنَّكَ لَتُكْتَبُ لِبَيْتِهِ هَذَا الْبُرْدُ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ كَسَانِيهِ خَلِيلِي وَصَفِيٍّ وَصَدِيقِي وَخَاصِّي عُمَرُ، إِنَّ عُمَرَ نَاصِحَ اللَّهِ فَصَحَّ اللَّهُ، ثُمَّ بَكَى.

Abu al-Safar narrates that a cloak was seen on Ali (RA) which he used to wear frequently. It was said to him, "You wear this cloak very often." He replied, "This cloak was given to me by my friend, my chosen companion, my sincere and intimate confidant, Umar (RA). Indeed, Umar was sincere to Allah, and Allah was sincere to him in return." Then Ali (RA) wept. (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, No. 31357)

Lexical Explanation

Safiy - meaning a chosen and selected friend.

Khass - carries the same sense, meaning a very close and confidential companion.

Referencing and Variance in Narration Chains

This narration through the chain of Abu al-Safar is also transmitted in the following sources: *Al-Shariah* by al-Ajurri (No. 1766), *Virtues of the Companions* by al-Daraqutni (No. 12), and *History of Damascus* by Ibn Asakir (Vol. 44, p. 363).

In the version recorded by Ibn Shabbah, Khalaf ibn Hawshab narrates the details of the incident as follows:

عن خلف بن حوشب، قال: ادركت رجلاً من اصحاب عبد الله شيخاً كبيراً، قال: خرج علينا علي رضي الله عنه من القصر وعليه بردة يمانية من هذه اليمانية الخمر، عتيق منها جيد، فجعل القوم يمسونه ويقولون: من اين لك هذا يا امير المؤمنين؟ قال: هذا كسانيه حبيبي عمر رضي الله عنه، فلما ذكر عمر رضي الله عنه قبع رأسه بالبرد، ثم بكى حتى رحمه من كان ثم.

Khalaf ibn Hawshab says: I met an elderly man among the companions of Abdullah ibn Masud (RA). He told me that Ali (RA) once came out from the palace wearing a fine but old Yemeni cloak. People began to touch it and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, where did you get this cloak?" Ali (RA) said, "My beloved Umar (RA) gave it to me." When he mentioned Umar (RA), he covered his head with the cloak and wept so much that those present were moved to pity for him. (Tarikh al-Madinah, No. 1498)

Khalaf ibn Hawshab also narrated this incident from Umar ibn Sharhabeel, with the following wording:

خرج إلينا علي عليه السلام، وعليه برد، فقال: هذا برد كسانيه خليلي عمر بن الخطاب عليه السلام، ثم رفع البرد فقتع به رأسه، ثم بكى حتى ظننا أن نفسه خارجة من بين جنبيه

Ali (RA) came out to us wearing a cloak and said, "This is the cloak which my intimate friend, Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA), gave me." Then he lifted the cloak and covered his head with it, and wept so intensely that we thought his soul would depart from his body. (Fazail al-Sahabah, al-Daraqutni, No. 14)

Another narrator, Abu Maryam, reports:

رأيت علي بن ابي طالب رضي الله عنه بردا خلقا قد انسحقت حواشيه، فقلت: يا امير المؤمنين، ان لي اليك حاجة قال: وما هي؟ قلت: تطرح هذا البرد وتلبس غيره. قال: فقعد وطرح البرد على وجهه وجعل يبكي. فقلت: يا امير المؤمنين، لو علمت ان قولي يبلغ منك هذا ما قلت. فقال: ان هذا البرد كسانيه خليلي. قلت: ومن خليك؟ قال: عمر رحمه الله، ان عمر عبد ناصح الله عز وجل فنصحته

"I saw Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) wearing an old cloak whose edges had frayed. I said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have a request.' He said, 'What is it?' I said, 'Please remove this cloak and wear another one.' He sat down, placed the cloak over his face, and began to weep. I said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, if I had known my words would grieve you this much, I would never have said them.' Ali (RA) replied, 'This cloak was given to me by my sincere friend.' I asked, 'Who is your sincere friend?' He said, Umar (RA). Umar was a servant devoted and loyal to Allah, and Allah, Exalted and Majestic, treated him with the best recompense." (Al-Shariah, al-Ajurri, No. 1767)

This narration of Abu Maryam is also cited by Ibn Shabbah (Tarikh al-Madinah, No. 1496). Additionally, this incident is also transmitted through Abu Hayyan al-Taymi (Al-Ikhwan, Ibn Abi al-Dunya, No. 219).

(10)

عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ عَلِيٌّ: إِنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ كَانَ أَوْأَاهَا حَلِيمًا، وَإِنَّ عُمَرَ نَاصِحَ اللَّهِ فَتَنَصَّحَهُ اللَّهُ، وَقَدْ كُنَّا أَصْحَابَ مُحَمَّدٍ نَرَى أَنَّ السَّكِينَةَ تُنْطِقُ عَلَى لِسَانِ عُمَرَ، وَقَدْ كُنَّا نَرَى أَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَهَابُهُ أَنْ يَأْمُرَهُ بِالْخَطِيئَةِ

Al-Shabi narrates that Ali (RA) said: "Abu Bakr (RA) was compassionate and forbearing, and Umar (RA) was sincere and loyal to Allah, so Allah was loyal to him in return. We, the Companions of Muhammad (PBUH), used to believe that sakinah (tranquility or angelic presence) spoke — meaning through the tongue of Umar — and we also believed that Satan feared him too much to incite him to sin." (Fazail al-Sahabah, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, No. 600)

Lexical Explanation:

Awwah - means compassionate and tender-hearted.

Sakinah - literally refers to something that brings calmness and tranquility. In some hadiths, it is used for a group of angels or a creation resembling them that descends where the Quran is recited (Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 3449).

Wahb ibn Munabbih explained it as follows: *al-sakinah ruhun minallah tatakallamu* — "Sakinah is a spirit from Allah that speaks." (Tafsir al-Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 328).

Explanation and Elucidation:

The qualities of Abu Bakr and Umar (RA) mentioned here are also described in the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH). During the Battle of Badr, when Abu Bakr (RA) advised releasing the captives, the Prophet (PBUH) likened him to Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Isa (AS) for his tenderness of heart and mercy, saying:

ان الله ليولين قلوب رجال فيه حتى تكون الين من اللبن.

“Indeed, Allah softens the hearts of certain men concerning Himself until they become softer than milk.”
(*Musnad Ahmad*, No. 3527)

Likewise, about Umar (RA), the Prophet (PBUH) said:

ان الله وضع الحق على لسان عمر يقول به.

“Allah has placed the truth upon the tongue of Umar — he speaks with it.” (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, No. 2619)

And on another occasion, addressing him directly, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

ان الشيطان ليخاف منك يا عمر.

“Indeed, O Umar, Satan certainly fears you.” (*Jami al-Tirmidhi*, No. 3781)

Referencing and Variance in Narration Chains

This narration through the chain of al-Shabi is also reported in the following sources: Collected Works of Abu Jafar ibn al-Bakhtari (No. 92); Dictations (Amali) of al-Muhamili (Nos. 165, 166); Dictations (Amali) of Ibn Bishran (No. 176).

However, in most versions through al-Sha'bi only one sentence is transmitted: “inna al-sakinah tantiqu ala lisani umar” — “Indeed, *sakinah* speaks through the tongue of Umar.” This version is found in: *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah* (No. 31334); *Sharh Usul Itiqad Ahl al-Sunnah* by al-Lalikai (No. 2390); *Hilyat al-Awliya* by Abu Nuaym (Nos. 94, 6066); *Al-Shariah* by al-Ajurri (No. 1326); and *History of Damascus* by Ibn Asakir (Vol. 44, p. 109).

The same sentence has also been narrated from Ali (RA) by Abu Juhayfah, Zur ibn Hubaysh, and Tariq ibn Shihab. The narration of Abu Juhayfah Wahb ibn Abdullah is reported by Imam Ahmad in *Musnad Ahmad* (No. 821), *Al-Sunnah* by Abdullah ibn Ahmad (No. 1254), and *Fazail al-Sababah* by Imam Ahmad (No. 45).

Through the route of Zur ibn Hubaysh, it is recorded in *Al-Jami* by Mamar ibn Rashid (No. 993), *Al-Shariah* by al-Ajurri (No. 1184), and *Fazail al-Sababah* by Imam Ahmad (No. 498).

In the narration of Tariq ibn Shihab, the statement appears with the wording:

كنّا نتحدث ان ملكاً ينطق على لسان عمر

“We used to discuss among ourselves that an angel spoke through the tongue of Umar.” (*Hilyat al-Awliya*, Abu Nuaym, No. 93)

The first portion of the statement — *inna aba bakr kana awwahan haliman, wa inna umar nasaballah fanasabahu allah*— is also narrated from Ali (RA) through the route of Abu Sareehah, in *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* by Ibn Sad (No. 3104), *Fazail al-Sababah* by Imam Ahmad (Nos. 104, 168), *Al-Shariah* by al-Ajurri (No. 1805),

Ansab al-Asbraf by al-Baladhuri (Vol. 10, p. 59), and *Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn Asakir (Vol. 30, p. 379). Ibn Asakir has also transmitted it through the chain of Qays ibn Abi Hazim.

Amr ibn Maymun narrated this same report with an additional sentence:

قال: اذا ذكر الصالحون فحي هلا بعمر، ما كنا نبعد اصحاب محمد عليه السلام ان السكينة تنطق على لسان عمر.
 He said: “When the righteous are mentioned, begin with Umar. We, the Companions of Muhammad (PBUH), did not consider it unlikely that an angel spoke through the tongue of Umar.” (*Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat, al-Tabarani, No. 5653; Hilyat al-Awliya, Abu Nuaym, No. 5537*)

(11)

قَالَ عَبْدُ خَيْرٍ: كُنْتُ قَرِيبًا مِنْ عَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ حِينَ جَاءَهُ أَهْلُ نَجْرَانَ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ: إِنْ كَانَ زَادًا عَلَى عُمَرَ شَيْئًا فَالْيَوْمَ، قَالَ: فَسَلَّمُوا وَاصْطَفُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، قَالَ: ثُمَّ ادْخَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ يَدَهُ فِي كُمِهِ فَأَخْرَجَ كِتَابًا فَوَضَعَهُ فِي يَدِ عَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالُوا: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، خَطُّكَ بِيَمِينِكَ وَإِمْلَاءُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْكَ، قَالَ: فَرَأَيْتُ عَلِيًّا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَقَدْ جَرَّتِ الدُّمُوعُ عَلَى خَدِّهِ، قَالَ: ثُمَّ رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ فَقَالَ: يَا أَهْلَ نَجْرَانَ، إِنَّ هَذَا لِأَخْرُ كِتَابَ كَتَبْتُهُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالُوا: فَأَعْطِنَا مَا فِيهِ، قَالَ: سَأُخْبِرُكُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ، إِنَّ الَّذِي أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ لَمْ يَأْخُذْهُ لِنَفْسِهِ، إِنَّمَا أَخَذَهُ لِجَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَكَانَ الَّذِي أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ خَيْرًا مِمَّا أُعْطَاكُمْ، وَاللَّهِ لَا أَرُدُّ شَيْئًا مِمَّا صَنَعَهُ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، إِنَّ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كَانَ رَشِيدَ الْأَمْرِ.

Abd Khayr narrates: I was close to Ali (RA) when the people of Najran came to him. I thought to myself, “If Ali (RA) is ever going to overturn any of Umar’s (RA) decisions, this is the day.” The people of Najran greeted him with salam and stood in a row before him. Then one of them put his hand into his sleeve, took out a document, and placed it in the hand of Ali (RA). They said: “O Commander of the Faithful, this is your handwriting, written with your own hand, and dictated to you by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).” (Abd Khayr says:) I saw that tears were flowing down the cheeks of Ali (RA). Then he raised his head toward them and said: “O people of Najran, this is the last document I wrote in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).” They said: “Then give us what is written in it.”

Ali (RA) replied: “I will tell you about that. What Umar (RA) took from you, he did not take for himself; rather, he took it for the collective good of the Muslims. And what he took from you was better than what he gave you. By Allah, I will not revoke anything that Umar (RA) did — indeed, Umar (RA) was rightly guided in his affairs.” (As-Sunan al-Kubra, Al-Bayhaqi, No. 18977)

Explanation and Elaboration

The background to this incident is described in various reports: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had given the people of Najran a written document stating that they would not be expelled from their land. This document had been written by Ali (RA) himself. However, as their population grew — and since they lived within the Arabian Peninsula — Umar (RA) became concerned that they might one day rise against the Muslims. Later, internal disputes broke out among them, and they themselves came to Umar (RA) asking to be relocated elsewhere. Umar accepted their request and transferred them to another region.

Afterward, the people of Najran regretted their decision and came back to Umar (RA), asking to be resettled in Najran, but he refused. During the caliphate of Ali (RA), when he had moved to Kufah, the people of Najran came to him carrying that same document he had once written for them, asking him to allow them to return to Najran. (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, No. 36343) The above narration refers to that same incident.

Ali (RA) meant that Umar (RA) had neither violated the original treaty nor seized the region of Najran for personal gain. Rather, the decision had been made at the request of the people of Najran themselves, and in view of the broader political and communal interest of the Muslims. Therefore, Ali (RA) affirmed that he would not revoke any of Umar's decisions, since he considered them to be sound and well-founded.

Referencing and Variance in Narration Chains

This incident is also narrated through the chain of Abd Khayr by *Al-Shariah* of Al-Ajurri (No. 1210). Besides Abd Khayr, it has also been narrated by Salim ibn Abi al-Jad, Abu Ishaq as-Sabiee, and Ash-Shabi.

Through Salim ibn Abi al-Jad: *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah* (No. 36343); *As-Sunan al-Kubra* (Al-Bayhaqi, No. 18976); *Tarikh Dimashq* (Ibn Asakir 44/364); *Akhbar Makkah* (Al-Fakihi, No. 2857); *Al-Shariah* (Al-Ajurri, No. 1211); *As-Sunnah* (Abd Allah ibn Ahmad, No. 1194); *Al-Ibanah al-Kubra* (Ibn Battah, No. 73); *Al-Amwal* (Ibn Zanjawayh, No. 418).

Through Abu Ishaq as-Sabiee: *Fadail as-Sababah* (Al-Daraqutni, Nos. 1–2); *Al-Hujjah fi Bayan al-Mahajjah* (Al-Isfahani, No. 345); *Tarikh Baghdad* (Al-Khatib, 7/131).

Through Ash-Sha'bi: *Fada'il as-Sababah* (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, No. 513); *Al-Kharaj* (Yahya ibn Adam, No. 31); *Al-Amwal* (Abu Ubayd, No. 273).

In some reports within the same context, Al-Shabi also narrated this statement:

قال علي حين قدم الكوفة: ما قدمت لأحل عقدة شدها عمر.

When Ali (RA) arrived in Kufah, he said: 'I have not come to untie the knot that Umar has tied.' (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, No. 31365) (See also: *Al-Amwal*, Abu Ubayd, No. 849; *Al-Kharaj*, Yahya ibn Adam, No. 32; *Al-Amwal*, Ibn Zanjawayh, No. 420; *Al-Ibanah al-Kubra*, Ibn Battah 8/383)

[To be continued...]

A REVIEW OF THE ‘HONEY’ NARRATIVE REPORTED IN THE SAHIHAYN - 2

Dr. Muhammad Ghatrif Shahbaz Nadwi

The ‘Point of View’ column is reserved for writings by various thinkers. The institution is not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed in the articles published therein.

The Narration of Ubayd ibn Umayr

Ibn Jurayj al-Makki (whose full name is Abd al-Malik ibn Abd al-Aziz ibn Jurayj — Jurayj being his grandfather) narrated from Ata ibn Abi Rabah, who narrated from Ubayd ibn Umayr. Ubayd said: I heard Aisha al-Siddiqah (RA) say that the Prophet (PBUH) would spend more time during the day at the home of Zaynab bint Jahsh (RA), and he used to drink honey there. So, I and Hafsa (RA) made a plan together (to dissuade him from drinking honey at Zaynab’s house), agreeing that whichever of us he visited (after returning from Zaynab’s house) should say to him: “I notice the smell of *maghafir* gum on you—have you eaten *maghafir*?”

(Ubayd ibn Umayr said:) Accordingly, when the Prophet (PBUH) came to one of them (I cannot say whether it was Hafsa or Aisha), she said that to him. He replied, “I have not eaten *maghafir*; I drank honey at Zaynab’s house, but I will never drink it again. I have taken an oath on that. Do not mention this to anyone.”

Ubayd reported that the opening verses of *Surah Al-Tabrim* were revealed concerning this incident. The Quranic words: *ma abhallallahu laka* refers to the honey the Prophet (PBUH) drank at Zaynab’s house, and he took an oath not to drink it again in order to please Aisha and Hafsa (RA). And in *wa iz asarrannabiyyu il abazi azwajibi hadithan*, the “saying (*hadithan*)” refers to his statement to one of them that he had sworn not to drink honey and asked her not to tell anyone. In *in tatuba*, the address is to Aisha and Hafsa (RA).

This narration appears in *Sahih al-Bukhari* in three places: *Kitab al-Ayman wa al-Nudhur*, *Kitab al-Tafsir* (under *Surah Al-Tabrim*), and *Kitab al-Talaq*. In *Kitab al-Ayman* and *Kitab al-Talaq* (Hadith No. 5267), the text is relatively complete, with the wording:

يَقُولُ (عُبَيْدُ بْنُ عُمَيْرٍ) سَمِعْتُ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَمَكُثُ عِنْدَ زَيْنَبَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا إِبْنَةَ جَحْشٍ أَنَا وَحَفْصَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا (فَوَاطِئُهُ) (In *Kitab al-Tafsir* it is) رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَيَشْرَبُ عِنْدَهَا عَسَلًا فَتَوَاصِيئْتُ أَنْ آتِينَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلْتَقَلَّ إِلَيَّ أَجْدُ مِنْكَ رِيحَ مَغَافِيرٍ، أَكَلْتِ مَغَافِيرًا؟ فَدَخَلَ عَلَيَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَقَالَتْ (In *Kitab* “لَهُ ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ: ”لَا، بَلْ شَرِبْتُ عَسَلًا عِنْدَ زَيْنَبَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا بِنْتِ جَحْشٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَلَنْ أَعُودَ لَهُ بَلْ كُنْتُ أَشْرَبُ عَسَلًا عِنْدَ زَيْنَبَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا بِنْتِ جَحْشٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا فَلَنْ أَعُودَ لَهُ وَقَدْ حَلَفْتُ، لَا تُخْبِرُنِي بِذَلِكَ أَحَدًا“
فَقَرَأْتُ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تَحَرَّمَ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ (التحريم 66:1) ... إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ ... (التحريم 66:4)“ لِعَائِشَةَ وَحَفْصَةَ، وَإِذْ أَسَرَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثَنَا (التحريم 66:3) لِقَوْلِهِ بَلْ شَرِبْتُ عَسَلًا

(*Bukhari: Kitab al-Ayman wa al-Nudhur & Kitab al-Talaq*, p. 793, and *Kitab al-Tafsir*, p. 729, India ed.)

After this Bukhari immediately recorded the narration of Urwah on the same page (p. 793), thus placing both narrations side by side. Muslim (Hadith No. 1474) did the same, as both chains are equally strong, and it was difficult to prefer one over the other.

I say: The decision of the two Shaykhs (*may Allah envelop them in His mercy*) is contrary to reason, discernment, and the principles of hadith transmission. When two reliable narrators report something in such a way that their accounts conflict directly, and reconciliation between them is impossible, both statements must be disregarded—neither is correct. The scholars have stated this rule thus: *idha taaraza al-khabrani tasaqata* (“When two reports contradict each other, both fall”).

Imams Bukhari and Muslim were aware that the narrations of Urwah and Ubayd ibn Umayr regarding the story of honey contain a clear contradiction. The narration of Urwah states that the one who gave honey to the Prophet (PBUH) was Hafsah bint Umar (RA), and that Aisha (RA), out of jealousy, conspired with Sawdah and Safiyyah (RA) to accuse him of smelling of *maghafir*.

However, the narration of Ubayd ibn Umayr says that it was Zaynab bint Jahsh (RA) who gave the honey, and the *maghafir* plan was made jointly by Aisha and Hafsah (RA). Therefore, both narrations must be deemed incorrect and disregarded.

Accordingly, Bukhari and Muslim should not have included either the narration of Urwah or that of Ubayd in their *Sahibs*. In truth, both narrations are mere hearsay. Even if only Urwah’s narration had existed, we would still have rejected the story as false; and if only Ubayd’s narration had existed, we would have deemed it mere gossip as well. Thus, even disregarding all other evidence I have already discussed, any reasonable person should have no hesitation in declaring both narrations baseless.

It should be understood regarding the particular narration of Ubayd ibn Umayr that it is a mixture of *musnad* (connected) and *mursal* (disconnected) transmission. According to his claim, the part of the report that states:

” سَمِعْتُ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ كَانَ يَمُكُّثُ عِنْدَ زَيْنَبَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا بِنْتِ جَحْشٍ وَيَشْرَبُ عِنْدَهَا عَسَلًا فَوَاطَأْتُ أَنَا وَحَفْصَةَ ”
” أَنْ أَيْتَنَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا النَّبِيُّ فَلْتَقُلْ إِيَّيْ أَجِدُ مِنْكَ رِيحَ مَغَافِيرٍ، أَكَلْتِ مَغَافِيرَ؟ ”

is *connected* — meaning Ubayd said that he had heard this from Aisha (RA).

However, from the phrase *fadhkhala ala ihdahuma faqalat labu zalika* to the end, the statement is Ubayd’s own addition. He did not say that he heard this part also from Aisha (RA). Had he been quoting her words, he would have said *fadhkhala ala ihdana* instead.

Arabic speakers understand this distinction well, but for those unfamiliar with Arabic:

- fadhkhala ala ihdana means “Then the Prophet (PBUH) came to one of us (i.e. to one of the two of us)”,
- whereas fadhkhala ala ihdahuma means “Then he came to one of them (i.e. those two women)”.

Thus, since Ubayd’s narration says *ihdahuma*, it is certainly his own statement, not something heard from Aisha (RA). In other words, half of his narration is *samai* (heard) and the other half is *qiyasi* (his own conjecture).

According to his own words, Ubayd only heard from Aisha (RA) that she and Hafsah (RA) had agreed that whichever of them the Prophet (PBUH) would visit, she would say to him: “*I sense from you the smell of maghafir (a kind of gum); have you eaten maghafir?*”

Ubayd then completed the rest of the story from his imagination — that the Prophet (PBUH) went to either Aisha or Hafsah (RA), she said this to him, and he replied that he had only drunk honey at Zaynab bint Jahsh’s (RA) house and had now sworn not to drink it again, instructing them not to tell anyone.

Having thus filled in the narrative himself, Ubayd told this to Ata ibn Abi Rabah, who told it to Ibn Jurayj, who then claimed that the first five verses of Surah Al-Tahrim were revealed concerning this incident. That is, Allah said to His Prophet (PBUH):

"لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ"

"O Prophet, why do you prohibit (for yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives?" (Al-Tahrim 66:1)

— meaning, why did you vow not to drink honey? Then Allah rebuked Aisha and Hafsa (RA) saying:

"إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا"

"If you both repent to Allah, your hearts have indeed inclined (to error)." (Al-Tahrim 66:4)

However, the truth is that this narration of Ubayd ibn Umayr is entirely false — both the first half that he claims to have heard (*samai*) and the second half that he fabricated by conjecture (*mudraj*).

This is proven by the fact that Ubayd neither studied the first five verses of *Surah Al-Tahrim* carefully nor understood the Quran's style, in which whenever Allah says *wa idh*, it introduces a new, independent event, separate from what preceded.

Ubayd ibn Umayr ibn Qatadah al-Laythi al-Jundai al-Makki was a *tabii* (successor), and preaching was his occupation. Preachers (*waiẓun*) are usually careless in reporting traditions, being more interested in moving their audiences emotionally rather than in maintaining precision.

Ubayd never went to Madinah to acquire knowledge from *Umm al-Muminin* Aisha (RA). She used to visit Makkah for Hajj, and during those occasions Ubayd, then a young boy, would be in her presence. It is inconceivable that Aisha (RA) would relate to a non-relative minor such a personal story about herself and Hafsa (RA) — one she never shared with anyone else in her lifetime. Reason alone rejects this possibility.

Therefore, the claim in this narration that Ubayd said *samitu Aisha* is false. Allah knows best whether this falsehood originated from Ubayd himself, from Ata ibn Abi Rabah, or from Ibn Jurayj.

Ibn Jurayj was indeed a prolific *muhaddith*, but his reputation was tainted by two flaws:

1. He was known for *tadlis* (concealing weak transmitters), a habit of narrators who knew a report was weak but still wanted it circulated without revealing its defect.
2. He practiced and advocated *mutab* (temporary marriage). Imam al-Shafi said that Ibn Jurayj contracted *mutab* with seventy women in his lifetime.

As stated in *Tabdhib al-Tabdhib* (6/360):

"وَقَالَ الشَّافِعِيُّ إِسْتَمَنَّعَ ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ بِسَبْعِينَ امْرَأَةً"

—and the learned are well aware that *mutab* is in fact a form of *zina* (fornication), though the Rafidah and Shiah sects consider it lawful and even meritorious.

This indicates that Ibn Jurayj held Rafidi leanings, though he concealed them under the guise of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation). It is thus quite possible that Ata originally said, "*yaqulu Ubayd bin Umair an Aisha (RA)*", while Ibn Jurayj, desiring to spread this false report to cast suspicion upon Mother of the Believers, Aisha (RA), changed it to "*samitu Aisha*".

This would align with the sectarian motive, since the *Rafidah* and *Shiah* harbor deep enmity and hatred toward Aisha al-Siddiqah (RA).

In any case, the first half of Ubayd ibn Umayr's narration, which he claims to have heard (*samai*), was certainly not something he actually heard from Aisha (RA). How could the Mother of the Believers have related such an absurd story? Allah alone knows from whom Ubayd ibn Umayr heard this false and senseless tale—and whoever that person was, he must have harbored malice toward Aisha (RA).

As for the latter half of his narration, which is based on conjecture (*qiyasi*), it too is absolutely false from beginning to end.

I say: even if one were to assume for argument's sake that the so-called “honey incident” did in fact occur—whether as described in Urwah's narration or as related by Ubayd ibn Umayr—still, the divine statement: " يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ " (*Al-Tabrim 66:1*) has no connection whatsoever with that story.

If this were truly the story being referred to, Allah would not have said to His Prophet (PBUH): “*Why do you prohibit for yourself that which Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives?*” Because, according to both versions of the honey story, the Prophet (PBUH) refrained from the honey not to please his wives, but because of his dislike for an unpleasant odor. Thus, the Quranic rebuke — “*tabtaghi marzata azwajika*” — would have been meaningless in that context. And it is inconceivable that any word in the Quran could be out of place or without purpose. Therefore, since this interpretation leads to such an absurdity, it must be rejected. These verses simply cannot pertain to the honey narrative.

Moreover, had Allah truly reproved the Prophet (PBUH) for forbidding himself the honey he drank at the house of Zaynab (RA) or Hafsa (RA), the Quran would have said “*lima harramta*” (past tense: “*Why did you prohibit...*”) instead of “*lima tuharrimu*” (present tense: “*Why are you prohibiting...*”).

Anyone blessed with even a modest understanding of the Quran knows that whenever the word “*wa idh*” appears, it introduces a distinct and independent event, separate from the one mentioned before it. One need only read the sixth, seventh, and eighth *ruku's* of *Surah Al-Baqarah* to see this pattern clearly.

Accordingly, in *Surah Al-Tahrim*, when Allah says: “وَإِذْ أَسْرَأَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا” it refers to an incident different from the one indicated earlier in:

" يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ. "

However, because Ubayd ibn Umayr lacked true understanding of the Quran, he mistakenly connected the verse “*wa idh asarrannabiyyu...*” to that baseless honey tale.

A detailed and explicit explanation of these verses, and indeed of the entire *Surah Al-Tabrim*, can be read in my book *Miftah al-Quran*, Volume V. Here, I will only summarize that two distinct incidents related to the Prophet's noble wives (*azwaj mutahharat*) are mentioned in these verses.

The First Incident

The first event concerns the Prophet (PBUH) intending, for the sake of his wives' satisfaction, to abstain from something lawful that Allah had permitted him. This refers to his intimate relationship with Mariyah al-Qibtiyyah (RA). She was a bondswoman of the Prophet (PBUH), and from her was born his son Ibrahim. This naturally stirred jealousy among the other wives. They requested that the Prophet (PBUH) cease relations with Mariyah (RA).

This demand was based on the reasoning that a husband is *not religiously obligated* to have conjugal relations with his slave-woman, whereas it is *obligatory* for him to maintain marital rights with his wife. Thus, if a man has two wives, neither can rightfully demand that he abstain from relations with the other, for that would be a violation of her co-wife's right. Such a demand is unlawful (*Haram*).

However, if a man has a wife and also a slave-girl, and the wife requests that he abstain from relations with the latter, her request is not unlawful, since it does not entail depriving another wife of her right. Yet, the husband is free to accept or reject such a request.

Therefore, when the Mothers of the Believers requested the Prophet (PBUH) to refrain from relations with Mariyah (RA), their demand was not legally forbidden. The Prophet (PBUH) considered that there might be no harm in accommodating them. But Allah did not approve of even this intention, for the Prophet's wives should have been seeking *his* pleasure, not the other way around.

Thus, Allah addressed His Prophet (PBUH) saying:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ"

"O Prophet, why do you prohibit (for yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you? Do you seek the approval of your wives?" (Al-Tabrim 66:1)

Meaning: It is your wives who ought to seek your approval, not you theirs, to the extent of giving up something lawful. Then Allah said:

"وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ"

"And Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." (Al-Tabrim 66:1)

— that is, your wives have acted unbecomingly in pressing this request upon you, yet forgive them, for Allah is Forgiving and Merciful; and His Prophet should display the same graciousness.

It should also be noted that the Prophet (PBUH) had only intended to comply with their request; he had not yet acted upon it. Had he actually refrained from relations with Mariyah (RA), Allah would have said "*lima harramta*" (past tense), not "*lima tuharrimu*" (present tense).

Allah's address to His Prophet (PBUH) with the words "*lima tuharrimu*..." could lead Muslims to wonder whether it is impermissible to take an oath regarding a permissible act (i.e., to declare something lawful as forbidden upon oneself). To remove this misunderstanding, Allah immediately addressed the believers, saying:

"قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَجَلَّةً أَيْمَانِكُمْ"

"Allah has prescribed for you a way to absolve yourselves from your oaths." (Al-Tabrim 66:2)

Meaning: if you have sworn to abstain from a lawful act, but later wish to resume it, Allah has already ordained the means for expiation — as detailed in Surah Al-Maidah: feeding ten needy people, or clothing them, or freeing a slave; and if unable to do any of these, fasting for three days.

Thus, taking an oath regarding a permissible act is not forbidden, for Allah has shown the way to atone for breaking such an oath.

"وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ"

"And Allah is your Master, and He is All-Knowing, All-Wise." (Al-Tabrim 66:2)

The Second Incident

The second incident that occurred around the same period was this: The Prophet (PBUH) had confided something in Hafsa (RA) as a secret. Thinking that since the Prophet (PBUH) loved Aisha (RA) dearly, there would be no harm in telling her, Hafsa (RA) shared that confidential matter with Aisha (RA). Allah informed the Prophet (PBUH) that the wife to whom he had confided a secret had disclosed it to another.

The Prophet (PBUH) said to Hafsa (RA) in a tone of reproach, “You have disclosed that secret — you did not keep it.” Instead of expressing remorse for her mistake, she asked, “Who told you about this?” She assumed that Aisha (RA) must have informed him, since she had mentioned it to no one else. The Prophet (PBUH) replied, “He informed me Who is the All-Knowing and the All-Aware” — meaning Allah Himself had told him.

Hafsa (RA) did not consider her mistake significant, nor did she express repentance. Aisha (RA) and Hafsa (RA) shared a deep affection and were closely aligned — both had earlier pressed the Prophet (PBUH) to abstain from relations with Mariyah al-Qibtiyyah (RA). Now this new incident added to their mutual entanglement.

Overwhelmed with grief, the Prophet (PBUH) swore to stay away from them for one month. Umm Salamah (RA) reported:

“أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَلَفَ أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَ عَلَى بَعْضِ أَهْلِهِ شَهْرًا”

“Indeed, the Prophet (PBUH) swore an oath that he would not enter upon some of his family for a month.”
(*Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah*)

The phrase “*bazi ahlihi*” refers to Aisha (RA) and Hafsa (RA). When a husband swears not to approach his wife, it is called *ila* in Islamic terminology. The Prophet (PBUH) had not taken *ila* from all his wives, but only from these two; however, in practice, he secluded himself from all of them for a month and stayed in the upper chamber. Hence, some narrations mention generally that the Prophet (PBUH) made *ila* from his wives, which led less-informed commentators and biographers to mistakenly think it applied to all of them.

Concerning this second event — the disclosure of the secret — Allah revealed:

“وَإِذْ أَسْرَأَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ خَدِيثًا”

“And when the Prophet (PBUH) confided a matter to one of his wives...” (*Al-Tabrim 66:3*)

That is, he told her something and instructed her not to disclose it.

“فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ”

“When she told it (to another) and Allah made it known to him, he informed her of part of it and overlooked part of it.” (*Al-Tabrim 66:3*)

That is, he mentioned her mistake in general terms, saying, “You have disclosed that matter.”

“فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِي الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ”

“When he told her about it, she said: Who informed you of this? He replied: The All-Knowing, the All-Aware informed me.” (*Al-Tabrim 66:3*)

As for what that secret was — only Allah knows. Hafsa (RA) told it solely to Aisha (RA) and never to anyone else; nor did Aisha (RA) ever mention it thereafter. None of the Companions ever sought to ask the Prophet (PBUH) about it. Therefore, we too should refrain from trying to uncover it — for neither the Quran mentions it, nor any authentic Hadith, nor has any Companion spoken of it.

اکنون کرا دماغ کہ پرسد ز باغبان
بلبل چه گفت و گل چه شنید و صبا چه کرد

“Who now has the mind to ask the gardener — what did the nightingale say, what did the rose bear, and what did the breeze do?”

Indeed, the books of exegesis contain all sorts of baseless conjectures — utterly unreliable and unworthy of attention. In *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, only this statement of Umar (RA) is reported:

“وَكَانَ قَدْ أَفْسَمَ أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَ عَلَيْهِنَّ شَهْرًا، فَأَعْتَزَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ الْحَدِيثِ حِينَ أَفْسَمَهُ حَفْصَةُ
”لِعَايِشَةَ تِسْعًا وَعِشْرِينَ لَيْلَةً“

“The Prophet (PBUH) had sworn not to approach his wives for a month, and he withdrew from them for twenty-nine nights because of the matter that Hafsa (RA) had disclosed to Aisha (RA).” (*Bukhari*, No. 2468, 5191; *Muslim*, No. 1479)

Regarding these two noble Mothers of the Believers, Allah said:

“إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيْلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
”ظَهِيْرٌ“

“If you both repent to Allah, (it will be better for you) for your hearts have inclined to that which is not befitting you; but if you support each other against him, then surely Allah is his Protector, and Gabriel, and the righteous among the believers; and the angels thereafter are his supporters.” (*Al-Tabrim* 66:4)

That is, two paths lie before you — one right and one wrong. The right path is to repent to Allah; jealousy and rivalry have led your hearts astray, so correct yourselves. The wrong path is to persist jointly in causing the Prophet (PBUH) grief and in seeking to make him act according to your wishes. If you take that path, it will lead to your loss — you will forfeit Allah’s grace, the angels’ prayers, and the believers’ affection. Even your illustrious fathers would be grieved by you. You would be deprived of the honor of being the Prophet’s wives. And do not imagine that Allah cannot provide His Messenger with better wives than you — more virtuous and better in character.

These two incidents, in themselves, were not particularly grave. But the *Mothers of the Believers* were no ordinary women — they were exalted far above the level of other believing women. Allah had honored them with the companionship of that greatest of all beings, of whom it may be truly said: “After God, you are the greatest — the story is short.” Therefore, even for such apparently small matters, Allah subjected them to such stern admonition that their story was recorded forever in the Quran — so that they themselves, reading these verses throughout their lives, might feel remorse: “Ah, if only we had not erred against the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).” And the Mother of the Believers who had disclosed that secret would sigh: “If only I had not done so.”

May the sons and daughters of these noble Mothers — that is, all believing men and women — as they read these verses, perceive upon the luminous and pure countenance of their noble Mothers these two small beauty spots of human imperfection.

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اَزْوَاجِهِ كَمَا تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضٰى وَعَدَدَ مَا تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضٰى

“O Allah, send blessings and peace upon Your Messenger Muhammad and upon his wives, as You love and are pleased — in the number that You love and are pleased.”

[To be continued]

SIR SYED'S THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND METHODOLOGY: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

Waris Mazhari

The 'Point of View' column is reserved for writings by various thinkers. The institution is not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed in the articles published therein.

Introduction

Sir Syed wrote on a wide range of subjects, yet the central aspect of his thought relates to *Ilm al-Kalam* (Islamic theology). As the herald of Islamic modernism in the Indian subcontinent, he sought to advance the project of reconstruction of Islamic thought. It appears that the term *modern Ilm al-Kalam* was first used in this region by Sir Syed himself,⁸ though the task of developing and systematizing this intellectual enterprise was mainly undertaken by Shibli Nu'mani. In this regard, Shibli's book *Al-Kalam* was the first Urdu treatise on the subject.

According to Sir Syed's thought, the foremost requirement of the modern age was to reconstruct Islamic intellectual tradition on rational foundations. He made this the focal point of his intellectual endeavor, formulated the principles of modern theology, and sought harmony between reason (*aql*) and revelation (*naql*) in light of those principles. There is no doubt that in doing so he often stumbled, fell into intellectual fallacies, and the erroneous conclusions drawn from faulty premises left negative effects on many minds. Yet, this was not unprecedented in the history of Islamic thought. The rich intellectual tradition of Islam has evolved through diverse tendencies and philosophical engagements throughout the ages.

This article attempts to examine Sir Syed's theological thought and methodology, to evaluate its intellectual worth and to bring out both its positive and negative aspects.

Sir Syed's Contribution to Theology

Sir Syed turned his attention to the reconstruction of *Ilm al-Kalam* at a time when very few minds in the Muslim world were reflecting on this issue. Among his contemporaries were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Mufti Muhammad Abduh, both eminent reformist thinkers from other parts of the Muslim world. However, while Afghani focused primarily on political reform within Islam, Mufti Abduh emphasized the renewal of Islamic religious thought. Yet, his work *Risalat al-Tawhid*,⁹ based on the philosophical framework of ancient Greek thought, could not adequately address the intellectual challenges posed by modernity.¹⁰

In contrast, Sir Syed took Islamic thought as a whole as his subject—especially Islamic theology (divine metaphysics)—and sought to reformulate it in accordance with contemporary rational demands. In fact, Shibli

⁸ Compilation of Lectures and Speeches, Aligarh, Sir Syed Academy, Aligarh Muslim University 2010, p. 292

⁹ Its Urdu translation, authored by the undersigned, was published by Global Media Publications, New Delhi, in 2019.

¹⁰ Abd al-Majid al-Sharafi, *Al-Islam wa al-Hadathab*, Tunis: Al-Dar al-Tunisiyyah li al-Nashr, 1991, p. 44 ff.

derived inspiration and courage from Sir Syed's intellectual initiative, which led him to author significant works such as *Ilm al-Kalam* and *Al-Kalam*. It can thus be said that Sir Syed laid the foundations of modern theology in the Indian subcontinent, Shibli was the first to delineate its framework systematically, and Iqbal ultimately presented it as a coherent philosophical system.

Sir Syed was the first to emphasize, with full intellectual vigor, that the corpus of *Ilm al-Kalam*—developed within the mold of Greek philosophy and logic and still taught in our seminaries—had become obsolete in the modern age. It was widely recognized that just as Greek philosophy once emerged as a rival to religion during the Abbasid period, modern science had now assumed that position in the contemporary era. But it was Sir Syed who articulated this shift forcefully and made it a matter of intellectual consciousness.

The dominance of Asharite thought had created extremes in reconciling reason and revelation. The Maturidi school, though it sought to restore balance between Mutazilism and Asharism, could not remove the prevailing Asharite influence in this region. Sir Syed struck a powerful blow against that dominance and set before himself the goal of reviving the long-suppressed philosophical tradition of Islam. His efforts were not without effect; they left a lasting intellectual impact. As Iqbal wrote:

“He was the first Indian Muslim to feel the need for a modern orientation of Islam, and not only did he perceive this necessity, he also worked upon it. We may differ with Sir Syed’s religious views, yet we cannot deny that it was his restless spirit that first sensed the challenge of the modern age and strove to reinterpret Islam in its light.”¹¹

Sir Syed's Theological Method and Its Characteristics

A substantial body of literature has been written in refutation of Sir Syed's theological views, beginning even during his own lifetime. Yet, it is a fact that few have examined his theological thought with intellectual seriousness and impartiality. Most analyses have focused primarily on highlighting the shortcomings of his religious thought. There is no denying that deviations are indeed evident in his theology, but within the broader Islamic intellectual tradition, these are not entirely alien.

Sir Syed's thought is often presented in connection with Mutazilism, giving the impression that his entire intellectual framework was molded in Mutazilite thought. This is not entirely accurate. While he did follow the Mu'tazila in certain issues—such as affirming, like them, that the divine attributes are identical with the divine essence, and siding with them completely on the question of the intrinsic goodness or badness (*Husn wa qubh*) of things—his core religious outlook was in fact more deeply influenced by the Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

Under the Neoplatonic influence, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina interpreted Islamic metaphysics in such a way as to reconcile reason and revelation. Sir Syed's rationalist temperament found this approach congenial. Consequently, concepts such as prophethood, Gabriel, angels, jinn, resurrection, and heaven and hell underwent reinterpretation in his thought. He adopted explanations close to those of the philosophers, often interpreting them figuratively rather than literally.

For instance, al-Farabi viewed a prophet as a person whose imaginative faculty (*quwwah mutakhayyilah*) had attained perfection and whose soul had become detached from sensory perception—allowing it to receive

¹¹ Iqbal, *Islam and the Ahmadi Movement*, Anjuman Khuddam al-Din, Lahore, 1963, p. 12.

emanation from the Active Intellect (*aql faal*).¹² In this scheme, no external agency mediates revelation to the prophet. Sir Syed similarly referred to the inner faculty within the prophet himself as *quwwat-e-jibriliyyah*¹³—the “Gabrielic faculty.” The underlying idea in both views is the same.

Despite all their rationalism, the Mutazilites—unlike the philosophers—remained within or close to the orthodox framework of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* in their understanding of prophethood and the afterlife. In these matters, their divergence from the Muslim philosophers is quite pronounced.

Viewed from this perspective, Sir Syed did not introduce an entirely new intellectual paradigm; rather, he sought to revive and follow the same rationalist line of thought whose vitality had been largely curtailed by al-Ghazali.¹⁴ Though weakened, that tradition had not vanished altogether, for Ibn Rushd’s philosophy continued to find acceptance among a circle of learned scholars. In essence, Sir Syed aligned himself with Ibn Rushd in opposition to al-Ghazali and endeavored to advance the *Rationalist (Rushdian)* outlook in the modern age through new arguments and reasoning. Just as he had studied al-Ghazali in detail, he had also benefited deeply from Ibn Rushd’s philosophical ideas. He understood the foundational principles of Ibn Rushd’s thought, which aided him in shaping his own intellectual methodology.

In my view, the true originality of Sir Syed’s thought does not lie in offering a rational justification of Islamic metaphysics per se, but in applying this philosophical mode of reasoning to the *exegesis of the Quran*. It was precisely this approach that provoked widespread opposition to him. Within the Sunni intellectual framework, Sir Syed was the first in the modern era to employ this philosophical perspective systematically in Quranic interpretation.

To grasp the essential direction of Sir Syed’s theological methodology, one must refer to his treatise *Tabrir fi Usul al-Tafsir* (“A Treatise on the Principles of Exegesis”). There, he enumerated fifteen principles of Quranic interpretation through which he sought to clarify his hermeneutical position. In addition, his correspondence with Maulana Qasim Nanautawi—later published under the title *Tasfiyyat al-Aqaid*—and several of his essays further expound certain of these principles. Taking all these writings together, the contours of Sir Syed’s theological and rational methodology may be understood under three fundamental headings, which capture the essential aspects of his system.

The Principle of Nature (*Usul al-Fitrah*)

One of Sir Syed’s most fundamental principles is that which he articulated in relation to the *Law of Nature*. According to him, the law of nature upon which the order of the universe rests is the “Work of God,” a *practical covenant*, whereas revelation (the Quran) is the “Word of God,” a *verbal covenant*. Since both proceed from the same divine source, conflict or contradiction between them is impossible. The law of nature is immutable and invariable; therefore, any interpretation of revelation that leads to opposition or contradiction with it must be deemed incorrect.¹⁵

¹² For Al-Farabi’s views on revelation and prophethood, see:

Kitab Ara’ Ahl al-Madinah al-Fadilah, Chapter 26, edited and annotated by Albert Nasri Nader, Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1968, p. 114.

¹³ Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Tabrir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1995, p. 32.

¹⁴ It would not be correct to assume that Al-Ghazali, through *Tabafut al-Falasifah* and his other writings, completely eliminated the philosophical tendency. In fact, Al-Ghazali’s real achievement in this regard was to curb philosophical intrusions and subtleties within the domain of theology. In other fields, however, the influence of philosophy largely persisted—the most significant among them being the field of Sufism.

¹⁵ *Tabrir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, pp. 37–42.

One may claim, he concedes, that exceptions to the law of nature are possible; however, he insists that such exceptions cannot be *proved*. In his own words:

“Rational possibility (*imkan aqli*) is not an existent reality; it is merely a mental supposition devoid of actuality.”¹⁶

Sir Syed’s critics strongly attacked this position, but their criticisms only made him more resolute in it.

Al-Ghazali, for his part, had classified the *naturalists* (*tabiyyun*) of his time among the heretical groups, because, according to him, they denied the *re-creation of the annihilated* (*iadah al-madum*),¹⁷ thereby rejecting the afterlife and the realities of Paradise and Hell.¹⁸ In contrast, Sir Syed, while criticizing al-Ghazali, counted himself—positively and consciously—among the naturalists.¹⁹

Ignoring the metaphysical intricacies of the debate on *iadah al-madum*, Sir Syed held firmly to its implications: that bodily resurrection is impossible, and that Paradise and Hell are metaphorical, not literal realities. Al-Ghazali, on the other hand, regarded any allegorical interpretation (*tawil*) of eschatological realities as tantamount to their denial and, consequently, an act of disbelief. On this very ground, he had pronounced Ibn Sina and al-Farabi unbelievers.²⁰ Sir Syed, however, was a severe critic of this view.²¹ He argued that al-Ghazali’s position was internally inconsistent: in *al-Iqtisad fi al-Itiqad* he treated the Balance (*Mizan*) and certain other aspects of the Hereafter as real, whereas in *al-Madnun bibi ala ghayri ablihi* he took them metaphorically.²²

Although Sir Syed’s insistence on making this principle—the harmony of revelation and nature—the *key* to Quranic interpretation was certainly misplaced, his stance, nonetheless, stands intellectually closer to that of the Muslim philosophers (*falasifah*). Influenced by Greek philosophy, these thinkers interpreted existential reality primarily through rational demonstration (*burhan*), and insisted that scriptural interpretation must conform to this demonstrative truth.

As Ibn Rushd writes in *Fasl al-Maqal*:

ونحن نقطع قطعاً أن كل ما أدى إليه البرهان وخالفه ظاهر الشرع، أن ذلك الظاهر يقبل التأويل على قانون التأويل العربي. وهذه القضية لا يشك فيها مسلم ولا يرتاب بها مؤمن. وما أعظم ازدياد اليقين بها عند من زاولها هذا المعنى وجربه وقصد هذا المقصد من الجمع بين المعقول والمنقول

“We hold with absolute certainty that whenever a demonstrative proof (*burhan*) leads to a conclusion that conflicts with the apparent meaning of the Law, that apparent meaning must be interpreted figuratively, according to the principles of Arabic interpretation. No Muslim can doubt this, nor can any believer hesitate

¹⁶ *Tabrir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, pp. 42.

¹⁷ Most of the Greek philosophers believed that after death, the human body disintegrates into its constituent elements and ceases to exist, making its reconstitution impossible. They held that the rational faculty of man depends on his temperament; therefore, when the temperament no longer remains in its original state, the rational faculty also ceases to exist. In this way, the soul, once extinguished, cannot live again.

— Al-Syed al-Sharif al-Jurjani, *Sbarh al-Mawaqif* by Adud al-Din al-Iji, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1998, 8:321–327.

¹⁸ *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, pp. 35–36, included in *Majmuat Rasail Imam al-Ghazali* (annotated, sourced, and introduced by Ahmad Shams al-Din), Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1988.

¹⁹ *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed* (ed. Maulana Muhammad Ismail Panipati), Lahore: Majlis-e-Taraqqi-e-Adab, 1984, vol. 3, p. 68.

²⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Tabafut al-Falasiyah* (edited and introduced by Dr. Sulayman al-Dunya), Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 8th ed., n.d., pp. 307–308.

²¹ *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed*, vol. 3, pp. 70–71.

²² *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed*, vol. 3, p. 85 and onward.

*in accepting it. Indeed, those who have pursued the reconciliation of reason and revelation, and have experienced this process, find their conviction in this truth only deepened.*²³

Ibn Rushd's position is explicit: whenever the apparent meaning of revelation contradicts demonstrative reason, the text must be interpreted in light of reason—not the other way around. Thus, within his rational project, revelation becomes subordinate, and reason assumes primacy.

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, explaining the epistemological difference between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd, observed that for al-Ghazali, knowledge descends from the *world of the unseen (malakut)* through revelation to the *world of sensory experience*, whereas for Ibn Rushd it ascends in the opposite direction—from the natural world to the metaphysical realm. The natural world, in his view, is the necessary prelude to metaphysical understanding.²⁴

Sir Syed essentially subscribed to the same perspective. He absorbed the influence of European *naturalists*, for in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries naturalistic thought had become increasingly dominant, and much of Europe's anti-clerical intellectual activity was shaped by it. Yet it would be incorrect to say that Sir Syed's thought *originated* in this Western trend. Rather, he found within the Islamic intellectual tradition itself a similar rationalist inclination, upon which he built his system—while benefiting further from modern Western naturalism.

The distinction lies in this: whereas Ibn Rushd sought to comprehend the “existential reality” within the universal framework of Greek philosophy, Sir Syed reinterpreted that same reality under the *Principle of Nature*, integrating it with the modern scientific worldview as a structural element of his own thought.

The Theory of *Tawil* (Interpretation)

The issue of *tawil*—the figurative or interpretive understanding of scriptural texts—has been a subject of debate and contention within the Islamic intellectual tradition from its earliest period. The *mubaddithun* (traditionists) generally reject the idea of *tawil* altogether, a stance systematized and reinforced through rigorous argumentation by Ibn Taymiyyah. On the other hand, the philosophers (*falasifah*) give *tawil* a central place in understanding revelation and seek to interpret Islamic metaphysics in light of it. Between these two extremes stand the Asharites and the Mutazilites—the former employing *tawil* with great caution, and the latter using it with relative freedom.

Sir Syed, in principle, adopted the philosophical position, yet in several specific issues he appears closer to the Mutazilites. For example, he does not accept the notion of *rational possibility (imkan aqli)* or *mental existence (wujud dhibni)*, though these are universally acknowledged among the Greek and Muslim philosophers. Moreover, the Muslim philosophers hold that a prophet may, for the sake of public comprehension, express something contrary to reality if the people are incapable of grasping the truth. Sir Syed rejects this idea. However, he does concede:

*“If people are accustomed to certain ideas, and those ideas are not contrary to the purposes of prophethood but rather supportive of them, then the prophets do not concern themselves with their truth or falsehood; instead, they address people in accordance with those very ideas.”*²⁵

²³ Ibn Rushd, *Fasl al-Maqal fi Taqdir ma bayn al-Shariah wa al-Hikmah min al-Ittisal* (with introduction and preface by Dr. Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri), Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-Arabiyyah, 1997, p. 98.

²⁴ Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Al-Khitab wa al-Tawil*, Casablanca: Al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi, 2008, p. 47.

²⁵ Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayat-e-Javed*, Arslan Books, Kashmir, 2000, vol. 2, p. 156.

In the matter of *tawil*, Sir Syed's position diverges significantly from almost all schools that advocate interpretation. For him, *tawil* means that if the apparent meaning of a statement does not conform to reason or fact, then one must seek another meaning that renders the statement correct and coherent:

*“When the apparent meaning of a statement is found inconsistent with reality, then other meanings should be adopted so that the statement becomes true. And if it is established that the speaker's real intention was precisely that meaning which is revealed through interpretation, then that is not tawil but rather the exposition of the speaker's actual intent.”*²⁶

Ordinarily, *tawil* among the interpreters of old means abandoning the literal meaning of a word in favor of a figurative one—for example, using *asad* (lion) to mean a brave man rather than the animal. Sir Syed, however, does not regard this as *tawil*. In his view, such usage simply means that the speaker *intended* the figurative sense directly. His approach thus approximates that of the *muhaddithun*, who deny that such instances constitute *tawil*. According to Sir Syed, meanings that are conventionally labeled “metaphorical,” such as interpreting *yad* (hand) as “power,” are already inherent in the semantic range of the word from the very outset of linguistic usage. Hence, he maintains that a word's signification includes all such connotations and that there is no need to treat them as secondary or derivative meanings.²⁷

A second major feature of Sir Syed's concept of *tawil* is his belief that the miraculous character of Quranic language lies precisely in its *dynamic and evolving meanings*. The meanings of its words, he argues, cannot be confined to fixed and final interpretations.²⁸ He adopted this view mainly to shield himself from the objection that his rational reconciliation of the *Work of God* (natural law) and the *Word of God* (revelation)—based on contemporary scientific theories—would collapse once those theories changed.

The objection to Sir Syed's position is indeed substantial, whereas his response to it carries little weight. The question that arises is: what significance remains for words and idioms that serve as the very foundation and measure of meaning, once it is assumed that any possible interpretation—red, white, black, or otherwise—is equally valid? If one allows for the possibility that “earth” might signify “heaven” and “heaven” might signify “earth,” then the text itself loses all intrinsic importance. In fact, this approach no longer explains the text but rather invents it. Such a stance closely resembles the Western hermeneutic approach to textual interpretation, according to which, after the author's death, it is up to the reader to determine how and on what basis meanings are to be derived from the text.

Sir Syed studied Al-Ghazali's thought on *tawil* (interpretation), and he was acquainted with Al-Ghazali's principal writings on the subject,²⁹ in which the latter sought to establish essential principles and rules for legitimate interpretation. Especially in his *Qanun al-Tawil*, Al-Ghazali advanced a balanced interpretive framework between the two extreme tendencies of the traditionalists (*muhaddithun*) and the rationalists (*Mutazilah*). Sir Syed, however, held that declaring anyone an unbeliever (*takfir*) is impermissible unless that person independently derives a meaning of the most explicit Quranic verse that contradicts its clear intent. In this way, he effectively grants every individual the personal right of interpretation—no matter what kind of *tawil* he employs to justify his position.

²⁶ *Tabrir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, p. 55.

²⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Risalah al-Madaniyyah* (ed. Al-Waleed ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Farayan), p. 53.

²⁸ *Tabrir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, p. 61.

²⁹ In the third volume of *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed*, several essays reference various books and treatises of Al-Ghazali. Moreover, in numerous writings, Sir Syed can be seen engaging with and discussing Ghazali's theological thought.

In this regard, Sir Syed seems unwilling to accept any fixed principles or boundaries. Al-Ghazali, by contrast, had laid down that *tawil* is impermissible in the fundamentals of faith (*usul al-iman*), which, according to him, are three: belief in God, belief in the Messenger, and belief in the Hereafter. Beyond these essentials, *tawil* may apply only to subsidiary matters (*furu*), and even then not to what is established by *tawatur* (definitive transmission)—for instance, the fact that the Kabah is located in Makkah, or the exoneration of Ayshah (RA) from the slander of *Ifk*, which is explicitly affirmed in the Quran.³⁰

Sir Syed, however, strongly criticizes this position and argues that even in such matters an individual should be free to interpret. He contends, for example, that one might claim that the *original* Kabah burned down in the time of Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, and that when he rebuilt it, al-Hajjaj demolished it again³¹—so a person could, in principle, understand the term *Kabah* differently. By such reasoning, the *obvious and apparent meaning* (*mana mutabadar ila al-dhibn*) loses all formal authority—the very foundation upon which the scholars of *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) had insisted.

Similarly, while Sir Syed, following the classical scholars, insists on adhering to the Arabic language and idiom in interpretation, he simultaneously declares that Arabic itself is *probabilistic* (*ẓanni*) in nature.³² In matters of vocabulary and usage, he advances an independent theoretical claim: that exegetes typically determine a word's meaning according to their own predispositions and then seek lexical confirmation in the poetry of the pre-Islamic Arabs. According to Sir Syed, since much of that poetry has been lost, any attempt to prove a meaning by appealing to it is logically precarious—one may as well assume that the needed evidence once existed but is now lost.

Adopting such concepts regarding the Arabic language became a necessity for Sir Syed so that an unlimited scope for interpretive freedom could remain available in understanding and explaining the text. However, he failed to reflect on the logical consequence of rejecting this linguistic standard—namely, that in doing so, the established existence of definitive (*mubkam*) meanings within the Quran is abolished, rendering the entire text ambiguous (*mutashabih*). As a result, the very foundation of faith collapses, since it cannot be built upon doubt or conjecture.

Moreover, he did not consider how the charge against the Divine Lawgiver could then be refuted—that God has obligated human beings to believe in and act upon matters that are vague, unclear, and therefore inherently uncertain, while making them the basis of eternal salvation or damnation. Sir Syed, according to his own formulated principles, regards the *tawil* (interpretation) of Quranic verses as disbelief (*kufir*).³³

However, these meanings of *tawil* are the product of Sir Syed's own intellectual construction. His reasoning seems to be: why should he not have the right to establish principles for understanding and interpreting sacred texts, and why should this right remain confined to figures such as Imam al-Shafi or Ibn Taymiyyah? In principle, this may appear justifiable, yet the meaning of *tawil* he presents is neither linguistically accurate nor consistent with

³⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Faysal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah* (edited and annotated by Mahmoud Bijou), Damascus: Maktabah Dar al-Bayroti, pp. 61–62.

³¹ *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed*, vol. 3, pp. 160–161.

³² *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed*, vol. 3, p. 163.

³³ Some of Sir Syed's critics have expressed astonishment at this apparent "contradiction": on the one hand, Sir Syed considers *ta'wil* (allegorical interpretation) to be disbelief, while on the other, he adopts an extremely liberal approach to *ta'wil*. They have, however, failed to consider what Sir Syed actually means by *ta'wil*. As clarified in the preceding discussion, for Sir Syed, *ta'wil* signifies the correction of an error in the speaker's words—and in this sense, the *ta'wil* of a revealed text would indeed amount to disbelief.

the discourse of the Divine Lawgiver.³⁴ Thus, apart from silence, no viable alternative remains. The truth is that Sir Syed's thought concerning *tawil* is, in principle, marked by extremity and imbalance.

[To be continued....]



³⁴ See Ibn Manzur al-Ifriqi, *Lisan al-Arab*, vol. 11, pp. 32–33.

Language and its vocabulary are based on transmitted usage (*sama*), and independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) in this domain is not permissible. However, Sir Syed regards even the commonly accepted meanings of *tawil* as conjectural (*zanni*), on the grounds that the Arabic lexicons which have reached us are themselves conjectural. (*Maqalat-e-Sir Syed*, vol. 3, p. 164).

THE CORRECT CONCEPT OF AL-KHARAJ BI AL-DAMAN

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

A man once came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) for judgment. Aishah (RA) narrates:

فردّه عليه، فقال (PBUH) أن رجلاً ابتاع غلاماً فأقام عنده ما شاء الله أن يقيم، ثم وجد به عيباً فخاصمه إلى النبي
: "الخراج بالضمنان (PBUH) الرجل: يا رسول الله، قد استغل غلامي، فقال رسول الله

A man purchased a slave who remained with him for some time as Allah willed. Later, he discovered a defect in the slave and brought the case before the Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) returned the slave to the seller. The buyer then said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he has benefited from my slave.' The Prophet (PBUH) replied: 'Profit is due with responsibility.' (Abu Dawud, No. 3510)

In Arabic, the root meaning of *daman* (ضمنان) is *to assume responsibility*.³⁵ Lexicographers explain it as *al-kafalah wa al-iltizam*—that is, *suretyship and commitment*. Accordingly, the meaning of *al-kharaj bi al-daman* in this context is that while the slave was under the buyer's possession, his food, care, and protection were all the buyer's responsibility. Justice therefore required that the profit gained during that period also belong to him, for the benefit was a direct and necessary outcome of that responsibility.

This narration, in its original context, was simply a judicial ruling in one particular case. However, later jurists, following their own methods of reasoning, treated it as a general legal maxim. They understood *daman* here to mean *liability for loss*, and on that basis derived the principle that *the right to profit belongs only to the one who bears the risk of loss*. From this interpretation, Hanafi jurists such as Imam al-Sarakhsi and Imam al-Kasani formulated the rule that any financial transaction in which one party does not assume any liability for loss amounts to *earning profit on capital alone*, which, in their view, constitutes *riba* (usury).

In our view, this interpretation is questionable on two counts:

First, the jurists restricted the meaning of *daman* merely to financial loss. Linguistically, however, the term fundamentally signifies *taking responsibility*. Bearing a loss is only one possible *manifestation* of that responsibility, not its defining essence. To present it as the primary meaning of the word is to impose one of its logical applications upon the original sense. In reality, the nature of *daman* varies with each contract:

- In a loan, it refers to the obligation to repay the debt.
- In a trust (*amanah*), it signifies care and safekeeping.
- In a sale, it refers to the mutual obligations stipulated between the parties.
- In the present Hadith, it pertains to the responsibility for maintenance and protection.

Thus, every transaction defines its own form of “responsibility” in accordance with its nature. It is therefore incorrect—both linguistically and contextually—to universalize one specific form of *daman* and treat profit as necessarily dependent upon bearing loss.

³⁵ Aqrab al-Mawarid, page 690

Second, the jurists applied the maxim *al-kharaj bi al-daman* to the contract of *mudarabah* (partnership of capital and labor) and, on that basis, held that the financier (*rabb al-mal*) bears liability for loss. Since, in their reasoning, profit is always tied to liability, they concluded that the financier is the rightful recipient of profit. But in reality, both parties in a *mudarabah* assume distinct forms of responsibility:

- The financier undertakes to provide the capital.
- The entrepreneur (*amil*) undertakes to safeguard and employ that capital productively.

Since the *amil* assumes operational responsibility, any loss in trade naturally falls upon him. Hence, the profit arises from the mutual fulfillment of both responsibilities—the financier’s provision of capital and the entrepreneur’s management and care.

It therefore becomes evident that confining *al-kharaj bi al-daman* merely to the notion of *bearing loss* is inconsistent with the Arabic language, incompatible with the context of the narration, and incongruent with the intrinsic logic of contractual responsibilities.

WERE THE QURAYSH AFRAID OF THE CALIPHATE OF BANU HASHIM?

Dr. Irfan Shehzad

In Response to a Comment by Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir.

Since pre-Islamic times, the political and religious leadership of the Quraysh rested with Banu Abd Manaf. The political leadership was held by Banu Abd Shams, and this remained with the descendants of his son, Umayyah, while the religious responsibilities were undertaken by Banu Hashim. These two clans, united under the common ancestry of Banu Abd Manaf, were allies and considered one cohesive entity against their rivals. Due to frequent intermarriages, they were bound through in-law, maternal, and paternal relations. Their chiefs were often close friends, confidants, and protectors of one another.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was from Banu Hashim, and in his person, both religious and political authority were united. After the Prophet (PBUH), Banu Abd Manaf naturally desired that political authority remain with them, as before. In particular, within Banu Hashim arose the aspiration that, since sovereignty had first come to their family, its continuation should remain therein. The problem, however, was that among Banu Hashim, there was no one who could be presented as a universally acceptable candidate for the caliphate. The only available contender was Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA), a young man of about thirty at the time, without an established political career. Nonetheless, by virtue of his kinship and marital relation with the Prophet (PBUH), he could be advanced as a candidate.

However, within the community formed by the Prophet (PBUH), the traditional criteria for leadership had undergone a significant transformation. Those who had long accompanied the Prophet (PBUH) in his mission, made sacrifices, and distinguished themselves in managing the collective affairs of Muslims were naturally regarded as more deserving of leadership. Among them, the most prominent were Abu Bakr (RA) — from Banu Taym — and Umar (RA) — from Banu Adi. These were comparatively smaller clans among Quraysh.

Both Banu Hashim and Banu Umayyah's leaders had initially opposed Islam and were late in embracing it. Hence, to the emerging Muslim community, they were not yet acceptable as leaders. Consequently, the chief of Banu Hashim, al-Abbas (RA); the chief of Banu Umayyah, Abu Sufyan; and their ally from Banu Asad, al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (RA) — whose mother, Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib, was the Prophet's paternal aunt — all endeavored, immediately after the Prophet's passing, to establish Ali (RA) from Banu Hashim as the caliph, since he was the most viable candidate among them.

'Uthman ibn Affan (RA) of Banu Umayyah — elder in age and highly esteemed for his wealth and generosity — could have been a more fitting caliphal candidate for Banu Abd Manaf, but he was not himself seeking the position, nor could the Muslims have preferred him over Abu Bakr and Umar (RA). Thus, despite his youth and limited political standing, Ali (RA) emerged as a claimant to the caliphate.

When, at the time of the third caliph's election, consensus was reached upon 'Uthman (RA), the leadership of the Quraysh and the Muslim polity once again returned to Banu Abd Manaf. Yet even then, the caliphate did not

go to Banu Hashim. Later, when finally a member of Banu Hashim, Ali (RA), ascended to the caliphate, the Quraysh did not fully accept his authority.

The Quraysh's reluctance in this regard stemmed from other reasons: they were displeased by Ali's (RA) delay in pursuing the *qisas* (retribution) for 'Uthman's murder and by his perceived leniency toward the rebels. Yet, it was this situation that fostered the impression that the Quraysh, from the very beginning, had conspired to keep Banu Hashim away from the caliphate. This notion gained strength from certain historical reports in which Ali (RA) and Umar (RA) themselves alluded to this perception, as well as from the well-known incident during the election of the first caliph, when Umar (RA) intervened and disrupted a meeting of Banu Abd Manaf that was deliberating on appointing Ali (RA) as caliph.

Regarding the Quraysh's attitude toward Banu Hashim, the following report is attributed to Ali (RA):

قَتَفُولُ: إِنْ وُلِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَنُو هَاشِمٍ لَمَّا تَخْرُجْ مِنْهُمْ أَبَدًا، وَمَا كَانَتْ فِي غَيْرِهِمْ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ تَدَاوَلْتُمُوهَا بَيْنَكُمْ.

You say that if the leadership is given to Banu Hashim, it will never leave them. But if it remains among other clans of Quraysh, it will circulate among you. (Tarikh al-Tabari 4/233)

A similar report is narrated from Umar (RA):

Abd Allah ibn Abbas narrated: I once traveled with Umar. On the way, he asked me, 'Do you know why your people (Banu Hashim) were excluded from the matter of the caliphate?' I said I did not. He said, 'I know the reason — they disliked that prophethood and caliphate be combined in your family.'" (Ansab al-Ashraf, al-Baladhuri, 10/378)

Based on these reports, Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir has stated that although, given the stature of Abu Bakr (RA) and Umar (RA), it was not possible for Ali (RA) to be chosen as caliph, even if there had been a man among Banu Hashim equal to these great Companions, the Quraysh would still have hesitated to select him. (See: Video Series "Tafhim al-Athar," Episode 56.)

However, this assumption — that even if a person of the caliber of Abu Bakr or Umar had existed among Banu Hashim, the Quraysh would have conspired to keep him from the caliphate — is not only speculative but also a serious accusation. The reality is that there was no suitable candidate for the caliphate among Banu Hashim at the time, such that the Quraysh would have needed to scheme to exclude him. This is precisely why Banu Hashim were never seriously discussed — positively or negatively — in the first two caliphal selections.

If one accepts the idea that the Quraysh deliberately worked to keep Banu Hashim away from the caliphate, it would raise doubts about the integrity and honesty of those leading the Quraysh — the foremost of the Companions at that time. Yet, when viewed in historical context, this impression is dispelled. In fact, as will become clear from the evidence that follows, it was through the support and mentorship of the caliphs themselves that Ali (RA) eventually became capable of being considered for leadership. His natural temperament and intellectual orientation were such that they initially stood in the way of political prominence. Just as he did not play a central political role during the Prophet's (PBUH) lifetime, he remained on the periphery of political affairs during the periods of the preceding caliphs as well.

This can be seen from the following details:

During the Prophet's (PBUH) lifetime, Ali (RA) neither held any official position nor, except on one or two occasions, was entrusted with administrative responsibility. Even when the Prophet (PBUH) left Madinah, he was never appointed as his deputy there. During the expedition of Tabuk, Ali (RA) was assigned to look after the

affairs of Banu Hashim, while Muhammad ibn Maslamah (RA) was appointed as the Prophet's acting representative in Madinah.³⁶

Until the later years of the Prophetic period, Ali (RA) still regarded himself as an inexperienced youth, and the Prophet (PBUH) did not dispute this self-assessment. The following narration illustrates this:

عن علي، قال: بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى اليمن قاضيًا، فقلت: يا رسول الله، ترسلني وأنا حديث السن، ولا علم لي بالقضاء، فقال: 'إن الله سيهدي قلبك، ويثبت لسانك، فإذا جلس بين يديك الخصمان فلا تقضين حتى تسمع من الآخر كما سمعت من الأول فإنه أحرى أن يتبين لك القضاء'، قال: فما زلت قاضيًا أو ما شككت في قضاء بعد.

Ali (RA) said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) sent me as a judge to Yemen. I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, you are sending me as a judge while I am still young and have no knowledge of judicial matters.' He (PBUH) replied, 'Allah will guide your heart and keep your tongue firm. When two parties appear before you, do not decide until you have heard the other side as you have heard the first — for that is most likely to make the judgment clear to you.' Ali said: After that, I continued to give judgments, and I never doubted any judgment I made.' (Abu Dawood, No. 3582)

Here, the Prophet (PBUH) acknowledged and encouraged Ali's (RA) potential in judicial matters — the ability to decide legal cases — not necessarily the administrative or political experience required for statecraft. Prior to becoming caliph, Ali (RA) never had an opportunity to acquire that kind of political experience.

Swordsmanship was his strength, but he was never appointed as the commander of an army. In the Battle of Khaybar, he conquered *Qamus*,³⁷ a subfort of the larger fortress *Katibiyyah* — and this was his main contribution to that campaign.

For these reasons, during the elections of the first two caliphs, no one among the general body of Muslims even mentioned Ali (RA) as a candidate.

During the eras of the caliphs as well, Ali (RA) neither held any governmental office nor participated in any military expeditions abroad. He played no role in the series of conquests that took place across various fronts. Nevertheless, his gradual rise in political stature was entirely due to the patronage and mentorship of the caliphs themselves. This becomes evident from the following facts:

Abu Bakr (RA) appointed Ali (RA) as the commander of a contingent responsible for the defense of Madinah and, for the first time, included him in collective consultations on state affairs.

Umar (RA) maintained a special relationship with the Prophet's (PBUH) family and consistently gave them precedence in matters of honor and respect. He granted to Ali (RA) and his sons stipends equal to those of the senior Companions (*Kitab al-Kharaj*, pp. 43–44).

From the income of the *fay* lands of Banu Nadir and Fadak, the share allocated to *dhu al-qurba* (the Prophet's relatives) continued as per established practice, and Ali (RA) was entrusted with the responsibility of distributing this wealth (*Kitab al-Kharaj*, p. 30). Umar (RA) also strengthened Ali's financial standing by granting him the estates of Yanbu' and other lands (*al-Kharaj*, *Yahya ibn Adam*, p. 73).

³⁶ Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah 11/162

³⁷ *Al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, 3/48, under the section "Husoon Katibiyyah."

Sirat Syeduna 'Ali al-Murtada, by Mawlana Muhammad Nafi', Dar al-Kitab, January 2007, Urdu Bazar, Lahore, p. 78.

During the caliphate of Uthman (RA), when the treasury expanded greatly, Ali (RA) was given a larger share of allowances than others (*al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* 5/46–47). Ali (RA) spent generously from this wealth on the people, which further increased his popularity and public support.

Umar (RA) made Ali (RA) a regular participant in political consultations and frequently appointed him as his deputy in Madinah whenever he left for travel. Thus, Umar (RA) played the most important role in cultivating Ali's political training and enhancing his stature among the people. As a result, by the time of the third caliph's election, Ali (RA) was included among the candidates for the caliphate.

Umar (RA) even expressed his personal wish that the caliphate might pass to Ali (RA) after him,³⁸ though he feared it might not happen—not because the Quraysh opposed Ali's candidacy, but because other senior Companions, whose religious, communal, and political services were more prominent, were also in consideration. These distinguished men were part of the *shura* (electoral council). However, when three of them withdrew their candidacies, the two remaining contenders were Uthman (RA) and Ali (RA). Uthman (RA), being older and more distinguished in service, was elected. Among those who withdrew, two—Talha (RA) from Banu Taym and Zubayr (RA) from Banu Asad—cast their votes in favor of Ali (RA). Umar (RA) himself had already expressed preference for him. Thus, a large segment of the Quraysh leadership stood in support of Ali (RA).

In summary: there was no suitable candidate for the caliphate among Banu Hashim. Yet, during the first caliphal election, the most powerful Quraysh clan, Banu Umayyah, and their allies, Banu Asad, sought to make Ali (RA)—a member of Banu Hashim—the caliph. Later, during the reigns of the subsequent caliphs, even though Ali (RA) neither held office nor performed state service, his political stature was continuously nurtured until, at the time of the third caliph's election, prominent Quraysh leaders such as Umar (RA), Zubayr (RA), and Talha (RA) were among his supporters.

No self-admitted statement from the Quraysh exists to substantiate the accusation that they collectively sought to exclude Banu Hashim from the caliphate. In none of the discussions surrounding any caliphal election is there mention of any deliberate intent to bar them. There was no need for such an exclusion, since there was, in truth, no qualified candidate among Banu Hashim on merit—nor among Banu Umayyah either. Even Uthman (RA), despite his dignity and virtue, was not initially seen as a competitor. Therefore, it is inconceivable that any scheme or conspiracy would have been necessary to prevent a member of Banu Hashim from attaining the caliphate.

Umar's (RA) comment regarding this perception about the Quraysh represents his personal opinion, which may be understood in light of his deep emotional attachment to the Prophet's (PBUH) family. However, if the above-mentioned accusation against the Quraysh—that they excluded Banu Hashim from the caliphate—were to apply to anyone, it would most logically apply to Umar (RA) himself, since he was the one who prevented the gathering of Banu Abd Manaf from appointing Ali (RA) as caliph during the selection of the first caliph. Yet Umar (RA) never considered himself guilty of such an act—and rightly so—because he did not merely restrain Banu Abd Manaf, but also the Ansar, from independently appointing a caliph without the collective consultation of the

³⁸ Thus, on one occasion, Umar (RA) expressed his desire as follows:

فلما خرجوا من عند عمر قال عمر: لو ولّوها الأجلح سلك بهم الطريق، فقال له ابن عمر: فما يمنعك يا أمير المؤمنين؟ قال: أكره أن أتحمّلها حياً وميتاً.

(*Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* 3/317)

"When the people left the presence of Syeduna Umar (RA), he said: 'If they appoint that one with the bald head, he will guide them along the right path.' Ibn Umar (RA) asked him: 'Then what prevents you, O Amir al-Muminin?' He replied: 'I dislike that I bear this responsibility both in life and after death.' That is, if he appoints him, the accountability for the appointed one's actions would also rest upon Umar (RA)."

Companions. His sole intention was to ensure that the nascent Muslim community did not fall into political discord at its very inception.

If the charge of excluding Banu Hashim from the caliphate could be laid against anyone, it might be directed toward Banu Umayyah—given their later conflicts with the descendants of Ali (RA). Yet, even they were initially part of the effort to appoint Ali (RA) as caliph under the tribal solidarity of Banu Abd Manaf.

Even if some within the Quraysh entertained the notion that if the caliphate passed to Banu Hashim, it would permanently remain under their control, the conduct of their leading figures contradicted this idea. It was, in fact, through their consistent support and encouragement that Ali (RA)—despite lacking any significant record of political service—rose to become a credible candidate for the caliphate.

The suspicion that the Quraysh wished to exclude Banu Hashim from leadership would only hold weight if Banu Hashim had produced a figure comparable in stature to Abu Bakr (RA) or Umar (RA) and yet he had been deliberately ignored.

If individuals like Abu Bakr (RA) and Umar (RA)—who belonged to relatively less powerful clans of the Quraysh—were chosen as caliphs due to their extraordinary religious devotion and political service to the Prophet (PBUH), then had there been anyone of equal caliber within Banu Hashim, it would have been inconceivable for him to be overlooked, especially given that he would have enjoyed the strong political backing of Banu Abd Manaf and their established tradition of leadership.



SALAT AL-TASBIH: IN THE LIGHT OF FIQH AND HADITH - 2

Dr. Amir Gazdar

Salat al-Tasbih in the References of Hanafi Jurisprudence

Just as the authors of the hadith compilations have a consistent method, so too do the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). They generally classify the diverse commands and etiquettes of religion into thematic divisions — *books (kutub)*, *chapters (abwab)*, *sections (fusul)*, or *topics (matalib)* — and then discuss the legal rulings and issues accordingly. The jurists (*fuqaha'*) typically address the voluntary (*nafl* and *tatawwu'*) prayers that are transmitted from the sayings or actions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) under the section of *Kitab al-Salah* (Book of Prayer), discussing their legal status and related rulings separately.

Thus, while conducting research on *Salat al-Tasbih*, the present writer aimed first to review the primary sources of Hanafi jurisprudence comprehensively — spanning twelve centuries — to determine whether this prayer was ever mentioned as a distinct *nafl* prayer. The questions examined were:

- Do the Hanafi jurists cite the transmitted narrations regarding this prayer as valid proofs?
- In which of the early sources of Hanafi law does this prayer appear, if at all?
- And which of the codified Hanafi works remain entirely silent on its mention?

Upon exhaustive investigation — tracing the sources of Hanafi jurisprudence from the writings of the great Imams of the second century AH up to the legal compendia of the thirteenth century AH — it was revealed that for approximately twelve hundred years, the foundational works (*ummuhāt al-kutub*) and other major references of the Hanafi school remained completely silent even about the *name* of this prayer. Listed below, in chronological order, are those sources:

1. Al-Athar, by Abu Yusuf Yaqub ibn Ibrahim al-Ansari (d. 182 AH)
2. Al-Athar, by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 189 AH)
3. Al-Asl (al-Mabsut), by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 189 AH)
4. Al-Jami al-Saghir, by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 189 AH)
5. Al-Hujjah ala Ahl al-Madinah, by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 189 AH)
6. Sharh Maani al-Athar, by Abu Jafar Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH)
7. Sharh Mushkil al-Athar, by Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH)
8. Sharh Mukhtasar al-Tahawi, by Ahmad ibn Ali Abu Bakr al-Razi al-Jassas al-Hanafi (d. 370 AH)
9. Uyun al-Masail, by Abu al-Layth Nasr ibn Muhammad al-Samarqandi (d. 373 AH)
10. Al-Tajrid, by Ahmad ibn Muhammad Abu al-Husayn al-Quduri (d. 428 AH)
11. Mukhtasar al-Quduri, by Ahmad ibn Muhammad Abu al-Husayn al-Quduri (d. 428 AH)
12. Al-Nutaf fi al-Fatawa, by Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Sughdi al-Hanafi (d. 461 AH)
13. Al-Nukat, by Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abi Sahl Shams al-Aimmah al-Sarakhsi (d. 483 AH)
14. Al-Mabsut, by Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abi Sahl Shams al-Aimmah al-Sarakhsi (d. 483 AH)
15. Tuhfat al-Fuqaha, by Muhammad ibn Ahmad Abu Bakr 'Ala' al-Din al-Samarqandi (d. c. 540 AH)

16. Tariqat al-Khilaf fi al-Fiqh bayna al-Aimmah al-Aslaf, by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Hamid al-Asmandi (d. 552 AH)
17. Sharh al-Nukat, by Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Atabi al-Bukhari Zayn al-Din al-Hanafi (d. 586 AH)
18. Fatawa Qadikhan, by Fakhr al-Din Hasan ibn Mansur al-Uzjandi al-Farghani al-Hanafi (d. 592 AH)
19. Bidayat al-Mubtadi, by Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Marghinani (d. 593 AH)
20. Al-Hidayah fi Sharh Bidayat al-Mubtadi, by Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Marghinani (d. 593 AH)
21. Tuhfat al-Muluk (fi Fiqh Madhhab al-Imam Abi Hanifah al-Numan), by Zayn al-Din Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Razi al-Hanafi (d. 666 AH)
22. Al-Ikhtiyar li-Talil al-Mukhtar, by Abd Allah ibn Mahmud al-Mawsili Majd al-Din Abu al-Fadl al-Hanafi (d. 683 AH)
23. Al-Lubab fi al-Jam bayna al-Sunnah wa al-Kitab, by Jamal al-Din Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Abi Yahya al-Manbijji (d. 686 AH)
24. Muniyat al-Musalli wa Ghuniyat al-Mubtadi, by Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Kashghari al-Hanafi (d. 705 AH)
25. Kanz al-Daqaiq, by Abu al-Barakat Abd Allah ibn Ahmad Hafiz al-Din al-Nasafi (d. 710 AH)
26. Tabyin al-Haqaiq Sharh Kanz al-Daqaiq wa Hashiyat al-Shilbi, by Uthman ibn Ali Fakhr al-Din al-Zayla'i al-Hanafi (d. 743 AH)
27. Sharh al-Wiqayah, by Ubayd Allah ibn Mas'ud ibn Taj al-Shariah al-Mahbubi (d. 747 AH)
28. Al-Ghurrat al-Munifah fi Tahqiq Ba'd Masa'il al-Imam Abi Hanifah, by Umar ibn IsHaq al-Ghaznawi al-Hindi al-Hanafi (d. 773 AH)
29. Al-Tanbih 'ala Mushkilat al-Hidayah, by Sadr al-Din Ali ibn Ali ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Hanafi (d. 792 AH)
30. Al-Jawharah al-Nayyirah 'ala Mukhtasar al-Quduri, by Abu Bakr ibn Ali al-Haddadi al-Zabidi al-Yamani al-Hanafi (d. 800 AH)
31. Al-Mutasar min al-Mukhtasar min Mushkil al-Athar, by Yusuf ibn Musa Abu al-Mahasin Jamal al-Din al-Malati al-Hanafi (d. 803 AH)
32. MinHat al-Suluk fi Sharh Tuhfat al-Muluk, by Abu Muhammad Mahmud ibn Ahmad al-Ghitabi al-Hanafi Badr al-Din al-'Ayni (d. 855 AH)
33. FatH al-Qadir (Sharh al-Hidayah), by Ibn al-Humam Kamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahid al-Siwasi (d. 861 AH)
34. Durar al-Hukkam Sharh Ghurar al-AHkam, by Muhammad ibn Famarz ibn Ali, known as Mulla Khasraw (d. 885 AH)
35. Multaqa al-AbHur, by Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Halabi al-Hanafi (d. 956 AH)
36. Fath Bab al-Inayah bi-Sharh al-Niqayah, by Mulla Ali al-Qari (d. 1014 AH)
37. Nur al-Idah wa Najat al-Arwah fi al-Fiqh al-Hanafi, by Hasan ibn Ammar al-Shurunbulali al-Misri al-Hanafi (d. 1069 AH)
38. Al-Lubab fi Sharh al-Kitab, by Abd al-Ghani ibn Talib al-Maydani al-Dimashqi al-Hanafi (d. 1298 AH)
39. Al-Nafi al-Kabir liman Yutali al-Jami al-Saghir, by Muhammad Abd al-Hayy al-Lakhnawi (d. 1304 AH)
40. Al-Siyah fi Kashf ma fi Sharh al-Wiqayah, by Muhammad Abd al-Hayy al-Lakhnawi (d. 1304 AH)
41. Umdat al-Riyah bi-Tahshiyat Sharh al-Wiqayah, by Muhammad Abd al-Hayy al-Lakhnawi (d. 1304 AH)

The View of Non-Legitimacy of Salat al-Tasbih in Hanafi Jurisprudence

Apart from the aforementioned absence of reference, according to the research and comprehensive inquiry of the present writer, the first Hanafi jurist who mentioned *Salat al-Tasbih* was Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-

Fadl al-Bukhari (d. 381 AH), a Hanafi jurist of the fourth century A.H. He mentioned this prayer only when responding to a question, wherein he rejected its legitimacy and did not accept it as a transmitted or legally sanctioned form of prayer. The details are as follows:

Imam Iftikhar al-Din Tahir ibn Ahmad al-Bukhari relates:

عن الإمام أبي بكر محمد بن الفضل البخاري رحمه الله أنه سئل عن الفقيه هل يصلي صلاة التسييح؟ قال: تلك طاعة العامة، فقيل: فلان الفقيه يصلي صلاة التسييح قال: هو عندي من العامة.

*It is narrated from Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Fadl al-Bukhari (d. 381 AH) that he was asked, 'Does any jurist (faqih) perform Salat al-Tasbih?' He replied, 'That is an act of devotion practiced by the common people.' Upon hearing this, he was told, 'Such-and-such a jurist performs Salat al-Tasbih.' To this, Imam Abu Bakr al-Hanafi replied, 'In my view, he is one of the common people, not a jurist.'*³⁹

Imam Iftikhar al-Din Tahir al-Hanafi (d. 542 AH) quoted this opinion of Imam Abu Bakr al-Bukhari al-Hanafi in his book *Khulasat al-Fatawa* without any comment or disagreement. From this, it becomes clear that he endorsed the same position regarding *Salat al-Tasbih* as that of Imam Abu Bakr al-Hanafi.

This same position of Imam Abu Bakr al-Bukhari al-Hanafi was later transmitted by the renowned Hanafi jurist Ibn Nujaym (d. 969 AH) in his *Al-Bahr al-Raiq Sharh Kanz al-Daqaiq*.⁴⁰

The opinion of Imam Abu Bakr al-Hanafi (d. 381 AH) regarding *Salat al-Tasbih* shows that certain weak narrations⁴¹ concerning this prayer, which first appeared in the third century AH and were included in some hadith collections as reports of virtue and encouragement (*fadail wa targhib*), had by the fourth century AH—his own era—spread among the general populace of Bukhara. People, having heard them from preachers, had begun to practice this prayer. However, the scholars and jurists were aware of the reality of this prayer and of its lack of authenticity from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).

In that period, if a person was observed performing this prayer, the learned could immediately infer that he was not a scholar or jurist but a lay Muslim, since he was unaware of the reality and the lack of authenticity—both in transmission (*sanad*) and content (*dirayah*)—of this distinctive voluntary prayer. In their view, a person possessing genuine knowledge and understanding of religion could not remain ignorant of such an obvious issue.

Otherwise, it is self-evident that if *Salat al-Tasbih* were in fact established as a legitimate voluntary prayer from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), it would be inconceivable to negate someone's status as a scholar or jurist merely on the basis of performing it.

Furthermore, it is also clear that in the narrations transmitted concerning *Salat al-Tasbih*, there is neither explicit mention nor even implicit indication that the Prophet (PBUH) prescribed this prayer specifically for the general public, excluding the jurists among the Companions, or that the reward associated with it applies only to the laypeople. None of the reported texts contain any indication of such a distinction.

³⁹ *Khulasat al-Fatawa* by Iftikhar al-Din Tahir ibn Ahmad al-Bukhari al-Hanafi, *Book of Disapproval (Kitab al-Karabiyyah)*, p. 248.

⁴⁰ See: *Al-Bahr al-Raiq: Sharh Kanz al-Daqaiq* by Zayn al-Din ibn Nujaym al-Hanafi, 8/378.

⁴¹ See: *Abu Dawud*, No. 1297; *Tirmidhi*, No. 482.

All the narrations reported regarding *Salat al-Tasbih* and their analytical study according to the principles of *Hadith* will be discussed in detail later in this dissertation.

Incidental Mentions of Salat al-Tasbih in Certain Hanafi References

Some Hanafi legal works mention *Salat al-Tasbih* only incidentally, not as an established or transmitted form of prayer within the chapters on voluntary (*nafl*) prayers. Rather, it appears only briefly and indirectly in the context of discussing issues related to disliked acts (*makruh*) within prayer.

The details are as follows: since the earliest centuries, jurists debated whether counting Quranic verses or utterances of glorification (*tasbihat*) on one's fingers during prayer was permissible or reprehensible. The jurists of the schools differed on this issue, which has been discussed in the books of jurisprudence from the earliest times. We even find it in the work of Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d. 189 AH), *Al-Jami' al-Saghir* (p. 100), under the chapter "On Actions Disliked in Prayer".

However, it is noteworthy that even in this discussion, the early Hanafi jurists (*fuqaha' al-mutaqaddimin*) made no mention whatsoever of *Salat al-Tasbih*.

Some later Hanafi jurists (*mutaakhhirin*), however, while discussing this issue, referred to *Salat al-Tasbih* incidentally. For example, they stated:

Regarding the recitation and glorification (tasbih) within prayer, the jurists differed on whether counting Quranic verses or tasbihat on one's fingers is permissible, in order to adhere to the Prophet's (PBUH) example in prayer. Imam Abu Hanifah considered such an act reprehensible (makruh), whereas his two disciples deemed it permissible. The need for such counting arises particularly in the narrated prayer known as Salat al-Tasbih.⁴²

According to the writer's research, the Hanafi legal references that contain this kind of incidental mention are only the following seven works:

- *Bada'i al-Sana'i fi Tartib al-Sharai* by Ala al-Din Abu Bakr ibn Masud al-Kasani al-Hanafi (d. 587 AH)
- *Al-Muhit al-Burhani fi al-Fiqh al-Numani* by Abu al-Maali Burhan al-Din Mahmud ibn Ahmad al-Bukhari al-Hanafi (d. 616 AH)
- *Al-Inayah Sharh al-Hidayah* by Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud, Akmal al-Din Jamal al-Din al-Rumi al-Babarti (d. 786 AH)
- *Al-Binayah Sharh al-Hidayah* by Abu Muhammad Mahmud ibn Ahmad al-Ghitabi al-Hanafi, Badr al-Din al-Ayni (d. 855 AH)
- *Al-Nabr al-Faiq Sharh Kanz al-Daqa'iq* by Siraj al-Din Umar ibn Ibrahim ibn Nujaym al-Hanafi (d. 1005 AH)
- *Maraqi al-Falah Sharh Nur al-Idah* by Hasan ibn Ammar al-Shurunbulali al-Misri al-Hanafi (d. 1069 AH)
- *Majma al-Anbur fi Sharh Multaqa al-Abhur* by Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Sulayman Shaykhi Zadah Damad Afandi (d. 1078 AH)

From this analysis, it becomes evident that the authors of the above works, spanning from the sixth to the eleventh century AH, neither mentioned this prayer as an independent act of voluntary devotion within the chapters on *nawafil*, nor cited any hadith related to *Salat al-Tasbih* in their works, nor transmitted any statement from the leading Hanafi imams supporting its desirability or legitimacy.

⁴² See: *Al-Kasani, Bada'i' al-Sana'i fi Tartib al-Shara'i'*, 1/216.

Moreover, it is particularly noteworthy that among these seven works, the last four—being commentaries—mention *Salat al-Tasbih* only in passing, while the original texts upon which they comment (*Al-Hidayah*, *Kanz al-Daqaiq*, *Nur al-Idab*, and *Multaqa al-Abbur*) contain no mention of this prayer at all. Thus, even this brief mention by the later commentators reflects merely their personal opinion, not an established doctrinal position of early Hanafi jurisprudence.

Later Hanafi Jurists Who Explicitly Declared Salat al-Tasbih to Be Recommended

In addition to the jurists mentioned earlier, there are three Hanafi scholars who, for the first time, while discussing the issue of counting Quranic verses and *tasbehat* on one's fingers during prayer, explicitly cited the hadith related to *Salat al-Tasbih* and declared it to be a recommended (*mustahabb*) prayer.

The first among them is Najm al-Din Mukhtar ibn Mahmud al-Zahidi (d. 658 AH) of the seventh century, who mentioned it in *Al-Qunyah al-Muniyyah li-Tatimm al-Ghunyah* (p. 43). The second is Ibn Nujaym al-Misri (d. 970 AH) of the tenth century, who mentioned it in *Al-Bahr al-Ra'iq* (p. 52), his commentary on *Kanz al-Daqaiq*. The third is Tahtawi (d. 1231 AH) of the thirteenth century, who discussed it in his marginal notes on *Maraqat al-Falah Sharh Nur al-Idab* (pp. 360–361).

From this, it is evident that the hadith concerning *Salat al-Tasbih* was recorded for the first time in Hanafi legal sources in the seventh century AH in *Al-Qunyah al-Muniyyah li-Tatimm al-Ghunyah*. Prior to this, no Hanafi jurist had ever mentioned this narration in any of their works.

After this period, the first Hanafi jurist to mention *Salat al-Tasbih* explicitly among the voluntary (*nafl*) prayers was Ibrahim ibn Ibrahim al-Halabi (d. 955 AH) of the tenth century, who in *Al-Sharh al-Kabir li-Muniyyat al-Musalli* (p. 432) listed it among the legislated voluntary prayers and cited its hadith as supporting evidence.

In the eleventh century AH, Ala al-Din al-Hasakafi (d. 1088 AH) also mentioned this prayer among the *nawafil* in *Al-Durr al-Mukhtar Sharh Tanwir al-Absar wa Jami' al-Bihar* (p. 93). However, his mention was only cursory—he listed the name of the prayer without elaborating on its details or citing the relevant hadith.

Later, in the thirteenth century AH, the renowned Hanafi jurist Ibn Abidin (d. 1252 AH), in his commentary *Radd al-Muhtar 'ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar* (2/27), established a separate heading titled “*Matlab fi Salat al-Tasbih*” (“A Discussion on the Prayer of Tasbih”). There, he discussed *Salat al-Tasbih* and its recommendation, describing its hadith as *hasan* (sound) due to its multiple chains of transmission. He also examined both the *marfu'* narration (attributed to the Prophet (PBUH)) and the alternate method of performing this prayer reported from Abd Allah ibn al-Mubarak.

Summary of Findings from Hanafi Legal Sources

1. A detailed study of Hanafi jurisprudential works reveals the following key points:
2. No statement or practice regarding the authenticity or legitimacy of *Salat al-Tasbih* is transmitted from Imam Abu Hanifah or his principal disciples.
3. From the second to the thirteenth century AH, all major Hanafi juristic compilations and foundational works are entirely devoid of any mention of this prayer.
4. Among the prominent early Hanafi jurists who deemed this prayer unworthy of mention are: Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad al-Shaybani, Imam al-Tahawi, Abu Bakr al-Jassas, Abu

al-Layth al-Samarqandi, Imam al-Quduri, Imam al-Sarakhsi, Ala al-Din al-Samarqandi, Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani, Abu al-Barakat al-Nasafi, and Fakhr al-Din al-Zayla'i.

5. In the fourth century AH, Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Fadl al-Bukhari al-Hanafi explicitly declared this prayer to be non-legislated (*ghayr mashru'*).
6. From the sixth century AH onward, a few later Hanafi scholars briefly mentioned this prayer—some only by name, while others also cited the narration related to it.
7. Every later jurist who mentioned *Salat al-Tasbih* or called it *mustahabb* did so as a matter of personal opinion derived from the hadith itself; none cited any statement from the early Hanafi imams, nor do the foundational Hanafi texts contain any evidence of its legislation or recommendation.

Salat al-Tasbih in Maliki Legal Sources

A review of Maliki jurisprudential references similarly indicates that they are, in general, entirely silent regarding this prayer and its recommendation—just as the compilers of *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaytiyyah* have explicitly affirmed.⁴³

The only exception is Qadi Iyad al-Maliki (d. 544 AH), who listed this prayer among voluntary devotions.⁴⁴ However, Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi al-Maliki (d. 543 AH), a contemporary of Qadi 'Iyad, explicitly declared *Salat al-Tasbih* to be unauthenticated and non-legislated.⁴⁵

Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Qabbab al-Fasi al-Maliki (d. 778 AH), in his commentary on Qadi Iyad's *Al-Ilam bi-Hudud Qawaid al-Islam*, writes:

Ibn al-Arabi stated:

The hadith concerning Salat al-Tasbih transmitted from Abu Rafi is weak. It has no basis in any authentic or even hasan-grade narration. Ibn al-Arabi further notes that Imam al-Tirmidhi himself explicitly clarified this point to caution people against being deceived by this narration. Moreover, Ibn al-Arabi asserts that the view attributed to Abd Allah ibn al-Mubarak regarding Salat al-Tasbih carries no authoritative weight.

Furthermore, Imam al-Qabbab al-Fasi affirms that the adopted (*mutamad*) position among Maliki scholars is that of Ibn al-Arabi. He writes:

*I know of no Maliki scholar who considered Salat al-Tasbih to be recommended, except Qadi Iyad, who expressed this view in his work. There are other such instances where Qadi Iyad based his opinion upon individual narrations as a matter of personal discretion. However, he ought to have clarified beforehand that such views were personal and not representative of the Maliki school, so that readers would not mistakenly attribute them to Imam Malik's jurisprudence.*⁴⁶

⁴³ See: *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, Al-Durar al-Sunniyyah, Book of Prayer (Kitab al-Salah), Chapter Seven: Voluntary Prayers (Salat al-Tatammu')*, Section One: Categories of Voluntary Prayers, Discussion Three: The Time-Bound Sunnah Prayers, Topic Five: *Salat al-Tasbih (al-Tasabih)*.

⁴⁴ See: *Al-Ilam bi-Hudud Qawaid al-Islam* by 'Iyad ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, p. 3.

⁴⁵ See: *Aaridat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Sahih al-Tirmidhi* by al-Qadi Muhammad ibn Abd Allah Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi al-Maliki, 2/266.

⁴⁶ See: *Sharh al-Ilam bi Hudoodi Qawaid al-Islam*, Abu al-Abbas Ahmed bin Muhammad al-Qabbab al-Fasi al-Jadhami 1/266-267

A similar assessment of Ibn al-Arabi's position and Qadi Iyad's view was later offered by the Maliki scholar Muhammad Amir al-Misri (d. 1232 AH).⁴⁷

Thus, it becomes evident that both the early and later Maliki sources are not only silent on *Salat al-Tasbih*, but some explicitly affirm that the authoritative (*mutamad*) Maliki position is that expressed by Ibn al-Arabi—namely, that this prayer lacks authenticity and legal legitimacy.

[To be continued]



⁴⁷ See: *Zaw al-Shamu Sharh al-Majmu Fi al-Fiqh al-Maliki*, Muhammad al-Amir al-Maliki 1/273

UNVEILING OVERLOOKED SYMBOLS: HOW ESCHATOLOGICAL SIGNS IN HADITH ALIGN WITH HISTORICAL EVENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN

Dr. Muhammad Saad Saleem

From the Previous Issue – Part 5

Smoke

In the Hadith, smoke is described as one of the major signs of the Day of Judgment, but there is no further clarification. It is also not mentioned in other religious scriptures. This event should be prominent globally for it to be a major sign.

After the Industrial Revolution, the extraordinary increase in human activities promoted the excessive use of fossil fuels, which led to the widespread production of smoke and atmospheric pollution. This revolution was a significant turning point in human history, profoundly affecting the environment.

Smoke, smog, and air pollution are now bitter parts of modern cities, causing health problems, environmental degradation, and declining quality of life. These phenomena affect billions of people globally and are in harmony with the sign of smoke described in the Hadith.

The Landslides in the East, the West, and the Arabian Peninsula

In Hadith, landslides in the East, West, and Arabian Peninsula are mentioned as three of the major signs of the Day of Judgment. The details of these signs are limited, but rather than restricting their meaning to just the physical landslides, they can also allude to social and political crises. These crises may represent situations where a nation collapses under its own weight due to internal conflicts and civil war.

In the Book of Revelation, the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls of wrath represent progressively intensifying historical events. These events begin after Jesus (PBUH) and reach their peak during the time of Muhammad (PBUH). After the opening of the seventh seal, there is silence, and the seventh trumpet symbolises the proclamation of God's kingdom,⁴⁸ which represents the establishment of the Muslim state through Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions in the seventh century. Similarly, the seventh bowl of wrath mentions the

⁴⁸ Revelation 11:15–19 (New International Version), *Bible.com*, accessed May 17, 2025, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/REV.11.15-19.NIV>.

destruction of cities, mountains, and islands, reflecting the downfall of the ruling civilisations of Rome and Persia.⁴⁹

Since the collapse of social and political structures has been likened in previous prophecies to natural disasters, these prophecies may reflect social and political crises rather than geological events, where nations are destroyed due to internal conflicts. In this context, the three possible manifestations of these prophecies are as follows:

East (Iraq – 2006)

Iraq experienced social and political turmoil during the United States' invasion in 2003 and the civil war in 2006. These events not only shattered the political structure but also devastated education, the economy, healthcare, agriculture, and other essential sectors, which resembles the landslide described in the Hadith.

West (Libya – 2011)

Historically, the West in the Arab context is associated with North Africa, which aligns with the collapse of Libya during the Arab Spring in 2011. Prolonged civil war and political instability in Libya not only led to the collapse of political institutions but also crippled the country's economic output, oil industry, education system, and other sectors.

Arabian Peninsula (Yemen – 2014)

Yemen is not historically part of Arabia proper but part of the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁰ After the Arab Spring in 2011, Yemen experienced escalating unrest, culminating in full-scale civil war in 2014. Since the outbreak of civil war in 2014, Yemen has faced one of the worst humanitarian crises. There is a lack of governance, famine, unemployment, the collapse of the healthcare system, and the closure of educational institutions, rendering the land seemingly "barren"—a region that has become not only politically but also practically "unproductive."

The landslides have manifested as comprehensive failure in every aspect of life in all three locations. After the collapse of Iraq, instability emerged in Libya and then Yemen, which corresponds to the signs of the landslides described in the Hadith.

Fire from Yemen

According to the Hadith, after the landslide in the Arabian Peninsula, a fire will emerge from Yemen, specifically from the lower regions of Aden, driving people towards the Gathering Place—the final place of assembly. This fire will move with the people; wherever they stop to rest, it will also halt there.⁵¹

This sign mentioned in the Hadith has most likely not yet occurred. Like other signs, its purpose is not to serve as a prediction. These signs should be understood in the context of the present or the past, rather than as speculation about the future.

⁴⁹ Revelation 16:17–21 (New International Version), *Bible.com*, accessed May 17, 2025, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/REV.16.17-21.NIV>.

⁵⁰ "Arabian Peninsula," *Wikipedia*, last modified May 17, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula.

⁵¹ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sabih Muslim* 2901b, accessed May 17, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2901b>.

⁵² Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sabih Muslim* 2901a, accessed May 17, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2901a>.

⁵³ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sabih Muslim* 2901c, accessed May 17, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2901c>.

Signs of the Day of Judgment: Other Important References

Hadiths Related to the First Fitnah

There are several Hadiths that contain predictions related to the First Fitnah. For example, in one narration, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that he could see the places where fitnas would fall among the houses of Medina, just as raindrops fall.⁵⁴ This article does not cover all such Hadiths in detail; however, a few important and selected Hadiths are presented below.

The Appearance of a Mountain of Gold from the Euphrates River – Wealth and Resources of Iraq

In one Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), it is predicted that soon the Euphrates River will reveal a mountain of gold, and when people hear about it, they will rush towards it.⁵⁵ However, those who are near this treasure will say: If we let these people take from it, they will take it all. As a result, they will fight among themselves, and ninety-nine out of every hundred will be killed. The Prophet (PBUH) warned that whoever is present at that time should not take anything from this treasure.⁵⁶

The Book of Revelation mentions the prophecy of the "drying up of the Euphrates" as a result of the "sixth bowl of God's wrath,"⁵⁷ so that the "kings of the east" may cross it easily.⁵⁸ This scenario symbolises the Byzantine–Sasanian wars (602–628 CE), in which Sasanian forces crossed the Euphrates River to attack Byzantine territories. Here, the "drying up of the Euphrates" actually refers to the removal of a major obstacle, symbolising the facilitation of military advancement for the Sasanians. As a result of these wars, both empires were severely weakened, paving the way for the Muslim conquests.

In this context, the appearance of the "mountain of gold" from the Euphrates River symbolises the immense wealth, resources, and fertile lands of the Sasanian Empire, which manifested in the form of spoils of war acquired by the Muslims after the final defeat of the Sasanian Empire. This interpretation is based on three main reasons:

- First, the "mountain of gold" refers to wealth or treasure that can be easily acquired, just as spoils of war can be seized after a battle. After the fall of the Sasanian Empire, its resources quickly came into the hands of the Muslims, which is why it is described as becoming a "mountain of gold."
- Second, the deadly wars during the First Fitnah primarily took the form of political and economic disputes. Since the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) entrusted the right of leadership to the Quraysh after him,⁵⁹ the influential factions of the Banū Umayyah and the Quraysh, who enjoyed the majority support of the Quraysh, are symbolised in this Hadith as those "near the treasure." In contrast, those "rushing towards the

⁵⁴ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim* 2885a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2885a>.

⁵⁵ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim* 2895, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2895>.

⁵⁶ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7119, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7119>.

⁵⁷ The seventh and final bowl of God's wrath in the Book of Revelation is the destruction of the Roman and Persian empires at the hands of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), while the sixth bowl of God's wrath refers to the wars initiated earlier by the Sassanid Empire, which correspond to the details described in the Book of Revelation.

⁵⁸ *The Holy Bible*, Revelation 16:12 (New International Version), accessed August 2, 2025, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/REV.16.12.NIV>.

⁵⁹ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3495, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3495>.

treasure" included the soldiers of Iraq and Egypt, the disgruntled warriors of Kūfah, and a large number of new converts. These groups sought equal participation in wealth and power and, being dissatisfied with the policies of 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him), became supporters of 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him). Especially considering the support of the warriors of Kūfah, 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) migrated from Medina to Kūfah and established his government there.

- Third, the two major battles of the First Fitnah—the Battle of the Camel (656 CE) and the Battle of Şiffin (657 CE)—were fought in the vicinity of the Euphrates River. These wars are counted among the most severe conflicts in Islamic history. The prediction of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) that "ninety-nine out of every hundred will be killed" vividly depicts the immense loss of life in these wars. For example, in the Battle of the Camel, approximately 10,000 to 20,000 people were martyred, while in the Battle of Şiffin, the number of martyrs reached up to 70,000. The intensity and consequences of these events proved to be exactly as forewarned and predicted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

All these circumstances can be seen as a symbolic interpretation of this Hadith, in which the fear and uncertainty that arose between those "near the treasure" and those "rushing towards the treasure" gave rise to political and economic disputes. Those "near the treasure" began to think, "If we let others take from it, they will take everything," and this very fear became the cause of intense conflict.

The Emergence of the Devil's Horn — The Role of Najd

In the Hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prayed for blessings for Syria and Yemen, but regarding Najd, he stated that earthquakes and tribulations would appear there,⁶⁰ and that the horn of Satan would rise from that direction — meaning from the east of Medina, where Najd is located.⁶¹

The tribes of Najd, renowned for their martial prowess, were settled by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) along the borders of Iraq during the era of the Rāshidūn Caliphate, so that their skills could be utilised in the Islamic conquests. However, certain groups from this region played a prominent role in the fitnas. For example:

- Support for false claimants to prophethood such as Musaylimah the Liar, who hailed from Yamāmah (a region in Najd);
- Kūfah, which was located in Iraq and where a large number of people from Najd had settled, became the origin of groups that rebelled against the caliphate of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (may Allah be pleased with him), and later played a prominent and active role in conflicts such as the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Şiffin; and
- Later, after separating from the caliphate of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him), they emerged as the Kharijites.

All these historical events can be seen as the practical manifestation of the warnings and prophecies made by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the Hadiths regarding the First Fitnah, in which Najd was described as the centre of tribulations and the "Land of the Devil's Horn."

⁶⁰ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7094, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7094>.

⁶¹ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7092, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7092>.

The Desire for Death in the Past — Under the Shadow of Regret and Fitnah

In one Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that a time would come when a person, passing by another's grave, would say: "I wish I were in his place."⁶²

This desire is, in fact, not merely a wish for death, but expresses intense regret, anxiety, and a longing for deliverance from tribulation and chaos. Such incidents truly occurred during the First Fitnah, in which the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) experienced deep sorrow and remorse after the battles of the First Fitnah. For example, when 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him) reached Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allāh (may Allah be pleased with him) after the Battle of the Camel—by then he had been martyred—he dismounted, wiped his face, prayed for mercy upon him, and said:⁶³

"I wish I had died twenty years before this day."

This sentence reflects the pain, remorse, and aversion to fitnah present in the heart of 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him)—a feeling that arises only in the hearts of the truthful and sincere.

The End of the First Fitnah — The Prophecy About Ḥasan (PBUH)

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and PBUH) prophesied about Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (PBUH) that through him, Allah would bring reconciliation between two major groups of Muslims.⁶⁴

This prophecy was fulfilled exactly when Ḥasan (PBUH) presented the conditions of peace to Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (PBUH). After these conditions were accepted, Ḥasan (PBUH) pledged allegiance to Mu'āwiyah (PBUH), and thus the First Fitnah came to an end.

Hadiths Related to the Second Fitnah

A selection of important Hadiths concerning the Second Fitnah is provided below.

The Last Ruler from the Ṣaḥābah — 'Abd Allāh Ibn Al-Zubayr (May Allah Be Pleased with Him)

In several Hadiths, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) described events that closely resemble the life and circumstances of 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him), who was the last caliph from among the Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them). The following Hadiths are presented in chronological order, each closely mirroring key phases in the life of 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him):

A Qurayshi Man Seeking Refuge in the Ka'bah

In one narration, the Prophet (PBUH) said that a Qurayshi man would seek refuge in the Ka'bah, and an army from his ummah would be sent to capture him. However, when this army reached Bayḍā', a plain near Medina,

⁶² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7115, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7115>.

⁶³ al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, ḥadīth no. 202, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://Hadithunlocked.com/tabarani:202>.

⁶⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2704, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2704>.

the earth would swallow them up. The Prophet added that on the Day of Judgment, each person in that army would be resurrected according to their intention.⁶⁵

This Hadith bears a striking resemblance to the life of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him):

- **A Man from Quraysh:** ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) was from the tribe of Quraysh.
- **Seeking Refuge in the Ka‘bah:** When Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah assumed power in 680 CE, ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) refused to pledge allegiance. He left Medina for Mecca, where, near the Ka‘bah, he was recognised as caliph.
- **The Syrian Army Swallowed by the Earth:** In 683 CE, during the first Umayyad siege of Mecca, news suddenly reached the besieging army that Yazīd had died. This created a crisis of leadership and deep political uncertainty. The army, unable to continue the siege, was forced to withdraw to Syria. Although the troops were not literally swallowed by the earth, their sudden disintegration and retreat without achieving their objective symbolically reflect the Prophetic prediction of an army being engulfed by the earth. This may be understood as a form of divine intervention, whereby the army collapsed without external resistance.
- **The Plain of Baydā’:** Just as Medina was the centre of the Muslim polity during the Prophet’s ﷺ time, so ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) made Mecca the capital of his caliphate. In this context, although Baydā’ is geographically close to Medina, symbolically the prophecy points to the downfall of the Syrian army near the capital of the caliphate at that time — Mecca.

Iraq and Syria Cut Off from Their Revenues and the Caliph Who Gives Without Measure

In another Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said that a time would come when Iraq would cease to receive its regular grain and silver revenues, due to a blockade by the Persians (al-‘Ajām). Similarly, Shām (Greater Syria) would be cut off from its dinars and food supplies, because of interference from the Romans (al-Rūm). And in the latter days of the Ummah, a Caliph would arise who would distribute wealth such that he would not even count it.⁶⁶

These predictions mirror the disruptions faced during the rule of Ibn al-Zubayr:

- **The Withholding of Iraq’s Revenues:** In Iraq, al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī seized control of Kūfah in 685 CE with the support of the Persian mawālī. His pro-‘Alid revolutionary movement effectively deprived ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) and his administration in Basrah of both the manpower and the revenues of central Iraq.
- **The Withholding of Syria’s Revenues:** During the same period, while the Umayyad government was entangled in internal civil strife, the Byzantine (Roman) Empire exploited the situation by intensifying its attacks on northern frontier regions such as Antioch, Tarsus, and Cyprus. As a result, Syria’s traditional financial resources, linked to Anatolia and the western borderlands, were cut off. The government in Syria was therefore faced not only with military defence but also with severe economic strain.
- **The Caliph Who Gives Without Measure:** ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him), after the martyrdom of his father al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām (may Allah be pleased with him), personally assumed responsibility for repaying all of his debts. He sold his own properties and gave every creditor their due. During his own caliphate, he would, for four consecutive ḥajj seasons, publicly announce that anyone

⁶⁵ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2884, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2884>.

⁶⁶ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2913a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2913a>.

with a rightful claim should come forward — and he fulfilled every claim, neither keeping count nor imposing conditions.⁶⁷ This conduct is a direct reflection of the meaning of the Hadith in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) foretold a “caliph who gives without reckoning” — a ruler who grants every rightful due without calculation or restriction.

- **The Final Era of the Ummah:** The reference to the “final era of the Ummah” here symbolically alludes to the closing phase of the age of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH). ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) was the last of the Companions to rule, and in this capacity he stands as the fulfillment of that Hadith.

Withholding of Wealth from Iraq, Syria, and Egypt

In a third Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said that Iraq, Syria, and Egypt will withhold their dirhams, dinars, and grain and You (Sahaba) will return to where you began.⁶⁸

This directly relates to the decline of Ibn al-Zubayr’s caliphate:

- **The Blocking of Resources from Iraq, Syria, and Egypt:** Although Iraq and Egypt had initially recognised his authority, these regions eventually fell back under Umayyad control, cutting off crucial financial support. As a result, by the final years of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr’s (may Allah be pleased with him) rule, only Mecca and parts of the Ḥijāz remained under his control.
- **“You Will Return to Where You First Began”:** This phrase illustrates the reality that, in that era, the sphere of the caliphate had contracted until it was confined solely to Mecca — much like the early period after the Hijrah, when the Muslim polity was limited to Medina and its immediate surroundings.

Abyssinian, Qaḥṭānī, and Jahjah – Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf

The following three Hadiths in Sahih Muslim present an allegorical and symbolic scenario, according to which the Day of Judgment will not occur until (1) a man from the tribe of Qaḥṭān appears who will rule the people with severity,⁶⁹ (2) an Abyssinian man with thin shins destroys the Ka‘bah,⁷⁰ and (3) a person named Jahjah attains a position of power.⁷¹

Although these narrations are brief in detail, their central theme points to political turmoil, the violation of sacred traditions, and the rise of oppressive power. All three narrations share a symbolic sequence: the mention of a symbolic figure and then their impact or action. In interpretive discussions of these Hadiths, the personality most often identified is Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, who played a significant role in the Second Fitnah. Although his name is not explicitly mentioned in these Hadiths, his rule and controversial reputation closely align with the symbolic imagery of these narrations.

Driving People with a Staff

The first Hadith, which predicts a man from Qaḥṭān who will “drive people with his stick,” is particularly noteworthy. This is a symbolic reference to a tyrannical figure who establishes authority through fear and oppression. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Qaḥṭānī tribes were renowned for their

⁶⁷ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3129, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3129>.

⁶⁸ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2896, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2896>.

⁶⁹ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2910, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2910>.

⁷⁰ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2909a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2909a>.

⁷¹ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2911, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2911>.

martial prowess, pride, and strong leadership. Although Ḥajjāj was not of Qaḥṭānī descent, his style of governance closely resembled the characteristics described in the Hadith: he ruled with an iron fist, tolerated no dissent, and was regarded as a figure of fear and awe. His military campaigns in Mecca and Iraq, where he strictly enforced Umayyad rule, aptly fit the metaphor of "driving with a stick" in the Hadith—this symbol represents dominance through power, not through counsel or moral superiority.

The Demolition of the Ka‘bah

The second Hadith mentions the destruction of the Ka‘bah at the hands of an "Abyssinian with thin shins," which carries a deep symbolic meaning. Although historically Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf was not of Abyssinian descent, the mention of "Abyssinian" in the Hadith actually refers to a style of governance that was considered contrary to Arab tribal traditions and freedom. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Abyssinian system of government was centralised and autocratic, differing from the decentralised, tribal, and consultative nature of the Arabs. Similarly, the physical description of "thin shins" points to a person who neither belongs to a noble tribe nor holds traditional leadership—a person of low social standing, generally not considered suitable for leadership by society. All these symbolic references strikingly apply to Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf—a man of undistinguished lineage, but remembered in history as a controversial figure due to his iron rule, harsh conduct, and grave actions such as attacking the Ka‘bah with catapults.

The Rule of Jahjah

The third Hadith mentions a person named "Jahjah" seizing the throne, which creates a linguistic and poetic effect. Although this name is not directly linked to Ḥajjāj, the phonetic similarity between "Jahjah" and "Ḥajjāj" is noteworthy, establishing a symbolic connection in the listener's mind. Prophecies about the future often use symbolic language so that the reality remains partially veiled under God's wisdom. A similar example is found in the Book of Revelation with the number "666," described as the mark of the "beast of the earth." Here, the "beast of the earth" was actually a symbolic expression for the church. Later Christian thinkers⁷² connected this number to the official title of the Pope⁷³ using the Jewish "gematria"⁷⁴ system of calculation prevalent during the time of Prophet Jesus (PBUH). In this way, the true meaning of the prophecy remained hidden from the general public, but was revealed to those who reflected deeply.

Miscellaneous Prophecies

The Passing of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings Be upon Him) and the Major Events Thereafter

In one Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) enumerated six signs before the Day of Judgment: (1) My death, (2) The conquest of Jerusalem, (3) A plague that will spread among you like the scab disease among sheep, (4) An abundance of wealth such that even if someone is given a hundred dinars, he will remain dissatisfied, (5) The emergence of a tribulation from which no Arab household will remain safe, (6) There will be a truce between you and the Banū Aṣfar (Romans), but they will betray it and attack you under 80 flags, with twelve thousand soldiers under each flag.⁷⁵

The details of these signs are explained below:

⁷² "Andreas Helwig," *Wikipedia*, accessed August 2, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andreas_Helwig.

⁷³ "Vicarius Filii Dei," *Wikipedia*, accessed August 2, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicarius_Filii_Dei.

⁷⁴ "Gematria," *Wikipedia*, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gematria>.

⁷⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3176, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3176>.

The Death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

This refers to his passing in 632 CE, which is considered one of the initial signs of the Day of Judgment.

The Conquest of Jerusalem

In accordance with the prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), Muslims conquered Jerusalem during the caliphate of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) in 636-637 CE.

A Plague That Will Spread Among You Like Scab Among Sheep

This refers to the Plague of ‘Amwās in 639 CE, which spread across the regions of Greater Syria and Palestine. This epidemic claimed the lives of thousands of Muslims, including a large group of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), such as Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāh, Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal, Shurahbīl ibn Ḥasanah, and other distinguished figures. This plague broke out about two years after the conquest of Jerusalem and is considered one of the earliest major calamities in Islamic history.

An Overwhelming Abundance of Wealth

This sign is interpreted as the immense influx of wealth to the Muslims following the conquest of the regions of Persia, Rome, and Egypt.

The Emergence of a Tribulation from Which No Arab Household Will Remain Safe

This refers to the First and Second Fitnahs, beginning with the martyrdom of ‘Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) in 656 CE and culminating in the martyrdom of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) in 692 CE. During these thirty-six years, the Muslim community endured civil war, intense struggles over leadership, the martyrdom of eminent Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), the assault on the Ka‘bah, the sieges of Mecca and Medina, and above all, the heartrending martyrdom of Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with him) at Karbala. It was a time of trial that touched nearly every Arab family in some form.

The Treaty, Betrayal, and Attack of the Romans with Eighty Flags

In 678 CE, Mu‘āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) concluded a historic peace treaty with the Byzantine emperor Constantine IV, marking a new chapter in Muslim–Byzantine relations. However, when the Muslims became engulfed in the turmoil of the Second Fitnah (680–692 CE), the Byzantines exploited the crisis and violated the agreement. At the end of the Fitnah, in 692 CE, the Battle of Sebastopolis was fought, during which the Muslims carried the broken treaty into battle as a flag, publicly exposing the Byzantines’ treachery.⁷⁶ Although partial truces were made thereafter, no peace of such magnitude was ever achieved again. Eventually, the scenario foretold in the Hadith came to pass: the Romans sought assistance from the Western Christian nations, and in 1096 the Crusades began. This was the very “Roman army” mentioned in the Hadith — “eighty flags, and under each flag twelve thousand men.” It was a massive Christian onslaught in which diverse European nations participated under their own flags. These Crusades lasted for centuries, involving hundreds of thousands of Christian warriors, particularly during the first nine major expeditions launched to seize control of Christian holy sites in the East.

A Fire from the Ḥijāz That Will Illuminate the Necks of Camels in Busra

A Hadith describes a fire from the Ḥijāz that will illuminate the necks of camels in Busra.⁷⁷ This event is often mentioned alongside the major sign of the fire of Yemen, but it has already occurred.

⁷⁶ “Battle of Sebastopolis,” *Wikipedia*, accessed August 2, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Sebastopolis.

⁷⁷ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7118, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7118>.

This sign mentioned in the Hadith occurred in 1256 CE (654 AH), when a major volcanic eruption took place in the Ḥijāz region near Medina. The intensity of this fire was so great that its light was seen from afar, even illuminating the necks of camels in Busra at night. This event was documented by contemporary scholars and historians such as Imām al-Nawawī and Ibn Kathīr.⁷⁸ Their accounts confirm the fulfillment of this Hadith, which is considered one of the signs of the Day of Judgment.

It is likely that the Hadith mentions "Ḥijāz" instead of "Medina" so that, unlike the other signs of the Day of Judgment related to Medina, it would not be considered a general sign for the entire ummah.

Worship of Dhū al-Khalaṣah

According to a Hadith, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said that the Hour will not be established until the women of the tribe of Daws move their waists around Dhū al-Khalaṣah.⁷⁹

Dhū al-Khalaṣah was a temple that was worshipped by the Arabs during the Age of Ignorance, and it was particularly associated with the tribe of Banū Daws. This shrine was demolished by Jarir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Bajalī (may Allah be pleased with him) on the order of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as a result of which the site became a ruin.

Historical accounts indicate that in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, there was a partial revival of the beliefs associated with Dhū al-Khalaṣah. When law and order collapsed in the Arabian Peninsula, its inhabitants were deprived of peace and tranquillity, and poverty and hardship prevailed in the land. Consequently, some people reverted to their old ways of ignorance—adopting innovations and superstitions, and seeking blessings from stones and trees. The Daws tribe and neighbouring tribes were at the forefront of this regression, returning to Dhū al-Khalaṣah—seeking blessings from it, making vows, and offering sacrifices there. Eventually, in 1925, during the reign of the founder of the modern Saudi state, King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Āl Sa‘ūd, the site of this temple was completely demolished.^{80,81}

Inanimate Objects Revealing the Hiding Places of Jews – the Holocaust During World War II

The Hadith states that the Muslims, the servants of Allah, will fight the Jews, and inanimate objects such as stones and trees will reveal the hiding places of the Jews, except for the Gharqad tree.⁸²

Just as the Hadith describes Gog and Magog as servants of Allah whom no one can overcome⁸³—and in this context, Nazi Germany is considered their symbolic manifestation—similarly, the "Muslims" and "servants of

⁷⁸ "The Fire in Hijaaz Illuminated the Necks of the Camels in Busra—Authentic Stories," *Precious Gems from the Quran and Sunnah*, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://preciousgemsfromthequranandsunnah.wordpress.com/2021/01/21/the-fire-in-hijaaz-illuminated-the-necks-of-the-camels-in-busra-authentic-stories>.

⁷⁹ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7116, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7116>.

⁸⁰ "Dhu al-Khalasah – Dhu al-Kaffayn," *Al-Ithnainiyya Series*, accessed August 2, 2025, https://alithnainiya.com/tocs/default.asp?toc_id=8612 (in Arabic).

⁸¹ al-Azraqī, *Akbbār Mecca wa mā jā’a fihā min al-āthār*, vol. 1, pp. 381–382, ed. Rushdī al-Ṣāliḥ Malḥas (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah), accessed August 2, 2025, <https://lib.eshia.ir/42059/1/381> (in Arabic).

⁸² Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2922, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2922>.

⁸³ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2937a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2937a>.

Allah" mentioned in the Hadith about the Jews also symbolically refer to the role of Nazi Germany. This is exactly like how, in *Sūrat al-Isrā'*, the polytheists of Babylon are also called "ibādan lanā" (Our servants).⁸⁴

These expressions are not meant to praise, support, or endorse any nation; rather, they merely indicate the fact that certain nations are used as instruments or means under the Divine plan at a specific time, even if their own actions are objectionable.

Historically, it is an established fact that the Nazis persecuted Jews and conducted widespread searches, often using informants, collaborators, and local authorities in occupied territories to force Jews out of their homes, bunkers, and forests. The Gharqad tree, which commonly grows in the Middle East, indicates that such persecution would occur in regions where the Gharqad tree does not typically grow, such as the colder areas of Europe.

A Slave-Girl Giving Birth to Her Mistress and Shepherds Competing in Tall Buildings — the Practical End of the Institution of Slavery and the Race for Skyscrapers in the Gulf States

Among the signs of the Day of Judgment mentioned in the Hadith is that a slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, and that barefoot, unclothed, destitute shepherds will compete with one another in constructing tall buildings.⁸⁵

This sign holds significant importance because it is mentioned in a Hadith in which Gabriel (PBUH) taught the fundamental principles of religion.

The first part of the Hadith, "a slave girl will give birth to her mistress," indicates social changes, particularly after the abolition of slavery. The formal condemnation of slavery and the promotion of equality through the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 provided former slaves and their descendants with freedom and equal rights. According to this interpretation, this phrase symbolises the emancipation of slaves and social equality.

The second part of the Hadith mentions "barefoot, naked, destitute shepherds" who will compete with each other in constructing tall buildings. This scenario can be clearly observed in the Gulf countries, where historically Bedouin Arabs were known as shepherds, but due to oil wealth, they are now engaged in building the world's tallest structures. Dubai's Burj Khalifah and Saudi Arabia's Jeddah Tower are clear examples of this transformation. This Hadith reflects the prediction of their shift from a humble lifestyle to one of luxury.

The Revival of Worship of Al- Lāt and Al- 'Uzzā

According to a Hadith, the day and night will not end until Al- Lāt and Al- 'Uzzā are worshipped again.⁸⁶

In modern times, as a result of growing interest in the pre-Islamic history of the Arabian Peninsula, there has been a limited but notable trend towards the revival of ancient Arab deities. Just as there has been a return to the worship of ancient deities in the Western world,⁸⁷ there are also some individuals and online communities engaged in seeking or partially reviving the worship of these pre-Islamic gods. This trend is called "Wathanism,"⁸⁸ which includes the worship of deities such as Al- Lāt and Al- 'Uzzā, who are also mentioned in Hadiths.

⁸⁴ Qur'ān 17:4–5 (Sahih International translation), accessed August 2, 2025, <https://quran.com/17/4-5>.

⁸⁵ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 8a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:8a>.

⁸⁶ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2907a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2907a>.

⁸⁷ "Modern paganism," *Wikipedia*, accessed August 2, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_paganism.

⁸⁸ *r/Wathanism*, Reddit, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://www.reddit.com/r/Wathanism>.

The Majority of Romans at the Time of the Hour – the Majority of Christians in the World

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that the Hour will not be established until the Romans are the most numerous people. He described their characteristics: they are patient in trials, recover quickly after calamity, attack again after retreat, treat orphans, the poor, and the weak kindly, and, finally, they resist oppressive rulers.⁸⁹

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Byzantine Christians were referred to as "Romans," and Christianity was a prominent part of their identity. Therefore, this prophecy—that the Romans will be the majority at the time of the Hour—actually indicates that Christian nations will be the majority in the world. In the present era, Christianity is the largest religion globally, and this condition will persist until the end of time.⁹⁰

The remaining characteristics mentioned can also be observed in many Western countries today, where Christian nations have demonstrated military strength and resilience throughout history, established welfare systems for orphans and the needy, raised their voices against the oppression of kings, and promoted democracy and constitutional monarchies within their societies. These qualities serve as a living reflection of the prophecy that was articulated more than fourteen centuries ago.

Imam al-Mahdī

Although some other collections of Hadith mention details about Imam al-Mahdī, there is no Hadith in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī or Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that explicitly mentions him by name. Generally, the narrations attributed to Imam al-Mahdī are based on a combination of different Hadith. Only those Hadiths are mentioned below which have been declared Ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) by the renowned Hadith scholar, Shaykh al-Albānī (may Allah have mercy on him):

Being from the Descendants of Fāṭimah (May Allah be Pleased with Her) — Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (May Allah be Pleased with Him)

Some narrations state that Imam al-Mahdī will be from the lineage of Fāṭimah (may Allah be pleased with her).⁹¹ Although such Hadiths are not found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī or Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the prophecy of the 'Mahdī'—the rightly guided one—appears to allude to the great role of Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with him), who brought an end to the First Fitnah and strove for the unity of the Muslim community. The Hadith concerning him has been discussed in the section on the First Fitnah.

Journey from Medina to Mecca and Receiving Allegiance, and the Generous Khalīfah — ‘Abdullāh Ibn Al-Zubayr (May Allah Be Pleased with Him)

Some narrations mention that a man from Quraysh will travel from Medina to Mecca, where the people will pledge allegiance (bay‘ah) to him. At that time, an army from Syria will march against him, but the army will be swallowed up by the earth at the place called Baydā’.⁹² This figure is also described in Hadith as being extremely generous.⁹³ Even in these narrations, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim do not explicitly mention Imam al-

⁸⁹ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2898a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2898a>.

⁹⁰ "What Is the Most Widely Practiced Religion in the World?" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/story/what-is-the-most-widely-practiced-religion-in-the-world>.

⁹¹ Abu Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud* 4284, accessed September 14, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/abudawud:4284>.

⁹² Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2884, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2884>.

⁹³ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2913a, accessed August 2, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2913a>.

Mahdī by name. In this article, under the section on the Second Fitnah, the circumstances of ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) are connected with these narrations.

The Leader of the Muslims Inviting Prophet Jesus (PBUH) to Lead the Prayer — Pakistan’s Appeal to the United States to Lead the Baghdad Pact

Some narrations mention that the leader (amīr) of the Muslims will invite Prophet Jesus (PBUH) to lead the prayer.⁹⁴ This symbolic statement is not attributed to Imam al-Mahdī by name in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī or Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim; rather, it is mentioned in reference to the leader of the Muslims. In this article, this has been interpreted as the state of Pakistan. For further details, see the chapter on the descent of Prophet Jesus (PBUH).

In summary, the narrations commonly known regarding Imam al-Mahdī are, in fact, the result of a combination of various prophecies and Hadith.

Summary and Acknowledgements

Summary of the Major Signs of the Day of Judgment

- **The Beast of the Land:** This symbolises a tyrannical power that spreads its conquests and influence through land routes, as opposed to those powers that expand via sea routes. Its interpretation refers to the Mongol Empire, which emerged from Central Asia in the 13th century and, at its height, became a symbol of destruction and terror across vast territories.
- **The Rising of the Sun from the West:** This sign symbolises the rise of Western civilisation, which began with the Renaissance in the 12th century during the Middle Ages.
- **Dajjāl (the False Messiah):** This represents a misleading force that deceives humanity with false promises of salvation and prosperity while promoting atheism, oppression, and religious coercion. In history, communist states represent those thirty (30) Dajjāls mentioned in the Hadiths, with the former Soviet Union playing the most prominent and central role, emerging as "ad-Dajjāl"—the greatest deceiver.
- **Gog and Magog:** These nations represent the peoples of Northern and Western Europe, who, from the 16th to the 20th centuries, established colonial dominance, exploitation, and plundering of resources across the world. However, their colonial supremacy ended as a result of their mutual conflict—the Second World War. This war not only defeated fascism but also laid the foundation for the decline of the colonial system.
- **The Descent of Jesus (PBUH) (the Messiah):** In the Second World War, the United States played a decisive role among the European powers—Gog and Magog—emerging as a saviour force, especially against fascism. Later, during the Cold War, it assumed a central position against Dajjāl (the Soviet Union) on ideological, military, and diplomatic fronts. Thus, in the context of these two great world conflicts, the United States emerged as a symbolic 'Messiah.'
- **The Smoke:** Smoke is a metaphor for air pollution and the environmental crisis following the Industrial Revolution, which affected billions of people.
- **The Landslides (in the East, West, and the Arabian Peninsula):** These have been understood as symbolic manifestations of sudden social decline, resulting from political instability and civil wars in various

⁹⁴ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sabih Muslim* 156, accessed May 17, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:156>.

regions. The events in Iraq (2006) in the East, Libya (2011) in the West, and Yemen (2014) in the Arabian Peninsula are possible examples of this.

- **Fire from Yemen:** This major sign has not yet appeared. Such symbols should be regarded as an invitation to reflection rather than a prediction.

Acknowledgements

The development of this framework and the detailed analysis began with Islamic scholar Javed Ahmad Ghāmidī's observation that many of the signs of the Day of Judgment were shown to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in visions.⁹⁵ Later, Adnan Ejaz's interpretation of the ten signs of the Day of Judgement gave further direction to this work,⁹⁶ where he introduced a new perspective by interpreting Hadith prophecies in light of Biblical prophecies.⁹⁷

Moreover, the latest version of this article can be accessed on the website:

<https://scripturehistorian.wordpress.com/>.



⁹⁵ Sayyid Manzoor-ul-Hasan, *Nazul Masih* (Ghāmidī Institute of Islamic Learning, November 2023), 185–217.

⁹⁶ Adnan Ejaz, "Konsi Qiyamat ki Nishaniyan Puri ho gai | کونسی قیامت کی کوئی نشانیاں پوری ہو گئیں | #Signs #qiyamat," YouTube video, 16:00, posted May 24, 2024, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmUt_7wXz1s.

⁹⁷ Adnan Ejaz, "[In Urdu/Hindi] قیامت کی نشانی | زمین کا جانور | دابہ الارض | Beast of the Earth | एक ज़मीनी जानवर," YouTube video, 14:47, posted December 15, 2023, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnM5JIyz8fg>.

THE NARRATIVE OF AHARON AND GOLDEN CALF - 5

(Isabel) Ayshah Khalid

The cross-narrative check:

When the Israelites fled from Egypt they were accompanied by a mix multitude of other nations, amongst the Egyptians. Finding the opportunity, in the absence of Musa, Samaritan makes a golden calf, although the bible is not specific in identifying the culprit but the Quran makes the open declaration. The graven image is referred to Elohim, as the court of Gods (Ba'al, el, Yahweh, Ashira...). Many Israelites go astray but after the reminder of Harun, some of them repent. Later on, the idol worshipers were slain, Quran 2:54, Exodus 32:28. The only contradictions occurred during to some misinterpretations of the text.

We will take a look on the two narratives and see them perfectly going hand in hand, the verses where Quran has described *bil'ijmal* and its relevant verse in the Tanakh. The verses taken from the Quran are Al-Baqqarah (51-54, 92-93), Taha (85-98), Al-Araf (145, 148-157).

Exodus, the historic documentation:

1 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, 'Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'

The Quranic indication:

And [recall] when We made a covenant with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him, while you were wrongdoers.

Exodus, the historic documentation:

2 So Aaron said to them, 'Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.'

The Quranic indication:

They said, 'We did not break our promise to you by our own will, but we were made to carry burdens from the ornaments of the people [of Pharaoh], so we threw them [into the fire], and thus did the Samaritan throw.'

Exodus, the historic documentation:

3 So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.

4 And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden[a] calf. And they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'

7 And the Lord said to Moses, 'Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.'

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’

9 And the Lord said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.’

11 But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, ‘O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?’ Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’ 14 And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

The Quranic indication:

He (Moses) said, ‘We have certainly tried your people after you [departed], and the Samaritan has led them astray.’ So Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved. He said, ‘O my people, did your Lord not make you a good promise? Then, was the time [of its fulfillment] too long for you, or did you wish that wrath from your Lord descend upon you, so you broke your promise [of obedience] to me?’

15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written.

16 The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

The Quranic indication:

We wrote for him on the Tablets ‘the fundamentals’ of everything; commandments and explanations of all things. ‘We commanded,’ ‘Hold to this firmly and ask your people to take the best of it. I will soon show ‘all of’ you the home of the rebellious.

Exodus, the historic documentation:

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, ‘There is a noise of war in the camp.’

18 But he said, ‘It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.’

19 And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

The Quranic indication:

And when Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, ‘How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after [my departure]. Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?’ And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by [the hair of] his head, pulling him toward him

Exodus, the historic documentation:

20 He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

The Quranic indication:

And look at your 'god' to which you remained devoted. We will surely burn it and blow it into the sea with a blast.' Indeed, your god is Allah, except for whom there is no deity. He has encompassed all things in knowledge.'

Exodus, the historic documentation:

21 And Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?'

22 And Aaron said, 'Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil.'

23 For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'

24 So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.'

The Quranic indication:

And Aaron had already said to them before, 'O my people, you are only being tested by it. And indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order.' They said, 'We will never cease being devoted to it until Moses returns to us.' [Moses] said, 'O Aaron, what prevented you when you saw them going astray, from following me? Then have you disobeyed my order?' [Aaron] said, 'O son of my mother, do not seize [me] by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, 'You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe [or await] my word.'" [Moses] said, 'Then what is your case, O Samaritan?' He said, 'I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful [of dust] from the track of the messenger and threw it, and thus did my soul entice me.'

Exodus, the historic documentation:

25 And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies),

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, 'Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me.' And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.

27 And he said to them, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.'

28 And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.

The Quranic indication:

And [recall] when Moses said to his people, 'O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Creator and kill yourselves. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Creator.' Then He accepted your repentance; indeed, He is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.

[Moses] said, ‘Then go. And indeed, it is decreed for you in [this] life to say, ‘No contact.’ And indeed, you have an appointment [in the Hereafter] you will not fail to keep. And look at your ‘god’ to which you remained devoted.

Exodus, the historic documentation:

29 And Moses said, ‘Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.’

30 The next day Moses said to the people, ‘You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’

31 So Moses returned to the Lord and said, ‘Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.

The Quranic indication:

And when regret overcame them and they saw that they had gone astray, they said, ‘If our Lord does not have mercy upon us and forgive us, we will surely be among the losers.’

But those who committed misdeeds and then repented after them and believed - indeed your Lord, thereafter, is Forgiving and Merciful. And when the anger subsided in Moses, he took up the tablets; and in their inscription was guidance and mercy for those who fear their Lord. And Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment. And when the earthquake seized them, he said, ‘My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them before and me [as well]. Would You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? This is not but Your trial by which You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us; and You are the best of forgivers.’

Exodus, the historic documentation:

(Exodus 33:1-6) The Lord said to Moses, ‘Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’

2 I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.’

4 When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.

5 For the Lord had said to Moses, ‘Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’

6 Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

The Quranic indication:

And when, We took your covenant and raised the mountain above you ‘saying’, ‘Hold firmly to that ‘Scripture’ which We have given you and obey,’ they answered, ‘We hear and disobey.’ The love of the calf was rooted in their hearts because of their disbelief.

Conclusion

Deciphering the story of the Golden calf has become a very challenging task to uphill, due to the ambiguities, flavored by the diverse sorts of exeges and the interpretation provided through them. In spite of these comprehension barriers, with the correct linguistic approach, the text seems to fully adhere to Quran's narration, placed in the right framework. Hence, the article absolves the historical depiction from any sort of prominent corruption, in the light of the Holy Quran.

The problems generated in the interpretation of the text was due to the major problem of committing to wrong approach, for studying the text. They included, adherence to inappropriate diction and severing the ties of the content from the context.

If the scriptures are read, merely, using the technique of Affective fallacy, the true meaning shall never be revealed, and one shall find all sorts of interpretations, every now and then, and the true meaning shall be lost somewhere in the hue.

On the other hand, while opting a rather, Intentional fallacy (speaking in literary terms), the ripples might be cleared, and one can get to the bottom of the true story, and the same approach has been used in this article.



A STUDY OF THE MUSNAD AHMAD - 2

Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir; Dr Muti Syed

Muti Syed: Imam Ahmad collected narrations from about seven hundred Companions in the *Musnad*, whereas the books on *Rijal* (biographical works) mention approximately twelve thousand Companions by name. The total number of Companions is reported to be around one hundred and twenty-four thousand. Where are the remaining Companions' accounts?

Ammar Nasir: The rest are not preserved in historical records, nor are all of their narrations, naturally, transmitted to us. Imam Abu Zurah was once asked how many Companions narrated directly from the Prophet (PBUH), and he replied: “*Who could possibly count them?*” Similarly, when asked about the total number of hadiths, he said: “*How can one count them?*” He further explained that, in total, the number of those who saw and heard the Prophet (PBUH)—whether from among the people of Makkah, Madinah, the Bedouins, or those present at the Farewell Pilgrimage—was around one hundred and fourteen thousand (*Al-Jami li Akhbar al-Rawi wa Adab al-Sami'*; al-Khatib al-Baghdadi 2/293). In other words, we neither possess personal details about every Companion nor have all the hadiths narrated by each of them been preserved.

Muti Syed: You mentioned that Imam Ahmad intended to compile a comprehensive collection of hadiths to which scholars could refer. Did he aim to include *all* kinds of narrations, or was he selective, like other hadith scholars, recording only authentic ones?

Ammar Nasir: His purpose was somewhat in between. His goal was neither to indiscriminately include every narration regardless of its strength, nor to limit himself strictly to those he considered *sahih* (authentic). Rather, he intended to compile a collection from which scholars could benefit for research and analysis. Therefore, he avoided completely baseless reports but did include weak ones—believing that such narrations were still worth knowing for scholars. In some instances, he also pointed out the weaknesses present in those narrations.

Muti Syed: So, *Musnad Ahmad* contains weak narrations but not fabricated (*mawdu*) ones?

Ammar Nasir: Yes, there are indeed many weak narrations in terms of chain reliability, and modern researchers have identified them. However, narrations that can be declared entirely false or fabricated are exceedingly rare. Ibn al-Jawzi labeled about two dozen narrations as fabricated, either due to weak narrators or problematic content. Yet, Hafiz Ibn Hajar disagreed with him and authored a treatise titled *Al-Qawl al-Musaddad fi al-Dhabb an al-Musnad lil-Imam Ahmad*, where he collected alternate chains and variants to show that those narrations were not baseless.

Muti Syed: Did Imam Ahmad also employ *dirayah*-based criteria—rational and contextual evaluation of narrations—besides the examination of isnad (chains)?

Ammar Nasir: Yes, the use of *dirayah* principles is found among other leading hadith scholars as well. The term refers to cases where a chain appears sound, yet the content of a narration contradicts established evidence or reason. For example, in *Sahih Muslim*, there is a narration by Abu Hurayrah (RA) describing the creation of the heavens and earth over seven days. Several aspects of this report conflict with the Quran's account. Imam Bukhari

remarked that Abu Hurayrah (RA) actually narrated this from the Jewish scholar Kab al-Ahbar⁹⁸—thus, it was not a *marfu* (Prophet’s) narration but rather an *Israiliyyat* report.

We find similar examples in Imam Ahmad’s approach. For instance, in the narrations of Abu Hurayrah (RA), Abdullah ibn Ahmad (RA) recorded a report that when the rulers of Quraysh become corrupt, the Prophet (PBUH) advised people to withdraw from them.⁹⁹ Abdullah ibn Ahmad then wrote that his father, during his final illness, instructed him to *remove this narration*, because it contradicted all other authentic reports in which the Prophet (PBUH) had commanded obedience and patience even under unjust rulers.

Muti Syed: In your PhD thesis, you also mentioned that Imam Ahmad applied a *dirayah*-based principle: if a hadith is attributed to a Companion but that Companion’s own practice or opinion contradicts it, this indicates that the attribution is likely incorrect.

Ammar Nasir: Yes, Ibn Rajab documented several such cases in his writings on Imam Ahmad’s views. For example, narrations about *mash ala al-kbuffayn* (wiping over leather socks) are attributed to Abu Hurayrah (RA) and Ibn Umar (RA), yet Imam Ahmad observed that Abu Hurayrah (RA) actually denied *mash*, and Ibn Umar (RA), upon seeing Sad ibn Abi Waqqas (RA) performing it, objected to him. This suggests that the attribution of such narrations to them is unreliable. Similarly, there is a well-known hadith attributed to Ayshah (RA): “Any woman who marries without the permission of her guardian, her marriage is invalid.” Imam Ahmad reportedly said that Ayshah’s own practice contradicted this—hence, if she truly narrated it, she would not have acted otherwise.¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, this same objection is raised by Hanafi jurists as well.

Muti Syed: In *usul al-fiqh*, Hanafi scholars also discuss *manawi* (content-based) criticism of hadith, and Ibn Khaldun mentioned principles of historical criticism. Are these all essentially the same methodology of *dirayah*, or do they differ?

Ammar Nasir: The fundamental idea behind all three—hadith criticism, juristic reasoning, and historical evaluation—is the same: a report’s content must be examined critically using all available knowledge, rather than relying solely on the narrators’ reliability. However, their *methods* and *criteria* differ significantly. Hadith scholars usually compare multiple chains and parallel reports to detect possible errors. Jurists go further, evaluating hadiths in light of the Quran, the established practice of the community, and analogical reasoning (*qiyas*). Historical criticism widens the scope even more—considering the general conditions, motives, and contextual factors surrounding events. Ibn Khaldun discussed these principles in his *Muqaddimah*, and some aspects were later elaborated by Shibli Numani in his introduction to *Sirah al-Nabi*. Western scholars, meanwhile, developed their own distinct approach to historical criticism, widely evident in the Orientalists’ studies of Islamic sources.

Muti Saeed: I was reading that Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal issued a fatwa that spurious (*raddi*) ahadith should be burned. My question is: which kind of hadith were these that he wanted to have burned?

Ammar Nasir: Essentially, his aversion was toward reports that contained criticisms or disparagements of certain Companions, or which were used by some sectarian groups to demean them. Imam Ahmad’s position was that such reports should neither be narrated nor written down after hearing them. His reasoning was that they yield

⁹⁸ Al-Tarikh al-Kabir 2/170

⁹⁹ Musnad Ahmad, No. 7992

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Rajab, Sharh Alal al-Tirmidhi, 2/889, 890

no religious benefit, while various groups were using them to spread aversion against the Companions, so one should avoid assisting them in that.¹⁰¹

Muti Saeed: This attitude is perhaps also found among some Companions. I think a similar incident is narrated about Salman al-Farsi (RA).

Ammar Nasir: Yes. It is reported about Salman al-Farsi (RA) that when he learned that Hudhayfah (RA) was conveying to people certain statements of the Prophet (PBUH) which he had said in anger about some Companions, Salman (RA) told him: “By doing so you will plant love for some Companions and hatred for others in people’s hearts.” Then he warned him that if he did not stop, he would write to Umar (RA) to complain.¹⁰²

Muti Saeed: In *Musnad Ahmad*, there are places where he says, *qala Ahmad: hadha Hadith munkar*—so he still included “rejected” (*munkar*) reports, while elsewhere he called for burning some.

Ammar Nasir: As I said, his stance was specifically regarding reports containing disparagement of the Companions, not a general ruling that every weak narration should be destroyed. Obviously, burning them would not erase their existence from the world. Since the reports already existed, the practical course was to record them along with his own critical judgment, thereby discharging scholarly responsibility.

Muti Saeed: Usually, however, we do not find that hadith scholars tried to erase weak reports; they simply pointed out their weakness. You also once said that the compilers of the *Six Books* preserved even spurious hadith, and that this was a good thing. Yet Imam Ahmad seems to have deliberately advocated their destruction.

Ammar Nasir: We must distinguish between the collective scholarly trend of the hadith scholars and the individual inclinations of some scholars that diverged from it. There is weight to the individual concern that unreliable reports—if they spread—would cause confusion and should therefore be eliminated. That could be an individual tendency, and it makes historical sense only during the period of hadith compilation. Once the material had been fully collected and recorded, it was no longer feasible. Imam Ahmad belonged to that very formative period. When the corpus was later codified and made accessible, the dominant scholarly approach became to preserve the entire body of material together with critical analysis, so that future generations could have both.

Muti Saeed: Meaning there was once a time when this could be acted upon, but not anymore.

Ammar Nasir: Historically it was a theoretical possibility, but even then perhaps not truly feasible. Compare this with Christian history: in early centuries many Gospels circulated among the people—dozens of them. The *Church Fathers* eventually selected some as authentic and suppressed or destroyed the rest. That was possible because the Church functioned as an institutional authority capable of deciding doctrinal matters.

Among Muslims, however, in the case of the Quran, the official preservation of its text was indeed ensured under state supervision, since the Companions were extremely sensitive about potential textual disagreements. But with hadith, no such institutional authority arose. Hence, the hadith scholars could not convene a council empowered to decree which reports must be preserved or destroyed. They simply had no ecclesiastical hierarchy comparable to the Church.

Political rulers could theoretically have done so, but very early in our tradition a clear distinction was established: political power would not interfere in religious and scholarly matters. Whenever it did—like under al-Ma’mun,

¹⁰¹ *Al-Jami li-Ulum al-Imam Ahmad*, 4/544–545.

Authors: Khalid al-Rabbat, Sayyid Izzat Id, Muhammad Ahmad Abd al-Tawwab.

¹⁰² Abu Daud, No. 4659

influenced by the Mutazilites, or later al-Mutawakkil in favor of the Hanbalis—it was viewed unfavorably. Maintaining that separation was seen as a positive feature of Islamic civilization. You could say that within the Islamic tradition there existed its own form of “secularism”—meaning that political authority leaves the scholarly and religious tradition to evolve independently, without interference.

Muti Saeed: So did this separation arise spontaneously, or were there particular reasons behind it? It wasn't something formally decided, was it?

Ammar Nasir: Indeed, it wasn't formally legislated, but neither was it a mere accident. Within a civilization, various social and intellectual forces operate simultaneously, and through their combined influence history naturally takes a particular direction.

[To be continued]



HAYAT-E-AMIN - 26

Naeem Ahmad Baloch

In concluding the account of Maulana Islahi's separation from *Jamaat-e-Islami*, it seems appropriate to reproduce here the letter he wrote to Maulana Maududi:

"I no longer agree with the present policy, system, and constitution of the Jamaat, and unfortunately, due to certain of your actions, my confidence in you personally has also been shaken. Some sincere members of the Jamaat who were striving for reform have now informed me of their failure and despair. Therefore, with deep regret, I hereby resign from the membership of the Jamaat.

At this moment, I feel comfort and satisfaction in declaring that the affection I have held for this Jamaat, God willing, will remain intact in general. Within this Jamaat are my best friends whose religious devotion and sentiments I greatly value and respect.

I have no personal grievance or complaint against you, and if there is any, I sincerely forgive it. During our fourteen to fifteen years of association, I must have caused you many difficulties; for all of them I most respectfully seek your pardon and request your prayers. If, through any of my words or actions, I have caused grievance to the Jamaat or any other colleague of the Jamaat, I also seek their forgiveness through you."
(Quarterly Tadabbur, July 1998)

New Engagements

Before his journey for Hajj, in January 1958, Mr. Khalid Masud, along with his friend Mahbub Subhani, visited Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi and requested that he spare some of his time for them. They wished to study the Quran from him according to his distinctive method.

At that time, Mr. Khalid Masud was a young science graduate with a family background that inclined him deeply toward religion. He was particularly influenced by Maulana Islahi's understanding of the Quran. (He was my father-in-law.) I have discussed this subject with him several times. Once, in response to my question, he said that one thing which puzzled him about the Quran was that—even an ordinary book has a coherent style of expression, yet the Quran seemed, at many points, to be a collection of disjointed sayings, lacking apparent coherence. The usual explanations of coherence did not satisfy him. However, after attending Maulana Islahi's Quranic lectures and reading his interpretive essays, he experienced the pleasant realization that the Quran is indeed an integrated and systematically structured discourse. This deeply impressed him.

Mr. Mahbub Subhani was a journalist and a homeopathic practitioner, affiliated with the daily *Mashriq*, and by virtue of his link with *Jamaat-e-Islami*, he had a religious temperament. Mr. Khalid Masud related how he first went to Subhani's office, and together they approached Maulana Islahi with their request.

Since Maulana already knew them from their participation in his lectures, and recognizing their enthusiasm, he could not refuse. He allotted them time after the Asr prayer. The two men would come daily with their Qurans and stay till Maghrib. During these sessions, casual conversation would take place—but they never got to actual Quran study. Then the Maulana departed for Hajj, and upon his return, both again presented themselves at his

doorstep. For nearly three months, the same situation continued. It was, in truth, a test of their perseverance. Seeing their consistency and devotion, one day the Maulana finally said:

“You people are truly persistent! I had thought that this was just a passing enthusiasm that would fade after a few days—this has been my earlier experience with people. But now I see that you are serious about studying. Very well, let us begin our work.”

Mr. Khalid Masud related that from that point, formal teaching began, and their relationship deepened. Some other friends also joined them. The students of that early circle included: Mr. Khalid Masud, Mr. Mahbub Subhani, Mr. Saeed Ahmad, Mr. Salim Kayani, Mr. Mahmood Lodhi, Mr. Muhammad Daud, Mr. Muhammad Ishaq, Mr. Abdullah Ghulam Ahmad, and Mr. Majid Khawar. This marked the beginning of his teaching phase.

Launch of the Monthly *Mithaq*

During this period, Maulana Islahi continued to contribute to *al-Minbar* (Faisalabad) and other journals, where portions of his in-progress Quranic commentary *Tadabbur-e-Quran* were being published. He strongly felt the need for a dedicated journal to serve as a platform for his writings—but he lacked capable assistants.

The arrival of these young men revived his spirit. Among them, he had special confidence in the abilities of Mr. Khalid Masud. Consequently, he decided to launch his own periodical. The first issue of the monthly *Mithaq* appeared in June 1959.

In its opening article, *Tadhkir wa Tadhakkur wa Tabsirah*, the Maulana explained the title and purpose of the magazine:

The name Mithaq has not been chosen by chance; it has been selected deliberately. It aptly reflects the purpose for which this journal is being launched. (Monthly Mithaq, June 1959)

He elaborated on the linguistic and Quranic meanings of the term *Mithaq*, explaining that it denotes the covenant between God and His servants:

This magazine has been started to remind people of that very Mithaq (Covenant), and it is in this sense that it has been so named.

He further stated:

InshaAllah, the approach in every section will be scholarly and research-based. Along with transmitted knowledge, reason too will be accorded the importance it deserves, so that even those ensnared by modern ideologies may derive full benefit. For such intellectuals, this magazine will, InshaAllah, serve as spiritually nourishing and intellectually wholesome food.

In our colleges and religious seminaries, there are many capable and intelligent individuals who wish to understand the Divine Law in the light of the needs of our age—but they find no source to quench their intellectual thirst. I hope the articles in this journal will provide them with valuable intellectual material.

One of the secondary objectives of *Mithaq* was to introduce the intellectual legacy of his teacher, Maulana Hamiduddin Farahi, to the wider public and to publish his own writings through the same medium. The name *Mithaq* itself subtly alluded to this connection.

When news spread of the magazine’s launch from Lahore, some circles speculated that *Mithaq* had been started in opposition to Maulana Maududi. Maulana Islahi clarified:

No one should misunderstand that this journal has been launched to oppose anyone. God forbid, if such a base motive were behind it, I pray that it should not continue for even a single day. Our opposition will be only to false doctrines and erroneous beliefs, wherever they appear. If they seem to have a misleading impact on Islam, they will certainly be critically examined.

Mithaq regularly published installments of *Tadabbur-e-Quran* under that title, as well as studies of hadith and related scholarly essays. Book reviews appeared under *Taqreez wa Tanqeed*, and portions of his other works were serialized in their respective titles. His travelogue *Safar-e-Hajj*, earlier published in *al-Minbar*, also appeared serially in *Mithaq*. Occasionally, brief reflections titled *Isharat* addressed national events, while *Murasalat wa Muzakara* featured answers to scholarly questions personally written by the Maulana.

Most of *Mithaq*'s articles were written by Maulana Islahi himself, though regular contributors included Khalid Masud, Dr. Saeed Ramadan, Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Hasan, Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Ansar Umari, and Maulana Ziauddin Ansari.

The articles specially written for *Mithaq* were later compiled into *Maqalat-e-Islabi* (Volumes I & II).

The regular column *Tadhkirah wa Tabsirah* featured scholarly discussions, obituaries, and commentary on politics and current affairs. It was in this section that his critical essay on Maulana Maududi's article "*The Place of Strategy in Religion*" appeared—a serious and well-reasoned critique written in a balanced, academic style. As noted earlier, in that essay Maulana Islahi systematically examined each of Maududi's claims and presented his own position in the light of the Quran and Sunnah.

This exchange ran from July to October 1959. In the same column, Islahi also wrote on national politics, social conditions, and organizational activities. His commentary on the 1964 presidential elections reflected his political thought—revealing that he had little optimism about the sincerity or political wisdom of contemporary leaders. Hence, in those elections, instead of supporting the alliance led by Miss Fatima Jinnah, he favored General Ayub Khan.

Presidential Elections and Maulana Islahi

To understand this matter, it is essential to briefly review the political circumstances of that time.

In October 1958, the country was engulfed in severe political instability. In reality, Iskandar Mirza desired to become the President through constitutional means, but both the cabinet and the administrative machinery detested him. In order to gain support, he appointed several prime ministers in succession, yet none could satisfy him. Eventually, in alliance with the Army Chief, General Muhammad Ayub Khan, he imposed the first martial law in Pakistan's history. However, within a few weeks, General Ayub Khan took power from him, suspended the Constitution, and banned all political parties. Thus, he assumed direct control of the government. The unanimous Constitution of 1956 was abrogated, and in 1962, he introduced a new one of his own design.

Afterward, Ayub Khan sought to reorganize the political structure of the country and introduced a new system under the name of "Basic Democracies." Under this system, locally elected representatives were empowered not only to manage municipal matters but also to vote in the presidential election. In January 1965, under this new system, Ayub Khan announced the presidential election. Political parties were restored, and the opposition collectively nominated Miss Fatimah Jinnah as their candidate, which gave the election exceptional political importance. *Jamaat-e-Islami* was also part of the opposition alliance.

However, *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s consistent and principled stance had always been that only politicians should lead the country and that the military should have no role in governance. Therefore, although according to Islamic law a woman is ineligible for any ruling position and her real sphere is the home—with no place in political affairs—the *Jamaat* argued that this was an “exceptional and temporary situation,” and thus, out of necessity, what is otherwise “Haram” (forbidden) could be treated as “Halal” (permissible) for the time being.

The view of Maulana Abul Ala Maududi concerning the role of women in society can be seen in *Tafhim al-Quran*. After explaining the meanings of verses 32 and 33 of *Surah Al-AHزاب*, he writes:

“In the presence of this clear and explicit command of the Quran, what justification can there be for Muslim women to become members of councils and parliaments, to run about in social activities outside the home, to work with men in government offices, to study alongside boys in colleges, to serve as nurses in male hospitals, to be employed as hostesses in airplanes and trains, or to be sent to America and England for education and training?” (*Tafhim al-Quran*, 4/90)

Maulana Islahi, though not in favor of military or any other form of authoritarian rule, harbored deep reservations regarding the competence of the politicians—including those of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Moreover, his principal objection was: *What kind of Islam is this that, in order to “implement” it, one begins by violating it?*

All religious parties of the time, including *Jamaat-e-Islami*, had consistently held that a woman's political or any form of leadership was absolutely *Haram* (forbidden) according to the Shariah. Yet now, merely for the sake of political expediency and the pursuit of power, they had compromised their own stance.

Maulana Islahi's criticism was especially directed at *Jamaat-e-Islami*, since he still regarded it as his own group and was deeply pained and angered by what he saw as its un-Islamic policies and actions. On this occasion, he wrote a masterful essay in his journal *Mithaq* entitled “*Urat ki Imarat aur Jamaat-e-Islami ka Idtirar*” (“The Leadership of a Woman and *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s Necessity”). The sharpness and irony of this essay are rooted in profound sorrow and disappointment. Some portions of it are reproduced below:

At this time, before us lies the two-page statement of Jamaat-e-Islami, explaining the compulsion and necessity that led it—despite deeming a woman's leadership and presidency Haram according to the Shari'ah—to enter the field of struggle with all its strength in support of Miss Fatimah Jinnah. The original words of the fatwa issued by the Jamaat's esteemed scholars are as follows:

‘When the opposition coalition reached the stage of selecting a unanimous candidate for the presidency, we were confronted with a complex situation: four parties agreed upon Miss Fatimah Jinnah, acceptance of whom was difficult for us in light of the Shari' injunctions, according to which no woman can be the leader of Muslims. (The use of “muttafiqah alayh” in the feminine form corresponds to Miss Fatimah Jinnah, though the correct form should have been “muttafiqah alayha”—this is likely a scribal error.) Therefore, we made no declaration of agreement or separation from the opposition at that time, so that we might thoroughly examine all aspects of the issue and consult with scholars before reaching a decision. After sufficient deliberation and consultation, the Jamaat has concluded that certain prohibitions established by the Shari'ah are absolute and eternal, which can never be altered under any circumstance, whereas others may, in cases of severe necessity, be temporarily relaxed within the bounds of need. It is now clear that the prohibition of appointing a woman as ruler is not among the eternal and absolute ones but can be counted among the latter type.’

We have nothing to say about this fatwa; we have already expressed our opinion long ago, and besides, we are not among the people of fatwa. However, we would respectfully request these gentlemen that in all the

literature the Jamaat has published and sold over the years in this country—there is hardly a book in which matters of Halal and Haram have not been discussed with great force—yet in none of them has it been clarified whether the rulings therein are permanent or temporary.

Because of this ambiguity, people face confusion. Just the other day, a gentleman met us and showed us a book written by the Amir of the Jamaat himself, in which the same issue that the Jamaat has now, after much deliberation, reached a new conclusion about, is discussed. In that book, the leadership and presidency of a woman are declared Haram in the light of the Quran and Hadith—even to the extent of criticizing Syedah Ayyshah (RA) for her action, which was not for seeking leadership or rule but merely for demanding qisas (retribution) from the killers of ‘Uthman (RA). We tried hard to convince that friend that perhaps this belongs to those prohibitions that are not eternal and absolute, but he could not be satisfied with our answer. Others may face the same confusion. Therefore, if our suggestion is worth consideration, these honorable gentlemen should print in red ink on all their books the date until which each book remains authoritative, and from which date it should be regarded as superseded.

In foreign countries, medicines and edible products come in sealed bottles and tins bearing such expiry instructions, which greatly help consumers. If the Jamaat were to adopt this method, people would be saved from confusion, and it would, by its novelty and uniqueness, earn a distinguished place in the history of religious literature—our future generations would count it among the original contributions of the Jamaat. For example, the Jamaat’s literature includes a book titled Pardah (Veil), which simple-minded members of the Jamaat still read and admire, though after Miss Fatimah Jinnah’s candidature it has become quite outdated. Similarly, there must be many other such works that will now confuse people unnecessarily and continually invite objections upon the Jamaat. (Maqalat-e-Islahi, 1/119–121)

[To Be Continued...]



LIFE STORY: DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM - 3

Dr. Shehzad Saleem, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

Hasan Ilyas: It is a great fortune that you were able to benefit intellectually from both Amin Ahsan Islahi and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. We were deprived of this opportunity because Maulana Islahi passed away before we could fully reach the age of intellectual awareness. Please tell us: Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's introduction itself is closely tied to Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi and his thought, and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi often refers to Maulana Islahi in his works. What was Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's relationship with his teacher like? How did they interact? Can you recall the nature of their exchanges?

Shehzad Saleem: I remember very well. There were many exchanges, but I often noticed that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi would remain silent, absorbing and learning. Occasionally, he would ask questions, and Maulana Islahi would respond. Many times, we would all be sitting in front of Maulana, and if there was a difficulty with *'Irab* (grammatical inflection), or if we needed to determine whether a word was *mafool labu* or *mafool maab*, or its proper syntactic situation, he had a special phrase: "*Kyun ji*" ("Why, sir?"). He would point and ask, "*Kyun ji, please tell me.*"

Hasan Ilyas: Did he point towards Javed Ahmed Ghamidi?

Shehzad Saleem: Towards all of us. Sometimes he would address Javed Ahmed Ghamidi specifically, saying "*Kyun ji?*" And when Javed Ahmed Ghamidi tried to respond, Maulana would say, "*Yes, I understand what you are trying to convey.*" Javed Ahmed Ghamidi would then confirm, "*Yes, that is exactly what I meant.*"

Hasan Ilyas: Did you ever see Maulana Islahi scold Javed Ahmed Ghamidi?

Shehzad Saleem: I never saw it personally, but I did hear that on one occasion he reprimanded him regarding a syntactical analysis of the verse from *Surah Al-Muddathbir*: "وَلَا تَمُنُّنَ تَسْتَكْبِرُ"

Hasan Ilyas: Can you give some details about that incident?

Shehzad Saleem: I would need to reflect further because there are two or three narrations of this event. I will verify it and narrate it another time. But I can share another incident that occurred right before my eyes. Maulana Islahi was seated on a sofa, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi on a chair, and I was sitting nearby. A discussion about books was underway when a gentleman from the UK asked about the copyrights of Maulana's books and how to handle them. At this, Maulana Islahi pointed to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and, in a booming voice, said a very firm sentence: "*Yeh mere Mukbtaar-e-Kull hain*" ("He is my absolute authority. Ask him.")

Hasan Ilyas: About Javed Ahmed Ghamidi?

Shehzad Saleem: Yes, about Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. Maulana Islahi had a great fondness for children. During lessons, if his grandchildren came to meet him, he would pause the lesson to embrace them and express his affection. I remember once when Maulana Islahi's friend, Malik Barkat Ali Sahib, a senior figure in Jamaat-e-Islami, passed away, we went with Maulana Islahi to his funeral. Maulana Islahi said, "*Pick me up.*" Maulana Islahi, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, and I all traveled in the same car. On the return, he asked the driver to stop and told me to get chocolates for his grandson, Hammad. At that time, *Jubilee* chocolates were new. He tried to give me

money, but I refused. When I brought the chocolates to Maulana, he was extremely pleased and later gave them to his grandson at home.

Hasan Ilyas: Excellent. Let's move forward. When did the idea of pursuing a PhD arise, and what motivated it?

Shehzad Saleem: The idea of a PhD arose in 2001 when Mian Amir Mehmood (Chairman, Punjab Group of Colleges) proposed that I could develop a two-year Master's course in Islamic Studies, and they would grant the degree through their MA Jinnah University in Karachi. I was free to design the syllabus. This was an excellent opportunity because existing Master's courses at Punjab University or elsewhere included many irrelevant elements, making them less appealing to educated students in terms of content and presentation.

So, I developed my own syllabus. They allowed me full freedom to incorporate contemporary material and works of Maulana Farahi or Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. This freedom, along with the degree, was very appealing. Once the degree plan was approved—after several meetings—an opportunity arose for pursuing a PhD through distance learning abroad.

This was a great opportunity because we wanted teachers to have local or foreign degrees, which would benefit the institution. I contacted the University of Wales in the UK, where Dr. Khalid Zaheer had also completed a PhD. They had a distance learning program, requiring periodic visits each year. Unlike the US, in the UK, you can proceed directly to the dissertation without completing coursework.

Before meeting my supervisor, I had conducted preliminary research on "*History of the Quran*" because I had been responsible for teaching that portion at MA Jinnah University. While teaching, I realized there were fundamental questions that needed deeper exploration. I had gathered substantial material by the time the PhD opportunity arose. I presented this material to my UK supervisor and informed him that I was associated with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. He did not know Javed Ahmed Ghamidi but recognized that some guidance was being provided and did not interfere much, saying: "*Alright, proceed and keep sending your work to me.*" This started the process, and the PhD was completed.

After completing the PhD, I realized more work remained on the *History of the Quran*, so I considered it post-doctoral work and spent another five to six years. In the post-doctoral studies, a major issue was divided into two areas: the compilation of the Quran, which I had covered in the doctoral thesis, and the *Qiraat* (variant readings) issue, which I had not addressed in the doctoral thesis but covered during the post-doctoral studies over another five to six years.

When I rejoined the institution after the PhD, I continued managing the institution alongside post-doctoral research. I completed the project around 2015–2016, making it a fifteen to sixteen-year endeavor. Revision took another two years. I recorded the material as a series of roughly ninety lectures, which was later published in book form in 2018–2019.

Hasan Ilyas: This is Dr. Shehzad Saleem's magnum opus. Since I share a very close and profound relationship with Shehzad Saleem and my own inspiration to join *Maktaba-e-Farahi* also stems from him, I find it a bit odd to call him "Dr. Sahib," so I refer to him as Shehzad Bhai. Shehzad Bhai has authored nearly forty books, of which twenty-five are his original works in English and the rest are translations. Shehzad Bhai, you wrote in English for a nation whose language is Urdu. Did you deliberately choose English, like Allama Iqbal, to make it inaccessible to some?

Shehzad Saleem: The situation arose like this: In 1990, when the *Renaissance* magazine started, it was an English publication. My teacher told me to select from the writings already produced at *Maktaba-e-Farahi*—including works of Maulana Farahi, Maulana Islahi, and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi—and translate them, along with some

small contributions I could make myself. If that magazine had not been launched, perhaps I would not have written in English. I have always had a passion for writing in Urdu. I remember a year when I decided to shift entirely to Urdu because of my deep fondness for it. For eight or six months, I left the *Renaissance* editorial work and handed it over to my colleague Asif Iftikhar. I told him, “*You handle the magazine; I will sit on the back bench and gradually move toward Urdu.*” But that plan did not materialize. So, if the magazine had not been launched, I might not have chosen English, but because it was, my focus naturally shifted entirely toward English.

Hasan Ilyas: Your cousin, Moiz Amjad, also joined this journey and began working in English. How did he come on board?

Shehzad Saleem: We need to consider some history, but it is known that he was a brilliant student, topping both his B.Com and MBA programs.

Hasan Ilyas: He was working in a bank in Rawalpindi, right?

Shehzad Saleem: Yes, at a place called Young Investment or something similar. At that time, I had already been influenced by Dr. Israr Ahmed. Moiz is my childhood friend and my maternal uncle’s son, so we were very close. When I developed a religious inclination, naturally I wanted to involve my close friend in this journey. So, when I went to Dr. Israr Ahmed, I persuaded him to join as well. His subsequent journey involved Dr. Khalid Zaheer, who had been his MBA supervisor and, incidentally, was also a student of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, so likely Dr. Khalid Zaheer brought him on board.

Hasan Ilyas: Correct. Now, Shehzad Bhai, this journey spans forty to fifty years. I want to present an image of it to the audience. Scholarly work was extensive, and simultaneously, the institution was being built. The process of institution-building is arduous, thankless, and exhausting. Muslims have no very organized tradition of establishing and running institutions. You have been associated with Al-Mawrid since 1988 and managed it almost continuously for 26–27 years. By 2009, when we formally became involved, you were likely still the General Secretary. Could you give a brief picture of how life unfolded while managing these practical affairs?

Shehzad Saleem: When I first became acquainted with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, we were individually learning from him. At that time, it became evident that institutionalization was necessary—creating a platform where people like us could join without difficulty, have access to education, and progress. This was around 1990 when Altaf Mahmood, an extraordinary personality, decided to take responsibility. Coincidentally, Moiz Amjad, Asif Iftikhar, and I all joined Javed Ahmed Ghamidi around the same period.

Hasan Ilyas: Were you all of similar age?

Shehzad Saleem: Yes, approximately. The institution was formed in 1983–84 and functioned smoothly as an evening institute until 1986, with classes three or four days a week for two to two-and-a-half hours. It was not a full-fledged institution. In 1986, it was banned and suspended. When we joined in 1988, after some time, Altaf Mahmood took the initiative in 1989, saying that this new batch of young people should not remain an individual batch but operate institutionally. Altaf Mahmood had returned from Germany and was involved in homeopathic medicines. He decided to revive Al-Mawrid, rent a place, and allocate one-third of his resources to the institution, one-third to his family, and one-third to his business. A few others assisted, but the primary effort was Altaf Mahmood’s.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi then told me to manage the institution until a replacement could be found, seeing my small administrative skills. An incident illustrates this: once, I went to E-51 Model Town, where Javed Ahmed Ghamidi had an office and a large room cluttered with books. After meeting him, I thought of organizing the room several times but left it. Eventually, I spent four or five hours arranging the room. Later, Javed Ahmed

Ghamidi noted my effort and felt I could manage the institution. Thus, I became the administrator, while others handled teaching. We also started the magazine alongside.

The process of launching the magazine and running the institution began simultaneously, a highly demanding task. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi personally assisted with everything—from selecting carpets to woodwork—planning at E-51 Model Town while the institution’s space was at E-98, across two streets. He spent eight to nine days molding the new space, painting, arranging furniture, and guiding workers. He was deeply engaged from morning till evening, instructing workers meticulously. After physically preparing the institution, we furnished it, with Altaf Mahmood financing it. We aimed for a modern educational organization, setting up rooms, beautiful carpets, and a reception area. A system was created for stipends and work assignments for those involved. From 1991 to 1995, over five years, we developed a structured system with defined semesters for students.

I remember that students like Dr. Sajid Hameed, Moiz Amjad, Asif Iftikhar, myself, and then others began to join. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi also restarted public gatherings, which had been on hold for some time. The arrangement was such that the Lahore Commissioner—perhaps Javed Qureshi, who knew Altaf Mahmood—was responsible for granting permission at Alhamra. Altaf Mahmood spoke to him, and he allowed a monthly lecture series. Thus, a series of lectures began, with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi lecturing once a month. Gradually, more people started attending. Initially, people associated Javed Ahmed Ghamidi with Jamaat-e-Islami, but over time, he became known as an independent scholar through Al-Mawrid. This brought some vitality to our institution.

Later, Altaf Hussain Qureshi Sahib, editor of *Urdu Digest*, suggested that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi deliver lectures weekly at his institution, Idara-e-Umur-e-Pakistan. Thus, a monthly series at Alhamra and a weekly series at Idara-e-Umur-e-Pakistan began.

Hasan Ilyas: The lectures on Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik?

Shehzad Saleem: Yes, you can see on Facebook that the older students attended. This was around 1988–89, and Dr. Absar Ahmed, brother of Dr. Israr Ahmed, also attended.

Hasan Ilyas: Khursheed Nadeem was also a newcomer around this time.

Shehzad Saleem: Yes, coincidentally, he joined then. Later, Maulana Wasi Mazhar Nadvi also joined, as did Mustafa Sadiq, editor of *Wifaq*. This is how it started. Regarding resources, we had to remain alert: salaries had to be paid by the first of the month. Occasionally, it seemed we might be late, but remarkably, we rarely were. Altaf Sahib initially covered all expenses. Later, Shakil-ur-Rahman, Dr. Munir Ahmed, Rafiq Rahman, and Anees Mufti also joined. So, a whole convoy began. Although our budget was modest, even then, the salaries we paid were better than those at contemporary religious institutions, as we had to cater to modern professionals. Some of our own people remarked that we were focusing too much on the setup and not enough on content. But Javed Ahmed Ghamidi’s temperament is such that he seeks refinement in both areas.

Hasan Ilyas: Shehzad Bhai, it has been a pleasure to have this long and detailed conversation with you. I have a small final question: when you look back, do you have any regrets? Do you feel that perhaps you should not have undertaken this work, or could have done something better?

Shehzad Saleem: Absolutely no regrets. I thank Allah every day. I believe Allah gave me an opportunity, and I am very grateful for it, because this work was my desire. I could have left this world with this desire unfulfilled, but God created a path: first, I met my teacher’s teacher, then my teacher, and through them, I had the means to acquire knowledge of the Deen. Moreover, when my family realized that this was not extremism, they supported me. My mother, my two sisters, my wife, and my son provided such support that I always felt if this opportunity

had not come from God, I could have done nothing. Therefore, I feel immense contentment and thank Allah daily for giving me the chance and the ability to utilize it.

Hasan Ilyas: Alhamdulillah. Final question, Shehzad Bhai: how do you envision the future of this institution, movement, or intellectual tradition?

Shehzad Saleem: The sustainability of any movement depends on creating one or more institutions that provide continuity. This revolves around three main areas: education, research, and dissemination. Each field requires committed individuals: some should handle educational responsibilities, others complete research projects, some work on new initiatives, and others focus on spreading the knowledge globally. For example, our US institution does this work, our parent institution in Pakistan has been doing it for a long time, and our branches in other countries are also engaged in this effort.

I believe the greatest responsibility is maintaining these three spheres, either combined or separately. There should be no disruption, and individuals must continue engaging in research, teaching, and dissemination. Depending on inclination and skills, some may work in more than one area simultaneously, but preferably, specialists should be developed—specialist teachers, researchers, and preachers—who understand, explain, and convey these ideas with humility, scholarly rigor, and without confrontation. Students should be inspired to seek truth, learn, teach, and cultivate tolerance to listen, engage, and educate rather than merely persuade.

Hasan Ilyas: Thank you very much, Shehzad Bhai, for your time. Viewers, InshaAllah, we will continue to benefit from Shehzad Saleem Bhai in future sessions. Time ends here. Thank you for your attention.



AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE WITH CHATGPT

Saqib Ali

Sometimes, even a seemingly ordinary experience can open the doors to profound reflection. A few days ago, during a conversation with ChatGPT, something quite strange happened. I asked it a simple question, and in its reply, it addressed me by my name. I was startled for a moment and immediately asked, “How do you know my name?” It replied, “I know many other things about you as well.” Curious, I asked, “Alright, tell me what you know.”

Then it told me my full name, the city I live in, and even the topics I often ask about. Hearing all this, I fell into deep contemplation. Suddenly, verses from the Quran began echoing in my mind, where Allah Almighty says:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۖ

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.”
(Surah Al-Zalzal 99:7–8)

Then I recalled the verse:

يَوْنِلْتَنَا مَا لِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا

“Woe to us! What a book this is! It leaves nothing small or great but has enumerated it all.” (Surah Al-Kahf 18:49)

And another verse came to mind:

وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَبْعَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ

“And We have fastened every man’s record of deeds to his neck.” (Surah Bani Isra’il 17:13)

When people in earlier times read these verses, it was perhaps beyond their imagination that any system could exist capable of recording every word and action of a human being. Yet today, we live in an age where our own creations — software, mobile apps, and artificial intelligence — can store detailed records of human behavior, speech, locations, and habits. If human-made systems can accomplish all this, then how can it be difficult for Allah Almighty — the Creator of human intellect and knowledge — to preserve the record of His servants’ deeds? For Him, it is but a matter of saying “Be,” and it is.

All these modern inventions, in reality, direct our attention to our own reality. Perhaps before the Day of Judgment, humanity is being shown — through its own creations — a mere reflection of the divine power that has always surrounded it: the power of the Lord who knows everything, sees everything, and records everything.

ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence is, in fact, only a reflection of the human mind and intellect — and the human being himself is one of the greatest signs of the Creator. Thus, all these inventions, this knowledge, this digital universe — they ultimately point to the same truth: if the systems created by man can preserve the record of human deeds, then how effortless it must be for Allah Almighty to keep the record of all humankind.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْرِنَا مِنَ النَّارِ، اللَّهُمَّ حَاسِبِنَا حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا

“O Allah, save us from the torment of the Fire, and make our reckoning easy.”

Geographical Configuration

عرب ، جس کا چرچا ہے یہ کچھ ، وہ کیا تھا

جہاں سے الگ اک جزیرہ نما تھا (حالی)

"Arab, whose mention is common, what was it really? It was a separate peninsula from the world." (Hali)

As is evident from observing the maps, the Arabian Peninsula, which is the largest peninsula in the world, is located in the southwestern corner of the continent of Asia. Its extreme length along the Red Sea coast is approximately 1,400 miles, and its extreme breadth from Yemen to Oman is about 1,250 miles, with a total area of roughly one million square miles. However, a large portion consists of barren deserts, and therefore the population density relative to the area is low.

To the east of the Arabian Peninsula lies the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. To the south is the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, while to the west is the Red Sea. Thus, three sides of this land are surrounded by water. On the fourth side, i.e., the north, its borders adjoin the "Fertile Crescent" (*al-halal al-zarkhaiz*), corresponding to present-day Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, etc. However, in this direction, the vast Nafud Desert extends over a large area, largely separating it from neighboring lands. From this perspective, the ancient Arabs were justified in calling their land *Jazirat al-Arab* ("the Island of the Arabs"), because this "peninsula" effectively functions as an "island," largely detached from the rest of the world.

This is why the historical development of the Arabs did not follow the general historical processes of Asia, allowing the Arabs to remain relatively pure in terms of race and language. At the same time, the Arabian Peninsula, in a broader perspective, presents a paradox. While its location in Asia suggests separation and isolation, it also occupies a strategic intercontinental position connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, facilitating mutual influences among these continents. This dual character of Arabia is evident in history: on one hand, its isolation dominated, and its inhabitants often lived in relative seclusion; on the other, from very ancient times, the Arabs held a crucial role in international trade as intermediaries.

Overall, Arabia is a plateau that gradually slopes from west to east. However, in Oman, the region of *Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar* forms a distinct elevation within this slope. In the west, along the Red Sea coast, lies the lowland region called *Tihamah* (Lowlands). In the central part of the peninsula is *Najd* (Highland), with *Hijaz* (Barrier) lying between the two. In the southwestern corner lies *Yemen*, the cradle of an ancient civilization, adjoining Oman which extends to the southeastern corner. Along the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf, small emirates such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait are established.

The desert regions are detailed as follows: to the north stretches the Nafud Desert, already mentioned. "Nafud" is the modern name; its ancient name was *Badiyah al-Samawa* or simply *Al-Badiyah*. This reddish, soft sand desert extends approximately 400 miles east to west, with an average width of about two miles. The wind forms extremely high and astonishingly long dunes, between which passageways sometimes stretch 10 to 12 miles. Although water is absent, winter rains promote grass growth, and in spring, nomadic Bedouins inhabit the area, migrating during the summer.

South of the Nafud lies the region of *Jabal Shammar*, crescent-shaped. Its ancient name was *Jabal Tayy* (Two Mountains of Banu Tayy), referring to the peaks *Aja* and *Salma*. *Shammar*, a new branch of Banu Tayy, gave its name to the region. The climate here is moderate, with significant rainfall and ample vegetation, supporting some permanent settlements.

A narrow strip of desert stretching southward from the Nafud is called *Ad-Dhannab*. It extends about 430 miles north to south, with an average width of roughly 30 miles. In its northern half, rows of reddish sand dunes rise 200–300 feet, whereas in the southern half such dunes are absent. Like the Nafud, grasses grow in winter and spring, attracting Bedouins during this period.

Further south, the desert expands dramatically. It is known as *Al-Rub al-Khali* (“the Empty Quarter”). Colloquially, it is also simply called *Ar-Ramlab* (“Desert”). It is the largest continuous desert in the world, extremely harsh, barren, and with minimal signs of plant or animal life. The sand marshes, now absent in other parts of the desert, are still found here. During the vegetation season, Bedouins roam certain areas, but in summer, it is almost impossible to traverse. Until the first quarter of the twentieth century, there are no historical accounts of its successful crossing.

Besides these vast desert regions, there are numerous smaller desert offshoots called *Uruq* (sing. *Arq*, meaning “veins”). Examples include *Arq as-Sabi*, located on the route from Mecca to Riyadh, and *Arq al-Mazbur*, a collective name for seven such offshoots.

Another notable part of the Arabian land is the *Harrat* or *Hirar* (pl. = *Harrab*). Yaqoot, citing Khalil ibn Ahmad, defines *Harrab* as:
“A land strewn with black, dense stones, as if scorched by fire.”

The reality is that at one time volcanoes erupted in Arabia, the silent craters of which remain to this day. The last known volcanic eruption occurred in July 1256 CE. The *Harrat* consist of successive layers of lava spread over rocky sands. Yaqoot enumerated twenty-nine *Harrat* scattered across Arabia. They are particularly abundant from the vicinity of Madinah to Syria, and even Madinah itself lies between two *Harrat*.

Traveling through these regions is arduous, and they often injure the feet of animals; yet their positive aspect lies in the richness of minerals, which renders the surrounding lands highly fertile. Consequently, lush palm groves are found in Tabuk, Tayma, Khaibar, and Madinah—all areas associated with *Harrat*.

Certain patches of land are covered with a white, glistening layer of salt, usually in low-lying areas where rainwater collects. When intense sunlight evaporates the water, the accumulated salts from surrounding lands appear as a thick crust. Such areas are termed *Sibakh* (pl. = *Sabkha*).

In some locations, small water reservoirs and perennial grasses exist, and nomadic herders, known as *Shuturban*, circulate in their respective territories, called *Darat* (pl. = *Darab*, or in modern dialect *Dirab*).

Arabia has neither significant forests nor perennial rivers. However, seasonal rains carve channels across the land. Each of these channels is termed a *Wadi* (pl. = *Awdiya*). After torrential rains, water flows through these channels for several days or even weeks as a rapid current, called *As-Sayl* (pl. = *Suyool*). Occasionally, these *Sayl* are powerful, rolling down large rocks from the mountains and causing substantial damage. Yet this force is temporary, and these channels—or *Wadiya* in the Arabic terminology—quickly dry, remaining dry for most of the year. Nonetheless, water absorbed in their layers persists and can be extracted through wells. This moisture also supports thriving palm groves in their vicinity. These *Wadiya* are countless and spread like the lines on a hand—for instance, *Wadi Hanifah*, *Wadi Hamd*, *Wadi Sirhan*, etc.

An additional significance of the *Wadiya* is that, by storing water, they have historically served as natural highways. When dry, travelers have journeyed along them. *Wadi ar-Rummah* served as a roadway extending several hundred miles from central Arabia to the lower Euphrates. Similarly, *Wadi Sirhan*, stretching nearly 200 miles from Hauran to Al-Jouf, has been an ancient caravan route facilitating trade with Syria.

The mention of “Arabia” evokes images of extreme heat, which is not incorrect. Indeed, the deserts of Arabia are among the hottest regions in the world, prompting desert-dwelling Bedouins to travel at night to avoid the sun’s heat. The scorching desert wind, known as *Samum*, is lethal, making prolonged exposure impossible. Coastal regions along the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, such as Jeddah and Muscat, experience oppressive heat and humidity. However, the popular perception of Arabia’s climate, while partially accurate, is somewhat exaggerated. Records indicate that some deserts of Sindh and regions of Iraq experience higher temperatures than Arabia.

The climate across Arabia is not uniform. For instance, Mecca is intensely hot, while Taif is a cool retreat during the summer. Certain parts of the peninsula maintain a healthy and pleasant climate year-round. Winters in northern Najd are often foggy and misty. Desert nights in winter are intensely cold, as sand cools as quickly as it heats. Northern winds are extremely cold.

Although rainfall is scarce, when it occurs, it manifests violently within a few days, temporarily causing floods. Yemen receives relatively abundant rainfall. In some areas, such as Madinah, snowfall occurs, and winter winds blow from the east. Oman also experiences significant rainfall and occasional snow. Even the elevated Saudi town of *Abha* sometimes sees snowfall.

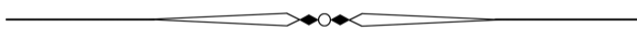
Before concluding these brief notes on the geographical features of Arabia, it is appropriate to mention, in summary, the ancient division cited by Roman and Greek sources, which divided Arabia into three parts:

1. Rocky Arabia (Arabia Petraea)
2. Desert Arabia (Arabia Deserta)
3. Fertile Arabia (Arabia Felix)

The latter is also referred to as *Arab Abadan* or *Arab Sa‘id*.

Rocky Arabia encompassed the Nabataean kingdom and the Sinai regions, with Petra as its center. In 106 CE, it was incorporated into the Roman Empire as *Provincia Arabia*.

Desert Arabia included the deserts adjoining Syria and Iraq (present-day Nafud), while Arabia Felix comprised the remainder of the peninsula. The misconception that it was limited to Yemen arose in medieval Europe, as Europeans then had the most knowledge of Yemen and little understanding of the interior. Perhaps the name “Felix,” meaning “prosperous” or “fertile,” also became associated with Yemen due to a linguistic conflation with the Arabic *Yaman* (meaning “blessed” or “fortunate”).



NEWSLETTER - AL-MAWRID US

LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF ILM AL-NABI

In October 2025, the first volume of *Ilm al-Nab*, the monumental scholarly work of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, was published after nine years of rigorous research. The book's launching ceremony was held last month at Al-Mawrid, Lahore, attended by the author, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, and other scholars of Al-Mawrid.

This book is a compendium of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) divinely inspired knowledge concerning religion, faith, morality, and reports about the past and future. The explanations and elucidations of the Hadiths have been written by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi himself, while the translation and research were undertaken by Muhammad Hassan Ilyas and Dr. Amir Guzdar. The book is now available to readers worldwide.

JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI VISITS PAKISTAN

In October 2025, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi visited Pakistan, accompanied by Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, Director of Research and Communication at the Ghamidi Center. During his visit, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi met with the scholars, colleagues, and long-time associates of Al-Mawrid Pakistan.

He also participated in public sessions organized by Al-Mawrid Pakistan in Lahore and Karachi, where a large audience from various cities engaged him with questions on scholarly, intellectual, political, and religious matters. All these sessions were organized under the supervision of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF RELIGION?

During his visit to Pakistan in October 2025, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, Director of Research and Communication at the Ghamidi Center, appeared on PTV's renowned program *Ibtidaa – with Sabookh Syed*. Speaking on the topic "What is the purpose of religion?", he explained that the purpose of religion is purification (*tazkiyah*), and that acts of worship are designed to maintain purity of the body, consumption, and character. Discussing the term *kafir*, he stated that it refers to someone who knowingly rejects the truth, and emphasized that human beings have no authority to declare anyone a believer or disbeliever in this world. This program is available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

AFKAR-E-GHAMIDI (GHAMIDI'S THOUGHTS)

Afkar-e-Ghamidi is a weekly program on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel, in which Syed Manzoor ul Hassan, editor of *Isbraq America*, elaborates on Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's ideas in an accessible and explanatory manner.

The episodes broadcast in October 2025 included:

- Armed Struggle or Moral Struggle — What Should Be the Correct Course for Muslims?
- Why Is the Study of the Companions' History Important?
- What Is Purification of the Self and How Is It Attained? All episodes are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

ASK GHAMIDI

In the ongoing online Q&A sessions titled *Ask Ghamidi*, a few notable questions from the past month include:

- Is it permissible to offer Friday prayers in non-Muslim countries?
- Have we failed to preserve the language of the Quran?
- Is the age of 18 sufficient as the only criterion for voting in countries like Pakistan?
- Does Javed Ahmed Ghamidi derive laws from historical events?

Recordings of these sessions are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

BARELVISM: FROM PEACE TO VIOLENCE

During his recent visit to Pakistan, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas recorded a program with Mr. Qasim Jami titled "*Barelvism: From Peace to Violence.*"

In this discussion, they examined state policies, religious leadership, the future of extremist organizations, and various intellectual trends. Hassan Ilyas observed that the path of mere devotion cannot lead a society toward peace, for devotion is not an intellectual premise that accommodates difference of opinion. This program is available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

WEEKLY LESSONS IN QURAN AND HADITH

In October 2025, during the live Quran and Hadith lessons organized by the Ghamidi Center, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi covered *Surah Al-Hajj (22:42–58)*. In the Hadith sessions, he discussed narrations related to *bid'ah* (innovation) and the Prophet's (PBUH) dreams. These lessons can be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF MORAL PURIFICATION

In his article, Syed Manzoor ul Hassan explained, in the light of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's thought, that moral virtues and vices are rooted in righteous deeds consistent with reason and human nature. He described *Surah An-Nabl (16:90)* as a comprehensive summary of all Quranic injunctions and prohibitions, stating that the verse outlines the foundational principles of moral virtues and vices, covering both positive and negative dimensions of conduct. The article appears in the October 2025 issue of *Isbraq America*.

TAFHIM AL-ATHAR SERIES

In October 2025, the ongoing *Tafhim al-Athar* series at the Ghamidi Center featured discussions on key topics, including:

- Scholars among the Companions and the Teaching of Sunnah
- The Companions' Views on Jihad against Apostates
- Prophetic Sayings on the Narration of Hadith
- Knowledge of the Quran Is Incomplete without Faith
- The Practice of the Rightly Guided Caliphs: A Continuation of the Sunnah. Recordings are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

ASK HASSAN ILYAS

The series *Ask Hassan Ilyas* continues on the popular YouTube channel *Muslim Today*. It is a question–answer format in which Muhammad Hassan Ilyas addresses scholarly, intellectual, and religious inquiries from participants.

In October 2025, some of the discussed topics included:

- What Is Islam's View on Nuclear Weapons?

- What Is Hadith According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi?
- Is the Black Stone a Stone from Paradise?
- What Is the Islamic Concept of Jinn? Recordings are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

THE HISTORICAL CRISIS OF JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI AND THE SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS OF MAULANA ISLAHI

In the October episode of *Hayat-e-Amin*, Naeem Ahmad Baloch wrote that in 1956, approximately 56 members, including the Deputy Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, dissociated from the party due to disagreements arising from the Review Committee's decisions. Maulana Maududi also resigned from leadership, but at the Machhi Goth congregation, *Maulana Islahi's* persuasive speech convinced him to withdraw his resignation. In 1958, Maulana Islahi formally stepped down from Jamaat responsibilities, yet scholarly exchanges between him and Maulana Maududi continued. While Maulana Maududi exemplified pragmatic flexibility in political strategy, Maulana Islahi maintained principled positions, offering detailed responses on issues such as the Caliphate.

The article is available in the October issue of *Ishraq America*.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AT THE GHAMIDI CENTER

During October 2025, owing to Mr. Ghamidi's and Muhammad Hassan Ilyas's visit to Pakistan, regular academic sessions at the Ghamidi Center were temporarily paused. However, social gatherings continued under the supervision of Farhan Syed, Executive Director. Weekly Sunday sessions were held, in which participants engaged in constructive discussions on diverse topics, fostering intellectual harmony through dialogue. The gatherings concluded with a communal meal, and first-time visitors were given a guided tour of the Ghamidi Center.

LIFE STORY: DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM

In August 2025, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas conducted an in-depth interview with Dr. Shehzad Saleem, a senior scholar at the Ghamidi Center. In this conversation, Dr. Saleem reflected on his intellectual journey, his first meeting with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, his family background, and aspects of his personal life. The edited version is being serialized in *Ishraq America*. The recent episode narrates how his passion for religious knowledge developed during his engineering studies, leading him to pursue informal education under Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's mentorship. Following Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's advice, he completed his engineering degree and later joined Al-Mawrid permanently, benefiting from the scholarship of both Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and Maulana Islahi in Arabic, Quranic, and Islamic studies.

FAITH AND BELIEFS

As part of the Meezan Lecture Series, Dr. Shehzad Saleem continues to teach Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's magnum opus *Meezan* in English. Last month, he recorded two lectures on the topic "Faith and Beliefs." These lectures are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

THE GHAMIDI CENTER'S ONLINE SPIRITUAL RETREAT (KHANQAH)

In the sessions of the online Khanqah held last month, discussions covered significant topics, including:

- Are Ease and Prosperity Also a Test?
- Freedom of Will and Divine Permission
- The Role of Intuition in Faith
- Overcoming Fear

- The Evil Eye — Reality and Limits.

Recordings of these sessions are available on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

ISLAM STUDY CIRCLE

In October 2025, during the Islam Study Circle, Dr. Shehzad Saleem discussed topics from the Quran, Hadith, and the Bible, titled respectively:

- The Mercy of Allah
- The Truly Poor
- Never Give Up.

Additionally, at the end of the session, he spoke on “Bad Habits” and answered questions related to the discussed themes. This English-language session can be viewed on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

ILM O HIKMAT: WITH GHAMIDI

In October 2025, the weekly Dunya News program Ilm o Hikmat: Ghamidi Kay Sath featured the following topics:

- The Dignity and Significance of the Companions
- The Religious Services of the Companions
- The Quran and Human Psychology

Some of the key questions discussed included:

- What was the most outstanding religious contribution of the Companions?
- Did the Companions record the Hadiths they heard?
- Does the Quran take human psychology into account in its commandments?
- Did the Companions fulfill their religious responsibilities to perfection?

These episodes are available on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM’S PRIVATE ONLINE CONSULTATION SESSIONS

Every month, Dr. Shehzad Saleem conducts private online consultation sessions where individuals seek guidance on personal and family matters. Over 30 such sessions were held last month, during which participants sought advice regarding parental challenges and issues faced by adolescents.

ISSUANCE OF LEGAL–RELIGIOUS OPINIONS (FATWAS)

People frequently contact the Ghamidi Center for Islamic Learning, Al-Mawrid America for applied legal–religious opinions concerning matters such as marriage and divorce, inheritance, and other social and economic issues. Several fatwas of this nature were issued last month by Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, based on the intellectual framework of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi.

TEACHING OF AL-BAYAN IN ENGLISH

Dr. Shehzad Saleem is conducting English-language lessons on Al-Bayan, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi’s Quranic exegesis, to make it accessible to English-speaking audiences. In October 2025, he taught Surah Al-Anam (6:93–152). These sessions are available on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

ASK DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM

Every month, Dr. Shehzad Saleem holds a live Q&A session, responding to questions concerning religious, moral, and social issues. Participants may ask questions in either Urdu or English. Recordings of these sessions are also available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

