

THOUGHTS OF GHAMIDI

DERIVED FROM JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI'S
CONVERSATIONS, SERMONS AND WRITINGS

COMPILED BY
MANZOOR-UL-HASSAN

GHAMIDI CENTER OF ISLAMIC LEARNING

The Thoughts of Ghamidi

Dedication

To my honorable brother, Sheikh Afzaal Ahmed, under whose patronage and guidance I have been granted the opportunity to serve the religion.

Thoughts of Ghamidi

Derived Conversations, Sermons and Writings

Compiled by

SYED MANZOOR-UL-HASSAN

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Preface

This is a collection of various writings based on the insights and teachings of my esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. These writings were penned from time to time during the editorial period of the monthly magazine *Isbraq*. Some are derived from the conversations with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, some from his writings, and some from his speeches. This compilation reflects my understanding and is inscribed by my pen. Hence, it is not entirely impossible that certain utterances of the esteemed teacher may have eluded my comprehension, or I may have been unable to fully transcribe them onto paper. Nevertheless, it is of utmost honor for me that I had the opportunity to document the profound thoughts of the greatest Islamic scholar of the modern era. This effort was undertaken with the intention of serving religion and the community. If it has rendered any service, I pray to Allah to accept it.

Manzoor
March 2024



Discourses of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

Impressions, Sermons, and Dialogues

The Future of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's School of Thought

Some people believe that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi is not a personality of the present times, but rather one for the future. At present, his ideology is not popular, but gradually it will flourish and become prevalent and popular after a hundred years. On the contrary, other people think that there is no possibility of his ideology gaining popularity. The reason for this is that he has refuted the prevalent and popular ideology and has presented a new way of thinking. In a response to a question, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi himself commented on these views, which follows.

I am a student of religion, and in this capacity, my primary concern is personal. Religion is the guidance from my Lord, a necessity that begins with me. I must understand it for myself and embrace it for my own sake, as I alone will face my grave and account for my deeds. Therefore, I am unconcerned with the status the world assigns to my words—whether they are accepted or rejected. The number of people who share my thoughts today or may join in tomorrow does not matter to me. Nor do I dwell on what people say about me now or what they might say a hundred years from now. These considerations hold no interest for me. This world belongs to the Lord. His sovereignty is established over it. He knows what He must do today and what He has to do in a hundred years. My concern is solely for my own welfare and salvation. For this, I need to both understand religion and practice it. As a human being, my responsibility does not extend beyond this. In my knowledge and actions, in my efforts, in my methodology, in my conversations, in my writings, and in my institutions, I strive to remain confined to this limit.

After this, when I engage in conveying the teachings of religion to people, I do so in fulfillment of an obligation. It is God's command

that if we acquire knowledge of the religion, we should convey it to others so that they, too, may be safeguarded from God's wrath. Thus, I consider it my religious duty that whenever a truth becomes clear to me, I present it to the people in the capacity of a student. I explain what its nature is, what its foundation is, and what its reasoning is. If there are any questions or objections to it, I clarify and respond to them. Beyond this, I have no further responsibility, nor do I hold any interest in anything beyond this.

It is not my role to make predictions about the future. This is also contrary to my inclination. If those who hold affection for me have made such statements, I would advise them to concern themselves with their future in the hereafter. Making claims about our worldly future is not our position. Whose mention will be elevated tomorrow, whose words will be accepted, who will receive acceptance — these are not matters for us to ponder. These are the matters of Allah and depend solely on His knowledge and His permission. We have absolutely no need to worry about these things. Therefore, they should devote all their attention to learning the religion, practicing it, and conveying it to others to the best of their ability.

Be aware that the popularity or unpopularity of a perspective is not the criterion for its correctness or incorrectness. When a movement gains momentum in the world, sometimes the reason is a special decision by Allah. That is, Allah, in His wisdom, creates the means for the promotion of a particular ideology. However, in general circumstances, the cause is the specific factors at work in the world. If these factors support an ideology, it gains influence and general acceptance. This means that when any political ideology, social perspective, religious thought, or religious interpretation achieves prominence in the world, there are many worldly factors behind its rise. The perspective that accumulates more support from these factors gains promotion.

This concept becomes clearer when viewed through the lens of the mission of God's prophets, rather than the perspectives of ordinary individuals or movements. These great individuals, sent as prophets,

were the epitome of humanity—the finest embodiment of human nature and the ultimate manifestation of human perfection. Their mission and message stood beyond any doubt or question. Among them, there were prophets whose invitations were not accepted during their lifetimes, nor even afterward. One notable exception is Prophet Jesus (PBUH), whose message found widespread acceptance. Yet, it is important to note that this acceptance came about when Saint Paul transformed his message into a new form. This transformation demonstrates that the rise or fall of a mission, or its acceptance or rejection, does not serve as the criterion for truth or falsehood. The validity of a message cannot be determined by the number of its followers or the degree of its success. As such, the judgment of what is right or wrong must transcend these superficial measures. As the wise often say: “A hint is enough for the wise.”

Thus, I do not consider the majority or the minority, their support or opposition, as the standard of judgment. For me, the real question lies elsewhere: Is my heart at peace? Is my conscience satisfied? Have I, with pure intention and sincere devotion, strived to understand the religion of my Lord and conveyed it faithfully, without any addition or omission? This is the extent of my concern. My efforts culminate here, and beyond this point, I have no interest in any other matter.

In the world, those who possess knowledge hold the position of teachers. Their role is to educate people and present their arguments with evidence. After this, it is up to the people to either accept or reject it. In this matter, people should adopt the attitude of acquiring knowledge instead of following them blindly. They should listen to and understand the words of all scholars. They should accept the arguments they find convincing and leave aside those they do not. If one statement from a scholar seems correct, it is not necessary that another statement from the same scholar will also feel correct. It is possible that they might find the argument of another scholar convincing on a different point. Agreement with one opinion of a scholar does not necessitate agreement with all their opinions. Consider the scholars of the community as teachers and instructors. Do not elevate them to any higher status than this. They are all

servants of religion and, in this regard, deserve respect without discrimination. We should learn from them and maintain a relationship of love and respect.

[February 2022]



Imam Farahi and the Reconstruction of the Religious Thought of Muslims

A three-day international seminar was held at Madrastul Islah, Sarai Mir, Azamgarh (India) on November 2, 2019. The theme of this seminar was “The History of Madrasatul Islah, Sarai Mir.” The seminar was inaugurated by Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Umri. Over sixty scholarly papers were presented in various sessions. Among the speakers were Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed Zilli, Dr. Inayatullah Subhani, and Muhammad Jameel Siddiqui. On this occasion, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, was also invited to address the participants. He, through a video link, in his brief address, discussed the scholarly contributions of Imam Hamiduddin Farahi and his expected impact in the contemporary era. The address of the esteemed teacher is as follows.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon Muhammad, the trustworthy. I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan. In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

I am grateful to you all for honoring this humble student and granting me the privilege to say a few words in this gathering of scholars.

You are aware that Allah Almighty has arranged guidance for humanity in such a way that the Qur’an holds a special position until the Day of Judgment. Allah has stated as a principle that when differences arose among people, the series of prophets was initiated: *fa-ba’atha-llāhu an-nabiyyīna mubashshirīna wa mundhirīn* (God sent forth prophets as bearers of glad tidings and as warners) and then the book was revealed with them: *wa anzala ma’ahumu-l-kitāba bil-haqqi li-yahkuma bayna-n-nāsi fīmā ikhtalafoo fīhi* (and with them

He sent down His Book as the decisive truth so that it may settle between people the differences among them),¹ so that it could resolve the differences among people regarding religion and faith. This reality has also been expressed by the Qur'an in some other styles. It is stated that Allah has revealed this book as a balance *li-yaqūma-n-nāsu bil-qist* (so that people adhere to justice)² so that people establish true justice in religious matters.

This is the status of the Qur'an. However, when we study our intellectual heritage, it becomes apparent that this status has been most undermined. The greatest contribution of Imam Farahi to this community is that before this world comes to an end, he restored this status once again with full glory. At present, we can say that the way he understood the Qur'an, the way he taught us to understand it, the way he organized its knowledge and wisdom, the way he delved into its verses to illustrate how it speaks, to whom it speaks, and how it delivers its verdict; it is the result of this that a firm foundation has been provided for establishing the supremacy of the Qur'an over everything related to religion and faith. That is, in its role as a judge, as a balance, it now dictates what is acceptable in religion, in faith, in the guidance of God, and what is not acceptable.

In this regard, I consider him as *Ayah min Ayātillah*, one of the signs among the signs of Allah.

Before this, the world was in the era of empires. Will Durant referred to the entire period dominated by religion as the 'Age of Faith.' This meant that religion had dominance over politics, and as a result, society and civilization were also being shaped in its light. That era has now ended. Imam Farahi's birth, in fact, is God's arrangement to once again complete His argument in this new era, in this new world. If we study the results at a global level, on one hand, we observe that the old theology has come to an end, its premises have been dismantled, and its foundations have crumbled. This era—which can also be called the

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:213

² Al-Hadeed 57:25

‘Age of Reason,’ and in terms of its outcome, ‘Age of Atheism’—demanded the emergence of solid reasoning based on the fundamental premises of human nature. If you look at *Hujjaj al-Qur’an*, or *Al-Qa’id ila Uyun al-Aqa’id*, or examine such matters in his exegesis, you will conclude that the natural reasoning of the Qur’an has been revealed with such grandeur for the first time. If history is leading itself to the point of atheism, then God’s argument, in opposition, has also positioned itself to be equally prominent.

The era when great empires were established was characterized by a relationship between rulers and subjects. The interpretation of law in that time—whether it was in our lands or in the Roman Empire—had entirely different contexts and conditions. All of this has now become irrelevant and extraneous. A figure like Allama Iqbal felt the necessity for a reconstruction of religious thought. However, a solid foundation was not available to this Sage of the Community. This foundation has indeed been provided by the discourse of Imam Farahi. The way he made the Qur’an a balance (*Meezan*), a criterion (*Furqan*), highlighted its authority, and defined the foundations is beginning to influence the legal minds of Muslims. Only after this development did the possibility emerge that in the modern nation-states, we could collectively implement God’s Shariah. Before this, neither the legal framework we had constructed nor the precedents upon which we had established our laws could meet the needs of the present era. Human efforts in their respective times are extraordinary, but they can neither be universal nor transcend time and space. It is only God’s guidance that can be universal and transcend time and space; it can maintain its relevance and connection in every era. In this era, as this new world is coming into existence, a firm foundation has been provided by Imam Farahi, allowing us not only to follow God’s Shariah in our individual lives but also to structure our collective life according to Shariah. Consequently, if Shariah is to relate to our collective life now, it will be based on this discourse, this line of thought.

In the same way, in ancient Islamic jurisprudence, the world was divided into Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb, which had certain

requirements that have now been fulfilled. It was Imam Farahi, who, by discovering the principle of *Itmam-e-Hujjat* (Completion of Proof), have clarified the perspective from which we should view the world: the perspective from which the world was viewed during the era of messengership, and the perspective from which it will be viewed until the Day of Judgment. What will be the nature of interpersonal and inter-nation relationships now? What will be the method of inviting people to Islam in the present age? And if the world is indeed moving towards a global government, how will our role be determined as Muslims in that context? These are a few very prominent aspects. Study his exegesis, examine his writings, and review his manuscripts; everywhere, he is laying the foundations for the reconstruction of the Muslim religious thought.

I would like to present to both students and teachers the suggestion that they study Imam Farahi from this perspective. I can say with complete certainty that if, on one hand, history seems to be concluding with the cultural discoveries of Western thinkers—as the thinkers of Western civilization believe—then, on the other hand, these signs of Allah have also appeared. *Ayah min Ayātillah*. One of the signs of Allah. One of the manifestations of Allah's signs. It is not far-fetched to think that in this final era, Allah's argument might be completed through His Book in the light of Farahi's thought!

I say this statement of mine, and I seek forgiveness from Allah for myself and for you and for all the Muslims.

[January 2020]



Iqbal's Vision for a Nation and Ground Realities

[This is the speech of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, which he delivered on November 9, 2004, at the annual ceremony of the Markaziya Majlis-e-Iqbal at Alhamra Hall, Lahore.]

Iqbal's voice was the most beautiful voice of this era. He is our unparalleled poet, thinker, and sage. If we called him the Poet of the East, the Interpreter of Reality, and the Sage of the Nation, we would not be wrong. There is no doubt that even today, whenever the caravans of Muslims set out on a journey, it is Iqbal's voice that serves as their *Bang-e-Dara* (The Call of the Caravan Bell). Similarly, whenever the youth aspire to soar high, they still strive to acquire wings for their flight from *Bal-e-Jibril* (The Wing of Gabriel). We acknowledge these truths about Iqbal. We hum his verses, listen to essays and speeches about his life and thoughts, compose odes in his honor, and pay homage to him in gatherings held in his memory. At this Iqbal Day event, if I also dedicate my words to the praise of Iqbal, it will not be an exercise in futility. However, in my view, the topic that deserves the most attention at this moment is: *Where do we stand after Iqbal?*

The first issue we face after Iqbal is whether the concept of nationalism presented by him corresponds with the ground realities, or whether it is an ideal that can never be achieved.

We know that Iqbal sang the songs of nationalism for a period, but then the time came when he forcefully presented the concept of Muslim nationhood. He made people understand that in Islam, the foundation of nationality is not color, race, or homeland, but Islam itself. In his essays, poetry, and lectures, he articulated this theme, if we borrow the words of Mir Anis, indeed *in a hundred hues*. You will

recall these verses from his poem “Nationalism as a Political Concept.”
He has said:

*In this age, the wine is new, the cup is new, the brim is new,
The idols shaped by culture's hand wear quite a different hue.
Among these newborn gods today, the greatest is the state,
The robe it wears, alas, becomes religion's burial gate.*

He went to such an extent in this matter that when a venerable scholar like Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani once mentioned that nations are formed by homelands, he sternly admonished:

*The non-Arab still does not know the subtle secrets of faith,
Otherwise, from Deoband's Hussain Ahmad, this wonder
wouldn't take shape.
He chants from the pulpit that the nation is born of land,
How unaware he is of the lofty station of Muhammad of
Arabia!*

Today, our new generations question us: if the universal concept of Muslim nationalism given by Iqbal is correct, then what is the meaning of the borders between Muslim countries? What is the status of the millions of Muslims remaining in India? What is the reason that when refugees from Bangladesh and Afghanistan arrived in the Pakistan envisaged by the visionary of Pakistan, they were refused to be considered citizens of this country? What is the reason that today our nation's slogan is "Pakistan first"?

Iqbal's son, Javed Iqbal, in his book *Apna Girebaan Chaak*, wrote a letter to his father, drawing attention to similar ground realities. Addressing his father, he mentioned that when you went to England and I requested you to bring me an English musical instrument, even this simple wish of mine clashed with your lofty, celestial thoughts. You replied:

*Take not the favors of the glassmakers of the West,
From India's clay, make your own cup and crest.
My path is not of kings, but of the poor and free,*

Sell not your soul — earn fame in poverty!

He wrote that even today, similar ground realities confront this community. What do you have to say about them? Following this, he identified those highly important issues that the muslim community is currently facing. It was necessary for our intellectuals to pay attention to these issues highlighted by the son of Iqbal. However, it is regrettable that no one focused on them, nor did anyone take note of them. And Dr. Sahab too, perhaps thinking that if Iqbal were to respond to his letter now, he would likely say:

*Neither am I Afghan, nor Turk, nor Tatar,
We are from the same garden and from the same branch.*

In any case, the conflict between theory and practice regarding the universal concept of nationality has taken the form of an unsolvable problem in the minds of our new generation. What is the solution to this problem? This is the first question.

The second issue is that the dream Allama Iqbal envisioned for the revival of the past glory of Muslims, though it was very beautiful and captivating, is the approach we have adopted so far to realize this dream correct, or is there a need to change it?

To restore past glory, the strategy we adopted has always had two aspects: first, we endeavored by all possible means to bring scholars into the corridors of power, and secondly, we encouraged Muslims at every opportunity to engage in jihad and combat, inspiring them to fight to the death. The outcomes of the first effort are evident in various forms: in Saudi Arabia, the movement initiated by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab transformed into a monarchy, in Iran, this experiment turned into papacy, and in Afghanistan, the struggle for the implementation of Islam manifested in the form of clergy rule. Therefore, in the words of Iqbal, Muslims today are still deserving of the same address: اے کشتہ سلطانی و ملائی و پیری.

As far as the second effort is concerned, you can see its results everywhere from Iraq to Afghanistan and from Palestine to Chechnya.

Did Iqbal also propose the same strategy for the recovery of past

grandeur, or was it different, and if the strategy he proposed was indeed this, then what guidance do the outcomes derived from it provide us? This is the second question.

The third issue is that Iqbal intensely felt that the current structure of Sharia is neither suitable for the propagation of Islam nor for its implementation. Consequently, he addressed this matter fundamentally in his book “The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.” He also cataloged the important practical issues for which the existing structure of Sharia offers no solution. This list can still be seen in the Iqbal Museum today. Iqbal’s concern was entirely justified, but the tragedy is that no one considered it worthy of attention.

It was necessary for us to thoroughly examine the Shariah and the principles of its derivation, determine the places for research and investigation, discover the paths of ijtiḥad, and formulate a jurisprudence for ourselves that, on one hand, aligns precisely with the Qur’an and Sunnah, and on the other hand, addresses the issues of the modern era in a satisfactory manner. However, contrary to this, we adopted a rigid approach of imitation, deciding to cling to those very laws that our ancient jurists had formulated according to the needs of their times. The result of this is that what we have propagated and implemented in the name of Islamic Shariah is so ludicrous that it cannot be convincingly accepted by the intelligent elements of our own nation, nor can it be presented with confidence to the non-Muslim nations of the world. Is our approach correct, or should we adopt a different method in this matter? This is the third question.

These are the questions that we are currently facing at the level of the Ummah. I want to draw the attention of the Majlis-e-Iqbal to engage the intelligent elements of the nation on these issues. The nature of these issues is not merely the mistakes of individuals; in reality, they have become the sins of the nation. Iqbal’s assertion is entirely justified that:

Nature may overlook the errors of individuals

Never does it forgive the sins of the nation.



The Scope of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Writings and Speeches

[Excerpt from a dialogue between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and Muhammad Hassan Ilyas]

Esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, has been engaged in the service of preaching and propagation for fifty to fifty-five years. During this time, he has elucidated and clarified the religion and addressed the issues, questions, and objections that have emerged as a result. Most of his work is based on this constructive invitation.

However, he did not stop at this; rather, he went further and targeted those interpretations of religion, which in his view, are the cause of spreading incorrect concepts about religion. In return for this, he has faced severe opposition and strong resistance. and ultimately had to adopt a life of exile.

This critique and analysis is further complemented by his thoughts on national affairs. He never ignores the political and social issues of the people of Pakistan and the Islamic community. Whether the nature of these issues is related to the imprints of the past, the present circumstances, or the concerns and possibilities of the future, if they are becoming a matter of concern for people's knowledge and actions, then he addresses them just as he would discuss any important topic related to the explanation and clarification of religion.

Many of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's companions and friends have reservations about this approach of his. In their view, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's critique and analysis of contemporary views and ideas have provoked opposition and resistance to his positive work and have limited his outreach. His discussions on national and communal situations have, on one hand, resulted in a waste of his valuable time,

and on the other hand, caused a decrease in people's interest in primary religious topics. Therefore, they believe that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi himself should avoid speaking on such controversial and supplementary subjects, and those engaging in dialogue with him should also refrain from bringing them into discussion.

This is the context in which my brother, Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, brought up the aforementioned objection in a weekly question and answer session with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. The summary of their conversation in this regard is as follows.

Inquiry of Hassan Ilyas

Respected Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, over the past five to six years, discussions have been exchanged on more than two thousand topics with you. These include the issues that have arisen in my mind as a student of religion and society, the objections raised by your critics, and the questions continuously received from your readers and listeners around the world. A review of these topics reveals that a wide array of subjects have been discussed, ranging from religious, ethical, legal, jurisprudential, social, political, to historical themes. Among these, particularly the critiques on traditional religiosity and the discussions on political and historical subjects, some scholars and friends opine that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi should not engage in discussions on these topics.

When examining their stance and reasoning, it can be expressed in these five points:

1. You hold the position of a religious scholar. Therefore, you should speak only on those subjects that are considered part of the religious content. This means you should discuss the Qur'an, Sunnah, Hadith, Ijma, Qiyas, Ijtihad, and Fiqh. Similarly, you should focus on matters of faith, impart lessons on ethics, and explain acts of worship. In short, discuss every aspect of the derivation and explanation of religion. All these subjects align precisely with your scholarly and missionary responsibilities. However, subjects other than these do not fall under your official responsibilities and are outside your realm of thought

and action. You should not speak on these topics.

When you progress from a positive exposition of religion and begin to critique those thoughts and ideologies that people accept as given truths, or analyze topics to which people's emotions are attached, or affirm or refute events that lead to division and factionalism, or comment on personalities whom some people like and some dislike, the only outcome is that both your personality and your message become controversial, and the atmosphere is no longer conducive to the conveyance of your positive message. Examples of such contentious topics include 'Islam and Sufism,' 'Islam and the State: A Counter Narrative,' 'Ali and Muawiyah,' 'The Incident of Karbala and Yazid,' and the 'Taliban Movement.' Instead of becoming entangled in such topics, you should confine yourself to presenting the pure message of religion. If you do not confine yourself to this, people who have ideological, factional, and personal affiliations will not be inclined to pay attention to your message.

3. Political science, sociology, international relations, law, history, literature, philosophy, and similar non-religious disciplines have their own technical foundations. To discuss these, specialization in them is essential. Your expertise lies in Islamic studies. If you speak on any other discipline or base any opinion on another field, it means you are providing guidance on matters beyond your grasp. This is akin to a political scientist or historian, who does not specialize in Islamic studies, beginning a discourse on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Titles such as "Military Narrative," "Religious Narrative of Change," "Palestinian Issue," "Change in Saudi Arabia," "Situation in Afghanistan: Causes and Solutions" are examples of additional and unrelated topics of this nature.

Then you have also discussed some historical figures who have had effects on religion, society, and politics. Accordingly, you have expressed your views on the thoughts and actions of figures such as Ibn Khaldun, Shah Waliullah, Shah Ismail, Allama Iqbal, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Inayatullah Mashriqi, Shorish Kashmiri, Habib ur Rehman Kandhalvi, Dr. Israr Ahmed,

Ghulam Ahmed Pervez, Maulana Ishaq, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Bacha Khan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and several other personalities of the same caliber. It is obvious that these discussions of yours are not related to your primary work.

4. Our scholarly tradition is such that the eminent scholars of the ummah have never stepped outside their sphere of influence. They have always spoken on subjects that fall within the domain of Islamic sciences. The expectation of your status and position is that you should adhere to this tradition.

5. These are the contentious and additional topics that have put you, your family, your students, and your friends in danger. These have been the reason for you and some of your companions to choose a life of exile, and due to these, some of your close companions have been martyred. Are they really so necessary that such a price should be paid for them?

These are five points of critique on your approach to preaching. I would like you to discuss them in a broader manner and explain to what extent, as a religious scholar, it is appropriate for you to address these matters. Furthermore, what is the scope of these issues in light of the commandments of the Qur'an, the example of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and the historical context of the preaching by the scholars of the Ummah?

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Response

Essential Elements of the Invitation to Faith

Religion is the guidance from Allah, which He provided to humanity through His prophets. This religion has been articulated in the Qur'an and was established by the Prophet (PBUH) as his Sunnah. In these two forms, it is preserved with the Muslim community and will remain available for the guidance of humankind until the end of time. Whenever this message has been presented to the people, three aspects have been consistently adhered to in it.

One is that the original matter should be stated without any addition

or subtraction.

Secondly, the implications of that matter should be highlighted.

Third, to clarify the error in the opposing viewpoint.

These three things are essential for understanding, explaining, and propagating the religion.

The Style of Invitation in the Holy Qur'an

When Allah Almighty presented the invitation to His religion, it included all three elements. Consequently, when we study the divine words, it becomes apparent that they do not merely contain discussions of faith, ethics, actions, and commandments. Had it been so, the size of the Qur'an would not have been more than a few chapters. Instead, there are parables, analogies, historical evidence, and thorough commentary on the behavior of the audience for explanation and clarification. Along with this, there is the correction of the incomplete knowledge of the audience, the refutation of baseless ideas, and the rejection of false beliefs. For this reason, its nature is that it is the proclamation narrative of the Prophet Muhammad's warnings. However, in all these discussions, the foundational topics of religion have not been neglected. Their status is like the focal point of a compass, as if all political, social, legal, and historical subjects arise from them, revolve around them, and return to them.

The Method of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Preaching

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), was the foremost and greatest scholar of religion. In this capacity, he fulfilled the duty of understanding, explaining, and elucidating the religion. A major part of this is collected in the books of Hadith and Seerah. A study of these sources also makes it clear that his sayings and actions consist of explanations of the original religion, clarifications, and critiques of opposing ideologies.

The Style of Invitation of the Scholars of the Ummah

In following the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the scholar-companions and all the scholars of the ummah after them have adopted this approach over the past fourteen hundred years.¹ Among them, those who rose in their respective times as bearers of the call to religion made it clear through their work that they engaged with every discussion related to the invitation and its effects. The examples of Imam Al-Ghazali, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, Imam Shah Waliullah, and Syed Abul A'la Maududi are very prominent in this matter. Imam Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifa* and *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah's *Minhaj al-Sunnah*, Shah Waliullah's *Izalat al-Khafa* and *Tafhimat-e-Ilahiyyah* are notable. Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi began his missionary work with a book entitled: *Muslim aur Maujooda Siyasi Kashmakash* (Muslims and the Current Political Struggle). A study of these books reveals that these distinguished scholars comment on their political and social conditions, warn rulers, address scholars, critique jurists, draw the attention of decision-makers, and identify the mistakes of intellectuals. All their missionary struggles are comprised of these tasks.

This detail makes it clear that in our history, whenever the task of inviting towards faith has been undertaken, it has been done

¹ If one wishes to obtain a general introduction to this, then reading Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi's book ""Tajdid wa Ihya-e-Deen" would be beneficial. In this book, he has mentioned prominent scholars and revivalists from the time of the Four Imams to Shah Ismail Shaheed, who made every possible effort to make religion a living issue for people. For this purpose, they provided explanations of religion, played a role in guiding on ijthadi matters, uprooted false beliefs and ideas according to their knowledge and understanding, and replaced them with the correct interpretation of Islamic thought. Furthermore, they addressed the objective conditions in political and social spheres, and without any compromise or appeasement, continued the struggle for the establishment of truth and the eradication of falsehood with full courage and bravery.

considering the prevailing circumstances. It has encompassed all those religious, political, social, and historical topics that, in one way or another, are issues for the audience, or can become obstacles for them, or cause confusion, or create hindrances in understanding positive truths.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Approach to Invitation

As a student of religion, I stand in the continuity of this tradition of inviting to faith. I have focused on those subjects that are essential in the mission of invitation to religion. In my writings, *Al-Bayan* is the interpretation and commentary of the Holy Qur'an. *Meezan* is a clear explanation of religion in a positive style. *Al-Islam* is a summary of the same. *Burhan* is a collection of articles that critique contemporary opinions and thoughts. *Maqamat* is a collection of miscellaneous articles, including my independent thoughts, critiques, reviews, and suggestions on national, communal, political, and social topics. Some historical issues have also been covered. In this collection, "Islam and State — A Counter Narrative" and other topics such as "The Problem of Nationalism," "Islamic Government," "Implementation of Sharia," and "Religious Extremism" are based on political themes. The discussions follow this pattern as well. They explain positive aspects concerning the invitation to faith, along with all those subjects that are part of the thought and action of the audience of the invitation. This is the scope of my work. This is my professional responsibility. Throughout my life, I have neither taken a step forward from this nor stepped back.

The question is, out of the topics I have written or spoken about so far, which of these things lie outside this scope?

Although there can be no restriction on anything outside this scope. I can write my autobiography, compose travelogues, teach poetry and literature, provide instruction in different languages, discuss the works of writers, poets, researchers, scholars, and leaders, speak on the rise and fall of nations and countries, and offer suggestions for the economic and political betterment of my compatriots. In short, I can

express my views on any topic of my choice.

The Importance of Mentioning Historical Events and Historical Figures in Dawah

As far as discussing historical events or personalities is concerned, the question is why does the Qur'an mention *Dhul-Qarnayn*? Why does it narrate the story of the Companions of the Cave? Why does it detail the life story of Prophet Joseph (PBUH)?

Human Emotions and Feelings

Keep in mind that it is human nature that if communication is presented without regard to the problems and issues of the audience, it will not be effective. The audience is not made of bricks, stones, or trees. They have emotions and feelings, political, social, and religious biases, and historical associations. These things influence their thinking and actions and sometimes take the form of religious interpretations. If one is to communicate with humans, it is necessary to comment negatively or positively on their important issues. Negative comments will correct their mistakes, and positive comments will encourage them.

Historical Events

In our context, you can see that these historical events are what divided the Muslim community into the two major groups of Sunni and Shia. We know that these events were not merely viewed as historical incidents; they were made the foundation of religious ideologies. One group put forward the concept of Imamate, which gradually assumed the form of a creed. Consequently, scholars from the other group had to discuss the early political events that served as the basis for that ideology. Therefore, if there is an intention to reform such ideologies, it will be necessary to bring the foundational events of these ideologies under discussion. Discussions conducted in a purely abstract manner will neither persuade the audience nor will they be comprehensible to them.

Different Interpretations of Religion

You are aware that there are various interpretations of religion prevalent among us. We refer to these interpretations for clarity of purpose with names such as the juristic interpretation of religion, the Salafi interpretation of religion, the jihadi interpretation of religion, the mystical interpretation of religion, and the political interpretation of religion. If within these interpretations, there is any amendment or addition from a religious standpoint, any excess or deficiency, or any disbelief, falsehood, misguidance, or innovation is included, it is crucial to identify it and, with complete knowledge and reasoning, refute and correct it. This is the work of purifying religious teachings from the admixtures of human thought and action. Without this, the correct understanding of religion cannot be instilled in people's hearts and minds.

This entire discussion has been presented from a negative perspective. Now, let us understand it from a positive perspective as well.

The Religious Nature of the Era of the Companions

Observe, it is clear from the Holy Qur'an that there are three essential demands of faith in the Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

1. It should be acknowledged that he was not only a Prophet of Allah, but also His Messenger.
2. It is to be accepted that his prophethood is *ilā al-khalqī kāffatan*,² that is for all of humanity.
3. It is to be accepted that prophethood has ended with him. No prophet will come until the Day of Judgment.

After the finality of Prophethood, the arrangement that Allah Almighty has established for the propagation of His religion is based

² In Sahih Muslim, this saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is narrated: "*Urseltu ila al-khalqī kaaffatan*" meaning, "I have been sent as a messenger to all of creation." (Hadith number 1167).

on two components:

One point is that He has completely preserved His entire guidance in the form of the Qur'an.

Secondly, the *Bani Ismail* (Ishmaelites), meaning the group of Companions (Sahaba), has been appointed to the position of "witness."³ Thus, it is stated:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا.

And in a similar manner, We have also made you an intermediate community so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before all the people of the world and the Messenger of God may bear this witness before you. (2:143)

This group of Companions is characterized as *ummatan wasatan* (a middle community), with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on one side and the rest of the world on the other. The religious responsibility of this group was to receive the religion from the Prophet (PBUH) and then convey it in its complete form to the rest of the world. They were appointed to the position of bearing witness to the religion. This means that Allah had selected them to testify to the truth of the religion in the same way that He chooses some eminent individuals among the descendants of Adam for prophethood and messengership. In this capacity, their duty was to establish the testimony of the religion upon the nations of the world, as the testimony of the religion was established upon them by the Messenger of Allah.

This group of esteemed companions continued to carry this responsibility until the time of Muawiya (RA). This means that from the reign of Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA) in 11 AH to the reign of Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan (RA) in 60 AH, there was a period of 50 years where this responsibility of bearing witness laid upon the companions by Allah was observed. The study of events, incidents, and personalities

³ In Quranic terminology, *shahadat* means to make the truth so clear to people that after this, no one has any excuse to deviate from it.

of this period is essentially the study of the era of testimony. It is important to analyze this period thoroughly, and if there are any misunderstandings about it among people, their correction is necessary. This necessity arises from both the aspects of religious knowledge and the propagation of religion. This cannot be overlooked in any way.

[May 2024]



Who is Responsible for Religious Incitement?

In the Context of the Sialkot Incident

On December 3, 2021, in the city of Sialkot, Pakistan, a mob comprising hundreds of individuals killed a Sri Lankan citizen, Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana, by collective assault. After the murder, his body was set on fire. The 49-year-old victim was a manager of a private factory and had been residing in Pakistan for the past 11 years. He adhered to Buddhism. It was alleged that he had torn posters affixed to the factory walls, which bore religious slogans. These posters had been put up by the factory employees. On this occasion, a question was posed to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi regarding who is responsible for this incident and other incidents of similar nature. His summarized response is as follows.

The tragedy of Sialkot is extremely heartbreaking. No matter how much sorrow is expressed over it, it is not enough. However, the main question remains the same, which is asked: who is responsible for this oppression and brutality? Who are the people because of whom the crimes of individual murder are taking the form of collective slaughter? Under whose instigation do naive people form mobs and beat an unarmed person to death?

First Level Responsible: Religious Leaders

In my opinion, the primary responsibility for these atrocities lies with our religious leaders. These individuals present incorrect interpretations of Shariah for their own purposes. They perform arbitrary exegesis of the Qur'an and Hadith. They hide the opinions of reputable scholars and jurists and instead spread the statements of poets, preachers, and

speakers. They incite the emotions of simple and sincere people with stories, tales, and legends, prompting them to take illegal actions. As a result, those who undertake such actions are presented as heroes. If they survive, they are called Ghazis; if they perish, they attain the rank of martyrdom. Then, odes are recited in their honor, their stories are told, and supernatural events and miracles are attributed to them. Tombs are constructed over their graves, declared as centers of divine radiance and manifestations, thereby becoming places of pilgrimage for people.

This enchanting atmosphere inspires and motivates ordinary Muslims, making them ready to sacrifice their physical, mental, and financial resources. In this, they perceive the blessings of this world and the hereafter. Consequently, when they observe that, in their opinion, someone has committed an insult, shown disrespect, or engaged in an inappropriate matter, they seize the opportunity and are prepared to take action. It is as if, in their view, that blessed moment arrives when they can succeed in attaining the blessings of both this world and the hereafter.

In this environment of agitation, there are those passionate and fiery slogans that stir the blood of every Muslim. One of these slogans, which has become very popular, is *Labbayk ya Rasoolallah* meaning “O Messenger of Allah, we are present for you.” The meaning of this slogan is clear to every Muslim. When I hear it, when you hear it, when any believer hears it, they become instantly restless. Obviously, how can it be that the Messenger of Allah calls out, and we are not present to offer our devotion? In such a case, our faith would not remain intact. This is because the noble and exalted personage of the Messenger is the sole source of religion on this earth. Religion is the name of his sayings, actions, and tacit approvals. Whatever he gives as religion, that is religion; and whatever he does not give as religion, that is not religion. He is Allah’s envoy, Allah’s representative, and Allah’s Messenger. Obedience to him is obedience to Allah, and disobedience to him is disobedience to Allah. A person truly attains the status of being a Muslim only when he considers him dearer than his parents, wife, children, and relatives. This is the esteemed status of the Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH), which is entrenched in the heart and mind of every Muslim. In this context, consider that when there is a call made in reference to the Prophet (PBUH), and in response the cries of *Labbayk ya Rasoolallah* rise from all sides, it is possible that a few individuals may feel the need to investigate, but most people will not be able to refrain from being swept away by emotions and will act impulsively. The tragedies of Salman Taseer, Mashal Khan, and Priyantha Kumara are the results of these fervent emotions.

In the same way, consider that some time ago in gatherings and processions, slogans of *Takbeer* and *Risalat* were raised, and in response, people would say “Allahu Akbar” and “Ya Rasool Allah.” Now, the slogan “*Man sabba nabiyyan*” (Whoever insults the Prophet) is raised, and in response, the cry “*fa-uq‘tulūhu*” (Let him be killed) is heard. When such slogans are raised in the streets and markets, when groups are formed based on them, when these cries are elevated from mosques and pulpits, when speeches of this nature are given in assemblies, when this becomes the standard of faith, when it is declared the practice of the righteous, and after all this, when authority is also placed in the hands of the common man, then it is only Ghazi Ilm-ud-Din and Mumtaz Qadri who will emerge. They will file the case themselves, become the lawyers themselves, give testimony themselves, pronounce the sentence themselves, and enforce it themselves.

Second Level of Responsibility: Scholars and Legal Experts

After religious leaders, those responsible for these incidents are the people who have made and enacted the blasphemy laws. Our scholars are aware that these laws are against the Qur’an, against the Hadith of the Prophet, and against Islamic jurisprudence. Many among them have admitted this and have stated that these laws do not conform to Islamic jurisprudence, yet, despite this, no one is prepared to amend or reform them.

The issue is that when a matter gains legal endorsement, people begin to consider it as justified, and if its motivations are religious, it also gains respect and sanctity. This is the same case with the blasphemy laws.

People start to consider any amendment to these laws as equivalent to, God forbid, an amendment in the Sharia. This is why criticism of these laws is often deemed as criticism of Islamic Sharia, whereas no Muslim can even conceive of critiquing any law of the Sharia. It is akin to considering an objection to the interpretive opinion or legal stance of scholars like Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, Maulana Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi, Maulana Sanaullah Amritsari, or Maulana Abul A'la Maududi as an objection to the divine book or Islamic Sharia.

This is the legal aspect of the issue. The practical aspect is that often, neither does the situation arise where a case is filed according to this law, nor does the question of its enforcement emerge. People themselves initiate legal action and enforce punishment on their own. It is evident that this is a grave criminal act, but due to religious sanctity, it is viewed with admiration. Consequently, the person who takes the law into their own hands is considered worthy of sympathy and pardon. The argument made is that by acting beyond the law, they have brought a person to justice who, according to the blasphemy law, deserved this outcome. Thus, it is implied they did the right thing, but in their emotions, chose the wrong method. As further justification, the excuse is presented that if this valiant individual had not acted, due to the weaknesses of the state and flaws in the judicial system, the real criminal would never have been punished.

One serious aspect of giving religious sanctity to these laws is that if a person is accused of blasphemy against the Prophet or religion, they become a criminal while being an accused. Firstly, their fate is often sealed even before an arrest, and if they are arrested, the entire society treats them like a criminal. No one stands up to provide them relief, no lawyer is willing to fight their case, and no judge is prepared to hear their case. They have to live in solitary confinement until death. If anyone manages to find an opportunity, the only refuge available is to leave the country.

Third Level Responsible: Authoritative Institutions

At the third level, this responsibility lies with those constitution-

breaking guns that use such people for their political objectives. This scene has been repeatedly witnessed in this country, where a group of a few people suddenly transforms into an organized party. A limited sect suddenly spreads at a national level. Resources are found, weapons and ammunition become available as well. How does all this happen? This mystery is now evident to everyone. We know how, in past decades, one group was used for political purposes and strategic interests, then another, and then a third. There are no signs yet of quelling this series. People have not forgotten the scenes witnessed in Faizabad (Islamabad) that the whole world saw. Our esteemed judge had written an excellent verdict highlighting these issues. If only that verdict had been read, understood, and behavior corrected accordingly, but regrettably, instead of that, guns were turned towards that very reformer.

In reality, these are the leaders who wish to wield the reins of power from behind the scenes. They are aware that they cannot come to power through democratic means, and therefore they attempt to keep politicians and elected officials under their control. If those in politics and governance start to become unmanageable, then to discipline and admonish them or to replace them with new individuals, resistant groups are formed. These groups create chaos in the country through protests, vandalism, and bloodshed, which compels politicians to capitulate under pressure. The nature of these resistant groups and their leaders is merely instrumental. Hence, when they are given the nod, they take to the streets with their forces, and when ordered to retreat, they calmly return to their centers, sometimes disappearing as if they never existed.

If these groups, formed by the rulers behind the scenes, become very organized and stable, they sometimes commit acts of rebellion and defiance. In such cases, there is a need to teach them a lesson. Since they are organized and armed, force is required to be used against them. In response, they adopt the same attitude. The result emerges as nationwide terrorism. Thousands of men, women, children, and brave soldiers and police officers are ruthlessly killed. If anyone objects to this bloodshed, the argument is presented in response that

nations have to make sacrifices for their survival, or it is said that such incidents fall under the category of 'collateral damage', which is an inevitable part of every war.

On the fourth level of responsibility: Political and Social Leaders and Intellectuals

In the end, politicians, social leaders, and intellectuals who adopt a stance of appeasement and concealment in this matter are also responsible. Even when they condemn objectionable incidents, they do so in hesitant terms, often couched with ifs and buts. They neither stand with the oppressed nor explicitly denounce the oppressor, and frequently, they even end up endorsing those who exceed limits. For this purpose, sometimes they perform the funeral prayers of the perpetrators, sometimes they participate in gatherings praising them, and sometimes they show up with flowers as offerings for them. These individuals, too, are responsible for these incidents. This same behavior was observed in the case of Salman Taseer, during the murder of Mashal Khan, and in the recent incident in Sialkot.

Method for Reforming Conditions

The summary of the discussion is that the incident of Priyantha Kumara is a continuation of the events involving Salman Taseer and Mashal Khan. This is very tragic and highly condemnable. The primary responsibility for such incidents lies with our religious leaders. Subsequently, the responsibility falls on the scholars and experts who formulated the blasphemy laws. Then, in sequence, the operatives of the establishment, politicians, and intellectuals are accountable. If all these groups can learn a lesson from this incident and decide to reform themselves, we can protect ourselves from such atrocities and make this country a cradle of peace and development.

What Should Religious Leaders Do?

For this purpose, our religious leaders must decide that they will neither be used for anyone's personal interests nor will they use the

general public. Instead of focusing on power, authority, and politics, they will make the invitation to the Qur'an and Sunnah their priority. They will use mosques, educational institutions, pulpits, and platforms solely for education and training. They will listen to the truth, support the truth, and convey the truth. They will communicate the knowledge of religion impartially and accurately - without any alterations, exaggerations, or imbalances. With full faith, they will accept that declaring things lawful that Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and deeming what has been made lawful as prohibited, is a very grave sin. This equates to attributing falsehoods to Allah and His Messenger. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH), has said that whoever intentionally misattributes something false to him will find their place in hell.¹

What should scholars and legal experts do?

Scholars and legal experts must inform people that viewing blasphemy laws as Sharia is incorrect. Sharia is the eternal and immutable law of Allah, obligatory for every Muslim, whereas these laws are opinions of certain legal experts, formulated according to their understanding and insight. These have been given the status of law through decisions made by authoritative bodies. Such opinions can be correct or incorrect from the perspective of religion and Sharia. Due to the possibility of both accuracy and error, it is necessary to keep the door open for revisiting and reviewing them. Therefore, criticism of these should not be seen as criticism of Sharia. If there is criticism, it is directed at those legal experts and the legislative assembly that formulated and approved them. If such human efforts are given the status of Sharia, it will greatly damage the distinct character of religion and Sharia.

Therefore, scholars and legal experts must clearly and openly highlight the deficiencies in the mentioned laws and propose necessary amendments and additions in light of the opinions of our esteemed jurists. The immediate and best solution to this issue is to legislate on

¹ Bukhari, No: 110

the matter of blasphemy according to the opinions of the Hanafi jurists. Although I disagree with their opinion, I still believe it is an extremely reasonable law. According to democratic principles, we should support its implementation because the majority of the country trusts and adheres to Hanafi jurisprudence.

What should powerful institutions do?

If the operatives of the establishment truly value the survival of the nation and the country, they must abandon the practice of nurturing and supporting extremist individuals and groups. This is only possible when they decide to withdraw from interference in national and international politics. This decision is a written decree on the wall, which they will inevitably have to make sooner or later. If they choose to make it sooner, they may salvage some of their reputation and prevent further decline of the nation and the country. A delay in making this decision will not only harm the country but also damage their own standing. They are responsible for maintaining stability and safeguarding peace and security in the country. Their entire focus should be concentrated on this front. Internal and external politics should not be made the arena for their excursions.

What should political and social leaders and intellectuals do?

Politicians and intellectuals must work to improve their moral standing. They should adopt honesty as their motto, build their character, and eliminate contradictions between their words and actions. Instead of pursuing temporary benefits for themselves and the nation, they should aim for long-term advantages. It should be made clear that they will not be used by internal or external forces under any circumstances. Those among them who are learned should elevate the consciousness of the people and encourage them to think critically. They should understand the religion themselves and explain it to others as well. If they sincerely and selflessly start fulfilling their responsibilities, the mercy of the Lord will overshadow them. The public will also begin to stand with them, escaping from the clutches

of tricksters and schemers. They must believe that this nation is both brave and capable. Every individual of this nation is a star in its destiny. If properly guided, this nation can soon overcome its weaknesses and embark on the journey of progress. If Allah, the Almighty, wills.

[January 2022]



Migration and the Issue of Citizenship

The Lower House of India's Parliament (Lok Sabha) has passed an amendment bill to the existing citizenship law. As a result, refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who have been residing in India for at least five years and belong to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian religions, have been deemed eligible for Indian citizenship. Muslim refugees do not possess this eligibility because they can potentially reside in Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Since religion has been made the basis for eligibility in this bill, it is being viewed as contrary to the concept of India being a secular state. Similarly, since it affects Muslims, criticism and protests have been ongoing from their side. In this context, in response to a question, esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has clarified his principled stance. The summary of his position is as follows.

I fundamentally consider the law restricting migration between states to be incorrect. To me, it goes against basic human rights. This earth is Allah's earth, and all human beings have an equal right to live on it. It is among the basic human rights that a person, according to their circumstances and needs, should be able to move to and reside in whichever region they desire and make it their homeland. In certain situations, this migration is not voluntary but becomes an inevitable demand of faith. If it becomes difficult to maintain the worship of Allah in an area, and people cannot freely practice their religion, then faith requires them to leave that place and move to a location where they can openly express and practice their religion without any hindrance. The Qur'an has referred to this as *Hijra*, and there is a warning of hellfire for those who avoid migrating under such

circumstances. The directive is states as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ شَحْم قَالُوا كُنَّا
مُسْتَظْعِقِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ شَحْم قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً
فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا شَحْم قَالُوا لَكَ مَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمِ شَحْم وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

[Even at this instance, people who are not willing to come out of the cities where they are being persecuted, tell them O Prophet that] people whose souls will be claimed by the angels in such circumstances that [while endangering their faith] they were being unjust to their souls; they will ask them: “What circumstances were you in?” “We were totally helpless in this land,” they will reply. The angels will say: “Was not the land of God spacious enough for you to migrate in it?” So, it is these people whose abode is Hell, and what an evil abode it is. (4:97)

Consider the current situation where the persecution of Muslims is occurring in China, and what is happening with the Rohingya and in Myanmar. In light of these circumstances, if people wish to migrate in obedience to Allah’s command, where can they go? People are being forced to change their religion and millions are being deprived of their citizenship. If they wish to migrate due to persecution or as a consequence of war and conflict, they are being denied acceptance. The question arises: who has granted the pre-existing residents the right to bar the path of those who come later?

Only the Creator of this universe holds the right to evacuate an area or impose restrictions on any place. No group, race, or nation possesses this right. This land belongs to Allah Almighty. He has given it to humankind, transcending all distinctions of color, race, and religion. People may choose to live wherever they wish. This is a divinely granted right from Allah that no one can take away.

It is stated that the origin of humanity is from Africa, which means that people migrated to spread across the world. If this migration was permissible for the earliest humans, then how can it be forbidden today? Those people who migrated and settled in Australia or America centuries ago, did they have any entitlement, did they go

with any visa or passport? How can they deprive others of the right they deemed rightful for themselves? This is the same case in other parts of the world. As a result, some regions are lying empty like vast deserts, and in some places, there are no means for people to earn a living. Therefore, in my view, it must be included in fundamental human rights that no restrictions can be imposed on migration on God's earth. Such restrictions cannot be placed on the basis of race or color, nor on the basis of religion or birth, nor on the basis of how long someone has been settled in an area. This restriction on the fundamental right of migration is the compulsion of the nation-states of the present age. Every modern state is guilty of this compulsion. This is a collective oppression by the nation-states against fundamental human rights, against which humanity should strive vigorously to attain liberation.

After establishing this principle, consider that in the concept of a modern nation-state, it is an accepted principle that the basis of citizenship will be geography. This means that a defined territory will be called a country, and its inhabitants will be called its citizens. The rights of citizenship will be the same for all inhabitants, with no discrimination or division based on color, race, language, or religion. Now, if India is a modern nation-state, making religion the basis of granting citizenship is against that fundamental principle on which the modern nation-state is founded. Ideally, you should have stood at the position where if people from other countries, facing oppression, persecution, deprivation, and violation of established citizenship rights, come to us, our doors would be open for them, and we would be ready to grant them equal citizen rights. If you could not stand at this position, then at least you should not have moved away from the position where the modern era's nation-state stands. If you decided to grant citizenship to certain people, then religion should never have been made the basis for accepting or rejecting them, as it contradicts the concept of the nation-state on which the state of India is founded.

The positive aspect of the concept of the nation-state was that it based citizenship on geography rather than color, race, or religion. Had it remained on this foundation, it would still have been somewhat

beneficial to the world, as it introduced regions where individuals could rise above the distinctions of color, race, and religion and achieve nationality. Now, if even this aspect does not remain, the limited utility of the nation-state, which ensures its survival, will also not remain.

In my opinion, such actions by states are based on oppression and aggression. They are contrary to basic human rights and also against the concept of a modern nation-state. Instead of being distressed by these actions and raising slogans of national pride, we Muslims should take a principled stance that wherever persecution occurs in the world, whether it is against Muslims or any other nation, we will condemn it and raise our voice against it. If only our Muslim governments—whose doors are closed even to Muslims—were granted the resolve by God to declare that wherever there is persecution in the world, wherever there is oppression and injustice, wherever the market of war and conflict is heated, wherever human rights are violated, wherever people are harassed and their citizenship is denied, our doors are open for those people. They may come and make our land their homeland. Pakistan should stand firm on this position. Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Gulf states, and other Muslim countries should adopt the same position.

[January 2020]



India-Pakistan Relations

Some Questions Regarding the Persistent Tension in Pakistan-India Relations. In response, derived from the discussion of the esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi.

First of all, it is important to understand that love for one's homeland is inherent in human nature. It is in human nature to live life being connected to relationships. From birth to the last stage of life, a person experiences happiness and sorrow with these relationships. These relationships cultivate the love for the homeland within the person. I was born in one place, opened my eyes in a particular environment, walked and moved around on specific land, grew up in a certain house, played in some streets and markets, wandered through some fields and farms; there were people around me; among them were my parents, uncles, teachers, friends, and acquaintances. All of these collectively instilled a sense of connection in my nature. This is the feeling of love for the homeland. It is the same natural feeling as we experience in human relationships. That is why, just as we cannot separate ourselves from our parents, siblings, relatives, and friends even when we go to far-off places, similarly, we cannot separate ourselves from our homeland.

It is also a reality that due to these relationships, feelings of animosity and hostility are inherent in human nature. When a person feels friendship with someone, they give it a romantic form in their emotions, living and dying within it. When these relationships are disrupted, the motives for enmity and animosity arise within them, which often transform into hatred and can lead to discord and conflict.

Religion and morality work on the refinement of the emotions of love and enmity. That is, they instruct on how these sentiments of love and

enmity should be confined within certain boundaries. They guide which conditions make them legitimate and beneficial, and which transgressions turn them into oppression, aggression, and a cause of corruption on earth. To regulate the hostility and enmity that arise from national pride, the Qur'an commands the establishment of justice and emphasizes to Muslims that "let not the hatred of a people incite you to deviate from justice."¹ When such animosity, based on nationalism, was expressed before the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), he described it as *da'wā al-jahiliyyah* or "the call of ignorance,"² and on certain occasions, stated that "whoever fights for nationalism, calls towards nationalism, or is enraged by nationalism, and dies in this state, has died a death of ignorance."³

Through moral education and training, we essentially provide a boundary to the storms that rise within us. Emotions are akin to a turbulent sea, requiring a shoreline for control. Education, training, culture, and ethics provide this shoreline. In essence, when you mold a nation in a particular civilization, specific culture, and particular customs, many things fall into place. Religion also fulfils this role. Thus, we are informed about the nature of our enmity and the nature of our friendship. What are the boundaries of enmity and what are the boundaries of friendship?

The purpose of this explanation is to express that love for one's homeland is inherent in human nature, and enmity towards the enemies of the homeland is a natural consequence of this inherent love. This love cannot be eradicated, nor should there be any attempt to do so. However, efforts should certainly be made through education and training to bring this love within the bounds of culture and ethics.

Hostility arising from love for one's homeland often results in national disputes and international wars, leading to the destruction of peace in countries and opening the doors to chaos and discord in the

¹ Al-Maidah 5:8.

² Bukhari, No: 4905.

³ Al-Nisae, No: 4119.

world. Now, the question arises, what is the way to safeguard against this? In the present era, the path that the collective human conscience has adopted is the adherence to two principles in national and political matters:

A democracy,

And the right to self-determination of other nations.

The history of nations in the past century testifies that wherever these principles have been adopted, an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation has prevailed, and wherever there has been a deviation from them, conflict and strife have dominated. Therefore, in my view, it is essential to adopt these two principles on a national and international level as part of the national ideology and political belief to end unrest and establish public peace: Firstly, the path of democracy should be chosen to change governments, and secondly, the right of self-determination of nations should be acknowledged at every level. This means that in any country, power will be held by the individual, group, or party that has the support of the majority of people. Decisions regarding the termination or change of power will also be made by the opinion of the public. In this matter, neither internal nor external forces will intervene. Similarly, if a nation resides in a specific region and, on this basis, demands a separate state, it will be accepted graciously. Emotional slogans, romantic tales, religious traditions, and authoritarian ideologies will not be allowed to hinder this. If these two principles are accepted in their true spirit, all the current disagreements and conflicts can immediately come to an end.

When Scotland demanded separation and autonomy from the United Kingdom, did any problem arise? Did the British government have to send seven hundred thousand troops there? Was there a storm of murder and mayhem? Were young lives taken there? Were such weapons used that seeing the result, life would become difficult for a person? None of this happened. The political parties there continued to contest elections and became part of the government. A referendum took place among them, the results of which everyone accepted wholeheartedly. In America, there is a long history of war,

meaning there is a civil war that led to the creation of this country. Many states agreed on a constitution to form this country. If you consider, it has been arranged in such a way that if any of these states wants to part ways, it can do so peacefully by a particular method.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah also advocated for Pakistan on the basis of these two principles. He adopted the democratic process for the transfer of power and, based on the principle of self-determination, made politicians realize that Muslims of India are a nation by every definition of nationhood, and they also have territory available in the northwestern and eastern regions of India. Therefore, their demand for a separate homeland should be accepted.

The conflict and tension between Pakistan and India, the wars and disputes observed, are essentially the result of not adhering to these principles. It doesn't take long for a situation of life and death to emerge on both sides, borders are closed, and channels for the exchange of ideas are obstructed. The exchange of books becomes impossible, and the movement of individuals becomes challenging. This cycle began on the very first day and continues to this day. Every person can imagine the distress and difficulty this causes to the residents on both sides. On the other side, the Sikh community resides, whose sacred sites are all in Pakistan. Many institutions and historic landmarks of those on this side are there. On this basis, both are a necessity for each other, but the way relations should be between the two countries, the way people should travel, and the way mutual trade should occur, such a situation has never been realized.

Why was this not possible? The fundamental reason is that the principles of democracy and self-determination were not accepted with an open heart. It was said that the great India was divided, the motherland was slaughtered, and the nation was fragmented. These are all emotional interpretations, imaginary concepts that maintain a certain kind of romantic aura.

The issue of Kashmir has also arisen as a result of not recognizing these two principles. Kashmiris constitute a complete nation. In terms of nationality, they have maintained their distinct identity for centuries.

There is a defined and specific region where they have been settled for hundreds of years. Moreover, beyond this, Kashmir has long held the status of a separate state. Therefore, they should have the full right to either become part of a country of their choosing through their own free will or to organize themselves as an independent state. Neither India nor Pakistan should object to this. However, if their rights are not recognized, it results in the same oppression that has persisted for several decades.

I believe that it is the responsibility of the political leaders, journalists, and intellectuals of Pakistan and India to educate people that India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Arab states, or Iran are not sacred entities. These are merely political entities that have been established as a result of various political circumstances. The division of borders between them is neither eternal nor everlasting. These are human arrangements that have changed in the past and may continue to change in the future. Whether these entities are ancient themselves or have emerged by separating from an ancient unity, in both cases, their existence should be acknowledged. If any nation within them wishes to establish its own new entity, it should be supported and endorsed, and no obstacles should be placed in its path. In the modern era, there is no other path to international peace than this.

[February 2020]



The Issue of Kashmir

*'Dunya' TV Program 'Ilm o Hikmat — Ghamidi Excerpted'
from a conversation with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi.*

In order to adopt the correct course of action regarding the Kashmir issue, it is essential to understand the change that has occurred in the political thinking of the world. Until some time ago, the notion prevailed that political order comes into being through force and operates in the form of a ruler-subject relationship. States and governments are established on this principle and utilize it for their continuity and stability. That is, people rise up, gather force, and subjugate others through the power of the sword or gun. The great empires of the world have come into existence under this concept; European governments have been established in this manner, Muslims have governed many regions by this method, and in India, the reigns of the Mughals and the British are also the result of this principle.

This concept has now changed. The notions of self-determination and democracy have taken its place. Two principles have been accepted: that nations have the right to self-determination, and that political disputes will be resolved democratically. The right to self-determination means that if the people of a certain territory demand a unique national identity based on language, race, region, culture, religion, or any other shared factor, they will be accepted as a nation. It will be acknowledged that they have sovereignty in their political decisions. Thus, if they wish, they will be able to separate from their state, affiliate with another state, or establish their own state. By democratic means, it is implied that all political matters, both at the national and international levels, will be decided by the opinion of the people.

These principles are now recognized as global norms. Although there hasn't been much practical progress, it is intellectually accepted that the relationship between the ruler and the ruled has ended. The governments that will now be established will operate on democratic principles, and if any nation demands the right to self-determination, it will shall be implemented through a referendum.

In this context, when we look at the issue of Kashmir, it becomes clear that there is no longer a need to view this issue against the historical backdrop of the partition of India. Instead, it should be seen in the light of the changes that have taken place in the world today. The basis for decision-making is no longer historical evidence but rather the question of whether the people of Kashmir see themselves as a separate nation and whether they wish to exercise their right to self-determination in this capacity. If the answer to this question is affirmative, then it is their right to be given the opportunity to make their political decision democratically.

After seventy years of struggle and immense sacrifices by the Kashmiri people, there is now no doubt in this matter that a vast majority of them do not wish to remain with India. In the past seven decades, they have shown the world that they are not ready to accept the accession. Therefore, the debate is now completely meaningless whether Maharaja Hari Singh was authorized to accede or not, whether the document of accession was valid or invalid, whether the role of the British rulers was biased or impartial. All these matters are irrelevant because, even if hypothetically it is accepted that the affairs of accession were as claimed by India, it cannot annul the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. When a nation has been demanding separation for seventy years, then there remains no room for any historical argument or documentary evidence. Their right to self-determination is an innate right, and their struggle for this has become an evident reality. In such a situation, the conscience of the world should awaken, the conscience of India should awaken, and Pakistan should also raise the voice of its conscience.

The world should view this not as a bilateral dispute between two

countries, namely India and Pakistan, but as a global issue. It should be acknowledged that the right to self-determination is a fundamental right of the Kashmiri people. This is a right that humans are endowed with at birth. The collective conscience of humanity has now recognized this right. There should be no violation of this right, and if any violation occurs, it should be protested against at all levels. The nations of the world must realize that in the matter of the right to self-determination, the global conscience is caught in the conflict of two values. On one hand, it advocates for the right to self-determination of nations, and on the other hand, it acknowledges the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. These two values are mutually contradictory. Accepting them simultaneously leads to intellectual inconsistency, and vigorous support for the right to self-determination becomes impossible. Therefore, there is a need for the United Nations to devise a procedure whereby no nation encounters any hindrance in claiming its right, and the international community faces no hesitation in supporting it. This means that if a nation that fulfills the criteria of nationhood demands separation from a country, accession to a country, or its own independence and sovereignty, there should be a formal system in place to implement it. From the demand to the plebiscite, and from the plebiscite to the implementation of results, there should be a known and definite course of action. For example, in American law, it has been decided that if a determined number of people from any state demand secession from the federation, the decision will be made through a specific procedure by holding a plebiscite.

India should understand that this is not the era of rulers and subjects. Not recognizing a nation's right to self-determination is not a matter of pride but of condemnation. The time has passed when it was considered a great achievement for one nation to subjugate another. The seventy-year struggle of the Kashmiris cannot be hidden from the world's view. Thus, it is mere self-deception to give the world the impression that this is not a national struggle of the Kashmiris, but rather confined to a few specific groups. If this claim is true, then what is the meaning of deploying seven hundred thousand troops in a

country with a population of five million? It should be understood that in this era, governments cannot be sustained for long by wielding guns, firing bullets, placing bayonets upon chests, and depriving people of their sight. If it is correct to form a government for Congress and BJP based on people's opinion, then how can it be wrong to decide the Kashmir issue on the basis of Kashmiri opinion? The conscience of India's writers, poets, journalists, scholars, and pundits should also awaken. Instead of following the erroneous ways of their leaders, they should inform them that the era of claiming Kashmir as an integral part has passed. Now is the era of self-determination and democracy. They should be explained that if the separation of Pakistan from India is justified and the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan is a reality, then the demand of the Kashmiris is equally legitimate. The use of force is not the solution to such a problem; rather, it breeds terrorism. Therefore, the issue should be resolved through democratic means, and whatever the outcome, it should be sincerely accepted.

Pakistan should also adopt the right of self-determination as a principle. This principle applies to Pakistan just as it does to India. Therefore, if any nation within Pakistan fulfills the elements of nationality and makes such a demand, it should also be provided the opportunity for a referendum in good spirit. In the case of Kashmir, its stance should be that the issue of Kashmir should be resolved according to the will of the Kashmiris. It should not perceive this matter as merely a border dispute between Pakistan and India that needs to be resolved by the two countries themselves. This principle of division is not correct in any way. The issue of Kashmir is a matter of fundamental human rights, and neither India, Pakistan, nor any decision by Maharaja Hari Singh or any document of accession holds decisive authority. The decisive authority belongs to the people of Kashmir. If they wish to maintain accession with India, Pakistan should not object. If they want to accede to Pakistan, India should accept it, and if they wish to establish an independent state, both India and Pakistan should recognize it. In this matter, negotiations between Pakistan and India should focus solely on the point of determining

what method should be adopted to ascertain the opinion of the Kashmiris.

As far as the people of Kashmir are concerned, it is their natural right to decide their political future according to their wishes. They should have been granted this right at the time of the partition of India, but unfortunately, this did not happen. Since this was not achieved, they had only two paths ahead of them: one, to accept the compulsion of circumstances and integrate into India's national mainstream, and the other, to begin the struggle for the right of self-determination. Each of these paths had its own demands, challenges, and outcomes. The Kashmiris chose the latter path and continue on it to this day. Despite seventy years of continuous struggle, since the goal has not yet become clear, even today they face the same two paths. They should choose the path that aligns exactly with their national interest. If their preference is the first path, then they should positively accept accession and become a part of India's national existence, in the same way that the Sikhs, Tamils, or some other nations have had to do. If they choose this path, they should focus all their attention on the education, training, and economic welfare of their future generations and limit their struggle to achieving those rights that can be obtained according to the Constitution and law of India. However, if they decide to continue the struggle for the right to self-determination, then they should pause and review their shortcomings and weaknesses, and in light of this, restructure their strategy. In this regard, three points are of fundamental importance:

First, they should create their own leadership and eliminate all group differences by organizing themselves in the form of a representative political party. When they gather under one leadership, unity will be established in their ranks, and they will be able to present their position to the world more effectively with one voice. If this idea is expressed in a single word, it is that they should produce their own *Quaid-e-Azam* (Great Leader) and adopt the same strategy that the Muslim League adopted under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. After this, the prospects for success can become very bright.

The second point is that they should adopt the method of peaceful struggle based on the right to self-determination. The destinies of nations are determined not through provocation, but through peaceful political struggle. They should remain limited to pure political struggle on the basis of non-violence. They should not give their struggle a religious color nor adopt extremist methods. They should approach every forum in the world and seek the moral support of the international community. They should turn their paradise-like land into a cradle of peace so that tourists from all over the world are drawn to it and return filled with a sense of support for the Kashmiri nation. If they adopt this method, then very soon the majority of the world will stand with them, and even within India, sympathizers will emerge. Ultimately, if Allah wills, their struggle will be fruitful.

The third point is that they should concentrate all their efforts on just one demand: the right to self-determination. Regardless of what the world says, no matter the commotion India causes, and irrespective of the offers made by Pakistan, they should never back down from this demand.

[February 2017]



The Dispute of the Babri Mosque

[The Supreme Court of India has delivered its verdict on the case concerning the land of the almost five-hundred-year-old Babri Masjid located in Ayodhya. In this verdict, the court has accepted the stance of the Hindus and rejected the position of the Muslims, ordering that the mosque be demolished and a temple be constructed in its place, while providing a separate site for the Muslims to build a mosque. Regarding this decision, when a question was posed to the esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, his response was summarized as follows.]

Commentary on this decision can only be made after a detailed study. It would be irresponsible to form an opinion about the decision without reading its reasoning. However, I would like to state a few fundamental points. You see, up until about one and a half to two hundred years ago, the world experienced an era of conquests. In those times, when conquerors seized a territory and made it part of their empire, they sometimes undertook oppressive measures such as demolishing historical and religious buildings or altering their structure or identity. Such actions have always been a dark chapter in human history. Islam has vehemently condemned them and has permitted jihad and combat to protect against such aggression. The importance of this issue is so extraordinary in the sight of Allah that He has declared the struggle against it with His own attribution. In Surah Al-Hajj, it is stated:

وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ
وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا

If God did not continue to drive away people through one another, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which the name of God is abundantly taken all would have been destroyed.
(22:40)

In history, the matters of this nature that have occurred or about which such claims are made, have three possible scenarios:

One possibility is that a religious group claims that the building of a place of worship originally belonged to them and was demolished centuries ago by another religious group, which then converted it into their own place of worship. This claim might be accepted by the religious tradition of the group but cannot be historically substantiated.

Secondly, the claim that a place of worship was demolished and its religious identity was altered centuries ago should be historically proven. In other words, evidence should support this claim and historians should be in agreement regarding its origins.

Thirdly, there should also be claimants of the association and ownership of the place of worship, historical testimony should support them, and the building should remain in its original form.

There are several well-known examples of this third scenario. One example is the Kaaba, which according to the Abrahamic religious tradition was the center of monotheism, and whose own custodians had transformed it into a house of idols. The second example is the Mosque of Cordoba, which was converted into a church. The third example is Hagia Sophia, which was first converted into a mosque and later into a museum.

Wherever this third scenario exists, if the national government restores the place of worship to its original identity, it is a commendable action that should be praised in every respect. As for the first two scenarios, wherever they exist, the residents should accept the historical interactions that have taken place over centuries. Making such places contentious is akin to digging up old graves, which will result in nothing but chaos and discord. If this act was committed with any building centuries ago, it was wrong then, and if it is done with a building that has stood for centuries today, it will still be wrong. The reason for this is that when a place of worship that has stood for centuries is demolished to construct another place of worship, the emotions of the community that has developed a religious, cultural, and emotional attachment to it cannot be prevented from being

agitated. This is an attempt to turn the wheel of history backward. If this tradition takes hold even once, it will become impossible to stop it, because perhaps there is hardly any region during the times of conquests where such actions were not taken or where such religious traditions did not develop among people. It is an unwise approach that cannot be used to govern the modern national state.

India is not the homeland of followers of a single religion. There are individuals from various communities numbering in the millions. There are large populations of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and Buddhists. The rulers of such a country must make decisions with careful consideration. The issue of the Babri Masjid is not simply that some people referred to a purported incident from four or five hundred years ago as a basis to approach the court, and the court ruled in their favor. The issue is that a mob arose and demolished a place of worship that had stood for centuries. The question is, what is the stance of the Indian government and courts on this criminal activity? Can such an activity be accepted in the contemporary national state?

What should have happened is that the intellectuals of India would train their nation to move forward by forgetting any incidents that might have occurred three or four hundred years ago. Their national leadership and decision-makers should also have demonstrated the same broad-mindedness. The case of the Shaheed Ganj Mosque in Lahore is no different. Historically, it is stated that this mosque was constructed during the era of Shah Jahan, and it was demolished during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and converted into a Gurdwara. Before the partition of India, Muslims attempted to restore it, resulting in the martyrdom of several Muslims. After the formation of Pakistan, it would not have been difficult to restore it as a mosque, but the leadership and the public relinquished their demands, thus permanently resolving the dispute. Consequently, to this day, a Gurdwara stands there instead of a mosque. The people of India should also demonstrate a similar attitude.

The demands of wisdom and knowledge suggest that if faced with the third situation mentioned, restoring a place of worship to its original

identity is entirely appropriate and commendable. If nations, governments, or courts take such steps, we will salute them. Thus, if the mosque of Cordoba or Hagia Sophia is restored to their original state, it would be a highly admirable action. However, if a mosque, a temple, a church, a monastery, or any place of worship has been in existence for centuries, it should be accepted as a fact of reality, irrespective of its historical background. In the modern era's multinational states, this is the path to peace and security.

[December 2019]



The Hijab Controversy in India

In the Indian state of Karnataka, a Muslim girl named Muskan Khan raised her voice in support of the right to wear the hijab. On February 8, 2022, a group of students insisted that she remove her hijab, citing the college dress code as the basis. She courageously and bravely refused to succumb to this pressure. In response to the crowd's slogans at that moment, she raised her voice with cries of "Allahu Akbar." This was a clear expression of her commitment to Islam. This incident gained worldwide attention. There was a mixed reaction from people. Most viewed it through a religious lens and declared support or opposition to the girl's action based on their religious perspectives. Some people condemned it by regarding it as a violation of discipline and order. Others described it as a struggle for freedom of expression, expressing strong support for it. Esteemed teacher Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was also questioned on this matter. In response, he gave an in depth discussion, the summary of some key points of which is presented below for public benefit.

God Almighty has created human beings free. In their personal affairs and private sphere, they are autonomous. If a person recognizes the Lord as their deity, believes in the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and accepts Islam, it is a personal and voluntary decision. Conversely, if they choose otherwise, they have the right to do so. In the same manner, decisions about what attire to wear, which language to speak, what education to pursue, what profession to choose, which society to live in, what ideology to support, and which religion to adopt are all personal matters. In these, the person has full authority, and no one else has the right to interfere—not an individual, society, government, politicians, or religious leaders. This freedom is the voice of one's nature and is based on the law of trial that God Almighty has

established in this world.

The modern state's foundational purpose is to protect citizens' rights from being violated, safeguard them against injustice towards their lives, property, and dignity, and prevent the chaos and disorder that arise from the misuse of human will and choice that leads to the usurpation of other people's rights. It is for this necessity that governments are established. Consequently, it is imperative for a government to remain confined to fulfilling this need. Beyond this, it does not have the right to interfere in personal matters. These matters lie outside its jurisdiction. Therefore, whether it is a monarchy, papacy, dictatorship, democracy, the government of Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, or Muslims, it is not permissible for any government to intervene in people's personal affairs. If it does so, it would mean that it is itself committing the injustice and violations it was supposed to prevent.

The choice of clothing and appearance is a natural right of individuals. It is a purely personal matter. No parliament has the right to interfere in it, neither does any government nor any court. A woman who wishes to cover her face has the right to do so, and one who wishes to reveal it also has the right to do so. Thus, for example, the government of France does not have the right to legislate against scarves, nor does the government or Supreme Court of India have any such right. Similarly, the governments of Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan do not have the authority to mandate hijab or any specific clothing for women. There is no justification for such interference in Turkey or Iran, nor in Europe or America.

There is no doubt that Islam has provided clear guidance regarding clothing and appearance, but its address is to the individual, not the government or the state. This is similar to how matters of faith and worship are related to the individual. For this purpose, religion has directly addressed the individual and has not employed the mediation of the state. Therefore, it is the requirement of religion itself that even if a government of Muslims is established, it should also refrain from interfering in these matters.

Furthermore, since religious injunctions are subjects of contemplation, differences in interpretation and elucidation as a result of scholarly reflection are an undeniable reality. This cannot be denied.

Thus, it is an individual matter for each person which religion they choose to accept and which interpretation or explanation they consider correct or incorrect. Furthermore, based on what they perceive as correct, they choose which commands to follow and towards which they adopt a negligent attitude. In this matter, the individual is not accountable to society or the state but is directly accountable to their Creator. Their afterlife depends on this accountability. Therefore, no secular government, religious government, monarchy, papacy, or democracy has the right to interfere in this accountability.

The argument against personal rights regarding dress and appearance in favor of discipline and dress code is not valid. Systems and discipline are established for the needs and convenience of humans and should be limited to this extent. If they become ends in themselves and cause discomfort instead of convenience, then their harm outweighs their benefits. Such systems or discipline are eventually rejected by the collective conscience of humanity. The systems that are beneficial, effective, and sustainable for humans are those that allow flexibility and change, enabling people to benefit from them without sacrificing their rights. An example of this is the discipline of the British army before the partition of India. Sikhs were permitted to avoid cutting their hair according to their religion and could wear turbans. Governments and institutions should promote such measures within their respective spheres. For instance, Muslims around the world should have the facility to perform prayers during working hours conveniently. Similarly, in offices, factories, and educational institutions, the respect for their religious symbols should be observed. Muslims should adopt the same approach for non-Muslims within their states and institutions.

Muskan Khan's raising her voice for her hijab is highly commendable. With remarkable courage and bravery, she has protected her personal right and demonstrated through her action that no one has the right

to interfere in her choice of dress or religious beliefs. She has set an example of how to protest when any system, institution, society, government, or court dares to intervene in a person's personal thoughts and actions. At this moment, her cry of "Allahu Akbar" is an expression of her personal commitment to her religion. It is a clear declaration that she considers God the greatest and trusts in Him. She accomplished this alone, despite being a young girl, and against a crowd of men. This is further evidence of her determination and courage. Individuals who stand up for their beliefs, their rights, and their freedom are the guardians and protectors of humanity. We should join our voices with theirs and salute their bravery.

Our admiration and support should not be limited only to the girl who raised the slogan in favor of the hijab in India. It should also extend to those girls who, standing within Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, refuse to accept the imposition of the hijab. On both sides, the principle is the same: religion, the interpretation of religion, and the acceptance or rejection of it is a personal matter for the individual, and another person or authority cannot impose their opinion in this regard.

The Muslims of India have decided to take this issue to the Supreme Court. This step is appropriate for the protection of their rights, but it is essential in this matter that they base their stance on sound and acceptable reasoning. That is, instead of presenting religious arguments based on a specific interpretation, they should ground their case on the premise of being wronged. As a result, their case will be both legitimate and have the potential for success. However, if they choose to adopt religious reasoning for it, the issue will become confused and result in no outcome.

The reason for this is that the same principle, the same law, the same reasoning can form the basis of a decision, which is mutually acceptable among the plaintiff, the defendant, and the court. Clearly, neither Islam holds this position in the collectivity of India, nor is any specific juristic interpretation of it accepted among all Muslims. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to take the books of jurists to the court and

try to persuade it based on them about the rulings on veiling. Determining the rulings on veiling is not the court's responsibility. This is a personal matter that Muskan or other women have to decide for themselves. They make this determination based on their own research, feelings, societal customs, or the opinion of an Islamic scholar—whatever the basis may be, in every situation, it is their right. Our dignity and support should be based on this very right of theirs.

[March 2022]



A Message for Students of Religion

In October 2023, when Javed Ahmed Ghamidi visited Malaysia, he met with Ph.D. students at the International Islamic University. The students asked various questions about his thoughts. At the end of the session, he was asked what advice he would like to give to students of religion. After necessary editing and additions, his response is as follows:

I myself am in need of advice. However, there are three requests that I present to you with great respect.

1. Become true seekers of knowledge.

Whether you are a layperson or a scholar, a teacher or a student, an elder or a youth, always consider yourself a student. When a person thinks that they have studied enough, gained mastery over many sciences and arts, and have become a great scholar, the door to knowledge closes for them. This arrogance makes them indifferent to the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, you should never fall into this delusion. You should remain a true student until the last moment of age and the final breath of life.

A true seeker of knowledge accepts knowledge based on its merit. Prejudices, inclinations, and desires do not obstruct his path. He does not concern himself with whether accepting something changes the beliefs he held, contradicts what he has previously said, or exposes a weakness in his knowledge. He also does not pay attention to who is speaking; whether they are considered small, great, supporter, or opponent. He listens to everyone and focuses on what is being said rather than who is saying it. In this matter, he does not let pride, arrogance, or a sense of superiority get in the way.

A true student welcomes differing opinions. He welcomes criticism.

In reality, it is easy to accept agreeable opinions; everyone embraces them willingly. But the question is, what attitude do you display towards opposing views? Have you dismissed it without hesitation, averted your gaze from it, or have you welcomed it? Welcoming does not mean accepting something without thought. The intention is that you become fully prepared to contemplate it wholeheartedly and stand in the hope that perhaps a new reality might reveal itself to you. My teacher, Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, when he was writing his exegesis *Tadabbur-e-Qur'an*, used to say that the day I open the Qur'an in the morning and encounter a difficult verse, I say, "This is indeed a day!" This meant that now some secret will unfold, now some revelation will occur, and now some truth will become clear. I believe that the same approach should be adopted when faced with differing opinions.

It is unfortunate that we, as Muslims, have abandoned this approach and lost this awareness. As a result, we have been deprived of knowledge. Whether it is our scholars, our laypeople, our religious individuals, our secular individuals, our teachers, or our students, this is the condition of everyone. This is not merely a matter of religious knowledge; in politics, economics, society, history, law, and every field of knowledge and art, we fall prey to this same approach. You can speak on any of these topics, and it will become evident how rigid we are about our established opinions and how emotional we become about our preconceived notions.

Therefore, my advice to you is to always be prepared to welcome knowledge and embrace differences. All my students are aware of this fact — Mr. Manzoor sitting here is a witness — whenever there is a critique on our thought, my only question to them is whether they have read this critique. The reason for this is that if a student is not awakened by the critique made on them, then they can hardly be called a student. When you read criticism attentively, one of two outcomes will occur: either it will become clear that your perspective is correct, thereby increasing your confidence in your stance, or a new truth will be discovered. If a new truth emerges, what could bring more joy to a student than that? It is precisely this pursuit that a

student embarks upon. We should be grateful to the critic and appreciate them for opening a new window of knowledge for us.

There is no doubt that instead of criticism, the style of disparagement, and instead of dialogue, the style of debate is often adopted in our society. Sometimes, one encounters a situation where the other person does not use a pleasant tone, shows contempt, or sits in judgment of your knowledge. In such situations, one should overlook and refrain. This is what the Qur'an describes in the manner of *wa-alladhina hum 'ani al-laghwi muridun* meaning that people of faith keep away from futile and pointless matters.

2. Develop a Passion for Truth Within Yourself

The essence of the dignity of truth is exactly as articulated by our teacher, Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, in his distinctive style: that even if a person's shadow abandons them, they should remain steadfast on the truth. The Qur'an uses the expression *Qiyam bil Qist* (establishment of justice) for this. It indicates that the commitment to truth surpasses the loyalty to parents and kin. Consequently, it is stated that if truth and justice require testimony against one's parents and close relatives on any occasion, there should be no hesitation in providing it. It is mentioned in Surah An-Nisa:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ....

Believers! Adhere to justice bearing witness to it for God even if this evidence is against yourselves, your parents, and your kinsfolk.... (4:135)

Here, in comparison to familial relationships, the dedication to truth is emphasized, and in Surah Al-Maidah, the prioritization of dedication to truth over national pride is highlighted. It is stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ سَمِحٌ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا سَمِحٌ اعْدِلُوا طَمِي ۖ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ سَمِحٌ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ سَمِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Believers! Stand up for God bearing witness to justice and your

animosity for a people should not induce you to turn away from justice. Be just; this is nearer to piety. And keep fearing God because God is well aware of all your deeds. (5:8)

In both these places, bearing witness alongside the establishment of justice is deemed necessary. It is not enough to solely remain steadfast on the truth and justice, but to go further and bear witness to it as well. This testimony is to be given within one's home, among one's circle of friends, and, if the need arises, at the national and international level as well. The purpose is that if your emotions, interests, and desires attempt to deviate you from the path of truth, you should stand firm on the truth. When the opportunity to acknowledge the truth arises, humble yourself before it; if there is a need to express it, do so without any embellishment; and if it demands testimony, fulfill its demand, even at the risk of your life. Truth demands this integrity, this honor, this support.

3. Adopt the Language of Knowledge

Generally, we speak in the language of emotions. This elicits reactions that turn differences into opposition. Instead, we should adopt the language of knowledge. The language of knowledge is characterized by patience and forbearance. It does not engage in debates but encourages dialogue. One listens to the other attentively first, then presents their perspective in a simple and scholarly manner. In this approach, a person neither opts for avoidance nor becomes emotional, neither loses their temper nor rolls up their sleeves, but instead presents their arguments with full confidence and patience. If the audience does not agree, no judgment is passed on them; rather, one tries to find an alternative method of conveying the message with courtesy. If criticism is intended, it first involves articulating the other's viewpoint, and in such a manner that the person whose stance is being expressed might exclaim that they could not have articulated it better themselves.

When you become capable of understanding and accurately expressing another person's viewpoint, you can benefit from their

criticism and make your criticism useful for them. However, if you form an opinion about someone else's position before even listening to or reading their viewpoint, and instead derive it from your own perceptions rather than their statements, and begin to critique it based on your own ideas, this means you have chosen the language of authority and debate over the language of knowledge and dialogue. As a result of this, accusations of disbelief and denial are issued, propaganda is born, and the environment of blame, defamation, conflict, and strife is fueled. Therefore, if you adopt the language of knowledge, you will be able to acquire knowledge yourself and also convey it to others.

Always keep these three things in mind. This is my request, this is my message.

[November 2023]



The Leadership of Friday Prayers

Today TV's program "Live With Ghamidi" In response to a question, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's discourse

What are the religious instructions regarding leading the Friday prayer, and to what extent do we adhere to them? To understand this issue, first recognize that the law governing obligatory prayers in Islam is divided into two parts: one part consists of the five daily prayers—*Fajr*, *Dhuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib*, and *Isha*—and the other part comprises the prayers of *Jumu'ah* (Friday prayer) and the two Eid prayers.

The five daily prayers can be performed individually or in congregation. To perform them in congregation, a mosque can be established at any appropriate location. It can be made in a corner of the house, in the neighborhood, or at the workplace. There is no restriction on a specific place for this purpose. There is also no condition for the imam in these prayers. Any Muslim can lead them.

The law for the prayers of *Jumu'ah* and the two Eid prayers is somewhat different from the five daily prayers. These prayers cannot be performed individually. As far as the Friday prayer is concerned, the directive has been given to the collective organization of Muslims, i.e., the government and state, that they should arrange a special prayer on the day of Friday each week. On that day, the *Zuhr* prayer is replaced by the *Jumu'ah* prayer. The directive regarding this prayer is that it should be performed not in ordinary mosques, but only in those mosques that are designated for this prayer. A fundamental condition of this prayer is that its arrangement is not done by ordinary Muslims, but by their rulers. They have the right to lead and deliver the sermon for this prayer, and the responsibility of it also rests upon them.

What is the wisdom behind the law of Friday prayer? From this

perspective, it becomes clear that Islam, through this, simultaneously connects the rulers to the remembrance of God and accountability to the public. They come to the house of worship of Allah, prostrate before Him, recite His words. This act, evidently, serves as a reminder and recollection of their connection with their Lord. Alongside, they also have to face the general public directly and be accountable before them. This weekly accountability instills a sense of responsibility and answerability in them. They not only become aware of people's issues but also go further to explain their actions. As a result of this process, the bonds of communication, harmony, and trust between the public and the rulers are strengthened.

In the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), there was no concept of individuals arranging the Friday prayer on their own in neighborhoods, localities, or villages. Designated central mosques were appointed for the Friday prayers. Initially, the Friday prayer was organized in the Prophet's Mosque, where the Prophet (PBUH) personally led the prayer and delivered the sermon. Later, as the empire expanded, various officials appointed by him began organizing the Friday prayer at different places. This method continued during the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Until the time of the Umayyads, the Friday pulpit remained in the hands of the rulers. After that, gradually, rulers began to feel intimidated by the people. That is, when they came to the mosque, they faced criticism and reactions from the people. Because of this fear, they abandoned the Friday pulpit. As soon as the rulers left the Friday pulpit, the scholars took it over. To this day, this pulpit remains with them.

I believe that the transfer of the pulpit of Friday from the rulers to the scholars has resulted in extremely adverse outcomes.

One outcome of this has been that a necessary opportunity for worship and connection with Allah's religion has ended for the rulers. If the rulers attended the mosques for Friday prayers, they would spend some time in worship. For the Friday sermon, they would have to refer to religious teachings for advice and guidance. To lead the prayer, they would need to memorize portions of the Qur'an for

recitation. They would need to adopt a demeanor appropriate for attending the mosque. All these things, evidently, would bring them closer to Allah and His religion.

The second consequence is that a very suitable form of communication between the rulers and the public has been abolished. The Friday congregation was a simple and easy way of doing this. Every person could have access to them and could inform them of their criticism and opinions. The current situation is such that not only is criticism of the rulers and holding them accountable out of reach, but the very idea of accessing them has become impossible for the common man.

The third outcome is that mosques have become centers of sectarianism. The situation is such that every mosque is associated with a particular sect. Consequently, here are mosques of the Ahl-e-Hadith, mosques of the Deobandis, and mosques of the Barelvis. All these sects have their mosques, but the concept of a mosque that transcends sectarian divisions, a mosque for Muslims or a house of Allah, has entirely vanished.

I believe that the only way to rectify this situation is to implement Islamic law regarding the organization of Friday prayers and its leadership, and to return the pulpit of Friday sermons from the scholars to the authorities. This is the correct path for eliminating sectarianism and reforming the rulers.

It should be noted that in our country, ninety to ninety-five percent of the people are Hanafi. In Hanafi jurisprudence, one of the conditions for Friday prayers is that the arrangement must be made by the Sultan, meaning the ruler is necessary, and it should be held in a *Misr Jami*, meaning a place where the ruler or his representative is present.

[April 2008]



The Journey of Knowledge

Extracted points from Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's conversation in the Geo News program 'Bol Ke Lab Azad Hain Tere,' recorded in America.

1. Knowledge is a journey, not a destination. It is a journey of discovering truths. In this journey, you continue to uncover facts. When you discover facts, many things that you previously considered as reality become tales of the past. Therefore, we should consider knowledge as a journey, not as a destination. If we consider knowledge as a destination, we will never be able to fully attain it.
2. Knowledge is the name of love for truth. If a student studies religion, science, history, or literature to attain truth, then his journey is in the right direction. However, if he studies these subjects to gratify emotions, fulfill desires, support prejudices, or seek arguments for preconceived notions, then he cannot tread on the path of true knowledge. A traveler on the path of knowledge desires to discover truth at all costs, even if that truth negates his own self.
3. We all should become true seekers of knowledge. A true student studies facts by rising above all kinds of biases. He enters the world of knowledge precisely at the point where there is no passage for prejudices. He always has the goal before him to reach the most accurate understanding possible.
4. Therefore, if I am to become a true student, I must make it my goal to reach the truth at all costs. Whether this truth dismantles my established beliefs, whether it takes away my past, whether it changes my present, or whether it crafts a new picture of my future, I must seek it, desire it, and pursue it above all else. It is true that rising above one's biases and societal influences is not an easy task. If I look back even now, there have been numerous instances where a certain bias, a

part of my past, or an emotion has obstructed my path to reaching the truth. A student who begins to remove these obstacles will commence the journey of knowledge.

5. Our entire life should actually be spent in an academic manner. By the academic approach, I mean that whenever you encounter an issue or a question, whether it be a personal issue, a family issue, a national issue, or an intellectual or practical question, you should analyze it. You should delve deep to see where this matter originates from, where its foundations are found. You will often observe that people try to comprehend the matter standing miles away from the point where it is actually arising.

6. The path to knowledge is solely through critique. There is no other path. A philosopher aptly stated that if you wish to build the best hospital in the world by simply sitting at a desk, you will never succeed. For this, you must adopt another method. Critically examine all the hospitals in the world and see what flaws they have. Then, strive to eliminate those flaws in your own hospital. In this way, your hospital will become better compared to others. Then, others will conduct a critical review of your hospital and try to build an even better one. The journey of knowledge, in essence, progresses in this manner.

7. Knowledge demands from you that when you speak from your position, give others the right to speak from where they stand. If a person has not traversed the journey or experienced what you have, how can they be in harmony with you? Every individual cannot adopt a different attitude than where they stand. When you understand this, you do not get angry at the perspective of others.

8. The biggest deficiency that has emerged among us is that we accept every prevailing notion related to knowledge and practice as creed and faith. This is not just a matter of religion; we do the same in science, in art, and in history. If our teacher has taught us something in sixth or seventh grade, we swear that we will never challenge it.

9. A challenge essentially arises from a question. If you consider a question as offensive and shy away from it, the door to knowledge

closes upon you. However, if you question yourself about your thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and ideologies, and question your environment, it opens the door to knowledge for you. You embark on a journey of knowledge and research. Then that thought, ideology, perception, belief either becomes a tale of the past or becomes part of your heart and mind as an intellectual truth.

10. The thinkers and scholars who influence us often have their words imprinted on the tablet of our hearts or inscribed on the tablet of our minds as if they are divine revelations. We repeatedly observe these imprints, yet they do not penetrate us deeply. The reason is that we accept the discovery as it is without making it our own, meaning we do not understand how that discovery was made. Generally, our teachers inform us about the conclusion of the thought process, but what should be communicated is the methodology and the stages they went through to reach that conclusion. The essential aspect is not the conclusion itself, but the methodology, the process, and the approach to reaching it.

11. Our issue is that we do not learn and understand knowledge in its abstract form, but rather in relation to personalities. A certain personality impresses us, we become inspired by them, and then we establish a connection with them. This attachment sometimes takes the form of obsession, and at times we refer to it as devotion, and then we begin to accept everything they say without question. This approach is common among us. It is a significant barrier in the path of knowledge. In the pursuit of knowledge, it is essential to overcome this.

12. The method of achieving salvation from this is to regard those personalities whom we seek to learn and understand from as ordinary human beings. This means benefiting from their abilities, acknowledging their virtues, and at the same time, being aware of their mistakes and shortcomings. None among them is a prophet; hence, instead of conferring them a status of devotion, they should be given a place of respect. This implies listening to them attentively, contemplating their words, comparing them with the views of other

knowledgeable individuals, and if their words seem correct, then accept them; otherwise, respectfully decline to accept. A true student should adopt this approach. I often tell people for their understanding that worship Allah, hold devotion for Muhammad Rasulallah (PBUH), and respect everyone else.

[May 2018]



The Status of Imam Shafi'i and the Scholars of the Salaf

The Desired Attitude from Students

While reading the book "Al-Risalah" by Imam Shafi'i, the teacher Respected Javed Ahmed Ghamidi: A Dialogue with the Author

(1)

Question: The issue under discussion, as you have explained, is fully clear now. However, this has created a strange confusion as to why the matter that has become clear to a humble student like me was not evident to an eminent imam like Imam Shafi'i, renowned as the leader of leaders?

Answer: The question of why our predecessors could not understand what we have come to comprehend is a major misconception and even a sin within the academic realm. Thinking in such a way closes the door to knowledge. When you read a scholar, you should focus all your efforts on understanding their context, position, and viewpoint. You should read their words according to their perspective and manner of thinking. It should never be the case that you interpret their writings from your own point of view. When someone reads a scholar's work from their own perspective, it is, in fact, criticism. This not only creates an obstacle for the individual in understanding the scholar's position but, if they convey this critique with the same mindset, it can lead to misconceptions for others as well. In this approach, criticism doesn't manifest as, for example, claiming that Imam Shafi misunderstood a verse he referenced; rather, it suggests that since I understand its meaning perfectly, therefore, Imam Shafi's interpretation is incorrect. Thus, it is necessary to develop the skill to

comprehend the stances of scholars as they intended. The initial step is not to try and identify a scholar's mistake, but to first strive to understand their perspective.

These are the shoulders of the scholars of the past on which we sometimes stand and our vision extends beyond them. Without them, the pursuit of knowledge cannot progress. If Aristotle had not provided a foundation, there would have been no space for Newton to emerge. If you are not well-versed in the scientific knowledge of the past, you will end up where Aristotle began. In essence, humanity progresses through its history because no person is granted a lifespan of two thousand years by God. The Almighty has not manifested the potential for knowledge in humans in an isolated or absolute manner, but rather within principles. Whatever form it takes, it combines with external knowledge, and in the external world, there is not just observation, but also a history of knowledge. This is why I used to tell you that if you have to create an advertisement, why start afresh? First, look at what previous people have achieved. You will move forward by adding to it, otherwise, you will be standing where the world's first advertisement creator stood.

To understand the journey of human knowledge, one might observe a child's small toy car. When it hits a wall or a table, the child picks it up and places it back where it originally started. The journey of knowledge is similar. While explaining the concept of instinctive knowledge to someone, I used this very example. I mentioned that the potential inherent in the car is akin to instinctive knowledge. This car begins its journey in the outside world; it might continue moving straight when you set it off, or it might immediately hit something and stop. It is also possible that after hitting an object, it might turn around and start moving in the opposite direction.

Looking back at the past from the vantage point of the present is never an accurate endeavor. Each era must be understood within its own context, a principle ingrained in me through a lifetime of learning. No human being, after all, can rise above the constraints of their time. What has always captivated my mind about the Holy Qur'an,

however, is its remarkable transcendence beyond the boundaries of time itself.

The same capability of ruthless analysis can sometimes become a source of evil for a person, and one should seek refuge with Allah from it. You often observe that minds with extraordinary analytical abilities are denying explicit truths. Therefore, this double-edged sword of analysis should be used with complete control.

Keep in mind that when we think we have discovered the ultimate truth, it is purely self-deception. The reason for this is that human statements cannot be final until the Day of Judgment. Someone coming later may reveal its error. Therefore, one should never adopt a forceful and insistent approach about their own statements. Accepting this, one should live with the understanding that we have comprehended something with honesty, and we are fully convinced that we have reached the correct conclusion, but we also acknowledge the possibility of error. If you do not hold this position, then no one can engage in a conversation with you, and you fall into stagnation.

It is important to note here that understanding someone's perspective, viewing their thoughts within the context of their time, or identifying their dilemmas is not intended to make you succumb to awe. I am not suggesting that you become overwhelmed and inactive; rather, I am saying that you should become simple. You have observed my life, and the person before whom I feel completely humble is my teacher, yet I am not overawed by them either.

Imam Shafi'i is the initiator, with nothing in the background. In this regard, if you observe, you will see that he stands at such a great position where we have no standing. We stand before his footsteps. This is not limited to religion that you may attribute it to devotion; the same is the case with every field of knowledge.

You should maintain a thoroughly academic mindset. Read and understand the words of Imam Shafi'i, and whenever there is ambiguity, interpret his words in the same manner as later Shafi'i scholars have interpreted them. This is because Imam Shafi'i's book is like the book of Sibawayh; it is not a systematically organized book of

principles. Imam Shafi'i has elaborated on many matters in *Kitab al-Umm* and in *Mukhtalif al-Hadith*, which should also be consulted.

When studying Imam Shafi'i, the demand of intellectual honesty is that one understands the words of the Imam, determines his position, and appreciates his issue. This is a process of comprehension. After going through this process, if one wishes to write any critique on him, it should be done in a purely scholarly manner. That is, if Imam Shafi'i has drawn an inference from a Qur'anic verse, what is the flaw in it? If he has based it on a narration, what is the error in it? If he has used rational reasoning in any matter, does it truly measure up to the standards of logic? If he has made an observation or mentioned an experience, is it contrary to reality, and do observation and experience truly verify it? If he has used human natural knowledge as evidence, is that indeed natural knowledge?

We possess natural methods of reasoning. We reason either through natural processes, deduction, experience, or observation. Thus, when we attempt to prove things, we essentially have two methods: deduction and induction. Apart from these, humanity has not invented any other methods. These methods should be used with complete impartiality, and when applying them, it should not be considered whether they are being applied to Imam Shafi'i or Imam Farahi.

[April 2018]



The discussion of the sources of religion in Al-Risalah

While reading Imam Shafi'i's book "Al-Risala," the teacher A Dialogue of the Author with the Honorable Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

(2)

Advancement and Delay in the Qur'an and Sunnah

Question: In Imam Shafi'i's book *Al-Risalah*, under the section titled *Fajima'u Ma Abana Allahu Li Khalqih Fi Kitabih* (What Allah has collectively explained to His creation in His Book), it appears that Imam Shafi'i considers the rulings not originally mentioned in the Qur'an but issued by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as based on the Qur'an itself. He uses the texts *Atii'u Al-Rasul* (Obey the Messenger)¹ and *Yu'allimuhum Al-Kitaba Wal-Hikmah* (He teaches them the Book and wisdom)² as the foundation for this. Is it correct to deduce from this that Imam Shafi'i, in terms of priority, considers the Qur'an to be given precedence over the Prophet (PBUH)? If this is correct, does this not raise the objection that he has based his argument on something contrary to reality?

Answer: When Imam Shafi'i and other scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have made the Qur'an the foundation of deriving religious understanding, it does not in any way mean that they regard the holy book as superior to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or are unaware of the fact that the Prophet was sent first and then the Qur'an was revealed. Instead of this interpretation, it should be

¹ Al-Nisa 4:59.

² Al-Baqarah 2:129.

understood that this is their way of presentation. In the scenario where the religion is present both within the Qur'an and outside of it, they adopted this approach: that firstly, there is the Qur'an, and whatever exists outside of it in the form of Sunnah, the justification for accepting that too is itself provided by the Qur'an.

Question: But the question is, why did they feel the need for this counterfactual presentation? They could have adopted the real and factual order in which the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) stands prior to the Book of Allah?

Answer: The response to this is that those who stood against them (such as the Kharijites, etc.) were asserting that this is *Kitab Allah* (the Book of Allah), *Ma anzala Allah* (that which Allah has revealed), *Tafsilan li-kulli shay* (a detailed explanation of everything)³ and therefore, there is no need to go beyond it. In this context, Imam Shafi'i used the Qur'an itself as evidence to establish the authority of the Sunnah. It is as if he conveyed to his addressees that the very book you acknowledge is also granting the same religious status to the words and actions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) that we are insisting upon.

The Relationship Between the Sources of Religion and Faith in Prophethood

Question: The debate on prioritizing sources has created confusion regarding the precedence of faith in prophethood and faith in the scripture. This prompts the question: Do we acknowledge the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) based on the Qur'an, or do we accept the Qur'an on the basis of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)?

Answer: Your question is based on the fallacy of relationship and should always be avoided. The Imam is not discussing faith in prophethood here. Instead, he is discussing the derivation of religious law. Beliefs are not the subject of this book. When other scholars discuss in this context, they are not talking about beliefs but about the

³ Al-An'am 6:154.

sources of religion. By their very nature, these discussions are what I have addressed under the title “Principles and Fundamentals” in my book *Meezan*.

Why do we consider Muhammad (PBUH) as the Messenger of Allah and how do we accept him as such? These are not discussions on the sources of religion, but rather on matters of faith. It should also be noted that there cannot be a specific logical sequence for belief in prophethood. The Companions of the Prophet believed directly, we have believed based on the testimony of our parents, while a non-Muslim might come to faith upon reading the Qur'an.

Question: With all due respect, I have not been able to separate the discussions of belief in prophethood and the sources of religion. Both discussions still seem inextricably linked to me. In my opinion, the purpose of accepting a prophet is to obtain religion and, based on that acquired religion, to determine the commandments of faith and action. I am actually unable to differentiate between the process of deriving religion and the process of believing, because both seem to result in the same outcome to me.

Answer: You are actually confusing two distinct concepts: knowing an event and having faith in it. Knowing the event means understanding that Muhammad bin Abdullah was a figure who declared prophethood in Arabia, presented the Qur'an, and established the Sunnah. This is not the same as having faith. Having faith means that we accept Muhammad bin Abdullah, who declared prophethood in Arabia, presented the Qur'an, and established the Sunnah, as the messenger and prophet of Allah and, in this capacity, we submit to him. These are two separate things. The difference between knowing an event and having faith in it becomes particularly evident in the example of an orientalist. He fully believes in the occurrence of the event but does not have faith in the Muhammad (PBUH) as a prophet and does not submit to him.

This incident is known to us through consensus and repetition. Consensus and repetition are secular means of transmitting any knowledge or news. This means necessitates certainty in the event, but

does not necessitate faith. It is as if consensus and repetition are sources of information for me, not reasons for argumentation. In other words, through consensus and repetition, I gain certainty about the event, not faith.

I began *Meezan* with this account of the event and clarified that this event has been known to me through consensus and continuous transmission. Keep in mind that when I, in *Meezan*, or Imam Shafi'i in *Al-Risalah*, or any other scholar describes the sources of religion in their book, they are deducing from the event, not from faith. That is, we are explaining how we derive the religion, not why and how we have come to believe in certain things. Therefore, it should be clear that for the extraction from the event, faith is not indispensable.

The Difference in Perspective between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and the Scholars of Usul

Question: The distinction between matters of faith and the derivation of religion has become completely clear, but the issue of the precedence and sequence of the sources of religion is still in need of clarification. To resolve this, I present the question: What is the divinely ordained sequence of the sources of religion?

Answer: The sequence from Allah is the one I have described in "Principles and Fundamentals," which states that the sole source of religion is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and the religion received from him is found in the Qur'an and Sunnah. If considered in terms of reality, this order will be the same; if considered in terms of knowledge, it will also be the same. However, along with this, it is also a fact that I will cite a verse from the Qur'an as support for this, because it is available to us in the most authentic form. The Sunnah requires searching to be understood, but the Qur'an is available in a definitive form. It is also important to note here that scholars of principles consider the Qur'an as the primary source because it is beyond dispute.

Question: Then why have you arranged your structure differently from that of the jurists, and why have you started the discussion of

sources with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) instead of starting with the Holy Qur'an?

Answer: In reality, our scholars approach the principles of religion starting with the Qur'an. If the Qur'an contained detailed explanations of everything, then this approach would have been appropriate. In that case, there would be no need to refer back to earlier sources. We would then say that the Qur'an has come at the end, but it encompasses all previous knowledge. However, in reality, this is not the case. For example, the prayer — which is greatly emphasized — is not detailed in the Qur'an. The existence of the Qur'an in this form necessitates looking back. Not understanding this reality from the correct perspective is the fundamental error of our scholars. They are making the mistake of beginning the Qur'an with Prophet Adam. As for my view, the foundational issue is not the sources of religion, but rather the religious continuity that has existed before the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the content that results in the Qur'an appearing not as the first, but as the final book.

Consider the issue in such a way that for the past 14 centuries, our scholars have faced the question of why there is a need to look beyond the Qur'an when the most authentic and defined source of religion is available in the form of the Qur'an. Our scholars respond to this by stating that the need is created by the Qur'an itself, because it commands Muslims to obey the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and imposes the responsibility of the explanation of the Qur'an on the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). This is the scholars' answer. In response to this, I state the factual matter that the Qur'an does not present the complete content of the religion.

[November 2018]



The Confusion of Knowledge Among Muslims and the Solitary Reports

While reading Imam Shafi's book "Al-Risala", the teacher... A Dialogue Between the Esteemed Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and the Author

(3)

Question: The previous discussions were comprehensive, yet the issue remains unresolved as to why the discourse on sources in our scholarly history has become so complex. Even after fourteen centuries, these debates continue. In contrast, the way you have presented this discussion makes it seem very straightforward, without any apparent complications.

Answer: To understand someone's point, the first thing to consider is the source of their confusion. If you ask what the intellectual dilemma is for Muslims from Imam Shafi'i to Maulana Maududi, the answer lies in the emergence of solitary reports (*akhbar al-ahad*). This refers to certain reports attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through individual sources, which reason and intellect suggest could indeed be from him. After acknowledging this intellectual and rational testimony, ignoring these reports is not feasible. So, what should be done with them? These reports are impacting both the divine scripture and the content of religion. They must be accommodated and cannot be disregarded. This is Imam Shafi'i's dilemma. He implies that if he does not accept them, his intellect and reason suggest he would be making a mistake.

Look, one aspect is the logical certainty or uncertainty of something, and another aspect is the psychological certainty or uncertainty you attribute to it. Our scholars describe this as being surrounded by

circumstantial evidence. That is, it is indeed a singular narration, but it has been encircled by so much supporting evidence that it elevates it to a place where, logically, I cannot declare it certain, but psychologically, there is no deficiency in my conviction. This is the dilemma.

In the context of this confusion, when you read *Al-Risalah*, you will better understand their perspective, and then you will realize that *Al-Risalah* primarily aims to establish the authority of solitary reports (*Akhbar-e-Ahad*). You will find that all its discussions revolve around this central theme. This is the objective that figures from Imam Shafi'i to Maulana Maududi establish concerning the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) emphasizing his God-appointed status and authority. They delve into these discussions because certain things have reached us from the Prophet (PBUH), whose denial is sheer obstinacy. The pious predecessors or orthodox scholars justifiably feel in their conscience that rejecting the solitary reports is evidently against knowledge and reason. They do not descend into such obstinacy, as argued by Aslam Jairajpuri and Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, who claim it is a non-Arab conspiracy. Then, the lengthy argument begins, pointing out that it was a few centuries later that Imam Bukhari emerged, who was not from Arabia but from Bukhara, and so on. This line of reasoning does not assert that all solitary reports are false, but rather argues that the manner in which they have reached us strips them of any capacity to influence or alter the Qur'an or religion in any way.

It should be understood that one method was to consider the contents of solitary reports as unreliable and thereby isolate the Qur'an and religion from them. This approach was adopted by individuals such as Ghulam Ahmed Parwez, Aslam Jairajpuri, Abdullah Chakralvi, and some others like them. The second approach was to affirm these solitary reports to the highest degree based on the status of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and simultaneously demonstrate the Qur'an's reliance on them, making it clear that it does not even specify from where a thief's hand is to be cut. This is the method adopted by scholars from Imam Shafi'i to Maulana Maududi. In between stands a significant figure, Ibn Hazm, who chose yet another approach,

differing from theirs. He claimed that God's protection is extended to solitary reports in the same manner as it is to the Qur'an.

In this context, I have adopted an approach to articulate the reality of the situation. I have explained that the knowledge derived from solitary reports is confined within the interpretation and elucidation of religion based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, it neither influences the Qur'an nor adds to the content of the religion. Given this true nature, there is no need for me to refute it, nor is it necessary to prove it as indispensable. What is required is to fully clarify how this is interpreting and elucidating the religion confined within the Qur'an and Sunnah.

It should be clear that I have not found any way to solve the issue, but have instead determined the true reality of the incident.

[November 2018]



Attaining the Level of Certainty from a Solitary Reports in Religion

While reading Imam Shafi'i's book "Al-Risala", Ustadh. A Dialogue of the Author with the Respected Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

(4)

The Status and Rank of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)

Question: In the previous session, the discussion you provided greatly helped in understanding the sources of religion. It also became clear how our esteemed scholars perceive the issue of solitary reports (*Akhbar-e-Ahad*). However, as far as the question of a solitary report reaching a level of certainty when surrounded by indications is concerned, my mind is not at ease. The question is, how can something be deemed correct based solely on psychological satisfaction without rational certainty? In other words, how has it happened that our scholars consider conjectural evidence to be parallel to, or even superior to, definitive evidence? Moreover, during the times of our Imams, the science of Hadith had not yet been fully developed. The issues related to investigation, deception, fabrication, narrative by meaning, and contradictions were extraordinary. In light of these circumstances, how was it possible to elevate a solitary report to the level of certainty based merely on indications and psychological satisfaction, either intellectually or practically?

Answer: If you overlook the original incident, it will become difficult to understand the matter. The incident is such that certain things have been narrated with reference to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). The attribution of these things is to a personality who is the sole source of religion, whose knowledge is infallible, and about whom it is entirely appropriate to say that his words are the words of Allah. Furthermore,

the words of these sayings, their knowledge, their wisdom, their eloquence, their scholarly height, their conformity with the Qur'an and Sunnah, all testify that they can only be attributed to him. Now, should they be rejected merely because they have reached us through individual sources? Every person of sound nature will say that doing so would be clearly against knowledge and reason.

The Nature of Psychological Assurance

When a person does not have a clear solution to a problem or cannot resolve it, they have two paths: one is to stand on the simple logical principle of acceptance and rejection. The second is to rely on their psychological strength to make a decision. Most people choose this second path. Behind this psychological strength, generally, there are arguments for which the term *mahfuf bil-qarā'in* (surrounded by contextual indicators) is used in our context. You see, there are many incidents that cannot be proven in court, yet we have complete certainty of their occurrence. In countless matters, we are making decisions based on psychological conviction. Such a decision can be right or wrong in terms of reality. However, when we are making this decision, we do so without hesitation and with certainty of its correctness. For instance, when I read the narratives of the Prophet's (PBUH) ablution, I become elated. No mental hesitation arises; even if they are not authentic, my psychology, my conscience, and my intellect spontaneously affirm that the Prophet (PBUH) must have performed ablution in this manner.

Psychological Assurance: A Double-Edged Sword

However, it should also be kept in mind that psychological satisfaction is a double-edged sword. Sometimes, it becomes the greatest obstacle in the path of knowledge, and often it happens that logical reasoning does not provide the same satisfaction as psychological satisfaction does. Keeping both aspects in view, one should also review prior knowledge and continually examine one's own mind.

If you would like to see examples of this psychological conviction, for instance, in the works of Maulana Maududi, studying two specific

places would be insightful.

There is a section in *Rasa'il wa Masa'il* Volume 3 where someone asked the question about how it can be said that not a single particle of the Qur'an has changed, given the differences among various readings. Maulana Maududi responded by explaining that the Qur'an was initially without diacritical marks and vowel signs. In such a form, a single verse could have multiple meanings, and the scope for interpretive differences would be very broad. However, consider it a mercy of God that He designated a few readings, thereby significantly limiting these differences. Another discussion can be found in *Tafhim al-Qur'an* regarding the issue of stoning. Please read the two or three paragraphs he has written on it as well.

The point is that when you fundamentally accept something as correct and become generally satisfied with it, even if you later observe any inconsistencies or gaps, you dismiss them in the light of your conviction. The mental structure you have developed makes this dismissal entirely legitimate. Human psychology operates in this manner.

For a long time, I studied the verse from Surah Al-Nahl in which Allah grants the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) the authority of elucidation,¹ according to Imam Shafi'i, Al-Shatibi, Al-Amidi, and Maududi. I never had any doubts. In fact, I even wrote an article with full conviction based on this verse. However, when I examined it closely within the context of the Qur'an, I realized that this was not its meaning at all. For twenty-five to thirty years, I never actually scrutinized it. The reverence for such great scholars never even allowed the thought to occur that they could be mistaken in understanding it. In such moments, a person feels their own humility and helplessness, but that is human nature. There are countless things like this, where sometimes trust in an error is ingrained within a person. When someone else brings it to attention, the true path becomes apparent.

Consider this from another perspective as well. Sometimes it happens

¹ Al-Nahl 16:44.

that I am completely satisfied with the meaning of a verse, but I am unable to figure out how to convey to the questioner that this is the meaning. In essence, I have become intuitively satisfied based on my knowledge of the Qur'an and language, and I do not have the slightest doubt about it, but I am unable to explain it because my satisfaction has not yet taken shape in the logic of expression.

Imam Shafi'i's Perspective on Akhbar al-Ahad (Isolated Reports)

Now, observe how Imam Shafi'i approaches this matter. He does not accept that anything has occurred. According to him, the solitary reports have neither abrogated, nor added, nor changed anything. He firmly insists that these are explanations of the Qur'an. This same premise was later adopted by his student, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Now, when you ask them how these are explanations, they will present you with established examples of Qur'anic verses and argue that when you accept these verses as explanations, why do you reject the solitary reports? The main discourse of *Al-Risalah* revolves around this. When Imam Shatibi also addressed this issue and described the knowledge derived from solitary reports as originating from the Qur'an itself, in essence, he adopted more or less the same argumentative approach as Imam Shafi'i.

The reasoning of Imam Shafi'i is quite straightforward. To understand it, one might say that he asserts when I read in Surah An-Nur, *Al-zāniyatu wa al-zānī fa-jlidū kulla wābīdin minhumā mi'ata jaldah* (A man or a woman guilty of fornication, flog each of them with a hundred lashes),² I understood that the punishment for adulterous men and women is a hundred lashes. However, when I looked at Surah An-Nisa (4:25), I realized that this command does not apply to slave women. This undermined my certainty to make an absolute ruling. Consequently, when a narration conveyed that this ruling is not for the married individuals as well, how could I deny it? Therefore, if the verse in Surah An-Nisa granting an exception for

² Al-Noor 24:2.

slaves can be an elaboration of the ruling in Surah An-Nur, then why can't the narration that prescribes stoning for married adulterers be its explanation as well?

The Hanafi Perspective on Solitary Reports

The Hanafis adopted a different approach. It should be noted that the Hanafis are more rational, meaning they are more sensitive to logical and rational propositions. They argued that considering what you regard as an explanation, the intellect does not accept it as such. In reality, this is abrogation, which you are describing as an explanation. However, we accept this status of Hadith that it can abrogate a ruling of the Qur'an. But we accept this abrogation in certain instances and not in others. We accept it where it is through a *Mutawatir* or *Mashhur* tradition, because then it reaches the level of certainty, and where it is through solitary reports, we do not accept it, because in that case, its status is of conjecture compared to certainty. I once commented on this that in principle, Imam Shafi'i's stance is correct, but in practice, the stance of the Hanafis is.

This makes it clear that the reasoning of knowledgeable individuals follows a certain order. It progresses in a linear fashion. Generally, it begins with psychological satisfaction, and once the evidence is provided, rational satisfaction is also achieved. In any case, every knowledgeable person should strive to attain both psychological and rational satisfaction regarding their knowledge. That is, we should continually endeavor for our psychological satisfaction and rational satisfaction to align. This is a struggle. In this, a person should be honest enough to highlight any differences if psychological satisfaction does not transform into rational satisfaction. This will encourage others, and they will also join you in the journey of knowledge.

[December 2018]



The Relationship Between the Qur'an and Hadith

Agreement and Disagreement with Imam Shafi'i

While reading Imam Shafi'i's book "Al-Risala," Ustadh. A Dialogue Between the Esteemed Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and the Author

(5)

Question: In the previous session, the concept of *bayan* you explained referred to its application to individuals of a word that exist within or are connected to it at the time of its inception. This principle is understood in general, but how can the directive from the Prophet (PBUH) to face the *Qibla* while praying be seen as *bayan*? Moreover, it would be helpful if the nature of agreement and disagreement between Imam Shafi'i's stance and yours could be clarified with an example for better understanding.

Answer: Consider this, Imam Shafi'i states that *bayan* is a comprehensive term used for meanings that are unified in principles but vary in branches. These meanings are implicit within the original ruling. Sometimes they manifest in detail, sometimes as branches, and sometimes as explanations. Although these manifestations may differ, since they emerge from the original ruling, they are considered part of it. For example, when the Qur'an mentions performing prayer, it is evident that the prayer is a concept that must have a specific reference. Anything included within this reference is considered 'bayan'. Thus, if after reading in the Qur'an to establish prayer, the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) directive to face the qibla while praying reaches you, this instruction is considered *bayan* because it is entirely within the scope of the directive to "establish prayer." In other words,

when the term ‘prayer’ is mentioned, all its necessary elements and conditions are inherently included. These necessary elements and conditions are technically referred to as the components of that ruling. Hence, when the essence of the original is present within the branch like a spirit, the branch is fundamentally a bayan of the original. In other words, if the original maintains its existence within the branches, then these branches are considered bayan. Similarly, if a branch maintains its comprehensive relation with the original, it is recognized as bayan.

Understand this from our point of view as well. Regarding the command to establish prayer in the Qur’an, we say that when this command was given, its reference was well-known and recognized in Arab society as part of the Abrahamic tradition. It was akin to the way we say to our son today, “Perform the prayer.” Imam Shafi’i states that when this command was given, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself was present to explain its reference. Now observe that in both these scenarios, the source of ‘explanation’ is different, but there is no difference in the relationship between the original command and its ‘explanation.’

Imam Shafi’i has provided examples in his book and clarified that what the Prophet (PBUH) has stated regarding the commands of the Qur’an is solely ‘explanation’. And since it is an explanation of the Qur’an, its intention cannot be different from the Qur’an, therefore, its adherence is as obligatory as that of the Qur’an. This is Imam’s position, which is absolutely correct, and about which I have written, “What can be truer than this statement of Imam Shafi’i!”

It should be clear here that this is a very elementary definition of ‘Bayan’, given that the art had just begun. We present the same idea in another way. We say that ‘Bayan’ is the expression of those implications that are inherent in a discourse at the time of its creation. Therefore, something cannot be considered ‘Bayan’ if it was developed after the creation of the discourse.

The core discussion here is that when a directive from the Qur’an is already present and a narration comes attributed to the Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH), there can be two possibilities: either it explains the Qur'anic directive or it abrogates it, meaning it changes it wholly or partially. Now, if it is an explanation, then it is merely clarifying the intent and thus there is no hesitation in accepting it. However, if it abrogates, then how should it be dealt with? Imam Shafi'i argues that in such a case, it would not be acceptable, because the Messenger of Allah cannot abrogate the divine scripture. The Hanafi scholars suggest that (if the chain of transmission is certain, i.e., it is well-known or widely transmitted), it would be acceptable, because if Allah can directly alter the Qur'an, then it can also be altered through the same Messenger through whom the Qur'an was revealed.

In principle, we agree with Imam Shafi'i's view that whatever is mentioned in the hadiths attributing to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is an explanation of the Qur'an; therefore, nothing in them can be contrary to the Qur'an. Allah's messenger is subservient to the divine book. He elucidates and explicates it but does not alter or amend it. While agreeing with Imam Shafi'i on this matter, we go a step further by asserting that not only any hidden revelation but even an apparent revelation outside the Qur'an cannot amend or alter its injunctions. The reason for this is that Allah has declared about the Qur'an that it is the "Mizan" and "Furqan" and possesses ultimate authority.

After establishing this principle agreement, let us now understand our disagreement with Imam Shafi'i. We assert that some narrations which Imam Shafi'i has categorized as 'explanation' cannot actually be considered as such. The reason is that the relationship between these narrations and the Qur'an in terms of words, meanings, essence, and subsidiary, or ruling and application, does not meet the criteria for categorization as 'explanation.' For instance, Imam Shafi'i has considered the narrations related to stoning to death (*rajm*) of adulterers who are married as the 'explanation' of the verse *Al-zāniyatu wa al-zānī fa-jlidū kulla wāhidin minhumā mi'ata jaldah* (A man or a woman guilty of fornication, flog each of them with a

hundred lashes)¹ we contend that this is not correct because the words *Al-zāniyatu wa al-zānī* do not specifically exclude the unmarried, nor do they exclude the married from their reference. Had this specification existed in the reference of *Al-zāniyatu wa al-zānī* we would have no hesitation in accepting this narration as an explanation of the aforementioned verse.

However, this does not mean that we reject the punishment of stoning mentioned in these narrations. We relate them to a different context within the Qur'an. In our view, these narrations explain the enforcement of the punishment for rebellion and corruption on earth mentioned in the verses of Surah Al-Maidah.² That is, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) decreed the punishment of stoning for certain criminals of depravity under the ruling *an yuqattalū* (to be executed in an exemplary manner) stated in those verses.

Similarly, if someone asks us how the exemption of slaves mentioned in Surah An-Nisa from the command *Al-zāniyatu wa al-zānī fa-jlidū kulla wābihidīn minhumā mi'ata jaldah* can be an 'explanation' of that command,³ we would say that this exemption is a part of the criterion for the application of the punishment that existed from its inception. Whenever a punishment is prescribed, it is implicitly understood that it will not be applied to those excused, as the excuse of minority or insanity is accepted in the case of capital punishment. Since this specification is rational, there is no need to state it explicitly. Thus, when Allah Almighty decreed that the adulterer be flogged, it was implicitly understood at the time of the decree's inception that this punishment would not be applied to those with excuses or may be reduced due to a valid reason. Therefore, it is the condition of slavery that provides an excuse for a reduction in their punishment.

On this basis, you can say that in principle, we agree with Imam Shafi'i, but in application, we differ from him.

¹ Al-Noor 24:2.

² Al-Maidah 5:33-34.

³ Al-Noor 24:2.

It is important to clarify here that the understanding and explanation of religion through the words, actions, approvals, and disapprovals of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and considering these as sources of religion are two separate discussions. The discussion of ‘explanation’ is distinct from the discussion of whether the Prophet (PBUH) is authorized to provide anything beyond the Qur’an. In my view, the Prophet (PBUH) not only has the right to provide beyond the Qur’an, but what he has delivered outside of the Qur’an constitutes an independent and inherent part of religious directives and commandments, which must be accepted in the same manner as the Qur’an. Therefore, these two discussions should not be confused or mixed with one another.

[January 2019]



The Mutual Relationship Between the Discourses of ‘Bayaan’ and ‘Aam wa Khaas’

*While reading Imam Shafi'i's book "Al-Risala," Ustadh...
A Dialogue of the Author with the Honorable Javed Ahmed
Ghamidi*

(6)

Question: In your article titled “*Aam o Khaas*” (General and Specific), you mentioned Imam Shafi'i's stance that whatever the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, stated regarding the commands of the Qur'an is ‘Bayan’ (explanation). This point has become clear, but it is still not understood what the relationship is between the discussion of ‘Bayan’ and the discussion of ‘*Aam o Khaas*.’ Furthermore, how is the discussion of *Aam o Khaas* linked to the explanatory directives (Hadith) of the Prophet, peace be upon him?

Answer: To summarize the subject in a few sentences, it is that like every language, the language of the Qur'an is also multi-meaningful, i.e., its words indicate multiple meanings. When we attempt to derive meaning from these words by determining one meaning out of these multiple meanings, the issue of general and specific arises. At such times, we are compelled to make judgments based on the composition of the sentence, context, coherence, the conventions of the speaker, and other such indicators. This is precisely the service the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) rendered for the Qur'an. Hence, if any elucidation of the Qur'an comes forth attributed to him, it should be considered in light of this linguistic issue that it is multi-meaningful, and one should not hastily reject this elucidation.

The classification of words into general and specific based on their

meanings is a type of 'explanation'. When I say that a particular word is general, another is specific, one is ambiguous, one is detailed, one is an original term, and another is a derivative, I am essentially discussing different forms of explanation. The point here is that language requires clarification.

Question: The determination of the general and specific is not done by any external factor; rather, the discourse itself determines it. That is, the discourse, through its context or other internal clues, clarifies whether general or specific meanings should be intended for words like '*al-mushrikun*,' '*al-naas*,' or '*al-insaan*.' There is no involvement of any external factor in their determination, whereas from your article, it seems you are incorporating the words of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) (hadith) into the discourse, which appears to be external to the discourse. As a result, does it not happen that the meaning of the discourse diverges from its original intent?

Answer: Your question suggests that you consider 'statement' to be outside the domain of word or discourse. This is not correct. 'statement' will only be considered a statement if it falls within the domain of word or discourse. Otherwise, it cannot be termed as a 'statement.' For instance, I considered the word 'المشركون' as generally applicable to all polytheists in the world. If the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) informed me that this refers specifically to the polytheists of Bani Ismail, then how has your statement become external to the discourse?

Question: Essentially, when you were interpreting 'al-Mushrikoon' to mean the polytheists all over the world, you were doing so by overlooking certain things such as the terminology of the book, the context of the speech, and some aspects of language and expression. Had this mistake not been made, you would have also interpreted it to mean the descendants of Ismael. Is it not the case that as soon as we turn the direction of understanding the speech under the heading of explanation towards the Prophet (PBUH), we are actually introducing an external idea into the discourse?

Answer: Dear, when an exegete tells you that this is the meaning of a

particular verse of the Qur'an, do you incorporate his opinion or statement into the text? Obviously, you do not. Similarly, the statement of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is not incorporated into the text of the Qur'an; it remains an explanation of it. Essentially, Imam Shafi'i is saying that the Prophet (PBUH) was also a scholar. As a scholar, if he has explained something, then pause and consider his words; they do not exceed explanation. Therefore, the Prophet's statements are not being inserted from outside because once they are inserted from outside, it would not remain an 'explanation.' Look, when the Qur'an mentions 'salah,' it implies everything related to 'salah.' When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) clarifies something related to 'salah,' he is not bringing anything from outside; rather, he is elucidating what is inherently encompassed within the scope of the term. This is what constitutes explanation.

Question: So, should your statement be understood to mean that the explanation provided by the Prophet (PBUH) is of the same nature as that given by a scholar or commentator of the Qur'an?

Answer: There is no doubt about this. I have written on this subject and explained that the mistake people make is considering the Hadith as an explanation of the prophetic office, whereas it is actually an explanation of the office of knowledge. In addition to the prophetic office, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) also held another position, which is that he was the foremost scholar of religion. The prophetic status rendered his knowledge infallible. Therefore, we read the Hadith as statements from the first, greatest, most elevated, and infallible scholar of religion.

[January 2019]



The Reality of the Authority of Hadith

As the esteemed teacher was reading Imam Shafi'i's book "Al-Risala"... Conversation with the esteemed Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

(7)

Question: In the previous session, you stated that the reports from individual narrators or the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) are not expressions of the prophetic office but rather expressions of the office of knowledge. However, at the same time, you also described the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) as infallible. Are these two statements not contradictory to each other?

Answer: The reason for considering the knowledge of the Prophet as infallible is that this knowledge has the endorsement and approval of divine revelation. The Prophet is under the protection of Allah Almighty. If there is any mistake, Allah immediately corrects it. However, this does not mean that the Prophet asks Allah about everything he does. He gives opinions as a scholar, explains, elaborates, but because he is under the direct protection of Allah, there is no possibility of error in his words.

Question: But as soon as we acknowledge the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) as infallible, does his knowledge not elevate from an intellectual level to the level of revelation?

Answer: Suppose today I have written a commentary on a verse. If tomorrow it is accepted by Allah, how will it affect my status as a scholar?

In reality, when the scholarly status of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is combined with his prophetic status, it becomes necessary for his words to be founded on truth. Whether one understands it or

not, it is incumbent upon us to bow our heads in submission to it in all circumstances. This is not due to his scholarly status, but because of his prophetic status. This is what Imam Shafi'i has expressed, and I have written regarding this that what can be truer than Imam Shafi'i's statement!

Therefore, understand well that if I dare to discuss the reports of individual narrations, I am only able to do so because their attribution to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is not definitive, or because there is a chain of narrators between me and you. Otherwise, if their attribution to you were definitive, or if you were physically present in front of me, shame on me if I were to engage in debate. My mind would be confounded if I were to stand before you and say, God forbid, that your statement does not conform to the Qur'an. Is my argument that if the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) were to say something regarding the Qur'an and its explanation is not apparent to me, I would refuse to accept it? Never, God forbid, I can't even conceive of such an idea, let alone express it.

Imam Shafi'i's dilemma is precisely that he psychologically perceives that the attribution of the solitary reports (Akhbar al-Ahad) to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is certain. It is as if he gives them the same status as if he is hearing directly from you. From this perspective, if one looks at it, he is not wrong in any way. If I were to stand with the same psychological stance regarding Akhbar al-Ahad, then I also could not conceive any objection to them, because doing so would then be contrary to faith.

[February 2019]



The Hereafter Should be Made the Primary Concern of Humanity

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Address at the Concluding Session of the Annual Gathering of 'Danish Sara'

Ladies and gentlemen, from the Qur'an and the practices of the Prophets, it becomes evident that the invitation of religion directs a person towards their inner self. In its essence, the invitation of religion is not about solving worldly problems; rather, it is an invitation to transform the very question of life itself. Worldly issues have always existed and will always continue to exist. Humans devise strategies and adopt new methods to address these issues, but when Allah's messengers are sent, they fundamentally transform the question itself. They shift the focus of humanity, making this world a matter of temporal attention and the Hereafter the primary focus of true concern.

We are to present ourselves before our Lord. This destination will be reached by traversing the path of death and it is this destination that should be made the real concern of the people. While worldly matters naturally become the center of human interest, the concern for the Hereafter should surpass them all, becoming the primary focus of attention and interest. This thought should encompass a person's life: that after departing from this world, I will step into a new world. There, I will be present before my Lord with my book of deeds. When I stand before Him, I will not be able to hide any shortcoming, any flaw, or any misstep. Everything I have done in this world will be meticulously presented before me in the form of my book of deeds. I am to face this book of deeds. When I rise to face it in the presence of my Lord, I will not be able to make any excuses, offer any ransom, fabricate any justification, or present any intercession. It will be me

and my Lord. I will be compelled to undergo the process of accountability established for that moment, as promised by the Lord of all worlds. The outcome of this accountability can result in eternal blessings or eternal mercy. However, I must strive to attain eternal mercy. This struggle must take place here, in this world. This world is the realm of action. If I can make this effort here, I will witness its results there. After my death, the opportunity for this struggle will come to an end.

This is the fundamental point of the call to faith and indeed the main subject of the call to religion. In the invitation of the noble Prophets, this aspect has always held an extraordinary status. They make this their ultimate goal, purpose, and focus of attention, striving tirelessly for it. They instill such a deep passion for it in people that they ask them, “O Prophet, O Messenger of Allah, tell us how we can save ourselves from Hell and attain Paradise?” This question—how can I save myself from Hell and attain Paradise?—becomes their primary concern. It becomes such a significant issue that one’s entire existence, waking or sleeping, becomes influenced by it. While one fulfills their social needs, addresses their economic and political issues in the world, their primary concern should be the hereafter. This is the central point in the invitation of the prophets, meaning that the issue itself should be transformed. Worldly problems should take a lesser priority. These issues should become secondary in nature. The ultimate issue should be realizing that one has to stand before their Lord one day.

Creating a sense of accountability, awakening the human mind to it, and embedding it deep in the soul and heart has been the primary purpose of the struggles of the Prophets (peace be upon them). Please pray for me that the Hereafter becomes the ultimate concern for me, and I pray for you that it becomes the ultimate concern for you all. Reminding about this fundamental issue, offering advice about it, preparing minds for it, directing the children of Adam towards it, and repeatedly reminding them—this is, in fact, what is called the call to religion. If the Hereafter does not become the fundamental concern and does not take position as the ultimate goal and objective for an

individual, the truth is, they cannot succeed in this trial.

[August 2000]



How to Provide Religious Education to the New Generation?

[Excerpt from Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's conversation in a question and answer session in the USA]

The question often arises of how to impart religious education to the new generation of Muslims. Muslims in America and Europe are particularly concerned about this issue. They observe that their children are deprived of religious education and training. Neither is Islamic education provided in educational institutions, nor is it arranged at the state level, nor does the social environment play any role in this regard. In Muslim countries, although there is provision for religious education at the levels of schools, the state, and society, the situation is not much different. While there is an absence of religious education in the West, despite its availability, there is an indifference and lack of interest in religious education. If this trend of estrangement from religion continues among the new generation, there is a fear that, in the future, the religion of Allah will become unfamiliar to Muslims. This means that people will stray away from the guidance on which their salvation in the hereafter depends. This situation is a major concern for Muslim parents. Consequently, they present this issue to every knowledgeable individual and seek its solution.

Reasons for Disinterest in Religious Education

To solve this issue, it is first necessary to understand its causes. That is, it is important to know why this alarming situation has arisen. Upon a little reflection, it will become clear that there are two main causes: one cause is ignorance, and the other cause is the imposition of religious education.

1. Ignorance

Distance from knowledge and ignorance is the greatest problem facing Muslims. This ignorance exists not only in worldly sciences but also in religious knowledge. While there has been a gradual increase in attention toward sciences and other worldly disciplines, when it comes to religious education and training, we are still following centuries-old methods. These methods, instead of opening pathways to understanding religion, actually block them.

According to these methods, religious education consists of memorizing certain chapters of the Qur'an, superficially studying parts of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), memorizing a few statements of creed, and practicing a handful of rituals. This is what is commonly defined as religious education. However, this approach neither explains the foundations of religion, nor integrates its beliefs and principles into conscious understanding. The biography of the Prophet is not studied in the light of the Qur'an, nor are the reasons and motivations behind various religious practices and commandments clarified. Religion is presented in such a way as if it is merely about accepting certain things without thought and blindly acting upon them. Our society, our scholars, and our religious educational institutions continue to nurture this approach. This is pure ignorance and the greatest obstacle to proper religious education.

b. Coercive Education

The second major issue that arises from the womb of ignorance is coercive education. The majority of Muslim parents wish to impose religion on their children by force. If a child asks any questions about religion, they are often silenced. Parents, teachers, scholars, and the media all adopt this approach. One reason for this is that those who are being questioned are themselves unaware of the answers. Thus, they try to ensure that, just like they memorized certain things or believed certain matters without thinking, the new generation adopts the same approach. However, the reality is that in the modern era, the new methods of education introduced have left no room for this style

of teaching. In these methods, questions are appreciated, and objections are listened to with an open heart. As a result, worldly knowledge and skills are advancing rapidly. The very demand of religion itself is that it be accepted with understanding and thought. There is no space for coercion in it. Whether parents, teachers, scholars, the state, or society, not even Allah has given His prophets the right to forcibly make people adherents of religion. Therefore, everyone should know that neither does the one explaining religion have the right to enforce it, nor is it the responsibility of the listener to accept it without thought and understanding.

Basic Steps for Developing an Interest in Religious Education

The issue of the new generation's lack of interest in religious education is as serious and concerning as its solution is simple and hopeful. However, achieving this goal requires firm determination and continuous effort. If parents, teachers, and scholars are active at their respective levels, they can change this worrisome situation. Three steps are essential for this purpose.

1. Parents, teachers, and scholars themselves should embrace religion.

The first step is for parents, teachers, and scholars to understand religion themselves and incorporate it into their knowledge and practice. They should understand that religion is not like science, history, or geography—subjects that one reads and retains in memory. It is neither an art nor a skill to be learned and used on specific occasions. It is knowledge that must be transformed into action; it must permeate a person's morals and character; it must be part of their morning and evening, and their day and night; it should integrate into their home, neighborhood, office, business, affairs of governance—in short, it should be part of every aspect of life. Therefore, if this knowledge is apparent in the personalities of parents, teachers, and scholars, children will also start to accept it.

In this matter, the most prominent aspect is morality. Parents, teachers, and scholars should foremost ensure its preservation. If children are influenced by the morals and character of adults, they will also become ready to accept acts of worship and other religious practices. If you wish to introduce your children to a particular religion, instill certain values in them, or connect them to a specific culture, then you must be a good example of it yourself. Children will not listen to your preaching. They will first observe you to see how the culture you talk about, the religion you teach, is embodied in your being, and how it is reflected in your behavior and dealings. If you want to impart something to your children, its beginning will originate from your own existence. It is not possible to say one thing verbally while your actions testify to something else. If you want to mold your children into a particular template, you must first mold yourself into it.

2. There shall be no compulsion in matters of religion.

The second step is for parents, teachers, and religious scholars to completely abandon coercive methods with the younger generation. These methods have now become obsolete in the world. A hundred or two hundred years ago, it was somewhat possible to instill preferred teachings by force into minds. The reasons for this lay in the cultural context of that era, with certain political and historical factors granting special importance to beliefs and faith. There was a tendency among the general population to accept ideologies without knowledge, reasoning, or critical analysis. For this reason, Will Durant described that era as the “age of faith.” However, at this time, the entire scenario has changed. Now, even ordinary minds are governed by reason. Hence, to convince someone of something, one must present reasoning, listen to criticism, and respond to it gracefully.

In this context, it has become essential that the approach of imposing compulsory education and training in religious matters be abandoned. The religion of Allah does not require it to be enforced compulsorily. It stands upon the clear evidences that Allah has instilled in human nature and for understanding which He has bestowed the light of reason. This is why the Book of Allah presents

arguments, the Messenger of Allah presents arguments, and the esteemed scholars of religion also present their views with reasoning. This approach is in complete harmony with human nature, and therefore, we should also adopt it.

3. The general teaching and instruction of religion should be established on correct principles.

The third step is to adopt the same method for the general education and training of religion that is used for teaching other sciences. That is, instead of teaching religion as a collection of beliefs and historical narratives, it should be taught as pure knowledge. When it is absorbed on an intellectual level, beliefs will naturally develop as a result. Then these beliefs will become an integral part of the heart and mind as established truths rather than unexamined theories. Therefore, religion should also be taught in the same manner as history, literature, science, mathematics, and geography. It is important to clarify that what is meant here is not specialized religious education, which is essential for becoming a scholar. This refers to the general education that is provided as elective subjects at the level of schools and colleges, for example, or the short courses in which graduates of various fields participate out of interest.

The objective is to teach Islam from a purely academic perspective rather than a proselytizing one. The foundational educational content of our religion is not extensive. If we set aside things like jurisprudence, history, and virtues and create a curriculum centered around the Qur'an, the fundamental education of religion can be completed in six months. Such a curriculum should be introduced in schools and colleges, and religious institutions should also make arrangements for its teaching.

If these three measures are taken, it is hoped that we will soon overcome the situation that the entire Ummah is facing regarding distance from religion and lack of trust in it. If Allah, the Almighty, wills!

[September 2023]



The Upbringing of Children

[Excerpt from the discussion session with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

In our society, parents are often worried about the religious and moral upbringing of their children. When children reach the age of puberty, the parents' concerns grow even more. They wish for their children to follow religious teachings, pray regularly, fast, and recite the Qur'an. Similarly, they desire for their children to adopt virtuous habits, avoid bad behaviors, and take their responsibilities seriously. To instill these qualities in their children, they generally adopt a method of strictness and compulsion. The reason for this might be that they believe compulsion is the only way for upbringing and reform. It is generally observed that after adopting this method of reform, three types of outcomes emerge considering the different natures of children and varying circumstances.

One outcome of this approach is that some mild-natured children suppress their own personalities. They adopt actions and practices that neither become a part of their conscious understanding nor align with their interests and enthusiasm. They diligently perform religious obligations such as prayer and fasting at the command of their parents, but there is no force of awareness or intention behind these actions. They grow beards and wear specific types of clothing, yet a sense of disinterest and reluctance prevails in their attitude toward these practices. In this situation, their zest for life, their passion for achieving something meaningful, and their drive to excel are almost entirely extinguished.

The second result of this is that some children with a sharp temperament adopt a rebellious attitude. They refuse to act upon things that their hearts and minds have not accepted. They clearly state that matters of religion and morality are merely outdated speeches, and they cannot shape their lives according to them. In response to

the strictness from parents, they develop a psychology of reaction where stubbornness and rebelliousness become part of their nature. At times, they even refuse to accept things that their own intellect deems entirely correct.

Its third outcome is that some children with moderate temperaments adopt a hypocritical attitude. In the presence of their parents, they behave according to their parents' wishes, but in their absence, they act according to their own desires. The parents assume that their children are leading a particular religious and moral life, but the reality is quite the opposite.

None of these three outcomes bear positive effects. Each of these outcomes not only impedes the moral development of children but also adversely affects their mental and physical health.

If looked at with fairness, the truth is that there is no fault of the children in this matter. The fundamental mistake lies in the parents' method of upbringing. Allah the Almighty has created humans in such a way that they first incorporate something into their mind, thought, consciousness, and will, and then act according to it. The method of blindly following commands is something Allah has reserved for animals, which simply turn in the direction they are driven. In the case of humans, they accept something through two means: one is the path of reasoning, and the other is the path of emotions. This is precisely why the Prophets always addressed the intellect of people and knocked at the doors of their hearts.

If parents truly wish to nurture their children, it is essential that they completely abandon their old methods. For this purpose, they must ensure that whatever religious and moral qualities they want to cultivate in their children first become a part of their consciousness. They should abandon all methods of harshness, coercion, pressure, force, and compulsion. They should enhance their children's knowledge and understanding. They must adhere to Socrates' principle that access to right action can only be achieved through right knowledge. Alongside this, they should also ensure that children spend as much time as possible in good company. They should

provide them with such a pure environment that children gradually embrace purity without even realizing it. This is the only way for the training and reform of children. Any other path chosen will lead to nothing but suffocation, rebellion, or hypocrisy in the household atmosphere.

[September 2005]



The Psychological Aspect of Depression and Despair

Causes and Treatment

[This text is derived from a conversation of the author with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. In this, he has identified the causes of depression and despair in the light of his religious and social knowledge and outlined guiding principles for overcoming them.]

In the present era, the disease of depression is spreading rapidly. There is an increase in the number of patients with each passing day. Men, women, adults, and children, all are affected by it. Among us, there are several factors contributing to this. Some of these are physical, while others are psychological.

Experts describe that the natural factors affecting it include chemical changes occurring in the body at a certain stage of life, or an imbalance of sodium or other elements in the body, or a psychological trauma, or a physical ailment that affects the brain. As a result, the mind stops functioning normally. If these are the causes of the illness, then it can be controlled with the help of medication. In such a case, treatment by a competent psychologist is generally sufficient.

The Three Major Causes of Despair

However, as far as the disease caused purely by psychological factors is concerned, cognitive and psychological correction is essential. In this matter, if the disease exceeds a certain limit, medication is required, but without correcting attitudes and concepts, it is not possible to get rid of it. In this matter, it is necessary to consider the three major causes of despair.

1. Do not consider the world as a testing ground.

The first thing is that we accept, as a matter of belief, that the world is a testing ground, but we do not consciously acknowledge it. We orally admit that we have to pass a test in this world, but we do not integrate it into our hearts and minds, nor do we accept it as a fundamental principle of life. This is why every trouble, failure, and deprivation leaves us complaining and disheartened. Why do we feel that all failures are meant for us? Are we the only ones meant to endure suffering? Are we the ones who must fall? Are we the only ones left to face hardships? Are pains destined solely for us? Did deprivation choose only our home? These sentences imply that we have not fundamentally accepted the principle that this world is a place of trial. This is the primary cause of despair and depression. When we perceive this world not as a place of testing, but as a place of results; when we consider it not as a place of striving, but as a place of reward; and when we view it not as a temporary abode, but as a permanent dwelling, then every difficulty, every trouble, and every failure becomes a cause of depression for us.

Therefore, it is essential to wholeheartedly accept that this world was created as a place of trial—a testing ground. The hardships and comforts, poverty and wealth, progress and decline that a person experiences are all a result of this reality. No guarantees of success have been given in this life. It is possible for a person's lifelong efforts to end in failure, while another may achieve success at their first attempt. One individual might face endless sorrows, while another is blessed with luxury and ease. Success and failure here are not fundamentally tied to a person's effort or abilities, just as hardships and comforts are not inherently the result of one's qualities.

Both success and failure are forms of trials. Suffering from illness, enduring poverty, facing hunger, living in obscurity, or experiencing subjugation—all these are tests. Similarly, if Allah grants health, wealth, greatness, fame, or power, these too are meant as trials. Sorrow and failure test our patience, while comfort and success test our gratitude. This trial, this testing, is Allah's scheme, and we must

inevitably pass through it.

Thus, we should not merely accept this as a belief or an abstract concept, but as a concrete reality. This reality should become a part of our consciousness, a part of our very being. Our thoughts should be based on this truth, and so should our actions. If this transformation takes place within us, then, God willing, neither despair will overwhelm us nor will we fall prey to depression.

2. Avoiding Patience and Gratitude

The second issue is that our overall upbringing is not based on the psychology of patience and gratitude. Our general upbringing is such that when we receive a blessing, we consider it our entitlement and become engulfed in pride and arrogance. Conversely, when any calamity or hardship befalls us, we blame others or begin to complain to Allah. The words of the Qur'an are that when any distress befalls a person, they say: *Rabbī ahānanī* meaning, "My Lord has dishonored me, humiliated me." This is ingratitude. In Surah Hud, this behavior of humans is described:

وَلَئِنْ آدَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ تَجَمَّ إِنَّهُ لَيُؤْسُ كَفُورٌ.
وَلَئِنْ آدَقْنَاهُ نِعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ ضِرَاءٍ مَسْتَهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ دَهْبَ السَّيِّئَاتِ عَلَيَّ شَحْم
إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ.

Such is the matter of a human being that if We bless him with some favor; then deprive him of it, he shall definitely complain because he is quick to lose hope and is very ungrateful. And if after some adversity that has inflicted him We make him taste a favor, he shall certainly say: "My adversities have left me," [and will rejoice] because he is very arrogant and boastful. (11:9-10)

This is not an appropriate attitude. The correct approach is to adopt patience in every difficulty and adversity and to confront them with determination and courage. It should be clear that patience is not a sign of humility or lowliness that people adopt out of helplessness. It is an expression of steadfastness, perseverance, and bravery. Those

who face the hardships and challenges of life with courage, accept them as tests and decrees of Allah, and keep their hearts and minds content and satisfied with them, are indeed the ones referred to in the Qur'an as *Sabireen* (the patient ones). Such individuals do not succumb to pride and arrogance in times of joy and happiness, nor do they become despondent and discouraged in situations of grief and distress. When faced with a calamity, they say: *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*, "Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we will return."¹

Patience and gratitude are intrinsically linked. Just as one must exhibit patience in times of adversity, one must express gratitude upon receiving blessings. If we observe our surroundings, we find countless opportunities for gratitude. Every minor blessing should be acknowledged with gratitude. The true value of a seemingly small blessing becomes apparent when it is taken away from us. Therefore, if you have access to cold drinking water, be grateful for it. If warm water is available in the bathroom, say *Alhamdu lillah* (All praise belongs to Allah). Clean air is a significant blessing, not available in some areas; a bed one has is a big blessing, as many people have to sleep on the streets. All these blessings demand gratitude. Upon reflection, we realize that even twenty-four hours in a day are insufficient to thank for the blessings that surround us. The prayers taught to us by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are expressions of this gratitude. The words of one prayer are: *Alhamdu lillahi alladhi ahyana ba'da ma amatana, wa ilayhi an-nushur*, meaning "All praise is due to Allah, who gave us life after death and to whom we will ultimately return."² Saying *Subhan Allah* (Glory be to Allah) when witnessing a sign of Allah, starting work with *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah), and saying *Alhamdu lillah* (All praise belongs to Allah) upon receiving a blessing are all expressions of gratitude. Once, Maulana Islahi asked what the greatest supplication in the world is. None of us could answer. He said it is Surah Al-Fatihah. The reason is that the

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:156.

² Bukhari, No: 6312, Muslim, No: 6887.

greatest blessing bestowed upon humanity is Allah's guidance, and Surah Al-Fatihah is an expression of gratitude for this immense blessing.

Understand this: it is not that people do not face hardships. No human is spared from them. The difference lies in the fact that a person who lives with the psychology of patience and gratitude focuses on blessings rather than afflictions. If you meet such a person, it will seem as if they have no pain, no illness, no grief, no worries. However, if they start to express, you would realize that there is a world of hardships they are living in. In reality, they have perceived this world as an abode of trials and have adopted the attitude of patience and gratitude as their creed.

A question from a person moved me to tears. He said, "I have been paralyzed for twenty years, I cannot get up to go to the bathroom, but will my prayers be accepted?" His real concern was not his disability, but rather whether there was any shortcoming in expressing gratitude to his Lord. Someone in the US asked me if I had any complaints about having to leave my homeland. I responded, "Why would I complain? My people and my country have always appreciated my abilities, and I should be grateful for that." It's true that I had to migrate, but often people end up on the streets after migration and have to face countless problems. By God's grace, I am sitting peacefully in my home. If I think this way, then even the biggest incident cannot overwhelm me with despair.

3. We know how to take, not how to give

The third point is that our psychology has been shaped in such a way that we only know how to take, not to give. We begin our lives from the premise that we must take from our parents. When we marry, the expectation is that the wife should take care of us, look after the children, and serve our parents. As life progresses and the children grow up, we establish the expectation that they must fulfill our unfulfilled desires; all our dormant wishes are now linked to them. They are expected to serve us and support us in our old age. We also

demand from relatives that they should assist and support us on every occasion. A friend is considered to be someone who comes to our aid during times of difficulty. In other words, our psychology, thoughts, actions, and behavior revolve around the central idea of what others have given us and how they have treated us, rather than considering what we should give to them and how we should treat them. The notion prevails that he did not care for me, did not help me, should have been considerate of my needs, should have fulfilled my requirements, should have solved my problem—that these were my rights, which it was their responsibility to fulfill. The repetition of these demands and expectations is a constant feature of our daily conversations.

These demands and requests lead to doubt and grievances. The reason for this is that no person can continuously meet our expectations. Gradually, they have to withdraw. Eventually, the day comes when their capacity is exhausted and they have to present their apologies. It is from this point that feelings of resentment and complaints arise. These feelings sometimes give rise to despair and hopelessness, and at other times, they take the form of emotions of sorrow, anger, hatred, and revenge.

In reality, taking should not enter our lives at all. Every person should make the decision at the very first step of conscious life that they were born to give. For me, this world is not a place to take, but a place to give. I must give to my parents, I must give to my wife, I must give to my children, I must give to my friends, I must give to society.

Hence, the issue for parents should be that these are our children, and it was our decision to bring them into the world; they did not request us for anything. Now, we have to nurture them, raise them, provide them with a good environment, and fulfill their needs. We must do all of this without expecting any reward because all of this is part of our duties.

When children mature, they should embrace a mindset of giving back to their parents. They ought to reflect on the pivotal role their parents played in bringing them into existence and nurturing them. The

father dedicated himself to their upbringing and provision, while the mother endured the immense challenges of childbirth and nursing. In their parents' old age, marked by frailty and vulnerability, it becomes our duty to provide them with the same love, care, and support they once gave us during the helplessness of our childhood.

The husband should consider that this woman has come from another home for my sake, she has made my home her own, and I must take care of her, educate her, and provide her with protection. In the same way, a wife should understand that this man has trusted me, entrusted me with his home and family, and taken on the responsibility of fulfilling my needs. Now it is my duty to fulfill the rights of companionship, to manage his household, to encourage him in his troubles, to give his parents the same status as my own parents, and to adopt the same attitude of service and patience towards them that I have adopted with my own real parents.

The same psychology of giving should be adopted by the teacher, the student should adopt it, and relatives and friends should adopt it among themselves.

This means that until your death, you should focus on one thing only: what have you done for this person who has become associated with you, and what are you going to do in the future? The question is not what they have done for you. Hence, all demands should be eliminated from your existence; insistence should not be a part of your nature; you should become devoid of expectations. Iqbal has expressed this sentiment as — His aspirations are modest, but his goals are noble — which means that an exemplary person does not live in the world of hopes and dependencies, but rather in the world of purpose.

In this age, the psychology of the entire world is based on the question of “What are my rights?” Both individuals and nations are captivated by this mindset. Everywhere, the protection of one’s rights has become the primary issue. In contrast, observe how the Qur’an does not even use the word rights. Instead, it speaks about duties. That is why there is no Charter of Human Rights in Islam. There is, however,

a list of duties, which every individual is obligated to fulfill. For instance, parents have duties, children have duties, husbands have duties, wives have duties, scholars have duties, rulers have duties, and citizens have duties. It's all about duties. The reality is that when we fulfill our duties, others receive their rights. Similarly, when others fulfill their duties, we receive our rights. In essence, there are two approaches to achieving the same outcome: one is the rights-based approach, and the other is the duties-based approach. One is focused on taking, while the other is focused on giving. Islam adopts the duties-based approach, emphasizing giving rather than taking. The result of this is that when a person does not receive their due rights, they do not fall into despair or hopelessness. Instead, they remain content and satisfied with the will of Allah, continuing their journey through life with patience and determination.

[October 2018]



What is Purification of the Soul?

How can it be attained?

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has been answering participants' questions following his weekly lecture on the Qur'an and Hadith. He was asked what is meant by the purification of the soul (Tazkiyah al-Nafs)? Who performs this purification? How should one perform the purification of oneself and one's family? Is there a specific method to achieve the purification of the soul? The summary of his discussion in response to these questions is as follows.

The purpose of religion is the purification of the soul. This means that the individual and collective lives of human beings should be cleansed from impurities, and their thoughts and actions should be nurtured in the right direction. God has sent His prophets to the world for this very purpose.

Allah Almighty has created this world on the principle that here, a person should strive to purge the impurities of his soul and nurture himself under the guidance of the teachings of the prophets in such a manner that makes him worthy of residing in Paradise. The fundamental condition for dwelling in Paradise is the purification of the soul. The Divine command is:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى. وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى. بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا.
وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى.

However, successful shall be he who spiritually purified [himself] and for this he remembered his Lord's name, then prayed. People! you do not have any sound argument. In fact, you give preference to worldly life even though the life to come is better and more lasting also. (87:14-17)

The Qur'an purifies both human knowledge and practice. The education it provides for the purification of knowledge is referred to as *Hikmat* (wisdom) in its terminology, and the education it provides for the purification of practice is termed *Shariah* (law). It can be understood that the instructions related to faith purify knowledge, while the instructions related to laws and regulations purify practice. For example, when the Qur'an refutes polytheism, it purifies our knowledge regarding the Divine Essence, and when it encourages active engagement in worshipping Him alone, it purifies practice.

From this, it is clear that purification is done by religion, not by any human being. In every age, many scholars emerge from whom guidance can be obtained. The Book of Allah is available to us in a completely preserved form, and by studying it, one can determine what is right and what is wrong. Any scholar or religious mentor only makes you aware of the teachings of the religion and provides a religious environment and good company. He does not purify us himself; rather, he connects us to the religion that does the purification. Thus, he is not the purifier (*muzakki*) — the one who purifies — but the teacher (*mu'allim*) — the one who teaches the knowledge that purifies.

Learn religion from those scholars whom you trust. Once you understand the religion, your nature will awaken, and you will realize what aspects of your knowledge and actions need purification.

As for your family, you must be concerned about their hereafter. You should strive to lead them to the stage of self-purification, but the only path for this struggle is religious education and training, and the company of the righteous. Acquire religious education for yourself and also arrange it for your family.

Sit in the assemblies of the teachers of religion and keep the company of those who have molded their lives according to the framework of religion. Encourage your family and friends also to sit in the company of scholars who possess noble character.

Encourage your household to be steadfast in prayer and instill in their hearts and minds the understanding that success in the Hereafter is

the true success. The life of this world is very brief and is merely a test. Inculcate in their minds and hearts the notion that success in the Hereafter will be granted only to those who, in this world, turn towards God's religion and purify their knowledge and actions from all impurities.

As far as the attainment of purification of the soul is concerned, in this matter, instead of seeking formulas from here and there, one should tread the path that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) has shown and on which the companions of the Prophet walked. While following that path, the results undoubtedly do not emerge quickly, but when they do, they are strong and enduring.

In this regard, make these three things a part of your life:

1. Make the recitation of the Holy Qur'an a part of your daily routine.

Recitation does not mean the mindless repetition of words; rather, it is the study of the Divine Book with full consciousness in the quest for guidance.

2. Maintain a complete and ongoing connection with the mosque.

3. Spend some time each week in the company of virtuous people.

These three points are derived from the exemplary conduct of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This is the conduct of Muhammad. If you adopt any other behavior or method besides this, there is a grave risk that instead of avoiding calamities, you may fall prey to them. Instead of purifying your soul from impurities, you may contaminate it. Instead of attaining the closeness to Allah and the station of His obedience, you may become distant by engaging in idolatrous activities. Despite believing that you have achieved self-purification, in reality, you will be deprived of it.

[June 2007]



Correct Sects

After the weekly lecture on the Qur'an and Hadith, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked which sects are correct from a religious perspective. The summary of Mr. Ghamidi's conversation in response to this question is as follows.

The sects, schools of thought, or perspectives on religion that exist today have been established by humans based on their understanding. It is not necessary that every aspect of any school of thought is correct, nor is it necessary that every aspect is wrong. From the perspective of knowledge and thought, no human effort can be declared entirely correct. Regarding the understanding of religion that I present to you, I can never claim that it will necessarily be entirely correct. My own history tells me that I have reconsidered many opinions I had established. Previously, I considered a certain opinion to be correct according to my knowledge and reasoning and expressed it with full confidence; today, in light of my knowledge and reasoning, I find that opinion to be incorrect. The matter of my faith and conviction is essentially tied to my understanding.

In this matter, the correct approach is that we should always keep our minds and hearts open and not be prejudiced by our own opinions. Therefore, regarding schools of thought, it can be stated that a particular school of thought is closer to the truth, but it cannot be said that a particular school of thought is the absolute truth. The definitive criterion of truth is exclusively the words of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). By using this as the standard, you can decide whether to accept or reject something.

[June 2007]



Unity in Religious Schools of Thought

After the weekly lesson on the Qur'an and Hadith, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked how unity is possible among religious groups and various schools of thought. The summary of his discussion in response to this question is as follows.

This issue has never been clear to me as to why there is a need to bring together people with different perspectives on one platform. The work of inviting to religion should undoubtedly be undertaken by the people of knowledge. There will naturally be some differences in the interpretation of religion among scholars. Religion has not imposed any restrictions on these intellectual differences. Such scholarly disagreement also existed among the Companions of the Prophet. Therefore, every thinker should present their viewpoint with evidence, and an ordinary person should accept or reject it based on that evidence. For this reason, I do not perceive any necessity for unity of any kind in the endeavors of understanding religion. As soon as you attempt to enforce such unity, you will fall prey to avoidance of truth and hypocritical attitudes. In contrast, the fundamental responsibility in conveying the message of truth is to bear true testimony to it and present it clearly and unambiguously.

For this reason, in my view, there is no need for any consensus on this matter. Instead, there is a need to adopt an attitude of tolerance toward different religious opinions. Hence, we should ensure that differences in opinion do not become grounds for personal enmity and hostility, and we should not erect walls of sectarianism based on these differences.

As far as unity and consensus are concerned, they should be aimed at solving national and political issues. If different groups or parties agree

on a few points in these matters, then it is a positive development.

[June 2007]



Invitation to Religion or Invitation to the Understanding of the Scholar

After the weekly Qur'an and Hadith lecture, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked this question: "Our preaching generally is based on the understanding we derive from your thoughts, and obviously, your thoughts are based on your own understanding. In this situation, how can our preaching become the invitation to Islam?" The summary of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's response to this question is as follows.

The invitation should always be towards religion. However, the task of presenting the invitation to religion can only be undertaken by individuals of knowledge. It requires a significant period of time for a person to develop the ability to understand religion within themselves. Only after developing this ability can a person serve in teaching and imparting the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Those who possess knowledge and provide guidance regarding religion inevitably hold their own perspective. They have also established certain principles for deriving religious understanding. It is this general trust in their work that associates you with them.

Every knowledgeable person, when presenting their viewpoint, will provide arguments for it. If you are satisfied with those arguments, then accept them, and if you are not convinced, then do not accept them.

As far as the invitation to religion is concerned, it is the act of conveying the Qur'an and Sunnah to the people. In every circumstance, these should serve as the foundation of the invitation. If you make any other matter besides the Qur'an and Sunnah the subject of the invitation, it will merely lead to sectarian divisions.

However, there is no harm in introducing people to the writings or speeches of the scholars you trust or from whom you seek guidance. This can serve the purpose of allowing others to acquire the understanding of a particular viewpoint that you have gained.

[June 2007]



Differences Regarding Prayer

After the weekly lesson of the Qur'an and Hadith, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked whether the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) performed the prayer in different ways during his lifetime. If not, why do practical differences regarding the prayer exist among Muslims? The summary of his response to this question is as follows.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) taught the Muslims a prayer that consists of two types of matters:

The first are those aspects that he established as part of the Sunnah. These are the essential components of prayer and cannot be altered. Examples include the number of prayers, their designated times, the words of the call to prayer (*Adhan*), the number of units (*Rak'at*) in each prayer, the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah and portions of the Qur'an in the standing position (*Qiyam*), the method of bowing (*Rukoo*), the method of prostration (*Sajdah*), and raising the hands during the start of the prayer (*Takbeer-e-Tahreema*).

The other matters are those which he did not establish as part of the Sunnah, but rather gave some fundamental guidelines and left them to people's discretion. Examples include *Sana*, the supplications recited in the sitting posture, sending blessings upon the Prophet (*Durood*), folding hands while standing, saying "Ameen" aloud or silently after the recitation of Surah Al-Fatiha, and raising hands while pronouncing certain *Takbeers*.

In matters of the first nature, there has always been consensus within the Muslim community, and these are the issues on which we should insist. As for matters of the second nature, we can choose according to our own preference. These are the issues where scholars have held different opinions. These differences do not affect the fundamental form of prayer. Since the Prophet (PBUH) himself left these matters

to people's discretion, we should not insist on any particular practice in these cases.

The issues which the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not establish as sunnah or for which people have been given discretion can be understood through a few examples:

Once the Prophet observed that a companion, during the supplication in the position of sitting (*Qa'dah*), was uttering words such as *As-Salamu 'ala Allah* meaning 'Peace be upon Allah'. The Prophet explained to him that Allah Almighty is absolute peace. It is disrespectful for humans to pray for peace for that entity. Then he taught the words of *Al-Tahiyyat*. It implies that initially, the Prophet did not teach *Al-Tahiyyat* while teaching how to pray, but rather, he corrected a mistake by explaining the proper way to present greetings to Allah Almighty.

The matter of reciting the *Sana* before Surah Al-Fatiha is similar. People noticed that when the Prophet (PBUH) led the prayer, he would stand silently for a moment before the recitation of Surah Al-Fatiha. They inquired about the reason for this pause. The Prophet explained that at the beginning of the prayer, he would present some words of praise and glorification before the Lord. When the people expressed their desire to learn these words, he taught them *Subhanak Allahumma wa bihamdika* (Glory is to You, O Allah, and praise is to You) along with some other similar expressions.

The prayer for the Prophet (PBUH), that is, the *Durood*, was also learned by people in this manner.

From these examples, it becomes clear that the Prophet did not establish certain parts of the prayer as Sunnah. Therefore, their status is optional. In these optional matters, every Muslim will naturally wish to seek the selections preferred by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). If one cannot ascertain them, they will inevitably resort to independent reasoning (*ijtihad*). In such a case, differences are a natural occurrence.

[June 2007]



The Throne of the Queen of Sheba

After the weekly lecture on the Qur'an and Hadith, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked this question: According to the Qur'an, a person presented the throne of the Queen of Sheba before Prophet Solomon (PBUH) in the blink of an eye. Under what knowledge was this task accomplished? What is the relevance of that knowledge to religion? The summary of his response to this question is as follows.

In the present age, people should not be surprised by this. After acquiring some mastery over the material sciences, we are able to witness events happening thousands of miles away right before our eyes. A person's image, conversation, and movements reach us directly. The miracles that the invention of the computer is displaying could only be imagined a few years ago. About the person who brought the throne of the Queen of Sheba, the Qur'an has informed us that he possessed knowledge of God's law.¹ This means the knowledge of the laws of God operating in the universe. It was probably a similar type of knowledge given through *Harut* and *Marut*. Just as the material sciences are performing astonishing feats in the present age, similar feats were accomplished through psychic sciences in ancient times. It is possible that in the modern era, material sciences may also acquire the capability to transport an object lying before us to places like the United States and Australia in the blink of an eye. The nature of that person's feat is similar to that of an invention or accomplishment of a scientist in our time. Hence, whether it is the material sciences of the modern era or the psychic sciences of ancient times, they have no connection with religion. They operate within the universe. People discover them through knowledge, intellect, experience, and

¹ Al-Naml 27:40.

observation, and bring them into their control.



The Qur'an Giving More Importance to Men

After the weekly lesson on the Qur'an and Hadith, a gentleman asked Javed Ahmed Ghamidi why the Qur'an addresses men more frequently, which leads to the perception that women are considered second-class beings in Islam. Wouldn't it have been better if the blessings women will receive in paradise were mentioned concerning them, just as 'houris' are mentioned for men? The summary of response to this question is as follows.

God Almighty does not create a new language to convey His message to the world; rather, He uses the language of the people among whom He reveals His message as the medium of expression. In the languages of the world, the masculine form is used to address both men and women collectively. Therefore, when the Qur'an uses this form, women are included along with men.

It is not correct to say that there are some specific blessings in paradise reserved only for men. Women will also have the same blessings in paradise, just as men do. Regarding spouses, the Qur'an uses the words *Azwaj-e-Mutabharah* which means that there will be pure partners for both sides. If instead it was said that there women would have ten men each, then consider yourself, would this be an appropriate manner of speaking? I believe our sisters should be grateful that Allah, keeping in mind their modesty, has expressed the entire matter in just one sentence.



Compensation for Missed Prayers with Supplications

After the weekly lecture on the Qur'an and Hadith, a person asked Javed Ahmed Ghamidi the question that in several books

it is mentioned that if certain supplications are recited in a few specific prayers, they can compensate for missed prayers. Is this correct? The summary of response to this question is as follows.

Regarding the missed prayers, generally, there are two main perspectives among the scholars of the Muslim community: One is that when you perform each obligatory prayer, you should also perform the missed prayers in place of or in addition to voluntary (*nafl*) prayers. The second is that you should sincerely repent to Allah Almighty for your negligence, make a firm commitment not to repeat the mistake in the future, and then hope that Allah will accept your repentance. Both of these methods have their own justifications and evidence. You may choose to follow any one of these. However, it is not correct to say that certain supplications (*tasbeehat*) can compensate for missed prayers.



The Religious Significance of Reciting Durood

After the weekly Qur'an and Hadith lecture, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked about the religious significance of frequently reciting Durood Sharif. Furthermore, how accurate are the virtues, blessings, and excellences attributed to Durood Sharif? The summary of his discourse in response to this question is as follows.

Sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a supplication to Allah Almighty for mercy, blessing, and elevation of his ranks. The more we engage in this supplication, the more it will be a source of reward for us. The word *Durood* is of Persian origin and is used in the same meaning as supplication. We pray for ourselves, for our families, for our parents, and similarly, we pray for our great benefactor, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This supplication is a sign of our faith and a symbol of our connection with the Prophet (PBUH). The connection with the Prophet is part of the religion. The

expression of connection with the Prophet is part of the religion. Love for the Prophet is part of the religion. As far as the virtues, blessings, and excellences associated with this matter are concerned, some of them are undoubtedly true, but most of them are merely myths.

[June 2002]



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan: Kāna Ummatan Fi Rajulin (He was a whole nation in one man)

[On the Death of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Perspectives]

An unparalleled personality, whose character, empathy, and dedication serve as a model for all of us, has departed from this world today. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was an extraordinarily unique individual. His voice was a singular one—so distinctive that perhaps it had never been heard before, and it is uncertain if it will ever be heard again. My connection with him is that we both were students of the same teacher; with the distinction that he received his education from Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi in the early period of the latter's career, while I had the honor of being his pupil in the final period.

His significant scholarly achievement is that he has elucidated the error of the contemporary political interpretation of religion on a purely academic level. After reading his book *Ta'beer Ki Ghalti*, you can gauge the high degree of his scholarly acumen, and had he dedicated himself to such research discussions, extraordinary works could have emerged from his pen. However, gradually, he took admonition and the general reform of Muslims as his focus. In this regard too, unparalleled works have emerged from his pen.

The achievement to which I have drawn attention is quite remarkable. This is significant in the sense that in the various commands of religion, if there is any mistake in their explanation and elucidation—and it is clear that no scholar's work is free from errors—it does not lead to any major issue. For example, regarding the act of raising hands during prayer, one person may have one opinion while another

person may have a different opinion. Similarly, how to perform prostration, how to sit during the *Tashahhud*, how to begin the prayer, or various other such matters. There have been and will be differences on these topics. But what is religion as a whole, what is its purpose, what does it seek from us, what is the inherent order within its commands, and what is the principle or concept by which all religious commands are linked? If there is any error in understanding or explaining these concepts, its effects and consequences can be extraordinary. Therefore, this topic is of great importance and we we address it under the title *Deen Ki Tabeer (Interpretation of Religion)*.

In our tradition, there exists an interpretation of religion which should be termed as the ‘sufi interpretation.’ Among its eminent figures are Imam Ghazali and, in later times, Shah Waliullah. Similarly, there is the ‘political interpretation’ of religion. The foremost thinker of this interpretation among us is our respected and admired Maulana Syed Abul A’la Maududi. He not only provided its scholarly foundations but also interpreted the Qur’an with this perspective in mind throughout his entire body of work, and explained the meanings and messages of Hadith accordingly. It is this interpretation that Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has also labeled as the ‘political interpretation.’ The discussion is not about which interpretation is correct or incorrect; the essential matter is to elucidate an interpretation academically, to conduct a scholarly critique of it, to present one’s perspective in comparison, and to critically analyze each principle of the interpretation, indicating what shortcomings exist according to the Qur’an, the collective body of Muslim knowledge, and our tradition. This task, in itself, is not of the nature of addressing a minor issue. It is a significant undertaking brought forth through his pen. Even now, I tell people that if they wish to see high-quality critical work—one that possesses sweetness, refinement, consideration for cultural values, and reflects the writer’s sincerity—then they should read Maulana Waheeduddin Khan’s book *Ta’beer ki Ghalti* as an academic work.

The writings of Maulana are extensive, and there are few in the present era who have written as prolifically. His main themes were to elucidate

the true nature of religion, to cultivate a genuine understanding of Allah among people, to highlight to Muslims the errors in their adopted political approach, and to guide them on what their actual duties are. People may agree or disagree with him on these subjects. I myself wrote on one occasion that he serves as a bridge between traditional thought and the Farahi school. However, regarding his religious sincerity, national concern, and genuine awareness of the Creator, there can be no dispute.

He was an excellent writer. He was absolutely correct in stating about himself that he gave the Urdu language, especially in the field of religious studies, a contemporary style. He expressed his thoughts with great clarity, illustrated them with examples, and depicted them within the context of general matters of life. He continued this work throughout his life. *Al-Risala* was made a classic by him from this aspect. It will always be presented in this status. The critiques he made on past knowledge or the indications he gave towards certain things are filled with significant meaning. Especially if you read his diaries, you encounter rare critiques on various academic discussions. Therefore, people should reflect on his work, consider his circumstances, and study his biography.

I consider two things out of his entire work to be his greatest achievements:

One of the key aspects is drawing attention to the true essence of religion. He has explained that religion is the true recognition of the benevolent Creator, genuine love for Him, and compliance with His commands. He endeavored to make this reality clear to everyone and dedicated His entire life to this aim. Similarly, his pen was a precious tool in conveying that people should discover the essence of religion, strive to attain its true purpose, and develop the understanding that their ultimate goal is the afterlife. They must one day stand before their Creator and be accountable for their deeds. He has written extensively on this subject, emphasizing the remembrance of God and the proclamation of the afterlife. This stands as his greatest achievement among his undertakings.

The second significant achievement is that he has shown Muslims the correct path regarding their political, social, and cultural attitudes. When a person shows the right path, there is sometimes a degree of extremism involved, but overall, he has guided Muslims in the right direction by informing Muslims about where they currently stand in the backdrop of their history, what their true mission is, what attitudes they should adopt in their political and social affairs, and what positive behaviors they should target and work toward. The fundamental message he has conveyed to Muslims in this regard is to move beyond a reactionary mindset and view the world and its matters with a positive outlook. The great treasure you possess — the treasure of religion — strive to convey it to the world.

Muslims are a very unfortunate nation. They form opinions about their greatness based on differences and agreements. It is true that there are some very great figures with whom we have disagreements, sometimes principled disagreements, such as Imam Ghazali and Shah Waliullah. But can their greatness be denied? Whether personalities of the past or the present, we should cultivate a tradition of differing with them while acknowledging the greatness of their knowledge, thought, character, and conduct, and do so with respect and courtesy.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan worked independently. There was no group, sect, faction, or large organization supporting him. He was an institution unto himself. *Kāna ummatan fī rajulin*: A man in whom an entire community resided. That man has returned to his Creator today, as if a great grandeur of our era has now departed from us. *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* (Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we shall return).

[May 2021]



The Martyrdom of Dr. Farooq Khan

Conversation of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

[This is a conversation by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, which he had during an interview with Mr. Imran Yusuf, a representative of www.al-mawrid.tv, on the occasion of Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan's martyrdom. The questions have been omitted to maintain the flow of conversation.]

Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan was my dear brother, my friend, and a long-time companion. People will mention his knowledge and excellence, discuss his writings, talk about his eloquence, enumerate his religious services, and highlight the contributions he made to education in his province. There is no doubt that he was praiseworthy in all these matters. However, that which always captivated me with love for him was his humanity. He was a perfect model of the pinnacle of humanity. Whoever saw him closely knows that his patience, composure, philanthropy, and the constant smile on his face were all integral parts of his personality. I shared a companionship of approximately twenty years with him. During this period, I cannot recall a single instance where any complaint arose against him, or anything in his demeanor was felt contrary to the higher stages of humanity. He always maintained his standards. In conversation, dealings, and ethics, he was a person of high stature, and I believe that this was his true beauty. He was always a messenger of peace and throughout his life, he continued to preach peace and safety.

Whatever our ideology may be, he played an extraordinary role in spreading it within his region. He wrote books to explain it, delivered speeches to clarify it, attended seminars, and participated in gatherings—always striving with full dedication, sincerity, and determination to propagate its message. He is a martyr of the call to

truth. He sacrificed his life for this cause. At this moment, when he has left us, you can imagine what emotions someone like me must be experiencing. The truth is, I have been deprived of a brother, a companion, and a friend. When I reflect on the great honor of martyrdom that he has attained, I can only say:

A longing arises, accompanied by regret—why was it not me?

When Providence creates its beloved personalities, it endows them with some extraordinary qualities. Forbearance, dignity, politeness, culture, gentleness—these were his perfections. God created him in such a way. These traits were embedded in his very nature. In truth, whenever I envision him, it is accompanied by him smile. He never became angry. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Al-Mawrid. In its meetings, naturally, differences would arise, and opportunities for complaints against others would present themselves, but he always remained a peacemaker. No one ever had the chance to hear any invective from his pen or tongue. In his relations with others, there were no ups and downs. Once the level of a relationship was established, he never let it deteriorate and always maintained it. His gaze was fixed on the sincerity of the other, and he always kept it in consideration. Whether it was his own or others, he always spoke with great decorum and politeness.

This gentleness was inherent in his nature, and the mission that he championed is fundamentally based on the idea that our relationship with those who do not believe is one of invitation; our weapon is only reasoning; we are to present our arguments with evidence. When you position yourself at such a standpoint, it is impossible for harshness to arise within you, or for you to commit any injustice against someone else, or to attack someone's sincerity. Observing Dr. Khan's conduct in this regard, it often seemed that he was acting in emulation of the example set by his Prophet (PBUH). God created the nature of His final Prophet in this way; he was the most excellent fruit of the tree of nature. Allah Almighty has praised his noble character repeatedly in the Qur'an. Words like *Ra'ūfun raḥīm* (most kind and merciful)¹

¹ Al-Tawbah 9:128.

have been used for him, and it is said, *Wa law kunta fazzan ghalīza al-qalbi lanfaddū min hawlīka*, meaning, O Prophet, had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.²

Dr. Farooq Khan came to visit me twenty years ago. His wife was a reader of “Ishraq.” She wrote a letter to me stating that her husband had written a book titled “The Future of Pakistan.” He had some religious uncertainties and wished to discuss them with me. Consequently, he visited me with her letter and stayed for several days. During this time, we engaged in discussions on numerous subjects. There were both disagreements and agreements. This process of debate, agreement, and disagreement continued until his martyrdom.

In summary, I can say that he largely understood my thought and was its advocate. There may have been differences in some interpretations, as he was a thinker in his own right. Just as I sometimes disagree with my teachers, he also had disagreements with me on some matters. Additionally, he wrote many things at a time when I had not yet completed my book *Meezan*. Therefore, it is possible that in some matters, people might see a difference in perspective between us. However, the reality is that overall he rose with this thought, bore witness to it before people, and ultimately sacrificed his life in the way of Allah for this cause.

In my opinion, with his departure, our nation has been deprived of a great individual. This is a significant deprivation for any nation to lose such personalities. An Arabic verse says:

Adā‘unī wa ayya fatan adā‘ū!

“They have lost me, see, how they have lost the youth!”

The reality is that a great loss has occurred, but perhaps this nation is not even aware of it. The reason for this is that it has not yet reached the level of maturity to recognize its well-wishers.

Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan’s struggle was essentially an individual effort. My own limited endeavors or those of some elders before me are

² Al-Imran 3:159.

also individual. Until this struggle is transformed into a movement or a comprehensive initiative, neither Islam nor Muslims can be positioned appropriately in front of the world as a genuine invitation to faith. Therefore, there is currently a need for a significant movement of renewal and revival to be initiated within the Islamic world—Reformation of Muslim Religious Thought. A movement for the reformation of Muslim religious thought. Such stagnation and staleness have permeated Muslim religious thought that unless it is eradicated and broken, and unless Muslim religious thought is re-evaluated in light of the interpretations from the early centuries of Islam and reformed anew, we cannot confront current challenges effectively.

The departure of Dr. Khan is undoubtedly a significant loss, but these are God's works. Jesus (PBUH) had said that no person is indispensable. What difficulty is there for Allah to bring forth an Abraham from beneath stones? The religion is His, the call is His, the message is His. We are merely servants. None of us is indispensable. When we are gone, Allah will raise other servants for His religion. The opportunity we have is simply to continue fulfilling the duty of serving the religion. Allah's religion is not dependent on us; His religion is established on His wisdom, and He continues to create its means. We are servants of the religion, not benefactors. Dr. Farooq Khan was one such servant among the servants of the religion. We pray to Allah to accept his service.

As for those who have claimed responsibility for his martyrdom, I would only say to them: Do not consider yourselves as enforcers; rather, become true callers to the faith. Listen to others with patience, and come forward with the weapon of reasoning. The injustice they have committed, and the atrocities they have perpetrated before this, make me fear that they may face the same question in the court of God:

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءَدَةُ سُئِلَتْ. بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ.

When the girl who was buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed? (81:8-9)

[December 2010]



Allama Khalid Masud: Custodian of Reformist Thought

Memorial conference for Allama Khalid Masood

All praise is for Allah, the Lord of all worlds. And blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, the Trustworthy. I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the accursed.

Respected Elders, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered at this time to offer condolences for the passing of a devout believer, a unique and distinguished scholar of religion, and the custodian of an extraordinary tradition of teaching and learning, Mr. Khalid Masood.

What kind of scholar was Khalid Masood? There are scholars who occasionally engage in melodious recitations in our mosques. There are scholars who dedicate themselves to teaching, learning, and guiding others in educational institutions. And then there are scholars who have made politics their first and ultimate passion.

What kind of scholar was Khalid Masud? People often ask me if this is the same community that once ruled the world. Is this the same community that for centuries had the honor of raising the banner of Islam as a superpower in the world? Is this the same community whose legacy of knowledge and wisdom is now kept in the libraries of the world, where the great traditions of learning from Cordoba, Granada, Constantinople, and Baghdad can be seen? Why did it happen that this community became engulfed in decline, reaching the final stage of downfall and falling into degradation? In response, I usually say that by taking a deep look at the history of this community, it becomes clear that there have essentially been two reasons for this: first, that after the second and third centuries, the Qur'an, which is

the Book of Allah, which the Lord has designated as the Criterion and the Balance, whose protection He Himself has taken responsibility for, and on account of which prophecy was concluded, did not remain the center of Muslims' knowledge and action. That is, after the second century, the Qur'an no longer held the position that when a decision needed to be made, a matter needed to be contemplated, an opinion needed to be formed regarding religion, or a viewpoint in knowledge and wisdom needed to be adopted, people would focus on it as the axis of consideration. It remained a book of reference, but the tradition of making it the axis of both knowledge and action started to decline after the second and third centuries, then gradually disappeared, and now it seems that for quite some time it has become completely alien.

The second reason for decline was the preoccupation of the intelligent elements of the Muslim community with philosophy and Sufism instead of natural and scientific sciences. Both philosophy and Sufism primarily deal with metaphysics and ethics. Muslims had no real need for these disciplines because they already had the guidance of divine revelation, and these subjects had been resolved for them. This was their heritage and intellectual capital. On this basis, they could have identified philosophy as mere philosophy and approached Sufism with a perspective rooted in reality. However, instead of doing so, their intellectual energies became centered on these disciplines, making them the focus of their research and inquiry, while they distanced themselves from natural and scientific sciences.

Until we thoroughly examine and make efforts to remove both these causes of the decline of the ummah, we can dream, create uproar and protest, and even sacrifice our lives, but we cannot bring the dream of the revival of the ummah to fruition.

In the modern era, an extraordinary event took place in India. In a small town near Azamgarh, a remarkable individual was born who, after centuries, provided all the elements necessary for making the Qur'an the axis of knowledge and action. I often express that just as the last scholar of our ancient academic tradition in the subcontinent

was Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi, similarly, Imam Hamiduddin Farahi holds the position of being the first scholar of Islam's modern era. His primary distinction is that he showed all disciplines how the Qur'an can become their center and axis. How it governs over science and art, over thought and reflection, over opinion and ijtihad, over tradition, over Hadith, over jurisprudence, over theology, over philosophy and mysticism, and over all the ideological debates of Muslims. Those who are not yet fully acquainted with this thought fail to realize how extraordinary a revolution it is in terms of the renaissance of Islam, brought about by the work of one individual. Since most of Imam Farahi's work was in Arabic and in a style that could only be truly understood by scholars, not many people became acquainted with him. However, scholars within India and abroad were compelled, both during his life and after, to acknowledge that he was an utterly unique kind of personality who re-established all sources, all origins, and all foundations of knowledge once again upon their original essence.

Khalid Masud was a scholar of this intellectual tradition, and his uniqueness lay in the fact that he was not just another scholar among scholars, but a herald of the message and call that the Qur'an should become the center of our knowledge and the axis of our actions. It can be stated without fear of contradiction that where Imam Farahi and his esteemed disciple Amin Ahsan Islahi advanced this tradition, Khalid Masud absorbed it into his being and comprehended it in its depths. Imam Farahi established this grand tradition in the fields of knowledge and practice, so much so that Syed Sulaiman Nadwi remarked that when they sat in the company of Imam Hamiduddin Farahi, it was difficult to decide whether his knowledge was greater or his piety. The same can be said with great confidence about Khalid Masud, that when someone became acquainted with him, they indeed pondered whether his knowledge was greater or his piety. In terms of knowledge, thought, character, and conduct, he brought this tradition to its peak and taught students of religion through his existence that knowledge and action, knowledge and faith, knowledge and morals, and knowledge and piety cannot be separated. When these are

combined with knowledge, it will hold value; without them, whatever intellectual prowess it may display, it cannot establish any standing in the world.

For nearly a quarter of a century, I have seen him with our esteemed teacher. Our revered elder, Dr. Anwar, was not wrong in saying that he had become absorbed in his mentor. The nature of this absorption, though, was not what is typically understood in our culture as blind imitation. Instead, it was about acquiring the knowledge of his teacher, gathering it, collecting whatever was expressed through his pen and tongue, refining it, and conveying it to the people. He had made this service his hallmark. There is no doubt that if there was anyone most trustworthy in both personal and scholarly matters of our esteemed teacher, it was indeed Khalid Masood. It was evident that he had as much interest in every single item of the teacher's legacy as any extraordinary seeker might have in any possession in this world. The focus and center of his desire, enthusiasm, determination, and all his endeavors was to understand whatever was being said and then strive to convey it to the world once it was understood.

When I first became acquainted with him, I observed that he was translating various essays of Maulana Farahi under the title *Afadaat-e-Farahi* for the pages of *Mithaq*. Even at that time, he was the only one whose introduction was that he was the distinguished student of Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi. When he published the final book of his life, which is considered the greatest achievement among his life's accomplishments, he insisted on including the words 'student of Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi' alongside his name. It was as if, in his view, his true honor and distinction lay in this. He regarded it as a source of pride and regarded this as his only introduction.

Khalid Masud was not an outspoken writer or orator, but the manner, clarity, and precision with which he expressed his thoughts and conveyed them to his readers can rightfully be said to make him an excellent essayist of contemporary style. In this style, he also communicated the ideas of Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi and presented his own research. He is generally known as the custodian and advocate

of Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi's scholarly work. However, I know that, in accordance with the tradition established by this school, he had politely and respectfully differed from some of his teacher's research during his teacher's lifetime and afterward. He did not dismiss a truth simply because it contradicted the viewpoint or opinion of his esteemed teacher, but he openly expressed his views and made it clear that his opinion on the matter differed.

In this world, a talented individual has not even come close to the things he has dreamt of. He lived his life with a sense of indifference. The truth is that his life was a practical embodiment of this principle:

Why should I desire the praise of this world, what is it?

I am waiting solely for their acceptance.

In his behavior, in his conversation, in his discussions, this aspect was prominent. In this age of propaganda, when it is unclear what people do to present themselves to the world, a person can live their life in such a state of detachment from this world, and their ultimate desire is that if they receive recognition, it should only be in the eyes of their master.

Khalid Masood's final and great achievement is his compilation *Hayat-e-Rasool-e-Ummi*. Maulana Shibli also wrote his last book on the biography of the Prophet and had said that:

Praised the non-Arabs, wrote the tale of the Abbasids

I had to reside temporarily at a different sanctuary.

However, now I am writing the biography of the Seal of the Prophets.

Thank God, this was how it was meant to end well.

Khalid Masood does not need to say this. He neither praised the non-Arabs nor wrote the tales of the Abbasids. He began with the Qur'an and the service of the Qur'an and ended with *Hayat-e-Rasool-e-Ummi*. The approach of the Farahi school in discovering the divine law concerning the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has unraveled countless unresolved complexities, corrected many mistakes, and

provided opportunities to refute many incorrect interpretations that had spread across the Islamic world. This is not a trivial event. In this context, it becomes evident that just as the classical tradition of Seerah ended with Shibli Naumani's *Seerat-un-Nabi*, similarly a new tradition of Seerah begins with *Hayat-e-Rasool-e-Ummi*. In this work, the personality of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is presented from a new perspective, narrating the entire biography. If you study it, you will observe that at several points, widely accepted notions have been critically evaluated at a high scholarly level, bringing to light the errors. It has corrected widely common perceptions regarding the Seerah. This effort began with the narration of the battles of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Those familiar with Shibli's *Seerat-un-Nabi* know that he first started his written work by refuting the enchantment created by traditions about the Battle of Badr. Khalid Masood also commenced his Seerah writing by focusing on the battles. He sought to academically refute the prevalent misunderstandings in this regard. During this time, he planned to compile an entire book on the Seerah. In those days, he had become quite weak, so it cannot be said that the work was completed to the highest standard, but the honor of being the initiator is not insignificant. He has provided a new direction to Seerah writing. Now, it can be hoped that future scholars will further work on this subject and endeavor to bring the building whose foundation he laid to its ultimate perfection.

His love and deep connection with his esteemed teacher are evident on every page of his writings. The way he compiled his teacher's sermons, speeches, and writings was a task uniquely suited to him. The truth is, while he was present, we always felt that this work belonged to him alone and that he was the one meant to carry it out. We never even sensed the need for students like us to take on such an effort. Now that he is gone, we truly realize how far behind we are if any work remains unfinished—and what an exceptional leader of our ranks has departed on his journey.

It is said that when a person departs from this world and arrives in the presence of their Lord, if they have spent their life filled with good deeds, they receive the provision, generosity, and bounties of Allah

Almighty. We hold this belief about Khalid Masood. If among these bounties and generosity he is also granted the opportunity to meet Ustad Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi, he can certainly present himself in his service and say:

I have written with the ink of loyalty,

My name on every path you traverse

[November 2003]



Reflections of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi on the Death of His Grandson

[Extracted from the conversation with Muhammad Hassan Ilyas]

Noshirwan was the apple of our eye, a blessing of Allah upon us. As long as he was with us, he was a manifestation of Allah's grace and favor. Now he has departed from us. *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* (Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we shall return). His passing has brought sorrow, pain, and tears—this is a natural expression of the love and mercy that Allah has placed in human hearts. Yet, there is no lamentation or despair before our Lord. He had sent him for a temporary period, and when that time was fulfilled, He called him back. The blessing of his life was temporary, and so is the grief of his passing. Just as this worldly life is temporary, so too are its joys and sorrows. The true and everlasting life is the one that begins after death. That life is attained by passing through the gateway of death. Therefore, we must always be prepared—for our own departure and for the passing of our loved ones.

No greater test can exist for parents than having to bury their child in their arms. I personally dug the grave for my young daughter and laid her to rest with my own hands. This is not an easy task. The compassion God has placed in the heart of a father and the love and nurturing feelings He placed in a mother are so strong and extraordinary that they encompass a person's existence. When, despite all this, God takes away the blessing of a child, it becomes very difficult to endure. At that time, it is only reliance on God and faith in the hereafter that provides patience. Hence, on such occasions, we are taught to recite the prayer: *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn*

(Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we shall return).¹ Similarly, it is mentioned in a hadith: *Inna li-llāhi mā akbadh wa labu mā a'tā*, meaning “Whatever He has taken belongs to Him, and whatever He has given also belongs to Him.” Not only this, but the hadith also states: *Wa kullu shay'in 'indahu bi ajal musammā* (And everything with Him has a fixed term),² meaning “For me, for you, for my circumstances, for your circumstances—for every matter, a fixed term and a destined moment of death has been appointed, which will inevitably come.” Since this is decreed and is bound to happen, it should be welcomed and accepted with patience and composure.

You know that Allah has revealed His books and sent His messengers to remind humanity. Similarly, the various events and incidents that occur in the world also serve the same fundamental purpose—reminding, warning, and awakening us.

The presence of this child was also a means of reminding us of Allah and the Hereafter. For eight and a half years, it was a life of trial—both for him and for us. This trial was a great blessing from Allah. Many times, we witnessed His grace through it. His personality, his life, his days and nights—all became a source of reflection and reminder for us. Through him, we found guidance on how we should conduct ourselves in this world. If Allah puts someone to trial, what stages they may go through—this too became clear, as if a book had been opened before us. Thus, he was nothing but a blessing. And what greater blessing from Allah can there be than a child's service, love, and companionship becoming a means of preparing one for Paradise—his life and circumstances serving as a constant reminder of Allah and His laws? From every perspective, he was a blessing upon blessing for us.

Allah Almighty granted his parents the opportunity to face his condition with patience and perseverance. And all praise is due to Allah, for both of them fulfilled this responsibility with great excellence. The father's affection was extraordinary, but the mother

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:156.

² Nisae, No: 1868.

had completely dedicated her life to him. What a mother is, what a mother's emotions are, what maternal love truly means—one could witness it in her days and nights. You or I might have, at times, stepped back or hesitated, but she never allowed a frown to appear on her forehead. She served him with full devotion and care, tirelessly and with immense love. Undoubtedly, the trial that both of them endured was exceptionally difficult. Therefore, if they remain patient, do not despair, place their trust in their Lord, and move forward with courage, their reward is nothing less than Paradise. At such moments, accepting divine will with contentment is not an ordinary act; this is why it has been termed *sabr* (patience) and why its reward is eternal Paradise. It is this very *sabr* about which Allah has given the glad tidings that, in this world, His special companionship is granted to those who endure patiently.³ And as for the Hereafter, He has already declared: *Jazā'uhum bimā ṣabarū*—meaning, Paradise itself is the ultimate reward for patience.⁴

Our child battled between life and death for a week. During this time, many people contacted us, expressed their love for us, inquired about the child's condition, and prayed for him. We are very grateful to all of them. Now that he has departed from this world, people are offering their condolences and sharing in our grief, for which we are extremely thankful. We request that they pray for peace for the child's parents and siblings so that after the anguish they have passed through, the shock they have encountered, and the blessing they have been deprived of, Allah grants them the tranquility and peace needed to turn towards their Lord and spend the rest of their lives in His devotion. For turning towards the Lord, seeking Him, and being satisfied with His will is the essence of religion and faith. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said that whoever attains this has tasted the sweetness of faith. I pray that as a result of this tragedy, Allah grants them the same sweetness of faith. Ameen.

³ Al-Baqarah 2:153.

⁴ Al-Dahr 76:12.



Insights of Ghamidi

Excerpts Derived from Conversations and Writings

Stability of Pakistan

Derived from a conversation with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day

On August 14, 1947, the Muslims of Pakistan envisioned establishing on earth a sovereign state where Islam would be practiced in its entirety, encompassing its philosophy and legal system. The world would once again witness the social justice that had emerged fourteen centuries earlier in the form of the Rashidun Caliphate. This entity would serve as a central institution for the Islamic community and stand as a testament to the invitation of Islam to the non-Muslim world. Within its borders, the paths to advancement for Muslims would not be obstructed by the prejudice of any other nation. They would unite to fortify it as a stronghold of Islam, providing support and cooperation for other Muslims around the world. They believed they were creating a state that would reflect all the concepts of a modern welfare state, where citizens would have their rights without discrimination and enjoy equal access to education, employment, health, and public safety services. Their vision was to bring into existence a country governed by political democratic values, where the people would structure their own collective system and have full authority to make changes and appoint or dismiss their leaders.

It has been more than half a century since Pakistan was established. Thanks to Allah, its existence remains secure, but the truth is that our dreams still await fulfillment.

The social justice and the Rashidun Caliphate of Islam are ideals that seem celestial in nature; we have yet to attain even those earthly ethics which are universally agreed upon and have been practiced for centuries by nations unfamiliar with Islam. Instead of becoming a laboratory for the Islamic state and its practical demonstration, it has unfortunately contributed to tarnishing the conventional status of

Islam. The introduction of Islam offered by its inhabitants through their words and deeds has led the global community to perceive it as a rigid, irrational, emotional, and incompatible religion with the modern era.

All concepts of a welfare state have disintegrated. Poverty is reaching its peak. The national economy is declining day by day. It is becoming increasingly difficult for most of the population to obtain two meals a day. The state of educational backwardness is such that the primary aim of education has become the acquisition of employment. The condition of educational institutions is that they continue to teach curricula in philosophy, literature, history, sociology, economics, mathematics, science, art, and other disciplines that the developed nations of the world have abandoned decades ago. A majority of people do not even have access to basic health needs. It would not be incorrect to say that our journey concerning the welfare state remains as incomplete today as it was fifty years ago.

As far as democracy is concerned, the truth is that we have perhaps not even been able to experience it for a few days. From the bottom to the top, our democratic politics has merely turned into politics of interests. The non-democratic institutions of the military and bureaucracy are permanently ruling, and the people are continuously deprived of their right to genuine representation.

This is the fate that has befallen our dreams and our ideals. The conditions of our collective existence are so evident that no one can deny them. However, a question inevitably arises in everyone's mind: what is the cause of this state of affairs? Is there a lack of human resources here? Are there incompetent people residing here? Do the people here lack interest in the implementation of Islam? Are the inhabitants of this land devoid of the desire for personal and national development? Do the citizens here not wish to run the political system according to their will? Or is this region a victim of divine calamities or is its land devoid of natural resources?

In response to these questions, everyone would say that this is certainly not the case. This country is rich in human resources. There

is no shortage of natural resources either. This land possesses such diversity and balance in terms of agriculture and minerals that few countries in the world have such distribution. The inhabitants here are no less in capability and diligence than anyone else. These are the people who, through relentless struggle, established a country that the world deemed impossible. Whenever a call for the survival of the nation and the country was made, its people did not hesitate to even offer their lives. They have always responded to the call for democracy. Their love for Islam is such that even if an ambitious person raised the slogan of Islam, they did not hesitate to respond to it.

If this is the case, then what is the reason that despite the passing of many years, not only we have failed to reach our destination, but we have even lost the signs of the destination? There is only one cause for this entire situation, and that is our ignorance in religious and worldly matters.

The reason we have not been able to turn this country into a laboratory for Islam is due to our ignorance about the religion. The extent of this ignorance is such that the common people's notion of religion is limited to following the jurisprudential opinions of specific schools of thought. There are issues concerning the loud or silent recitation of prayer, whether trousers should be above or below the ankles, the length of one's beard, and disputes over turbans and caps. As for the elite, due to the misinterpretations of Islam, they regard it as an ancient tale and deem it incompatible with the demands of the modern age. Regarding religious scholars, most insist on keeping the people engaged in conflicts. During this time, they have never made any effort to enlighten people with the true understanding of religion, arrange for their moral education, or encourage them to devise strategies suited to the circumstances. In particular, in this era, it was their responsibility to examine the questions posed by the modern mind about Islam and formulate satisfactory answers in the contemporary style. Tragically, rather than engaging in academic and intellectual work in this field, they have focused all their attention on the adversarial political struggle and fostering an emotional atmosphere

against hostile forces.

If we have not been able to make this a welfare state, it is due to our ignorance regarding worldly matters. We have always adopted an attitude of neglect and indifference towards the general education of our people. As a result, all our classes, without exception, are victims of ignorance. A fundamental characteristic of a welfare state is that the collective system of society is just, transparent, and equipped with life's amenities. We have never planned to achieve these objectives. What factors are necessary for the development of society, what is the importance of the rule of law, how do higher human values transform into institutions, how do welfare organizations serve, what are the responsibilities of citizens, what duties must the rulers perform, what planning must the government undertake to provide health, education, and employment facilities, and how do the public participate in this process, how are public order issues resolved, how is a plan of action formulated for the eradication of oppression and the establishment of justice? These issues have never become part of our thought and action framework.

In this age, the material development of any nation solely depends on the pace at which it progresses in the field of science and technology. Development in defense, industry, agriculture, and communication can only be achieved based on science and technology, yet our condition in this field is extremely poor. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the real cause of our poverty is indifference to modern scientific knowledge. The concept of a welfare state is incomplete without public order. For its establishment, it was necessary for us to be endowed with a sense of general ethics. We should have been trained in our responsibilities as citizens, how the rights of others are fulfilled, the benefits of observing the law, and the disadvantages of breaking it, how deception, fraud, animosity, obstinacy, and deprivation distort human personalities and create issues of peace and order for the entire society. We have not been able to train ourselves in these aspects to this day, nor have we been able to formulate any plan of action for this purpose.

If we are unable to strengthen democratic values here, the reason lies in our ignorance regarding political matters. The majority of our population remains oblivious to political awareness. Democracy is defined as the vigorous participation of the public in the political process. This means that individuals of a nation identify their needs through mutual consultation, formulate strategies to fulfill them, organize themselves, distribute responsibilities based on the principle of division of labor, form institutions and associations for this purpose, and engage actively in national development with full dedication. Every individual of the nation participates in this activity with complete consciousness. In contrast, our situation is such that the operative elements deceive the public, and the people easily fall prey to their deceit. The individual or group in power desires to hold onto it forcibly and does not hesitate to undermine democratic institutions to achieve this goal. In such circumstances, the public is unable to effectively protest or strive for change along the correct lines. The result is that democratic institutions collapse even before they are established, and the country remains engulfed in an atmosphere of political instability.

In this context, we understand that the only path to realizing the true interpretation of the 1947 dream is education. Until we free ourselves from ignorance both religiously and worldly, and comprehend the reality that in the present era, progress can only be achieved through education and learning, this dream of ours will remain just a dream.

[August 2003]



Resolution of Mutual Conflict at the National Level

In the program “Live With Ghamidi” on Aaj TV

Every sensitive individual is troubled by our current national circumstances. The reality is that not only our country, but the entire Muslim community is facing a very dangerous situation. Sometimes I feel as if this community is like a large Lal Masjid, and all Muslims on a national level are doing exactly what transpired recently at Lal Masjid in Islamabad. If you observe its leaders, examine their methods and reasoning, and study the emotions and perceptions of its individuals, we see an almost identical situation unfolding.

In other words, how can this ongoing conflict—between religious groups and those labeled as secular, between governments and political factions, and among different segments of society—be brought to an end?

After years of contemplation on this issue, I have concluded that there are five things whose neglect has led to signs of conflict everywhere. Whether it is Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, or any other Muslim country, the absence of these five things has become the cause of conflict and internal discord. If these things are achieved, we can then emerge from our problems and proceed on the path of development.

The first thing is democracy. It is also a requirement of our religion, and as a result of its experiences, the world has also reached this conclusion that a democratic society is essential for human welfare. This means that the government should come into existence with the consent of the people, remain established with the consent of the people, and lose its legitimacy once deprived of that consent. No individual should be

granted the right to break the constitution or take any actions beyond it. Any constitution, any code, any rule established on a national level should be regarded as a national covenant. All people should honor and respect it. It should be considered a sacred document, and setting it aside should not be tolerated under any circumstances.

True democracy is not just an ideal; it is our necessity. It is the only path through which conflicts can be resolved. By eliminating the element of violence from society, we can guide people toward a course where they seek change through persuasion rather than force—where they influence minds and shape opinions, creating the possibility of transformation through peaceful means. Change and social reform are fundamental human rights. Every individual aspires for the governance of their state to reflect their hopes and ambitions. The crucial question, then, is: What is the right way to achieve this? The answer lies in granting the nation its rightful authority—where every institution of the state submits to the will of the people. Parliament must hold true supremacy, and a democratic system should be established that fosters negotiation, encourages dialogue, and embraces differences with tolerance. Only then can religious groups, too, be persuaded that if they believe in a cause, they must engage with the people, win their hearts and minds, and bring about change through reason and discourse. When democracy is stifled, the door to violence inevitably opens. Deprived of peaceful avenues for expression, people resort to misguided methods to achieve their objectives.

The second crucial aspect is the education system, for it serves as the foundation upon which a nation is built. It is the educated class that shapes the intellectual and ideological direction of society, ultimately influencing the entire nation. Unfortunately, Pakistan lacks a unified education system. Instead, multiple parallel systems exist, and their number continues to grow. There is one system for religious education, another for secular education, a separate system for Urdu-medium instruction, and yet another for English-medium education. These fragmented educational structures have given rise to distinct social classes, each molded by its own curriculum, worldview, and priorities. It is precisely this division within the education system that

has fractured the nation into isolated, often disconnected groups—hindering the development of a truly cohesive and unified society.

I believe that education up to the twelfth grade should be uniform under all circumstances. No one should be allowed to try to establish a parallel educational system in opposition to this. Children are the trust of the entire nation. They should all be provided with the same curriculum and environment. After this, when the opportunity to specialize arises, training should be given in specific fields. At that point, an appropriate division can be made, but the beginning of education should be from one place and according to one methodology. After the twelfth grade, children reach the age of awareness and can decide whether they want to become scholars, teachers, engineers, or doctors. Following this, as many private educational institutions as desired can be established to arrange education and training in specific sectors, but before this, there should be only one system of education. Until you decide on a unified educational system at the national level, the conflict in society cannot be resolved.

The third element is the institution of the mosque. This is a very large institution. In our religion, the Friday prayer is specifically related to the state. According to Islamic law, the pulpit of Friday prayers is exclusive to Muslim rulers. It is their duty to deliver the sermon and organize the prayer. The purpose of this is to establish their connection with both society and God. We have entrusted this pulpit to the scholars. As a result, sectarianism has emerged. Consequently, fortresses of religious individuals have come into existence which has laid the foundation for the division of mosques. The institution of the mosque and the pulpit of Friday prayers, has now started becoming a source of violence and also a source of turmoil and chaos. The place that was very sacred to us as a house of worship, we are now determined to make it an arena of politics. Therefore, it is necessary to take it back from the scholars and entrust it to the state. Those in power should be reminded that the pulpit of Friday prayers was entrusted to them by the Prophet of God. Just as they perform other duties, similarly manage this pulpit so that it becomes a source of national unity and enables the state to fulfill its responsibilities.

The fourth aspect is the system of promoting good and preventing evil (*Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi an al-Munkar*). By this, I mean that institutions should be established under the government's supervision, which awaken social awareness in people and arrange for their moral training. This is a task that can be entrusted to the scholars under the government's guidance. As a result, it provides a channel for the scholars to become part of the state's system and offer their services. If this is not done, the conflict between the religious and ruling classes will persist.

Every government desires to eradicate social evils. It aims to eliminate bribery, dishonesty, betrayal, deception, oppression, and other vices. In this regard, if the task of reform and education is entrusted to the scholars, then as a result, the scholars will also turn their attention to their religious duties, and there will be no conflict between them and the rulers. As for the action in cases of crimes, this responsibility should in all circumstances be entrusted to the police and judiciary. However, before and after that, scholars should be tasked with various functions of reform and education.

The fifth element is justice. If justice is absent in a country, there can be no trust established among individuals, among institutions, or between the government and the public. The decline of our judicial system is evident to everyone. Firstly, justice is scarcely available here, and if someone does receive it, it takes a lifetime. With the multitude of grievances people hold against this system, if it is not reformed, people's unrest will continue to increase. If a proper system of justice is established in a country, gradually disputes begin to diminish.

These are the five things that, in my opinion, should become the subject of civil society. Intellectuals should establish a consensus on these, and every group should strive for them. If we succeed in attaining these, the path can be paved for the end of national and local conflicts.

[September 2007]



The Fundamental Mistakes of Politicians

[Based on various discussions by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi on this subject]

In Pakistan, the fundamental role in destabilizing democratic values has been played by the military and bureaucracy. However, despite this, politicians cannot be entirely absolved of responsibility. The fact is that our politicians have not only been negligent in their duties, but they have also engaged in criminal activities. Over the past fifty to fifty-five years, their conduct has been such that in the public's lexicon, 'deceit' and 'politics' have become synonymous. It is now almost unimaginable for people to conceive that a politician can be engaged in their development beyond the lust for power. This is why, even in today's pro-democracy era, some naive individuals find themselves saying that, compared to politicians like these, a military government is preferable.

The cause of this situation is, in fact, several serious mistakes that are prominently found in the behavior of our politicians, which lead to the public becoming disillusioned with them.

Immoral Behavior

The greatest mistake in the conduct of our politicians is that in their struggle for acquiring power, they have never cared for religion and morality, principles and law, and democratic values. For gaining positions, if they needed to lie, they have lied; if they needed to flatter, they have flattered; if they needed to offer bribes, they have offered them; if they needed to put their dignity at stake, they have done so, to the extent that for the establishment and perpetuation of power, if they had to strengthen the hands of tyrants, they have not hesitated to

do so. This is why in the political arena, these people have never attained any status greater than puppets moved by the whims of the military and bureaucracy. It is not a minor tragedy in our political history that whenever a non-democratic and unconstitutional ruler has assumed the throne, a substantial number of these politicians have offered their services to them. Even if some resistance has emerged at such times, it has not been based on any principles or ideals, but merely on interests and prejudices.

After becoming the Governor-General, Quaid-e-Azam laid the foundation of a democratic tradition by resigning from the presidency of the Muslim League. However, when Liaquat Ali Khan broke this tradition by seeking the presidency of the Muslim League along with the Prime Minister's office, the Muslim League politicians accepted it wholeheartedly. When Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad dismissed the head of the majority parliamentary party, Khwaja Nazimuddin, against parliamentary traditions, the political figures remained silent. Subsequently, when the Governor-General nominated non-political individuals like Muhammad Ali Bogra and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali as Prime Ministers one after another, instead of protesting, the politicians from the Muslim League even offered them the presidency of their party. Then, when the Governor-General dissolved the elected Constituent Assembly, it was accepted after some protest. Later, on the instigation of Governor-General Sikandar Mirza, the Republican Party was formed in competition to the Muslim League, which neither had public support nor was capable of competing with the Muslim League; most of the elected representatives of the Muslim League left their party to join it. Similarly, when General Ayub Khan, General Zia-ul-Haq, and General Pervez Musharraf established governments through undemocratic means, they were also joined by numerous people from the political groups. This review of history makes it abundantly clear that our politicians have put the country's political stability at stake merely for the sake of their power. The truth is that if politicians had remained above the lust for power and unitedly continued their struggle against undemocratic rulers, the grip of dictators on politics could have

weakened, and the country could have moved towards political stability.

Non-Political Conduct

The second mistake of the politicians is that they adopted an entirely apolitical approach with the public. They neither paid attention to strengthening their roots within the populace nor established any communication channels with them, nor were they inclined towards organizing the public. Even if they established some connection with the public, it was limited to electoral rallies and processions. Instead of seeking a mandate from the public, their persistent effort was often to reach the halls of power through other means. For this purpose, they consistently acted contrary to the priorities and aspirations of the public.

Whenever they came to power, they completely severed their ties with the public. Many people experienced that political leaders who met them with affection during election days, listened to their grievances, and made promises to fulfill their needs, denied recognizing them as soon as they succeeded. These politicians, after coming to power, only cared for relatives, friends, and close associates. If doors of progress were opened, it was only for close associates, and merit was not considered at all in this regard.

The political parties that were formed nurtured sentiments of obedience and devotion among their workers instead of awakening political consciousness. They were encouraged to believe that the leader's word is the final authority. If today the leader declares something to be incorrect, it is entirely false; and if tomorrow he declares the same thing to be correct, it becomes an absolute truth. Within the party, opportunities for advancement were provided only to those individuals who were prepared to lavish money and wealth at the leader's command or to praise him excessively.

At the national level, the leaders loudly championed the slogans of democracy, yet within their own parties, they exhibited the worst form of dictatorship. They neither provided party workers the

opportunity to elect their leaders, nor did they establish any system of consultation from the grassroots level upward, nor did they leave any room for freedom of opinion. Whenever the public was brought out onto the streets, it was for the purpose of having them sacrifice their lives, properties, and time to pave the way for their power.

The outcome of this behavior towards the public was nothing more than their complete disillusionment with them. They neither retained any trust nor maintained any relationship with these politicians. This is why, if we analyze public support for these politicians during elections, the reality is that, in their perception, they are choosing a lesser evil over a greater one.

Violation of Democratic Values

The third major mistake of these politicians is that they trampled on those democratic values that were essential for their survival. The promises based on which they took votes from the public were completely forgotten once they came to power, let alone being acted upon. The parties whose support enabled them to reach the corridors of power never faced any hesitation in changing their loyalties. The constitution and laws that they themselves crafted and were tasked to protect were violated under the guise of political necessity. They established a tradition in parliament of opposing for the sake of opposition. If seated on the opposition benches, they opposed even the correct measures of the government, and if they held the seat of power, they refused to tolerate the very existence of the opposition. Despite the economic downturn of the nation, they allocated to themselves privileges not afforded even to leaders of major world powers. They penned tales of financial corruption in the national treasury that even robbers would shudder to hear. The result of this was nothing but devastation for political parties and the democratic institutions of the legislature and administration.

This is a glimpse of the behavior that our politicians have exhibited over the past half-century. The purpose of bringing this picture to the forefront is by no means to suggest that people should turn elsewhere

instead of them, but rather the aim is for political figures to hold this mirror before themselves and reorganize their roles anew for national development.

[September 2004]



Basic Principles of Muslim Politics

This question has often been posed to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi: What should be the political strategy for Muslims in the contemporary era, and what considerations should they keep in mind regarding this matter? The detailed conversations he has engaged in on various occasions in response to this question are presented in this article. To further elucidate, some excerpts from his writings have also been included. It is hoped that this article will aid in understanding the esteemed teacher's perspectives on the aforementioned question.

The political conditions of Muslims vary across different countries of the world. In some places, they are in the majority, while in others they are in the minority. In some areas, they hold the reins of government, whereas in others they are under the control of other nations. In certain regions, they enjoy freedom and independence, while in others, they are subjugated, and in some areas, they suffer from political tyranny, oppression, and religious persecution. In these diverse political conditions, their approach must be distinct and different from one another, and they should advance their collective affairs accordingly. However, there are four principles that must be given a status of commonality in various political strategies. Whether they are citizens of a Muslim country, residents of a non-Muslim state, members of a community, political party representatives, members of a parliament, or rulers of a state, they must adopt these principles in their internal and external politics and proclaim their support for them with determination and firm resolve. Their adherence to these principles within the sphere of politics should be as steadfast as their adherence to religious beliefs in the realm of religion. These principles are as follows:

1. Respect for Human Rights

The most basic right of a human being is freedom of thought and action, as well as security of life, property, and dignity. This is not a privilege granted by any authority—it is a natural and inherent right, rooted in the very essence of human existence. All other rights are the result and supplement of this right. Hence, it is necessary for the continuity and stability of human society to ensure its protection. Without this, no society can be formed, no social order can come into existence, and neither can civilization and culture develop. This is a right granted by Allah, from which no human can be deprived. Therefore, it is not permissible for any individual, group, government, or state to impose restrictions on freedom of expression or attempt to harm life, property, or dignity.

Esteemed teacher Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes:

Man is created free. Except for his Creator, he is not subservient to anyone. Therefore, whether it is an individual or a state, no one has the right to impose any restriction on his knowledge and actions or take any measures against his life, property, or dignity. This freedom is a birthright of a human being and has been bestowed upon him by his Creator. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an expression of this very truth. All the nations of the world have acknowledged it and assured in their constitutions that they will not violate it. This is evidence that the consciousness of this freedom is inherent in human nature, and he never desires that any individual, institution, or government should ever try to usurp it. The Prophet (PBUH), during the Farewell Pilgrimage, highlighted this very truth in a most eloquent manner. He stated:

إن دماءكم وأموالكم وأعراضكم بينكم حرام كحرمة يومكم هذا في
شهركم هذا في بلدكم هذا

Your lives, your wealth, and your honor are as sacred among you as the sanctity of this day (Day of Sacrifice) in this month (Dhul-Hijjah) and in this city (Umm al-Qura, Mecca). (Sahih

In essence, the freedom of religion, ideology, thought, belief, and viewpoint is the most cherished by Allah Almighty. The reason for this is that Allah has created this world as a test, and for this purpose, He has endowed it with the blessing of free will and choice. This necessitates that humans should have complete freedom in adopting or abandoning ideologies. Thus, this freedom is an integral part of Allah's scheme. This is why Allah has described aggression against religious and ideological compulsion as *fitnah* (persecution), has deemed it a crime greater than murder, and has permitted *jihad* and combat for its eradication and elimination.¹

Similarly, the taking of a human life has been described as equivalent to murdering all of humanity,² and without any distinction or discrimination,³ the punishment of death has been prescribed for it. Violations of the rights of property and honor are punished through the amputation of hands⁴ and flogging.⁵ If such transgressions against rights take the worst forms, such as murder turning into terrorism, adultery into rape, and theft into robbery, then it is described as waging war against Allah and His Messenger and causing corruption on earth (*fasad fi-l-ard*), and it has been instructed to impose exemplary punishments for it.⁶ The purpose of these punishments is to ensure that human beings refrain from violating the rights of others and that the world moves towards the path of peace and harmony instead of oppression and aggression.

Muslims should adopt this principle in their knowledge and actions, and for this purpose, they should pay special attention to the following

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:191.

² Al-Maidah 5:32.

³ Al-Baqarah 2:179, Bani Israel 17:33.

⁴ Al-Maidah 5:38.

⁵ Al-Noor 24:2.

⁶ Al-Maidah 5:33-34.

things:

1. Muslims should raise their voices for these fundamental human rights. They should uphold the banner of these rights within their homes, families, society, state, and throughout the world.
2. In this matter, they should not let any racial prejudice, any national interest, or any religious pride become a hindrance. If anyone, whether black or white, Arab or non-Arab, Hindu or Sikh, Jew or Christian, is a victim of racial prejudice, national bigotry, or religious oppression, there should be a wholehearted effort to rescue them from it.
3. They should review their national concepts and assess to what extent ideas of national pride, treason, and enmity against the country align with the framework of fundamental human rights, and to what extent they do not.
4. One should re-examine their religious beliefs to understand, for instance, what the perspective of the Qur'an and Sunnah is regarding the concepts of excommunication, apostasy, caliphate, and the struggle for the dominance of religion.

2. Democracy

Democracy means that all matters of collective organization among people should be determined through their mutual consultation. The government should be established by their consent and dissolve by their consent. Administration should come into existence through their consultation and change by their consultation. In the formulation of constitution and legislation, their opinion should hold sovereignty. Internal and external policies should be shaped according to their will. In essence, their opinion should have decisive authority in all political matters at national and international levels.

The democratic method aligns exactly with the command of the Qur'an. It is stated in Surah Ash-Shura:

وَأْمُرْهُمْ شُورًا بَيْنَهُمْ

And their system is based on their mutual consultation (42:38)

This is an explicit text of the Qur'an. The style clearly indicates that it is not discussing the option or necessity of consultation, but establishing it as a foundation. Therefore, it does not mean that consultation is a better strategy that rulers should employ, but rather that the political system of Muslims is inherently dependent on their consultation. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has stated regarding this verse that in the Islamic legal-political framework, the foundation of governance is encapsulated in this three-word phrase that is replete with meaning. Its style differs from verse 159 of Surah Aale Imran where the words *washāwir'hum fil amri* (keep consulting them in affairs) are used. Here, instead, the style is *amrahum shura baynahum* (their system is based on their mutual consultation) which means that the edifice of the Muslim political system is established precisely on the basis of consultation. According to him, this shift in the stylistic expression necessitates that:

...The leadership of the leader should be established through consultation. The system should come into existence through consultation. In giving advice, everyone's rights should be equal. Whatever is created through consultation should also be able to be dismantled through consultation. For the matters that require consultation to bring them into existence, When something is brought into existence through consultation, the opinion of every individual should be considered a part of its foundation. If a decision cannot be reached through consensus and agreement, then the opinion of the majority should be accepted as the final resolution. (Meezan 496)

Some of the essential requirements of this principle of democracy are:

1. The establishment and continuation of government should depend on the opinion of the public. The individual or group that runs the government should be the one entrusted by the public with this responsibility. No one should have the right to impose their authority over Muslims on the basis of religious sanctity, academic superiority, hereditary association, public service, personal capability, or any other such attribute.

2. All institutions of the legislature, judiciary, and administration should be subordinate to the collectivity of Muslims. Experts should draft the constitution of the state and outline the principles on which it should be founded, but the decision to adopt, amend, or append should be made by the public. Recognizing the supremacy of the Qur'an and Sunnah in every individual and collective matter is an essential requirement of faith and Islam. However, the decision as to which commentator, *muhaddith*, or jurist's opinion should hold the status of law should also depend on the discretion of the general populace of Muslims.

3. In terms of the state's internal and external policies, the public's inclinations should be followed. Priorities in matters of education, health, employment, and public welfare should be determined according to their inclinations. Similarly, relations with other countries should be established according to their wishes, and in international matters, their perceptions should be implemented.

4. All individuals should have equal rights to consultation and voting. If their direct participation in consultation is not possible, they should exercise this right through their representatives. Furthermore, if a consensus among them cannot be reached on a matter, the decision should be made by majority vote.

5. If Muslims, in their national capacity, make an erroneous decision, then those in positions of authority and people of intellect should, with utmost sincerity and empathy, counsel them and endeavor in every possible manner for their education and training. However, beyond this, no one should have the right to forcibly restrain them.

This is the demand of *amrahum shura baynahum* and this is democracy. An authoritarian and despotic system is its opposite, therefore, there is no room for it in the political law of Islam. Consequently, the esteemed teacher has written:

...Whether dictatorship belongs to a particular family, class, group, or national institution, it can never be accepted — not even in matters of interpreting and explaining religious injunctions related to collective order, even if the interpreters are experts in

*religious sciences. They certainly have the right to present their interpretations and express their opinions, but their stance will only gain the status of obligatory law for the people when a majority of the representatives elected by the public accept it. In a modern state, the institution of parliament is established precisely for this purpose. In the governance of the state, the final decision rests with the parliament, and it should remain so. The people have the right to critique parliamentary decisions and to attempt to highlight any errors in them, but no one has the right to violate or rebel against those decisions. Neither scholars nor the judiciary of the state can be placed above the parliament. The principle of *amrahum shura baynahum* binds every individual and institution to practically bow their heads in submission to the decisions of the parliament, despite disagreements. (Maqamat 203-204)*

3. The Right of Self-Determination

The meaning of the right to self-determination is that if the people of a region, based on language, race, territory, culture, religion, or any other commonality, demand recognition of their unique national identity, they should be accepted as a nation. It should be acknowledged that they are autonomous in their political decisions. Consequently, if they wish, they can separate from their state, affiliate with another state, or establish their own independent state.

These principles are now globally accepted as universal truths. Practically, although much progress has not been made, intellectually, it has been accepted that the relationship between ruler and ruled has ended. Now, the governments that will be established will follow democratic principles, and if anywhere a nation demands the right to self-determination, its will shall be implemented through a referendum. Whether it is the issue of Kashmir, Palestine, or Ireland, each matter should be viewed in light of the changes that have occurred in the world today. The basis for decision-making in this regard should be formed not on any historical background or legal evidence but on the question of whether the people of that region wish to

exercise their right to self-determination. If the answer to this is affirmative, then it is their right to be provided with the opportunity to make their political decision themselves through democratic means.

In this regard, Muslims should adopt the following:

1. It must be acknowledged that the right to self-determination is a fundamental human right. This is a right that humans are endowed with from birth. This right has now been recognized by the collective conscience of humanity. Therefore, instead of adopting an apologetic attitude in this matter, there should be a robust expression of confidence.
2. If there is a violation of this anywhere in the world, a voice should be raised against it at every level.
3. The global community should be made aware that on the issue of the right to self-determination, the world conscience is caught in a conflict between two values: on one hand, it advocates for the right to self-determination of nations, and on the other, it acknowledges the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. These two values are contradictory. Accepting them simultaneously creates intellectual inconsistency, and strong support for the right to self-determination becomes impossible.
4. The United Nations should be encouraged to develop a procedure ensuring that no nation faces any hindrance in demanding its rights, nor do the nations of the world face any hesitation in supporting it. Specifically, if any nation meeting the criteria of nationality requests separation from a country, annexation to another, or demands its freedom and autonomy, there should be an established system in place to operationalize it. From the demand to the plebiscite and from the plebiscite to the implementation of results, there should be a known and defined course of action.
5. If any nation associated with your system demands separation from you, their demand should be accepted with complete generosity and full justice. No negative or positive sentiment, no pride, and no prejudice should be allowed to become an obstacle in this matter.

4. Adherence to the Law

This implies that the supremacy of collective organization should be accepted at both national and international levels. It requires obedience to its rulers, acceptance of the decisions of its authorities, respect for its institutions, adherence to its laws, and allowing no room for rebellion, defiance, mutiny, disrespect, or deviation. In the Qur'an, this is described as obedience to Allah, obedience to the Messenger (PBUH), and obedience to those in authority. It is stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ تَجْمَعُونَ
فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ سَلِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا تَأْتُونَ بِهِ

Believers! [This is the kingdom of God; in it] obey God and obey His Messenger and also those among you who are made responsible for affairs. Then if there is a difference of opinion between you in some matter, refer it to God and His Messenger [for judgement] if you believe in God and the Last Day. This is better and more seemly as regards the consequence. (4:59)

The obedience to those in authority, namely rulers, is under and in adherence to the obedience of Allah and His Messenger (PBUH). There are two fundamental conditions of this obedience: first, that Muslims should affiliate themselves with their collective system, and second, that they should adhere to the state laws. The Prophet (PBUH) used the terms *al-Jamā'ah* (the community) and *as-Sulṭān* (authority) for the first condition, and *as-Sam' wa-t-Tā'ah* (listening and obedience) for the second. The esteemed teacher has clarified these two conditions in the following words:

First, Muslims should remain fully committed to the system of governance established under it. The Prophet (PBUH) referred to this system as al-Jamā'ah (the community) and as-Sulṭān (authority) and made it obligatory for every Muslim not to separate from it under any circumstances. He equated departing from it with leaving Islam and stated that if a Muslim dies

having separated from it, he will die a death of ignorance. The saying of the Prophet (PBUH) is:

من رأى من أميره شيئاً يكرهه فليصبر عليه، فإنه من فارق من الجماعة شبراً فمات إلا مات ميتة جاهلية.

Whoever sees something undesirable from their ruler should be patient, for whoever separates from the collective organization of Muslims even by a handspan and dies in that state, their death will be as if in the period of ignorance (Jahiliyyah). (Sahih Bukhari No. 7054)

This same narration has been transmitted in another manner as follows:

من كره من أميره شيئاً فليصبر، فإنه من خرج من السلطان شبراً مات ميتة جاهلية.

If anyone finds something displeasing in the ruler, they should exercise patience, because whoever withdraws from the authority even by a handspan and dies in that state, dies in ignorance. (Bukhari No. 7053)

Even during times of political turmoil and strife, the guidance given is that a Muslim should not only abstain from participating in any action against the collective order, but should remain fully loyal to it. In a narration by Imam Muslim, it is recorded that for Hudhayfah (RA), the Prophet (PBUH) said: 'Talzim Jama'at al-Muslimeen wa Imamuhum' "In such a situation, you will remain attached to the collective organization of the Muslims and their leader" (Bukhari, No. 3606. Muslim, No. 4784). This directive indicates the religious intention regarding affairs of state.

Secondly, they should adhere to the law. Whatever command is given, instead of avoiding or evading it, they should listen to it attentively and obey it. No disagreement, dislike, prejudice, or any kind of mental reservation should lead to deviation from

the law, unless a law is made that entails disobedience to God. It is stated:

عليك السمع والطاعة في عسرك ويسرك ومنشطك ومكرهك وأثرة عليك.

You are obliged to adopt the attitude of listening and obedience with your rulers, whether you are in hardship or ease, and whether it is with willingness or reluctance, and even if someone is unjustly given preference over you. (Sahih Muslim No. 4754)

على المرء المسلم السمع والطاعة فيما أحب وكره إلا أن يؤمر بمعصية، فإن أمر بمعصية فلا سمع ولا طاعة

It is obligatory for a Muslim that, whether they like it or dislike it, they must listen to and obey their ruler in all circumstances, except if they are commanded to commit a sin. If they are commanded to do a sinful act, then they should neither listen nor obey. (Sahih Muslim No 4763)

اسمعوا وأطيعوا وإن استعمل عليكم عبد حبشي كأن رأسه زبيبة.

Listen and obey, even if a slave from Habsha is made ruler over you whose head is like a raisin. (Sahih Bukhari No. 7142)

(Meezan 486-487)

For Muslims, adherence to this principle of abiding by the law requires the following commitments:

1. They should adhere to the laws of the country in which they reside, regardless of whether it is governed by Muslims or non-Muslims.
2. If they disagree with the national laws, they should express their disagreement politely and logically while adhering to them.
3. If the laws of a country obstruct them from practicing their religion or heeding the voice of their conscience, then they should employ solely democratic methods to influence public opinion and bring about changes in the governance system.
4. Understand the spirit of *Shariah* laws as well as attain a complete

understanding of state laws, and refrain from taking into your own hands those matters that *Shariah* or the state has entrusted to others, such as the parliament, government, or judiciary.

5. Adhere to international laws and treaties.
6. Raise the banner of the rule of law in the world.

[March 2020]



The Foreign Policy of the Muslim State

During the question and answer session following the Qur'an study lecture, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi was asked what should be the foreign policy of a Muslim state. The summary of the discussion he provided is as follows.

A Muslim state's foreign policy is based on two fundamental principles:

1. To stand firmly on truth and justice and to bear witness to it when the occasion arises.
2. To struggle against oppression and tyranny in the world.

In light of these principles, the policymakers and decision-makers of the state will formulate the strategy themselves.

1. Testimony of Justice and Fairness

While explaining the principle of justice and fairness, the esteemed teacher referred to these verses of the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ تَجْمُ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا طَمِي فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا تَجْم وَإِنْ تَلَّوْا أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا .

Believers! Adhere to justice bearing witness to it for God even if this evidence is against yourselves, your parents, and your kinsfolk. If someone is rich or poor, God only is more worthy [that His law be followed]. So, do not be led by desires [by leaving His guidance], lest as a result you swerve from the truth. And [remember that] if you try to distort [what is true and just] or evade [it], you shall definitely be punished for it because God is well aware of what you do. (4:135)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ سَمَحٌ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ
شَتَانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آلَا تَعْدِلُوا شَحْمَ إِعْدِلُوا طَمِي هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ سَمَح
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ شَحْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ.

Believers! Stand up for God bearing witness to justice and your animosity for a people should not induce you to turn away from justice. Be just; this is nearer to piety. And keep fearing God because God is well aware of all your deeds. (5:8)

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's response indicates the path for Muslims that can lead them to a position of honor and dignity in the world. Walking this path means that if religious sentiments, national biases, or financial interests prevent Muslims from speaking the truth and justice, it is their duty of faith to remove those obstacles and stand in support of justice and fairness.

Justice does not merely mean maintaining fairness in matters of crime and punishment; rather, justice is the name of an attitude and a value. Truth is justice, and falsehood is against justice; honesty is justice, and dishonesty is against justice; giving full measure is justice, and giving less is against justice; fulfilling promises is justice, and breaking promises is against justice; tolerance is justice, and prejudice is against justice.

Muslims should adopt justice and fairness as a fundamental principle in their national affairs as well as in their international relations. They should uphold this behavior to such an extent that neither the pride for their own nation nor the enmity with another nation should sway them from justice. In the current era, ideological differences, border disputes, financial dealings, and issues of peace and war frequently raise the question of what is in accordance with justice and what is against it. On all these occasions, representatives of Muslims should speak out for justice and fairness with full responsibility and sincerity. This approach will make them acceptable in the sight of Allah and enable them to play a positive practical role in the world as well.

This responsibility is not merely of the collective organization of Muslims, but every individual is accountable for it. It is the behaviors

of individuals that are reflected in the collective existence of a nation. Therefore, if an individual desires the establishment of justice within their community, they should first implement that principle within themselves and set aside all kinds of prejudice and pride in this matter. Aisha (RA) states that:

When a woman from the Makhzum tribe committed theft, the Quraysh were greatly concerned about her case. People began contemplating who could possibly intercede with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) on her behalf. Ultimately, it was decided that only Usama bin Zayd could muster the courage to do so, as he was very dear to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). At the people's behest, Usama interceded with the Prophet on her behalf. The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'Usama, are you interceding in one of the limits set by Allah?' Then he stood up to deliver a sermon and said: 'O people, what destroyed the nations before you was that if a noble person among them stole, they would let him go, but if a common person stole, they would enforce the penalty upon him. By God, I will not do this. If Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad (PBUH), were to steal, I would cut off her hand as well.' (Bukhari, No. 3216; Muslim, No. 3196)

2. Struggle Against Oppression and Injustice

While explaining the principle of striving against oppression and aggression, the esteemed teacher referred to these verses of the Qur'an:

أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ شَعْمًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ. الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ.

[Thus] those against whom war is waged are granted permission of war because they have been oppressed and God certainly has the power to help them. Those who were turned out of their houses without any justification only because they say: "God is our Lord." (22:39-40)

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ شَعْمًا وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا شَعْمًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ..... وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً.

And fight in the way of God with those who fight against you [to stop you from offering ḥajj] and do not transgress bounds [in this fighting]. Indeed, God does not like the transgressors. ... And keep fighting this war against them until persecution ends. (2:190-193)

These verses are based on the injunctions of *jihad* and combat, and they instruct the Muslims' collective organization not to be indifferent to the rebellion and oppression of nations and governments. They should take notice of their tyrannical actions, raise their voice against them, and if they do not desist, then take steps for *jihad* and combat against them to the extent of their ability.

This is the eternal decree of the *Shariah*. It is the will of Allah Almighty that peace and freedom for individuals and societies be maintained in His world. If any nation destroys this, it exhibits rebellion against Allah's will. Such a nation should be admonished and advised, but if it does not come to the right path, Allah commands that the sword be raised against it and kept raised until the atmosphere of peace and freedom is restored. The truth is that the message of Islam is, in fact, one of peace and security. It calls for the eradication of every element of oppression and tyranny from the world. The growth and development of human life are based on the protection of life, property, and honor. Islam prevents every act of transgression and injustice against individuals or societies in these matters.

Therefore, Muslim states should base their foreign policy on the principle that they do not allow the world to become an arena of oppression and excess. For this purpose, if the situation calls for warfare, they should not hesitate to engage. If they find themselves lacking in the capability or courage to eliminate tyranny and injustice through force, they should at least raise their voice against it. Whether the oppression is against Muslims or non-Muslims, in both situations, they should strive against it with full enthusiasm and wisdom. However, during this struggle, they should not abandon the path of justice and fairness under any circumstances.

The summary is that Muslim states and governments should cultivate

an attitude within themselves that they are advocates of justice, fairness, peace, and security, and they should harbor a hatred for oppression and tyranny. They should always uphold the principles of justice and fairness and actively engage in the struggle against oppression and aggression. The enmity or opposition of an individual or nation should not motivate them to adopt a stance of oppression and excess. When the Quraysh of Mecca prevented Muslims from entering Mecca and the Kaaba, and the Muslims expressed grief and anger, the Holy Qur'an taught them this lesson:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا
وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰى سَمُمٌ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْاِثْمِ
وَالْعُدُوْا نَسَمٌ وَاَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ سَحْمٌ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعَقَابِ.

Some people had stopped you from coming to the Sacred House. So, even your animosity against them should not incite you so much that you cross the limits. [No, abide by these limits come what may] and collaborate with one another in what is virtuous and pious but not in what is unjust and oppressive. And remain fearful of God because God is stern in retribution. (5:2)

[August 2000]



Not Armed Struggle, But Moral Struggle

[Excerpt from a conversation by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

The strategy we Muslims have adopted for safeguarding our rights is armed struggle. For the past three centuries, we have been adhering to this approach. The religious and political leaders of the nation have advocated for this method, and the masses have devotedly followed it. The essence of this approach is that if we are scattered, we draw the world's attention to our issues through acts of violence, and if we are somewhat united, we strive to achieve our rights through warfare. The gains and losses of this strategy can be observed in the current situations in Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq. If we categorize our achievements and losses over the past three centuries, it becomes evident that what we have gained is defeat, decline, poverty, and ignorance, while we have been deprived of greatness, elevation, knowledge, and ethics. We have always described this strategy of armed struggle as *jihad*, thus conveying the message to the world that Islamic *Shariah*, God forbid, is a proponent of warfare.

In the terminology of *Shariah*, *jihad* is the armed struggle of an Islamic state against the oppression and tyranny of nations. According to the Holy Qur'an, along with the strength of faith, the acquisition of material power is indispensable for this endeavor. However, our conduct has always been such that, despite having very weak faith and being completely devoid of military power, we have entered the battlefield with claims of divine assistance. Whether this is foolishness or unfamiliarity with religion, in any case, the result has been that we have exhausted ourselves by sacrificing millions of our workforce to the war. Added to this is the fact that we have also closed the doors of knowledge and wisdom, reform and invitation, and national

construction and development.

Thus, the current state of affairs is such that, in matters of knowledge, morals, and sustenance, we find ourselves in a situation of extreme distress. We are at a level of poverty where the majority of us are deprived of the basic necessities of life; our level of ignorance is such that we have become oblivious to those sciences which we ourselves once brought into existence; the extent of our moral decline is such that in terms of dishonesty, deceit, adulteration, and law-breaking, we have no equal in the world. Our lack of respect is such that no one is willing to trust us in international affairs, and in terms of victimhood, whether we are right or wrong, we are always deemed guilty and deserving of punishment.

The truth is that the primary reason for our miserable condition is the error in our strategy. After the successive tragedies in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is possible that we will succeed in realizing this mistake. If this happens, then we should abandon the strategy of armed struggle and adopt a new strategy of moral struggle. This is the only path by which a weak and oppressed nation can open the closed doors of development and progress for itself.

In this context, we must first acknowledge the fact that although we are among the few largest nations in the world in terms of population, we do not hold any significant position among the global powers in terms of strength and capability. We have no standing in the political, economic, and scientific or technological domains of the world, nor is there any likelihood of establishing one in the near future. After acknowledging this reality, we should commence a non-armed moral struggle instead of an armed one. We should, as individuals and collectively, stand on a high moral ground. Adopt a moral stance in both national and international matters, and if necessary, do not hesitate to sacrifice interests for this cause. If faced with violence, confront it with patience and perseverance. Make the struggle for rights entirely non-violent and do not give the oppressor a chance to attack us under any pretense. If it becomes necessary to unilaterally resolve disputes for this purpose, do not shy away from doing so.

Support the oppressed in the world's forums under all circumstances. Never abandon the principles of justice and fairness, even if they impact our national existence. Set aside all forms of prejudice and promote values such as liberty, democracy, equality, and human sympathy. Unconditionally condemn war and advocate for peace and security. Tolerate religious and political differences and advise others to adopt the same approach. Make full use of the contemporary moral awakening to achieve these objectives. Contribute to the development and advancement of the organizations that raise the voice for human rights around the world and utilize all available media resources extensively.

Moral struggle is, in fact, synonymous with patience, endurance, wisdom, and intellect. When a nation finds itself helpless and powerless against an oppressive nation, when it lacks even the slightest means of defense, when no nation in the world dares to come to its aid, and when there is no such court established in the world that can use the force of law to stop the oppression against the nation, then the only course of action is moral struggle. This means countering tyranny and oppression with the strength of ethics and character. In the collective existence of a nation, values shared by humanity such as peace, freedom, reasoning, justice, compassion, and truthfulness should be strengthened and, based on these, the collective conscience of humanity should be invoked. If a nation persistently raises this voice with patience and steadfastness, the collective conscience of humanity inevitably responds to it. Otherwise, the Almighty joins His voice with that call. The relief for the oppressed comes from the heavens, and eventually, the foundation of tyranny and oppression is dismantled.

[January 2004]



The Problem of Muslims and Its Solution

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has frequently been asked what problem Muslims face as a community and what course of action they should adopt for its remedy. The discussions he has had from time to time in response to this question have been derived into the present article.

After having held the seat of power in the world for nearly a thousand years, we Muslims have been deposed. Several centuries have passed since this event occurred. In the life of nations, this period is not sufficient for a renaissance, but it is more than enough for a nation to determine the causes of its decline and to actively engage in addressing them. Our tragedy is that we have not only failed to determine the causes of our decline, but we have yet to even understand the divine decree regarding our deposition. Despite being a conquered nation in the world, we continue to live with the mentality of dominance and rule. It is as if we stand shackled in the grand assembly of the world, yet proclaim the conquest of the universe. It is a long tale of folly that we have inscribed over the past two centuries. This tale is not associated with any specific region or race; rather, its chapters are scattered wherever our communities exist. Upon reading it, the people of the world are astonished as to who these people are, standing at the ultimate point of moral degradation, yet insisting that the world ought to learn the lessons of morality from them. They are unfamiliar even with the basics of modern sciences and arts, yet they desire that everything they say be considered authoritative. Deprived of the ability for even basic defense, they appear eager to storm the world. Estranged from their Creator, yet they still firmly believe that Allah's support and mercy are solely reserved for them.

In this context, if we examine our collective existence, a list of numerous issues can be compiled, but the most comprehensive words for them are ‘ignorance’ and ‘poverty.’ These maladies have penetrated our entire existence like a festering wound. The manifestations of these can be clearly seen in our morals and character, education and learning, and organization and community.

In terms of ethics and character, if we observe these manifestations, we find that our collective existence has become devoid of those values that have always been universally recognized among humans and which Islam has presented as its hallmark.

The value of respecting humanity, upon which the foundation of society is built, is being trampled upon in such a way that respect for others’ dignity, conscience, and opinion is neglected, and human life itself holds no reverence for us anymore. This is why we become ready to slit another person’s throat merely on the basis of a difference of opinion.

The value of justice and fairness, through which any society becomes a cradle of peace and harmony, is being severely undermined in our context. We view and weigh every matter, both on individual and collective levels, through the lens of personal interests and benefits.

Values of tolerance and patience nurture love among humans and eliminate hatred. Our current state is such that instead of these, we only seem to exhibit prejudice, animosity, and provocation.

The safety of any society depends on the value placed on the respect of the law, but our general attitude is such that we consider adherence to the law as an insult to ourselves. As a result, wherever we are present, anarchy and disorder reach their peak.

In the same way, valuing self-respect is essential for the protection of dignity and honor. If a nation lacks this, it is not possible for it to achieve a place among the nations of the world. In this regard, our situation is such that we are known as a nation of beggars globally. The issue is not just that we knock on others’ doors for our economic needs, but we also await others’ favor in matters of scholarly research,

technical inventions, and cultural standards.

These are manifestations of our poverty and ignorance regarding moral values. This situation exists fully in the field of education and learning. From this perspective, it becomes apparent that these words, with all their meanings, are applicable to us. In every sphere of life where education is the key to progress and survival, a state of lethargy has overtaken us.

Philosophy and wisdom, knowledge and art, poetry and literature, law and politics, thought and craft—in every field, we are counted among the most backward nations of the world. In mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy, political science, and economics, we are unaware even of the basics of these sciences, where some nations have traveled years to achieve the pinnacle of expertise. Our ignorance and negligence in worldly sciences have blocked all paths to material progress for us.

If the matter had remained limited to this, it would still have been bearable. However, we have gone further and exhibited the same behavior in the field of religious sciences. As a result, despite being the bearers of the firm faith (*Dīn-e-Matīn*), we lost the wealth of knowledge and morality that we could have transferred to the world, thereby securing an honorable position among the nations. In the life of nations, a stage of decline and deterioration can also come where they become indifferent to external factors of progress, but this situation becomes tragic when they become negligent of their own heritage. In the matter of religion, we are confronted with this very situation.

The poverty and ignorance can also be prominently seen in our organization and gatherings. The collective institutions upon which the construction of the nation depends have become so afflicted with the illnesses of ignorance, disorder, and corruption that the very idea of their reform and development based on them is inconceivable.

Political institutions are deprived of the foundation of *amrabum shura baynahum* (their system is based on their mutual

consultation).¹ Consequently, neither is the government established through the opinion of the Muslims, nor does it remain established through their support, nor does it necessarily come to an end once deprived of it. As a result, the public has not been able to become fully politically aware, nor has the process of scrutinizing leadership been completed. This is why we have not yet been able to define our internal and external objectives of action.

In terms of the economic system, we are continuously grinding in the mill of poverty and destitution. In this regard, it is clear in every respect that this poverty has not come upon us as a trial from Allah, but is the result of our own shortcomings and negligence. In this field, while many slogans are being raised for the elimination of interest, we neither actively strive to bring about a conscious change among the people, recognizing how interest has infiltrated the collective existence of humanity like a malignant disease, nor are we presenting proposals for an alternative economic system to those in authority.

If we look at it from a social perspective, we are abandoning the practice of sharing each other's sorrows. The extreme poverty and destitution prevalent in our society and the government's negligence towards welfare activities have significantly increased the common man's problems. Furthermore, there is an atmosphere of self-centeredness. As a result, we often witness that precious human lives are lost while hoping for medicines, young girls are unable to leave their homes due to lack of proper arrangements, and talented youths are forced to abandon education and turn to factories. Our representative values such as modesty, respect, and family dignity are becoming unstable. Public welfare institutions are nearly non-existent, and those that do exist are failing to fulfill their responsibilities.

When we examine the education system, it becomes clear that the primary objective of education in our region is not knowledge and wisdom, but the attainment of employment. Educational institutions are based on an unnatural division between religious and non-religious, and Urdu and English. Even within these, the curricula are outdated,

¹ Al-Shura 42:38.

teachers are untrained, and students are reluctant to put in hard work. The education of women, who are responsible for nurturing the new generation, is considered either illegitimate or unnecessary in some places.

The judicial system is akin to a marketplace where the commodity of justice is affordable for the affluent and unavailable for the impoverished.

The state of religious institutions is such that if one goes to them to seek education, they receive lessons in imitation; if one goes to obtain training, the demand for obedience and submission is made; and if one goes for worship, sometimes even the ultimate sacrifice of life is taken in the name of sectarianism.

In these severe circumstances, it is necessary that some wise and intellectual individuals stand up to raise awareness about these issues among the nation and strive for their resolution. In this regard, we believe that a plan of action should be formulated with the following objectives in mind.

Promotion of Moral Values

First and foremost, moral values should be deeply instilled in people's hearts and minds, and they should be trained to align their actions accordingly. They should be encouraged to adopt a mindset not of seeking dominance over the world, but of making moral reformation through da'wah (inviting others to righteousness) their ultimate goal.

They should perceive the world as a place of trial and, while advising its people towards truth, righteousness, faith, and morality, their objective should be to present their case before Allah in the Hereafter, seeking to save themselves from the torment of Hell. They should uphold and promote noble moral values such as respect for humanity, commitment to truth, tolerance, justice, and integrity—practicing these virtues themselves and encouraging others to do the same.

Encouragement of Education

Secondly, the importance of the pursuit of knowledge and education should be highlighted among the members of the community. They should be informed that education empowers individuals and thus opens pathways for national development and progress. They should be explained that the primary purpose of education is not employment but the attainment of knowledge and wisdom. People should be directed towards both religious and worldly education. They should acquire worldly education for material progress and religious education to discover paths for moral development and success in the hereafter.

Guidance in Collective Matters

Thirdly, the responsibility of reforming national and collective institutions should be undertaken. In this context, work needs to be done in two directions initially. First, the shortcomings present in these institutions should be identified, and second, suggestions for their rectification should be formulated. Then, an awareness of reform should be cultivated among the public, and those in power should be urged sincerely towards positive changes. For instance, regarding political governance, the Qur'anic command *amrahum shura baynahum* (their system is based on their mutual consultation) should be adopted as a fundamental principle, and it should be insisted that the standard of living of rulers be brought at par with that of the ordinary citizen. In the economic sector, a comprehensive system of Zakat should be established to meet national needs, and no other tax should be imposed. In the realm of society, the importance of the family should be highlighted, and a society should be formed where the criterion of dignity and respect is not power and authority, but knowledge, wisdom, virtues, and piety. In the field of education, the existing discrimination should be abolished, and curricula should be cleansed of antiquity and blind imitation. In religious institutions, it should be ensured that the differences in opinion among religious groups do not turn into hostility and enmity, and that under the guise of religion, an environment of murder, slaughter, and terrorism is not created.

Struggle Against Backwardness

Fourthly, it is necessary to raise awareness among Muslims that they should embark on their efforts in the fields of science and economics. In the current era, these are the primary fields of progress. Along with awakening this awareness, Muslims should be informed of the reality that because of their backwardness in these fields, they are helpless in the world. The notion of dominance and supremacy over the world is a far-off dream; they are deprived of genuine sovereignty even within their own states. They wish to conquer the West, but lack the realization that Western civilization, philosophy, and knowledge have not only overtaken their material existence but have also subdued their hearts and minds. Their intellectuals speak the language of Europe and declare its values as obligatory; their rulers sing its praises and beg at its doorsteps; their skilled individuals consider the understanding of its arts as the pinnacle of their creations; their general public perceives it as a terrestrial paradise and is ready to abandon their society, homeland, and even family to attain it. If, even after all this, they chant slogans of domination over the West, it can be described at most as a psychological ailment.

Helping People in Distress

Fifth, observe the difficulties and needs of the people around you and assist them as much as possible. If someone is sick, arrange medicines and medical treatment for them. If a student is in need, make arrangements for their fees and books. If someone requires assistance for a daughter's marriage, help them. In this regard, a network should be established so that people can help each other on a self-help basis.

[December 2003]



The True Strength of Muslims for Success in the World

[Excerpt from a conversation with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

In the past two centuries, the narrative of our defeats has been repeatedly recounted. Our losses on the battlefields of Mysore, Plassey, Balakot, Delhi, Afghanistan, and Iraq are now a part of history. Scholars and intellectuals among us hold varying perspectives on the causes and consequences of these defeats. Some interpret it as a test from Allah, advocating for perseverance and steadfastness. Others see it as a result of national disunity and preach unity and solidarity, while yet others attribute it to the military superiority of superpowers and suggest strategies for acquiring military strength. While all these analyses and suggestions may be valid, there is another reality beyond these which our intellectual and political leadership continuously overlooks. The reality is that our nation has chosen the wrong battlefield for war. It is a battleground where we suffer repeated defeats. This is the field of material power. If the manifestation of this power is wealth, then we are beggars; if it is knowledge and skills, then our ignorance is evident; if it is weaponry, we are defenseless; and if it is authority, we are merely subjugated. We are completely devoid of all these manifestations of material power. Despite continuously suffering from the bitter consequences of this reality, we persist in staking our lives in this very field. Had this been a calculated action, we could have diverted our thinking to a new direction to escape the cycle of defeat, but the tragedy is that it is entirely based on ignorance. We are not even aware that in the battlefield of material power where we are waging war, the factors of victory and success are knowledge and skills, agriculture and minerals, and industry and commerce. Certain nations have amassed these to establish their dominance in the field of material power. We mistakenly believe that through emotional slogans, fanciful

wishes, and baseless claims, we can end this dominance.

In any case, the absolute truth is that in the current circumstances, the field of material strength is an arena of defeat for us. If we continue to engage in this field with the same weakness, then, God forbid, stories of ruin and humiliation will continue to be written, and in exact accordance with divine law, defeat will be our ultimate fate. If we wish to achieve any success in this field, it is essential that we first withdraw from it and acquire all the means and resources of material strength that are indispensable for success. A prolonged struggle is required to obtain them. If we begin this struggle today, it is possible that after a period of time, we may acquire them.

However, there is one battlefield where we still possess the means and resources for victory. The truth is that if we actively engage in this field, no nation in the world—no matter how many unite against us—can compete with us. Our victory in this domain is certain.

This is not the battlefield of material power but of intellectual strength. We possess an eternal intellectual force in the form of the final guidance from the Lord of the Worlds. Whether it is Judaism or Christianity, Buddhism or Hinduism, this guidance holds undeniable superiority over all religions. Neither mysticism, secularism, communism, capitalism, nor any other political, economic, or social ideology is capable of challenging it. Indeed, the reality is that even if the West were to gather all its intellectual power, from Socrates and Plato to Freud and Marx, it would still be unable to reach the intellectual heights of Muhammad of Arabia (PBUH).

If this premise is correct, then we should decide that from now on, we must target the ideological boundaries of the nations of the world, not their geographical borders; we must attack their ideas, not their lands; and we must conquer their hearts and minds, not their bodies.

Thus, in this new arena, we must convey to the world through education, teaching, reform, and invitation, as well as through ethics and character, that the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam is an established historical fact. The affirmation of divinely revealed religions such as Judaism and Christianity also relies on the affirmation

of this prophethood. It must be clarified that the Qur'an is the final and ultimate source of divine guidance on earth. Its authority is established in every aspect over other divine scriptures and philosophies due to its arrangements for preservation, its distinctive style of speech, and its purely intellectual and natural teachings. Consequently, in all discussions of belief and faith, as well as philosophy and ethics, it is regarded as the measure and criterion until the end of time. Every idea and every action must now be weighed on its scale and assessed by its standards. In this field, we must also convince others that the only way to establish an individual's and society's life on the correct principles is through Islamic Shariah. In this regard, it also resolves those issues which human intellect cannot due to its limitations. In its light, a society can be formed where modesty holds the status of a fundamental value and the family unit possesses such stability that a person can lead a joyful life even through childhood and old age. An economic system can be established that is free from greed, deceit, and exploitation. A state can be formed whose system guarantees the welfare of citizens and reflects justice and fairness. Through its blessings, it is possible for an environment to exist where the ultimate aim of human existence is not this world, but the hereafter. Humans fulfill their worldly responsibilities with a full spirit of competition, yet simultaneously keep their focus on success in the afterlife. This establishes with certainty that a land illuminated by the light of Shariah will see rare instances of terror, brutality, oppression, and moral decay.

In the realm of intellectual advancement, the circumstances of the time have become very conducive. Until some time ago, individuals, nations, and rulers lived within the psychology of war. Those who possessed material power had the accepted right to overpower the weaker without any moral justification, if they so desired. Rulers like Genghis Khan, Hulagu, Hitler, and Mussolini considered the destruction of nations as their right. Fear and terror held the status of international law. This atmosphere has now changed. The collective conscience of the world has emerged from the psychology of war. There is a trend of hatred towards war and love for peace. Humans have begun to recognize the right of self-determination for other

humans and nations for other nations. The manifestations of fear and terror have been deemed as symbols of disgrace rather than greatness. Furthermore, the vast expanse of media has opened the door to access every individual in the world. In such a situation, it is not incorrect to say that the field is entirely open for the invitation of Islam, and it can be as effective today as it was unimaginable in the past. Consequently, the only course of action for us at this time is to channel all our energies into the realm of intellectual strength until we have achieved the necessary material power. This is the field of our victory—a field where the concept of defeat does not exist.

[December 2005]



The Attitude of Political, Social, and Religious Leaders

An article based on various discussions held by the esteemed teacher with the fellows and associates of Al-Mawrid.

What attitude should religious and political leaders adopt towards their associates and supporters? This question has been significant in every era, but in the present times, the trend of organizational development has greatly increased its importance. State institutions, political parties, religious organizations, and welfare associations now operate within a collective framework. As a result, two components emerge between leaders and their associates and supporters, working together in their struggle. Leaders call upon people, and individuals respond to their call by standing with them. The motivation for this support is often a high ideal or a noble cause. Consequently, they relate to them with complete sincerity and offer sacrifices in every manner—be it financially, morally, or verbally. As a result of this commitment and self-sacrifice, there naturally arises a desire within them for the leaders to be attentive to them, encourage them, appreciate their worth, and treat them with kindness and affection. If this behavior is not received, they become disheartened and withdrawn, and in some cases, it escalates to opposition and antagonism. This is a common habit of humans. People of every era, region, and nation follow this pattern. There is no difference among them in this regard.

This real-life requirement demands that leaders cultivate warmth and the ability to win hearts. If they wish to keep their followers engaged and make them their allies and partners, there is no alternative to this approach. They must develop a disposition of kindness and generosity within themselves. This means that they should speak to them with softness and love, approach every matter with good temperament, listen attentively to their advice, encourage them, overlook their mistakes,

value their emotions, and most importantly, respect their dignity. This is the approach that serves as the essential provision for every leader and guide. Iqbal has rightly said:

High ambition, enchanting speech, soul full of passion

This is the provision for the journey for the leader of the caravan.

The Holy Qur'an has made this matter extremely clear. It has presented the conduct and exemplary character of the perfect guide, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as an absolute principle and has declared that the behavior desired by the Lord from leadership is the one exemplified by His Messenger. It is stated:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ تَجْمَ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا
مِنْ حَوْلِكَ سَمِعَ فَأَعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ.

So, it is because of God's favor that you are very gentle to them [O Prophet!]. Had you been ill-tempered and hard-hearted, all these would have dispersed from your presence. Therefore, ignore them and seek forgiveness for them and keep consulting them in affairs. (3:159)

This is the tribute from the Lord of the Universe to the person who is the Messenger of Allah, upon whom the prophethood has concluded, and who is the sole source of religion on this earth until the Day of Judgment. This person holds the position of *An-Nabiyyu Awwal bil-Mu'minina min Anfusihi*,¹ meaning his right over the Muslims is greater than their own selves. His obedience is the obedience of Allah, and his disobedience is the disobedience of Allah. He is the Sultan of sultans, the leader of leaders, and the king of kings, before whom necks bow, heads are lowered, and hearts are laid in his path. Regarding this great personality, Allah has declared that if he were not gentle and kind-hearted, the people would have dispersed from around him. This makes it absolutely clear that even for a being as divinely ordained and obligatory to obey as the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), kindness and compassion were essential. History bears

¹ Al-Ahzab 33:6.

witness that Allah granted him an abundant share of these qualities, and with His help, he elevated this to such a level that the world proclaimed:

Peace be upon him who revealed the secrets of love.

Peace be upon him who, despite being wounded, showered flowers.

Peace be upon him who clothed those thirsty for his blood with robes of honor.

Peace be upon him who, in response to curses, offered prayers

It is evident that for leadership, the indispensable trait is the quality of winning hearts. This is what Allah requires, and this is the behavior of His Messenger (PBUH). If a leader lacks this trait, then despite possessing a thousand other qualities, he cannot lead people effectively. Leaders must understand that when people are following them, they are not doing so by considering them wardens or patrol leaders. It is a bond of brotherhood and love that ties them. The notion of those who believe that good governance is achieved through harsh criticism, constantly pointing out mistakes, fault-finding, sarcasm, harshness, tough demeanor, accountability, and reprimand, is utterly misguided. Such an approach not only fails to create good governance but also puts the existence of governance itself at risk. If such individuals attain leadership positions, instead of running institutions, organizations, and parties, they end up destroying them. The reason is that those who volunteer or participate for a greater cause do not accept ingratitude, disrespect, coercion, blame, and harshness. They cannot be kept engaged while being hurt and distressed. The only way to engage them is through kindness and compassion. Leadership should value their love. It should respond with even greater love. If they walk ten steps alongside, they should be thanked, and if they accompany for two steps, they should still be appreciated. Accept their cooperation graciously without demanding more and putting them in a difficult situation. If they make a mistake, gently draw their attention like a kind teacher and a well-wishing friend.

In summary, it is indispensable for leadership to be characterized by the quality of winning hearts. If by chance someone is placed in a

leadership position who does not possess this attribute, they should attempt to cultivate it. If successful, they may continue in their position; otherwise, they should relinquish it to someone who is eloquent in speech, tender-hearted, and affectionate in nature. If they do not do so, it should be understood that the situation will become that:

*Some drifted away from the caravan, some grew disillusioned with the
sanctuary,*

For the leader of the caravan lacked the art of winning hearts.

[December 2021]



The True Responsibility of Scholars

[Derived from a conversation of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

The responsibility that Allah Almighty has placed upon the scholars is nothing other than *inzār*—that is, to warn people about the punishment of the Hereafter. Allah has stated:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً شَحِمَ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ.

It was not possible that all Muslims should have come out; but why did this not happen that a few from each of their groups could come forward to obtain sound understanding of religion and warned the people of their nation [about these attitudes they had adopted] when they returned to them so that they could remain secure from God's grasp? (9:122)

The requirement of this great responsibility of warning is that:

- The scholars should strive to protect people from the impurities of polytheism and guide them onto the straight path of monotheism.
- Inform them about the truths of prophethood and messengership, and arrange for their training to follow the exemplary conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- Endeavor to strengthen their faith in the Hereafter and warn them of the torment of Hell.

Inform them that this world is merely a testing ground, which is destined to come to an end one day. In this world, human beings have been sent for the purpose of preparing righteous souls for the eternal world created by God, distinguishing between those who respect the

boundaries set by God and those who break them, separating the obedient of Allah from those who rebel against Him, and then populating paradise with pure and compliant human beings while making rebellious individuals with impure souls the fuel for hellfire.

The continuous reminder and admonition of these truths is the fundamental responsibility of the scholars. For this purpose, they possess the Book of Allah, the message of which, if conveyed without any omission or alteration, conquers the hearts and minds with its divine power.

In fulfilling this responsibility, they must necessarily adhere to the limits established by Allah in this matter. The most important aspect of this is that they should confine themselves to reminders and admonitions. Allah has not provided any leeway for coercion or compulsion beyond this. If Allah had intended to grant any such leeway, He would have given it to those exalted personalities who were at the highest level of self-purification, who were intensely concerned for the salvation of people in the hereafter, whose discourse was manifestly clear, and with whom God communicated directly. These eminent figures were explicitly told:

فَذَكِّرْهُمْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ. لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ.

If they do not believe in spite of this, then just remind them [O Prophet]! You are one who only reminds. (88:21-22)

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ تَجْمَ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ.

[In spite of this, they will not believe; so, do not worry much O Prophet.] You cannot guide those who you want; in fact, only God guides [according to His law] whomsoever He wills and only He knows well those who are guided. (28:56)

إِنْ تَخْرُصْ عَلَى هُدْيِهِمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ.

If you are very desirous for their guidance, what will you gain from this [O Prophet] because God does not guide those whom He leads astray [according to His law] and also no one can be their helper. (16:37)

It is evident that if the work of the prophets is limited to mere reminder and admonition, then how can a religious scholar standing in their following exceed this! His task is simply to convey the message of the Qur'an and Sunnah to people by employing his best abilities. His language should be sweet, his reasoning strong, his manner benevolent, and his criticism courteous. It is this style of invitation that captures hearts and cultivates growth even in barren lands. Once this approach is adopted, there is no need to eliminate the existence of ideological opponents; rather, if Allah wills, the existence of the opponents gradually transforms into complete support and cooperation for them.

However, it seems to be the tragedy of the entire Muslim community that the proponents of religion appear to evade their fundamental responsibility. It seems as if enlightening people about the truths of monotheism and prophethood, and warning them of accountability in the hereafter, is no longer their concern. Instead, the tasks they have chosen for themselves mainly involve inciting naive individuals against their ideological opponents, issuing decrees of apostasy against them, and declaring them deserving of death.

In this entire approach, the fact is completely overlooked that in this world, at most, a decision can be made about whether a person or group is legally considered Muslim or non-Muslim. However, as far as true faith is concerned, only Allah Almighty can determine it. We neither have the ability to look into hearts nor should we attempt to do so. If scholars believe that the ideas of a person or group are incorrect, they should clarify the error of these ideas on an intellectual level and strive to bring them to the right path through compassionate advice and exhortation. This is their primary responsibility.

[June 1997]



The Issue of the People of *Da‘wah*

A written account based on the discussions of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi in response to certain questions on this topic.

A major issue with our people of *Da‘wah* (Islamic Preaching) is that they are reluctant to present the religion in its complete form. Instead, they present the components of religion in such a manner that the general public begins to perceive a single component as the entire religion. Upon examining their approach, it becomes evident that specific aspects, such as *Da‘wah*, *jihad*, or any other component of religion, are made the central focus from a certain perspective, and then all activities of thought, action, invitation, and education are linked to it. The work of scholarship and research is undertaken to understand only the details of that specific component, books are authored to elaborate on it, newsletters are issued to communicate it, educational institutions are established to teach it, and groups and movements are organized to shape public opinion about it. In short, all manifestations of invitation are detailing that single component. The other components of religion are either not mentioned at all or, if a need arises, they are presented as prerequisites of that specific component. There are two prominent examples of this in our context:

1. *Da‘wah*

Invitation, or preaching, is a component of religion, but some scholars have presented it in such a way that this component seems to dominate the entire existence of religion. Every individual is held responsible for the task of invitation, yet evidently not every person possesses the capability or capacity to master the sciences of the Qur’an, Sunnah, Hadith, and Fiqh, and to convey them to various segments of people through teaching, lecturing, or writing. Consequently, a few points from the contents of religion are selected under the title of religious

invitation and handed over to anyone and everyone. The most prominent example of this situation is the work of the Tablighi Jamaat. Their invitation is based on six points. Among these, *Tasbeeh-e-Kalma* (correction of the creed) refers to pronouncing the words correctly; *Tasbeeh-e-Namaz* (correction of prayer) means memorizing the words of the prayer; *Tasbeeh-e-Ilm o Zikr* (correction of knowledge and remembrance) implies discussing the virtues of faith and memorizing specific phrases of *zikr* (remembrance of Allah); *Tasbeeh-e-Niyyat* (rectification of intention) signifies dedicating one's intention to the propagation of this six-point program; *Ikram-e-Muslim* (honoring Muslims) is understood as treating fellow Muslims with respect and dignity; *Tafriq-e-Waqt* (allocating time) means setting aside specific days to spread the message of these six points among people. While these elements hold significance in their own right, presenting them in such a manner that they are perceived as the sole and complete invitation to religion ultimately harms the religion rather than benefiting it.

2. *Jihad*

Some advocates of the faith present *jihad* as the core message of religion. They bring forth this aspect of religion in such a way that everyone begins to perceive *jihad* and fighting as the complete religion. Muslims are made to believe that the survival and propagation of religion are only possible when there is an active struggle against the enemies of Islam. Even if worldly success is not achieved in this path, it is still not a losing bargain because the ultimate success in the hereafter will definitely be attained. In this perspective, the general person sees the best way to practice religion as abandoning all worldly matters and turning to the battlefield of *jihad* to drink the goblet of martyrdom and secure his place in paradise. The Taliban and some similar groups are following this approach.

There is no doubt that some of these methods are fundamentally baseless in relation to their origin in religion. However, aside from this aspect, for now, the focus is intended on the fact that presenting religion in terms of its components is extremely detrimental to its

propagation. This approach inevitably leads to the following outcomes:

Firstly, religion does not present itself to people in its complete form.

Secondly, both Muslims and non-Muslims become acquainted with religion through the aspect of a specific component.

Thirdly, the majority of common people adopt specific elements of religion, perceiving them as the religious objectives.

Therefore, while presenting the invitation to religion, it is extremely important to keep two matters in consideration:

One, that religion should be presented in its complete form as a whole.

Secondly, each part of the religion should be given the same weight that the religion itself has assigned to it. Temporal or local expediencies should not influence the presentation of certain components in a way that disrupts the balance established by the religion itself.

It is necessary that the scholars, take these matters into account while presenting the invitations to religion. They should make it clear to the people that:

The essence of religion is servitude to Allah, and the meaning of a religious life is that an individual, in both personal and collective existence, directs all aspects of thought and action fundamentally towards servitude to the Lord.

Inform them that the objective of religion is the purification of the soul and that those who deserve the reward of Paradise are the ones who actively strive to purify their souls from Satanic impurities in this world.

Teach them that religion is not merely the name of rituals and ceremonies, but it has, in the form of *Shariah*, established fundamental principles and laws for every aspect of life such as worship, social conduct, politics, economy, proselytization, *jihad*, limits, and punishments. It is essential to adhere to them, and their denial is tantamount to the denial of religion.

In this comprehensive manner, the invitation to religion is a demand of faith and wisdom. It is the responsibility of the scholars to understand the religion with full insight and present it to the people in its entirety.

[December 2004]



Interpretation of ‘The Sole Source of Religion’

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi regards the existence of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), as the ultimate manifestation of human perfection and the embodiment of God’s justice on earth. He considers his being as the center of both devotion and obedience and deems the unquestioning fulfillment of his commands as obligatory. He believes that religion is centered in his person, and consequently, he accepts the words, actions, approvals, and endorsements of the Prophet as a binding authority until the Day of Judgment. In the discussion on the source of religion, he has adopted a unique interpretation called ‘the sole source of religion.’ As a result, the focus of acquiring religion has entirely shifted towards the person of the Prophet (PBUH), and the dependence of religion on his existence has emerged more prominently and concentrated compared to prevailing interpretations.¹ In his book *Meezan* on Islam, he begins by writing:

Religion is the guidance of Allah Almighty, which He first instilled into human nature and then conveyed to humankind through His prophets, along with all its necessary details. The last prophet in this sequence is Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, the sole source of religion on this earth is now the noble and exalted personality of Muhammad (PBUH). (13)

As a necessary result of accepting the esteemed personality of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the sole source of religion, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi considers the entirety of the religion to be based on Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) words, actions, tacit approvals, and

¹ In the books of principles and rulings, religion and Shariah generally have four sources mentioned: the Quran, Sunnah, Ijma’ (consensus), and Qiyas (analogical reasoning).

endorsements. Thus, advancing the aforementioned premise, he writes:

...It is only his (Prophet) being through whom the descendants of Adam can receive guidance from their Lord until the Day of Judgment. And it is solely his position that through his sayings, actions, and tacit approvals, whatever he declares as religion will remain the true religion until the end of the world. (13)

This means that, according to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi:

1. On this planet, the exclusive right to prescribe religion belongs solely to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). No one else holds this authority or legitimacy.
2. This right of his is forever valid. As long as this world exists, humanity must turn to him alone for Allah's guidance.
3. Regarding religion, every belief and creed, every form of knowledge and wisdom, every method and practice, and every law and commandment has its source, origin, and reference in his esteemed and noble personality.
4. Whatever he declares about religion through his words, that is religion.
5. Whatever religious actions he performs through his deeds is religion.
6. His silence regarding people's knowledge and actions is religion. His implicit approval (*taqrīr*), his explicit endorsement (*ta'yīd*), his disapproval (*tardīd*), and his validation (*taswīb*)—all are part of religion.
7. The Qur'an is religion because it has been given to us through his words.
8. Sunnah is religion because it has been preserved through his actions.
9. Hadith is religion because it records his sayings, actions, implicit approvals, and endorsements.

10. Among previous divine scriptures and the legacy of the religion of Abraham, only those elements hold religious authority that have been affirmed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

In this regard, from the perspective of a specific law, my esteemed teacher has articulated this concept in his book *Burhan* with the following words:

...The commands and directives of Muhammad (PBUH) are obligatory to obey until the Day of Judgment, in the same manner as the Qur'an itself is obligatory to obey. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was not merely a messenger of God whose role ended after delivering the Book. As a Messenger, every word and action of his holds the status of legal authority and evidence. (38)

[November 2020]



The Term ‘Sunnah’ - Interpretation

by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

The perspective of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi regarding the application and meaning of the term ‘sunnah’ differs somewhat from that of the eminent scholars of the past. However, this is merely a difference of interpretation, which he has employed to address certain issues related to the determination and classification of religious content. As a result of this, there is no alteration, amendment, or addition to the consensus-based content of the religion.

The detail is that according to him, the sole source of religion until the Day of Judgment is the esteemed personality of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). On this earth, Allah’s religion can now only be accessed through him, and only he can issue a verdict on what constitutes religion and what does not. Therefore, whatever he has declared as religion through his words, actions, affirmations, and approvals, that alone is religion. Whatever he has not declared as religion through his words, actions, affirmations, and approvals, is certainly not religion. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes:

Religion is the guidance of Allah Almighty, which He first instilled into human nature and then conveyed to humankind through His prophets, along with all its necessary details. The last prophet in this sequence is Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, the sole source of religion on this earth is now the noble and exalted personality of Muhammad (PBUH). It is only his (Prophet) being through whom the descendants of Adam can receive guidance from their Lord until the Day of Judgment. And it is solely his position that through his sayings, actions, and tacit approvals, whatever he declares as religion will remain the true religion until the end of the world.

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ.

It is He who brought forth among the unlettered a Messenger from among them, who recites to them His revelations and purifies them and for this instructs them in the Law and in Wisdom.
(62:2)

(Meezan 13)

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, this status of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a necessary consequence of the belief in his prophethood. Thus, the very meaning of Islam is to submit in all matters of life to the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in his capacity as a prophet.

To acknowledge someone as a prophet inherently necessitates obedience to him as per God's command. Allah has made it clear in His book that a prophet is not merely an object of reverence, but also a focus of obedience. He does not come simply for people to recognize him as a prophet and messenger and then become inactive. His status is not just that of a preacher and advisor, but of a guide whose obedience is obligatory. The very purpose of his advent is that in all matters of life, the guidance he provides should be followed without hesitation or question. Allah Almighty has stated:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ.

Whichever messenger We have sent has been sent that He be obeyed by the permission of God. (4:64)

(Meezan 144)

This explanation makes it completely clear that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's conception of religion is that only what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has declared as religion through his words, actions, implicit approvals (*tagrīr*), and validations (*taswīb*) constitutes religion. This holds the status of absolute proof, and accepting it as

religion and considering it obligatory to follow is, in itself, true Islam. No Muslim has any room for deviation or disagreement from this principle in the slightest. This stance is fundamentally the same as that of the early scholars and imams. They also recognize as religion only that which is based on the words, actions, implicit approvals, and validations of the Prophet (PBUH). This means that, in terms of determining what constitutes religion, there is no difference between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's view and that of the early scholars of Islam.

One part of this religion has been preserved in the form of the Qur'an, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and has been conveyed to the Muslim community with complete protection through the consensus and oral continuity of the Companions. Besides this, the religion that we have received from the words, actions, implicit approvals and validations of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) can be divided into the following three categories based on its nature:

1. Independent Religious Rulings
2. Explanation and Elucidation of Independent Religions Rulings
3. Practical demonstration of Independent Religious Rulings

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, these three components are considered religion in their essence. The reason for this is that these components are based on the words, actions, implicit approvals and validations of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and as we have stated, in his view, religion is defined by what the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared as religion through his words, actions, implicit approvals and validations. The early scholars of Islam also consider these components as entirely part of the religion for the same reason. Therefore, there is no difference between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's approach and that of the early scholars regarding these three components being considered part of the religion.

The difference between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's opinion and the opinion of the classical scholars of the past primarily lies in the classification of these components and the determination of terms for them. The early scholars uniformly used the term 'sunnah' for

independently religious rulings, explanations, and exemplary practice. Regarding the distinction in their juristic nature, status, and significance, they divided various actions under the comprehensive term 'sunnah' into different categories such as obligatory, necessary, supererogatory, Sunnah, recommended, and commendable, etc. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has chosen separate terminologies for these three components instead of a single term. For independently established rulings, he uses the term 'sunnah,' while for explanations and exemplary practice, he adopts expressions derived from the Qur'an: *Tafheem wa Tabyeen*¹ and *Uswa-e-Hasanah*.² The reason for this is that, in his view, in terms of the categorization of religious commands, it is not appropriate that if a matter has been accepted as a separate and independently established ruling, its explanation and practice should be considered as separate commands. As a result, this causes difficulty in understanding the commands and the differentiation and categorization in the nature, status, and significance of the commands as intended by the Lawgiver does not remain fully intact. Hence, in his book *Meezan*, he has firstly outlined the independent religious rulings of the Qur'an and Sunnah and listed clarifications and exemplars under them. For instance, he does not regard the statement of the Prophet (PBUH) *Ma Quti'a min al-Bahimat wa Hiya Hayya fahiya Mayta*³ as a separate ruling, but views it as an application of the Qur'anic command *Hurri-mat 'Alaykumu al-Mayta*.⁴ Similarly, he considers the saying of the Prophet (PBUH) that two dead animals, namely fish and locusts, and two bloods, namely liver and spleen,⁵ are lawful, as a clarification and explanation of the aforementioned Qur'anic command, which is not an independent command but an exception arising out of customary practice. The punishment of stoning, which the Prophet (PBUH) implemented on certain criminals during his time, is, according to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, not a separate

¹ Al-Nahl 16:44.

² Al-Ahzab 33:21.

³

⁴ Al-Maidah 5:3.

⁵ Ibn Majah, No: 3314.

punishment but an application of the command in Surah Al-Maidah *Innama Jazaa'u alladheena yuhaariboon-Allaha wa Rasoolahu wa yas'auna fil-Ardi Fasaadaan an yuqat-talu*.⁶ Similarly, after acknowledging prayer as an independently established Sunnah, instead of designating different occasions and additional prayers at different times as individual *Sunan* (plural of Sunnah), he interprets them as exemplars of the divine instruction *Man Tatawwa'a Khayran Fa'inn-Allaha Shaakirun 'Aleem*.⁷ In the same way, the method of ablution transmitted with reference to the Prophet (PBUH) in the narrations is, according to him, an exemplar of practice on the same Sunnah of ablution detailed in Surah Al-Maidah (5:6).

In light of the above details, if we wish to determine the difference between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and the Early scholars regarding the application and meaning of the term 'sunnah', it can be expressed in the following points:

Firstly, in its essence, this is merely a difference in interpretation. As a result of this, there is no change or alteration, nor any amendment or addition to the universally agreed upon contents of the religion.

Secondly, the determination and classification of the contents of religion have always been an ongoing task among the scholars of the Ummah, and in this regard, the differences in interpretations among them are well-known. From this perspective, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's work is not something new.

Thirdly, the objective and perspective of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi in determining and classifying the contents of religion are, in any case, different from those of the Early scholars. The classification by the Early scholars is based on the difference in importance and rank of the commandments, whereas Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has essentially classified them by considering the relationship between the fundamental and the subsidiary. The difference in importance and rank is incidentally clarified by this.

⁶ Al-Maidah 5:33.

⁷ Al-Baqarah 2:158.

Fourthly, as a result of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's classification, it becomes clear that the original and fundamental part of religion is transmitted through uninterrupted and certain evidence, whereas the branches and details are dependent only on solitary reports.

[December 2008]



The Difference Between Sunnah and Hadith

The body of religious knowledge that we have received from the sayings, actions, tacit approvals, and validations of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in addition to the Qur'an, is commonly referred to using the terms Sunnah and Hadith. These terms are generally used as synonyms, meaning that the concept and reference of Sunnah is considered to be similar to that of Hadith. Contrary to this general usage, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi makes a clear distinction between these two terms. He believes there is a difference in their origin, evidence, and in their meaning and reference as well. Some scholars consider his stance as incorrect from an academic perspective and view it as contrary to the opinions of jurists and hadith scholars. Accordingly, the well-known scholar of the Ahl-e-Hadith school, Maulana Salahuddin Yousuf, writes in his article titled "Is the Ghamidi Thought and Methodology in Accordance with the Thought and Methodology of the Early Scholars (Salaf)?":

... The reality is that the Imams of the Salaf and the hadith scholars did not distinguish between the concepts of Sunnah and Hadith. They considered Sunnah and Hadith as synonymous and equivalent in meaning. ... The distinction between Hadith and Sunnah is entirely artificial. No Imam, hadith scholar, or jurist has stated such a difference. In their view, Hadith and Sunnah are synonymous and have the same meaning. Anything proven by the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is an authority in religion. Whether it is called Hadith or Sunnah, it is the same thing.¹

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, what is the nature of the

¹ Monthly al-Shariah, Feb-March 2015.

difference between these two terms? Before understanding this, it is appropriate to present some brief background of this discussion.

In this context, regarding the linguistic meaning, all scholars attribute different meanings to these two terms. According to them, the meaning of Hadith is 'new', and this term is also used in the sense of speech, conversation, and information. Sunnah refers to the way or path that is adopted or followed. Based on this linguistic difference, the idea of a terminological distinction between them is not improbable. Hence, despite the general perception that these two terms carry synonymous meanings, differences in their definitions and their scope of application among the scholars are well-known and established. Furthermore, certain terminologies used by the *Usuliyyun* (scholars of Islamic legal theory), jurists, and hadith scholars, such as *Sunnat-e-Ma'looma* (known Sunnah), *Sunnat-e-Mashhoora* (well-established Sunnah), *Sunnat-e-Muakkadah* (emphasized Sunnah), *Naql al-Kafa' an al-Kafa'* (transmission from one competent authority to another), along with other similar terms and certain methodologies adopted by the scholars, further highlight the conceptual distinction between Sunnah and Hadith.

Imam Shafi'i, in certain parts of *Al-Risala*, has employed the terms Hadith and Sunnah in such a context that it becomes clear that he considers these two terms to have distinct meanings. In the discussion of differing hadith, he has written:

Hadiths can also be conflicting, so (in such a case) I prefer some of them by reasoning through the Qur'an, Sunnah, consensus, or analogy.²

Khateeb al-Baghdadi has also taken this distinction into account while stating the principles of acceptance and rejection of Hadith.

A hadith will not be accepted if it is contrary to reason, the Qur'an, well-known Sunnah, any practice established as Sunnah,

² Al-Shafi'i, Muhammad bin Idris, *Al-Risalah*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2005, p. 373

or any definitive evidence.³

In this context, if we undertake a general review of the definitions of the aforementioned terms and the scope of application according to the opinions of the scholars, three general types of opinions emerge:

One perspective is that Hadith and Sunnah are synonymous terms, and by these is meant the narration of the sayings, actions, tacit approvals, and validations of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The sayings and actions of the Companions of the Prophet also fall within the scope of this definition. This is the preferred view among the general scholars of Hadith.

Dr. Baqar Khan Khakwani writes in reference to *Al-Hasami* and *Al-Tawdih Ma' Al-Talwih*:

The hadith scholars consider the term 'Hadith' as synonymous with 'sunnah' and 'Khabar,' and in their view, these three terms apply to the words, actions, and tacit approvals (silence) of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), as well as to the words, actions, and tacit approvals, i.e., silence of the Companions and the Followers.⁴

The second opinion is that there is a subtle distinction between the terms Sunnah and Hadith. The distinction is that the term Sunnah is more general compared to the term Hadith. Sunnah applies to the words, actions, tacit approvals, and validations of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as well as to the words and actions of the Companions. In contrast, Hadith is specific to the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). This opinion is prevalent among jurists and scholars of Islamic legal theory.

It is stated in *Noor-ul-Anwar*:

Sunnah applies to the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH),

³ Khateeb al-Baghdadi, *Al-Kifayah fi Ilm al-Riwayah*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub alIlmiyyah, 2000, p. 437.

⁴ *Fuqaha ke Usool-e-Hadith*, Dr. Baqir Khan Khakwani, p. 78.

his actions, and his silence, as well as to the sayings and actions of the noble Companions, whereas Hadith specifically refers to the sayings of the Messenger (PBUH).⁵

The third opinion is that Sunnah and Hadith are two different terminologies with distinct meanings and applications. Scholars have described the nature of this difference from various perspectives. According to most scholars, the nature of this difference is that Sunnah is a religious practice or method that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) established among his companions through his actions and which has been transferred to the Muslim community through continuous practice. In contrast, Hadith is the narration of the sayings and actions of the Prophet (PBUH) that has reached us through the method of solitary reports.

Syed Sulaiman Nadvi states:

Nowadays, people generally do not differentiate between Hadith and Sunnah, which leads to significant misunderstandings. Hadith refers to any narration related to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), whether it is an incident reported only once or narrated by a single person. However, Sunnah actually refers to the practice that has been transmitted through continuous consensus, meaning the Prophet (PBUH) himself performed it, then it was practiced by the Companions, and subsequently by the Successors. Even if it has been orally narrated in different ways, and thus may not be considered continuous as a narration, its practice is continuously observed. This continuous practice is termed as Sunnah.

No one can claim that the determination of the five times and the manner of prayer were established and popularized among Muslims due to Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Hanifa, or Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on them. This is the practice that would have

⁵ Mulla Jeevan al-Siddiqi, *Noor al-Anwar*, Karachi: Maktaba al-Bushra, 2008, p. 798.

*been established in the same way even if Bukhari or Muslim had not existed in the world. ...Even if, hypothetically, not even a page of hadith existed in the world, it would have continued in the same way. The writing and compilation of hadiths have established the undeniable historical status of this practice. ...Thus, there is a significant distinction between Sunnah and Hadith. Hadith merely holds the status of narration, and Sunnah is the name given to its practical continuity. ...The practical representation of the words of the Holy Qur'an presented by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the Sunnah, and this is essentially the practical interpretation of the Holy Qur'an, whose status is far superior to the literal narrations of the hadiths.*⁶

Maulana Maududi writes in *Tafheem-ul-Qur'an*:

*The term Hadith refers to those narrations concerning the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that have been transmitted with a chain of narration from earlier generations to later ones. The term Sunnah refers to the method that, through the verbal and practical teachings of the Prophet, became prevalent in the individual and collective life of the Muslim society. The details of this method were also passed down from one generation to the next through reliable narrations, and subsequent generations observed its implementation in the previous ones.*⁷

In his book *Fuqaha ke Usool-e-Hadith*, Dr. Baqar Khan Khakwani references Ali Hasan Abdul Qadir's work *Nazariyyah Aamah fi Tareekh al-Fiqh al-Islami* (A General Theory in the History of Islamic Jurisprudence) and Dr. Subhi Saleh's compilation *Uloom al-Hadith* (The Sciences of Hadith) and writes:

Contrary to the opinion of the hadith scholars, if we study these

⁶ Nadwi, Syed Sulaiman, *Monthly Ishraq*, Lahore, December 1996 edition, p. 32

⁷ Maududi, Syed Abul A'la, *Tafheem-ul-Quran*, Lahore, Vol. 6, p. 337

two words further, there appears to be a considerable difference between them. The meaning of the word 'hadith' is "that which has been issued by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)," whereas 'sunnah', regardless of whether there is a hadith concerning a specific injunction or not, refers to the religious conventions and practices that have been present among Muslims since early times. Furthermore, a rule that is present in a hadith is also called sunnah, just as Ahmad ibn Hanbal stated: "There are five sunnahs in this hadith." Therefore, the Prophet's noble words and the rules derived from them will be called sunnah. Consequently, it is not necessarily the case that sunnah agrees with hadith; rather, sunnah can also be in opposition to hadith. In light of this distinction in meaning between these two words, some hadith scholars sometimes express themselves by saying, "This hadith is against qiyas (analogical reasoning), sunnah, and ijma (consensus)." This manner of distinction clarifies that hadith is a theoretical and intellectual matter, whereas sunnah is a practical matter. However, the method for acquiring knowledge about both is the transmission of reports.⁸

Some scholars explain the difference between Hadith and Sunnah from the perspective of the source of *Shariah*. According to them, Sunnah holds the status of being a source of *Shariah*, whereas Hadith does not hold this status. Dr. Muhammad Baqir Khan Khakwani has cited this perspective with reference to the scholars of Islamic legal theory and jurists.

The term 'sunnah' is a comprehensive word according to scholars of Islamic legal theory and jurists. Therefore, they have considered it the second source in Islamic legal sources and have presented solutions to countless issues through it. According to them, any individual or group that does not consider the Sunnah as the second source of Islamic law is outside the fold of Islam. Moreover, a person who acknowledges this status but does not act

⁸ *Fuqaha ke Usool-e-Hadith*, Dr. Baqir Khan Khakwani, p. 57.

upon the Sunnah is called a 'Tark al-Sunnah,' meaning someone who abandons the Sunnah. This has been a reason that from ancient times to the present, most scholars have used the term 'Muhyi al-Sunnah' as a title with their names, meaning the reviver of the Sunnah, to prevent the mischief of denying the Sunnah and similar issues. In contrast, the term 'Hadith' has never been used by Islamic scholars as a legal source of Islam, nor have titles like 'Muhyi al-Hadith' or 'Muhyi al-Khabar' been used for any scholar in Islamic history. Furthermore, individuals or groups that do not consider any one or a few Hadiths as the words of the Prophet (PBUH) or those who abandon them have never been declared infidel.⁹

A representative scholar of the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought, Maulana Abdul Rehman Keelani, has established a chapter titled "The Difference Between Hadith and Sunnah" in his famous book *Aaina-e-Parveziyat*. Under this title, he has explained that there is a distinct technical difference between these two terms. He has highlighted this difference from four different aspects: lexicon, scope, authenticity, and quantity. He writes:

Since the vast reservoir of Hadith serves as a major source for Sunnah, these two terms are often understood to have the same meaning. However, from a technical perspective, there is a clear distinction between them. This difference can be observed in the following four aspects:

- 1. In terms of meanings and technical definition: The literal meaning of 'sunnah' is any established method or practice, whether it is good or bad. ... The literal meaning of 'Hadith' is 'speech,' as well as 'new speech.'*
- 2. In terms of the scope of meaning: Initially, the term Sunnah of the Messenger (PBUH), was generally applied to the sayings of the Messenger. Then, Sunnah came to include every action,*

⁹ *Fuqaha ke Usool-e-Hadith*, Dr. Baqir Khan Khakwani, p. 85.

deed, and silence of the Prophet. It further extended to everything that is in any aspect proven from the Messenger of Allah. Here, the scope of Sunnah concludes. However, the scope of Hadith is broader than this. It includes the sayings and actions of the Companions and the Followers (Tabi'un) as well.

3. In Terms of Authenticity and Inaccuracy: Concerning the Sunnah of the Messenger (PBUH), only two statements can be made: either it is the Sunnah of the Messenger or it is not. Hadiths have multiple classifications: some are Sahih (authentic), some Hasan (good), some Da'if (weak), some Mawdu' (fabricated), some Matrook (abandoned), and so on. However, we cannot say about a Sunnah of the Messenger that it is authentic, good, weak, fabricated, etc. The Sunnah of the Messenger can only be called that which is proven correct through possible human means.

4. In Terms of Quantity: The fourth difference between Sunnah and Hadith in terms of quantity is that the Prophet's words, Innama al-a'maalu bin-niyyaat (Indeed, actions are based on intentions) are his Sunnat-e-Qawli (verbal Sunnah). This verbal Sunnah has been transmitted through approximately 700 different chains. Therefore, while this is a single Sunnah, in terms of Hadith, it accounts for 700 hadiths. This is why the number of hadiths increases exponentially when counted through different chains of transmission (isnaad). When it is said that Imam Bukhari memorized 600,000 hadiths, this actually refers to different chains of transmission, while the actual number of reports (akhbar and athar) is significantly lower. Similarly, a single Hadith may mention multiple Sunnah.¹⁰

Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi also believes in a clear distinction between these two terms. His fundamental stance is the same as mentioned above with references to some other scholars. He asserts that Sunnah

¹⁰ Maulana Abdul Rahman Keelani, *Aaina-e-Parveziyat*, Lahore, p. 554.

refers to those religious customs or practices instituted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and conveyed to the community through practical continuity. In contrast, Hadith applies to the narration of the Prophet's sayings, actions, silent approvals, and validations that have reached us through solitary reports. In *Mabadi Tadabbur-e-Hadith*, he writes:

People generally consider Hadith and Sunnah to be completely synonymous. This notion is incorrect. There is a vast difference between Hadith and Sunnah, akin to the difference between the heavens and the earth, and their status and position in religion are distinct. Considering them synonymous leads to significant complexities. To understand Hadith correctly, it is essential to clearly comprehend the difference between the two. Hadith refers to the report of any saying, action, or approval of the Prophet (PBUH), whether it is established or its authenticity is disputed. Sunnah is the method shown by the Prophet (PBUH), both as a teacher of Shariah and as the perfect example, for the performance of commands and rituals, and for molding life according to the format preferred by Allah Almighty.¹¹

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi believes in the clear distinction between the terms Hadith and Sunnah while remaining within the overall scope of their application. As far as our understanding goes, this distinction is based on three aspects:

1. From the aspect of origin, explanation, and derivation
2. From the aspect of propogation
3. From the aspect of authenticity

Difference from the aspect of origin, explanation, and derivation

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, Sunnah is the collection of

¹¹ Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Mabadi Tadabbur-e-Hadith*, Lahore: Faran Foundation, 2008, pp. 19-24

independent rulings of the religion. That is, the rulings which are original in nature, and not explanations, derivations, or clarifications. In contrast, Hadith is not a collection of independent religious rulings, but rather an explanation, derivation, or clarification of the independent rulings mentioned in the Qur'an or established in the Sunnah. He has stated:

The Prophet (PBUH) gave the Qur'an to the world. Apart from this, the things that he gave to the world in terms of religion are fundamentally three:

1. Independent rulings and guidance that did not originate from the Qur'an

2. Explanation and clarification of the independent rulings and guidance, whether they are in the Qur'an or outside the Qur'an

3. Practical Demonstration of the implementation of these rulings and guidance

These three things are part of the faith and every Muslim is obligated to acknowledge and act upon them. Once assured of their attribution to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), no believer can dare to deviate from them. It is only fitting for him that if he wishes to live and die as a Muslim, he should submit to them without any hesitation.

Our scholars use the same term 'sunnah' for all three. I do not find this appropriate. In my view, the term Sunnah should be used for the first, 'tafheem wa tabyeen' (understanding and explanation) for the second, and 'Uswa-e-Hasana' (excellent example) for the third. The purpose of this distinction is to eliminate the confusion that arises when both the original (Asl) and the derivative (Far'a) are placed under the same title and

treated at the same level.¹²

The necessary consequence of this distinction is that the Qur'an and Sunnah are considered the primary sources of religion, while Hadith assumes the role of their explanation and subsidiary status. It is through the Qur'an and Sunnah that beliefs and practices are added to religion, but such an addition does not occur through Hadith.

There should be no feeling of strangeness or unfamiliarity with this distinction between the 'original' and the 'explanation and derivative', because accepting Hadith as an explanation and derivative is an established part of our scholarly tradition. Scholars from both the early and later generations have positioned Hadith and Sunnah collectively in the place of explanation of the Qur'an, meaning interpretation and derivation, as well as comprehension and clarification. Imam Shatibi, articulating this as a principle, writes:

"Sunnah, in its meaning, ultimately refers back to the Book (Qur'an). It serves as a clarification of the general statements in the Qur'an, an explanation of what is ambiguous, and a detailed elaboration of what is concise. This is because Sunnah is essentially the exposition of the Qur'an. Therefore, you will not find anything in the Sunnah whose meaning is not already indicated by the Qur'an—whether this indication is general (ijmali) or detailed (tafseeli).

Difference in the aspect of propagation and authenticity

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi differentiates between Hadith and Sunnah from the perspectives of propagation and authenticity. According to him, Sunnah was established by the Prophet (PBUH) with great diligence and was actively implemented by him within the Ummah. It has been transmitted to us through *Ijma* (consensus) and *Tawatur*

¹² Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, *Maqamat*, Lahore: Al-Mawrid, 2014, p. 150

(uninterrupted continuous transmission), which makes its authenticity definitive, just like the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not give any particular emphasis to the propagation of Hadith, Instead, hadiths has reached us through solitary reports, making its authenticity probable rather than definitive. Based on this distinction, he holds the view that Sunnah constitutes the core of the religion, whereas Hadith does not contain the core of the religion but rather serves as its explanation and derivative. He writes:

Sunnah ... it is absolutely certain that in terms of authenticity, there is no difference between it and the Qur'an. Just as the Qur'an is received through the consensus of the Companions and perpetual recitation, Sunnah is similarly received through their consensus and perpetual practice, and like the Qur'an, it is proven by the consensus of Muslims in every era. Therefore, there is no room for any debate or dispute regarding it. ... The reports of the sayings, actions, and tacits approvals of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) which are generally known as 'Hadith,' the undeniable fact about them is that he never made any special arrangement for their propagation and preservation, but rather left it to those who heard and saw them to choose whether they pass them on or not. Therefore, they do not add any new doctrine or practice to the religion. The matters related to religion that appear in them are, in fact, the explanation and clarification of the very same religion confined within the Qur'an and Sunnah, and a demonstration of the excellent example of the Prophet (PBUH) for acting upon it. The scope of Hadith in this matter is precisely this. Consequently, no matter can be considered part of Islam if it lies outside this defined scope, nor can anything be accepted solely on the basis of Hadith if it does not align with this principle.¹³

¹³ Al-Shatibi, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Musa, *Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shari'ah* (Translated by: Maulana Abdul Rahman Keelani), Lahore: Dayal Singh Trust Library, 2006, 44/10

It is an established principle in our scholarly tradition to differentiate between the contents of Hadith and Sunnah based on evidence and means of transmission, and to classify them into two categories. Imam Ibn Abdul Barr, while conveying the stance of the scholars of the Ummah on this matter, writes:

There are two types of Sunnah: One type is that which all people transmit from generation to generation. That which is transmitted in this manner, where there is no disagreement, holds the status of definitive proof. Therefore, a person who does not accept the consensus of these transmitters is denying one of Allah's texts. It becomes obligatory upon such a person to repent, and if he does not repent, then his blood is permissible (i.e., they are liable for capital punishment). This is because he has deviated from the consensus position of the just Muslims and has chosen a path separate from their agreed-upon method. The second type of Sunnah is that which is transmitted by trustworthy, reliable individuals among the singular narrators, with uninterrupted transmission. According to the esteemed group of the eminent scholars of the Ummah, such a Sunnah makes practice obligatory, while some among them believe it obliges both knowledge and practice.

After this brief clarification of the difference between Hadith and Sunnah, the question now is: What is the reality of Sunnah from the perspective of historical authenticity? In Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's view, its essence lies in the tradition of Abrahamic religion, which the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) established as religion after renewing and reforming it, along with his additions. He writes:

Our reference to 'sunnah' is the tradition of the Abrahamic faith, which the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established among his followers as part of the religion after its renewal and reform, and with certain additions. In the Qur'an, he is commanded to follow the Abrahamic way. This tradition is also a part of that.

In this regard, to understand Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's position, it is essential to reflect on the following two questions:

1. On what basis do the components of Sunnah attain the status of being part of the religion?

The answer, according to the scholars of the early generations is that the various components of Sunnah derive their religious status from the implementation and approval of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Javed Ahmed Ghamidi also holds exactly the same position. He writes:

The religion that has been received through the Sunnah is largely composed of the renewal and reform of the Abrahamic religion. All scholars and researchers agree on this. However, this does not mean that the Prophet (PBUH) only made minor additions to it. Absolutely not. Rather, he also introduced independent rulings. Anyone who wishes can see examples of this in 'Meezan.' The same is true for the Qur'an. The details of the rulings in religion that originated from it are elaborated on in nearly three hundred pages of 'Meezan.' I consider accepting and acting on each of these injunctions a fundamental requirement of faith, and therefore, the allegation, according to me view, is utterly baseless that introducing any new ruling or adding something new to religion beyond what is already existing and recognized is not in the scope of the Prophet (PBUH) or the Holy Qur'an.

2. What is the background of religious practices such as prayer, fasting, Hajj, Zakah, sacrifice, marriage, circumcision, and funeral rites, and some other similar elements of faith? To whom are they historically attributed?

As for the scholars of the Ummah, they do not bring up this question at all in the context of the definition and interpretation of the Sunnah. However, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi links these elements to the divine command given to the Prophet (PBUH) which is stated in Surah An-Nahl in these words:

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا سَحِمَ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ.

Then [it is precisely because of this that] We sent this revelation to you: Follow this way of Abraham who was fully devoted and was not among the polytheists. (16:123)

From the perspective of defining Sunnah, the difference between Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and the scholars of the Ummah is well acknowledged. However, if we abstract ourselves from the discussion of definitions and investigate the historical attribution of the Sunnahs, it becomes evident that the learned scholars accept the fact that many of the ordinances instituted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are based on the authentic traditions of the Abrahamic faith. The most significant reference in this matter is of Shah Waliullah. In his renowned book *Hujjatullah al-Baligha*, regarding the background of the Islamic faith, he has explained that there has always been one fundamental religion. All the prophets have fundamentally taught similar beliefs and similar practices. However, in terms of the ordinances of the Shariah and the methods of their observance, there have been differences owing to the necessities of circumstances. In the Arabian Peninsula, when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent, the state of this religion was such that, as a result of centuries of practice, its ordinances had assumed the status of religious certainties and were fully recognized as the community of Abraham. Nonetheless, certain ordinances had been subject to distortions and innovations. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was instructed: *Ittabi' millata Ibrahima hanifan* meaning, follow the community of Abraham in pure faith. He adhered to this guidance by upholding the well-known ordinances of this community, eradicating innovations, and restoring the distorted ordinances to their original form. Shah Waliullah writes:

The true religion is one, and all the prophets, peace be upon them, have preached it. Any differences, if they exist, are only in laws and methodologies... Therefore, you will see that in the Qur'an, these matters are presented as accepted truths of the audience, and their reasoning (justification and explanation) is not discussed. If there are differences among various religions, they pertain only to the details, particulars, and methods of

performing these commandments.

He has expressed the same concept regarding the *Millat-e-Ibrahimi* at another place in these words:

Allah Almighty sent the Prophet (PBUH) to correct the deviations in the Hanifi Ismaili faith and to remove the alterations that had occurred within it, so as to restore it to its original form. Hence, the expressions: Millata abikum Ibrahima (and Ittabi' millata Ibrahima hanifan) indicate this reality. Therefore, it was essential to preserve the principles of the Abrahamic faith, considering them as established truths. Similarly, if any changes had not occurred in the practices established by Prophet Abraham (PBUH), they were to be followed. When a prophet is sent to a nation, the righteous traditions of the previous prophet's laws remain preserved to some extent. Altering these is not only unnecessary but meaningless. The proper course is to make them obligatory to follow because those people who already regard those righteous traditions with respect will more easily accept the obligation. If someone tries to deviate from them, they can be more easily convinced because those traditions are already part of their accepted beliefs.

It is also entirely acknowledged among scholars that the practices of Abrahamic faith were prevalent among the Arabs before Islam. Accordingly, Shah Waliullah has stated that the Arabs were following the commands of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, almsgiving, retreat, sacrifice, circumcision, ablution, bathing, marriage, and burial as aspects of the Abrahamic tradition. For these commands, Shah Sahab has used the expressions 'sunnah' (tradition), 'sunan Mu'akada' (emphasized traditions), 'sunnah al-Anbiya' (traditions of the prophets), and 'sha'air al-Millah al-Hanifiyyah' (symbols of the Abrahamic community).

It was well known among all the Arabs that human perfection and bliss were achieved by completely entrusting both the outward and inward aspects of oneself to Allah Almighty and

exerting utmost effort in His worship. They considered purity as an integral part of worship, and bathing due to impurity was their practice. Circumcision and other natural dispositions were adhered to by them. In the Torah, it is written that Allah Almighty established circumcision as a mark of identity for Abraham and his progeny. The practice of ablution was prevalent among Jews, Zoroastrians, and others, and the Arab sages also engaged in ablution and prayer. Three years before Abu Dharr al-Ghifari embraced Islam, when he had not yet had the opportunity to meet the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he used to perform prayers. Similarly, it is narrated about Quss ibn Sa'idah al-Iyadi that he used to perform prayers. Regarding the manner in which the Jews, Zoroastrians, and the Arabs performed their prayers, it is known that their prayers consisted of acts of reverence, with prostration being the major component. Supplication and remembrance were also parts of the prayer. Besides the prayers, other religious ordinances were also in practice among them, such as Zakah, etc. From the break of dawn until sunset, abstaining from eating, drinking, and sexual relations was considered fasting. Thus, in the age of ignorance, the Quraysh were committed to fasting on the day of Ashura. They also regarded seclusion for worship as significant. The saying of Umar (RA) is recorded in the hadith books that during the time of ignorance, he had vowed to observe seclusion for a day and sought the Prophet's guidance regarding its ruling. It is widely known that year after year, thousands of people from various tribes used to come from far and wide to perform the pilgrimage to the Kaaba. They also considered slaughtering and sacrificing animals as essential. They did not strangle or tear apart the animal. Similarly, the sanctity of the sacred months was established among them. ...Certain emphatic traditions of the religion were prevalent, and those who neglected them were deemed deserving of reproach. These refer to the etiquettes and instructions related to eating and drinking, clothing, Eid and Walimah celebrations, marriage and divorce, waiting period and mourning, buying and selling, and the rites of preparing

and shrouding the deceased, which have been transmitted from Abraham and were part of the Shariah brought by him. They adhered to all these practices. They regarded marriage to one's mother, sister, and other prohibited relations as forbidden, as mentioned in the Qur'an. They acted upon the Abrahamic injunctions concerning retaliation, blood money, and oaths, and punishments were prescribed for adultery and theft.

The tradition of slaughtering and ritual sacrifice is a practice inherited from the prophets (peace be upon them)... Slaughtering and ritual sacrifice are among the symbols of the true religion and serve as a means to distinguish between those who follow the Hanif (monotheistic) way and those who do not. Therefore, this is also a tradition similar to circumcision and other natural customs. When the Messenger of God (PBUH) was graced with the mantle of prophethood and sent to the world for guidance, this Abrahamic tradition was preserved in his religion as a symbol of the Hanifi faith.

Regarding the Sunnah of circumcision, Imam Ibn Qayyim has written that its tradition continued uninterrupted from the time of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) to the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent to complete and confirm the religion of Ibrahim.

Those who consider circumcision obligatory state that it is a symbol of the Abrahamic faith, a hallmark of Islam, an original aspect of nature, and a defining feature of the community. ... Those who follow the Abrahamic faith have consistently adhered to this practice from the era of their leader, Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH), to the time of the Seal of the Prophets, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent to perfect and confirm the Abrahamic faith, not to alter or change it.

In modern times, Dr. Jawad Ali, a researcher of pre-Islamic history, in his book *Al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam* has

documented almost all those practices as the religion of Abraham (PBUH) that Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has compiled in the list of traditions in his book *Meezan*. In this context, the author has clarified that practices such as prayer, fasting, *I'tikaf*, Hajj and Umrah, sacrifice, the slaughtering of animals, circumcision, keeping the moustache trimmed, cutting the pubic hair, cleaning the armpit hair, cutting long nails, cleaning of the nose, mouth, and teeth, ritual purity, bathing of the dead, preparing for burial, and burial itself were prevalent as traditions of the Abrahamic religion, and the Arabs, especially the Quraysh, adhered to them.

From this explanation, it is clear that:

Firstly, the determination and classification of the components of religion have always been an ongoing process among the scholars, and within this domain, differences in terminology among them are well-known and well-established.

Secondly, the distinction between the terms Hadith and Sunnah from various perspectives is as clear as daylight within the disciplines of Hadith and Fiqh.

Thirdly, in essence, this is merely a difference in terminology, and as a result, it does not bring about any alteration, modification, or addition to the universally agreed-upon components of religion.

Fourthly, establishing a distinction in the meanings and connotations of the terms Hadith and Sunnah does not, in any way, cast doubt upon their authoritative nature.

[January 2018]



Additional Responsibilities of Messengers Over Prophets

[Derived from the contents of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's compositions Al-Bayan and Mizan]

The task assigned to the Prophets of Allah, as per the terminology of the Qur'an, is warning and giving good tidings. This means that they receive revelation from the heavens to inform people of the truth, delivering glad tidings of a good outcome in the Hereafter to those who believe, and warning those who deny about the consequences of a bad outcome. It has been stated:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً طَلَمِي قَبَعَتْ اللهُ النَّبِيْنَ مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ.

Mankind was just a single community. Then [differences arose between them. So,] God sent forth prophets as bearers of glad tidings and as warners, (2:213)

Adam, Idris, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Elias, David, Solomon, Zachariah, and John, peace be upon them, are counted among these prophets.

Among the prophets, certain individuals are appointed by Allah Almighty to the position of Messengers. Their role is not limited to warning and giving glad tidings; rather, they go beyond this by establishing the dominance of truth in practice. It is as if they come as the court of God, executing the judgment of reward and punishment upon their addressees in this world before departing. It is stated in Surah Yunus:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ تَجْمَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُوْلُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ.

[His law is that] for every nation there is a messenger. Then,

when their messenger comes their fate is justly decided and no injustice is done to them. (10:47)

In Surah Al-Mujadila, it is stated:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذْلَلِينَ. كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْلَيْنَا
وَرُسُلِي شَحْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ.

[You should know that] those who show enmity to God and His Messenger, it is they who shall be humiliated the most. This is because God has decreed: "I and My Messengers are destined to be dominant." In reality, God is extremely Powerful and very Mighty. (58:20-21)

Noah, Hud, Salih, Abraham, Lut, Yunus, Shu'ayb, Moses, and Jesus, peace be upon them, are included in the category of messengers. The Prophet of the end of times, Muhammad (PBUH), was also vested with the office of messenger. Thus, Allah expressed his designated duty in these words:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ
كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ.

It is He who has sent forth His Messenger with guidance and the true religion so that He may make it prevail over all religions [of this land], however much these Idolaters may dislike it. (61:9)

In the chapter on Messengers, how the implementation of this Sunnah of Allah occurs, has been explained in detail by my esteemed teacher in his book *Meezan*:

The form it takes is that Allah Almighty selects these Messengers for the manifestation of His judgment, and then, before the Day of Judgment, a minor judgment is established in this very world through them. They are informed that if they remain steadfast on their covenant with God, they will be rewarded, and if they deviate, they will face punishment in this world itself. As a result, their existence becomes a sign of God for the people, and it is as if they see God walking and judging on earth with them. Along with this, they are commanded to preach the truth they

have witnessed with their own eyes and to convey God's guidance to the people with complete fidelity and decisiveness. According to the terminology of the Qur'an, this is 'witnessing.' Once this is established, it becomes the basis for God's judgment in both this world and the Hereafter. Consequently, Allah grants dominance to these Messengers and inflicts His punishment upon the deniers of their message. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is called 'shahid' (witness) and 'shabeed' (one who bears witness) in the Qur'an for this very reason. It is stated:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا قَمِمْ شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا.

To you [O Quraysh of Makkah!] We have sent forth a Messenger as a witness to you just as We had sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. (73:15)

(Meezan 73-72)

The responsibility of bearing witness upon the messengers of Allah necessitates certain specific stages of invitation. These stages also have some inevitable outcomes, which invariably emanate from Allah. There are a total of five stages. A brief description of these is as follows.

The first stage is warning (inzar). This means warning people about their fate. Prophets of God only warn of the punishment of the Day of Judgment, but Messengers of God also alert to the punishment that descends in this world upon those who persist in rebellion against their call. In the words of the esteemed teacher:

They inform their nation that they have been sent to bring about a minor judgement day on earth. When God's proof is fulfilled through their call, their nation will inevitably witness the consequences of their rebellion in this very world. (Meezan 536)

The second stage is 'Public Warning'. This is a continuation of the first stage. The only difference is that in this stage, the Messenger of Allah is commanded to advance his message from private gatherings

to openly and publicly present it before the entire nation.

The third stage is ‘Completion of Argument’ (itmam-e-hujjat). This refers to the point at which the continuous invitation of the Messenger and the manifestation of divine signs make the presented truths as clear as daylight. The addressees no longer have any excuse, response, evidence, or argument for denying them. This is the moment which is termed “completion of argument“ in the terminology. This means:

What is being presented should become so clear that nothing but stubbornness, obstinacy, or animosity could lead a person to its denial. In this, it is evident that with God’s judgment, the style, reasoning, discourse, and the personality, attributes, knowledge, and actions of the Messenger, everything becomes effective, to the extent that the matter becomes as bright as the sun shining in the open sky. Hence, at this point, the prophet also makes the fate of his audience quite clear and adopts a tone of final warning in the invitation. (Meezan 540)

The fourth stage is ‘Migration and Exoneration.’ When the evidence is fully presented to the addressees of the Messenger, this stage arrives. In this stage, the Messenger announces the indictment for the denial to his people and declares his disassociation from them. Following this, depending on the circumstances, it is conveyed from Allah that the period of respite for the people has ended and the time for their reward and punishment has arrived. If the people are determined in their denial, the Prophet is commanded to migrate.

The fifth and final stage is ‘Reward and Punishment.’ In this stage, reward is given to the believers and punishment is enforced on the disbelievers. This reward and punishment is from Allah, and it is given according to His command and at the time specified by Him. Regarding its nature and its various forms, the esteemed teacher has written:

In this, the court of the heavens is established on earth, manifesting God’s judgment, and a minor day of judgement

occurs for the nation of the Messenger. The history of the warnings of the prophets, as stated in the Qur'an, indicates that generally, two scenarios arise at this juncture: one is that the Messenger's companions are very few in number, and he does not have any place of migration available. The second scenario is that he departs with a considerable number of his companions, and before his departure, Allah provides him with a land where he can live and settle with freedom and stability. In both scenarios, the divine practice related to the Messengers, as mentioned in the Qur'an, inevitably comes into effect:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ تَجْمَعُ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ.

[His law is that] for every nation there is a messenger. Then, when their messenger comes their fate is justly decided and no injustice is done to them. (47:10)

In the first scenario, after the Messenger departs from his people—whether through death or migration—a decree is issued in such a manner that the armies of the heavens descend, storms of devastation arise, and the forces of clouds and winds attack the nation so thoroughly that none of the Messenger's adversaries remain on the earth. However, this matter is specific to those whom the Qur'an describes with the term *mushrikeen* (polytheists). As for those who are inherently connected to monotheism, this dealing does not occur with them. The principle regarding them is that instead of their annihilation, a punishment of humiliation and subjugation is imposed upon them. It is thus known that this was the case with the Israelites, whereas the people of Noah, the people of Hud, the people of Salih, the people of Lot, the people of Shu'ayb, and some other similar nations were exterminated from the earth.

The same law applies to the second scenario, but in this instance, the decision for punishment is implemented by the swords of the Messenger and his companions. In this case, it is evident that the

nation is given some respite. During this period, the Messenger completes the conclusive argumentation with the people in place of migration, trains and purifies those who have believed in him, organizes them for this battle between truth and falsehood, and consolidates his authority in the abode of migration to such an extent that with its support he can accomplish the eradication of the deniers and the victory of the people of truth. (Mizan 543-544)

[January 2023]



Basic Principles of Debate and Reasoning in Religion

This question is of great significance: What principles should serve as the foundation for understanding, discussion, reasoning, and agreement or disagreement in religious discourse? In our view, two fundamental principles hold primary importance in this regard. These are reason (*Aql*) and transmitted knowledge (*Naql*), both of which serve as decisive authorities in the comprehension of religion and *Shari'ah*. The principles are as follows:

1. The Qur'an is 'Meezan' and 'Furqan'

In religion, the Qur'an holds the status of the scale (*mizan*) and the criterion (*furqan*). This means that in all matters related to religion, it possesses decisive authority. Therefore, every statement, every narration, and every opinion from Hadiths and traditions, history and biography, jurisprudence and exegesis will be weighed on its scale and tested against its criterion. Only that will be acceptable which it accepts. Whatever the Qur'an rejects will not be accepted as part of religion or as its interpretation and explanation.

To adhere to this principle, it is essential that Hadith be understood in the light of the Qur'an, and if anything within it contradicts the Qur'an and Sunnah, it should not be accepted. Esteemed teacher Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes:

...In religion, its status is that of the scale and the criterion. It is the overseer of everything and has been sent down as a deciding authority to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Therefore, it requires no further argument that anything against the Qur'an must necessarily be rejected. The ultimate and definitive source of the history of what the Prophet (PBUH) did in his capacity as a Prophet and Messenger is also the Qur'an. Hence, most of the

content of Hadith is related to it in the way that a branch is related to its root, and an explanation is related to the main text. It is obvious that understanding an explanation or a branch without referring to the original text or root is not possible in any way. If we meticulously review the mistakes made so far in understanding Hadith, this truth becomes clearly evident. The incidents of stoning during the Prophetic era, the killing of Ka'ab bin Ashraf, the narrations of the punishment of the grave and intercession, commands such as *Umirtu an uqātīla an-nās* (I have been commanded to fight the people) and *Man baddala dīnahu faqtulūh* (Whoever changes his religion, kill him) have caused confusion precisely because attempts were not made to understand them in relation to their root in the Qur'an. (Meezan 63, 65)

2. The Holy Qur'an was revealed in clear Arabic language

The Qur'an was revealed in clear and lucid Arabic language. There is no complexity, ambiguity, peculiarity, or strangeness in its words and styles. It presents its message with complete clarity, which poses no difficulty for scholars to understand.

The esteemed teacher has written in *Meezan*:

...The Qur'an was revealed not only in Arabic but in clear Arabic—meaning a language that is extremely explicit, without any ambiguity, where every word is clear and every style is familiar to its audience. It is stated:

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ. عَلَيَّ قُلُوبَكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِينَ. بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ.

The Trusted Spirit has brought it down to your heart so that you also become a warner like other prophets, in very lucid Arabic. (26: 193-195)

فُرِئْنَا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عَوْجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

In the form of a Qur'an that is in Arabic in which there is no flaw so that they can be secure from God's torment. (39:28)

This is a clear fact about the Qur'an. If one acknowledges it, then as a necessary consequence, it must be accepted that no word or style in the Qur'an can be rare or obscure in terms of its meaning. It was revealed using words and styles that were completely well-known and familiar to its audience. In terms of language, nothing in it contains any kind of peculiarity, but rather, it is clear and evident in every aspect. Therefore, in its translation and interpretation, the known meanings of its words should be kept in mind at all times. Any interpretation deviating from these cannot be accepted under any circumstances. (20-21)

In our traditional schools of thought, many misunderstandings stem from the avoidance of principles concerning reason and transmitted knowledge. The unequivocally authenticated and definitive texts of the Qur'an are considered subsidiary, while the conjecturally authenticated and probable texts of the Hadith are taken as primary. Instead of understanding Hadith in the light of the Qur'an, the Qur'an is interpreted in the light of the Hadith. The same issue arises with well-known Arabic words and styles. Sometimes they are taken away from their established meanings and attributed with rare and unfamiliar interpretations. This erroneous approach to knowledge and thought and the inverted order of comprehension and reasoning compromise the status of the Qur'an as a scale and criterion. Established linguistic norms are disregarded, and such an interpretation is conveyed which, in certain aspects, results in opposition or contradiction to the overarching goals of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

[May 2023]



Authority to Issue Fatwas

[Excerpt from a conversation with Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

The word ‘fatwa’ is used in two contexts: first, when a scholar expresses their opinion on a religious matter, and second, when a religious scholar issues a legal ruling concerning a specific incident. For some time now, our scholars have predominantly used the word in the second context. As a result, the use of the word in the sense of opinion or viewpoint has become almost obsolete. Consequently, fatwa is now understood to mean the issuance of a definitive ruling on a particular issue or incident by scholars. Scholars issue fatwas in this capacity, and the general public accepts them in this regard. In this situation, we perceive that several issues arise.

The first issue that arises is that the authority for legislation and administrative decisions related to religion and Sharia falls into the hands of those who are not legally authorized. In matters such as whether a divorce has occurred between a husband and wife, whether their marriage is still valid or annulled, or whether the moon for Ramadan or Eid has been sighted, these and many other matters that are entirely related to the judiciary and administration end up in the hands of unrelated individuals as a result of the issuance of fatwas by scholars.

The second issue that arises is that the concept of the supremacy of law is undermined, and tendencies towards lawlessness are strengthened among people. The reason for this is that law inherently demands enforcement. If it is deprived of enforcement, its status is reduced to merely an opinion or a viewpoint. A decree or law issued by an unauthorized individual lacks the enforcement power of the government. There is no fear of any punishment for violating it. Consequently, if a decree does not align with the preferences of the

addressee, they often refuse to accept it. In this manner, the decree or law is rendered ineffective. In an environment like this, citizens tend to develop a disdain for the law, and as soon as they get the opportunity, they unabashedly violate it.

The third issue that arises is that if attempts are made to enforce decisions issued by unauthorized individuals, there is a severe risk of disorder and anarchy in the country. When efforts are made to implement legal decisions issued by unauthorized persons without governmental support, it practically announces that the source of law and authority has changed. For example, when a religious scholar issues a fatwa stating that it is the responsibility of Muslims to demolish cinemas and TV stations, or that jihad has become obligatory against a particular nation, or that a divorce given by one person is valid while another's is not, or that a certain person or group has lost its Islamic identity, he is essentially issuing a legal verdict. In other words, he is announcing the formation of a separate state within the state. The result of this is nothing but chaos and anarchy. This is why in areas where the grip of the government is weak, such decisions are implemented, and the government remains helpless.

The fourth issue that arises is that different and contradictory religious edicts come to the forefront due to various religious sects concerning the same matter. It is a common occurrence in our daily lives that certain scholars of religion consider a particular group as infidels, while others regard them as Muslims. If a person utter the words of divorce thrice on one occasion, some scholars rule it as a single divorce, allowing for reconciliation, while others consider it as three divorces, rendering reconciliation invalid. This situation creates extreme difficulties for an ordinary person.

The fifth issue arises when rulers do not have a particular interest in religion and Shariah. In such a situation, they do not focus on legislation in the light of Shariah. They compromise with this method of law-making on the principle of 'things are going on'. As a result, governmental institutions adopt a careless attitude toward necessary legislation, and laws remain deprived of their natural evolution.

The sixth issue that arises is the possibility of disrespect towards the prevailing law and the courts. When the courts deliver their verdict on a matter and the scholars deem it invalid and issue a contrary decision, it undermines the dignity of the courts. This means that a citizen has stood up to challenge the judiciary.

In the present era, a significant tragedy faced by the Muslim community is that its scholars are adamant about fulfilling responsibilities they are not obligated to, rather than their actual responsibilities. According to the Qur'an and Sunnah, the primary responsibility of scholars is to engage in *dawah* (calling to Islam), *tableegh* (preaching), warning and giving glad tidings, and education and research. Their role is not in politics but rather to inform politicians with guidance from the faith; their role is not governance but to strive for the rectification of rulers; their role is not *jihad* and combat but to teach about jihad and awaken the spirit of *jihad*. Similarly, their task is not legislation and issuing fatwas, but rather research and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). In other words, they are to conduct research to understand the meaning of the Qur'anic text, determine the intent of the established Sunnah, and ascertain the purpose of the Prophet's sayings. In matters where the Qur'an and Sunnah are silent, they should establish opinions based on independent reasoning through their intellect and insight. When the judiciary or parliament accepts any research or *ijtihad* of theirs, it will become law. Before this, its status will merely be that of an opinion, and thus it should be presented as such.

This means that no ruling will be made, no decision will be announced, no fatwa will be issued; rather, a student's tone will be adopted, presenting one's viewpoint purely based on knowledge and reasoning. It will not be said that a particular person is an infidel, but if necessary, it will be stated that a certain belief of a specific person is *kufr*. It will not be claimed that a certain person has exited the fold of Islam, but it will be stated that a particular viewpoint of a specific person does not fall within the boundaries of Islam. It will not be said that a person is a polytheist, but it will be specified that a certain idea or practice is *shirk*. It will not be asserted that the three divorces given at one time

by a husband have taken effect; rather, it will be said that three divorces given at one time should be considered as taking effect.

Issuing judgments, pronouncing decisions, formulating laws, and issuing fatwas are, in truth, the work of the judiciary and the government. Any attempt by a religious scholar or any unauthorized individual to perform this task is a clear transgression. During the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphate, this principle was always observed. Shah Waliullah writes in his book *Izalat al-Khafa*:

Until that time, sermons and fatwas were dependent on the opinion of the Caliph. Without the Caliph's order, neither were sermons delivered nor fatwas issued. Later on, sermons began to be delivered and fatwas issued without the Caliph's order, and the process of consultation with the council (Majlis-e-Shura) that previously existed in the matter of fatwas did not remain. (In those times) when a contentious issue arose, the matter was presented to the Caliph, who, after consulting with people of knowledge and piety, would establish an opinion, and that would become the collective opinion of all. After the martyrdom of Uthman (RA), every scholar began issuing fatwas independently, and in this way, differences arose among Muslims.

(Reference: Islami Riyasat Mein Fiqhi Ikhtilafat ka Hal, Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, pp. 32-33)

[February 2001]



The Necessity and Importance of Ijtihad

*Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Discussion in the "Awan-e-Waqt"
Assembly Debate of the Daily "Nawa-i-Waqt"*

In the present era, our academic circles have begun to use the term 'Ijtihad' (independent reasoning) incorrectly. Generally, I have observed that when people use this term concerning certain religious injunctions and some directives of Shariah, their intention is that due to the evolution of civilization and changes over time, the application of these injunctions and directives has become impossible. Therefore, they believe that through ijthad, efforts should be made to adapt them to the demands of the present age. My perception is that this issue stems from a lack of understanding of the term 'Ijtihad'.

The word 'Ijtihad' originates from a well-known narration attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), based on a conversation with Mu'adh ibn Jabal (RA). When the Prophet (PBUH) appointed Sayyidina Mu'adh ibn Jabal (RA) as the governor of Yemen, he asked him, "How will you make decisions?" He replied, "I will decide according to the guidance in the Book of Allah." The Prophet inquired again, "If you do not find guidance in the Book of Allah, then what will you do?" He responded, "Then I will turn to the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (PBUH)." The Prophet further asked, "If you do not find the guidance there as well, then what?" He replied, "*Ajtabidu bi-ra'yi wa la alu juhdan.*" meaning, "I will make the utmost effort to form my opinion and will not spare any endeavor." The Prophet (PBUH) then said, "Praise is to Allah, who has guided you to say what is pleasing to Allah's Messenger."

This is the very tradition that led to the use of the term 'Ijtihad' in our jurisprudence and law. If we consider this source, ijthad does not

mean altering the religious commands according to the times. Instead, it refers to forming an opinion in the light of reason and nature on matters where the Qur'an and Sunnah are silent. This is the correct meaning of *ijtihad*. Scholars should elucidate this meaning and dispel the misconception that allows even a layperson to claim that a certain punishment mentioned in the Qur'an or a certain directive of the Prophet (PBUH) is no longer applicable in the modern age, and thus should be subjected to *ijtihad*.

The commands that Allah Almighty has given us through the Holy Qur'an and the guidance that the Prophet (PBUH) has provided through his Sunnah are not subjects for *ijtihad*, but rather subjects for contemplation. This means that one must strive to understand the true intent behind any command in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It will be examined whether people have wrongly determined the intent of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Any shortcomings in research will be identified, and errors in interpretation will be clarified. However, all these efforts will be aimed at reaching the true intent of the religion, not for making any changes or alterations in it.

There are two realms in Sharia regarding the affairs of life:

There is one domain that pertains to the interactions between Allah Almighty and His servants. This domain encompasses matters of servitude and worship. In this, Shariah has legislated to the utmost degree. In these devotional matters, Shariah does not permit humans to introduce anything from their side. If a directive has been given in these matters, it must be followed. If something has been prohibited, it must be avoided. Taking even one step beyond the defined edicts of this domain will be deemed innovation and misguidance. Hence, the declaration of the Qur'an that the religion has reached its perfection in every respect necessitates that there should be no interference in these matters.

The second domain pertains to matters between human beings. This includes matters of politics, economics, society, etiquette, as well as prescribed punishments. In all these matters, the Sharia has commanded the performance of certain acts and prohibited others.

Within this context, the Sharia addresses only those issues where human intellect has faltered or is likely to falter. Thus, there are a few specific things that the Sharia has defined. For example, there are seven or eight commandments related to economics, similarly, there are a few commandments pertaining to politics, certain commandments concerning society, and five to seven matters have been specified related to etiquette and religious symbols. In the realm of limits and punishments, there are only five crimes for which punishments have been stipulated. Apart from these, all other matters have been left to human intellect. That is, all matters for which the Sharia has provided no command will be resolved through *ijtihad* in light of religion. Muslim scholars and intellectuals, considering civilization, circumstances, and customs, can legislate on these matters.

Neither can society be halted in one place, nor can its civilization be rendered stagnant; therefore, the need for *ijtihad* cannot be eliminated. The Sharia is eternal, whereas *ijtihad* is not eternal. It can be altered according to time and circumstances. People of one country can adopt one opinion based on their circumstances, their civilization, their culture, and their social setup, while people of another country can adopt a different opinion. *Ijtihad* is essential for the progress and survival of society. If this path is blocked, it is akin to depriving an individual of water.

This is my perspective on the necessity and importance of *ijtihad*. However, there are two questions in this matter that are very important:

One question is whether there are specific conditions for *ijtihad*?

The second issue is how *ijtihad* takes the form of law?

The answer to the first question is that discussing conditions in matters of *ijtihad* is completely meaningless. It is the argument for one's own *ijtihad* that determines its validity or invalidity. The person presenting their opinion must necessarily provide its justification. If this justification is strong, there is no reason to reject their opinion based on our hypothetical conditions. Conversely, if the justification is weak, regardless of how comprehensively qualified the person conducting the *ijtihad* may be, it should ultimately be deemed

unacceptable.

The answer to the second question is that *ijtihad* can attain the status of law only through the decision of the majority of the authoritative representatives of the Muslim community. These representatives, after thorough discussion and deliberation, can form their own opinion or accept the opinion of a knowledgeable and skilled scholar. In both cases, the final decision rests with them. Whichever *ijtihad* is accepted by their majority will be enforced as law. No individual among the Muslims will have the right to violate it. However, everyone will retain the right to disagree with it. It is possible that the majority of these representatives, influenced by differing opinions, may decide to amend the law. Thus, whether it pertains to the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah or *ijtihad* in matters where the Quran and Sunnah are silent, it is the elected representatives of the Muslim community whose decisions grant it the status of law in an Islamic society.

[August 2000]



Role of the Islamic Ideology Council

A representative of the newspaper 'Jung' asked Javed Ahmed Ghamidi what role should the 'Islamic Ideological Council' play in a Muslim state like Pakistan, whether it has fulfilled this role, and how its performance has been based on this. Furthermore, how can it be made an effective institution? The summary of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's response to this question is as follows.

Islamic Ideology Council is a constitutional body of the state of Pakistan. Its primary duty is to present recommendations to the Parliament and the provincial assemblies for the formulation of Islamic law. There is no doubt that this task is of paramount importance for the nation and the country. The reason for this is that most of the doubts or questions about Islam currently emerging in the world are related to jurisprudence and Shariah. These include the limits and conditions of jihad and combat, the structure of governance and the nature of consultation (shura) within it, issues related to the economy and the interest-based system, rulings on matters related to women such as veiling, polygamy, and divorce, laws concerning testimony and compensation, punishments for crimes such as murder, adultery, theft, and apostasy, the legal status of music, painting, and other fine arts, and numerous other subjects that are commonly debated. Since our scholars do not have satisfactory answers to these questions, the notion is being formed that Islamic shariah is a remnant of a bygone era. It is perceived to lack the ability to align with the changes brought about by the evolution of civilization in the individual and collective affairs of human beings. Consequently, its implementation at the state level in modern times is considered impossible.

In this context, the main purpose of the Islamic Ideology Council is

that it:

Firstly, it addresses and resolves the doubts and uncertainties surrounding Islamic Sharia.

Secondly, determine the context of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and inform the nation and community with their opinions.

Thirdly, to develop laws on individual and collective matters to guide the parliament.

This is the very need that Allama Iqbal sensed even before the establishment of Pakistan. Hence, he addressed this in his book “The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam” and expressed that the existing structure of jurisprudence and Shariah is neither suitable for the propagation of Islam nor for its implementation. He also listed important practical issues for which this structure offers no solutions.

Now the question is whether the Islamic Ideology Council possesses the capability to fulfill this need. In my view, the answer is in the negative. The reason for this is that our educational system is incapable of producing such distinguished scholars who are capable of meeting the needs of the modern era. This educational system is based on the principle of rigid imitation. It insists that the interpretations and commentaries of the religion by ancient scholars are complete in every respect. While there is room for understanding and explaining their work, there is no scope for revising it. The principles and laws that the jurists of the first era established remain applicable despite the changes of time. In this context, there is neither a need for research and *ijtihad* nor is there any possibility now for anyone to attain the position of a *muftahid*. Our scholars are products of this educational system. Hence, whether they function in an individual capacity or collectively as part of an institution, they lack the capability to explain and elucidate Islamic Sharia or to present their views on matters where the Sharia is silent. These very scholars are part of the Islamic Ideology Council. Therefore, it is futile to expect this institution or any similar institution to be able to answer the questions being raised by the intelligent elements among Muslims regarding Islamic Sharia, or to dispel the doubts and skepticism faced by Muslims at a global level.

Therefore, if the performance of the Islamic Ideology Council is evaluated from the perspective of whether it has formulated laws that are precisely in accordance with Islamic Shariah and fully meet the needs of the present era, its performance is zero. However, if viewed from the angle that it has made recommendations for the formulation of laws in light of traditional religious thoughts, regardless of the issues of the present time, its performance is one hundred percent.

As far as the question is concerned regarding how to make it an effective institution, in my opinion, these three measures are indispensable:

1. The religious education system should be reformed so that it can produce scholars who are genuinely capable of fulfilling the task of codifying Islamic law.
2. Merit should be used as the basis for council membership.
3. The parliament should be bound to discuss its recommendations and decide on their acceptance or rejection.

[January 2006]



Intentional Murder and the Possibility of Pardon

[Derived from the conversation and writings of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

Regarding retributive justice, generally, there are two perspectives:

One perspective is that a murderer is actually a mentally ill person. The commission of a grave crime like murder by them is due to emotional stress or mental disturbance. A patient suffering from these ailments deserves treatment, not punishment. Therefore, killing the murderer in return for murder is akin to putting a sick person to death instead of providing treatment. For those who hold this viewpoint, the correct approach is to arrange for the mental reform and moral training of the murderer, instead of executing them.

The second point of view is that a murderer is akin to a malignant sore in the body of society. Cutting it off and discarding it is essential for the health of society. A murderer is an enemy of peace and security. If such a person is allowed to remain in society, the very existence of society can be put at risk. For the survival of society, it is necessary to purify society from such a person.

A general review of these two perspectives leads us to the conclusion that both of these viewpoints deviate from the position of moderation.

As far as the first point of view is concerned, it is fundamentally incorrect to say that the act of committing murder by a person necessarily occurs in a state of illness. Generally, one decides to kill someone with complete consciousness and awareness. If it is actually proven that a murderer is mentally or psychologically ill, then no court in the world imposes the death penalty on him.

The result of adopting this perspective is that, without exception,

every murderer is considered a mental and psychological patient, and the death penalty is entirely abolished. We believe that if this is adopted, the protection of human life, in its true sense, no longer remains. The fear of losing life can deter even a beast-like human from taking another's life. If there is no fear of losing life in return for taking a life, then any human-like beast can turn the loss of human lives into a game. Furthermore, adopting this perspective does not create any form of deterrence for others, and by seeing a murderer not receiving the death penalty in return for their crime, other individuals with similar evil inclinations are incited to commit such heinous crimes.

The fundamental flaw of the second perspective is that it does not acknowledge the possibility of repentance, guidance, and reform, and entirely blocks these paths. Moreover, the possibility of ending the cycle of enmity among families and, as a result, establishing an atmosphere of tolerance and fraternity in society is entirely eliminated.

Regarding retribution, these are two extreme perspectives. Islam stands at a place of moderation and balance between these extremes. It neither wishes to give murderers free rein, thus making human life cheap and turning society into an embodiment of cruelty and transgression, nor does it want to completely eliminate the possibility of forgiveness for the murderer, thereby removing opportunities for expressing values such as compassion, benevolence, brotherhood, and sacrifice within the society, rendering it entirely soulless and lifeless. Consequently, on one hand, by declaring the murder of one person as the murder of all humanity and making retribution obligatory, Islam has provided complete protection to society. On the other hand, by allowing the heirs the opportunity to forgive, it has facilitated the atmosphere of brotherhood in society and paved the way for the sinner's repentance, contrition, and moral guidance.

It is clear from the Qur'an that Islam equates the killing of one person with the killing of all humanity, and saving one life is equivalent to saving all of humanity. The command of God is:

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ سَجَدَ كُلُّنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ
نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا

فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا.

It is this [rebelliousness of human beings] because of which [when We gave the shari'ah to Moses.] We wrote [in it] the directive for the Israelites also that he who killed a human being without the latter being guilty of killing another or of spreading anarchy in the land, then it is as if he killed all mankind, and he who gave life to one person, it is as if he gave life to all mankind. (5:32)

The perpetrator of this crime has been deemed deserving of the eternal punishment of Hell by Allah Almighty. It is stated:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا.

However, he who intentionally kills a believer, his punishment is Hell. He shall abide therein forever. The wrath and the curse of God are upon him. And He has prepared for him a great doom. (4:93)

This gravity of the crime undoubtedly demands that the state and society, with their entire system, stand up against the murderer and ensure that the heirs of the victim are granted retribution. The law regarding retribution that Allah Almighty has stated in His Book, the Qur'an, is as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ: شَحْمُ الْحُرِّ بِالْحُرِّ
وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنْثَى بِالْأُنْثَى شَحْمُ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ
فَأَتْبَاعُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ شَحْمُ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ شَحْمُ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكَ فَقُلْ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ. وَلَكُمْ فِي
الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

Believers! Qisās is decreed for you in the cases of those [among you] who are killed such that if the murderer is a free-man, then the same free-man should be killed in his place and if he is a slave, then the same slave should be killed in his place and if the murderer is a woman, then the same woman should be killed in her place. Then for whom there has been some concession from his brother, [you can accept it; but if it is accepted, then] after this it

should be followed according to the custom and whatever is the diyat should be paid to him befittingly. This is a kind of concession from your Lord and His favor upon you. Then, after this, for whoever exceeds the limits is a torment afflictive [on the Day of Judgement] and there is life for you in qisās O men of insight so that you may keep following the limits set by God. (2:178-179)

These verses clearly indicate that retribution is obligatory for intentional murder, and this obligation rests upon the community of Muslims. Hence, it is the responsibility of society and the state to apprehend the murderer and, after fulfilling legal requirements, enforce the penalty of retribution upon him. This means that by sentencing the murderer to death as a consequence of his crime, society is cleansed of his presence. The society or state does not have the authority to show leniency, concession, or pardon in this matter. However, the heirs of the victim do have the right to recommend leniency or pardon for the murderer. After their recommendation, the obligation of enforcing retribution does not remain on the court and government, and consequently, the justification for leniency or pardon arises. In such a situation, it is within the discretion of the court and government to either grant leniency, taking into account the nature of the crime and the circumstances of the criminal, or to enforce retribution. Therefore, the government and society have the full right to insist on retribution based on the nature of the crime and the circumstances of the offender, and to refuse to accept this concession.

In the aforementioned verse of Surah Al-Baqarah, it is also stated that in the event of receiving a pardon, it is obligatory for the perpetrator to pay compensation or blood money in accordance with the prescribed rules.

What is Diyah in terms of its reality? Generally, two viewpoints have been prevalent regarding this:

One perspective is that compensation paid to the victim or heirs of a victim (diyat) is in fact the price of life. When the heirs of the deceased

forgive the murderer in exchange for a sum of money, they are essentially forgiving after receiving the price of the life of the deceased.

The second point of view is that it is compensation for the economic loss suffered by the heirs of the deceased due to his departure from the world. In other words, by receiving the blood money, the heirs of the deceased compensate for the financial loss that they might have to endure due to the absence of the deceased.

In our opinion, both of these viewpoints are incorrect. It is unimaginable for a human being to exhibit such dishonor that they would accept blood money for their loved ones. Can any parent accept compensation for their son's life, and can any son accept money for the life of his parents and forgive the murderer? Similarly, the idea that receiving blood money after a murder compensates for economic loss is also incorrect. Accepting this notion fails to explain the rationale behind compensating for injuries to other parts of the body. Clearly, losing a tooth or a finger from the hand or foot generally does not result in economic loss.

What is the correct viewpoint on blood money if both of these perspectives are wrong? In this regard, the esteemed teacher Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes in his book *Burhan*:

The concept of Diyat is mentioned in several places in the poetry of pre-Islamic Arab society. Incidents of murder and bloodshed were so common in their lives that themes of revenge (Tha'ar), retribution (Qisas), and blood money (Diyat) were always readily available for their poets to explore. There is no doubt that, generally, in these verses, they stigmatize those who accept blood money and urge them towards vengeance. However, if they ever speak on the topic of blood money without any such emotional backdrop, the reality of Diyat typically becomes clear through their expression.

For compensation, they use the word 'gharamah' or its synonymous word 'mughrām' on such occasions. In Arabic, this word is used in the same sense as we use the word fine or penalty in Urdu. Just

as in our language, every amount taken from a criminal as punishment for a crime is termed as fine or penalty, similarly, in the language of pre-Islamic Arabs, the word 'gharamah' was used for this purpose. In fact, to express the concept of compensation, Arab poets have used this very word, as we have mentioned.

...It is clear from this that compensation (diyat) is a substitute for economic loss, not the price of the victim's blood. In its essence, it is merely 'gharamah,' which means compensation or a fine, imposed obligatorily on the perpetrator in the case of forgiveness from retaliatory justice in intentional killing and in the case of accidental killing. (23-24)

In summary, retribution for murder is a decree of the Shariah, and it is obligatory upon the collective organization of Muslims. In this regard, the state and government hold the dual responsibility of being both the custodian and the party involved. It must uphold the Shariah, fulfill the responsibility of justice and fairness, and also protect its own rights, which in essence means the rights of society against the crime committed. Thus, the state will arrest the killer and inquire from the victim's heirs whether they seek the application of the death penalty in retribution or are willing to grant the killer any concession. If the heirs demand retribution, it becomes incumbent upon the state to enforce it. In this situation, the state does not possess the right to grant any reduction or concession. On the other hand, if the heirs wish to pardon the killer, then it falls to the discretion of the state, depending on the nature of the crime and the circumstances of the criminal, either to accept the concession of forgiveness and arrange for blood money for the heirs or to persist with the retribution punishment and execute the murderer.

[August 1997]



The Punishment for Rape

[Derived from the conversation and writing of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

According to newspaper reports, in recent days in a village named Jatoi in Punjab, certain human-like beasts attempted gang rape in public. This incident has been met with deep sorrow and grief in national and international circles, and there has been a demand for the perpetrators to be punished as swiftly as possible. The Chief Justice of Pakistan took suo motu notice of this incident and ordered government officials to take immediate action. We believe that if the newspaper account is accurate, the criminals deserve the most severe punitive measure. This is a matter of protecting the foundations of honor and chastity on which the edifice of our society is built. It is the responsibility of the members of society to maintain as much pressure as possible for the accountability of the criminals. It should never be the case that the flaws in our judicial system become a reason for the criminals to escape real punishment even on this occasion. At this juncture, a question has also arisen before the people about what the appropriate punishment for this crime should be according to Sharia.

Some of our friends have sought to understand Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's perspective on the punishment for adultery in relation to this incident. According to our understanding, its summary can be outlined in the following key principles:

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has very clearly expressed his viewpoint on the punishment for adultery in his works Meezan and Burhan. His stance is based on the following verse from Surah An-Nur:

الرَّانِيَةُ وَالرَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ سَمٌّ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ
بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ تَجْمَعُ
وَلَيْسَ لَهُمَا عَذَابٌ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. الرَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ

مُشْرِكَةً سَمَحَ وَالزَّانِيَةَ لَا يَنْكَحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ تَجْمَ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

A man or a woman guilty of fornication, flog each of them with a hundred lashes [if their crime is proven], and in [the implementation of] this law of God any feeling of sympathy with them should not arise in you, if you in reality believe in God and in the Hereafter. And at the time of their punishment a group of Muslims should also be present there. [After this punishment,] this man guilty of fornication can only marry a woman guilty of fornication or an idolatress. And this woman guilty of fornication also shall only be wedded by a man guilty of fornication or by an idolater. This has been prohibited to the believers. (24:2-3)

According to him, the punishment of one hundred lashes is the punishment that the Holy Qur'an has prescribed for the crime of fornication. There is no additional punishment mentioned in the Holy Qur'an regarding this crime.

Here, the question arises that if adultery transforms from a common crime into rape or takes on an even worse form, as described in the Jatoi incident, will the punishment of a hundred lashes still apply in that situation, and will there be no change in the punishment due to the difference in the intensity and abomination of the crime?

We understand that precisely this question also arises in the context of punishments for theft and murder. The punishment for theft is the amputation of the hand, and the punishment for premeditated murder is death. However, when theft takes the form of robbery and murder assumes the character of terror and barbarity, will the general punishments for these crimes still be enforced in such cases?

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, the Qur'an provides very clear guidance on this matter. Crimes of this nature are described by it as *muharabah* (waging war against God and His Messenger) and *fasad fil-ardh* (spreading corruption in the land), and it prescribes four punishments for the perpetrators of such crimes. It has been stated:

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شَحْمٌ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ تَجْمَعُوا اللَّهُ غُفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

[They should be told that] the punishment of those who wage war against God and His Messenger and in this way strive to spread anarchy in the land is to execute them in an exemplary way or to crucify them or to amputate their hands and feet from opposite sides or to banish them from the land. Such is their disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter, for them shall be an awful doom

except those who repent before you overpower them; so, [do not commit excess against them and] you should understand well that God is Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. (5:33-34)

In explaining this verse, he writes in his book *Meezan*:

When the Messenger of Allah is present in the world and people, under his rule, choose rebellion against any of his commands or decisions, it is tantamount to fighting against Allah and His Messenger. This is similarly expressed as causing corruption on earth. It refers to the situation when an individual or group rebels against the law and wages war against people's lives, property, honor, intellect, and opinions. Consequently, murder becomes terrorism, adultery turns into rape, theft becomes robbery, or when people make immorality a profession, openly engage in debauchery, pose a threat to the dignity and honor of the respectable due to their wantonness, mischief, and sexual delinquency, rise in rebellion against state order, or create issues of law and order for the government through crimes like kidnapping, sabotage, intimidation, and other serious offences, they are guilty of the same 'corruption on earth.' Four punishments for their suppression are stated in these verses:

1. Taqteel
2. Tasleeb

3. Cutting off hands and feet in a disorderly manner
4. Exile

The term *Taqteel* refers to execution in an exemplary manner. *Tasleeb* refers to crucifixion, where the criminal's hands and feet are nailed, and they are hung on a cross to be left to die slowly. "Cutting off hands and feet in a disordered manner" implies cutting off a hand from one side and a foot from the other to make the person an example while letting them remain alive. The court has the authority to impose whatever punishment it deems appropriate based on the nature and severity of the crime.

The words "this is a disgrace for them in this world" indicate that a necessary aspect of the punishment for *muharibah* and *fasad fil-ardh* is to disgrace the criminal in this world. The purpose of this is to ensure that these criminals become a lesson for others, so that there remains no courage to commit such crimes. Therefore, it is essential that while administering punishment, no feelings of mercy or sympathy should prevail. In this context, Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

...This disgrace in the world will serve as a means of lesson and insight for others, and as a result of it, even among those who do not possess the capability to respect the law merely on the basis of its utility and greatness, a sense of fear and respect for the law will be instilled. In the present age, the sympathetic and sentimental theories that have emerged under the guise of philosophy for crime and criminals are precisely the reason why, as humanity appears to progress outwardly, the world is simultaneously becoming more of a hell. Islam does not encourage such hollow theories. Its law is not based on fanciful ideas, but rather upon human nature. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 2/507-508)

In light of this discussion, it can be stated that if the crime committed in Jatohi is exactly as detailed in news reports, then it would not be categorized as a common crime of adultery. In its essence, it is a crime of *muharibah* and *fasad fil-ardh* according to the Qur'an. The

punishment for this can be *Tagteel*, which means execution in a manner that serves as a deterrent. The punishment of stoning or *rajm* is a form of this *Tagteel*, in which people kill the criminal by throwing stones at them. If the court wishes, it can impose this punishment of *rajm* on the criminal of *fasad fil-ardh*.

However, can it be expected on this basis that in the future the occurrence of such crimes will completely cease? Everyone will answer this question in the negative. There is no doubt that the fear of punishment keeps a person inclined to refrain from crime, but it is also a reality that when a person resorts to oppression, immorality, and revenge, they do not hesitate to commit the worst crimes without regard for their life, wealth, or honor. Therefore, along with punishments, and indeed beyond that, it is necessary to make arrangements for the education and training of the members of society. They need to be awakened to high morals and respect for the law. This is the main path to crime prevention.

[September 2002]



The Condition of Ownership in Zakat

*[Derived from the conversation and writing of Javed Ahmed
Ghamidi]*

Our jurists have imposed the condition of *tamleek-e-zaati* (personal ownership) on the disbursement of *zakat*. This means that *zakat* funds can only be given into the personal ownership of an individual; they cannot be spent directly on public welfare projects. That is, this money cannot be used to establish hospitals, madarasas, or similar collective institutions, nor can it be spent on the funeral arrangements of a deceased person or the repayment of their debts. The reason for this is that in matters of collective welfare, it is not possible for *zakat* to be handed over into the possession of an individual, and in the case of burial arrangements, the deceased cannot, due to death, be made the owner of the amount spent on them.

Respected teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi does not consider this stance to be correct. In his view:

The condition of personal ownership which our jurists have imposed on the expenditures of zakat finds no basis in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, zakat can be spent on welfare projects in the same way as it can be given directly into the hands of an individual. (Meezan 354)

To establish ownership as a condition for *zakat* according to the jurists, generally, the following arguments are presented:

One point is that in Surah Al-Tawbah, verse 60, the word *lilfuqara* in *Innama al-Sadaqatu lilfuqara* contains the letter 'ل' (lam), which is used for ownership, meaning to make someone the owner.

Secondly, the words *aatu az-zakaata* in the Holy Qur'an, the word *eeta* conveys the concept of transfer of ownership.

Thirdly, Allah Almighty has named *zakat* as *sadaqah*, and the concept of *tasaddaq* inherently implies ownership.

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi, in his treatise *Masala-e-Tamleek*, criticized these arguments and deemed the concept of personal ownership contrary to the intent of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The summary of his position is as follows:

Firstly, there is no textual evidence in the Qur'an and Sunnah that possession is a requisite pillar of *zakat*.

Secondly, regarding the usage of '*Lam*' in *lilfuqara* with the connotation of ownership (*tamleek*), it is important to clarify that in the Arabic language, '*Lam*' is not used solely to convey the concept of ownership. It is employed in many other meanings as well. The renowned Arab scholar Ibn Hisham has written in his book *Mughni al-Labib* that this '*Lam*' is used in 22 different meanings. Some of its usages are:

- Entitlement is used in the sense of being deserving, as it is used in the word *Lillah* in the phrase *Alhamdulillah*. The meaning of this phrase would be: "Only Allah is deserving of all praise."
- Exclusive, meaning it is used in the sense of being special. For example, it is used in the phrase *Al-Jannat lil-Mu'mineen* in the word *lil-Mu'mineen*. The meaning of this sentence would be that "Paradise is exclusive for the believers."
- Ownership is used in the sense of being an owner, as it is mentioned in the phrase *Labu ma fi al-samawati wa ma fi al-ardi* in the word *Labu*. The meaning of this sentence would be: "To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth."
- Transfer of ownership is used in the sense of ownership or making someone an owner. As in the phrase *Wahab li Zaid*

dinaran, the word *li Zaid* is used. The meaning of this sentence would be: "I have gifted a dinar to Zaid."

- Outcome or final consequence is also used in the sense of end result. For instance, it appears in the phrase *li-yakuna* in the verse *Fa-altaqatabu ālu Fir'awna li-yakuna lahum aduwwan wa hazanan*. The meaning of this sentence would be: "And the people of Pharaoh picked him (Moses) up from the river so that the outcome would be that he becomes for them an enemy and a cause of grief."

Ibn Hisham's approach is to attempt to provide examples from the Qur'an and Hadith for clarifying the meaning. If no example is available there, then he cites a sentence from the common language. Here, he has presented a common sentence from the Arabic language as an example of the possessive '*Lam*'. If the letter '*Lam*' in the sentence *Innama al-Sadaqatu lilfuqara* had been as evidently possessive in meaning, he would have surely presented this very sentence from the Qur'an as an example.

Thirdly, regarding the '*Lam*' in *lilfuqara*, our scholars have different opinions. The Hanafi school takes it to mean 'consequence'. The Maliki school interprets it as 'term'. Imam Shafi'i understands it in the sense of 'ownership'.

Fourthly, the context of this verse refuses the interpretation of ownership.

The verse and its context are as follows:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ تَجْمَ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَحْطُونَ. وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ. إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمَوْلَقَةُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغُرْمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ شَحْمَ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ شَحْمَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

Among them [O Prophet!] are those also who censure you [in the distribution] of charity. [These are the ones whom greed has impelled to join you.] Thus if they are given from that wealth,

they remain happy and if they are not given from it, they show immediate anger. It would have been far better for them if they had remained content with what God and His Messenger had given them and said: "God is sufficient for us. God will give us a lot in future out of His grace and His Messenger also; We only want God." [Tell them:] Charity in reality is only for the poor and the needy, and for those who are in charge of its set-up, and for those whose hearts are to be assured. Moreover, for the release of necks and to help those who have been inflicted with losses and for the way of God and for the welfare of the wayfarers. This is an obligation decreed by God and God is All-Knowing and Wise. (9:58-60)

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes regarding the context of the verse:

Look, in the above verse, the mention was of those hypocrites whose good and bad assumptions about the Prophet (PBUH) were entirely based on their interests. If they received their desired share from the charity, they would praise the Prophet (PBUH) profusely, but if they did not get as much as they wished, they did not refrain from accusing him. They would unjustly charge him with bias and partiality and spread various insinuations among the people. Reflect on what could be the point to mention in this context? Is it that making a poor person the owner is necessary for the payment of zakat, or is it that the real rightful recipients of zakat and charities are such and such types of people? It is evident that in this context, the point to mention could only be the latter, not the former. Therefore, those among the commentators whose focus remains on context and background have also interpreted the verse in this manner. (Masala-e-Tamleek 19-20)

Fifthly, the internal composition of the verse obstructs the interpretation of ownership. This explanation is provided by Maulana Islahi in the following words:

In the verse, as is quite evident, eight categories are mentioned as beneficiaries of charity, with the first four mentioned under "أَمْ"

(*Lam*) and the next four under “فی” (*fi*). It is clear that an interpretation should be proposed which can be related both to “لام” and “فی”. If “لام” is taken to mean ownership, the first part of the verse will become completely detached from the last part because “فی” inherently does not imply ownership. It implies benefit and service or utility, as mentioned in the Hadith: *Ma kaana al-abdu fi aouni akhi-hi* (As long as a Muslim is in the aid of his brother). Therefore, the coherence of both parts of the verse necessitates that here “لام” should be understood in the sense of entitlement or benefit so that the entire verse can be expounded under a unified interpretation. If this is not done and “لام” is interpreted to mean ownership, one would have to completely undermine the expansiveness and eloquence of the discourse to associate the concept of ownership with the last four categories.

The second and third arguments of the jurists, as mentioned earlier, are based on the idea that the true essence of the words *eeta* (giving) and *tasadduq* (charity) inherently involve transfer of ownership. In the context of these arguments, Iman Islahi states that it is true that at certain places the notion of ownership does get included in these terms, but the context holds decisive authority. It is not the case that the concept of ownership is invariably present within these words. If this were indeed true, then we would have to consider the sense of ownership in *wa ātaynāhum al-kitaba* (and We gave them the Book) and *'aataynā Dā'uda zaburā* (and We gave David the Psalms), which would not be correct. Similarly, the verse from Surah Al-Munafiqoon *fa assaddaqa wa akun min as-sālihin* implies that “I would generously spend my wealth in the way of Allah and for the welfare of the poor in various ways.” It does not mean “I used to transfer ownership to the poor.” Imam Islahi thus writes:

The words eeta (giving) and tasadduq (charity) are not so definitive in implying possession that they can be presented as textual evidence for the proof of ownership. The fundamental concept that emerges from them is giving or spending. This giving and spending can occur with ownership and also without it. The insistence on ownership, especially to the extent that without it

zakat cannot be fulfilled, to the point where one cannot even purchase a shroud for a poor deceased person with zakat funds or pay off the debt of a poor deceased individual, is, in my opinion, completely unfounded.

This explanation makes it clear that ownership is not a necessary condition for *zakat*, meaning it is not required that a person be made the owner for it to be paid. Just as it can be given into someone's possession, it can also be used for public welfare projects. Therefore, from this fund, hospitals and schools can be built, highways and rest houses can be constructed, and arrangements can be made for the burial of unclaimed bodies.

[May 2004]



Islam and Music

This text pertains to the subjects of “Islam and Fine Arts” and “Islam and Music”. However, it was written in the light of various discussions by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi.

Human beings have been created by Allah Almighty in the best of forms. Therefore, the pursuit of beauty and excellence in thought and action is an essential demand of their creation. This is why they seek goodness over evil and yearn for virtues in contrast to vices. Instead of hatred, lies, oppression, and injustice, they are inclined towards sincerity and love, truth and purity, and justice and fairness. They long for light instead of darkness, fragrance instead of stench, and beauty instead of ugliness. The evolution of civilization and culture is, in fact, a story of the search for beauty and excellence. Every word of it reveals that humanity has always chosen the best.

For growth and development, he required nourishment. He could have fulfilled this need with thorns, dry grass, and simple greens, yet he adorned the dining table with a variety of delicious foods. Covering oneself was a demand of his modesty; this could have been achieved by wearing coarse cloths and simple wraps, but he chose silk, fine fabrics, and luxurious textiles. To inhabit, he needed a dwelling, which could have been arranged in forests and deserts through caves, tents, and huts, yet he established cities and decorated them with magnificent palaces. In social interactions, he needed to communicate his intent. If not through gestures, then even simple speech could have sufficed, yet he developed such modes of expression that the language evolved into the form of poetry and literature.

From the history of mankind, it is evident that it is in his nature to be inclined towards beauty and goodness in his every action. His external and internal senses and their requirements are a reflection of his

aesthetic taste. It is his sense of beauty that he adorns and embellishes his surroundings and transforms his thoughts into images. It is his eloquence that he arranges words and creates poetry with the influence of their rhythm and meanings. It is his auditory beauty that he introduces emotion and melody into sound, and composes tunes and notes from its highs and lows. Additionally, it is his auditory appreciation that he is enchanted by the sounds of his environment and creates instruments to preserve them. Music, in essence, is the collective expression of his auditory art and auditory appreciation. Thus, it satiates his aesthetic sense and provides pleasure and delight for his inner self.

Music is a legitimate expression of human nature, therefore, there is no doubt about its permissibility. However, it is generally perceived that Islamic law deems it forbidden. In our view, there is no basis for this perception in the Shariah. In matters of permissibility or prohibition within the religion, decisive authority belongs solely to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Without their sanction, no addition or alteration can be made to the Shariah's list of lawful and unlawful things. Hence, true faith demands that whatever matters they declare permissible be accepted with complete openness of heart as permissible, and for those matters they declare impermissible, no attempt whatsoever should be made to seek justification for them in thought or practice.

In order to understand the religious perspective on any matter, the method adopted by scholars is to first consult the definitive sources of the Shariah, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Thereafter, the narrations attributed to the Prophet (PBUH), recorded in the books of hadith, are critically examined. If narrations related to the subject are found, guidance is sought from them in the light of established principles of reason and transmitted knowledge. When necessary, the ancient revealed scriptures are also studied, and the transmitted reports of the noble Companions are likewise reviewed. Finally, the commentaries and explanations of both earlier and later scholars of the Qur'an, hadith, and jurisprudence are carefully analyzed.

According to this methodology, when we consult different sources regarding music, we find that in the Qur'an, music is neither directly nor indirectly prohibited in any manner. In the list of Sunnah, there is no mention of such an action that could form the basis for the prohibition of music.

In the corpus of hadith, there are numerous narrations of the degree of Sahih and Hasan that indicate the permissibility of music and musical instruments. Narrations prohibiting them also exist, but most of these have been classified as weak by the scholars of hadith. However, the content of these narrations suggests that the reason for their prohibition is due to some forms being associated with alcohol, immorality, and certain other ethical vices.

In the ancient scriptures, it is clearly stated in the Bible that Prophet David (PBUH) had a very melodious voice and praised God through musical instruments. The book revealed to him, Psalms, is a collection of those divine songs that he sang with the harp.

Among the reports from the noble Companions, narrations reflecting both approval and disapproval are found. As for the work of scholars and researchers, some of them, following the method of *tafsir bil-ma'thūr* (interpretation based on transmitted reports), have identified certain words in the Qur'an as referring to music, and on that basis, have expressed a tendency toward considering music as prohibited and morally blameworthy. However, hadith scholars regard most of the narrations concerning the prohibition of music as weak. In this regard, the viewpoint of some scholars is that there is not a single narration in the collections of hadith which can be classified as *sahih* (authentic) on the subject.

The majority of esteemed jurists declare the prohibition of music. The basis of their argument, generally, are the same narrations that hadith scholars have deemed weak.

Therefore, our perspective on this subject is that music is among the permissible aspects of nature. Islamic Shariah does not declare it as forbidden. People, if they wish, can use the art of music in genres such as hymns, praise, ghazals, songs, or other genres of poetry like elegy,

comedy, and epic.

In those genres of poetry and literature where themes such as polytheism, atheism, and moral depravity—subjects that corrupt the human soul—are found, they are undoubtedly reprehensible and vile. The reason for such vileness, evidently, lies in the nature of the content itself. If the subject matter, from the perspective of religion and morality, is legitimate, then all its means of expression—whether in the form of poetry, prose, speeches, writings, vocal performance, or music—are permissible. However, if any moral flaw is present in the content, then the specific mediums that convey it will necessarily be deemed frivolous and objectionable.

For instance, if a *naat* (poetry in praise of the Prophet Muhammad) contains polytheistic themes in its verses, the poetry of that *naat* will be considered inappropriate, but the genre of *naat* itself will not be deemed incorrect. Similarly, if a song contains obscene poetry, it will be the verses that are deemed reprehensible, not the genre of poetry and song itself. However, if at any point an ethical vice becomes inherently associated with a permissible thing, it can temporarily be declared forbidden under the principle of *sad-e-zariya* (blocking the means).

[July 2003]



The Way to Attain Paradise: Purification of the Soul

*[Derived from the contents of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's works
Al-Bayan and Meezan]*

The ultimate objective of human life is the Abode of the Hereafter (Dār al-Ākhirah). It is a realm of peace and safety, a dominion of eternal sovereignty. The Noble Qur'an has designated it as *Jannah* (Paradise), and for it, has employed numerous expressions such as *Jannat al-Firdaws*, *Jannat al-Na'im*, *Jannat 'Adn*, and *Jannatin tajri min taḥti-hā al-anhār*, among others. It is described as the gardens of Paradise, meadows of comfort, and eternal fields of delight. Beneath them flow rivers. There is neither the heat of the sun nor the severity of cold. Within are pure dwellings for residence—an abode of ultimate tranquility. Its comfort is everlasting. The people therein will wear bracelets of gold and necklaces of pearls; they will be adorned with garments of fine silk (*sundus*) and brocade (*istabraq*), reclined upon thrones. For their nourishment, there will be various fruits, and whatever they desire will be brought before them. Therein, the servants of God will attain closeness to their Lord, and their Master will Himself serve them cups of pure drink (*sharāb tabur*). There is, thus, no doubt that this *Jannah* of God is a land of well-being and safety, a kingdom of rest and serenity, and a dominion marked by *rādiyatan mardīyyah*—being pleased and pleasing (to God). Compared to it, the life of this world is inferior and of the lowest order, while Paradise is exalted, sublime, and supremely superior. Esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, has written about it.

This is the place of everlasting bliss. In contrast to this worldly life, there is no concept of death with life, pain with pleasure, sorrow with happiness, anxiety with peace, discomfort with

comfort, or adversity with blessing in it. Its comfort is eternal, its pleasure is boundless, its days and nights are everlasting, its safety is perpetual, its happiness is immortal, its beauty is eternal, and its perfection is infinite. (Meezan 197)

Humans has been sent to this world to attain this very paradise. Therefore, Allah has guided them to actively strive to achieve it throughout their life. It is stated:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

And run to advance to the forgiveness of your Lord and to Paradise which is as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous. (3:133)

In another place, encouragement is given to excel one another in the endeavor to attain it. It is stated:

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ شَحْمَ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن
يَشَاءُ شَحْمَ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ.

[For this reason,] strive fervently while outdoing one another towards the forgiveness of your Lord and for a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth. It has been prepared for those who truly believe in God and His messengers. Such is the grace of God: He bestows it on whomsoever He wills and great is God's grace. (57:21)

God's religion has been revealed to guide humanity towards this paradise. His scriptures indicate the paths leading to it, and His prophets endeavor to educate and nurture mankind to attain it. It is stated in the Qur'an that when Allah commanded Adam, Eve, and their descendants to inhabit the earth as a test, He promised to bestow His mercy upon them and provide guidance in the form of religion. Those who value this guidance and adhere to it will be deemed deserving of that paradise, where there will be neither fear nor sorrow. It is proclaimed:

قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا تَجْمَ فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

We said: Get down from here all of you; then if ever comes to you any guidance from Me, follow it because those who follow this guidance of Mine, their reward is Paradise. So, there they shall neither have any fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:38)

In clarification of this passage, the esteemed teacher has written:

It becomes clear from this that the ultimate objective of human beings since eternity is Jannab (Paradise) al-Firdaws. It is for the attainment of this that they have been sent to this world, and thus, the motive behind all their actions is this Paradise. Even if they are not striving for it in the rightful place, they cannot be indifferent to it. All the capabilities of their knowledge and actions are then dedicated to the effort of attaining it in this world. This is ingrained in their nature. Even unwillingly, they live for this ultimate objective and die for it. (Al-Bayaan 1/54)

The method prescribed by Allah to achieve the ideal of *Jannat al-Firdaws* is the purification of the Self. This means that the gates of the highest paradise will open only for those who strive to purify both their external and internal selves in every aspect.

It is commanded:

وَمَنْ يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَى. جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا سَحْمٌ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى.

Contrary to this, those who come before Him as believers, who have done righteous deeds, then it is such people for whom there are high ranks, orchards of eternal residence beneath which streams flow. They shall live in them forever. And this is the reward of those who adopt purity. (20:75-76)

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes in clarification of this place:

This is the reward for those who purify their outward and inward selves, as well as their beliefs and actions. The implication is that

this is not something attained through false hopes, but rather those are deserving who strive to cleanse their souls from all kinds of impurities, whether they are ideological or practical and moral. In this path, the stumbles a person encounters, Allah Almighty has provided measures for their rectification in His book, and the concessions a person requires due to their weaknesses have also been granted to them. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 5/69)

In Surah Al-Naziat, this truth has been elucidated in another manner. It is stated that Paradise will be granted to those who restrain their souls from following false desires:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ.
And he who feared the standing before his Lord and restrained his soul from lowly desires, then Paradise only shall be his abode.
(79: 40-41)

This detailed explanation makes it completely clear that the purpose of human life is to attain Paradise. To achieve this, it is essential for a person to purify their soul. The prophets of Allah teach humans the ways by which one can purify their soul. The name given to this method taught by the prophets (peace be upon them) is religion. Therefore, the purpose of religion is the purification of the soul. This means that its function is to inform people about the ways of adopting purity.

The esteemed teacher has written:

The purpose of this religion as stated in the Qur'an is referred to as 'Tazkiyah' in Qur'anic terminology. It means that the individual and collective life of a human being should be purified from impurities, allowing their thoughts and actions to develop in the right direction. This concept is mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'an, explaining that a person's ultimate goal is the Garden of Bliss and the sovereignty of rādiyatan mardiyah (being pleased and pleasing), and the guarantee of reaching this state of success and salvation is only for those who achieve their purification in this world.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى. وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى. بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا.
وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى.

However, successful shall be he who spiritually purified [himself] and for this he remembered his Lord's name, then prayed. People! you do not have any sound argument. In fact, you give preference to worldly life even though the life to come is better and more lasting also. (87:14-17)

Therefore, in religion, purification holds the position of being the ultimate goal and objective. Allah's Prophet was sent for this very purpose, and the entire religion was revealed to guide humanity in achieving this objective and reaching this ultimate goal. It is stated:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ.

It is He who brought forth among the unlettered a Messenger from among them, who recites to them His revelations and purifies them and for this instructs them in the Law and in Wisdom. (62:2)

(Meezan 80)

Thus, the person who purifies their self, that is, cleanses it from the impurities of thought and action as well as from the defilements of soul and body, is considered a tranquil soul in the sight of Allah. It is this soul that will be granted permission to enter the kingdom of *rādiyyatan mardīyyah*. It will be proclaimed:

يَأْتِيَنَّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً. فَأَدْخُلِي فِي
عِبَادِي. وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي.

He will say: "O you with a contented heart, return to your Lord, such that He is pleased with you and you are pleased with Him. So, enter among My servants, and enter My Paradise." (89:27-30)

Regarding the words of permission *Irji'ee ila rabbi ki rādiyyatan*

mardiyyah, Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi has written:

This is a word of praise and commendation from Allah the Almighty. The address will be directed towards those individuals, stating that well done! In the field of trial where your Lord placed you, your success has been outstanding. Now return to your Lord with this honor, having proven that you remained content and satisfied with your Lord in all kinds of conditions, whether easy or difficult. Along with this honor, you have also attained the distinction of being pleasing in the eyes of your Lord. Just as you never complained at any stage with your Lord, in the same way, your Lord never found you lacking at any stage from His standards. You are pleased with Him and He is pleased with you! (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 9/362)

It is clear from this that the religion presented by Allah through His Messenger (PBUH) is an invitation to purify both their individual and collective lives.

The foundation of self-purification is the awareness of good and evil, which is an essential part of human existence. Just as humans are naturally endowed with the ability of reproduction, hearing and sight, speech and conversation, understanding and perception, and intellect and wisdom, in the same way, the awareness of good and evil is also instilled within them. This awareness is inspired in their nature. Thus, without any external guidance, a person possesses the complete ability to recognize and distinguish between good and evil. It is akin to a moral sense, by which a person can differentiate between virtuous and vile morals and understand which elements are beneficial for their personality and which are harmful. For this natural awareness and moral sense, the Qur'an has chosen the expression *Alhamahā fujūrahā wa taqwāhā* (then inspired it with its evil and its good). It has been stated:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّيْنَاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا.

And the soul and the way it is perfected then inspired it with its

evil and its good that the Day of Judgement is certain to come; [hence,] he succeeded who purified his soul and he failed who corrupted it. (91: 7-10)

The esteemed teacher writes in explanation of this position:

Just as Allah Almighty has given eyes to see and ears to hear, in the same way, He has bestowed upon humans a moral sense to distinguish between good and evil. Man is not just a physical and intellectual being; he is also a moral being. This means that the distinction between right and wrong, and the innate sense of good as good and evil as evil, has been inspired in human heart and mind at the time of creation. This same truth is explained in other places with the words Inna Hadainahu as-Sabeel (We have shown him the way of good and evil) and Hadainahu an-Najdain (Have We not shown him the two ways?). This distinction and feeling is a universal reality. Hence, even the worst person, when committing a sin, firstly tries to hide it. When Adam's son Cain tried to conceal his brother Abel's corpse after murdering him, it was clearly due to the feeling of guilt. The same is true of virtue. Man loves it, finds feelings of respect and honor for it within himself, and whenever he creates a society for himself, he establishes a system of truth and justice within it. This is clear evidence of the natural distinction of good and evil. There is no doubt that sometimes man concocts excuses for evil, but at the very moment he does so, he knows that these excuses are being fabricated against his nature, because if the same evil is done to him, he unhesitatingly considers it wrong and stands in protest against it. (Al-Bayan 5/465-466)

This awareness of good and evil urges a person towards self-purification. On this basis, one is convinced that virtue and vice are not the same in their essence and their outward and inward realities, and therefore, their consequences cannot be the same either. This distinction demands that their recompense should also be given, and the recompense should not be the same, but rather different from one another. Hence, one realizes that they are not absolute sovereigns or

possessors of complete authority but are bound by certain limits and regulations. If they observe these limits, they will achieve success, and if they violate them, they will fail. My esteemed teacher has explained this matter in light of the aforementioned verses of Surah Al-Shams. He writes:

The second question is, what is the primary motivation that prompts a person towards moral purification? The Qur'an answers this question in these verses by stating that this motivation is the human consciousness that arises from the divine inspiration of good and evil, that the results of both cannot be the same for him. He feels that the awareness of the goodness of good and the wickedness of evil demands from his existence that the outcome of both should appear according to their nature. From this, it becomes clear to him that he is not an uncontrolled camel and that he must inevitably face recompense and punishment for his deeds. The Qur'an describes this as achieving success or facing failure. It is evident from this that a sense of fear and desire arises within a person, which becomes the motivation for purifying his morals despite his natural inclinations. Then, when he embraces faith, this same consciousness becomes related to God. At that point, the Qur'an demands from a person that the true motivation for adhering to good character and avoiding evil conduct should be none other than the love of that God, the desire to attain His pleasure, and the fear of His displeasure—He who is the Knower of the unseen (Ālim al-Ghayb), the Possessor of all secrets (Dānā-i-Rāz), the One fully aware of all hidden matters (Waqif-i-Asrār), and completely informed of every movement of existence and every stir of the heart and glance of the eye. (Meezan 204)



Worship and Purification of the Soul

[Derived from Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's works Al-Bayan and Meezan]

Allah, the Exalted, is *Al-Quddus*, meaning He is absolute purity. In the Hereafter, He will bestow the honor of His nearness only upon those who are pure. These alone will be deserving of His pristine Paradise. Purity is indeed the very purpose for which Allah sent His prophets and revealed His guidance in the form of religion. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi, in his explanation of the divine attribute *Al-Quddus*, has elucidated precisely this reality—that purity, both inward and outward, is the essential prerequisite for attaining closeness to Allah and for entry into His sanctified abode. He writes:

Al-Quddus - He is completely pure and free from every flaw, imperfection, and evil. For this reason, He sent down the book and dispatched messengers to purify His servants so that by becoming pure, they could be worthy of attaining His nearness. In Surah Al-Jumu'ah, by referencing both attributes Malik and Quddus, the implications of these have been made clear. First, He referenced His attributes with these words Al-Malik al-Quddus al-Azeed al-Hakeem, and then, in this manner, elucidated the implications of these attributes: Huwa alladhi ba'atha fil ummiyyina rasoolan minhum yatlu 'alayhim aayaatihi wa yuzakkeebim (He is the One who raised among the unlettered a Messenger from amongst them, who recites to them His verses and purifies them.)

If you reflect, you will realize that He sent the Messenger (PBUH) and the book because He is the sovereign; it is an essential requirement of His sovereignty that He sends His ambassadors to His subjects and His commands as well. He desired the

purification of His servants because He is the Holy and Pure. He cannot desire for His servants to remain tainted with sins. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 8/312-313)

Hence, the closer a person is to *Al-Malik Al-Quddus*, the purer they become. Worship increases this closeness, resulting in the purification of the soul. If one takes the cultivation and growth of the earth as an example, the ordinances of physical purification, dietary purification, and moral purification cleanse the weeds and impurities from the field of the human soul, enabling it to grow the crop of righteous deeds. Worship further nurtures this crop and ensures its upkeep. According to the Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, self-purification through worship achieves its perfection. He writes:

The purpose of religion is purification. The means to reach the highest perfection of this is the establishment of the right relationship between God and man as a servant and a deity. The stronger this relationship is, the more a person progresses in the purity of knowledge and action. Love, fear, sincerity and loyalty, and the feelings of appreciation and recognition for the boundless blessings and infinite favors of God Almighty are inner manifestations of this relationship. In the daily life of humans, it generally manifests in three forms: worship, obedience, and zeal and support. In the religion of the Prophets (peace be upon them), acts of worship are prescribed as reminders of this relationship. Prayer and almsgiving are forms of worship. The essence of Qurbani (animal sacrifice) and Umrah is the same. Fasting and seclusion signify obedience, and Hajj is the symbolic expression of zeal and support for God Almighty. (Meezan 267)

Among these acts of worship, the foremost and most important is prayer. It cleanses a person from the filth of sins and makes them pure, and proves to be an aid in achieving the purpose of religion, which is the purification of the soul. The Holy Qur'an, where it has declared purity as a condition for success, has presented the remembrance of Allah and prayer as its means. It is stated:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى. وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى.

However, successful shall be he who spiritually purified [himself] and for this he remembered his Lord's name, then prayed. (87: 14-15)

The purpose of religion is this purification (Tazkiyah), the reward for which will be granted to humans on the Day of Judgment in the form of the highest paradise (Firdaws). To achieve this purpose, the path that should be adopted has been described by Allah Almighty in two words: that is, with a true understanding of the divine attributes, a human should remain steadfast in the remembrance of Allah Almighty and submit entirely before Him. Prayer is the greatest manifestation of this remembrance and submission. (Al-Bayan 5/439)

Therefore, for anyone seeking purity and desiring success and salvation in the Hereafter, the best path is to diligently perform prayers. After the command to establish prayer in Surah Fatir, the *Wa man tazakka fa innama yatzakka li nafsibi wa ilay al-lahi al-maseer* (And whoever purifies himself, he only purifies himself for his own benefit, and to Allah is the final return) highlight the same benefit of prayer. In explanation of this, Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

This points towards the benefit of prayer, emphasizing that a person who wishes to be relieved from the burden of sins and attain purity should not rely on false supports but should instead commit to prayer. This will cleanse them of sins, and whoever attains purity will indeed benefit themselves. Allah does not need anyone's worship or obedience; rather, it is the servants themselves who are in need of it, and ultimately, everyone will return to Him. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 6/370)

How does prayer cleanse the impurities of sin? Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has explained that in every prayer, a person makes a covenant with their Lord to keep themselves protected from sins. After some intervals, when the next prayer comes, they renew their covenant. They begin their day with prayer and conclude it with prayer as well. Thus, prayer

encompasses their days and nights and, consequently, their entire life. If a person performs it with full consciousness, the external and internal impurities on their being are continuously purified. He writes:

Salah erases sins. When a person stands for salah with proper consciousness, he renews his covenant with God to abstain from His disobedience. As a result, he inevitably feels remorse for the slips between one prayer and the next and returns to the engagements of life with a new determination and resolve to avoid them. If we reflect, this is also the essence of repentance, and it is known that repentance purifies an individual from sins. Thus, it is stated:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ شَحْمَ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ
السَّيِّئَاتِ شَحْمَ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي لِلذَّكْرَيْنِ.

And Listen! [O Prophet! To remain steadfast in this path,] be diligent in the prayer in both parts of the day and in the early part of the night also. In reality, virtues take away vices. This is a reminder for those who are willing to be reminded. (11:114)

Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Tell me, if any of you had a river at his door in which he bathed five times a day, would there be any dirt left on his body?" The people replied: "In such a case, no dirt would remain on his body at all." The Prophet (PBUH) said: "This is the example of the five prayers. Allah removes sins in the same manner through these prayers." (Mizan 272-273)

The literal meanings of the word *zakat* are increase, growth, purity, and cleanliness. These meanings are also encompassed within its technical definition. Thus, it represents that portion of wealth which purifies not only the wealth itself but also the person who gives it. This clarifies that the purpose of this act of worship is the purification of the soul. The esteemed teacher writes:

The purpose of zakat is the same as that of the entire religion. It purifies the self from the impurities that may befall it due to the love of wealth, brings blessings to wealth, and enhances the purity

of the human soul. Since it is the minimum requirement of spending in the path of Allah that a Muslim has to fulfill under all circumstances, it does not achieve everything that is obtained by fulfilling the broader demands of spending beyond this. However, it does incline the human heart towards its Creator, and to a significant extent, it removes the negligence that befalls it due to its attachment to the world and material means. In the words of Prophet Jesus (PBUH): Indeed, a man's heart stays where his wealth stays. This is a self-evident truth. A person can experience this whenever they choose by spending their wealth in the path of Allah.

The Qur'an has beautifully clarified the purpose of zakat itself. It is stated:

حُذِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا.

Accept the charity of their wealth so that you may cleanse them and purify them. (9:103)

وَمَا أَتَيْنُمْ مِنْ رَّكَوَةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ.

And the charity you give to please God through it, it is they that give it who increase their wealth with God. (30:39)

(Meezan 351)

In Surah Al-Layl, this attribute of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is mentioned, that he spends his wealth to attain purity, and it is clarified that its reward is protection from the fire. It is stated:

وَسُيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتَقِيُّ. الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى.

And [Our Prophet] – the extremely God-fearing shall certainly be kept away from it, who spends his wealth to purify his soul. (92: 17-18)

Although *zakat* is spent on the needs of society, its essence is an act of worship to Allah. Therefore, when a person pays it, its acceptance is also decided in the court of Allah. It is mentioned in Surah At-

Tawbah:

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ.

Do they not know that it is God alone Who accepts the repentance of His servants and lauds their charity? (9:104)

Fasting is a special act of worship related to self-control. It is a manifestation of obedience to Allah. In this, a person, in compliance with the command of Allah, makes even permissible things prohibited for themselves. The purpose of fasting is that people adopt piety. It is stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

Believers! The fast has been made obligatory upon you as it was made obligatory upon those before you so that you become fearful of God. (2:183)

The purpose of fasting is explained through the words *La'allakum Tattaqun* meaning that piety (*taqwa*) may be developed within you. *Taqwa* means that a person binds themselves to regulations and lives within the boundaries and limits set by Allah. One should constantly fear that by breaking these limits, they might become deserving of Allah's punishment and be deprived of the paradise that Allah has prepared for those who recognize these limits. Allah has stated that the heirs to His paradise are those who are pious. It is stated:

تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا.

This is the Paradise that We shall give in inheritance to those among Our servants who fear God. (19:63)

It is clear from other places that the same reward of Paradise is for those people who will adopt purification. It is stated:

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا شَحْمٌ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى.

Orchards of eternal residence beneath which streams flow. They shall live in them forever. And this is the reward of those who

adopt purity. (20:76)

This means that piety and purification have the same aim and the same destination, which is paradise. By adopting piety, purification is achieved, the reward of which is paradise. And to attain purification, piety must be adopted, whose ultimate outcome is the kingdom of paradise.

The purpose of this explanation is to clarify that fasting also leads to the same level of purification that other forms of worship achieve.

How does fasting generate *Taqwa*? According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, three points should be kept in mind to understand this:

The first aspect is that fasting awakens the profound awareness in a person's mind that he is a servant of Allah. This sense of servitude begins to manifest as soon as the locks of prohibition are placed on some basic desires of the self, and it gradually intensifies until it envelops his entire being by the time the fast is broken. From dawn to sunset, not a morsel of food nor a drop of water passes the throat of the fasting person. He denies every demand of his self for these things solely in obedience to the command of his Lord. When the act of fasting is repeated continuously, this reality permeates the innermost essence of the fasting individual; indeed, it becomes embedded in his instincts that he is a servant of his Lord, and it is befitting for him to surrender to his Master's rule with acceptance and acknowledgment in all other matters of life. He should relinquish the claim of freedom and autonomy in both thought and action. As a result, it is evident that a person's faith in God transforms into a living faith in every respect, whereby he acknowledges not just the existence of one God, but an entity that is All-Hearing and All-Seeing, All-Knowing and Wise, and Upholder of justice, aware of all his overt and covert actions, and from whose obedience he cannot deviate. The most critical necessity for nurturing piety is this awareness.

The second point is that fasting deeply instills within the heart and soul the awareness that a person will one day be held

accountable before their Lord. Although every Muslim acknowledges this belief, during fasting, when thirst becomes troublesome, hunger becomes oppressive, and sexual urges demand satisfaction with full force, every person knows that it is solely this sense of accountability that restrains them from fulfilling these demands of the stomach and desires. Throughout the month of Ramadan, every day for hours, one maintains a vigil over these fundamental temptations of the self purely because they must eventually face their Creator. Even in the extreme heat, when the throat is parched from thirst and cold water is readily available, although they can easily drink, they refrain; when hunger is unbearable and food is available, they do not eat; when a husband and wife are young, with privacy available, they could fulfill their desires but choose not to. This discipline is no ordinary endeavor. The sense of accountability before Allah becomes deeply ingrained in both heart and mind through this practice. If you ponder, it is the second most effective means to cultivate piety.

Thirdly, it is necessary for piety to have patience, and fasting imparts training in patience to an individual. In fact, there may not be a better or more effective method than this for training in patience. What is the reality of the trial we face in this world, except that on one hand, there are the overwhelming desires of our animalistic existence, and on the other hand, there is the demand from Allah Almighty that we live our lives within His limits? This constantly demands patience. Without truthfulness, integrity, tolerance, forbearance, adherence to promises, justice, forgiveness, avoidance of prohibited acts, refraining from immorality, and steadfastness in righteousness, there is no meaning of piety. And, evidently, without patience, these qualities cannot be developed in a person in any way. (Meezan 363-364)

The rituals of Hajj and Umrah symbolize a confrontation with *Iblis* and the attainment of victory in this battle. In worldly life, humans face the trial that *Iblis* and his progeny, with their entire forces, are actively trying to lead them astray from the straight path. Their plan

is to deprive humans of the eternal kingdom of paradise. The esteemed teacher writes:

Allah Almighty has informed that from the creation of Adam, a scheme came into being in this world against which Iblis declared war from the very first day: Qaala Fabima aghwaytani la-aq'udanna lahum siraatak almustaqeem. Thumma la-atyannahum min baini aydeehim wa min khalfihim wa an aimaanihim wa an shama'ilihim, wa la tajidu aksarabum shakireen (He said: 'Then for this reason that You have led me astray, I shall surely sit in ambush for them on Your straight path. Then I will certainly approach them from before them and from behind them, and from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them grateful'). The Qur'an states that this challenge of Iblis has been accepted and the servants of Allah are in battle with this eternal enemy and his progeny until the Day of Judgment. This is the test of this world, upon which our eternal future depends on success or failure. (Mizan 373)

The greatest weapon that Satan uses to mislead humans is that he encourages them towards immorality and evil. When humans become involved in these, their existence and soul become polluted with these impurities. On the contrary, if they reject Satan's temptations and protect themselves from evils, their soul attains purity. Satan encourages immorality and evil, therefore, Allah has forbidden following in his footsteps. The command is as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ شَحْمَ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ.

Believers! Do not follow the footsteps of Satan and [remember that] he who follows the footsteps of Satan will only ruin himself because he entices [people to] lewdness and evil. (24:21)

Sacrifice, like prayer and *zakat*, is an expression of worship to Allah. Its purpose is to show gratitude to Allah Almighty. As a result, it cultivates piety within a person, which leads to the pleasure of Allah. Regarding the meat of the sacrifice, Allah states:

لَنْ يَبَالِ اللَّهُ لَحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَبَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ.

Neither does their flesh reach God nor their blood; in fact, only your piety reaches Him. (22:37)

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes in clarification of this:

The implication is that God is not pleased with the meat or blood of the sacrifices, as the polytheists have assumed, but rather He is pleased with the piety, submission, and humility that arise within those who offer these sacrifices. Therefore, while offering these sacrifices, instill this spirit of piety within yourselves. If this spirit is not cultivated, then it merely becomes the act of spilling an animal's blood, and it yields no benefit. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 5/251)

The essence of this practice is to present one's soul before Allah. By sacrificing an animal in the way of Allah, it is expressed that we have dedicated our life exclusively for Allah; He may take it whenever He wills, and may command us to sacrifice our lives in His path whenever He wishes. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has elucidated this reality of sacrifice in detail. He writes:

It holds the same essence as zakat, yet essentially it is not a vow of wealth, but a sacrifice of life, redeemed in exchange for the life of the animal which we sacrifice as its substitute. Apparently, it is a presentation of oneself for death, but upon reflection, this very death is the doorway to true life. It is declared: Wa la taqooloo liman yuqtalu fee sabeelillahi amwaatun, bal ahyaa'u wa laakil la tash'uroon (And do not say about those who are slain in the way of Allah that they are dead. They are not dead, but rather they are living, though you cannot perceive that life). The Qur'an, in one instance, has placed the concept of life against prayer and death against sacrifice to elucidate this truth: Just as prayer is our life with Allah, sacrifice is our death in His path.

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

Say: My prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, all are

for God, Lord of the Universe. (6:162)

When Prophet Abraham (PBUH) was instructed to offer an animal sacrifice instead of his son and a great sacrifice was established as a commemoration for future generations, Allah Almighty said: Wa fadaynahu bizibh'in azcem (And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice). This meant that Abraham's vow was accepted, and now, generation after generation, people will keep the memory of this event alive through their sacrifices.

From this perspective, sacrifice is the pinnacle of worship. By turning ourselves and our animals towards the Qibla and pronouncing "Bismillah, Allahu Akbar, we offer our animals in the standing or prostrating position to our Lord with the realization that, in essence, we are dedicating ourselves to Him.

This is the essence of offering in Islam, because the very meaning of Islam is to submit in obedience, and for a person to surrender their most beloved possessions, even their own life, to Allah Almighty. Sacrifice, if you ponder, is a depiction of this very reality. (Meezan 303-304)

[February 2024]



Rules of Purification of the Body

*[Derived from the contents of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's works
Al-Bayan and Meezan]*

The human body is the primary manifestation of one's existence. Its purity and cleanliness are inherent in human nature. Since humanity's inception on earth, the practice of maintaining cleanliness has been performed without external pressure, purely based on an inner inclination. This is why bathing, washing, cleaning away dirt and grime from the body, cleansing various bodily excretions, and grooming hair have been an innate aspect of human behavior since the very beginning. No era or region of human society has been devoid of these practices. They have been equally prevalent in every tribe, nation, country, and civilization, and they operate as a general code of conduct. A significant component of cultural and civilizational evolution is the effort to adopt better methods for keeping the body clean. Essentially, this represents an expression of the purity that Allah has endowed within human nature. From Prophet Adam (PBUH) to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), all the prophets have deemed bodily cleanliness mandatory and have prescribed certain specific practices for it. These injunctions for bodily purification were practiced in Arabia as part of the Abrahamic religious tradition before the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH). He endorsed and approved them, thus establishing them in religion as acts of Sunnah.

Among these instructions, one is to keep the moustache trimmed; the second is to shave the pubic hair; the third is to clean the armpit hair; the fourth is to cut the grown nails; and the fifth is the circumcision of boys. The Prophet (PBUH) has described these as the natural practices and, given their importance for purification and cleanliness, regarded them as an essential part of the faith. The guidance is:

الفطرة خمس: الختان والاستحداد وقص الشارب وتقليم الأظفار ونتف الأباط.

Five things are part of natural disposition: circumcision, shaving pubic hair, trimming the mustache, cutting long nails, and cleaning the armpit hair. (Sahih Bukhari No. 5891)

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has clarified that the purpose of these religious injunctions is the purification and cleansing of the body. He writes:

These five things are related to etiquette. Large mustaches create a kind of arrogant impression in a person's appearance. Moreover, while putting food and drink in the mouth, they can also become contaminated. Long nails not only gather dirt but also give a semblance of similarity to wild animals. Thus, it has been instructed that mustaches be trimmed and long nails be cut. The rest of the things are necessary for bodily cleanliness. The Prophet (PBUH) was so committed to these that for some, he prescribed a specific time limit. (Meezan 644)

The sixth matter is the cleanliness of the nose, mouth, and teeth. The Prophet (PBUH) was so diligent about the cleanliness of teeth that he said:

لولا أن أشق على أمتي لأمرتهم بالسواك مع كل صلاة.

If I did not think that I would put my Ummah into hardship, I would command them to clean their teeth at every prayer time. (Sahih Bukhari No. 887)

The religion aims to inculcate a sense of purity and cleanliness among individuals, and in accordance with this requirement, the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the cleanliness of the nose and mouth as part of the Sunnah. The traditions of his ablution which have been conveyed to the community indicate that on every occasion of ablution, he took great care to perform *madhmadah* and *istinshaq*, meaning he would rinse his mouth with water and cleanse his nose by putting water into it.

The seventh matter pertains to the cleansing of the bodily orifices

used for urination and defecation, an act termed *istinjā* in Islamic jurisprudence. This practice is also among the religious obligations that the Prophet (PBUH) instituted and observed as a part of his Sunnah.

The eighth, ninth, and tenth things are different forms of bathing (*ghusl*). These include the *ghusl* after menstruation and postnatal bleeding, *ghusl* after sexual impurity, and the bathing of the deceased. It is obligatory for women that after menstruation and postnatal bleeding, when the bleeding stops, they should perform *ghusl* and attain purification. The Qur'an has also emphasized this practice. In Surah Al-Baqarah, it is stated:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ شَحِمٌ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى لِّى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهَرْنَ تَجْمَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ شَحِمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.

And [now that the issue of marriage has been raised,] they ask you about the menstruation [of women]. Say: It is a kind of impurity. Therefore, keep away from women during their menstrual periods and do not approach them until they are in a state of purity; then when they are clean after having a bath, approach them from where God has enjoined you [about it]. Surely, God loves those who repent and those who keep themselves clean. (2:222)

After intimacy, it is prescribed for the couple to perform a ritual bath. The purpose of this is also to attain purity. The ritual washing of the deceased is an excellent example of the concept of purity. When a person's earthly remains are offered to God by placing them in the grave, they are encouraged to be washed with full diligence at that time. This practice indicates the importance of acquiring purity and its psychological significance in religion. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi writes regarding the ritual washing of the deceased:

This washing is also among the practices of the Prophets (peace be upon them). Although its requirement is fulfilled by pouring water thoroughly over the body, given the importance of

purification and cleanliness in religion, the deceased should, as far as possible, be given a full and proper washing. On one occasion, the instructions given by the Prophet (PBUH) for this are as follows:

اغسلنها ثلاثاً أو خمساً أو أكثر من ذلك، إن رأيتن ذلك بماء وسدر، واجعلن في الآخرة كافوراً أو شيئاً من كافور.

Give her (the girl) a bath three times or five times, or if deemed appropriate, even more times, with water and lotus leaves. And in the final bath, add camphor or said that also include some camphor in the water. (Sahih Bukhari No. 1258)

اغسلنها وتراً: ثلاثاً أو خمساً أو سبعاً، ابدأن بيمينها ومواضع الوضوء منها.

Give this (girl) a bath an odd number of times: three or five or seven times, and start with the right side and with those limbs that are washed in ablution. (Sahih Bukhari No. 1254)

These are the comprehensive rules for the purification of the body. Religion has not included them in the category of permissible and forbidden. Their nature is that of customs and etiquettes. These customs and etiquettes have been prescribed keeping in view the religious objective of the purification of the soul. In view of this objective, they hold extraordinary importance in religion. The prophets, peace be upon them, have emphasized their observance and have urged their followers to adhere to them. Most of these customs were prevalent in Arabia before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He adopted them and established them as a tradition in the Muslim community. My esteemed teacher has also discussed these etiquettes of body purification under the title “Customs and Etiquettes” in his book *Meezan*, along with some other customs and etiquettes. In their introduction, he has written:

The aspects of human civilization that are highlighted by the ways of living and the manifestations of culture are termed ‘customs and etiquettes.’ No era of human society has been devoid of these customs and etiquettes. We observe them as being

uniformly prevalent and established as a common custom in every tribe, nation, and civilization. The identity of nations and peoples is mostly established in contrast to one another through these very means. The religions brought by the Prophets, peace be upon them, also bind their followers to certain customs and etiquettes. The purpose of religion is the purification of the soul; thus, these customs and etiquettes of religion are also determined with this purpose in mind. When the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was sent, most of these were prevalent in Arabia as the tradition of the Abrahamic religion. Apart from a few things, he did not add to them. These precede the Qur'an and hold the status of a Sunnah, which, after the approval and endorsement by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), has been transmitted to the Muslim community through the consensus of the Companions and continual practice. Their source is now the consensus of the Muslim community, and based on this, they are accepted as religion throughout the entire Muslim community everywhere. (642)

[April 2024]



Global Pandemics: Warnings from Allah

[In 2019, the entire world was engulfed by the Corona virus. For almost three years, people were affected by it. Millions of people fell victim to it, and more than 7 million perished. During this time, various media channels posed the question to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi whether this pandemic was of divine punishment in nature, as some scholars had suggested, or merely an accident. Similarly, they asked what Muslims should contemplate and what behavior they should adopt in such times. The following text is derived from the conversations that my esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, had in response to these questions.]

The Corona virus and similar global pandemics are among the warnings from Allah. The purpose of such warnings is to alert people to the power of Allah and His grasp. The Qur'an uses the term *Nuzur* for them. This refers to those signs that occasionally manifest in the form of celestial calamities, drawing human attention towards the might and will of the Creator of the universe. Their target can be a home, a village, a city, a country, or at times, the entire Earth. These manifest in the form of earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, floods, contagious diseases, and epidemics, often engulfing millions of people.

The Prominent Aspects of Allah's Warnings

These warnings from Allah serve as admonition, lesson, and reminder for humans from various aspects. Among these, three aspects are the most prominent:

1. Reminder of Death and the Day of Judgment

The most prominent aspect of these reminders is the remembrance of

death and the Day of Judgment. The establishment of the Day of Judgment for the recompense and punishment of humans is a firm decree of Allah. That is why it holds fundamental importance in the message of the Prophets (peace be upon them). They proclaim it and warn about it. The first stage a person goes through in preparation for attendance on this day is death. With its arrival, the period of respite in life ends, leaving no room for reform, repentance, or seeking forgiveness. It is as if with death, the journey toward the Day of Judgment begins.

The gravity and dread of death are known to everyone. We witness it daily, yet the tragedy is that we consider it a routine occurrence and overlook it. We do not reflect on the fact that just as it has erased a certain child, a certain youth, or an elderly person from the face of existence, it is destined to erase me as well. However, when this individual death assumes a collective form, its fear and dread overwhelm everyone. This is the moment when even the greatest feel paralyzed, the tyrants and oppressors tremble, and the heedless and indifferent turn towards repentance and seek forgiveness. This moment creates an opportunity for human beings to draw lessons and admonitions. If a person keeps their senses alert and does not let their intellect become impaired, through this they gain knowledge of the Creator of the universe and become deeply concerned about the Day of Judgment and recompense.

2. Reminder of Allah's Power

The second prominent aspect of these admonitions is the reminder of Allah's immense power and boundless vastness. In reality, humans, captivated by their own knowledge and discoveries, forget their status and worth. They start to believe that they can unravel any mystery, avert any difficulty, and solve any problem. Caught in this delusion, they become oblivious to plain truths. They fail to acknowledge the limitations of their intellect and the weaknesses in their knowledge and actions. For modern man, the discoveries and inventions of science have amplified this issue on a large scale. There is no doubt that science has greatly served humanity. It has acquired information

about matter and, as a result, has made countless inventions that have brought civilization to the pinnacle of progress. But the question is whether even a single step has been taken towards that fundamental issue, which is the greatest problem of the universe? The answer is a resounding no. That issue is how matter came into existence, where life was introduced into it, and how consciousness emerged within that life. This is the greatest mystery of the universe, one that science has yet to take any step towards solving. The Urdu proverb aptly describes this behavior: it's like taking a turmeric lump and considering oneself a great merchant—believing oneself to be a significant person having found a trifling thing. Our wealth, our knowledge, our authority are essentially like a lump of turmeric, and on its basis, we begin to think that we have conquered the world and that everything is under our control. To rescue humans from this folly and delusion, Allah sends down His admonitions.

If Allah Almighty had desired, this virus would not have come into existence, and if by His permission it did come into existence, He could have prevented it from spreading right from the start. However, by the will of Allah, it has been created and is reaching thousands of people daily. This means that the Lord of the worlds wants to admonish humans, to shake them, to awaken them from negligence, and to show them what their status is before the Creator of the universe.

3. Understanding the Will and Intention of Allah

The third prominent aspect of these warnings is to direct attention to the eternal will of Allah. In matters of accidents occurring in the world, people usually focus on causes and do not turn their attention to the Causer of causes. However, the reality is that any event that occurs in the world happens with Allah's consent. Any accident that takes place does so by His permission. Not even a particle in the universe can move without His consent. Therefore, every ease and difficulty that befalls humans depends on Allah's will.

It is also a reality that none of Allah's actions are devoid of goodness and wisdom. This is because His very essence is the embodiment of

goodness and absolute wisdom. This concept is elucidated in the Qur'an through the story of Prophet Moses and Khidr (peace be upon them). It is narrated that by the command of Allah, Khidr made a hole in the boat in which they were traveling. The wisdom behind this was that the boat belonged to some laborers, and there was a king ahead who was seizing boats in good condition. Then Khidr killed a boy. The reason given for this was that the boy was destined to grow up and choose disbelief, which would have been a source of suffering for his believing parents. After this, Khidr repaired a collapsing wall in a village. The reason was that beneath this wall, the father of two orphan children had buried a treasure for them, which would be of use to them when they grew older. This incident fully highlights the great wisdom underlying Allah's decisions. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi has stated that three points become clear from this incident:

Firstly, everything that occurs in this world happens under the permission and will of God. Not a single particle can move from its place without His permission and will.

The second point is that God is absolute goodness and wise, and therefore, none of His intentions are devoid of goodness and wisdom. If He gives respite to the people of falsehood, it is not because He loves falsehood or is helpless before it; rather, it is because He is nurturing some great goodness within it. Similarly, if He subjects the people of truth to trials and tribulations, it is not because He has any interest in their suffering, but rather because through this, He opens pathways to some greater good for them.

The third point is that human knowledge is limited, and therefore, one cannot comprehend the wisdom behind every divine intent in this world. The mysteries of His intentions will only be unveiled in the hereafter. In this world, the appropriate attitude for a person is to carry out their duties while being patient and grateful for all of God's decisions, and to remain satisfied that the sweetness hidden within today's bitterness will, God willing, be revealed tomorrow.

The Required Attitude on the Occasion of Warnings

After understanding the nature and wisdom behind Allah's warnings, the question now arises as to what attitude we should adopt when faced with extraordinary warnings such as the coronavirus and other similar situations.

In this matter, the following four things are important:

1. Turn your attention towards death

Firstly, one should derive the attention, admonition, and lesson intended by this warning. This means that one should be as vigilant about death as is truly deserved. There should be a profound belief, both from the depths of the heart and the expanses of the mind, in the occurrence of death and its potential to occur at any given moment, similar to the certainty we hold about being alive. Furthermore, it is essential to fully understand that death is not our ultimate end. It is the door through which we will pass to be present in the court of Allah and present the account of our deeds before Him.

2. Acknowledge your limitations

Secondly, we must recognize our weakness, incapability, and helplessness in the face of Allah's power and will, and embodying the essence of 'recognize your own worth,' we should adopt a manner of staying within our status and limits. We should gain full awareness of the fact that Allah is the Lord of all worlds who:

He is the sole owner of the heavens and the earth and everything in between; no other shares in His sovereignty; no other is a partner in His workshop of power; nothing in the world is hidden from His sight; no affair of the world is beyond His command; everything is dependent on Him, yet He is in need of none; inanimate objects, plants, animals, all prostrate before Him and are engaged in His glorification and praise; His power is immense, His reach is unlimited, and His will operates in every

particle of the universe; He may destroy whatever He wishes whenever He wishes, and He may recreate it whenever He desires; honor and disgrace are in His hands; all are perishable, He alone is everlasting; He is beyond perception, yet nearer than the jugular vein; His knowledge and power encompass everything; He knows the secrets of the hearts; His will prevails in every will, and His decree is above every decree. (Meezan 103)

3. Ensure the protection of life

Thirdly, we should implement all measures that can serve as a means of liberation from such epidemics. Just as the reminder of death is necessary, so too is the protection of life imperative. Therefore, we must consider what causes the disease has come from, what role we have played in creating those causes, where the mistake was made, and how it occurred. Then, we should eliminate the causes, rectify the mistake, and fully engage in treatment and prevention. The general public should adopt all precautions as advised by medical experts and social organizations. In this matter, we should adopt a completely scientific approach. This is what our religion itself has taught us—that when any distress, calamity, or issue arises, we should seek guidance from our intellect and strive to solve the problem using all resources of experience, observation, knowledge, and action. In Surah Yusuf, see that Allah has provided this guidance that wisdom and intellect should be employed to deal with the calamity of famine, and by better planning of material resources, relief from adversity can be achieved. It was not taught on this occasion to escape the calamity through any incantations or supplications. Hence, we must stay vigilant that if we become complacent and do not do our part to protect ourselves, according to the law of Allah, this warning can become a very great punishment.

4. Pray in the presence of Allah

Fourthly, we should not solely rely on our own efforts, but also supplicate before the Lord. The reason for this is that our efforts can only be effective if Allah grants His permission. He is the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all existence, neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor

sleep, and His sovereignty extends over the heavens and the earth. If He wills, our efforts will succeed; if He does not, they will not. Therefore, it is essential that after making every possible effort, we present ourselves in His court, plead before Him, implore, and cry out. For this purpose, if the blessed supplications taught by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are raised from the depths of our hearts, there is hope that our Lord will assist us, God willing. Some of the words of the supplications of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) are as follows:

O Allah, I have greatly wronged myself, and (I know that) no one can forgive my sins except You. Therefore, (O Lord), forgive my sins through Your special grace and have mercy on me. Indeed, You are the Forgiver, Your compassion is eternal. (Bukhari, No. 834; Muslim, No. 6869)

O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your displeasure, and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment. And (Lord), I seek refuge in You from You. It is not possible for me to fully praise You. You are as You have praised Yourself. (Muslim, No. 1090)

O Allah, forgive my sins; the previous and the later, the apparent and the hidden. And forgive any excess that I have committed, and everything that You know about me more than anyone else. You are the One who advances people and You are the One who delays them. There is no deity except You. (Muslim, No. 1812)

O Allah, You are my Lord; there is no deity but You; You created me and I am Your servant, and I remain steadfast on Your covenant and promise to the best of my ability. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my deeds; I acknowledge Your blessings upon me and I confess my sins. So forgive me, for indeed, none forgives sins except You. (Bukhari, No. 6306)

Principles of Adherence to Shariah in Difficult Circumstances

After the nature and wisdom of God's warnings and the direction of

our attitudes become clear, the most important question for every believer is: under these circumstances, while practicing the commandments of religion, what things are necessary to observe? How much effort should be made to achieve the desired form of the command, and if there is any obstacle, compulsion, or difficulty, to what extent is there room for reduction or concession? In this regard, it is also essential to know where the scope of Shariah ends and the boundary of *ijtihad* begins. Alongside these fundamental questions, it is also necessary to answer the practical issues facing people. Among these, the most prominent is: after the restrictions on closeness and mingling by medical experts, what is the nature of Shariah's ruling on congregational prayers, Friday prayers, Eid, and other religious gatherings in mosques? The question is also under discussion that if there is a risk of the epidemic spreading from the deceased, how will the rites of funeral arrangements be carried out? Similarly, if the number of deaths exceeds the limits of management, what will be the situation for the funeral prayers and the shrouding and burial?

In these discussions and issues, we first understand what the fundamental guidance of Shariah is in exceptional cases.

It is evident from the Qur'an and Hadith and Sunnah that for specific circumstances, the Shariah has clearly outlined the rules of alleviation, concession, leniency, and exemption. These rules are based on two principles: one is *ixтираар*, which is the principle of necessity, and the other is *usr*, which is the principle of hardship. The details are as follows:

a. The Principle of Necessity

The first principle is necessity, which is in fact a necessary implication of the commandment regarding the sanctity of life. This principle relates to the prohibitions concerning food and conduct. After delineating the dietary prohibitions in the Qur'an — carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered in the name of anyone other than Allah — it is stated that if one is compelled by necessity, the use of these forbidden items is permitted. The directive is:

فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ شَحْم إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

Even then, whoever is driven to necessity, intending neither to desire nor to transgress, incurs no sin. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Ever-Merciful. (2:173)

فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرٍ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمِهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

But he who, constrained by hunger, is compelled to eat any of these things not intending to commit sin, then there is no harm in this because God is Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. (5:3)

This means that if people find themselves in a situation where they must choose between something forbidden and death, they are allowed to consume forbidden items to the extent necessary to save their life. Similarly, if the situation arises where one can save their life by uttering a word of disbelief, Allah has permitted this as well. It is stated:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أَكْرَهَ وَقُلُوبُهُ مَطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ.

[Believers! Those among you] who disbelieve after believing, if they are compelled and their hearts are content on belief, then there is no penalty for this. (16:106)

From these verses, it is clear that the protection of human life is so esteemed in the eyes of Allah that He has permitted the suspension of prohibitions. This is why it is a well-accepted principle in Shariah that in cases of compulsion and necessity, the use of prohibited things is permissible and there shall be no accountability for it. Under the mentioned verse of Surah Al-Baqarah in *Al-Bayan*, it is stated:

This is a concession for a state of necessity which arises when no food is available. In this, the punishment for using the forbidden has been lifted, and the words fa laa ithm alayhi inna Allaha ghafoorur raheem (Then there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful) make this matter entirely clear. Evidently, this rule should also apply to a state of coercion. The correct approach in this matter is that when necessity arises, a person should take advantage of this concession and not put

themselves through unnecessary hardship in zeal for strictness. The example of the Prophet (PBUH) regarding tayammum, shortening of prayers, and wiping over socks, as mentioned in traditions, also leads to this conclusion. (1/175)

b. The Principle of Hardship

The second principle is difficulty. This principle relates to acts of worship. It is the intent of Allah that if one encounters hardship, concessions or leniencies may be sought in worship to create ease. The reason for this is that Allah desires ease for His servants, not hardship or difficulty. It is stated:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ

God desires ease for you and does not want to be harsh with you. (2:185)

In light of this principle, the concessions granted by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) in acts of worship are notably as follows:

1. When there is a danger, there will be an exemption from attending the congregation and mosque, and people will be allowed to offer prayers while walking or riding. It is instructed:

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا تَجِمُّ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ.

Then if you fear any danger, pray on foot or while riding, in whichever way you like, but when circumstances become secure, remember God in the very manner He has taught you, which you knew not. (2:239)

2. If it rains during the night or if the cold is excessive, then instead of congregational prayer in the mosque, individual prayer can be performed at home. On such occasions, the Prophet (PBUH) would have the caller to prayer announce, "People, perform your prayer in your homes!" It is narrated in Sahih Bukhari:

عن نافع أن ابن عمر أذن بالصلاة في ليلة ذات برد وريح، ثم قال: ألا صلوا في الرحال، ثم قال: إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: كان يأمر

المؤذن، إذا كانت ليلة ذات برد ومطر، يقول: ألا صلوا في الرجال.

Narrated by Nafi: Abdullah bin Umar (RA) gave the call to prayer on a cold and rainy night, and then said, "O people, pray in your homes." He then explained that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) would instruct the muezzin on nights of cold and rain to announce that people should pray in their homes. (No. 666)

3. During travel, it is permissible to shorten the prayer. The term used in Shariah for this is *Qasr*. It is mentioned in Surah An-Nisa:

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ طَمَحًا إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا شَحْمًا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا.

When you travel [to wage this jihad], it is no offence for you to shorten your prayers if you fear that the disbelievers may torment you because these disbelievers are your open enemies. (4:101)

Therefore, the prayers consisting of four units will be performed in two units each. It is stated in *Meezan*:

Traditions reveal that the Prophet (PBUH) drew an analogy to the typical troubles, chaos, and disturbances of travel during his time and generally performed shortened prayers in those journeys. Similarly, to spare the caravan from the inconvenience of halting, voluntary prayers were also offered while seated on the mount. (315)

4. Permission has also been granted to adjust the timings of prayers. For instance, Zuhr can be delayed and combined with Asr, and Asr can be brought forward and combined with Zuhr. Similarly, the Isha prayer can be brought forward and combined with Maghrib, and Maghrib can be delayed and combined with Isha. This is elaborated in *Meezan* as follows:

The permission for shortening the prayer in certain circumstances has also been interpreted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as an allowance for combining the timings of certain prayers during travel. In such travels, he prayed the Zuhr and Asr, as

well as the Maghrib and Isha prayers together. It is narrated by Mu'adh bin Jabal that during the journey of the Battle of Tabuk, the usual practice was that if the sun had declined before setting out, the Zuhr and Asr were combined. If the journey commenced before the sun's decline, the Zuhr prayer was delayed until the time of stopping for Asr. The same approach was taken for the Maghrib prayer. If the sun set before setting out, the Maghrib and Isha were performed together. If the journey commenced before sunset, the Maghrib would be delayed until stopping for Isha, and then both prayers were performed together. (315)

5. During the time of the Prophethood, when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself was present for leading the prayer, no Muslim could agree to the idea that while some people attained the honor of following him, others should be deprived of it, even in the battlefield. Considering this situation, the strategy that Allah provided maintained the concession of shortening the prayer for both the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the noble Companions. Furthermore, it included the directive that people would not pray the two units consecutively but would perform them separately, pausing between them. The army was to be divided into two groups: one group would follow the Prophet (PBUH) in the first unit of prayer, and the second group in the second unit. Thus, people would complete one unit of prayer under the leadership of the Prophet (PBUH), then pause, and after a short while, perform the second unit separately. It is stated in Surah An-Nisa:

وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا
أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ طَلَمِي فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ سَمِ وَأَلْتَاتِ طَائِفَةٌ
أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا.

And [O Prophet!] when you are among them, and stand to lead them in the prayer [at perilous places], let one group among them stand with you such that they are armed with their weapons. Then after making their prostration, let them withdraw to your rear and then let the other group who has yet to pray come forward and pray with you. (4:102)

In *Meezan*, it is explained regarding this command:

During the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH), a significant challenge was arranging congregational prayer on the battlefield. If the Prophet led the prayer, no Muslim would willingly miss the opportunity to join. Every soldier wished to perform the prayer following his lead. This was a natural desire, but it was also essential to maintain defense measures. One solution to this problem was that the Prophet (PBUH) would pray four units (rak'ahs), and the army would divide into two groups, each joining for two units with him. This approach was used on certain occasions; however, considering the potential hardship for the Prophet (PBUH), the Qur'an provided a solution. It suggested that both the leader and followers pray a shortened prayer, and the army's two divisions should successively join half the prayer with the Prophet and complete the remainder on their own. Consequently, one group would move back after the prostrations of the first unit to take over guarding duties, allowing the other group, which had not yet prayed, to join the Prophet in the second unit. (316)

6. In the case of travel, illness, or scarcity of water, when both ablution and bathing become difficult, Allah Almighty has permitted that a person may perform *tayammum*. It is stated:

وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ.

And if you are sick or on a journey or when anyone of you has relieved yourself or you have had intercourse with women, then you find no water, find some clean surface and wipe your faces and your hands with it. (4:43)

7. On the principle of *tayammum*, the Prophet (PBUH) also permitted wiping over socks and turbans. It is written in *Meezan*:

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) performed wiping over the socks and turban by analogy with the same ruling of tayammum and gave permission to the people that if the socks are worn after

performing ablution, then for the resident, they can wipe over them for one day and night, and for the traveler, for three days and nights, instead of taking them off and washing the feet. (290)

8. If a person is unable to complete the fasts of Ramadan due to illness or travel, he can make them up later, and if that is not possible, he can compensate by feeding a needy person for each missed fast. It is commanded in Surah Al-Baqarah:

فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ شَحْمٌ وَعَلَى
الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ.

Yet if any one among you is ill or on a journey, let him complete this count in other days; and those who have the capacity to feed a needy, they must feed a needy in place of every fast. (2:184)

10. The pilgrimage to the House of Allah is obligated with the condition of capability. Thus, those who do not possess the financial or physical capability, it is not obligated upon them. The directive is:

وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا

And for those who are capable of reaching this place, the pilgrimage to this House is incumbent upon them. (3:97)

These allowances and concessions are based on the principle of *yurīdu-llāhu bikumul yusra wa lā yurīdu bikumul 'usr* meaning Allah desires ease for His servants and does not wish to place them in hardship and difficulty. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has termed these concessions and allowances as a blessing from Allah and demonstrated through his actions that benefiting from them is indeed the exemplary practice of the Prophet (PBUH). According to a narration in Sahih Muslim, Umar (RA) states:

عجبت مما عجبت منه، فسألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن
ذلك، فقال: صدقة، تصدق الله بها عليكم، فاقبلوا. صدقته

(When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) shortened the prayer without any apparent danger,) I found it astonishing, just as it was astonishing to (Ya'la bin Umayyah). So, I inquired from the

Messenger of Allah (PBUH) about this, and he said: This is a concession from Allah, which He has granted to you, so accept this concession from Allah.” (Sahih Muslim No. 573)

Applications of the Principles of Hardship and Necessity

The nature of the rules regarding hardship and necessity has been fully clarified in the previous discussion. However, despite this, it is natural for some fundamental and practical questions to arise. Some prominent ones among them are: Is it desirable in Shariah to act upon concession in hardship and necessity? Is acting upon it obligatory or optional? Does the ruling of concession hold the status of an alternative to the original ruling? While benefiting from it, which aspects of faith and practice need to be considered? If the rulings of Shariah become contradictory in a state of hardship and necessity, what will be the criteria for acceptance, preference, and delay? If a Muslim wants to choose the path of rigidity instead of concession, what things should they keep in mind?

To understand the intention of religion regarding this and other similar questions, the following points are important:

First, the requirements of religion are the fundamental commands that it demands from its followers. Among these, some are obligatory and related to compliance, while others are based on prohibition and restriction, meaning some actions are to be performed, while others are forbidden. For instance, prayer is obligatory with adherence to its appointed times; being in a state of ablution and facing the Qibla are its essential conditions. Attending the mosque and organizing prayer in congregation holds exceptional merit. *Zakat* is also obligatory, with specified rates on wealth, livestock, and produce. Similarly, the month of Ramadan is designated for fasting, and it is commanded that whoever witnesses this month should complete its fasts. Hajj, Umrah, and sacrificial offerings are the ultimate forms of worship and are ordained as a representation of devotion of life and wealth before God. Hence, for each form of worship, the requirements of Shariah

are completely clear. The same applies to prohibitions. For instance, in a state of major impurity, menstruation, or intoxication, prayer is not permitted. Fasting during menstruation and postnatal bleeding is also prohibited. Intentionally breaking a fast is forbidden. There is a command to avoid intoxication, gambling, and interest. Consuming the carcass, blood, pork, and animals sacrificed in the name of any other than Allah is haram. Violating life, property, and honor is counted among the major crimes and appropriate punishments have been prescribed for them. These are a few examples of Shariah commands to illustrate that the requirements of religion in terms of Shariah are fully determined and completely clear in every respect. Faith demands that we adhere meticulously to their words, meanings, intent, and purpose. Our hearts, minds, and limbs should submissively comply with these, allowing no hesitation, pretense, negligence, or disregard to approach. This is the objective of religion, and this is the demand of faith. However, if in any matter there is no command of Shariah, or a command exists but its specifics and details have not been determined, or changes in circumstances have led to new situations regarding its application, then the door of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) remains open. The principle of Shariah is that if in any issue the Qur'an and Sunnah are silent, we can exercise *ijtihad* in the light of religion and, according to our understanding and perception, determine the requirement of religion.

Second, the concessions for compulsion and coercion are not the original commandments of religion. These are exceptions that are adopted out of necessity. Therefore, to incline towards them and exceed the limits of necessity is contrary to faith and ethics. It is stated in *Meezan*:

...Exceptions from prohibitions are only in a state of necessity, and that too ghayra baghin walaa aadin, meaning in such a way that the person neither desires it nor exceeds the limit of necessity. This matter is stated in exactly the same words in the verses of Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah An-Nahl. However, in Surah Al-Maidah, there is a slight difference in wording. It is stated:

Then if one is compelled by hunger to consume any of these things, without inclining towards sin, there is no blame in it, for Allah is Forgiving, His compassion is eternal.

Imam Islahi writes in its explanation:

The meaning of the term Makhmasah is hunger. The concept of being distressed by hunger implies that a person finds themselves in such a dire state of hunger that no apparent option other than choosing between death or engaging in something forbidden remains. In such a condition, it is permissible for them to utilize something from the forbidden to save their life. The restriction of Ghaira Mutajaanifin reflects the same notion expressed elsewhere as ghayra baghin walaa aadin meaning one should neither become someone who desires it from the heart nor exceed the necessary limits. The restriction of Makhmasah makes it clear that where other dietary alternatives exist, merely on the pretext that halal meat is not available, as is often the case in many European and American countries, no one has the right to declare the prohibited as permissible. Meat is not indispensable for survival. Not only can life be sustained with other foods, but health can also be maintained at the highest standards. The restraint of Ghaira Mutajaanifin Li-Ithmin signifies that a concession is still just a concession, and forbidden remains forbidden in every form. Neither can anything prohibited become inherently permissible, nor is any concession a permanent license. Thus, it is not permissible for anyone to exceed the extent necessary to alleviate dire need. If someone saves their life by observing these restrictions and consuming something forbidden, then Allah is forgiving and merciful. However, if someone exploits this permission to indulge their desires, the responsibility lies with them, and this permission will not serve as an excuse on the Day of Judgment. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 2/458) (640-641)

Third, the rules of hardship and necessity are not substitutes for the desired rules. Therefore, it should be noted that, for example,

shortening prayers or combining them to limit to three times instead of five, performing *tayammum* instead of ablution and ghusl, not maintaining the direction of the Qibla while traveling, praying at home instead of in congregation, observing obligatory fasts after the month of Ramadan has passed, or the government reducing *zakat* during famine or economic hardship are not alternatives or replacements for the original Shariah rules. These are concessions for situations when it becomes impossible or difficult for a person to act according to the desired command. Their nature is similar to when an ambulance is allowed to pass through a red signal due to an emergency, or when educational institutions declare holidays during severe weather to save children from hardship. Just as these exceptional situations are not considered alternatives, similarly, the concessions in Shariah should not be regarded as substitutes for the original injunctions. They should be accepted as exceptions, and as soon as circumstances return to normal, one should revert to the desired commands with full spiritual conviction.

[May 2020]



Guidance of Shariah Regarding Incurable Diseases

[Response to the questions sent by a student, this text is derived from the discourse of Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

Question: If a person is suffering from an incurable and painful disease, can the treatment be discontinued to relieve him from the agony, consequently leading to death? In this situation, can the person themselves request to withdraw from the treatment? What guidance does Islamic Shariah provide on this matter?

Answer: In this matter, understand two things as principles.

Firstly, according to Islamic law, human life holds sanctity. It is a trust from Allah, given to humans for safekeeping. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) stated, “Your body has a right over you,” and “Your life also has a right over you.” This means that just as others’ rights are obligatory on a person, the right to protect one’s own life is also obligatory. Therefore, one cannot harm their own life nor be harmful to the lives of other people.

The treatment and therapy originate from the same principle of the sanctity of life. Its primary purpose is the protection of life. Therefore, when a person becomes ill, they should make every possible effort to seek treatment. Negligence in this matter should never be adopted. This responsibility of seeking treatment applies to an individual regarding their own self, as well as concerning their family and dependents. There is no fundamental difference between the two situations. Both involve life, and both are entrusted with the responsibility of protection. Hence, in both cases, one must necessarily fulfill this responsibility.

Second, in Islamic law, obligations and duties are given precedence

over optional and recommended acts and permissible and allowable actions. Thus, it is mandatory to fulfill obligations and duties. Deviation from them is tantamount to violating Islamic law. However, as far as optional acts (*nawafil*), recommended acts (*mustahabbat*), and permissible acts (*mubah*) are concerned, they are left to a person's discretion. The protection of life and making arrangements for its treatment fall under the category of obligations; hence, avoiding them without a valid reason is prohibited. However, if the matter goes beyond treatment to merely maintaining breath or involves artificial measures rather than natural methods of treatment, it is up to the person to decide whether to accept them or to avoid them. Maintaining life through such methods is neither a religious nor a moral obligation.

In the light of these principles, it becomes clear that the protection of human life and providing medical treatment is a religious and moral responsibility. This responsibility applies to every individual not only for their own life but also for the lives of others. Every person is accountable and cannot overlook this obligation. However, if a disease is incurable and the pain exceeds the limit of endurance, then a person is no longer obligated to continue treatment. In such a situation, the matter shifts from being obligatory to being recommended or permissible, and continuing or abandoning the treatment becomes an optional matter.

The same principle applies to situations where the essential organs that guarantee human life become non-functional, but the opportunity arises to sustain life through mechanical devices or transplantation of organs from other humans or animals. In this situation too, the individual has both options: they can either rely on such means to continue the journey of life, or they can forgo these means and entrust their life to Allah. They are free to choose either option. In this regard, there is no religious or ethical obligation on them.

As for physicians and medical practitioners, they should also guide the patient in accordance with the aforementioned principles. If, at any point, they must make a decision on their own, they should consider the patient to be under their care and act accordingly. In other words,

they should make decisions in the same manner as parents do for their children.

Question: According to Shariah, what is considered death, when does it occur, and how can it be determined? If a person experiences brain death but the heart continues to beat, or the heart stops but the brain is alive, or the person is in a permanent state of coma due to another reason, should treatment continue in such a case? According to Shariah, is it obligatory, recommended, or permissible to continue such treatment?

Answer: Determining the occurrence of death is not a subject of Shariah. It is based on people's experience and observation. If there is any doubt, consultation with a medical professional is sought. The medical professional also forms an opinion with the help of their knowledge, experience, and available resources as to whether a person is alive or deceased. Sometimes, the decision is made by examining the eyes, sometimes by checking the pulse, conducting a test, listening to the heartbeat, or determining brain death. The objective is to be completely assured that death has occurred and there is no possibility of life remaining. In this matter, mistakes can sometimes happen, but despite this, we have to rely on our own knowledge and experience. Besides this, we have no other method to ascertain death.

In terms of medical treatment, it should be limited to preserving actual life and providing relief to the patient. Extending beyond this to merely maintaining physical existence, effectively turning a human into a living corpse, is not the intention of Shariah. In such situations, medication should be discontinued, and machines should be removed, waiting instead for Allah's decree. Once God's decision is made and death occurs in the conventional sense, burial should be conducted according to Shariah guidelines. There is no distinction of obligatory, recommended, or permissible in this matter. If life can be saved, every possible effort should be made to save it, as this is obligatory from a Shariah perspective. However, if life cannot be saved, it is better to leave the individual to Allah's care.

Question: If a disease is treatable, but the patient and their family lack

financial means, is it permissible to take a loan or seek assistance for treatment?

Answer: It is the duty of society and the state to provide for the basic necessities of life. The protection of life is the most fundamental need of humans. Society should make every possible effort to fulfill this need. If society fails to meet this requirement, then the responsibility falls on relatives and close kin. It is entirely permissible to seek help from others or to take a loan for medical treatment. The Shariah has not imposed any restriction on this. However, it is necessary that the loan is taken within one's capacity to repay, ensuring that it is possible to return it.

It should be kept in mind that life and death are within the control of Allah. Means and resources are also subject to His power. We must make every effort to save lives according to our capacity and strength. After this, we must leave matters to Allah. If Allah wishes to sustain life, then the means for it will inevitably be created. However, if He has decreed death, then despite all available means, a person will not be able to survive.

[April 2022]



Human Milk Bank and Breastfeeding

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Position

(Derived from a conversation with Muhammad Hassan Ilyas)

If any other woman feeds a child her milk in place of the real mother, she is regarded as the child's mother. The Shariah gives her the status of a nursing mother, and her relatives are also connected through this maternal relationship. Consequently, her husband is considered the nursing father of the child, and her sons and daughters are considered the child's nursing siblings. This applies to all other relations as well. All the restrictions related to marriage that are applied based on blood relations are also enforced on these relations. That is, the relationships prohibited for marriage due to connections of the womb and blood are also prohibited due to the connection of the breast and milk. It is within this context that various legal questions arise concerning the definition, context, application, and compliance of nursing and the nursing mother. Some prominent questions among these are:

Does the ruling of breastfeeding apply to children of all ages, or are only those within the nursing age included in this category?

Is there any stipulated quantity or duration for breastfeeding in order to attain the status of a nursing mother?

If a woman accidentally or due to temporary necessity breastfeeds a child a few sips, does she attain the status of a nursing mother?

If milk is expressed from the breast and given to the child through another means, would it also be considered as nursing?

These and some other questions of this nature have always been presented before scholars and jurists, and they have responded to them

according to their own knowledge and understanding.

In the current era, certain questions of a similar nature have arisen regarding human milk banks, where milk from multiple women is collected and made available in various forms. The fundamental question among these is whether the feeding of milk collected by such a bank would invoke the rulings of suckling (*Rada'a*) and consequently, would all the women providing the milk be regarded as nursing mothers?

According to the general opinion of our jurists, the answer to this question is affirmative. They apply the ruling of breastfeeding to any situation where milk goes into the child's stomach and becomes part of their nutrition. In their view, the cause for the ruling of breastfeeding is the transfer of milk into the stomach, not the means of transfer. Therefore, whether the mother's milk is fed directly from the breast or through any vessel—such as a glass, bottle, spoon, etc.—they consider it as breastfeeding. In light of this juristic stance, there is no fundamental objection to a human milk bank. In this situation, multiple instances of breastfeeding occur, which is not prohibited. That is, all the women whose milk goes down the child's throat and becomes part of their nourishment are considered the child's nursing mothers.

This is the reason why our scholars have not raised any fundamental objections to this. Their critique is on the methodology and its potential outcomes. The issue with this methodology is that neither the identity of the milk-providing woman can be confirmed nor can the quantity of milk fed be determined, hence the matter of suckling becomes one of doubt. As a consequence of this doubt, there arises a concern that individuals might unknowingly enter into a marital relationship with each other who are actually suckling relatives, and marriage between them is prohibited. This is the concern for which, to preemptively prevent it, our scholars, based on the principle of *sad-e-zariya* (blocking the means), have deemed human milk banks and their products as impermissible.

In this regard, the esteemed teacher Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's stance is

based on the following points:

Firstly, the matters in which Allah Almighty has established sanctity, it is essential to be sensitive about them. This sensitivity forms the basis of adhering to boundaries, which is necessary for the purification of the self. Hence, the intention of religion is that people should not even approach the sanctities established by Allah, and if any doubtful situation arises, they should adopt an attitude of avoidance and abstention. However, in a situation of necessity and compulsion, such things can be used. Even in this condition, the use should be to the extent of necessity; it should not become indulgent or freely consumed. Making them desirable and commonplace gradually erodes the awareness of the abhorrence of sanctity, and a person progresses to the extent of crossing those boundaries whose adherence is essential for self-purification. The human milk bank affects the sensitivity intended by Shariah in the matter of nursing. If it is medically unavoidable, its products should be limited to situations of necessity and should be used only when no alternative is available.

Secondly, regarding the question of whether a human milk bank or a similar arrangement can be considered as breastfeeding, the answer is in the negative. The cause of breastfeeding is not merely the milk passing through the throat, but it is the entire maternal process undertaken by a woman in the capacity of a surrogate mother. In this process, she first makes the decision to take on the responsibility of breastfeeding the child, then she takes the child in her lap, and begins the act of breastfeeding through her breast. In the Qur'an, the verbs *Rada'a* and *Irdha* are used for this process. Their meanings are to suckle the breast.

The term *Irdha* in this context implies the act of emphasis. This means that the action which will be considered as true *Rada'a* is one where breastfeeding is based on completion, perfection, and careful attention. Without these elements, the act of drinking or feeding milk cannot be described as *rada'a*. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

*The relationship of suckling is akin to the maternal relationship.
... The child who is nurtured in the lap of a mother and*

nourished by her breast milk becomes at least partially, if not fully, her child. Then how is it possible that the child, in whose veins her milk flows, is not affected by her emotions and sentiments? If the child is not affected, it is not a natural formation, but rather a distortion, and Islam, being the religion of nature, deemed it necessary to rectify this distortion. ... However, it's important that this relationship does not establish through mere coincidence. The words in which the Qur'an has expressed this clearly indicate that it does not happen coincidentally but with intent, as a purposeful act. First, it is stated: 'Your mothers who have suckled you.' Then, the term Rada'a is used. Wa akhawatikum min al-rida'ah. Those knowledgeable in the Arabic language know that Rida'a is from the form IV of verbs, which inherently carries an intensity of meaning. Similarly, the word Rada'a also refutes the idea that if a woman places her breast in the mouth of a crying baby to comfort him, it should be termed as suckling. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 2/275)

This detailed explanation makes it clear that the act of breastfeeding can only be termed as nursing when a woman takes a child into her embrace like a real mother and begins the process of breastfeeding with full attention. Therefore, practically speaking, nursing is the name of the comprehensive situation involving the following conditions and actions.

- If a child is of the age of breastfeeding,
- If a woman decides to nurse him as a foster mother,
- For this purpose, she should take him into her embrace,
- She should then begin the direct breastfeeding process from her breasts.

After these steps, the breastfeeding woman attains the status of a nursing mother, and the act of breastfeeding is considered as nursing. It is about this that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

يُحَرِّمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ مَا يُحَرِّمُ مِنَ الْوِلَادَةِ.

Every relationship that is prohibited due to birth becomes prohibited due to breastfeeding as well. (Al-Muwatta No. 1887)



The World of Barzakh - An Example of Reflection on the Holy Qur'an

This text is derived from a scholarly discussion by the esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi. In this discussion, he explained to the writer how to derive and interpret meanings from the Qur'an. For this purpose, the topic of 'Alam-e-Barzakh' (the intermediary world) was used as an example for the discussion.

It is a common style of language that for matters with which we are not directly acquainted, a symbol or expression is adopted to describe them. 'Alam-e-Barzakh' (the intermediary world) is also an expression of the same kind. It refers to the period from the time people depart from this world until the Day of Judgment. When a person departs from this world, they become invisible to us and enter into a veiled state until the Day of Resurrection. In the Arabic language, the word *Barzakh* is used for a veil. From this, the term *Barzakh* has become prevalent in our context for the conditions after death and before the Day of Judgment. This word appears in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Mu'minun. It is stated:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ. لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا
تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا سَحِمٌ وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ
إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ.

[They will not desist from their pranks] until when the death of any of them hovers over, he will say: "Lord! You people send me back that I may earn good deeds in what I have left behind." Certainly not! This is merely a statement that he is uttering. In front of them will now be a barrier until that Day when they will be raised. (23:99-100)

What is Barzakh?

Is this the state of life or the condition of death?

Is this a part of this world or a realm beyond it?

In this world, will a person exist without any sensation or will they experience sorrow and comfort?

In this concealment, will the person be unaware, or will certain conditions present themselves to them?

These are the questions that arise in our minds regarding this matter. To consider them, it seems necessary for us to first study the texts of the Qur'an regarding life and death, accounting, and reward and punishment:

1. Death before worldly life

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ.

[O People!] How can you deny God whereas you were dead, then He gave you life? (2:28)

2. Worldly Life

فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنَبِّينَ لَكُمْ شَحْمَ وَنُفْرٌ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ.

We have created you from clay, then from sperm, then from a clot of blood, then from a lump of flesh which may be completed and also remains incomplete. So that We make evident to you some facts [that you should understand]. Whatever We want, We continue to lodge in the wombs until an appointed time. Then bring you forth in the form of a child. Then give time so that you may reach your maturity. (22:5)

3. Death After Worldly Life

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ طَمِي ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا. تُرْجَعُونَ

Every soul must taste death. Then you will be returned to Us alone. (29:57)

قُلْ يَتَوَفَّيْكُمْ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ. تُرْجَعُونَ

Tell them: Your soul will be claimed by the very angel of death who has been deputed to you; then you shall be returned to your Lord alone. (32:11)

4. Life After Martyrdom

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ شَحْمَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

And do not say that those slain in [this] cause of God are dead; they are not dead; in fact, they are alive, but you are not aware [of the manner in which they live]. (2:154)

5. The Commencement of the Day of Judgment and the Afterlife

نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُسْبِقِينَ. عَلَيَّ أَنْ تُبَدِّلَ أَمَّا لَكُمْ وَنُنْشِئُكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

We have ordained death among you, and We are not helpless; in fact, We have the full power to replace you with those like you and raise you in a world you know not. (56:60-61)

وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ. وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ. حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ النُّذُرُ. فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ تُكْرِهُونَ خَشَعُوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ يُخْرَجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ. مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ شَحْمَ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ .

Every matter has an appointed time. The anecdotes of the past have come before them which have for them much lesson, profound wisdom. But of what use are warnings [for these rebellious people]? For this reason, turn away from them, and wait for the day in which a summoner will summon them to a thing very undesirable. Their eyes will be downcast on that day. They will come out of their graves running towards the summoner as if they are locusts scattered about. At that time, these disbelievers will cry out: "This is a very difficult day that has arrived!" (54:3-8)

6. Two Lives and Two Deaths

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا اِثْنَيْنِ وَاَحْيَيْتَنَا اِثْنَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ اِلَى خُرُوجٍ
مِّنْ سَبِيلٍ.

They will say: "Lord! Twice you gave us death and twice you gave us life. So, [no doubt remains now on being resurrected after death. Consequently,] We confess our sins; so, is there also a way to get out from here?" (40:11)

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللّٰهِ وَكُنْتُمْ اَمْوَاتًا فَاحْيَاكُمْ تَجْم ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ
اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

[O People!] How can you deny God whereas you were dead, then He gave you life? Then it is He who gives death to you; then after this He only shall give life; then towards Him shall you be returned. (2:28)

7. Punishment in this world

فَكُلًّا اَخَذْنَا بِذُنُبِهِ تَجْم فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا تَجْم وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
اَخَذْتُهُ الصَّيْحَةَ تَجْم وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَسَفْنَا بِهٖ الْاَرْضَ تَجْم وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
اَغْرَقْنَا تَجْم وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ.

So, We seized each of these because of their sins. Then to some of them We sent a stone-hurling wind and some of them were seized by thunder and some of them We thrust in the earth and some We drowned in the sea. In reality, God was not unjust to them; in fact, they themselves were unjust to their souls. (29:40)

8. Rewards and Punishments after Death and before the Day of Judgment

وَلَوْ تَرَى اِذْ يَتَوَفَّي الدّٰٰثِنَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَضْرِبُوْنَ وُجُوْهُهُمْ وَاَدْبَارُهُمْ تَجْم
وَدُفِنُوْا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ.

Had you been able to see [you would have known what had happened at that time] when the angels were claiming the souls of these disbelievers whilst striking them on their faces and their backs and while saying: "Taste now the torment of the fire!" (8:50)

وَحَاقَ بِالْاٰثِرِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ اَلنَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا تَجْم

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ طَمِي أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ

But the people of the Pharaoh were surrounded by an evil torment the fire of Hell before which they are brought day and night and the Day the Hereafter arrives, it will be ordered: "Admit the companions of the Pharaoh into the worst torment." (40:45-46)

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ شَحْم قَالَ يَلَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ. بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ.

It was said: "Enter Paradise." [When he heard this glad tidings,] he said: "Would that my nation could have known my forgiveness from God and His including me among the honourable." (36:26-27)

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا شَحْم بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُزْرَقُونَ.

And whoever have been slain [during this war] for the cause of God, never regard them as dead. They are not dead; in fact, they are alive in the presence of God; they are being well provided for. (3:169)

9. Two Occasions of Punishment Before the Torment of the Hereafter

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ شَحْم وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ نَجَمِي مَرَدُّوا عَلَيَّ النَّفَاقِ طَمِي لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ شَحْم نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ شَحْم سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ.

There are also many hypocrites among the Bedouins who live around you and among the inhabitants of Madīnah also. They have become adept in their hypocrisy. You do not know them; We know them. Soon We shall punish them twice. Then they will be pushed towards a great torment. (9:101)

10. Punishment of Hell in the Hereafter

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ

مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ مَا تُقْبَلُ مِنْهُمْ تَحِمَّ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ. يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرِجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخُرُجِينَ مِنْهَا سَمَحَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُؤِيمٌ.

As for those who disbelieve [in him], if they are able to acquire all the riches of the earth and as much besides so that in return for it they can redeem themselves from the torment of the Day of Judgement, it will not be accepted from them and for them surely is a woeful punishment. They will like to get out from the Fire but they shall never be able to. For them is an eternal punishment there. (5:36-37)

11. Deciding the outcome of the Hereafter without account in this worldly life.

وَالسَّبْقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهْجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا سَمَحَ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ.

God was pleased with those Muhājirūn and Anṣār and they were pleased with God who took the initiative the foremost, and with those also who have befittingly followed them. God has prepared for them orchards below which streams flow. They shall abide in them forever. This alone is great success. (9:100)

لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ. مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ طَلَمِي ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ شَحْمَ وَبُئْسَ الْمِهَادُ.

Do not [O Prophet!] be deceived by the fortunes of these disbelievers in the cities of this land. This is brief prosperity; then Hell shall be their abode and what an evil abode it is? (3:196-197)

12. After the Day of Judgment, the determination of the final outcome in the Hereafter

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْنُوثِ. وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ. فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ. فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ. وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ. فَأَمَّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ.

On that day, people shall be like moths scattered about and mountains like carded wool. Then he whose scales are heavy shall

dwell in bliss and he whose scales are light, an abyss shall be his abode. (101:4-9)

The summary of the above verses can be presented in the following points:

1. Before coming into this world, a human being was dead.
2. Allah Almighty granted man the first life after the first death and sent him into this world through reproduction.
3. After the first life, with the permission of Allah Almighty, an angel takes the soul of a human. The state of death befalls the person for the second time, and the individual departs from the world.
4. After departing from this world, even before the Day of Judgment, some people are granted a second life.
5. The Day of Judgment will occur at an appointed time, and all human beings will simultaneously attain a second life.
6. The second life, in terms of its reality, will be exactly like the first life.
7. Every human being will experience two lives and two deaths throughout their entire history.
8. Some individuals will have to face punishment in this worldly life itself.
9. Some humans will receive reward and punishment after death and before the Day of Judgment.
10. Some people will have to face punishment twice before the great punishment of the Hereafter.
11. For some humans, the eternal punishment of Hell will commence after the Day of Judgment.
12. The judgment regarding the hereafter of some people has already been pronounced in their worldly life.
13. As soon as the second life is given after the Day of Resurrection, the formal account of deeds will begin.

14. After the formal accounting is completed, the reward and punishment for humans will be determined, and they will be admitted into Paradise or Hell.

If we conduct a superficial study of the aforementioned passages of the Holy Qur'an, apparently a few contradictions are perceived:

The first contradiction that is felt is that, on one hand, the Qur'an clearly states that every human being will have two lives available to them: one worldly life and one life in the hereafter. On the other hand, in reference to some individuals, there is also presented the concept of a third life between death and resurrection.

The second contradiction appears to be that on one hand, the Qur'an states that the process of reward and punishment will commence after the Day of Judgment is established at a specific time. On the other hand, its verses suggest that the process of reward and punishment begins immediately after death, even before the Day of Judgment. Furthermore, when it is found that the Qur'an has declared a decree to administer punishment twice before the torment of the Hereafter, this contradiction becomes even more pronounced.

The third contradiction appears to be that on one hand, the premise of the Qur'an is that there will be a formal judgment on the Day of Resurrection after which the decision regarding Paradise and Hell will be made, and on the other hand, the verses give the impression that entrance into Paradise and Hell will begin immediately upon death. Moreover, there are clear indications that the decision regarding Paradise and Hell is determined during a person's lifetime.

After recognizing these contradictions, three approaches can be adopted:

One is to consider the Qur'an as a book whose verses, God forbid, are mutually contradictory and inconsistent.

Secondly, a person should acknowledge their lack of understanding and remain silent.

Thirdly, one should try to comprehend these passages of the Holy

Qur'an by engaging in reflection and contemplation.

It is evidently clear that the third approach is the correct one in this matter. The Qur'an is the word of the Almighty Lord, and the notion of any contradiction or inconsistency within it cannot be entertained. Thus, upon reflecting on these verses, it becomes fully apparent that in terms of death and life, resurrection and recompense, these are expressions of the different components of God's law that are interconnected and harmonious. We will detail this under the following headings:

1. The Veil that Separates Death and the Day of Judgment
2. Two Lives with Physical Existence
3. Different Meaning of Death and Life and the State of *Barzakh*
4. Different Treatment for Different People in the Realm of *Barzakh*
5. Worldly and Intermediary Punishment Before the Punishment of the Hereafter
6. With regard to accounting, there are three groups of people

1. The Veil Between Death and Resurrection

The Qur'an has described the state between death and the Resurrection as *Barzakh*, which means a barrier or a veil. It is stated:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ. لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا سَحْمٌ وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ .

Until when the death of any of them hovers over, he will say: "Lord! You people send me back that I may earn good deeds in what I have left behind." Certainly not! This is merely a statement that he is uttering. In front of them will now be a barrier until that Day when they will be raised. (23:99-100)

2. Two Lives with Physical Existence

The Qur'an, in its entirety, has clearly stated that human beings will

be granted two lives. One life in this world before death and another life after the Day of Judgment, known as worldly life and the hereafter. These two lives will be similar in their essence. The life of the hereafter will mirror the life that a person lived in this world. He will possess physical organs in the same manner; blood will circulate in his veins in the same way; his respiratory system will function similarly; and he will have the capabilities of hearing, sight, and speech. In essence, a life just like this will manifest itself there in its complete form. The Qur'an, with its eternal style, has used the words "two lives" to fully clarify this truth. In Surah Al-Mu'min it is stated:

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا اِثْنَيْنِ وَاَحْيَيْتَنَا اِثْنَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ اِلَى خُرُوجٍ
مِّنْ سَبِيلٍ.

They will say: "Lord! Twice you gave us death and twice you gave us life. So, [no doubt remains now on being resurrected after death. Consequently,] We confess our sins; so, is there also a way to get out from here?" (40:11)

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes in the explanation of this verse:

At that time, these people will confess with great humility and clarity, saying, 'O Lord, now we acknowledge all our crimes. In our view, resurrection after death was impossible; for this reason, fearlessly from Your reckoning and accountability, we mocked Your Messenger and his invitation. But now You have given us death twice and life twice, allowing us to thoroughly observe life after death. Is there any way now for us to be delivered from this Hell so that we may return to the world and live a life of faith and righteous deeds anew?'

Two instances of death are referred to here: first, the state of death that prevails over a person before coming into existence in this world; and the second is the death that every living being must inevitably face. Similarly, one life is that which is obtained in this world, and the other is that which will be obtained on the Day of Resurrection. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 7/23)

From this, it becomes clear that in his entire history, a human being will only attain two lives. Apart from these, no third life of this nature will be granted to him. Therefore, the state of human life in the realm of *Barzakh* will be different from worldly and eternal life.

3. The Different Concept of Death and Life and the State of *Barzakh*

The Qur'an has also used the words for death and life in meanings that are somewhat different from their common understanding.

The general meaning of death is a person's departure from this world, but the Holy Qur'an has also used the term death for sleep. It is stated:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثْكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى تَجْمُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ.

It is He Who claims your souls at night and also knows what you do during the day. Then He raises you up in it so that the allotted span of life is completed. Finally, to Him is your return. (6:60)

The common meaning of life is to spend time living in the world, but the Qur'an has used this word for those who depart from the world after being killed in the path of Allah. It is stated:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ شَحْم بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ.

And do not say that those slain in [this] cause of God are dead; they are not dead; in fact, they are alive, but you are not aware [of the manner in which they live.] (2:154)

It is as if a person, while living, is in the embrace of death during sleep, and even after entering the embrace of death, can still partake in life. However, sleep in its common sense is not death, nor is the life of martyrs life in the common sense. Since the death-like state of sleep is part of our daily routine, we are to some extent conscious of it. We have no experience of the life after martyrdom, therefore, we have no consciousness of it either.

The life of the martyrs, evidently, is not the same life that people will obtain after the Day of Judgment. If it were the same life, Allah Almighty would not have stated, “You cannot perceive it.” As the life of the afterlife resembles worldly life, understanding it is relatively easy for us. It is also a fact that the Day of Judgment will come for all humanity at the same time, thus the death of the martyrs cannot be defined as the Day of Judgment. Consequently, it is clear that the life granted to the martyrs after death is indeed the life between death and the Day of Judgment, referred to as *Barzakh*.

Based on these indications, we can infer that the realm of *Barzakh* is a state similar to sleep, in which a certain kind of death is imposed upon us, and we are experiencing a certain kind of life. The death is such that we are deprived of our physical existence and some of its prerequisites, and the life is akin to the kind of life we lead in the state of sleep.

In this world, the conditions of reward and punishment can be likened to the realm of dreams. In the state of sleep, every person dreams. Dreams can be good or bad. A good dream induces a feeling of joy and tranquility in a person, whereas a bad dream creates a sense of unrest and anxiety. In this state, a person’s body remains still, but they feel distress and comfort. Based on this, it can be assumed that in the realm of *Barzakh*, the matter of reward and punishment will be similar.

However, for the realm of *Barzakh*, using the expressions of the state of sleep and the dream world can be chosen to explain and understand the concept, but it cannot be definitively stated that the realm of *Barzakh* and the dream world are exactly the same. The matter of the state of life in the realm of *Barzakh* is, in any case, among the ambiguous matters. Nothing definitive can be said about it.

4. Different Treatment for Different People in the Realm of *Barzakh*

Reflecting on the Qur’an reveals that in the realm of *Barzakh*, the matter of reward and punishment will be different for different classes of people. The Qur’an is very clear about two of these classes. One is

the class of martyrs and the other is the class of disbelievers who were obliterated from existence after the conclusive establishment of the truth by the Messengers.

Regarding the first group, the clear directive of the Qur'an is:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا شَحِمَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ. فَرَجَبِينَ بِمَا أَنَّهُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ إِلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلِهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

And whoever have been slain [during this war] for the cause of God, never regard them as dead. They are not dead; in fact, they are alive in the presence of God; they are being well provided for; pleased with what God has given them of His blessings, expressing joy about those they left behind who have not yet come to them that [in this eternal kingdom of God] neither is there any fear for them as well nor shall they ever be sorrowful rejoicing in the favors and blessings of God and rejoicing that God shall never waste the reward of the believers. (3:169-171)

That is, those people who have offered their lives as a sacrifice in the way of Allah will, upon departing from this world, be in the mercy of Allah and will receive sustenance from Him, and they will be joyous and content.

The example of the second group is Pharaoh and his companions, who were not willing to believe even after the conclusive proof presented by Prophet Moses (PBUH). It is described in much detail about them:

وَحَاقَ بِالْأَفْرَافِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا تَجْمَعُونَ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّاعَةُ طُمِئِ الْأَفْرَافُ بِالْأَفْرَافِ.

But the people of the Pharaoh were surrounded by an evil torment [after this:] the fire of Hell before which they are brought day and night and the Day the Hereafter arrives, it will be ordered: "Admit the companions of the Pharaoh into the worst torment." (40:45-46)

These are, in reality, the people who were directly invited by the

Messengers of Allah to worship Him alone. However, instead of accepting this invitation, they knowingly denied it and spent their entire lives opposing the Prophets. After the Messengers had conclusively conveyed the truth to them, the punishment of Allah descended upon them, and they were annihilated. After their end in this world and before the Day of Judgment, they will already be subjected to a state of torment.

Apart from these people, meaning those who were neither obliterated from the face of existence due to the crime of rejecting the Messengers nor elevated to the rank of martyrdom, the Qur'an remains silent about them.

5. Earthly and Purgatorial Punishments Before the Torment of the Hereafter

The verse from the Holy Qur'an that explicitly refers to the life of Barzakh is found in Surah At-Tawbah, verse 101. It is stated:

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ شَحِمَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ نَجَمِي مَرَدُّوا
عَلَى النَّفَاقِ طَمِي لَا نَعْلَمُهُمْ شَحِمَ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ شَحِمَ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ
ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ .

There are also many hypocrites among the Bedouins who live around you and among the inhabitants of Madinah also. They have become adept in their hypocrisy. You do not know them; We know them. Soon We shall punish them twice. Then they will be pushed towards a great torment. (9:101)

This verse was revealed as a warning to those addressees of the Prophet (PBUH) who acknowledged the Prophet (PBUH) and his message merely for their own interests and gains. In reality, they were committed to opposing the Prophet (PBUH) and were secretly engaged in conspiracies against the Muslims. For these people, a declaration of two types of punishment was made before the great torment of the Hereafter. One is the worldly punishment, which has been inflicted by Allah Almighty on those addressees of the Messengers who persisted in disbelief and rebellion even after the

conclusive evidence had been established. The history of this punishment is recorded in the Qur'an with reference to Aad, Thamud, the people of Lot, and the followers of Pharaoh:

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِ تَجْمَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبَاتٍ تَجْمَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
أَخَذْتُهُ الصَّيْحَةُ تَجْمَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ تَجْمَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
أَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ.

So, We seized each of these because of their sins. Then to some of them We sent a stone-hurling wind and some of them were seized by thunder and some of them We thrust in the earth and some We drowned in the sea. In reality, God was not unjust to them; in fact, they themselves were unjust to their souls. (29:40)

The punishment upon the polytheists and hypocrites of Arabia, who were addressed by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), was meted out through the swords of the believers.

بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ... فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ
الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ.

A declaration of acquittal is made from God and His Messenger for the Idolaters with whom you had made agreements... After this when the sacred months have passed, kill these Idolaters wherever you find them. (9:1-5)

The second is the torment of the grave, which will descend upon them after departing from this world and before the occurrence of the Day of Judgment.

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

... San'u'adh-dhibuhum marratayn (We shall punish them twice), one refers to the punishment they will face at the hands of the Muslims. The second refers to the punishment they will encounter in the realm of Barzakh. Thumma yuradduuna ilaa adhaabin azeem points towards the torment of the Hereafter, which will be the most severe. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 3/637)

6. In terms of reckoning, there are three groups of humans

From the clear indications in the Qur'an, we can infer that regarding the account in the hereafter, there will be three groups of people.

The first group will consist of the Prophets, the martyrs, the truthful ones, and the righteous, meaning those people who spent every moment of their lives solely for the pleasure of their Lord. They will be warmly welcomed. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad (peace be upon them), and Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) will be included in this group.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ تَجْمَعُهُمْ وَحَسَنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا. ذَٰلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَحْمٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا.

[Tell them:] Those who obey God and His Messenger, it is they who shall dwell with those whom God has bestowed with favor: the prophets, the truthful, the witnesses and the righteous. How good are these companions! This is a blessing of God, and [for this,] sufficient is the knowledge of God. (4:69-70)

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيقُونَ طمحو وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ شَحْمٌ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ.

And those who have truly professed faith in God and His messengers will be among the ṣiddiq and the shuhadā'. For them will also be their reward and also their light. (57:19)

The words from Surah An-Nisa, *An'am Allahu 'Alayhim* (upon whom Allah has bestowed His grace), make it clear that on the Day of Judgment, without putting them through the anxiety of reckoning, they will be granted a certificate of distinction for success, and the gates of Paradise will be opened for them.

The second group will consist of those people who knowingly denied the truth, adopted a rebellious attitude towards their Creator, perpetuated tyranny and aggression in the world, and dedicated their entire lives to opposing the truth and supporting falsehood. Nimrod, Pharaoh, Abu Jahl, and Abu Lahab will be included in this group.

لَا يَغُرَّتْكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ. مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ طَمَعِي ثُمَّ مَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ شَحْمٌ وَبَيْسٌ الْمِهَادُ.

Do not [O Prophet!] be deceived by the fortunes of these disbelievers in the cities of this land. This is brief prosperity; then Hell shall be their abode and what an evil abode it is. (3:196-197)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا. إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا. إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا شَحْمٌ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا.

Those who have disbelieved and debarred others from the path of God have strayed far into error. Those who have disbelieved and in this manner have been unjust to their souls, God will neither forgive them nor will He guide them to any path other than the path of Hell. They shall abide in it forever and this is very easy for God. (4:167-169)

In the case of these people, there will be no need for any accounting or reckoning; rather, they will themselves testify to their disbelief and rebellion.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شَحْمٌ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَيْنَا أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ. قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ.

Until when Our angels come to them to claim their souls, they will ask: "Where are those whom you worshipped besides God?" They will reply: "All of them have been lost upon us," and will bear witness against themselves that they were in fact disbelievers. God will say: "You too enter Hell with all those groups of men and jinn who lived before you." (7:37:38)

The third group will consist of those people who are neither so virtuous that they can stand in the ranks of the Prophets, martyrs, and the truthful, nor are they sinful enough to be placed among the rebellious ones. Their good deeds and bad deeds will be mixed. Most humans will fall into this category. These are the people for whom the

Day of Judgment will primarily serve as the Day of Reckoning. Their deeds will be weighed. Those whose scales of good deeds are heavy will be rewarded with Paradise, and those whose scales are light will face the punishment of Hell:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ. فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ. وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ. فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ.

Then he whose scales are heavy shall dwell in bliss and he whose scales are light, an abyss shall be his abode. (101:6-9)

The Qur'an has highlighted these three groups among the addressees of the Prophet (PBUH) in Surah At-Tawbah:

وَالسَّبْقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا شَحِمَ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ. وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنْفِقُونَ شَحِمَ وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَغْمِي مَرَدُّوا عَلَى الْيَفَاقِ طَمِي لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ شَحِمَ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ شَحِمَ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَيَّ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ. وَآخَرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا شَحِمَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ شَحِمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

God was pleased with those Muhājirūn and Anṣār and they were pleased with God who took the initiative the foremost, and with those also who have befittingly followed them. God has prepared for them orchards below which streams flow. They shall abide in them forever. This alone is great success. There are also many hypocrites among the Bedouins who live around you and among the inhabitants of Madīnah also. They have become adept in their hypocrisy. You do not know them; We know them. Soon We shall punish them twice. Then they will be pushed towards a great torment. [Besides these,] there are some others also who have confessed their sins. They had done varied deeds, some good and some bad. Hopefully, God will bestow His favor on them because He is Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. (9:100-102)

In light of the above reasoning, the summary of our perspective on *Barzakh* is as follows:

1. *Barzakh* is the term used to describe the intermediate state between human death and the Day of Judgment. After death, a human will remain in this realm until the Day of Judgment.
2. In this realm, the condition of human life will be different from worldly and hereafter life.
3. In this world, we cannot definitively say anything about the emotions, conditions, and states of human beings. This matter belongs to the ambiguities. For the purpose of understanding, it can be likened to the realm of dreams.
4. In *Barzakh*, the martyrs, prophets, the truthful ones, and the righteous will be in the mercy of Allah and will be in a state of happiness.
5. In this world, the dwelling of the deniers of the Messengers will be shown to them morning and evening, and in this way, they will remain subjected to the condition of punishment.
6. The rest of humanity will be in a good or bad state according to their deeds.
7. On the Day of Judgment, all humans will emerge from the realm of *Barzakh* and will be resurrected with their physical bodies, awake and aware, to be presented for reward and punishment.

[November 2000]



The Purpose of Fasting: Taqwa

[From a lecture by Javed Ahmed Ghamidi]

In Islamic Shariah, among the obligatory acts of worship, after prayer and zakat, there is the worship of fasting. According to the Holy Qur'an, this is not a new form of worship introduced after the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is an ancient form of worship that was also obligatory for the communities before the Muslim Ummah. It is stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ

Believers! The fast has been made obligatory upon you as it was made obligatory upon those before you so that you become fearful of God. (2:183)

Allah Almighty began the process of providing guidance to humanity from the time of the first human, Prophet Adam (PBUH). On that occasion, Allah Almighty made this promise:

فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّْي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

If ever comes to you any guidance from Me, follow it because those who follow this guidance of Mine, their reward is Paradise. So, there they shall neither have any fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:38)

The guidance in the form of Allah's religion has been continuously conveyed to humanity through the prophets. The last prophet in this sequence was Muhammad (PBUH). He established the fundamental commands of the religion within his community as part of the prophetic tradition. Some of these were made mandatory upon this community through the Qur'an, while others were established through

the approval of the Messenger (PBUH) himself. Among these fundamental commands, a way to fulfill the servitude to Allah has been designated in the form of prayer. Furthermore, instructions have been given for spending in the way of Allah, which have been referred to as *infāq* and considered among the acts of worship. Similarly, fasting for one month in the year has also been maintained as an act of worship.

Why has fasting been made obligatory and what is its purpose? This has been stated by the Qur'an itself in the words *la'allakum tattaqun*. This means that fasting has been prescribed for the servants so that they may develop *Taqwa* (God-consciousness).

The Meaning of Taqwa

Taqwa is a specific term in our religion. Its intent is precisely what we express in Urdu with the words '*hudoos ashnaai*' (awareness of boundaries). This means that while living in this world, a person should not remain carefree and fearless, should not adopt a careless and negligent attitude, but live with alertness, awareness, and vigilance. They should never fall into negligence regarding why they have been sent to this world, what their ultimate goal is, what situation they will face one day, and what constitutes true life for them. They should remain fully aware of these realities and not become heedless of them at any stage of life. When a person lives with this awareness and alertness, they do not fall into the servitude of their desires. This very alertness and awareness is called *Taqwa*.

The following are some prominent manifestations of *Taqwa*:

The servitude to Allah is *Taqwa*.

Taqwa is that a person lives in this world as an obedient servant to Allah. The real test for a person is whether upon receiving Allah's blessings, they remain a grateful servant or adopt an attitude of ingratitude. When a person avoids disobedience, rebellion, and extremism, and respects the limits set by Allah, it is as if they are adopting *taqwa*. The meaning of this servitude is:

...In this connection, the servant attains tranquility through the remembrance of his Lord. He sees gratitude for His blessings surging within him like an overwhelming tide. He fears His displeasure, belongs solely to Him, lives by His trust, and entrusts every matter to Him. He surrenders his entire being to Him and remains content with His every decision. (Meezan 67)

The sense of accountability before Allah is *Taqwa*.

Taqwa is the awareness that a person should remain conscious at every moment of having to present oneself one day in the court of the Most Just of Judges. There will come a time when one will be held accountable for their responsibilities. It is this very sense of accountability that teaches a person how to navigate the thorny path of life cautiously, carefully gathering up their cloak. This awareness and this attitude, in essence, is *Taqwa*. A companion once asked Umar (RA) about the meaning of *Taqwa*. He responded by saying, "If you were to pass through a path filled with thorns, what approach would you take?" The companion replied, "I would gather up my cloak." Umar (RA) then said, "That is *Taqwa*."

Self-control is *Taqwa*.

Taqwa is the quality that enables a person to control the inclinations of the self that incite evil. This involves managing anger, maintaining emotions within limits, not becoming ensnared in reactive states, preventing hatred and bitterness from taking root, keeping material pleasures and desires within boundaries, and not allowing the demands of the belly and the desires of sexual nature to overpower one's religious and moral existence. The decision should be made not to bow to the self, but to have the self bow to oneself. In essence, the purpose of *taqwa* is to suppress the self, not to destroy it. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) articulated this truth excellently in response to a question. He said that every person has a devil attached to them. He was asked if he has a devil as well. He replied that yes, he does, but he has made him a Muslim. This illustrates that one should not strangle the self; rather, the self should be disciplined and brought within limits.

Living life with responsibility is *Taqwa*.

Taqwa implies that a person fulfills their responsibilities with dedication and sincerity. They should fulfill those rights that are incumbent upon them in their individual capacity. They should carry out those duties that are obligatory within the family. They should discharge the responsibilities demanded by society and the state, meaning a person should live in this world, earn their livelihood here, and play their active role here. Allah Almighty has created humans with this very nature. Instead of deviating from this nature, one should strive to fulfill its demands. This very effort and struggle is *Taqwa*.

The preservation of moral existence is *Taqwa*.

Taqwa is for a person to constantly guard their moral existence. It is this moral existence that distinguishes a human from animals. Allah Almighty has sent humans into this world with complete awareness of good and evil. At every turn in life, a person makes a good or bad decision with a clear understanding of good and evil. While making every good decision, one keeps in view those moral values and principles that are the honor of humanity and are ingrained in one's nature by the Creator. Every person feels these as the voice of conscience within themselves. If they heed them, they are human; if not, then they are merely a two-legged animal and have no status beyond this.

The preservation and safeguarding of moral existence means that an individual should carefully consider whether an action is truly befitting of their stature before undertaking it. Their moral existence demands that they do not lie, deceive, betray trust, commit injustice, deprive others of their rights, or engage in unfairness. Moral existence requires them to fulfill responsibilities, grant rights, uphold truthfulness, love the creation of God, express gratitude for blessings, exercise patience in adversity, respect elders, and show compassion to the younger. In essence, they should always heed the voice of their conscience. If it advises against an action, they should refrain, and if it encourages an action, they should perform it with excellence.

Taqwa is not asceticism.

The trial for a human being is that they must live within their desires, emotions, and inclinations. All these elements present in human nature exert full force to keep them from staying on the path of moderation and balance. When a person fights against these, sometimes they reach the other extreme. This other extreme has been referred to as monasticism in religions. It has a significant and poignant history. It implies that when a person makes the pleasures of material life their primary goal, extraordinary corruptions arise from it. Similarly, when they attempt to escape from these pleasures by setting asceticism as their goal, immense corruptions also result from this.

Asceticism and renunciation of the world mean that a person decides once and for all to completely withdraw from worldly affairs. The things in this world that have been created as a test for them, they must abandon. Knowledge and intellect, wealth and riches, beauty and elegance, grandeur and power—essentially, any material aspects of life that might tempt a person to exceed their limits, they resolve to abandon entirely. They choose a life where they are minimally accountable to the instincts of the self.

When a person adopts this form of asceticism, it apparently brings satisfaction, as if they have chosen an easy path for themselves through the trials of the world. This decision is initially very difficult, but once it is made, it no longer retains the challenges experienced daily by a righteous individual.

Monasticism and renunciation of the world is a path that deviates from nature and religion. In contrast, the divine law teaches man the path of moderation and balance. What it trains a person in is not monasticism, but *taqwa*.

The Method for Attaining *Taqwa*

What is the method to attain the level of *Taqwa*? In this regard, two things should be considered:

One principle is to adopt a gradual approach in the attainment of *Taqwa*. This is also the wisdom of religion. God created human nature in such a way that if a person wishes to develop a particular capability

or attitude, he cannot cultivate it immediately. Instead, through the continuous interplay of intention and action, he gradually adopts it. Thus, it is not possible for someone to make a list of virtues and instantaneously integrate them into their personality. It is akin to the impossibility of teaching a fifth-grade student the curriculum of the twelfth grade. In the acquisition of knowledge, one must inevitably establish progressive stages. Similarly, the learning of arts is accomplished through gradual practice and exercise. This is also the principle of religious and moral training. When the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent, God initiated the guidance process through the Qur'an. During this time, God did not hand over the entire book to him at once upon his prophethood but revealed the Qur'an gradually based on the needs of the message. Similarly, to reach the stage of *taqwa*, one should also adopt a gradual path.

Secondly, these three things must be included in your daily routine:

1. Congregational prayers should be performed in the mosque daily.
2. A few verses of the Qur'an should be recited daily with understanding.
3. Spend some time at least once a week in the company of a righteous servant of God.

The environment of the mosque, the direct reminder provided by the Qur'an, and the influence of the company of a righteous believer will play a fundamental role in nurturing the tree of *taqwa*.

Fasting is a training ground for *Taqwa*.

To instill the discipline of *taqwa*, the Shariah has specifically designated the worship of fasting. Once a year, a training period of 720 hours is established, and in an extraordinary manner, millions of people begin to undergo it. Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

The worship of fasting... is a special form of worship for the training of taqwa, upon which the establishment and survival of the entire religion and law depends, and for whose bearers alone the Qur'an was indeed revealed as guidance... In other

words... the true benefit of the Qur'an is exclusive to those people who possess the spirit of taqwa, and the specific means for the training of this taqwa is the worship of fasting. For this reason, the Lord, the Most Generous and Wise, has designated that month for fasting in which the Qur'an was revealed. In other words, it can be said that the Qur'an is the spring for this world, and the month of Ramadan is the spring season, and this spring season nurtures the crop that is taqwa. (Tadabbur-e-Qur'an 1/451)

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