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The Role of Culture in the Advancement of Islamic Civilization in the Age of Globalization

Dr. Taher Alimohammadi¹
Dr. Mohammad Ali Sarlak²
Seyd Mehdi Veisheh³
Mohammad Taab⁴

Abstract

This Paper's main purport is to examine and explain the role of culture and cultural elements in Islamic civilization in this era of globalization. It is so that we find that throughout history only a few nations could have a growing culture and a prosperous civilization. No civilization can develop without the backbone of a powerful culture. In other words, culture is the main pre-requisite of the emergence of a civilization. It can be said that culture is the spirit of civilization and distinction among civilizations is due to their different cultures.

Here, we have to answer some essential questions: (1) What are proper mechanisms for improving cultural self-esteem in the Islamic societies? (2) Is globalization an opportunity or a threat? Islamic civilization has a very turbulent history, and we should identify the components such as culture that affects its richness and development for understanding its different aspects.

The problem of facing globalization as a complicated issue with broad and deep impacts (negative and positive) has been studied by Islamic thinkers and there are some proponents and some opponents in regards with the problem

¹ President of the University of Ilam, Iran

² Department of Management, Payamnor University, Iran

³ Department of Management, Ilam, University, Ph.D. student, Iran

⁴ Department of Management, Tehran University, Ph.D. student, Iran

of globalization. The proponents believe that it has positive effects and consider it as an opportunity. On the other hand, its opponents think that globalization is the continuation of imperialism in today's world. The results of this research show that development of Islamic civilization in the globalization era is going through production and reproduction of cultural norms, and it seems that Eastern societies, especially Islamic societies, can have access to a proper mechanism for development, using their rich culture.

And if having self-esteem with faith in their own culture and beliefs, globalization can be an appropriate opportunity for them to introduce the Islamic culture to other nations and civilizations.

Introduction

Islamic civilization is religious civilization. All of its elements are based on Islamic teachings. But for its very rich base, it can be defined as recurrently invigorated on the one hand, due to its being of definite opening and ending, and on the other due to its vast conceptual and thematic capability, and also due to its delicacy and universality as a theistic religion.

Therefore, Islamic civilization includes all features of a divine civilization, falling in the framework of Qur'anic lessons and also its exposition, based on the Traditions [*Sunnat*] of the Holy Prophet Muhammad [p.b.u.h]. Its elements are religion – ethics, knowledge, justice, religious laws, rules and principles, etc. (Jan Ahmadi, 2008).

The first and the most important feature of Islamic civilization is the nobility and richness of Islamic culture. Qur'an became the center, the base of knowledge and learning in this civilization. Next to Qur'an are the sayings and lessons, taught by Hazrat Muhammad ([p.b.u.h], which are known as the Traditions), and then there are also the lessons taught by the Infallible Imams and religious figures. Owing to this fact, Muslims earned themselves a noble, vast and deep culture in the very first Hijri century, before having science and knowledge transferred from other nations.

Another feature of this civilization, though differing from others is its rationalism and consideration of morality as a value. Islamic civilization is actually the civilization of wisdom, not of passion, for the central idea of this civilization is the maturity of man, whose stability lies in his wisdom (Qorbani,

1991). On the other hand, and as a matter of fact, culture can be defined as a process, preparing ground for content-building, structure-determining, amendment, and social involvement through interactions among societies (Zahishery, 2009).

Cultural production is done through cultural mediums, in its three stages of production, distribution and utilization of cultural products, related to human innovations in the field of art and knowledge, resulting in changing theories, beliefs, ideologies, information and transformation of life styles in the process of adjustment to the surrounding environment (Bennet, 1973, pp. 315–316). It is endeavored to provide answers to the following questions with reference to relevant literature and its research-oriented review: What is the appropriate process for cultural improvement and confidence in Islamic societies? Is globalization an opportunity or a threat for the world of Islam?

In order to find answers to these fundamental questions alongside with a description of Islamic civilization and culture, and the background needed for formation of Islamic civilization by stating the principles, cultural confidence and Islamic awareness, the impact of globalization on Islamic culture will be explained. In fact, the primary question always being asked is that whether globalization in the field of culture would result in uniformity of cultures or in appearance of cultural varieties. Relatively, taking Americanization of culture as an example, satirically referred as "Coca Colaization" and "Mc Donaldization," it is said to be actually developing a kind of cultural imperialism in the world, a phenomenon which causes worries (Meyer, 2000).

On the other hand, unlike many opponents, Glorian believes that globalization does not mean Americanization, and universal dominance of trading companies, and also not the ability to eliminate cultures. He considers globalization as an opportunity for formation of global commonwealth, and not a process resulting in poverty. But Mason believes that global development relies more on culture, rather than on economics, and many prospects of globalization rely on the manner of paying attention to cultural differences (Arasteh, 2008).

The Definition of Culture

The Persian word for culture, "FARHANG" – pronounced as /færhæŋg/ – is an ancient word from Avestaiee, consisting of two parts, viz. "FAR," a prefix meaning up, front, before, and "HANG," with an Avestaiee root, "SANKA," meaning pulling, gravity, dignity, (Qaraiee-Moqadam, 1995, p. 146). Edward

Cypre, a psychologist and anthropologist, defines culture as "a system of behaviors and temperaments, based on the unconscious." In his idea, the culture of a group is production of all social models of behavior by all or the majority of members of that group, and society is, in fact, a cultural term that the people use, based on the relationship among them in order to express some forms of their specific behaviors (Ruh-al-Aminy, 1992, p. 92). Spencer, in "Basics of Sociology" spoke of culture as ultra body, and tried to differentiate it from physical and natural factors. He believed ultra body environment is specific to man, while he has the two other environments (natural and physical) in common with animals (Iranzadeh, 1997, p. 2). The definitions mentioned have one aspect in common, and that is the presence of a set of beliefs and ideas within and merged with him, directing his unconscious.

Features of Culture

- Culture is neither inherent, nor inborn, and is not transferred via genes, rather built in social environment.
- Culture is general, and the culture of a society cannot be known by partial studies.
- While being general, culture is also particular. All social systems have culture. Culture differentiates societies from one another, and is particular in the meantime of being general.
- Culture is social. Cultural customs have social origins.
- Culture is constant and has permanency and stability.
- Culture is ruled by history, thereby meaning that it is formed during the course of history.
- Culture is transferable. Since only man has the capability to transfer his findings to the next generation, only man has culture. Language has a fundamental role in transferring culture (Qolipoor, 2001, p. 188).

Cross-cultural Communications

Culture is tied with communication, and as communication is dynamic and complicated, culture too is not static. Dynamicity means a continuous constant activity. On the other hand, communication is always based on interaction and responses. Communication is systematic and is not done in vacuum; rather, it is part of higher system. The highest system, influencing communication, is our culture. Culture is an environment in which all our interactions take place (Noorbakhsh, 2007).

Cross-cultural communications usually become meaningful in a society with a variety of cultures, religions, and ethnic groups and this concept helps make connection between all religious, ethnic, and cultural minorities, and at higher levels it achieves national correlation. Even creating connection and correlation within a multicultural society is redefined by various concepts viz. the concept of multiculturalism includes national, ethnic, and religious combination of cultures and deals with the rights and representations of cultural majorities, and with groups too. The concept of multiculturalism is a new phenomenon, which has merged into political and social hypotheses (Ameli and Mohammad Kani, 2007). As Jackson (2004) states, religion can be considered as the most civil factor in social health and safe cross-cultural communications. Jackson mentions religious educational programs in European countries, which have become of significant importance since 1970 (Ameli, 2003).

The importance of cross-cultural communications is because some trends of communication became important prior to intercultural communications. Some misunderstandings, for example in the manner of statement and action, are originated here. It is important to pass ethnicity in order to understand others' culture (Heringer, 2004, p. 220–2). Cultural variety is always considered a valuable goal in many societies, but anxiety, lack of assurance, invalidity, and clichés are always part of cross-cultural communications, being in the nature of such cultural varieties (Gils and Watson, 2008, pp. 23–29). Of most important effects of modern conditions is the ability of fast, variable change in culture, having different impacts on the social and cultural systems.

For communications between societies and cultures (due to expansion in the wake of use of media), the possibility to discuss the issue of cultures being exposed to changes has been raised. Different communications among civilized societies in the current age have caused different culture to blend with each other, and societies have moved from cultural monism toward cultural pluralism. The complete independence of cultures is endangered in recent age, and due to connections and interactions between cultures, cultural pluralism has been formed (Asgari Khaneqah, Azad Armaki, 2000).

If we change any aspect of culture it will result in changes in other aspects as well. As a stone thrown in water disturbs the even surface and the formed waves go forward as far as the force imposed is finished, any new cultural factor results in a similar wave-resembling effect on the phenomenon of culture; of course, with this difference that any innovation goes forth and develops to the point that other changes and innovations, automatically or intentionally and on purpose, do not oppose it (Faster, 1999).

The Definition of Civilization

Different definitions are proposed for civilization. Will Durant in "The History of Civilization" states: "Civilization is a social system which gives human a definition, and consists of four factors of social foundations as capitals, political system, customs and traditions, and sciences and technologies." The importance of civilization is so prominent that it can be stated that civilization reforms general changes of human life in a social form, even more than culture. Civilization results from the interactions between various different cultures. Therefore, Islamic civilization too is formed by interactions between, and combination of the cultures of people believing in Islam all over the world (Mo'inee, 2007). Islamic civilization, with Monotheism as its basis, is an ideological civilization with a set of corporeal and moral factors, which gained prominence and consequently resulted in construction of Islamic society, directing man toward moral and material maturity (Jan-Ahmad, 2007). Another feature of Islamic civilization is paying attention to science and knowledge, and showing special consideration for scientists. Special attention paid to science, knowledge, and culture in Islam, and to the requirement for correct understanding of Islamic lessons, all based on accurate points, caused Muslims to develop Islamic culture and civilization and expand education, from the very beginning (Qorbani, 1991).

Similarities and Differences between Culture and Civilization

With all correlations and incorporations between the two concepts of culture and civilization, in definition and evidence, they could be used interchangeably, though there appear differences at close look.

Civilization, in its specific form, represents particular ages in the history of a nation, including significant features of the society in all aspects of life, from social organizations to technology, literature, philosophy, architecture, art, language, religion, and even traditions. Therefore, all civilizations are definable and separable on the basis of the two factors of time and place (Jan Ahmadi, 2007).

The Relationship between Culture and Civilization

Despite the relationship between culture and civilization, these two are not the prerequisites of each other. Cultural development may result in achieving civilization in a society, a society may develop itself by adopting another civilization and rely on a civilization, different from its own or that of others. On

the other hand, it should be considered that an “uncivilized” society may still have its culture. For instance, native tribes of Australia and Africa are not deemed civilized, but they do have their native culture, that is, a set of beliefs, customs, and traditions. Therefore, human communities, even though primary, have their own particular culture (Velayati, 2008).

The Background of Formation of Islamic Civilization

Many factors and reasons contributed to the formation of Islamic civilization, a summary of which is represented below:

1. *The position of science of knowledge:* If all Islamic aphorisms, sayings, and anecdotes about the importance of science and knowledge are collected without any interpretation or explanation, several voluminous books will be created, and if the Holy Prophet and Imams [p.b.u.t] did not emphasize on the importance of learning science and knowledge this much, the civilization of Islam would have never reached to such a state of grandeur. The word "ILM," meaning science and knowledge, is alone repeated 80 times in Qur'an, without its derivatives. And Muhammad [p.b.u.h] emphasized (that) "Learning is necessary, and a must, for every Muslim," or "an hour of thinking is better than a year of praying."
2. *Transporting knowledge and science, and attracting scientists to the world of Islam:* The main resource of knowledge for the world of Islam was Greece and its schools of thoughts. Another part of Greek science too was taught to Muslims in Alexandria (in Egypt) and its national center, School of Alexandria.
3. *The movement of translation:* After the period of conquests, and when the territory of Islamic government was stabilized and Muslims relatively succeeded in the main act of collecting Islamic knowledge, because of the attention and motivating policy of some Abbasid, the then government, using large sum of money, helped Muslims step by step to notice industrial sciences, mostly of other nations (Velayati, 2008). In fact, by doing artistic and cultural activities and achieving knowledge and science of those days, Muslims tried to develop Islamic civilization, and building different scientific organizations proved to be effective in the process.

The Role of Islamic Culture in the Creation of Civilization of Man

George Sarnen, one of the great figures in the history of science, states that creation of a new excellent universal scientific civilization in a period of less than two centuries is something which can be mentioned. Yet it was not discussed thoroughly. Maybe the most important, and in the meantime the most undetectable service of the middle ages was the creation of experimental thinking. This philosophy developed due to the attempts by the Muslims till the end of the 12th century. The services, rendered by the Islamic civilization, which blessed the world of science, are, in fact, not countable, even in summary. This was not limited to the translation of Greek scientific texts, but goes beyond this. Islamic scientists were not only the mediums of transferring the ancient sciences, but rather innovators themselves (Sarnen, 1997). As Asimov states, when the Western Europe was floating in deep darkness and ignorance, and human being were latent like a resting silent swamp, sleeping in a deep eternal sleep, it were the Muslims to light up science and knowledge again, and to save the results of the knowledge and philosophy of the ancient times from falling (Asimov, 1996 p. 121). Science is the most important gift of Islam for the modern world, but its complete development took place at a low pace. It was not only the science to revitalize Europe, but various impacts of the civilization of Islam, too, transferred their congenital life to Europe (Taqizadeh and Ansari, 2006). Alfred North Whitehead states: "Bizence and Muslims had civilizations of their own." Hence, their cultures saved their inner forces: forces which were empowered with material and virtual adventures. They started trading with the Far East; developed their borders on the west; passed laws, altered mathematics to new forms, and made attempts to develop and complete the science of medicine (Whitehead: 1992, p. 220). Hunke believes that the great Islamic culture was created by these children of desert. It seems like all of a sudden, they created the most wired instances of the history of human wisdom out of nothing.

In view of the description above, we should spend some time on this superior extraordinary Islamic civilization. How does it happen that a nation with no political role and no place in schools of thought, dared to level with Greeks in the shortest time, while other nations could not do it in better conditions? Muslims became so famous in the field of medicine that people thought they had invented this art, and they could easily claim that. The books written by Avicenna, Razy, and Ibn-e-Roshd were of such a credit that if anyone willing to be a medic had not studied them, he would be considered short of knowledge. The books by Muslims were the most to be published after the invention of printing. Namely, the books by Razy on measles and spots were published 40 times from 1486 to 1866, and, by the beginning of 17th century, the works of

Muslim Medics were to be known as the best study books in medicine, in the universities of Frankfurt and Tübingen. Muslims constructed drugstores in all cities of Cecil, during 200 years of ruling it (Taqizadeh and Ansari, 2007).

The Causes of the Downfall of Civilizations, especially the Islamic Civilization

A set of inner and outer causes contributed to the downfall of the Islamic civilization, a summary of which is represented hereunder.

The Internal Causes:

Autarchy: It means to rule in accordance to one's own whims. Hence, anarchy can be defined as to be authoritarian and dictatorial. In anarchy, the government and the head ruler entail no responsibility and commitment unto their people.

Materialism, Close-mindedness, and Receding from True Islam:

The life style of Hazrat Muhammad [p.b.u.h] was like that of the most ordinary people of the society, far off from luxury. After his passing away, the Rashidin caliphs adopted the same lifestyle. Beginning from with Omavi caliphs, materialism and luxury moved Muslims away from true Islam. In the meantime, close-mindedness also has stood as a barrier in the way of wisdom and innovation, resulting in inactivity of the Islamic civilization (Velayati, 2009).

Opulence and luxury brings collision to people and then results in all kinds of evils to be engraved in the nature of man, ruining all goodness. On the other hand, the desire for luxurious life makes people forget religion and lose their divine foundation, and this can be one of the causes of the failing and collapse of a civilization (Arnold Twin. B., 1966).

Schism:

The traditional system of exploitation relies on making divisions among nations. Today, several branches stand created in Islam, namely Shia, Sunni, and Hanafi, Maliki, etc. It is imperialism that wants Muslims to lose their Islamic identity and fall into divisions and branches. This is what has murdered several prominent ideological and religious figures in Pakistan (Ali Zahedi, The Ideology of Imam Khomeini, 2004).

Reliance on the Outsiders:

History reveals that if governments do not rely on their own people, do not allow their people to participate in the country's affairs, issues, and rely on the outsiders instead, they will be doomed to failure: Montesquieu states, taking

forces from among foreigners in the Roman army, as one of the causes of the downfall of the Romans (Montesquieu, 1960).

Outer Causes

Crusades:

Crusades, before being a martial encounter between Christian West and Muslims, are rather an encounter between the Western brutality and Islamic civilization, a fact mentioned by many researchers and historians. Crusades, that continued from 1096 to 1291, and finished by the complete withdrawal of Western troops from Islamic lands, is a set of eight vast wars.

The Invasion by Mongolians:

Crusades were not finished on the Western borders of the Islamic lands yet that another invasion happened on the East. Separate tribes of Mongolia that were united and led by Genghis invaded Islamic lands, when Kharazmshahian ruled the East of the world of Islam, to avenge killing of a group of traders, as excuse.

Cultural Self-belief and Islamic Awareness:

When Arabs got in contact with European governments, they realized how undeveloped they were, and how developed residential Europeans were. Several solutions have been proposed to compensate this state of being undeveloped ever since. One is to revisit Islam as a religion and civilization. Several “isms” have been formed, namely: (1) Civilizationism–Arabism, (2) Civilizational–Islamism, (3) Traditional Islamism, and (4) Islamic Fundamentalism. Based on the classification above, Tahtavi and Kheir al-din, were the ideologists of the first “ism,” “Concept of God in Islam and Hinduism”, Sayed Jamal al-din Asadabadi and, to some extent, Mohammad Abdoh, of the second “ism,” Rashid Reza of the third “ism,” and Hasan Al-banna, Sayed Qotb, and Akhavan al-muslimin were the ideologists of the fourth “ism.” Historically, the closer we get to the present time, Islamic fundamentalism has been conquering other Schools of thoughts, pushing them aside. The movement by Imam Khomeini is the climax of this Islamic struggle; other Islamic movements all over the world became powerful by the impact of his success in founding the Islamic Republic. The idea and the plan of Imam Khomeini was a combination of saving the Islamic identity along with developing, while the previous leaders of Islamic awakening movements, such as Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani, were seeking development and modernism, and some had weak emphasis on the identity (Velayati, 2009).

Unity of the World of Islam

The idea of "The Unity of the World of Islam" has been one of the main concerns of religious leaders, especially Imam Khomeini. Unity in Islamic societies and among Islamic countries is, not only desired and possible, but is also based on religious lessons of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet [p.b.u.h], being undeniable requirement. In order to establish unity and bring convergence in the world of Islam, and to effectively face the challenges before it, some solutions are proposed, which are stated hereunder:

1. *Cross-cultural talks*: The more cross-cultural talks and communications are empowered in the world of Islam, all the more to prepare conditions for Islamic unity. Regarding the policy of dividing Muslims into branches and tribes, maybe the only solution is the policy of "Unity in Multiplicity." Based on this, it is required to reinforce economic, cultural, political, and social links among different nations, cultures, and tribes, among which the important role belongs to cultural links, particularly cross-cultural talks.
2. *Common values*: Having values in common among Muslims brings security, but environmental responses are very important. The more these values agree with environmental values, the more security is ensured. Disagreements with environmental values can relatively result in loss or lessening of security.
3. *Shared language*: Language is one of the main elements of one's, or a society's identity, playing an important role in the unity of different nations and societies (Eyvazi, 2008). The first step in creating a universal, ideological, cultural, and principled system is emergence of the universal movement of Islam. But a "unitary ideological system" is effective in creating shared beliefs and values, only when it finds its place among nations, and affects public minds greatly, because convergence results in unity and companionship within a nation, when *firstly*, a unit ideological tendency has been created, *secondly*, social correlations are of enough stability, and *thirdly*, there is total Islamic advantage in this unity (Fooladi, 2008). The world of Islam includes all the separated and various ethnic groups, which, despite all surfaced differences, have many things in common. The most important moral and cultural assets, gathering scattered Muslims or different ethnic groups together, are the foundations, each of them having an important share in the unity of the world of Islam. These foundations are:
 - *The Holy Qur'an*: The shared Holy Book of all Muslims from different branches of Islam.

- *The Shared Qebla*: The sacred Mecca, the centre of Monotheism, the memento left by Prophet Abraham [p.b.u.h].
- *The Tradition of Hajj*: This tradition unites Muslims significantly.
- *Mosque*: One of the shared elements among Muslims.
- *Arabic language*: The language of oracle and the Holy Qur'an and prayers, covering the world of Islam.
- *Shared traditions and customs*: All the different branches of Islam have some religious traditions in common; each of them is very effective in creating connection and link between these branches, like the prayers, said five times every day, as also fasting during Ramadhan.
- *Shared Islamic celebrations*: Such as Qurb'an, Fitr, or even Mab'ath on which Hazrat Muhammad [p.b.u.h] was chosen as Prophet and Messenger.
- Shared dates, history, and ideals, etc. (Jan Ahmadi, 2008).

Globalization

Globalization is stated to be a process, resulting from the global technology of communication, and also, a managed project which is actually possessing the software of globalization.

1. *Transnationalization of the processes*: Transnationalization means the presence of non-native culture and financial-political products in a native society. This phenomenon results in cultural, financial, and political blending between native and non-native phenomena, some of natural outcomes of which are a gap between generations, followed by opposition, anxiety, and stress.
2. *Unification of the cultural environment*: Communication technology has created a unitary environment above the geological borders of nations and countries. The population of 6 billion people lives in one unit figurative digital world, and the borders between nations and countries have no impact on this unity.
3. *The unanimity of universal communication*: Unanimity is a phenomenon, which, in the idea of Tomlinson (1999), is the basic spirit of globalization. The industry of universal communication has rendered communication between far and near the same, and, in fact, distances have been removed due to it, creating a kind of universal unanimity.
4. *Expansion in universal knowledge*: Due to the process of transnationalization, the unit environment and universal awareness of

the world, as a part of the whole history, has expanded more (Robertson, 1992).

Effect of the West's Globalization on the World of Islam, and Its' Challenges

One of the challenges that the world of Islam faces is the policy of globalization adopted by the West. Therefore, the ability and capability of the West, especially America, for affecting the world of Islam in different levels of governments, nations, and organizations, and in the field of identity and culture, in future, should be studied. It is briefly discussed below:

1. *On governments:* Historically, the programme of globalization having the West as its representative has had a different treatment before Islamic governments, in a way that the correlation between Western countries and Islamic countries has always been altering between opposition and rivalry, and agreement and cooperation. And, in spite of the disagreements, resulting from ideological, cultural, and religious factors, real policy and the advantages of cross-governmental relationships have shaped correlation between these two civilizations. Basically, in the past, the main motivation for the policy adopted by the Western countries was political and economic dominance, thereby meaning that they cooperated only with those countries, which expressed their willingness to work to their advantage, no matter whether the governments were national or Islamic.
2. *On nations:* Political challenges of the world of Islam, around the issue of identity and culture, and their reflection over the Islamic civilization are one of the important issues. It is important to know as to what extent culture has worked as a base for action and behavior of a nation, consequently, affecting the decisions and policies, adopted by the rulers off these countries. In fact, within the framework of culture, the political challenge at the level of nations is empowered into two directions to unify management and security, in turn, unifying the world of Islam.

Culture as a Means for Muslim Nations to Encounter Globalization with It, and as Criterion to Know Muslim Nations' Ideas Concerning It

Both ways, a kind of contradiction appears formed with reference to "Islamic Awareness" and "Shared Islamic Identity", to be reinforced on one side, and on the other to encounter evil effects of globalization, whether in a defensive or aggressive manner, while stressing at unity and convergence of Muslims for their empowerment.

The Symbols

Though the larger part of cultural activities is done at the level of nations and governments, there are some international and territorial Islamic organizations, dealing with cultural issues. The most active cultural organization within the system of Islamic Conference Organization is the Islamic National Cultural and Educational Organization. In addition to this organization, which works with the support of Islamic governments, there are hundreds of active non-governmental organizations, working in the field of culture, within the world of Islam, leading toward reinforcing Islamic identity and formation of the "Islamic United Nations." All these activities put together, have the ability to impact actions of Islamic governments, and even on defining value and advantage preferences of them (Eyvazi, 2008).

Conclusion

Several factors contribute to development and glory of civilization; among which, the role of culture in its development and improvement is more outstanding. The material aspect of culture includes tools, devices, and man-made technology, and its immaterial aspect includes a set of values, beliefs, traditions, customs, proverbs and sayings, literature, and artifacts. In fact, culture is a form of human life, which sustains and develops civilization itself. Nowadays, keeping high Islamic values by the Islamic societies is vital, as it is required as shield against deceptive material culture of the West, and to help return to Islamic behaviors and ethics. In addition to culture, factors like security, national unanimity, cooperation and forgiving, and unity are the factors, affecting culture. We are at the beginning of the age of information and globalization. We have not passed a long time since its beginning, so we can make an opportunity out of it for the Islamic nations by returning to the basic principles of Islam, and

having the help of Islamic unison. But if we hesitate, we will be kept back again. We, Muslims, should be united, and aware of the immense peril, we are going to face in this borderless world. Further, concerted efforts should be made to minimize the gaps between Islamic countries. They have introduced the idea of a borderless world, that is, a "Global Nation." Their advertising machine has ensured success of the idea in being accepted all over the world: if Muslims deny it, they will be considered recessive, and undeveloped. Therefore, we Muslims are put under pressure to join the unanimity in accepting globalization. Some of our people, even some of our nations, due to their incapability, tend for purposeless, blind, and brutal actions, so we are called terrorists, and Islamic countries are projected guilty, and as centers of terrorism. What the agents of such actions get, is nothing but a small scratch, but the expense, they define for us to pay, has been so terrible for all of our people.

During the history, the reason for conflicts and great wars has always been cultural differences. Of course, in some sections, the role of culture has not been defining, and the role of military and financial factors have been important. But, within a bipolar system, the contradiction between cultures and civilizations was paid more attention, and Samuel Huntington/Newington proposed it as a unisonous hypothesis. In his idea, people all over the world are getting divided into cultural groups, and in near future, these cultural units will play the role of countries/nations, and the contradictions between them will be the contradiction between cultures.

It is obvious that globalization is a biaspectual process, having both opportunity-making and threatening features. Regarding globalization as a threat is due to, at least, two reasons. One is the cultural and structural condition of societies, and the other is the features of great powers of the world, and the United States before all, having long-term purposed strategies. It seems that the inner aspect (cultural and structural condition) is to some extent under the control of nations and governments. But the other aspect is the threat, imposed by the cultural invasion by the West, which requires an extended cultural engineering in order to stop damages. One of the most important aspects of globalization is cultural globalization. Cultural communications are unequally formed. Few countries export their cultural products, and the United States has the first place in cultural products' exports. In fact, it seems that the universal impact of transnational cultural industries are as much as, if not more than, the effective familiar forms of power. From this view, globalization is a mono-directional process of cultural imperialism. In such an environment, as post-modernist would say, identities become mobile, ultra-narratives lose centres, and the possibility of talks, bi-directional, and multi-directional communications is prepared.

Without any doubt, and based on historical and cultural evidences, because of the impact of Islam on the national culture of Iran, this country to some extent has kept resisting against the outsider environment and imposition of culture of the West, now putting on the dress of globalization. In fact, despite globalization and development of the Liberal West, the society of Iran, relying on the Islamic element of its culture, has founded a government, opposing the culture of the West, and one of its main concerns is to protect its cultural elements against the West. Of course, Islamic awareness is today getting shaped in the form of Islamic countries, and without doubt, even a cursory look at the age of Islamic glory results in such a self-assurance and confidence that no culture can resist it.

In order to develop Islamic civilization, the only way is that which has been defined by the Holy Qur'an, and the Holy Messenger and Prophet Muhammad [p.b.u.h]. The first Verse of the Holy Qur'an, revealed to the Holy Prophet, emphasizes: "Read, in the Name of your God." If Qur'an is read closely, it will be noticed that it describes the reason of dominance of the human over other animals by referring to knowledge and science. The Holy Qur'an has been a very effective factor in raising thoughts and ideas of the Muslims, encouraging them to study and think. "Qur'an, after attracting people to the philosophy of creation and building a foundation for belief and reformation, united the thoughts for better and more thinking; constantly encouraged people to think, and criticized ignorance all the time, considering ignorant people as fool, unwise, blind, mute, deaf, and equal to animals." Words derived from the roots of science and knowledge, wisdom, cognition, reasoning, sense, thinking, understanding, recognition, and logic find appearance at different places in the Holy Qur'an. These have been mentioned many times, in an emphasizing and effective way. And, in fact, adopting this procedure, alongside with the unanimity of the Muslims and keeping away from schism and divisions, Islamic civilization will be gloriously emerging as developed, God is willing – our Creator, to Whom belong all praises.

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Peaceful Co-existence and Spirituality in Islam **With special reference to Indian and Iranian Sufis!**

Prof Hamidullah Marazi*
(Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi)

The issues regarding spirituality and monasticism are very relevant to modern times as we have been rendered devoid of almost all perennial values and these have been replaced by new set of values after we blindly emulated the materialistic and atheistic trends which came in the wake of modern western ideologies. These new values are mostly governed by the consumerist concerns of our times and there is hardly any spiritual or moral foregrounding attached to these. Our organisational behaviour in the corporate life is mostly influenced by these considerations and governed by these new consumerist ethical codes of conduct which are somewhere rooted in the hedonistic or utilitarian, or at the most we can say, pragmatic considerations. Our world is torn apart by the wars raging everywhere and among various stakeholders. The situation has reached to the saturation point where we can easily apply the remark of Hobbes which he had made about the state of nature: “War of all against all”!

Evelyn Underhill rightly says in the preface to his famous book *Practical Mysticism*, “Moreover, that deep conviction of the dependence of all human worth upon eternal values, the immanence of the Divine Spirit within the human soul, which lies at the root of a mystical concept of life, is hard indeed to reconcile with much of the human history now being poured red-hot from the cauldron of war.” 1/

Even in the western context it is being felt earnestly that the world needs something better and more enduring than this show of muscle power and weaponry which has led the world to the unprecedented devastation of human resource, values, and above all the cultures of peace and humanity which were

* Director Shah-i-Hamadan Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, Hazrat Bal, Srinagar.

created by the great souls everywhere in the world throughout the annals of human history: “....if the experiences on which it [mysticism] is based have indeed the transcendent value for humanity which the mystics claim for them—if they reveal to us a world of higher truth and greater reality than the world of concrete happenings in which we seem to be immersed—then that value is increased rather than lessened when confronted by the overwhelming disharmonies and sufferings of the present time.”^{2/}

More than this, a deep instinct sometimes assures the mystics that the inner spring or secret of that Whole Fact is also the inner spring and secret of their individual lives: and that here, in this third factor, the disharmonies between the part and the whole are resolved. That invulnerable spark of vivid life, that “inward light” which these men find at their own centres when they seek for it, is for them an earnest of the Uncreated Light, the ineffable splendour of God, dwelling at, and energising within the heart of things: for this spark is at once one with, yet separate from, the Universal Soul.

According to Martin Lings:

“Nearly 1000 years ago a great Sufi defined Sufism as ‘taste’, because its aim and its end could be summed up as direct knowledge of transcendent truths, such knowledge being, insofar as its directness is concerned, more comparable to the experiences of the senses than to mental knowledge.”^{3/}

Spiritual target which Islam sets before man is to realise ones responsibilities towards his Creator and his fellow beings? The answer in the words of the Qur'an is that when man reaches to this realisation he can be called as: '*A soul at rest*' (89:27). Thus the spiritual goal of Islam is to attain this state of peace in the soul.

The Qur'an addresses such souls in these words: “*O serene soul! Return to your Lord joyful, and pleasing in His sight. Join My servants and enter My paradise*” (89:27-30).

The way to reach the stage of the peaceful soul depends on man's relation to God. The more man turns his attention to God, the more he will receive inspiration from Him. With the help of divine inspiration, he will be able to pass through the various stages of spiritual uplift until he ultimately reaches that pinnacle of sublimity so desired by the Almighty.

Facing all the conditions of life good and bad without losing one's integrity, as the adversaries do not disturb the inner peace of man, successes and failures do not affect him. The soul which is contented does not take revenge or vengeance. This peaceful soul is very tranquil in all conditions and it has no fear or grief as it has surrendered itself to Allah and accepts all the Divine decrees for himself and for his world around him.

The Quran says about these saintly persons: "*No doubt! Verily, the Auliya' of Allâh [literally the friends of God, i.e., those who believe in the Oneness of Allâh and fear Allâh much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden), and love Allâh much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)], no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve. Those who believed (in the Oneness of Allâh---Islâmic Monotheism), and used to fear Allâh much (by abstaining from evil deeds and sins and by doing righteous deeds), for them are glad tidings, in the life of the present world (i.e., righteous dream seen by the person himself or shown to others), and in the Hereafter. No change can there be in the Words of Allâh, this is indeed the supreme success*" (10:62-64).

The peaceful soul that is henceforth created raises a person to the higher plane of existence, most beautiful disposition and sublime character,' (68:4)

In Arabic about soul there are various words like *Nafs* and *Ruh*.

The *Ruh*, literally spirit, is used in all the possible meanings of spirit but, in particular, means the non-individual aspect of the soul, the intellect or *nous* (in Arabic *al-aql al fa''âl* (or *fâ'il*) active intellect) as opposed to the lower individual soul, the psyche, in Arabic *an-Nafs*. 4/

The *Nafs* is understood as the soul. The Arabic *Nafs* corresponds to the Latin *anima* and the Greek *psyche*. It is the individual substance and corresponds to the receptive pole of the Being.

It exists alongside with *rûh* (spirit) again corresponding to Latin *spiritus* and Greek *pneuma*, which is non-individual and represents the active pole of Being in man, also called the *aql* (intellect). 5/

Often the term *Nafs* is used in a pejorative sense, because in its fallen, unregenerate state, admixed with passion and ignorance, it is *an-Nafs al-Ammarah bi-s-sû* (the soul which incites to evil: 12:53). Passing through the stage of *an-Nafs al-Lawwamah* (the reproachful soul; 75:2), which corresponds

in some sort to the conscience, advocating conversion, it can become purified and reconciled to the source of its reality as an *Nafs al-Mutma'innah* (soul at peace) assured of paradise:

*“O soul at peace, return unto thy Lord, well-pleased, well pleasing!
Enter thou among My servants! Enter thou My paradise!”*(89:27) 6/

The Prophet had this peaceful soul and the “sublime character,” (68:4) sublime character in real sense of the word. One day, as the Prophet was sitting with his companions in Madinah, a funeral procession passed by. The Prophet stood up. His companions pointed out that it was the funeral of a Jew, that is, a non-Muslim. The Prophet replied: “Was he not a human being?” 7/

However, there can be no comparison between the devotion and asceticism of the Prophet (SAW) and that of the Sufi as the Prophet (SAW) is perfect in all respects. Moreover, whatever the travellers on spiritual path attain, it is due to following his footsteps only. It is perhaps for the same reason that, according to Lings, the Divine Messenger enters and leaves this world by the celestial gate towards which all mysticism is oriented. 8/

In order to reach to the culmination in spiritual life, the Muslim mystic has to enter this world by the gate that is merely cosmic. Not that the mystic could ever reach this central point of perfection by his efforts. But the Prophet (SAW) himself is always present at this centre, and to those who are not, he has the power to throw out a “life-line,” that is, a chain (*Silsilah*) that traces a spiritual lineage back to himself. 9/

Furthermore, every Sufi order (*tariqah*) is descended from the Prophet (SAW) in this way, and initiation into *tariqah* means attachment to its particular chain.

However, Sufism has the dynamism attached to its very essence and it can be said that: “Sufism is nothing if not a movement to return, an ebb, and that by the standards of Sufism the rest of the community, although facing the right direction, is stationary. Even among themselves the Sufis make a distinction between those more central members of an order who are what they call “travellers” (*sālikūn*) and those more peripheric members who are relatively at a standstill.”10/

The Sufis are true example of these two traits: connections with God and forbearance with men.

After the period of Prophet, apart from other religious accomplishments, the companions and their followers continued the spiritual practices they had learnt from the Prophet in devotion to the acts of worship and righteousness, and finally Sufism became a widespread discipline in the Muslim world. Though the mystical traits were acquired at the individual level by the Sufis in the initial stages of Islamic history, it should be made clear that this individual mannerism and spiritual elevation lead finally to the clandestine emergence of organised monasticism, which developed its structural set-ups known as Sufi *Silsilahs* (orders) and *Khanqahs*.

The 13th century was a step forward in the integration and consolidation of the mystical movement in Islam. Imam Ghazzali and Imam Qushairi had given form and coherence to the mystical concepts; Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi (ob. 1234) enunciated the principles of *Khanqah* life and organisation in his *Awarif-ul-Maarif*. Two great mystic thinkers of the 13th century, Shaikh Muhi-u'd-din Ibn Arabi (ob. 1248) and Maulana Jala-u'd-din Rumi (ob. 1273), gave to the Sufi movement a warm fund of emotions and an élan to appeal to and attract all higher religious sentiments.” 11/

However, this fact needs our constant notice that all the Sufis individually and Sufi orders collectively trace their origin to the true Master, the Prophet (SAW) himself and, we know that even the companions of the Prophet (SAW) had received blessing (*barakah*) from him which he had received from Allah. This was conveyed to them by him at *Bayat ar-Ridwan*, the pledge made by the companions of the Prophet (SAW) at Hudaibiah when they made a formal Bayt (allegiance) on the sacred hands of the Prophet (SAW).

In the Sufi tradition the chain of transmitters whereby the original pact made with the Prophet is passed on from Shaykh to Shaykh and is called a *silsla*, an initiate chain. All authentic Sufi orders are linked into such a chain.

Historically, the Sufis have been grouped into organisations called *tawaif* or *turuq*, the latter word being used more commonly in the later period from the time of the Qadiriyyah order.

Tariqah is now also a technical term for esoterism itself. Its plural form *turuq* are congregations formed around a master meeting for spiritual sessions (*majalis*), in *zawiya*, *khanwahs*, or *tekk*, as the meeting places are called in different countries. 12/

These spiritual meetings are described in the words attributed to the Prophet: “*Whenever men gather together to invoke Allah, they are surrounded by*

Angels, the Divine Favour envelops them. Peace (as-Sakinah) descends upon them, and Allah remembers them in His assembly."

The presence of Shaikh is also crucial in all such gatherings. Initiation (*al-bayah* or *al-idhn*) is necessary point of entry from the exoteric, for this transmits a spiritual influence (*barakah*), a grace conveyed by the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet at the time of revelation; initiation plants a seed in the soul; it is beginning of a new life, for the initiation bestowed by a spiritual master (*Shaykh*) has a lineage that goes back, through the entire series of spiritual masters, then to the Prophet. The master, who is always an orthodox Muslim, must incarnate the truth of the doctrine of which he is the living example; only he who has achieved a realization—in some degree at least—of the Divine Truth can "put in motion the wheel of the doctrine" for an individual seeker. Ultimately, as al-Kalabadhi said, "The Sufis are agreed that the only guide to God is God Himself." 13/

In the early days, Sufism was not recognized as the inner dimension of Islam, as it is now, but was identified with Islam as such. Indeed, to disparage the weakening of human aspiration after Islam's first efflorescence, Sufis have said, "In the beginning, Sufism was reality without a name; today it is a name without reality." 14/

Sufism is a description of the adventures of a soul. It speaks of the seeker after God as a *Salik*, or a "traveller," and of the progress in the spiritual life as a "*Suluk*," a "travel" or "journey" along which he is guided by a *Murshid* or *Pir*, a "guide" or an "elder," who has already attained the goal by completing the journey, and is thus qualified to lead a seeker, now his *Murid*, an "aspirant," to the attainment of *Marifat*, "the knowledge" of God. The traveller is guided along the course of *at-Tariqat*, the "path," the practices which are prescribed by the *Murshid*, the guide, according to the progress made by the devotee. He, passing through the *Maqama*, the "stages," experiences certain *Ahwal*, the "states," and finally, if he shows the perseverance to the end, he attains by *Fadl*, the grace of God, the desired goal of union with God, called *fana fil-haqiqat*, "annihilation in reality." 15/

According to Abu Sayeed Kharaz, a humble *Murid* has this quality that he is overwhelmed by the tendencies of time affection and generosity he tried to remove and ward off all the miseries from creatures because he is just like the earth for the creatures of Allah on which people walk and run and, to the Shaikh, he is like a pious son and, for children, he is like an affectionate father. In short, he is very kind to the creatures in general and his behaviour is such a merciful one that he is always involved with them in their distress and also in the supplications and bears all the infliction he receives from them." 16/

Sahal ibn Abdullah says that the *Murid* has this routine that he is inclined to performance of actions and forgiveness from sins and to think for the welfare of people. 17/

According to Yusuf Ibn Hussain the indications of a *Murid* are as follows: his not liking someone is like liking someone; his enemies are also safeguarded from him, as his friends; he finds everything in the Quran; whatever he knows he puts into action, and whatever he does not know he tries to know; he shuns idle thought and thinking; he is ever desirous to get rid of punishment and aspirant of the bounties of Allah and His promises. Instead of looking into the defects of others he keeps eye on his own heart. 18/

According to Khawaja Nizamuddin Awliya, a *Salik* should possess six qualities:

1. He should remain in a secluded place so that he may have control on his self.
2. He should remain always with ablution and if he feels sleepy, he should make a fresh ablution after sleep.
3. He should try to keep fast always, but if not possible for him, he should eat very little.
4. He should remain silent about what does not pertain to God.
5. He should have passionate love and affection for his Shaikh.
6. He should leave all apprehensions for the sake of *Haqq*. 19/

Moreover, the *Salik* should avoid four things:

1. He should discard the World; especially he should refrain from the company of worldly people.
2. He should not mention any one other than Allah, and not should he to have any relation with anyone else than Allah.
3. He should also not display any slight inclination towards the world. 20/

Sharfuddin Muneeri says that the first weapon in the hand of us in the fight against our *Nafs* is hunger as our stomach is the source of all sins. 21/

Because, through satisfying the hunger by eating men get sexual power; therefore hunger is fire and human sexual power is its fuel. Human sexual instinct and sexuality can be burnt only by the fire of hunger and turned into ashes. 22/

In abnormal and tragic circumstances, the role of these Sufis has been more crucial and challenging.

According to Hujwiri, *Salik* always follows the commands of *Haqq*, performs his duties towards people and needs the help of a Shaikh because seclusion in his favour is destruction.

When any *dervish* comes to see him, he should welcome him with respect; if he travels he, should travel for the sake of God; that is, he should only make journey for the sake of Hajj, Ghazwa or acquisition of knowledge, or to visit the tomb of a Shaikh. His food should be like the food of a sick person, and should be lawful; he should not accept the invitation of the worldly persons; he should walk with feebleness, and not be arrogant; sleep only when overpowered by sleep; should remain silent as silence is better than speech; even when he needs to speak, his speech should be truthful as speaking truth is better than silence. He should supplicate to Allah and ask for everything from Allah. Though celibacy is against *Sunnah*, as in celibacy man is sometimes overwhelmed by carnal desires but if a *Salik* wants to lead a secluded life then remaining celibate is his ornament. 23/

According to Mooinuddin Chisti, among the five worship items of a *Salik* are:

1. Service of parents
2. Recitation of the Quran
3. Respect of *Ulama* and *Mashaikh*
4. To make a pilgrimage to Kaabah
5. To render service to his *Pir*. 24/

According to Bakhtiyar Kaki:

1. A *Salik* should not eat to fill of his belly; if he does, he is a self seeking person; eating is just for the sake of having strength to perform worship.
2. Dress should not be for show; if he wears for show and ostentation, he is a thief though pretending to be treading the Sufi way.
3. A *Salik* should speak little.
4. Sleep less.

5. Abstain from the worldly luxuries.

He says Bayazid Bistami worshipped for 70 years but still did not achieve nearness to Allah, but at the time of death he threw away his earthen jug and the *khirqah* of leather; it was only then that he could achieve this nearness.”^{25/}

At the collective levels, the role of Sufis was very significant, especially in the critical junctures of Islamic history.

To start with, in crisis Sufism played very significant role and its achievements cannot be underestimated. It got its organisational structure owing to these crises and other emerging challenges to the very existence of Islam in medieval times. For example, Mongol invasion was “a challenge” for the Sufis. Therefore the Sufis concentrated their energies on “the regeneration of society,” and they divided universe into spiritual territories (*walayatas*), and in this environment “the spiritual orders (*silsilah*) and *Khânqâhs* were effectively organised and established on an extensive scale to meet the situation which henceforth became an integral part of the mystic discipline.” With the rise of these *silsilahs*, large establishment of *Khanqahs*, for inculcating community spirit among mystics and for the moral and spiritual culture of the people, became almost imperative.

Khanqah is a Persian word and its Arabicised form *jukhangah* means place, and its abbreviated form is *khan*; in Pahlavi language it is *khanak* and in old Persian *ahanah*; some people call it combined form of *khawan gah*, i.e., the place of *khwan* meaning the place of eating for the *dervishes*, meaning thereby that where the Sufis go, i.e., a place where they stay and eat; such places have been found in the buildings existing from old age.

A verse is being quoted in this respect. Surah al Dahar (verse-8), where it has been mentioned that the believers make others to eat despite the fact that they themselves are in need of the eatables: “And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive.” (76:8)

In a famous Sufi treatise *Tabaqqat-al-Sufia*, its form has been given as *Khanqah* and at another place *khangah* in Persian. According to *Tabaqqat-al-Sufia*, the first ever *Khanqah* was constructed at Ramallah for Abu Hashim Kufi.

Thus it can be said that it is a place where dervish and mashaikh eat and worship and live together. During the times of Prophet (SAW) there was a bench constructed for some of the wayfarer companions of the Prophet in the Masjid of the Prophet (SAW), and the people who were residing there were commonly known as *Ashab-i-Sufah* (the people of the Bench). Some people consider that this model of *sufah* had some resemblance with *Khanqah*, because on the *sufah* were living those companions of the Prophet (SAW) who had no houses of their own and thus lived on *sufah*. 26/

Following are some of the salient features of the *Khanqah*:

1. Staying place of the *dervishes*, i.e, for such people who do not have place to stay and the people who do not have their own houses *Khanqah* is their home.
2. A place where Sufis and *dervishes* can talk and stay together and also worship together so that they may get externally and internally united to be able to get illuminations of each other and to get enlightened in their souls and hearts so that they and the surrounding areas may get affected by their illuminations, hence safeguarded from catrosphies and atrocities.

A dervish should not travel alone; at least one friend should accompany him though; with four people travelling is a difficult position and less than too as well. Everyone should have a rod, a jug, a prayer rug, one comb, one belt and one tooth stick. They should select one of them as their leader and others should follow him as subordinates. When they reach to any *Khanqah* they should first search for the servant, and when the servant comes they should be welcomed by him and taken inside. And he should make them to put off their socks wherever they want and then should show them bath room. Afterwards, they should handover their belongings to the servant (*khadim*) and he should preserve these and spread the prayer rug for them. These people should make fresh ablution and offer two *rakahs* and after offering prayer go to meet the *dervish*. The *dervishes* should leave prayer rug and stand up to welcome them and embrace each other and kiss each other's hands. And then all should sit on their respective prayer rugs and then whatever is asked from them reply to it gently in shortest possible manner. And they should not answer that which is not asked. Then dining table should be spread and they should be made to dine whatever is available. They should stay there for three days and not leave unless there is any compulsion. After three days they should leave and meet whomsoever they want to. 27/

Without permission the people in *Khanqah* should not leave, and if they want to leave they should only after seeking proper permission for it. But they should not go to *bazaar* and should come back at their earliest after performing

their duties. They should not eat outside nor go to attend any invitation and not ask for anything from any one.

But whatever they need they should just ask from the *khadim*. They should refrain from talking in the mosque loudly and not to make noise while taking off their shoes so that the people busy in *dhikr* and worship or the sleeping people are not disturbed.

Any person accepting service should be given something. Elders should advice youngsters. 28/

First of all one should go to *Madrasah* and then *Khanqah* and become *murid* and remain in the company of the Shaikh, then learn important sciences and then read narrations, then leave reading these books. Afterwards, he should do that what is liked by his Sheikh. There are two ways to reach Allah, one is from *takrar* (constant repetition) and *tahsil* (acquisition) and followers of it are these people who call themselves people of *Shariah*. Second group is of people of the *mujahidin* (strugglers in Allah's way) and *zikr wa azkar* (and people who extensively make the *zikr*). Thus these are people of *Shariah* and people of *Tariqat*. 29/

Even the Sufis have been taught the mannerism touching upon such trivial points as to how to start with right foot while entering and take out left while leaving. Or how to enter mosques or shrines! But while going to toilets they have been taught to start with the left but while coming out start with right foot.

The *dervish* is advised thus:

“Oh *dervish*! Neither during day or night you should shout in the *Khânqâh* nor recite or chant anything loudly. When a man walks into the *Khânqâh* he should not walk there with heavy feet nor strike his shoes against earth so that the people busy in commemoration or meditations get disturbed or if they are sleeping their sleep is disturbed.

“Oh *dervish*! If in the *Khânqâh* there is someone amongst the people of service he should accept to serve but if there is no one to serve whosoever is given this charge of service he should be given some remuneration for the services. He will serve sincerely and honestly. To serve others will be allowed only when they allow so and permit accordingly.

“Oh *dervish*! The dwellers of *Khânqâh* should know each other's conditions and if any one amongst them is afflicted by a calamity and he is not able to remove it, other dwellers of the *Khanqah* should help him. When the elders meet youngsters they should admonish them. I mean to say that they should not shy away in helping each other and hide shortcomings of each other on the other and highlight good qualities instead. The elderly should respond the queries of others with leniency and open-heartedly or if the questions are not suitable they should avoid their replies. Because responding such questions will entail more harms than profit still if they want to save the people who ask questions from heart burning then they may respond in a very polite way to these questions. The people should be addressed according to their capability. 30/

“Though broadly used in the sense of hospices, these terms differ in their connotation. The *Khanqah* was a spacious building, providing separate accommodation for every visitor and inmate. The establishment of *Khanqahs* was based on the conviction that a life of solitary, self sufficient, contemplation was incompatible with the highest mystic ideal of salvation through service of mankind. 31/

“At some places *Khanqah* was named *Zāwiyah*. *Zāwiyah* literally means a corner, and in North Africa the word means an oratory or small mosque, a place of religious retreat, or in particular, a meeting place of Sufis for prayer and the invocation of the Name of God (*dhikr*). A *Zāwiyah* may be small or large, even a mausoleum of a saint associated with religious order.

“It is the equivalent of what is called a *Khanqah* in the East, or a *tekke* or *Dargah* in Turkey. It can also be a part of a home that is set aside for prayer.” 32/

Some of the Sufis wish to draw themselves closer to Allah through constant weeping, as Thomas à Kempis advised the spiritual postulant “to seek the gift of tears”. Most Sufis have passed through phases of weeping as a sign of the “melting of the heart” or melting of existential knots. 33/

In fact, when men of different temperaments and attitudes assembled in these *Khanqahs*, all tensions, conflicts and complexes in their character were resolved and their personalities were moulded in consonance with the spirit of the *Silsilah*. Common penitences and sufferings drew out the noblest qualities of their souls and made them understand what Carlyle calls the ‘divine significance of life’. 34/

Strict discipline was maintained in the *Khanqah* and elaborate rules were laid down for the guidance of the inmates: How to talk to the Shaikh; how to deal

with visitors; how to sit in the *Khanqah*; how to walk; how and when to sleep; what dress to wear---on these and similar other topics minute instructions were given to the people of a *Khanqah*. The Shaikh sternly dealt with those inmates who were found guilty of the slightest irregularity.

Awarif-ul-Maarif is accepted by the medieval Muslim mystics as an excellent manual for the guidance of organisers of *silsilahs*.

In this book the details about the *Khânqâh* life, its organisation and the various related rules and regulations maintained by the Sufis in their monastic life have been discussed succinctly.

Here is a gist of these monastic organisational rules and regulations which have been mentioned in this great Sufi treatise:

“Sufis reach to *Khânqâh* before the afternoon, if due to some reason they are late they alight at the *Masjid* or in some corner. The next day, at sunrise, they proceed to the *Khânqâh* and make (a) two *rak’ahs* (of prayers) as salutation to the spot; (b) *salaam* (peace wishing); (c) haste to embracing and to the handshaking those present.” 35/

While being in the *Khanqah* their monastic behaviour is described as:

“In speech, they make no presumption; so long as they are not asked, they do not speak.” 36/

About their activities at *Khânqâh*, it has been mentioned that they wait till they can meet the masters they want to get instructions from, or just to get blessings, or just to have the pleasure of their spiritual company:

“For three days of the business that they may have, beyond visiting of the living and of the dead---they go not from the *Khânqâh* until the inward form, from the alteration caused by the accidents of travel, returneth to its own ease, and they become ready for the interview with the Shaikhs.” 37/

Not only their coming to the *Khanqah* and going out from the *Khanqah* is governed by certain set of rules and regulations, but their assembly and stay in *Khanqah* is also determined by the strict rules and regulations:

“When from the *Khânqâh* they wish to go out, they refer their request to the men of the *Khânqâh*. When three days have passed, if they resolve to stay, they seek service whereby they may stay.” 38/

The first three days after the travellers have arrived are spent by them as the guests according to the Prophetic tradition and guidance. But if they want to stay beyond these first three days then they will stay at the *Khânqâh* but not as guests but as servants of the other incoming or outgoing Sufis. Yet again in the monastery the engagements of the Sufis is like whether to be engaged in devoting oneself to spiritual activities then they are exempted from the services or else they may serve. If their time be engaged in devotion, no performance of service is necessary for them.

This was something about the behaviour of the travellers who keep on pouring in the *Khanqah*. The dwellers of the *Khânqâh* have their respective engagements. They have to display certain traits and need to possess certain etiquettes.

For example, “The dwellers of the *Khânqâh* meet the travellers with (a) *tarhib* (ye are welcome), (b) regard, and (c) expansion of face (through joy).”39/

It means that they have to welcome the incoming Sufis with open arms and smiling faces. It should not be a just cosmetic mannerism as we may find at the occasion of someone’s checking in at the reception of a hotel, but it was and still is a heartfelt greeting and soul rendering welcome not governed by material concerns and consumerist considerations.

After making the incoming Sufis to feel comfortable the next thing the dwellers do is to offer food and refreshment to the guests: “The servant should offer light food, and be present fresh of face, sweet of speech.”40/

There is possibility that a strange person may turn up who is not aware about the monastic life and its etiquettes, still he is to be conducted in a polite way and his self respect and honour have to be maintained.

“If a traveller, unaccustomed to the customs of Sufis, reaches the *Khânqâh*, they should not look at him with contempt, nor should they prevent him from entering.” 41/

The groups which stay at *Khânaqâh* have different spiritual objectives to realise, and thus they have to behave in the manner which is most suitable to their condition:

“The dwellers of the *Khânaqâh* form three parties: (a) *ah-li-khidmat* (men of service,); (b) *ahl-i-suhbat* (men of society); (c) *ahl-i-khilvat* (men of solitude).”^{42/}

The roles to be played by these different groups have also been discussed in detail.

“The *ahl-i-khidmat* are the “beginners,” who out of love come to the *Khânaqâh*. They do them service, so that thereby they may become acceptable to the hearts of men of deeds and of stages, and may be regarded with the glance of mercy, may acquire fitness for kinship and become a slipper out of the garment of alienation and of farness.

They gain capability of society for its advantages, and by the blessing of their society, words, deeds and manner become bound by the bond of dignity. After that they become worthy of *khidmat*.

To the old men, the passing of their time in *khilvat* is best.

To the youth, the house assembly setting in company (*suhbat*) is better than solitude (*khilvat*), so that, with the bond of knowledge (*Ilm*), their lusts may be (by the revealing of states, words, and deeds to those present) bound.

Thus has Abu Yaqub Susi said:

The men of the *Khânaqâh* have a portion, devotion and a service; and aid each other respecting important matters of faith and of the words.

Fitness for “service” is when a person has, by outward resemblance and inward and pure desire, acquired kinship with Sufis.

Who hath no kinship with one of these two ways, ---him, and it is not proper to “service,” or with him to associate except in compassion.

If the *Khânaqâhs* have no bequest, and in it be present one possessor of vision, he, according to the exigency of the time and their capacity, instructs *murids*.

If he considers good to abandon *Kasb* (acquisition) and to remain in beggary, he puts them on *Tawakkul* (reliance on God) and on the abandoning of the means (of livelihood).

If the men of *Khânqâh* are a brotherhood, and no Shaikh be present, they choose, as occasion demands, one of these three ways:

Whether to choose *Kasb* (acquisition) or *Tawakkul* (reliance on God) or beggary?

The men of *Khânqâh* should observe concord to each other, sit at one eating table, pass life in love and purity and counterfeit evil thoughts. They should not allow hypocrisy that they should display outward reconciliation, and their hearts are flooded with hate, then hopelessness is their good, and their destruction an expectation. They should outwardly and inwardly try to be in agreement with, and in equality to each other, and to be in respect of all people from impurity (of wrong).

“In the heart of a Sufi or a *faqir*, how should there be the alloy and the counterfeit (of evil thought), the place of return whereof is the love of the world?”

By abandoning the world and turning from it are they special and chosen.

When a person appears possessed of lust, with him they should strive to repel the darkness of lust by the luminosity of the heart.

The injurer and injured both are in sin. Because if the injured one had heartily opposed the lust of the injurer, the darkness of lust would through the luminosity of the heart, have departed.

The true Sufi is he who strives in the purifying of his heart, and allows no pollution to abide in him. 43/

1. The people of the *Khanqah* should establish cordial relations with all men (*Khalq*).
2. They should concern themselves with God.
3. They should abandon all efforts at earning a livelihood and should resign themselves to the will of God.
4. They should strive for the purification of their inner life.
5. They should abstain from things that produce evil affects.
6. They should learn the value of time.

7. They should completely shake off indolence and lethargy. 44/

The true Sufi is he who strives in the purifying of his heart, and allows no pollution to abide in him. 45/

The conditions of the company of the *Mashaikh of Tariqat* are:

1. Everybody is to be respected according to his status.
2. Old people need to be revered and the people of equal age to be treated well and children to be treated gently, elderly people to be taken as fathers, and the people having same age as brothers and children like siblings.
3. Caprice jealousy and animosity and hatred to be abandoned.
4. And never leaving any opportunity to advice others and never be grieved for any one's bad behaviour and never abandon people due to their ill treatment."46/

Kashaf-al-Mahjub mentions the etiquettes of the companionship in *Tasawwuf* in detail. (It is one of the oldest Persian treatises on Mysticism. It was written around mid of 11th century.

The original work is in Persian and it has been translated into many Oriental and European languages. It was composed by Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Uthman b. Abi Ali al-Jullabi al-Ghaznavi al-Hujwiri (may Allah be pleased with him) who was born in a noble family of Ghazna which was renowned for their piety and countenance. 47/

Hujwiri says:

"The condition of companionship in Sufism is that one should treat everyone according to his degree. Thus he should treat elders with respect, those of their own sort with pleasant familiarity, and younger with affection. For him elders should be like his parents, should consider brothers of his own age group and should treat the younger like his sons. Should renounce hate, envy, and malice and must not withhold sincere admonition. It is not permissible to speak evil on somebody's back and or to behave dishonestly with companions.

Similarly, it is also not appreciated to deny one-another on account of any word or deed, because a companionship which begins for Allah's sake should not be cut short by human words or acts. He says further: "*Dervishes* are of two kinds, residents and travellers. According to the custom of the Shaikhs,

the travelling *dervishes* should regard the resident *dervishes* as superior to themselves, because they go to and fro in their own interest, while the residents have settled down in the service of Allah which in the former case is the sign of search, and in the latter is the token of attainment. Hence, those who have found and settled down are superior to those who are still seeking.

Similarly, the resident *dervishes* ought to regard the travelling *dervishes* as superior to themselves, because residents are laden with worldly encumbrances, while the travelling dervishes are unencumbered and detached from the world.”

Again, old men should prefer young ones to themselves, for they are newer to the world and whose sins are less numerous; and young men should prefer to themselves the old ones, for they are better than them in devotion and service. If it happens like this, there will be no evil and there will be ease and deliverance for all.

Mongol invasion was “a challenge” for the Sufis. Sufis concentrated their energies on “the regeneration of the Muslims of Muslim society, “at a time when Muslim political power was at its lowest ebb; they divided universe into spiritual territories (*walayatas*), and in this environment “the spiritual orders (*silsilaha*) and *Khânqâhs* were effectively organised and established on an extensive scale to meet the situation which henceforth became an integral part of the mystic discipline.”^{48/}

The earliest order was the Qadiriya founded by Abdul Qadir Gilani (ob.1166). His sermons and teachings attracted people to Islam and even a “very large number of Jews and Christians to Islam.” Even after his death his *madrassa* and his *ribat* continued to attract people from distant lands, and his order found adherents in Yemen, Syria, Egypt and many other regions. ^{49/}

Next was the *silsilaha-i-Khwajagan* organised by Khawaja Ahmad popularly known as Ata Yasawi (ob.1166), and he is referred by Farididdin Attar as *Pir-i-Turkistan*; it is said he affected the conversion of Turks to Islam, his tomb became a “place of pilgrimage” for both kings and Sufis.”^{50/}

However, Khawaja Abdul Khaliq Ghujduwani (ob. 1220) gave a distinct spiritual philosophy to the *silsilaha-Khwajagan*. Nearly a century and half later there appeared Khawaja Baha-u'd-din Naqshband (ob. 1389) on the scene of the *silsilaha-i-Khwajagan*. His contribution towards the consolidation and expansion of the *silsilaha* was so great that after his death the order came to be known as the Naqashbandi silsilaha.

Another important mystic order was the Chistiya founded at Chisht in the Hari-Rud valley of Afghanistan, near Firuz Koh, the capital of the Shanbani rulers of Ghur by Khawaja Abu Ishaq of Syria (ob. 940 A.D.) and it produced great saints like Khawaja Maudud Chishtti, Haji Sharif Zindani and Khawaja Usman Harwani. Khawaja Mu'in-u'd-din Hasan Sijzi was the founder of this order in India and this order is "in fact, essentially Indian" says Nizami. 51/

Khawaja Mu'in-u'd-din arrived in India during the reign of Prithvi Raj and set up a Chisti mystic centre at Ajmer, in the heart of Rajputana. 52/

Khawaja Mu'in-u'd-din was having a very dynamic concept of religion and was "thoroughly humanitarian in his outlook." 53/

He interpreted religion in terms of human service and exhorted his disciples "to develop river like generosity, sun like affection and earth like hospitality." The highest form of devotion according to him was to "redress the misery of those in distress; to fulfil the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry." 54/

Abul Fazl says that multitudes of people came under the influence of his teachings. 55/

His two disciples—Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Bakhtiyar Kaki (ob. 1236)—played a prominent role in the expansion of the *silsilah*. The former worked out the Chisti mystic principles at Suwal, a far-off village in Rajputana. 56/

The Suharwardi *silsilah* was founded by Shaikh Abu Najib Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi (ob. 1168), a distinguished Sufi, jurist and reformer of the 12th century. Many of his spiritual descendants become founders of new *silsilahs*—e.g., Kubrawiya, Shattariya and Firdausiya and his' nephew Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (ob. 1234) succeeded him in Baghdad and devoted himself to the expansion of this order. His Awarif-ul-Maarif is accepted by the medieval Muslim mystics as an excellent manual for the guidance of organisers of silsilahs. 57/

Shaikh Najm-u'd-din Kubra (ob. 1226) lived under distressed conditions owing to the Mongol invasion, and it was in July 1226 that the Mongol attacked Khawarizm and the Shaikh went out to meet the invaders in the open field and died fighting the Mongol forces. 58/

With the rise of these *silsilahs*, large establishment of *Khanqahs* for inculcating community spirit among mystics and for the moral and spiritual culture of the people became almost imperative; interestingly, the first *Khanqah* was built early in the 2nd century AH by Abu Hashim Sufi. This has been mentioned by Nafahat –ul- Uns. 59/

Maqrizi thinks that the origin of the separate houses of worship may be traced back to the days of the Caliph Uthman. 60/

Ibn Taimiyah writes on the authority of Akhbar-us Sufiya that the first house for mystics was constructed at Basra. 61/

But he thinks that the popularity of *Khanqahs* and *ribats* started with the Seljuq period. 62/

But these early *Khanqahs* could not develop into centres of the mystic movement. They remained private in character. From the 12th and 13th centuries onwards *Khanqahs*, *jamaat khanahs* and *zawiyahs* became the nuclei for the expanding mystic movement.

Zāwiyahs

Though broadly used in the sense of hospices, these terms differ in their connotation. The *Khanqah* was a spacious building, providing separate accommodation for every visitor and inmate. The *Jamaat khanah* was a large room where all disciples slept, prayed and studied while sitting on the floor. The Chisti saints built *Jamaat khanahs*. Suhrawardis constructed *Khanqahs*.

Common people, unable to appreciate the distinction, used the word *Khanqah* even for the Chisti *Jamaat khanahs*, and now the term is used for all centres of spiritual activity without distinction. The *zawiyahs* were smaller places where mystics lived and prayed but, unlike the inmates of *Khanqahs* and *Jamaat khanahs*, did not aim at establishing any vital contact with the world outside. In the 17th and the 18th centuries another type of *Khanqahs*, the *daerahs* came into existence. The primary aim of the *daerahs* was to provide place for the men of one affiliation to devote their time to religious meditation. They were smaller than the *zawiyahs*. 63/

The establishment of *Khanqahs* was based on the conviction that a life of solitary, self-sufficient, contemplation was incompatible with the highest mystic

ideal of salvation through service of mankind. In constructing *Khanqahs*, writes Shaikh Izzuddin Mahmud, there are several advantages ... First, it provides shelter for mystics who do not possess any house of their own ... Second, by gathering at a place and mixing with each other, the mystics get an opportunity of regulating their lives and developing uniform inward and outward ways Third, in this way they get an opportunity of criticising and mending each other's ways."64/

Khaliq Nizami says, "In fact, when men of different temperaments and attitudes assembled in these *Khanqahs*, all tensions, conflicts and complexes in their character were resolved and their personalities were moulded in consonance with the spirit of the *silsilah*. Common penitences and sufferings drew out the noblest qualities of their souls and made them understand what Carlyle calls the "divine significance of life." 65/

Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrawardi found sanction for the establishment of *Khanqahs* in the Quranic verses --- (24:36-37)66/

Strict discipline was maintained in the *Khanqah* and elaborate rules were laid down for the guidance of the inmates as to how to talk to the Shaikh, how to deal with visitors, how to sit in the *Khanqah*, how to walk, how and when to sleep, what dress to wear—on these and similar other topics minute instructions were given to the people of a *Khanqah*. The Shaikh sternly dealt with those inmates who were found guilty of the slightest irregularity."67/

If a *Khanqah* had waqf for its maintenance, the Shaikh could either instruct his disciples to earn their livelihood or permit them to beg or ask them to sit in the *Khanqah* resigned to His will.

If a *Khanqah* had no Shaikh but was run by a group of men of equal spiritual status (*Ikhwan*) the same three courses were open to them."68/

Marifat (gnosis) being the summon bonum of a Sufis life methods were adopted for achieving this goal. Through which *wasl* (union) was possible. Heart (qalb) was considered the only medium which could set the Finite in tune with the Infinite. Every *silsilah* consequently developed its own methods for training heart. However, the temperament of the people of a particular region was taken into consideration while prescribing these methods. This point has been mentioned by Shah Wali Allah. When a person desired to get initiated into a *Silsilah*, he gave his hand in the hands of the Shaikh and repented for his past sins (*Tauba*) and promised to lead a chaste and pure life in the future. Sometimes

the head of the new entrant was shaved. Sometimes a cap was placed on his head.
69/

These are the methods adopted in order to “harness all feelings and emotions to establishing communion with Allah:

1. *Zikr-Jihr*: Reciting the names of Allah loudly, sitting in the prescribed posture at prescribed times.
2. *Zikr-Khafi*: Reciting the names of Allah silently.
3. *Pas-i-Anfas*: Regulating the breath.
4. *Muraqabah*: Absorption in mystic contemplation.
5. *Chillah*: Forty days during which a mystic confines himself to a lonely corner or cell and devotes himself to contemplation.

In some Sufi *silsilahs* the efficacy of audition parties (*sama*) is laid emphasis upon so that one’s spiritual personality gets developed, as music in their view relieves the strain on a man’s emotions, and quickens ones emotional response and attunes his heart to the Infinite and the Eternal. According to Nizami:

“*Sama* or *qawwali*, consequently, became one of the popular institutions of medieval mysticism and the common man, incapable of comprehending the mystic principles at a higher level, readily accepted its ceremonial aspect. If its metaphysics attracted the higher intellects, the mystic ceremonial—*sama*, *urs*, *Langar*, etc.,---drew to its fold the common man who looked upon the mystic more as a blessed miracle worker than a teacher of a higher morality. Considered in the broad perspective of Islamic history, a significant contribution of the Sufis was that they removed the contradictions between static theology and the rapidly changing conditions of life. In fact, it was through the mystic channel that dynamic and progressive elements entered the social structure of Islam.”^{70/}

The whirling dance or Sufi whirling that is proverbially associated with *dervishes*, is the practice of the Mevlevi Order in Turkey, and is part of a formal ceremony known as the *Samah*. The *Samah* is only one of the many Sufi ceremonies performed to try to reach religious ecstasy (*majdhub, fana*). The name Mevlevi comes from the Persian poet Rumi (born in Balkh, modern day Afghanistan), whose shrine is in Turkey and who was a *dervish* himself. This practice, though not intended as entertainment, has become a tourist attraction in Turkey.

“If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through the narrow chinks of his cavern."71/

Khânqâh was not just a place of retreat but a place where all the comforts of life were present and people used to enjoy stay in a *Khanqah*. Ibn Jubayr Andalusî says that in the latter part of 6th century in the Muslim world the Sufis were enjoying very good and luxurious life, and like the kings had all the facilities of life available there and they used to have at least the glimpses of the promised bounties of paradise on earth itself, so to say. They used to organise the musical concerts in these *khawaniq*. 72/

Coming to Kashmir Sufism, it has also developed a well-knit system of monastic rules and regulations apart from important mystical traits. One of the patron saints of Kashmir Syed Ali Hamadâni who belonged to a Kubarawi sect of Sufi says, for example, ".... our *tariqah* is stronger than all other *turq*; therefore a person who wants to be initiated in to our *Tariqah* should be ready to get initiated in *Tariqat wa Haqiqat* at one and the same time."

Taqwa, according to Shah Hamadan (as the Syed is commonly known in Kashmir and Iran) means that in heart of the Sufi only Allah's *Wajud* (Being and existence) is settled and all other things than Allah have already vanished. A *Salik* should make it a point that whatever actions he is performing no one else should know about their performance. *Salik* is a person who gets unconnected from the worldly affairs and remains with ablution all the times and silence is maintained by him throughout, as he remains strictly obedient to all the commands of his *Murshid* and does not talk to all, and in seclusion keeps fast and does not eat that much that he may be overcome by sleep and remain deprived of worship; however, he should not eat less to become very weak also.

The etiquettes of *khilvat* (solitude) are as follows according to Hamadâni:

"*Salik* should remain very much considerate and with ablution and keeping (his sitting and standing) direction towards *Qiblah* and whatever invocatory prayers are recommended by the *Murshid* should be practiced, and he should remain in seclusion and select a very dark room so that he remained cut off from all the external relations and should only come out from his room when he has call of nature or for ablution or for offering congregational prayers, and when he comes out he should keep his head down and should not cast his gaze on any one .

In seclusion, he should engage himself in *zikr* and the concentration on recitation of *Kalimah Shadah* and its repeated mention on his tongue should be

that extensive that whole of his body gets affected by its good impact and vibrations.

A special care according to Hamadâni should be taken that a *Salik* should not mix up with people and avoid their company. 73/

About the importance of Shaikh (*Pir*) a great Rishi saint of Kashmir says: *Pir* is the father and mother of the *Salik* as the Sufis believe. Nooruddin considered Mir Syed Hamadâni as his spiritual guide; therefore he says:

“...the *Pir* is father and mother and through him I have got connected with God who is my lord; therefore *Pir* is just like the light of my eyes and I hope on the Day of Judgement due to his intercession my sins will be pardoned, and my miseries warded off due to his recommendation. “74/

According to Shah Hamadan, after the gnosis of one's self all the successes follow and man becomes the holder of key of the door of grandeur as he becomes master of his times also. 75/

When Shah-i-Hamadan reached to Kashmir for preaching of Islam, he informed people about Islamic teachings in the towns and cities. Wherever he stayed in connection with preaching of Islam his son got constructed *Khânqâhs* later on and these *Khânqâhs* are attributed to Syed Ali Hamadani. The place he stayed at Allaudinpora, when he reached Kashmir, was actually a royal guesthouse those days. Afterwards, it was demolished by the king to establish a *sufah* for prayer where Syed Ali Hamadâni, known as Amir-Kabir, Sultan Qutubbuddin and his nobles would offer five times prayers. In the south (*junoob*) of this guest house, in its vicinity was a Budh Vihara where a Buddhist monk was residing along with his followers. This monk embraced Islam by the preaching of Syed Ali along with his followers. His grave is present in the graveyard, which is situated near present *Khânqâh* itself. The stones of this Budh Vihara have been used in the *Khânqâh-i-Mu'alla* situated on the left side of the *Khânqâh*. It was on the place of *sufah* that the son of Mir Syed Ali Hamadâni constructed a *Khânqâh* known as *Khânqâh-i-Mu'alla*. It is worth mentioning that Syed Ali Hamadâni had established only the *sufah* and no other *Khânqâh* in Kashmir. 76/

The *Khânqâh-i-Mu'alla* was constructed by Mir Muhammad Hamadâni during the period of Sultan Sikandar at the place of *sufah* which was demolished by the king Qutubbuddin himself.

The construction of this *Khânqâh* was started in 798 AH and completed in 799 AH (1397 AD). 77/

The deed written in this regard is very explicit in pronouncing that this *Khânqâh* was meant for the purposes of the stay of the custodians of this *Khânqâh* and the people who will stay there for various religious devotions. The poor people (*fuqara*), destitute (*masakin*), pious people (*Salah*), righteous (*atiqiyah*) and the truthful (*sadiqqin*) etc., were the benefactionaries of this *Khânqâh* and the people who want to meditate in this *Khânqâh* will be provided all the facilities so that they may remain busy in their prayers. This *Khânqâh* was given in the guardianship of Mawlana Sayeed so that he may spend the income incurred from the donated villages on the beneficiaries of this *Khânqâh* and one portion of the income incurred from these villages was allocated for the requirements of the treatment of sick people. This was also agreed upon that the income was to be spent on the needy persons. Malik Devi Ganai was made as overseer on these works so that no one took advantage of any anomaly. In this regard, the agreement was signed by both by Sultan Sikandar and Mir Muhammad Hamadani, the copy of which is found in the record of this *Khânqâh*. 78/

Khanqah-i-Aala Trâl was constructed by Mir Muhammad Hamdani in 800 AH which is very similar with *Khanqah-i-Maula*. It was constructed with timber and bricks and in the *Khanqah* there was constructed 40-ft wide and 60-ft high mosque, and there was made flowery on its walls and the beautiful names of Allah were in golden letters.

Khanqah-i-Amirryah, Namlabal Pampur: Amir stayed also at Pampur and Mir Muhammad Hamadani constructed a *Khanqah* in Namlabal during the reign of Sultan Sikander (1389—1413). The *Khanqah* is 25 sq ft in breadth and length. <Author: Square feet is the unit of area. Please check and verify the actual measure of the structure> Big slabs of stones were used in its construction which used to be around 3 ft in width and 4 ft in length. This is similar to other *Khânqâhs*, and in its construction stones, timber and bricks were used; and there is embroidery on the timber logs and *mehrab*s.

Khanqah-i-wala (Wachi): This *Khânqâh* is situated at Wachi in the township of Shawarah in Zainapora. This *Khanqah* was also constructed by Mir Muhammad Hamadani in 1399 AD and was known as *Khanqah-i-Wala*. Second time this *Khânqâh* was constructed by Nasibuddin Ghazi. This *Khânqâh* has been renovated several times; therefore its original shape has not remained intact. In 1974, it was constructed once again.

Khânqâh Kubarawi (Amirryah): This *Khânqâh* is situated in Mattan Chismah Machbhavan and was constructed during the reign of Sultan Skindar by Syed Muhammad Hamdani. The lawns of this *Khânqâh* have been decorated with very beautiful flowers. The Mughals shifted this *Khânqâh* and constructed it at another place. On the spring Aasif Jah Khan built a Shahi Bagh and some glorious buildings.

Khânqâh-I—Ameerihyah Monghhama Pulwama: Since during his stay in Kashmir, Amir stayed at Monghhama Pulwama (Sirnaw), and it was due to this reason that his son Mir Muhammad Hamadani constructed one-storey *Khânqâh*.

During the reign of Aurangzeb in 1116 AH (1704 AD), this *Khânqâh* was renovated by his governor Ibrahim Khan when he was made governor of Kashmir for the third time. 79/

As we know, among the Sufis who were trained in the *Khânqâh* of Alaud-Daula Simnani (1261/1336) was Shaikh Abul-Mailî Sharaf-uddin-Din Mahmud Bin Abdullah Muzdaqani. His prominence owes to the fact that his disciple was initiated Sayyid Ali Hamadani (born 714 AH) in the Kubraviyav order by him. 80/

The importance of *Khânqâh* was well known to Syed Ali Hamadani as he was himself acquainted with this phenomenon at his native place Iran.

Sayyid Ali travelled very extensively and came to Kashmir also. Many of the Sufis who were trained at the *Khanqah* of Alaud-Daula Simnani, left their native towns and travelled as far as Gulbarga in south India. Mir Saiyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (d. 1405), who had travelled for some time in the company of Saiyid Ali, later settled at Faizabad, east of Luknow. 81/

Accompanied by his disciples, Sayyid Ali travelled widely in the Valley. He left his deputies at a number of places, which were great Hindu centres of those days, such as Pampur, Awantipora and Vijabror. These followers of Sayyid Ali established *Khânqâh*, and the network of branches which gradually emerged became important centres of preaching and proselytisation. 82/

It was not specific with Kashmir only but during the Mongol period in most of the Islamic countries like India, Turkistan, Syria, Rome, Egyptian Africa, etc., were great places of flourishing Sufism and everywhere the *Khânqâhs* would abound and the assemblies of *samah* held with great zeal. Ibn Batuta has mentioned that wherever he went to eastern or western part of Islamic world, he

found inns, *Khanqahs*, *tekkes* and *Langar* in abundance where the people from amongst Sufis, *qalanders* frequented the most. This situation was prevalent till the last part of 9th century Hijrah, and even after that Sufis were revered the most. They were considered friends of Allah; caliphs would respect them, and the noble and notables would throng their *Khanqahs*. 83/

In some cases, the kings and caliphs would come bare-footed to visit some famous *mashaikh* and *awliya*, and would also build their *Khânqâhs*. 84/

References and Notes

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2. *Ibid* –p 7
3. *What is Sufism?* Premier Publishing Company, Aligarh, 1973, preface
4. Cyril Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Stacey International London, 1989, p-338
5. *Ibid*. p-295
6. *Ibid*. pp-295—296
7. Hajar Asqalani, *Fathul Bari*, Volume 3, p-214. On another occasion the Prophet of Islam was in the Masjid al-Nabavi in Medina, the second most sacred mosque in Islam, when a Bedouin, that is, a desert Arab, entered the mosque and urinated inside it. It was obviously a very provocative matter. But the Prophet was not at all provoked. After the nomad had urinated, the Prophet simply asked his companions to bring a bucket of water and wash the place clean (*Fathul Bari*, 1/386).
8. Lings, *op.cit*. p-38
9. *Ibid*
10. Lings, *op.cit*. p-28. Lings has made three categorisations of the divisions of Muslims of the spiritual hierarchy, firstly those Sufis who are “travellers,” secondly those who are relatively “stationary” but whose faith and practice are nonetheless perfumed with Sufism, and thirdly the “exoteric” majority. p-31
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18. *Ibid.*
19. Pp-271-272 *Bazm*
20. *Ibid.* P-272
21. *Ibid.* P-458
22. *Ibid*
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25. *Ibid.* p-105
26. Prof. Dr. Shamasuddin Ahmad, *Shah-i-Hamadan, Hayat aur Karnamay*, Shaikh Ghulam Muhammad and Sons, Maisima Bazar, Srinagar, 1995, p-892
27. Azizuddin Nasafi, *Al Insa al Kamil*, quoted in *Shah-i-Hamadan, Hayat aur Karnamay* op.cit. p-899
28. *Ibid.* p-895.
29. *Ibid.* pp-900-901
30. *Ibid.* According to A.R .I.Doi: "In the old Khanqah... besides Dhikr and Afkār (Meditation and thought) the Dars (Lessons in Religious Scriptures) formed an essential part of training for the novice. But, now, in how many courses, including those designed for adults, is Sufism presented not from the point of view of apologetic, but as a problem in Islamic living which the students themselves have to work under guidance of the Shaykh of the Silsilah (Order?) "(The Islamic Review and Arab Affairs, September 1970, p-32)
31. *Mysticism, Islam*, Nizami, p-74, footnote no. 85
32. Cyril Glassé, op.cit p-432
33. *Ibid.* p-418
34. *Mysticism in Islam*, edited by K.L Seshagiri Rao, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2002, p-67 Some psychologists have interpreted meditations of various people in a psychological manner whereby assigning symbolic and figurative meanings to various religious symbols or injections. For example, while explaining Surah Kahaf, Carl Jung has given a novel interpretation about the very name Kahf meaning cave when he says that everyone has a cave in himself, or into the darkness that lies behind the consciousness will find his self involved in an –at first—unconscious process of transformation, by penetrating into the unconscious he makes connection with his unconscious contents. (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* pp-74-75)
35. Shahbuddin Suhrawardi (Tr. by Lieut Col. H. Wilberforce Clarke), *Taj Company*, New Delhi, 1984, pp-30-36
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39. *Ibid*, p-38
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47. This book is translated By Lt. Col (R) Muhammad Ashraf Javed. The author talks about the etiquettes of a man intending to involve himself with mystic life)
48. Nizami .*op.cit*.p ,P-61
49. *Ibid*. p-62
50. *Ibid*.
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52. *Ibid*.
53. *Ibid*.
54. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p-46
55. *A'in-i-Akbari*, edited by Sir Syed. p-207
56. Nizami, *op.cit*. p- 64
57. *Ibid*. p-65. This book is a treatise on ethics and practical mysticism. It not only explained the Sufi terms and their connotations explained the aims and ideals of the Sufis and has formulated principles for the "group organisation" of the Sufis. It was due this reason that the contemporaries "in their eagerness to organise their silsilahs, accepted it as their guide book" p-73, footnote 71, Nizami. Its influence in India may be estimated from the fact that for a long time it was prescribed for higher studies in religion and mysticism. p-73
58. *Ibid*. p-65
59. *Ibid*. 32-32
60. Ibn Taimiyah, *Fatawa* (vol.IV,P-271)
61. *Fatawa Ibn Timiya*, 11, p- 460
62. *Ibid*. (IV, P.459)
63. Footnote no. 85, pp-74-75, *op. cit*. Nizami

64. *Misbah –ul –Hidayah*, (Lucknow edition, 1322 AH, PP-118-119). See also Nizami op. cit., P-67
65. *Ibid.* Nizami. op. cit. p-67
66. *Awarif –ul-Maarif* (Urdu Translation Lucknow 1926, p-123)
67. Nizami. op. cit. p-68
68. *Misbah –ul –Hidayah* (Lucknow edition, 1322 AH) PP-121-122
69. Nizami. op. cit. pp-68-69
70. Nizami. op. cit. p-69
71. According to Hujwayri, without mushadah there is no possibility of mujadah and without mujadah there is no possibility of mushadah. He does not, however, consider mujahidah as the cause of mushadah, but the method to reach to the way of truth and its means.” See Syed Sabahusddin Abdur Rahman, *Bazm-i-Sufia, Mutbah Maarif Dar al Musannifin*, Aazamgarh, 1989, pp-25-26
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75. *Ibid*, p-103
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One God, One Religion

Saiyed A. Haider*

Introduction

The most important of native Meso-American documents was what is now called the Dresden Codex, named after the town in whose library it was lodged. It deals with astronomy providing detailed tables of lunar eclipses and other phenomenon. These are so accurate that they put our own calendar to shame.

Mayans had a system of counting the days relative to a starting date, called the Birth of Venus and now known to be 13 August 3114 BC. This calendar was divided into "months" or *uinals* of twenty days, "years" or *tuns* of 360 days and longer periods of 7200 days, the *katun* and 144,000 days, the *baktun*. The number 13 was magically important to them and they believed that, starting from the Birth of Venus (Prophet or a divine person Quetzalcoatl), after 13 of these longest periods, or *baktuns*, this age (the Age of the Jaguar, the fifth and the final Sun') would come to an end. Working from their start date, this Mayan prophecy points to a date in our own time, 22 December 2012, when the fifth or last age of man ends.

There is not much information regarding what the Mayans thought would occur in 2012, but the consensus of opinion is that there will be great change. To some people this means a positive, spiritual change. Others consider that a catastrophic event may have been predicted. Most agree that something is going to happen. But what is likely to happen? Though none but God knows the truth, I tried to find from the various revealed scriptures and books of religious importance to the Mayans, the Jews, the Christians, the Hindus, and the Muslims to come to a logical conclusion.

* Senior Journalist (The article is extracted from Saiyed A. Haider's book: "Muslims and the Straight Path")

It is interesting to note that the Maya civilization which inhabited a region encompassing southern Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, and western Honduras, and flourished as Aztec empire between 3rd and 10th centuries AD, had degenerated by 1200 AD. When the Spanish conquistadors arrived on 4 March 1519 under Hernan Cortes with merely 11 ships, 600 foot soldiers, 16 horses, and some artillery on the coast near what was to become Vera Cruz, the entire Aztec Empire succumbed to their feet by 13 August 1521.

Part of the reason for his success was a case of mistaken identities. The Indians believed that he was a divine person named Quetzalcoatl whose return had long been prophesied, and they did not offer much of a fight and consequently Spanish got control of the entire region.

The entire Aztec empire succumbed to Spanish feet but Quetzalcoatl – the savior, whom they were waiting for, did not come. He still has not come during the past 500 years since then. If Quetzalcoatl is real, is he mentioned in the holy books of the Hindus, Jews, Christians, and the Muslims? Who is Quetzalcoatl, whose return had been prophesied? Will the much awaited Quetzalcoatl finally come in 2012? Again, God knows the truth but fact remains that the concept of savior is present in starkly similar form in most of the religions of the world. If this concept could be found as far as in Latin America (a continent discovered only in 15th century A.D.), it proves that there is only One God of all humanity, whose One Path got deviated in various directions to form different religions that exist in the world today.

The Coming of the Awaited Savior

An article on Christianity said that in order to be a prophet from God, you must prophesy. The article goes on to say “... if you claim to be a prophet yet fail to prophesy, you are a false prophet ...” and ridicules other religions other than Christianity for containing “miniscule amounts of prophecy or none at all. Because of this fact, these religions are immediately disqualified as being divinely inspired by God.”

We do not agree to the aforementioned statement which appears to be written by someone with an apparent bias to a particular religion. Fact remains that all the religions of the world which may be termed as Divine or have emanated from the One God of the Cosmos contain abundant prophesies, if we look at them with an unbiased, untainted perception. Unfortunately, the greatest of our faults is that we look at other religions with a biased, preconceived

mindset at all times, considering our own religion and prevailing practices to be the best and in accordance with the Divine Will.

Actually, with the passage of time each of our divine religions has become so distorted and deviated that we can safely say that our present day understanding and following of the teachings of these religions is far removed from the divine teachings that they possessed some time ago, or possess even these days. Neither it is true that there is only one true religion and all others are false religions nor that each religion emanated from a different god. There is no doubt that there is One God of the Universe who was at all times guiding and showing the path of our well-being. If this is true then the Divine Truths and Teachings must be present in all the divine scriptures. This must also mean that as they emanate from the one and the same source, same or similar teachings must be present in all scriptures that are attributed to God. At least the path shall be the same! After all, if there is One God, there must be only One True Path to reach to Him.

Quetzalcoatl is the Savior, as per the Mayans

Coming back to the Mayan prophesy about Quetzalcoatl who is supposed to come again as the savior to this world, I tried to find whether similar prophesies regarding the awaited savior exists in other holy scriptures of the world. After all, those who say that “if you claim to be a prophet yet fail to prophesy, you are a false prophet” will agree that if several people, separated by the barriers of religion, thousands of kilometers in distance and hundreds of years in time, have prophesied about one and the same thing, all these scriptures must have a common source.

If the Mayans believed in the coming of Quetzalcoatl, it was not possible to know about it until the discovery of America by Columbus in the 15th century or till the Dresden Codex was unscripted by a German scholar in 1880. Vedic and other Hindu scriptures had not been translated into other languages until the time of Dara Shikoh. The Mormon Scriptures and the Dead Sea Scrolls have been found only in the 19th century. Confucius and Buddhist teachings have been known to the world in the 20th century. And Prophet Mohammad was never taught by any person and, hence, was considered illiterate till Quran was revealed as the greatest literary masterpiece among Arabs who took pride in their vocabulary, literature and command over language and yet prostrated before the Quranic verses, agreeing that it was not a compilation by a human soul.

Jesus is the Awaited Savior, as per the Christians

Christians believe that Jesus is the savior. He had come as Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited Messiah sent from God and will again be sent on earth close to the end of the world. All believers of Jesus are waiting for the time when he will come once again to rid us of all ills that are plaguing our society.

Jesus said to the religious leaders of the day when they did not believe in him:

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the same Scriptures that testify about me but you refuse to come to me to have life.^{1/}

The following prophesy was revealed to Prophet Daniel in 580 B.C.

Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah comes, there will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two sevens, the Messiah will be cut off but not for himself. The people of the ruler to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. ^{2/}

This is an interesting argument! Christians and Jews do not know what is meant by seven sevens or seventy sevens. Interestingly, Quran too talks of seven and seven and most Muslims are confused regarding its meaning. You will be amazed that even Upanishads talk of seven and seven which comprise all life. Isn't it another secret that is present in at least three great religions whose answer is unknown to each of them? It is also interesting to note that while Bible talks clearly of the Second Coming of Jesus, it also refers to an " ... *anti-Christ who will rise to power on a peace platform. He will initiate a seven-year peace treaty with Israel and many other countries. However, halfway through the treaty, he will end sacrifices and offerings and he will set up the abomination that causes desolation. This is known as the tribulation period.*"

Isn't it interesting that it were not just the Mayans who believed that Quetzalcoatl will come to them as savior for humanity? Their eagerness to be

with him cost them their kingdom as they prostrated before a false Quetzalcoatl. The Christians too believe that Jesus will reveal himself once again as the savior for all humanity. And around the same time, the anti-Christ will arrive as the villain against God and the True Teachings.

Talking of anti-Christ, it is said:

“He opened his mouth to blaspheme God and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. He was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast, all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. He, who has an ear, let him hear.” 3/

The anti-Christ is also likely to befool people in the name of Jesus just as the Mayans were befooled by a false Quetzalcoatl. For, it is clearly said he will rise to power on a peace platform. Soon he will have worldwide control. There will be no sovereign nations. All countries of the world will be under his authority. Most people on earth will begin to worship him. God will be blasphemed and those who will not worship him will be punished to death.

What does Jesus have to say about when he will be returning? It is clearly said that it is not in his hands when he will re-arrive. No one knows the timing but God.

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” 4/

Jesus says he will be returning when the earth is like it was in Noah's day. What was the world like in Noah's day? The earth was corrupt before God and it was filled with violence. *“All flesh had corrupted their way”* is the reference to materialistic pursuits overshadowing the spiritualistic pursuits. *“For God looked upon the earth and it was indeed corrupt. All flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before me. The earth is filled with violence through them and I will destroy them with the earth.’” 5/*

Decide for yourself whether or not our world today is filled with corruption, violence and lust for material desires.

About the true believers Jesus says:

"Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. I will make the one who overcomes a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God and I will also write on them my new name." 6/

Jesus not only says that he will be coming soon but will divulge the name of a new city, perhaps even more sanctified than Jerusalem. Not just this, Jesus will come and reveal himself by a new name or he will be born as a normal person by a certain name and then proclaim that he is Jesus, thus complicating things which will facilitate the anti-Christ to make followers for him.

Now read this. Son of Man is a clear indication that another Divine Person who has been born out of man will also arrive. "*Son of Man*" can never be reference to Jesus:

"If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. At that time, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away. You also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." 7/

"Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. I tell you the truth; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away." 8/

Tenure of Jesus will be followed by the Day when all those who are living will fall dead. Blessed will be they who attain immortality or salvation for the soul even though the physical body will perish. Jesus too is perishable but he

will join with the Imperishable – the Almighty God. The following passage is a clear reference to the Day of Judgment.

I declare to you that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. The trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. The perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, death is your victory? Where, death is your sting?" 9/

In the following revelation, there is another reference that another Divine Spirit other than Jesus will arrive. It says that Jesus will present himself and testify before the Spirit. The Spirit is not God as it is sitting with his bride. All will take the Free Gift of the Water of Life. This means that they all will attain immortality through salvation, and will live forever in the heavens. (Interestingly, in Upanishads too there is mention of this spirit's connection with all Life that exists.)

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright Morning Star. The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' and let the one who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let them come, and whoever wishes, let them take the Free Gift of the Water of Life .10/

Mahdi is the savior as per Muslims; he will be accompanied by Jesus

Exactly the same concept exists among Muslims regarding the coming of the Savior. Several books of prophecies and the authentic sayings of the Prophet Mohammad say that Mahdi – the Awaited – will be the Savior who will remove all evil from the earth. He is referred to as Baqiatullah [or the remaining part of (the spirit of) Allah]. Quran also testifies that Jesus will come again. It is not clarified whether the two will come together or one before another. However, it is abundantly made clear that all evil will be wiped out from the face of the earth by Jesus and Mahdi – whose real name will be Mohammad. Traditions also say that Mahdi will be from the Prophet's family and descendant of Ali and Fatima.

Though all sects believe in the concept of Mahdi, Shia sect of Muslims believes that Mahdi is none but Mohammad, son of their 11th Imam, who took birth in 869 CE and was hidden by God at the age of five (874 CE). He is still alive but has been in occultation, waiting for the time that God has decreed for his return. He is the light or spirit that guides us even now and will come to save this world from evil and corruption in the near future. Though all Muslims are awaiting the coming of the Mahdi along with Jesus, Mahdi is besieged to come in all congregations of Shia Muslims.

In Shia and Sunni eschatology, Mahdi (The Guided One) is the prophesied redeemer who will stay on earth for seven, nine or nineteen years (according to various interpretations) before the Day of Judgment (literally, the Day of Resurrection) and, alongside Jesus, will rid the world of wrongdoing, injustice, and tyranny.

In Sunnis, five of the six canonical collections of Hadith (Sahah-e-Sitta) refer to the Mahdi, thus indicating that the Mahdi doctrine is common to both Sunni and Shia Muslims. Even the belief in an anti-Christ is prevalent, very much like Christianity. Islamic scholar Moojan Momen considers that following beliefs in relation to the Mahdi are shared by Sunni and Shia Muslims alike:

- The Mahdi will be a descendant of Mohammad of the line of Fatimah.
- He will have the same name as Mohammad.
- He and Jesus will rule together for 40 years
- His coming will be accompanied by the raising of a Black Standard.
- His coming will be accompanied by the appearance of the anti-Christ.
- There will be a lunar and solar eclipse within the same month of Ramadan.
- A star with a luminous tail will rise from the East before the coming of the Mahdi.
- He will restore faith to its original form and eradicate moral corruption.
- He will fill the world with justice and fairness at a time when the world will be filled with oppression.

The Twelfth Imam will return as the Mahdi with *"a company of his chosen ones,"* and his enemies will be led by the one-eyed anti-Christ and the Sufyani. The two armies will fight *"one final apocalyptic battle"* where the Mahdi and his forces will prevail over evil.

The Prophet Muhammad said:

The Mahdi is the protector of the knowledge, the heir to the knowledge of all the prophets, and is aware of all things.

The dominion (authority) of the Mahdi is one of the proofs that God has created all things; these are so numerous that his [the Mahdi's] proofs will overcome (will be influential, will be dominant) everyone and nobody will have any counter-proposition against him. People will flee from him [the Mahdi] as sheep flee from the shepherd. Later, people will begin to look for a purifier. But since they can find none to help them but him, they will begin to run to him. When matters are entrusted to competent [the Mahdi], Almighty God will raise the lowest part of the world for him, and lower the highest places. So much that he will see the whole world as if in the palm of his hand. Which of you cannot see even a single hair in the palm of his hand?

Muhammad al-Baqir, the Fifth Imam said of the Mahdi:

The Master of the Command will be named as the Mahdi because he will dig out the Torah and other heavenly books from the cave in Antioch. He will judge among the people of the Torah according to the Torah; among the people of the Gospel according to the Gospel; among the people of the Psalms in accordance with the Psalms; among the people of the Qur'an in accordance with the Qur'an.

Ja'far al-Sadiq, the Sixth Imam, made the following prophecies:

Abu Bashir says: When I asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, "O son of the Messenger of God! Who is the Mahdi (qa'im) of your clan (ahl al-bayt)?", he replied: "The Mahdi will conquer the world; at that time the world will be illuminated by the light of God, and everywhere in which those other than God are worshipped will become places where God is worshiped; and even if the polytheists do not wish it, the only faith on that day will be the religion of God.

Sadir al-Sayrafi says: I heard from Imam Abu Abdullah Ja'far al-Sadiq (the Sixth Imam) that: Our modest imam, to whom this occultation belongs [the Mahdi], who is deprived of and denied his rights, will move among them and wander through their markets and walk where they walk, but they will not recognize him.

Abu Bashir says: I heard Imam Mohammad al-Baqr saying: "He said: When the Mahdi appears he will follow in the path of the Messenger of God. Only he [the Mahdi] can explain the works of the Messenger of God."

Ali Ibn Abi Talib quoted the Prophet as saying:

The Mahdi is one of us, the clan of the Prophet. God will reform him in one night. (Reported by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Maqah)

At-Tirmidhi reported that the Prophet said:

The Mahdi is from my Ummah; he will be born and live to rule five or seven or nine years. (If) one goes to him and says, "Give me (a charity)," he will fill one's garment with what one needs.

Abu Dawud also reported a hadith about the Mahdi that the Prophet Mohammed said:

The Mahdi will be of my stock, and will have a broad forehead, a prominent nose. He will fill the earth with equality and justice as it is filled with oppression and tyranny, and he will rule for seven years.

At-Tirmidhi said:

It has been related from Abdullah that the Messenger of Allah said: One of my people whose name is the same as mine will assume leadership... If but one day of life remains to the world, Allah will prolong that day to permit him to assume dominion.

In Sufism too, belief in the Mahdi is widely accepted. Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, in his fatwa entitled 'The brief discourse on the portents of the awaited Mahdi,' said that denial of the Mahdi is disbelief.

Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti wrote:

This is the belief of ahl al-Sunnah, this is the belief of the Sufis, this is the belief of our sheikhs, and this is the belief of the true Shadhili sheikhs, whose path both al-Suyuti and al-Haytami followed. Whoever differs with them is a liar and an innovator.

The Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi Order, under the leadership of Shaykh Nazim and his khalifah Shaykh Hisham Kabbani of Islamic Supreme Council of America (ISCA), is among the Sunnis/Sufis who strongly believe the coming of Imam Mahdi in this 21st Century is imminent. Shaikh Hisham has written a book titled "The Approach of Armageddon" that touches much on this subject in line with Sufi doctrine and beliefs.

It says *"Predictions and lore concerning the Mahdi abound."* Among them are that the promised Mahdi would be a Caliph of God and that to make a covenant with him is obligatory. He would belong to the House of Mohammad and would be in the line of Imam Hussein. His name would be Mohammad and his family name would be Abul Qasim; his father's name would be 'Abdu'llah, and he would appear in Mecca. He would protect the Muslims from destruction and would restore the religion to its original position.

Imam Rabbani is of opinion that Mahdi will appear in the second millennium after the death of the Prophet. It has been 1421 years since Prophet's death. It is said that 1400 to 1600 years are crucial as this is the middle of the second millennium. God may ask Mahdi to come anytime during this period. According to Imam as-Suyuti's accounts, the life of the community of Muhammad will not exceed the year 1500. God knows the best.

Maschiach of Yisra'el (Messiah of Israel) is Savior, as per Jews

The path of Maschiach is the path of salvation (Yeshua), as per the Jews. In other words, Maschiach himself is salvation. He is God in flesh -- the healer and the judge. The Talmud extensively details the advent of the Messiah (Sanhedrin 98a, et al.) and describes a period of freedom and peace, which will be the time of ultimate goodness for the Jews and for all mankind. Tractate Sanhedrin contains a long discussion of the events leading to the coming of the Messiah, for example: R. Johanan said: *When you see a generation ever dwindling, hope for him [the Messiah], as it is written, "And the afflicted people thou wilt save."* 11

R. Johanan said:

"When thou seest a generation overwhelmed by many troubles as by a river, await him, as it is written, when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; which is followed by, and the Redeemer shall come to Zion." He also said: "The son of David will come only in a generation that is either altogether

righteous or altogether wicked. 'In a generation that is altogether righteous,' — as it is written, Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever. 'Or altogether wicked,' — as it is written, And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; and it is [elsewhere] written, For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it."

Throughout Jewish history Jews have compared these passages (and others) to contemporary events in search of signs of the Messiah's imminent arrival, continuing into present times.

The Talmud tells many stories about the Messiah, some of which represent famous Talmudic rabbis as receiving personal visitations from Elijah the Prophet and the Messiah. For example:

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: "Have I a portion in the world to come?" He replied, "If this Master desires it." R. Joshua b. Levi said, "I saw two, but heard the voice of a third." He then asked him, "When will the Messiah come?" — "Go and ask him himself," was his reply. "Where is he sitting?" — "At the entrance." "And by what sign may I recognise him?" — "He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and rebandage them together, whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores]." So he went to him and greeted him, saying, "peace upon thee, Master and Teacher." "Peace upon thee, O son of Levi," he replied. "When wilt thou come Master?" asked he, "Today." was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, "What did he say to thee?" — "peace upon thee, O son of Levi," he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, "He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come." "He spoke falsely to me," he rejoined, "stating that he would come to-day, but has not." He [Elijah] answered him, "This is what he said to thee, To-day, if ye will listen to his voice."

Also it is written:

Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolation's have been decreed. 12/

The traditions and belief about the coming of the Messiah are so widespread among Jews that they won't be surprised if the Messiah arrives just now, even while you are reading these lines. Prophet Ezekiel living in the land of Babylon had prophesied of a Gog-Magog War, which will last for seven years. Rabbi (Priest) Kaduri believes that this is reference to the US and British forces' War against Terror which began on 7th October, 2001.

As per Jews, the final "Shemittah'z" or Seven Sabbatical years before the Revelation of the Messiah are already over in 2008 and the Messiah can arrive any time now. According to the calculations of the Vilna Gaon, as interpreted by the Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri, during the 7-year count from that Hoshana Rabba on October 7, 2001, a major revelation associated with Maschiach may be given. Rabbi Kaduri believes that the Mashiach is already in the land of Israel but says: *"Whatever people are sure will not happen, is liable to happen and whatever we are certain will happen may disappoint us. But in the end, there will be peace throughout the world. The world is mitmatek mehadinim (or becoming sweet from strict justice)."*

Not long ago, Gerrar Rebbe, who is known as Rabbi Yakov Aryeh Alter, too joined the call of the current Torah experts to send the warning that the time for the arrival of the Mohiach of Yisra'el is near. Rabbi Alter is the seventh Hasidic rabbi of the Ger Hasidim in Israel, the largest single Hasidic group in the Land of Israel. And Rebbe shlit'a said recently: *"We are now so close to Moshiach that all of our current mitzvas are preparations for his imminent arrival"*. If that's the case, then we must all hasten to strengthen our Torah and tshuva (repentance) immediately; tomorrow might be too late.

Not long ago, Chief Rabbi of Russia Rabbi Berel Lazar said: *"We know that he is very near at hand, but he needs not only to be born but also to come."* He further said that *"the Messiah may well have been born already, but unless he is ordered by God he cannot reveal himself with God's help and change the world for the better."* Speaking further, Rabbi Berel Lazar said: *"The world today*

*is in a state described by our sages as 'hevley mashiah', that is, labor that precedes the coming of a Messiah. It is a time when many good things are created in the world and the progress of science and technology has made it possible to solve many human problems, to overcome diseases, famine, etc., on one hand. On the other hand, it is for the first time since God created human beings that humans have taken hold of such means of destruction that the whole of our race and even the globe itself can be destroyed instantly. We are living on the verge of history. It can be felt everywhere." He further said: "Perhaps God is waiting for only one deed to be put on the good scale to order the Messiah to reveal himself," and that it was important for everyone "to add this good deed, as one's contribution may prove decisive." And said: "May Hashem help us. **Chazak ve'amatz**, be courageous and strong in your outreach work, Lazer; even if the whole world throws tomatoes at you and spits in your face, continue to spread the word of Hashem to anyone that is willing to listen. **B'hatzlocho!**"*

The Kalki Avatar is the Savior, as per the Hindus

Lord Krishna says in the Gita that it is our actions that are leading to the destruction of the world. The advent of Lord Krishna became imminent as the world had become full of corruption and there was a need for *Dharma* (righteousness) to be re-established. 3600 years after Krishna, the world has been filled up with corruption, sin, deceit, treachery, and mischief once again and it is time for the Kalki Avatar (an Avatar of the present era) to arrive who shall re-establish order resulting in dawn of the golden era. Hindus believe that none other but an incarnate of the Omnipotent God can achieve this feat. He will be the deliverer and He will bring all countries on a single platform.

As per Hindu traditions, the Kalki avatar for all practical purposes shall be one who guides the humanity in the present chaos. He is the chosen one. He is destined to save the mankind from the rigors of today. The day to day lowering of human values, humans behaving more like a vicious animal (it is ironic sometimes it is difficult to distinguish human beings from animals), the breaking up of relationships between the family members, between communities, and on larger scale the countries has become the order of the day. Such a one fully prepared and powered to address the ills of today head-on shall be known as Kalki Avatar -- one who shall annihilate the ills of today and make dharma (righteousness or true path) prevail and make the humanity step forward towards a new golden era... the Satyuga (the golden period). He will be a true incarnate of Almighty God himself.

It is believed that out of the present world population of 6000 million people, 1200 million will perish in the fights that will ensue upon his arrival and out of the remaining 4800 million, 2000 million people will have faith in him.

It is said that the Kalki Avatar will provide a justified end to Kali Yuga, the metal age. He will be one whose teachings and preaching will be based on the strength of his character. He will be one who will approach every problem logically and render full justice. He will never be dictatorial in character. He shall be a man from the masses, a believer in the concept of by the people, of the people, for the people. The society as a whole will get a reprieve to improve self and also those around. Every individual would exercise his right and all shall be equal in his eyes. Man or woman... everyone would be governed by truthfulness. To distinguish right from wrong would be his forte, to punish the guilty and reward hard-working honest denizen of the society would be his daily routine. Might is right shall be the forgotten order. Truth and only truth shall be the order of the day.

The society as of today awaits the coming of Kalki Avatar! Call him the Messiah of the masses or the downtrodden denizens of the society... coming of Kalki Avatar would be a boon to the mankind at large!

The prophecy and its origins

The Vishnu Purana explains that:

When the practices taught in the Vedas and institutes of law have nearly ceased, and the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being who exists of His own spiritual nature, and who is the beginning and end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon earth. He will be born in the family of Vishnuyasha, an eminent Brahman of Shambhala village, as Kalki, endowed with eight superhuman faculties. By His irresistible might he will destroy all the mlecchas and thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will re-establish righteousness upon earth, and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali age shall be awakened, and shall be as clear as crystal. The men who are thus changed by virtue of that peculiar time shall be as the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who will follow the laws of the Krita age or Satya Yuga, the age of purity. As it is said, 'When the sun and moon, and the lunar asterism Tishya, and the planet Jupiter, are in one mansion, the Krita age shall return.' 13/

The Padma Purana relates that Lord Kalki will end the age of Kali and will kill all the wicked *mlecchas* and, thus, destroy the bad condition of the world. He will gather all of the distinguished *Brahmanas* and will propound the highest truth. He will know all the ways of life that have perished and will remove the prolonged hunger of the genuine *Brahmans* and the pious. He will be the only ruler of the world that cannot be controlled, and will be the banner of victory and adorable to the world. (6.71.279-282)

The Bhagavata Purana states:

At the end of Kali Yuga, when there exist no topics on the subject of God, even at the residences of so-called saints and respectable gentlemen, and when the power of government is transferred to the hands of ministers elected from the evil men, and when nothing is known of the techniques of sacrifice, even by word, at that time the Lord will appear as the supreme chastiser. 14/

It further describes Lord Kalki's activities as follows:

Lord Kalki, the Lord of the universe, will mount His swift white horse Devadatta and, sword in hand, travel over the earth exhibiting His eight mystic opulences and eight special qualities of Godhead. Displaying His unequalled effulgence and riding with great speed, He will kill by the millions those thieves who have dared dress as kings.15/

Followers of Tibetan Buddhism have preserved the Kalachakra Tantra in which "Kalkin" is a title of 25 rulers of the mystical realm of Shambhala. The aims and actions of some of these are prophesied in portions of the work. The Kalachakra tantra was first taught by the Buddha to King Suchandra, the first *dharmaraja* of Shambhala, which says: "*Lord Kalki will appear in the home of the most eminent Brahman of Shambhala village, the great souls Vishnuyasha and Sumati.*" 16/

Commonality of Teachings

Wikipedia description of the Kalki Avatar says: "In Hinduism, Kalki (also rendered by some as Kalkin and Kalaki) is the tenth and final Maha Avatar (great incarnation) of Vishnu who will come to end the present age of darkness and destruction known as Kali Yuga. The name Kalki is often a metaphor for eternity or time. The origins of the name probably lie in the Sanskrit word "kalka" which refers to mud, dirt, filth, or foulness and hence denotes the

"destroyer of foulness," "destroyer of confusion," "destroyer of darkness," or "annihilator of ignorance." Other similar and divergent interpretations based on varying etymological derivations from Sanskrit -- including one simply meaning "White Horse" - have been made."

One of the revelations attributed to Christians say:

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice, he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. 17/

And in their book, *Al Mahdi and the End of Time*, Muhammad Ibn 'Izzat and Muhammad 'Arif, two well-known Egyptian authors, identify the Mahdi from the Book of Revelation, quoting Hadith transmitter Ka'ab al-Ahbar.

At one place, they write, "I find the Mahdi recorded in the books of the Prophets... For instance, the Book of Revelation says: *"And I saw and behold a white horse. He that sat on him...went forth conquering and to conquer."* 'Izzat and 'Arif then go on to say:

"It is clear that this man is the Mahdi who will ride the white horse and judge by the Qur'an (with justice) and with whom will be men with marks of prostration (zabiba) on their foreheads."

It is not just coincidence that Hindu, Christian, and Muslim scripture are all talking of a White Horse for the Savior. Popular images of the Kalki avatar depict him riding a white horse with wings known as Devadatta (God-given.) In these images, Kalki is brandishing a sword in his right hand and is intent on eradicating the corrupt destitution and debauchery of Kali Yuga.

Mahdi is said to be in possession of Zulfiqar (the double-edged sword) that was given to his great grand father Ali by God through his angels in one of the battles. He will also be riding a white horse, it is written.

Revelation 22:16-17 talks of a divine spirit other than Jesus before whom Jesus will present himself and testify. Muslim scriptures talk of Jesus and Mahdi together as saviors. Mahdi is referred to in some supplications as “baqiatullah” or ‘the remaining portion of (spirit of) God’ on earth. Mahdi is also referred to as the guiding spirit created by God. Most interestingly, R. Johanan in Jewish scriptures says “*The Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him (enemies),*” which is followed by, “*And the Redeemer shall come to Zion.*” And the Muslim scriptures say that Mahdi, together with Jesus, will raise Black Standards against the enemies. Jews also refer to him as “*God in flesh.*” Not very different from the Muslim phrase “baqiatullah”!

All religions believe that there will be one savior (not only for us but our souls); he will come when the world will be full of corruption and injustice. When he will come, there will be great bloodshed but eventually truth will prevail. There will be justice, there will be happiness. Earth will open up its treasures. All scriptures show a direct relationship of the redeemer with God. He has been described as salvation. Any one who will come on his side will attain salvation. In fact he is the torch-bearer from God, one who will not only show the path but will lead with example. This will be God’s final chance for all the remaining souls to attain salvation. All scriptures agree that the world will come to end after this.

Can there be different sources to such similar teachings? We must conclude that there is only One God and Only One True Path to reach Him and all of us have deviated from the Path in the name of religion, to coin our own religions.

One God, One Path

If Muslims believe that the Savior will convert all the people to Islam, if Christians believe that the Savior will turn all people to Christianity, if Jews are of the opinion that the Zionist belief will prevail upon his arrival, and if the Hindus think that *dharma* (their religion) will prevail, all are wrong. Yet, all are correct! As Mohammad al-Baqir, the Fifth Imam said of the Mahdi: *The Master of the Command was named as the Mahdi because he will dig out the Torah and other heavenly books from the cave in Antioch. He will judge among the people of the Torah according to the Torah; among the people of the Gospel according to the Gospel; among the people of the Psalms in accordance with the Psalms; among the people of the Qur'an in accordance with the Qur'an.*

Since the Savior has a direct connection with God and since God has guided people of different lands and time with different scriptures and prophets, he will unite all the religions and reveal the One Religion – the Straight and True Path to Lord. The scriptures of all religions still talk of the Straight Path, but we have either distorted them or understood them differently, as per our abilities or requirements, to give different shapes to our respective religions.

Once these distortions and deviations are removed, One Straight Path will be abundantly visible to adherents of all religions, from their own scriptures itself. A Hindu will identify the Savior from his scriptures, Jews from his own scriptures, Christians from their scriptures, Buddhists from their books, Muslims from their own books, and even the North Indians of America from their own scriptures.

That way if people adhering to different religions believe that the Savior will convert the rest of humanity to their religion (as it exists today), they are wrong. But if they believe that the Savior will convert the rest of humanity to the teachings of their True Scriptures, they all are right. After all, True Divine scriptures, when taught by a True Divine Representative, will reveal the One and Only Divine Path to Bliss and Salvation.

References

1. *John 5:39—40*
2. *Daniel 9:21-26 written 580 B.C.*
3. *Revelation 13:6-9 written 95 A.D.*
4. *Matthew 24:36-37*
5. *Genesis 6:11-13*
6. *Revelation 3:10-12*
7. *Matthew 24:22, 30--31, 35, 44*
8. *Luke 21:29-33*
9. *I Corinthians 15:50-55*
10. *Revelation 22:16-17*
11. *II Samuel 22:28*
12. *Daniel 9:24-26*
13. *Book Four, Chapter 24*
14. *Bhagwat Purana, 2.7.38)*

One God, One Religion

15. *Bhagwat Purana, 12.2.19-20*
16. *Srimad-Bhagavatam Bhag.12.2.18 [7]*
17. *Revelation 19:11-16*

Religion is the Original Phenomenon of Mankind's History

Hamid Ghalandri*

This phenomenon was so important that when God Almighty created the first human being, who descended to the earth, He chose him as His messenger and prophet. The conclusion that is derived from this is that God Almighty created the very first human being, that is Adam [p.b.u.h] and chose him as His prophet, His first messenger, and first human being, who was appointed to lay the foundation of religion on the earth. He, in fact, played an important role in the direction of developing the culture of humanity, and got successful in that object. He should be considered the first teacher of humanity, who gave the lesson of coexistence to human beings. In the continuation of the chain of life, we do not find that any single period in the existing world was without religion and belief. Human life always got spiritual inspiration from religious belief; though, this has also been seen that sometimes in some part of the world a number of people or an individual denied the religion. But, in a very short time, they met their failure in their dogma. Its recent example is the erstwhile U.S.S.R., which posed as one of the super powers of the world. But, due to absence of spiritualism, it could not last long and disintegrated. The far-sighted leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Imam Khomeini, in his letter that he wrote to Mr. Gorbachev, pointed out that:

“At present, the human society all over the world is facing countless disorders in the complications of life, for this reason it has gone astray from spiritualism. That has opened thousands of avenues for failure in social life. But, finding themselves helpless, and all the ways blocked for human beings, they have to seek refuge in the shelter of religion. But the opportunists are taking advantage of this spiritual thirst of mankind. This has been experienced in the last three decades that every moment a new idea in the guise of religion is developed to create obstacles in the way of the followers of religion. This is a long story that can not be described here in detail.”

* Member, Scientific Group, Payam-e-Noor University, Nahavand, IR Iran.

But the Indian sub-continent has been the cradle of many religions. Even at present, millions of people, following different religions and sects, are living together peacefully. This needs to be discussed, and also how the followers of religions are living together without any tension or dispute.

-I-

Hinduism and Its Historical Roots

Hinduism is the most ancient and the most firm religion that is being followed by most of the people of Indian sub-continent.

In fact, Hinduism is the collection of several beliefs and tenets that have been derived since ancient time. But, with this it can be perceived that this religion has its deep roots in its soil and cultural life that is particular to the nation living in this vast sub-continent. This religion contains legends, preachings of faith, moral teachings, spiritual instructions, derived from the sacred texts of this religion that are deep rooted in the culture of this ancient nation.

The antiquity of Hinduism goes back to 1500 years back before the birth of Christ. In the beginning, it was based on the Vedic philosophy, founded by the scholars of ancient India. This is the most primitive and extraordinarily ancient religion of Hinduism.

The philosophy of Hinduism is based on animism and fetishism. From which it started to evolve to collectivism, a composition of social traditions and culture of the people of India that has been molded and specified in a religious organization. This has attracted the majority of people of this vast land.

Hinduism is based on peaceful coexistence. The people live under one umbrella, even with the difference of opinion regarding their faith. This distinguishes it. The peaceful coexistence of the people is an example for the people of whole world.

-II-

The Saved Text of Hindus

According to Hindu belief, there are several sacred texts regarding their faith. These are considered very ancient in the world, particularly in India. Taking in view their historical background and their roots in the past, we can know of their sacredness and their antiquity. Some have been mentioned hereunder:

1. The Vedas are four in number.
2. The Upanishads are mainly 18.
3. The Bhagwad Gita, 18th Chapter from the Mahabharata, which deals with such various different subjects, that sometimes the reader becomes perplexed to derive a single conclusion from there.

-III-

*The Six Darshan
or the Six Evolutionary Stages of these Sacred Texts*

Taking in view the antiquity of Hinduism, that goes back to 3500 years in the past, making its evolutionary survey, we come to know that this religion has passed through several evolutionary strange changes, which are very important to help understand its spirit and its main objects. These evolutionary changes started about 1500 year BC, and continued about 300 years afterwards, that can be called six *darshan* or the evolution of six stages, discussed below in brief.

The First Period of Migration:

This period started about 1500 BC, and continued about 800 years. This has been already pointed out that the roots of Hinduism go to Vedic philosophy. The word *Veda* has been derived from the word *Ved* that means knowledge. Subsequently, this became known as the Vedic philosophy. Attaining knowledge is the ultimate goal of a Hindu sage, that is, the ideal for which he makes quest. The Vedic philosophy was transported by Aryan immigrants, who shifted from Central and Northern Asia to India in ancient times. The distinguished features of that can be traced in the Vedic language; those were collected in the verse form

in the Vedas, particularly in the Rig Veda. The Sām Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda also cannot be ignored in this regard. They mostly contain hymns, sung in praise of Aryan deities and their legendary gods. If we go in the depth of the meanings of those hymns, we find many facts and realities regarding the creation of this world and to live peacefully with the others.

The Vedas, according to Hindu belief, are not the compositions by human beings. They were rather revealed upon the sages of their faith. It is, therefore, that they have the spirit of divinity in their sense. The Vedic philosophy gives the concept of the creation of life, Unity of God Almighty, living peacefully and the relation between this mortal and that eternal world, preached by many of their deities. The Hindu belief is that there are many deities, in which every one of them has been appointed by God Almighty (i.e., Brahma) to perform a particular function, specified to him. In their physical appearance, they are very similar to human beings, but, in fact, they are the incarnation of Brahma. The others manifest them in the form of the heat (i.e., the Sun), the air, water, and the dust.

The spirit of the hymns of the Vedas reveals that, in spite of that there are many gods and deities, particular to carry out some specific purpose, they are governed by one God, named Brahma, also called in common language *Parjāpati* (the ruler of the people or the king of his subject). His main function is creation.

The Second Period:

The Second Period, referred as the Period of Brahmanism, started about 900 BC. It was then that distortion of Vedic views was removed by a number of leaders of the priest class of Vedic thoughts; though, in the beginning this was not more than a School of Thought. But, the founders of this School were always of the opinion that they should realize the origin of the creation of the world of existence to attain the truth. However, they could not realize their objective, and they got bewildered. However, Brahmins at the beginning concluded that the first of the created beings is Indra. Later, they called Indra with the names of Mitra and Agni and finally termed him as Brahma.

As they could not aptly describe the reality of Brahma under this philosophy, there spread many rituals in the form of prayers, which were ever spreading and expanding. What during this period got popular as the substitutes of the Truth, were chants and spells. Though, the pioneers of this philosophy were in quest of the Truth, described by the Vedic thoughts, they meant to attain the awareness first, and then to build up human beings.

The priest class of Brahmins had taken this liberty that they had the right to go to any extent to interpret the sacred texts of the Vedas with the purpose to maintain their position and status.

The priest class (i.e., the Brahmins) wrote the commentary of the Vedas, and named them Brahmanas, explaining in them the attributes of Brahman.

In any case, the scholars of the Vedic texts are of the opinion that this period continued up to 500 BC, termed as the Brahmanic period. After that, Manu laid the foundation of Manuic Brahman philosophy. He lived somewhere at the present Delhi, and was presented as the incarnation of God. Though, according to their principles, Brahma is “self-existing being.”

The Third Period, the Epic Age:

This period started about 600 BC, and continued till about 200 BC. This period historically, culturally, and philosophically is considered very significant period in India. Its importance can be estimated with this that all the intellectual thoughts have their roots in this period. Thus, it can be termed as the age of intellectual awareness. This depleted at the end of the big war, called *Mahabharata*. Here, the example can be given of Gauthakshia Muni, the founder of Buddhism. The other School of Thought was Jainism, which means “the victorious.” This was founded in the 6th century BC. In the same manner like that of Buddhism, there came the belief of Krishna (literally meaning the dark blue water), then, later it changed into Predictionism. In that period, Pashupati (the God of the cattle) was worshipped, that later changed into Vishnuism. All these are the different schools of thoughts that have their roots in the epic age. In this period the different priest classes revolted against the strict sectarianism and intellectual catalepsy, imposed by Brahmanism. But, in the light of that there came into being and got up rise of the noble class, the princes and the warrior class, that played an important role against the domination of Brahmanism. They laid the foundations of their own Schools of Thoughts and developed their own independent ideas about religions or rather sectarian thoughts. All these ideas and School of Thoughts got their inspiration from the historically legendary epic, called the *Mahabharata* (the Big War). This period was called the Epic Age for this reason that it contains the legends, related to war affairs as well as that are narrated in the gatherings and displayed in monoacting. The other legendary Epic is the *Ramayana*, read and recited as the spiritually sacred text. Both the epics are regarded respected and valuable. Both of them have been translated into many living languages of the world, including Persian. The *Bhagwad Gita* is the 18th Chapter, extracted from the *Mahabharata*, the only Chapter, regarded as the sacred Scripture for most of the people of Hindu classes.

Bhagwad Gita is the collection of hymns, sung in praise of God Almighty. This is the 18th Chapter of the Mahabharata and has been extracted from there. This is the only Chapter from that epic that has attracted the attention of devoted Hindus. The above mentioned sacred book is commonly referred by its short name, the Gita. One of its Sections is entitled *Bhakti* (devotion). This part is extraordinarily interesting and appealing to mind. This also has been translated into most of the living languages of the world including the Persian language, which has six different versions, in which much emphasis has been laid on sincerity, devotion, contemplation, and living peacefully with those of other beliefs; though the meter of the whole Epic is not the same, as it varies in different stanzas. Yet, in spite of that, it is wonderfully attractive and appealing to mind. Its sentences have been beautifully enriched with several figures of speech and flowery language. Most of people of India are devoted to this sacred Chapter. In short, it can be said about this book that it is a Treatise, based on the discourse between lord Krishna and Arjuna, the Commander of his army. It seems that this part was included in the epic of Mahabharata in the 1st century of the Christian era.

The Fourth Period, the Age of Sutra (Axiom):

The Sutra Age started by the year 200 BC. The Sutras are the scattered masterpieces of great Indian thoughts. They came into being after prolonged periods of history. During this period, the Indian sages decided to take measures to complete them and keep preserved the scattered pieces of paper in the form of book with head-band of the cotton thread (Sutra, literally meaning cotton thread). Presently, the Sutras are the collection of the philosophical thoughts that have been composed either in the poetic form or written in ornate prose. In the light of the Sutras, this can be said with confidence that it was the period of the building up of Hindu philosophical thoughts, because most of the basic philosophical thoughts are related to that period.

The Fifth Period:

This is the period of varied Schools, started by 200 BC, that continued up to 150 BC. Schools for the philosophical teachings were founded with the purpose to affiliate all the teaching centres and the institutions, where the philosophical ideas were taught. Therein the students were permitted to have open discussions and exchange their views regarding the different branches of philosophy with the result that there started a School of Reasoning, for which particular terms were coined, and specific principles were laid. On the whole, during this period, different Schools of philosophical ideas took a regular form.

The books written during this period or earlier were supplemented by the commentaries and expositions, based on reasoning.

The Sixth Period, the Age of Declination:

The age of declination started in the 10th century with the advent of Islam in the Indian sub-continent that started to make its influence upon different Schools of Hindu thoughts. Later, its effects became clearly evident with the British rule in India, with the result that at present this religious collection is believed to contain contradictory ideas? Subsequently, a proper place can not be given or decided to clarify the different Schools of Hindu thoughts. Some of the sacred texts do not speak about the unity of the being and the number of deities, while some of these scriptures do not tell about the unity of God and the Divinity. Further, there exist some other texts also, that seem to deny the existence of God and lead toward atheism. Some of them speak about duality and plurality of deities. These kind of contrary ideas that are found in the sacred texts create a sense of confusion to a great extent in this ancient religion. It is thus that the followers of this religion cannot often explain their belief rationally.

-IV-

Introduction of Some of Sects of the Hindu Religion:

Hinduism, in the course of time, has been divided into different castes and several sects: there are three main sects. As this religion is based on trinity, therefore, each of these three sects believes in any one of them. They are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Each one of them is worshipped with full devotion. And, particular rituals are observed by each one these. A brief description of them is given below:

1. The Shivit Sect:

This is the biggest sect in Hinduism. Its followers are spread all over the country. Hindus, who remember their ancestors with respect, are the followers of Shiva. This deity is worshipped in many aspects. Of these one of them is that he is taken as fierce destroyer, naked ascetic, lord of the cosmic dance and that of the beasts. There are thousands of Shivalas (the temple, where the image of Shiva is worshipped). In each of these *Shivalas*, his image is shown with four hands in the state of dancing, which is the symbol of one of his aspects – as the destroyer

of the universe. These *Shivalas*, situated all over the country, have been built by his worshippers. The devotees of Shiva also worship his male organ, called *lingam*, the symbol of prosperity and of race preservation. The Shiva *lingam* is regarded so respectful that some of his devotees keep its mini sized replica in their pockets and purses. Shiva is male deity. Along with this, two of his wives, named Shakti and Durga Kālī, are worshipped as the female deity. They are called the symbols of strength. The followers of Shiva are divided into two sects: one of these is called Lingami (the worshippers of the male organ of Shiva), and the other is called Shakti and Kali (the symbol of strength). The followers of the sect worship Durga as well as Kali. This is also worth mentioning here that these two sects of Shivaism are further sub-divided into many small sects. Some of these are: (1) Kapolika, (2) Kala Mukha, (3) Lakho Pashu Pata, (4) Pavatya Bijreya, and (5) Vira Shiva.

2. *The Vishnuit Sect:*

Vishnuism is another main sect of Hinduism. Its followers are also very large in numbers, belonging to Hindu religion. The devotees of Vishnu are called Vishnuit. Vishnu is the deity of life and protector of all the living beings. He is God of virtues, well wisher of the people. He, it is believed, brings happiness and prosperity to the world. He is the symbol of morality, and had descended nine times on the earth, and after spreading peace, justice and prosperity returned to heavens. This belief, in fact, is very similar to the common belief of Muslims particularly of Shiite sect regarding the promised Imam Mahdi [p.b.u.h], who would appear to maintain justice, peace, and prosperity. Most of the religions of the world speak about appearing of a person, who would give salvation to the oppressed. The followers of Vishnu believe that he incarnated in the forms of (1) fish, (2) tortoise, (3) boar, (4) half man and half lion, (5) dwarf, (6) Rama with the arrow in his hand, (7) Krishna, (8) Buddha, and (9) Kalki.

The Hindus, who worship Vishnu are called Vaishnu (Vishnuit). About 1000 attributes are ascribed to him by his devotees. The Vishnuit believe that he would appear with a sword in his hand mounted on a white horse. He would maintain peace, prosperity, equity, and justice in the world.

Justice has been stressed at in the following Verses of the Holy Qur'an:

That ye judge with justice:

Verily, how excellent

is the teaching which He has given you!

-Surah Nisāa, Verse 58

*God commands justice, the doing
of good, and liberality to kith
and kin and He forbids
all shameful deeds and injustice
and rebellion: He instructs you
that ye may receive admonition*

-Surah Nahl, Verse 90

*If God had so willed,
He could have made them
a single people; but He
admit whom He will
to His Mercy;
And the wrong-doors
will have no protector
or helper.*

-Surah Shura, Verse 8

In all the Verses mentioned above, much emphasis has been laid on justice. To maintain justice and to spread it, are the two main objectives, revealed in Surah Nisāa. Further, God says in the Glorious Qur'an:

*We sent aforetime
Our apostles with Clear Signs*

and sent down with them

The book and the Balance

(of Right and Wrong), that men

may stand forth in justice

-Surah Hadid, Verse 25

Vishnu is introduced with all the qualities that are ascribed to God Almighty, along with his most manifested characteristics, related to creation and the most excellent qualities that mankind may have.² In the sacred revealed scripture of Muslims all over the world, the word *a'dl* (justice) has been used with its different synonyms like *qest* (equity), *qasd* (intention), *esteqāmat* (straightness), *vast* (mid-most), *haq* (the right), and *mizān* (scale). Subsequently, Prophet Mohammad [p.b.u.h] the last Prophet and Messenger said in one of his Traditions [*Hadiths*] that Mahdi [p.b.u.h], the savior, would fill the earth with justice, when this would be brimful with injustice, tyranny, and oppression. With this of his conduct, the living beings of heaven and of the earth would be highly pleased and agreed. There is another Tradition of the Holy Prophet [p.b.u.h], which predicts that Imam Mahdi [p.b.u.h] would bring justice; he would give order to be just. God Almighty would affirm his words. When oppression and tyranny would be widespread all over the world, he would descend on the roof of Ka'ba.

By interpreting the collected information on a comparative basis during the research work, we came to conclude that the rule of Imam Mahdi [p.b.u.h] all over the world, would not go unattended and wasted in any part of the world, it may be a country, a province, any region or a State, any religion or any sect of that. Justice and peace is right of every individual, belonging to any caste and creed. The justice of the awaited Imam Mahdi [p.b.u.h] in the framework of Islamic law pre-ordinates that all the nations of the world, all the well behaved, civilized and chosen people of the society, possessing all the necessary human good qualities and Islamic character, wherever they would be – in any corner of the world – would live in such an environment, where justice, peace and prosperity in every place, free of all sorts of conflict and dispute, would be prevailing. In his world wide rule, they would be benefited with all kinds of gifts, and there they would continue their life beautifully under the rule of divine justice with perfect peace and prosperity. Under such a rule of the Imam, the largest society would be built up to live with Mutual Existence.⁴

The Religion of Brahma:

Brahma, the Creator God, is self-existing and eternal. This deity is highly respected in general by all the people believing in Hinduism.

This is the common belief of Hindus that the effect of Brahma is very little in the daily life of the people and also the ongoing current affairs of the world. This is manifested in only a few temples that exist all over India where Brahma is being worshipped. Contrary to that two other deities, Vishnu and Shiva, have always been worshipped throughout the long period of 3000 years by most of the followers of Hindu religion, from the North to the South and from the East to the West. But, still there are some people, who are the devotees of Brahma, called Brahmins or Brahmani.

-V-

In this Section, we have taken to provide a brief introduction to some of the sub-sects, prevailing in Hinduism. This should also be kept in mind that Hinduism by its nature is such a religion that has the spirit of spreading its tenets. But with that in the process of history, we notice that it has also the capacity to absorb in it the ideas that came in from outside. This was the main cause that the main religion got divided into several minor sects. Here, a brief survey of three main sub-sects – Ganesha, Hanumana, and Murkana Sects – is being presented hereunder.

1. Ganesha Sect:

The followers of this sect worship Ganesha, the deity of nourishing. His image is presented in the form of a huge human body with the head of an elephant. He is said to be the son of Parvati and Shiva. Ganesha has a large number of his devotees all over India. He is believed to be the remover of all sorts of obstacles that can come in human life. It is, therefore, that Ganesha is worshipped before inauguration of any business or function. On such occasions, offerings are given to this deity. His image is found in the form of statues made of stone or of wood and printed as picture on posters.

2. The Hanuman Sect:

Followers of Hanuman worship this deity. He is taken as an ideal symbol of loyalty, faithfulness, and devotion.

3. *The Murkana Sect:*

The followers of this sub-sect worship Murkana as their deity. Whenever Hindus face any difficulty, they worship this deity. Murkana is believed to be the son of Shiva like Askanu. In the historical background, Murkana is taken as the non-Brahmid deity. He is always represented as the God of wars and fights. But in the national and family traditions, Murkana is the popular deity of the Hindus of South India. Every year, festivities are celebrated to worship this deity.

Besides the sub-sects, described above, there are still many other sub-divided sects, living in the Indian sub-continent. The names of the deities of each sub-divided sect are being given below:

(1) Indra, (2) Agni, (3) Soma, (4) Dharma, (5) Lakshmi, (6) Adin, (7) Rati, (8) Nimar, (9) Surya, (10) Kobra, (11) Tama, (12) Dovi, (13) Saritu, (14) Diti, (15) Varuna, (16) Wayon, (17) Kartika, (18) Sarsvati, (19) Mahadevi, (20) Pirthavi, and (21) Mahatma.

-VI -

Based on the recommendation, made by the sacred scriptures of this religion viz., the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagwad Gita, we found that all of them speak about co-existence in all matters, relating human life. These texts may differ in their contents about the other aspects of life, but on the subject of co-existence all of them have a common approach. From the point of view of co-existence, the following conclusions can be derived:

1. Paying respect to the revealed scriptures, having full belief in them and following the traditions, set up by Brahmins, the priest class of Hindus.
2. Worshipping God with the belief that He manifested Himself by incarnation in the past.
3. Believing in transformation of human soul in different bodies.
4. Strictly following the established rules and regulations, related to caste system in social behavior and marriage bonds.
5. Paying regard to all non-humans, particularly the cow.

According to ancient belief of Hindus, the cow was the first creature that came into being. At the time when the demon tried to attack cow, Ahura Mazda (God Almighty) made to grow a kind of plant named Yanak, so that it could safeguard the cow from the danger. But after some time, the plant dried and the

cow fell ill. At the moment of taking its last breath, it said: the quadrupeds are created with the medicine for cure.⁴

In any case, it is cow, which is highly respected by the Hindus. In some parts of India, burial ceremonies of a dead cow are observed. Its dead body is carried on a palanquin amidst chanting of hymns. It also happens sometime that a political leader also participates on that occasion. In some places, hymns are chanted while the burial of a dead cow is being performed. Many devotees of cows shed tears in their sadness. Thus, a dead cow is buried after performing all the customary rituals. In some tribes, this is also the custom that when the dead cow is buried, some coconuts are also placed in its grave, so that it should not be hungry.

As already mentioned above, Hindus not only love human beings, but also pay their regard to all the other beings. This sense of regard is the cause to live peacefully with others, even with the creatures other than human beings. Though, at present the population of this country has become more than 1000 million and the people are the followers of different faiths, beliefs and tenets, but in spite of this diversity and variety they live together peacefully. Though there are the people who have different ideas and views regarding their religion and faith, but it does not make any effect on their harmonious living.

Mahatma Gandhi, the biggest national leader of India, though a Hindu by caste, treated his Hindu co-religionist as well as Muslims equally like brethren. He also paid great respect to Prophet Mohammad [p.b.u.h], all the saints, sages, and the great Muslim leaders. In the struggle for freedom of India, Imam Husayn [p.b.u.h], the third Imam of the Shiite Muslims, was an example for Mahatma Gandhi in view of his opposing the tyrant ruler, Yazid, and his sacrificing all for a just cause. The Mahatma had high respect for him. In his struggle against the British Imperialism, which had subjugated India and had made it its colony, his support to Imam Husain's [p.b.u.h] struggle is an example.

As regards coexistence, this should also be kept in mind that there will always be some persons who will be prejudiced in their views regarding their faith and religion; such a kind of people are found everywhere. These prejudiced people may cause damages to each other's sacred monuments and places. But these kinds of actions and disputes hardly make any effect in peaceful coexistence between Hindus and Muslims of this country. They are living together peacefully for last many centuries.

Hindu faith is based on four principles. They are:

1. Divinity of soul.
2. The unity of existing beings.
3. The unity of deities.
4. The unity of all the sects and religions.

This has been noticed that based on the principles of trinity, the belief of Hindus is based on unity. It means the unity of existing beings, the unity of deities and the unity of sects and religions. Subsequently, the unity on which much emphasis has been laid is a means of concord and oneness that has left its effect upon the unity of different sects and religions. The concept of this unity has made its influence upon the mystic thoughts of Christians and Muslims of the East as well.

-VII-

Islam: the Religion of Concord and Oneness

It was more than 14 centuries ago that Hazrat Mohammad [p.b.u.h], the appointed prophet, son of one of the descendents of Prophet Ibrahim [p.b.u.h], received the Divine Message brought to him by angel Gabriel. He was commanded to read in the name of his Sustainer – Allah – to recite with His name and thus to propagate Islam, the true religion. The Holy Prophet [p.b.u.h] briefed regarding the object of his prophecy in one sentence. He declared his message for all the successive centuries and ages to come, saying: that he was appointed prophet for all the people of the world to teach morality in the Name of God, that cannot be attained without the completion of virtues, because it is concord and oneness that facilitates acquisition of moral values. The prophet of Islam said further that the true religion is based on moral virtues, without this quality the people of Arabia were living in the darkness of ignorance. The Holy Prophet through this good behavior raised the ignorant people to high level of honour and dignity. Hundreds of tribes and classes, who used to kill their girls and were always quarrelling with each other, converted into such a big polity that all of them got to hold strongly the string of reliance upon God Almighty. It is thus that they became united. In short, Islam is the religion that gives the message of justice, love, and peace. It does not believe in race discrimination; it does not believe in caste and creed, and does not separate poverty and prosperity, that is, these hold no ground in Islam; it accords honour for faith and good deeds, rather than wealth and power. Piety, as per Islam's view, makes one superior to others. As the Glorious Qur'an says:

... verily the most honoured of you

in the sight of Allah

is [he, who is] the most

righteous of you

in the sight of God ...

-Surah Hujurāt, Verse 13

From this above mentioned verse, it is vividly clear that anything, be it wealth or property or any other thing, does not make a man superior to the other person or persons. The good end is for those who are righteous in their conduct. With this discourse, the following points emerge:

1. Perfection of moral characteristics was the main and basic objective to appoint Prophet Mohammad [p.b.u.h], the seal of the prophets, that is, the last Prophet and Messenger. After whom, no other Prophet was sent.
2. Islam never approved any sort of discrimination among the people. None holds superiority over others, except due to his/her piety and righteousness, that makes him/her distinguished over the others. As Faiz Kashāni, the Persian poet, says:

Come along, so that we may be the companions, the intimate friends and also sympathetic to each other.

Be friendly at heart, over-strained by sorrow and feeling of sufferings of others.

When the night comes, may we become candle and burning with the pain of each other.

When the day comes, we should help others like the hands and the feet.

-VIII-

*Comparison of the Recommendations
Made for Coexistence Between Islam and Hinduism,
and the Conclusions Drawn*

This has been mentioned earlier that Islam is the religion that gives comfort to heart-broken persons. It heals the wounds of the injured people, who are oppressed by tyranny, deceit and oppression. Hazrat Mohammad [p.b.u.h], Prophet of Islam, the members of his family [Ahle Bayt p.b.u.t] all have preached to attain knowledge and cultivate morality and moral behavior. They have also taught to be kind, merciful, remain united, and live peacefully together in all justice. This religion recommends that happiness can be achieved only by the means of Islamic brotherhood, and on the basis of friendship as per the principles, as ordained by the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an, and of the Holy Prophet. This faith further suggests to its followers to stand firm like a strong wall and be united collectively like a single body. The result of that is friendship and brotherhood. In this, the ideal has been the Holy Prophet himself in all aspects of human behavior. As a believer in God, His commandments, and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, he set himself as an ideal personality. After his migration from Mecca to Madinah, he advised the immigrants to live peacefully with the local inhabitants, a good means of coexistence. The sermon that he gave after performing his last pilgrimage of the holy shrine of Mecca on the side of the place is called Ghadir.

In any case, Islam is a divine religion with its sacred Book, revealed upon the Holy Prophet. The message of this revealed religion is to love mankind; to safeguard the rights individually of everybody and to coexist peacefully. The main aim is to obtain spiritual unity among the people all over the world. This religion has given the message of justice, unity and equality, and peace among all the people of the world. Islam has suggested that spiritual tranquility can only be obtained by means of coexistence. The message of equity and equality has not been kept limited only for Muslims alone, but it also covers those who do not believe in the tenets of Islam.

In Hinduism too this kind of unity exists. Though there are several deities, each one of them has been appointed to perform a particular function. But all of them work under the command of Brahma. Hindu belief is that all the created beings, including nature, are the manifestations of Brahma. In the process of history, Islam has also left its impact upon Hinduism and Buddhists.

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Concepts of Morality or Ethics, in Islamic Studies and Gandhi's Viewpoint

Dr. Hamid Rezaia *

Ethics, a major branch of philosophy, is the study of values and customs of a person or group. It covers the analysis and employment of concepts such as right and wrong, good and evil, and responsibility. Ethics has been defined as:

"The normative science of the conduct of human beings, living in societies -- a science which judges this conduct to be right or wrong, to be good or bad or in some similar way."

(William Lillie, An Introduction to Ethics, 3rd Edition, Methuen & Co. 1971, pp. 1 - 2)

Philosophy is concerned with questions of a very different kind: What should we do? How should we organize society? What is right? How should we understand the idea of justice? On what basis can we choose between different courses of action? These lead to a study of ethics, political philosophy, and the philosophy of law.

The pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece had probed many questions about the nature of reality, the answers of which are still interesting in terms of both epistemology and the natural sciences. With Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the emphasis shifted towards issues of morality; so, for example, Plato's Republic is not based on the question "what is society? But "what is justice?" And, it is through that question that many other issues about society and how it should be ruled are explored. Aristotle (in Nicomachean Ethics) asked about the "good" which was the aim of every action, and about what could constitute a "final good"-- something that was to be sought for its own sake, rather than for the sake of something higher. He came to the view that the highest good for man was eudemonia, which literally means "having a good spirit," but perhaps can be translated as "happiness." He saw it as the state in which a person was fulfilling his or her potential and natural function. It expressed a form of

* Religions University-Qom, Iran

human excellence or virtue (arête). This tied in with his general view that everything had a "final cause," a goal, and a purpose to which it moves. If you understand the final cause of something, you also understand its fundamental essence, which finds its expression in that goal. If a knife had a soul, Aristotle argued, that soul would be "cutting" that is what makes it a knife. That is what it is there to do. What then is the essence of humankind? What is it there to do? What is its goal? The study and evaluation of human conduct in the light of moral principles includes many dimensions today. Moral principles may be viewed either as the standard of conduct that individuals have constructed for themselves or as the body of obligations and duties that a particular society requires of its members.

The Role of Ethics in Science

Whether one is a good or bad person depends essentially on what motive one performs! Normally one's (ethics) whether an action is good or bad cannot be independent of its harmful or beneficial efforts, but the knowledge of what are the harmful or beneficial behind efforts of an ethics is a scientific knowledge. Hence, such ethical knowledge is some kind of empirical knowledge. The knowledge about how to transform one's life into a life of ethical perfection is also same kind of especial scientific knowledge. Vivekananda, Gandhi, and Radha Krishnan explicitly accept that these are good programs towards ethical perfection by conscious effort by exercising one's free will and reason and see directly various deeper immoral spiritual truths about life.

Why should we study ethical issues in science and technology? One reason is that several recent scientific developments such as cloning and genetic engineering of plants and animals have raised pressing ethical issues. Many universities and research funding agencies have determined that science and technology majors should increase their awareness of the ethical issues they are likely to face in their careers and have made courses such as this one mandatory. Many members of the public domain as well wish to increase their understanding of current debates about ethical issues in biotechnology and other areas of science that will affect their lives and well-being. The reasons for studying ethical issues in science and technology extend beyond current controversies to the pervasive influence of science and technology in our lives. Long-standing debates and deeper questions about ethical issues continue to arise in science and technology. For example, some people argue that our attitude toward the natural environment as a resource to be dominated and exploited is at the root of these issues.

Gandhi's View on Morality

Ethical life based on internal sanction constitutes the essence of religious life and one could lead religious life even if he/she does not believe in external religious sanction.

Although all religions accept the external religious sanction for morality based on some metaphysical beliefs, they do have fundamental differences in the field of metaphysics. Since metaphysics is beyond the scope of apriority reason, there is no way for us to know the view of which religion on same metaphysical problem is true. At present, science has no answer to the problem of the existence of God, the soul, and life after death. Marx's belief in the non-existence of God, soul, life after death, and so on is a metaphysical belief, not a scientific belief.

The Gandhian view which states that there is fundamental unity and truth in all great religions is essentially true with reference to their ethics. Since ethics constitutes the core of religion and fundamental ethical questions are within the scope of reason, the Gandhian view that critical ethical and religious dialogue is conducive to inter-faith harmony and growth of religions is also essentially correct.

Mahatma Gandhi, one of India's prominent spiritual leaders, though largely known for his *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance as truth-force means of freedom struggle in the Indian Independence Movement) has also contributed to the field of Ethics to a great extent. Gandhi was influenced by the Indian Scriptures like *Gita* and *Upanishads*. Also the teachings of Tolstoy (conscientious objection and non-violent non-cooperation) and Thoreau (civil disobedience against unjust laws, e.g, slavery and war) influenced him greatly. In the simplest terms, Gandhi's philosophy can be summarized into two important principles of *Satya* (Truth) and *Ahimsa* (Non-violence).

Satya (Truth) stands for the Indian philosophical thought that God alone has Absolute Existence and God is Absolute Truth/Being (*Sat*)-consciousness (*Chit*)-bliss (*Ananda*).

Hence, Gandhi equated Truth with God and said that Truth is there in the hearts of all and sustains all creation. When doing so, by Truth Gandhi meant Absolute Truth and not mere truthfulness and honesty, which are means to Truth. Truth is the end and not a means to something beyond itself. Gandhi said that to find Truth fully means to realize oneself and one's destiny and to become perfect.

Ahimsa (Non-violence) for Gandhi is to patiently adhere to the Truth in spite of whatsoever sufferings come in our way, even at the cost of one's life. While Truth is the goal, *Ahimsa* is the means without which the realization of Truth is not possible. Like Buddha, Gandhi also explained *Ahimsa* as not injuring any living being, neither by body, nor by mind. In a broader sense, *Ahimsa* includes love, charity, and compassion. Gandhi asserted Christ's saying "Love your enemy." Non-violence should not be taken for weakness; Gandhi said that his doctrine of non-violence is a highly active force and has no room for cowardice or weakness. According to him, non-violence is the law of the human species, as violence is the law of brutes.

According to Gandhi, the principle of *Ahimsa* involves different noble practices like non-stealing, non-covetousness, no untouchability, religious tolerance and equanimity, conservation of ecology and nature, celibacy (gentleness and compassion, instead of addiction and sexual violence, control of the palate, physical labor, and serving one's immediate neighbor first).

According to Gandhian morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms, "A moral life without reference to religion is like a house, built upon sand. And, religion divorced from morality is like 'sounding brass' good only for making a noise and breaking heads. Morality includes truth, *Ahimsa*, and continence." He also held that every virtue that mankind has ever practiced, is referable to and derived from these three fundamental virtues. Non-violence and continence are again derivable from Truth, which for me is God."²

Gandhi believed that morality is the basis of religion as he said: "As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion over-riding morality. Man for instance cannot be untruthful, cruel or inconsistent and claim to have God on his side."³

*Clarification of the Ethical Theory of Islam*⁴

A significant matter to be noticed here and to be reasonably and philosophically clarified and justified is how human manner and permanent qualities become possessed of value through "worship to Allah and perfect

² M.K.Gandhi, in Search of the Supreme, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, India, 2002, Vol I, p.131

³ Ibid, p131

⁴ See: At-Tawhid or Monotheism , Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi – p.146

obedience and humbling oneself before Allah.” In this regard, as per the outlook of Islam and verses of the Holy Qur’an and Hadith, we have no doubt, for the Almighty Allah says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“And, I have not created the jinn and the men, except that they should worship Me (51:56).”

The only aim of the creation of man and of jinn, who from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur’an are two kinds of responsible (entrusted with duties) beings is just (their) worshipping the One God (Allah -- The One and the only). Of course, taking into consideration Verses of the Holy Quran, we come to realize that this is the final goal, for this very ‘*ibadat* (worship) to Allah in another ayah of the Holy Quran has been propounded as the right way.

وَأَنْ أَعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

“And that you should serve Me; this is the right way (36:61).”

The Aim of Ethics in Islam: the Purification of the Soul⁵

Moral virtues in man gain him eternal happiness, while moral corruption leads him to everlasting wretchedness. It is, therefore, necessary for man to purge and purify himself of all evil traits of character and adorn his soul with all forms of ethical and moral virtues. Moreover, without having cleansed oneself of all evil habits, it would be impossible to nourish and develop moral virtues in oneself. The human soul can be compared to a mirror in this regard. If we wish to see something beautiful, reflected in a mirror, we must first cleanse the mirror, so that dust and dirt do not disfigure the reflection. Any attempt to obey God’s commands, would be fruitful and successful only when one has purified himself of evil habits and tendencies; otherwise, it would be like putting on jewels on a dirty and unwashed body. When self-purification has been completed and one is

⁵ See: Jami' al-Sa'adat, The collector of felicities, P. 9-11, by Muhammad Mahdi ibn Abi Dhar al-Naraqī.

completely rid of all evil habits of thought, speech, and action, then the soul is ready to receive the unlimited grace of God. Such reception is the ultimate reason for which man was created.

In truth, God's grace and the Divine mysteries are always accessible to man; it is man who must purify his soul and develop within himself the necessary receptivity to benefit from the infinite Grace of his Creator. In order to attain the ultimate and final perfection, it is necessary to traverse the path of struggle against selfish lusts and immoral tendencies which may exist within the soul, and thus to prepare the soul to receive the Grace of God. If man sets foot on the path of self-purification, God shall come to his aid and guide him along the path:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"And [as for] those, who struggle in our cause, surely we guide them in our ways." (29:69)

Imam Reza (A.S.) said:

"Allah may take pity and be merciful to the servant, who resurrects and revives our affair, so I said "And how is it that your affair gets revived?" He responded, by learning our knowledge and teaching them to the people."

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Report of
Philosophical Introspection Meeting
On Occasion of the Visit of Dr. Khosrow Panah
Held in the Office of Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of the Islamic
Republic of Iran, New Delhi

A meeting was organized on the subject of Philosophical Introspection with the presence of some of the scholars of the seminary and professors of the Universities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and India and also the representative of Al-Mustafa International University in India on Saturday, 18.02.2012.

Dr. Khosrow Panah; the president of Research Institute of Philosophy and Wisdom of Iran, Dr. Gholam Reza Mahdavi; the Representative of Al-Mustafa International University in India, Mr. Ahmad Alami; the Cultural Counselor of the Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi, Mr. Ali Dehgahi; Director of the Office of the Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi, Dr. Abdollah Shayan Rad, Director of the Comparative Studies of Religions in Islamic Research Center of Al-Mustafa International University in India, Dr. M. M. Verma; President, Interfaith Dialogue, Professor R. P. Singh; Head, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Jawaharlal University, Dr. Hira Paul Ganjagani; Department of Buddhist Studies, Delhi University, Dr. I. H. Azad Faruqi, Professor, Department of Comparative Studies of Religions, Jamia Mellia University, Professor Ghulam Yahya Anjum; Faculty of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences, Jamia Hamdard University, Mr. Mohammad Usman Siddiqui; Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Mujir Khan were among the participants present in the



meeting.

The session began with the introduction of Indian scholars and Dr. Khosrow Panah at 10 am. Dr. Khosrow Panah initiated the discussion with a brief introduction of the Research Institute of Philosophy and Wisdom of Iran which was established forty years ago and presently pursues its activities covering six departments namely; Department of Philosophy, Department of Logic, Department of Philosophy of Arab, Department of Religious Studies, Department of Science and Faculty of Mystic Research.

Following the discussion Dr. Gholam Reza Mahdavi raised the important issues concerning the comparatively retarded development and progress of philosophical wisdom against that of the mystical one in India which ultimately has caused the society to be a softer target for the influence of the foreign cultures and corresponding changes. He emphasized on the topic of common



belief and its importance too, while expressing his views.

Dr. Faruqi started his words regarding the declined or even lack of a remarkable influence of Islam in India and the best approach and deliberation for improving the present situation.

Dr. R. P. Singh followed the discussion while referring to different dimensions of philosophy and mysticism in India describing Yoga as a live instance and daily practice of Indians and its relation with mysticism. He explained in brief the different exercises (Assans) of this practice both in physical and mental dimensions while pinpointing the significance of each in the path of peace, tolerance and serenity that are the essentials of mysticism and spirituality, resulting in inner peace.

He cited some of the Chapters and verses of the old testament of the holy Bible where it reads as; “God has created Man as his own image”. He called human tendency to move and get promoted on the path toward God’s attributes a natural instinct. Dr. Singh also emphasized on the significance of Yoga as a fulfilling and rather adequate response to human desires, tendencies and appeals for attaining God, as a logical process.

Dr. Verma started his discussion while extending his gratitude to the organizers of the meeting particularly Dr. Dehgahi, Mr. Alami and Dr. Mahdavi, expressing his humbleness, he then cited the subject of Philosophy and religion as a very complicated field of study and research which dates back beyond the human imagination and comprehension. He then referred the doctrines and teachings of it in the sacred book of Hindus, the holy Gita in his speech where it is stated philosophy as an eternal field of knowledge and no starting date can be specified for the beginning of this discipline. He reminded about his interest and research about the teachings of holy Quran citing the Chapter: 2, Verse; 85 and Chapter: 3, Verse; 64 about the liberty of human being in choosing faith, denying any use of force and oppression in religion. Dr. Verma added that the fundamental principles of all the religions being similar, guiding the disciples and human society toward peaceful coexistence, harmony, tolerance, brotherhood, sympathy and empathy which are originated from a parallel and monotheist belief.



He commented about the mutual influence of religions and also their influence on human societies. He later continued to briefly express his views regarding the independence of soul from the physical, geographical or any sort of manmade limitations described issues concerning the same. He once more referred to some verses of the holy Quran describing it as a movement toward peace and harmony emphasizing on its encouragement for the promotion and expansion of Islam religion while acknowledging and paying regards to the sanctity of others' faiths, treating them equally sacred. He recalled the differences appearing in the mode of worship or optional coverings used, absolutely a superficial phenomenon. Dr. Verma again pointed out the 124000 prophets of God as the supporting evidence in existence of relationship between different religions. He however emphasized that the history of the relationship between God and human beings was a measure beyond the imagination of human mind.

The next speaker, Dr. Hira Paul Ganjagani started his words while extending his gratification to the organizers of the session explained the subject

of Philosophy and mysticism from Buddhists' point of view. He expressed man as an absolute unit of creation who interprets philosophy as an individual's response or vision, owing the same to the complexity of the subject. He once more concluded that Philosophy is a subject which is dependent on the vision and understanding of the individuals. He continued that; "After observing and understanding the truth, people interpret and express it through the logic, their beliefs, and personal opinions. These interpretations differ as per the criteria of individual's knowledge; experiences, abilities and rationalism thus would be quite diverse in nature. Mysticism is an evolutionary movement advancing beyond the physical limitations toward attainment of the truth. It is a phase where the details become quite obvious, comprehensible and explicable. In religions such as Jainism and Buddhism the proposed theory follows the interdependence of all components of the creation that ultimately leads to peace and accord. The foundation is laid upon the principle of non existence of God; hence a direct relationship between the members and their mutual influence on each other and all the elements of nature and the environment is perceptible.



Another participant, Professor Anjum from Hamdard University expressed his opinions stating that Islam is ultimately the religion of all mankind through the process of evolution of religions, using some example in an effort to express his opinions. He described religion as the outfit of the human being

from the childhood to later stages of growth and maturation in life. He added that with the changes in size of the outfit from time to time, a man cannot claim that all those outfits have never been his while the same changes would create impediment in the use of the childhood clothes. However human being is the same individual but requirements are definitely poles apart. He described the fundamental of all the religions to be the same while as per different requirements with regard to time and space, this phenomenon of evolution and progressive movement will eventually lead human beings towards the ultimate divine religion. He categorized Islam as a distinct religion being efficient enough to respond to human needs and requirements and devoid of limitations such as time factor.

Dr. Anjum cited some of the responsibilities of the Prophet of God as:

- Educating the common man about the teachings of holy Quran; thus inviting people to embrace it
- Investing efforts for educating the believers leading to better comprehension and conception of the teachings of Islam
- Purification and refinement

Professor Anjum, emphasized on successful accomplishment of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) mission in executing the above mentioned tasks which confirms to the fundamental and imperative principles of Islam. Later he paid attention to the term philosophy, interpreted and elucidated the same and its role in achieving the truth and attainment of ultimate realization and called it mysticism, indeed. He described mysticism as an excellent approach to realization, confession and declaration of God's matchlessness and uniqueness.

He once again highlighted the elemental role of realization of understanding and conception of God's commandments through the teachings of holy Quran. This thorough realization of God's supremacy will lead to complete and unconditional trust in the Creator, thus leaving everything to him to decide which is an evidence of perfect appreciation of God.



Dr. Anjum while relating Islam's emphasis on love and peace among human beings, which are categorized among the remarkable peculiarities and virtues of God, acknowledged philosophy and mysticism as counterparts of these divine traits. He stated those people who invest their lives for training and enlightening human societies and have dedicated their being to Sufism, as unparallel exemplary phenomena, which is seldom witnessed in other religions. He recalled the names such as Chisty and Nizamuddin Auliya, as the consistent and incredible core for expression of human feelings and needs, visited by people from different religions belonging to every walk of life; thus making mysticism a distinctive phenomenon in Islam.

Mr. Usman Siddiqui as one of the guests began his speech regarding monotheism. He called religion a descent and graceful means of attaining the



best attributes of God. The apparent differences between the different people can be ascribed to diverse cultures, habits, commonly accepted and adopted life styles, religious promotions, recreational and employment programs, he said.

At last Dr. Khosrow Panah began his speech mentioning the history of science, renowned scientists and personalities of Iran such as Avicenna, Suhrawardi and Sheikh Eshragh in addition to manifestation of science and technology in Iran.

He stated the course of introduction of mysticism among the Muslim nations and added; “Sufism would grow when philosophical wisdom disappear from the society”.

The president of Research Institute of Philosophy and Wisdom of Iran, while delivering his speech stated that; “The brief discussion in the meeting overviews that no doubt left in minds of the representatives of different religions including Hinduism, Buddhism and etc., where all accentuate on an affectionate relationship between human beings”.

He added that this signifies philosophy and mysticism as two parallel elements, leading to the truth and serenity.

In a part of his speech he expressed his delight to find considerable potential leading to tolerance and the peaceful coexistence of different religions and the need of efforts to develop the same in vaster dimensions in India. He elucidated the improper use of science and technology of world



capitalism, which eventually leads to destruction of human societies. Such a model of capitalism creates detachment and aloofness between humans, resulting in introduction of uncertainty and vagueness in the family bonding, he stated.

He cautioned about the necessity of coordination and cooperation of philosophy and mysticism in different religions so much so that a single distinct affirmation is presented. He then added; “Undoubtedly, different religions accept knowledge, wisdom and awareness, and don’t disagree with the modern sciences such as physics, chemistry and technology, but oppose the misuse in application of science in today’s world.

The highest rate of suicide is reported in Japan and America. Family compassion and understanding is almost destroyed in the West, Churches are sold in Europe which are the consequences of improper use of science and technology. Spirituality, mysticism and philosophy are needed more than ever by the human beings. I suggest that regular meetings be held in Al-Mustafa University and the Iran Culture House so that the religious scholars can interact and achieve precise results toward the resolution of such issues. However, the final resolution of human miseries is in the hand of the savior of humanity which I am sure the believers of all the religions trust”.

At last he extended his word of gratification and appreciation to the organizers of the meeting and expressed his delight to have met the scholars and professors attending the session. He conveyed his invitation to all the professors present there for a formal visit of the Research Institute of Philosophy and Wisdom of Iran.



This meeting lasted three and half an hour. The meeting ended after the lunch and some refreshments, was served.

MAIL BOX

Write your views & comments @
Al-Mustafa International University,
18 Tilak Marg, Iran Culture House, New Delhi
or e-mail @ Almustafamagazine@gmail.com



Koyippally (koyippally@gmail.com)

Dear Dr. Abdullah Shayanrad:

I was delighted while going through the Vol. 1 & 2 of the journal of “Religious Thought”. I am confident that the publication tries to promote cooperation between different religions through interfaith dialogue and explorations. However, I find it appropriate to remind you that processing ISSN registration will be a milestone as it will bring about academic credit for the Indian academicians as well.

Best wishes

Dr. Joseph Koyippally

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Dear Sir,

I received the E-version of your magazine. Brief Hindi summary of all the articles provided at end of magazine is really commendable. It confirms your efforts, capability and farsightedness. I would like to congratulate your editorial board on this.

I would like to request you to deliver a print-copy of the E-version if you still got one, at the following address:-

Regards,

Prof. Anjni Kumar Singh,
30 B Hirapuri Colony
University Camups
Gorakhpur- 273009 UP

Mail Box

Anjani Kumar Singh (anjanikumarsingh53@gmail.com)

Dear Sir,

I am genuinely thankful to you for the painstaking job of sending the quarterly Journal (Summer Issue No.2) of "Religious Thought" to me. Kindly let my name remain on your mailing list as a regular recipient of the Journal. Articles, Format and printing, is remarkable and clearly depicts your academic interest and endeavor. Once again, I must congratulate you for publishing such a standard and fine Journal.

Wishing you a Happy New Year

Yours sincerely,

Prof. A. K. Singh
30 B Hirapuri Colony,
University Campus,
Gorakhpur-273009 U.P.
Mob. No. 09415244937

.....
Kind Dear Sir,

I just learnt about your publications and surely would like to get more information about the terms and conditions to present articles Regards

Dr. Ahmad Ilyas

.....
Siyaram Haldhar (siyaramhaldhar@yahoo.in)

Dear sir

I appreciate and extend my heartiest words of gratification, feeling honored to see my article among the published works.

Regards;

Siyaram Mishra Haldhar

Showkat Dar Hussain (showkat786@gmail.com)

The Editor,
Al-Mustafa magazine,

Thanks for mailing the updated issue of your magazine! I hope it will continue to contribute to the contemporary world in both academic and intellectual capacity.

Looking forward and obliged!

Dr. Showkat Husain,

Asst. Professor,
Islamic Studies,
Islamic University of Science and Technology,
Awantipora, (J&K), India.

.....
Kazi Sufior Rahaman (kazi_Sufior_rahaman@yahoo.com)

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the second Issue of "Religious Thought",

The articles of the magazine in this issue are thought provoking.

Best regards,

Yours

Kazi Sufior Rahaman
Associate Professor
Department of Islamic History and Culture
University of Calcutta
1, Reformatory Street
Kolkata 700027
Phone 09830327146

लेखों का संक्षिप्त विवरण

वैश्वीकरण के युग में इस्लामी सभ्यता की प्रगति में संस्कृति की भूमिका

डाक्टर ताहिर अली मौहम्मदी¹
डाक्टर मौहम्मद अली सरलाक²
सैयद मेहदी वैसे³
मौहम्मद ताब⁴

संक्षिप्त विवरण: इस लेख का मुख्य उद्देश्य है कि वैश्वीकरण के इस युग में संस्कृति और इस्लामी सभ्यता में सांस्कृतिक तत्वों की भूमिका की जांच और व्याख्या करे। यदि हम इतिहास पर नज़र डालें तो हम पाते हैं कि केवल कुछ ही देशों में बढ़ती हुई संस्कृति और समृद्ध सभ्यता देखने को मिलती है। शक्तिशाली संस्कृति के बिना कोई सभ्यता विकसित नहीं हो सकती। दूसरे शब्दों में किसी भी सभ्यता की तरक्की के लिए संस्कृति अतिआवश्यक है। यह कहा जा सकता है कि संस्कृति किसी भी सभ्यता की जान होती है और विभिन्न सभ्यताओं के बीच भेद उनकी भिन्न संस्कृति के कारण है।

इस जगह पर लेखक ने कुछ आवश्यक सवालों का जवाब ढूंढने की चेष्टा की है। (1) इस्लामी समाज में सांस्कृतिक आत्मसम्मान में सुधार के लिए उचित तंत्र क्या हैं? (2) वैश्वीकरण एक अवसर है या खतरा? इस्लामी सभ्यता का एक बहुत अशांत इतिहास रहा है, और हम को उसके विभिन्न

¹ अध्यक्ष इल्म यूनिवर्सिटी, ईरान

² मैनेजमेंट डिपार्टमेंट, प्यामनूर यूनिवर्सिटी, ईरान

³ पी एच डी छात्र, मैनेजमेंट डिपार्टमेंट, इल्म यूनिवर्सिटी, ईरान

⁴ पी एच डी छात्र, मैनेजमेंट डिपार्टमेंट, तेहरान यूनिवर्सिटी, ईरान

पहलुओं जैसे संस्कृति की पहचान करनी चाहिए जो उसकी समृद्धि और विकास को प्रभावित करती हैं। इस्लामी विचारकों ने वैश्वीकरण का सामना करने की समस्या, उसके व्यापक और गहरे प्रभावों जैसे जटिल मुद्दों (सकारात्मक और नकारात्मक दोनों) का अध्ययन किया है और वैश्वीकरण के सम्बंध में कुछ समर्थक और कुछ विरोधी नज़र आते हैं। समर्थकों का मानना है कि इसका सकारात्मक असर पड़ता है और इसे अवसर के रूप में देखते हैं। दूसरी ओर विरोधियों को लगता है कि वैश्वीकरण आज की दुनिया में साम्राज्यवाद की अगली कड़ी है। इस शोध के परिणाम दिखाते हैं कि वैश्वीकरण के इस युग में इस्लामी सभ्यता का विकास सांस्कृतिक मानदंडों के उलट फेर से गुज़र रहा है और ऐसा लगता है कि पूर्वी समाजों, विशेष रूप से इस्लामी समाज में, उनकी समृद्ध संस्कृति का उपयोग करते हुए विकास के लिए एक उचित तंत्र बन सकता है। और यदि हम अपनी संस्कृति और मान्यताओं में विश्वास के साथ आत्म-सम्मान रखें तो वैश्वीकरण का उपयोग अन्य देशों और सभ्यताओं के लिए इस्लामी संस्कृति का परिचय कराने के एक उपयुक्त अवसर के तौर पर किया जा सकता है।

इस्लाम में शांतिपूर्ण सह-अस्तित्व और आध्यात्मिकता भारतीय और ईरानी सूफियों के विशेष संदर्भ के साथ

प्रोफ़ेसर हमीदुल्लाह मराज़ी
(हामिद नसीम रफियाबादी)

संक्षिप्त विवरण: आध्यात्मिकता का मुद्दा आधुनिक समय के लिए बहुत ही प्रासंगिक है। जैसा कि हम देख रहे हैं कि हम ने लगभग सभी मूल्यों को भुला दिया है और इन की जगह हम भौतिकवादी और नास्तिक विचारों को आंख बंद करके अपनी ज़िन्दगी में जगह दे रहे हैं जो आधुनिक पश्चिमी विचारधाराओं ने प्रतिस्थापित किए हैं। आज पश्चिमी संदर्भ में भी यह महसूस किया जा रहा है कि दुनिया को केवल ताकत और हथियारों की दौड़ से अधिक कुछ चाहिए। यह वह चीज़ें हैं जिन्होंने मानव संसाधन, मूल्यों, और सब से अधिक शांति और इंसानियत की उस संस्कृति हमें दूर कर दिया, जिस को महात्माओं ने इस दुनिया के इतिहास के विभिन्न दौरों में हमें सिखाया था।

आध्यात्मिक लक्ष्य जिसको इस्लाम इंसान के सामने रखता है वह इस दुनिया के खालिक और अपने साथी प्राणियों के प्रति ज़िम्मेदारियों का अहसास दिलाना है। कुरआन के शब्दों में जवाब यह है कि जब इंसान इस एहसास को पा लेता है तो उसके लिए कहा जा सकता है कि “आत्मा को शांति मिली”। (89:27) इस प्रकार इस्लाम का आध्यात्मिक लक्ष्य आत्मा की इसी शांति को पाना है।

* श्रीनगर, कश्मीर

भारतीय और ईरानी सूफियों के विशेष संदर्भ के साथ लेखक ने इसी रुहानी मक़सद को हासिल करने का उल्लेख किया है और लिखा है कि कैसे सूफियों ने अपनी ज़िन्दगी का उद्देश्य यही आत्मिक शांति और उसके बाद की मोक्ष की मंज़िल बना रखी थी। उनके लिए धार्मिक भेद भाव कोई महत्व नहीं रखता था और इसी कारणवश यह शांतिपूर्ण सह-अस्तित्व के सब से बड़े चैम्पियन थे।

सूफियों का वुजूद, उनके विचार, उनकी इस्तेलाहें, रुहानियत और नफ़स परवरी में अंतर, सूफी सिलसिलों और खानकाहों का उल्लेख, सालिक का विवरण और उसके प्रकार और ईरानी और भारतीय जनता की ज़िन्दगी में सूफी सोच के कारण असर को बहुत ही विस्तृत अंदाज़ में ब्यान किया है।

एक खुदा, एक धर्म

सैय्यद हैदर

संक्षिप्त विवरण: दक्षिणी अमेरिका के मेसो अमेरिकी दस्तावेजों में सब से महत्वपूर्ण जो हैं वह जिस शहर के पुस्तकालय में रखे गये थे उसके नाम के अनुरूप ड्रेस्डन कोडेक्स कहलाते हैं। यह खगोल विज्ञान से संबंधित चन्द्र ग्रहण और अन्य घटनाओं की विस्तृत तालिकाएं प्रदान करते हैं। यह इस हद तक सही हैं कि हमारे आज के कैलेंडर को शर्मसार कर सकते हैं। 13 अगस्त 3114 ई. पूर्व को शुक्र की जन्म तिथि से आरंभ यह माया कैलेंडर 22 दिसम्बर 2012 को समाप्त हो रहा है, जब इंसान का पांचवा या आखिरी दौर खत्म होगा।

इस बुनियाद पर कई लोग यह चिंता व्यक्त करते हैं कि इस दिन दुनिया खत्म हो जाएगी। इस बारे में माया जमाने के लोग क्या सोचते थे यह तो पता नहीं परन्तु राय की सहमति यह है कि महान परिवर्तन आएंगे।

यह दिलचस्प बात है कि माया सभ्यता ने जो एक समय में दक्षिण अमेरिका के बहुत बड़े भाग में बसी थी स्पेन के मात्र 11 जहाजों, 600 पैदल सैनिकों, 16 घोड़ों और कुछ तोपों के आगे घुटने टेक दिए। स्पेनियों की यह सफलता ग़लत पहचान की बुनियाद पर थी। स्थानीय लोगों का मानना था कि एक दिव्य व्यक्ति क्वेटज़ाल्कोटल की वापसी होगी, और यह समझते हुए कि वही क्वेटज़ाल्कोटल वापिस आ गए उन्होंने अधिक जंग नहीं की और फलस्वरूप स्पैनिश पूरे क्षेत्र पर नियंत्रण पाने में कामयाब हो गए।

* वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

क्वैटज़ालकोटल नामी किसी देवता के इंतज़ार में जी रहे स्थानीय लोगों ने अपनी आज़ादी गंवा दी लेकिन क्वैटज़ालकोटल नहीं आए। वह आज भी नहीं आए हैं। तो क्या 2012 में क्वैटज़ालकोटल को ही आना है? लेखक विभिन्न धर्मों की मूल किताबों में वर्णित आखिरी ज़माने में आने वाले मसीहा के विवरण को ढूँढ़ निकालते हैं। यहूदी, ईसाई, हिन्दू और मुसलमान सब ही किसी न किसी मसीहा के आने का इंतज़ार कर रहे हैं। हर धर्म के ग्रंथों के हिसाब से यह खुदाई मसीहा धरती को शांति और इंसानों से भर देगा। हर ओर ईश्वरी रास्ता प्रशस्त होगा। हिन्दू उसे कालकी अवतार कहते हैं तो मुसलमान मेहदी के नाम से उसे पुकारते हैं। यहूदी और ईसाई धर्मगुरु यह कह रहे हैं कि मसीहा किसी भी समय आ सकता है, यहां तक कि जब आप इसे पढ़ रहे हों तब भी। यहां तक कि उसके आने की भविष्यवाणियां भी सभी धार्मिक ग्रंथों में मिलती जुलती हैं।

लेखक इस निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचते हैं कि जो लोग यह कहते हैं कि सब धर्मों ने एक दूसरे से एक जैसी बातों को चुरा लिया वह ग़लत है। हिन्दु, मुस्लिम, यहूदी और ईसाई धर्म तो एक दूसरे से एक समान बातों को ले सकते हैं पर दक्षिण अमेरिका में स्पेनी लोग 16वीं शताब्दी में पहुंचे और उनकी किताबों का अनुवाद 19वीं शताब्दी में हो सका, तो यह कैसे किसी दूसरे धर्म के तत्वों को चुरा लेंगे? लेखक कहते हैं कि हमें मानना पड़ेगा कि सब धर्मों की उत्पत्ति का स्रोत एक ही है। जब पृथ्वी का बनाने वाला एक है तो हम क्यों नहीं समझते कि वह पृथ्वी के हर क्षेत्र में दूत भेजता रहा जिन्होंने आगे होने वाली बातों की एक समान भविष्यवाणी की। उनका पैग़ाम भी एक था जो समय के साथ विकसित होता गया। अंत में वह कहते हैं कि यदि एक खुदा है तो उसका मार्ग भी एक ही है और हमारे बनाए मार्ग जिन्हें हम धर्म कहते हैं उस खुदाई पथ से विचलित मार्ग हैं।

धर्म मानव जाति के इतिहास का मूल तत्व है

हमीद गुलन्दरी

संक्षिप्त विवरण: धर्म इतना ही महत्वपूर्ण था कि ईश्वर ने आदम के रूप में जो पहला इंसान पैदा किया और उसे ज़मीन पर उतारा उसे उसने अपने दूत और नबी के रूप में चुना ताकि वह धरती पर धर्म की बुनियाद डाल सके। उन्होंने वास्तव में मानवता की संस्कृति के विकास की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई और इसमें उन्हें काफी सफलता मिली। उन्हें मानवता के उस पहले शिक्षक के रूप में देखा जाना चाहिए जिस ने मनुष्य को सहअस्तित्व-वाद का सबक दिया। इस दुनिया में मानवता के इतिहास में कोई एक अवधि ऐसी नहीं रही जो धर्म और विश्वास के बिना हो। मानव जीवन को हमेशा धार्मिक विश्वास से आध्यात्मिक प्रेरणा मिलती रही, हालांकि ऐसे भी लोग पैदा होते रहे जिन्होंने धर्म का इंकार किया। लेकिन बहुत ही कम समय में उन्हें अपने विचारों में असफलता से मुलाकात की। इसका ताज़ा उदाहरण पूर्व सोवियत संघ है जो विश्व की महाशक्तियों में से एक के रूप में गिना जाता था। लेकिन आध्यात्म के अभाव के कारण वह लंबे समय तक नहीं रह सका और विघटित हो गया। ईरान की इस्लामी क्रांति के दूरदर्शी नेता इमाम खुमैनी ने अपने पत्र में इस विषय में श्री गोर्बाचेव को चेताया था।

भारतीय उप-महाद्वीप बहुत से धर्मों का घर रहा है। वर्तमान में यहां विभिन्न धर्मों और संप्रदायों के लाखों लोग एक साथ शांति से रह रहे हैं। इस पर चर्चा की आवश्यकता है और इस पर भी कि कैसे विभिन्न धर्मों के अनुयायी किसी भी तनाव या विवाद के बिना रह रहे हैं। इस लेख में भारतीय जनता के शांतिमय सहअस्तित्व पर चर्चा की गई है।

* सदस्य, वैज्ञानिक समूह, पैयामे नूर यूनिवर्सिटी, नहावंद, ईरान

हिन्दु धर्म और उसकी ऐतिहासिक जड़ों, हिन्दुओं की सहेजी हुई किताबों, छह दर्शन या उन पवित्र ग्रंथों के छह विकासवादी चरणों, इतिहास के विभिन्न दौरों पर चर्चा के बाद हिन्दु धर्म के संप्रदायों में से कुछ का परिचय कराया गया है और उन सब की एकता के धर्म – इस्लाम – से तुलना की गई है। इस्लाम और हिन्दु धर्म के बीच सह-अस्तित्व के लिए बनाई गई अनुशंसाओं और निष्कर्ष के बीच तुलना की गई है।

इस्लामी शिक्षा और गांधी के दृष्टिकोण में नैतिकता या नीतिशास्त्र की अवधारणाएं

डाक्टर हमीद रज़ानिया

संक्षिप्त विवरण: नीतिशास्त्र दर्शनशास्त्र की एक मुख्य शाखा है जो एक व्यक्ति विशेष या समूह के मूल्यों और रीति रिवाजों का अध्ययन करता है। यह प्रचलित अवधारणाओं जैसे सही और ग़लत, अच्छाई और बुराई का विश्लेषण करता है। नैतिकता की परिभाषा यह है: “समाज में रह रहे मनुष्यों के आचरण के मानकों का विज्ञान — ऐसा विज्ञान जो सही या ग़लत, अच्छे या बुरे या इसी प्रकार के मानकों के बीच निर्णय करता है।

दर्शन शास्त्र बहुत ही भिन्न प्रकार के प्रश्नों को लेकर चिंताग्रस्त नज़र आता है: हमें क्या करना चाहिए? हमें समाज को कैसे व्यवस्थित करना चाहिए? क्या सही है? हम न्याय की सोच को कैसे समझें? किस आधार पर हम कार्यवाई की राह का चयन करें? यह हमें नैतिकता, राजनीतिक दर्शन और कानून के दर्शन की ओर ले जाता है।

लेखक विभिन्न पहलुओं पर बहस करते हैं जैसे विज्ञान में आचार की भूमिका, नैतिकता पर गांधी का नज़रिया, इस्लाम के नैतिक सिद्धांत का स्पष्टीकरण, इस्लाम में आचार संहिता के मक़सद के तौर पर आत्मा की शुद्धि की अहमियत, आदि।

भारत के प्रमुख आध्यात्मिक रहनुमा महात्मा गांधी ने भी आचार क्षेत्र में बहुत बड़ा योगदान किया है। गांधी गीता और उपनिषदों जैसे प्रमुख भारतीय ग्रंथों से प्रभावित थे। टाल्स्टॉय और थोरो की शिक्षाओं ने भी उन्हें बहुत प्रभावित किया था। सरल शब्दों में कहें तो गांधी दर्शन सत्य और अहिंसा के दो महत्वपूर्ण सिद्धांतों में संक्षेपित किया जा सकता है। गांधीवादी नैतिकता के

* धर्म विश्वविद्यालय, कुम, ईरान

अनुसार आचार और धर्म में कोई मतभेद नहीं है। वह नैतिकता को धर्म का आधार मानते थे। “जैसे ही हम नैतिक आधार खो देते हैं, हम धार्मिक भी नहीं रहते। उदाहरण के तौर पर यदि आदमी बेईमान, क्रूर या असंयमी है तो वह भगवान प्राप्ति नहीं कर सकता।”

लेखक गांधीवादी आचार, नैतिकता और धार्मिक सिद्धांत की तुलना इस्लामी सिद्धांतों और शिक्षा से करते हैं और इस संदर्भ में कुरान की आयतें और हदीसें पेश करते हैं।

مقالات کا خلاصہ

گلوبلائزیشن کے زمانہ میں اسلامی تہذیب کی ترقی میں ثقافت کا کردار

ڈاکٹر طاہر علی محمدی^۱

ڈاکٹر محمد علی سرلاک^{۲*}

سید مہدی ویسے^۳

محمد تاب^۴

خلاصہ: اس مضمون کی مرکزی فکر یہ ہے کہ گلوبلائزیشن کے اس زمانہ میں ثقافت اور اسلامی تہذیب میں ثقافتی عناصر کے کردار کی تحقیقات کرے اور اسکی وضاحت کرے۔ اگر ہم تاریخ پر نظر ڈالیں تو ہمیں یہ ملتا ہے کہ صرف چند ممالک ہی میں بڑھتی ہوئی ثقافت اور خوشحال تہذیب دیکھنے کو ملتی ہے۔ طاقتور تہذیب کے بغیر کوئی ثقافت ترقی نہیں کر سکتی۔ دوسرے الفاظ میں کسی بھی تہذیب کے قیام کے لئے ثقافت بنیادی شرط ہے۔ یہ کہا جاسکتا ہے کہ ثقافت کسی بھی تہذیب کی روح ہوتی ہے اور مختلف تہذیبوں کے درمیان امتیاز انکی مختلف ثقافتوں کی وجہ سے ہے۔ اس جگہ پر مضمون نویس نے کچھ اہم سوالوں کے جواب ڈھونڈنے کی کوشش کی ہے۔ (۱) اسلامی معاشروں میں ثقافتی خود اعتمادی کو بہتر بنانے کے لئے مناسب میکینزم کیا ہیں؟ (۲) گلوبلائزیشن ایک موقع ہے یا خطرہ؟ اسلامی

^۱صدر، علم یونیورسٹی، ایران

^۲مینجمنٹ ڈپارٹمنٹ، پیام نور یونیورسٹی، ایران

^۳پی. ایچ. ڈی. طالب علم، مینجمنٹ ڈپارٹمنٹ، پیام نور یونیورسٹی، ایران

^۴پی. ایچ. ڈی. طالب علم، مینجمنٹ ڈپارٹمنٹ، تہران یونیورسٹی، ایران

تہذیب کی ایک بہت ہنگامہ خیز تاریخ رہی ہے، اور ہم کو اسکے مختلف اجزاء جیسے ثقافت کی شناخت کرنا چاہئے جو اسکے عروج اور ترقی سے متعلق مختلف پہلوؤں کو سمجھنے کے لئے اثر انداز ہوں۔ اسلامی مفکروں نے گلوبلائزیشن کا سامنا کرنے کا مسئلہ، اسکے وسیع اور گہرے اثرات جیسے پیچیدہ مسائل (منفی اور مثبت) کا مطالعہ کیا ہے اور گلوبلائزیشن کے حوالے سے کچھ حامی اور کچھ مخالف نظر آتے ہیں۔ حامیوں کا خیال ہے کہ اس کا مثبت اثر پڑتا ہے اور اسے ایک موقع کے طور پر دیکھتے ہیں۔ دوسری طرف اسکے مخالفین کا خیال ہے کہ گلوبلائزیشن آج کی دنیا میں سامراجیت کا تسلسل ہے۔ اس تحقیق کے نتائج دکھاتے ہیں کہ گلوبلائزیشن کے اس دور میں اسلامی تہذیب ثقافتی معیاروں کے الٹ پھیر سے گزر رہی ہے اور ایسا لگتا ہے کہ مشرقی معاشروں، خاص طور پر اسلامی معاشرے میں، انکی اعلیٰ ثقافت کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے ترقی کے لئے ایک مناسب نظام بن سکتا ہے۔ اور اگر اپنی ثقافت اور عقائد میں یقین کے ساتھ خود اعتمادی رکھیں تو گلوبلائزیشن دوسری قوموں اور تہذیبوں کو اسلامی ثقافت سے متعارف کرانے کا مناسب موقع ہو سکتا ہے۔

اسلام میں پرامن بقائے باہمی اور روحانیت ہندوستانی اور ایرانی صوفیوں کے خصوصی حوالہ کے ساتھ

پروفیسر حمید اللہ مرازی[☆]
(حامد نسیم رفیع آبادی)

خلاصہ: روحانیت اور راہبانہ مسائل جدید دور میں بہت اہمیت کے حامل ہیں۔ جیسا کہ ہم دیکھ رہے ہیں کہ ہم نے تقریباً تمام اقدار کو فراموش کر دیا ہے اور ان کی جگہ ہم مادی اور کافرانہ رجحانات کو آنکھ بند کر کے اپنی زندگی میں جگہ دے رہے ہیں جو جدید مغربی نظریات کی دین ہیں۔ آج مغربی تناظر میں بھی یہ شدت سے محسوس کیا جا رہا ہے کہ دنیا کو صرف طاقت اور ہتھیاروں کی دوڑ سے کچھ زیادہ چاہئے جس نے انسانی وسائل، اقدار، اور سب سے زیادہ امن اور انسانیت کی ثقافت سے محروم کر دیا جن کو عظیم روحانی شخصیات نے دنیا کی تاریخ کے مختلف لمحات میں رائج کیا تھا۔ روحانی ہدف جو اسلام انسان کے سامنے رکھتا ہے وہ اس دنیا کے خالق اور اپنے ساتھی مخلوقات کے لئے ذمہ داریوں کا احساس دلاتا ہے۔ قرآن کے الفاظ میں جواب یہ ہے کہ جب انسان اس احساس تک پہنچ جاتا ہے تو اس کے لئے کہا جاسکتا ہے کہ ”روح کو آرام ملا۔ (۷۲:۹۸)۔ اس طرح اسلام کا روحانی مقصد یہ ہے کہ روح کو امن حاصل ہو۔ ہندوستانی اور ایرانی صوفیوں کے خصوصی حوالہ کے ساتھ مضمون نویس نے اسی روحانی مقصد کا ذکر کیا ہے اور لکھا ہے کہ کیسے صوفیوں نے اپنی زندگی کا مقصد بھی روحانی ارتقاء اور اسکے بعد کی نجات کی منزل حاصل کرنا بنا رکھا تھا۔ ان کے لئے مذہبی بھید بھاؤ کوئی معنی نہیں رکھتا تھا اور اسی لئے یہ پرامن بقائے باہمی کے سب سے بڑے علمبردار تھے۔

* سری نگر، کشمیر

صوفیوں کا وجود، ان کی فکر، ان کی مختلف اصطلاحات، روحانیت اور نفس پروری میں فرق، صوفی سلسلوں اور خانقاہوں کی وضاحت، سالک کی تشریح اور اسکے اقسام اور ایرانی اور ہندوستانی عوام کی زندگی میں صوفی سوچ کے اثر کو بہت ہی واضح طور پر بیان کیا ہے۔

ایک خدا، ایک مذہب

☆ سید حیدر

خلاصہ: جنوبی امریکا کے میسوامریکن دستاویزات میں سب سے اہم جو ہے وہ جس شہر کی لائبریری میں رکھا گیا تھا اس کی بنیاد پر ڈریسڈن کوڈیکس کہلاتا ہے۔ یہ علم نجوم سے متعلق قمری گرنہوں اور دوسرے واقعات کی تفصیلی معلومات فراہم کرتا ہے۔ یہ اس حد تک درست ہے کہ ہمارے آج کے کیلینڈر کو شرمسار کر سکتا ہے۔ حضرت عیسیٰ سے ۳۱۴ سال قبل وینس کی پیدائش کے دن سے شروع ہوا یہ مایا کیلینڈر ۲۲ دسمبر ۲۰۱۲ کو ختم ہوتا ہے جب انسان کا پانچواں یا آخری دور ختم ہوگا۔

اس بنیاد پر کئی لوگ یہ قیاس لگا رہے ہیں کہ اس دن دنیا ختم ہو جائیگی۔ اس بارے میں مایا زمانے کے لوگ کیا سوچتے تھے یہ تو معلوم نہیں، لیکن یہ رائے کا اجتماع ہے کہ عظیم تبدیلیاں ہوں گی۔ یہ دلچسپ بات ہے کہ مایا تہذیب نے، جو جنوبی امریکا کے بہت بڑے خطے میں بسی تھی اسپین کے صرف ۱۱ بھری جہازوں، ۶۰۰ پیدل فوجیوں، ۱۶ گھوڑوں اور کچھ توپوں کے آگے گٹھن ٹیک دئے۔ اسپینیوں کی اس کامیابی کی وجہ غلط شناخت کی بنیاد پر تھی۔ مقامی لوگوں کا ماننا تھا کہ قبیلہ اکلوتل نامی ایک روحانی شخص جس کی آمد کی پیشگوئی ان کی کتابوں میں کی گئی تھی، انھیں لگا کہ وہی قبیلہ اکلوتل واپس آگئے اور انھوں نے زیادہ مزاحمت نہیں کی اور نتیجے میں ہسپانوی پورے خطے پر قابض ہو گئے۔

☆ سینئر صحافی

قویٹڈالکوٹل نامی کسی دیوتا کے انتظار میں جی رہے مقامی لوگوں نے اپنی آزادی گنوا دی لیکن قویٹڈالکوٹل نہیں آئے۔ وہ آج بھی نہیں آئے ہیں۔ تو کیا ۲۰۱۲ میں قویٹڈالکوٹل کی ہی آمد ہونی ہے؟ مضمون نگار مختلف مذاہب کی اصل کتابوں میں موجود آخری زمانے میں آنے والے کسی مسیحا کی پیشگوئیوں کو ڈھونڈھ نکالتے ہیں۔ یہودی، عیسائی، ہندو اور مسلمان سب ہی کسی نہ کسی مسیحا کا انتظار کر رہے ہیں۔ ہر مذہب کی کتابوں کے حساب سے یہ خدائی مسیحا دنیا کو امن اور انصاف سے بھر دیگا۔ ہر طرف خدائی نظام نافذ ہوگا۔ ہندو اسے کالکی اوتار کہتے ہیں تو مسلمان مہدی کے نام سے اسے پکارتے ہیں۔ یہودی اور عیسائی مذہبی رہنمایہ کہہ رہے ہیں کہ مسیحا کسی بھی وقت آسکتا ہے یہاں تک کہ جب آپ اسے پڑھ رہے ہوں تب بھی۔ یہاں تک کہ اسکے آنے کی پیشگوئیاں بھی سبھی مذہبی کتابوں میں ملتی جلتی ہیں۔

مضمون نویس اس نتیجہ پر پہنچتے ہیں کہ جو لوگ یہ کہتے ہیں کہ سب مذاہب نے ایک دوسرے سے ایک جیسی باتوں کو چرایا وہ غلط ہیں۔ ہندو، مسلم، عیسائی اور یہودی مذہب تو ایک دوسرے سے ملتی جلتی باتوں کو لے سکتے ہیں لیکن جنوبی امریکا میں ہسپانی لوگ ۱۶ویں صدی میں پہنچے اور انکی کتابوں کا ترجمہ ۱۹ویں صدی میں ہو سکا، تو یہ کیسے کسی دوسرے مذہب کے اصولوں کو چرائیں گے؟ مضمون نویس کہتے ہیں کہ ہمیں ماننا پڑیگا کہ سب مذاہب کا اصل ماخذ ایک ہی ہے۔ جب ہم مانتے ہیں کہ اس دنیا کا بنانے والا ایک ہے تو ہم کیوں نہیں سمجھتے کہ وہ دنیا کہ ہر علاقے میں پیغمبر بھیجتا رہا جنہوں نے آگے ہونے والی باتوں کی ملتی جلتی پیشگوئیاں کیں۔ انکا پیغام بھی ایک تھا جو وقت کے ساتھ ترقی کرتا گیا۔ آخر میں وہ کہتے ہیں کہ اگر ایک خدا ہے تو اسکا راستہ بھی ایک ہی ہے اور ہمارے بنائے راستے جنہیں ہم مذہب کہتے ہیں، اس خدائی راہ سے منحرف راستے ہیں۔

مذہب انسانی تاریخ کا حقیقی مظہر ہے

حمید قلندری ☆

خلاصہ: مذہب اتنا ہی اہم تھا کہ خدا تعالیٰ نے سب سے پہلے آدم کی شکل میں جس انسان کو خلق کیا اور اسے زمین پر اتارا، اسے اس نے اپنے رسول اور نبی کے طور پر منتخب کیا تاکہ وہ زمین پر مذہب کی بنیاد ڈال سکے۔ انھوں نے حقیقتاً انسان کی ثقافت کی ترقی میں اہم کردار ادا کیا اور اس سمت میں انھیں خاصی کامیابی ملی۔ انھیں انسانیت کے سب سے پہلے استاد کے طور پر دیکھا جانا چاہئے جس نے انسان کو بقائے باہمی کا سبق دیا۔ اس دنیا میں انسانیت کی تاریخ میں کوئی ایک مدت ایسی نہیں رہی جو مذہب اور عقیدے کے بغیر ہو۔ انسانی زندگی کو ہمیشہ مذہبی عقیدے سے روحانی ارتقا کی راہیں دکھائی گئیں حالانکہ اس سے انکار نہیں کیا جاسکتا کہ ایسے لوگ بھی پیدا ہوتے رہے جو مذہب کے منکر تھے۔ لیکن بہت کم وقت میں اپنی سمجھ میں انھیں ناکامی ملی۔ اسکی حالیہ مثال سابق سوویت یونین ہے جو دنیا کی سپر طاقتوں میں سے ایک کے طور پر دیکھا جاتا تھا لیکن روحانیت کی غیر موجودگی کے سبب وہ طویل عرصہ تک نہیں رہ سکا، اور ٹوٹ گیا۔ ایران کے اسلامی انقلاب کے دوران ایش رہنما امام خمینی نے اپنے خط میں اس بارے میں جناب گورچیکو کو آگاہ کیا تھا۔

ہندوستانی برصغیر بہت سے مذاہب کا گھر رہا ہے۔ موجودہ دور میں بھی مختلف مذاہب اور فرقوں کے لاکھوں لوگ مل جل کر امن کے ساتھ رہ رہے ہیں۔ اس پر بحث کرنے کی ضرورت ہے اور اس پر بھی کہ مختلف

* اراکین، سائنسی گروپ، پیام نور یونیورسٹی، نہاوند، ایران

مذہب کے پیروکار کس طرح کسی بھی کشیدگی یا تنازعہ کے بغیر ایک ساتھ رہ رہے ہیں۔ اس مضمون میں ہندوستانی عوام کی پرامن بقائے باہمی پر بات چیت کی گئی ہے۔

ہندو مذہب اور اسکی تاریخی جڑوں، ہندوؤں کی محفوظ کردہ کتابوں، چھ فلسفوں یا ان چھ فلسفوں کے نشوونما کے مختلف مراحل اور تاریخ کے مختلف ابواب پر چرچہ کے بعد ہندو مذہب کے کچھ فرقوں کا تعارف کرایا گیا ہے اور انکا توحید اور یکتائی کے مذہب اسلام سے موازنہ کیا گیا ہے۔ اسلام اور ہندو مذہب کے درمیان بقائے باہمی کے لئے تشکیل دی گئی سفارشات اور نتائج کا موازنہ کیا گیا ہے۔

اسلامی تعلیمات اور گاندھی کے نقطہ نظر میں نیتکنتا یا اخلاقیات کے تصورات

ڈاکٹر حمید رضا نیا[☆]

خلاصہ: اخلاقیات فلسفہ کی ایک اہم شاخ ہے جو کسی شخص یا گروپ کے اقدار اور رسم و رواج کا مطالعہ کرتی ہے۔ یہ رائج تصورات جیسے صحیح اور غلط، اچھے اور برے کا تجزیہ کرتی ہے۔ اخلاقیات کی وضاحت یہ ہے: ”معاشرے میں رہ رہے انسان کے عمل کو سمجھنے کی سائنس، ایسی سائنس جو صحیح یا غلط، اچھے یا برے یا اسی قسم کے طرز عمل کے بیچ فیصلہ کرتی ہے۔“

فلسفہ بہت ہی مختلف قسم کے سوالات کو لیکر فکر مند دکھائی دیتا ہے: ہمیں کیا کرنا چاہئے؟ ہمیں معاشرے کو کس طرح منظم کرنا چاہئے؟ کیا صحیح ہے؟ ہم انصاف کے تصور کو کیسے سمجھیں؟ کس بنیاد پر ہم اپنا راہ عمل منتخب کریں؟ یہ ہمیں اخلاقیات، سیاسی فلسفہ اور قانون کے فلسفہ کے مطالعہ کی طرف لے جاتا ہے۔

مضمون نگار مختلف پہلوؤں پر بحث کرتے ہیں، جیسے سائنس میں اخلاقیات کا کردار، نیتکنتا پر گاندھی کا نظریہ، اسلام کے اخلاقی اصول کی وضاحت، اسلام میں اخلاقیات کے مقصد کے طور پر روح کی طہارت کی اہمیت، وغیرہ۔

[☆] مذہبی یونیورسٹی، قم، ایران

ہندوستان کے ممتاز روحانی رہنما مہاتما گاندھی نے اخلاقیات کے میدان میں بہت بڑا کردار ادا کیا ہے۔ گاندھی گیتا اور پرنسپل جیسے اہم ہندوستانی کتابوں سے بہت متاثر تھے۔ ٹالسٹائی اور تھور کی تعلیمات نے بھی انھیں بہت متاثر کیا تھا۔ سادہ ترین الفاظ میں بات کریں تو گاندھی کے فلسفہ کو سستیہ اور اہنسا کے دو اہم اصولوں میں بیان کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ گاندھیوادی اخلاق کے مطابق اخلاقیات اور مذہب ایک ہی ہیں۔ وہ اخلاقیات کو مذہب کی بنیاد مانتے تھے۔ ”جیسے ہی ہم اخلاقی بنیادوں کو چھوڑ دیتے ہیں، ہمارا مذہب ہونا بھی ختم ہو جاتا ہے۔ مثال کے طور پر اگر کوئی جھوٹا، ظالم یا بے صبر ہے تو وہ خدا کو بھی نہیں پاسکتا۔“

مضمون نگار گاندھیوادی اخلاق، اخلاقیات اور مذہب ہی فکر کا موازنہ اسلامی اصولوں اور تعلیمات سے کرتے ہیں، اور اس کے لئے کئی قرآنی آیات اور احادیث پیش کرتے ہیں۔

خلاصه مقالات

نقش فرهنگ در پیشرفت تمدن اسلامی در عصر جهانی شدن

دکتر طاهر علی محمدی^۱

دکتر محمد علی سرلک^۲

سید مهدی ویسه^۳

محمد تاب^۴

چکیده: این مقاله به بررسی و توضیح نقش فرهنگ و عناصر فرهنگی در تمدن اسلامی در این عصر جهانی شدن پرداخته است. پر واضح است که در طول تاریخ تنها چندی از ملل به فرهنگی رو به رشد و تمدنی مرفه دسترسی یافتند. هیچ تمدنی بدون پشتوانه فرهنگی قدرتمند، نمی تواند گسترش یابد. به عبارت دیگر، فرهنگ شرط اصلی و اولیه ظهور تمدن می باشد. می توان گفت که فرهنگ، تمدن را به حیطة زیست می آورد و تمایز بین تمدن ها با توجه به فرهنگ های مختلف ممکن می شود. دو موضوع مهم در این میان، مکانیسم های مناسب برای افزایش اعتماد به نفس فرهنگی در جوامع اسلامی

^۱ رئیس دانشگاه ایلام، ایران

^۲ گروه مدیریت دانشگاه پیام نور، ایران

^۳ دانشجوی مقطع دکتری مدیریت دانشگاه ایلام - ایران

^۴ دانشجوی مقطع دکتری مدیریت دانشگاه تهران - ایران

و دیگر مسئله جهانی شدن بعنوان یک فرصت یا یک تهدید و مخاطره، می بایستی مورد بحث و بررسی قرار گیرند.

تمدن اسلامی دارای سابقه ای بسیار آشفته بوده است، لذا تشخیص و درک جنبه های مختلف اجزایی مانند فرهنگ که غنا و توسعه تمدن را تحت الشعاع قرار می دهد، امری واجب است. مشکلات ناشی از رویارویی با مسئله پیچیده جهانی شدن با توجه به تأثیرات گسترده و عمیق بوجود آمده، توسط متفکران اسلامی مورد مطالعه قرار گرفته که دستاورد آن طرفدارانی با نظر مساعد و نیز مخالفانی که آن را دال بر حاکمیت و استمرار امپریالیست می دانند، می باشد.

نتایج این تحقیق نشان می دهد که توسعه تمدن اسلامی در عصر جهانی شدن در حین حرکت از مجرای تولید و تکثیر ارزشهای فرهنگی بوده و به نظر می رسد که جوامع شرقی به ویژه جوامع اسلامی می توانند با استفاده از فرهنگ غنی خود به یک مکانیسم مناسب، برای توسعه دسترسی یابند. با داشتن عزت نفس و ایمان به فرهنگ و اعتقادات خود، جهانی شدن می تواند فرصتی مناسب برای مسلمانان در معرفی فرهنگ اسلامی به دیگر کشورها و تمدن ها باشد. بنابراین، تمدن اسلامی که دربرگیرنده تمامی ویژگی های یک تمدن الهی است، در حیطه درسهای از قرآن و تفاسیر آن، و نیز سنت پیامبر، حضرت محمد(ص)، یک راهنمای بی نظیر با عناصر آن، که عبارتند از دین - اخلاق، دانش، عدالت، قوانین مذهبی، اصول و غیره ثابت می شود.

تمدن اسلامی در واقع بیش از شور و هیجان، تمدن عقل و خرد انسان است، چنانچه ایده اصلی بلوغ و شکفتگی ذهن انسانی، ثبات حکمت و اخلاق را در خود نهفته

دارد. فرهنگ نه ذاتی است و نه موروثی و نه در محیط های اجتماعی مانند جنسی یکروزه ساخته و پرداخته و آماده انتقال می شود. فرهنگ پدیده ای همگانی است و فرهنگ جامعه را نمی توان با مطالعات جزئی شناخت. همه سیستم های اجتماعی دارای فرهنگی پایدار و ثابت که تحت حاکمیت تاریخ و قابل انتقال نیز می باشد، بوده و این ویژگیهای فرهنگی جوامع را از یکدیگر متمایز می سازد. فرهنگ با ارتباطات گره خورده است، و از آنجایی که ارتباطات پویا و پیچیده هستند، فرهنگ نیز راکد و ساکن نیست. این پویایی به معنای یک فعالیت مداوم و مستمر است. ارتباطات سیستماتیک بوده و در خلاء انجام نمی شوند و البته بخشی از سیستمی والاتر می باشند. فرهنگ محیط زیستی است که در آن همه فعل و انفعالات ما به انجام می رسند. تغییر نگرش در هر بخش فرهنگی باعث تغییراتی در جنبه های دیگر آن می شود. حال آنکه ویل دورانت تمدن را یک نظام اجتماعی دانسته که زندگی انسان را توصیف می کند و متشکل از چهار عامل بنیادی، اجتماعی که عبارتند از اصول، نظام سیاسی، آداب و رسوم و سنت، و علوم و فن آوری، می باشد. تمدن بیشتر از فرهنگ تغییرات کلی، زندگی انسانی را در شکل اجتماعی اصلاح می کند. تمدن در نتیجه تعامل بین فرهنگ های مختلف شکل می گیرد. تمدن اسلامی با مبنای توحیدی، تمدنی ایدئولوژیکی می باشد. با مجموعه ای از عوامل مادی و اخلاقی و دست آوردهای اسلامی و پرداخته جامعه اسلامی، هدایت انسان به سوی بلوغ اخلاقی و مادی را در ضمن توجه به علم و دانش و نیز توجه ای ویژه به دانشمندان به انجام می رساند.

با وجود رابطه بین فرهنگ و تمدن، این دو پیش نیاز یکدیگر نیستند. توسعه فرهنگی در راه رسیدن به تمدن در یک جامعه، ممکن است. جامعه می تواند با گزینش

و یا تکیه بر تمدنی متفاوت توسعه یابد. علم مهم ترین هدیه ی اسلام در جهان مدرن است، اما توسعه کامل آن با سرعت کمی انجام می گیرد.

آلفرد نورت وایتهد (Alfred North Whitehead) می گوید: مسلمانان با بهره بردای از تمدن غنی خود موفق به حفظ توانایی های خارق العاده خود اعم از نیروهای معنوی و نیز قدرتهای مادی و فیزیکی شدند. آنها تجارت با شرق دور را آغاز کرده، مرزهای خود را در غرب گستراندند و قوانین را تصویب کرده، ریاضیات را به اشکال جدید تغییر داده و تلاش برای توسعه و تکمیل علم پزشکی را به کمال رساندند. آنها ناگهان موفق به خلق عجایب بی نظیری در تاریخ بشر شدند. چنانچه اساسی ترین کتابهای پزشکی توسط شخصیتهایی از بین مسلمانان چون ابو علی سینا، رازی و ابن رشد نگاشته شدهاند. اما مسائلی از قبیل استبداد، مادی گرایی، تعصب، و دوری از اسلام واقعی و اتکا به بیگانگان از جمله علل سقوط تمدن اسلامی به شمار می آیند. راه حل این همه را می بایستی در وحدت جهان اسلام از طریق مذاکرات و تبادل نظرونیز تبادل ارزش های مشترک با استفاده از زبان و بیانی مشترک یافت. چنانچه قرآن کریم و احکام آن، حج، قبله، مسجد، سنت پیامبر اسلام (ص) و زبان عربی که همانا زبان کلام الله است، اعیاد مسلمانان، تاریخ های مشترک سنتی اسلامی، تاریخ اسلام و آرمانهای مسلمانان مشترک می باشند.

یکی از چالش هایی که جهان اسلام در رابطه با سیاست جهانی شدن مواجه است از سوی مصوبات جهان غرب و بویژه آمریکا می باشد. امروزه، حفظ ارزش های اسلامی در جوامع اسلامی، بسیار حیاتی است، تا آن را به عنوان سپر در برابر فرهنگ مادی و فریبنده غرب برای کمک به بازگشت به رفتارها و اخلاق اسلامی بکار گیرد.

قرآن مجید به طور مداوم با انتقاد از جهل، مردم را تشویق به تفکر کرده و از مردم نادان به عنوان جمعی احمق، جاهل، کور، لال، کر و در رده حیوانات یاد کرده است. کلمات مشتق شده از ریشه علم و دانش، خرد، شناخت، استدلال، احساس، تفکر، درک، و منطق در آیات مختلف قرآن کریم بچشم می خورند. لهذا با اتخاذ روش صحیح و با اتفاق نظر مسلمانان و دوری از تفرقه و اختلافات، تمدن اسلامی با شکوه و جلال به سوی توسعه گام بر خواهد داشت، ان شاء الله تعالی.

معنویت و همزیستی مسالمت آمیز در اسلام با توجه و عنایت خاص به صوفی های هندی و ایرانی

پروفسور حمید الله مرازی*

چکیده: مسائل موضوع های مربوط به معنویت و رهبانیت با ادوار مدرن، بسیار مربوط شده اند. چنانچه تقریباً تمام این ارزش های ارائه شده، عاری از اخلاقیات می باشند. این ارزش های جدید، محصول یک سری ارزش های جایگزین شده که منشأ آن ها تقلید کورکورانه از روند های مادی و لامذهب بوجود آمده، از ایدئولوژی های مدرن غربی می باشد.

این ارزش های مدرن با کمترین زمینه های معنوی و اخلاقی، اغلب دغدغه های مصرف گرایانه عصر حاضر را تحت الشعاع قرار داده اند.

رفتارهای اداری و سازمانی در تجارت و کاربطور عمده، تحت تاثیر این ملاحظات و این کدهای جدید مصرف گرایانه و اخلاقیات، ناشی از موضوعاتی که از لذت های دنیوی و یا اصل اخلاق سودگرایی و یا در نهایت می شود آن را پراگماتیک و

*استاد دپارتمان فلسفه دانشگاه کشمیر حضرت بال سرینگر

(سرپرست موسسه مطالعات اسلامی شاهی همدان)

عملگرا دانست، ریشه می گیرند . دنیای بشریت در اثر جنگ ها ، به خاک و خون کشیده شده است و یک مشت ذی نفع آن را بین خود تقسیم کرده اند . چنانچه لمبوز آن را جنگ اعضای عالم بر علیه یکدیگر می نامد.

از طرف دیگر اهداف معنوی که اسلام برای بشر تعیین کرده است، مستلزم تحقق بخشیدن به مسئولیت های انسان در برابر خالق و هم نوعان است که دستاورد آن، آرامش روح می باشد.

بنابراین پر واضح است که هدف معنوی اسلام، دستیابی روح بشر به صلح و آرامش است. همانگونه که در قرآن کریم در آیات متعددی به این هدف اشاره شده است (سوره ۸۹ آیه ۲۷) ، (سوره ۸۹، آیه ۲۷-۳۰). از نظر اسلام طریقه دستیابی روح به صلح و آرامش به رابطه انسان با خالق بستگی دارد. توجه هرچه بیشتر بشر به خداوند باعث افزایش معنویت در انسان می باشد. بدون تردید اولیای خداوند به یگانگی الله معتقد بوده ،همانا ترس از خداوند باعث پرهیز از گناهان کبیره و بدی ها و عشق معبود از طرفی دیگر، باعث افزایش نیکی ها و پیروی از احکام الهی، اساس عملکردشان بوده است .این معنویت انسان ها از پیمودن طرق ناباب و ناشایست در تمام مراحل پستی و بلندی های روزگار، انسان را در امان نگاه داشته، باعث ایجاد آرامش درونی و شکل گیری و اقتدار نفس انسانی می شود. به طوری که شکست ها و پیروزی های دنیوی او را مسرور و مغرور نمی کند. چنین روح و روانی به انتقام و دشمنی روی نیاورده و خود را نمی بازد. چنین باوری درجه سکون ذهن و احساس انسان را چنان ارتقا می دهد که مسائل و مشکلات زودگذر دنیوی، باعث ایجاد کوچکترین واهمه و اندوهی در او نمی - شود. عرفان زیباترین منش و شخصیت والا را در انسان متجلی می سازد. دستیابی به

زندگی معنوی و روحانی عارف مسلمان، بایستی از طریق کائنات، واردچنین جهانی شودکه البته این بدین معنا نیست که توسط چنین طریقی، عارف به مرکز کمال نائل خواهد آمد. چراکه آن مقام، شایسته و بایسته پیامبر می باشد. ائمه اطهار سرمنشاء تصوّف از پویایی ذاتی برخوردار می باشند. عرفان چیزی غیر از یک جنبش به بازگشت نیست و لازم است که با استانداردهای تصوّف هر چند در مسیر درست لکن ساکن و ثابت باشد.

قرن سیزدهم شاهد گامی استوار به سوی ادغام تحکیم جنبش عرفانی در اسلام بود. در این قرن امام غزالی و امام قشیری به مفاهیم عرفانی شکل و انسجام بخشیدند. شیخ شهاب الدّین سهروردی اصول زندگی خانقاه و سازماندهی آنرا درعوارف المعارف اعلام داشت. دو تن از متفکران عارفان بزرگ قرن سیزدهم، محیّ الدین ابن عربی و مولانا جلالالدّین رومی به جنبش صوفی جان تازه ای بخشیده و با ایجاد دگرگونی هایی باعث ترویج سریع وجذابیّت هر چه بیشتر آن به عنوان یکی از والاترین موضوعات عاطفی، مذهبی شدند.

خواجه نظام الدّین اولیاء انزوا برای کنترل لازم بر نفس، وضو، روزه داری و اجتناب از پر خوری، اختیار سکوت در موضوعاتی که در رابطه با خداوند نمی باشد، عشقی پر شور و سرشار نسبت به صوفیان دیگر، ترک همه دغدغه های دنیوی در راه حق؛ را برای یک سالک صفات، لازم می داند و نیز اجتناب از امور دنیوی، قطع ارتباط با مردم وامور مربوطه و تمرکز بر حق و اجتناب مطلق از کوچکترین تمایلات دنیوی در طریقه سلوک را، لازم می شمارد.

برطبق نظریه معین الدین چشتی، خدمت به پدر و مادر، قرائت قرآن کریم، احترام به علما و مشایخ، زیارت حج، ارائه خدمات به امام زاده ها و امکان مقدس مذهبی از جمله پنج عبادت سالک می باشند.

تأسیس خانقاه بر اساس اعتقاد به زندگی انفرادی، بی نیازی از دنیا، عدم سازگاری تفکر با والاترین وایده آل ترین درجه عرفان که همانا نجات و آزادی از گناه از طریق خدمت به بشریت است، بنیان نهاده شد.

خانقاه پناهگاهی است برای عرفا و صوفیانی که ترک دنیا کرده اند و درکنار سالکانی که در این محل گرد هم آمده و خط مشی زندگی خود را تعیین کرده اند و چهره این حرکت را از درون و برون یکسان می سازند تا فرصتی برای نقد و انتقاد و نیز بهبود طرق در خانقاه با افکار و نگرش های متفاوت، تمام تنش ها و درگیری های شخصی و مشکلات را حل و فصل کرده و باهم صدایی و هماهنگی شخصیت های جدید، سلسه وار تولید شوند و با طلب مغفرت مشترک و ریاضت ها و رنج ها بالاترین منش انسان را باعث شده، ندای الهی در گوش انسان، اهمیت زندگی الهی را متجلی سازد.

معرفت طریقه رسالت است. تنها ارتباط سالک و معبود رابطه قلبی است. سالکان با ذکرنام خداوند با صدای بلند و نیز در سکوت و بی صدا به طور مکرر و مرتب با تنظیم تنفس، فرو رفتن در تفکر عرفانی و نیز چهل روز ریاضت درانزوا که در نتیجه تمرین فراوان ورقص صوفی و نوای آن، حالت خلصه را ایجاد می کند، طریق را برای ایجاد وصال حق طی می کنند.

خدایی واحد، منجی واحد

اگر خدا یگانه است، منجی عالم بشریت نیز یگانه است

سید حیدر *

چکیده: یکی از مهمترین اسناد بومی آمریکایی که در حال حاضر در کتابخانه اسناد شهر درسدن (Dresden) نگهداری و به همین نام نیز معروف است، درباره علم نجوم، جدولهای دقیقی از خسوف ماه و پدیده های دیگر، مطالب مهمی را ارائه می کند. این محاسبات چنان دقیق هستند که تقویم های امروزی در مقابلشان بسیار ابتدایی بنظر می رسند. اقوام مایان، سیستم محاسبه روزهای سال را نسبت به تاریخ مبدأ بنام روز تولد ستاره زهره، که با محاسبات امروزی ۱۳ آگوست سال ۳۱۱۴ پیش از میلاد است، انجام می دادند. طبق محاسبات این تقویم یک ماه از ۲۰ روز (uinals/ یونال) و سال از ۳۶۰ روز (tuns/ تون) متشکل بوده و نیز دوره های طولانی تر ۷۲۰۰ روزه (katun/ کاتون) و نیز دوره های ۱۴۴۰۰ روزه (baktun/ باکتون) نامیده می شدند. شماره ۱۳ به طور خارق العاده ای برای آنها مهم به شمار آمده است. چرا که مبتنی براساس اعتقادی بود که

* روزنامه نگار ارشد

تدوین: سازمان لایف واچ وحدیت دل

تاریخ آغاز را روز تولد ستاره زهره و کوتزال (Quetzalcoatl) پیامبر و یا شخصیتی روحانی تلقی کرده و در نهایت پس از این ۱۳ دوره طولانی (باکتون) خاتمه خواهد یافت. بر اساس این محاسبه، زمانی از تاریخ مبدأ این پیشگویی (نبوت) مایانها، می بایستی این ۱۳ دوره طولانی در روز ۲۲ دسامبر ۲۰۱۲ مقارن با اتمام پنجمین و یا آخرین دوره زمانی به پایان برسد. اطلاعات زیادی در مورد آنچه از نظر مایانها در این تاریخ اتفاق خواهد افتاد در دست نیست. اما اجمال نظر درباره دگرگونی های بزرگی که در راه است، وجود دارد. برای برخی تاریخ، بشارت از دگرگونی ها و تحولات مثبت و روحانی می دهد. در حالیکه بعضی ها آن را به مثابه آخر الزمان دانسته و آن را تاریخی فاجعه آمیز پیش بینی کرده اند.

بنده با رجوع به متون و کتب مقدس ادیان مطرح چون مایانها، یهودیان، مسیحیان، هندوها و مسلمانان، اهتمام را بر دستیابی به نتیجه ای منطقی گذارده ام. جالب توجه است که تمدن مایانها در سراسر مناطق جنوب مکزیک، گواتمالا، السالوادور، بلیز و غرب هندورایی گسترش یافته و امپراتوری آرتک که بین قرون سوم تا دهم به اوج شکوفایی خود دست یافته بود، در نهایت دستخوش انحطاط کامل شده است.

اگر این ناجی را یک حقیقت فرض کنیم که در کتاب مقدس هندوها، یهودیان، مسیحیان و مسلمانان از او یاد شده، آیا در سال ۲۰۱۲ نزول خواهد کرد؟

آیا این مسئله ناجی که از آمریکای لاتین شروع شده و در تمام ادیان به آن اشاره شده، می تواند مدرکی بر یگانگی خداوند نیز باشد؟ اکنون با گذری سریع و کوتاه بر این مقدمه که از دیدگاه مذاهب مختلف در برهه های متفاوت زمانی، توجه جامعه

بشریت را به خود جلب نموده، می پردازیم. متون هندو نیز که در زمان دارا شکوه ترجمه شده، بازگو کننده حقیقتی مشابه می باشند. متون مرمون نیز در قرن ۱۹ به دست آمدند. آموزه های بودایی و کنفسیوس نیز در قرن ۲۰ در سطح بین المللی مطرح و شناسایی شدند. مسیحیان نیز در انتظار منجی عالم هستند. در دین اسلام هم چنین باوری درباره ظهور بقیه ... حضرت مهدی بعنوان ناجی بشریت وجود دارد. البته قرآن کریم بشارت بازگشت حضرت عیسی را نیز اعلام داشته است. جالب است که طبق اعتقادات مسلمانان پیش بینی شده که حضرت مهدی (ع) بمدت ۹۰۷، و یا ۱۹ سال پیش از روز قیامت و همزمان با حضرت عیسی جهان را از تخلف، بی عدالتی و ظلم و ستم رها خواهد ساخت. و اما در میان یهودیان نیز ماشیاک اسرائیل را رهایی و نجات دهنده بشر از گناهان می دانند که در قالب انسان، ظاهر خواهد شد تا عدالت را برقرار ساخته و تسکین دهنده دردها باشد.

در کتاب مقدس هندوها، در بخشی بیان شده که ۳۶۰۰ سال پس از ظهور کریشنا دنیا چنان به فساد، گناه، دروغ، خیانت و مودی گری آغشته می شود که نیاز مبرم یک ناجی بار دیگر احساس می شود. این منجی دنیا را از تباهی نجات خواهد داد. هندوها معتقدند که جز خداوند کسی شایسته چنین عدالت گستری و رهایی بشر نخواهد بود. طبق باور هندوها این ناجی در قالب انسانی ظهور خواهد کرد و بر گزیده خداوند است و نجات انسانها را بر عهده خواهد داشت.

او دهمین و آخرین ظهور و بازگشت ویشنو (یکی از خدایان هندوها) به نام کالکی و به معنای ابدیت در بعد زمان است.

مذهب ، مبداء تاریخ بشریت

حمید قلندری*

چکیده: خداوند بشر را به عنوان نماینده خود خلق نمود و به زمین فرستاد. چنانچه حضرت آدم (ع) اولین بشر که اولین پیامبر برگزیده خداوند نیز بر روی زمین است، پایه گذار دین بشمار می آید. ایشان نقش بسیار حساسی را در تدوین و توسعه فرهنگ بشریت ایفا نمودند. چنانچه حضرت آدم (ع) درس همزیستی مسالمت آمیز راه جامعه بشریت آموخت.

در طی ادوار و قرون، تاریخ شهادت داده است که در هیچ یک از ابعاد زمان، انسان جدای از مذهب قادر به ادامه و رشد و کمال نبوده است. یکی از این موارد، مسئله شوری بود که علی رغم قدرت و عظمتش، بدلیل عدم معنویت سرانجام رو به نابودی رفته و سرنوشت غم انگیزی را تجربه کرد.

مذهب هندو با قدمت بیش از ۳۵۰۰ سال مجموعه ای از عقاید و باورهای گوناگون باریشه های باستانی، افسانه ها، موعظه های دینی، آموزه های اخلاقی و معنوی که از مشتقات متون مقدس می باشد، یکی از غنی ترین ادیان محسوب می شود.

* عضو هیئت علمی دانشگاه پیام نور نهاوند

فلسفه هندوئیسم براساس اعتقاد به عالم روح به عنوان اصل و اساس زندگی و نیز اعتقاد به طلسم، پایه گذاری شده است.

این فلسفه ضمن طی کردن پدیده تکامل، به اصول اشتراکی گرویده است. این اصول ترکیبی، سنن اجتماعی و فرهنگی مردم هند راتحت الشعاع قرار داده و آنها را به اشکالی جدید و قابل قبول بامذهب مطابقت داده است.

متون مقدس هندو باستانی و عتیق بوده، بر علم و آموختن بسیار تأکید دارد. البته این پدیده اعتقادی، تحت تاثیر مهاجرت آریاییها از آسیای میانه و نیز شمال آسیا به هند واقع شده است. سروده های بسیاری در متون "ودا" که اولین دوره هندوئیسم بوده، شاهی برای این ادعا می باشد.

طبق اعتقادات هندو، "وداها" ساخته و پرداخته بشر نبوده بلکه به انسان وحی شده اند که اشاره ای بر نیروی الهی دارد.

فلسفه "ودا" به مفهوم خلقت زندگی، وحدانیت خداوند، زندگی مسالمت آمیز و رابطه بین جهان فانی وابدیت توسط بسیاری از موعظه گران، بیان شده است.

در حالیکه در فلسفه هندوئیسم از خدایان نام برده شده است، ولی آموزه های آن در یک جهت بوده و قیمومیت آنها را خدا که همانا "برهمن" می باشد، بر عهده دارد.

سیر تکاملی هندوئیسم از ادوار مختلف که شامل دوره ودا، دوره برهمنی، دوره حماسی، دوره بدیهیات، دوره رشد و نمو فلسفه هندوئیسم و نهایتاً دوره ای که تحت تأثیر

اسلام بر مذهب هند و باعث تغییرات و دگرگونی های عمیقی شده و پس از آن حضور انگلیسی ها، که ضمن ایجاد تناقض هایی در این مذهب، دچار دگرگونی هایی شگرف شده است.

در طول زمان فرقه های مختلف و متعددی مثل فرق شیوایی، ویشنوی و غیره نیز از مذهب هندوئیسم منشعب شده اند.

در مذهب برهما نیز فرقه هایی همچون گانیش، هانومان، مورکان به وجود آمدند.

ناگفته نماند که در مذهب هندو نه تنها انسان، بلکه همه موجودات و مخلوقات جای ویژه ای داشته و انسان همواره به دوستی و محبت و ترحم ترغیب شده است.

مذهب هندو بر ۴ اصل استوار می باشد: الوهیت روح، وحدت موجودات، وحدت خدایان و وحدت همه ادیان و فرقه ها. در دین مبین اسلام پیامبر گرامی حضرت محمد (ص) نیز بشارتی مشابه را برای بشر به ارمغان می آورند. حضرت با تکیه بر وحدت بشر و وحدانیت خداوند، تعلیمات اسلام را برای همه انسانهای روی زمین و کاربرد این آموزه ها، وصال حق مبتنی بر اصل تزکیه را اعلام می فرمایند.

همانگونه که میدانیم اسلام دینی است که بردل های آزردہ مرحم گذاشته و دستگیر مستضعفان است که در طول تاریخ همواره تحت ظلم و استبداد قرار گرفته اند.

ائمه اطهار همواره مشوق بشر در کسب علم و معنویت و اخلاق بوده اند. محبت،
ترحم، وحدت، انصاف و صلح و آرامش همواره خرد و آموزه های خاندان اهل بیت بوده
است. این آموزه ها در مذهب هندو نیز بوضوح قابل لمس می باشد.

مفهوم اصول اخلاقی از دیدگاه اسلام و مهاتما گاندی

دکتر حمید رضانیا*

چکیده: اخلاق به عنوان علم هنجاری، رفتار انسان ها را در جوامع تعریف می کند. این بدین معنی است که این شاخه از علم به قضاوت رفتار بشری در جامعه پرداخته و طبق موازین خاص آنها را درست یا غلط، خوب یا بد می نامد. از طرف دیگر فلسفه با سؤالاتی بسیار متفاوت مثل چگونگی عملکرد و یا سازماندهی جامعه و آنچه مطلوب و شایسته است و نیز چگونگی ادراک ایده عدالت و انتخاب مبنا در میان عملکردهای مختلف، سرو کار دارد که از جمله سؤالاتی هستند که منجر به مطالعه اخلاق، فلسفه سیاسی و فلسفه حقوق می شوند. اگرچه فیلسوفان پیش از سقراط در یونان باستان به جستجو و بررسی ماهیت واقعیتهای پرداخته بودند، لکن پاسخ هایی در مورد سؤالاتی در رابطه با معرفت شناسی و علوم طبیعی هنوز هم جالب توجه می باشند. بعنوان مثال افلاطون پاسخ خود را به این پرسش که "عدالت چیست" بجای "جامعه چیست" متمرکز ساخت. و از این طریق بسیاری از مسائل دیگر در مورد جامعه، و چگونگی اداره آن را مورد بررسی و کاوش قرار داد. ارسطو به این نتیجه رسید که والاترین وسیله برای انسان ریشه شناسی است که به معنای واقعی کلمه به معنی داشتن یک روح مصلح و

* عضو هیئت علمی دانشگاه ادیان و مذاهب قم

نیک می باشد، در حالیکه همه اینها تضمینی بر سعادت نیست. ریشه شناسی موجب تعالی و برتری انسان و نیز نماد هدفمند بودن پدیده ها را در بر دارد. مطالعه و بررسی رفتار انسان در پرتو اصول اخلاقی، شامل ابعاد متعددی است.

انگیزه در عملکرد، عامل اصلی قضاوت در خوبی یا بدی انسانهاست. در علم اخلاق، خوبی و یا بطور کلی هر عمل نمی تواند مستقل از اثرات مضر یا مفیدش باشد. وی وک آنندا، گاندی و رادها کریشنن به صراحت می پذیرند که امکان ایجاد برنامه هایی برای ارتقای کمالات اخلاقی با تلاش آگاهانه فردی با اعمال اراده ولی آزادانه وجود دارد. بطوریکه افراد مستقیما قادر به مشاهده حقایق غیر معنوی و غیر اخلاقی عمیق تری را که در زندگی وجود دارند، بشوند. امروزه حتی برای دانشجویان رشته های مختلف علوم از قبیل شبیه سازی و مهندسی ژنتیک گیاهی و جانوری، فن آوری و اطلاعات نیز دوره های آموزش اخلاق، طراحی و ابداع شده اند.

آقای گاندی به زندگی اخلاقی، بر اساس تحریم های داخلی که به منزله ماهیت زندگی مذهبی درونی هستند اعتقاد ندارد. از نظر ایشان یک نفر می تواند از زندگی مذهبی بهره مند باشد حتی اگر به تحریم ها و سختگیری های ظاهری مذهبی اعتقاد نداشته باشد. اگر چه همه ادیان به پذیرفتن تحریم خارجی، مذهبی برای اخلاقیات بر اساس برخی از باورهای متافیزیکی معتقدند، اما از آنجایی که این تفاوت های بنیانی در زمینه متافیزیک یکسان نمی باشند و متافیزیک فراتر از محدوده دلیل به معلول پی بردن است، لذا برای ما پی بردن و حصول اطمینان در گزینش مذهبی بعنوان منطقی ترین مذهب، میسر نمی باشد. از نظر گاندی اساس وحدت و حقیقت در همه ادیان بزرگ بر اصل اخلاق استوار است. مهاتما گاندی حقیقت را با خدا همسان دانسته و گفته است که

واقعیت در دل همه انسانها وجود دارد، و موجب استمرار خلقت می شود. گاندی می گوید که برای پیدا کردن حقیقت به طور کامل درک مفهوم "خود"، "سرنوشت" و نیز دستیابی به "کمال ایده آل" واجب می باشد. وی در توضیح می گوید که اخلاق اساس دین بوده، از دست دادن اساس اخلاقی همانا به منتفی شدن اعتقادات مذهبی می انجامد. دین بر اخلاق الویت ندارد. نمیتوان خدا در کنار کذب، ظلم و یا بی بند و باری قرار داد.

دین اسلام نیز با تأکید بر عبادت خداوند یگانه که لازمه آن فضایل اخلاقی در انسان، که دستاورد آن سعادت ابدی است. و پرهیز از فساد اخلاقی، که منجر به نفرت و دونی و زبونی می شود، بر اصل خلوص درونی پافشاری دارد. به منظور رسیدن به کمال نهایی، اسلام انسان را به پیمودن مسیر مبارزه با نفس اماره و تمایلات خودخواهانه غیر اخلاقی دعوت نموده تا روح انسان برای ادراک و دریافت فضل خداوند آماده باشد. چنانچه در قرآن کریم آمده است:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۚ

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و [برای] کسانی که در راه ما مبارزه می کنند، یقیناً ما آنان را راهنمایی می کنیم.