

Al-Baiyyinah

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*In the Name of Allah
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful*

“ISLAMIC PERSONALITIES OF SOUTH ASIA”

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Editorial

Alhamdulillah! All praise to Allah that we have been able to bring out a very special issue of Al Baiyyinah. In this issue we chose to highlight the lives and deeds of the Islamic scholars of South Asia

There is no doubt that the sub-continent of South Asia has been blessed with many Islamic scholars in different times, who served Islam in various ways. Some of them have given leadership in politics, some have built up various institutions and some have organized Islamic parties and organizations. Others have written extensively on Islam, in explaining its tenets, removing misunderstanding to establish Islam in personal, social and national fields and to keep the spirit of Islam alive. It is in no way possible to cover all these great scholars in our limited number of pages. Though we gave our utmost effort to cover as many scholars as we could, within our limitations, we admit it was still not possible to cover many important scholars. We sincerely apologize for our incapability and look forward to publish the life-account and achievement in other issues.

In the current world, where we lack adequate number of quality thinkers and scholars on Islam, we hope this magazine will serve not only as a database, but also as an inspiration for the new generation. The Ummah and humanity require many more profound and morally inspired scholars. Each of the scholars whose life account has been included in this number led a life of sincerity, integrity and devotedness to Almighty. Their life is a clear proof that it is possible to follow the footsteps of the Prophet (SAW) and live a life in Allah's way, in every age. There is much we can learn from their deeds and actions, but what is more important is that we reflect the same in our lives.

We take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to all whose contribution made the publication of this magazine possible. We look forward to accept more of their articles in future. We pray and hope to keep regularity of the publication of this magazine. May Allah (SWT) - the Most Beneficial and Merciful grant us the capability to continue this effort and accept this humble effort of us, Ameen.

Editor

July, 2008

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Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1563-1624)

Early Life and Education

Shaikh Ahmad Badaruddin Al-Frooqi Sirhindi, better known as Mujaddid Alf Thani or the reviver of the second millennium, was born in 971/1563 at Sirhind. His father Shaikh 'Abd al-Ahad Makhdum was a great saint and an acknowledged authority of jurisprudence. From his father's side, he descended from the Caliph 'Umar. In his early childhood he was sent to a school where in a short period of time he learnt the Holy Qur'an by heart. Then he learned the fundamentals of Qadriyyah and Chistiyyah orders of Sufism from his father. He also learned a great deal from Kamal Kiis-hmiri, Ya`giib Kashmiri and Khwajah Bagi Billah. He also visited Agra and met great men of learning Abu al-Fadal and Faidi. Shaikh Ahmad was married to the daughter of Shaikh Sultan, a noble man of Thanesar.

Contemporary Subcontinent

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind was born when Muslim world was passing a very critical juncture in its History. The Tartaric 'fitnah' had already captured their whole land to west of the Hindu Kush. In India, Akbar introduced his new religion 'Din-e-Ilahi'. 'Baha'ism' also has its sprouting in this period. The Society was defiled with all outward appearance of fitnah, tyranny and immoral practices. The filth of 'shirk' intruded into Muslims through the erroneous practices of a class of injudicious Shaikhs (Piirs). The result of this intrusion was severe. The Muslims were as to forget the articles of Islamic faith. It was prevalent in the courtyard of Akbar that Islam was the religion of the ignorant and illiterate mass, and was inappropriate for a civilized and cultured nation. The belief in Nubuyat, Wahi, Akherah, Jannah and Jahannam became laughable and funny. Abul Fazl in his Ain-i-Akbari writes: "Notwithstanding every strictness and reluctance shewn by His Majesty in admitting novices, there are many thousands, men of all classes, who have cast over their shoulders the mantle of belief, and look upon their conversion to the New Faith as the means of obtaining every blessing.

At the above-mentioned time of everlasting auspiciousness, the novice with his turban in his hands, puts his head on the feet of His Majesty. This is symbolical, and expresses that the novice, guided by good fortune and the assistance of his good star, has cast aside conceit and selfishness, the root of so many evils, offers his heart in worship, and now comes to enquire as to the means of obtaining everlasting life. His Majesty, the chosen one of God, then stretches out the hand of favor, raises up the suppliant, and replaces the turban on his head, meaning by these symbolical actions that he has raised up a man of pure intentions, who from seeming existence has now entered into real life. His Majesty then gives the novice the *Shaçî'*, upon which is engraved 'the Great Name,' and His Majesty's symbolical motto, '*Alláhu Akbar.*'"ⁱⁱ

About the Ordinances of Din e ihali Abul fazal writes: "The members of the Divine Faith, on seeing each other, observe the following custom. One says, "*Alláhu Akbar;*" and the other responds, "*Jalla Jaláluhu.*"ⁱⁱⁱ These formulæ remind of Akbar's name, *Jaláluddín Muhammad Akbar*. The words *Alláhu Akbar* are *ambiguous*: they may mean, *God is great*, or, *Akbar is God*. There is no doubt that Akbar liked the phrase for its ambiguity; for it was used on coins, the Imperial seals, and the heading of books, farmáns, &c. His era was called the *Divine* era; his faith, the *Divine* faith; and the note at the end of this A'ín shows how Akbar, starting from the idea of the Divine right of kings, gradually came to look upon himself as the *Mujtahid* of the age, then as the prophet of God and God's Vice regent on earth, and lastly as a Deity.

The creeds of his new religion got popularity among the flatterers of Akbar's courtyard, selfish ullemas and polytheists. Akbar found words 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad' unsettling. So, the 'chelas' (followers of Din e Ilahi) cut their names to size removing from them 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad'. Abul Fazl argued against and doubled over Salat (prayer), Saum (Fasting), Hajj (Pilgrimage) and many other fundamental 'ibadah'. The ullemas did not dare to write naat in the preface to their books. It was daring to perform salat near the royal court.

While introducing the new religion, it was propagated that as Islam had become a thousand years old, it was unsetting now. So, a right and proper religion will be set up incorporating good things from all religions. Fire

worshipping, sun-worshipping, bell-ringing, observing Shibratri, Rakhi, Punam, Hawan became parts of the religion. The court endorsed permission for playing gambling, taking interest, drinking wine.

Shaikh Ahmad was born to such a downfallen nation. After receiving proper education, he attempted to alter the downward trend into an upward one.

Shaikh's Reform Movement

There were many sufis and sheikhs at that time. Many of them were really truth seekers. Nevertheless, it was only Sheikh Ahmad who stood against all oppression and fitnah for the revival of the Islamic Shariah. As a result, he had to fall in the fire of anger of the tyrant. The royal power made use of all possible means to stop his mission, but he was never dismayed. Finally, he succeeded to alter the trend of the fitnah. In 1028/1618, he was imprisoned and was sent to Gwalior prison as he refused to prostrate in honor before the Emperor Jahangir. However, later Jahangir himself became his disciple, and got his own son Khurram admitted as Sheikh Ahmad's student. Consequently, Din-e-Ilahi made its departure as the Darbari Shariah. Islamic etiquettes and jurisprudence were restored in cleansing all alterations made in Akbar's courtyard. Sheikh Ahmad successfully resisted the conspiracy of wiping out Islam from the realm of life and the plot to turn the royal power towards 'kufr' and 'shirk'. In addition he stamped out the erroneous concept of 'tasauf' that was spread over the Muslim society by miss-guided Sheikhs. He carried out far reaching movement to eradicate all sorts of 'Jaheliyah' from the society. His effort was not confined in Indian subcontinent only. By thousands of his followers and workers, it spread out in the Central Asia and reformed the character and faith of the people.

The Mujaddid strictly adhered to religious practices as sanctioned in the Quran and Sunnah. He was very hard on those who coined excuses to violate them. His knowledge of 'Fiqh' was encyclopedic. He was an authority on 'Fiqh' and 'Tradition'. His reforms were of three categories:

- (1) He called the Muslims to follow the 'Sunnah' and discard 'bid'ah' (heresy).
- (2) He reformed Islamic mysticism (Sufism) from the practices and thoughts, which had crept into it through non-Muslim influences.
- (3) He put great emphasis on the Islamic Law.

His views are outlined in his most famous work, *Maktubat*, a compilation of his letters. His burial place is at Sirhind.¹

ⁱ A ring or a piece of thread like Brahminical thread.

ⁱⁱ Ain-i-Akbari (Blochmann Volume I, Book One, A'in 77)

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

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Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur (1817-1898)

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur commonly known as Sir Syed, was an South East Asian educator, politician, and an Islamic reformer and modernist. Sir Syed pioneered modern education for the Muslim community in Indian subcontinent by founding the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College, which later developed into the Aligarh Muslim University. His work gave rise to a new generation of Muslim intellectuals and politicians who composed the Aligarh movement to secure the political future of Muslims in Indian subcontinent.

Early Life

Born into Mughal nobility, Sir Syed earned a reputation as a distinguished scholar while working as a jurist for the British East India Company. During the Indian Rebellion of 1857, he remained loyal to the British and was noted for his actions in saving European lives. After the rebellion he penned the booklet *Asbab-e-Bhaghawath-e-Hind (The Causes of the Indian Mutiny)* — a daring critique, at the time, of British policies that he blamed for causing the revolt. Believing that the future of Muslims was threatened by the rigidity of their orthodox outlook, Sir Syed began promoting Western-style scientific education by founding modern schools and journals and organizing Muslim intellectuals. Towards this goal, Sir Syed founded the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875 with the aim of promoting social and economic development of Indian Muslims. Being one of the most influential Muslim politicians of his time, he promoted Muslim unity and pro-British attitudes and activities.

Scholarly works

The *Social Reformer* was a pioneering publication initiated by Sir Syed to promote liberal ideas in Muslim society. While continuing to work as a jurist, Sir Syed began focusing on writing on various subjects, mainly in Urdu. His career as an author began when he published a series of treatises in Urdu on religious subjects in 1842. He published the book *Athar Assanadid (Great Monuments)* documenting antiquities of Delhi dating from the medieval era. This work earned him the reputation of a cultured scholar. In 1842, he completed the *Jila-ul-Qulub bi Zikr il Mahbub* and the *Tuhfa-i-Hasan*, along with the *Tahsil fi jar-i-Saqil* in 1844. These works focused on religious and cultural subjects. In 1852, he published the two works *Namiqa dar bayan masala tasawwur-i-Shaikh* and *Silsilat ul-Mulk*. He released the second edition of *Athar Assanadid* in 1854. He also penned a commentary on the Bible – the first by a Muslim – in which he argued that Islam was the closest religion to Christianity, with a common lineage from Abrahamic religions.

Acquainted with high-ranking British officials, Sir Syed obtained close knowledge about British colonial politics during his service at the courts. In 1858, he was appointed to a high-ranking post at the court in Muradabad, where he began working on his most famous literary work. Publishing the booklet *Asbab-e-Bhaghawath-e-Hind* in 1859, Sir Syed studied the causes of the revolt. In this, his most famous work, he rejected the common notion that the conspiracy was planned by Muslim elites, who were insecure at the diminishing influence of Muslim monarchs. Sir Syed blamed the British East India Company for its aggressive expansion as well as the ignorance of British politicians regarding Indian culture. However, he gained respect for British power, which he felt would dominate India for a long period of time. Seeking to rehabilitate Muslim political influence, Sir Syed advised the British to appoint Muslims to assist in administration. His other writings such as *Loyal Muhammadans of India*, *Tabyin-ul-Kalam* and *A Series of Essays on the Life of Muhammad and Subjects Subsidiary Therein* helped to create cordial relations between the British authorities and the Muslim community.

Reform Works

Through the 1850s, Syed Ahmed Khan began developing a strong passion for education. While pursuing studies of different subjects including European jurisprudence, Sir Syed began to realize the advantages of Western-style education, which was being offered at newly-established colleges across India. Despite being a devout Muslim, Sir Syed criticized the influence of traditional dogma and religious orthodoxy, which had

made most Indian Muslims suspicious of British influences. Committed to working for the upliftment of Muslims, Sir Syed founded a modern Madrasah in Muradabad in 1859; this was one of the first religious schools to impart scientific education. Sir Syed also worked on social causes, helping to organize relief for the famine-struck people of the Northwest Frontier Province in 1860. He established another modern school in Ghazipur in 1863.

Upon his transfer to Aligarh in 1864, Sir Syed began working wholeheartedly as an educator. He founded the Scientific Society of Aligarh, the first scientific association of its kind in India. Sir Syed assembled Muslim scholars from different parts of the country. The Society held annual conferences, disbursed funds for educational causes and regularly published a journal on scientific subjects in English and Urdu. Sir Syed felt that the socio-economic future of Muslims was threatened by their orthodox aversions to modern science and technology. He published many writings promoting liberal, rational interpretations of Islamic scriptures. However, his view of Islam was rejected by Muslim clergy as contrary to traditional views on issues like *jihad*, polygamy and animal slaughtering.

Founding Aligarh

On April 1, 1869 Sir Syed traveled to England. Sir Syed returned to India in the following year determined to build a "Muslim Cambridge." Upon his return, he organized the "Committee for the Better Diffusion and Advancement of Learning among Muhammadans" By 1873, the committee under Sir Syed issued proposals for the construction of a college in Aligarh. He began publishing the journal *Tahzib al-Akhlaq (Social Reformer)* to spread awareness and knowledge on modern subjects and promote reforms in Muslim society. Sir Syed worked to promote reinterpretation of Muslim ideology in order to reconcile tradition with Western education. He argued in several books on Islam that the Qur'an rested on an appreciation of reason and natural law, making scientific inquiry important to being a good Muslim. Sir Syed established a modern school in Aligarh and, obtaining support from wealthy Muslims and the British, laid the foundation stone of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College on May 24, 1875. He retired from his career as a jurist the following year, concentrating entirely on developing the college and on religious reform. Sir Syed's new institution attracted a large student body, mainly drawn from the Muslim gentry and middle classes. The curriculum at the college involved scientific and Western subjects, as well as Oriental subjects and religious education. The first chancellor was Sultan Shah Jahan Begum, a prominent Muslim noblewoman, and Sir Syed invited an Englishman, Theodore Beck, to serve as the first college principal. The college was originally affiliated with Calcutta University but was transferred to the Allahabad University in 1885. In 1920, the college was transformed into a university.

Political career

In 1878, Sir Syed was nominated to the Viceroy's Legislative Council. He testified before the education commission to promote the establishment of more colleges and schools across India. In the same year, Sir Syed founded the Muhammadan Association to promote political co-operation amongst Indian Muslims from different parts of the country. In 1886, he organized the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference in Aligarh, which promoted his vision of modern education and political unity for Muslims. His works made him the most prominent Muslim politician in 19th century India, often influencing the attitude of Muslims on various national issues. He supported the efforts of Indian political leaders Surendranath Banerjea and Dadabhai Naoroji to obtain representation for Indians in the government and civil services. In 1883, he founded the Muhammadan Civil Service Fund Association to encourage and support the entry of Muslim graduates into the Indian Civil Service (ICS).

His Demise

On March 27, 1898, this great Muslim scholar passed away. May Allah rest his soul in peace. Ameen!

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Allama Iqbal (1877-1938)

Allama Iqbal is one of the preeminent writers of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Indeed, the attention he has received from numerous writers, translators, and critics from Western as well as Islamic countries testifies to his stature as a world literary figure. While his primary reputation is that of a poet, Iqbal has not lacked admirers for his philosophical thought. He has in fact been called “the most serious Muslim philosophical thinker of modern times.” The frequently used appellation of “poet-philosopher” is thus well deserved. The hyphen in the phrase is all-important: Iqbal’s poetry and philosophy do not exist in isolation from each other; they are integrally related, his poetry serving as a vehicle for his thought. Iqbal wrote poetry in Urdu and Persian, and several collections in each language exist. In the following page a life-sketch of Iqbal is followed by a brief treatment of some of the major themes and literary features of his poetry.

Early Life and Education

Iqbal was born in Sialkot, in the present-day province of the Punjab in Pakistan, in 1877. He received his early education in that city, where one of his teachers was Mir Hasan, an accomplished scholar who commanded a knowledge of several Islamic languages. Mir Hasan gave Iqbal a thorough training in the rich Islamic literary tradition. His influence on Iqbal was formative. For higher education Iqbal went to Lahore (1895), where he enrolled in Government College, getting, in 1899, an MA in philosophy; he had already obtained a degree in law (1898). In Lahore, a major center of academic and literary activity, Iqbal soon made a name for himself as a poet. One of the teachers of Government College Iqbal admired most was Sir Thomas Arnold. Arnold, too, had great affection for Iqbal, he helped Iqbal in his career as a teacher and also encouraged him to undertake several research projects. Iqbal then left for study at Cambridge. His choice of Cambridge was probably dictated by the fact that Cambridge was reputed for the study not only of European philosophy but also of Arabic and Persian. In his three years of stay abroad, Iqbal obtained a BA from Cambridge (1906), qualified as a barrister at London’s Middle Temple (1906), and earned a PhD from Munich University (1908). After returning to Lahore in 1908, Iqbal taught philosophy at Government College for a few years. In 1911 he resigned from government service and set up legal practice. Meanwhile he continued to write poetry in Urdu and Persian, *Asrar-i Khudi* (Persian) was published in 1915. Translated into English as *The Secrets of the Self* (1920) by Professor Reynold Nicholson of Cambridge, the book introduced Iqbal to the West. *Asrar-i Khudi* was followed by several other volumes: *Rumuz-i Bikhudi* (1918), *Payam-i Mashriq* (1923), *Bang-i Dara* (1924), *Zabur-i ‘Ajam* (1927), *Javid Namah* (1932), *Musafir* (1936), *Zarb-i Kalim* (1937), and *Armaghan-i Hijaz* (1938, posthumously). Iqbal wrote prose also. His doctoral thesis, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, was published in 1908, and his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (with a 7th chapter added to the original set of six lectures, first published in 1930), in 1934. Many of Iqbal’s poetical works have been rendered into foreign languages, including English, German, Italian, Russian, Czechoslovakian, Arabic, and Turkish. His works have also spawned a vast amount of critical literature in many languages.

His Role in Political Issues

Although his main interests were scholarly, Iqbal was not unconcerned with the political situation of the country and the political fortunes of the Muslim community of India. Already in 1908, while in England, he had been chosen as a member of the executive council of the newly established British branch of the Indian Muslim League. In 1931 and 1932 he represented the Muslims of India in the Round Table Conferences held in England to discuss the issue of the political future of India. And in a 1930 lecture Iqbal suggested the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of India. Iqbal died (1938) before the creation of Pakistan (1947), but it was his teaching that “spiritually ... has been the chief force behind the creation of Pakistan.” He is the national poet of Pakistan. Iqbal is the person who brought Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah back to politics after he left India for England, being frustrated by situation here. Iqbal remained steady supporter of Mr. Jinnah till his death in 1938. In 1930, in the Muslim League conference in Allahabad, Dr. Iqbal in his presidential speech spoke about independent Muslim state or states in the sub-continent, which finally led to the establishment of Pakistan

His poetic and philosophical ideas and style

A reader of Iqbal's poetry is struck by its sheer thematic variety. Iqbal was deeply interested in the issues that have exercised the best minds of the human race—the issues of the meaning of life, change and constancy, freedom and determinism, survival and progress, the relation between the body and the soul, the conflict between reason and emotion, evil and suffering, the position and role of human beings in the universe—and in his poetry he deals with these and other issues. He had also read widely in history, philosophy, literature, mysticism, and politics, and, again, his catholic interests are reflected in his poetry.

The theme of humanity is closely linked in Iqbal with that of *khudi* (literally, “selfhood”). *Khudi* is a complex thought in Iqbal. Broadly speaking, it represents the principle of the inner self with an urge to manifest itself. Societies as well as individuals have *khudi*, and it is on the development or suppression of one's or failure in the world depends, *khudi* that one's success the *khudi* of slaves, for example, is moribund. Recognition, discovery, cultivation, and assertion of their *khudi* should, therefore, be the aim of humans. Iqbal's critique of Muslim societies is predicated on the assumption that these societies have lost their *khudi* or have allowed it to become seriously impaired. The best way to understand Iqbal's concept of *khudi* is by reading poems in which he discusses the subject. Perfection, or rather limitless perfection, is a frequently occurring motif in Iqbal's poetry. “I seek the end of that which has no end,” says Iqbal in “The Hour and the Poet”, and, in the same poem: “From the spark I seek a star, from the star a sun.” Iqbal sees no end to human potentialities. He wishes humans to embark on a never-ending journey of discovery and to this end emphasizes the importance of action. Constant action and perpetual movement are in fact the only guarantee of survival in the world. Nations fall behind when they cease to be dynamic and start preferring a life of idle speculation over one of purposive action.

Contribution to Muslim Ummah

Although he has wide-ranging interests, Iqbal essentially belongs to, and speaks from within, the Islamic tradition, employing, for his purposes, the historical, religious, philosophical, and literary resources of that tradition. Iqbal held to the doctrine of art for life's sake. Acutely aware of the problems of Muslim decadence and backwardness, Iqbal takes it upon himself to shake the Muslims of India and other countries out of their lethargy, urging them to take the path of progress, so that they can gain an honorable position in the polity of nations. He uses the medium of poetry to arouse socio-religious consciousness among Muslims. As a result, Islamic religious and social themes predominate in his poetry. But Iqbal's vision of a revived religion is far from conservative. He is sharply critical of many of the institutions of historic Islam (of the institution of monarchy, for example), and his vision of a new world derives from the Islamic notions of egalitarianism and social justice. He rejects dogmatism in religion, advocates rethinking of the Islamic intellectual heritage, and stands for the establishment of a forward-looking community. But the conviction of art for life's sake never allows Iqbal's poetry to degenerate into bland or crass propaganda. The worldwide acclamation he has won is proof that Iqbal's strength consists in writing purpose poetry of the highest artistic standards.

(Based on the article of Mustansir Mir, available at www.allamaiqbal.com)

Quotes by Allama Iqbal

“I have never considered myself a poet. Therefore, I am not a rival of anyone, and I do not consider anybody my rival.”

“I lead no party; I follow no leader. I have given the best part of my life to careful study of Islam, its law and polity, its culture, its history and its literature.”

“People who have no hold over their process of thinking are likely to be ruined by liberty of thought. If thought is immature, liberty of thought becomes a method of converting men into animals.”

Begum Rokeya Shakhawat Hossain (1880-1932)

Begum Rokeya Shakhawat Hossain was an educationist, and social reformer who played a leading role in Muslim women education. She was born on 9th December 1880 into a landed family of Pairaband in Rangpur. Zahiruddin Abu Ali Haider Saber was her father and Rahatunnesa Chowdhury, her mother. In 1898, Rokeya was married to Syed Sakhawat Hossain, an Urdu-speaker from Bhagalpur in Bihar. A deputy magistrate, Sakhawat Hossain was liberal and progressive, and encouraged his wife to study both Bangla and English and also inspired her to read literary works from home and abroad. She also started writing at the inspiration of her husband. Unfortunately, Rokeya had a short marital life. Her husband died on 3 May 1909. She had two daughters, but they died in infancy.

Begum Rokeya actively fought for women rights. She fought against complete seclusion of women, immorality, misconceptions on *hijaab*, dowry, marriage of widows, early marriage, wrong practice and misuse of divorce provisions. She used her voice and pen against all these odds and superstitions and explained the real position of Islam through her actions and wonderful literature. She was a devoted Muslimah and she fought her life for clearing misconceptions on Islam. She mentioned Quran and authentic Sunnah in her writings to justify her points. She did all these when it was a male-chauvinist society in the then Bengal region, and women education was almost non-existent. Rokeya realized that women could be freed from their shackles only if they were educated and became economically independent. Accordingly, on 1 October 1909, she started a school for Muslim girls at Bhagalpur with only five students, naming it after her husband, Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School. However, she could not continue at Bhagalpur for domestic reasons and decided to move to Calcutta. Rokeya worked hard to convince Bengali Muslim families to send their daughters to school. She went from house to house, persuading the parents that education was good for girls and promising that *hijaab* (PURDAH) would be observed at her school. Her tireless efforts paid off, with middle class Muslim girls breaking the taboo against stepping out of the house to study. She also arranged horse-carriages so that girls could go to school and return home observing *pardah*. Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School gave lessons in recitation from the Qur'an, along with explanations, Bangla, English, Urdu, Persian, home nursing, first aid, cooking, sewing, physical exercise, music etc.

In one of her writings, she once retorted, "Initially what we did not accept was obliged these as an order of religion... To keep/remain us in darkness, men have used and preached those religions as the ordinances of God". This might confuse some people unless we consider her entire literatures and statements. Actually, she showed her anger and discontent against some odds in the name of religion. She never pointed Quran or Sunnah to mean 'religion; or its ordinances or books. Actually, by religious books or ordinances, she meant the books by semi-religious people or by those people who has shallow knowledge in Islam and those contain points against the rights of women. So her anger was definitely against religion or Qur'an or Sunnah, rather it was against the illiterate groups. Actually, there were some books written by some and those books were against the Islamic perspectives of Islam on women. Even today, sometimes we find books or religious sermons by some people that are against the spirit and rights of women in Islam. So she was angry. Actually, she mentioned the overall equity of Islam among man and woman in Islam.

In her another writing in Monthly Muhammadi (a monthly in Bangla during early twenties) she clearly stated her love and respect for Prophet Muhammad (SM), "In my childhood, mother told me that 'Qur'an Shariah will protect as armor, these statements are really true. The overall teachings of Qur'an can really save us from the dangers of various superstitions. If we follow our religion and do our activities based on the teachings of Qur'an, we can protect ourselves from the moral and social destructions". These are clear statements from Rokeya and no one can deny these statements and distort her words in support to deny Islam and defame Islam.

Rokeya's writings called upon women to protest against injustices and break the social barriers that discriminated against them. *Abarodhbasini* (The Secluded Women, 1931) is a spirited attack on the extreme forms of *pardah* that endangered women's lives. Her other noted works include *Matichur* (essays 1st Vol. 1904, 2nd Vol. 1922), *Sultana's Dream* (satire, 1908), *Padmarag* (novel, 1924). *Sultana's Dream*, which she

later translated into Bangla as *Sultanar Svapna*, is a satirical piece, set in a place called Lady Land, a world ruled by women. The second volume of *Matichur* includes stories and fairy tales such as *Saurajagat* (The Solar System), *Delicia Hatya* (translation of the *Murder of Delicia*, by Mary Corelli), *Jnan-phal* (The Fruit of Knowledge), *Nari-Sristi* (Creation of Women), *Nurse Nelly*, *Mukti-phal* (The Fruit of Emancipation) etc. Rokeya also wrote fine poetry. Her poem titled 'Saogat' was published on the first page of the first issue of the *Saogat* in *Agrahayan*, 1325 (1918 AD). Many of her other poems and essays were also published in the magazine.

She was a high-level social reformer. In Indian subcontinent, social reformers similar to her level are very few in the history of thousand years. Unfortunately, she is not that much well-known to the other parts of the world. Like many parts of the world, women in Indian subcontinent are under various social, moral oppressions and deprived from various religious and basic rights in the name of various superstitions, misinterpretations of religions, etc. Excessiveness and undue measures mainly on women issues are much more responsible for this discrimination. Begum Rokeya raised her voice when women were really undermined and she started a revolution to bring improvement in status of women, especially in this region. Many people of present time may not fully realize the great work done by her in extremely unfavorable conditions rationalize her effort clearly unless we go through her works, efforts. Due to her effort, we see lots of positive break-through in the society regarding Islamic rights of women. Now, we have lots of voices – some are right, some might be wrong – but her voice during that period was revolutionary. And she did her task with the love of Islam, as once in her writing, she was calling our Prophet to come forward to bring the women from dark and give them the rights that Qur'an has provided in a balanced manner. She also asked for tafsir of Qur'an in Bangla language so that people can understand the basic book of Islam clearly.

The pioneer of Muslim women's awakening and emancipation, Rokeya lived for only 52 years. She died in Calcutta on 9 December 1932. Her legacy, however, lived on. Many women who were noted for their role in the women's movements in Bangladesh were Rokeya's students.

Reference:

http://banglapedia.org/HT/H_0170.HTM

Excerpt from Begum Rokeya's Speech on the Distressful Condition of the Muslims of Bengal

"I will have no problem in personal level if this school does not work. But why do I want the development of the school? It is neither to be famous nor to preserve the memory of my husband; but only for the cause of the Muslims of Bengal. I want to present a morally uplift generation despite the fact that I have no hazard to be afraid of or ashamed of the moral decline of my next generation as I do have no descendants of my own. So it is doubtless that I have no personal interest in promoting the cause of this school. But it is the demand of the time that those who have future generation about whom they feel concerned are supposed to come forward to make this school an ideal institution."

Syed Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979)

Syed Abul A'la Maududi is considered as one of the most influential Islamic thinkers of 20th century. While commenting about Maududi, Prof. Anis Ahmed said "Meeting the challenges of modernity, perhaps no other Muslim intellectual in the 19th and 20th century offered such elaborate ideas on political, economic and social dimensions of Islam as we find its in the writings of Syed Maududi". As such, he topped the list of the most influential Islamic personalities of South Asia.

Family and Education

Abul A'la was born on Rajab 3, 1321 AH (September 25, 1903 AD) in Aurangabad, a well-known Indian town in the former princely state of Hyderabad (presently Maharashtra). His family had a long-standing tradition of spiritual leadership. A number of Maududi's ancestors were outstanding leaders of Sufi Orders. One of the luminaries among them, from whom he derived his family name, was Khawajah Qutb al-Din Maudud (d. 527 AH), a renowned leader of the Chishti Sufi Order. Maududi's forefathers had moved to the subcontinent from Chisht towards the end of the 9th century of the Islamic calendar (15th century of the Christian calendar). The first one to arrive was Maududi's namesake, Abul A'la Maududi (d. 935 AH). Maududi's father, Ahmad Hasan, a lawyer by profession, was a highly religious and devout person. Abul A'la was the youngest child in his family.

After acquiring early education at home, Abul A'la was admitted in Madrasah Furqaniyah, a high school which attempted to combine the modern Western with the traditional Islamic education. After successfully completing his secondary education, young Abul A'la was at the stage of undergraduate studies at Darul Uloom, Hyderabad, when his formal education was disrupted by the illness and eventual death of his father. This did not deter Maududi from continuing his studies though these had to be outside of the regular educational institutions. By the early 1920s, Abul A'la knew enough Arabic, Persian and English, besides his mother-tongue, Urdu, to study the subjects of his interest independently.

His Career in Journalism

After the interruption of his formal education, Maududi turned to journalism in order to make his living. In 1918, he was already contributing to a leading Urdu newspaper. In 1920, at the age of 17, he was appointed editor of *Taj*, which was being published from Jabalpure, a city in the province now called Madhya Pradesh. Late in 1920, Maududi came to Delhi and first assumed the editorship of the newspaper *Muslim* (1921-23), and later of *al-Jam'iyat* (1925-28), both of which were the organs of the *Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Hind*, an organisation of Muslim religious scholars. Under his editorship, *al-Jam'iyat* became the leading newspaper of the Muslims of India.

Research & Writings

During 1920-28, Maulana Maududi also translated four different books, one from Arabic and the rest from English. He also made his mark on the academic life of the subcontinent by writing his first major book, *al-Jihad fi al-Islam*. After his resignation from *al-Jam'iyat* in 1928, Maududi moved to Hyderabad and devoted himself to research and writing. It was in this connection that he took up the editorship of the monthly *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* in 1933, which since then has been the main vehicle for the dissemination of Maududi's ideas.

He proved to be a highly prolific writer, turning out several scores of pages every month. Initially, he concentrated on the exposition of ideas, values and basic principles of Islam. He paid special attention to the questions arising out of the conflict between the Islamic and the contemporary Western world. He also attempted to discuss some of the major problems of the modern age and sought to present Islamic solutions to those problems. His writings revealed his erudition and scholarship, a deep perception of the significance of the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and a critical awareness of the mainstream of Western thought and history. All this brought a freshness to Muslim approach to these problems and lent a wider appeal to his

message. In the mid '30s, Maududi started writing on major political and cultural issues confronting the Muslims of India at that time and tried to examine them from Islamic perspective rather than merely from the viewpoint of short-term political and economic interests.

Birth of Jamaat-e-Islami

Around 1940, Maududi developed ideas regarding the founding of a more comprehensive and ambitious movement. This led him to launch a new organization under the name of the *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Maududi was elected *Jamaat's* first Ameer and remained so till 1972 when he withdrew from the responsibility for reasons of health.

Beginning of Struggle & Persecution

After migrating to Pakistan in August 1947, Maududi concentrated his efforts on establishing a truly Islamic state and society in the country. Consistent with this objective, he wrote profusely to explain the different aspects of the Islamic way of life, especially the socio-political aspects. This concern for the implementation of the Islamic way of life led Maududi to criticize and oppose the policies pursued by the successive governments of Pakistan and to blame those in power for failing to transform Pakistan into a truly Islamic state. The rulers reacted with severe reprisal measures. Maududi was often arrested and had to face long spells in prison.

His Scholarly Contributions

Maududi's ideology and scholarly contribution played a significant role in the global Islamic resurgence. To convey his ideology through Qur'anic concepts, he produced "Tafhimul Quran" – one of the best known exegeses of Quran in the world. He explained the Qur'anic instructions with logic and analogy in the light of contemporary situations. Maulana Maududi wrote over 120 books and pamphlets and gave over a 1000 speeches and press statements of which about 700 are available on record. The range of subjects he covered is unusually wide. Disciplines such as *Tafsir*, *Hadith*, law, philosophy and history, all have received the due share of his attention.

He discussed a wide variety of problems; political, economic, cultural, social, and theological. He showed how the teachings of Islam were related to those problems. Maududi's influence transcends the boundaries of all parties and organizations. As a scholar and writer, he is the most widely read Muslim writer of our time. His books have been translated into most of the major languages of the world; Arabic, English, Turkish, Persian, Hindi, French, German, Swahili, Tamil, and Bengali. His books are now available in many other Asian, African and European languages.

Traveling Abroad

The several journeys which Maududi undertook between 1956-74 enabled Muslims in many parts of the world to become acquainted with him personally and appreciate many of his qualities. At the same time, these journeys were educational for Maududi himself. They provided him the opportunity to get acquainted with a large number of people in different parts of the world. During these tours, he lectured in Cairo, Damascus, Amman, Makkah, Medina, Jeddah, Kuwait, Rabat, Istanbul, London, New York, and Toronto. During these years, he also participated in several international conferences. He also completed a study tour to Saudi Arabia, Jordan (including Jerusalem), Syria and Egypt in 1959-60 to study the geographical aspects of the places mentioned in the Qur'an.

He was invited to serve on the Advisory Committee which prepared the scheme for the establishment of the Islamic University of Medina and was on its Academic Council ever since the inception of the University in 1962. He was also a member of the Foundation Committee of the *Rabitah al-Alam al-Islami*, Makkah, and of the Academy of Research on Islamic Law, Medina.

Last Days

Maududi was a tower of inspiration for Muslims all over the world and influenced the climate and pattern of thought of Muslims, as the Himalayas or the Alps influence the climate in Asia or Europe. This great Islamic personality left this earth on September 22, 1979 at the age of 76. May Allah bless him with His mercy for his efforts and reward him amply for the good that he has rendered for the nation of Islam (Ummah).

Source: *"Islamic Perspective", The Islamic Foundation, UK, 1989 (with some modifications by Shah Abdul Hannan)*

Some Important Links to Visit!

40 Tasks for Muslims to Dawah:

<http://www.witness-pioneer.org/Dawah/40TasksForMuslimsSAHannan.pdf>

100 Selected books for advanced study on Islam:

<http://www.witness-pioneer.org/Dawah/100BookListSAHannan.pdf>

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<http://www.witness-pioneer.org/Dawah/100BookListSAHannan.pdf>

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Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi (1914 -1999)

Syed Abul Hassan 'Ali Nadwi was one of the most prolific writers and original thinkers of 20th century. He was the author of well over fifty books in various languages, and an undisputed scholar of rare distinction.

Early Life and Education

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi, or “Ali Miyan” as he was popularly known, was born in a family of Islamic scholars on the 6th of Moharam 1333 H (1914) at Takia Kalan (Daira Shah Alamullah). He began his formal Arabic education under the guidance of Allama Khalil Arab Ansari Yamani and Dr. Taqi Uddin Helali Marakeshi, eventually completing his learning of Arabic language and literature under them.

In 1926, he gained admission in Nadwatul Ulama. He attended the Dars of Hadith by Allama Muhaddith Haider Husain Khan and Sahiyen-Sanana-Abudaud and Sanan-Tirmzee word by word from him. In the session of Nadwatul Ulama of Kanpur, Maulana attended and impressed the one and all by his Arabic conversation. The Arab guest made him their companion on the tour of the city as a guide.

A year later, he took admission in Lucknow University and obtained the degree of Fazil from the university. He studied the select Urdu literature, which helped him in his Dawah work. Until 1930, he also learned English language, which helped him to study English books on various Islamic topics and gain useful information directly. He received the teaching in the commentary (Tafseer) in selected surah from his Sheikh Maulana Khalil Ahsan and studied the complete Tafseer of Al-Quran at Lahore in 1932 by Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahoree.

Literary and Da'wah works

In 1931, he wrote his first article on Syed Ahmad Shahid at the age of 17 years, which was published in the journal Al-Manar edited by Sayyid Rashid Rida of Egypt. Three years later, he was appointed as a teacher in Nadwatul Ulama. He taught Tafsir, Hadith, Arabic literature, History and Logic. His first book, “The Life History of Syed Ahmad Shahid” was published in 1938, which became popular amongst the Deeni and Dawah circles.

In 1943, he established an Association by the name of ‘Anjuman Taleemat-e-Deen’ and delivered Lectures on Tafseer and Sunnah which became very popular particularly in Modern educated persons and persons in Govt. service. This was followed by this 1945 selection as a member of the administrative council of Nadwatul Ulama.

He was later proposed as deputy Director Education Nadwatul Ulama by Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and was appointed and after the death of Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, he was made the Director of Education in 1954 - following the foundation of his famous movement Payam-e-Insaniyat in 1951. He also became the editor of the journals Al-Baas and Al-Raid and founded the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications In 1961, after the death of his brother Dr. Abdul Ali Hasani, he was appointed the General Secretary of Nadwatul Ulama.

He was invited by education minister of Saudi Arabia in 1968 to participate in the critical study of the curriculum and system of the department of Sharia. He delivered many lectures in Riyadh University. He was also in the editorial board of the Arabic Journal "Al-Zia" of Nadwatul Ulama in 1932 and the Urdu journal Al-Nawa 1940 and published an Urdu Journal Tameer in 1948 and took the responsibility of editorial of a journal from Damascus in 1959. He was the chief controller of all the above papers which were published from Nadwa.

A prolific writer, his works have been prescribed in the courses of study in a number of Arab Universities. His notable Arabic work Maza Khasera al-Alamb'inhat-il-Muslimeen was not only widely acclaimed but also carved out a place for him in the literary circles of the Arab world. Several of his works have since been translated into Arabic, English, Turkish, Bahasa Indonesia, Persian, Tamil and some other languages.

Karvaan-e-Zindagi, his autobiography in 8 volumes, and Purane-Chiragh (life sketches of contemporary personalities), his biography of Syed Ahmad Shaheed, his biography of Hazrat Ali (KW) and his Tarikh-e-Dawat-o-Azimat are his permanent contribution to Urdu literature.

Among many of his notable works which are translated into English include: Path to Medina, Western Civilization: Islam and Muslims, and Saviors of Islamic Spirit.

Memberships and Associations

In his formative years, the Maulana was associated with the Jamat-e-Islami for a few years after its establishment by Maulana Abul Ala Maududi. Spiritually a disciple of Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri, the Maulana belonged to the Sufi Silsila Qadiriya Naqshbandia.

He was an Honorary Member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus and Academy of Arabic Language, Amman and served as Visiting Professor in a number of Arab universities

Internationally recognized, he was one of the Founder Members of the Rabita at-Alam-al-Islami, Makkah, (1963), and served on the Higher Council of the Islamic University, Medina, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat, and as the Chairman of the Board for the Centre of Islamic Studies of the Oxford University. The lectures he delivered at Indian, Arab and Western Universities have been highly appreciated as original contribution to the study of Islam and on Islam's relevance to the modern age

The Maulana was one of the founders of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) (1964), the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) (1972) and the All India Dini Talimi Council. He presided over the Milli Convention in 1979. He also extended his patronage to the Islamic Fiqh Academy and the All India Milli Council when they were established.

To promote communal harmony, the Maulana became one of the founders of FOCUS, which was later transformed into Society for Communal Harmony. He also established a movement 'Pyam-e-Insaniyat' to preach the gospel of universal love and brotherhood.

Honors and awards

In 1956 he was made visiting member of Arabic Academy Damascus. At the first inaugural session and foundation of World Muslim League in Mekkah Mukarama in which His Royal Highness the King of Saudi Arabia Saud Bin Abdul Aziz and King of Libya Idris Sanussi were present. Maulana performed the duties of secretary at that session. At the inauguration and foundation of Medina University, Medina, he was made the member of the advisory council and remained as member till the administration was changed, and was a Foundation member of the League of Islamic Universities.

In 1980s, he was made a Member of Arabic Academy of Jordan, won the King Faisal Award, became Chairman of Islamic Centre Oxford, was given an Honorary Degree of Ph.D. by Kashmir University. In 1999, the Maulana was awarded Dubai International Holy Quran award by the government of Dubai. He also won the Sultan Brunei Award by Oxford Islamic Center on his work of 'Tareekh Dawat-o-Azeemat'

Personality and Uniqueness

Maulana was a man who personified Islamic values, soft-spoken, cultured and courteous to the core, humility and modesty, patience and tolerance, moderation and balance, generosity and compassion – all Islamic

values. Neither a politician, nor a publicist, essentially a scholar, a man of religion, a spiritual person, a modern Dervish, a Mard-e-Momin who combined in himself the highest values of the Shariah and the Tariqat, of orthodoxy and Sufism and who commanded respect for his transparent sincerity, for his simple living and for his selfless devotion to the common cause of the Community and the Nation, a man who lived for Allah alone and who wanted nothing but the good of all is no more.

The great political battles of the Muslim community during the last decades of the century were fought under his guidance. The A.I. Muslim Personal Law Board launched in 1985 the movement for legislative nullification of the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano Case, which the Muslim Indians saw as the thin end of the wedge for interference with the Shariah and for distorting the Islamic identity of the community. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorcees) Act, 1986 was its fruit; though it had several inbuilt flaws, which has landed the community subsequently in endless litigation.

In the last decade of his life the Maulana served as the final arbiter, the last word, the Marja', the ultimate point of reference, on any intra-communal differences, even if he did not play any active role in resolving them. He counseled commitment with patience and wisdom, movement within the framework of democracy and rule of law, and dignity and not rhetoric in utterances. Assiduously sought by eminent political personalities from Indira Gandhi to Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Maulana acted as the bridge between the government and the national parties, on one hand, and Muslim community, on the other.

His demise is the end of an era in the history of the Muslim India and has created a void impossible to fill in the foreseeable future.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, Ameen!

References:

<http://www.youngmuslims.ca/biographies/display.asp?ID=10>,

http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Syed_Abul_Hasan_Ali_Hasani_Nadwi

Contributor: Maimuna Musarat.

Pearls of Wisdom

The righteous Salaf were as fearful as their good deeds being squandered, or not being accepted, as the present generation is certain that their neglect would be forgiven.

Hasan al Basri

Dewan Mohammad Azraf (1908-1999)

Dewan Mohammad Azraf was one of the greatest Islamic scholars of South Asia. He was simultaneously a renowned teacher, author, politician, journalist, philosopher and advocate of women's progress in Bangladesh. In 1993, he was honored as the 'National Professor' of Bangladesh.

Family and Education

In 1908, Dewan Mohammad Azraf was born in a wealthy (zaminder) family in the village of Teghria in Bangladesh. He studied at the Middle English School, Duhalia. In 1930, he passed BA with distinction from Murari Chand College, Sylhet and in 1932, MA in Philosophy from the University of Dhaka. He was the grand son of renowned poet Hasan Raja. Despite his rich lineage, he used to live a simple life.

Beginning of Career

After completion of his Masters from Calcutta University, he got an offer from that University to join in the Department of Philosophy. But to serve the nation, he decided to stay in his own area Sunamgonj and joined in Sunamgonj College. He contributed huge amount of money from his Zamindari to develop the college. He was also a supporter of the Bangla Language Movement of 1952. For his support of the movement, he was dismissed from the post of the Principal of Sunamganj College in 1954. His support was particularly influential when he edited the magazine 'Nao Belal' in 1948.

Involvement in Politics

He joined Muslim League in 1946 in protest of the treatment against Muslim immigrants in Assam, and was elected to the Assam Provincial Committee. He also served 10 months of prison sentence for violation of Section 144. He was a co-worker of Maolana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani who was then the President of Assam Province Muslim League.

His Scholarly Contribution

A fulltime worker of Islam, Azraf's whole life was devoted to serve the purpose of Allah. In 1936, he organized the Kendrio Muslim Shahitto Sangsad (Central Muslim Literary Association) in Sylhet and served as its president from 1940 to 1943. He was one of the founder of Tamaddun Majlish, the organization which led the Bengali language movement during Pakistan period. During genocide in 'Shatila' 'Shabra' camp of Beirut on Palestinians by Lebanese Christians in 1982, he requested Pope John Paul to raise his hands against genocide and Pope responded positively in response to Azraf's request. He was a member, as well as a treasurer for some time, of the Pakistan Philosophical Congress. From 1984 to 1989, he served as the president of the Bangladesh Philosophical Association (Darshan Samiti). He wrote about sixty books on various subjects including Tamadduner Bikash, Islam O Manavatavad (Islam and Huminity), Marami Kavi Hasan Raja, Dharma O Darshan (Religion and Philosophy), Philosophy of History, Jibon Shomossor Shomadhane Islam (Role of Islam in solving our daily problems), and Islam: Monishar Aloke. He wrote more than 300 articles that are published in different national and international journals. He received numerous awards for his contributions to the society. The awards he received include the Independence Day Award, International Muslim Solidarity Prize, Ekushey Padak, Islamic Foundation Prize, Srijnan Atish Dipankar Prize and Bangladesh Muslim Mission Prize.

His Last Days

In October 1999, this great Islamic personality departed from this world. May Allah grant him Jannah.

Contributor: Abu Kholdun Mahmud. Dr. Kholdun is a Medical Faculty in Bangladesh.

Maulana Abdur Rahim
A Commemoration by Shah Abdul Hannan

I first met Maulana Abdur Rahim in 1957. His great personality brought two of us closer and we continued to have a very good relation till his demise. In various Islamic forums, we worked together. We, with few others established the Islamic Economics Research Bureau (IERB) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was elected the first Chairman of IERB, while I was elected the first Vice-Chairman.

Under Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, we both were involved in compilation of a two volume book on Economics in Qur'an (in Bangla language, the name is 'Al-Qur'an-e Orthoniti'). Our task was to find out the Qur'anic verses that are related to economics or finance, directly or indirectly, and explain these with reference to current economic issues. One of us used to find out the explanations of these verses from old and new Tafsirs and also prepared notes on key words used in the verses. The verses, after preparation of the note as mentioned, used to be distributed among the members of the group and each of us used to write the new economic interpretation or explanation of the verses. Afterwards the new interpretations used to be checked by the whole group and after discussion, the write-up used to be finalized. In most cases, we were in agreement. However, once on '*diyat*' (blood-money) of woman, I was in disagreement with Maulana Abdur Rahim. This issue should be clarified further as this is a disputed matter among scholars too. If a woman is killed unintentionally (*Qatle Khata*), what will be her blood-money or *diyat*? In traditional Fiqh, the blood-money of woman will be half of the blood-money of man. A gender-conscious person cannot accept this view so easily. Why half? In Qur'an, the rule for an intentional killing is capital punishment; for non-intentional killing, blood-money will be the compensation instead of death penalty. Al-Qur'an does not differentiate between man and woman in this case. However, majority of the scholars took the approach of half *diyat* for woman. We both wrote on the issue and I insisted both should go in the volume.. He wrote based on traditional approach. But I started to study on this topic again and found that among classical jurists, two past scholars and two scholars of the present time have held that *diyat* will be equal for both sexes (Ibne Ulayya and Asim in the past and Abu Zuhra and Shaikh Qardawi in the present time and many others). They mentioned that the hadith that is considered for this opinion is 'daif' or weak hadith. There is also no Ijma on this matter. Therefore, I followed the opinion that blood-money for both man and woman is the same.

As there is no basic distinction between man and woman, and also the referred hadith is weak (weak hadith can never be a basis for any ruling on any serious matter) and also because there is no Ijma in the matter, I have written for equal blood-money. Finally after some discussions, I offered that both papers will be published with a note in the introduction that the committee could not agree on this matter and hence both articles have been included.. However, Maulana Abdur Rahim finally agreed to take my view in his article (Economics in Al-Quran (volume 1): Pg 722 - 723, April 1990). However, whatever the academic disputes we had, we did it through cordial and friendly discussion.

He wrote several important books in Bangla language and his language was of high standard and attractive. It is a wonder to me how he could write such good Bangla even after studying in Urdu (during his time, Madrasah education was in Urdu language). His translations from Arabic and Urdu were all of high quality. As I know Urdu, I can understand how appropriately he brought out the spirit of the original writing. He was not only my friend, but also my teacher at the same time.

He joined to Jamat-e-Islami (JI) during 1947-48 when he was a student of Calcutta Alia Madrasah. He used to receive the magazine 'Tarjamanul Qur'an' edited by Maulana Abul Ala Maududi. Maulana Abdur Rahim was deeply influenced by this magazine and other writings of Syed Maududi. Syed Maududi's writings are very appealing and his writings are of excellent level in terms of language, content, depth, analysis and dimensions. Therefore, it is usual for a person to be moved by his literatures and Abdur Rahim sahib was greatly influenced by him as well. He later became the Chief (*Amir*) of the party in around 1955 and remained so till 1970.

He organized and established the modern Islamic movement in this region even though there were lots of turmoil, propaganda, and conspiracies against Islamic movement [as it is evident and seen even today in

many parts of the Muslim world]. One point raised at that time was – joint or separate election issue for all religious communities. This point should be clarified here that. Syed Maududi was against joint-election of various religious communities but he did not say that it is illegal in the eye of Islam. He thought that based on the then political and state context, it would be less beneficial for the country at that time.

As regards contribution of Maulana Abdur Rahim., he was a competent politician and he had to manage and deal with great politicians of this region, like Khwaza Nazimuddin, Nurul Amin, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Maulana Bhasani to name a few. His involvement was crucial. After the independence of Bangladesh, he established a political party called Islamic Democratic League. It was a right decision at that time. Under his leadership, this party gained 6 seats in the national parliament. He also played important role in the parliament.

A good 'dayi' (preacher of Islam – a common responsibility to every Muslim based on his/her ability) tries his/her best to spread the message of Islam to every possible sphere. Maulana Abdur Rahim decided to do this through the development of a political party, and through this to serve Islam and the people. Among other important approaches, he decided to use his pen to write books, and translate great books of great writers in his native Bangla language. He translated not only the books of Syed Maududi, he also translated two books of Dr Qaradawi, "Fiqhuz Zakat" (The Fiqh of Zakat) and "The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam" and also the "Ahkamul Quran" of great jurist Al Jassas. His contribution and leadership in Islamic thought was very effective. He was undoubtedly a great thinker.

Like many other countries, the progress of Islamic movements in Bangladesh was and is not a bed of roses. Islamic movements in Egypt, Iran, Syria, etc. passed through difficult time. During the turmoil in this region, he did his best to manage everything in proper manner. May Allah accept his deeds.

Recently his biography has been completed as a Ph.D. thesis by Dr Abdul Kader and he has already been awarded the doctoral degree by Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh but the book has not yet been published (by July 2008).

(Shah Abdul Hannan can be contacted at sahannan@sonarbangladesh.com. He is the advisor of Witness-Pioneer International and the Chairman of Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought, Bangladesh.)

AL-QURAN

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah’s favor on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.” Al-Quran 3:103

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.” Al-Quran 3:104

Khurram Murad (1932-1996)

Khurram Murad, a Pakistani senior scholar, was the Director General of Islamic Foundation, UK; the most important think tank and publishing house of UK.

Early Life and Education

Khurram Murad was born in Bhopal, India on 3rd November, 1932, and migrated to Pakistan in 1948. He studied Civil Engineering at the University of Karachi (B.Eng. 1952), securing 1st place in the University, and went on to study in the University of Minnesota (USA) (M.Sc. 1958). He worked as a leading consulting engineer in Karachi, Dhaka, Tehran and Riyadh. Associated Consulting Engineers Ltd., with which he worked as a chief engineer and resident director, was responsible for the initial design and electrification of the extension of the *Masjid al-Haram*, Makkah. He also played an important role in the formulation and implementation of the plans for extension of the *Haram*.

Islamic Movement

Khurram Murad's whole life, from early boyhood to his last moment, was dedicated to the service of the Islamic movement. He was initiated in the Jamat-e-Islami, Bhopal, as a student and joined Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba, Pakistan, immediately after his arrival in Karachi in November 1948. In the Jamiat he served as the President of the Karachi unit (1949-'50) and as its Nazim-e-A'la (All Pakistan President) during 1951-1952. After the conclusion of his student career, he joined the Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan and served as its Amir at the important cities of Dhaka (1963-'71), and Lahore (1987-'89), as a member of Central Shura (working Committee) and 'Amila (Executive Committee) (1963-1996) and as its Naib Amir (Vice-President) (1987-1996). In 1992, he was appointed editor of the monthly Tarjumanal Qur'an, Lahore, the journal founded by Mawlana Abul A'la Mawdudi in 1932 and which had been the chief pace-setter for the Islamic movement in the South Asian subcontinent.

Khurram Murad occupies a place of distinction in the intellectual firmament of contemporary Islam. A thinker, an orator and a prolific writer, he has been one of the architects of current Islamic resurgence. While his da'wah activities began in Pakistan, he has been involved in the promotion of the Islamic movement in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. As a teacher and a da'yah his speeches and thoughtful orations have inspired thousands of young men and women all over the world. As chief of the training departments of the Islamic Student Organisation (Jamiate Talaba) and the Jamaate Islami and as an active resource-person in training programs in the UK and America, he played a key role in the character-building and intellectual development of the youth in the Islamic Movement.

He also served as the Director General of the Leicester-based Islamic Foundation (www.islamic-foundation.org.uk) and was a household name among British Muslims throughout the seventies and eighties.

Scholarly Contributions

An author of over thirty works in Urdu and English, his thoughts have influenced two generations of Muslims the world over. Some of his major works are:

- Inter-Personal Relations in an Islamic Movement (Urdu)
- Way to the Qur'an
- Islamic Movement in the West: Reflections on Some Issues
- Lam'at-e-Zandan (Urdu)
- Shari'ah: The Way to God

- Shari'ah: The Way to Justice
- Key to al-Baqarah
- Qur'anic Treasures

Some of his other works in English are:

- Islam - The Easy Way
- Who is Muhammad
- Gifts from Muhammad
- In the Early Hours: Reflections on Spiritual and Self-Development
- Sacrifice: the making of a Muslim
- Dawah among Non-Muslims in the West
- Islam & Terrorism
- The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values Power and Change
- Dying & Living for Allah (his last will)
- Let us be Muslims
- The Islamic Way of Life (with Khurshid Ahmad)

Some of his booklets in Urdu are:

- Zikr-e-Ilahi (Remembrance of God)
- Rabb se Mulaqaat (Meeting with the Lord)
- Dawat kai Nishan-e-Raah
- Imaanat Daary (Honesty)
- Allah se Muhabbat (Loving Allah)
- Hasad aur Bughz (Jealousy & Envy)
- Rizq-e-halal (Lawful Sustenance)
- Niyyat aur Amal (Intention & Action)
- Hubb-e-Dunya (Love of the World)
- Dil ki zindagi (Life of the Heart)
- Ghalatiyon to Maaf Karna (Forgiving Mistakes)
- Haqeeqat-e-Zuhd (Reality of Piety)
- Urooj ka Raasta (The Way to Elevation)

As a translator and interpreter of Maulana Maududi, Khurram Murad has made his mark. He also edited Mawlana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's pioneering work, "Muslims in the West: Message and the Mission". He also wrote over half a dozen books for children, edited and directed a video on "The Life of the Prophet Muhammad", and contributed dozens of scholarly articles to different journals and magazines. Over four hundred audio and videocassettes of Khurram Murad are in circulation in Pakistan and different parts of the Muslim World. Khurram Murad was involved in Islamic dawah and inter-faith dialogue in the West for the last twenty years. In this connection, he addressed dozens of conferences and seminars. His contributions in initiating and promoting strategic thinking on dawah issues in Muslim countries as well as in countries where Muslims are in a minority have been immense.

His Demise

He passed away on 19th December, 1996 (9th Sha'ban 1417 AH).

References:

<http://www.youngmuslims.ca/biographies/display.asp?ID=11>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khurram_Murad

ⁱ A ring or a piece of thread like Brahminical thread.

ⁱⁱ *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochmann Volume I, Book One, A'in 77)

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

Contributor: Dr. Kamrul Hasan

[Dr. Md. Kamrul Hasan is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at Asian University of Bangladesh. Currently, he is teaching English in Japan as an ALT of Interac Co. (Hiroshima Office). He can be contacted at kh_doharvi@yahoo.co.in]

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Pearls of Wisdom

Whoever desires Paradise, proceeds towards goodness; whoever fears Hell, refrains from the impulses of passion; whoever believes firmly in death, detests worldly life; and whoever recognizes the worldly life, the trials and tribulations (of life) become slight for him.—*Ali ibne Abu Talib*

Khurshīd Ahmad (1932 -)

Khurshīd Ahmad (also known as **Professor Khurshid**) is a scholar, economist, writer, and Islamic activist. He holds Bachelors degrees in Law and Jurisprudence, Masters degrees in Economics and Islamic Studies, and an Honorary Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Education, and an Honorary Doctorate (PhD) in Islamic Economics conferred by the International Islamic University Malaysia IIUM. Khurshid Ahmad is a prolific writer with numerous books, articles, seminar papers and translation works..

Involvement with Islamic Organizations

Khurshid Ahmad became a member of *Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT)* in 1949 and was elected as the *Nazim-e-A'la* (President) of the same organization in 1953. He formally joined *Jama'at-e-Islami* Pakistan in 1956 and is at present Naib Ameer (Vice President) of the organization. Besides several other responsibilities, he is presently also the editor of the seminal *Tarjuman al-Quran*, a monthly publication launched by Syed Maududi in May 1933.

Literary contributions

Prof Ahmad has been editing a number of ideologically oriented magazines and periodicals. He has authored and edited about 70 books in English and Urdu combined and contributed to a large number of magazines. He has so far participated in over 100 international conferences and seminars in personal as well as representative capacities.

Portfolio

His in-depth comparative study of the oriental as well as occidental philosophies in religion, academics, economics, constitutional matters and commitment for Islam has led him to be entrusted with key positions in the national as well as international organizations on these socio-economic and other multi-dimensional disciplines. Throughout his life, he has held the following positions:

- Member of Senate of Pakistan (2003 to date).
- Vice President Jama'at e islami Pakistan.
- Federal Minister of Planning and Development and has been Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Govt. of Pakistan (1978-79).
- Professor at the Karachi University (1955-68).
- Research scholar at the University of Leicester, UK.
- Chairman, International Institute of Islamic Economics, International Islamic University, Islamabad (1983-87).
- President, International Association of Islamic Economics, Leicester, UK (1984-92).
- Member, Supreme Advisory Council, International Center for Research and Islamic Economics, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah (1979-83).
- Vice President, Standing Conference on Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe, Berlin and London (1974-78).
- Member, Advisory Council, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, UK (1976-78).
- Member, National Hijra Committee, Govt. of Pakistan (1978-83).
- Member, Committee of Jurists to Evaluate Islamic Laws in Sudan (1986-87).
- Member, International Review Committee, Islamic Research and Training Institute, Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah (1988-89).
- Member of Senate of Pakistan for two terms (1985-1997) and Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning.

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- Founder and Chairman of both the Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad and The Islamic Foundation, Leicester (UK).
 - Member, Boards of Trustees of Islamic Centre, Zaria (Nigeria); International Islamic University, Islamabad; Foundation Council, Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization, Amman (Jordan).
 - Vice President of Islamic Research Academy, Karachi and Lahore.

Awards

In view of his pioneering work and contributions towards the development of Islamic Economics as an academic discipline, he was awarded the First Islamic Development Bank Award for Economics in 1988. His contributions to the Islamic cause were also recognized in the form of King Faisal International Prize, 1990. In recognition of his services in Islamic Economics & Finance, he was given 5th Annual Prize of American Finance House, LaRiba, USA in July 1998.

Reference:

<http://www.jamaat.org/leadership/pka.html>

Contributor: Maimuna Musarat.

“Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.”
[Al-Quran 3:110](#)

Dr. Zakir Naik (1965-)

Hafiz **Zakir Abdul Karim Naik** is an eloquent Indian speaker, and writer on Islam and comparative religion. By profession, he is a doctor, but since 1991 he has focused only on preaching Islam. Zakir Naik is also the founder and president of the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) a non-profit organization that owns and broadcasts the free-to-air TV channel network Peace TV from Mumbai, India — as well as Islamic International School which claims to 'provide Muslim children excellent quality education for their overall development'.

Early Life and Education

Zakir Naik was born on October 18, 1965 in Mumbai, India. He is of Konkani descent. His first educational institution was St. Peter's High School (ICSE) situated in Mumbai. After which he joined Kishinchand Chellaram College in the same city. After his higher secondary degree he studied medicine at Topiwala National Medical College and Nair Hospital in Mumbai. He completed his MBBS degree from University of Mumbai. In 1991 he gave up his activity as a physician and started working for Dawah or proselytizing of Islam. Naik says he was inspired by Muslim Scholar Ahmed Deedat.

According to Naik, the goal is to concentrate on the educated Muslim youth who have become apologetic about their own religion and have started to feel that their own religion is outdated.

Lectures and visits

Thomas Blom Hansen, a sociologist at the University of Edinburgh, has written Naik's style of memorizing the Qur'an and hadith literature in various languages, and travelling abroad to debate Islam with theologians, has made him extremely popular in Muslim circles. Although he usually speaks to audiences of several hundreds, it is the videotapes of his talks which are widely distributed. His talks are usually recorded in English, to be broadcast at weekends on several cable networks in Mumbai's Muslim neighborhoods, and on the channel Peace TV, which he co-promotes. Topics he speaks on include: "Islam and Modern Science", "Islam and Christianity", and "Islam and secularism", among others. He is the president of the Islamic Research Foundation, which he founded.

Besides delivering numerous public talks in India, Naik has delivered more than 1000 public talks in various other countries. He has also authored several books on Islam and Comparative religion as well as those directed towards removing what he considers to be misconceptions about Islam. In 2004, Naik visited New Zealand and then Australian capitals at the invitation of Islamic Information and Services Network of Australasia. In his conference in Melbourne, according to journalist Sushi Das, "Naik extolled the moral and spiritual superiority of Islam and lampooned other faiths and the West in general", adding that Naik's words "fostered a spirit of separateness and reinforced prejudice." Journalist Khushwant Singh believes similarly, and claims that Naik's pronouncements are 'juvenile', saying that "they seldom rise above the level of undergraduate college debates". Political Analyst Khaled Ahmed considers that Zakir Naik, by his claims of Islam's superiority over other religious faiths, practices what he calls "reverse Orientalism". In August 2006, Naik's visit and conference in Cardiff (UK) were the object of controversy. Welsh MP David Davies called for his appearance to be cancelled and described him as a 'hate-monger'. Saleem Kidwai, secretary general of the Muslim Council of Wales, disagreed, stating that "people who know about him (Naik) know he is one of the most uncontroversial people you could find", also inviting Davies to discuss further with Naik. Naik's conference went ahead, with the Cardiff council stating it was satisfied that he would not be preaching extremist views. Naik provoked anger amongst the Shia community at a Mumbai peace conference when he spoke of Yazid I in a positive light, though others believed the comment was blown out of proportion until Naik, who was on the Islamic Hajj Pilgrimage released a public clarification of his statement after returning on 26th Dec. 2007.

Dr. Zakir is popular for his critical analysis and convincing answers to challenging questions posed by audiences after his public talks. In the last 6 years (by the year 2002), Dr. Zakir Naik has delivered more than 1000 public talks in the U.S.A., Canada, U.K., Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, South

Africa, Mauritius, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Guyana (South America) and many other countries, in addition to numerous public talks in India.

Sheikh Ahmed Deedat, the world famous orator on Islam and Comparative Religion, who had called Dr. Zakir, “Deedat plus” in 1994, presented a plaque in May 2000 awarded to Dr. Zakir Abdul-Karim Naik for his achievement in the field of Dawah and the study of Comparative Religion with the engraving “Son what you have done in 4 years had taken me 40 years to accomplish, Alhamdulillah”.

Some of the Books Authored By Dr. Zakir Naik

- Replies to the most common questions asked by non-Muslims
- Qur’an and modern science – compatible or incompatible
- Concept of god in major religions
- Islam and terrorism
- Women's rights in Islam – protected or subjugated?
- Al-Qur’an – should it be read with understanding?
- Is the Qur’an god's word?

Contributor: Ms. Shahera Hossain

[Ms. Shahera Hossain is a Post Graduate student at Kyushu Institute of Technology, Japan. She can be contacted at shaherahossain@yahoo.com]

Common Misconceptions about Islam

- “Why does Islam “degrade” women by keeping them behind the veil?”
- “How can Islam be called the religion of peace when it was “spread by the sword”?”
- “Under Islamic law, why is a woman’s share of the inherited wealth only half that of a man?”

These are a few of the various mind blogging questions Muslims face and often find a dilemma in answering. Log on to <http://www.ilovezakirnaik.com/misconceptions/index.htm> and find out **Dr. Zakir Naik’s** response to these and many more FAQ’s.

Announcement from WPV School

Witness-Pioneer Virtual School (WPVS) is going to start a course **from 1st September, 2008**. Details are:

Course Name: Parenting: Islamic Perspective

Last Date for Registration: 22nd August, 2008 (registration will start from 22nd July).

School web page: <http://www.witness-pioneer.org/VSchool/index.htm>

Cost: Free of charge

Please do the registration and inform others before all the seats are filled up.

Director,
Witness-Pioneer Virtual School

Next Issue: Send Your Articles

We request you to send your contribution for coming issues of this magazine. The next issue (October - December 2008) will focus on **Terrorism: Islamic Perspective**. So please inform others and send your write-up, summary of book chapters, book review, important information, poem, comments, biography, etc.

Last date for Submission: 7th September, 2008.

Submit to: wpi.magazine@gmail.com