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Intellectual Movement

Salafis

The word salafi or "early Muslim" in traditional Islamic scholarship means someone who lived and died within the first three hundred years after the Prophet (ﷺ), including scholars such as Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه), Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه), Imaam Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه), and Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (رضي الله عنه). Anyone who died after this is one of the *khalaf* or "latter-day Muslims". The term "Salafi" was revived as a slogan and movement, among latter-day Muslims, by the followers of Muhammad Abduh (the student of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani) some thirteen centuries after the Prophet (ﷺ), approximately a hundred years ago. Among the present day Salafi we have names like Ibn Taymiyya (661 – 728 H) and his student Ibn al-Qayyim Al Jawziyyah (691 – 751 H), Ibn `Abd al-Wahhab (1114 – 1206 H) and his Najdi epigones (followers) and others like Abdul `Aziz Bin Baz (1330 – 1420 H), his student Uthaymin (1347 – 1421 H), Albani (1332 – 1420 H), Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Al Shaykh (1360 H) and their propagandists (partisans).

The Sunnis disagree with them because neither do these belong to the time of the *Salaf*, nor are they considered representative of the belief and practice of the *Salaf*, nor are they considered foremost authorities by *Ahl al-Sunna*. There have always been differences of opinions among all groups in Islam. In fact the condemnation of the first three by many scholars is well-known, as are the innovations and blunders of the latter. It is interesting to note that Imaam al-Dhahabi (673 – 748 H), who is listed by the "Salafis" alongside Ibn Taymiyya has himself characterized Ibn Taymiyya as an innovator. His precise words were: "He [Ibn Taymiyya] was a virtuous and outstanding scholar, very accurate and meticulous in his intellectual examinations, but guilty of introducing innovations in the Religion (*mubtadi'*)". (al-Sakhawi in his book *al-T'lan wa al-tawbikh*).

There are many criticisms against the Salafis movement. **Foremost**, modern day salafis have the concept of Anthropomorphism of Allah's attributes. This means that they tend towards affirming a place, direction, and corporeal limbs to Allah Almighty Who is far exalted above all of those. They contradict their own teachers such as Ibn Taymiyyah: 'Whosoever considers the Attributes of Allah to be like the attributes of creation- such that the Istawa (Ascending) of Allah is like the ascending of the creation, or His nuzool (descending) is like the descending of the creation, or other than that-- then he is a deviated innovator." Ibn Taymiyyah - Majmoo-al Fatawaa (5/262)'. **Moreover**, there is some kind of abasement and disrespect towards of the Prophet (ﷺ) especially in fields like the capacity of the prophet (ﷺ), his 'ilm ul Ghaib, the

number of Darood to convey to him, the preservation of his body in his grave, his status of Shafa'ah, the ability of his knowing of what is going on in this world and Akhirah and many others. However the concepts of Ibn Taymiyyah are different. Ibn Taymiyyah in his book *al-qaida al-jaleela fit-tawwasali wal-waseela* (pg 12) stated that 'and Allah will take out of hell some others by the shafa'ah of other than the prophet (ﷺ)'. On page 17 Ibn Taymiyyah says: "'his (ﷺ) prayer and his (ﷺ) intercession and this is also of benefit ...and whoever denies *tawassul* in one of these two meanings is a *kaafir* and a *murtad* which means he must repent or he must be killed as a *murtad*.'" Ibn Taymiyyah also said in his book (Iqtidah Siratul-Mustakeem, Pg 373): 'And, in the days of Harrah, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib heard the voice of our Prophet (ﷺ) saying the adhan, from the grave. And there are more events like these and they are all true'. Again Ibn Taymiyyah said in Majmu Fatawa Ibn Taymiya (28/605): 'And in it there are those which He (Allah) showed from his unseen whatever he wished'. **Thirdly**, there is an unprofessional and selfish approach to Qur'an and hadith in the sense that they propound that they are the only ones possessing the right explanation of the words of Allah and the prophet (ﷺ). For them, the rest of the Islamic world does not have the right interpretation and application. In fact we can see that through their translation of Hadith Bukhariy 488 (Book Swalaat hadith 135) there are 9 hadith that are not translated. Hiding the truth to deny accessibility of data to Muslims is the concepts of many present day Salafis especially when these information are swahih but dangerous for their 'Aqidah. Ibn Taymiyyah said in Majmu Fatawa (28/605): 'And in it there are those which He (Allah) showed from his unseen whatever he wished' meaning that knowledge is not solely found in the hands of the present day Salafis. As such, **fourthly**, this leads to a situation where they propound for common people to follow only what their Ulama say without question. They are thus condemned to following blindly without question. This is the present situation in Mauritius with the Salafi movement. However Ibn Kathir mentions in *Al-Bidayah wa'n-Nihayah*, (14/46): 'Difficult legal questions used to be sent to him (Ibn Taymiyyah) from governors and specific people, which the Jurists could not deal with, and he would respond from the Book and *Sunnah* in a way that would bewilder the minds.' **Added to the above**, there is a 'what we can say' as hatred or unappreciated feeling towards the Four Sunni schools of Law (the Four *madhahib*), the Two Schools of doctrine (Ash'aris and Maturidis), and all the schools of self-purification (*Tasawwuf*). This is common throughout the Islamic world. They are extremists in their views and they don't accept differences. However Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned about the definition of *Tasawwuf*, from Volume 11, "At-Tawassuf" of "Majmu'a Fatawa: 'Alhamdulillah, the pronunciation of the word *Tasawwuf* has been thoroughly discussed. From those who spoke about *Tasawwuf* were not just the the Imams and Shaikhs, but also included were Ahmad bin Hanbal, Abi Sulayman ad-Daarani, As-Sirr as-Saqati, al-Junayd al-Baghdadi, Hasan al-Basri, Ma'aruf al-Karkhi, Abdul Qadir Jilani, Bayazid al-Bistami and many others. This is a term that was given to those who were dealing with that kind of science [*tazkiyyat an-nafs and Ihsan*]'.

Sixthly, there is the practice of takfir that is declaring other Muslims unbelievers. Anyone who opposes their concepts whether in theory or practice is declared Kaafir. This practice has been since the time of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Najdi. However, one of the students of Ibn Taymiyya, Shams al-Din al-Dhahabi (d. 1348) reported: "Towards the end of his life, our teacher Ibn Taymiyya would state: 'I do not deem anyone from among the Muslims to be an unbeliever.'" (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'). But in this present world we find another mind set of the so called salafi movement. **Furthermore**, there has been the destruction of Jannat ul Baqi and Jannat ul Ma'la. After Hijaz became under the Saudi family, new decisions were taken concerning the shrines at the graveyards and the height of graves. Shrines were destroyed and graves were level to the ground. But ironically, the grave of Ibn Taymiyyah is greatly high above the ground and those graves in Jannat ul Baqi and Ma'la are at least one foot above ground level. Ibn

Taymiyya in al-Muntaqa (2:261f.) reported: ‘Dawud ibn Salih said: “[The governor of Madina] Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] one day saw a man placing his face on top of the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ). He said: "Do you know what you are doing?" When he came near him, he realized it was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. The latter said: "Yes; I came to the Prophet (ﷺ), not to a stone’. Imam al-Dhahabi said: ‘Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about touching the Prophet's (ﷺ) grave and kissing it and he saw nothing wrong with it’ (Al-Dhahabi, Mu'jam al-Shuyukh (1:73 #58). **Moreover**, there is the desire to remove the body of the prophet (ﷺ) from Masjid-un-Nabawi. It must be noted that the decision of burying the prophet (ﷺ) in the mosque was from his own hadith (words) and the first caliph Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه). That was done during the time of the Swahaba. But nevertheless nowadays salafi want to remove the body of the prophet (ﷺ) to Jannat ul Baqi. Allama Ahmad bin Ali Basri states in the book ‘Faslul Khitaab fi Rad’di Dalaalati Ibn Abdil Wahab’ as follows : ‘From amongst the things, he (Abdul Wahab) mentioned one thing, ‘if I attain the opportunity to do so, then I will break down the Rauza of Holy Prophet (ﷺ). A pamphlet published in 2007 by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, endorsed by Abdulaziz Al Sheikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, and distributed at the Prophet's (ﷺ) Mosque, reads as follows: "The green dome shall be demolished and the three graves flattened in the Prophet's (ﷺ) Mosque". **Ninthly**, there is the destruction and elimination of many relics of the Salaf including the prophet, Swahaba, tabi’oun and taba’ut tabi’in. Any site or object belonging to the real Salaf are not valued and considered as worthy by the nowadays Salafi. They considered it as a Shirk concept. However, Hafiz Ibn Taymiyya states in Iqtida as-Sirat al-Mustaqim, page 203:"Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal was asked,'Is it permitted to do masa [wipe one's hands] over the mimbar of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) or to touch the mimbar for blessing?' He replied, 'Yes it is permitted.'"Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyid, Yahya ibn Sa'id, and other great scholars of Madinah used to do masa of the mimbar". Hafiz Ibn Kathir (701 – 774 H) one of the students of Ibn Taymiyya writes in 'Death of Ibn Taymiya': "When Hafiz Ibn Taymiyya passed away some people came and gathered around him and sat close to his body to obtain blessing from him. Also a group of women came and they drank from the water that was left over after bathing him to get blessing from it as tabarruk. The left over leaves of a tree which were also used in bathing him were distributed among themselves for the purpose of tabarruk. Whatever touched his body, such as his handkerchief or scarf which he wore round his neck, was sold for a large amount of money, to someone to keep as tabarruk. People used to come day and night to his grave, and some people use to even spend the night there" **Tenthly**, there is the killing of all those rejecting their faith especially during the years 1930's. Throughout the history of Mankind many such instances have occurred. For instance in these days we have the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) who are imposing Islam on all people and are slaughtering anyone against their concepts. Sheikh ‘Aadel Al-Kalbani, former imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca has announced that ISIS is the result of the Salafi version of Islam, and therefore there needs to be changes within the Salafi sect itself. The Isis jihadist group has held as many as 3,500 people as slaves in its territories in Iraq alone, the UN has said, and continues to carry out a wide range of abuses against civilians that amount to "war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide". From the beginning of 2014, a new report said, at least 18,800 civilians have been killed in Iraq and more than 3.2 million people have been displaced.

In fact many of those who say they are from the Salafi group, in fact they are not true salafi, one by the name ‘salafi’ they adopt and second by their doctrines. As long as people from the Salafi movement are stubborn in their concept and are not really following the real orthodox way of Islam, there will always be differences of opinions.

Muhammad Abduh

Muhammad ‘Abduh was an Egyptian reformer and pioneer of Islamic modernism and nationalism. He was born in Lower Egypt (1849-1905) and studied at the village Qur'an school, the Ahmadi mosque in Tanta, and the great mosque-university of al-Azhar in Cairo. He was influenced by Jamal ad Din al Afghani (1839-1897). When Afghani was expelled from Egypt in 1879, his disciple Abduh was dismissed from teaching duties at al-Azhar and returned to his village. Abduh came back to Cairo in 1880 as editor of the government's *Official Journal*. He supported a revolt against Egypt's domination by Europeans. In 1884 Abduh joined Afghani in Paris to publish a short-lived journal, *The Indissoluble Bond*. In 1888 he returned to Egypt and became a judge on the National Courts.

There are different concepts of Muhammad Abduh. **Firstly**, he believed that Muslims everywhere must cooperate to reverse internal decline and counter European imperialism. He wanted to sensitise Muslims on the importance of Islamic ideology and its preservation. **Moreover**, he wanted people to return to the spirit of early Islam. What is meant here is to follow the Qur'an and Hadith. This was due to the fact that the society was moving towards immoralities and corruptions. **Furthermore**, he advocated for a reinterpretation of the Quran and the *Sunnah* (precedent) of the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in light of modern times. He wanted to make Islam survive in this present world. However it is clear that it is this world that should be made to adapt to Islam. **Added to the above**, he interprets the Islamic law in such a way as to free it from the traditional interpretations and prove that Islam and modern Western civilization were compatible. He wanted to modernise the orthodoxy of Islam. **Fifthly**, Abduh was thus the chief exponent of what has been termed as the "Two-Book" school of thought which, though it basically holds the unity of God inseparable from the unity of truth, recognizes two open ways to it: the way of revelation and that of natural science.

Sixthly, Abduh tried to break through the rigidities of scholastic interpretation and to promote considerations of equity, welfare, and common sense, even if this occasionally meant disregarding the literal texts of the Quran. He wanted to make less burdensome the Islamic concepts. **Moreover**, Abduh's theology was innovative. He believed that the gates of Ijtihad (use of the human reasoning) were not closed and he rejected the divine origin of much of the Quran. He believed part of it reflected the ideas of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), and he advocated reasoned interpretation of the Quran. **Again**, Abduh deplored the blind acceptance of traditional doctrines and customs and asserted that a return to the pristine (original) faith of the earliest age of Islam not only would restore the Muslims' spiritual vitality but would provide an enlightened criterion for the assimilation of modern scientific culture. **Besides**, Abduh nonetheless believed that the Quran was the only true ethical and logical guide, implying that the Madhhab (schools of Jurisprudence) might be wrong. He was not in agreement of following any of the schools of thought. **What's more** is that Abduh was an innovative and controversial jurist. He ruled that meat from animals slaughtered by Christians or Jews was Halal, permitted to Muslims. He also reformed the provisions of the *Waqf* law and allowed interest on loans.

Hassan Al Banna

Hassan Al Banna was an Egyptian reformer. He was born in Mahmudiyya in Egypt (1906-1949). He was the Founder of Muslim Brethren (Brotherhood) – Ikhwan Al Muslimoun. He had a Traditional education. He created his Organisation in the 20th century in the year 1928 – politically geared against the West. At the age of 16 (year 1923), he entered Al Azhar darul uloom. He was influenced by the works of Salafiyya movement, especially those of Rashid Reedah (1865 – 1935). He was influenced by the Magazine Al Manar of Rashid Reedah. He launched the Muslim Society (Brethren) by 1928. In 1932, headquarters shifted to Cairo. There was the growth of the brotherhood during the 1930s and 1940s. By the early 1950s, branches had been established in Syria, Sudan, Jordan, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. He gave lectures at night for parents at Isma'iliyyah institute. He wanted to make changes through institutions around mosque, Islamic welfare associations, activism, and mass communication. He placed his members in all sectors. Al-Banna's message tackled issues including colonialism, public health, educational policy, natural resources management, Marxism, social inequalities, Arab nationalism, the weakness of the Islamic world on the international scene, and the growing conflict in Palestine. Due to its illicit activities in killings, the Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha disbanded it in December 1948. The organization's assets were impounded and scores of its members sent to jail. 3 weeks later, the prime minister was assassinated by a member of the brotherhood. This in turn prompted the murder of Al-Banna, presumably by a government agent, in February 1949, when Al-Banna was still only 43 and at the height of his career.

Following his background Hassan Al Banna had different concepts. Above all, he propounded the **Central importance of violent Jihad** - In traditional Islam, Jihad, which means "struggle", was divided into "Greater Jihad," an inner struggle to achieve sanctity and religious truth and a "Lesser Jihad" - war against enemies of Islam or Jihad Masla. Al-Banna reversed the priorities. He relegated inner spiritual struggle to Jihad al-asghar, the lesser Jihad, and elevated violent war against enemies of Islam to Jihad al Akbar, the great Jihad. His stance on this point is explicit. Secondly, he spread the **cult of martyrdom**. Al-Banna wrote: "My brother, you should know that one day you will face death and this ominous event can only occur once. If you suffer on this occasion in the way of Allah, it will be to your benefit in this world and your reward in the next." As such his second concept is much attached with the first one, Jihad. Moreover, he was for the **supremacy of Islam**. According to him, 'Islam must dominate and is not to be dominated. In doing so, there was much hatred in the hearts of his followers towards the unbelievers. The concepts of patience and acceptance of differences were not that taken into consideration. He also propounded the **Restoration of the lost caliphate**. Here this is the concept of Khilafat which is the chief immediate political goal of the Islamist movement. He was for one caliph ruling over the whole of the Muslim world. As far as the concept is concerned, this is the reality of an Islamic state, but how to apply it was not well seen by the contemporaries of Al Banna who was too extreme in his views.

Furthermore, he elaborated on the **decadence and imminent demise of the west** saying that "The civilization of the West, which was brilliant by virtue of its scientific perfection for a long time, and which subjugated the whole world with the products of this science to its states and nations, is now bankrupt and in decline," thus advocating a return to Islam. Al Banna also dealt in with the **Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism**. The Jews are the agents of change and westernization, and responsible for the decline of the west as well as Islam. This was not a new theme in the Muslim and Arab world. He associated the decline of the West to that mentality and thought to change it. As such there was a link between **Al-Banna and Nazism**.

The growth of the Muslim Brotherhood was accompanied or caused in part by the fact that Al-Banna associated it with the German Nazi party and the Third Reich. From the ideological point of view, the Jew hatred, authoritarianism, addiction to violence and desire to defeat the British of both the Muslim Brothers and the Nazis were quite enough to make the two movements find common cause. In doing so, he was criticised.

In brief, both Muhammad Abduh and Hassan Al Banna worked on several themes and as such they wanted to return to orthodox Islam, to re-educate the Egyptians, to awake the people, to mobilise people against the West and the European, to lead people to their own dependence, to spread the concept of Salafiyyah movement, to make Islam known through magazines, books, media etc ..., to Islamise the world and to make (force) people to abide by the Shari'ah.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan

Syed (Sayyid) Ahmad Khan was born in the year 1817 and died in the year 1898 in Shahjahan Abad, new Dehli. He was influenced by his grandfather Khwaja Farid for his diplomatic skills with the British and by his mother, Aziz un Nisa, for her generosity and piety. In the Indian sub-continent, he was among the first for this kind of reform. He wanted a return to Islam. He advocated for not following the British and the west. He devoted in many activities in education and politics. In 1960, he developed a concept of new and modern Islam. He wrote articles on the state of Indian and Indian Muslims. He criticised their loyalty to the British. He assumed that India was a Dar ul Islam when all 'Ulama of India said that it was Dar ul Harb. He perceived Indian Muslims as backward and need education. On January 9, 1864, he convened the first meeting of the Scientific Society at Ghazipur with the British. Ahmad Khan and the Society moved to Aligarh in 1867 where he was able to procure a piece of land from the government for experimental farming.

On April 1, 1869, Ahmad Khan, his two sons, Sayyid Hamid and Sayyid Mahmud, a younger friend, Mirza Khuda Dad Beg, and a servant known only by the affectionate name of Chachu left Benaras and arrived in London on May 4, 1869 after spending five days in Marseilles and Paris. He was "in the society of lords and dukes at dinners and evening parties", he saw "artisans and the common working-man in great numbers", and he was awarded the title of the Companion of the Star of India by none other than the Queen herself. He obtained the title of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. "Without flattering the English," he wrote, "I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are like a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man." In Aligarh he established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1877. In 1920, the College would become Aligarh Muslim University.

As such he had his own views. In his drive for modernization, Ahmad Khan wanted to **re-interpret Islam**. "We need a modern 'ilm al-Kalam," he said in a speech delivered at Lahore in 1884, "by which we should either refute the doctrines of modern sciences or show that they are in conformity with the articles of Islamic faith." But what became apparent in the subsequent writings was the fact that Ahmad Khan was not really interested (or qualified) to refute any modern scientific doctrine; all he could do was to re-interpret Islam to show that the "work of God (nature and its laws) was in conformity with the Word of God (the Qur'an)", an adage (motto) that earned him the title of Naturi. In his attempts to re-interpret Islam to accommodate modern Western science, Ahmad Khan exposed his weaknesses in both domains of

knowledge. He was severely criticized by the ‘ulama’ for the lack of qualifications to interpret the Qur’an and Hadith and the shallowness (superficiality) of his knowledge of Western science and its philosophical underpinnings (foundations) was apparent from his own writings. He had no training in any natural science or in philosophy of science and he had never finished his traditional education.

Secondly, Ahmad Khan decided to write a tafsir and he said: When I tried to educate Muslims in modern sciences and English, I wondered whether these are, in fact, against Islam as it is often claimed. I studied tafsir, according to my abilities, and except for the literary matters, found in them nothing but rubbish and worthless discussions, mostly based on baseless and unauthentic traditions and fables which were often taken from the Jewish sources. Then I studied books on the principles of tafsir according to my ability with the hope that they would definitely provide clues to the principles of the Qur’anic interpretation based on the Qur’an itself or which would be otherwise so sound that no one could object to them but in them I found nothing but statements that the Qur’an contains knowledge of such and such nature... Then I pondered over the Qur’an itself to understand the foundational principles of its composition and as far as I could grasp, I found no contradiction between these principles and the modern knowledge... then I decided to write a tafsir of the Qur’an which is now complete up to Surat ul Nahl.”

Moreover, Ahmad Khan denied all miracles. In the Ninth Principle of his tafsir, he stated: “there could be nothing in the Qur’an that is against the principles on which nature works... as far as the supernatural is concerned, I state it clearly that they are impossible, just like it is impossible for the Word of God to be false... I know that some of my brothers would be angry to [read this] and they would present verses of the Qur’an that mention miracles and supernatural events but we will listen to them without annoyance and ask: could there could not be another meaning of these verses that is consonant with Arabic idiom and the Qur’anic usage? And if they could prove that it is not possible, then we will accept that our principle is wrong... but until they do so, we will insist that God does not do anything that is against the principles of nature that He has Himself established.”

To wrap his views, it can be said that Syed Ahmad Khan wanted to awake the Indian people, to bring to them a new Islam to be applied to modernity, to re-educate the Indian people, to bring Islam only (at first) to Indian people, he created his Scientific research, he obtained help from the French and the British, he wanted to analyse the Qur’an and Hadith based on his ability, he wanted to bring relaxation to the rigidity of the Qur’an by the ‘Ulama and he had the guts to go against the ‘Ulama.

Abu ‘Ala Al Mawdudi

Abu ‘Alaa Mawdudi was born in the year 1903 and died in the year 1979. He was the founder of Jami’ah Islami of Pakistan. He was a Contemporary thinker and wrote much about society, economy and politics. He introduced the ideology of Hizbiyyah (strict loyalty to a particular group or party). Though there were many sayings against him, he is renowned. He is the leader of many Muslims today. He is the writer and philosopher of many books. He had great influence on youngsters who don’t want to complicate Islam or rather to lead a simple Islamic code of conduct. There are many critics against him for his thoughts on other people. He had his positive and negative ways of thinking which have and still are causing harm to some and welfare to others.

Mawdudi was the founder of Jama`at-i Islami party/movement in India and Pakistan. (Although it traditionally has not gone above the single digits in vote gathering, it had much success in influencing Pakistani elites and has "managed to exert a political and ideological influence in excess" of its numbers. ...) (Talbot, p.108). He had his own views on different topics. As such on the **Islamic state** he said that its sphere of activity is co-extensive (extending over the same area or time) with human life ... In such a state no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. [Ahmad, p.154] It should be the very antithesis (opposite) of secular Western democracy ... Considered from this aspect the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist (authoritarian) and Communist states [Adams, pp. 119-21]. On the topic of **Muslims in charge** he propounded that it is a dictate (injunction) of this very nature of the Islamic state that such a state should be run only by those who believe in the ideology on which it is based and in the Divine Law which it is assigned to administer. [Ahmad p.155, quoted in Adams p.121]. On the **Choice of the State's leader** it is said that Islam does not limit the scope of its possibilities by attempting to lay down exactly how the choice of leader will be made. [Ahmad, quoted in Adams, p.252]. Different methods may be appropriate to different times and circumstances, as is evidenced by the lack of uniformity in the ways of deciding the succession of the first four caliphs ... [Adams, p.123].

He propounded that **Legislature / Administration should not be a law-making body**. In addition to providing a means for the ruler to fulfil the duty of consulting, the function of the legislature is really that of law-finding, not of law-making. Islam leaves no room of human legislation in an Islamic state, because herein all legislative functions are vested (entrusted) in God and the only function left for Muslims lies in their observance of the God-made law . . . The fact of the matter, however, is that Islam does not totally exclude human legislation. It only limits its scope and guide it on right lines. [Adams p.125, quoting Ahmad, p.77]. As such, the State must "**be controlled and run exclusively by Muslims**", the Head of state as "the locus of all power and authority," must be a Muslim, adult male who has not actively sought the post, the Ruler should be the "best" (in terms of piety as well as competency) for the task, non-Muslims may hold non-sensitive posts but must be "rigorously excluded from influencing policy decisions", Government must be managed through mutual consultation, the ruler is to be selected, appointed, or elected through a consultative process among others. Another aspect to restore **the unity and righteousness** that existed at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, four principles are needed: Those who bear responsibility should face the representatives so the public and be accountable for what they do, the party system should be reformed to abolish loyalty to parties, the government should not operate with complex rules, and the people elected to office should have the proper qualifications (Ahmad, p.259).

Abu Ala Al Mawdudi gives directives on **Shari'ah** dealing with family relationships, social and economic affairs, administration, rights and duties of citizens, judicial system, laws of war and peace and international relations. In short it embraces all the various departments of life ... The Shari'ah is a complete scheme of life and an all-embracing social order where nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking. [Adams p.113, quoting Ahmad p.57]. He also elaborated on **non-Muslim Culture** having very disastrous consequences upon a nation; it destroys its inner vitality (strength), blurs its vision, befogs (confuses) its critical faculties, breeds inferiority complexes, and gradually but assuredly saps (weakens) all the springs of culture and sound its death-knell (the tolling of a bell to mark someone's death). That is why the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has positively and forcefully forbidden the Muslims to assume the culture and mode of life of the non-Muslims. [Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p.131]. He propounded on **non-Muslims Rights** as the Muslims should feel proud of such a humane law as that of *Jizya*. For it is obvious that a maximum freedom that can be allowed to those who do not adopt the way of Allah but choose to tread the ways of error is that they should be tolerated to lead the life they like. [Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the*

Qur'an, p.183.]. He interprets the Qur'anic imperative to Jihad as having the aim of defeating non-Muslims, to force them to pay the *Jizyah* as the defining symbol of their subjection: ... Jews and the Christians ...should be forced to pay Jizya in order to put an end to their independence and supremacy so that they should not remain rulers and sovereigns in the land. These powers should be wrested from them by the followers of the true Faith, who should assume the sovereignty and lead others towards the Right Way. [Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, v.2, page 183.] That is why the Islamic state offers them protection, if they agree to live as Dhimmis by paying *Jizya*, but it cannot allow that they should remain supreme rulers in any place and establish wrong ways and establish them on others. [Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, v.2, p. 186.]

In brief, Abu Ala Al Mawdudi wanted to facilitate Islam for the youngsters, develop concept of patriotism, lead people towards Khilafat, bring his people under only one cause, present a Tafsir of the Qur'an to people and his views on various domains like society, economics and politics.

Muhammad Iqbal

Muhammad Iqbal was born in Sialkot, Punjab (now Pakistan) (1877 - 1937). He was proficient in Arabic and Persian languages. He graduated in philosophy, college teacher in Lahore. He moved to Cambridge for higher studies and PhD at Munich. He was a Barrister at law in 1908 and returned to Lahore. A collection of his six (later seven) addresses was first published in 1930 titled Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. He said in this country Islam would have an opportunity to 'mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.

At the outset, Iqbal's philosophy is often described as the philosophy of khudi, or the own Self. For him, the fundamental fact of human life is the absolute and irrefutable consciousness of one's own being. For Iqbal, the advent of humanity on earth is a great and glorious event, not an event signifying human sinfulness and degradation. He points out that according to the Qur'an, the earth is humanity's 'dwelling-place' and 'a source of profit' to it. Iqbal does not think that having been created by God, human beings were placed in a super sensual paradise from which they were expelled on account of an act of disobedience to God. **Secondly**, the purpose of life is the development of the Self. In order that they may achieve the fullest possible development, it is essential for human beings to possess knowledge. Following the Qur'an, Iqbal maintains that there are two sources of knowledge: the inner consciousness of human beings and the outer world of nature. Starting with the intuition of the Self, human beings become aware of the Not-Self, the confronting 'other' which provides a constant challenge for them. Nature, however, does not confront God in the same way as it confronts humanity. **Thirdly**, Iqbal distinguishes between two aspects of the Self, the efficient and the appreciative. The efficient self is that which is concerned with, and is itself partially formed by, the physical world. It apprehends the succession of impressions and discloses itself as a series of specific, and consequently numerable, states. The appreciative self is the deeper self, of which one becomes aware only in moments of profound meditation when the efficient self is in abeyance (state of uncertainty, doubt, misuse).

Moreover, Iqbal cannot be easily or exclusively classified as an empiricist (scientist, researcher), rationalist (someone prioritising reason over emotion) or intuitionist since he combines sense-perception, reason and intuition in his theory of knowledge (see Epistemology (theory of knowledge good / bad) in

Islamic philosophy). He defines knowledge as 'sense-perception elaborated by understanding' ('understanding' here does not stand exclusively for 'reason' but for all non-perceptual modes of knowledge). There are two ways of establishing connections with the Reality that confronts us. The direct way is by means of observation and sense-perception; the other way is through direct association with that Reality as it reveals itself within. **Furthermore**, of all the parts of his thought, Iqbal's political philosophy is perhaps the most commonly misunderstood. This misunderstanding is largely the result of dividing his political philosophy into phases, such as the nationalistic (patriotic) phase, the pan-Islamic (unity of muslim / caliphate) phase and the last phase in which he pioneered the Muslim independence movement. By regarding each phase as being quite different from and independent of the other phases, one almost always reaches the conclusion that either Iqbal's political views changed with astonishing rapidity or that he could not make up his mind and was inconsistent. One can indeed see Iqbal first as a young poet with rather narrow parochial (close-minded) sympathies which gradually widened into love of homeland, and then gave way to love of Islam which later became transformed into love of humanity. However, he can also be seen as a visionary, whose ideal from first to last was the realization of God's Kingdom on Earth, who believed in the interrelatedness, equality and freedom of human beings, and who strove at all times to achieve these goals; and by viewing Iqbal in this one light, one attains a much better understanding of his political philosophy.

As such, it can be seen that Muhammad Iqbal has different concepts and among others there are man's achieving full self-consciousness, the idea of the finality of prophethood to be 'a psychological cure' for the Magian attitude of constant expectation, the idea of all personal authority claiming a supernatural origin came to an end in this history of man, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Qur'an and the emphasis that it lays on nature and history as sources of human knowledge are... different aspects of the same idea of finality, the birth of Islam is the birth of inductive intellect, albeit Qur'an and sunnah we must use reasoning, accepting modern knowledge but with cautious, no rejection of what benefit West can bring, the contribution of the understanding of the contribution of sufism in Ibaadah, the observance of nature, the advancement is made through prayer and so on.

However, there have been some critics from the Salafis movement such as the use of Urdu and Farsi poetry, the use of reasoning where many people can be misguided or mislead, there is no logic in Islam except Iman, the acceptance of good concepts from the West, the concepts of Tasawwuf / Sufism and they say it is Bid'ah and criticism against Wazifah, Dhikr or Tasbih by some groups.

Islam Judaism Christianity

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity make up the three largest religions in the world. These top three religions have many similarities and differences. Among their major similarities is their common regard for historical and religious figure named Abraham. Two other major similarities are their belief in monotheism and Jerusalem as a holy city. While these similarities are significant, they also have many differences. Their differences include: their view of Jesus Christ, religious texts, and how they approach God in prayer. If all three religions hold steadfast to their core religious beliefs, then reconciliation and unity among them will never take place. However even in their disagreements, they do have similarities.

One important similarity among all three religions is the importance they **place on the historical figure Abraham**. In Islam the life and faithfulness of Abraham is celebrated in a variety of ways. In the five pillars of Islam, the fifth one called pilgrimage or hajj is used as a remembrance of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son to obey God. Another way that Islam recognizes his importance is through the Feast of Sacrifice. On the tenth day of pilgrimage month the head of each Islamic household is to kill an animal and provide a feast. As Abraham plays an important role in the faith of the Islamic people, he is equally revered in Judaism. He is seen as the father of the Jewish faith, he is also known as the patriarch of the Jewish people. It is believed that Abraham established a covenant with God after being obedient in his willingness to sacrifice his son. The importance of Abraham is also seen in the tradition of circumcision. "Genesis traces the ritual back to a commandment of God to Abraham (Genesis 17:10, 11)" In the Old Testament God told Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation, which Judaism considers to be Israel. Christianity also has a high regard for Abraham. He is spoken highly in both the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament evangelists and early church of Christianity recognized Abraham for his covenant with God. Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, speaks of Abraham and the importance of his early covenant. With Christianity recognizing the Old Testament, Abraham and his importance to the establishment of the Jewish people and the coming of Jesus, sets the basis for his acceptance and high regard with in Christianity itself. The importance of Abraham in all three religions steams from a common thread of Abraham's obedience to God. All three religions share sacred religious texts of Abraham. While it seems that their foundations are very similar, their views on Jesus Christ are not.

All three religions have a different view of who **Jesus Christ** was. In Christianity Jesus is the messiah that is talked about in the Old Testament. Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled the requirements and prophecies that the prophets spoke about. One of their key reasons for believing this is their belief in his resurrection from the dead. Jesus played a significant role in establishing Christianity and training his followers to share his message. This led to the writing of the New Testament and its importance in the Christian faith. Tensions between Christianity and Judaism arose over their differing views of who Jesus Christ was. Judaism didn't accept Jesus as the messiah they'd been waiting for. They believe that a messiah is still to come and that Jesus was simply an educated Jewish rabbi. While Judaism rejects anything divine about Jesus, Islam sees him as a prophet. He is seen as a great teacher, but not the son of God as Christians see him. However, according to Islamic belief Jesus was born of a Virgin and preformed great miracles. Islam teaches that Allah sent Jesus to the earth to reveal to them new scriptures. They now believe that through human error some of this scripture has been tainted by human error. One such error is how he died. While Christians maintain that he died on a cross for their sins, Muslims believe he was alive when God called him to heaven. The life and death of Jesus remains a differing point among the three religions.

Christians believe that Jesus came as the son of God and died on the cross and rose again for their sins. Jews believe that Jesus was a great rabbi, but nothing more. While Islam agrees with Christianity in the virgin birth and miracles, they only see him as prophet. Even with this disagreement all three religions are monotheistic.

Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are all **monotheistic religions** that believe in a single God. While Christianity is actually a form of Trinitarian Monotheism, it can still be considered monotheistic. Some would argue that Christians believe in three separate Gods; however Christians would rebuttal with an established belief that all three members of the trinity make up a single God. “Trinitarian Monotheism is the view that there is only one God, but within this one God are three distinct yet equal persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Only biblical Christianity affirms Trinitarian Monotheism.” Islam believes in one God without regard for the trinity. “The most basic belief of Islam is that there is only one God, who is called Allah...” Judaism also holds the belief of one God who is almighty and everlasting. Islam goes a bit farther and proclaims that the God of the Christians and Jews is Allah, “...there is only one God, who is called Allah, the same God worshiped by Jews and Christians.” While Judaism and Christianity would disagree with this statement, they would also disagree on the importance of different religious texts.

While there are some common religious texts between the three religions, they disagree on **divine inspiration and importance**. Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God. There is common belief within Christianity in the inerrancy of both the Old and New Testaments. The holy book of Islam is the Qur’an. The Qur’an is believed to be the very word of God and was not subject to human interpretation errors. “Qur’an is the word of God: It is eternal, absolute, and irrevocable.” While the Christians admit that they believe the Bible to be written by humans with inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Since Muslims believe so firmly in the Qur’an, they take great efforts to memorizes as much of the text as possible. Christians also believe in Bible memorization, however not to the extent of Muslims. The holy text for Judaism is the Torah. Like Muslims, Jews go to great efforts to memorize as much of their holy texts as possible. The high emphasis on memorization shows not only their dedication, but also their reverence for the text itself. Even with some common religious texts, the three religions remain divided in their agreement on each text’s validity. However, they all agree on Jerusalem as being a historical and religious site for each of their religions.

Jerusalem has a rich religious and historical background that is important to Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. For Muslims, Jerusalem was the first place they were instructed to pray toward, it was later changed to Mecca. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) instructed followers of Islam to embark on journeys to three temples, one of which is the one located in Jerusalem. “It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said, "There are only three mosques to which you should embark on a journey: the sacred mosque (Mecca, Saudi Arabia), this mosque of mine (Madinah, Saudi Arabia), and the mosque of Al-Aqsa (Jerusalem).” Jerusalem is also significant to Muslims because it is believed to be the place where the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) acceded into the heavens. For Christians Jerusalem is also an important religious place. They believe that it is the place where Jesus completed his earthly ministry and was crucified. “Thus Jerusalem is the stage on which God's plan of salvation was put into effect.” Jerusalem’s significance goes back to the foundations of Judaism. Judaism considers Jerusalem to be a holy and sacred land. Jews believe in praying toward the city and mentioning the city often in their prayers. Jerusalem was proclaimed a religious capital by King Solomon and was the location of the main Jewish temple. Jerusalem remains equally important to all three religions to this day. Prayer is also very important, but different in each of the three religions.

All three religions believe **in prayer as a way to communicate with God**; however they differ in how they should approach Him in prayer. In Islam, prayer is one of the Five Pillars of faith. Muslims are told to pray five times a day toward Mecca. During their prayer time, male and females are separated and each person must wash themselves to cleanse themselves of any impurities. Prayer plays an important role in the life of Jews also. “Jews are supposed to pray three times a day; morning, afternoon, and evening.” They believe that the more they pray, the closer they get to God. Some Jews use prayer books or prewritten prayers, while others simply speak to God from their heart. This is a similarity with Christianity. Some Christians have prewritten prayers while others believe they should simply pray what is “on their heart”. Most Christians do not have a set number of times to pray during the day, but they also believe that prayer draws them closer to God. While all religions believe that God will hear their prayers, each one has a different way that they teach their followers to approach God. Even with the different ways of approaching God, the ritual of prayer remains established in all three religions.

The three religions have some **universal themes** that are shared among them. One of these is the belief of an afterlife. Each religion believes that a person dies once and then enters a spiritual place. Although they differ on where people go after death, the belief of eternity is a common thread between them. They also believe that God is all powerful. In each religion they consider God to be omnipresent, in other words, all knowing and all seeing, present at every place all at once. All three also have meeting places set aside in their communities where they can go to worship and pray, for Muslims they go to a mosque, Christians to a church, and Jews to a synagogue. They believe in fellowshiping together and have close ties with other members of their religion. This and other similarities may not be enough to bring the three religions together.

There are ways that the three major religions of the world can be reconciled, however the possibility is unlikely. In order for Islam, Christianity, and Judaism to come together, they would each have to give up some of their core beliefs. For instance, Judaism and Christianity could not come together unless they resolve who Jesus Christ was. This would require Jews to accept him as the messiah, or Christians to deny him as the messiah. For Islam and Christianity to unite they would have to address both Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and their place in religious unity. The very core of each religion would have to compromise their beliefs to accept that another group is correct. This does not seem to ever happen because of the intense belief that each religion believes theirs is the only correct one. It seems that their significant differences will forever outweigh any of their similarities.

Islam, Christianity, and Judaism remain the world's three most popular religions. They have many similarities and differences among their beliefs and practices. All three religions started with the same historical figure of Abraham, but later branched off into varying beliefs of who God is and how he has communicated with humanity. While all three religions believe in the power of prayer, they differ in how to approach God. Christians believe they need a mediator, Jesus Christ, while Jews and Muslims approach prayer in a more structured way. Their major differences on the importance of religious texts entrenches their separation to a point that may be unbridgeable. They can never reconcile their faiths among each other if they hold to their core beliefs outlined in their individual religious texts.

Qur'anic teachings on faiths other than Islam

There are many Qur'anic verses related to the existence of other faiths other than Islam. As such, Allah says in the Qur'an 'O People of the Scripture! Why confound the truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?' (3: 71) and indicates that there are those people who are aware of the truth and having access to it but nevertheless hide it. It is also said that 'And if thou were to ask them: Who created the heavens and the earth, and constrained the sun and the moon (to their appointed work)? they would say: Allah. How then are they turned away?' (29: 61) indicating that the unbelievers are aware that the creator of this world is Allah but they deny the truth and turn away. There is also another verse related to the Sabi'oun where Allah says 'Lo! those who believe (this Revelation), and those who are Jews, and the Sabaeans and the Christians and the Magians and the idolaters. Lo! Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection. Lo! Allah is Witness over all things.' (22: 17), indicates the existence of other religions where Allah will judge them. Allah also says concerning the Polytheism, 'So be not thou in doubt concerning that which these (folk) worship. They worship only as their fathers worshipped aforetime. Lo! We shall pay them their whole due unabated,' (11: 109) meaning that Allah will judge between them and will be given hell as reward as they follow the religions of their ancestors. There are verses related to the Idol worshipping as Allah says, 'And they have chosen (other) gods beside Allah that they may be a power for them. Nay, but they will deny their worship of them, and become opponents unto them,' (19:81-82) indicating that there are those who took intercessors to Allah and they will be punished for their concepts. There is also the existence of the Hanif as Allah says, 'Say: Allah speaks truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, the upright. He was not of the idolaters. (3: 95) meaning that there are those who have the concepts of the prophet Ibrahim (as) and are Muslims by nature and concept.

There are also the warning of Allah that He will judge between them, 'And the Jews say the Christians follow nothing (true), and the Christians say the Jews follow nothing (true); yet both are readers of the Scripture. Even thus speak those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differ,' (2: 113) indicating that both Jews and the Christians had the scriptures from Allah but nevertheless they did not follow the religion of Allah. There are verses related to the deeds of the Jews and Christians as falsifying their texts, 'But those who were unjust changed it for a saying other than that which had been spoken to them, so We sent upon those who were unjust a pestilence (virus) from heaven, because they transgressed. (2: 59). The Holy Quran informs us that the Jews and Christians have corrupted their scriptures by mixing the original revelation with human interpolations and interpretations until the former could not be distinguished from the latter. The Qur'an also informs us that the Jews were hypocrites towards Jesus, 'Then when Jesus came to know of their disbelief, he said: "Who will be my helpers in Allah's Cause?" The disciples said: "We are the helpers of Allah; we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (we submit to Allah)." Our Lord! We believe in what You have sent down, and we follow the Messenger (Jesus); so write us down among those who bear witness (to the truth, La ilaaha illallah - none has the right to be worshipped but Allah). And they (disbelievers) plotted (to kill Jesus), and Allah planned too. And Allah is the Best of the planners.' (3:52-54) There are also signs that people were hypocrites towards Musah: "And We brought the Children of Israel (with safety) across the sea, and they came upon a people devoted to some of their idols (in worship). They said: "O Musah (Moses)! Make for us an ilaahan (a god) as they have aaliha (gods)." He said: "Verily, you are a people who know not." (7: 138)

Muslim Minorities

Problems Faced And Opportunities Of Muslim Minorities

In your country or another country you know, what major (a) problems and (b) opportunities face present-day Muslims as they try to live by the teachings of Islam?

Islam is a religion where Allah and His prophet (ﷺ) have already established the code of conduct for all Muslims in all circumstances. In this way, Islam has made provision for those Muslims living as minorities in different parts of the world. The following will elaborate on both the problems and opportunities faced by Muslims as they try to live by the teachings of Islam.

Problems faced by Muslims throughout the world are different based on the countries they are living in. The lines below will discuss the major problems Muslims face pertaining to the practicing of Islam. Above all, Muslims who live in Muslim countries can easily manage offering prayers during their work timings, as the offices usually allow prayer breaks. However, in most Muslim minorities countries, Muslims find it difficult to find time to offer prayers, as the offices are not understanding of the fact that there is some prayers time and it is obligatory for Muslims to say prayers. In Mauritius though in most cases Muslims have time for their prayers, those working in private firms and companies often have problems to ensure prayer times from their employers. Moreover, Islam is the largest religion alongside with Christianity and Judaism. Therefore, in Muslim minorities countries, there is a strong hold of unislamic cultural and life style. Therefore, due to religious nature of these styles, a Muslim is unable to relate with these and finds it difficult to be a part of unislamic culture. And if he or she does try to mingle with the predominant unislamic culture it comes at the cost of suppressing the Islamic beliefs and system. As such in Mauritius we have so many unislamic religious feast and culture where our youngsters as well as adults get caught in the system and we see Muslims celebrating day of assumption, Christmas, Easter holiday among others. Another example can be the image and life of Muslim changed in many countries especially the US, right after the 9/11 incident. Since then the Muslim nationals of US have never been able to feel or live the same. The main problem Muslims face in US, is the blame of being terrorists. The western media is playing a biased role in all the proceedings, and portray all Muslims as terrorists, because of which it has become difficult for Muslims to live their lives with freedom in US. However, all Muslims cannot be blamed for the actions of one group. In Mauritius, there have always been a communal system of election and the whole population know that it will never change.

Muslims in America who are open about their support of Islamic causes and critical of US policies know full well the dangers such outspokenness entails. Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals, scholars, activists, leaders, imams and anyone who challenges the mainstream narrative is harassed, detained, summoned before grand juries, interrogated and/or deported by the US government. In Mauritius there are NIU (National Intelligence Unit) at every Muslim gathering and Friday prayers. **There are also psychological oppressions** upon the Muslim minorities. There are problems and influences which tend to threaten the faith and integrity of the students' Islamic identity and allegiance. As such, the Modernist view holds that matter which is tangible and mind which can be experienced are the only realities. Moreover one opinion is as good as another and that religious doctrines are merely one set of opinions which are refuted by others. The religious beliefs and spiritual realities are only the fantasies of uneducated, simple people.

The Science created by the human mind through the human senses represents the highest authoritative truth about man and the Universe and that ultimately man's Science will solve all man's problems. Man, far from being the servant of God, is the master of his natural environment and may exploit it as he wills. There is no authority except collective or individual greed for more and more comforts, T.V. sets, refrigerators etc and that there is no decree of destiny, only the opportunity or otherwise to get more of what one wants or thinks one needs. The only criterion of good and evil is convenience, comfort and physical well-being. It doesn't matter what one believes or thinks, so long as one is comfortable and healthy. There is freedom of intermingling of sexes attached to consumption of alcoholic drinks, pigs, halal and haram food and all kinds of drugs found everywhere such as in late night parties. There is also the easy accessibility of easy money through gambling. Thus modern man has set himself up against God and Nature. Many colleges and universities students are faced with such ideologies unfortunately. They are faced with a dilemma and needed religious and spiritual attention.

Moreover there has been the emergence of an **extremist** group among those saying they believe in Islam which has deepened the sorrows of Muslim minorities. It started in the early 90's with the rise of the Salafi Movement which eventually incited a reaction called "Tradition Islam". For example we have the Al Qaeda. Prior to the rise of Salafism, it was easy dealing with difference in the convert community. But as more and more people became Muslim and were indoctrinated into Salafism, it seemed the local leadership could neither keep with the pace of conversion nor the sophistication of the Salafi teachers. There are many brainwashing programmes resulting in suicide bombing under the heading of 'Jihad'. This has and is still contributing to the problems of Muslim minorities throughout the world. Many of our youth today, after inheriting disdain for classical scholars and scholarship from their parents (and also because of the misguided teachings of some of those who are classically trained), find themselves confronted with troubling philosophical discussions in Western universities, and, especially, the ideas related to the New-Atheists. Some of them are troubled enough to doubt the authenticity of Islam and its universal truths, largely because they never were afforded the opportunity to study classical Islamic dialectics, logic, and/or dogmatic theology. In Mauritius, it is noted among some types of students the hatred they have for unislamic government and the desire for a Khalifah movement. There was also the FSM (Front Solidarité Mauricien) movement desiring to spiritualise the unislamic political system in Mauritius.

However, it must be noted that Muslims living as minorities have also specific rights and facilities. There are governments who are sensible to the situation of minorities in their countries. For example in India, a report illustrates how programmes intended to improve school education among Muslims has focused on modernization of Madrasah even though only Muslim kids go there for education. In higher studies, the government has focused on providing assistance to minority institutions rather than expanding the overall education network to include Muslims. In states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (with high concentration of Muslims), infrastructure projects have been diverted to them. The Reserve Bank of India's efforts to extend banking and credit facilities to Muslims, a major result of the Sachar Committee report which said Muslims were out of the banking system, has also ended up benefiting non-Muslim minorities. In Mauritius, there is the equality of chance for Muslims whether it be for religious schools (Madrasah) or primary, secondary or tertiary level. In Europe, Muslim integration is one of the most controversial issues in the immigration debate, and one that gets right to the heart of public anxieties about immigration. European countries are struggling with ways to accommodate Muslim minorities while preserving national values. Getting the balance right has not been easy. Governments have taken many steps to incorporate Islam into the architecture of the modern state, such as introducing Muslim councils to help resolve conflicts over

cultural practices. In Mauritius, we have the rights to establish any Muslim organisation with the intention to work for the progress of Muslims. There is no restriction as such.

Still there are steps which some governments have taken to ensure Muslim **integration** as well as **preservation** of the countries' cultures. Governments have sought to restrict or prohibit practices perceived as contradicting national or liberal democratic norms and values, especially those that condone violence or are seen as undermining gender equality. Citizenship and integration tests, as well as arrival contracts, have all been employed to signal the undesirability of certain practices. For example, Denmark requires immigrants to sign a statement on arrival committing to respect individual freedoms and gender equality. Some countries restrict religious dress in certain public professions, either to ensure neutrality in the public sphere, or for practical reasons like facilitating human interaction. These include civil servants, teachers (in approximately half of the German federal states, Oslo municipality, all of French public schools, and in the United Kingdom), the police force (Denmark, Norway, Germany, and ad hoc cases in the Netherlands), and judges and clerks (Denmark, Norway, ad hoc in the United Kingdom and Spain). The idea is to facilitate integration. It must not be judged and taken negatively. In Mauritius, all Muslims male and female have the rights to wear whatever they want related to Islamic dress. It may be the Jilbaab, Hijab, Jubbah, 'Amaamah and others except in the police force (where a uniform is needed) and in some private schools and companies. **Concerning the relationship between mosques and states**, the official recognition of Islam has been problematic in several countries because of the religion's non-hierarchical structure, meaning Muslim organizations are not always granted the rights and benefits of other religious groups including tax benefits, the right to perform marriage and funerals with civil validity, and financial support for Muslim schools. Governments have sought to encourage the development of representative councils or umbrella bodies in order to fulfil this role. Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom all now have national councils, formed with varying levels of government support. These councils help resolve debates on religious practices like imams, prayer spaces, chaplains, mosques, education, and halal food; provide a representative hierarchy following the structure of the Christian church; and "deny oxygen" to would-be extremists by including some minority voices in public debate. Here in Mauritius we have various institutions like the 'Family Council' and the 'Halal Committee' to ensure the rights of Muslims.

Another set of policy interventions promotes integration by providing **financial** or other support for religious education and institutions. The *raison d'être* is that developing a home-grown form of Islam could guard against the influence of extremist groups or foreign governments. These imams or Islamic educators brought in from abroad might encourage mosques to act as centres to encourage integration and social and religious respect. In Mauritius, Muslims living in peace and harmony are keen to merge in the society. **Moreover**, resistance to the provision of Islamic education in mainstream classrooms is slowly being replaced by the view that it can strengthen, rather than threaten, integration. Recent reports indicate that, contrary to popular belief, there is little desire for self-segregation among Muslim parents (mixed schools are associated with higher performance). Policymakers have the option of encouraging faith schools and segregated education or providing support for Islamic education within the regular school system. In Mauritius, as from the primary schools Muslims can opt either for Urdu and Arabic as subjects and Islamic Studies at secondary schools. At tertiary level there are B.a courses for Arabic, Urdu and Islamic Studies. **Imams** imported from abroad are thought to find it more difficult to provide context-specific advice and participate in official discussions as they may lack knowledge of the language or culture of the new country. While traditionally imams did little more than lead the prayer, they are increasingly called on to perform a number of roles, from marriage counsel or to financial advisor. Imams might therefore be critical to second-

and third-generation integration. There are steps to providing financial support for mosques, it is hoped, will weaken the influence of foreign governments further. Most mosques in European cities are temporary conversions of basements or warehouses, so-called backyard mosques. Governments are making efforts to help these Muslim minorities. In Mauritius Imaams have already these rights and subsidies are given to both Imaams as wages and mosques to buy any kind of transport among others.

In short, Muslims have spread to other nations and cultures of the world. However, the life out there is not the same as in Muslim countries. The Muslims have to face different issues and have to work very hard to keep their Muslim hood intact, or else they may also lose their identity in the secular culture and environment. However, there are also many opportunities. For example, halal meat is available in many public institutions; Muslim religious holidays are celebrated at the local level (for example schools give Muslim students the day off to celebrate Eid); and prayer rooms are increasingly provided in higher education facilities, hospitals, and prisons in many countries. Many of these changes occurred without trumpet blast on a local, municipal, or institutional level, and often in areas where Muslims form a critical mass.

Reactions Of Muslims Living in Muslim Minorities Countries

Islamophobia is by no means a new phenomenon. Rather, it goes back to the earliest period of Islamic history. A massive storm of anti-Muslim hatred emerged and spread across large parts of the world with the expansion of Muslim political rule, from the early eighth century onwards. It was this that, in large measure, propelled the Crusades, which played a major role in propagating and perpetuating deeply-held negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the West. However, there are ways how to react to this trend.

Unfortunately, Muslim scholars and activists have not given this question much serious consideration, being guided mainly by feelings of revenge and reaction, mainly at the political level. Muslim scholars from South Asia have a particularly important role to play today in countering Islamophobia, because, unlike in several countries in the Arab world, there is much greater intellectual freedom in this region. South Asian Muslim scholars must devote adequate attention to studying and understanding the psyche, worldview and ideologies of various Islamophobic forces, their methods of working and the consequences of their activities and propaganda. South Asian madrasah could have taken up this task more effectively than other Muslim institutions. For this to happen, madrasah must include such subjects in their curriculum as would enable their students to gain a proper understanding of modern social, political, economic and cultural conditions and challenges.

As such one of the ways to react is to follow the verse of the Qur'an 'Believers, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others toward you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that you do'. (Qur'an 5:8). In that there are the concepts of **justice and patience**. As long as a Muslim keeps on the path of justice with a certain amount of patience, perseverance and determination he will be able to cope with all challenges. It is also said "...let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help you one another in righteousness and piety, but help you not one another in sin and rancour: fear God, for God is strict in punishment." (Quran 5:2). The aspects determined here are about **violence and vengeance** which must not be adopted by Muslims. As such all concepts behind suicide bombing and terrorism are banned in Islam. No matter what

has been done to you, God says, you are not allowed to commit injustice. The ends do not justify the means. There can never be a “free for all” against those who hurt us. The amazing profundity of the statements in 5:2 and 5:8 are even more greatly appreciated when one realizes when they were first revealed to the Muslims: soon after the conquest of Mecca. However, this principle also needs to be understood by the Americans. Despite what happened on September 11, it does not give the Americans the right to kill innocent people in Iraq and Afghanistan in revenge. It does not give the right to torture detainees in Iraq or Afghanistan. It must never be so. Never let the hatred of a people toward you move you to commit injustice. An “eye for an eye,” is not appropriate here. Let there be mercy.

The Qur'an also tells us to dismiss the people of ignorance and not to give a lot of attention to them as such **ignoring the words of ignorant people**. It asks us to not engage with them in any conversation, except perhaps to safeguard ourselves from greater harm. Allah says ‘Be tolerant, command what's right, pay no attention to foolish people’ [7:199]. This is such an important matter that the Qur'an makes it one of the traits of the People of God: ‘The Servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk humbly on Earth, and who, when the foolish address them, reply 'Peace'” [25:63]. We see the Qur'an encouraging us to engage with the people of reason and to even debate them if they have a different point of view: ‘Call people to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching, and argue with them in the most courteous way’ [16:125]. Another aspect is towards a **call to respect the sanctity of faith symbols**. A very interesting and very relevant verse to this discussion in the Qur'an says ‘Do not revile those they call on beside God, so they, in their hostility, revile God, without knowledge’ [6:108]. The direct meaning of this verse is that reviling, insulting, or cursing the idols is prohibited because indirectly we are causing our God to be reviled, insulted or cursed. No matter how much we disagree with idol-worship, we cannot mock, insult, or curse idols, idolaters, or idol-worship. This verse is also teaching us that there are always consequences to our actions. Just like we hold our religious symbols very dear to our hearts and we consider them holy or untouchable, people of other faiths will feel the same towards their religious symbols, no matter how ridiculous those symbols may seem to us. Therefore, we should have mutual respect of religious symbols in order to live together in a civilized manner. At the least, we should, as they say, respectfully disagree. Furthermore, the Quran says, **"Do not disagree:"** do not "tanaaza`u" that is a strong word in Arabic. It is different from "Ikhtilaf disagreement." “Tanaaza`u” is saying, do not have conflict with one another. So what must be done is to consolidate all bridges among the different Islamic parties, eliminate all differences in ‘Aqeedah but work for the common people and Muslims, create a solidarity and trust as a pillar, help all Muslims whether poor or better-off, work together as one unit, try to come in partnership with Muslims businessmen, spread Islam in the best way – wisdom, don’t force anyone to enter Islam, talk politely, keep the traditional Islam intact, let Islamic customs and traditions be part of one’s private and public life, abide by the law of Allah for blessings, follow the Shari’ah for one own betterment, make the formation of the future generation through your kids, pass on the Islamic concepts to the offsprings, don’t merge with European and western cultures thus forgetting Islamic ones, inculcate Sabr (patience) in one’s heart in times of physical and psychological persecutions and among others migrate to a Muslim country in search for another friendly land to live Islam.

As such, when a muslim lives in a muslim minorities country, he must talk and he must also listen. He takes, but must also give. He respects first and then he gains respect and attains credibility and dignity. There cannot – absolutely cannot – be any discussion of minority problems with only one side present. Dialogue is the essence even of Da’wah. It needs above all moral courage of the highest Islamic order, especially in present times when religious and political polarization has reached lethal proportions

Women in Islam

Status Of Women In Islam

The status of women in society is based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the hadith of our prophet (ﷺ). In order to understand the status of women in Islam, we must have a brief survey of the status of women in the pre-Islamic era and it is only after that that we can see whether the status of women has changed or not.

Before the coming of Islam, women had no status. For instance, the rule of inheritance was agnatic, that is descent traced through males only to the exclusion of females. Their consent in marriage was not considered, they were the purchased properties of their husbands, they were like slaves, they had no civil or public offices, could not be witnesses, sureties, tutors, etc. Girls were killed or sold on the market as chattels. They were ill-treated and had no say in the society till the coming of the prophet (ﷺ) of Islam alongside the Qur'an. After the coming of Islam everything changed for women and the following lines are examples of in some fields of change. It is said in the Qur'an that 'O Mankind, keep your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them two has spread a multitude of men and women' (4:1). It is also said that 'Men are the **protectors and maintainers** of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means' (4:34). These 2 verses are explicitly in accordance to the rights and status of women in Islam. In the first verse it is a direct order from Allah for men to keep their duties towards Allah and in the second verse, Allah elaborates on these duties as being protectors and maintainers of their wives and women. Allah gave the specific reasons as being more strong and responsible towards women and as both are supporters to each other. These 2 verses are enough to say that the rights of women must be respected and the status of women must be elevated in Islam.

As such, the Qur'an clearly elaborates on the status of women in different fields, For instance, in the **field of responsibility**, it is said that 'every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds' (74:38) meaning that just like for women, men also will be accountable for their deeds. The implication here is that Allah wanted to make men realise that whatever they have done or how they have treated their wives or women, they will be accountable for their deeds. Thus irresponsibility and ill-treatment towards women must not exist. In the **field of reward**, it is said that 'Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him will We give a new life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to their actions' (16:97) meaning that the deeds of women same as men are valued and praised by Allah. As such the deeds of women are not taken for granted concluding that women have their status in this society. In terms of **religious obligations**, such as the Daily Prayers, Fasting, Poor-due, and Pilgrimage, woman is no different from man. In some cases indeed, woman has certain advantages over man. For example, the woman is exempted from the daily prayers and from fasting during her menstrual periods and forty days after childbirth. She is also exempted from fasting during her pregnancy and when she is nursing her baby if there is any threat to her health or her baby's. If the missed fasting is obligatory (during the month of Ramadan), she can make up for the missed days whenever she can. She does not have to make up for the prayers missed for any of the above reasons. Although women can and did go into the mosque during the days of the Prophet (ﷺ) and thereafter attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is optional for them while it is mandatory for men (on Friday).

On **social field**, there is no female infanticide and it is considered as a crime as the Qur'an says that 'And when the female (infant) buried alive - is questioned, for what crime she was killed' (81:8-9). Islam requires kind and just **treatment for girls**. Among the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) we find 'Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, God will enter him into Paradise' (Musnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, No. 1957). As a wife, the Quran clearly indicates that marriage is sharing between the two halves of the society, and that its objectives, besides perpetuating human life, are emotional well-being and spiritual harmony. Its bases are love and mercy. In order to show the status and importance of wives in Islam, Allah says "And among His signs is this: That He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest, peace of mind in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are signs for people who reflect." (30:21). Wives are signs and means of rest, peace of mind, love and mercy but not of persecutions, oppositions, disgrace or ill-treatment. In the **field of marriage**, Islam has given women rights to choose their partners. There is no forced marriage in Islam and women have rights to ask for divorce. Ibn 'Abbas reported that a girl came to the Messenger of God, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and she reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent. The Messenger of God gave her the choice... (between accepting the marriage or invalidating it) (Ibn Hanbal No. 2469). In another version it is said that the girl decided willingly to stay after the choice was given by saying 'Actually I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right (to force a husband on them)' (Ibn Majah, No. 1873). It is also decreed that woman has the full right to her Mahr / dowry which is presented to her by her husband and is included in the nuptial contract, and that such ownership does not transfer to her father or husband. In this **family life**, both husband and wife have the same rights as Allah says 'And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, and men are a degree above them' (2:228) and that 'degree' mentioned here is that of responsibility (Qiwama (maintenance and protection)) of the husband towards the wife. Moreover, both partners have the **rights to mutual decision** as Allah says 'If they (husband wife) desire to wean the child by mutual consent and (after) consultation, there is no blame on them' (2:233) giving the wife a say in the procreation system.

The **behaviour of husbands** towards their wives must be out of kindness throughout their married lives. Allah says 'But consort with them in kindness, for if you hate them it may happen that you hate a thing wherein God has placed much good' (4:19) meaning that husbands must be patient and avoid criticising their wives out of ignorance of unseen knowledge. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that 'The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives' (Ibn-Hanbal, No. 7396). If ever there is a **case of divorce**, Allah orders husbands to be kind though in such situation as 'When you divorce women, and they reach their prescribed term, then retain them in kindness and retain them not for injury so that you transgress (the limits) (2:231).' Considering the **status of a mother** in Islam, Allah says 'And we have enjoined upon man (to be good) to his parents: His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness (31:14)', 'Your Lord has decreed that you worship none save Him, and that you be kind to your parents (17:23) and there is a hadith where a man came to our Prophet (ﷺ) asking: 'O Messenger of God, who among the people is the most worthy of my good company? The Prophet (ﷺ) said, Your mother. The man said then who else: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, Your mother. The man asked, Then who else? The Prophet (ﷺ) said, Your mother. The man asked, Then who else? Only then did the Prophet (ﷺ) said, Your father. (Sahih al-Bukhari 5971) and again a famous saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) is: "Paradise is at the feet of mothers." (Sunan an-Nasa'i 3104). These are to show to what extent mothers are respected and loved in Islam.

Islam decreed a right of which woman was deprived both before Islam and after it, the **right of independent ownership**. According to Islamic Law, woman's right to her money, real estate, or other properties is fully acknowledged. This right undergoes no change whether she is single or married. She retains her full rights to buy, sell, mortgage or lease any or all her properties. With regard to the woman's right to seek employment there is no decree in Islam which forbids woman from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in positions which fit her nature and in which society needs her most. Examples of these **professions** are nursing, teaching (especially for children), and medicine. Moreover, there is no restriction on benefiting from woman's exceptional talent in any field. Even for the position of a judge, where there may be a tendency to doubt the woman's fitness for the post due to her more emotional nature, we find early Muslim scholars such as Abu Hanifah (رضي الله عنه) and Al Tabari holding there is nothing wrong with it. In addition, Islam restored to woman the right of inheritance as Allah says 'Unto men (of the family) belongs a share of that which Parents and near kindred leave, and unto women a share of that which parents and near kindred leave, whether it be a little or much - a determinate share (4:7).' She has no obligation to spend on her family out of such properties or out of her income after marriage.

Any fair investigation of the teachings of Islam into the history of the Islamic civilization will surely find a clear evidence of woman's equality with man in what we call today "political rights". This includes the right of election as well as the nomination to political offices. It also includes woman's right to participate in public affairs. Both in the Quran and in Islamic history we find examples of women who participated in serious discussions and gave allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) himself as Allah says 'O Prophet! when believing women come to you giving you a pledge (60: 12) meaning that women had rights to accept a leader and to swear allegiance to him. As such we can also see that women have been given the choice to work. It is said in the Qur'an concerning the history of Hazrat Musah (as) that 'When he arrived at Midian's waters, he found a group of men watering [their flocks], and beside them two women keeping their flocks back, so he said, 'What is the matter with you two?' They said, 'We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take their sheep away: our father is a very old man.' He watered their flocks for them, withdrew into the shade, and prayed, 'My Lord, I am in dire need of whatever good thing You may send me' (28: 23-24). At another place Allah says that 'they will not be blamed, nor will there be any blame if you wish to engage a wet nurse, provided you pay as agreed in a fair manner. Be mindful of Allah, knowing that He sees everything you do' (2:233). These two verses are enough to say that women have the full rights to get engaged in economic activities and to have a wage or salary. Besides, there are hadith where there were wives of companions of the prophet (ﷺ) who were engaged at a moment of their lives in working field like Hazrat Bibi Khadijah (رضي الله عنها), Hazrat Bibi Faatima (رضي الله عنها), Hazrat Hind (رضي الله عنها), Hazrat Haalima Sa'diyah (رضي الله عنها) and many others.

These are few instances listed above among so many others that the status of girls, women, wives and mothers has been elevated by Islam. Above all these examples, the foremost one is the **rights for education** where the first verse revealed upon the prophet (ﷺ) was 'Read' (96: 1) and the hadith 'Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim' (Ibn Majah Book 1, Hadith 229) indicating the importance of both secular and religious studies for both men and women leading to knowledge of their rights, duties and responsibilities in their lives.

Women At Work

The topic of women at work has always been of great controversy. This is due mainly to the differences of opinions of the different Islamic scholars. There are those who advocate that the place of women is at home and some say that women have the rights to go out from their homes to work. The following paragraphs will elaborate on the topic with clear examples.

Those advocating that women must stay at home bring forward verses of the Qur'an and Hadith from the prophet (ﷺ). Among these verses it is stated in the Qur'an that Allah says 'And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance' (33: 33). According to this verse, it is clear that this is an order from Allah to women to stay in their houses. The order continues in the sense that women have not been allowed to display themselves like the women of pre Islamic Arabia and as such they have been ordered to cover themselves using the 'hijaab' or staying at home. There is also a hadith that is used where the prophet (ﷺ) said 'Their houses are better for them'. This is from Abu Dawood hadith 567. This is about the permission to go to the mosque where women are allowed to do so but our Nabi (ﷺ) said that staying at home for their swalaat is better for them. According to Tafsir ibn Kathir, "And stay in your houses" means "stay in your houses and do not come out except for a purpose. One of the purposes mentioned in Shari'ah is prayer in the mosque, so long as the conditions are fulfilled, as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said 'Do not prevent the female servants of Allah from the mosques of Allah, but have them go out without wearing fragrance' (Abu Dawood hadith 565). According to such scholars, this explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah forbids for women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an outdoor duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behove (it is not proper for) the women of a Muslim society to walk out fully embellished; to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tight-fitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquettishly. Some may advocate that the environment in this modern world may not be proper for women to go out from their houses. But when it comes to the searching for education, performing hajj and Umrah, going to the mosque, consulting the doctor, visiting the sick relatives, for passport and national identity requirements, and many others, are our daughters, wives, mothers and women still not allowed to go out from their homes.

However, according to the other group of Islamic scholars, it is permissible for a woman to go to work. There is no clear-cut verse of the Qur'an or any hadith indicating that women are restricted at home and are not allowed to work. However, taking form the above verse and hadith, it is clear that women have the rights to move out of their houses based on specific conditions like it is mentioned in not to display their beauties and not to apply fragrance. Allah says in the Qur'an as an order to our Nabi (ﷺ) 'O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them when they go abroad. That will be better, that so they may be recognised and not annoyed (33: 59). It is clear from this verse that the wives and daughters of our Nabi (ﷺ) and the wives of the believers had been long authorised to get out from their houses under one condition, that is, to draw their cloaks close round them meaning to cover their body respectfully. In that same verse, Allah gave two reasons and advantages in doing so; one in being known as Muslim women and second to avoid being molested psychologically and physically by mischief mongers. Islam in so many instances has given women the rights to participate in the active social, religious or economic lives of the society. This can be proven by the participation of some of the great women in Islam as follows. We have Hazrat Khadija b. Khuwaylid (رضي الله عنها) (d. 620). Even

before her famous marriage to the Prophet (ﷺ), she was an important figure in her own right, being a successful merchant and one of the elite figures of Mecca. Secondly, we have Nusayba b. Ka'b al-Anṣārīyya (d. 634). Also known as Umm 'Ammara, she was a member of the Banū Najjār tribe and one of the earliest converts to Islam in Medina. As a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), there were many virtues attributed to her. She is most remembered, however, for taking part in the Battle of Uhud (625), in which she carried sword and shield and fought against the Meccans. She shielded the Prophet (ﷺ) from enemies during the battle and even sustained several lance wounds and arrows as she cast herself in front of him to protect him.

Thirdly, **Khawla b. al-Azwar** (رضي الله عنها) (d. 639) was another contemporary of the Prophet (ﷺ). She is best known for her participation in the Battle of Yarmuk (636) against the Byzantines. According to later narratives of the Islamic conquests, authors described her as having the skill and fighting ability of the famed Muslim general Khālīd ibn al-Walīd. It is nonetheless notable that scholars such as al-Waqidi and al-Azdi, writing in the eighth and ninth centuries, found it necessary to ascribe such importance to a female warrior in the conquests. Fourthly, **'Ā'isha b. Abī Bakr** (رضي الله عنها) (d. 678) is a figure that requires almost no introduction, 'Ā'isha was the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ) who had perhaps the most influence on the Muslim community after his death. She played a central role in the political opposition to the third and fourth caliphs Uthmān ibn 'Affān and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, even leading an army against the latter at Basra in 656. Although she retired from political life after her defeat, she continued to play a major role as a transmitter of Islamic teachings. She is one of the major narrators of hadith. In many ways, she is among the most controversial figures in early Islam, especially since the implications of her actions for women's participation in scholarship, political life, and the public sphere clashed with later conservative conceptions of the role of women. Fifthly, we have **Zaynab b. 'Alī** (رضي الله عنها) (d. 681) who was the grand-daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) through his daughter Fāṭima (رضي الله عنها) (d. 633) and her husband 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) (d. 661). She was among the most illustrious and admirable figures of the Ahl al-Bayt (Family of the Prophet (ﷺ)) and played a central role both during and after the Massacre at Karbala (680), where her brother al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (رضي الله عنه), and 72 of her nephews and other brothers were killed by the Umayyads. For a time, she was the effective leader of the Ahl al-Bayt and served as the primary defender of the cause of her brother, al-Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنه). Her strength, patience, and wisdom makes her one of the most important women in early Islam.

Sixthly, we have **Rābī'a al-'Adawīyya** (رضي الله عنها) (d. 801) who was one of the most important mystics (or Sufis) in the Muslim tradition, spending much of her early life as a slave in southern Iraq before attaining her freedom. She is considered to be one the founders of the Sufi school of "Divine Love," which emphasizes the loving of God for His own sake, rather than out of fear of punishment or desire for reward. She lays this out in one of her poems: "O God! If I worship You for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship You in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise. But if I worship You for Your Own sake, hold not against me Your everlasting Beauty." Seventhly, **Lubna of Cordoba** (d. 984) who was originally a slave-girl of Spanish origin, rose to become one of the most important figures in the Umayyad palace in Cordoba. She was the palace secretary of the caliphs 'Abd al-Rahmān III (d. 961) and his son al-Hakam b. 'Abd al-Rahmān (d. 976). She was also a skilled mathematician and presided over the royal library, which consisted of over 500,000 books. According to the famous Andalusī scholar Ibn Bashkuwāl: "She excelled in writing, grammar, and poetry. Her knowledge of mathematics was also immense and she was proficient in other sciences as well. There were none in the Umayyad palace as noble as her." Ninthly, **Al-Malika al-Ḥurra Arwa al-Sulayhi** (d. 1138) whose full name was Arwa b. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Sulayhī ruled as the queen of Yemen (1067 to 1138) in her own right. She was an Ismā'īlī Shi'i and was well-versed in

various religious sciences, Qur'an, hadith, as well as poetry and history. Chroniclers describe her as being incredibly intelligent. Tenthly, **Fāṭima b. Abī al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muhammad b. Ghālib al-Ansārī al-Sharrāṭ (d. 1216)** was one of the most learned women in al-Andalus during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Her engagement with works of legal theory, jurisprudence as well as mysticism makes it apparent that she was familiar with a wide variety of Islamic sciences.

Another name was **Razia Sultan (d. 1240)** who was the ruler of the Sultanate of Delhi between 1236 and 1240. Her father, Shams al-Dīn (r. 1210-1236) had Razia designated as his heir before his death, therefore making her the official ruler of the sultanate. She was a fairly effective ruler and was a major patron of learning, establishing schools and libraries across northern India. In all matters, she behaved like a sultan, leading armies, sitting upon the throne and even adopting the same royal dress as her father; to the outrage of many, she also insisted on appearing unveiled in public. Another woman was **Shajar al-Durr (d. 1257)** who was the widow of the Ayyubid sultan al-Sālih Ayyūb (r. 1240-1249) and played an important role in Egyptian politics following her husband's death. She was most likely of Turkic origin, beginning her life as a slave-girl in the Ayyubid court. By 1250, she had become the ruler (or *sultana*) of Egypt; her reign is generally considered to mark the beginning of the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt. She played an important role in the preparations in defending northern Egypt against the Seventh Crusade, defeating the crusaders (although she herself was not present) at the Battle of Fariskur (1250) and taking King Louis IX of France captive. She was the effective head-of-state. Another one was **Zaynab b. Ahmad (d. 1339)**. She was perhaps one of the most eminent Islamic scholars of the fourteenth century. Zaynab belonged to the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence and resided in Damascus. She had acquired a number of *ijazas* (diplomas or certifications) in various fields, most notably *hadith*. In the early fourteenth century, she taught such books as *Sahīh Bukhārī*, *Sahīh Muslim*, the *Muwatta'* of Mālik b. Anas, the *Shamā'il* of al-Tirmidhī, and al-Tahāwī's *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Athār*. It is important to point out that Zaynab was only one of hundreds of female scholars of hadith during the medieval period in the Muslim world. Last but not least we have **Parī Khān Khānum (d. 1578)**. A Safavid princess and daughter of Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524-1576) was one of the most influential Iranian women in the sixteenth century. She was renowned as an educated woman and was well-versed in traditional Islamic sciences, such as jurisprudence. She was also known to be an excellent poet.

It becomes clear, then, that far from being confined to their homes twiddling their thumbs, Muslim women will need to emerge very often in order to fulfil the obligations of Islam - such as seeking and imparting knowledge - and to perform social and moral duties in their society. It is for this purpose that hijab has been ordained and they have been warned in the same verse not to display themselves as in the days of the first ignorance implying that the same time of ignorance would re-emerge in the future, which has unfortunately happened. In order to conclude, Allah says that 'they will not be blamed, nor will there be any blame if you wish to engage a wet nurse, provided you pay as agreed in a fair manner. Be mindful of Allah, knowing that He sees everything you do' (2:233). This verse is enough to say that women have the full rights to get engaged in economic activities and to have a wage or salary. It must be clear that though women have the rights to work, they have their duties and responsibilities towards Allah in following the Shari'ah and inculcating moral values in themselves and to be responsible towards their husbands and children. Islam has not restricted women from working but our sisters must be aware of in which environment they are emerging.

To What Extent Are The Rights Of Women Respected?

The status of women in society is based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the hadith of our prophet (ﷺ). To what extent are these rights respected or not depends on the mentality of people and the changing society. The following will elaborate on the instances where these rights are tampered.

It is said in the Qur'an that 'O Mankind, keep your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them two has spread a multitude of men and women' (4:1). This means among others that it is Allah who has created both men and women and at the same time they both have their rights and duties on this earth. This has been accepted and put into practice throughout times. However, the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) in Pakistan concluded their 192nd meeting with the ruling that women are un-Islamic and that their mere existence contradicted Shari'ah and the will of Allah. But in fact, this institution is against the law of Allah and laws in the hands of this organisation tantamount to disrespect and ill-treatment towards women. **According to the Qur'an**, it is also said that 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means' (4:34). Most part of the world and in most family lives, men are protectors and maintainers of their wives. However, in Bangladesh, women do their best to fulfil their duties and take care of all their men's needs; yet women were abused by their husbands or their husbands' relatives. Very recently, a woman, Parul Akter, who was seven months pregnant, was killed and her body thrown in a river; her two other children are still missing. This is the reality that many women in Bangladesh face. **Another instance** is that the Qur'an says that 'And when the female (infant) buried alive - is questioned, for what crime she was killed' (81:8-9). Islam requires kind and just treatment for girls. Among the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) we find 'Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, God will enter him into Paradise' (Musnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, No. 1957). It is a fact that most parents are kind to their daughters but still in Pakistan a 10-month-old girl, Sawera, was allegedly killed by her father inside her house in Eidu Goth within the limits of Bin Qasim police station. A Saudi Arabia man accused of trying to strangle his daughter for being with a man he disapproved of has been condemned.

It is said in hadith that Ibn 'Abbas reported that a girl came to the Messenger of God, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and she reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent. The Messenger of God gave her the choice... (between accepting the marriage or invalidating it) (Ibn Hanbal No. 2469). In another version it is said that the girl decided willingly to stay after the choice was given by saying 'Actually I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right (to force a husband on them)' (Ibn Majah, No. 1873). However, in Bangladesh a woman still does not have the right to reject her parents' choice of a partner or to insist on her own choice. The "Mahr" or bridal gift is turned into a "status-symbol" and mockery and never given to her. The husband, in case of nearing death or divorce, meekly begs her to forgive and forego the "Mahr" whereas to have it is her undisputed right. **At another place Allah says** 'And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, and men are a degree above them' (2:228) and that 'degree' mentioned here is that of responsibility (Qiwama (maintenance and protection)) of the husband towards the wife. Moreover, both partners have the rights to mutual decision as Allah says 'If they (husband wife) desire to wean the child by mutual consent and (after) consultation, there is no blame on them' (2:233) giving the wife a say in the procreation system. However, in Bangladesh and in some places of Pakistan and India, women have no right to voice out their opinions and they are subjected to the ill-treatment and machoism of men.

Again it is said that Allah says ‘But consort with them in kindness, for if you hate them it may happen that you hate a thing wherein God has placed much good’ (4:19) meaning that husbands must be patient and avoid criticising their wives out of ignorance of unseen knowledge. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that ‘The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives’ (Ibn-Hanbal, No. 7396). However, women in Pakistan have been constantly complaining of having being isolated from the mainstream of society. Women feel disillusioned on being maltreated by the male-oriented set up in Pakistan. They strongly claim that if they are given a chance, they can contribute more positively towards the development of all social aspects. However the Pakistani society usually adopts a hostile attitude towards the women. Their development in society is hindered due to many factors. Particularly the rural woman has to sustain, sometimes, unbearable dominance by the other sections of society where no help and assistance is obtained from the male gender. **At another** place Allah says that ‘they will not be blamed, nor will there be any blame if you wish to engage a wet nurse, provided you pay as agreed in a fair manner. Be mindful of Allah, knowing that He sees everything you do’ (2:233). However, a woman’s right to work in Iran has been inconsistent over the past decades. After the 1979 Revolution, the Islamist government displaced most female workers, insisting that the physical and mental weakness of women makes them incapable of working in certain jobs. **Another** example is where Allah says ‘and not display their beauty except what is apparent, and they should place their khumur over their bosoms ...’ (24: 30) referring to hijab and a convenient dress or jilbaab. However, there are countries, including France (since 2004), which have banned the wearing of all overt religious symbols, including the hijab in public schools and universities or government buildings. Tunisia (since 1981, lifted in 2011) and Turkey (since 1997) are the only Muslim-majority countries which have banned the hijab in public schools and universities or government buildings

As such there are so many instances where women are not subjected to their rights. The following are some places where the rights of women are curbed by men. In Egypt, women are protesting their marginalization and rampant sexual violence campaigns waged to deter them from raising their voices. In Tunisia, one of the most progressive countries in the region for women, activists are striving to preserve their past gains, and safeguard their rights in the constitution and legislation. In Syria, women are carrying the brunt of the devastating conflict. Female refugees have been victims of abuse, early and forced marriages, sexual violence, and exploitation due to their vulnerability. In Palestine women continue to suffer dual marginalization and oppression resulting from the combination of prolonged military occupation and a patriarchal culture. High on the women’s agenda these days is the fight against the rising frequency of ‘honour crimes’. In Yemen, where a peaceful revolution has been prematurely aborted, women still struggle for the right to participate in the political process and for equality. In Libya, women are fighting the effects of the violence and lawlessness plaguing their country, depriving them of basic safety and security. In Jordan, activists are addressing violence and discrimination and especially women’s right to pass their nationality to their children born to non-Jordanian fathers. In Lebanon, women’s organizations continue to push for legal frameworks to protect women from domestic violence in light of increasing incidents and grant them nationality rights. In Iraq, calls are mounting to abolish a newly drafted personal status law applicable to the Shiite community that allows the marriage of girls as young as 9 years old. In Morocco, where the women’s movement is among the most active, calls continue for protection of women from violence. These were a few examples. In addition to the violence that women are subjected to during times of peace, women are particularly vulnerable during times of war. Islam condemns violence against women no matter what the circumstances. War is no exception. Our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was strict in ensuring that non-combatants, primarily women and children, were not harmed during war time. Female genital mutilation, another form of violence against women, has no basis in Islam. Rather, it is a cultural practice

which must be eliminated through education and the empowerment of women. Likewise, forced prostitution is another form of violence against women with no basis in Islam and which must be eradicated through the empowerment of women.

However, Islam has given women all their due rights. **In the field of divorce** Allah says ‘When you divorce women, and they reach their prescribed term, then retain them in kindness and retain them not for injury so that you transgress (the limits) (2:231). Considering the **status of a mother** in Islam, Allah says ‘And we have enjoined upon man (to be good) to his parents: His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness (31:14)’. **In the field of inheritance**, Allah says ‘Unto men (of the family) belongs a share of that which Parents and near kindred leave, and unto women a share of that which parents and near kindred leave, whether it be a little or much - a determinate share (4:7)’. **In the field of politics**, Allah says ‘O Prophet! when believing women come to you giving you a pledge (60: 12) meaning that women had rights to accept a leader and to swear allegiance to him. **In the field of education**, the first verse revealed upon the prophet (ﷺ) was ‘Read’ (96: 1) and the hadith ‘Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim’ (Ibn Majah Book 1, Hadith 229) indicating the importance of both secular and religious studies for both men and women. The rights granted to women by Islam, are rarely practised in some parts of the world, resulting in a pitiable, shameful condition of Muslim women. Various organizations and individuals have been fighting for decades to ensure justice for women but women’s empowerment alone will not solve the problem; we need to treat women as human beings first, rather than simply as women. We need to break the silence and stand up against religious and cultural traditions that encourage the repression of, and violence against, women and children. Every civilized nation should dream that woman will be treated as equal human beings; that women will really be empowered; and as the main nurturer of the human race, they will lead the nation toward a more humane society.

Islam granted several rights to Muslim women but men folk deny them at specific instances through Qur’an and Hadith misinterpretation or hiding of the truth. In all these roles the Muslim woman suffers. But she suffers the most as a wife and a daughter-in-law. Her rights are glorified at the highest pitch from microphones on bedecked stages by garlanded leaders, her duties counted endlessly. True, Islam gives her unbelievable rights, exalted status and a constructive role in society, but that is what Islam gives her. What has the community given her? All her rights are mentioned in the Shari’ah. All her duties and extra-duties are imposed on her in totality from the society. The yawning gap between theory and practice has swallowed up the Muslim woman like a hungry lion. There is the need to change the mentality of men, leaders and the society not the Shari’ah. However, it must be noted that to a certain degree the situation has worsened by the attitudes of women in the domain of seeking the knowledge of Islam (‘ilm ud deen). It is seen that women at a certain level of being wives or mothers don’t have time to search for the truth through the Qur’an and Hadith. They are stagnant and they accept the authority of men without putting that authority into question. As such the birth of a girl is lamented. Her death is engineered at times, her education is stalled as it will not benefit her parental family, her taking up a job is welcomed as her earnings would benefit the family. Her salary is snatched, her assets are frozen. She cooks and cleans, bears and rears children. She works double at home and outside too, and then, this tired, ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-treated woman is expected to be a fresh, glamorous bed-partner at night.