Islamic Studies

Syllabus For HSC

(9013 / 22)
Paper 2

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Table of Content

Dynasties

Umayyad Dynasty (661 – 750)

Write short notes on the main characters and activities of the main Umayyad rulers

The Umayyad Dynasties lasted from the year 661 – 750 CE. They were characterized by 4 main caliphs: Mu'awiyah, Abdul Malik, 'Umar II and Marwan II. In a way or the other the mentioned caliphs brought their own contributions. In the paragraphs below we will try to elaborate on them.

The **first** caliph Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan (661 – 680) was the governor over Syria for 20 years. He changed Syria into a powerful military and naval base. His career began in 655 with the murder of the caliph Uthman (رضي الله عنه) who was his cousin. He was determined to bring the murderer to court. After death of Ali (رضي الله عنه), he persuaded Imam Hasan (رضي الله عنه), to renounce his claim to the caliphate. He set about restoring the unity and renewing the expansion of the Muslim state. He obtained strength from two quarters - the Syrian tribesmen and his Umayyad kinsmen. To consolidate the support of the Syrian, he transferred the centre of Muslim government from Iraq to Damascus. However, there was a lack of the support from the influential religious circles. He transformed the Islamic government to an Arab tribal aristocracy served by a bureaucracy. He created a postal service and a bureau of registry. He framed a tolerant policy toward Christians. There was the distribution of bribes to dissident (rebellious) tribes. He organized military expansion - on land and sea, to the north, east, and west. That was a new era of Muslim Arab conquest which was established. He established his kingdom to the east, the north-eastern province of Persia—Khurasan, to the west, North Africa as far west as Algeria and to the north, with the Byzantine.

The **second** main caliph was Abdul Malik (685 – 705). He was recognized by his partisans and he strengthened the governmental administration. He adopted Arabic as the language of administration. He crushed his Enemies: the Kharijites, the Shi'ah, and the forces of the anticaliph 'Abdallah ibn az-Zubayr. The Khawarij was still being a problem. 'Abd al-Malik had appointed al-Hajjaj to govern Basra that campaigns against them began to prove successful. In the north of Kufah, another Kharijite trouble centre developed. The Kharijite movement remained strong, especially among the Bakr tribes between Mosul and Kufah. He captured Carthage and other coastal cities fell, and thus there was the work of pacification and Islamization. He set up a money system. He built mosques from local materials. There was the system of coinage and development in religious architecture. He made the Dome of the Rock, the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque of Damascus.

The **third** main caliph was 'Umar II (717 – 720). He was not a hereditary successor to the former caliph, but was appointed. His mother was a granddaughter of Hazrat Umar (r.a). He formed a council with which he administered the province. He preferred to keep things simple. All depositing equipment in the public treasury was meant for the caliph. He decided in abandoning the palace to the family of Sulaiman and lived in a tent. He was publicly encouraging the people to elect someone else if they were not satisfied with him. He confiscated all estates seized by Umayyad "royalty" and redistributed it to the people. He was unpopular with the Umayyad court but was beloved by the masses. Umar ended a tradition among some Umayyad rulers where Ali (رضي الله عنه) would be cursed during Friday sermons, replacing the tradition with the recitation of the following verse, "*Surely God enjoins justice, doing of good and giving to kinsfolk*". He enforced the Shari'ah and ended drinking and bathhouses. He continued the welfare programs and special programs for orphans and the destitute. He reinforced the Islamic frontier but he had to contend with Kharijite uprisings. He was one of the finest caliphs in Islamic

History. He gave much importance to Education, Schools of Shari'ah and advocated the return to Shari'ah.

The **fourth** caliph to be studied is Marwan II (744 – 750). He was the last Umayyad ruler to rule from Damascus. He took the caliphate after his cousin Ibrahim abdicated and went into hiding. He inherited an empire that was falling apart and he dedicated his life in trying to keep the Umayyad Empire together. There were Anti-Umayyad in Iran and Iraq and thus the Abbasids had gained a lot of followers. He was killed by Abu Al Abbas As Saffa (at bank of river Nile). There were too many problems and could not solve all of them. He lost many territories to the Abbasid and the Islamic dominion was surrounded by enemies from all sides. There was a lack of administrative measures due to inefficiency of his governors. He was thus not able to consolidate the Islamic frontiers and wasn't able to cope with the existing and uprising Khawarij. For 6 years he tried to regain the lost cause. His society was characterized by Shari'ah being established in the dominion, loyalty of some of his governors, support of the masses, inefficiency of his men, materialistic influence of the society, degradation of the society (sins), emergence of Shi'a movement helping the Abbasid, uprising movement and slogan against the state and threat against the Umayyad families.

What were the main traits of the Umayyad Dynasty?

There were some of the achievements of the Umayyad Dynasty. **Firstly**, there was development in Architectural buildings and palaces. The Umayyad architecture is a major witness of the dynasty, with numerous buildings still extant. Extensive municipal architectural programmes were undertaken, in addition to those constructions that were built by order of the Umayyad royal family. **Moreover**, there was the construction of different mosques and the Dome of the Rock. Both the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus appear to have been built as symbols of Umayyad power and victory, and these buildings still give an impression of the grandeur of the dynasty's architecture. **Thirdly**, there were many palaces used for festivities and the presence of forts and ruins are still important. In addition, the remarkable palatial buildings formerly known as 'desert castles' continue to fascinate people for the window they provide into Umayyad court life and ceremonials. **Furthermore**, there was the construction of full-fledged cities. There were extensive building programmes which were undertaken for the benefit of the community as well as for the ruling elite. Cities such as Amman had a palatial complex, a mosque, a marketplace and a water reservoir, and thus served the government and the administration of the country in addition to the needs of the community. Vitally important infrastructure such as dams, cisterns and water reservoirs were constructed and bridges were erected.

Added to the above, there were different styles and cultures of different countries used by the Umayyad caliphs and governors. In this formative phase one cannot speak strictly of a full-blown Islamic art as it is the juxtaposition (association and comparison) and innovative combination of various decorative styles and motifs (styles and designs) drawn from different artistic and imaginative traditions that produced such striking results and made them appear different. **Besides**, there was the establishment of independent policy. During the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwan (r. 65–86 / 685–705), a policy of administrative and political centralisation was initiated. Each province had its own way of administration and policy. However the rulers and governors will be accountable for the financial development and problems. **Seventhly**, there was the introduction of an income to be allocated for members of the state and the role of the Bait ul Maal. In the fiscal / financial administration, however, the Arabs introduced an innovative system according to which all fully fledged members of the new polity were entitled to regular stipends (salaries) (*'ata'*); a system that was financed by the taxes of the local populous (people). The main taxes were land tax (kharaj), a fixed rate in kind or money and the poll tax (jizya), which was imposed on every mature non-Muslim and means tested according to income. Priests, monks, and the disabled were exempt from paying *jizya*. **Last but not least**, there was the introduction of the official Arabic coinage. A standard Arabic coinage was developed to replace the Arab-Byzantine (Roman empire) and Arab-Sassanian (Persian of modern times (new persian people)) types which had been used up to this time. From the coin reform on, all Umayyad coinage was of a standardised weight

and design: purely epigraphic, with an inscription giving the date and a religious formula. These measures served to introduce a unity which hitherto had been lacking.

What were the reasons for the downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty?

There were many reasons for the downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty. **At the outset**, there was the battle of Karbala against the Ahlu Bait by Yazid the son of Mu'awiyah where many of the members of the family of the prophet (ﷺ) were killed and among them there was Imam Hussein (رضي الله عنه). **Moreover**, there were too many illicit thoughts and activities (policies) like adultery, prostitution, the bait-ul-Maal became the kingdom's property as such. The people were disgusted with that regime. **Thirdly**, there were bribes which were distributed to gain popularity and election by the governors of the future caliph. They were buying their seats for the caliphate. **Furthermore**, interest was ramping and too much liberty was given to non-Muslims in many fields. The rate of interest imposed by the lenders over both Muslims and non-Muslims were too high. The rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer was the condition at that time. **Added to the above**, there was a return to islamisation from the good caliphs which also meant a reduction of illicit gain. In this way the corrupted people tried their best to eliminate them (the good caliphs). **In addition**, both the Christians and the Jews were not loyal to the caliphs and they plotted against them (the caliphs) for personnel interest. They were never for the caliphate or the Islamic state as during the time of the prophet (ﷺ). **Besides**, the Khawarij were always uprising from all sides to create instability in the society. That was since the time of the prophet (ﷺ) in his army and city. They were the mischief mongers. **More to the point**, there were revolts from those tribes who accepted Islam based on personal interest and once a caliph passed away they rose against the Muslims. They wanted only to be under the protection and wings of the caliphs. **Ninthly**, there were constant revolts from the Abbasid leaders against any Umayyad caliphs. The Abbasid wanted to come to power and every mean was good to attain their objectives. **Tenthly**, there were revolts from the Shi'a movement in search for a leader from the Ahl-ul-Bait. The shi'a were never satisfied and wanted only a member and descendant of the prophet (ﷺ) as leader and guide. They would not accept any other leader.

Another reason was that there was a decrease in the amount of jizya obtained from non-Muslims resulting in a decrease in the Bait-ul-Maal. That was done to please the non-Muslims and to obtain their votes but the bait ul Maal was not well funded. **Added** to that, the unpopular caliphs due to their personal interest disgusted the common people. The latter knew that these caliphs were nominated due to their political power and thirst for money and power. There were so many unreligious and egocentric deputies, governors and caliphs of the Umayyad period. **In addition** to that there were so many other small Karbala (murders) against the caliphs of the Umayyad. The opposing regime (Abbasid) would use illegal means in order to wipe out the Umayyad from the surface of the earth. **Moreover**, there was a general political instability among the caliph due to their inexperienced governance. At the outset they were nominated due to their influences and many of them were inexperienced in fields of administration, business (trade) and humanitarian grounds. **Furthermore**, there was a lack of expertise and counselling from Umayyad caliphs. Each caliph would do as he wanted to run his reign and country. There was no sincere and concrete Majlis Shurah. **Besides**, there were well established conspiracies led by the Abbasid to bribe and buy the Umayyad governors. Many governors were on the side of the Abbasid secretly and they plotted against the Umayyad till its downfall. **More to the point**, there was a series of attack on the main points/strength of the caliphate or related to their family members. There were menaces, threats, kidnappings, many attempts to kill and murders upon the Umayyad. **Moreover**, there was no regular check on the work and expenses of the governors. Some of the caliphs were themselves self-centred and the governors would do the same. **Again**, there were so many critics concerning the morality of both the Umayyad caliphs and the state of the Islamic society. They were not applying the Shari'ah and people were disgusted with the situation.

Abbasid Dynasty (750 - 1258)

Write short notes on the main characters and activities of the main `Abbasid rulers:

The Abbasid Dynasties came just after the Umayyad Dynasties and lasted from 750 to 1258. There were achievements and twists during that period. The most Important Caliphs were Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah, Abu Ja'far al Mansur, al-Mahdi, Harun al-Rashid, al-Ma'mun and al-Mutawakkil.

The **first** most important one was Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah (750 – 754). He magnified the virtues and claims of the descendants of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Hazrat Abbas (رضي الله عنه). He denounced the usurpation (seizure of power and property by force) and crimes of the Umayyad and their Syrian followers and praised the Kufans for their fidelity to his family. He declared openly: "I am the Great Avenger, and my name is As-Saffah, the Shedder of Blood." His first care was to sweep from the face of the earth the entire Umayyad race. In Palestine, an amnesty was offered to the Umayyad family. They (90) were invited for a feast and were killed. The bodies of Umayyad caliphs (except Mu'awiyah and Umar II) were unearthed, hung and burned (throughout Syria, Khurasan and Ethiopia). He used to stand looking at himself in a mirror and exclaimed, "I do not say, as Sulaiman, Behold the kingly youth; but I say, Lord give me long life, and health to enjoy it." As he spoke, a slave said to his fellow, "The term between us is two months and five days." He took it as an evil augury (prophesy); and so he sickened, and death (smallpox) overtook him as the term expired. Towers were constructed for protection of the pilgrims at convenient distances all the way from Al-Kufa to Mecca. He had small respect for human life. He intensified his cruelty and guilt by treachery in the face of solemn oaths, and also by ingratitude. He began his rule at Kufa. He had to face revolts from the partisans of Umayyad, Shi'a and the Khawarij. He had two great men and soldiers with him – Abu Salama and Abu Muslim. They played a leading role to the downfall of the Umayyad. There was jealousy between them. Men of Abu Muslim killed Abu Salama.

The **second** caliph to be studied is Abu Ja'far al Mansur (754 – 775). He was the brother of As Saffah and when he returned from pilgrimage, he assumed khilafat. He led the prayer and made his announcements of caliph. He assumed the name of Al-Mansur, the Victorious. Al Mansur feared the attitudes of his uncle Abdullah. Abu Muslim assured him that he would take charge of him. When the enemy and burden Abdullah was calmed down, al Mansur killed Abu Muslim. The reason he gave was – "It was a lesson to be laid to heart; the man began well, but ended ill, and now by pride and rebellion has forfeited his life." Abu Muslim was at the head of the army. He was powerful and a threat to al Mansur. There was complete loyalty of the army towards al Mansur. Peace restored in Persia and Ethiopia (Mesopotamia). Abdullah was imprisoned. There was the rise of the Rawandiyah – a Persian sect. Al Mansur already had 200 of their leaders imprisoned. They didn't consider al Mansur as divine though he came personally talking to them. They were then extirpated (destroyed). There was rebellion at Khurasan and as such its leader's hands, feet and head were cut off after cruelty. Al Mansur, to his enemies he was cruel but to his friends he was liberal. He invested in statecraft (control and diplomacy) and was very strict in maintaining accounts. He left the treasury to his successor. He maintained religious discipline in his court and didn't allow repugnant practice outside Islam.

The **third** Caliph was al-Mahdi (775 – 785). He succeeded his father, al-Mansur. Al-Mahdi, whose name means "Rightly-guided" or "Redeemer," was proclaimed caliph when his father was on his deathbed. He was mild and generous in contrast to his father. He tried to win the hearts of people by kind and benevolent policies. He adopted a conciliatory attitude towards his opponents. He made a rapprochement with the Shi'a Muslims in the Caliphate and Islamization of the administration. He tried in reaching out to Shi'a and he appointed them to senior posts. The city attracted immigrants from all of Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Persia, and lands as far away as India and Spain. He also engaged in dialogue with the leader of the Nestorian Church (emphasizes the disunion between the human and divine natures of Jesus.), an early episode in Christian-Muslim relations. It was the period of prosperity, scholarly excellence and religious freedom although there were persecutions. He expanded the Abbasid administration, creating new divans, or departments, for the army, the chancery (like an embassy / paper

work) and taxation. Qazi or judges were appointed, and laws against non-Arabs put into place by the Umayyad were dropped. Shari'ah began to develop, neglected under the Umayyad as part of an Islamization process. The Abbasids had swept the Umayyad from power promising to restore Islam to the centre of the what, effectively, was an imperial royal polity. The Umayyad had privileged Arabs over non-Arabs. Al-Mahdi had two important religious policies: the persecution of the zanadiqa (atheists), and the declaration of orthodoxy. The zanadiqa ridiculed the Qur'an, but admired Muhammad as a human law-maker. The zanadiqa were almost certainly followers of Mani, or Manichaeans (one of the Iranian Gnostic religion). Al-Mahdi singled out the persecution of the zanadiqa in order to improve his standing among the Shi'i, whom he also presented with gifts and appointed to posts, including the Viziership (position of a minister or councillor) as well as releasing political prisoners. He was able to use the considerable financial legacy left by his father. Scholarship flourished, including the translation of Greek philosophical works into Arabic. Al-Mahdi "enlarged and beautified the Mosques of the Holy Cities, and of the capital towns elsewhere. Al-Mahdi also began the practice of withdrawing into isolation to emphasize the sanctity of the office of caliph. He therefore depended heavily on his Vizier. Ultimately, this led to a weakening of the temporal power of the caliphate, although it may have enhanced the caliph's spiritual status. Al-Mahdi continued the war with the Byzantine Empire throughout his reign, extending the caliphate as far as Ankara (capital of Turkey). It was a prosperous period marked by internal stability and peace although territorial expansion continued. Al-Mahdi dealt severely with what he saw as heresy (unorthodox and deviant). He tried to build bridges with Shi'a Muslims and was tolerant and even magnanimous in his dealings with the "people of the book".

The **fourth** caliph was Harun Ar-Rashid (786 – 809). He was the brother of Musa (surnamed as Hade) being the son of al Mahdi. His time was marked by scientific, cultural and religious prosperity. Art and music also flourished significantly during his reign. He established the library Bait al-Hikma ("House of Wisdom"). Islamic literature (the work of ibn Kathir, for example) has raised him to the level of an ideal figure, a great military and intellectual leader, even a paragon (model) for future rulers to emulate. His best-known portrayal in the West, in the stories of the Thousand and One Nights, has little basis in historical fact, but does show the mythic (fabulous) stature he has attained over time. He was strongly influenced by the will of his mother, Khaizuran in the governance of the empire. Baghdad flourished into the most splendid city of its period. Tribute was paid by many rulers to the caliph, and these funds were used on architecture, the arts and a luxurious life at court. Agriculture was flourishing to support the new Imperial centre. He tried to bring to heel the princes and chieftains of the region, and to re-impose the full authority of the central government on them. This new policy met with fierce resistance and provoked numerous uprisings in the region. He imposed heavy taxes on farmers, traders and artisans. He maintained slave-girls and concubines to entertain him. Al-Rashid virtually dismembered the empire by apportioning it between his two sons, al-Amin and al-Ma'mun. Very soon it became clear that by dividing the empire, Rashid had actually helped to set the opposing parties against one another, and had provided them with sufficient resources to become independent of each other. After the death of Harun al-Rashid civil war broke out in the empire between his two sons, al-Amin and al-Ma'mun. Harun made the pilgrimage to Mecca several times. Harun is widely considered the greatest of the Abbasid caliphs, presiding over the Arab Empire at its political and cultural peak. He died in Tus, Iran.

The **fifth** caliph is Al Ma'mun (813 – 833). On the death of Al Amin, al Ma'mun took over. There were many disturbances in Iraq during the first several years of al-Ma'mun's reign. Lawlessness in Baghdad led to the formation of neighbourhood watches. Most of Persia was sympathetic to the Hashimites. Al-Ma'mun's opponents in Baghdad gave allegiance to Ibrahim ibn al-Mahdi (one of the Alids). Imam Ali Raza informed al-Ma'mun of happenings in Baghdad and sided with the Alids. When Ali Raza fell sick and died at Tus, Al-Ma'mun wept and mourned for him and tried to show himself innocent of the supposed crime. While Baghdad became peaceful, there were disturbances elsewhere. There was uprising in Qum sparked by complaints about taxes. After it was quashed (crushed), the tax assessment was set significantly higher. Egypt continued to be unquiet. Sind was rebellious. There was also struggle against the Byzantines. In 830, al-Ma'mun led a victorious force across the border. He captured several fortresses, sparing the surrendering Byzantines. Al-Ma'mun's relations with the

Byzantine Greeks were marked by his efforts in the translation of Greek philosophy and science. Al-Ma'mun gathered scholars of many religions at Baghdad, whom he treated magnificently and with tolerance. He sent an emissary to the Byzantine Empire to collect the most famous manuscripts there, and had them translated into Arabic. It is said that, had he been victorious over the Byzantine Emperor, Al-Ma'mun would have made a condition of peace be that the emperor hand over of a copy of the "Almagest" (influential scientific text written in Greek). He made efforts toward the centralization of power and the certainty of succession. The Bayt al-Hikma, or House of Wisdom, was developed during his reign. The ulama emerged as a real force in Islamic politics during al-Ma'mun's reign for opposing the Mihna (it is a move to impose his theoretical views upon people), which was initiated in 833, only four months before he died. People who were subject to the mihna were traditionalist scholars whose social influence and intellectual quality was uncommonly high. Al-Ma'mun introduced the mihna with the intention to centralize religious power in the caliphate institution and test the loyalty of his subjects. The mihna had to be undergone by elites, scholars, judges and other government officials, and in consisted of a series of questions relating to theology and faith. The central question was about the createdness of the Qur'an, if the interrogate stated he believed the Qur'an to be created he was free to leave and continue his profession. During his reign Alchemy greatly developed and the pioneers of the science were Jabir Ibn Hayyan and his student Yusuf Lukwa was patronized by Al-Ma'mun, although he was unsuccessful in his attempts regarding the transmutation (transformation) of gold, his methods greatly led to the patronization of Pharmaceuticals (medicines) compounds. Although the mihna persisted through the reigns of two more caliphs, al-Mutawakkil abandoned it in 848. The ulama and the major Islamic law schools became truly defined in the period of al-Ma'mun and Sunnism, as a religion of legalism, became defined in parallel. Doctrinal differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam began to become more pronounced.

The **sixth** caliph is Al Mutawakkil (847 – 861). Upon the death of al Ma'mun, he appointed his brother Musta'sim, then the latter's son Wasiq then the latter's brother Jaafar known as Mutawakkil. The latter was not in good term with Wasiq. During Wasiq's reign, Mutawakkil was ill-treated. Mutawakkil on assuming caliphate reversed the policies of the regime and avenged himself. He restored fundamentalism (strict adherence to specific theological doctrines) and banned rationalism (use of reason as a source of knowledge). He stated that the Qur'an was not created. The rationalists were expelled from public offices and all discussions on science and philosophy were banned. All fundamentalist Imams like Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (رضي الله عنه) were set free and the Mu'tazilah were imprisoned and their properties confiscated. He was hostile to the Shi'a and continued anti-Shi'a policies. He destroyed Mausoleum of Imam Husain (رضي الله عنه) and banned pilgrimage of Najaf (according to the Shi'a Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه) said that this valley is part of paradise) and Karbala (martyrs of Karbala). He ordered the Jews and the Christians to wear distinctive dress. They were forbidden to ride on animals other than donkeys and mules. No new church and synagogue was built. There were revolts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Hims. All of them were crushed. In Egypt the Sufi Dhun Nun proclaimed communication with God. The fundamentalist wanted punitive measures. But when he was questioned by al Mutawakkil, he found nothing wrong in his belief and let him free to return to Egypt. During his reign, a great part of his dominion suffered from earthquakes and other natural calamities. Special measures and prayers were made. Mutawakkil wanted his son Muntasir to succeed him but through the influence of his wife Qabiha he changed his idea and wanted Mu'taaz (the son of Qabiha) to be the successor. Muntasir refused and that created bitterness between them. Muntasir and his army conspired and killed the caliph. He was the first caliph to be killed by his own army.

What were the main traits of the Abbasid Dynasty?

There were many achievements during the time of the Abbasid dynasty. **Firstly**, it was in the field of Agriculture & Economy. The Golden age of the Abbasids was between the 3rd and 4th / 9th and 10th centuries. During that time the Middle East and North Africa witnessed a major shift from a largely agricultural economy to one driven by trade. There were imports and exports leading to economic development. **Moreover**, there was emphasis on education. The seeking of formal knowledge was encouraged by the state. Many schools were established in Baghdad and the provinces. The art of book

translation thrived and led to the preservation of many key Greek, Persian and Indian works which were translated into Arabic. Significant contributions were made in the fields of science, mathematics, medicine and philosophy. **Furthermore**, there was development in medical field. The Abbasids supported and patronised medical research and medical practitioners. Great developments in medicine were achieved. There were many books on a variety of medical subjects which were written and translated. Medical experiments were conducted and documented and a number of medical instruments were designed to deal with a variety of procedures. **In addition**, there was the development of town infrastructures. With an expanding population and an awareness of how valuable was good urban planning, the Abbasids built a number of towns and cities where special attention was given to communications and transport routes. Everything was available in these new towns and cities.

Fifthly, there were experts in the fabrication of Islamic ceramic. It was not until the Abbasid period that a distinct type and style of ceramic was emerged and that can be distinguished technically as 'Islamic'. They were mainly used for decorations of mosques, administrative blocks, palaces, libraries and museums. **More to the point**, there was the manufacture of Lustre wares for shining and brilliance as part of decoration. During the early Abbasid period, the refined and luxury-loving ruler and imperial court got directly involved in sponsoring new innovations in the ceramics industry, especially in the development and manufacture of lustre wares. They were meant for inland and foreign business. **Last but not least**, there were innovative architectural designs. As the Abbasid Empire expanded from Afghanistan to Algeria, regional ceramics industries were influenced by techniques, designs and motifs from other parts of the empire, adding to the variety of designs, decorations and styles available locally.

What were the reasons for the downfall of the Abbasid Dynasty?

There were many reasons why the Abbasid dynasty came to an end. **Firstly**, most of the later caliphs of this dynasty led pompous and luxurious life and cared little for the state. They were concentrated in amassing wealth for their own use. **Secondly**, instead of making any attempt to uplift the condition of the subjects and to improve the government, they devoted their valuable time to wine, women and music. They were engaged in illicit activities. **Moreover**, the supremacy of the Turks in the later period was one of the causes of the fall of the empire. After the death of Mutawakkil the power of the Turks began to increase rapidly and the successors of Mutawakkil could not resist it. **Fourthly**, the Arabs and the Persians became disgusted with their high handed policy. They were not loved and appreciated by the public. **Furthermore**, the negligence of the military department under the later caliph greatly contributed to the downfall of the Abbasids. They were interested in obtaining money and booty of war from the dynasty and they were not loyal soldiers and commanders.

Added to the above, the relation between the province and the central government was not cordial. There was no cooperation and unity among the different parties of their administration. They were interested in money and not the public welfare. **Besides**, many provinces declared their independence. That situation was due to the fact that they were disgusted with the promises made by the caliphs. But in fact when they were in power nothing was done for their provinces. **As well**, the struggle between the Arabs and non-Arabs between the Muslims and non-Muslim was going on in full swing during this period. The caliphs were not able to contain that situation. **Ninthly**, the Iranians who were favoured by the Abbasids despaired (saw no hope in) the Arabs and the Arabs despaired the Iranians and other. There was no cooperation between the allies. **Tenthly**, the imposition of taxes for the interest of the ruling class discouraged farming and industry and the constant bloody striper (someone with ranks in the army) left many a piece of cultivated land desolate and hopeless.

Another reason was the flood in Mesopotamia made the people hopeless and homeless. Besides this famine and epidemic decimated the population in many provinces. **As such**, to these causes of decay must be added the invasion of Halaqu, a grandson of Changez Khan (founder of Mongol empire from different tribes from Mongolia and china) who divested the city of Baghdad on such a scale that for three years the streets ran with blood and the water of the Tigris was dyed red for miles along the course. He

killed the last caliph of this dynasty and massacred his family so much so that for the first time in its history the Muslim world was left without a caliph whose name could be cited in the Friday prayers. **Among others**, the Khawarij who were always pestering the lives of the Muslims since the creation of the Islamic state were continuing their plots to destabilise the society. **Added to** that the Shi'a party was constantly demanding their rights and as such they were dividing the Ummah and creating confusion and rebellions. **Above all**, the people were disgusted with a society based on blood and iron policy of the Abbasids. There was no peace and harmony and as such no stability and security.

4 Imaam

Their Sources And Methods

After the death of the prophet (ﷺ) there was the period of the Ashab, Tabi'oun and the Taba'ut Tabi'in. It was during these 2 last periods that came into existence the four schools of thought. They were the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hambali Madhhab (schools of thought). They had their own respective way to derive their Madhhab.

The first school of thought is that of Imam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) whose actual name was Nu'maan Ibn Thaabit. He was born in the year 80 H till 150 H (702 CE – 772 CE), in Kufah, Iraq. Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) began his earlier studies in the field of philosophy and dialectics (discussing or debating upon the truth) known as "Ilm al-Kalaam", but after mastering its various disciplines, he left it and went into an in-depth study of Fiqh and Hadith. He chose as his main teacher, Hammaad Ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه), who was among the greatest scholars of Hadith of his time. Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) studied under him for eighteen years. During this time he became qualified to teach, but instead remained Hammaad's student until the latter died in the year 742 CE. After Hammaad's death Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) took up the position of teacher at the age of forty and became the most outstanding scholar in Kufah. Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) based his teaching method on the principle of Shurah (group discussion). He would present a legal problem to his students for debate and discussion and tell them to record its solution whenever they arrived at a unified position. Because of this interactive approach to making legal rulings, we could say that the Hanafi Madhhab was as much a product of Imaam Abu Hanifa's students' efforts as it was a product of his own efforts. They would also debate on hypothetical (based on hypothesis / assumption) problems and work out solutions, based on the principle of preparing for a problem before its occurrence. Due to their leaning towards hypothetical Fiqh which often introduced an issue with a question, "What if so and so happened?", they became known as the "What-Iffers" or Ahl ar Ra'i [the opinion people].

The early jurists of this Madhhab deduced Islamic Laws from the following sources which are listed hereunder in the order of their importance: **The Most Holy Qur'aan:** They considered the Most Holy and Noble Qur'aan to be the primary unquestionable source of Islamic Law. In fact it was used to determine the accuracy of the other sources. Accordingly any other source that contradicted the Holy Qur'aan was considered inaccurate. **The Sunnah:** The Sunnah was consulted as the second most important source of Islamic Law, but with some qualification as to its use. They stipulated that it was not sufficient that a Hadith be accurate (Swahih), but it had to be also widely known (Mashhoor), if it was to be used as a legal proof. This condition was laid down as a safeguard against false Hadith which were cropping up frequently in that region where only a few notable Swahaabah had settled ('Alí and Ibn Mas'ood). **Ijma' of the Swahaabah:** Third in importance as a source of Islamic Law was the unanimous opinion of the Swahaabah on any point of law not specified in the Most Holy Qur'aan or the Sunnah. That is, Ijma' of the Swahaabah was precedence over the personal opinions of Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) and his students in their deduction of Islamic Law. The Hanafi Madhhab also recognized the Ijma' of Muslim scholars in any age as valid and binding on Muslims. **Individual opinion of the Swahaabah:** If there were different opinions among the Swahaabah on a particular point of law and no Ijma' was subsequently formed, Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) would choose the opinion which appeared most appropriate to the case in question. In establishing this as a vital principle of his Madhhab, Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) again gave more weight to the opinions of the Swahaabah than to his own. However, he did apply his own reasoning in a limited sense by choosing one of their various opinions. **Qiyaas (Analogical deduction):** Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) felt no obligation to accept the deductions of the students of the Swahaabah (known as the Taabi'un) in areas where no clear proof was available from any of the above mentioned sources. He considered himself equal of the Taabi'un and would make his

own Ijtihaad based on the principles of Qiyaas which he and his students established. **Istihsaan (Preference):** Istihsaan, in short, is the preference of one proof over another proof because it appears more suitable to the situation, even though the preferred proof may be technically weaker than the one it is preferred to. This may involve the preference of a Hadith which is specific over a general one, or it may even involve the preference of a more suitable law over the one deduced by Qiyaas. **'Urf (Local Custom):** Local customs were given legal weight in areas where there was no binding Islamic custom available. It was through the application of this principle that various customs found in the multiplicity of cultures within the Islamic world entered the legal system and became mistakenly or not classified as Islamic.

Secondly we have the school of Imam Malik Ibn Anas Ibn Aamir (رضي الله عنه) who was born in Madinah in the year 93 H till 179 H (717 CE – 795 CE). His grandfather, Aamir (رضي الله عنه), was among the major Swahaabah of Madinah. Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) studied Hadith under az-Zuhri (رضي الله عنه) who was the greatest Hadith scholar of his time, as well as under the great Hadith narrator, Naafi (الله رضي عنه), the freed slave of the Swahaabi Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه). Imaam Malik's (الله رضي عنه) only journeys outside of Madinah were for Hajj, and thus he largely limited himself to the knowledge available in Madinah. Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) taught Hadith in Madinah over a period of forty years and he managed to compile a book containing Hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Athars (statements) of the Swahaabah and their successors which he named "al-Muwatta" [the Beaten Path]. Imaam Malik's (الله رضي عنه) method of teaching was based on the narration of Hadith and the discussion of their meanings in the context of problems of that day. He would either narrate to his students Hadith and Athars (statements of the Swahaabah) on various topics of Islamic law then discuss their implications, or he would inquire about problems which had arisen in the areas from whence his students came, then narrate appropriate Hadith or Athars which could be used to solve them. After Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) completed 'al-Muwatta', he used to narrate it to his students as the sum total of his Madhhab, but would add or subtract from it slightly, whenever new information reached him. He used to strictly avoid speculation and hypothetical Fiqh and thus his school and its followers were referred to as the people of Hadith [Ahl al-Hadith].

Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) deduced Islamic Law from the following sources which are listed hereunder in the order of their importance. **The Most Holy Qur'aan:** Like all the other Imaam, Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) considered the Most Noble Qur'aan to be the primary source of Islamic law and utilized it without laying any preconditions for its application. **The Sunnah:** The Sunnah was used by Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) as the second most important source of Islamic law, but, like Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) he put some restrictions on its use. If a Hadith was contradicted by the customary practice of the Madinites, he rejected it. He did not, however, insist that a Hadith be Mashhoor (well-known) before it could be applied as Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) did. Instead he used any Hadith that was narrated to him as long as none of the narrators were known liars or extremely weak memorizers. **'Amal (Practices) of the Madinites:** Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) reasoned that since many of the Madinites were direct descendants of the Swahaabah and Madinah was where the Nabee (ﷺ) spent the last ten years of his life, practices common to all Madinites must have been allowed, if not encouraged by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. Thus Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) regarded common Madinite practices as a form highly authentic Sunnah narrated in deeds rather than words. **Ijma' of the Swahaabah:** Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) like Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) considered the Ijma' of the Swahaabah, as well as that of later scholars, as the third most important source of Islamic law. **Individual Opinions of the Swahaabah:** Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) gave full weight to the opinions of the Swahaabah, whether they were conflicting or in agreement, and included them in his book of Hadith, 'al-Muwatta.' However, the consensus of the Swahaabah was given precedence over individual opinions of the Swahaabah. Where there was no consensus, their individual opinions were given precedence over his own opinion. **Qiyaas:** Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) used to apply his own deductive reasoning on matters not covered by the previously mentioned sources. However, he was very cautious about doing so because of the subjectivity of such forms of reasoning. **Customs of the Madinites:** Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) also gave some weight to isolated practices found among a few people of Madinah so long as they were not in

contradiction to known Hadith. He reasoned that such customs, though occurring only in isolated instances, must also have been handed down from earlier generations and sanctioned by the Swahaabah or even the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. **Istislaah [Welfare]:** The principle of Istihsaan developed by Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) was also applied by Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) and his students except that they called it by the name Istislaah which simply means seeking that which is more suitable. It deals with things which are for human welfare but have not been specifically considered by the Shari'ah. **'Urf [Custom]:** Like Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه), Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) considered the various customs and social habits of people throughout the Muslim world as possible sources of secondary laws as long as they did not contradict either the letter or the spirit of the Shari'ah. According to custom in Syria, for example, the word Daabbhah means a horse, whereas its general meaning in Arabic is a four legged animal. Hence, a contract made in Syria requiring payment in the form of a Daabbah would legally mean a horse whereas elsewhere in the Arab world it would have to be more clearly defined as a horse.

Thirdly, we have the Shafi'i school of thought after the name of Muhammad Ibn Idris ash-Shaafi'i (رضي الله عنه). He was born in the town of Ghazzah on the Mediterranean coast of what was then known as Shaam in the year 150 H till 204 H (767 CE – 821 CE) but travelled to Madinah in his youth to study Fiqh and Hadith under Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه). He succeeded in memorizing the whole of Imaam Malik's book, 'al-Muwatta' and recited it to him from memory, word perfect. Imaa Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) remained under Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) until the latter passed away. He then departed to Yemen where he taught. He remained in Yemen until he was accused of Shi'ite leanings in the year 805 CE and brought as a prisoner before the Abbaasid Caliph Haroon ar-Rasheed who was the ruler of Iraq from 786-809 CE but was subsequently released. Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) remained in Iraq and studied for a while under Imaam Muhammad Ibn al-Hassan (رضي الله عنه), the famous student of Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه). He then travelled to Egypt in order to study under Imaam al-Layth, but by the time he reached Egypt the Imaam had passed away. However, he was able to study the Madhhab of al-Layth from al-Layth's students. Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) remained in Egypt until his death in the year 820 / 821 CE during the rule of Caliph al-Mamoon [813-832 CE]. Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) combined the Fiqh of Hijaaz [Maliki thought] with that of Iraq, [Hanafi thought] and created a new Madhhab which he dictated to his students in the form of a book called 'al-Hujjah' [The Evidence]. This dictation took place in Iraq in the year 810 CE and a number of his students memorized his book and narrated it to others. [Among these students were Ahmed Ibn Hambal (رضي الله عنه) of the Hambali Madhhab and Abu Thawr of the Abu Thawr Madhhab]. This book and period of his scholarship are usually referred to as al-Madhhab al-Qadeem [the old school of thought] to differentiate it from the second period of his scholarship which occurred after he reached Egypt. In Egypt he absorbed the Fiqh of Imaam al-Layth Ibn Sa'd and dictated al-Madhhab al-Jadeed [the new school of thought] to his students in the form of another book which he named al-Umm [The Essence]. Because of his exposure to a completely new set of Hadith and legal reasoning, in al-Madhhab al-Jadeed, he reversed many of the legal positions which he had held while in Iraq. Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) holds the distinction of being the first Imaam to systematize the fundamental principles of Fiqh which recorded in his book called ar-Risaalah.

His Madhhab was based on certain criteria and sources. **The Most Holy Qur'aan:** Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) did not differ from the previously mentioned Imaam, in their uncompromising stand in relation to the primacy of the Holy Qur'aan among the sources of Islamic law. He relied on it as heavily as those before him adding only the new insights which he gained from a deep study of its meanings. **The Sunnah:** Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) laid down only one condition for the acceptance of Hadith, namely that they be authentic [Swahih]. He rejected all other conditions set by Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) and Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه). He was also noted for his great contributions to the science of Hadith criticism. **Ijma':** Although Imaam ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) had serious doubts about the possibility of the Ijma' in a number of cases, he conceded that in the few cases where it was known to have occurred, it should be regarded as the third most important source of Islamic law. **Individual Opinions of the Swahaabah:** Credence (credibility) was given by Imaam ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) to the individual opinions of the Swahaabah on condition that they were not at variance with each other. If there were conflicting opinions among the Swahaabah on a legal point, he, like Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله

عنه) would choose whichever opinion was the closest to the source and leave the rest. **Qiyaas:** Qiyaas was, in the Imaam's opinion, a valid method for deducing further laws from the previous sources. However, he placed it last in order of importance, considering his personal opinions inferior to proofs based on the opinions of the companions. **Istis-haab [Linking]:** Both the principle Istihsaan used by Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) and Istislaah used by Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) were rejected by Imaam Ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) and considered a form of Bid'ah [innovation], since, in his opinion, they were based mostly on human reasoning in areas where revealed laws already existed. However, in dealing with similar issues ash-Shafi'i was obliged to use a principle similar to Istihsaan and Istislaah which he called Istis-haab which literally means seeking a link, but legally it refers to the process of deducing Fiqh laws by linking a later set of circumstances with an earlier set. It is based on the assumption that the Fiqh laws applicable to certain conditions remain valid so long as it is not certain that these conditions have altered. If, for example, on account of the long absence of someone, it is doubtful whether he is alive or dead, then by Istis-haab all rules must remain in force which would hold if one knew for certain that he was still alive.

Fourthly, there was the school of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal ash-Shaybaanee (رضي الله عنه), who was born in Baghdad in the year 164 H till 241 H (780 CE – 855 CE). He became one of the greatest memorizers and narrators of Hadith. Imaam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه) studied Fiqh and Hadith science under Imaam Abu Yusuf (رضي الله عنه), the famous student of Imaam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه), as well as under Imaam ash-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) himself. He was jailed and beaten for two years by order of Caliph al-Ma'moon (rule 813-842 CE), because of his rejection of the philosophical concept that the Most Holy Qur'aan was created. Later set free, he continued teaching in Baghdad until al-Waathiq became Caliph (rule 842-846 CE) and renewed the persecution. Thereupon Imaam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه) stopped teaching and went into hiding for five years until Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861 CE) took over. Caliph al-Mutawakkil ended the inquisition permanently by expelling Mu'tazilite scholars and officially rejecting their philosophy. Imaam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه) continued to teach in Baghdad until his death in 855 CE. Imaam Ahmad's greatest concern was the collection, narration, and interpretation of Hadith. His teaching method consisted of dictating Hadith from his vast collection known as al-Musnad, which contained over 30,000 Hadith, as well as the various opinions of the Swahaabah concerning their interpretation. He would then apply the Hadith or rulings to various existing problems. If he could not find a suitable Hadith or opinion to solve a problem, he would offer his own opinion while forbidding his students to record any of his own solutions. As a result, his Madhhab was recorded, not by his students, but by their students.

He had also his own sources to frame his Madhhab. **The Most Holy & Glorious Qur'aan:** There was no difference between the way Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hambal (رضي الله عنه) approached the Holy Qur'aan and that of those who preceded him. In other words, the Holy Qur'aan was given precedence over all else under all circumstances. **The Sunnah:** Likewise, the Sunnah of our Beloved Nabee (ﷺ) occupied the number two position among the fundamental principles used by the founder of this school in the deduction of laws. His only stipulation was that it be 'Marfu' i.e. attributed directly to the Prophet (ﷺ). **Ijma' of the Swahaabah:** Imaam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه) recognized the consensus of opinion of the Swahaabah, and placed it in the third position among the fundamental principles. However, he discredited the claims of Ijma' outside the era of the Swahaabah as being inaccurate, due to the vast number of scholars and their wide diffusion throughout the Muslim empire. In his opinion, Ijma' after the era of the Swahaabah was impossible. **Individual Opinions of the Swahaabah:** If a problem arose in an area where the Swahaabah had expressed conflicting opinions, Imaam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه), like Imaam Malik (رضي الله عنه) would give credence to all the various individual opinions. Because of that, there developed within the Madhhab many instances of multiple rulings for individual issues. **Hadith Dwa'if (Weak Hadith):** For a ruling on a case where none of the previous four principles offered a ready solution, the Imaam (رضي الله عنه) used to prefer to use a weak Hadith rather than applying his own deductive reasoning (Qiyaas). However, this was on condition that the weakness of the Hadith was not due to the fact that one of its narrators was classified as a Faasiq (degenerate and corrupt), or a Kadh-dhaab (liar). **Qiyaas:** As a last resort, that is when no other major principle could be directly applied, Imaam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه)

would reluctantly apply the principle of Qiyaas and deduce a solution based on one or more of the previous principles.

Differences Through Examples

The four schools of thought namely Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hambali are identical concerning the basic aspects of Imaan but as for the secondary branches they differ. The following will detail some of the examples that can be used to show how there can be minor differences among the 4 schools.

In the field of family life especially the **Nikah** there are some differences concerning its putting into practice. According to the Hanafi, Maliki and Hambali schools of thought it is obligatory – Wajib for someone to get married. It is essential as it is a means to avoid so much sin and to adhere to the principles of Islam. But according to the Shafi'i school it is supererogatory – Mubah. If someone thinks that by getting married he will be deprived of his time spent in the way of Allah, then he can abstain from getting married but at the same time must times and often keep fast. Another example can be found in the '**proposal on the proposal of a brother**', that is a brother has sent his marriage proposal to a girl though there is another proposal that was sent before his. According to the Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi'i schools of thought it is a sin. The person must ask forgiveness from Allah and must at least ask forgiveness from the first brother. But according to the Hambali it is not a sin. On the same topic of Nikah another example can be seen in the **marriage with the people of the Book**, that is the Jews and the Christians. According to the Hanafi school of law it is unlawful to marry a woman of the Book if she is in a country known as Dar-ul Harb, that is a country where the Shari'ah is not imposed. This is because she may return to her ancient religion and in that there is no guarantee. According to the Maliki school, it depends to what extent the husband trusts the wife and the wife's sincerity in Islam. It depends on how the husband has trained the wife such as to trust her completely. However according to the Shafi'i and the Hambali both of her parents must be from people of the Book. The parents must be Muslims.

With the same topic another example can be found in the role of the **Guardian in Nikah**. According to the Hanafi and the Hambali schools the guardian is optional. If the boy or the girl is mature enough then they can get married without the consent of the parents though the new couple can be well in a first time marriage without experience. However according to the Maliki and the Shafi'i schools it is one of the essential elements of Nikah. Without the parents or the guardians there is no Nikah. Another example can be seen through **Talaq** through duress or pressure. According to the Hanafi and the Hambali schools it is valid. A Talaq which is pronounced under any kind of situation is validated and acceptable but according to the Maliki and the Shafi'i schools it is not valid. Another example is the **punishment for bestiality**. According to the Maliki and the Hanafi schools of thought there is no *Hadd* punishment but *Ta'azir*. If someone is caught having sexual intercourse with any kind of animal he will not be slashed or stoned. However he will have any other kind of punishment decided by the judge. But according to the Shafi'i and the Hambali schools, there is *Hadd* punishment. The animal must be killed and its flesh is unlawful. Another example can be seen in the case of **Defamation**. According to the Hanafi and the Maliki schools the person must receive 80 lashes. This is due to the view that in the case of lying there are 80 lashes as per the analogy of Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه). But according to the Shafi'i and the Hambali schools, the reason for his action must be known first before lashing him. Then Ta'azir must be applied by the judge.

Another example can be in **stealing of a brother's or relative's property** or belonging. According to the Maliki, Shafi'i and the Hambali schools there is Hadd punishment (cutting of the hand) as stealing is stealing in all cases. However according to the Hanafi there is no Hadd but Ta'azir punishment will be applied by the Islamic Judge. Another example is in **Alcoholic drink**. According to the Hanafi, Maliki and the Hambali schools there are 80 lashes as punishment but according to the Shafi'i there are only 40 lashes. The severity of punishment depends on the degree of crime. Another example can be in the **Sunnah in Swalaat** - The Shafi'i school considers them to be eleven rak'ah: two units before the morning (subh - fajr) prayer, two units before the noon (zuhr) prayer and two units after it, two units

after the sunset (maghrib) prayer, two units after the night ('isha') prayer and a single rak'ah (unit) called 'al-watirah' (witr). The Hanbali school considers them to be ten rak'ah (units); two rak'ah before and after the noon prayer (zuhr), two after the sunset (maghrib) and the night prayer (isha), and two before the Morning Prayer (fajr). According to the Maliki school there is no fixed number for the supererogatory (Nawafil) prayers performed with the obligatory salat, though it is best to offer four (units) rak'ahs before the zuhr and six after the Maghrib prayer. The Hanafi school classifies the nawafil performed along with the fara'id into 'masnunah' and 'mandubah'. The 'masnunah' (mu'akkadah) are five: two rak'ahs before the subh (fajr); four before the zuhr, and two after it, except on Friday; two after the maghrib and two after the 'isha' prayer. The prophet (ﷺ) didn't miss them. The 'mandubah' (ghair mu'akkadah) are four: four – or two – rak'ah before the 'asr, six after the Maghrib, and four before and after the 'isha' prayer. Another example found in swalaat can be that of **folding of hands** in Swalaat. According to the Hanafi school the hands are folded right over left below the navel, according to the Maliki school they are on the sides of the body, according to the Shafi'i they are folded right over left above the navel below the chest and according to the Hambali they are folded right over left above the navel.

Swahih Sitta

Stages In Compilation

Outline the major stages in collecting the Prophet's (ﷺ) Hadiths in the early Muslim era that led up to the six canonical collections in the 9th century.

The term hadith is restricted to the sayings, deeds and silent approval of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Tabi'un and the Taba'ut Tabi'in. The history of the compilation of Hadith may be broadly divided into four stages; the first stage relates to the period of the Prophet (ﷺ) till 10 A.H, the second stage is approximately from 11 A.H. to 100 A.H. This is the period of *Swahaabah*, the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the third stage is from about 101 to nearly 200 A.H. This is the period of the *Tabi'un*, the disciples of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the fourth stage is roughly from 200 A.H. to 300 A.H. This is the period of *Taba'ut Tabi'in*, the disciples of the disciples.

During the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) there was no regular compilation of the traditions, for they were not generally recorded in writing. However, they were orally transmitted, with great accuracy of detail, thanks to the Arabs' exceptionally retentive memories. **Some** companions had, however, prepared written collections of traditions for their own personal use. Those companions, in particular, who had weaker memories used to write them down for memorizing and preservation. These were also dictated to their disciples. **Then** there were those companions who had administrative offices arranged for written copies of traditions, so that they might carry out their duties in the true spirit of Islam. For instance, while appointing Amr ibn Hazm (رضي الله عنه) as the governor of Yaman, the Prophet (ﷺ) himself gave him a letter containing the times of prayer, methods of prayer, details of ablution, booty, taxation, *zakat*, etc. **Abdullah** ibn Amr ibn al-As (رضي الله عنه), a young Makkan, also used to write down all that he heard from the Prophet (ﷺ). He had even asked the Prophet (ﷺ) if he could make notes of all that he said. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied in the affirmative. Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) called this compilation *Swahifah Swadiqa* (The Took of the Truth). It was later incorporated into the larger collection of Imam Ahmad ibn Hambal (رضي الله عنه). **Anas** (رضي الله عنه), a young Madinan, was the Prophet's (ﷺ) personal attendant. Since Anas (رضي الله عنه) remained with the Prophet (ﷺ)day and night, he had greater opportunities than the other companions to listen to his words. Anas (رضي الله عنه) had written down the tradition on scrolls. He used to unroll these documents and say: "These are the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ), which I have noted and then also read out to him to have any mistakes corrected." **Ali** ibn Abi Talib (رضي الله عنه) was one of the scribes of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) once dictated to him and he wrote on a large piece of parchment on both sides. He also had a *swahifa* (pamphlet) from the Prophet (ﷺ) which was on *zakat* (the poor due) and taxes. **Besides** these there were some other documents dictated by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself — official letters, missionary letters, treaties of peace and alliance addressed to different tribes— all these were later incorporated into larger collections of Hadith.

After the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), interest in Hadith literature increased greatly on two accounts. Firstly, the Companions who knew the Hadith at first hand were gradually passing away. Their number continued to diminish day by day. Therefore, people became keener to preserve the precious Hadith literature that had been stored in their memories. Secondly, the number of converts was growing and they showed great eagerness to learn as much about the traditions as possible. This was the age of the rightly guided Caliphs. In this age the Companions had settled in almost all the countries conquered by the Muslims. People flocked to them to hear traditions from them. Thus a number of centres for the learning of traditions came into existence with these Companions as the focus. When a disciple had learned all the traditions he could from one Companion, he would go to the next Companion and so on, collecting as many traditions as possible. The zeal of these disciples was so great that they undertook long journeys to collect traditions from different Companions. In this period, there were not many regular compilations. This was rather the period of collecting traditions. The work of compilation took place on a large scale during the age of *Tabi'un*, the disciples of the disciples.

This is the age of the followers of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). They devoted their entire lives to collecting traditions from different centres of learning, with the result that a large number of traditions were preserved. Now it became possible to collect several memoirs in larger volumes. Mohammad ibn Shihab Al Zuhri (رضي الله عنه), the first regular compiler, was one of the most distinguished traditionists. Ibn Shihab Zuhri (رضي الله عنه) and Abu Bakr Al-Hazm (رضي الله عنه) were asked by Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, the Umayyad caliph, to prepare a collection of all available traditions. Umar bin Abul Aziz wrote to Abu Bakr Al Hazm (رضي الله عنه): "Whatever sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) can be found, write them down, for I fear the loss of knowledge and disappearance of learned men, and do not accept anything but the Hadith of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), and people should make knowledge public." The compilations made in this period do not exist today independently, having been incorporated into the larger collections of the later period. These collections were not exhaustive works on Hadith. Their nature was that of individual collections. After the individual compilations of this period, comes the *Al Muwatta* of Imam Malik (رضي الله عنه) (716-795), the first regular work which contained a well-arranged collection of traditions. The number of the traditions collected by him is put at 1700. This came to be accepted as a standard work. In this period the traditions respectively of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions, and the decisions / edicts of the *Tabi'un* were collected together in the same volume. However, it was mentioned with each narration whether it was that of the Prophet (ﷺ), his companions or of the followers.

This age of the followers of the companions' successors from 200 to 300 A.H., is the golden age in Hadith literature. In this age the Prophet's (ﷺ) traditions were separated from the reports of the companions and their successors. The authentic traditions were very carefully and painstakingly (carefully) sifted (examined) from the "weak" traditions and then these were compiled in book-form. Elaborate rules were framed; canons (rules and laws) were devised to distinguish the true from the false traditions in accordance with clear principles. The main attention of scholars who engaged themselves in the critical scrutiny of Hadith was given to the recorded chains of witnesses (*isnad*); whether the dates of birth and death and places of residence of witnesses in different generations were such as to have made it possible for them to meet, and whether they were trustworthy. This activity, to be properly carried out, involved some feeling for the authenticity of the text itself; an experienced traditionist would develop a sense of discrimination. All traditions therefore fall into three general categories: (*swahih*) sound, having a reliable and uninterrupted *isnad* and a (*matn*) text that does not contradict orthodox belief; (*hasan*) good those with an incomplete *isnad* or with transmitters of questionable authority, (*dwa'if*) weak those whose *matn* or transmitters are subject to serious criticism.

By the use of these criteria the Hadith scholars were able to classify the traditions according to their degrees of reliability. This is the period in which six authentic collections of traditions were compiled. These works are considered standard works on Hadith, and are known as the six correct books (*sihah-e-sittah*). The authors' names and book titles are as follows: Muhammad b. Ismail al Bukhari, (194 A.H.-256 A.H.): *Swahih*. This work is next to the Quran in authenticity. Muslim bin Qushairi (204 A.H.-261 A.H.): *Swahih*. This is the next most important work on Hadith. Ibn Majah (202 A.H.-275 A.H.): *Sunan.* Abu Isa al Tirmizi (209 A.H.-279 A.H.): *Jaami'.* Abu Abdur Rahman an Nasai (214 A.H.-303 A.H.): *Sunan.* Abu Da'ud (202 A.H.-275 A.H.): *Sunan*

Criteria Of Each Collector

Among the Six Canonical Collections of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sunnah, those of al-Bukhari and Muslim are usually called Sahih ('correct'). What, if anything, distinguishes these two collections from the other four?

With the coming of the Prophet (ﷺ) there were both the Qur'an and his Hadith / Sunnah. Throughout his period and more precisely after his death, there was the need for collection of all his sayings. It was through this idea that we have the Swahih Sitta. However, according to some scholars

only Hadith Bukhari and Muslim are Swahih (known as Swahihain) compared to the other four namely Tirmidhi, Ibn Majaa, Abu Dawood and Nasaa'i. We will try to find how they are distinct from each other.

Among the 6 collections we have the one of Imam Bukhari (رضي الله عنه) who took birth in the year 194 AH and died in the year 256 AH. He was born in Bukhara, Iran and memorized 200000 Hadith. The book of Hadith has 7275 out of 600000 hadith collected by the Imam. A second collection is the Swahih Muslim whose author is Imaam Abul-Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjaaj (رضي الله عنه). He was born in the year 202 AH – 261 AH in Nisaabur, Iran. His book has 4000 Hadith out of 300000 he has collected. A third collection is the Jami' al Tirmidhi whose author is Imaam Abu 'Isa Muhammad ibn 'Isa at-Tirmidhi (رضي الله عنه). He took birth in Tirmidh, Iran in the year 209 AH and died in the year 279 AH during the reign of the Abbasid Khalifa Ma'mun al-Rashid. His Jami' has 2028 Hadith. Another collection is Sunan Abu Dawood whose author is Imaam Abu Dawood Sulaymaan ibn al-Ash'ath Sijistaaniy (رضي الله عنه) who took birth in Sijistaan, Khuraasaan in the year 202 and died in the year 275 AH. The book consists of 4,800 Hadith. Another book of Hadith is Sunan an Nasaa'i whose author is Imaam Abu 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb ibn 'Ali Nasaa'i (رضي الله عنه) taking birth in Nasa, Iran (in the year 215 and died in the year 303 AH) situated in Western Asia known at that time as Khurusan which was a famous centre for Islamic Knowledge where millions of Ulama'a were situated and Hadeeth and Fiqh was at its peak. The book has 5761 Hadith. Another collection is the Sunan of Ibn Majaa whose author is Imaam Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yazeed ibn Maajah al-Qazweeniy (رضي الله عنه), born in Qazween, Iran in the year 209 and died in the year 273 AH. The sunan has 4,000 Hadith.

According to Imam Bukhari (رضي الله عنه) there are some criteria to be respected in the collection of Hadith. It was vital that all reporters as from him till the Prophet (ﷺ) should be trustworthy and reliable. Any doubt on their authenticity would result in rejection of the hadith. Imam Bukhari would give preference to students of highest rank of any particular teacher. In this way he would ensure the best report without mistake found in the text. He also accepted the usage 'an (عن) – contemporary in hadith collection. The meaning of 'an means 'from' or 'concerning' and it implies that the one narrating the hadith should know and hear from the one before him personally. Imam Bukhari (رضي الله عنه) would reject Hadith with discontinued Sanad (chain of narrators). If there is anyone missing in the sanad or isnad or chain of narrators, he would never accept the Hadith. However he would accept reports of not yet matured children as according to him lessons could be learned from him. **According to Imam Muslim** (رضي الله عنه) he made a clear distinction between *Haddathana* and *Akhbarana.* 'Haddathana' meaning 'he narrated to us' implies that the person had heard it directly from his teacher. There is direct contact between the teacher and the student who is listening attentively. 'Akhbarana' meaning 'he informed us' implies that the student is reading the hadith before the teacher. This reflects his utmost care in the transmission of a hadith. Imam Muslim (رضي الله عنه) also accepted the usage of 'an but there is no need to be in contemporary period as long as it is accepted. He also accepted Hadith only through the consensus of Traditionists (those collecting hadith). Imam Muslim (رضي الله عنه) has taken great pains in connecting the chain of narrators. He has recorded only that hadith which, at least, two reliable *Tabi'i* (successor) had heard from two Companions and this principle is observed throughout the subsequent chain of narrators. Imam Muslim (رضي الله عنه)has classified students in 3 categories, the first category is the one with high memory and credibility, the second is lesser than the 1st group and the third is the one accused of lying. However he made his choice from the 1st category and rarely from the 2nd but never from the 3rd.

Now, according to **Imam Tirmidhi** (رضي الله عنه), he maintained the following conditions throughout the compilation of his book. Firstly he never narrated hadith from those who fabricated hadith. According to Allama Tahir Muqaddisi, he mentions that *al-Jami` ut-Tirmidhi* contains four types of hadith: those ahadith that conform to the conditions of Bukhari and Muslim, those ahadith that conform to the conditions of Abu Dawud and Nasa'i, those ahadith that have certain discrepancies either in the *sanad* or *matan* and those weak hadith that some *fuqaha* have relied on. But after mentioning a weak hadith, he would explain the state of its weakness. Imam Tirmidhi (رضي الله عنه) accepted a hadith which is narrated with the word 'an provided both the narrators are contemporaries (within the same period and have met each other). A *mursal* (1 person omitted) hadith is accepted by Imam Tirmidhi (رضي الله عنه) when it is

supported by a chain of narrators which is not broken. **According to Abu Dawood** (رضي الله عنه) all hadith supported by the Practice of Ashab of the Prophet (ﷺ) are accepted. However he would make great investigation if there is any contradictory in a hadith or between 2 hadith or more. According to him, if a Mursal Hadith (1 person omitted) is backed and supported by a Swahih hadith then it will be accepted. He would also follow the conditions and styles of Imam Bukhariy (رضي الله عنه) and Imam Muslim (رضي الله عنه). **According to Imam an Nasaa'i** (رضي الله عنه), he would reject a reporter if all Traditionists did so. He considered the traditionists as experts in their domains and would not go against such instance. He would also reject a hadith if the reporter has mentioned anything extra while others have not reported it from the same teacher. As such each hadith was scrutinized through different angles. However, he recorded weak Hadith only to show their mistakes. **According to Ibn Majaa** (رضي الله عنه)he didn't mention his methodology but through analysis of his work it can be noted that he made a merger of all categories of Hadith. However, he would take care of not including false hadith in his collection. He brought this collection with Swahih, hasan and dwa'if hadith with the view to broaden the scope and availability of hadith to the public.

In preparing their collections, these traditionists obviously used a critical technique of selection to decide what they would include and what they would reject. Their purpose was to assemble a corpus (amount) of traditions which would serve as a code of life for Muslims, so their primary interest was in selecting such traditions that would give clear guidance concerning what Muslim belief and practice should be, which things were permissible and approved, and which were not. In their attempt to set up tests of authenticity which would exclude unauthentic material, these traditionists chose the Isnad (chains of transmitters) as the testing point and worked out an elaborate system for testing the trustworthiness of these "chains" and of the individuals who formed the links therein, so that a Isnad could be labelled "excellent", "good", "fair", "weak" and the tradition itself rated accordingly. The primary aim of the reporters was to establish unerring authority for laws and customs; thus the narrators devoted scrupulous attention to the Isnad. Ibn Sirin (رضي الله عنه) (d. 110 A.H.), the famous interpreter of dreams, said that the traditionists did not ask about the Isnad, but did so when civil war broke out, and those men who adhered to the Sunnah, their traditions were accepted and those who were innovators, their traditions were rejected. 'Abd Allah b. Mubarak (رضي الله عنه) (d. 181 A.H.), a student of Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) (d. 150 A.H.), was very outspoken with regards to the importance of the chains of narrators, and this is evidenced in the following statement by him, "The chains of narrators according to me are part of religion. If there were no chain of reporters, anybody would say whatever he liked and about whomsoever he wished". Ahmad Abu Wahb throws more light on the extent to which 'Abd Allah b. Mubarak (رضي الله عنه) regarded the Isnad by saying that he ('Abd Allah b. Mubarak) would consider committing highway robbery rather than narrating from a narrator accused of lying.

Each one of the collectors has made their utmost to compile these collections where through chapters we can go through them easily. They are already conceived tools for both the lawyers, jurists and students of Hadith and for the general public in search of knowledge of Sunnah and hadith. All the 6 collections are important in our daily lives.

Matn And Isnad

Identify and explain the main methods which the collectors of the Hadith have used to ensure that the sayings they compiled could reliably be traced to the Prophet (ﷺ) .

A hadith consists of two parts: its text, called matn, and its chain of narrators, called isnad or sanad. Comprehensive and strict criteria were separately developed for the evaluation of both the matn and the isnad. The former is regarded as the internal test of ahadith, and the latter is considered the external test. A hadith was accepted as authentic and recorded into text only when it met both of these criteria independently.

The pure and undisputed character of the narrator, called rawi, was the most important consideration for the acceptance of a hadith. As stated earlier, a new branch of 'ilm al hadith known as asma' ur rijal (the names of the men (narrators)) was developed to evaluate the credibility of narrators. The following are a few of the criteria utilized for this purpose. Firstly the name, nickname, title, parentage and occupation of the narrator should be known. Secondly, the original narrator should have stated that he heard the hadith directly from the Prophet (ﷺ). Thirdly, if a narrator referred his hadith to another narrator, the two should have lived in the same period and have had the possibility of meeting each other. Fourthly, at the time of hearing and transmitting the hadith, the narrator should have been physically and mentally capable of understanding and remembering it. Fifthly, the narrator should have been known as a pious and virtuous person. Sixthly, the narrator should not have been accused of having lied, given false evidence or committed a crime. Seventhly, the narrator should not have spoken against other reliable people. Eighthly, the narrator's religious beliefs and practices should have been known to be correct. Ninthly, the narrator should not have carried out and practiced peculiar religious beliefs of his own.

On the other side, there are many criteria for the Matn. Firstly, the text should have been stated in plain and simple language. Secondly, a text in non-Arabic or couched in indecent language was rejected. Thirdly, a text prescribing heavy punishment for minor sins or exceptionally large reward for small virtues was rejected. Fourthly, a text which referred to actions that should have been commonly known and practiced by others but were not known and practiced was rejected. Fifthly, a text contrary to the basic teachings of the Qur'an was rejected. Sixthly, a text contrary to other ahadith was rejected. Seventhly, a text contrary to basic reason, logic and the known principles of human society was rejected. Eighthly, a text inconsistent with historical facts was rejected. Ninthly, extreme care was taken to ensure the text was the original narration of the Prophet (ﷺ) and not the sense of what the narrator heard. The meaning of the hadith was accepted only when the narrator was well known for his piety and integrity of character. Tenthly, a text critical to the Prophet (ﷺ), members of his family or his companions was rejected. Another one was that a text by an obscure narrator which was not known during the age of Swahaabah or the tabi'un was rejected.

Along with these generally accepted criteria, each scholar then developed and practiced his own set of specific criteria to further ensure the authenticity of each hadith.

In addition to the above see and add _Criteria Used By Collectors_.

Mu'tazilah And Ash'ariyyah

Mu'tazilah

Describe the main teachings of the Mu`tazilah.

The emergence of this sect / group took place during the latter part of the first century or at the beginning of the second. Al-Mu'tazilah means "those who separated". It originated in 8th century in Basra when Wasil ibn 'Ataa (700-748) left the teaching lessons of the distinguished scholar al-Hasan al-Basri (رضي الله عنه) (642-728)

The opinions held by the Mu'tazilah are many which according to them form an essential part of the faith. They cover a number of physical, social, anthropological and philosophical issues, which are not directly related with the faith. There are five principal doctrines which, according to the Mu'tazilah themselves, constitute their basic tenets: **Tawhid**, i.e. absence of plurality and attributes; Justice *('adl)*, i.e. God is just and that He does not oppress His creatures; Divine retribution **(at-wa'd wa al-wa'id)**, i.e. God has determined a reward for the obedient and a punishment for the disobedient, and there can be no uncertainty about it. Therefore, Divine pardon is only possible if the sinner repents, for forgiveness without repentance *(tawbah)* is not possible; **Manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn** (a position between the two positions). This means that a *fasiq* (i.e. one who commits one of the "greater sins," such as a wine imbiber, adulterer, or a liar etc.) is neither a believer *(mu'min)* nor an infidel *(kafir); fisq* is an intermediary state between belief and infidelity; **al-'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar** [bidding to do what is right and lawful, and forbidding what is wrong and unlawful]. The opinion of the Mu'tazilah about this Islamic duty is, firstly, that the Shari'ah is not the exclusive means of identifying the *ma'ruf* and the *munkar;* human reason can, at least partially, independently identify the various kinds of *ma'ruf* and *munkar.* The implementation of this duty does not necessitate the presence of the Imam, and is a universal obligation of all Muslims, whether the Imam or leader is present or not. Only some categories of it are the obligation of the Imam or ruler of Muslims, such as, implementation of the punishments *(hudud)* prescribed by the Shari'ah, guarding of the frontiers of Islamic countries, and other such matters relating to the Islamic government. As can be noticed, only the principles of *tawhid* and Justice can be considered as parts of the essential doctrine. The other three principles are only significant because they characterize the Mu'tazilah. Even Divine Justice - although its notion is definitely supported by the Qur'an, and belief in it is a necessary part of the Islamic faith and doctrine - has been made one of the five major doctrines because it characterizes the Mu'tazilah. Or otherwise belief in Divine Knowledge and Power is as much an essential part of the Islamic faith and principal doctrine.

Concerning the **Doctrine of al-Tawhid** it has various kinds and levels such as al-tawhid al-dhati (Unity of the Essence); al-tawhid al-swifati (Unity of the Attributes, i.e., with the Essence); al-tawhid al-af'ali (Unity of the Acts); and al-tawhid al-'ibadi (monotheism in worship). Al-Tawhid al-dhati means that the Divine Essence is one and unique; it does not have a like or match. All other beings are God's creations and inferior to Him in station and in degree of perfection. In fact, they cannot be compared with Him. The idea of *al-tawhid al-dhati* is made clear by the verses: "*Nothing is like Him." (42:11).* Al-Tawhid al-swifati means that the Divine Attributes such as Knowledge, Power, Life, Will, Perception, Hearing, Vision, etc. are not realities separate from God's Essence. They are identical with the Essence, in the sense that the Divine Essence is such that the Attributes are true of It, or is such that It manifests these Attributes. Al- Tawhid al-af'ali means that all beings or rather all acts [even human acts] exist by the Will of God, and are in some way willed by His sacred Essence. Al-Tawhid al-'ibadi means that except God no other being deserves worship and devotion. Worship of anything besides God is *shirk* and puts the worshipper outside the limits of Islamic *tawhid* or monotheism. Secondly, there is the **Doctrine of Divine Justice**. The Mu'tazilah believe that some acts are essentially 'just' and some intrinsically 'unjust.' For instance, rewarding the obedient and punishing the sinners is justice; and that God is Just, i.e. He rewards the obedient and punishes the sinners, and it is impossible for Him to

act otherwise. Rewarding the sinners and punishing the obedient is essentially and intrinsically unjust, and it is impossible for God to do such a thing. Similarly, compelling His creatures to commit sin, or creating them without any power of free will, then creating the sinful acts at their hands, and then punishing them on account of those sins - this is injustice, an ugly thing for God to do; it is unjustifiable and ungodly. But the Ash'ariyyah believes that no act is intrinsically or essentially just or unjust. Justice is essentially whatever God does. If, supposedly, God were to punish the obedient and reward the sinners, it would be as just. Similarly, if God creates His creatures without any will, power or freedom of action, then if He causes them to commit sins and then punishes them for that - it is not essential injustice. If we suppose that God acts in this manner, it is justice. Also, thereby, the Mu'tazilah believes in human freedom and free will and is its staunch defenders, contrary to the Ash'ariyyah who deny human freedom and free will.

Thirdly, there is the **Doctrine of Retribution** (al-wa'd wa al-wa'id). *"Wa'd"* means promising award and *"wa'id"* means threat of punishment. The Mu'tazilah believe that God does not break His own promises (all Muslims unanimously accept this) or forego His threats, as stated by the Qur'anic verse regarding Divine promise: "*Indeed God does not break the promise." (13:31).* Accordingly (the Mu'tazilah say), all threats addressed to the sinners and the wicked such as the punishments declared for an oppressor, a liar or a wine imbiber, will all be carried out without fail, except when the sinner repents before death. Therefore, pardon without repentance is not possible. From the viewpoint of the Mu'tazilah, pardon without repentance implies failure to carry out the threats *(wa'id*), and such an act, like breaking of promise (*khulf al-wa'd*),is *"qabih",* and so impossible. Thus the Mu'tazilite beliefs regarding Divine retribution and Divine forgiveness are interrelated, and both arise from their belief in inherent good and evil of deeds determinable by reason. Fourthly, there is the **Doctrine of Intermediate State** (Manzilah Bayna al-Manzilatayn). The Mu'tazilite belief in this matter emerged in the wake of two opposite beliefs in the Muslim world about the faith *('iman)* or infidelity *(kufr)* of the *fasiq.* Accordingly, they were adversaries of the current politics. They maintained that the perpetrator of a major sin is neither a *mu'min,* nor he is a *kafir,* but occupies a position between those two extremes. This middle state was termed by the Mu'tazilah *"manzilah bayna al- manzilatayn."* The fifth concept is the **Doctrine of Encouraging good and Prohibiting bad** (Al-'Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar) which is an essential Islamic duty, unanimously accepted by all Muslims. The difference occurs only in the limits and conditions related to it. The Mu'tazilah accepted the conditions for *al-'amr wa al-nahy*, but, not limiting it to the heart and the tongue, maintained that if the unlawful practices become common, or if the state is oppressive and unjust, it is obligatory for Muslims to rise in armed revolt. Thus the belief special to the Mu'tazilah in regard to *al-'amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* - contrary to the stand of the Ahl al- Hadith and the Ahl al-Sunnah - is belief in the necessity to rise up in arms to confront corruption.

The above-mentioned five doctrines constitute the basic position of the Mu'tazilah from the viewpoint of *kalam,* otherwise, as said before, the Mu'tazilite beliefs are not confined to these five and cover a broad scope ranging from theology, physics and sociology to anthropology. For example they say that **physical bodies** are made up of indivisible particles; smell relates to particles scattered in air; taste is nothing but the effect of particles; light is made up of particles scattered in space and interpenetration of bodies is not impossible. Concerning **Human problems**, the Mu'tazilah say that Man is free, endowed with free will; not predetermined (this problem, the problem of the nature of human acts whether [created by God or man], and the problem of Divine Justice, all the three are interrelated); ability (istita'ah); that is, man has power over his own acts, before he performs them or desists from them; the believer (mu'min) has the power to become an infidel and the infidel (kafir) is able to become a believer; a fasiq is neither a mu'min, nor a kafir; human reason can understand and judge some matters independently (without the prior need of guidance from the Shari'ah); in case of conflict between reason and Hadith, reason is to be preferred and it is possible to interpret the Qur'an with the help of reason. Concerning **Political and Social Problems** they say that there is the obligatory nature of al-'amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar, even if it necessitates taking up of arms, the leadership (imamah) of the Rashidun Caliphs was correct in the order it occurred, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was superior to the Caliphs

who preceded him (this is the view of some of the Mu'tazilah, not of all. The earlier Mu'tazilah - with the exception of Wasil ibn 'Ata' considered Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) as the best, but the majority of the latter Mu'tazilah considered 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as superior), the evaluation and criticism of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their deeds is permissible and a comparative study and analysis of the state policies of 'Umar and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه).

1. **What were the distinctive features of the teachings of the Mu'tazilah about Tawhid (Oneness of God)?**
2. **Why did the Mu'tazilah call themselves the People of God's Unity?**

Al-Mu'tazilah are from the Rationalist school of thought and have very many deviations in their methodological principles. Al-Mu'tazilah means "those who separated". It originated in 8th century in Basra when Wasil ibn 'Ataa (700-748) left the teaching lessons of the distinguished scholar al-Hasan al- Basri (رضي الله عنه) (642-728) after a theological dispute on the question relating to the definition applicable to the Muslim who commits a major sin, and hence he and his followers were termed al-Mu'tazilah. Later, al- Mu'tazilah called themselves Ahl ul 'Adl wat Tawhiid (People of Justice and Monotheism) based on the theology they advocated.

Al-Mu'tazilah adopted the position that a Muslim who commits a major sin without repenting occupies a middle state between being a Muslim and not being a Muslim. Al-Mu'tazilah theology developed on logic and rationalism from Greek philosophy, and sought to combine Islamic doctrines with the former, and show that they are inherently compatible. At the time of the rise of the 'Abbasids in 750 Mu'tazilah began to become prominent in the Islamic world. In the 9th century the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Ma'mun, raised the Mu'tazilah doctrine to the status of the state creed. Openly supported by the caliphate, the Mu'tazilah became increasingly intolerant and began to persecute their opponents. On one occasion the eminent Sunni scholar Ahmad ibn Hanbal (رضي الله عنه) (d. 855), was subjected to flogging and imprisonment for his refusal to subscribe to the Mu'tazilah doctrine that al-Qur'an was created in time.

The Mu'tazilah divided Tawhid into various kinds and levels such as al-tawhid al-dhati (Unity of the Essence); al-tawhid al-swifati (Unity of the Attributes, i.e., with the Essence); al-tawhid al-af 'ali (Unity of the Acts) and al-tawhid al-'ibadi (monotheism in worship). Taking the first one, al-Tawhid al-dhati, it means that the Divine Essence is one and unique and it does not have a like or match. All other beings are God's creations and inferior to Him in station and in degree of perfection. In fact, they cannot be compared with Him. The idea of al-tawhid al-dhati is made clear by the following two Qur'anic verses when Allah says that "Nothing is like Him" (42:11) and that "He does not have a match" (112:4). The second category is the al-Tawhid al-swifati which means that the Divine Attributes such as Knowledge, Power, Life, Will, Perception, Hearing, Vision, etc. are not realities separate from God's Essence. They are identical with the Essence, in the sense that the Divine Essence is such that the Attributes are true of it, or is such that it manifests these Attributes. The third is al-Tawhid al-af 'ali which means that all beings or rather all acts exist by the Will of God, and are in some way willed by His sacred Essence. The fourth one is al-Tawhid al-'ibadi which means that except God no other being deserves worship and devotion. Worship of anything besides God is shirk and puts the worshipper outside the limits of Islamic tawhid or monotheism. In a sense al-tawhid al-'ibadi (tawhid in worship) is different from other kinds of tawhidi, because the first three relate to God and this kind relates to the creatures. In other words, the Unity of Divine Essence, His Uniqueness and the identity of the Essence and Attributes, the unity of the origin of everything - all of them are matters which relate to God. But tawhid in worship, i.e. the necessity of worshipping the One God, relates to the behaviour of the creatures. But in reality, tawhid in worship is also related to God, because it means Uniqueness of God as the only deserving object of worship, and that He is in truth the One Deity Worthy of Worship. The statement "la ilaha Illallah" encompasses all aspects of tawhid, although its first signification is monotheism in worship.

Al-tawhid al-dhati and al-tawhid al-'ibadi are part of the basic doctrines of Islam. It means that if there is a shortcoming in one's belief in these two principles, it would put one outside the pale of Islam. No Muslim has opposed these two basic beliefs. Lately the followers of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, who was a follower of Ibn Taymiyyah, a claimed Hanbali from Syria, have said that some common beliefs of the Muslims such as one in intercession (shafa'ah) and some of their practices such as invoking the assistance of the prophets (ﷺ) and holy saints (رضي الله عنهم) are opposed to the doctrine of al-tawhid al-'ibadi. But these are not considered by other Muslims to conflict with al-tawhid al-'ibadi. The point of difference between them; the Mu'tazilah and other Muslims is not whether any one besides God – such as the prophets or saints – is worthy of worship. There is no debate that anyone except God cannot be worshipped. The debate is about whether invoking of intercession and assistance can be considered a form of worship or not. Therefore, the difference is only secondary, not a primary one. Islamic scholars have rejected the viewpoint of these followers of ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab in elaborate, well-reasoned answers.

Al-tawhid al-swifati (the Unity of Divine Essence and Attributes) is a point of debate between the Mu'tazilah and the Ash'ariyyah. The latter deny it while the former affirm it. Al-tawhid al-af'ali is also another point of difference between them, with the difference, however, that the matter is reverse; i.e. the Ash'ariyah affirm it and the Mu'tazilah deny it. When the Mu'tazilah call themselves 'ahl al-tawhid, and count it among their doctrines, thereby they mean by it al-tawhid al-swifati, not al-tawhid al-dhati, nor al- tawhid al-'ibadi (which are not disputed), nor al-tawhid al-af'ali. This is because, firstly, al-tawhid al-af'ali is negated by them, and, secondly, they expound their own viewpoint about it under the doctrine of justice, their second article. The Ash'ariyyah and the Mu'tazilah formed two radically opposed camps on the issues of al-tawhid al-swifati and al-tawhidal-af'ali. To repeat, the Mu'tazilah affirms al-tawhid al-swifati and rejects al-tawhid al-af'ali, while the Ash'arite position is the reverse. Each of them has advanced arguments in support of their positions.

1. **Write an account of the Mu'tazili principle of divine justice ('adl).**
2. **Why did the Mu'tazilah call themselves the People of God's Justice?**

Al-Mu'tazilah are from the Rationalist school of thought and have very many deviations in their methodological principles. Al-Mu'tazilah means "those who separated". It originated in 8th century in Basra when Wasil ibn 'Ataa (700-748) left the teaching lessons of the distinguished scholar al-Hasan al- Basri (رضي الله عنه) (642-728) after a theological dispute on the question relating to the definition applicable to the Muslim who commits a major sin, and hence he and his followers were termed al-Mu'tazilah. Later, al- Mu'tazilah called themselves Ahl ul 'Adl wat Tawhiid (People of Justice and Monotheism) based on the theology they advocated.

Of course, it is evident that none of the Islamic sects denied justice as one of the Divine Attributes. No one has ever claimed that God is not just. The difference between the Mu'tazilah and their opponents is about the interpretation of Justice. The Ash'ariyyah interprets it in such a way that it is equivalent, in the view of the Mu'tazilah, to a denial of the Attribute of Justice. Otherwise, the Ash'ariyah are not at all willing to be considered the opponents of justice. The Mu'tazilah believe that some acts are essentially 'just' and some intrinsically 'unjust.' For instance, rewarding the obedient and punishing the sinners is justice; and that God is Just, i.e. He rewards the obedient and punishes the sinners, and it is impossible for Him to act otherwise. Rewarding the sinners and punishing the obedient is essentially and intrinsically unjust, and it is impossible for God to do such a thing. Similarly, compelling His creatures to commit sin, or creating them without any power of free will, then creating the sinful acts at their hands, and then punishing them on account of those sins - this is injustice, an ugly thing for God to do; it is unjustifiable and ungodly. But the Ash'ariyah believes that no act is intrinsically or essentially just or unjust. Justice is essentially whatever God does. If, supposedly, God were to punish the obedient and reward the sinners, it would be as just. Similarly, if God creates His creatures without any will, power or freedom of action, then if He causes them to commit sins and then punishes them for that - it is not

essential injustice. If we suppose that God acts in this manner, it is justice. For the same reason that the Mu'tazilah emphasizes justice, they deny al-tawhid al-'af'ali. They say that al-tawhid al-'af'ali implies that God, not the human beings, is the maker of human deeds. Since it is known that man attains reward and punishment in the Hereafter, if God is the creator of human actions and yet punishes them for their evil deeds - which not they, but God Himself has brought about - that would be injustice and contrary to Divine Justice. Accordingly, the Mu'tazilah considers al-tawhid al-'af'ali to be contrary to the doctrine of justice. Also, thereby, the Mu'tazilah believes in human freedom and free will and is its staunch defenders, contrary to the Ash'ariyah who deny human freedom and free will. Under the doctrine of justice - in the sense that some deeds are inherently just and some inherently unjust, and that human reason dictates that justice is good and must be practiced, whereas injustice is evil and must be abstained from - they advance another general doctrine, which is more comprehensive, that is the principle that "beauty" (husn) and "ugliness" (qubh), (good and evil), are inherent properties of acts. For instance, truthfulness, trustworthiness, chastity and God-fearing are intrinsically good qualities, and falsehood, treachery, indecency, negligence, etc. are intrinsically evil. Therefore, deeds in essence, before God may judge them, possess inherent goodness or evil (husn or qubh).

Hereupon, they arrive at another doctrine about reason that is human reason can independently judge (or perceive) the good or evil in things. It means that the good or evil of some deeds can be judged by human reason independently of the commands of the Shari'ah. The Ash'ariyyah are against this view too. The belief in the inherent good or evil of acts and the capacity of reason to judge them, upheld by the Mu'tazilah and rejected by the Ash'ariyah, brought many other problems in its wake, some of which are related to theology, some to human predicament; such as, whether the Divine Acts, or rather, the creation of things is with a purpose or not. The Mu'tazilah claimed that absence of a purpose in the creation is "qabih" (an ugly thing) and so rationally impossible. How about a duty which is beyond one's power to fulfil? Is it possible that God may saddle someone with a duty which is over and above his capacity? The Mu'tazilah considered this, too, as "qabih", and so impossible. Is it within the power of a believer (mu'min) to turn apostate? Does the infidel (kafir) have any power over his own infidelity (kufr)? The answer of the Mu'tazilah is in the affirmative; for if the believer and the infidel had no power over their belief and infidelity, it would be wrong (qabih) to award and punish them. The Ash'ariyah rejected all these Mu'tazilite doctrines and held opposite views. Facing the problem of existence of evil in the world, the Mu'tazilah pointed at the free will of human beings, so that evil was defined as something that stems from the errors in human acts. God does no evil, and He demands not from any human to perform any evil act. If man's evil acts had been from the will of God, then punishment would have been meaningless, as man performed God's will no matter what he did. Mu'tazilah did not deny the existence of suffering that goes beyond human abuse and misuse of their free will granted to them by God. In order to explain this type of "apparent" evil, Mu'tazilah relied on the Islamic doctrine of *taklif* — that life is a test for beings possessing free will, i.e., the capacity for choice.

Humans are required to have belief, *iman*, faith and conviction in and about God, and do good works, 'amal us swaalih, to have iman reflected in their moral choices, deeds, and relationship with God, fellow humans, and all creatures in this world. If everyone is healthy and wealthy, then there will be no meaning for the obligations imposed on humans to, for example, be generous, help the needy, and have compassion for the deprived and trivialized. The inequalities in human fortunes and the calamities that befell them are, thus, an integral part of the test of life. Everyone is being tested. The powerful, the rich, and the healthy are required to use all their powers and privileges to help those who suffer and to alleviate their suffering. In the Qiyamah (Judgment Day), they will be questioned about their response to Divine blessings and bounties they enjoyed in their lives. The less fortunate are required to patiently persevere and are promised a compensation for their suffering that, as the Qur'an puts it is "beyond all reckoning". The test of life is specifically for adults in full possession of their mental faculties. Children may suffer, and are observed to suffer, given the nature of life but they are believed to be completely free from sin and liability. Divine justice is affirmed through the theory of compensation. All sufferers will be compensated. This includes non-believers and, more importantly, children who are destined to go to Paradise.

The doctrine of 'Adl in the words of 'Abd al-Jabbar: It is the knowledge that God is removed from all that is morally wrong (*qabih*) and that all His acts are morally good (*hasana*). So, whoever perishes does so only after all this has been made clear. And you know that every benefit we have is from God; as He has said: "And you have no good thing that is not from Allah" (Qur'an 16:53); it either comes to us from Him or from elsewhere. Thus, when you know all of this you become knowledgeable about God's justice.

Ash'ariyyah

By referring to Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari's attacks upon the teachings of the Mu'tazilah, explain why al-Ash'ariy is often regarded as one of the most important Muslim theologians. Why did Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ariy break ties with the Mu'tazilah?

Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿariy (رضي الله عنه), was born in the year 873 in Basra, Iraq and died in 935 in Baghdad. He was a Muslim Arab theologian noted for having integrated the rationalist methodology of the speculative theologians into the framework of orthodox Islam. In his Maqalat al-Islamiyin ("Theological Opinions of the Muslims"), compiled during his early period, al-Ashʿari brought together the varied opinions of scholars on Muslim theological questions. At the age of 40 he pursued a more orthodox study of theology through the Qurʾan (Islamic sacred scripture) and the sunnah (the body of Islamic custom and practice based on Muḥammad's words and deeds). He founded a theological school that later claimed as members such celebrated authors as al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun.

Abu al- Hasan al-Ash'ari (رضي الله عنه) was a Sunni Muslim coming from a Sunni household. When he was young, he studied Mu'tazalite theology with Abu 'Ali al-Jubai. He then repented from this and one day ascended the teaching chair in the mosque and spoke at the top of his voice, "He who knows me, knows me, and he who does not know me let me introduce myself. I am so and so and I used to say that the Qur'an was created and that God cannot be seen by human eyes and that, evil actions are actions I commit. I repent from this and I will respond to the teachings of the Mu'tazilites and expose their falsehood." The jurist Abu Bakr al-Sayrafi said "the Mu'tazilites were prominent and used to hold their heads up high until Abu al-Hasan detained them back to a corner and halted their efforts." Qadi 'Iyad (رضي الله عنه) the Maliki jurist said about him that he composed the major works for the Ash'ariy school and established the proofs for Sunni Islam and established the attributes of God that the people of innovation negated. He established the eternality of the speech of God, His will, and His hearing. The people of Sunna held fast to his books, learned from him, and studied under him. They became intimately familiar with his school of thought and this school grew in number of students so that they could learn this way of defending the Sunna and adducing these arguments and proofs to give victory to the faith. That situation brought popularity in the Ash'ari school. In doing this, these students took on his name as well as the followers of his students so they all became known as Ash'aris. Originally they were known as the muthbita (those who affirm), a name given to them by the Mu'tazalites since they affirmed in the Sunna and the Shari'ah what the Mu'tazilites negate. Therefore the people of Sunna from the East and the West used his (al-Ash'ari) methodology and his argument has been praised by many people. Qadi ibn Farhun al-Maliki said about him that he (Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari) was a follower of the Maliki School of law and he authored works for the people of the Sunna and he adduced arguments for the establishment of the Sunna and those things that the people of innovation refuted". He established these clear arguments and proofs from the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions as well as sound rational arguments. He suppressed the arguments of the Mu'tazilites and those apostates after them. He wrote these extensive works that God has benefited the Muslims with; he debated the Mu'tazilites and was victorious over them. Abu al- Hasan al-Qabisi used to praise him and he even authored a treatise about al-Ash'ari and his school in which he praised him and did him justice. Abu Muhammad ibn Abi Zayd and others from the leaders of the Muslims also praised him. This is to show how he was famous among the 'Ulama.

Orthodox theology of Sunni Islam, both the Ash'ari and Maturidi schools, is clear in all aspects of theology. However, most who criticize these schools have been ignorant of the school's tenants of belief in God and this has to do with "additions to God" or what is technically referred to as "attributes that God has informed us of ". This confusion has its roots in certain Qur'anic words which God has added to Himself in His book, and some people seek to affirm these extra attributes in their literal linguistic meaning which amounts to anthropomorphism. The Ash'arites however, understand that these attributes are not meant for us to establish literally since they are obscure. This opinion holds that these attributes cannot be established by intellection, and only from the fact that we have been informed of them through the revelation of the Quran. These attributes, therefore, are to be accepted the way they are without trying to derive from their linguistic, literal meanings. The reason being is that the literal, linguistic meanings are counter to the tenants of belief in God. This opinion is that of the early Sunni theologians, those who were first called Ash'aris. At this stage the people were against the idea of attributing shapes or forms to the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'an. In fact this boosted the reputation and fame of the Ash'ari school. The later Ash'ari theologians, however, took a slightly different route; one of interpretation. These scholars held it better to establish a meaning, even from an obscure word or theme, rather than fall into anthropomorphism. Both the early and late Sunni theologians are in agreement that the best approach is to pass over these passages without describing and interpreting them as well as not believing in the literal meaning that leads to anthropomorphism. That made them known and famous among the people. The later theologians, however, added that one only understands from these attributes what is appropriate to God. This is as if to say to the opponents, "if you must understand these attributes then do so only in a way that does not underestimate the greatness of God or leads to anthropomorphism. At that time when people of knowledge and ordinary common people had such explanation it became a boost up for them. That caused his popularity. Therefore the eye of God is interpreted as His care for His creation as God says in the Quran "And I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My eye". (20.39) Therefore one can say that the early theologians' method was one of belief and the later theologians' method was one of debate. This is the methodology of Sunni theology in dealing with these obscure words, which if taken literally will lead to anthropomorphism. This is why al-Hafidh al-'Iraqi stated concerning the "face or countenance of God" which occurs so often in the Qur'an and Sunnah, "in understanding this there are two opinions: the first is to pass over it as it is without asking how. So one believes in it fully and resigns its meaning to the One who possesses this meaning with firm conviction that there is none like unto God. The second is to interpret it in a way that is becoming of God's essence so the meaning of the face or countenance of God is His existence."

Perhaps the best that has been written on this topic is Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi's statement in his Lum'at al-'Itiqad: All that has come in the Qur'an or has been soundly narrated on the Messenger of God (ﷺ) concerning the attributes of the most Merciful one must be believed in and be received with acceptance and resignation. It is also better not to engage in its interpretation, its refutation, or assimilating the attribute to something tangible, and other problematic methodologies. It is incumbent to establish the attribute as it came and to leave interpreting its meaning and to resign its meaning to the One who spoke of it in accordance with the way of those who are firmly established in the faith whom God has praised by saying "And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord", and He has criticized those who innovate in interpretation "But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except God." In this verse God considered the desire to interpret the meaning of the obscure verses as an indication of the sickness of man's heart and He has linked their desire for interpretation to cause tribulation but God has cut short their desires since He says at the end "and only God knows their meaning." At that moment when many verses were given different meanings, the Ash'ariyah came as a help for the people. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (رضي الله عنه) has stated regarding the statement of the Messenger of God (ﷺ) "God descends to the lowest of the skies" and that "God is seen on the Day of Resurrection" and to the like he said: "We believe in these texts and we verify their truth without asking how, or without seeking a meaning and we desire nothing of this. We believe what the Messenger of God brought is truth and we do not respond to him nor do we describe God with more than what He has described of Himself "there is none like unto Him and He is the all-seeing, all

hearing". We simply state what He has stated concerning Himself, and we describe Him with that which He has described Himself. We do not increase in this as He is exalted beyond anyone's description. We believe in the entire Qur'an, its self-evident parts and its obscure parts. We do not exclude any aspects of it due to some issue that has arisen. We never go further than the Qur'an and hadith, and we cannot fathom them except by believing in the Messenger of God and the Qur'an". Imam al-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) has stated that 'I believe in God and what has been sent from God in the manner by which God has willed, and I believe in the Messenger of God (ﷺ) and in that which has been sent from him in the manner by which he has willed.' This is the path that both the pious ancestors and later scholars have followed. All of them are in agreement to confirming these traits and passing over them without referring to interpretation". These are the words among others which made the Ash'ariyah famous as they were in conform to Imam Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (رضي الله عنه).

After Muslims began to disagree on theological issues and those of reprehensible innovation emerged, it became necessary to correct these misconceptions and purify the theology of the Messenger of God and his companions just as Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari (رضي الله عنه) did. In this regard Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari did not devise a new school in Islamic theology, but rather restated and emphasized the theology and creed that the Messenger of God taught. This is exactly what al-Subki (رضي الله عنه) stated when he wrote that "Know that Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari did not innovate a new (theological) position nor did he start a new school, rather he restated the school of the pious ancestors, fighting for the cause that was the way of the Messenger of God. Those who follow his way, do so in the sense that he gave a voice to the way of the pious ancestors and he established firm proofs and arguments for this voice. Therefore those who follow this system of proofs and arguments call themselves Ash'arites". For the people Ash'ariyah is a continuity of the message and teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the prophet (s.a.w) and the blessed generations. As such he gained popularity and is considered as one of the most important Islamic theologians. Al-Mayraqi the Maliki said, "Abu al-Hasan was not the first to argue the theology of the people of the Sunnah, rather he traverses an already established path and increased in its proofs and clarity. He did not innovate a new position or school. Is it not clear that the [legal] school of Madina claimed to follow the Maliki school and those of this school call themselves Maliki. Imam Malik, however, simply followed the example of the pious ancestors who came before him and he was strict in following them. When his school increased in proofs and clarity it became ascribed to him. This is the same situation with the school of Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari. He did nothing but clarify the positions of the pious ancestors, and his writings scored them victory." All these made him famous and acceptable. In another of his writings al-Subki says: "All of the Hanafis, Shafi's, Malikis, and Hanbalis are all one in their creed following the way of the Sunna in the manner laid down by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari. Generally speaking the theology of the Ash'aris is gathered in the writings of Abi Ja'far al-Tahawi who has been received and accepted by the various schools". The great Hanafi jurist Ibn 'Abidin (رضي الله عنه) has stated in his book, "as for his statement 'according to our creed' those things we believe in aside from secondary juristic issues, which are incumbent on every legally bound individual without following another's scholarly opinion (taqlid). These (set of beliefs) are what is found amongst the people of the Sunna who are none other than the Ash'ari's and Maturidis, and they are both in agreement except for a few minor points most of which can be reduced to a difference in technical language".

According to this lengthy discussion and taking into mind the opinions of these formidable scholars it would be correct for one to say that the creed and theology of the Messenger of God was according to the Ash'ari school just as it is possible to say that the Qur'anic recitation used by the Messenger of God was similar to Nafi' (رضي الله عنه) even though Nafi' (رضي الله عنه) never met the Messenger of God and it is Nafi' (رضي الله عنه) who recites like the Messenger of God (ﷺ). However, as Nafi' (رضي الله عنه) was a great scholar of Qur'anic recitation and he compiled his own, what he compiled was what was most commonly found to be the recitation of the Messenger of God (ﷺ). In conclusion, it is clear that the position of the pious ancestors concerning theology was one of acceptance and passing over obscurities so as to avoid falling into heretical positions such as anthropomorphism as mentioned by Imam al-Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه), Imam Ahmad (رضي الله عنه), and others. This is the creed and theology of the Ash'aris and God is most high and most knowledgeable.

Sunni v/s Shi'a

1. Explain the meaning and importance of the term Shi'at 'Ali (Party of 'Ali)
2. Explain the significance of the battle of Siffin and the massacre of Karbala' in the development of Shi'i Islam.
3. The events that led to the emergence of the Shi`ah are often seen as tragic in Islamic history. Outline these events and explain their significance in Islam.

There have been many sects since the time of the prophet (ﷺ). According to the latter (ﷺ), there will be 73 groups in Islam and Shi'a is among them. All groups have their original starting point in history and their distinctive features. The partisans of that group exist all around the world but mainly in Iran. The Shi'a known as Shi'atou 'Aliy (شيعة علي) – or Shi'ah 'Ali means the party of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). The name of the group suggests that this group is pro Hazrat Ali and they are the partisans, fellowmen and supporters of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). Here reference is made to Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). They are also known as the Shi'te. However, there is a history behind that name. 'Ali's supporters were a myriad of disenchanted people, some of whom had grievances with Caliph 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه). These became the "Partisans of 'Ali" or the Shia't Ali.

Indeed, these Partisans of Ali (رضي الله عنه) were simply recently converted Bedouins from a Mushrik (polytheist) concept as well as conquered Persians who clung to their Zoroastrian ways. They were weak in faith, ignorant, and barbaric. They were not a religious sect, but rather a political party. They were not interested in the religion of 'Ali as Islam but they were more interested in the political views of not accepting the Umayya clan and preferring the Hashim clan. The term "Shi'ah Ali" was not used to denote a distinct religious sect; in fact, the partisans of Mu'awiyyah would be called "Shi'ah Mu'awiyyah" at a time. Both the Bedouins and the Zoroastrians were accustomed to their former pagan beliefs and had a difficult time adjusting to Islam, and often-times they would mix Islam with pagan thought. The Shi'ah first formed an identifiable movement in Islamic history during the First Civil War among Muslims, which tore the Muslim Community apart between 656 and 661 C.E during 'Ali's (رضي الله عنه) caliphate. According to Shi'ah doctrine, 'Ali was meant to assume leadership of the Community upon the Prophet's (ﷺ) death in 632. They affirmed that the Prophet (ﷺ) had explicitly designated him as his successor, but the jealousy and ambition of his enemies prevented him as a succession of three other leaders, Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) (632–634), 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) (634–644), and 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه) (644–656), were chosen instead. They would base themselves on the Ghadir Khum declaration where the prophet (ﷺ) said that the "one who has me as leader (mawla) has 'Ali as leader" (Sunan Ibn Maaja Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 121). Shi'a as a movement bursts into full view with the assassination of Hazrat 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه) and the resulting civil war. According to the Shi'a, in 656 Hazrat 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه) was assassinated in Madina by Muslims angered by his supposedly open preferential treatment in making appointments to lucrative (profitable) governorships in the newly conquered provinces. They were the Kharijites. At this point, Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was chosen as caliph, but soon met opposition from the Umayyah clan, the Prophet's (ﷺ) widow Hazrat 'Aisha (رضي الله عنها), and others, who accused him of complicity in 'Uthman's (رضي الله عنه) assassination. These were the Shi'a allegation.

Then came the incident of the battle of camel. Accordingly, Talha (رضي الله عنه) and Zubair (رضي الله عنه) went to Hazrat 'Aisha (رضي الله عنها) in order to find the culprit of Hazrat Uthman's (رضي الله عنه) death. However, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as caliph didn't approve that any army would leave his kingdom without his order. He thus sent his sons and army to halt the ongoing army. They continued talks for weeks but when it seemed that there will be peace, mischief mongers from both sides started the battle. One of the reasons for this battle was that the partisans of 'Ali would never accept anyone opposing the caliph. They would consider that as an act of disrespect and disloyalty. Anyone who went against the

regime of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was not from his nation. That was the shi'a concept. Men from Hazrat 'Ali's (رضي الله عنه) forces among the Shi'a killed Talhah (رضي الله عنه) and al-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) and captured Hazrat 'A'isha (رضي الله عنها). However, she was returned to Madina with honour by 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) though his supporters wanted otherwise. They were never satisfied with what they had. Sometimes they would ask for justice and other times they would simply ask for self-arbitration. War was declared, pitting (fighting) 'Ali's (رضي الله عنه) supporters, centered in Kufa in Iraq, against forces in Basra and Syria. They would never accept anyone going against 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and they would retaliate. As they were accustomed with the Nomadic life and the Persian warring style they were always ready to wage war. The following year, Mu'awiyah (رضي الله عنه) didn't pay allegiance to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). That was again an insult to the partisans of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). At the same time Mu'awiyah (رضي الله عنه) who was the governor of Syria took his army to face the Khawarij who killed Hazrat Uthman (رضي الله عنه). Again it was a decision without the approval of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). For the shi'a it was disobedience and a means of creating chaos and fitna on the Islamic territory. For the partisans of 'Ali, looking for the murderers of Hazrat 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه) was not that vital as he was among the Umayyah. Their motto was to accept 'Ali and the Ahlul Bait at all cost and allegiance with sincerity to be prevailed.

As such there was the battle of Siffin. During that battle men of Mu'awiyah (رضي الله عنه) played a trick to stop the battle by placing pages of the Qur'an on top of the lances and swords. Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) didn't want to stop fighting but a section of his army turned against him and asked for a halt and an arbitration. Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) lost the battle of Siffin in the Syrian desert after his deputy bungled arbitration with the agent of Mu'awiya (رضي الله عنه), the governor of Damascus. A large group of Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)'s supporters, angered that he had submitted to arbitration, left him at this point. Known as the Khawarij (or Kharijites, "deserters"), they became Hazrat 'Ali 's (رضي الله عنه) bitter enemies. In the meantime these situations created sympathy in the hearts of his partisans for Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). The latter retreated to Kufa and defeated a Kharijite army at Nahrawan in 658. Again his supporters were with him and totally accepted to fight the Khawarij. That was all they were good at, that is fighting. In 661, he was assassinated by the Khariji ibn Muljim in Kufa. This led to sympathies for his family and the Ahlul Bait. His supporters recognized his eldest son Imaam Hasan (رضي الله عنه) as their leader. As a matter of fact they would only recognize the members of the Ahlul Bait and the prominent Ashab from the Prophet (ﷺ)'s house. They would reject the other ashab especially the first three caliphs. They had enmities with the Umayyah and were fiercely against anyone opposing Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). Throughout Umayyad rule, the Shi'a engaged in periodic uprisings against the illegitimate caliphs (according to them), rebelling in the name of various members of Ahlul Bait. The most famous of these incidents is the revolt of Husayn (رضي الله عنه), Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)'s second son, on the death of Mu'awiya (رضي الله عنه) and the accession of his son Yazid in 680. Imam Husayn (رضي الله عنه) was summoned to Kufa to lead the revolt. He set out from Madina with a small contingent, but Umayyad forces halted him in the Iraqi desert, preventing him from reaching his supporters in Kufa. Rather than surrender, Husayn (رضي الله عنه) and his followers fought; most were slaughtered, and Imaam Husayn's head was delivered to Yazid in Damascus. In this battle many of the Ahlul Bait were killed and 73 persons from the side of Imam Husayn (رضي الله عنه) died.

The martyrdom of Imaam Husayn (رضي الله عنه) and his followers is retold and re-enacted by the Shia on the day of 'Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram in the first month of the Islamic calendar. They propound the view of lamentation and human mutilation. Four years later, Kufan Shia known as al-Tawwabun ("the Penitents") led a revolt, reflecting their dedication to the cause of Imaam Husayn (رضي الله عنه) and their regret that they had not come to his aid. Their main slogans are the five pious persons like Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Faatima (رضي الله عنها), Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), Hasan (رضي الله عنه) and Husayn (رضي الله عنه). The Abbasid revolution that toppled the Umayyads in 750 began in part as a Shi'a movement, adopting the slogan *al-rida minal bayt,* "the acceptable candidate from the family of the Prophet (ﷺ)". Upon victory, a descendant of the Prophet (ﷺ)'s uncle 'Abbas assumed rule as caliph. In a clear pro-Shi'a movement, the new dynasty established its capital in Iraq, first at Wasit, then at Baghdad, founded in 761. The Abbasids, however, soon turned on their Shi'a allies and eventually took over the Umayyad's role as illegitimate rulers and the nemesis of Shi'a aspirations. Muhammad al-Nafs al-

Zakiyya ("the Pure Soul") led a Shiite revolt against the Abbasids in 762. The Abbasid period would witness countless more revolts in the name of 'Alid (following the name of 'Ali) leaders. Attempts at reconciliation, the most notable being al-Ma'mun's appointment of 'Ali al-Rida, the eighth imam of the Twelver Shi'a line, as his successor in 816, were short-lived.

The shi'a movement was developed first of all when the Bedouins and the new converts of the Persian empire were against the regime of their time. They wanted that someone from the Ahlul Bait to become the leader. They thus started their campaign. Any objection, threat, rejection, misconduct or disobedience from anyone would meet the Shi'a of 'Ali on their way. That led to battles of Camel, Siffin, Nahrawan and Karbala as events leading to the development of Shi'a movement.

Why were the leading descendants of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه)and Fatimah (رضي الله عنها) known as Imams?

As historians point out, the Shi'a has emerged as a group siding with the family of the Prophet (ﷺ). That is why we can see in the history of Shi'a Islam that much importance is given to the Prophet (رضي الله عنه), Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), Faatima (رضي الله عنها), Hasan (رضي الله عنه) and Husayn (رضي الله عنه) among others. They are deeply attached to them. As a matter of fact they consider these dignitaries as Imam. Literally, an Imam is someone who is in front and he is leading the line, the group of the movement. Moreover he is a leader for the five daily prayers, the accomplishment of Umrah and the performance of Hajj as a pillar of Islam. An Imam is someone who is considered as a leader in all fields and when it comes to the idea of the Shi'a, an Imam is a leader of the social, economic, cultural, political, religious and spiritual domains. He is a complete personality. There were different Imam since the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their names may differ due to the existence of different groups among the Shi'a itself. Among the names we can have Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, Imam Jafar as Swadiq, Imam Musah Kazim, Imam Ali Ridha, Imam Muhammad at Taqi, Imam Ali al Naqi, Imam Hasan Askari and Imam Muhammad al Mahdi. All of them are famous and renowned scholars. They were known as Imam for specific reasons. Firstly, Allah says in the Qur'an that "We appointed from among them leaders who guided by Our command". As such, those descendants were known as Imams. According to them it is a title given to them by Allah. They adopted the same name. Secondly, as being from the blessed family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) having been given the title of Imam by the Prophet (ﷺ), for the Shi'a, it is clear that only descendants of the Prophet (ﷺ) are rightly called. Thirdly, according to the Shi'a, the real successor of the Prophet (ﷺ) is no more than Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) who has been chosen by the Prophet (ﷺ). They considered the Ghadir declaration as proof that the real Imam and successor is Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) .

Based on these concepts the Shi'a pay great importance to the Iman. **Firstly**, they consider their Imam as the supreme authority. Whatever is decided by him must be accepted and abided by the followers. **Secondly**, they are so much inspired by the imam that all his words, sayings, sermons, advices are considered as law and form part of their Shari'ah. **Thirdly**, they consider the words of their imam as revelation from Allah and as such they are infallible, that is they are deprived of sins, errors, mistakes and defects. For them he is just perfect. **Fourthly**, they love their Imam so much that they exemplified him through their love and loyalty towards him. He is thus venerated exaggeratedly. **Fifthly**, the imam is considered as their leader as he is considered from the family of the prophet (ﷺ). He is thus blessed by Allah. **Sixthly**, for the shi'a people, the imam will receive way or revelation directly from Allah. He is pure and nothing can change him. **Seventhly**, some of the extremists of the Shi'a consider the Imam as the reincarnation of Allah. **Eighthly**, they say that their imam is divinely appointed either by Allah directly, or through the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) directly before his death or by the preceding ones telling or pinpointing the next imam. **Ninthly**, the way they believe in their leaders will automatically create a strong society trough solidarity and brotherhood. **Tenthly**, the descendants of the Prophet (ﷺ) were known as leaders as they followed the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ), Ali (رضي الله عنه), Hassan (رضي الله عنه) and Hussain (رضي الله عنه) verbatim. This elevates the status and honour of the Imam. **Tenthly**, on the 18th of Dhul-hijjah, the day when the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed at Ghadīr Khum after his return from Hajjat-ul-wadā to Madina, and surrounded by the Companions (ﷺ) he declared while raising the hand of Hazrat Alī (رضي

الله عنه) that the "One who has me as his master has Alī as his master" (Sunan Ibn Maaja Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 121). In this the Prophet (ﷺ) used the term Mawla. Accordingly Mawla is an Imam and a leader. So for them the family of Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) is to be considered as the lineage for Imamate.

Another very important fact why the Shi'a considered the descendants of Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as Imam is through the rejection of accepting Hazrat Abu Bakr **(رضي الله عنه)** as caliph. Indeed, Imam Ali **(رضي الله عنه)** refused to give his allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr **(رضي الله عنه)** for a period of six months. He gave his allegiance to Abu Bakr **(رضي الله عنه)** only after the martyrdom of his wife Fatimah al-Zahra (رضي الله عنها), daughter of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), six months after the departure of Prophet (ﷺ). (See Swahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English version, Tradition 5.546). If refusal to give allegiance to an elected nominee was prohibited in Islam, Imam Ali (رضي الله عنه) would not have allowed himself to delay in giving his allegiance. However, we can use the same logic here in order to justify why Mu'awiyah (رضي الله عنه) didn't accept Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and give his allegiance to him as caliph. In the same tradition in Swahih al-Bukhari, Imam Ali (رضي الله عنه) said that he had some rights in Caliphate which was not honoured, and he complained why Hazrat Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) should have not consulted him in deciding upon the ruler. However, it is important to note here that Hazrat Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) took the post of khilafat after Umar took his hand and swore allegiance to him. It was a critical moment and it was imperative to have a caliph the soonest possible. He later gave his allegiance when he found that the only way to save Islam is to leave the isolation which occurred due to his refusal of giving the oath of allegiance. Whatever the reason behind the delay in giving oath to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), the shi'a or the supporters of Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) considered the situation in a bitter way and as from then were totally against not only Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) but against all those who were not among the Ahlul Bait. As such they accepted only a caliph form the descendant of Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) .

As can be seen the Shi'a has been created since the time of the Salaf and till today they are numerous in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and many other different places of the world. Their continuous concepts prevail throughout the world and are still against the sunni.

1. Discuss the importance of the line of Imams in early Shi`i Islam.
2. Give reasons why Shi'ites attach great importance to the succession of the Imams.
3. Discuss the main spiritual differences between the position of the Imam in Shi'i beliefs and of the Khalifah in Sunni beliefs.
4. Compare and contrast the differing understandings of authority in Sunni and Shi'i Islam.
5. Why was the position of Imam so powerful for early Shi'i Muslims?

Throughout the history of Islam there have been so many groups with their specific views and concepts. Among them the Shi'a is second to the Sunni in this present world. Both the shi'a and the sunni have their own creed or 'Aqeedah and their own fields of authority and importance. For the shi'a their authority is in the hands of the Imam and for the sunni it is the Khalifa. These following paragraphs will elaborate on the importance of both Imam and khalifa and their authority.

Firstly, the main framework and back stone of the shi'a is based on a verse of the Qur'an where Allah says that "we have made among them leaders who guide by our command" (32: 24) where Allah uses the word "Aimmatan" which is the plural of Imaam and Allah says that they act as per His order and command. Based on that the shi'a established themselves as a nation which will be led by such leaders, that is divinely guided leaders. However, the sunni take a verse from the Qur'an where Allah says that "I am about to place a viceroy on earth" (2: 30) and Allah has used the word "Khalifah". As such, they will stick to it that a khalifah can be anyone (from the Ummah) who has the ability and aptitude to lead his people. **Secondly**, the shi'a establish their belief that the one who can be an Imam must be from the family and descendant of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) . They based themselves on the hadith declared in the Ghadir Khum where the Prophet (ﷺ) said that the "one who has me as leader (mawla) has Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as leader" (Sunan Ibn Maaja Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 121). So their spiritual leader must be from the Ahlul Bait. However, the sunni derive their belief on a verse of the

Qur'an where Allah says that "he only shall tend Allah's sanctuaries who believes in Allah and the Last Day and observes proper worship and pays the poor due and fears none save Allah. For such (only) is it possible that they can be of the rightly guided" (9: 18). From this verse, anyone having these characteristics and qualities can rule over the houses and orders of Allah. **Thirdly**, according to the shi'a, the imam is supposed to be nominated directly from God or from the words of the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) or from the last Imam but for the sunni the caliph must be elected by the people and population and must be a capable one.

Fourthly, for the shi'a, the imam is considered as the supreme authority and no one has the right to contradict or disobey his command, but for the sunni the caliph is considered as a leader and a guide where his order and command can be reviewed based on circumstances. **Fifthly**, the shi'a consider the imam's discourse and khutbah as sacred and divinely guided and are compiled as source of guidance (shari'ah), but for the sunni the caliph's discourse and sermons are not sources of Shari'ah but merely advices and words of an ordinary person (Muslim). **Sixthly**, for the shi'a imam angel Jibril (عليه السلام) made the mistake by sending wahy upon the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) instead of Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه) but the sunni caliph advocates for the angel Jibril (عليه السلام) is devoid of the capacity to commit mistakes and disobey Allah. So for the shi'a the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islam should have been Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). **Seventhly**, the shi'a people consider their imam as infallible, that is deprived of sins and mistakes whereas the sunni people consider their caliph as a normal human being with the weakness of committing errors, mistakes or sins. **Eighthly**, the shi'a people love their imam and are loyal to him to such an extent that they venerate him exaggeratedly whereas the sunni people love their caliph but in case he is wrong or cruel, then they won't be loyal to him. It is a question of trust and responsibility. **Ninthly**, for the shi'a the time of reign of the imam is not determined, meaning that as long as he is alive he will be the imam but for the Sunni caliph once his mandate is over, there will be another election. It depends on the public vote.

Tenthly, for the shi'a the imamate is a question of dictatorship where his followers and those residing in his country have to abide and comply by his rules but for the Sunni it is a question of democracy where there is dialogue among the different parties in the society in the interest of the public. **Eleventh** point is that for the shi'a, the Islamic law which is applied on the population by the imam is from their (odd) fabricated Qur'an which has an additional 10 chapters, their limited Hadith (which are only from the Prophet (ﷺ), Ali (رضي الله عنه), Faatima (رضي الله عنها), Hasan (رضي الله عنه), Husain (رضي الله عنه) and their lineage), and the imam own explanation and his sermons. For the sunni, it will be from the Qur'an, Hadith, Ijma', Qiyas, Ijtihad and Fatwa of the 'Ulama. **Twelve** point is that for the shi'a their imam receives wahy and commands from Allah and before his death he passes on his spirituality to his successor but for the Sunni caliph wahy has stopped at the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is only through Ilham (inspiration) and good morality which is needed to have the help from Allah and to guide Mankind. **Thirteenth** point is that the Imam has so much importance that though after their death they are venerated by the shi'a. Shrines over their grave are built and they are venerated. However for the sunni though shrines are often built over the grave of the prophets and their great awliya or caliph, they are not venerated. **Fourteenth** point is that for the shi'a, the last Imam known as Imam Mahdi has already come but is hidden and will soon reappear. However for the sunni he is still to come. **Fifteenth** point is that the extremist of the shi'a people consider their imam as reincarnation of Allah up to the extreme of being god. This is undoubtedly exceeding the extreme. However for the sunni there is only one God and that is Allah.

As can be seen for the shi'a their Imam is considered as a high personality whose words are considered as sacred and as such they are venerated. There are also other points which differ from the sunni. Examples cab be found in the call for prayer where the name of Hazrat 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) is mentioned, the swalaat itself where the shi'a used to merge swalaat and the human mutilation where it is lawful and recommended to the shi'a to mutilate the body on the day of 'Ashourah. The importance of their Imam lies in the belief the people have in the Imam.

Sufism

1. **Outline the distinctive characteristics of Sufi Islam.**
2. **Describe the relationship between Sufism and Islam.**
3. **Discuss the principal features of the teachings of Sufism.**

Islam is a religion that has been sent through the last prophet (ﷺ) as a code of conduct. That code deals with both the external and internal appearances of the Muslims. According to the famous hadith Jibril (Muttafaq 'alaih hadith in both Swahih Al Bukhariy Book 65, Hadith 4777, Swahih Muslim Book 1, Hadith 5), the angel Jibril (عليه السلام) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with three questions based on Islam, Iman and Ihsan. In this way the three constitute the external and internal aspects of a Muslim. From Ihsan, a field of study known as Tasawwuf or Sufism has emerged.

There are many opinions regarding the origin of this word, Tasawwuf (تصوف – Sufism. Some people associate Sufism to the Ahlus-Sufaah (people of As-Sufaah) who was at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). That group of people was very poor and they stayed in the courtyard of the mosque of the holy prophet (ﷺ) in devotional acts. Some say that Sufism comes from As-Saff al-Awwal (First Row), implying that some companions of the holy prophet (ﷺ) would stay in the first row in the mosque of Madinah. Their main aim was to study Islam in depth. Some claim that the term is derived from As-Safaa meaning clearness, purity, sincerity. Some accept the opinion that the term Sufism refers to the wearing of woollen clothing (Suf). This is so because many scholars known to be Sufis used to wear woollen cloth. According to the 4 Imams, Sufism has its place in Islam. Imam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) (85 H. - 150 H) said that "If it were not for two years, I would have perished." He said, "For two years I accompanied Sayyidina Ja'far as-Sadiq (رضي الله عنه) and I acquired the spiritual knowledge that made me a Gnostic in the Way." (Ad-Durr al-Mukhtar, vol 1. p. 43). Imam Malik (رضي الله عنه) (95 H. - 179 H.) said that "Whoever studies Jurisprudence (tafaqaha) and doesn't study Sufism [tasawwuf] will be corrupted; and whoever studies Sufism and doesn't study Jurisprudence will become a heretic; and whoever combined both will be reaching the Truth." ('Ali al-Adawi, vol. 2, p 195.) Imam Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) (150 - 205 AH.) said that "I accompanied the Sufi people and I received from them three knowledges: (1) how to speak; (2) how to treat people with leniency and a soft heart, (3) and they guided me in the ways of Sufism." (Kashf al-Khafa, 'Ajluni, vol. 1, p 341). Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (رضي الله عنه) (164 - 241 AH.) said that "O my son, you have to sit with the People of Sufism, because they are like a fountain of knowledge and they keep the Remembrance of Allah in their hearts. They are the ascetics and they have the most spiritual power." (Tanwir al-Qulub p. 405)

According to a Hadith Hazrat An-Nu'man bin Bashir (رضي الله عنه) said that the holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that "... Surely there is in the body a small piece of meat; if it is good the whole body is good and if it is corrupted the whole body is corrupted and that is the heart." (al-Bukhari: Vol 2, Book 1, Hadith 49) (Muslim: Book 10, Hadith 3882) and Hazrat Abu Huraira (رضي الله عنه) said that the holy Prophet (ﷺ) said (emphasizing on the heart) that "Verily Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces but He looks to your hearts," and he pointed towards the heart with his fingers." (Swahih Muslim: Book 32, Hadith 6220). As such the Sufis try to link the theoretical concept known as Iman with the practical concept known as Islam through its excellence and beauty known as Ihsan. In trying to do so, the Sufis Masters have developed both the internal and external conducts and principles. In fact the following will deal with these concepts and teachings of Sufis and how they must lead their inner selves to practice Islam. **Firstly**, there is the concept of Tawbah which is the repentance for all small and big sins. The first step is to avoid all sins from all parts of the physical and spiritual bodies. This is a proven from the Qur'an (66: 8): 'O ye who believe, Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance!' (Tawbatan Naswouha). **Secondly**, the sufi adopts the concept of Muhaasabah which is the analysing of our nafs. It deals with scrutinising deep into our own selves of our weaknesses or sins and tries to change them. This is a proven from the Qur'an (59: 18): 'O you who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent forth for tomorrow, …'. **Thirdly**, the sufi lives in Khawf which is the fear for Allah. It is the sweet fearing of Allah's wrath,

greatness and magnificence. It is said in the Quran (49: 13): 'Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most god-fearing of you. God is All-knowing, All-aware.' **Fourthly**, the sufi cultivates the concept of Rajaa which is the hope we place in Allah. It is an everlasting and joyful hope for His kindness, goodness and generosity in this world and the next. It is said in the Qur'an (17: 57): 'and they hope for His mercy, and fear His punishment'. **Fifthly**, there is Swidq which is the attestation of truth. Whether we have seen Allah or not we must attest of His existence with firm faith with feeling of it. It is said in the Qur'an (9: 119): 'O those who believe, fear God, and be with the truthful ones'.

Sixthly, the sufi develops the concept of Ikhlaas which is the sincerity in faith and action. Ibaadah without sincerity is worthless in the eyes of Allah. All actions and intentions must be sincere for Allah only. It is reported in the Qur'an (98: 5): 'And they were not commanded except to worship Allah , being sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth …'. **Seventhly**, a sufi adopts the concepts of Swabr which is patience in worldly and spiritual affairs. In whatever situation a sufi finds himself, he just accept it with patience and perseverance. Allah says in the Qur'an (2: 155): 'and give good tidings to the patient ones'. **Eighthly**, a sufi treads the path of Waraa which is abstaining from haram and doubtful. He is conscious that haram will lead him to darkening of the heart and doubtful will never resolve the problem of darkness. Allah says in the Qur'an (23: 3): 'and those who turn away from impious talks' and (2: 172): 'O believers! Eat of the good things that We have provided you'. **Ninthly**, a sufi will adopt the concept of Zuhd which is abstaining from love of worldly luxuries. The sufi is not interested in luxuries. He will lead his life as any human being with his family and job but will not run after this world. Allah says in the Qur'an (6: 32): 'What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the hereafter, for those who are righteous. Will ye not then understand?'. **Tenthly**, the sufi will adjust himself to the concept of Radwaa which is the satisfaction from what Allah gives. He will never complain of his situation whether he is ill, poor or at ease. He accepts any state and condition from his Lord who says in the Qur'an (98: 8): 'God is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord'. **Another step** adopted by the sufi is Tawakkul which is complete Trust in Allah in all circumstances. He depends on Allah alone and is committed only to Him. Allah says in the Qur'an (65: 3): '…And whosoever puts his trust in God, He shall suffice him. God attains his purpose…'.The **last code** of conduct put into practice internally is Shukr which is the everyday thanks to Allah for everything. He knows that whatever he has or will have is thank to Allah. He exists because of Allah and as such he always thanks Allah. Allah says in the Qur'an (14: 7): 'And when your Lord proclaimed, "If you are thankful, surely I will increase you, but if you are thankless My chastisement is surely terrible''. All the above mentioned concepts are real concepts of the Qur'an and the Hadith / Sunnah and are not challengeable. Through all the above concepts the Sufi Master helps people to incorporate spirituality in the hearts of Man thus joining Islam, Iman and Ihsan all together.

Now turning to the external concepts and practices the sufi adopts different ways. **Firstly**, there is the Dhikr. It is most likely the most frequent form of prayer. Among the orders of Muslims that practice dhikr, there are some who advocate silent, individual prayer, while others join together in an outward, group expression of their love for God. There are also a number of hadiths that give emphasis to remembrance of God (Swahih Bukhariy Hadith 7405). It is the constant remembrance of Allah through any kind of Ibaadah especially the frequent recitation of the Shahadah – Laa Ilaaha Illallah as it is said in Jami' al Tirmidhi (hadith 3383): 'the best of dhikr is Laa Ilaaha Illallah' and it is said in the Qur'an (33: 41) 'o you who believe, make abundant remembrance of Allah'. There are some Sufi orders that perform a ritualized form of Dhikr in groups termed "haḍra" (literally presence) standing as mentioned in surah 3 verse 191: 'Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides'. Another method of dhikr, but which is most commonly associated with Sufism, is the repetition of the Arabic name "Allah" like ''Call upon Allah, or call upon the Merciful (Ar Rahman)' (17: 110). When the Dhikr involves the repetition of particular phrases a specific number of times, the beads are used. It is said in Sunan Ibn Majaa hadith 3795: 'Always keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime'. Dhikr can be done at any time but most preferably during the night and in early morning. **Secondly** there is the practice of Muzaakarah. It is the seeking of guidance from the Shaikh for Shari'ah and spirituality. It is said in the Qur'an (16: 43): 'question the people of the Remembrance, if

you do not know'. The aspirant sufi or the student is deprived of the knowledge of the shari'ah and spirituality. He is in need of a guide and of someone who has already taken and gone along the path of shari'ah and spirituality. Like a patient will depend on the advice of his doctor for curing his cancer, likewise the student or aspirant sufi will depend and trust his teacher or shaikh for the inner purification of his heart and ego and the outer purification of his body and conduct. Muzaakarah is important for the aspirant as the way towards Allah is so difficult with the presence of Shaitaan. At any time Shaitaan may tempt the student. The shaikh is the pole, guide, light and way to make him reach his goal that is Allah who says (18: 17): 'He whom Allah guides is the guided, but he whom He leaves astray - never will you find for him a protecting guide'.

Thirdly, there is the concept of Khalwah. The literal meaning of Khalwah is seclusion or retreat, but it has a different connotation in Sufi terminology. It is said in the Qur'an (2: 51): 'And (remember) when We appointed for Musah forty nights'. It is the act of total self-abandonment in desire for the Divine Presence. In complete seclusion, the Sufi continuously repeats the name of God as a highest form of Dhikr. It is recommended for the aspirant to spend at least one hour per day for Khalwah. It is the complete abstinence of this world to seclude oneself in one's room to praise Allah. It can be in different form like reading of the Qur'an or making tasbihaat. It is said in swahih Bukhariy hadith 1423: '…a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes get flooded with tears'. It can be more than one hour depending on the level of the aspirant sufi. However for the sufi master it can be for a whole night from swalaat Isha till Fajr. It is said that the prophet (ﷺ) spent days and nights in seclusion in the cave of Hira (Bukhariy hadith 3) and Allah says (73: 8): 'And remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with (exclusive) devotion'. **Fourthly**, there is the concept of Muraaqabah. It is the sincere concentration on Allah in all Ibaadah. It can exist in different stages. The first one is making muraaqabah on our sins. We ponder on our weaknesses and try to reform them. It is said (39: 53): 'Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.Muraaqabah is where you concentrate on Allah, so from one side you are taught how to recognize and avoid the doings of Shaitaan, and on the other, how to establish a nisbah (relationship), or closeness with Allah. It is said (13: 28): 'Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction'. This is done in a special way, which is be dedicating a special time for Allah, where you will try to only reflect on Allah by way of His Asmaa (names) and His creation. This increases the love of Allah in your heart. As we know when one remembers someone a lot, that person becomes dear to us, hence if we remember Allah all the time, He becomes dear to us. It is said in swahih Muslim hadith 2750 'and if your state of mind is always the same as it is at the time of remembrance of Allah, the Angels would shake hands with you and would greet you on the path by saying: As-Salamu-Alaikum'. The word Muraaqabah is derived from the attribute of Allah, ar Raaqib – the one who is ever watchful as 'Allah is watchful over everything' from (33: 52). It is said in (50: 18): 'Not a word does he utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)'. The sufi is careful of what he says, thinks and does.

Fifthly, there is the concept of Khanqa. A Khanqa is a building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood, or tariqa, and is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. In the past, and to a lesser extent nowadays, they often served as hospices for Sufi travellers (saalik / soulouk) and Islamic students. It is said (3: 37) concerning the retreat of Hazrat Maryam (رضي الله عنها) in the mosque to learn and study: 'So her Lord (Allah) accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Zakariya. Every time he entered Al-Mihrab to (visit) her, he found her supplied with sustenance …'. It is similar to a Dar ul 'Uloom. Khanqa are very often found adjoined to dargah (shrines of Sufi saints), mosques and Madrasah. It is said () that a mosque was built over the graves of the youngsters of the cave by the believers: 'Construct over them a structure. Their Lord is most knowing about them." Said those who prevailed in the matter, "We will surely build over them a masjid.'. It is also known as zawiyya. All Khanqa, regardless of size, feature a large central hall. The daily swalaat are held in this hall, as are the specifically Sufi forms of Dhikr, meditation and celebration of the divine. Large Khanqa often grew up around the tomb of a tariqa's founder or the

mausoleum of a Sufi saint. It is said in Hadith Bukhariy 488 (Book Swalaat hadith 135) that 'there are two or three graves by the side of a mosque on a plateau. There was a mould of stones over the graves … the prophet (ﷺ) prayed swalaat Zohr in that mosque'. Some Khanqa include dwellings for the Sufi sheikh, and his family, or cells for Sufis who wish to pursue their Dhikr in quiet and isolation. They may also include lodgings for travelling Sufis and pilgrims and premises for charities such as hospitals. This is similar to the mosque of Madina where there is the place for prayer, the house of the prophet (ﷺ), the house of Hazrat Faatima (رضي الله عنها) and place for Ashaab us sufah. **Sixthly**, there is the concept of Silsila. It is an Arabic word meaning chain, often used in various senses of lineage. In particular, it may be translated as "religious order" or "genealogy". Centuries ago, Arabia did not have schools for formal education. Students went to masters who taught them. Upon completion of their study, they received ijazah (permission) which acted as the certification of education. It is said in Swahih Bukhariy hadith 7172 and in Swahih Muslim hadith 29 of book 1 that Hazrat Mu'adh bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) said that the prophet (ﷺ) sent him as the governor of Yemen and instructed him. A graduate then acted as a master having his own students. This chain of masters was known as Silsila. The shaikh gives his disciples permission (ijaaza) to practice the tariqa and he may also authorise one or more of them to teach it to others. It is also said in Swahih Bukhariy hadith 3924 that the prophet (ﷺ) sent Hazrat Mu'adh bin 'Umair (رضي الله عنه) as the first envoy to madina to teach the people there. It is a major conduit of the baraka (blessing) of any genuine Sufi school, and links the mureeds (students) of that order with the combined spiritual power of their spiritual antecedents and with the unseen transformative forces that transpire behind the outward manifestation of the Chain, which is called the Silsila ("chain" or "pedigree"). The representation of the chain of transmission is called the Shajara (tree).

Seventhly, following the silsila, there is the relationship between the Murshid (teacher or shaikh) and the Mureed (student or aspirant seeker). The seeker must submit to the will of the shaikh and to obey him in all his orders and advice, because the shaikh has more experience and more knowledge in haqiqat, in tariqat and in shari'ah. . It is said (18: 69) when Hazrat Musah (عليه السلام) met Hazrat Khidr (عليه السلام) the former said that 'If Allah wishes, you will find me patient and I shall not disobey any of your orders'. As such it is the principle and respect of a student. The seeker must not object to the way the shaikh instructs and controls the murids. Each shaikh has his own way, which he has been permitted by his own shaikh to use. It is said in Swahih Bukhariy hadith 5028 that 'The most superior among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it'. Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haythami said, "Whoever opens the door of criticism against shaikhs and their behaviour with their murids and their actions will be punished and will be isolated from receiving spiritual knowledge. Whoever says to his shaikh, 'Why?' will never succeed." [al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya, p. 55]. The seeker must respect and honour the shaikh in his presence and his absence, if only because the shaikh can see with the eye of the heart. The murid must be sincere and loyal to the company of his shaikh. It is said in Jami' Tirmidhi hadith 1919 that 'He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders.'. It is the same respect that we have for our teachers or Ustadh in madrasah or dar ul 'uloom. As it is not appropriate to rebuke or go against our teacher / ustadh in Tajweed, alike we must respect our teachers in shari'ah. The mureed must love his shaikh with an extraordinary love. He must not look to any other than his shaikh, though he must keep respect for all other shaikhs. He must agree with the opinion of his shaikh completely, as the patient agrees with the physician. He must behave well in the association of the shaikh, by avoiding yawning, laughing, raising the voice, talking without authorization, extending the feet, and always sitting in a respectful manner. He must serve his shaikh and make himself as useful as possible. He must attend the association of the shaikh. Even if living far away, he must make an effort to come as often as possible. These above external concepts help Man to leave this materialistic world and to get a spiritual touch with a spiritualised environment. Sufism helps Man to put Islam in practice both inwardly and outwardly.

Islam and Sufism are connected like the spokes and the hub of a wheel. Islam is the outer (exoteric) side of the religion, the wheel, and sufism is the hub around which the wheel rotates. The spokes connecting the outer wheel to the hub are the different paths (Tariqa) upon which the seeker may discover the inner reality of religion. Imam Nawawi (620 - 676 AH.) said that "The specifications of the

Way of the Sufis are ... to keep the Presence of Allah in your heart in public and in private; to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) ... to be happy with what Allah gave you..."[in his Letters, (Maqasid at-tawhid), p. 201]. lbn Qayyim (691 - 751 AH.) said that "We can witness the greatness of the People of Sufism, in the eyes of the earliest generations of Muslims by what has been mentioned by Sufyan ath Thawri (رضي الله عنه) (d. 161 AH), one of the greatest imams of the second century and one of the foremost legal scholars. He said, "If it had not been for Abu Hisham as-Sufi (رضي الله عنه) (d. 115) I would never have perceived the action of the subtlest forms of hypocrisy in the self... Among the best of people is the Sufi learned in jurisprudence." [Manazil as-Sa'ireen.]. Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1115 - 1201 AH.) "My father Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and I do not deny or criticize the science of Sufism, but on the contrary we support it, because it purifies the external and the internal of the hidden sins, which are related to the heart and to the outward form. Even though the individual might externally be on the right way, internally he might be on the wrong way. Sufism is necessary to correct it." [ad-Dia'at mukathaffa did ash-Shaykh Ibn Abdul Wahhab,p.85]

As such Sufism contributes to social Cohesion through love, patience, help, charity, tolerance, and solidarity. It helps the Economic Development as economically they wage war against ignorance, poverty and conflicting ideas. It helps in the Democratic Process through Participation in political and social affairs for better life. It helps in the Civil Society as the Sufi engaged in helping people to accept any kind of differences without criticising. Sufism helps in the Religious Plurality as the Sufis convey Respect of other religions and other groups within Islam. It helps to understand Sufism through elaborating on the real concepts of Islam and it helps to erase Misconceptions as Sufis help us to crush all misconceptions and wrong says about Sufism. Sufi Masters are not those people who will impose on Man to practice their concepts but rather they will explain these concepts to us and it will be up to us to decide. As the Qur'an says, "there is no compulsion in religion", the Sufi Masters leave it to Man as a code of conduct to be chosen or not depending on what we want in life. Sufism has been so much criticised because of the so called false sufi people with false innovations and concepts but the real Tasawwuf practiced by the real Sufi Masters is praiseworthy. According to Dr. Muhammad Musa Al-Shareef who studied at the Umm ul Qura University and being an assistant professor in the Department of Islamic Studies, King Abdul Aziz University, Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi (رضي الله عنه) is the master of Tasawwuf and it (Sufism) has its place in this world where materialism is taking over the hearts of Man.

1. **Explain how Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali attempted to relate Islamic observances to their spiritual significances in his Ihya' 'ulum al-din ('Revival of the Religious Sciences').**
2. **What would you say are the main contributions of Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali to the relationship between Muslim belief and practice?**
3. **How far did al-Ghazzali succeed in his attempt to reform Sufi beliefs?**
4. **What are the main teachings of al-Ghazzali's Ihya' 'ulum al-din ('Revival of the Religious Sciences')**
5. **How would you defend or reject the view that this book is one of the most important Islamic religious texts ever written?**
6. **How far did al-Ghazzali succeed in reconciling Sufi beliefs with the beliefs of the majority of Muslims of his day?**

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazzali (رحمة الله عليه) (born 1058 C.E. in Tus, Khorasan province of Persia in modern day Iran and died in 1111 C.E. in Tus) was one of the greatest jurists, theologians and mystical thinkers in the Islamic tradition. At a certain period of his life, he did not attend any more to philosophy and applied himself totally to Sufism and to the renewal of orthodox religion. Al-Ghazzali (رحمة الله عليه) composed a great work known as *The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion (Ihya' 'ulum al-din)*.

He is known to have reconciled Sufism and orthodoxy. According to him Sufism is the best doctrine in comparison with philosophy or theology, because Sufism leads to a positive knowledge of

God and nature. When one engages on this way, it is imperative to avoid the unlawful and the blameworthy behaviour. In opposition to these reprehensible attitudes, al-Ghazzali suggests commendable conduct, among which of great importance are repentance, self-discipline and fear of God. According to Imam al-Ghazzali (رحمة الله عليه) we must repent sincerely for all our sins and be firm on this way with Dhikr and Tawakkul as part of the basics of our lives. Then the murid (student) will be annihilated – Fana – in the love of Allah. Anyway, the *fana'* or ecstatic grasp is only a short and transient instant (al-Ghazzali (1970): 62) and does not concern any kind of *hulul* (state) or descent and incarnation of God in the mystic. Al-Ghazzali strongly rejects every immoderate claim of some Sufis, such as the utterances by al-Hallaj (I am the Truth), because they are dangerous and can lead through incomprehension to heresy and polytheism (*shirk*). Rather, al-Ghazzali emphasizes the importance of love (*mahabbah*). According to al-Ghazzali "a true learned man loves only God Most High; and if he loves somebody who is not God, he loves him for God, the Almighty and Sublime" (al-Ghazzali (1970): 257). The highest degree of love involves a full confidence in God: this is the meaning of *tawakkul*, such a complete trust in the Creator that the believer gives himself up to Him "like a dead man in the hands of a corpse-washer" (al-Ghazzali (1970): 249; al-Ghazzali (1985), 4: 242-3). An important issue is to point out that the Sufi way did not imply for al-Ghazzali the neglect of the orthodox practices of worship and the careful fulfilment of the *Sunnah* (al-Ghazzali (1967a): 71-2). Al-Ghazzali is persuaded that exteriority leads to interiority (al-Ghazzali (1970): 102ff).

Thus al-Ghazzali built his system on God as starting point and foundation, unlike the philosophers who started with senses or reason. He anchored reason in iman, whence it drew its ultimate postulates; and then gave it the freedom to be as critical as it wished. Without such anchoring, reason is fallible and untrustworthy. God is knowable through His works, His order and design of nature, His omnipresent providence - all of which reason is capable of discerning in tentative but not definitive form. Between God and the world stands the realm of *malakut* and *amr*, by which al-Ghazzali meant the realm of values constituting the ought of all that is or will be, a realm that is absolute, a priori and transcendent (inspirational) (malakut). Knowledge of it is yaqin (certainty) and such knowledge is the ground of all other knowledge. Al-Ghazzali, we may concede, taught the primacy of axiological knowledge (Axiology refers to ethics and aesthetics. Ethics investigates the concepts of "right" and "good" in individual and social conduct. Aesthetics studies the concepts of "beauty" and "harmony."), which relates man to God, over the knowledge of the world, which would be faulty and groundless without the first." [pp. 300-1]. Finally, Sufism is not for al-Ghazzali simply an individual path to reach perfection but a whole conception of life including ethics and morality, behaviour and belief, cosmology and metaphysics. The contribution of the Sufis to society lies in their sincere and dedicated struggle to find a unity for the various elements that make up its totality. They appreciate the multi-racial, multi-religious and multilingual pattern of the society. Their efforts are directed towards the creation of a healthy social order free from dissensions, discords and conflicts. In love, faith, toleration and sympathy they find the supreme talisman of human happiness. In fact, peace and goodwill between human beings was the end all and be all of Sufi endeavours.

This book of Al Ghazzali, the Ihya, is so important that there are many 'ulama and authors praising it. 'Abdallah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad has said: "Al-Ghazzali is a graceful favour bestowed by Allah upon this nation (*ummah*). He has investigated the sciences and weaved them. No *'alim* can have his rank", "The books of al-Ghazzali quench thirst for they are a cure of the heart's sicknesses", "To love al-Ghazzali is an incomparable gift, and you will see this in *akhira*. Only the believer whose heart is enlightened and who deals justly with his self loves the books of al-Ghazzali, he has guided us with his books and the *barakat* of his secrets", and "The one who engages in reading the Ihya' is gaining firmly established knowledge, for the reading of it may suffice as a teacher and a *shaykh*. Nothing is more beneficial to the people of this time than to read the Ihya', for it is life and happiness in *akhira*". Ibn al-Subki said that "It ranks among the books which Muslims must look after and spread far and wide so that many people may be guided by reading them. Seldom has someone looked into this book except he woke up on the spot thanks to it. May Allah grant us insight that shows us the way to truth, and protect us from what stands between us and the truth as a veil." Al-Safadi said that "It is among the noblest and greatest

of books, to the extent that it was said, concerning it, that if all books of Islam were lost except the Ihya', it would suffice for what was lost." Fakhr al-Din al-Razi said that "It was as if Allah gathered all sciences under a dome, and showed them to al-Ghazzali."

Professor Yasin Ceylan one of the leading Muslim journals in US (vol. 12, no. 4, Winter 1995) published a paper titled "Al Ghazzali between Philosophy and Sufism". The author describes al Ghazzali's experience with sufism in these words: "His disillusionment with philosophy was derived from its destructive effect on the fundamentals of religion, while his attraction to Sufism was rooted in the fact that ethical refinement and the purification of the soul were necessary conditions in this discipline." [p. 584] "Al Ghazzali mentions three fundamental features related to his mystical experience: a) the purification of the soul from those evils and worldly desires that hinder moral perfection; b) those spiritual dispositions or explorations that occur after the process of purification reaches the level of maturity; and c) that these dispositions are not explicable through reason." [p. 587].   In his work, The Cultural Atlas of Islam, Professor Ismail R. al Faruqi writes, "Reaffirming his view that Tasawwuf is both knowledge and action, al-Ghazzali chastised those who sought to reach the mystical experience in a hurry. He also rejected the sufi claim that in the mystical experience one reaches God through fusion into or unity with the divine Being. Such a claim he regarded as blasphemous. By reaffirming that Islam implies action, al-Ghazzali meant to repudiate those sufis who preached the way of the monks and cells and the withdrawal from society, any form of asceticism (abstinence) or mortification (humiliation), or no obligation to observe the rituals and all other laws of the shari'ah. Al-Ghazzali thus made Tasawwuf respectable and conformant with the shari'ah and spirit of Islam.

Al-Ghazzali seeks to demystify Islam. He maintains, for example, that in order to be a Muslim it is sufficient to hold the beliefs that have been laid down by God and his Prophet (ﷺ) in the Quran and sunnah, and that knowledge of the complex arguments advanced by the theologians is not requisite of faith. The essence of religion is experience, not mere profession, and the sufis are the ones who are able to experience the realities that theologians only talk about. [vol. 2, pp. 61-63].

1. **Why has the orthodoxy of Sufism often been doubted?**

2. **Explain why Sufi teachers were often regarded as a threat to orthodox Islamic believers.**

Tasawwuf is a technical term which describes the state of Ihsan, as mentioned in the famous hadith of Jibril, and the process of Tazkiyat an-Nafs (purification of the self) which is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. That is acceptable in Islam, as long as it does not contain superstition or foolish concepts. We accept Tazkiyat an-Nafs and the state of Ihsan, purification of the heart, as it is an important part of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. However due to some false sufis (they are not Sufis) and misconceptions Tasawwuf is criticised.

The term Tasawwuf was not known in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). However, even though the name is new, the essence of it is part and parcel of the religion and cannot be separated out from it. The purpose of Tasawwuf is to purify the heart from all kinds of bad desires and inclinations and the dirtiness that accumulates upon it due to sins and wrongdoing, either externally or internally, and to remove these bad manners and sins and to clean the self and to dress and decorate the heart with the good behaviour and good manners that are demanded by the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). Its purpose is to create the state of Ihsan, perfection of character, which was the state of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the state which each of his Companions was striving to achieve. The term Tasawwuf was used to identify the way of cleansing the heart, originally called Tazkiyat an-Nafs in the Qur'an, but which became known later as the Science of Tasawwuf. Originally this 'ilm (science) was known by the terms the Science of Austerity (Zuhd), the Science of Purification (Tazkiyah) and the Science of Perfection of Character (Ihsan). The terms Zuhd, Tazkiyat and Ihsan were the terms used in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). Through the passing of time, those practicing Tasawwuf, known as Sufis Masters, have elaborated an internal and external code of conduct or practices to be adopted. For internal conduct we have Tawbah, Muhaasabah,

Khawf, Rajaa, Swidq, Ikhlaas, Swabr, Waraa, Zuhd, Radwaa, Tawakkul, Shukr. For external concepts we have Dhikr, Muzaakarah, Khalwah, Muraaqabah, Khanqa, Silsila and Mursheed and Mureed. However, since long, there have been many critics raised against the whole concept of Sufism in Islam. These criticisms are still based on the real origin and concepts and practices of the Tasawwuf. The following will shed light on how questions are set against the topic of this work.

It must be noted here that according to Dr Muhammad Musa Al Shareef, an associate professor at the King Abdul Aziz University, there were 3 phases of Tasawwuf in history. The first phase was from the 2ⁿᵈ century till the 4ᵗʰ century of Islam. The second phase started from the 5ᵗʰ century till the 7ᵗʰ century. The third phase was from the 8ᵗʰ century till today. According to him criticism started in the third phase. **As such**, according to those against Sufism, they say that it was a movement in the 8ᵗʰ century against the prevailing impersonal and formal nature of Islam. The idea here is that if really Sufism is an Islamic concept, then it should have been existed in the holy Quran and the Sunnah of the holy Prophet (ﷺ). However, it must be noted as listed above that the aim of Tasawwuf in the purification of the heart and this is attained through the internal and external practices which no doubt are according to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. None of these practices can be challenged. Whether we change the name to Zuhd, Ihsan or Tazkiyah, the principles will be the same. **Secondly**, the idea that wealth was enjoyed during the period of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) for military purposes was the response against Sufi concept of going against the materialistic world. That thought emerged as many so called sufis left their daily activities and family members to retreat in mountains or the wilderness. However, the life of a Real Sufi Master revolves around both the rights of Allah and the rights of Human Being. He has his family life as anyone else. Concerning retreat in mountains or wilderness, it is a sunnah of the prophet (ﷺ) to go for a retreat or seclusion for a limited amount of days in a secluded area or simply a room at home. The Prophet (ﷺ) did it in the cave of Hira. **Another criticism** is that the whole concept of Sufism is generated from other various religions like Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Neo-Platonism and Manichaeism, for instance, the grave worshipping and the idea of fire-temple. This is so because the false sufis used to go to these shrines and worship the dead people. However, this is against the concepts of Tasawwuf and Islam. Real Sufi Masters don't adhere to that practice. Real Sufi Masters and their aspirants do never worship or make sajdah in front of graves of Awliya. This may be the acts of false sufi but it has been attributed to real Sufi. It is incorrect. **Fourthly**, according to Sufis, there are verses of the holy Qur'an and Hadith of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) having deeper meaning, that is esoteric aspects. However, the critic says that the Sufis force the meaning of the holy Qur'an and the Hadith they use are not from the sound Hadith books. However, it is a fact that things that we can't perceive and understand are considered as strange but to what extent are they right or wrong depends on the level of education, understanding and inspiration from Allah. According to Dr Muhammad Musa al Shareef of King Abdul Aziz University, there is a secret which is shared between Allah and the real Mu'min that not only we don't know but angels also are unaware of it. It is said in Swahih Bukhariy hadith 120 that Hazrat Abu Huraira (رضي الله عنه) said 'I have memorized two kinds of knowledge from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) . I have propagated one of them to you and if I propagated the second, then my pharynx (throat) would be cut (i.e. killed)'. Are we going to accuse Hazrat Abu Huraira (رضي الله عنه) of blasphemy or kufr?

Fifthly, those who are against Sufism say that the further one delves into Sufism from an academic perspective, the clearer it becomes that both the origins and content of Sufism clearly show the inclusion of religious ideas and influences contrary and contradictory to orthodox Islam. However according to Imam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه), Imam Malik (رضي الله عنه), Imam Shafi'i (رضي الله عنه) and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (رضي الله عنه) it is recommended to study and practice Tasawwuf. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (رضي الله عنه) said "O my son, you have to sit with the People of Sufism, because they are like a fountain of knowledge and they keep the Remembrance of Allah in their hearts. They are the ascetics and they have the most spiritual power." (Tanwir al-Qulub p. 405). Were the four above mentioned scholars unorthodox? **Sixthly**, it is criticized that their practices also bear close similarities to those of Hinduism and other mystical religions of the East. The Sufi orders are led by Shaykh, who play the same role as Hindu gurus. Some of the Shaykh were described as having "pronounced psychic powers." However, the Sufi orders and Khanqa are similar to a Madrasah or a Darul Uloom where the students can

stay there for education and they are supposed to respect the teachers and follow their advices. This is discipline to shape the character and akhlaaq (good manners) of the students. Concerning the so called powers criticised by the opponents of Tasawwuf, it is proven in Islam and as such Dr Muhammad Musa said that these are miracles that the men and friends of Allah can do. However it is not to forget that there are those who don't possess any of these qualities and are pretending to have them. It is mentioned in the Qur'an (27: 40) when Hazrat Sulaiman (عليه السلام) being in Palestine wanted that the throne of Bilkiss be brought to him from Yemen 'One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said: "I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!" then when (Sulaiman (عليه السلام)) saw it placed before him, he said ....'. That person was not a prophet. How was he able to do it? Is that farfetched? It is but from the Qur'an. **Seventhly**, the mystical quest of the Sufis is pursued through a number of mental and physical exercises. The opponents of Sufism criticise these whirling dances "intended above all to plunge the dancer into a state of concentration upon Allah." However, according to Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (رضي الله عنه) in his Musnad Volume 3 Page 152 (Imam Maqdisi said that it is Swahih) there is a hadith where Hazrat Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Ashab used to dance in front of the holy prophet (ﷺ) while reciting and saying "Muhammadun 'Abdun Swalih". The word "Raqsw" (Ra Qaf Swad) meaning to dance has been used. According to al Ghazzali (رحمة الله عليه), Imam Suyuti (رحمة الله عليه), Imam an Nawawi (رحمة الله عليه) among others we can't repudiate those practicing Sufi dance and Hadra (a form of standing Dhikr in group). After all what is controversial is that those saying that Sufi dancing is haram, accept and practice "tribal dancing with swords in hands" known to be a "tribal custom". This is seen in the Arab world. It is also said in Swahih Bukhariy (949 and 950) and Swahih Muslim (892) being a Muttafaqun 'alaih hadith that Hazrat 'Aisha watched two Abyssinian (Egyptian) girls of Bani Arfida using the tambourine, chanting the songs of Buath and dancing. **Eighthly**, there are "invocations of the Divine Name," also known as Dhikr, which can be done either silently or in a chant. However, the opponents of Tasawwuf say that here also there are similarities with Hindu mantras. They say that the Sufi doctrine of the Dhikr coincides with that taught by the 19th century Hindu saint Rama-krishna, who succinctly summed it up in the phrase: "God and His Name are one". However, we no doubt know that Dhikr done is for the best of oneself. In Swahih Bukhari hadith 7405 it is stated that Hazrat Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Allah Says: "'I am just as My slave thinks I am, and I am with him if He remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than they …". These are criticism against Sufism only to discredit the Sufi Masters and the field of Tasawwuf.

Ninthly, there are some sayings of some Sufis that could not explain at that time. For example there is much criticism against the words of Mansur al Hallaj which are "Anal Haqq" – "I am the Truth". Some say that this was not his word (as he could never say something as such) but for those who say that this is his word are those who are against Tasawwuf adamantly criticise him. As such, when speaking on characters in Sufi Islam who have eternally distorted the image of Sufi Islam in the eyes of critics, two particular people come to mind, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, and Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj. Abu Yazid Al-Bistami, in the eyes of Mainstream Muslims, had committed blasphemy upon reaching an "intoxicated state" (for which his particular Sufi sect is labelled "Intoxicated Sufis"). He felt he had attained a union with God, and in light of his discovery proclaimed "Glory be to me! How great is My Majesty!". Many Muslims scolded Bistami, whose claim was interpreted as praise for himself instead of the divine. Al-Ghazzali strongly rejects every immoderate claim of some Sufis. His intentions and interpretation of those words were subject to much scrutiny, but some prominent Muslims still held him in high regard, including the "sober" Sufi, al-Junayd Baghdadi (رحمة الله عليه). Al-Junayd (رحمة الله عليه) wrote commentary on the utterances of his Murid (Disciple), Abu Yazid Bistami, and interpreted the sayings in accordance with Mainstream teachings. As for Al Bistami, his achievement of fana (annihilation) marked the beginning of the concept of ascension as a spiritual goal in Sufism, continued by other controversial figures like Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj. **Tenthly**, Al-Junayd Baghdadi (رحمة الله عليه), as a Pir (Master) who mentored such Murids as Abu Yazid al-Bistami, could not ignore the actions of al-Hallaj. Al-Hallaj quickly became one of the more controversial and divisive figures in Islamic History. Beginning as a mutasawwif (a student on the path of Tasawwuf), he could not stay with one Shaikh for any given period, and continuously switched from one to another without the previous Shaikh's consent. Al-Hallaj ended up

as a martyr for his convictions. His refusal to denounce his famous words "ana al-Haqq" ("I am the Truth") infused rage in the Mainstream Muslim community over such blasphemy; a rage that subsequently cost him his life. Mainstream Muslims interpreted his words in the literal sense, because, if one is not in the same mind-state, it is hard to interpret such a direct phrase any other way. Al-Hallaj, however, was likely referring to his absolute identification with the divine after the achievement of fana.

The state in which al-Hallaj was in, during the time of his blasphemous utterance could be understood in an allegory he liked to use; a human soul was like a moth and God was like a flame, engulfed with fascination for the flame, the moth eventually drifts closer until finally consumed. Mainstream Muslims, however, interpreted al-Hallaj's utterances one way, literally. Perhaps this can be attributed to the influence of the Hanbali School of Thought on the Caliphate of the time. Hanbali thinking proclaimed all things in relation to God must be taken in the literal sense, that one should not ask questions about God, and that if one committed a "grave sin", one must be punished accordingly and proclaimed a non-Muslim. Al-Hallaj was punished for his blasphemy; Mainstream Muslims did not believe one could attain a union with God in the present life, and to claim unity with God was questioning the very foundation of Islam; the oneness of God. Misinterpretation of Sufi Mystic rituals also stems from their unwillingness to describe many attributes of their experiences. While some Sufis claim that description of the attainment of unity, or closeness to God is indescribable, others claim one must not describe the experience. Those that claim one must not describe the experience to the curious are told to say the following, according to al-Ghazzali, "There was what was of what I do not mention: So think well of it, and ask for no account". Those that cannot grasp the concept must not be granted the knowledge that is attained when one enters such a state. This concept adheres to the exclusivity and exoteric (outer) notions of Sufism. Since most Sufi rituals and practices are very personal to the practitioners, it is natural that the attainment of closeness with God remains an experience between man and God. It is also believed that only an 'Arif (a learned person in spirituality) can achieve fana and it is unlikely that one who does not possess piety or ma'rifat (mystical intuitive knowledge of spiritual truth) would be able to comprehend the beauty of such an experience, and for that reason, they should not be told.

There are also those who believe that the experience should be shared, but it is indescribable in actual words, and thus, to portray the beauty of such an experience, one can only use metaphors, similes, and allegories. For example, Jalaaluddin Rumi (رحمة الله عليه) allocates the feelings he experiences into similes, using words like "celestial birds" to describe his 'flight' into the highest of high stages, as well as a freer consciousness, and "sugary cubes" for the pleasant taste left in his heart and mind once he 'comes back down to earth'. Thus, those who share their experiences are unable to describe the experience in direct terms and thus, use abstract descriptions through poetry to portray it to those who have not attained it. If the notion of achieving an absolute God-centred state is possible, according to Mainstream Muslims, then, like the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Sufis, too, should be able to describe their experience. Mainstream Muslims perhaps cannot see past the esotericism (mystery) in Sufi practices because they, themselves, have never truly attempted to experience fana. It may also be because of the greater emphasis on esoteric Islam practiced by Mainstream Muslims that makes it difficult for them to understand the exoteric aspect of Sufism. This lack of understanding of esoteric and allegorical Islam is then the cause for misinterpretation of Sufi rituals and practices by Mainstream Muslims.

However there are false Sufis because of whom Tasawwuf is discredited for many reasons as follows. These false Sufis steal the words of the Sufis and present them as their own. They do not have true knowledge of that which they are speaking; it is only on their lips but not from their hearts. These people take the title of "Sufi" because it gives them a certain amount of prestige and power among people in the society. They are despicable, weak, incapable, morose, without any exit from uncertainties, and deficient in all their senses. They steal away all your attainments and will not benefit neither in this world nor the next. They are like blind men who cure eyes but in fact will be worsened. They have no scent or trace of God, but their claims are greater than those of Hazrat Shiite (عليه السلام) or Hazrat Adam (عليه السلام). They are not embarrassed to keep on saying that they are of the saints and even greater but in fact they are only liars. They steal many of the words of the dervishes, so that people may think they really are

someone, having knowledge and spirituality. They are destitute of the bread and provisions of heaven. They are engaged in revealing to their disciples things that they don't know and they are pretending to know the future. They are attached to the jinns asking for their help. They are unaware of the reality of Shari'ah and commit much mistake. Their lives are not compatible with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. They are the mischief-mongers of the society and are destroying the real Islam. They say that they possess supernatural power. They say they can predict the future. They say they can do miracles. They say they can travel throughout time and space. Some of them advice their followers not to perform Swalaat and in return they will perform the ibaadah for the followers. Some spend their time in the ruins away from the society and their family. They order their students things against Shari'ah.

Tasawwuf has existed since long but in other different names like Tazkiyah of Nafs. If one doesn't like the term *Tasawwuf* he shouldn't use it. He can use some other term, of which there are many. However, just because one doesn't like the term *Tasawwuf*, perhaps because of some negative connotations that have been attributed by modernists and Orientalist, that doesn't mean great scholars didn't define the term and explain it, as a science in Islam and an essential part of the Din. Ibn Taymiyya did so in 1400 pages of Volume 10 ('Ilm as-Sulook) and Volume 11 (at-*Tasawwuf*) of his lifework, "The Gathered Fatawas of Ibn Taymiyya" ("Majmu'a Fatawi Ibn Taymiyya").

Philosophy

Islamic Philosophy Main Characteristics

Explain the main characteristics of Islamic philosophy [falsafah] in the classical Islamic period.

Early Islamic philosophy or classical Islamic philosophy is a period of intense philosophical development beginning in the 2nd century AH of the Islamic calendar (early 9th century CE) and lasting until the 6th century AH (late 12th century CE). This period starts with al-Kindi in the 9th century and ends with Averroes (Ibn Rushd) at the end of 12th century.

Some of the significant achievements of early Muslim philosophers included the development of a strict science of citation, the isnad and the ijtihad among others. Early Islamic philosophy can be divided into clear sets of influences, branches, schools, and fields, as described below. The life of prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which generated both the Qur'an (revelation) and hadith (his daily utterances and discourses on social and legal matters), during which philosophy was defined by Muslims as consisting in acceptance or rejection of his message. Together the Sirah (life biography) and hadith constitute the Sunnah and are validated by isnad to determine the likely truth of the report of any given saying of prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Philosophy has many branches like Kalam. With Kalam, questions about the Sirah and Hadith, as well as science (Islamic science) and law (fiqh and Shari'ah), began to be investigated but philosophy remained subordinate to religion. "Kalam" generally referred to the Islamic tradition of seeking theological (religious) principles through dialectic (discussion). A second branch is Falsafa (philosophy). From the 9th century onwards, owing to Caliph al-Ma'mun and his successor, Greek philosophy and Hellenistic (relating to Greek history, art and architecture) philosophy were introduced among the Persians and Arabs, and the Peripatetic (nomadic) and Neo-Platonism (modern term used to designate a tradition of philosophy that arose in the 3rd century AD) schools began to find able representatives among them; such were al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd , all of whose fundamental principles were considered as criticized by the Mutakallamun (a scholar of kalam / debate on religious matters).

During the Abbasid caliphate a number of thinkers and scientists, some of them non-Muslims, played a role in transmitting Greek, Hellenistic, Indian and other pre-Islamic knowledge to the Christian West. Three speculative thinkers, the Turk al-Farabi, the Iranian Ibn Sina and the Arab al-Kindi, combined Neo-Platonism (term for a school based on philosophies of Plato a Greek philosopher of 3rd century) Aristotelianism (term for a school based on philosophies of Aristotle a Greek philosopher and student of Plato) with other ideas introduced through Islam. They were considered by many as highly unorthodox and a few even described them as non-Islamic philosophers.

Philosophy has many schools like Farabism. Al-Farabi was a founder of his own school of Islamic philosophy but which was later overshadowed by Ibn Sina. Al-Farabi's school of philosophy "breaks with the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and moves from metaphysics (field dealing with fundamental nature of being and the world) to methodology, a move that anticipates modernity", and "at the level of philosophy, Al farabi unites theory and practice [... and] in the sphere of the political he liberates practice from theory". His Neo-platonic theology (doctrine) is also more than just metaphysics as rhetoric (art of speaking or writing fluently). In his attempt to think through the nature of a First Cause, Al farabi discovers the limits of human knowledge". A second school is Avicennism of which Ibn Sina was the founder. Due to Ibn Sina's successful reconciliation between Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism along with Kalam, ibn Sina eventually became the leading school of Islamic philosophy by the 12th century. Ibn Sina had become a central authority on philosophy by

then, and several scholars in the 12th century commented on his strong influence at the time. Another school is Ibn Rushd who is most famous for his commentaries on Aristotle's works.

Philosophy has different ethics. Environmental ethics is the concept where due to resource scarcity in most Islamic nations, there was an emphasis on limited use of natural capital. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is considered a pioneer of environmentalism for his teachings on environmental preservation. We have also medical ethics. The ethical standards of Muslim physicians was first laid down in the 9th century by Ishaq bin Ali Rahawi, who wrote the Adab al-Tabib (Conduct of a Physician), the first treatise dedicated to medical ethics. He regarded physicians as "guardians of souls and bodies", and wrote twenty chapters on various topics related to medical ethics, including. There is also Humanism. Many medieval Muslim thinkers pursued humanistic, rational and scientific discourses in their search for knowledge, meaning and values. A wide range of Islamic writings on love poetry, history and philosophical theology show that medieval Islamic thought was open to the humanistic ideas of individualism.

Another branch of philosophy is logic. In early Islamic philosophy, logic played an important role. Islamic law placed importance on formulating standards of argument. Early forms of analogical reasoning, inductive reasoning were introduced in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Shari'ah (Islamic law) and Kalam (Islamic theology) from the 7th century with the process of Qiyas. The first original Arabic writings on logic were produced by al-Kindi (805–873), who produced a summary on earlier logic up to his time. The first writings on logic with non-Aristotelian elements were produced by al-Farabi. Ibn Rushd was the last major logician from al-Andalusia, who wrote the most elaborate commentaries on Aristotelian logic. Ibn Sina developed his own system of logic known as "Avicennian logic" as an alternative to Aristotelian logic. Ibn Hazm (994-1064) wrote the Scope of Logic, in which he stressed on the importance of sense perception as a source of knowledge. Al-Ghazzali (1058–1111) had an important influence on the use of logic in theology, making use of Ibn Sina's logic in Kalam.

Another field of philosophy is metaphysics. Metaphysics is concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world. Ibn Sina's proof for the existence of God was the first ontological argument (argument on the existence of God). Ibn Sina's proof of God's existence is unique in that it can be classified as both a cosmological argument and an ontological argument. The cosmological argument is an argument for the existence of a First Cause to the universe, and by extension is often used as an argument for the existence of a "supreme" being, usually then identified as God. There is also the topic of resurrection. Ibn al-Nafis wrote on "the system of Islam and the Muslims' doctrines on the missions of Prophets, the religious laws, the resurrection of the body, and the transitory of the world. "The book presents rational arguments for bodily resurrection and the immortality of the human soul, using both demonstrative reasoning and material from the hadith corpus as forms of evidence. Another topic is the soul and spirit. The Muslim physician-philosophers, Ibn Sina and Ibn al-Nafis, developed their own theories on the soul. They both made a distinction between the soul and the spirit. We have the philosophy of mind which was studied in medieval Islamic psychological thought, which refers to the study of the nafs in the Islamic world.

There is also the philosophy of education. In the medieval Islamic world, an elementary school was known as a Maktab, which dates back to at least the 10th century. Like Madrasah (which referred to higher education), a maktab was often attached to a mosque. In the 11th century, Ibn Sina, in one of his books, wrote a chapter dealing with the maktab entitled "The Role of the Teacher in the Training and Upbringing of Children", as a guide to teachers working at maktab schools. He wrote that children can learn better if taught in classes instead of individual tuition from private tutors, and he gave a number of reasons for why this is the case, citing the value of competition and emulation among pupils as well as the usefulness of group discussions and debates. Ibn Sina wrote that children should be sent to a maktab school from the age of 6 and be taught primary education until they reach the age of 14. During which

time, he wrote that they should be taught the Qur'an, Islamic metaphysics, language, literature, Islamic ethics, and manual skills. Ibn Sina refers to the secondary education stage of maktab schooling as the period of specialization, when pupils should begin to acquire manual skills, regardless of their social status. He writes that children after the age of 14 should be given a choice to choose and specialize in subjects they have an interest in, whether it was reading, manual skills, literature, preaching, medicine, geometry, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, or any other subject or profession they would be interested in pursuing for a future career.

Another field of philosophy is experimental medicine. Ibn Sina is considered the father of modern medicine, for his introduction of experimental medicine and clinical trials, the experimental use and testing of drugs, and a precise guide for practical experimentation in the process of discovering and proving the effectiveness of medical substances. Another field of philosophy is eschatology which is concerned with the Qiyamah. Eschatology relates to one of the six articles of faith of Islam. Islam teaches the bodily resurrection of the dead, the fulfilment of a divine plan for creation, and the immortality of the human soul, the righteous are rewarded with the pleasures of Jannah, while the unrighteous are punished in Jahannam.

Islamic Philosophy v/s Theology

What are the main similarities and the main differences between Muslims who called themselves theologians and Muslims who called themselves philosophers?

Divine Law calls upon man to search for the secrets of God's creation; to learn the secrets of the Law itself, especially in matters of God's attributes, the character of the revelation, and man's responsibilities. The two most influential concepts in Islamic jurisprudence are the philosophical concepts of kalam (speculative theology / doctrine) and falsafa (arabized Greek philosophy).

Kalam was founded by Wasil ibn Ata (700–748) who sought to investigate and justify Islamic process by means of logic. This was especially important as Islam was spreading from simple pagan regions to regions of deep philosophical and intellectual heritage. Ibn Ata and those who followed him felt that in order for Islamic authority to be maintained and the new Legal System to be respected by these newly conquered peoples, the Faith would have to stand up to any philosophical challenged posed by them. Two main schools of thought evolved out of the kalam movement: the Ashari and the Mutazilah.

Around the same period in Abbasid Iraq's *House of Wisdom* (Bait al-Hikma), Arabs, Persians and Jews were joined by refugee Christian scholars in the translation to Arabic of Aristotelian philosophical writing inherited from conquered lands and appropriate it to the new multi-cultural Arab civilization. This arabized philosophy was given the name falsafa. Credited with this movement is Iraqi scholar, abu Yusuf ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (801-873) whose works, "introduced the idea of the validity of philosophical investigation by itself, independently of formal kalam affiliation." In the twelfth century, as result of a decline in political, economic, social and military power of the Caliphate, Islamic territories began to break down into regional dynasties. The influence of the *House of Wisdom* waned and the mutakallimun began to gain influence. This was sealed with Al-Ghazzali's attack on falsafa, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

There are some similarities between Kalam and Falsafa as follows. The earliest theological thought developed among the Qur'an memorizers and early Islamic intellectuals. Their concerns tended to be highly practical: the legitimacy of political succession in Islam, the nature of God and the Qur'an, the relationship between faith and works (for people who said they were Muslims - including Caliphs - were sinning), and the relationship of free will to predestination.

The early relations between *falsafa* and *kalam* were far from being hostile. Al-Kindi, the first of the 'philosophers', was often considered as belonging also to Mu'tazili *kalam*, and '*ilm al-kalam* has its place in the 'Catalogue of the sciences' (*Ihsa' al-'ulum*) of al-Farabi. It is interesting that the Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma'mun who permitted and patronised the introduction of Greek philosophy and science also declared the Mutazilah School of kalam as official doctrine of Islam between 833 and 848. Despite his persecution of any who rejected his declaration, the Ash'ariy school of kalam however, remained opposed, mainly due to the insistence of the Mutazilah Matakalimun and the falasifa (philosophers) that divine Revelation needed to be *justified* by man's intellect.

Despite their internal misgivings however, both kalam and falsafa philosophies did enjoin man to strive to *know* God by the use of their intellect. Prerequisite of this pursuit is of course, a common belief in the existence of a God. Belief in a God follows on that such Being possesses dominion over existence and oversees laws which exist to maintain harmony in the universe. Both the falasifa (philosophers) and mutakalimun (theologians) held the rights of God and of the universe supersede (surpass) the rights of man. In obligation to these rights, a view of the universe which requires man to "understand his place in (the) comprehensive order of things" is advocated in preference to an individualist existence is preferred.

Another important common factor in falsafa and kalam is belief in the importance of virtuous, respectable, civil character. According to Muḥsin Mahdi (author of the critics of 1001 nights), the chief virtue in both the city constructed by the philosophers and the city constructed by the divine Law is justice. True justice can only be overseen by the virtuous leader who rules in accordance to divine Law channelled to mankind from God through the Philosopher - Prophet. Both kalam and falsafa require this leader (philosopher, Caliph, Sultan) to be God-fearing, ethical, just, inscrutable, mighty, and dedicated to the happiness of his people.

However there exist differences between Kalam and Falsafa. In translating the works of Greek philosophers, many terms had to be adapted to a new monotheist audience. For instance, Aristotle's "First Mover" or "Unmoved Mover" was substituted with the word "Allah" but the understanding of the nature of this Being remained the same. For example, ibn-Rushd held that Aristotle's belief that the Unmoved Mover, is Himself part of the matter, exerting influence through chains of cause-and-effect events, is closer to the truth than position of the mutakallimun who generally took the position that God is in fact the Creator of matter and exists outside of and separate from His creation from where He exerts His influence and control on the universe. He is the declarer of natural laws and may choose to avoid them if He pleases (in the form of miracles).

It should be noted however that although agreeing with ibn-Rushd on the most, fellow falasifa / philosophers, believed that the endeavour to know God is a vain one and beyond man's capacity. He contended instead that God can only be known negatively i.e. we can only know what God isn't and not what He is. Although the Holy Scriptures describe Him as Good, Just, Merciful etc…, this cannot be understood in accordance with our ideas of these attributes; they can however be understood in accordance with our ideas of what these attributes are not. An example of is the following mutakallim (Mutazilah School) challenge: "If the good or bad actions of the individual are predetermined by God, and then if God punishes a person in this world and in the Hereafter for his bad actions, then there is no justice in it and God being Just, this is not possible."

Criticism Against Islamic Philosophy

1. **Al-Ghazzali wrote a major work in which he condemned philosophy in Islam. Why would a Muslim theologian wish to attack philosophy?**
2. **Explain why many great theologians of Islam condemned the thinking of the philosophers as inconsistent with Islamic teachings.**
3. **Explain why Islamic theologians have traditionally been hostile towards philosophy.**

Throughout history the place of philosophy in Islamic thought has been controversial. Philosophy can be described as the way of thinking, an ideology, a concept based on proof or not. When we deal with Islamic philosophy it must deal with the concepts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. However when these views are influenced by Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle then it is not Islamic. The vast majority of the early traditional Sunni Muslim scholars have either criticized or prohibited it. Imams such as Imam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله عنه) prohibited his students from engaging in philosophy, stating that those who practice it are of the 'retarded ones' (al-Makkee, Manaaqib Abee Haneefah, pg. 183-184). Imam Malik ibn Anas (رضي الله عنه) referred to philosophy in the Islamic religion as being 'detested' (Dhammul-Kalaam (B/194)), and that whoever 'seeks the religion through philosophy will deviate' (Dhammul-Kalaam (Q/173/A)). In addition Imam Shafi'i said that no knowledge of Islam can be gained from books of philosophy, as philosophy 'is not from knowledge' (Dhammul-Kalaam (Q/213) and Dhahabi, as-Siyar (10/30)) and that 'It is better for a man to spend his whole life doing whatever Allah has prohibited – (besides shirk with Allah) rather than spending his whole life involved in philosophy" (Ibn Abi Hatim, Manaaqibush-Shaafi'ee, pg. 182).

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (رضي الله عنه) also spoke strongly against philosophy, stating his view that no one looks into philosophy unless there is 'corruption in his heart', and even went so far as to prohibit sitting with people practicing philosophy even if they were defending the Sunnah, and instructing his students to warn against any person they saw practicing philosophy. Today criticism of philosophy also comes from modern day scholars of the Salafi movement who base their argument on the views held by the early Imams of the Sunni Muslims. However other contemporary scholars such as Nuh Ha Mim Keller, a Sheikh in the Shadhili Order hold that the criticism of philosophy from early scholars was specific to the Mu'tazilah, going on to claim that other historical Muslim scholars such as Al-Ghazzali, As-Subki, An-Nawawi and even the four Madhhab saw both good and bad in it and cautioned from the speculative excess of unorthodox groups such as the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyya.

Another scholar who criticized philosophy was Al Ghazzali. In his book '**The Incoherence of the Philosophers** (the Tahafut) which is the title of a landmark 11th century work by he criticized Ibn Sina's school of early Islamic philosophy. Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi are denounced in this book. The text was dramatically successful, and marked a milestone in the ascendance of the Ash'arite school within Islamic philosophy and theological discourse. The tahafut is organized into twenty chapters in which al Ghazzali attempts to refute Ibn Sina's doctrines. He states that Ibn Sina and his followers have erred in seventeen points (each one of which he addresses in detail in a chapter, for a total of 17 chapters) by committing heresy. But in three other chapters, he accuses them of being utterly irreligious. Among the charges that he levelled against the philosophers is their inability to prove the existence of God and inability to prove the impossibility of the existence of two gods. Some of the twenty points are the inability of philosophers to prove the existence of the Creator, the inability of philosophers to prove the impossibility of the existence of two gods, the philosopher's doctrine of denying the existence of God's attributes, their inability to demonstrate that the First is not a body, refuting their assertion of the impossibility of the annihilation of the human soul, refuting their denial of bodily resurrection and the accompanying pleasures of Paradise or the pains of Hellfire. The three irreligious ideas are as follows: (1) the theory of a pre-eternal world. Ghazzali wrote that God created the world in time and just like everything in this world time will cease to exist as well but God will continue on existing, (2) God only knows the universal characteristics of particulars - namely Platonic (nonphysical – spiritual) forms and (3) the Bodily resurrection will not take place in the hereafter only human souls are resurrected.

"Ibn Sina had a number of heterodox (unorthodox) beliefs. First, he believed that the world is beginninglessly eternal, while Muslims believe that Allah created it after it was nothing, second, he believed that Allah knows what is created and destroyed only in a general way, not in its details, while Muslims believe that Allah knows everything; and third, he held that there is no bodily resurrection, while Muslims emphatically affirm in it. Taj al-Subki's says: "Is he not ashamed before Allah Most High to espouse (adopt) the ideas of Ibn Sina and praise him – while reciting the word of Allah "Does man not

think We shall gather together his bones? Indeed, We are well able to produce even his index finger" (Qur'an 75:7) – and mention in the same breath Ibn Sina's denial of bodily resurrection and gathering of bones?" (Mu'id al-ni'am, 80). Imam Ghazzali, despite his magisterial breadth of perspective in `aqida issues, held it obligatory to consider Ibn Sina a non-Muslim (kafir) for these three doctrines (al-Munqidh min al-dalal, 4445, 50)." Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajr (رضي الله عنه) said about Ibn Sina, "The shaafi'ee scholar, Ibn Abi Al-Hamoowee said: the Scholars have all agreed that Ibn Sina used to say that the universe has always been in existence, and that the bodies will not be raised physically on the day of judgment. It has also been said that he used to say that Allah does not have knowledge of the specifics (of everything that takes place); rather He is aware of what takes place in the general sense. Thus, the scholars in his time and those after them, those scholars whose statements carry weight in matters of fiqh and Usool ul-fiqh, have unequivocally (clearly) declared him and al-Farabi to be kuffar (unbelievers), because of their beliefs regarding these matters for they contradict the beliefs of the Muslims. (Lisaanal-Meezaan, (2/293))

Siddeeq Hasan Khaan al-Qannawjee said about him, "Ibn Sina said in al-Ishraat, based on the statement of the philosophers, that Allah has knowledge of general affairs, not the specifics of things that take place, and this is clear kufr that cannot be misconstrued. This is one of the reasons why the Muslims have considered the philosophers to be kuffaar. They have many other destructive beliefs, so do not be swayed (influenced) by the ideas, deep knowledge, and wisdom that they claim to have, for there is not one of them except that he contradicts the truth or he is on the brink (edge) of the fire." (Abdjadal-Uloom, (1/23)). Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Ibn Sina, as he stated about himself, said that he and his father were from the esoteric Qaraamitah sect (a shi'a sect) who do not believe in the beginning of creation, the resurrection, the Creator, nor the Messengers. Those zanaadiqah (heretics) used to adopt Shi'aism and claim to be from the lineage of the Prophet's (ﷺ) family as a guise in order to hide their disbelief, whereas the Prophet (ﷺ)'s family is not at all related to them with regards to lineage, their actions and their beliefs. They used to kill the people of knowledge and the people of Imaan, and they would leave the people of shirk and kufr. They did not consider what is haraam to be haraam, nor what is halaal to be halaal." (Ighaathah Al-Lahfaan (2/266))

Another philosopher was Al Kindi. Deeply rooted in Aristotle's thought, al-Kindi attempted one of the first efforts to "Islamize" Greek philosophy. He adopted certain concepts from the Aristotelian tradition and proposition; from the Platonist tradition, he takes speculation on the soul in its relationship with the body and with the divine light and on its ascent to and beyond the heavens. Another philosopher is Ibn Rushd. The Ash'arites maintain that the world is created and that it must "necessarily have a Maker who created it." However, Ibn Rushd objects to them, because they cannot answer the mode of the existence of the Maker of the world whether He is eternal or created, yet they want to show that the world is created in time, whereas God is eternal. If the Maker is eternal, then His *actions* must be eternal. Consequently, the world that is produced by an act of God must be eternal. This philosophy was considered to be irreligious in Muslim Spain where the society was formulated on true Arabic lines. Being a rational philosopher, his ideas were incompatible with the religious sentiments of orthodox Muslims and he was accused of being an atheist. Ibn Rushd was criticised for suggesting that revelation must be guided by reason. In his view, the noblest form of worship was to study God through His works using the faculty of the mind. Thus his Muslim contemporaries persecuted him while Muslim posterity (future generation) almost ignored him, allowing his works to be lost.

We can conclude that the moment any thinker introduces any un-Islamic concepts from any un-Islamic source, his concepts are rejected. This is why theologians don't agree with people like Ibn Sina, Al Farabi, Ibn Rushd and al Kindi due to the fact that they derive many of their concepts from Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.

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-I`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 Aakhirah 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 Taymiyyyah 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 jurisprudent. 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 though 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. [Maududi, *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 being 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 import 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 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 Muslim they go to a mosque, Christians to a church, and Jews to a synagogue. They believe in fellowshipping 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 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. There major differences on the importance 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 worshiped 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 "Ikhtilaaf 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 Khadīja 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 Khālid 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 **Rābi'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 Andalusi 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-Sulayḥī 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 Bukhāri*, *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.