

Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought

Written by Shaykh Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, Compiled from the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, Published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, London & Washington. First Published in 1426 AH/ 2005 CE, ISBN: 1-56564-414-X (paperback), 1-56564-415-8 (hardback), Page-302, Price: US\$ 18.95 (PB), US\$ 28.95 (HB), Tk. 1,000.00

Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, former President of International Institute of Islamic Thought, U.S.A., is an eminent Islamic scholar, jurist and specialist in Usul. He is also founder-member of the Council of the Muslim World League, a member of the International Fiqh Academy, and the president of the Fiqh Council of North America. Born in Iraq in 1935, Dr. Al-Alwani studied in Al Azhar University and obtained doctorate in Usul al Fiqh in 1973. He served as a Professor of Usul al Fiqh at the Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh.

A prolific writer, Dr. Al-Alwani has to his credit a good number of publications. His literary work includes the editing of Al Mahsul fi 'Ilm Usul al Fiqh (The Sum and Substance in the Science of Usul al Fiqh) by Imam Fakhr al Din al Razi (six volumes). He is also well known for his scholarship in Islamic jurisprudence. His published works include the important titles- Al Ijtihad wa al Taqlid fi al Islam (Ijtihad and the Unquestioning Adoption of Tradition in Islam), Adab al Ikhtilaf fi al Islam (Ethics of Disagreement in Islam) and Islah al Fikr al Islami (The Reform of Islamic Intellectual Discourse).

Dr. Al-Alwani is widely acclaimed in the West for his discourse on the 'Fiqh of Minorities'. He is the pioneer of our time explaining afresh the importance of 'Time and Space Factor' in understanding Maqasid Shariah or the objective of Divine Law.

The book under review [‘Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought’, published by International Institute of Islamic Thought, London, U. K., ISBN 1-56564-414-X, pages 301+V, paperback - price 15 British Pound] is a composition of articles of the author earlier published in the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences that throw insight on the contemporary ills of the Muslim society, calls upon the Muslims scholars and intellectuals to realize the depth and dimension of the crisis and

come forward for restructuring the society by refreshing the pristine teachings of Divine Guidance and work earnestly for renewal and revival of Islam and the Muslim society. This book discusses a variety of subjects in eighteen different headings that have been arranged in four broad chapters.

Chapter-one - 'Islamic Thought'- comprises of five articles. The first article – 'Some Remarks on the Islamic and the Secular Paradigms of Knowledge', the second article – 'Towards an Islamic Alternative in Thought and Knowledge', the third article - 'The Reconstruction of the Muslim Mind: The Islamization of Knowledge', the fourth article – 'The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today' and the fifth article – 'The Islamization of the Methodology of the Behavioral Sciences'.

In the first article– 'Some Remarks on the Islamic and the Secular Paradigms of Knowledge' the author underscored the need to develop an Islamic paradigm of knowledge that will serve as an alternative to the secular positive paradigm, an alternative that combines Islamic and universalistic perspectives; addresses the intellectual and conceptual problems of all humanity, not just Muslims; and includes a tawhid-based reconstruction of the concepts of life, humanity, and the universe [pp 4-5]. Dr. Al-Alwani underlined that the entire edifice of the Islamic paradigm of knowledge must stand on the foundation of tawhid, augment its sources with several principles and fundamentals that are essential to its comprehensive and compassing nature [pp 5-6].

In the second article– 'Towards an Islamic Alternative in Thought and Knowledge' the author rightly identified that the current approach of replicating the traditional thought did not prevent the decline of the Ummah. Likewise Western thought has failed to protect the Ummah from its inherent, adverse, harmful and disastrous effect. The author is also very critical of the 'elective or selective approach' for the proponents of this approach have not presented or come out with any working formula as how to blend traditional and modern thought [p 10]. Dr. Al-Alwani analyzed the crippling effects of the blind imitation of previous scholars and stressed the need to free the Muslim mind from the negative effects and shackles of imitation on the psychology, education, and way of life [p 14]. The teaching methods and curricula of the educational institutions are largely responsible for Westernization and alienation of the students from Islam [p 15] for the Muslim world's current system of education has failed to instill any belief, sound vision,

standards, or motives [p 17]. Dr. Al-Alwani emphasized that the only way to come out of this mess is to instill a strong Muslim belief and an Islamic vision in the hearts and minds of the Muslim youths in order to achieve a sense of belonging to the Muslim Ummah. This, the author said, could be achieved by integrating existing systems and creating a single educational system based on the teachings of Islam, its spirit and vision. The new education system, its syllabi and methods, should all be infused with the principles and goals of Islam. It should generate a sense of mission, whereby professional achievements and material success may be regarded as bonus, not as the purpose and objective of education [pp 17-18]. The author rightly emphasized that while developing the alternative in thought and knowledge special attention must be given to the study of Islamic civilization which is the most important means of creating and crystallizing the individual's feeling of belonging to the Ummah. Dr. Al-Alwani stressed that the new Muslim educational strategy must include a course of study that explains the bases, values, sources, and goals of Islam as a source of thought, culture, and civilization. This course should be of four years and be studied regardless of specialization, the author opined [pp 18-19]. The author underlined the need for classifying all available materials of the Islamic legacy according to modern social requirements and also prepare textbook that reflect the Islamic vision of contemporary reality and needs.

In the third article— 'The Reconstruction of the Muslim Mind: The Islamization of Knowledge' the author emphasized the importance of restructuring the Muslim mind so that it can once again engage in *ijtihad* [p 21] and becomes the bearer of guidance and light to the humanity [p 23] by providing the Muslims with the intellectual underpinnings for a complete civilizational transformation [p 23] and thereby reform thought removing traditional and historical obstacles that hobble the Muslim mind [p 23]. Dr. Al-Alwani put emphasis on conducting research by Muslim scholars that has immediate relevance for the Ummah [p 25]. In the absence of integrated and methodologically sound textbooks, the challenges before the contemporary Muslim scholars are enormous that needs to be addressed intelligently and with precision.

In the fourth article— 'The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today' the author emphasized that those who want to pursue this noble work of Islamization must acquire vast knowledge of the Quran and a firm grounding in the social sciences and humanities [p 35] so that

scholars may not lose equilibrium while engaging in independent and creative thought [p 32]. Dr. Al-Alwani underlined the need to construct a systematic methodology for dealing with the text of the Quran and the Sunnah for such a methodology could consider the particulars of those texts from a comprehensive methodological perspective and in the light of higher aims and purposes of Islam that will liberate research from the confines of taqlid for old solutions in new guises are still old solutions and will never provoke the needed reform or save the higher purposes of the universal message of Islam [p 41]. Indeed constructing such a methodology should be considered a major priority and an essential precondition for Islamization of Knowledge for outright rejection or wholesale acceptance of the contributions of the past, as also cosmetic grafting of elements without reference to a systematic methodology will not benefit the Muslims [pp 41-42]. No doubt separating knowledge and values was a serious mistake. The Islamization of Knowledge undertaking seek to make this issue one of the universal concern by laying out its philosophical and strategic frameworks, providing the means necessary to achieve it, and establishing the guidelines required to connect scholars with truth rather than speculation [p. 46].

In the fifth article – ‘The Islamization of the Methodology of the Behavioral Sciences’ the author argued that the crisis of Ummah is essentially an intellectual crisis [p. 49] which is the outcome of deviating from objective thinking [p. 50]. Dr. Al-Alwani stressed that the Ummah now needs to make a great educational and intellectual effort to rid itself of the debilitating and paralyzing effects [p. 52]. The author thinks that split in the educational system, which is a legacy of colonization, is a major reason for the backwardness of the Ummah [p. 56]. The Ummah must abolish this dual system of education in order to rid the Muslim mind of the dichotomy knowledge, produce a united education system and a methodological syllabus capable of providing the Ummah with Muslim specialists in every practical area as well as in the social science and humanities [p. 56]. Dr. Al-Alwani emphasized that the Ummah must establish academic institutions for research and study [p. 57]. The author hoped that Islamization of behavioral sciences, which is the basis of all social sciences, would enable the teachers to structure and develop their knowledge and reintroduce these sciences to their students from an Islamic angle by giving examples and evidence and adopting from the Quran and the Sunnah [p. 58].

Chapter-two – ‘Issues in Islamic Jurisprudence’ - deals exclusively with Ijtihad and Taqlid, in all six articles. In fact both Ijtihad and Taqlid have been widely discussed, total 96 pages. The author emphasized that we must shun imitating rulings of the scholars of the past ignoring contemporary realities and must make renewed and vigorous intellectual exercises to solve modern day problems.

Chapter-three deals with ‘Human Rights’ focusing on the right of the accused and a full length article on ‘The Testimony of Women in Islamic Law’ (pp161-186). Here the author has raised a very pertinent and timely issue in view of great misunderstanding in the West about women’s subordinate position in Islam as compared to men. The author while explaining the verse 2: 282 of the Quran has taken a broader look into the social milieu. The reason for halving women testimony is lack of their involvement in financial transaction and not their subordinate position in Islam and their inferior status as human souls. The author has established by giving examples that the witness of man and woman is equal in areas other than financial transactions. ‘There is no basis ... for claiming one is somehow less than the other. Such a view only manifests its holder’s ignorance’ [p 171]. The author here has successfully come out from the cultural prejudice of the earlier jurists that many a times colored their rulings and discussions on women. Going deep into the discussion on the testimony of women the author emphasized that ‘we must develop [new] methodologies based on the Quranic paradigms, and strive to develop our methodologies for critiquing Hadiths, rather than leave our intellectual legacy to the depredations of others’ [pp 182-183]. He reminded that Sunnah is there to clarify the Quran, not to contradict or reject its basic principles [p 171].

Chapter-four deals with the important issue of ‘Political Thought’. In the first article of this chapter – ‘Political Science in the Legacy of Classical Islamic Literature’ - the author discussed significant challenges the Muslim scholars of Political Science confront in understanding and formulating proper perspective of Islamic political discourse and emphasized the importance of mobilizing all available resources to pursue the introduction of a revolution of thought in the Ummah and establish sound academic foundations for an Islamic science of Shariah-based principles and conduct of government [p 231]. Dr. Al-Alwani stressed the need to link political discourses and practices with Shariah obligations and overall Divine Guidance to follow the principle of

enjoining good and prohibiting the evil. The author raised the pertinent question on the nature of Shura and the rights of non-Muslim minorities. In his own words: “What is the true nature of *shura*? How is the principle to be expressed, and how may it be participated in? What sort of institutions need to be established in order to realize *shura*? How the Ummah to be prepared to make use of *shura*? How are the circumstances of the Ummah’s history to be analyzed in order that lessons may be drawn from it? What is to be the effect of fiqh on the Islamic political thought, practice, and institutions? How is the Ummah to be involved practically in the political process? What are the means of bringing the Ummah to a state of political competence? What kinds of institutions are needed for such an undertaking? What guarantees can contemporary scholars of political science glean from the teachings of Islam, which could be presented at a legislative and institutional level, about preventing a ruler from abusing his/her office and toying with the Ummah’s rights? What guarantees and fundamental concepts can be presented to the non-Muslim minorities living in Islamic states? How can they participate in the politics and government of a clearly Muslim-majority state?” [pp 232-233]. Dr. Al-Alwani emphasized the need to work for understanding the goals and purposes of Islam in order to develop a complete system of political thought that can interact with the contemporary realities in order to realize the greater purposes of Islam. The author stressed the need to use such tools as *maslahah mursalah* (the greater good), *istishab* (assessment of circumstances), *baraah* (legal license), *adah* (custom), *araf* (legal convention), *istiqla* (induction), *istidlal* (deduction), *istihsan* (legal preference), *sad ad-dharai* (obstruction of pretexts), and *akhdh bi al-akhaff* (acceptance of the least imposing) in addition to primary sources of Quran, Sunnah, *ijma* (consensus of the scholarly community) and *qiyas* (analogical reasoning).

The most important article of this chapter is: ‘Missing Dimensions in the Contemporary Islamic Movements’. Dr. Al-Alwani correctly diagnosed and identified that political power alone cannot be a prelude to reform. Rather, reform starts with addressing the numerous problems that caused degeneration [p 240]. He has highlighted some of the very fundamental weakness of the Islamic movements:

“Islamic movements have become tainted with a partisan mentality; and are now at odds with the Ummah’s higher interest. Since they cannot

carry out any form of collective work, they have become easy targets for those seeking to isolate or destroy them.

“Some of these movements have confused the sacred texts with human interpretations and jurisprudence derived from *ijtihad* based on these texts.

“This confusion of the divine and the human has resulted in some of these movements claiming that only they have the truth, thus conferring on their own human thought and *ijtihad* the sanctity of fundamental texts. In addition, they have expropriated the Ummah’s historical achievements and taken credit for them by claiming that they are the only extension or embodiment of that historical reality.

“Some movements mistakenly believe that they can do without intellectual effort or *ijtihad* so long as they have the Quran and the Sunnah. Thus, they fail to link the Islamic text with the real world and lose the ability to actualize the faith. Some of them launch themselves as fully fledged “organizations” well before determining or reforming the world of their thoughts. As a result, they began to haphazardly select notions from the real world and Muslim tradition in order to respond to the requirements of their organizations and everyday activities, instead of proceeding by sound and rational judgment.

“They have claimed to embody, through organization and membership - and to the exclusion of all other groups- the whole Ummah. This is no more than intellectual immaturity and a juvenile fondness for exclusiveness and theatrics.

“Despite their untiring verbal commitment to the Quran and the Sunnah, these movements have not drawn up any appropriate programs for themselves and thus display their members’ poor grasp of the methodological foundations of Islamic doctrines and the Shariah. As we know, methodology constitutes the cornerstone leading to the development of a comprehensive Islamic discourse that can implement Islam’s ultimate objectives.

“Since the beginning of modern contacts with the West, the Islamic discourse has been stranded between high and low tides, between progression and retrogression. At times when all-out mobilization of effort and resources was needed to ward off an outside danger, it rose to the occasion. However, during times of construction and development, the Islamic discourse seemed almost everywhere to be pathetically

lacking in vigor and wholeness. Be that as it may, an analysis of the present Islamic discourse's silent characteristics ought to instill in us more awareness toward rectifying its form and content in order to make more viable in an age fraught with intellectual and other challenges" [pp 256-258].

The last article of this chapter and also of the books is: 'Authority: Divine or Quranic'? Dr. Al-Alwani while referring to the mistaking understanding of divine authority of many contemporary Islamic movements [p 287] underlined that divine authority is vested in the Quran. "The Quran may never become the exclusive domain of one group in the name of divine authority, owing solely to such people claiming to be the only ones capable of accessing and understanding it" [p 286]. "The Islamic understanding is that divine authority resides in His eternal message, the Quran, which is the word of God" [p 285]. The author here emphasized the supremacy of the Text of the Quran: "Authority resides in the Quran" [p 285]. "However, the important thing is that the Quran is to be understood and interpreted through human reading, for its discourse is directed towards human beings"[p 285]. The author here tried to draw a balance between divine sovereignty [pp 281-282] mundane exercises of authority in civil matters as vicegerents [p 289]. Dr. Al-Alwani hoped that "if the contemporary Islamic thought is able to correct its own mistakes, then God willing, it will not remain dormant ... If Muslims become serious about their responsibility ... they will begin to contribute to the building of a new and better world ..." [p 293].

This book will help the readers to understand the intellectual crisis Muslim community is facing today. The need of the hour is to review our intellectual heritage and legacy with a critical mind and reformulate newer methodology and options for restructuring our thought pattern. This book will no doubt help Muslim social reformers in realizing the vital task lying ahead that need to be addressed with a view to bringing positive changes not only in the intellectual realm but also in the plan of actions. I am confident the book will be useful not only for general readers and academics but for those who work for social reform worldwide InshaAllah.

Reviewed by-

Shah Abdul Halim
Chairman, Islamic Information Bureau Bangladesh

The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam

*Written by Shaykh Taha Jabir al Alwani, Translation from Arabic by Abdul Wahid Hamid, Published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA.
ISBN :1-56564-117-5 (hardback), 1-56564-118-3 (paperback),
Page-162, Price : Tk. 250.00*

The most dangerous problem affecting the Muslim Ummah now is the problem of disagreement and discord. Taha Jabir observed that this disease has become all-pervasive and affects every area, the appalling influence of this disease has penetrated into ideas and beliefs, morality and behavior and ways of speaking and interacting. Day by day it is enveloping people's souls. Our new generation are getting the impression that all the Islamic teachings, commands, and prohibitions at the disposal of the Ummah are there only to spur people on to discord.

In the first chapter Taha Jabir discussed this malaise of discord among Ummah. He positively identified that this trend is contrast to the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah, because after stressing the paramount duty of affirming the oneness of Allah (Tawhid), both the Quran and the Sunnah stress on the unity of Ummah. The main objective of the Quran and the Sunnah was to treat and rid the Ummah of any disagreements which ruin the brotherhood of believers. He rightly pointed out that our crisis is an intellectual crisis and it is very serious. He also derived the fact that our deviation from the Quran and Sunnah has landed us in disputation and ruin. We forgot the essence of Quran, 'Obey Allah and His Apostle. And do not dispute with one another lest you fail and your moral strength desert you (8:46)'. He searched a solution to the question that how can we get rid of the intellectual paralysis which afflicts the Muslim mind and the moral crisis which affects Muslim behavior. He highlighted that there must be a renewed stress on intellectual formation and the recovery of a sense of priorities.

In the second chapter he went through the spectrum and different dimensions of disagreements. He discussed in detail the meaning of the term '*Ikhtilaf*', he also went through discussion of other related terms like '*Jadal*', '*Shiqaq*'. He gave instances of acceptable and unacceptable

differences. He pointed out the benefits of acceptable differences. He also showed the disadvantages and dangers of impulsive disagreements. At the end of second chapter he pointed out that discord is Evil.

In chapters three, four and five Dr. Taha discussed the historical context of disagreement during Prophet's lifetime and during his first generation and second generation companions' time.

In chapter six Dr. Taha discussed the difference at the same time unity in diversity between different 'Madhahib' (schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence). He showed the methodologies used by different scholars like Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam al Shafii, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Imam Daud al Zahiri. In this chapter he showed with example that many of the principles which are attributed to the leading jurists do deviate from their actual statements and are not corroborated by authentic reports. These baseless principles are then adhered to and defended against any criticism or opposing view. All this give rise to constant controversy and ultimately detracts attention from the Quran and Sunnah. Thus he was able to identify the roots of controversy and discord.

In the seventh chapter he searched the reasons for differences. He identified the natural differences, differences among Sahabi's after the assassination of third Khalifah, differences due to linguistic causes, difference about taking essence from Hadith, differences over juristic methods.

In the eighth chapter Dr. Taha cited the examples from different scholars that how they approached about controversial issues with each other. He quoted the letter written by Imam Al Lyth ibn Sad to Imam Malik, the meeting between Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik, the friendship between Imam Muhammad ibn al Hassan and Imam Malik and Between Al Shafi and Imam Muhammad ibn al Hassan. There were so many other examples which showed how the early scholars were united in heart even after disagreement about any issue, they were guided by the essence of Quran that unity of Ummah is the top priority.

The ninth chapter tells us the maladies Ummah faced when in stead of ijthihad (analytical thought) people started imitating blindly (taqlid) their Imams.

In chapter ten he guided the new generation Muslims about how to approach controversial issues in this age highlighting the brotherhood and solidarity of Ummah.

He showed the way to recovery from the malaise of disagreement. According to him recovery requires to select the talented Muslim youth and make available to them the best means to study science of Shariah. He also emphasised on removing intellectual crisis from Muslim mind and heart, removing of the tradition of blind imitation and improving research methodology on to take lesson from Quran and Sunnah.

The book serves as a useful introduction to the subject of disagreement. It gives Muslims of this age an explanation of the Islamic etiquette for all those engaged in discourse and intellectual dialogue.

Reviewed by-

Dr. Abu Khaldun Al-Mahmud
Associate Professor, Ibn Sina Medical College, Dhaka

IBN ASHUR

Treatise on Maqasid al-Shari'ah

*Written by Muhammad Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, Published by the
International Institute of Islamic Thought, London & Washington,
First Published in 1427 AH/2006 CE, ISBN: 1-56564-422-0 (Paperback),
1-56564-423 (Hardback), Page-490, US\$ 25*

Maqasid al-Shari'ah or the higher objectives of Islamic law is considered a very important branch of knowledge in Islamic Shari'ah. Next to Usul al-fiqh, which deals with issues pertaining to the sources and methodology of Islamic Law, Maqasid al-Shari'ah can be regarded as the greatest development in the history of Islamic jurisprudence. Many scholars of Islamic jurisprudence contributed to this important development, right from Abul Ma`ali al-Juwayni (419/1028-478/1085) in the classical period of Muslim history up to Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur (1296/1879-1393/1973) in modern times. Realizing the importance of the idea of maqasid, al-Shatibi (d. 790/1388) laboured to reconstruct the whole of usul al-fiqh around the Maqasid and thus made

them the unifying theme of the issues and topics usually dealt with almost independently of one another by usual works. With him the Maqasid became the axis of *usul al-fiqh*.

The idea of Maqasid al-Shari'ah as conceived and developed by Muslim scholars over the centuries is about the sociopolitical and moral order of human society. Thus, it does not only reflect the objectives of the legal system of the Shari'ah, but it is also a manifestation of the Islamic worldview itself. Likewise, it has been an important tool for formulating the fundamental principles and cardinal values pertaining to human good and welfare according to a descending order of human needs. It has also served as a means to articulate a harmonic and systematic understanding of Islamic teachings. This implies certain conception of human nature and a specific view of the dynamics of human society. Among the writers who dealt with the subject of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, Ibn Ashur exhibited the sharpest awareness of this aspect of the question and made systematic effort to elaborate on it through his discussion of the Qur'anic concept of *fitrah*.

Ibn Ashur in his book "Treatise on Maqasid al-Shari'ah" sought to reformulate the Maqasid not only as a doctrine in Islamic jurisprudence and central theme in *usul al-fiqh*, but as an independent discipline. His work on Maqasid al-Shari'ah is a pioneering study of the Shari'ah's higher objectives and it is not known whether any modern jurists prior to Ibn Ashur has made any attempt to develop a comprehensive and systematic study of its different aspects. Thus The work stands as a testament to his deeply cherished objective of establishing Maqasid al-Shari'ah as an independent discipline in its own right, under the title 'Ilm Maqasid al-Shari'ah'.

Ibn Ashur's book of "Treatise on Maqasid al-Shari'ah" is divided into three parts. In the first part of the book, consisting of almost seventy pages with the heading on establishing the Maqasid al-Shari'ah, the author argues two main things. The first point is that the Shari'ah has purposes and objectives underlying its commands and teachings. This is established through a discussion of the issue of *ta'wil* and a refutation of the literalist approach to the textual sources of the Shari'ah. Hence, the case is made for a distinct object of *ilm al-maqasid* as an independent discipline. The second point is dealt with through an analysis of the

various methodological rules and steps that should be followed to discover those purposes and objectives. Here the author thoroughly discussed some primary issues of Maqasid and emphasized on the necessity of the knowledge of the Maqasid al-Shari'ah. Then He described the methods of establishing Maqasid al-Shari'ah along with the evaluation of the predecessors' methods. After that, he mentioned the bad result of the deficiency of the knowledge of higher objectives, which makes some scholars fall into unending errors when they focus all their attention on words and confine the process of deriving the rules (*ahkam*) of the Shari'ah to squeezing the words so as to extract their meaning, believing this to be proper and only course. At the end of this part he highlighted the prophet's intent of legislation and described certain and probable Maqasid of the Shari'ah.

In the second part covering almost half of the book, the subject matter of the proposed new discipline is taken up again. It talked about the general objectives of Islamic legislation. The author provided here with a lot of important issues related to Maqasid al-Shari'ah. He described here some characteristics of the Shari'ah such as magnanimity (*Samahah*), univesility, freedom and equity which were focused on all of the Maqasid al-Shari'ah. He also mentioned the meaning of *Maslahah* and *Mafsadah* with the description of the categories of *Maslahah* intended by Islamic legislation. In this part the author also talked about alteration and confirmation objectives of the Shari'ah, public and individual license, the Shari'ah's aim in avoiding elaboration at the time of revelation as well as building a solid and stable social order and ended it with the description of the necessity of Ijtihad.

Ibn Ashur in this Part suggests that the universality and suitability of the Shari'ah can be conceived in two different, yet interrelated, ways. Firstly, its universal values and general principles are applicable to all situations without causing harm or leading to negative and harmful effects. Secondly, human circumstances in all spaces and times can be moulded and oriented in accordance with Islamic teachings without difficulty or hardship. As is clear from his reasoning, it is at this level of universality and flexibility of the Shari'ah that ijthad acquires its significance. From this universality and suitability principle flows, according to Ibn Ashur, the strategy of the Shari'ah is dealing with the human life and condition.

This strategy operates at two complementary and closely interconnected levels, namely change (*taghyir*) and confirmation or sanctioning (*taqrir*).

The author undertakes here a more detailed analysis of the components of the Maqasid and elaboration on their classification according to a descending hierarchical order branching out of the all-purpose principle of the shari'ah (*al-maqasad al-amm*) to which he devotes a whole chapter. Throughout this part Ibn Ashur labours to show how the maqasid constitute a specific area worthy of independent inquiry that transcends the narrow concerns and atomistic methods of the traditional jurist and is informed by an underlying logic knitting its component elements together. A major feature of his reasoning in this respect is to establish the generality and universality of the maqasid by virtue of the compatibility of Islamic teachings with human nature as expounded on the basis of the Quranic concept of fitrah. As mentioned before that al-Shatibi successfully strove to reformulate the idea of maqasid as the central and unifying theme of Islamic legal theory. He thus paved the ground, both epistemologically and methodologically, for Ibn Ashur to free that study from the narrow legalistic approach and language of both legists and legal theorists. Although his stated purpose was to narrow down juristic differences and transcend doctrinal fanaticism between the *fuqaha* by providing a reference point consisting of the certain universals (*kulliyat qat'iyah*) of the Shari'ah, the inter-textual analysis of his works has, however, clearly shown that his contribution went far beyond that limited purpose and addressed fundamental issues relating to the study of human social existence. By grounding the study of maqasid al-Shari'ah in a comprehensive understanding of human nature and condition and discussing basic questions concerning the origin and universality of values, Ibn Ashur has paved the way for a social theorizing capable of transcending the epistemologically and methodologically reductionist tendencies and materialistic philosophies prevailing in much of the literature on man and society.

In the third part of the aforementioned book, Ibn Ashur undertakes what can be considered an applied study of the main ideas and concepts developed in the preceding parts. A number of areas in human social life and dealings are discussed here to show how the idea of maqasid is manifested in them through the various levels of Islamic legislation.

They include domains like the specification and determination of rights, family and kinship, economic activity and property, justice and juridical procedures, punishment and the penal code, etc. All this is prefaced with an insightful analysis of the relationship between means and ends according to which the latter can in no way justify the former.

It is clear that an independent scientific discipline must have a specific subject matter, a set of clear general propositions, a body of rules and methods guiding the steps of research in it and allowing its pursuers to arrive at objective conclusions that can be tested and verified, and must enjoy a sufficient level of unity and internal cohesion. From a general view of the material arrangement, methodological structure and line of reasoning of Ibn Ashur's book on maqasid it can be said that these requirements have been adequately observed.

Reviewed by-

Dr. Mohdammad Manzur -E- Elahi

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Islamic Studies, National University

Missing Dimensions in Contemporary Islamic Movements

*Written by Shaikh Taha Jabir al Alwani, English Translated from Arabic and
Published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, London & Virginia*

First Published in 1417 AH/1996 CE, ISBN :1-56564-061-6

Page-54, Price: Tk. US\$ 25

Though contemporary Islamic movements are in fact outgrowth of the previous movements fought against the colonial powers or in order to preserve the Muslim identity, they actually suffer from some missing dimensions the presence of which could put the Ummah on its desired status.

In chapter one the author says that as the Ummah was evolved to work as a responsible witness to the whole humanity, conceptually and actually, and as it was created as a 'justly balanced' Ummah, its responsibilities lie in correcting and rectifying the methodological problems inherently imbedded in the branches of human knowledge. These methodological

errors are there both in western as Muslim societies. But unlike the west, the correction should start in the Muslim societies through comprehensive awareness of the *Tawhīd*, encompassing all aspects of Muslim mind and all areas of Muslim geography.

According to the author, because of the dominance of the west in contemporary world, two extreme attitudes developed within the contemporary Islamic movements: one is compromise and the other is outright rejection. One example of the first phenomenon is approximating western democracy to Islamic *Shūra* or approximating Islamic social justice to socialism neglecting the major differences between these two cultural and epistemological paradigms. On the other hand, the tendency of outright rejectionism blinded the Muslims to examine their history in a critical and analytical manner with the objective of exploring weakness and suggesting remedies. According to the author, the reason behind establishing the 'International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) to device such methodological/ epistemological paradigms. Otherwise, there is no dearth of the basic tenets of Faith in the Muslim hearts, no obscurity in the principles of worship, transaction, and *Sharīah* policies in the Muslim sources and references.

But the attainment of political power will not solve the crisis of the Ummah, as is wrongly thought by many contemporary Islamic movements. Because the loss of political power to the west is a comparatively recent phenomenon whereas the degeneration of the Ummah started much earlier and was triggered off by numerous problems, and all of them, according to the author, are rooted in wrong methodology. The author then discusses the reasons behind the grand success of our pious predecessors and invited the conscience of the Ummah to examine those to regain the lost glory.

The author starts chapter two of the book with an insightful diagnosis of the underlying causes of the decline of the Ummah. According to him, it is partly, because of the unfortunate emergence of secularist view in the Muslim world who maintained that the notion of transcendence should be excluded from human affairs and secondly (almost) invariable Muslim approach to the Qur'ān and Sunnah in a highly selective manner ignoring to relate the reality on the ground to the totality in the divine message (without giving much thought to the time and space factors in many divine messages), which caused to exclusively rely on the classical

ijtihād and not to feel any need for recourse to new *ijtihād* for the many recent phenomena.

In chapter three the author discusses the reason behind the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). According to him, this is to islamize the methodologies of the natural and human sciences in light with divine revelation, because the methodology of knowledge for western and Islamic world is fraught with problems. The world has seen the transformation of the classical natural economy into industrial one, the cognitive processes from mental hypothesis, sense-based observation, intuition or surface experience to systematic doubt and scientific reasoning into logical empiricism. All these new developments required dynamic, rather than static, understanding of human societies. The author opines that the west acted dynamically to respond to this new phenomenon, but unfortunately divorced Revelation to play any role there. Thus the western methodology became deconstructive without offering any reconstruction based on divine revelation which resulted in the emergency and subsequent reinforcement of hedonistic individualism that constituted a reversion to the primitive times when men killed and pillaged headless of the divine laws of mercy, fairness, and responsible trusteeship.

On the other hand, in the face of these new phenomena the Islamic world remained in most cases static, and did not reform their methodologies to relate to the changing circumstances. Though a few Islamic movements across ages rose to the event to do something, those were tainted with a partisan mentality which caused them to be split into many groups at odds with the higher interest of the Ummah and made them incapable of carrying out any form of collective work within the Ummah. This mentality also resulted in some of these movements claiming that they are in sole position of the truth which further aggravated the situation prompting them to haphazardly borrowing notions from the Muslim traditions to respond to the requirements of their “organization” and every day activities instead of proceeding in the light of sound and rational judgment through intellectual effort or *ijtihād*. He says that despite untiring verbal commitment to the Qur’an and the Sunnah, these movements have failed to establish/reform their methodologies to deal with the Qur’an, to combinedly read the Qur’an and the universe in order to draw up appropriate programs for themselves and solve the contemporary problems of knowledge. The author then

outlines a few characteristics of Islam to be inculcated in the contemporary Islamic movements to overcome the missing dimensions in them: the comprehensiveness and tolerance of the *Sharīah*, the very general approach to man, time, and place, the purposefulness of Creation, the universality of the Islamic discourse, the supreme authority of the Qur'an, the conclusive nature of Muhammad's Prophethood, and the belief in man's capacity for renewal and his Allah-given ability to discover the divine pattern (and mechanism) of perpetual renovation (p-27-28).

He then explains that comprehensiveness implies a balanced depiction of quintessential facts and it considers all aspects of human activities as worship (*ibādah*) which are to be done from within the framework of man's vicegerency on Earth. It's very general approach to man, time, and place implies that Islam is not confined to a specific community, time or place. Its message was never meant to be addressed to a particular community in a particular place at a particular time. Rather it is a call to the whole of humankind which, within the Islamic methodology, is seen as an invisible whole. Its purposefulness lies in the truth that nothing in this universe can be termed to be accidental-without purpose, reason or role. Any creature, great or small has been created for a purpose and with a role to play in this life whether man is aware of it or not. Its universality lies in the fact that within a few decades of its emergence, Islam branched out to connect & enlighten the Atlantic in the West and the Pacific in the East and the Muslims managed to transcend the duality of East and West, and to enfold all religious and cultural pluralities within the universality of Islamic discourse.

The author then explains that Islamic universality is still the only panacea for all the problems of contemporary western world as it was earlier. But, according to the author, the Muslims will be mistaken if they think that any nominal Islamic movement at any given time would be capable to bring about this. This is because it is not a prophecy to be fulfilled regardless of reasons or conditions (p-31). Many contemporary Islamic movements are, mistakenly, captive to the wish of 'establishing a state like the one founded by the Prophet in Madīnah (or in the shape of *khilāfat* established by subsequent Caliphs and dynasties). Furthermore, Islam is invariably presented by many Muslims and many contemporary Islamic movements in a form that does not match its greatness and potential. It is routinely introduced as a comprehensive heading for a geographical area where Muslims nowadays live or through a thick

tangle of transmitted *fiqh*, more suited to simple, agrarian society and basic exchange of benefits than to the complex realities of our time (p. 30-33).

But the author is optimistic and says that despite all of these odds, Islam and Islamic universality/civilization, not the western civilization, is the only solution for all contemporary problems. It is because, the western civilization/universalism, which is the product of western mind, suffers from a few insurmountable crises: (a) Christian theology, shaped and expropriated by the Greco-Roman heritage, inculcates in the western mind the concept of the embodied God which subsequently restricted the human mental endeavor to a narrow area, because the concept of the Godhead, which in the first basis of universality has been reduced to the level of natural object. The Pagan Hellenic and Roman civilization, deriving their power from the gods in Athens or Rome developed their own peculiar view of man. It was a view that allowed the enslavement of man in his capacity as a labor force, making him a slave without pay, implacably subordinate to the interests of Athens or Rome. Their modern inheritors in the West have also enslaved man in the mines and other industries in a similar fashion, (b) there is the problem of the natural mind vis-à-vis the scientific mind. The natural mind emancipated itself from Christian theology and it way supported by principles and postulates of the scientific mind. The end result was divorce between it and theology, (c) the western mind deconstructed the methodologies of the natural and social sciences, having taken lion share from the Greco-Roman experiences, though at a high ecological and human cost, but could not reconstruct those in line with the divine revelation which made it totally ethically and morally neutral. On the contrary, as opposed to the coercive Greek and Roman models, Islamic universality/civilization: (a) came as a liberator. History does not record any instance of Muslim armies fighting the peoples of the countries they liberated, (b) Islamic civilization everywhere was characterized by a vigorous adherence to the doctrine of *tawhīd* which means that Allah was not the god of a race or faction but the Lord of all mankind, thus everyone was accorded equal dignity and status, (c) Islamic model of civilization was characterized everywhere by the absence of enslavement of the peoples of the conquered territories whether that was social, political economic or religious. Contrarily everything was done to liberate people from all shackles of bondage.

According to the author, the contemporary western civilization is replete with the problems of: moral degeneration along with scientific progress, the eruption of conflagrations, and commission of most appalling acts of barbarity despite all the optimism preceding the First and Second World Wars, large scale dissent and rebellion against socialist or capitalist ideology-based western civilization, and the inevitable bad effects of the western order, based on the theory of conflict and survival of the fittest, causing marginalization of the average people everywhere and even in the West, and their eventual deprivation of basic needs. Thus only Islam offers solution for all these problems because-: (a) Islamic universality is one blessed by the Creator of the cosmos. Its *raison d'etre* is the world's desperate need for solutions to its ecological, intellectual, economic, and political crises which will get worse as the world's social and moral order declines further, (b) Islamic universality is capable of responding to western anxiety and confusion, (c) the triumph of Islamic universality, once articulated and enacted by responsible human, is inevitable. When Muslims will start working towards that goal they will do so in response to their commitment to the responsibility of human vicegerency on Earth and the requisite need to witness to the whole of humankind; it is a responsibility not an indulgence.

The author opines that in order to actualize that the Muslims should do the followings: (a) the Muslims, armed with the epistemological methodology of the Qur'ān should form close relations with the scholars of western analysis with an objective to orient them about Qur'ānic epistemology, (b) the Muslims should give all possible support to the Islamization of knowledge in the fields of natural, human, and social sciences, (c) a dialogue can take place within a scientific methodological framework to which Muslims can bring their awareness of the Qur'ān, but Muslims should avoid raising sensitive issues or those which activate the Western historical memory (P. 42).

But the Ummah should be aware of the missing dimensions in their contemporary Islamic movements. The contemporary Islamic movements suffer from the absence of a worthwhile effective epistemological methodology with which they will be able to come in terms with a contemporary and vibrant world. Since they could not devise that epistemological methodology, they: (1) resort to the moral violence of branding others "apostates"; (2) cling to the more triumphant features of early Islamic history; and (3) refer matters to the world of unseen and the unknown while neglecting the methodology of Islam in

terms of the interaction between that world, man and the cosmos. (4) Alternatively they may resort to gaining political power in order to introduce change by setting up a cleric as a ruler under divine jurisdiction and appease the Almighty by the application of the penal code (p. 43). The author observes that, accordingly, their eyes become mesmerized by the dream of accession to power within the geographical areas in which they live. They ignore the concepts of universality let alone consider the methodologies or tools to achieve them, thus overlooking a basic aspect of Islamic discourse. In this way they oversimplify, indeed trivialize, Islam.

The writer here points out another problem within the thought of the Ummah which is their excessive obsession with the intellectual legacy of the past few centuries- without looking into the situational variables and changed circumstances took place in the meantime. He mentioned the dynamism of Imam al-Shāfiʿī in this regard. Al-Shāfiʿī wrote his book *Al-Hijjah* in Baghdād, read it to the best Baghdadi scholars including Ahmad bin Hanbal, and then when he left Baghdad for Cairo he reconsidered his jurisprudence in its entirety and revised his views except for thirteen *masā'il* (issues in *fiqh*). The author then poses the question that if such was the experience of a scholar who lived for a mere fifty years and who had revise his almost entire earlier juristic opinions because of a minimal cultural difference between two countries, much less than that are today, say, between China and America, how could the *fiqh* scholars of today absolutely rely on a cultural order that was based on the school of *Hijāj* or *Kūfāh* as formulated in the second century of *Hijrāh* by the scholars of that time.

The author finishes the book with these concluding remarks: in order to effectively actualize the universality of Islam we should review our heritage in its entirety through effective methodology, discern its paradigms, and reclassify and judge it in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

If that is done effectively, the Muslims will find that many aspects of their inherited sciences will have to be replaced, rectified or updated.

But, according to the author, this responsibility has to taken by the scholars and intellectuals of the Ummah, as it is shifted to their shoulders after the death of the Prophet (sm). Again everything should be done in the light of combined reading of Revelation and the Universe, taking into notice the changes and variables of the contemporary world.

I strongly recommend this book for everyone concerned with the current abysmal state of the Ummah. It is a must-read for all frontline Islamic academics, intellectuals, and leaders (political, social, religious etc.) of contemporary Islamic movements.

1. Islamization of Knowledge by International Institute of Islamic Thought
2. Toward Islamization of Disciplines
3. Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence: The Usul of Islamic Fiqh by Taha Jabir al Alwani
4. Islamization of Knowledge: A Methodology by Imad al din Khalil
5. Islamization: Reforming Contemporary Knowledge by 'AbdulHamid Abu Sulayman
6. Islamization of Knowledge: A critical overview by Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr
7. Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan, *International Institute of Islamic Thought*, 3rd ed., 1995, 144pp,
8. Islamization of Knowledge: Background, Models and the Way Forward, Sa'idu Sluaiman, 2000, 59pp
9. Islamization of Knowledge: A Research Guide, *Bashir Shehu Galadanci (ed.)*, IIIT Nigeria, 2000, 90pp
10. Islamization of Knowledge: Conceptual Background, Vision and Tasks, *Salisu Shehu*, IIIT Nigeria, 1998, 84pp
11. Islamization of Knowledge: Historical Background and Recent Developments, *Danjuma Abubakar Maiwada*, IIIT Pakistan, 1999, 42pp,
12. Islamization of Academic Disciplines, 1997, 96pp.

Reviewed by :

Md. Mokhter Ahmad

Assistant Professor & Coordinator, CURC, I IUC- Dhaka Campus

Guidelines to Islamic Economics: Nature Concepts and Principles

Written by Professor M. Raihan Sharif, Published by Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought, Dhaka, First Published in November 1996, ISBN: 984-8203-01-X, Page-200, Price : Tk. 250.00 (White), Tk. 350.00 (Offset), US\$ 20

Professor M. Raihan Sharif is among the most prominent Islamic economist and researcher who expressed his views on nature, concepts and principles of Islamic economics in his book. The author realizes that the Muslim-majority countries should develop integrated rational educational systems of their own, based on develop nationally-upheld values, which are likely to meet the objective of producing ‘whole man’ with the capabilities of meeting the current need mentioned above. To meet up this objective, the Muslim countries have to avoid conceptual dependency on the choice and adoption of the required educational reforms in the current conditions of world dominating by the western conventional economics, the author added. Therefore, his views on this topic are particularly important because this contributes to meet up the textual requirement of the graduate students of the universities as well as the general readers.

The books contains total of six chapters, in addition to preface and forward (by M. Zohurul Islam, Secretary General, BIIT). The first chapter elaborately explains the introduction of conventional economics and its relevance to developing economics. In this chapter the author also tries to projects different logics of both the conventional and Islamic economics, pointing out the ideas of conventional economist like, Alfred Marshal, J.N. Keynes, Samuelson and Karl Marx and Islamic economist like, Ibn-i-Khaldun. The author also tries to take the reader the rationalism of Ibn-i-Khaldun’s approach and methodology for studying the processes of social and economic change which had been remarkably modern and even comparable to Marx’s radicalism. In this chapter the author also explains the way of remould the apparatus of conventional modern economics towards Islamic economics citing references from Quran and different journals. He has also brought before us the contexts of Islamic economists who are also trained in conventional economics. Chapter 2, “Approach to the study of Islamic economics a social science,” explains approaches of social philosophy and economics. This chapter reviews the development of Islamic economic thought and

different Islamic economic models along-with the approaches to analysis those models. The author also explains the realities of Islamic economics in Islamic world as the secular science and technology rises, taking the chances of declining influence of long history of Islamic ideology. In Chapter 3, "The Islamic Perspective of Economic Behaviour," the author explains the role of understanding, faith, knowledge and discipline of Islamic economics and its methodologies in relation to conventional economics. In this chapter the author also explains the nature of balanced economic behaviour, social equality and concept of socio-economic responsibility citing the references from Quran and Hadit. Chapter 4 deals with assumptions axioms, concepts and fundamental theory of both Islamic economics and secular economics. This chapter also explains the concepts of wealth and goods, its Islamic perspective which make easy to conceive the main basic differences between Islamic economics and conventional economics and also why economic analysis itself have to differ. This also points to the need for difference in the application of the usual tools of economic analysis. The fifth chapter projects Islamic economics as system dealing on rationalism, theory of consumption, production and marketing. Here the author also explains how to analysis the consumers demand and market demand from both conventional and Islamic point of view and consumer's equilibrium in Islamic economy. The last Chapter, "Problems of Distribution in an Islamic Society," the author has also explained how to short out the problems of distribution and also shows how the Islamic theory of distribution is superior to the conventional theories. In this chapter he explains the problems of inadequacy of modern distribution theory, fundamentals of the Islamic approach to distribution and institutional development and also the consequences of interest based banking in the economy. This chapter also suggested prospects and potential of solving those problems. The book consists of an appendix which explains the comparative equity and efficiency related to the theory of distribution between the Islamic and conventional approaches. Here the author also tries to relate Islamic general equilibrium with Bangladesh economy.

In general, the book embodies a modest endeavour at presenting some guidelines in the main areas of Islamic Economics in such a way that the difference will appear to be clear and will also lead to the positive exercise of building up correct concepts and principles for application in the context of Islamic norms. The author has also presented the designed chapters of the guidelines of Economics in Islam in simple and understandable language with references to contrasting positions of

conventional economics where needed. The subject of the book is Islamically significant and useful. It can also be acknowledged that it contributes something new to my knowledge of the subject that is sense of history which is very rare in Islamic economists’.

Although the guidelines to Islamic economics comprises of philosophy, assumptions, concepts, theory, fiscal, monetary and development issues he did not deal with the specific development, fiscal or monetary subjects. Instead, the author chose to clear up the minds of the young economists on the conceptual and metaphysical issues so that they can build up the proper perspective of Islamic fiscal and monetary and other systems by themselves. The author presents all his arguments in a scholarly method and avoiding extremism, takes a moderate stand between faith and economics. However, his presentation was more theoretical than practical that is no concrete steps and methods to be applied were given.

In short, this is an enlightening work and that should be made available to the students of nationalism and internationalism. I know this book can serve the textual requirements of the educational institutions of the Muslim world so that they can take measures needed to implement such ways in their economic systems. General readers can build upon their ideas, taking them as a theoretical background and build further with assumptions axioms, concepts and fundamental theory Islamic economics.

Reviewed by-

Dr. Md. Mizanur Rahman

Director (Research), Islami Bank Training & Research Academy

Social Justice and Human Development

*Written by Professor Abdun Noor, Published by Adorn Publication,
Dhaka, 2007, First Published in December 2007 ISBN 984-20-0047-8*

Page-252, Price Tk. 300, US\$ 20

As the title suggests, Professor Noor’s latest book contains some invigorating and exhaustive discussions on selected salient dimensions of Social Justice and Human Development, such as the theoretical underpinnings of societal justice and governance, the process of public

administration from an Islamic perspective, the synthesis between education and human development, and the practice and reforms of the local government systems. It sets out some interesting agenda for reforming and reorganizing structure and processes of governance in the two broad and crucial areas of 'social justice' and 'rural development'. Despite repeated attempts and the growing emphasis, ensuring social justice and good governance has, thus far, proved to be one of the most elusive goals for Bangladesh public administration and society. Professor Noor's long pursuit in search of the ways and means of developing an ethical, morally-laden, people-oriented, and just public administration and governance system for the country has produced a series of research articles; and the current volume represents his untiring zeal and commitment for the search.

This book consists of some ten chapters, organised into three broad parts: 'governance of social justice', 'governance of rural development', and 'education and human development'. The diverse themes explored in the Volume include: a moral guideline for administrative decisions; the process of public administration; teaching and research in public administration from an Islamic perspective; ethics in good governance; financing local bodies; strengthening Union Parishads; education and human development from an Islamic perspective. The central focus of the book is creating and contemplating about a "just society"; as the author astutely argues:

Man needs to live in the society because of his dependency on others for meeting his innumerable needs. Such a mutually dependent situation gives rise to a relationship of mutual exchange. Everybody expects his rightful share in social exchange, which in other words, is called 'social justice'. Thus justice is a guarantee for happiness and injustice or 'feeling of deprivation' becomes the cause of unhappiness. Justice and happiness are, therefore, inextricably interwoven. It further necessitates proper institutional arrangement for producing necessary goods and services required for a good life and their just distribution. (p.11)

Some discussions are particularly interesting and thought-provoking; such as the accounts of "ethics in good governance" (pp.109-123); "Islam and development: A rebuttal to Western critics" (pp.38-57) and

“Rural development through local government: A suggested model of coordination at the Union level” (pp.186-195). The language is generally lucid and penetrating. Some parts of the book are, however, rather terse and difficult for non-specialist readers to comprehend; for example, the analysis of “Governance of public interest and social justice” (pp.15-34). There are a number of minor word processing errors, which may irritate a vigilant reader. The price of the volume is reasonable, and the look is fairly smart. On the whole, this work offers a worthwhile reading, and makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the Bangladesh administration, society, and development by bringing in a rich diversity of analytic perspectives. This book, thus, deserves to be studied widely.

Reviewed by:-

Dr. Niaz Ahmed Khan

Professor, Department of Development Studies
University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000. Email: niaz.khan@yahoo.com

A Young Muslim’s Guide to the Religions in the World

*Written by Dr. Sayed Sajjad Hussain, Published by Bangladesh Institute of
Islamic Thought Dhaka. First Published in 1992 2nd Edition in 2006
ISBN : Page-252, Price : Tk. 175, US\$ 20*

This Writtings is Illuminating, scholarly, and a superb work on comparative religion. It Indicates commonplace ideas and misconceptions about different religious beliefs. Syed Sajjad Hussain sheds light on the major religions– other than Islam– practiced across the globe such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism as well as some cults like Sikhism, Parseeism, Jainism, Animism and Paganism. He also discusses religions practiced in the modern West, China, and Japan since the ancient time to the present. Quite unprecedentedly, he examines the leading proponents of the discourse of comparative religion and locates them in their spatio-temporal contexts. Most importantly, his keen

observation can potentially stir young Muslims to see beyond stereotypes and help them discover the dynamics of a greater world in terms of religion.

Hussain spells out subtle points, which are most often abstruse to a young Muslim learner, of both similarity and divergence between Islam and other religions that have been misrepresented by non-Muslim writers in their books. Considering the governing factors in the world's cultural climate, he lucidly explains those points with convincing arguments. In different places of the book, ethical issues inextricable from religion are also enacted with regard to theological evolution such as monotheistic and polytheistic beliefs. The final section, 'A Note on Islam', briefly sums up the concept of Godhead and religion in Islam. He thus provides valuable insights into the commonalities of different schools of thoughts explored in his intellectual quest. As the book looks beyond the prisms of commonplaces in religion, it encourages the reader to reconsider religious issues. Yet the language used in the book is easily understandable to a young Muslim reader.

The book is an essential read for young Muslims as it will introduce them to the major belief systems in the world and thus will enable them to compare Islam with other faiths. In a world of *continuing exclusion* and parochialism, dialogues between the adherents of different religions is a prerequisite to establish a climate of understanding and tolerance in order to ensure peaceful co-existence between people from different religions. This book will equip promising Muslim scholars with the required knowledge about other faiths in order for them to engage more productively in interfaith dialogues. Like his other important works, *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Religions in the World* will continue to attest to Syed Sajjad Hussain's impeccable scholarship.

Reviewed by-

Md. Saifullah,

Dept. of English, Dhaka University.

গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলাম

দি অ্যামেরিকান জার্নাল অব ইসলামিক সোসায়াল সায়েন্সেস-এর বিভিন্ন ইস্যু থেকে নির্বাচিত প্রবন্ধসমূহের সংকলন গ্রন্থ। এটি অনুবাদ করেছেন এম রুহুল আমিন, সম্পাদনা করেছেন মুহাম্মদ আবদুল আযিয, প্রকাশ করেছেন বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইসলামিক থ্যাট, আইএসবিএন : ৯৮৪-৮২০৩-৪১-৫, প্রকাশকাল : আগস্ট ২০০৫, পৃষ্ঠা সংখ্যা : ৯৬, মূল্য: ১০০.০০ টাকা

বর্তমান বিশ্বে সবচেয়ে বেশী আলোচিত শব্দগুলোর মধ্যে অন্যতম হচ্ছে গণতন্ত্র এবং ইসলাম। আবার গণতন্ত্র এবং ইসলাম নিয়ে বিতর্কেরও শেষ নাই। অনেকে মনে করেন গণতন্ত্র এবং ইসলাম দুইটা ভিন্ন মতাদর্শ। অনেকে আবার মনে করেন গণতন্ত্র এবং ইসলাম পরস্পরের পরিপূরক। কিন্তু গণতন্ত্রকে ইসলামের প্রতিপক্ষ ভাবেন এমন লোকের সংখ্যাও একবোরে কম নয়। গণতান্ত্রিক পদ্ধতিতে ইসলামী আদর্শ বাস্তবায়ন করা সম্ভব এটা যেমন অনেকে বিশ্বাস করেন তেমনি ইসলামী আদর্শের বাস্তবায়ন হলে গণতন্ত্রের লেশ মাত্রও আবার থাকবেনা এটাও কিছু লোক বিশ্বাস করেন।

এরকম অবস্থায় ‘গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলাম’ এই শিরোনামে অত্র পুস্তকের প্রকাশনা বাংলা ভাষার অনুবাদ সাহিত্যে একটা অনন্য সংযোজন। কারণ এই পুস্তকে গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলাম সম্পর্কে বিশ্বের খ্যাতিমান আটজন লেখকের আটটা প্রবন্ধ স্থান পেয়েছে। এই সব প্রবন্ধে গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলামের প্রকৃত স্বরূপ তুলে ধরার চেষ্টা করা হয়েছে।

বর্তমান সময়ের অন্যতম শ্রেষ্ঠ ইসলামী চিন্তাবিদ ড. ইউসুফ কারযাভী গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলাম প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন - “কারো কারো ভয় গণতন্ত্র মানুষের ক্ষমতার উৎস বানিয়ে দেয় এমনকি এটি বিধি বিধানও বানিয়ে থাকে, তাদের এ ভয়কে আমলে নেয়ার প্রয়োজন নেই। বিধি বিধান প্রণয়নের মালিক একমাত্র আল্লাহ্। এ মূলনীতির মাধ্যমে আমাদের এটি জানা থাকা দরকার যে পরিবর্তনশীল জীবন আর পার্থিব প্রয়োজন মেটানোর নিমিত্ত বিধি বিধান প্রণয়নে উম্মাহকে যে ক্ষমতা আল্লাহ্ দিয়েছেন তা তিনি নিয়ে নেননি” অর্থাৎ গণতন্ত্র এবং ইসলাম পরস্পর প্রতিপক্ষ নয় বরং পরিপূরক।

প্রখ্যাত চিন্তানায়ক ড. আব্দুলহামিদ আবুসোলায়মান ইসলামী স্বাধীনতা ও গণতন্ত্র প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন- “ইসলামী পদ্ধতির একটি মূল নীতি হলো কুরআনে স্পষ্টভাবে যা নিষিদ্ধ নয় তাই বৈধ বা হালাল, বা যা সমাজের মূল স্বার্থের বিরুদ্ধে নয় তাই বৈধ। এ অবস্থার প্রেক্ষিতে ইসলামে কোনটা বৈধ আর কোনটা বৈধ নয় তা আমরা বুঝতে পারি। আবুসোলায়মানের এ প্রবন্ধের মাধ্যমে ইসলামে স্বাধীনতা ও গণতন্ত্র তথা জনগণের অধিকারের পরিধি যে অনেক বিস্তৃত এবং বিশাল তাই প্রমানিত হয়েছে।

“গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলাম” মালেক বেন্নাবী’র দর্শন প্রবন্ধে বেন্নাবীর ধারণা- ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ গণতান্ত্রিক ধারণার মধ্যে মানুষের নিরাপত্তা ও অধিকারের বিষয়টি নিশ্চিত হলেও মানুষকে এ ধরনের গণতন্ত্র কোন জোট বিশ্বাস ও কোন শ্রেণীর একনায়কত্বের হাত থেকে বাঁচাতে

পারেনা। এই বক্তব্য যে কতখানি নির্মম সত্য বর্তমান সমাজের দিকে তাকালে আমরা যথার্থভাবে অনুধাবন করতে পারি। বেন্নাবীর মতে ইসলামেই রয়েছে প্রকৃত গণতন্ত্র। ইসলামেই রাজনৈতিক গণতন্ত্র এবং সামাজিক গণতন্ত্রের সমন্বয় ঘটেছে।

প্রখ্যাত রাজনীতিবিদ এবং ইসলামী চিন্তানায়ক ড. হাসান আল তুরাবী ‘ইসলাম ও গণতন্ত্র রাষ্ট্র ও পশ্চিমা দেশসমূহ’ নামক প্রবন্ধে বলেছেন- সংখ্যালঘুদের সমস্যার সমাধান করতে হবে। এই সমস্যাটি আজ নতুন নয়। প্রথম ইসলাম রাষ্ট্রটি শুধুই মুসলমানদের রাষ্ট্রই ছিলনা। এ রাষ্ট্রে ইহুদীরা ছিল। তাদের স্বায়ত্বশাসন ছিল, তাদেরকে রাষ্ট্রের তরফ থেকে সহায়-সম্মল ও স্বাধীনতা দেয়া হয়েছিল। এই বক্তব্যের মাধ্যমে ইসলামী রাষ্ট্রে সংখ্যালঘুদের কোন অধিকার থাকবেনা, তাদেরকে ইসলামী রাষ্ট্রে থেকে বিতাড়ন করা হবে ইত্যাদি যেসব অমূলক অভিযোগ উত্থাপন করা হয় তার যথার্থ জবাব ড. তুরাবী এই প্রবন্ধে দিয়েছেন।

ইসলাম ও গণতন্ত্র, কুরআন, হাদিস ও ইতিহাস নামক প্রবন্ধে প্রখ্যাত চিন্তাবিদ প্রফেসর আহরার আহমদ লিখেছেন- ইসলাম কোনো রাজতন্ত্র বা উত্তরাধিকার নির্বাচনে পক্ষপাতিত্ব প্রদর্শন সমর্থন করেনা। অর্থাৎ ইসলামে রাজতন্ত্র, একনায়কতন্ত্র, পরিবারতন্ত্র তথা জনবিরোধী কোন মতবাদের স্থান নেই এবং গণতন্ত্রের সাথে ইসলামের কোন বিরোধ নেই।

জনগণের সার্বভৌমত্ব, গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলাম নামক প্রবন্ধে প্রখ্যাত রাষ্ট্রচিন্তানায়ক গেণ্ডন ই পেরী লিখেছেন - সাধারণ অর্থে গণতন্ত্রের জন্য প্রয়োজন জনগণের সার্বভৌমত্ব। প্রকৃতপক্ষে এটি কল্পনা ছাড়া কিছু নয়, সার্বভৌমত্বের কৌশলগত প্রকৃতি তাই প্রমাণ করে। এর সাথে ইসলামের কোনো বিরোধ নেই। কেননা, এখানে যে কোন সিদ্ধান্ত জনগণ বা তাদের প্রতিনিধির মাধ্যমেই গ্রহণ করা হয়ে থাকে। সেজন্য বিভিন্ন সীমাবদ্ধতার মধ্যেও গণতন্ত্রের চাবিকাঠি হলো জনগণের কার্যকর নিয়ন্ত্রণ (যেমন আল্লাহ প্রদত্ত কোন কোন অপরিবর্তনীয় আইন)। এটি জনগণের সার্বভৌমত্বের দুর্বোধ্য কোন তত্ত্ব নয় যা ইসলামে আল্লাহর সার্বভৌমত্বের সাথে বিরোধের সৃষ্টি করতে পারে। এটি মানুষের সার্বভৌমত্বের একটি রূপ যার মধ্যে জনগণের সম্পৃক্ততা রয়েছে। অর্থাৎ আল্লাহর সার্বভৌমত্বের স্বীকৃতির মাধ্যমেই প্রকৃতপক্ষে জনগণের সার্বভৌমত্ব কায়ম করা সম্ভব। অন্যথায় সেখানে জনগণের সার্বভৌমত্বের নামে একদলীয় স্বৈরাচার, গণতান্ত্রিক স্বৈরাচার তথা বিভিন্ন প্রকারের দুঃশাসন চালানো হয়।

গণতন্ত্র ও ইসলামী রাষ্ট্র প্রবন্ধে প্রফেসর ফজলুর রহমান লিখেছেন- ইসলামী রাষ্ট্রের সবচেয়ে বেশী জরুরী হলো রাষ্ট্রের প্রতিরক্ষা এবং রাষ্ট্রের সংহতি রক্ষা করা। আইন শৃংখলা রক্ষা করা এবং রাষ্ট্রকে এমন পর্যায়ে উন্নত করা যাতে এর জনগণ তাদের মেধা শক্তির বিকাশ ঘটাতে পারে এবং রাষ্ট্রের উন্নয়নে তার ব্যবহার করতে পারে। এজন্য প্রয়োজন একটি কেন্দ্রীয় কর্তৃপক্ষ। এ কর্তৃপক্ষ এমন যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন হবে যাতে এটি দেশের উন্নয়নে সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করতে পারে এবং তা বাস্তবায়নও করতে পারে। কখনো কখনো এ কর্তৃপক্ষ অপ্রিয় হলেও উন্নয়নমূলক কার্যবলী চালিয়ে নিতে পারবে। বিভিন্ন প্রয়োজনের কারণে দূরদৃষ্টিসম্পন্ন শক্তিশালী নেতার প্রয়োজন। নির্বাহী প্রধান হিসাবে তার থাকবে দক্ষতা ও সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের

ক্ষমতা। জনগণ দ্বারা এ কর্তৃপক্ষ নির্বাচিত হবে এবং সবার কাছে তিনি আস্থাভাজন হবেন। এখানে পরিস্কারভাবে বলা হয়েছে নির্বাহী কর্তৃপক্ষ অবশ্যই জনগণ কর্তৃক নির্বাচিত হবেন অর্থাৎ ইসলামে শৈরতুল্লাহ, একনায়কতন্ত্র এবং রাজতন্ত্রের কোন সুযোগ নেই। কেবলমাত্র গনতান্ত্রিকভাবে নির্বাচিত প্রতিনিধিরাই দেশ শাসনের অধিকার পাবেন।

বর্তমান সময়ের অন্যতম সেরা ইসলামী চিন্তাবিদ শাহ আবদুল হান্নান 'ইসলামের প্রেক্ষিতে গণতন্ত্র' প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন - ইসলামী চিন্তাবিদ ও মুসলিম জনগণ ভোটাধিকার, আইনের শাসন এবং জনগণের নির্বাচিত সরকারই চায়। এসব বোঝাবার জন্যই আজকাল 'গণতন্ত্র' শব্দটি ব্যবহার করা হয়। সার্বিক প্রেক্ষিতে আমরা বলতে পারি যে, গণতন্ত্র শব্দ গ্রহণ করার মধ্যে কোন অসুবিধা নেই। পাশ্চাত্যে ইসলাম সম্পর্কে ভুল বোঝাবুঝি রয়েছে যে ইসলাম আত্মসী এবং একনায়কত্ববাদী -এর ফলে এসব দূর হবে। মুসলিম বিশ্বেও এর ফলে রাজা-বাদশাহ ও শৈরশাসকগণ অন্যায়া সুযোগ গ্রহণ করতে পারবেনা। আমরা দেখছি যে, বিভিন্ন শাসনতন্ত্রে ব্যবহার ছাড়াও ইসলামী চিন্তাবিদগণ ইতোমধ্যেই গণতন্ত্র পরিভাষাটি গ্রহণ করেছেন। এটি সংগত। আমরা আশা করি এ আলোচনা গণতন্ত্র এর পরিভাষা সম্পর্কে বিতর্ক দূর করতে সহায়তা করবে।

'গণতন্ত্র' পরিভাষাটির ব্যবহার ইসলাম এবং মুসলিম স্বার্থের সহায়ক হিসাবে পরিগণিত হবে, শাহ আবদুল হান্নান সাহেবের এই নিবন্ধ থেকে তাই এটা সুস্পষ্ট হয়ে উঠে। প্রকৃতপক্ষে গণতন্ত্র এবং ইসলাম সম্পর্কে বিভিন্ন ভুল বোঝাবুঝি নিরসনে বিশ্বখ্যাত লেখকদের এই আটটি প্রবন্ধদের সংকলন যথেষ্ট সহায়ক হবে বলে মনে হয়। AJISS থেকে প্রবন্ধসমূহ নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রে এম. আবদুল আযিয যথেষ্ট দক্ষতার পরিচয় দিয়েছেন। প্রফেসর ড. ইউএবি রাজিয়া আকতার বানুর সংক্ষিপ্ত অথচ সমৃদ্ধ ভূমিকা বইটির মান বৃদ্ধিতে সহায়ক হয়েছে। অনুবাদক এম. রুহুল আমিন মোটামুটিভাবে ভালই অনুবাদ করেছেন। সারা বিশ্বের বাংলাভাষাভাষী গণতন্ত্রকামী ছাত্র, শিক্ষক এবং বুদ্ধিজীবী সমাজ, যারা ইসলামী সমাজ বিনির্মাণে কাজ করে যাচ্ছেন তাদের চিন্তা চেতনাকে আরও সমৃদ্ধ করতে বইটি ব্যাপক ভূমিকা রাখবে। তাই আমরা বইটির বহুল পাঠ, ব্যাপক প্রচার এবং প্রসার কামনা করি। এই তথ্যসমৃদ্ধ বইটি প্রকাশ করার জন্য BIIT কে অনেক অনেক ধন্যবাদ।

রিভিউ করেছেন-

মীর কামাল চৌধুরী

সিনিয়র শিক্ষক, সরকার ও রাজনীতি বিভাগ, এশিয়ান ইউনিভার্সিটি অব বাংলাদেশ