

# The Emergence of Moderates as a New Muslim Sect and Its Potential Impact on Islamic Identity Forever

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<p><b>Abstract:</b> Islam today has numerous branches, each claiming to follow the true path. However, a new challenge has emerged within every sect, the rise of moderate Muslims. These moderates selectively choose which religious obligations to follow, prioritizing personal convenience. This selective approach renders them largely unaccountable, creating an uncontrolled segment of society that indulges in personal pleasures while justifying their actions as permissible (halal). Their openly visible lifestyle also influences others, encouraging more individuals to adopt similar practices under the label of "proud moderate Muslims." This research examines how Islam, with its various sects, is responding to the challenge posed by moderates and whether it can preserve its identity. Over time, the influence of moderates is expected to grow, shaping Islam's overall identity. The study also evaluates the doctrinal legitimacy of the Ahl-i-Hadith and Tablighi Jamaat movements within the parameters of Shariah, assessing their adherence to Quranic injunctions and Prophetic traditions (Sunnah). Additionally, it explores the contemporary challenges these movements face, particularly in light of the increasing influence of moderate Muslims, which is shaping new paradigms of Islamic identity in the modern era.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Review Paper</b></p>
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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of digital information and communication, where vast amounts of knowledge are accessible to a global audience, it is regrettable that Islam, as a religious system, has not effectively leveraged these advancements to foster unity. Despite the

widespread availability of doctrinal evidence in the public domain, sectarian [1], divisions persist due to the absence of a standardized interpretative framework. The reliance on religious clerics for doctrinal guidance, rather than direct engagement with religious texts, has contributed to the proliferation of sects. Furthermore, the pursuit of socio-political influence and material gains [2],

<sup>1</sup>*Sunan Abu Dawud Volume 5, page 156-Hadith 4597.* It was narrated from Abu - 'Amir Al-Hawzani that Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyān stood up among us and said: "The Messenger of Allah - stood up among us and said: 'Those who came before you of the people of the Book split into seventy-two sects, and this *Ummah* will split into seventy-three sects, seventy-two of which will be in the Fire, and one in Paradise. That is the *Jama'ah* (main group of Muslims)." Ibn Yaya and 'Amr RA' added in their *Hadith*: "And there will emerge among my *Ummah* people who will be dominated by those whims and desires as rabies dominates its victim." 'Amr said: "Rabies does not leave any vein or joint of its victim but it enters it." (*Hasan*)

*Sunan ibn Majah Volume 5, page 204 Hadith 3992.* It was narrated from 'Awf bin Maik that the Messenger of Allah SWT said: "The Jews split into seventy-one sects,

one of which will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of which will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah (*PBUH*), who are they?" He said: "The main body." (*Hasan*)

3993. It was narrated from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah SWT said: 'The Children of Israel split into seventy-one sects and my nation will split into, seventy-two, all of which will be in Hell apart from one, which is the main body.' (*Sahih*)

<sup>2</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volumn 9, page 251 (7) CHAPTER. What is said against judging (in religion) made on the basis of one's own opinion or by *Qiyas* (without referring to the Qur'ān or the *Sunna*).

by some religious leaders has exacerbated theological fragmentation, necessitating the institutionalization of sectarian identities [3], even in direct contradiction to the Prophet's (PBUH) explicit warnings [4], against schisms [5], within the Muslim community.

The development of the four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence occurred well after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These scholars played a crucial role in providing legal and theological guidance to the expanding Muslim Ummah, which had encountered diverse cultural, linguistic, and social landscapes. These legal scholars sought to codify methodologies for deriving rulings on contemporary

issues while remaining within the parameters of Sharia. However, it is erroneous to equate these schools with Islam itself, as the Quran does not advocate for the institutionalization of sectarian divisions. Instead, it consistently emphasizes the oneness of the Ummah [6], and warns against schisms.

Sectarian distinctions often arise from variations in ritual practices, with some groups incorporating elements not present during the early Islamic period. Over time, extrinsic cultural and religious influences have shaped Muslim observances, leading to the adoption of practices [7], that were historically foreign to Islam. For instance, the commemoration of the

(And the Statement of Allah SWT) "And follow not (O man, i.e., say not, or do not, or witness not) that of which you have no knowledge (e.g. one's saying: I have seen," while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard", while he has not heard)..(V.17:36)

(1) (Ch .7) Verdicts and judgements given by Islamic religious scholars. These are given on the following proofs respectively: (a) From the Holy Book (the Qur'an). (b) From the Prophet's *Sunna*. (c) From the unanimously accepted verdict of the *Mujtahidin* (independent religious scholars who do not follow anybody blindly but with proof from all over the Muslim world). (d) *Qiyas*, i.e., the verdict given by a *Mujtahid* who considered the case similar in comparison to a case judged by the Prophet. *Qiyas*=is not to be practised except if the judgement of the case is not found in the first three proofs, (a), (b) and (c).

<sup>3</sup>(11) CHAPTER. The Statement of Allah "... or to cover you with confusion in party strife..." (V.6:65)

Saheeh Bukhari Volumn 9, page 256, Hadith 7313. Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah RA When it was revealed to Allah's Messenger PBUH: "Say: He has power to send torment on you from above.....(V.6:65) He PBUH said, "O Allah! I seek refuge with Your Face (from that punishment)." And when it was revealed:

"... or from under your feet.....(V.6 :65) He PBUH said, "O Allah! I seek refuge with Your Face (from that)." And when it was revealed: "... or to cover you with confusion in party strife, and make you to taste the violence of one another,..." (V.6:65) he said: "These two warnings are easier (than the previous ones)."

<sup>4</sup>Verse 06:159- As for those who divided<sup>985</sup> their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did.

985 Divide their religion: Farraqu: i.e. (1) makes a distinction between one part of it and another, take the part which suits them and reject the rest: or (2) have religion one day of the week and the world the rest of the six days: or (3) keep "religion in its right place," as if it did not claim to govern the whole life: Make a sharp distinction between secular and the religious, or (4) show a sectarian bias, seek differences in views, so as to break up the unity of Islam.

<sup>5</sup>Verse 30:32 Those who split up their religion, and became (mere) Sects,- each party rejoicing in that which<sup>3544</sup> is with itself!

3542 Din Qaiyim here includes the whole life, thoughts and desires of man. The "standard Religion," or the Straight Way is thus contrasted with the various human systems that conflict with each other and call themselves separate "religion" or "sects" (see verse 32 below). Allah's standard Religion is one, as Allah is One.

3544 A good description of self-satisfied sectarianism as against real Religion. See n. 3542 above.

<sup>6</sup>Verse 2: 143- Thus have We made of you An Ummat justly balanced.<sup>143</sup> that ye might be witness<sup>144</sup> over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves;

143- Justly balanced: The essence of Islam is to avoid all extravagances on either side. It is sober. Practical religion. But the Arabic word (wasat) also implies a touch of the literal meaning of intermediacy. Geographically Arabia is in an intermediate position in the old world, as was proved in history by the rapid expansion of Islam, north, south, west and east.

144- Witness: When two persons dispute, they advance extravagant claims. A just witness comes between them, brings the light of reason to bear on them, pruning all their selfish extravagance. So the mission of Islam is to curb, for instance, the extreme formalism of the Mosaic law and the extreme "other-worldliness" professed by Christianity. The witness must be unselfish, equipped with first-hand knowledge, and ready to intervene in the cause of justice. Such is the position claimed by Islam among rival systems. Similarly, within Islam itself, the position of witness to whom disputants can appeal is held by Muhammad Al-Mustafa.

<sup>7</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volumn 9, page 258, Hadith 7319(14) CHAPTER. The statement of the Prophet., "Certainly you (Muslims!) will follow the ways of those who were before you (i.e., Jews and Christians)."

7319. Narrated Abu Hurairah The Prophet PBUH said, "The Hour will not be established till my followers copy the deeds of the previous nations and follow them very closely, span by span, and cubit by cubit (i.e., inch by inch)." It was said, "O Allah's Messenger! Do you mean by those (nations) the Persians and the Byzantines?" The Prophet PBUH said, "Who can it be other than they?"

Prophet's (PBUH) birth through Mawlid (Milad-i-Nabi) [8], reflects a parallel to Christian Christmas traditions. Similarly, cultural assimilation has impacted social customs, as seen in the prevalence of gender mixing at weddings in South Asian Muslim communities and the widespread adoption of dowry-an imported tradition that contradicts the Islamic principle of mahr, which serves as financial security for the bride. Such developments illustrate how cultural convergence can obscure the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence and social ethics.

The *Shah Bano* [9], case stands as a seminal moment in Indian Muslim legal history, highlighting the complex interplay between religious personal laws and constitutional principles of gender justice. The case arose when Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman, sought post-divorce maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) after being unilaterally divorced by her husband. Given her financial vulnerability and responsibility for three children, her plea triggered intense legal and socio-political discourse. The case ultimately questioned whether the rights of Muslim women should be governed by personal laws or by the broader, secular legal framework of India. The media's coverage largely framed Islamic jurisprudence as regressive, reinforcing narratives that positioned Sharia law in opposition to women's rights.

During the Supreme Court hearings, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) argued that Quranic provisions for post-divorce maintenance applied exclusively to devout and God-fearing Muslims, rather than to the Muslim community [10], at large. This interpretation was met with sharp judicial criticism, with the court questioning whether adherence to piety and righteousness should be selectively applied, (applying AIMPLB argument means Islam don't want every

Saheeh Bukhari Volumn 9, page 258, Hadith 7320. Narrated Abū Sa'id Al-Khudri: The Prophet said, "You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit (i.e., inch by inch) so much so that even if they entered a hole of a mastigure, you would follow them." We said, "O Allah's Messenger! (Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?" He said, "Whom else?" (See H. 3456)

<sup>8</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volumn 9, page 259, Hadith 732115) CHAPTER. The sin of the person who invites others to an evil deed or establishes a bad tradition, for Allah *SWT* says:

"...and also of the burdens of those whom they misled without knowledge.. ." (V.16:25)

7321. Narrated 'Abdullāh The Prophet PBUH said, "None is killed unjustly, but the first son of Adam will have a part of its burden." Sufyan said, "A part of its blood because he was the first to establish the tradition of murdering."

<sup>9</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/doc/823221/>

Muslim to be pious and righteous) implicitly challenging the logic of the argument and its implications for broader legal equity. The ruling ultimately reaffirmed a constitutional approach to justice, asserting that maintenance rights extend beyond religious prescriptions and are subject to the broader principles of Indian law.

A significant legal and theological dilemma [11], arose when a man, after issuing a valid divorce to his wife, resumed marital relations without undergoing the requisite Islamic procedures for reconciliation. The subsequent birth of children within this irregular union led to a legal dispute regarding their legitimacy and inheritance rights. The court ultimately ruled that, under the prevailing legal framework of Muslim Law, the children were deemed illegitimate and ineligible to inherit, revealing the legal and religious consequences of neglecting proper Sharia protocols in matters of marriage and divorce.

Numerous legal cases involving Muslims have drawn public scrutiny, often highlighting deficiencies in religious awareness and governance within the community. Disputes over Waqf property management, conflicts concerning mosque administration, and family property disagreements reflect deeper systemic issues. Additionally, the prevalence of controversial practices such as *Halala* [12], and *Mut'ah* [13], (temporary marriage), as reported in the media, points to both a lack of understanding of Islamic jurisprudence and the failure of religious leadership to enforce doctrinal integrity. The persistence of such cases underscores the urgent need for enhanced religious education and the reinforcement of structured Islamic legal oversight to prevent deviations from fundamental religious principles.

Islam today has numerous branches [14], each claiming to follow the true path. However, a new

<sup>10</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/docfragment/823221/?big=2&formInput=quran>

<sup>11</sup><https://indiankanoon.org/doc/655532/>

<sup>12</sup>a process that makes a divorced woman permissible for her first husband to remarry her (by marrying her to another person and after consummation of marriage second husband divorce her so that she became permissible to marriage her first husband again. (It is artificial arrangement in present its present form), See documentary from BBC:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLvNMIIMWhw>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/hyderabad-mutah-marriages-sheikhs-gulf-countries-minor-girls-investigation-2644868-2024-12-04>

<sup>14</sup>Verse 45:28 And thou wilt see every nation bowing the knee<sup>4766</sup> every nation will be called to its Record: "This Day shall ye be recomposed for all that ye did!

4766 Bowing the knee: the key phrase of the Sura, and its title. Cf. xix. 72. Whatever the arrogance of the wicked may be in this life, the time will come when they will humbly submit and bow the knee to the Truth.

challenge has emerged within every sect-the presence of *moderate Muslims* [15]. These moderates selectively decide which religious obligations to follow and which to disregard. Their ability to pick and choose religious duties according to personal convenience renders them largely unaccountable, creating an uncontrolled segment of society that indulges in personal pleasures while justifying their actions as permissible (*halal*). At the same time, their openly visible lifestyle influences others, leading more individuals to adopt similar practices under the label of "proud moderate Muslims."

It is an important area of research to examine how Islam, with its various sects, is responding to the challenge posed by moderates and whether it can preserve its identity. Over time, the influence of moderates is expected to grow, shaping the overall identity of Islam. If the current trend continues, divisions among Muslim sects may inadvertently pave the way for the dominance of moderate Islam. As a result, the weakest sects may dissolve first, and the process will persist unless Islamic scholars (*Ulema*) recognize the threat and take decisive steps to safeguard religious identity.

This study conducts a critical theological analysis of the *Ahl-i-Hadith* and *Tablighi Jamaat* movements, tracing their historical evolution from reformist endeavors aimed at reviving Islamic consciousness to their eventual institutionalization as distinct sectarian identities. The research evaluates their doctrinal legitimacy within the parameters of *Shariah*, assessing their adherence to Quranic injunctions and Prophetic traditions (*Sunnah*). Furthermore, it examines whether their theological frameworks align with the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) or if their doctrinal developments have introduced elements of exclusivity that diverge from mainstream Islamic thought. The study also investigates their contemporary challenges, particularly in the face of increasing influence from *moderate Muslims*, who adopt a selective approach to religious obligations, thereby shaping new paradigms of Islamic identity in the modern era.

## METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper relies on two types of data sources. The first consists of Islamic sources, specifically the Quran and the six books of authentic Hadith, while excluding any other sources from the discussion. These

Before Allah, when their Record is produced, they must necessarily be dumb.

<sup>15</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volumn 9, page 252, Hadeeth no 7307. Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: I heard the Prophet; saying, "Allah will not deprive you of knowledge after he has given it to you, but it will be taken away through the

seven sources are considered because they are universally accepted by all Islamic sects as genuine and authentic. In contrast, other Hadith collections face questions regarding their authenticity, leading to differing interpretations among sects. Even Islamic literature associated with the *Ahl-i-Hadith* and *Tablighi Jamaat* sects is included only after careful examination to relate and analyze their principles critically in comparison to the Quran and Sahih Hadith.

In Islam, the Quran holds the highest authority. Nothing is accepted if it contradicts the Quran. Any referenced material, including Hadith, must align with or confirm the Quran's message. If a Hadith appears to contradict the Quran, it suggests that the Hadith may be inauthentic, misinterpreted, or lacking essential context.

Hadiths serve as the second source of guidance for Muslims, clarifying what is commanded and what is prohibited. They illustrate the practical application of Quranic directives, as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through his actions, thereby establishing how these commands should be observed. Additionally, Hadiths address societal issues by depicting how the Prophet resolved various matters and enforced certain obligations or prohibitions. Finally, they provide guidance on *Sunnah* (recommended practices), which are rewarded when performed but are not obligatory, meaning there is no penalty for neglecting them.

Hadith literature varies in authenticity: Most scholars agree that the six books of Hadith, known as *Sahih Sitta* (The Authentic Six), compiled by Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Abu Dawud, Imam Ibn Majah Al-Qazwini, Imam An-Nasa'i, and Imam At-Tirmidhi, are reliable and widely accepted. Among them, Imam Bukhari's collection is considered the most authentic, followed by Imam Muslim's, with the remaining four ranked accordingly.

This paper follows the same hierarchy, beginning with the Quran. If further clarification is needed, it refers to Hadith, prioritizing Imam Bukhari's collection, then Imam Muslim's, and finally the other four for additional perspectives. When Hadiths appear in multiple sources with the same chain of narration or covering the same subject, this research references only Imam Bukhari or Imam Muslim to avoid unnecessary repetition.

This paper also exercises discretion in selecting Hadiths that are clearer and more accessible to an

death of the religious learned men with their knowledge. Then there will remain ignorant people who, when consulted, will give verdicts according to their opinions whereby they will mislead others and will go astray."

international audience, rather than using lengthy Hadiths that address multiple subjects simultaneously-provided that the meaning and context of the topic remain unchanged.

The research primarily involves an in-depth study of the Quran, which consists of 114 *Surahs* (chapters), and *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, which spans nine volumes. From his collection of over 300,000 Hadiths, Imam Bukhari selected 7,563, all of which are regarded as unquestionably authentic and offer extensive insights into various issues addressed within Hadith literature.

Sahih Muslim spans seven volumes, containing 7,563 Hadiths categorized into 54 "books," each explained in detail. Sunan Abu Dawud consists of six volumes with 5,274 Hadiths, Sunan Ibn Majah has five volumes with 4,341 Hadiths, Sunan An-Nasa'i includes six volumes with 5,761 Hadiths, and Jami' At-Tirmidhi comprises six volumes with 3,956 Hadiths.

All seven works have been translated into English and published by Darussalam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, ensuring a clear and reliable source of information.

The second source of information consists of data from research scholars and published material with academic validity. The formation of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement and its ideology can be studied in the works of Khan, Rahmatullah, and Metcalf. Similarly, the Tablighi Jamaat is analyzed through the works of Lone and Malik, along with their religious literature, *Fazail-i-Amal*.

Additionally, legal cases, news articles, and documentary evidence are referenced for readers interested in topics such as *Halala* and *Mut'ah*. These sources provide authoritative insights, and citations are marked for open discussion.

The paper is divided into 11 sections, with the introduction as the first section and the methodology and literature review as the second. The third section focuses on the Quran and its authenticity as the final revelation. Section four examines the language of the Quran,

discussing how the divine revelation was delivered in pure Arabic and how its clarity remains unquestionable, allowing even a simple Arab to understand its meaning and the instructions it provides.

Section five emphasizes the role of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), explaining that he is the last prophet in a long line of prophets who repeatedly conveyed the same message for the salvation of humanity. After him, all avenues for any further divine revelation are closed, as the Quran is the final divine message.

Section six discusses the origin of Ahl-i-Hadith, how their movement to purify Islam evolved into a sect, and the fundamental principles on which it was established. It also briefly examines the work of a notable Ahl-i-Hadith leader, Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan.

Section seven focuses on the Tablighi Jamaat, analyzing the reasons for its establishment, the work of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi, his methodology in spreading the ideology, and how it became a leading religious organization with an international presence. Section eight provides a summary of how these two organizations oppose each other, contributing to the fragmentation of Muslim religious spaces.

Section nine defines moderates and explores how their presence alters the original identity of Islam, reshapes the religious landscape by absorbing weaker sects, and poses a challenge to others. The discussion continues in section ten, examining the impact of moderates on Islamic sects and explaining why they are perceived as a threat to Islamic identity. Finally, section eleven presents the conclusion, addressing the potential future impact of moderates, strategies to counter their influence, and ways to preserve Islamic identity against their effects.

### The Quran -The Final Revelation

The Quran, as an embodiment of Allah's mercy, delineates its primary objective of revelation [16], to elucidate divine guidance for the believers and unify them under a singular faith. Another verse [17], unequivocally states that Allah has revealed the Quran as

<sup>16</sup>Verse 16:64 And We sent down the Book to thee so that that thou shouldst make clear to them those things in which<sup>2091</sup> they differ, and that it should be a guide and a mercy to those who believe.

2091. But the path of duty before Allah's Messenger is clear. He is sent with the Revelation (the Quran) for three express purposes; (1) that he should bring about unity among the jarring sects, for the Gospel of Unity, while preaching the One True God, leads also to the unity of mankind; (2) that the revelation should be a guide to right conduct; and (3) that it should show the path of repentance and Salvation, and thus be the highest mercy to erring sinners.

<sup>17</sup>Verse 6:92 And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings,<sup>912</sup> and confirming (The revelations) which come before it: that thou Mayest warn the Mother<sup>913</sup> of Cities and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this (Book), and they are constant in guarding their Prayers.<sup>914</sup>

912. Mubarak: blessed, as having received Allah's blessing: bringer of blessing to others, as having been blessed by Allah. Allah's highest blessing is the Guidance and Light which the Book brings to us, and which brings us nearer to Him.

913. Mother of Cities: Makkah now the Qibla and Centre of Islam. If this verse was (like the greater part of the

a testament to prior scriptures granted to prophets preceding Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), with the directive that its message be propagated universally. Moreover, verse (17:105) [18], substantiates the Quran's divine authenticity, affirming its role in admonishing sinners about the repercussions of their transgressions while proclaiming the divine recompense for the faithful.

The Quran was revealed progressively [19], addressing various circumstances and guiding believers [20], in different contexts. Those who are pious and well-versed in the teachings of previous scriptures, such as the Old Testament, immediately recognized its divine origin as the true message from Allah. Furthermore, the Quran conveys to the Prophet [21], that this revelation is from Allah, the All-Wise and All-Knowing [22]. The specific verse reaffirms that the Quran is a divine scripture originating from Allah, who encompasses all wisdom. These verses unequivocally affirm to every Muslim that

Chapter) revealed in Makkah before the Hijrat, and before Makkah was made the Qibla of Islam. Makkah was nonetheless the Mother of Cities, being traditionally associated with Abraham (see ii. 125 and n.217 to ii. 197).

All round Makkah: would mean, the whole world if we look upon Makkah as the Centre.

914. An earnest study of the Quran is true worship: so is Prayer, and so are all deeds of goodness and charity.

<sup>18</sup>Verse 17: 105 We sent down the (Quran) in Truth, and in Truth<sup>2315</sup> has it descended: and We sent thee but to give Glad tidings and to warn (sinners).<sup>2316</sup>

2315. The Quran was sent down by Allah in Truth: it was not forged by any mortal. It has descended in Truth: it was not and has not been falsified or corrupted in the process of the Hereafter.

2316. The part of the Prophet was that of a Messenger: he was not responsible if the ungodly rejected it. He fulfilled his mission in promulgating and explaining it and leaving it as a legacy to the world.

<sup>19</sup>Verse 17:106 (It is) a Quran which We have divided (Into parts from time to time), in order that thou mightiest recite it in men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages.<sup>2317</sup>

2317. The marvel is that these parts, revealed at different times and in different circumstances, should fit together so closely and consistently as they do. All revelation is progressive. The previous revelations were also progressive. Each of them marked a stage in the world's spiritual history. Man's mind does not take in more than his spiritual state will have prepared him, for Allah's revelation comes as a light to illuminate our difficulties and show us the way in actual situations that arise.

<sup>20</sup>Verse 17:107 Say: "Whether ye believe in it or not, it is true that those who were given<sup>2318</sup> knowledge beforehand, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration,

2318. No one's belief or unbelief affects the beauty or grandeur of Allah's revelation. But those endowed with spiritual knowledge or insight know at once when they

the Quran is the divine word of Allah, leaving no room for doubt regarding its purpose or its origin.

The Quran, in response to the objections of disbelievers, presents a profound challenge-daring them to produce ten [23], surahs of equal eloquence and depth, seeking assistance from any they wish. Addressing the accusation of fabrication, the Quran further intensifies this challenge in verse 2:23 [24], instructing them to bring forth even a single surah of comparable nature, relying on those they invoke besides Allah. This divine challenge is reiterated in verse 10:38 [25], asserting to the non-believers that the Quran is a revelation from Allah, conveyed through His chosen servant, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The Quran is a flawless revelation, free from any distortion or inconsistency. Its message is direct, devoid of cryptic elements or ambiguous [26],

hear Allah's holy Word, and fall down and adore Allah. Those endowed with knowledge include those who had received previous revelations and had kept themselves free from corrupt ideas.

<sup>21</sup>Verse 27:06 As for thee, thou receives The Quran from One All-Wise, All-Knowing.

<sup>22</sup>Verse 45:02 The revelation<sup>4736</sup> of the Book is from Allah the Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom.

4736. This verse is the same as xl.2, except that "wisdom" is here substituted in the last line for "knowledge". This is appropriate, as in this Sura we are dealing with the folly of those who reject Allah and His Signs, while s.xl. dealt with the individual soul's witness to Faith and Virtue.

<sup>23</sup>Verse 11:13 Or they may say, "He forged it." Say. "Bring ye then ten Suras forged, like unto it, and call (To your aid) Whomsoever ye can, other than Allah!- if ye speak the truth!"<sup>1510</sup>

1510. Cf. ii. 23 and x. 38.

<sup>24</sup>Verse 2:23 And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witness or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if ye are truthful.<sup>42</sup>

42. How do we know that there is revelation, and that it is from Allah? Here is a concrete test. The Teacher of Allah's Truth has placed before you many Suras. Can you produce one like it? If there is any one besides Allah, who can inspire spiritual truth in such noble language, produce your evidence. Or is it that your doubts are merely argumentative, refractory, against your own inner light, or conscience? All true revelation is itself a miracle, and stands on its own merits.

<sup>25</sup>Verse 10:38 Or do they say, "He forged it"? Say: "Bring then a Sura like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if it be ye speak the truth!"<sup>1430</sup>

1430 Cf.ii.23 and n.42.

<sup>26</sup>Verse 18:1 Praise be to Allah,<sup>2325</sup> who hath sent to His Servant The Book, and hath allowed therein no Crookedness:<sup>2326</sup>

expressions that surpass human comprehension. The Quran presents its guidance in a clear and comprehensible manner [27], ensuring accessibility for all. Its primary objective is to caution humanity against spiritual perils and to lead them toward ultimate salvation and eternal bliss.

The Quran provides intrinsic proof of its divine origin. In verse [28], 29:47, it directly addresses the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), asserting that

2325. See n. 2324 to xvii. 111. The theme of the last Sura, that Allah is good and worthy of all praise from His creatures, to whom He has granted a clear revelation, is continued in this Sura. The spirit of man makes gradual progress upwards, through the grace and mercy of Allah. 2326. Some people's idea of a Sacred Book is that it should be full of mysteries-dark corners, ambiguous expressions, words so far removed from human speech that they cover anything or nothing. Pagan oracles were couched in language which suggested one meaning to the hearer and claimed to have the very opposite meaning in the light of the events which actually happened subsequently. They were distinctly crooked, not straight. In the next verse the "Straight" (qaiyim) is used to characterize the Quran, in contrast to this word "crooked" ('iwaj). See also xix 36 n.2488

<sup>27</sup>Verse 18:2 (He hath made it) Straight<sup>2327</sup> (and Clear) in order that He may warn (the godless) of a terrible Punishment from Him, and that He May give Glad Tidings to the Believers who work righteous deeds, that they shall have a goodly Reward,

2327. Qaiyim: straight, that which has no bends and no corners to mystify people, that which speaks clearly and unambiguously, that which guides to the right path. Cf. ix. 36, where the adjective is used for a straight usage, in contrast to usages, which tend to mystify and deceive people. The Quran is above all things straight, clear, and perspicuous. Its directions are plain for everyone to understand. Any book that deals with the highest mysteries of spiritual life must necessarily have portions whose full meaning is clearer to some minds than to others not so well prepared. But here there is nowhere any mystification, any desire to wrap up things in dark sayings repugnant to human reason. Allah's purpose is to give clear warning of spiritual dangers and lead up to the highest bliss.

<sup>28</sup>Verse 29: 47 And thus<sup>3475</sup> (it is) that We have sent down the Book to thee. So the People of the Book believe therein,<sup>3476</sup> as also do some of these<sup>3477</sup> (Pagan Arabs): and none but unbelievers reject Our Signs.

3475. It is in this spirit that all true Revelation comes from Allah. Allah is One, and His Message cannot come in one place or at one time to contradict His Message in another place or at another time in spirit, though there may be local variations according to the needs or understanding of men at any given time or place.

3476. The sincere Jews and Christians found in the holy Prophet a fulfilment of their own religion. For the names of some Jews who recognized and embraced Islam, see

Allah's message remains free from contradiction across time and place, as it is universal and unchanging for all of humanity. Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), prior to receiving revelation, was neither literate [<sup>29</sup>], nor trained in transcription. His life was openly observed by the Arabs of Makkah, who could attest that he lacked any prior capacity to compose such profound and inerrant verses. These evidences suffice for a believer, while only those who act unjustly reject them,

n.3227 to xxvi. 197. Among the Christians too, the Faith slowly won ground. Embassies were sent by the holy Prophet in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> years of the Hijrat to all the principal countries round Arabia, viz., the capital of the Byzantine Empire (Constantinople), the capital of Persian Empire (Madain), the Sasanian capital known to the West by the Greek name of Ctesiphon, (about thirty miles south of modern Baghdad), Syria, Abyssinia, and Egypt. All these (except Persia) were Christian countries. In the same connection an embassy was also sent to Yamama in Arabia itself (east of the Hijaz) where the Banu Hanifa tribe was Christian, like the Harith tribe of Najran who voluntarily sent an embassy to Madinah. All these countries except Abyssinia eventually became Muslim, and Abyssinia itself has a considerable Muslim population now and sent some Muslim converts to Madinah in the time of the Prophet himself. As a generalization it is true that the Jewish and the Christian peoples as they existed in the seventh century of the Christian era have been mainly absorbed by Islam, as well as the lands in which they predominated. Remnants of them built up new nuclei. The Roman Catholic Church conquered new lands among the northern (Germanic) Pagans and the Byzantine Church among the eastern (Slovonic) Pagans, and the Protestantism of the 16<sup>th</sup> century gave a fresh stimulus to the main ideas for which Islam stands, viz., the abolition of priest craft the right of private judgement, the simplification of ritual, and the insistence upon the simple, practical, everyday duties of life.

3477. The Pagan Arabs also gradually came in until they were all absorbed in Islam.

<sup>29</sup>Verse 29:48 And thou wast not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (Able) to transcribe it with the right hand:<sup>3478</sup> In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted.

3478. The holy Prophet was not a learned man. Before the Quran was revealed to him, he never claimed to proclaim a Message from Allah. He was not in the habit of preaching eloquent truths as from a Book, before he received his Revelation, nor was he able to write or transcribe with his own hand. If he had these worldly gifts, there would have been some plausibility in the charge of the talkers of vanities that he spoke not from inspiration but from other people's book, or that he composed the beautiful verses of the Quran himself and committed them to memory in order to recite them to people. The circumstances in which the Quran came bear their own testimony to its truth as from Allah.

as emphasized in verse [30], 29:49. The Quran's explanation should suffice [31], for the faithful and serve as a manifestation of divine mercy.

The Quran's preservation is a divine decree, with Allah Himself assuming the responsibility of safeguarding it from any corruption or distortion. As a result, no falsehood [32], can compromise its authenticity in any manner. This eternal protection [33] is evident through historical scrutiny, which establishes that the Quran has remained unchanged in its original form for more than 1,400 years.

<sup>30</sup>Verse 29:49 Nay, here are Signs self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge:<sup>3479</sup> and none but the unjust reject our signs.<sup>3480</sup>

3479. "Knowledge" ('ilm') means both power of judgement in discerning the value of truth and acquaintance with previous revelations. It implies both literary and spiritual insight. To men so endowed, Allah's revelations and Signs are self-evident. They commend themselves to their hearts, minds and understandings, which are typified in Arabic by the word *sadr*, "breast".

3480. Cf. the last clause of verse 47 above. There the argument was that the rejection of the Quran was a mark of Unbelief. Now the argument is carried a stage farther. Such rejection is also a mark of injustice, a deliberate perversity in going against obvious signs, which should convince all honest men.

<sup>31</sup>Verse 29: 51 And is it not enough for them that we have sent down to thee the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is Mercy and a Reminder to those who believe.<sup>3482</sup>

3482. The perspicuous Quran, explained in detail by Allah's Messenger, in conjunction with Allah's Signs in nature and in the hearts of men, should be enough for all. It is mere fractious opposition to demand vaguely something more. Cf. also vi 124, and n.946.

<sup>32</sup>Verse 41:42 No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it.<sup>4514</sup> It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise.

4514. Allah's Truth is fully guarded on all sides. No one can get the better of it by attacking it from before or behind it, openly or secretly, or in any way whatever.

<sup>33</sup>Verse 85:21 Nay, this is a Glorious Quran, Verse 85:22 (Inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved!<sup>6066</sup>

6066. "Inscribed in a Tablet Preserved", i.e. Allah's Message is not ephemeral. It is eternal. The "Tablet" is "preserved" or guarded from corruption: xv.9: for Allah's Message must endure forever. That Message is the "Mother of the book": seen.347 to iii. 7

<sup>34</sup>Verse 12:2 We have sent it down As an Arabic Quran<sup>1630</sup>, In order that ye may Learn Wisdom 1630. Quran means: something (1) to be read, or (2) recited or (3) proclaimed. It may apply to a verse, or a sura, or the whole Book of Revelation.

<sup>35</sup>Verse 13:37 Thus have We revealed it to be a judgement of authority<sup>1859</sup> in Arabic. Wert thou to follow

### Language of the Quran

The Quran, as it defines [34], itself, is a revelation to be read, recited, and proclaimed, whether in part or in its entirety. It was revealed in Arabic, ensuring immediate comprehension by the Arabs [35], for whom divine guidance was first addressed. The Quran establishes that all affairs should be adjudicated in accordance with divine scripture, without the interference of subjective inclinations. Since the Prophet Muhammad [36], (PBUH) was an Arab, it was ordained that the revelation be delivered in a language readily understood by his people, who bore the responsibility of conveying it to the world. Makkah [37], is described as

Their (vain) desires after the knowledge which hath reached thee, Then wouldst thou find Neither protector nor defender<sup>1860</sup> against Allah.

1859. The Quran is in Arabic; therefore the Arabs, among whom it was promulgated, could have no difficulty in understanding its precepts and using it in judging of right and wrong in all their affairs. But it is also universal; therefore no one should give preference to his own vain fancies against this authoritative declaration.

1860. Cf. ii.120 The variation is in single word "Waq" here in place of "Nasir" in ii.120. In each case the apt word is chosen not only for the rhythm in its own passage but for the general meaning in the Argument.

<sup>36</sup>Verse 41:44 Had we sent this as A Quran (in a language)<sup>4516</sup> other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not Its verses explained in detail? What! A foreign (tongue) and (a messenger) an Arab?" Say: "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe in their ears,<sup>4517</sup> And it is blindness in their (eyes): They are (as it were) Being called from a place far distant!"

4516: Cf.xvi.103-105; xii. 2; etc. it was most natural and reasonable that the Messenger being Arab, the Message should be in his own tongue, that he might explain it in every detail, with the greatest power and eloquence. Even though it was to be for the whole world, its initial exposition was thus to be in Arabic. But if people had no faith and were spiritually deaf or blind, it would not matter in what language it came.

4517:Cf. xli.5, and vi.25. They pretended that it was too deep for them, when they meant that they were superior to it! The fact was that by putting themselves in an artificially false position, they rendered themselves impervious to the Message. The voice of Revelation or the voice of conscience sounded to them as if it came from a far-off place! They themselves made themselves strangers to it.

<sup>37</sup>Verse 42:07 Thus have We sent by Inspiration to thee an Arabic Quran<sup>4533</sup> That thou mayest warn The Mother of Cities<sup>4534</sup> and all around her,- and warn (them) of the Day of Assembly, of which there is no doubt: (When) some will be<sup>4535</sup> in the Garden, and some in the Blazing Fire.

4533: The point of the Quran being in Arabic is that it is plain and intelligible to the people through whom and among whom it was promulgated; see next clause.

the epicenter of the faith, from which the Quranic message radiated outward, reaching all of humanity.

The divine revelation was delivered in the purest [38], form of Arabic, ensuring that its message remains unambiguous and comprehensible. The Quran challenges even the most eloquent Arab linguists, asserting that no human can produce even a single verse of equivalent magnitude. It stands as a flawless composition, devoid of human imperfection, while remaining accessible enough for even the simplest of individuals to understand.

The Quran affirms its own clarity, stating that its message is easily [39], understood, as it was revealed in the native Arabic language [40], of its recipients. While offering deep philosophical insights into spiritual life, its guidance remains simple [41], and practical. This ease of comprehension is emphasized repeatedly in Surah [42], 54 (verses 22,32 and 40), underscoring the Quran's self-evident clarity and the expectation that individuals should grasp its meaning without reliance on external interpretation. The Quran's unambiguous nature negates the necessity for excessive mediation by religious authorities, as its teachings are direct and devoid of esoteric complexity. However, as human civilization evolves and new societal challenges emerge, Islamic scholars play a vital role in contextualizing legal and

4534: The City of Makkah. See n.913 to vi 92. This is undoubtedly a Makkan verse. Even apart from the Qibla, Makkah is the centre of Islam, and "all around her" is the whole world.

4535: The contrast is again emphasized, as explained in the summary.

<sup>38</sup>Verse 16:103 We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that Teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear.<sup>2143</sup>

2143. the wicked attribute to Prophet of Allah just motives and springs of action as they themselves would be guilty of in such circumstances. The Pagans and those who were hostile to the revelation of Allah in Islam could not and cannot understand how such wonderful words could flow from the tongue of the Holy Prophet. They must need to postulate some human teacher. Unfortunately for their postulate, any possible human teacher they could think of would be poor in Arabic speech if he had all the knowledge that the Quran reveals of previous revelations. Apart from that, even the most eloquent Arab could not, and cannot, produce anything of the eloquence, width, and depth of Quranic teaching, as is evident from every verse of the Book.

<sup>39</sup>Verse 19:97 So have We made The (Quran) easy in thine own tongue, that with it thou mayest give glad tidings to the righteous, and warning to people given to contention.

<sup>40</sup>Verse 44:58 Verily, We have made this (Quran) easy,<sup>4734</sup> in thy tongue, in order that they may give heed.

ethical rulings. Through rigorous analysis of Hadith and historical jurisprudence, they ensure that contemporary issues are addressed in accordance with Islamic legal principles while preserving the integrity of divine guidance.

The diversity of interpretations has led to the development of various Islamic schools of thought. In numerous instances, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practiced more than one valid approach, as supported by Hadith. However, rather than being a source of flexibility, these differences have sometimes led to sectarian conflicts. Disputes have arisen over issues such as Raf'al-Yadayn (raising the hands in prayer), the timing of prayers, the placement of hands while standing in Salah, and the recitation of Ameen aloud. Such differences have contributed to ongoing debates between groups like the Tablighi Jamaat and Ahl-e-Hadith, despite their shared adherence to Islamic fundamentals, their misinterpretation has occasionally overshadowed the essence of Islamic unity and jurisprudential tolerance.

### The Last Prophet (PBUH)

The finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) is explicitly stated in the Quran (Surah Al-Ahzab 33:40) [43]. This theological principle is further reinforced in *Sahih Muslim*, which dedicates an entire

4734. Easy: not only to understand, being in the Arabic tongue; but mellifluous, whose rhythm carries off our spirits to a higher spiritual plane. In another sense, it is difficult; for to get its deepest meaning, we shall have to strive hard, as the contents of this Sura alone will show.

<sup>41</sup>Verse 54:17 And We have indeed made the Quran easy<sup>5143</sup> to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

5143. While the Quran sums up the highest philosophy of the inner life, its simple directions for conduct are plain and easy to understand and act upon. Is this not in itself a part of the Grace of Allah? And what excuse is there for any one to fail in receiving admonition?

<sup>42</sup>Verse 54:22 But We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

Verse 54:32 And we have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

Verse 54:40 And we have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

<sup>43</sup>Verse 33:40 Muhammed is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets:<sup>3731</sup> and Allah has full knowledge of all things.

3731. When a document is sealed, it is complete, and there can be no further addition. The holy Prophet Muhammed closed the long line of Messengers. Allah's teaching is and will always be continuous, but there has

chapter to this doctrine. In multiple narrations by Abu Hurairah [44], Abu Saeed [45], Jabir [46], and Salim [47], the Prophet (PBUH) employs a metaphor, likening himself to the final brick completing an exquisite architectural structure-symbolizing the perfection and culmination of divine revelation through Islam. Additionally, *Sahih Bukhari* expands on this parable, illustrating that Allah has established a grand edifice, metaphorically representing Paradise [48], and has dispatched His Messenger as the inviter to a divine feast. Those who accept this invitation are granted entry into this eternal abode.

been and will be no Prophet after Muhammad. The later ages will want thinkers and reformers, not Prophets. This is not an arbitrary matter. It is a decree full of knowledge and wisdom: "for Allah has full knowledge of all things." 44Saheeh Muslim Volume 6, Chapter 7, page 144, Hadith 5959, 5960, 5961, 5962, 5963, 5964.

[5959] 20 - (2286) It was narrated from Abū Hurairah that the Prophet said: "The likeness of myself and the Prophets (who came before me) is that of a man who built a structure and built it well and he made it beautiful, and the people started walking around it and saying: 'We have never seen any structure more beautiful than this, except for this brick.' I am that brick."

[5960] 21 - ( ... ) It was narrated that Hammâm bin Munabbih said: "This is what Abu Hurairah narrated to us from the Messenger of Allah a." He narrated a number of *Ahadith*, including the following: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'The likeness of myself and the Prophets who came before me is that of a man who built some houses and built them well, making them beautiful and perfect, apart from the space of one brick in one of their corners. The people started walking around them, admiring the structure, saying: "Why don't you put a brick here? Then your building will be complete." Muhammad said: 'I am that brick.'"

[5961] 22 - ( ... ) It was narrated from Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said: "The likeness of myself and the Prophets who came before me is that of a man who built a structure and built it well and made it beautiful, except for the space of a brick in one of its corners. The people started walking around it, admiring it and saying: 'Why is this brick missing?' I am that brick, I am the Seal of the Prophets."

45[5962] ( ... ) It was narrated that Abū Sa'eed said: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'The likeness of me and the Prophets...' and he mentioned something similar (to *Hadith* no. 5961).

46[5963] 23 - (2287) It was narrated from Jâbir that the Prophet said: "The likeness of myself and the (previous) Prophets is that of a man who built a house and made it perfect and complete, except the space of a brick. The people started to enter it and admire it, and they said: 'Were it not for the space of a brick.' The Messenger of Allah said: "I am the space of that brick, I have come and sealed the (succession of) Prophets PBUH.

During his farewell sermon at the final Hajj, on the Day of Arafat, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) proclaimed that Allah had perfected [49]. Islam as a religion and completed His divine favor upon humanity. He affirmed that all essential commandments for living a righteous life had been revealed, requiring only adherence for believers to attain the promised reward.

Islamic doctrine holds that the Quran and the Sunnah constitute the primary sources of guidance for the faithful. They encompass *Al-Amanah* [50], the divine

47[5964] ( ... ) Salim narrated a similar report with this chain of narrators, and instead of saying 'made it complete' he said 'made it beautiful.

48Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 235, Hadith 7281. Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullâh RA: Some angels came to the Prophet (Muhammad); while he was sleeping. Some of them said, "He is sleeping." Others said, "His eyes are sleeping but his heart is awake." Then they said, "There is an example for this companion of yours." One of them said, "Then set forth an example for him." One of them said, "He is sleeping." Another said, "His eyes are sleeping but his heart is awake." Then they said, "His example is that of a man who built a house and then offered therein a banquet and sent an inviter (messenger) to invite the people. So whoever accepted the invitation of the inviter, entered the house and ate of the banquet, and whoever did not accept the invitation of the inviter, did not enter the house, nor did he eat of the banquet." Then the angels said, "Interpret this parable to him so that he may understand it." One of them said, "He is sleeping." The others said, "His eyes are sleeping but his heart is awake." And then they said, "The house stands for Paradise and the call-maker is Muhammad ; and whoever obeys Muhammad obeys Allah; and whoever disobeys Muhammad, disobeys Allah. Muhammad separated the people (i.e., through his message, the good is distinguished from the bad, and the believers from the disbelievers)."

49Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 231. Chapter 96, Hadeeth no. 7268. Narrated Tariq bin Shihab: A Jew said to 'Umar, "O, chief of the believers, if this Verse '...This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion...' (V.5 :3) had been revealed upon us, we would have taken that day as a festival day." 'Umar said, "I know definitely on what day this Verse was revealed; it was revealed on the Day of 'Arafah, (9th of Dhul-Hijja) on a Friday." (See H. 45)

50Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 234, Hadith 7276. Narrated Hudhaifa: Allah's Messenger . said to us, "*Al-Amanah* (the trust or the moral responsibility or honesty, and all the duties which Allah has ordained) descended from the heavens and settled in the roots of the hearts of men (faithful believers), and then the Qur'an was revealed and the people read the Qur'an, (and learnt it from it) and also learnt it from the *Sunna* (legal ways of

trust that entails moral integrity, religious obligations, and accountability as prescribed by Allah. These revelations are binding upon true believers, who must learn and implement them in their daily lives. The Prophet (PBUH) further clarified that the optimal path in religion lies in adherence to his Sunnah and the Quran, while religious innovation [<sup>51</sup>], (*bid'ah*) is condemned as the gravest misguidance, leading followers away from the intended purity of Islamic teachings.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was divinely appointed as the final messenger [<sup>52</sup>], to guide humanity by warning against transgression and inviting believers to the path of righteousness, as prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah. Disobedience to the Prophet (PBUH) equates to failing in one's religious obligation. Even scholars, who bear the responsibility of preserving and transmitting Islamic teachings, are admonished to uphold the straight path, lest they too become misguided [<sup>53</sup>].

In *Sahih Bukhari*, this principle is further reinforced through a hadith where the Prophet (PBUH) declared that all of his followers will enter Paradise, except for those who refuse [<sup>54</sup>]. When asked to clarify,

the Prophet ) [Both the Qur'an and *As-Sunna* (legal ways of the Prophet ) strengthened their (the faithful believers') *Al-A mānah* .} (See *Hadith* No. 7086)

<sup>51</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 234, Hadith 7277. Narrated 'Abdullāh The best talk (speech) is Allah's Book (the Qur'an), and the best (legal way for) guidance is the guidance (way) of Muhammad ., and the worst matters are the heresies (those new things which are introduced into the religion); and whatever you have been promised will surely come to pass, and you cannot escape (it). (See H.6098)

<sup>52</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 236, Hadith 7283. Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet PBUH said, "My example, and the example of what I have been sent with is that of a man who came to some people and said, 'O people! I have seen the enemy's army with my own eyes, and I am a plain warner; so protect yourselves!' Then a group of his people obeyed him and fled at night proceeding stealthily till they were safe, while another group of them disbelieved him and stayed at their places till morning when the army came upon them and killed and ruined them completely. So this is the example of that person who obeys me and follows that Truth which I have brought (the Qur'an and the *Sunna*), and the example of the one who disobeys me and disbelieves the Truth I have brought."

<sup>53</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 236, Hadith 7282. Narrated Hammam: Hudhaifa said, "O group of *Al-Qurra'*! Follow the Straight Path, for then you have taken a great lead (and will be the leaders), but if you divert right or left, then you will go astray far away."

(1) (H.7282) *Qurra'*: Religious scholars in the knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunna*, or those who know the Qur'an by heart.

<sup>54</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 235, Hadith 7280. Narrated Abu Hurairah S. Allah's Messenger PBUH said,

he explained that refusal means rejecting obedience to him, thus emphasizing that adherence to prophetic guidance is essential for salvation.

### Ahl-i-Hadith

The Ahl-i-Hadith emerged as a Sunni Islamic movement that strictly adheres [<sup>55</sup>], to the Quran and Hadith, rejecting the necessity of conforming to any of the four classical Sunni legal schools. Their doctrinal lineage is closely associated with the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328) [<sup>56</sup>], whose interpretations emphasized scriptural purism. Although frequently categorized as Wahhabi, the movement's origins are distinctly South Asian, deriving intellectual inspiration from Shah Waliullah [<sup>57</sup>], of Delhi. Given that both Shah Waliullah and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab were contemporaries and shared reformist inclinations, their ideological commonalities led to a perception of Wahhabi influence. Under British colonial rule, Wahhabi-affiliated groups were subject to surveillance and restrictions. To mitigate political repercussions and establish a separate identity, the movement formally adopted the title Ahl-i-Hadith [<sup>58</sup>].

"All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse They (the people) asked, "O Allah's Messenger! Who will refuse?" He said, "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it)."

<sup>55</sup>(Khan, 1987), page 103- Ahl-i-Hadith are Sunni but confined themselves with the Quran and Hadith and relied on individual judgement upon them.

<sup>56</sup>(Khan, 1987) page 11- Ahl-i-Hadith of India, identified themselves with the Ibn Taimiya (1263-1328 AD) movement who although Hanibali persuasion rejected all forms of law school in favor of lateral reading of Quran and Sunnah. He opposed shrines and Saints.

(Metcalf, 2023) Not only did the Ahl-i Hadith reject the role of any intercessor like imams, holy men, and the Prophet himself, they even minimized taqlid the personal role of an alim or scholarly guide. They opposed (adherence to a single law school [mazhab] like the Hanafi) in favour of direct engagement (ijtihad) with the Quran and Prophetic hadith.

<sup>57</sup>(Khan, 1987) page 36- The puritan movement started by Sayyid Ahmad in the beginning of the nineteenth century came as regard as the Wahabi movement. As a matter of fact it is purely Indian movement and drew inspiration from the writings of Shah Waliullah of Delhi, who is said to be fellow student of Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahab at Mecca as both are influenced by same scholars and has resemblance in their movement.

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<sup>58</sup>(Khan, 1987) (page 146) It is on compulsion to distinguish themselves with Wahabi, they accepted the term Ahl-i-Hadith. (pg 48) and Governor General of Punjab in his official correspondence with home department dispatch number 131, mentioned that "Wahabis" henceforth should be called Ahl-i-Hadith.

The Ahl-i-Hadith represent a reformist movement within Sunni Islam that advocates for a strict return to the Quran and Hadith as the sole sources of religious authority. They reject the concept of spiritual guides [59], and regard Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the exclusive conduit of divine revelation. Viewing the classical Hadith collections of *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* as the most authentic [60], they argue that differences [61], among Islamic jurists have led to sectarianism, obstructing Muslim unity. They emphasize that the four major Sunni schools of jurisprudence emerged centuries after the Prophet, and they distinguish between *fiqh* [62], (legal interpretation) and core religious tenets.

As part of their reformist stance, the Ahl-i-Hadith actively denounce practices they perceive as deviations from Islamic monotheism (*tawhid*), such as tomb veneration, Sufi [63], saint worship, and esoteric mystical beliefs. They reject doctrines like *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* [64], (the unity of existence) and practices such as *Rabitah* (mystical connection with a Sufi master) and *Taqlid-e-Shakhsi* [65], (blind adherence to a scholar). While opposing *Wasila* [66], (intercession through saints), they permit *Shafa'ah* [67], (intercession) but only from a righteous individual who is still alive.

The followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, after entering into official correspondence with Government of British India under the leadership of Moulvi Mohammad Hussain Batalwi, adopted the most acceptable and least controversial nomenclature of Ahl-i-Hadith. (Pg. 10) (Metcalf, 2023), The book's first chapter comprised an extract from Siddiq Hasan's Persian text, *Hidayat al-sā'il ilā adillat al-masā'il* (1875), a compendium in the classic fatwa form of question and advisory answer. The whole chapter was an answer to a query about 'Abdul Wahabb. This was a chance to make clear that Siddiq Hasan had long denied any association with the Arab Wahhabis, an accusation he attributed to the seditious Shi'a schemers siding with his long-term opponent, Qudsiyya Begum (d. 1881), Shah Jahan Begum's grandmother. There was no contact of any kind between Indians and Wahhabis, he pointed out, and, unlike him, they practised (Hanbali) *taqlid*. Siddiq Hasan invoked scholars like Shah Waliullah and his successors who regarded opposition to the ruling power an unpardonable sin. He drew on English-language newspapers like *The Pioneer* and *Hindu Patriot* that reported the erroneous use of the 'Wahhabi' label—a label, he noted, that was used to tar opponents and that was invariably rejected by those so named. Siddiq Hasan closed the fatwa with a hadith warning against heretical sects as, implicitly, the Wahhabis were.

<sup>59</sup>(Metcalf, 2023) the Nawab is a distinguished member of the community, both on account of his social position and the theological learning, [but] there is not a single Ahl-i-Hadis (with the exception of illiterate persons, whose opinion does not count for much) who assign him

The historical development of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement was significantly influenced by two prominent figures: Moulana Sayyid Nazir Husain Dehlavi and Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan. Moulana Nazir Husain, a pioneering theologian, initially served as an instructor in an established madrasa before founding *Madrasa-i-Nazairiya*, an institution dedicated to the dissemination of Ahl-i-Hadith principles. His academic and religious teachings played a critical role in shaping the movement's doctrinal stance.

Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan was a prolific scholar and educational reformer whose literary contributions [68], were widely esteemed in the broader Islamic world. His extensive works in theology and jurisprudence reinforced the intellectual foundation of the movement. Additionally, as a patron of Islamic scholarship, he strategically utilized his financial resources to support the growth of Ahl-i-Hadith institutions, sponsor academic initiatives, and procure Islamic manuscripts from distant regions, fostering a scholarly environment that advanced the movement's objectives.

Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, a leading scholar of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement, gained prominence as the

the same position as that of a prophet or imam... except the prophet the Ahl-i-Hadis do not recognize any other spiritual guide [at all including] any Maulvi living or dead [emphasis added]...Even the head Maulvi Nazir Hosein, and the late Maulvi Ismail and Maulvi Abdula of Ghazni, who died at Amritsar, are not regarded as spiritual guides, to say nothing of the poor Nawab.

<sup>60</sup>(Khan, 1987), (page 108) They accept the Bukhari and Muslim as the authentic hadith.

<sup>61</sup>(Khan, 1987), (Pg. 109) Disagreement among the four Imam prevented Muslims from strictly adhering to follow the Prophet's teachings.

<sup>62</sup>(Khan, 1987), (Pg. 109) *Fiqa* is not equivalent to religion as per Nawab

<sup>63</sup>(Khan, 1987), (pg 113) Raised voice against the tomb worship, grave worship, excessive veneration of Sufi. Critical of Khanqa and Shrines

<sup>64</sup>(Khan, 1987), They reject Sufi theory of *Wahdut ul Wujud* as it is oppose *touhid*. Denounce the practice of *Rabitah*, the special relation with the Sheikh.(pg 115)

<sup>65</sup>(Khan, 1987), They are critical of *Taqlid-e-Shakhsi*, which means each Muslim should follow a *Alim*, trusting him completely as his true guide in matters of Islamic Law. (pg 114)

<sup>66</sup>(Khan, 1987), They reject *wasalat* (mediation), they believe worship directly and act on Hadith (pg 116)

<sup>67</sup>(Khan, 1987), They believe in *Shafat* (intercession) but only from living person devoid of *shirk*, (pg 117)

<sup>68</sup>(Metcalf, 2023), Siddiq Hasan was meant to write and meant to publish, and he did, disseminating text after text in the diverse languages of his milieu.

husband of Begum Shah Jahan, ruler of Bhopal, who selected [69], him for his profound knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence and theology. In his writings, he strongly advocated for the observance of *purdah* [70], and discouraged the assimilation of foreign cultural influences into Islamic practice.

His political fortunes, however, declined due to British intervention, particularly through the political agent Griffin [71], who sought to exert influence over Sultan Jahan Begum, the designated heir. Sultan Jahan's adherence to Nawab Siddiq's teachings, including *purdah*, created barriers to Griffin's control, prompting him to engineer Nawab Siddiq's political downfall by stripping him of his official titles and influence. This episode exemplifies the scholar's prioritization of religious integrity over political power.

Nawab Siddiq's intellectual legacy remains significant, particularly through his magnum opus, *Al-Din al-Khalis*, which systematically critiques *shirk* using Quranic and Hadith-based arguments. The book faced intense opposition from various sects that viewed it as an ideological threat, yet it gained recognition and acceptance in broader Islamic scholarship [72].

The Ahl-i-Hadith movement, originally a revivalist effort to cleanse Islam of extraneous cultural and sectarian influences, has waned in contemporary times. Declining religious enthusiasm among followers and an inability to assert a distinct identity in modern public discourse have contributed to its reduced influence and visibility.

<sup>69</sup>(Khan, 1987) page 87, (Metcalf, 2023) page 09

<sup>70</sup>(Metcalf, 2023), He urged women to practice seclusion and eschew what he took to be either Hindu or European clothes (saris, blouses with short sleeves). He deplored the elaborate Muharram processions that had become civic observances in settings like Bhopal. He called for an end to mixed gatherings, and visits to graves as part of the observance of the Shab-i- Barat when, it is believed, each person's fate is foretold for the coming year.

<sup>71</sup>(Metcalf, 2023), "It was Lepel Griffin, as agent to the governor-general for Central India (1881–1886), who chose to act on the implausible claim that Siddiq Hasan, whose interests were royally served by the colonial presence, was engaged in seditious actions. Griffin, arrogant and excitement loving, was enough of a public figure to be caricatured in a roman à clef and drawn in political cartoons. The appointment to Central India, moreover, had left him aggrieved since, fresh from diplomatic success in Afghanistan, he had expected to be appointed governor of Punjab. Was he just looking for action? Charmed by an unveiled princess and her manly spouse, he readily took the side of a court faction centred on Siddiq Hasan's stepdaughter, Sultan Jahan Begum (r. 1903–1926), the heir apparent, who tried to discredit Siddiq Hasan as a corrupt, manipulative, vengeful

### Tablighi Jamat

The Tablighi Jamaat emerged as a response to the religious and social upheaval faced by Indian Muslims in the aftermath of the 1857 revolt. Founded by Moulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi (1885–1944), the movement aimed to revive Islamic practice at a grassroots level. Moulana Ilyas, witnessing a decline in religious observance, especially among the rural Muslim population, sought to rekindle faith through personal reform and collective religious engagement. His vision was to instill a renewed commitment to Islamic teachings, emphasizing practical adherence rather than theological debate.

The movement formally began in 1926 in Mewat [73], focusing on *da'wah* (religious outreach) through direct community engagement. It employs a structured methodology where small groups of volunteers travel to various regions, stay in mosques, and invite people to reconnect with Islamic obligations [74], particularly *Salah* (prayer) and *Sunnah* practices. The self-sustaining nature of the movement, where participants bear their own expenses and commit to voluntary missionary work, has contributed to its global expansion, making it one of the most widespread Islamic revivalist movements in contemporary times.

The Tablighi Jamaat's success lies in its strict focus on personal religious reform and *Da'wah*, free

'Svengali'. Siddiq Hasan, the effete intellectual, clearly got under Griffin's skin as the tough and martial Pathans of the ruling family did not. And he wanted it to be himself, not Siddiq Hasan, as he saw it, who told the begum what to do. He was incensed that she adopted *parda*, in many ways an assertion of power against him on her part since she could see him but not vice versa. He blamed her doing so on Siddiq Hasan—even as other officials took the practice in their stride. He banded about charged terms like 'jihad' to describe Siddiq Hasan's international connections and 'oriental despotism' to libel his alleged ruling practices. He invoked what a contemporary scholar calls 'phantom Wahhabis' who lurked everywhere in the British imagination, playing on the existential condition of fear characteristic of British colonial rule. Superiors, who had expressed doubt over Griffin's claims, backed him in the interest of making officialdom look strong."

<sup>72</sup>(RAHMATULLAH, 2015) page 97.

<sup>73</sup>(Lone, 2018), Tablighi Jamaat has emerged arguably the most widely followed movement in the Islamic world. Emerging from the social, economic and religious conditions of the Mewat region, near Delhi around 1926, <sup>74</sup>(Lone, 2018)"Ilyas argued that Muslims needed first to strictly follow Islam themselves before they could go out to preach others

from political [75], affiliations. By emphasizing direct engagement with Muslim [76], communities, the movement ensures that its outreach remains accessible [77], and effective. Mosques serve as focal points for religious instruction, spiritual rejuvenation, and the propagation of Islamic teachings.

The organizational framework of the movement follows a mentorship model, where seasoned members progressively take on leadership roles, training others in *Da'wah* methodology and reinforcing communal religious observance. This dynamic and self-replicating structure has allowed the Tablighi Jamaat to achieve worldwide [78], recognition, with an extensive presence across diverse cultural and geographic landscapes.

The Tablighi Jamaat commands a substantial presence, with a self-replicating missionary [79], structure that integrates millions of adherents, each actively engaged in Islamic outreach. The movement encourages *Taqleed* [80], (adherence to established jurisprudential rulings) and places significant emphasis on religious instruction through *Muntakhab Hadith* (Selected Hadiths). Central to their pedagogy are texts such as *Fazail-e-Amaal* [81], and *Hayat-us-Sahaba*, which serve as primary sources of inspiration while discouraging engagement with alternative theological or academic discourses.

<sup>75</sup>(Lone, 2018), In other words they separate religion from worldly affairs. They are mainly concerned with realms of spirit and rituals (ibadat) and maintain strict aloofness from the affairs of state like entering into politics, talking about education, technology, military etc.

<sup>76</sup>(Lone, 2018), First of all, they were of the view that it was wastage of time to call non Muslims towards Islam, when Muslims themselves were not truly practicing Muslims-

<sup>77</sup>(Lone, 2018), Similarly M.S Agwani (1986: 40) while citing Mianji Mohammad writes; "It is not necessary for one to be an alim (scholar of religion). Every Muslim has the responsibility of creating awareness of Islam among others". Further Mumtaz Ahmad (1986: 2) writes; "TJ is a gross-roots movement with followers from all sections of society, the TJ support base consists mainly of educated, lower middle class Muslims

<sup>78</sup>(Lone, 2018), presence in and over one hundred and fifty countries throughout the world with adherents in between 100 to 150 million.

<sup>79</sup>(Lone, 2018), It was the religious duty of each Muslim to see himself or herself foremost as a Muballigh or missionary of Islam".

<sup>80</sup>(Lone, 2018), Tablighi Jamaat "calls for „taqleed" or strict adherence to Islamic jurisprudence as developed over the centuries by the Ulama of the schools of sunni Islamic law.

<sup>81</sup>(Malik, 2020) the Deobandi scholar Muhammad Zakariya (1898–1982), acquired a central place.<sup>5</sup>

The movement is often perceived as being closely aligned with Sufism [82], due to its methodological similarities. Practices such as *Zikr* and *Chilla* [83], resemble elements found within Sufi orders, and historical affiliations with the Kandhlawi and Saba'iyya Sufi lineages further contribute to this perception. However, despite these resemblances, Tablighi Jamaat maintains a distinct theological identity centered on the revival of fundamental Islamic practices.

The ideological framework [84], of the Tablighi Jamaat is encapsulated in six fundamental principles [85], and an overarching general principle. These include *Shahadah* (Declaration of Faith), *Salah* (Prayer), *Ilm-o-Zikr* (Religious Knowledge and Divine Remembrance), *Ikram-i-Muslim* (Upholding Muslim Brotherhood), *Ikhlas-i-Niyyat* (Purity of Intention), *Tafrih-i-Waqt* (Commitment of Time for Religious Engagement), and *Tark-i-Laya'ni* (Avoidance of Worldly Distractions). These principles serve as the foundation for the movement's mission, guiding its members toward personal and communal religious revival.

Despite its widespread influence, the movement faces criticism on multiple fronts. Scholars and critics highlight its perceived de-emphasis on scientific education [86], reliance on *Da'if Hadith* (weak narrations) in *Da'wah*, and the frequent use of unverified anecdotal narratives [87], without proper citation. These

Originally titled Tablighi Nisab (Tablighi Syllabus), it was later renamed *Faza'il-e-A'mal* (The Virtues of Good Deeds).<sup>6</sup> *Faza'il* remains the central text of reference among Tablighis world-wide and has been translated into numerous languages, becoming an iconic symbol of their global efforts

<sup>82</sup>(Lone, 2018), the Jamaat's lineage is linked with Kandhalawi or Sabriyya Sufi order, but the esoteric individual quest and its ecstatic complement

<sup>83</sup>(Malik, 2020)

<sup>84</sup>(Lone, 2018)

<sup>85</sup>(Malik, 2020)

<sup>86</sup>They strongly disapprove science or gaining knowledge regarding this world. In other words they believe gaining knowledge regarding polity, economy, history, society etc as merely ignorance.

<sup>87</sup>Examples from *Fazail –I – Amal* page 498,: *Shaitan ka Wasose dalna, Sufi Tariqa, Sahaba Ka Tariqa, Buzrug Ka Kissa*, One of the pious old man make a prayer that, whenever Satan (Iblis) is attacking his heart, he is able to see him, due to acceptance of his prayer he saw him in a form of Mosquito sitting on the left side of his heart, who has long elongated nose like an elephant, which he use like a needle whenever a person do remembrance, he back off, otherwise use it as an injection to fill the heart with things that take away the religious blessings.

*Fazail –I – Amal*, Page 509, An old pious man with her maid, visiting in a market and told her to sit at a place and wait for him, when he returned he didn't find her and got angry, when he reached his home, she came back

concerns have sparked debates on the movement's approach to religious propagation and textual authenticity.

### Sectarian Polarization between Tablighi Jamaat and Ahl-i-Hadith

The sectarian divide between the Tablighi Jamaat and the Ahl-i-Hadith reflects broader theological and sociological tensions within the Muslim community. The Ahl-i-Hadith, historically associated with a more scholarly and purist approach to Islamic jurisprudence, have often been perceived as maintaining an elitist [88], character. In contrast, the Tablighi Jamaat, with its emphasis on grassroots mobilization, draws followers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including both the underprivileged and affluent segments of society.

This discord has manifested in deeply entrenched religious rivalries. In some regions, Hanafi scholars have issued *fatwas* [89], prohibiting the burial of Ahl-i-Hadith adherents in Muslim cemeteries, while many Hanafis refrain from offering prayers [90], behind an Ahl-i-Hadith imam. The division has become so institutionalized that mosque affiliations are often determined by sectarian allegiance, exacerbating the fragmentation [91], of Muslim religious spaces.

### The Moderates

Islam is currently in a phase where the entire world is blaming Muslims for various issues due to the extreme interpretation and application of Islamic principles on them. In response, a segment of Muslims who wish to be seen as progressive and seek freedom beyond religious boundaries take the liberty of redefining themselves within democratic societies. They align with values perceived as progressive and

with reason that she was sitting where people are not in remembrance of Allah, so she thinks that if any calamity comes due to it, she will also suffer hence she get away from them.

<sup>88</sup>(Khan, 1987), It has elitist character in the early phase, even limited to certain families. (pg 140-141)

<sup>89</sup>(Khan, 1987), Enimity with Hanafi was so great that they issued Fatwa, that they should not be buried in the Muslim graveyard. (pg 147.)

<sup>90</sup>(Khan, 1987), Visible differences are style of Canonical prayer, where they say Amin loudly, do Rafadayan, fold their hands at chest, Hanafi do not like to pray behind Ahl-e-Hadith Imam. (pg 148), they shut the door of their mosque for them and matter was reported to Court (year 1871) also. (Pg.149)

<sup>91</sup>(Khan, 1987), In Meerut, the magistrate divide the mosque Five to Ahl-e-Hadieth and rest to Hanafi (year 1892). In Etawah same thing happen but court turn down in favor of Hanafi, then they have to built their mosque separately (pg 152)

<sup>92</sup>Verse 07:51 "Such as took their religion to be mere amusement and play, and were deceived by the life of the

reformatory by the world while maintaining their Muslim and sectarian identity, calling themselves "moderates." The Quran describes their character in verse (7:51) [92], specifically highlighting that they treat their religion as mere amusement and play, deceived by the pleasures of worldly life.

The primary issue they emphasize is the freedom of women to work, receive an education, and live without observing the obligatory *parda* [93], (veiling). Additionally, they advocate for a lifestyle free from restrictions of any form. Their social gatherings promote gender mixing and revealing clothing, where the primary aim is to present one's best appearance, encouraging admiration and appreciation from others. These occasions also feature music and dance as forms of entertainment. Such gatherings create opportunities for men and women to interact, evaluate potential life partners, and build relationships before marriage. Ultimately, moderate Muslims seek to adopt Western lifestyles while retaining the Muslim identity.

Not all moderates engage in every activity mentioned in the previous paragraph to the same extent; rather, they adopt practices based on their personal preferences and the environment in which they live. These moderates exist across all sects of Islam, and their numbers are rapidly increasing. This is evident in Muslim wedding celebrations, which have become increasingly extravagant, incorporating numerous rituals under the guise of entertainment during the auspicious occasion of marriage.

A key source of discontent among moderates is the role of *Ulema* in regulating personal and societal norms. They perceive religious authorities as exerting undue influence over matters such as women's education

world." That day shall We forget them<sup>1029</sup> as they forget the meeting of this day of theirs, and as they were wont to reject Our Signs.

1029: "Forgetfulness" may be involuntary, from a defect of memory, or figuratively, a deliberate turning away from, or ignoring of something we do not want, as when we say in an argument. "You conveniently forget that so-and-so is so-and-so." Here the latter kind is meant. If men deliberately ignored the Hereafter in spite of warnings, can they expect to be received by Allah, Whom they themselves rejected?

<sup>93</sup>(12) CHAPTER. "... and to draw their veils all over their *Juyubihinna* (i.e., their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)..." (V.24:31)

4758. Saheeh Bukhari Volume 6, page 245 Hadith 4758 Narrated ' Aishah RA, May Allah bestow His Mercy on the early emigrant women. When Allah revealed: "... and to draw their veils all over their *Juyubihinna* (i.e., their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)..." (V.24:31) they tore their *Murat* (woolen dresses or waist-binding clothes or aprons etc.) and covered their heads and faces with those torn *Muruts*

and employment. While professional development for women is a legitimate social necessity, religious institutions often fail to establish structured pathways for them within a Sharia-compliant framework. Although financial necessity compels many women to work, Muslim communities—despite possessing significant economic resources—have been unable to develop industry sectors where women can pursue careers while adhering to Islamic principles. This disconnect between religious governance and socioeconomic realities continues to fuel dissatisfaction among moderate Muslims.

In many developing nations where employment opportunities are limited, enforcing Sharia-compliant restrictions on women poses significant challenges. While certain organizations provide modern education and employment opportunities to Muslim women, their availability is insufficient relative to the actual demand.

Under such conditions, if Islamic scholars (*Ulema*) focus solely on enforcing religious obligations and warning against transgressions without presenting practical, Sharia-based solutions, individuals with weaker faith may drift away from traditional teachings. Many, in seeking an easier path, align themselves with moderate ideologies, distancing themselves from religious authorities.

The rise of moderates can thus be attributed to the *Ulema's* failure to implement religious obligations effectively within their sects and the larger Muslim society. Furthermore, their inability to construct a compelling Islamic identity—one that exemplifies piety, discipline, and a fulfilling way of life—has left a void,

<sup>94</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 255, Hadith 7311 (10) CHAPTER. The statement of the Prophet PBUH, "A group of my followers will remain victorious in their struggle in the cause of the Truth." Those are the religious learned men (i.e., *Mujtahidūn*)

7311. Narrated Al-Mugira bin Shu'ba: The Prophet said, "A group of my followers will remain victorious (and on the Right Path) till Allah's Order (the Hour) comes upon them while they will still be victorious." [See *Hadith* 3640, 3641, 7459]

(1) (Ch .10) *Mujtahidun*, i.e., independent religious scholars who do not follow anybody blindly but with a proof from the Qur'an or the Prophet's *Sunna* or both.

<sup>95</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 255, Hadith 7312. Narrated Humaid: I heard Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan delivering a *Khutha* (religious talk). He said, "I heard the Prophet PBUH saying, 'If Allah wants to do a favour to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion [the understanding of the meanings of the Qur'an and the *Sunna* (legal ways) of the Prophet PBUH, I am only a distributor, but the grant is from Allah.(2) The state of this nation (i.e., true Muslims, real followers of Islamic Monotheism) will remain good till the Hour is established, or till Allah's Order comes.' (3)

allowing moderates to flourish. Without a clear counter-narrative, these individuals remain unaware of the spiritual loss associated with their choices.

Over time, economic hardship, aspirations for improved living standards, and the persistence of nominal faith will further fuel the growth of this group. Many moderates wish to retain the Muslim identity while selectively adhering to religious obligations, believing that their final judgment remains in the hands of Allah.

If left unaddressed, this trend could lead to a significant ideological shift within the Muslim *Ummah*, forming a distinct division of self-proclaimed moderates who gradually expand their influence, potentially reshaping the religious landscape by absorbing weaker sects.

## DISCUSSION

In every era, a group remains victorious, steadfast in preserving religious authenticity despite the proliferation of *bid'ah* (innovations) and ideological deviations. These individuals, known as *Mujtahidun* [<sup>94</sup>], possess deep knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah and dedicate their lives to their protection [<sup>95</sup>].

Conversely, there have always been dissenters who deviate from established religious principles. In the present era, moderates [<sup>96</sup>], fit this classification, as they selectively reject religious obligations in pursuit of personal convenience and self-interest.

The decline of the Persian [<sup>97</sup>], language in India serves as a historical case study of cultural shifts. Once

(2) (H.7312) The Prophet PBUH taught his followers whatever he received from Allah without partiality, while it is Allah who gives whomever He will the gift of understanding.

(3) (H.7312) This means that, till the Hour, there will be good Muslims protecting Islam against its enemies.

<sup>96</sup>Saheeh Pg 49 Volm 9 (6) CHAPTER. Killing *Al-Khawārij* (some people who dissented from the religion and disagreed with the rest of the Muslims), and *Al-Mulhidūn* (heretical) after the establishment of firm proof against them. And the Statement of Allah SWT: "And Allah will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid..." (V.9:115)

And Ibn 'Umar used to consider them (*Al-Khawārij* and *Al-Mulhidūn*) the worst of Allah's creatures and said, "These people took some Verses that had been revealed concerning the disbelievers and interpreted them as describing the believers.

<sup>97</sup>(Mozafari, 2014) The Persian language was used as a second language in South Asia it was served as the language of culture and education in several Muslim Courts in South Asia and became the sole official language under the Mughal emperors.

the administrative and intellectual language of the Mughal Empire, Persian lost its prominence following the British takeover, now surviving only within linguistic academic departments. In contrast, state languages persist due to their practical use within regional boundaries. A similar trajectory is observed with Urdu, once a thriving literary and journalistic language among Muslims. As economic struggles take precedence, Urdu has suffered significant decline [98], with newspapers and publishing houses shutting down due to diminishing readership. Academic interest in the language has waned due to limited professional opportunities, and those tasked with its preservation have distanced themselves, prioritizing adaptation to contemporary linguistic realities.

Religious demographics exhibit a comparable pattern. Several faith communities are witnessing population declines, with some on the brink of extinction. The Parsi-Zoroastrian population, for instance, has declined by 40% over the last 60 years (Bagechi, 2014), reflecting the vulnerability of smaller religious communities in the face of sociocultural transformations.

The gradual erosion of religious identity is a challenge faced by many communities, and Muslims are no exception. Unless they actively revive their commitment to faith, Muslim sects and the *Ummah* at large risk losing their ability to survive and uphold the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).

One of the main factors contributing to this decline is the growing tendency among Muslims to neglect religious obligations and instead identify as “Moderate Muslims,” a term that allows them to selectively adhere to religious practices. Key life events [99], such as marriages, funerals, and Aqiqah traditionally require adherence to Islamic rituals. However, these occasions have also become platforms for the introduction of *bid'ah* (religious innovations), often influenced by other faiths and cultures. The inclusion of such practices by moderates is a reason where one can say, if they can engage in certain customs, we should also be able to do the same. Over time, these borrowed traditions become normalized within Islamic ceremonies. While Islam does not condemn enjoyment, it mandates that such activities remain within the framework of Sharia. However, moderates use these religious events as pretexts for violating Islamic principles. The deterioration of religious integrity is a shared responsibility between the *Ulema*, who have failed to uphold doctrinal purity, and the Muslim believers who actively engage in such practices.

In the contemporary world, the preservation of religious identity is critical for the survival of any faith.

Without a structured religious environment and a strong sense of identity, Muslims may find themselves vulnerable to external influences. Cultural assimilation, material temptations, psychological factors, and social pressures can gradually weaken religious commitment, leading to a state where religious obligations are abandoned in favor of prevailing societal norms. To prevent such an outcome, Muslims must reaffirm their commitment to the teachings of Islam and ensure that their religious identity remains intact amidst changing global dynamics.

To preserve religious identity, it is essential for individuals to fulfill their obligations [100], based on their respective roles and positions in society. These obligations exist in various forms- as a Muslim (for both men and women), as a man or woman, as a husband or wife, as a father or mother, as a trader, ruler, or citizen. Each person, according to their role, must adhere to the responsibilities (Obligations) prescribed for them. Neglecting or showing leniency toward any aspect of these obligations weakens religious identity. Over time, in the absence of enforcement, religious identity gradually dissolves, giving way to more dominant influences driven by personal desires rather than religious principles.

Within contemporary Islamic movements, *Tablighi Jamaat* and *Ahl-e-Hadith* both contain a considerable number of moderates. *Tablighi Jamaat* has successfully established a recognizable presence through its distinct dress code, making its followers easily identifiable in public. On the other hand, *Ahl-e-Hadith*, which adheres more closely to traditional Islamic principles by opposing *Sufi* practices and rejecting *bid'ah* (religious innovations) prevalent in the Indian subcontinent, has not yet gained the level of recognition it arguably deserves for its efforts in promoting religious authenticity.

The existence of minor variations in prayer rituals should not be a cause for division within the Muslim community or the establishment of separate mosques. Saudi Arabia provides a model where such differences do not hinder communal worship. However, within the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement, a trend toward moderation is becoming evident. Many of its followers, once strict adherents to their interpretation of Islam, are now more accepting of gender mixing and are willing to form marital alliances with members of other Islamic sects that maintain a socially moderate atmosphere. This evolution raises theological concerns, as *Ahl-e-Hadith* has traditionally positioned itself as the guardian of Islam in its purest form, emphasizing direct adherence to the Prophet's teachings rather than following the jurisprudence of the four major Imams.

<sup>98</sup><https://muslimmirror.com/cbse-drops-urdu-thousands-of-urdu-medium-students-left-clueless/>

<sup>99</sup>(RAHMATULLAH, 2015) page 75

<sup>100</sup>(RAHMATULLAH, 2015)

Muslims who struggle with the dilemma of whether to conform to prevailing social customs- especially in celebratory events such as weddings, which are often influenced by moderate and non-traditional practices- or to risk social alienation by refusing to engage in them should reflect on the religious consequences of their choices. Assisting [<sup>101</sup>], in or endorsing *bid'ah* (religious innovations) is considered sinful in Islam, and it is the duty of every believer to resist such practices. The reluctance of Muslim sects to challenge these deviations, combined with their tacit approval by offering religious services at such events, has inadvertently strengthened the moderate movement and eroded the religious integrity of the *Ummah*.

Islamic traditions (hadith) indicate that various sects may contain both elements of truth and misguidance- some of their teachings remain faithful to

<sup>101</sup>Saheeh Bukhari Volume 9, page 251, Hadith 7306 6) CHAPTER. The sin of the person who gives refuge or helps a person who innovates an heresy (in the religion) or commits sin. This has been narrated by 'Ali RA on the authority of the Prophet PBUH.

7306. Narrated 'Asim: I asked Anas, "Did Allah's Messenger. made Al-Madina a sanctuary?" He replied, "Yes, (Al-Madina is a sanctuary) from such and such place to such and such place. It is forbidden to cut its trees, and whosoever innovates an heresy in it or commits a sin therein, will incur the Curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people." Then Musa bin Anas told me that Anas added, "... or gives refuge to such an heretic or a sinner..." (See H. 1867 and 1870)

<sup>102</sup>Sahih Bukhar Volume 9, page 137 hadith 7084 (11) CHAPTER. What a Muslim should do if there is no righteous group of Muslims.

7084. Narrated Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman: The people used to ask Allah's Messenger PBUH about the good but I used to ask him about the evil lest I should be overtaken by it. So I said, "O Allah's Messenger! We were living in ignorance and in an (extremely) worst atmosphere, then Allah brought to us this good (i.e., Islam); will there be any evil after this good?" He said, "Yes." I asked, "Will there be any good after that evil?" He replied, "Yes, but it will be tainted (not pure)". I asked, "What will be its taint?" He replied, "(There will be) some people who will guide others not according to my (legal way of) guidance. You will approve of some of their deeds and disapprove of some others." I asked, "Will there be any evil after that good?" He replied, "Yes, (there will be) some people calling at the gates of the (Hell) Fire, and whoever will respond to their call, will be thrown by them into the (Hell) Fire." I said, "O Allah's Messenger! Will you describe them to us?" He said, "They will be from our own people and will speak our language." I said, "What do you order me to do if such a state should take place in my life?" He said. "Stick to the group of Muslims and their *Imam* (Muslim ruler)." I said, "If there is neither a group of Muslims nor an *Imam*?' I e said, "Then turn away from all those sects even if you were to

the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, while others result from excessive veneration or doctrinal distortions. This duality makes it challenging for ordinary Muslims to discern the correct path. However, the same Prophetic (PBUH) narrations [<sup>102</sup>], warn against certain groups- including moderates- who actively mislead people, drawing them toward spiritual downfall. In societies where Sharia law is not implemented, Muslims are encouraged to distance themselves from sectarian divisions and adhere solely to the clear and direct guidance of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, which provide an unambiguous framework for religious observance.

## CONCLUSION

During the Prophet's era, no sectarian divisions or religious factions existed. The People of the Book [<sup>103</sup>], were also invited to adhere to the Quran as the

bite (eat) the roots of a tree till death overtakes you while you are in that state.

<sup>103</sup>Verse 42:13 – The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah-<sup>4541</sup> the which We have sent by inspiration to thee- and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in Religion and make no division therein<sup>4542</sup> to those who worship other things than Allah, hard is the (way) to which thou callest them.<sup>4543</sup> Allah chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him).

4541- Allah's Religion is the same in essence, whether given, for example, to Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Jesus, or to our holy Prophet. The source of unity is the revelation from Allah. In Islam it is "established" as an institution, and does not remain merely a vague suggestion.

4542- Faith, Duty or Religion, is not a matter to dispute about. The formation of sects is against the very principle of Religion and Unity. What we should strive for is steadfastness in duty and faith, and unity among mankind.

4543- Unity, unselfishness, love for Allah and man, - these things are inconsistent with selfish aggrandizement, unjust suppression of our fellow- creatures, false worship, and false conduct to our brethren. Hence the Gospel of Unity, through it is in complete accord with the pure pattern after which Allah made us, is yet hard to those who love self and falsehood. But Grace is free to all, and in His wise Plan, He will specially select teachers to show the Way to humanity, and no one who turns to Him will lack guidance.

Verse 42:14- And they became divided<sup>4544</sup> only after knowledge reached them,- being insolent to one another. Had it not been for a word that went before<sup>4545</sup> from thy Lord, (Tending) to a Term appointed, the matter would have been settled between them: But truly who have inherited the Book after them are in suspicious (disquieting)<sup>4546</sup> doubt concerning it.

4544- Cf.ii.213. If you reject Truth after it has reached you, it can be through selfish contumacy or envy.

ultimate revelation and submit to its truth. However, as the Muslim community experienced material prosperity, ideological fragmentation emerged, leading many to prioritize worldly interests over religious adherence. The development of Islamic sects stems from doctrinal disputes with dominant interpretations, often initiated by individuals who highlight perceived theological or jurisprudential errors. Instead of engaging in scholarly discourse to reconcile differences, some opt to establish distinct sectarian identities.

Islam fundamentally rejects sectarianism, as evidenced by Quranic injunctions and Prophetic traditions emphasizing unity. Despite this, sects and various theological schools persist. In contemporary times, a significant and expanding movement, often identified as "moderate Muslims," has emerged. This movement transcends sectarian boundaries, with adherents present across diverse Islamic factions, steadily increasing in influence.

Islamic sects must take proactive measures to identify and remove moderates who infiltrate their institutions, ensuring they no longer associate themselves with the sect's identity. It is also imperative to educate the broader Muslim community about the ideological and moral threats posed by these individuals, as they introduce practices into religious observances that contribute to moral decay within Muslim society.

Looking ahead, there is a real possibility that certain sects will deliberately integrate such practices to attract these individuals, leveraging their presence as a means of financial gain or social influence. This phenomenon is already observable, as numerous sects continue to sustain themselves by appealing to individuals who either lack formal Islamic education or deliberately avoid studying the Quran and Hadith. Many such individuals depend entirely on unqualified religious figures (pseudo-scholars and self-proclaimed spiritual leaders) for guidance.

Failure to regulate such elements within their institutions may result in sects being perceived as

4545- Cf.x.19, and n.1407. Allah's decree has allowed a certain Term during which sinner has the chance of repentance and forgiveness. Were it not so, sin would be punished at once, and the matter would be decided straightway. So also, when people reject Truth from selfish or contumacious motives, they get rope: perchance they may repent.

4556- Cf.xiv.9 and n.1884. "Those who inherited the Book" are the People of the Book, of all ages since the Book or revelation came to them. Referring to the Jews and Christians, contemporary with our Prophet, how true it is that they were broken up into hostile sects which hated and persecuted each other! Islam came to unite them, and it did. For the present phases of Christianity and Judaism are of later growth.

enablers of these deviations. As these moderates publicly affiliate themselves with their respective sects, they serve as direct evidence of ideological corruption. Their growing numbers and societal influence have reached a point where their un-Islamic practices are normalized and even legitimized as acceptable forms of entertainment on a global scale.

Prophetic traditions (hadith) indicate that as the end of times approaches, illicit relationships will become increasingly prevalent. The gatherings facilitated by self-proclaimed moderates create an environment conducive to the development of such immoral interactions, marking the initial stages of a broader societal decline. Over time, these behaviors will gain social legitimacy, mirroring the moral trajectory observed in Western societies. Muslim moderates actively pursue similar freedoms, advocating for an unrestricted lifestyle that disregards religious constraints.

The threat they pose to Islam is particularly severe, as they reject external religious accountability, insisting that only Allah will judge them. Conversely, sectarian leaders are scrutinized by their followers, in front of Allah and hold them responsible for any deviations from Islamic teachings. In contrast, moderates operate without institutional oversight, leading to the normalization of sinful practices. These individuals follow desires-driven social customs that originate from within their circles and gradually become accepted as mainstream behavior.

Regrettably, many common Muslims lack the opportunity or inclination to seek religious knowledge directly from the Quran and Sahih Hadith. Instead, they place unwavering trust in sectarian authorities, following their interpretations without question. This dynamic perpetuates the existence of sects that guide their adherents based on their own perceived benefits rather than strict adherence to divine revelation.

A Muslim's true identity is rooted in adherence to divine obligations and striving for righteousness as Al-Mujtahidun-those who seek religious knowledge and

Verse 43:64- "For Allah, He is my Lord<sup>4664</sup> and your Lord: so worship ye Him: this is a Straight Way."

4664 – In verses 26-28 an appeal is made to pagan Arabs, that Islam is their own religion, the religion of Abraham their ancestor; in verse 46-54, an appeal is made to the Jews that Islam is the same religion as was taught by Moses, and that they should not allow their leaders to make fools of them; in verse 57-65 an appeal is made to the Christians that Islam is the same religion as was taught by Jesus, and that they should give up their sectarian attitude and follow the universal religion, which shows the Straight Way.

Verse 43: 65- But sects from among themselves fell into disagreement: Then woe to the wrong-doers, from the Chastisement of a Grievous Day!

walk the straight path. The Quran (Surah Al-Furqan 25:74-75) emphasizes the importance of family as a means of fostering righteousness within society. The trials encountered in fulfilling these obligations are tests of faith, requiring perseverance rather than succumbing to the ease [<sup>104</sup>], and leniency embraced by moderates.

While moderates faced struggle due to worldly hardships and the failure of religious scholars to strengthen their faith, their selective observance of obligations poses a significant threat to Islam. By choosing which religious duties to follow based on personal preference, they facilitate moral and societal decay. Wealth becomes the dominant force, and unlawful means are justified in the pursuit of material pleasures. As this mindset spreads, sects risk losing their influence, as their followers begin to question the necessity of religious commitment in comparison to the comfort and freedom enjoyed by moderates.

To counteract this decline, a comprehensive revival of Islamic identity is necessary. This requires an institutional approach, integrating modern education with religious scholarship to equip future generations with both contemporary knowledge and Islamic ethics. Only through such initiatives can Islamic values be preserved in an era of increasing moderation and moral corruption.

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<sup>104</sup>Sahih Bukhari Volume 1, page 83, (39) CHAPTER. The superiority of that person who leaves all doubtful (unclear) things for the sake of his religion.

52. Narrated An-Nu'man bin Bashir RA: I heard Allah's Messenger PBUH. saying, "Both legal and illegal things are evident but in between them there are doubtful (unclear) things and most of the people have no knowledge about them. So whoever saves himself from these doubtful (unclear) things, he saves his religion and his honour. And whoever indulges in these doubtful (unclear) things is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the *Hima* (private pasture) of someone else, and at any moment he is liable to get in it. (O people!) Beware! Every king has a *Hima* and the *Hima* of Allah SWT on the earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart.

Sunan Ibn Majah Volume 5, page 239 Hadith-4045. It was narrated that Anas bin Maik said: "Shall I not tell

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you a *Hadith* that I heard from the Messenger of Allah which no one will tell you after me? I heard it from him (saying): 'Among the portents of the Hour are that knowledge will be taken away and ignorance will prevail, illegal sex will become widespread and wine will be drunk, and men will disappear and women will be left, until there is one man in charge of fifty women.' (Sahih)

a. 'No one will tell you' means that all the Companions who heard this *Hadith* from the Prophet PBUH, have died. Anas, RA, was the last Companion who died in Basrah. He died in the year 91 A.H.

b. Knowledge will be taken away means proficient and religious scholars will die, and their death will lead to the disappearance of religious guidance. Therefore, the people will become ignorant in their religious matters, even though they will be excellent in their worldly matters.

c. Due to the prevalence of obscenity people no longer will feel disgust from immodesty. Nowadays, our poetry, novels, films and the like are totally dedicated to spreading immorality.

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