

## THE UNIVERSAL TEACHINGS OF ISLAM AND THE DIVERSE IDENTITY OF PAKISTANI SOCIETY

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### **Abstract**

*This research article primarily elucidates two aspects. The first aspect attempts to provide a genuine interpretation and understanding of Islam. While this endeavor is not overly extensive or heatedly debated, it does point out significant key points. These points either encompass the fundamentals of Islam or elaborate on its ethics and principles. In this way, the discussion covers not only the overarching matters of Islam but also specific details that highlight the distinct and guiding nature of Islam compared to other religions. The second aspect is presented in considerable detail. This is crucial because we are all witnesses to the uncertain situation in Pakistani society. This society is neither striving to become religiously literate nor showing enthusiasm for modern scientific understanding. Instead, every individual here seems to lead a life that, while exhausting, also immerses them in the deep sea of futility. Their preferences are unclear, and their goals remain unattained. They engage in activities masked as 'busyness,' which cannot sustain fulfillment. Furthermore, there are abundant reasons for concern. Additionally, another significant reason for the malaise in Pakistani society is the overwhelming emotional factor. Rather than nurturing a spirit of various religious beliefs and sects, pathways leading to extremism are being paved. Under such circumstances, instead of fostering ideas and theories, outdated dogmas and factions thrive, leading to an individualistic mindset that erodes the concept of national unity. This research article is structured to clarify and highlight these observations. It is hoped that it will prove useful for researchers focusing on the intersections of religion and society, if not in entirety, at least in certain aspects.*

**Keywords:** Islam, Universality, Society, Diversity, Pakistan.

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## 1. FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS:

*One of the foundational principles of research is the “Question,” and a question is deemed worthy of attention if its answer is logically acceptable. This research paper is structured around three key questions, which are as follows:*

- (1) What is the fundamental secret of human creation, and by linking this secret to religion and belief, can we claim that this creation of humanity is, in fact, a means for the recognition and worship of the Creator? On the other hand, is it correct that under the pretext of religion, sect, or denomination, humanity becomes a cause for shame, and is this truly “Islamic”?*
- (2) Is the root cause of religious and sectarian enmity in Pakistani society the detachment from religion and indifference to modern sciences, or is there a prevalent trend of using religion merely as a tool?*
- (3) Is the rising attitude of intolerance in society due to the fact that Muslims here are confined within the shell of emotionalism rather than being religiously knowledgeable or trained?*

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

*This research is based on analysis and observation. Specifically, the discussion related to Pakistani society stems from personal observations and opinions. For the completion of this paper, no questionnaire was utilized, nor was there a perceived need to conduct interviews with any knowledgeable individuals. Instead, a research hypothesis was established based on analysis and observation, and subsequently, the analytical and observational research methodology was deemed sufficient for progressing toward completion.*

## 3. INTRODUCTION:

*As Muslims, we claim that our religion provides us guidance in every aspect of life. However, what is the reason that our society deviates from parallel standards and operates under substandard principles (chaos and conflict, sectarianism and religious divisions)? When we look at our Pakistani society, it becomes evident that while we possess a wide critical perspective, we lack the capacity to act. It is becoming a trend for us to scrutinize the actions of every responsible individual in society and attribute various flaws to them. I believe that while today's scientific life has provided us with numerous conveniences, the lack of accurate identification and disregard for issues have led to the erosion of the foundations of society, especially within the Muslim community. This society is not at the level where it ought to be. In a society where unity is*

*absent and chaos prevails, the values and principles of nations become meaningless. In fact, I would go so far as to assert that such a society heads toward obliteration, and its name and existence may fade from the pages of history. Conversely, those nations endure and thrive which not only maintain social unity but also seek paths to uphold social civilization. We can observe plenty of such examples in our world.*

#### **4. THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND HUMANITY:**

*We humans, who are closely related to this universe, have always been in search of knowledge and understanding. Exploring the vastness of the universe and its magnificent wonders has been a cherished pastime for us. We must contemplate the time when the universe began, and it must have wondered what the true essence of its creation was. Eventually, it must have found solace in the realization that there is indeed a creation that brings beauty to its existence, and later the universe became aware that this creation was humanity.*

*It has been narrated in other contexts that when the time came to select clay for the creation of mankind, the Earth objected and began to plead with the angel Gabriel, saying:*

*“O, angel! I find it extremely distressing and painful that the beings made from me will descend into Hell. Therefore, I beseech you to refrain from taking the clay and convey my request to the Divine Presence.” (Kararwi, S. N., 1974)*

*The meaning of this is that human creation has a profound connection with the earth and soil, yet this relationship is more associated with trials and tests than with the fortune of humanity. The soil itself seemed to anticipate that there would be rebellion in the very fabric of humanity. Not only would humans demonstrate disobedience to God, but they would also engage in actions that would make not only humanity cringe but also cause the earth and soil to tremble. The earth prepared for this. The fragrance of the soil began to spread everywhere, and the process of human creation was successfully completed. The likeness of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was formed—a statue crafted solely from the soil, gathered from four different places. The creation of Mother Eve (peace be upon her) also took place. Both were enjoying a life of comfort and tranquility in paradise when, in accordance with the will of the Lord of the Universe, they were commanded to descend to the earth. Here, our discussion is not about the consequences of Prophet Adam’s (peace be upon him) lapses; rather, we will focus on the purpose for which Adam (peace be upon him) was created. This is in accordance with the Divine decree that states, “I am placing*

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*a vicegerent on earth,” (Quran 2:30,) which we shall regard as the core objective of human existence. Furthermore, by associating human elevation with religion and faith, we argue that this creation of humanity is, in fact, a means of recognizing and serving God, regardless of the extent to which divine recognition depends on this servitude. The creation of the universe and the establishment of humanity's vicegerency within this vast cosmos suggest that the advent of religion, particularly the foundation of Islam, is imminent. Before the emergence of this religion (Islam), other faiths were introduced as a precursor. Islam is a religion for which the Almighty has taken great measures to highlight its grandeur, appointing its noble Prophet (PBUH) as the leader of all prophets, (Suyuti, J. al., 2006) peace be upon them. One may reflect on the elevated moral and ethical standards to which the followers of this religion will adhere, as well as the esteemed position they will hold in honoring humanity. Therefore, the entirety of Islamic teachings and their essence revolve around the service, dignity, and honor of suffering humanity.*

*In light of the aforementioned statements, it becomes evident that the essence of Islam is to remedy the plight of suffering humanity. The same Prophet (PBUH), whose teachings emphasize the respect for human dignity, has seen his followers transform into street warriors, adept at rioting and indulging in chaos, rather than embodying the principles of compassion and humanity. Where is the lesson in humanity that forbids causing even the slightest harm to another? Instead, we witness a troubling mentality that threatens to annihilate anyone who dares to confront us. It is well-known that whenever the Prophet (PBUH) dispatched an army for battle, his first command was always to ensure: “Beware! Do not lay a hand on the innocent, do not harm those who flee, and do not harm children, elders, or women.” The Prophet even forbade the cutting down of fruit-bearing trees, demonstrating the profound respect for all forms of life. (Tusi, A. J. M. b. al-Hassan, 1992)*

*It is regrettable that contemporary Islam, particularly in the context of Pakistan, exhibits a strong inclination towards this instinct (sophistry). When a person loses control, they tend to cross all boundaries in their actions. They disregard ethics and show no concern for the repercussions of their behavior. In such circumstances, every moral framework loses its significance. Religious figures in Pakistan have faced arrests in the past, and protests have been raised before. The recent arrest (Syed, A. 2021) (Referring specifically to the religious organization “Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan,” founded by Khadim Hussain Rizvi,*

whose leadership has since passed to his son, Saad Rizvi, following his death. However, after Saad's appointment, the Punjab government arrested him along with several leaders of the organization under the pretext of maintaining public order, which sparked violent protests and unrest in various cities across Pakistan) signals such intense rage on your part that it is almost unimaginable to consider the emotional state of those whose loved ones have been killed or disappeared.

In this context, for those whose loved ones have been murdered, the culmination of aggression, the peak of anarchy, and a fervent instinct to incinerate everything into ashes must prevail. This is due to the innate bond that every individual possesses with their dear ones, which transcends the mere relationship of passing time. In order to address breaches of peace, the state sometimes resorts to stringent measures, all in accordance with legal requirements and the constitutional framework of Pakistan. The individual whose arrest has led to a deterioration of the situation in Pakistan poses a question: Does he hold more significance than the integrity of the nation or possess greater sanctity than the value of human life? This inquiry is directed at every Muslim today who regards himself as the authentic embodiment of true Islam.

This group (referring to the previously mentioned aggressors who have justified their actions by claiming their arrests) will find no evidence of legitimate conduct within the teachings of Muhammad (peace be upon him) or the ethics of Prophethood. However, numerous fabricated justifications can be created that diverge from the core principles of the faith. What could be a more significant justification than questioning how their leader was apprehended? It is likely that this individual has not yet fully mastered the nuances of leadership; he may have inherited his position of authority from his father and, by chance, become a leader for some in both religious and worldly contexts. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that anyone would dare to take action against such a leader. In Karachi, an individual in his vehicle found himself ensnared by this group. Whether he wished to proceed forward or backward, he was trapped in a circle of those wielding clubs. The only 'offense' of this innocent person was his audacity to use the protest route for his personal needs. While sitting in his vehicle, he was subjected to a relentless barrage from outside, with blows raining down upon him. Amidst a torrent of insults and coarse language, it seemed as though our sense of Muslim identity was laying the groundwork for a new civilization.

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*At one location, three soldiers in uniform find themselves surrounded by a group of individuals proclaiming their Islamic identity. The enraged crowd is chanting religious slogans, while the three soldiers are injured and subjected to the additional torment of being forced into what the crowd deems to be "strong and formidable Muslims." As a result of various tumultuous events, three personnel lose their lives. Numerous scuffles and clashes ensue, leading to hundreds of police officers sustaining serious injuries, necessitating their admission to hospitals across the country for treatment. (Shakil Qarar, I., & Gabol, I. 2021) (In 2021, protests by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik resulted in nationwide disruptions. In various locations, confrontations erupted between the organization's activists and security forces, leading to casualties on both sides as well as damage to property), It appeared as though victorious Muslims had just returned home after demonstrating their bravery on the battlefield. In contrast, there were the noble figures among the Companions of the Prophet, who, even in the course of fighting for the cause of Allah, remained mindful of humanity. Islamic historians assert that during the Battle of the Trench, when Hazrat Ali subdued Amr ibn Abd Wudd and mounted him, he was on the verge of killing him, as Amr had committed a transgression. However, Hazrat Ali chose to dismount without taking his life. Amr, astonished, asked why he had not been killed when it could have been done so easily. Hazrat Ali responded that he had become angry, but that anger was for his own sake rather than for the sake of Allah. (Ibn Shahr Ashub, Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali. 1991) Moreover, there are those among our warriors of faith who do not spare even a single human being along the path. Do these attitudes truly affirm our Muslim identity? Simply proclaiming it with our tongues is insufficient; our actions must also clearly reflect that we embody the true essence of Islam. Our actions have been estranged ever since we blurred the lines between truth and falsehood, diminished the distinction between good and evil, perceived knowledge and ignorance as one and the same, and, above all, viewed sectarian animosity with a sense of approval.*

*In the context of the aforementioned selective examples, several key points come to the forefront, which need to be articulated to underscore the relevance and understanding of the topic. The conclusion of any discourse carries significant weight. A discourse that begins with eloquence yet ends with superficial remarks and ideas loses its significance. Rather than being impactful, such discourse becomes engulfed in a sea of aimlessness.*

Consequently, articulating one's thoughts within an environment filled with misunderstandings and then guiding those thoughts toward the truth becomes exceedingly challenging. I find myself relying solely on God's support, with the hope for change. It is possible that my observations may serve as a catalyst for societal transformation. I will now present the aforementioned points:

#### **1.4. OPTIMISM:**

*In our society, many individuals harbor hope and conviction that change will transpire, leading to the realization of the aspirations deeply ingrained in people's hearts. However, if we explore this notion further and examine what that change will actually entail, it appears rather elusive. This indicates a detachment from reality and a divergence from mere assertions, which I would aptly categorize as "optimism." The timeless metaphor of the birthplace of both virtuous and vicious individuals surfaces here. For a person whose very being is not infused with the essence of "rightness," what transformation can occur, even if they are subjected to the machinery of change? The outcome would remain consistent with what has historically transpired: the dream of change, accompanied by the inevitability of departing from this world. Previous generations ventured forth with the hope that one day everything would transform, marking the dawn of a new beginning. They envisioned a society where the labyrinth of existence would seamlessly flow towards a known destination, allowing individuals to achieve their true goals. Such raw thoughts resided in the minds of our ancestors, who departed without witnessing these ideals take tangible form. Today, we find ourselves in a similar time; we too are a collection of dreams and ideas. We navigate our lives daily, perhaps in hopes of hearing the joyous herald of a new dawn that could alleviate our suffering. Is the realization of such dreams approaching fruition, or do we merely carry a trove of hopes as our means for this journey? When we pose this question through the lens of religion and creed, we discover significant messages of patience and hope. Particularly among Muslims, these thoughts and perspectives are widely present, with every idea tracing back to the teachings of the esteemed Messenger. As is universally acknowledged among all sects of Islam, there is a belief in the imminent arrival of a significant leader (Imam Mahdi), who will guide the world back to its true essence. Prior to this event, the world will have been filled with oppression, injustice, and numerous challenges. One of the primary responsibilities of Imam Mahdi will be to assist those who have suffered under tyranny and to ensure that the oppressors are held accountable for their actions. (Al-Nishapuri, A. A. M. b. A. H. 2002)*

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### 2.4. THE CALL OF TRUTH:

*The issue at hand is that the current circumstances are profoundly disordered. Is there any aspect of life that does not require transformation, and yet these changes demand centuries to achieve? To elevate our thoughts and ideas, we not only need internal change but also a significant transformation within society, so that every individual can tangibly experience this change. However, our social behavior tends to favor those who speak over those who listen, with particularly few representatives of action and adherence. When everyone speaks, gives advice, and presents themselves as scholars—in words rather than actions—who will truly heed the call of truth? How can a voice possess the strength to resonate with the ears of the people and stir their consciousness? In a society where admonishing discourse is limited by time and space, the concept of “Collective consciousness” remains vague and unclear.*

*We often observe in religious and political gatherings that if speakers were to initiate the implementation of their own teachings, the quality of social life and collective consciousness would undoubtedly reach extraordinary heights. Unfortunately, the proclamations made in places of worship and political arenas often stem from impassioned rhetoric rather than genuine intent. Their practical manifestations are rarely evident, nor are their benefits accessible. Thus, as a student of society, my voice, my words, my writings, and my counsel will not resonate as the call of truth until I embody the true essence of action and adherence myself. By “Action and adherence,” I mean that I must practice the commands highlighted in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and follow the directives that clarify what is lawful and unlawful, as well as the paths of reward and punishment, virtue and vice. As a follower of one of the world's major religions (the second-largest faith), I possess clear guidance, illuminated paths, and significant teachings. With such explicit instructions at hand, I have no logical excuse to wander aimlessly or to seek justifications for the absence of direction in my life, as provided by the great human figure (Muhammad), who articulated the principles of living well. To claim otherwise would be a grave falsehood.*

### 4.4. THE WHITE-COLLAR CLASS:

*On one side, there exists a class characterized by white-collar individuals, for whom a sense of superiority is deeply ingrained in their being and possessions. They have been indoctrinated with the notion that the entirety*

*of societal interaction and responsibility rests upon their shoulders. Change begins with them and is perceived to conclude with them. They are the ones who formulate laws and disrupt frameworks; the burdens of these convoluted regulations are ostensibly placed upon the shoulders of the impoverished and the helpless. This class often supports the proclamations of every ruler and eagerly anticipates immediate transformation. However, these individuals remain oblivious to the fact that the very change they yearn for is being ceremoniously buried with each passing day.*

#### **5.4. THE CURRICULUM OF COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS:**

*Pause for a moment! Let us pay tribute to those white-collar individuals who, filled with hopes for change, oscillate between holding positions of influence in one branch and becoming mere followers in another. Their journey continues indefinitely, persisting until the very essence of life is drained away. We should exercise extreme caution regarding such transformations, as they may lead to our own annihilation. I am specifically referring to the political activists who take the polished rhetoric of political leaders at face value and become embellishments of their rallies. My observations indicate that political operatives often waste their precious time for minimal returns, jeopardizing their entire lives in the process. Such activists need to familiarize themselves with the curriculum of “Collective consciousness.”*

#### **6.4. THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE:**

*It is asserted that what existed before will no longer be, and that what is to come will serve as a significant catalyst for change for all of us. I was also enamored with this notion, believing wholeheartedly that it would indeed be the case. However, I do not wish to succumb to despair. By considering hope as a substantial resource, I repeatedly reassure myself that:*

*“These leaders are quite astute; they will undoubtedly navigate us through the forthcoming challenges, for they have gauged the pulse of the times. A storm-like adversary may arise, presenting difficulties akin to a tempest. Yet, they will stand firm and effortlessly overcome every hardship. Is this merely my wishful thinking? I find myself unable to comprehend.”*

#### **7.4. POLITICAL ADVOCATES:**

*The political advocates might argue that they were given an opportunity, and we too require time. What does it matter that we have just stepped into this arena? Who knows how long it will take for the fruits of our transformation to*

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*manifest. We remarked, Well! When have we prevented you from seeking permission? The previous ones were also free; they played and exhibited their skills with finesse. Every political boundary they crossed was executed with such style that even their opponents could not help but commend them. You too should play; we are, after all, avid enthusiasts of your game.*

*In light of the above discussion, I assert that for the enhancement of “Collective consciousness” within society, it is essential for the Pakistani community to focus profoundly on religion, spirituality, and ethics. Each individual should revisit the Islamic curriculum to effectively fulfill their social responsibilities. The past was a different era when Islam was understood primarily through hearsay; however, the current time is distinct, modern, and challenging, necessitating that every person independently comprehends Islamic teachings. This understanding is crucial to instigate a significant transformation in social structure and status.*

*In this context, we draw upon the life of that great personality (The Guide and Leader, peace be upon him), as mentioned at the beginning of our discussion, to elucidate and interpret “Collective consciousness” in modern society. As students of society, we regard education and learning as the primary measures of societal progress and decline. Our belief is anchored in the understanding that the advanced nations of our world have distinguished themselves from their contemporaries primarily through this very avenue of education and learning. Furthermore, the notion that “Knowledge is a blessing and a path to salvation,” which was emphatically stated and exemplified by the Prophet (peace be upon him) over fourteen hundred years ago, remains profoundly relevant today. (Al-Zuhri, M. bin S. bin M. 1421 H) As Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has emphasized the necessity and significance of education at multiple points, the cornerstone of his early missionary efforts was the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Indeed, even the release of prisoners of war was conditional upon their ability to teach and learn. Integrating the noble persona of such a Prophet with all the aspects and awareness of society would prove to be the most beneficial endeavor for the contemporary Muslim community. It is a common observation that as long as the Muslim society remained focused on education and learning, the paths of guidance were clearly defined, and this society reflected a profound sense of “collective consciousness.” Other nations, including the West, considered it essential to benefit from the structured educational methodology of Muslim*

society. (Javed, A. 2010) As soon as the intellectual attitude and approach to research among Muslims fell into apathy, the narrative of decline began from that point, a trend that continues to this day.

Without pointing to any specific nation, which today is achieving various milestones of progress, we would like to clarify that there existed an individual who, through multifaceted thinking, was successful in establishing guiding principles. This individual, who possessed the resilience to endure rigorous tests and navigate through the most challenging problems, embodies the essence of a dynamic personality. What does such an active individual look like? To seek answers to this question, if we survey our surroundings, we can develop analytical insights and indicate that a personality must traverse through phases of construction that often involve critical scrutiny and satirical evaluation. I believe that individuals who embrace revolutionary thought and action have seldom been exempt from criticism. If a prominent figure is not immune to any form of critique, then ordinary individuals cannot be absolved from scrutiny and judgment either. It is evident that prominent members of society engage in numerous endeavors, which is why their status is elevated. Conversely, those with less significant personas often remain untargeted, leading commonplace lives as mere reflections of unassuming roles. The most significant flaw in our contemporary society is the presence of three ideologies that dominate with great intensity:

#### **FIRST: PERSONALITY CULT:**

It is quite common to attribute qualities of praise and admiration to a personality. I assert that the phenomenon of personality cult is prevalent in our society. Individuals tend to focus on understanding themselves better than they do others and examining the intricacies of others' lives closely. Those in your inner circle will often commend you with the intention of highlighting your personal life and social status. Sometimes, they are so ardent in their flattery that they completely forget whether the qualities they praise actually exist. Those who form such opinions about an individual are typically unable to recognize any flaws in their subject of admiration. The person being praised is also aware that the bridges of praise built around them are akin to threads that may easily break; even a slight breeze can cause these bridges to tremble. We can say that where flaws are nonexistent and praise serves merely as a superficial judgment, the inclination toward personality cult becomes common. There is a complete lack of realism or impartiality in such scenarios. This tendency could lead to a stagnation of the individual's capabilities; potential growth may be stunted

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*when the space for further development is constrained.*

*Consider the students of religious or secular knowledge who delve deeply into their studies. When these students have the opportunity to speak in a certain position—be it in a mosque or a political arena—they present their talents with great splendor, whether in the form of oratory or interpretation of knowledge. The initial expression of their thoughts tends to crystallize into an act of defining praise and admiration. The individual who has taken on a prominent role in a mosque, become a political heir, or occupied the teaching seat often becomes subject to the applause that accompanies praise. Despite having embarked on their quest for knowledge with genuine enthusiasm, they may find that excessive praise effectively clipped their wings. Although such praise may be delivered unwittingly, it can extinguish the recipient's capabilities, rendering them indifferent to the pursuit of further knowledge. I believe that while encouragement through praise is essential, it should never overshadow the flaws of the individual being praised. Consequently, the societal norm of consistently praising a relative or dear one does not foster constructive competition, but rather establishes a tradition of nepotism. In a society where familial ties are prioritized, the vibrancy of personal development and collective intellectual growth diminishes, resulting in a community that becomes stagnant rather than dynamic.*

*When viewed in this context, the situation in Pakistani society becomes quite clear. Prior to the 1960s and 1970s, Pakistan was firmly on a constructive path characterized by its multifaceted diversity. The tradition of honoring skilled individuals took precedence over close personal connections. It was not the case that friends or relatives were elevated to positions of praise merely for their relationships; rather, only deserving and capable individuals were deemed suitable for fulfilling relevant responsibilities. The reason for this is evident: during that time, national leaders were active and dynamic. Renowned bureaucrat Qudrat Ullah Shahab aptly captures the challenges of early Pakistan and the people's spirit of nationalism in the following words:*

*“...offices were largely devoid of traditional furnishings. There were few cabinets or shelves for files; generally, flat stones were utilized to create workspaces. Depending on the season, it was common practice to conduct office work under the shade of trees outside. Throughout the day, Indian bomber planes would pass overhead or to the sides, recklessly raining down bombs on their targets before nonchalantly returning. There was no arrangement for our*

resistance or prevention against them. In contrast, our only support was our reliance on Allah. Whenever an Indian aircraft rained bombs nearby or indiscriminately fired machine guns directly above us, we would remain silent, sitting still and frozen in our places.” (Shahab, Qudratullah. 2003)

This depicts a Pakistan that was just beginning its journey. While Pakistan has since gained considerable proficiency in craftsmanship, sciences, and arts, the situation remains largely unchanged. As previously mentioned, prior to the 1960s and 1970s, there was momentum in Pakistan's development, and despite facing significant challenges, society was making progress. However, after the fall of East Pakistan, our society became overshadowed by a sense of loss, leading to a dominant trend of decline rather than advancement. To this day, the nation remains in a psychological state of upheaval. (Mahmood, Dr. Safdar. 1990) Moreover, as Pakistan has aged and gained experience, nepotism, corruption, and favoritism have increasingly destabilized the fabric of society.

## **SECOND: THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE:**

In society, we can observe that some individuals seem to exist solely to criticize others. For them, it is rare to find anyone worthy of praise. Notably, these critics often target individuals well-versed in religious studies. When even a minor mistake is made by a student of religious knowledge, the criticism swiftly turns towards scholars. However, it is essential to recognize that not everyone in society possesses only religious knowledge; there are also students pursuing contemporary fields of study. Do the mistakes made by these individuals not count for anything? This imbalanced perception persists largely because the cohort of critics in society is quite vast. Have we ever reflected on the fact that the flaws and errors of those around us are deemed condemnable, particularly because we do not recognize such flaws within ourselves? Each of us must come to understand, during moments of reflection, that just as a religious student may make mistakes, so can we, regardless of the branches of life with which we are affiliated.

## **THIRD: SPECULATION:**

Forming an opinion about someone indirectly, commonly referred to as speculation, can have significant implications. For instance, attributing a sin to someone when they have not committed it goes beyond mere speculation; it can also be classified as an accusation. It is reported from Prophet Muhammad that if a person whose theft has been committed falsely accuses innocent individuals,

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*their sin is greater than that of the thief themselves. (Baharanji, M. H. 2013) In other words, if you do not have a direct acquaintance with someone and lack knowledge about their character, yet someone informs you that this person is morally lax, undertaking heinous acts behind the guise of their knowledge (if they are educated), such a judgment highlights a precarious situation. How can we measure someone's character in terms of good or bad when we have not observed them closely, nor are we eyewitnesses to their conduct? Principally, before forming a definite opinion about someone, one should meet them in person and engage in conversation to ascertain whether they are indeed as they have been portrayed. No one can accurately represent another's thoughts, feelings, or emotions, particularly in situations where you seek opinions about someone from their adversaries. An opponent will never offer praise; their ultimate aim is to tarnish every facet of their rival's character. This tendency is also prevalent in contemporary Pakistani society. Such behavior not only fosters misunderstandings but also intensifies resentment. Moreover, Islamic teachings strongly condemn this type of attitude, asserting that sins such as "Opinion," "Accusation," "Slander," and "Backbiting" lead not only to the corruption of individual character but also contribute to societal decay. Remarkably, even mentioning a flaw in someone constitutes backbiting; if it is not backbiting, then it would be considered slander. (Qaradawi, Y. 1976)*

*There is an unusual commotion taking place. In the marketplace of human society, the funeral of humanity is held with great fanfare every day. There is a conspiracy at every turn, and every individual is a schemer; compassion seems to be utterly absent. Everyone has embarked on a path dictated by their interests. If one observes the palaces, markets, and squares, they will witness a landscape strewn with critical and destructive thinking. The history of palace intrigues in key institutions is indeed quite extensive. The sight of factionalism, gatherings, and emotional affiliations is astonishing to the point that comprehending such a scene might require the longevity of Noah, Prophet Noah dedicated over nine hundred and fifty years to guiding his people, yet only a few individuals embraced the faith of Islam (Damiri, M. bin M. Bin I. 2006), the patience of Job, Prophet Job was subjected to immense suffering as a test, and he is regarded as one of the most patient individuals in the history of humanity (Mas'udi, A. bin H. bin A. (1975), the eloquence of Moses, Prophet Moses was granted the honor of conversing with God. Furthermore, he is the prophet who expressed a desire to behold God's presence (Abi Shaybah, A. B.*

A. bin M. (2014), and even the majesty of Muhammad, according to Muslim historians, it is sufficient to describe the grandeur of the Prophet Muhammad by stating that he was the culmination and completion of the prophecies and missions of all the prophets. (Tabrisi, A. A. F. bin H. (2004). A person engages in a battle for his interests with such grandeur that he neither distinguishes between right and wrong nor shows any regard for what is permissible or prohibited. He leaps into the arena of life alone, taking risks and concocting schemes. In contrast, another individual moves forward with the intention of thwarting all of this first person's plans, believing that if he has not attained success, then he will not allow anyone else to succeed either. How can a benefit be deemed useful for you if it is inaccessible to me? At times, the desire to win and emerge victorious ignites, and this pursuit of victory establishes boundaries between life and death. It is believed that if victory is unattainable, it is akin to the dissolution of the entire system, as if theories collapse and societies disintegrate. Conversely, there exists another perspective. In this view, a group believes that the conscience of the conscientious has begun to falter, the honorable are selling out, and even the astute are becoming deceitful. Here, there is a respect for promises, a regard for the dignified, and honesty holds no value; rather, the swift winds of time are poised to sweep everything away. Is it necessary to provide an example of how, when a prominent figure from a coalition of various groups known as the Pakistan Democratic Movement won an important seat, (In March 2021, elections were held for the Senate of Pakistan? Although the then-ruling party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, secured a majority in the elections, the significant seat of Islamabad was won by the joint candidate of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), Yousaf Raza Gillani. The victorious candidate achieved this by defeating his opponent, Dr. Hafeez Sheikh from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) (Ghalib Nahad, Y. R. 2021, March 4) in the capital, Islamabad, an overwhelming surge of rhetoric and claims ensued from both sides to validate their respective positions? One party took on the role of the accuser:

“Today, democracy has donned yet another cloak of victory. Instead of resorting to riots and bullets for retribution, revenge was taken through the means of 'better' democracy.” (BBC Web Desk. 2021, March 3)

The second party, which had tasted defeat, was somewhat disheartened and expressed in a sorrowful tone: “Today, money triumphed and silenced the conscience. Our opponents employed every tactic available to ensure their victory.” (BBC Web Desk. Ibid, 2021, March 3)

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*In essence, the Pandora's box of conspiracies within Pakistani society remains perpetually open, serving not as a catalyst for constructive and human-centric initiatives, but rather as a byproduct of destructive tendencies. Each of us is undoubtedly a prisoner of personal interests; however, we have yet to cultivate the courage for truthfulness and recognition of that truth. It is uncertain when our current approach, which relentlessly pushes us toward degradation, will realign with a righteous path. One wonders when we will emerge from the confines of courtly conspiracies and prioritize collective interests. While each individual yearns for goodness, our actions and behaviors starkly contradict this aspiration. We may vocalize affirmations of "very good," yet we are unwilling to become partakers of that very goodness.*

### **5. CONCLUSION:**

*Based on my personal observations, the Pakistani society is experiencing stagnation in terms of religious inquiry. Even reasonably educated individuals often refrain from questioning whether the religious ideologies, which are used to label their opponents as misguided, are logically substantiated. At times, historical anecdotes and supernatural occurrences are invoked to validate one's own sect. In contemporary times, individuals possessing excellent language and literary skills engage in shaping public opinion, and their eloquence becomes so widely accepted that many in the audience regard their assertions as definitive. As a result, an environment is fostered where, alongside personal and sectarian derogation, violence and bloodshed become easily rationalized.*

*In the civilized world, one notable observation is the profound sense of commitment to one's country, community, and society. In contrast, our society, which ostensibly embraces Islamic teachings, exhibits a significant gap between ideals and practice. It is still navigating a phase of learning and deterioration; at times, it is tested in the name of religion and at other times under the guise of "legitimate politics." The reflections of sectarianism, religious divisions, and distinctions based on ethnicity, color, and race are all vividly observable within Pakistani society.*

*It is indeed accurate to state that each sect holds certain fundamental principles that are regarded as axioms of faith. Additionally, it is a truth that the underlying threads of these foundations ultimately trace back to the universe's greatest human, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Given that we can recognize two primary sources for these foundations—namely, the Holy Quran and the revered Prophet himself—it becomes essential for us to engage in*

thorough contemplation before discussing other religious texts, events, and matters. This necessity arises because an issue may represent a matter of belief for one person while being perceived as merely superficial for another. Consequently, we must strive to act in ways that foster mutual respect, avoiding any form of disrespect or abusive language. Pakistani society cannot bear the weight of ongoing disputes and divisions, as their continuation could incite conflicts. As Muslims, we should always consider differing opinions as acceptable only with the intent of scholarly inquiry. Otherwise, attempts to label others as religiously incorrect and unjust will undoubtedly lead to sectarian rifts, ultimately eroding our ability to forgive opponents based on minor doctrinal disagreements.

Why has the element of religious fanaticism become deeply entrenched in Pakistani society? A closer examination and analysis reveal that religious adherents have, in their own estimation, constructed a set of rules and convinced themselves that the logical justification for the division of heaven and hell, as well as the nuances of punishment and reward, lie in the denigration and excommunication of opposing faiths and sects. However, the concept of reward and punishment is fundamentally related to humanity's connection with the principles of social cohesion and kinship before attaining paradise. Islamic teachings encompass an entire chapter dedicated to "Rights of the People," which is evident in almost all jurisprudential texts. It is crucial to remember that, from the Islamic perspective, the respect and sanctity of humanity are foundational principles. These texts assert that the rights of humanity and the duty of maintaining familial ties lead to paradise, while cutting off those ties leads to hell. The essence of a hadith emphasizes the importance of worshiping Allah without associating anything with Him, establishing prayers, contributing zakat, and upholding kinship ties. (Qadri, S. A. A. 2014) Allah did not say, "Beware! Only do not commit injustice against Muslims; any injustice towards others is acceptable." Clearly, injustice is injustice, whether it is inflicted upon a Muslim or a non-Muslim; accountability will occur regardless. The incident that occurred in Sialkot in 2021 serves as a pertinent example of this reality. On December 3, 2021, a Sri Lankan man was brutally murdered by a mob in a factory in Sialkot, Pakistan, following allegations of blasphemy. The victim, who was working as a general manager at the local factory, was accused of tearing down religious posters from the walls and uttering blasphemous remarks. A large crowd gathered and turned violent, chanting against the Sri Lankan man before attacking him. The incident resulted in the loss of the victim's life. (BBC

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*News Urdu. 2021, December 4) All individuals involved in that incident, who exhibited religious fanaticism and were implicated in the murder of a human being, will be held accountable before Allah (God). They will be asked why such an atrocity was committed against this individual, who, by virtue of being human, deserved to be free from oppression and brutality. This inquiry is, in essence, a form of accountability. Here, I am citing a relevant conceptual excerpt from a hadith. It has been reported:*

*“A man will come holding the hand of another man and say: “O my Lord! He killed me.” Allah will respond: “Why did you kill him?” He will reply: “I killed him in order for Your faith to prevail.” Allah will then say: “Honor and dominance belong to Me.” Similarly, another person will come holding the hand of yet another person, saying: “O my Lord! He killed me.” Allah will ask: “Why did you kill him?” The response will be: “So that so-and-so could have dominance.” Allah will clarify: “It was not for so-and-so,” and thus the individual will be deserving of punishment due to his sins.” (Hindī, A. 'Ala al-Dīn 'Alī Mutaqī bin Husām al-Dīn. 2009)*

*Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the Quranic verse which states that the killing of a single human being (not just a Muslim) is equivalent to the killing of all of humanity. (Quran:5, 23)*

*We have critically and analytically examined the interplay between religion and society, connecting this interplay with the concept of "social consciousness." It has been determined that our responsibilities within society are inherently linked to our sincerity. When our sincerity is reflective in our actions, we can be seen as correct representatives of religion and politics within the community. Conversely, if there is a dissonance between our sincerity and actions, the very notion of “Social consciousness” will become a figment of imagination.*



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