

The Life & Work of the Prophet of Islam, Vol.1 by Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi: A Reading

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“If a book is worth reading, it is worth buying.” John Ruskin
(1819-1900)

Introduction

Sirah or Life of the Prophet of Islam (*Sal'lallahu 'Alayhi Wa Sallam*) has been a subject of great significance for Muslim scholarship and common man as a normative source of guidance. *Sirah* has been a subject of endless series of writings and studies done by historians, traditionalists, jurists and scholars interested in the disciplines of social sciences.¹

In the 1st century of Islam, *Sirah* became a vital source of developing the religious, socio-economic and political laws of Islam, interpretation of Holy Qur'an, of Islamic history and other areas of the activity. The first three centuries of Islam is a period of compilation and classification of the available

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Raftum ke khaar az pa kashum

Mehmal nehan shud az nazar

Yek lehza ghafil ghashtum

Sad sala raahum door shud

He is explaining the situation where he is following the caravan of the beloved. The beloved is being carried away and the camel is back and the poor lover is on foot and he is running behind the camel barefooted. That is the situation. He says 'My foot has caught a thorn and I stopped for a moment to take out the thorn from my feet and with in that moment the caravan disappeared from my eyes. The absence was for a single moment but the distance created is that of hundred years.

So, if we have been victim of forgetfulness for one moment, the disappearance or the distance of the caravan would be of the distance of one hundred years,

Wassalalm Alikum Wa rahmatulla Wa barakatuh ..

the graduates of Madrasahs are admitted for a course of three to four years and they are taught at a specialized level, Fiqh in comparison with modern law, Hadith in comparison with modern writings and so on and so forth. This was an acknowledgement by the Ulama themselves that a new approach is required and a new dimension is to be adopted for the future of Islamic scholarship.

In Pakistan also you might have heard about the International Islamic University, which is operating for similar objectives and which has been adopted by the International Islamic University in Chittagong and Dar al Ehsaan University in Dhaka. In Malaysia, in Egypt and in several other countries. Such institutions are coming up but the time is very short in our disposal and unfortunately the Ulama are taking a very long time unnecessarily to proceed in that direction. They should realize – I may submit – the urgency of this task and the colossal challenge being faced by the Muslim Ummah. If they delay in shifting over to the new paradigm, they will be relegated to the background with the passage of time.

The change and the challenge are very big. The enormity of the challenge and the danger ca not be over emphasized, it is known to everybody. I conclude with a line from a Persian poet , this is addressed to the Ulama – I am sorry if some of you do not follow the Persian- The poet says:

international career, in terms of reintroducing of their institutions and law, in terms of rewriting the new systems and new institutions for the future of the Muslim Ummah.

This is, in my humble view, the future need of Islamic education. Fortunately there is an understanding and awareness in different parts of Muslim Ummah in the world about the present and future needs. A large number of institutions, run by both traditional ulema and by those who combine the two streams and by modern Islamic scholars, are being established. In Bangladesh, I would mention two leading institutions, The International Islamic University established in Chittagong, which seeks to integrate the Islamic knowledge with the contemporary knowledge and to produce an Islamic scholar with a balanced approach with a deep and profound Islamic understanding and a rich exposure to modern knowledge.

There is another institution known as 'Dar al Ehsaan University', established by a very profound Islamic philosopher of twentieth century, Late Professor Syed Ali Ashraf. He had a very clear and perceptive idea of the needs of Muslim Ummah in future and it was under his ideas and messages that the university came in to being.

In addition to these two leading institutions, there are smaller institutions established by some Ulama. Last year, I had an opportunity to visit an institution in Dhaka, where

different issues . This kind of syllabus can be offered within a period of three years after matriculation. After these three year's elementary Islamic education which would be equal to intermediate or A' Level, there may be another course of two, three or four years for those who want to serve as teachers of Islamic Studies in schools or colleges with some additional subjects to these and some exposure to the issues which are confronted by the Muslim Ummah now. Then comes the traditional Dars e Nizami for those who want to teach in these Madrasahs, even for them Dars e Nizami is to be modified. Some unnecessary books which have been proved to be inadequate or ineffective, they may be replaced by the new books at least in the field of Grammar, *Surf* and *Nahav* , and instead of concentrating on the old rational Sciences *Ma'aqulaat* , some books on new philosophies and modern western thought will have to be added. There are books available in Arabic and Urdu on the good exposition of the modern western thought with some critical appreciation and understanding. These may be taught to the teachers of future Darul Ulums, so that they may have an idea of the world in which they are living and the idea of the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah.

Then, we would like to have a higher Islamic syllabus for those Islamic scholars who are required to guide the Ummah, to lead the Muslim Ummah in terms of their

Karachi to Raskumari and from Khyber to Chat gang to come out with an answer to that book? I am afraid we do not have any. My submission is that the future of Islam and Muslims in the Sub continent requires that our Islamic education should be reviewed and restructured to accommodate the needs of these five categories.

First of all, we should have a course of two, three or four years after Matriculation for the production of a good Imam. If a person has a matriculation certificate from the mainstream institutions and is also a Hafiz and with Tajweed, he can be taught some Arabic in three years, the text of the Qur'an may be taught to him with translation, one or two commentaries, one in Urdu or Bengla and one in Arabic, some selections of the Hadith books, for example, this Ma'arif al Hadith by Maulana Manzoor Nomani or Tarjuman al Sunnah by Maulana Badr e Alam and one Arabic collection like Mishkaat or some other collection and one or two books of Usul al Fiqh and two, three books on Fiqh, selected good books, one earlier books like Hidayah and one modern book like 'Al fiqh al hanafi wa adiilatahu' and some books on the modern expositions to Islam dealing with Economic legal and jurisprudential, constitutional matters & issues, dealing with International law and so on and so forth. So that an Imam is to some extent (becomes) competent to give answers to the questions post to him on

did not find a single – and I can underline this statement – that the Banks complained after three months that they did not find a single, individual Islamic scholar with the degree of Dars e Nizami and with some knowledge of English and with some understanding of Banking problems and issues. They came to the board again to review and revise that criterion and now the board is revising the criteria, in order to accommodate such expertise which may be available in the country to be provided to the Banks. This shows that the graduates of the Dars e Nizami in their present makeup are not adequate. They do not have the adequate expertise to provide guidance to the institutions, to the governments, to the bodies engaged in the islamization of laws and institutions. In Bangladesh a big Islamic Bank is working and that Islamic bank is one of the most successful Islamic Banks in the modern world. If it requires a group of Islamic scholars and asks the Madrasahs, I do not think that the traditional Madrasahs would be able to provide the required expertise.

Then comes the higher level challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah. Some ten years back Huntington had written a book 'The clash of civilizations'. Suppose an Islamic scholar is required or called upon to write a rejoinder to 'The clash of civilizations', how many graduates or is there a single graduate of Dars e Nizami in the Sub continent from

teach Islamic Studies to a young boy studying O' and A' Levels, the graduates of Madrassah are hardly suitable. They are hardly qualified to teach Islamic studies to a school where the boys are studying at O' or A' Levels. They require something additional.

Those who are called upon to examine –for example- in Pakistan there is a move now to have a Shariah compatible Banking. The state Bank of Pakistan has laid down a legal framework for the Banks in Pakistan who want to operate in Islamic Framework and to develop Shariah compatible moods. The State Bank of Pakistan requires that there should be a Shariah advisor in each Bank or non banking financial institution which desires to opt for Shariah compatible moods and instruments. They have established a Shariah board at the country level. That Shariah board lays down the principles and policies to be implemented and to be observed by other banks. This has the authority of the State Bank of Pakistan. This board has required all banks that every bank should appoint a Shariah advisor to assist the bank and to ensure that the instruments and the products developed by the Bank are Shariah compatible.

We, in the beginning decided that we should require that a Shariah advisor should be a graduate of Dars e Nizami and Darul Ulum and should have some knowledge of English and Banking. After three moths the Banks complained that they

on Sharh Jami which is known as Tahreer e Sumbhat , then Tahreer e Sumbhat has a marginal note know as Sawaleh kabuli. Then there is a marginal note on Saweleh Kabuli, known as Saweleh Basuli. All this is taught in the Madrassahs in the Frontier province and despite the fact that they spend tens of years on the study of these texts they are unable to write a single sentence in Arabic. What is the use of that? And even if there is a use, I do not deny that, but an Imam does not need that. The people offering their prayer with Imam they do not ask these questions. It is wastage of time for the Imam and for the Madrassah. It is the wastage of resources to teach a prospective Imam, a future Imam these subjects which he never needs. On the other hand he needs problems of day to day life. People ask him about Bank interest, People ask him about mortgage here in England, People ask him about leasing, and People ask him about sale and purchase of shares. The poor Imam does not know anything about these because he is never taught these things.

So what I feel that even for an Imam the Dars e Nizami is not sufficient. It requires some purging, some additions of new subjects. As far as the teachers of Dars e Nizami are concerned and for those who are going to teach these very books, they can teach (study) these books or at least some of them can teach these books, but for those who are going to

does not require Mabzi or Hidayatul hikmat or Sharah hidayatul hikmat. He does not require the verbal hairsplitting of the commentaries and the marginal notes of sharah Jami. We in the Sub continent, particularly in the province of NWFP (KPK), there is much emphasis on the commentaries of kaafiyah and the commentaries of the commentaries and the commentaries of the commentaries of the commentaries. A student reads Kaafiyah . Kaafiyah is a text of Arabic grammar. Those who read Kaafiyah they never know Arabic grammar. Take it from me. Many of them, ninety nine percent of them are unable to write a sentence of correct Arabic. They are not able to speak a sentence in correct Arabic. That is the level of their mastery of the grammar through Kaafiyah. The kaafiyah is read, the kaafiyah studied in such a way that the first line of Kaafiyah is discussed for three weeks without any relevance to Arabic grammar. The poor author of Kaafiyah did not write in the beginning "Bismillah Al Rahman Al Raheem! Alhamdulillah .." The first question why the author did not write the Bismillah? Then the scholars come out with imaginations of his own and then the possibilities, the intellectual hairsplitting which has nothing to do with Arabic grammar and the poor student hardly knows anything about the grammar up to that stage. Then he starts Sharh Jami which is a commentary on Kaafiyah. Then there is a marginal note

We require teachers to teach Islamic Studies in the main stream schools and colleges where in Pakistan Islamic Studies is a compulsory subject and we have around half a million secondary schools in Pakistan and tens of thousands of colleges and now hundreds of universities. In all these institutions Islamic Studies is a compulsory subject which is taught in every institution. Therefore every institution requires a teacher of Islamic Studies at various levels.

Then, we require senior scholars, professors and guides, renowned jurists to guide the nation in terms of general guidance about the challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah. Then we require Fuqha , and experts in Islamic Economics to change Pakistan or to facilitate that change and shift over from the present system ito an Islamic compatible or shariah compatibles system that requires another category of scholars.

My humble opinion is that the present Madrasahs can cater for the needs as far as the first two objectives are concerned. The graduates of a Madrasah can serve to some extent as good Imams and khateebis and they can also serve as good teachers in different Madrasahs. Although, I personally feel that in order to become a good Imam some of the courses being taught to a graduate of the Madrassah are not needed for the Imam. An Imam leading prayers in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Dhaka, Chat gang, Delhi or Mumbai

one hundred or more in different parts of India. The objectives were two:

1. To provide and produce Imams and Khateebis in different mosques.
2. To produce teachers and professors for Darul Ulum and similar other Madrasahs.

These two were the main objectives of the establishment of Darul Ulum . After the independence, particularly in Pakistan and now in Bangladesh the objectives of Madaris should have been reviewed and revised. Now as independent Muslim countries Pakistan and Bangladesh particularly and India to a large extent have some wider objectives to be fulfilled by the Madrasah and by the Dars. Whether it is Daras e Nizami in its original form or the form amended, we require Imams, we require teachers to teach different subjects and disciplines in the Madrasahs whose number is now in thousands as against around the one hundred in the beginning of twentieth century. Now the number of Madrasahs in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh is around fifty thousand Madrasahs or might be more and the number of students is now in Millions. So the requirement is increasing undoubtedly. The provision of teachers in the Madrasahs is a very important requirement, but beyond these requirements we have three other requirements.

1947, a large number of changes were introduced. Later on some books of Philosophy were added, some books of logic were also added, and some books of Hadith were also added. Later on Al Tahavi was added, Mua'taa Imam Malik was added, Mishkaat was added and Mua'taa Imam Muhammad was added. Four, five, six books on Hadith were added. Much later the translation of the text of the Qur'an was added which started from class two or class three perhaps and continued till the end. This covered the entire Qur'an as subject. Some texts on the principles of interpretation were also added. Shah Waliullah's brief text on the philosophy of *tafsir* and the principles of the interpretation of the Qur'an , *Al fauz al kabeer* was also introduced.

These modifications were made later at different intervals. In the beginning of the twentieth century, perhaps in 1913 or 1912 the masterpiece of Shah Waliullah of Delhi, *Hujjat Allah al baligha* was also introduced as a complimentary text. It was taught to a group of selected scholars who had already graduated from Darul Ulum.

That is how the Dars e Nizami had come down to us. During the British days from 1867 when Darul Ulum Deoband was established up to 1947 when India became independent there were two main purposes of running the Darul Ulum and other similar institutions whose number was around

other persons, they took the initiative and decided to establish a Madrassah in Deoband, to retain whatever could be retained of the Islamic education and Islamic tradition in the wake of abolition of all Islamic institutions in India and the abolition of remnants of Islamic education. They were trained in a certain tradition. They adopted for Dars e Nizami so they also adopted Dars e Nizami as the curriculum of the Madrassah with two important modifications. In the beginning it was decided and it was on the insistence of Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gagohi that no book of *Mantaq* or logic and philosophy should be taught. He was of the view that the challenge now or the question now is to retain whatever Islamic education could be retained, therefore according to him the emphasis should be on Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh and Usul al Fiqh and Arabic language, it was needed to study these subjects. There was no need –according to him– to study philosophy, logic and other subjects. So in the beginning the modified Dars e Nizami as was adopted by Darul Ulum Deoband, did not include *Mantaq*, philosophy and other subjects.

The second important modification was the introduction of Hadith at the end of Dars e Nizami. One additional year was added with a concentrated study of Hadith which has also gone some changes and modifications. During the long history of almost ninety years of Darul Ulum Deoband upto

Company after their capture of Delhi and they introduced a new curriculum in that college and appointed some of the leading Islamic scholars in that college. One such scholar was Maulana Mamluk Ali, who was father of Maulana Muhammad Yaqub Nanotvi , the first *Sadr Mudarris* or the Chief Professor in Darul Ulum of Deoband. He was also a teacher scholar like Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi and Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi. All these three gentlemen were the graduates of *Madrasah Ghaziuddin* or Delhi College as it was known later.

After the down fall of the Mughal Empire and the total collapse of Mughal throne in 1857, East India Company abolished all the Madrasahs, It abolished Auqaf and it also back tracked the agreement which was made with Shah Alam in 1765. Now there were no more Muslim courts, There was no more the implementation of Shariah, no more Qadhis, Muftis. Everything was wound up. The Madrasahs were deprived of the revenue of Auqaf as well as the revenue of grants being given by the Central government or the Provincial governments in different parts of India or the Muslim Principalities in the different areas and there was a crisis of running the Madrasahs and maintaining any remnant of Islamic education.

Under this situation, Maulana Qasin Nanotvi , Maulana Rasheed Gangohi, Haji Muhammad Abid Husain and some

Dars e Nizami should be appointed as *Qadhis* and *Muftis* . The books of Fiqh Hanafi would be the source material for judges. *Hidayah* was got translated into English. *Fatawa Alamgiri* was also summarized into English and some basic texts of Fiqh Hanafi were got translated into English by different British scholars. This was to facilitate the East India Company and its officers to know the legal positions on different issues according to the Hanafi Fiqh.

This made the *Dars e Nizami* popular throughout the India because it provided the job opportunities to the graduates; it offered higher salaries to the graduates. Those who were employed by others were paid little and less. The Company paid them higher prices and higher salary. That was the cause and the time when the *Dars e Nizami* became very popular and was known as *Dars e Nizami* as said in those days.

From now onwards, that is after 1761, *Dars e Nizami* became gradually more and more popular in parts of India. The *Madrasahs* started adopting *Dars e Nizami* as the curriculum for their instructions but, with the rise of British the number of *Madrasahs* started diminishing for a variety of reasons. There was a very significant *Madrasah* which was left and continued for a very longer time was known as the *Madrasah Ghaziuddin*. It was know later as "Delhi College". This Delhi College was taken over by the East India

1806, the same agreement awarding the diwani to the company was extended to the other provinces and the East India Company was given the authority or formal permission to rule India on behalf of the Mughal Emperor. In those days, when a public announcement was made the legal position was retreated in these words:

“The creature belongs to the All Mighty, Creation belongs to the All Mighty, The kingdom belongs to the king, but the orders or the commandments belong to the *Bahadur* Company.”

The company, in the beginning tried at least to show to the Muslims that it was sticking to the agreement and was establishing the Islamic courts. They did establish Muslim courts, did appoint Muslim *Qadhis*, judges and *Muftis* to these courts and in order to facilitate the appointment they decided that they would select the *Qadhis* from the graduates of either *Frangi Mehal* or those who have graduated under *Dars e Nizami*. Frankly speaking they had been very methodological people. They are still very methodological and whenever they do something good or bad they do it lawfully and methodologically. They decided the law first, they provide a seminary provisions, they developed a methodology and then they do things –whether good or bad- So, they also decided to do it under a law, under a methodology, the methodology required that the graduates of

was issued by the Mughal Emperor to East India Company granting them the authority and permission to revenue collection, to civil administration and to some other civil matters.

This was virtually the legal downfall of the Mughal Empire. They surrendered three major provinces of their empire -The richest provinces of those days- Bengal in those days, was the richest of resources province of Mughal Empire. All the expenses of the campaigns under taken by Aurangzeb were financed by the revenue of Bengal. The main stay of the Mughal Empire was on the revenue collected from Bengal. This province of rich resources was handed down to East India Company and the Mughal Empire abdicated the administration of these three provinces, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in favor of the Britishers.

But in the agreement, which was signed at the time of abdication – They did not call it an abdication, but it was virtually an abdication – It was provided that as far as the Muslims were concerned, their matters would continue to be decided in terms of Islamic Shariah through courts manned by Muslim judges , *Qadhis* and *Muftis*. The British East India Company agreed to this provision and established courts in different parts of the three provinces. When the East India Company came forward and captured UP and other provinces surrounding Delhi and finally entered Delhi in

Earlier, a similar exercise was made by Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith al Dehlawi, where also some books of Seerah and Hadith were introduced but, soon after the demise of Sheikh Abdul Haq, the reforms introduced by Sheikh Abdul Haq were abandoned by the academia in the Sub continent. And soon the situation, which was earlier revived and people started following the same early traditions. This was the situation when the Mughal Empire collapsed. The tradition of *Farangi Mehal* continued to be the same. The tradition in the East of Sub continent continued to be on the pattern of Jaun Pur and some Madrasahs in Delhi, in Lukhnow, in Thatha and in some other cities of the Sub continent - numbering around six or seven- they tried to introduce and implement the syllabus developed by Shah Waliullah of Delhi with emphasis on the understanding of Qur'an and the study of the text the Ahadith.

When, by the middle of the eighteenth century, 1760's or 17 late 50's, the British east India Company occupied Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and a threat was felt by the Mughal Empire, Shah Alam -the second perhaps- that the rising time of East India Company would over run the entire Sub continent, he decided to take some action and then finally, instead of facing the tide by military power or force he decided to reconcile with the rising power and to acknowledge their authority to three provinces. A charter

some fifty six subjects were taught under one roof and under one system. The idea was to introduce a student with the latest development of knowledge through brief texts which he was required to memorize so that he should get the key to the basic issues for different sciences and disciplines. It included Medicine, it included Mathematics, Geometry and similar other subjects which were represented by one or two brief texts as developed by scholars in Iran Central Asia or in the Arab world.

Shah Waliullah noticed that this syllabus was not fit to produce a competent and profound Islamic scholar of the caliber Shah Waliullah conceived. He emphasized the study of Qur'an, the Hadith and the philosophy of the Shariah as against the Greek philosophy introduced in other institutes. Shah Waliullah wrote the several texts which were introduced into his syllabus. The translation of the Qur'an was made compulsory. The textual study of Hadith through *Mua'taa* Imam Malik and its commentaries were considered to be compulsory and the excessive emphasis on the text was reduced. This was the first introduction in the history of mankind, in the history of Sub continent, in the Northern part of India where a serious and concerted effort was made to re -structure the syllabus on the foundations of the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Seerah of Prophet (SAWW).

knowledge but, his greatness was confined to the writing of a philosophical text which was a condensation, a summarization of philosophical discussions and ideas which were prevalent and popular in Iran. That was the tradition of Jaun Pur.

When Shah Waliullah returned from Arabia, after some fifteen months stay there, he introduced some amendments or improvements in these educational systems. He deleted the excessive introduction of philosophy. He also dismissed the excessive use of texts and jugglery of words. He also dismissed the excessive use of the texts and commentaries and marginal notes of the books of Grammar. He developed a very simple and a new curriculum which was originally introduced by his father; Shah Abdul Rahim. Shah Waliullah has given the details of that curriculum in his own small autobiography known as '*Al juz al Latif fe tarjumat al abd al Dhae'ef*', in which he has given the details of that syllabus which he had studied under the supervision of his father with his own comments on different aspects and texts included in that syllabus. Up till now, neither in the syllabus of *Farangi Mehal* nor in the syllabus of Jaun Pur, nor in the syllabus of many other institutions and Madrasahs, the Qur'an and Hadith was given any special significance. The education was to some extent general and included a large number of subjects. According to an estimation of a scholar

way, Usul al Fiqh was taught in that way. Instead of Usul al Fiqh being taught as a tool to develop Fiqh and to deduct new principles of law, it was taught as a jugglery of words, concentrated on the text of a given author. So, also the Fiqh . Therefore, in my humble assessment despite the great contribution made by the Madrasah *Farangi Mehal*, the impact on Fiqh and Usul al Fiqh in general was very limited. No new book was written on Usul al Fiqh and even if there were new books, no new idea was propounded; no expansion in the area of or the expense of Usul al Fiqh was added. This continued to be the tradition till the downfall of the Mughal Empire as far as the *Farangi Mehal Madrasah* is concerned.

The second tradition was that of Jaun Pur which was in the South of India, in the South of UP. It was considered to be *Shiraz e Hind*, The Shiraz of India. The tradition in Shiraz was confined mostly to philosophy and what was known as Ma'aqula'at or rational sciences. Shiraz of India i.e Jaun Pur produced some very competent and good scholars but their interests lay in philosophy and in rational sciences as conceived by Iran and as developed by Iranian scholars. Mullah Mehmood Jaun Puri is considered to be the most prominent figure in the history of Jaun Pur. He, according to few scholars was equal to Shah Waliullah. According to some other scholars he was equal to Sheikh Ahmad Sir Hindi in terms of his intellectual competence and profundity of his

was a great jurist and a Faqih and headed the two hundred membered committee of scholars who had compiled the *Fatawa Alamgiri*. He was given the charge of the building at the Madrassah and he established a Madrasah which created a big impact on the academia of the Sub continent with special emphasis of Fiqh and Usul. Unfortunately the Fiqh education also, Fiqh is the vibrant and living law of the Muslim, it represented the vibrant tradition of Islamic shariah, which is a guidance for all times and climbs to come and the Shariah is that law and that system which has always provided active guidance to the Muslims and enabled them to face any challenge posed to them in any period of their history. But unfortunately the educational Shariah in this Madrasah was not that of a vibrant and living academic tradition. It was also confined to certain texts which were prepared somewhere outside India, either in Central Asia or in Arab world and the ideas of the authors of those respective texts was to show their mastery as to how brief they can write a text. The briefer, the more popular. The more difficult, the more popular. The more difficult, the more profound it was considered. These texts were taught in the Madrasah *Farangi Mehal* . Students were required to memories those texts and to concentrate on the verbosity of the author and on the verbosity of the commentator. The Grammar was taught in that way, Fiqh was taught in that

text, and the second tradition of philosophy and rational sciences as conceived by Iranian scholars. That was the basic feature of Madrasah education during the Mughal period. There were various traditions in different cities of India. Two of them deserve special mention; one tradition took place in the city of Lucknow through an institution which is known as *Frangi Mehal*. *Frangi Mehal* was a big building allotted by Jahangir to a group of British traders, who were allowed to trade and to do business in India. They used to perform their activities through that building and the office situated there. During the days of Aurangzeb Alamgir there were complaints that they were not abiding by the instructions given to them by Jahangir. Aurangzeb took administrative action against them and took this building away from them and they were expelled from that building. The building was thus given to a group of Muslim scholars who had established a Madrasah there. Since the building belonged to the *Frangis*, it was popularly known as the *Frangi Mehal* or the castles of the westerners. The Madrasah also came to be known as *Madrassah e Farangi Mehal*, the Madrasah established in the castle of Frangis or the Fort of Frangis. This Madrasah was established by Maulana Nizamuddin Sahalwi; A contemporary scholar of Aurangzeb Alamgir, who had also presided over the academy compiling the *Fatawa Alamgiri* at the behest of Aurangzeb Almgir. He

running text was Arabic, If you read in column one -for example- it was Persian, If you read in column four -for example- it was Turkish and so on and so forth.

This kind of jugglery -I may say- it may be reflective of genius and the perceptive mind and the mastery over the language and the subject of the scholar concerned but it contributed little to the expansion of knowledge as a whole and to the development of the different disciplines as a whole. This continued to be the tradition up to the fall of the sultan period and the downfall of the Lodhis at the hands of Hindus and then the Mughals. When the Mughals came to India and established themselves after Humayun, another tradition was introduced into Sub continent, the tradition of philosophy, logic as conceived and developed in Iran. Now the academic links of the Sub continent and the Madrasahs were established with Iran. Scholars from Iran were invited in big numbers. Thousands and thousands of Iranian scholars and men of letters came to India. Poets, philosophers, experts in logic and other subjects, they came to India and they introduced Philosophy and what was known as Ma'aqula'at or the rational sciences into the curricula of the Madrasah. From now onwards the Madrasah became the center of two different traditions, the tradition coming from Central Asia and Afghanistan emphasizing the Fiqh and Usul through text and concise text and text on the

marginal notes on the first commentary, marginal notes on the second commentary, marginal notes on the third commentary, marginal note on the marginal note. So, this was the area where scholars excelled and focused. This was undoubtedly an academic exercise; it was undoubtedly reflective of the deep mind and perceptive minds of the authors, but it confined their attention on the verbal hairsplitting about the text of the book. It did little service to the expansion of knowledge itself. It created a tendency of lack of growth in different Islamic sciences and disciplines. Whatever was achieved up to fifth or sixth century by earlier Muslim scholars, little contribution was made to it.

But if we forget this negative aspect and see the tendency of preparing the text, we face very interesting and marvelous examples. I do not have the book with me now, but I came across a text where a scholar prepared a text, a running text on one subject and then he divided the verse of the running text into certain columns and if the text was divided in accordance with columns in horizontal way, it represented a different text in a different subject. If the passage was read in column wise, first column represented a different text, second another text, third another text, fourth another text. There were seven texts in one passage to be culled and drawn from those very words and not merely that, three different languages were accommodated into one text. The

culture and the market. The Buddhists became experts in Persian and Islamic law. There were many Hindu scholars and the Buddhist scholars and other scholars who left an impact in different areas of knowledge and sciences because of the contribution of Madrassah. But there was a negative aspect of the Madrasah education starting from this period and that was the lack of interest or the dearth of interest in expansion of knowledge and in independent research and study. The knowledge was now by and large confined to the study of the text produced elsewhere in the Central Asian countries or in the Arab world. Those texts in Fiqh and jurisprudence, law, logic, philosophy, were imported into India and were adopted as the text books. The contribution of Indian Muslim scholars, which was big in terms of quantity but it was confined to the commentaries , explanations, marginal notes on the texts imported from either Central Asia or from the Arab world. Their contribution was marginal notes on the marginal notes on the marginal notes. There are examples of the books, when you open the book you will be amazed and be confused perhaps to find out how the book is to be consulted? On one page you will find tens or perhaps more texts at the same time, intermingled with each other. The original text, the commentary, the commentary of the commentary, the commentary of the commentary of the commentary,

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ardh Baili coming from Syria at the invitation of Muhammad Tughlaq to establish a seminary of Islamic teaching and learning. There were almost in every town, in every village Madrassahs imparting education not merely to the Muslims but also to the Hindus.

The Madrasah education was not merely confined to the Muslims. It was extended to Hindus, the Buddhists and others. Up till now according to Hindu traditions knowledge was confined to two different groups. Acquisition of religious knowledge was the monopoly of a class and worldly knowledge was confined to another class. The rest of the classes in Hindu society were denied to any access to knowledge. There were some classes, the down trodden ones who are not only denied but it was considered to be an act of crime and offense if anybody belonging to that class had any access to knowledge even without intention. He was punished with boiling lead to be poured into ear which had committed the mistake and offense of hearing and listening to knowledge. That was the law given by their divine books.

The Madrasah for the first time opened its doors for the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs (the Sikhs were not there), the Janis and the Buddhists. Later on to the Sikhs, it was for the first time in the history of India that Hindus belonging to all classes they got education. They became masters of Persian language, the language of the court and

who is known for his contribution to the science of Seerah and Hadith. The examples are too numerous to be quoted. That period in the history of education in the Sub continent continued for about four centuries. The people coming from Central Asia and Afghanistan inherited it and with the establishment of the Sultanat of Delhi in the seventh century of Hijrah at the hands of Qutub uddin Aibak, gave rise to a new era of Islamic education in the Sub continent. Now the academic links with the Arab world were weakend in the beginning and finally almost came to an end. Central Asia were established will up the relations. Now the traditions were imported from Central Asia and Afghanistan, where much emphasis was laid on Fiqh, Usul and Arabic Language and Grammar. This was the time when the traditional, precise and concise texts in different disciplines were imported in to India and became the subjects of study and instructions in the Madrasahs then established in Delhi and different parts of the world.

In terms of dissemination of knowledge and the expansion of academic activity, this was the golden period of Islamic education in the history of India. When Ibn Batuta visited India in the seventh century of Hijrah, he noticed that in Delhi alone there were more than one thousand Madrasahs were higher learning and education was imparted. He noticed scholars from different parts of the world. He met

in course of history. There was a time when the Muslim administration in the sub-continent was confined to what today is known as Pakistan, the Sindh valley, the Multan and the areas surrounding this valley. This was the Arab period in the Muslim history of the Sub continent where the traditions of the Muslims of India were derived from the Arab centers of knowledge. Kufa, Basra, Baghdad, Damascus, Mecca and Medinah were the centers of excellence where the scholars from the Sub continent received higher education and acquired higher standards in their respective specializations. There are a host of scholars produced by Sindh and Multan, whose contribution was acknowledged by the scholars of the Middle East, Iraq, Arabia and Syria in the fields of Fiqh, Seerah, Hadith, Arabic literature and so on and so forth. The best collection of selected Arabic poetry, the *Hamasah* includes passages and poems from the persons belonging to Sindh, Abul Ata'a Al Sindhi is one such poet whose verses have been recorded by Abu Tammam in this well known collection of the selected Arabic poetry, which shows that the level of Arabic understanding and the use of Arabic as the *Lingua franca* had reached such a degree that it could produce a poet of the stature of Abul Ata'a Al Sindhi.

Abu Ma'asher Najeeh Al Sindhi, another example of the perfection in terms of academic tradition of the Arab world,