Niyāz Fatehpurī and the 'Ulamā': Criticism and Debates (1922-1966)

By Juhi Shahin

A Thesis Submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree Master of Arts

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Abstract

Author: Juhi Shahin

Title: Niyāz Fatehpurī and the 'Ulamā': Criticism and Debates (1922-1966)

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree: Master of Arts

Niyāz Fatehpurī (1884-1966 A.D./1302-1384 A.H.) was an accomplished literary critic, poet and religious scholar. He published a very successful magazine *Nigār*, primarily a literary journal, which soon became a platform for debating many of the most controversial religious, ideological, political and sociological issues of the time. It began publication in 1922 and continues to this day.

This thesis, the first detailed study in English, aims to put forward and analyze Fatehpurī's religious and social views in the context of the socio-political situation of the time. Through *Nigār*, Fatehpurī campaigned against the traditionalists, who he felt were responsible for the lack of both worldly and spiritual progress of Muslims because they fostered an unquestioning attitude on religious matters.

He discussed many religious concepts, for instance, revelation, free will and predestination, the hereafter, as well as the purpose of Islamic practices like prayer, fasting and charity. He believed that the basic purpose of religion was to teach *akhlāq* (ethical spirit) to people. *Akhlāq*, for him, meant doing good deeds for their own sake (as an individual's natural duty) and for the love of God. He offered what he believed to be the "rational" meaning of religion; his interpretation of religion was completely shorn of anything super-natural, and consisted of only those beliefs and actions which he thought were logical.

However, he defended the traditional role of women in society, which he saw as managing the household effectively. He considered this rational, since nature had made men and women different to enable them to perform different roles in society. Women, however, were equal to men, since their role in society was as important as that of men.

Résumé

Auteur : Juhi Shahin

Titre : Niyāz Fatehpurī et les 'Ulamā': critiques et débats (1922-1966)

Département : Institut des Études Islamiques, Université McGill,

Diplôme : Maîtrise en Arts

Niyāz Fatehpurī (1884-1966/1302-1384) fut un éminent critique littéraire, poete et intellectuel religieux. Il publia la revue a succes *Nigār*, au départ un journal littéraire qui se transforma rapidement en un forum de discussion sur les sujets religieux, idéologiques, politiques et sociologiques les plus controversés de l'époque. La publication de cette revue débuta en 1922 et continue encore a ce jour.

Cette these, la premiere étude détaillée sur l'auteur en anglais, vise a mettre de l'avant et analyser les opinions religieuses et sociales de Fatehpurī dans le contexte sociopolitique de l'époque. Á travers *Nigār*, Fatehpurī fit campagne contre les traditionalistes, les jugeait responsables du manque de progres spirituel et matériel des Musulmans a cause d'un manque d'ouverture envers la question religieuse.

Il s'entretenu sur une foule de concepts religieux, comme la révélation, la liberté d'action et la prédestination, l'haut-de-dela et la raison d'être de la priere, du jeûne et de la charité. Pour lui, la raison d'être d'une religion était d'enseigner l'esprit spirituel au Peuple. *Akhlāq* représentait l'action de faire le bon geste uniquement pour sa valeur intrinseque et ce, comme responsabilité naturelle incombant a l'individu et pour l'amour de Dieu. Il développa ce qu'il croyait être une définition rationnelle de la religion en évacuant la valeur surnaturelle de son interprétation et conservant seulement les croyances et actions qu'il considérait logiques.

Il défendu le rôle traditionnel de la femme dans la société a titre de gestionnaire efficace du foyer familiale s'appuyant sur le fait que la nature a fait les hommes différents des femmes afin de leur permettre de jouer chacun des rôles différents dans la société. La femme était cependant l'égal de l'homme puisque son rôle dans la société était aussi important que celui de l'homme.

Acknowledgements

I am who I am, and doing this thesis, because I am my parents, Sultan and Pragya's daughter. I would like to thank them for supporting and encouraging me to pursue my studies abroad, and believing in me so much. In fact, it was my father, who gave me the idea of studying Niyaz Fatehpuri sahab, on his visit to Montréal. When we discovered almost the whole set of *Nigar* in the Institute of Islamic Studies Library, it was the most amazing luck!

Prof. Sajida S. Alvi, my supervisor, was extremely supportive throughout. She invested a lot of time, went over every detail with me, and gave a lot of useful suggestions. I cannot thank her enough for all her patience, encouragement and support, both emotional and material. I am very grateful to the Institute of Islamic Studies for the funding they gave me. Everyone in the Institute did their best to make life easier for me; I would like to specially mention Prof. Robert Wisnovsky, Kirsty McKinnon and Ann Yaxley. I would also like to thank my teachers, Prof. Rula Abisaab, Prof. Sajida Alvi, Prof. Wael Hallaq and Prof. Uner Turgay, for each in their own way have helped shape my thinking. I am grateful to Steve Millier for his valuable help in editing the thesis.

So many people have been so encouraging and supportive throughout the writing of this whole thesis that the list is endless. Some people helped just by being such good friends, on top of the list are Lesley Braun, Pralabh Dayal, Andréa Schnell, and Rimin Dutt. I would like to especially mention Véronique Geoffrion for all her help, especially in translating my abstract. I also want to thank Muhammad Qadeer Usmani sahab's family for making me feel so much at home, and especially his wife Huma Qadeer for helping me out with my Urdu. I also want to thank Yusuf Gul Khan sahab for painstakingly going over some articles of Niyaz sahab with me. I would like to thank Jose Abraham for always being ready to discuss the issues I had in mind.

Meeting Sarfaraz Niazi sahab, son of Niyaz Fatehpuri, on my trip to Chicago was very encouraging. His affection, hospitality and views, made me feel wonderful. I would like to thank him and his family.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

ا a	ڈ ḍ	ع ʿ
ب b	ذ z̲	غ g̲h
پ p	ر r	ف f
ت t	ڑ rh	ق q
ٹ ṭ	ز z	ک k
ث s̲	س s	گ g
ج j	ش sh	ل l
چ ch	ص ṣ	م m
ح ḥ	ض ẓ	ن n
خ k̲h	ط t̤	و v
د d	ظ ẓ	ھ h
ں n̲		ی y

Vowels: Short: a, i, u

Long: ā, ī, e, o, ū

Alif maqsūrah: á

Dipthongs: au, ay

Aspirated: b̲h, t̲h, d̲h, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Niyāz Fateḥpurī (1884-1966 /1302-1384), an accomplished literary critic, poet, religious scholar and socio-religious reformer, is the focus of this study. He published a very successful literary magazine, *Nigār*, that was soon transformed into a forum for debating many of the most controversial religious, ideological, political and sociological issues of the time, as well as for levelling incessant criticism at the *'ulamā'* class. It is published to this day, from its inception in 1922. He also wrote a number of books on varied themes such as religion, Islamic history, women and also fiction.

This is the first detailed study in English on this important Muslim intellectual of the last century. It is all the more surprising that this is so, given the fact that Fateḥpuri's works were widely read and discussed, his magazine was published consistently for more than four decades, and his influence as an intellectual figure was so enduring.

Fateḥpurī arrived on the scholarly scene of the subcontinent at a very turbulent time in its history. He was born and brought up during the colonial era, was witness to the freedom struggle and lived in both independent India and Pakistan. He lived through not only the most politically active period, but also the most intellectually charged atmosphere. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) had already inspired many to pursue a modern education in English, and to think afresh on everything, including religion. He was also the first one to criticize the *'ulamā'* publicly for keeping Muslims away from progress. Following his

tradition, many other scholars wrote on similar issues; Shiblī Nu'mānī (1857-1914), Chirāgh 'Alī (1846-1895), Sayyid Amīr 'Alī (1849-1928) and Alṭāf Hussain Ḥalī (1837-1914) were among the most famous. Muḥammad Iqbal (1877-1938), the philosopher-poet, also called for progressive thinking; in fact, his poetry still continues to inspire. As such Fateḥpurī found a ready audience for his radically rationalist views; he and his magazine were very popular.

This was also an era of journalism. A number of journals came into being during the time, even though many of them were later discontinued. Almost every intellectual of the time was publishing a journal to propagate his/her views. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's (1888-1958) *Al-Hilāl*, Maulana Muḥammad Ali Jauhar's (1878-1931) *Hamdard* and *Comrade*, and Sayyid Abul 'Ala Maudūdī's (1903-1979) *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* are only some of the more noteworthy publications in addition to *Nigār*. In fact, Fateḥpurī was the one who suggested to Maudūdī that he concentrate on writing and begin a career in journalism.[1]

The importance of the use of print is undeniable with regard to Fateḥpurī, since it was his only platform for reform. He did not found an educational institution like Sayyid Aḥmad, or a socio-religious organization like the Jamāt-i Islāmī of Maudūdī . The magazine was his mission. It was indeed an accomplishment in itself that he was able to sustain his magazine for more than four successive decades, in the face of so much controversy and criticism. He had to move to Lucknow from Bhopal in 1927 because of opposition of the *'ulamā'*,

[1] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Maududi and the making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 14.

and even in Lucknow he saw many hardships and lack of funding, but he continued publishing, taking the magazine to Karachi in 1962 when he could not publish it in Lucknow anymore.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on a textual analysis of Fateḥpuri's own writings on religion and society in the socio-political context of the colonial and post-colonial periods. The framework of colonialism is used as the backdrop for understanding the socio-political situation of the time and thus, the context of Fateḥpurī's writings. Jamal Malik has defined this context very well. According to Malik, there was a concerted attempt at "traditionalisation of India"[2] by the British from the 1750s to the 1850s, resulting in selective appropriation of Indian ideas on one hand and obliteration of Indian creativity on the other. A picture of stagnant India was drawn that was divided in castes, religions and races.

> However, an important aspect of these discussions was the criticism of contemporary reformers and pietists of their own Muslim/Hindu society...The reformers postulated doing away with folk-religious rites and appropriating God's message individually and independently through the revealed text. This meant emancipation of the self from immediate and direct ties of authority on the one hand and reconstruction of Islamic society by laypersons on the other, thereby referring to early Muḥammadan time. This

[2] Jamal Malik, "Encounter and Appropriation in the Context of Modern South Asian History," Jamal Malik, ed., *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History 1760-1860* (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2000), 327-329.

> was *ijtihad* in the widest sense, and expressed the desire for newness.[3]

Fatehpurī started writing when India had already been "traditionalised," and he saw his community as stagnant, since it did not live up to the modern image of "progress". He wanted to bring vitality to his society and change it for the better. However, for this progress to come about, he did not believe in imitating the West or blindly accepting its philosophy, but believed that it could be brought about by the religion of Islam. This position of the modernists has been criticised for being defensive of Islam, and for trying to make Islam more palatable for modern consumption. In Fatehpuri's case, however, this criticism is not valid. He and some of his contemporaries were inspired by Islam, and were trying to re-vitalize it by bringing in new ideas.

Malik contends that two separate and opposing streams of thought can be seen during the time. The first stream of thought was that of the functional elite, who fostered the study of theology (*kalām*) and law (*sharia*), which were congruent with state law. These people did not want any major changes in how the society worked. The other stream of thought meanwhile stood for independent reasoning and stressed the role of vernaculars.[4] Fatehpurī, since he is seemingly part of the latter group, challenged the religious elite, represented by the *'ulamā'*, and accused it of having a vested interest in things not changing in any way.

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[3] Ibid., 320.
[4] Ibid., 323.

Muḥammad Qasim Zaman's contention against the hypothesis that the *'ulamā'* have long been stagnant in their thinking was very constructive in shaping my own views regarding the subject. He insists that the *'ulamā'* have been the custodians of change throughout Islamic history and that there has never been the stagnation that modernists talk about.[5] Another important point that Zaman makes is that, in spite of major differences among modernists, their common theme has been that "one does not necessarily need that tradition to understand the 'true' meaning of Islam, and that one certainly does not need the 'ulama to interpret Islam to the ordinary believers. That authority belonged to everyone and to no one in particular."[6]

CHALLENGING RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Fatehpurī consistently campaigned against the *ulamā'*, who he felt were responsible for the lack of both worldly and spiritual progress among Muslims, in whom they fostered an unquestioning attitude. He believed that the basic purpose of religion, *akhlāq* (morality, ethical spirit), had been forgotten, as the *'ulamā'* insisted merely on practicing the *ẓāhirī* (external) aspects of religion (he counts even prayer and fasting among them). He contends that a Muslim should pray and fast, but only after understanding why he or she is doing it.

Fatehpurī proposed a rethinking of all religious issues; that was the only way, according to him, by which the community could progress not only

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[5] Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), See "Introduction."
[6] Ibid., 10.

spiritually, but materially. In his view, Islam itself demands that one use one's reason (*'aql*). This debate has acquired great contemporary relevance, since even in today's India and Pakistan the very same issues are controversial that Fatehpuri took head on. Recently, an article published in *al-Ma'arif* by Manzur Ahmad[7] explaining Fatehpuri's views came under fire. In this article, Ahmad was basically asking people to adopt a forward-looking outlook and to think afresh, using Fatehpuri as an example and trying simply to explain his views while relating them to the present day.

For Fatehpuri, change in Islamic traditions was not only desirable but essential for there to be any growth in the material or spiritual life of Muslims. He seems not to be alone in thinking along these lines: most of the reformers of his time and even earlier were arguing for the same thing. The *'ulama'* on the other hand were advocates of there being a continuity in traditions and in how things are perceived and done. A constant struggle can be seen between the two ideas in Fatehpuri's time, whether there should be continuity or whether change was imminent.

It is not the intention here to argue that the *'ulama'* have been oblivious to changing realities, or that they have not brought about change themselves. In fact, they have even been making use of new technology (print then, internet now) to reach out to people and give religious statements on issues of concern to the masses in this age. The thesis merely argues that Fatehpuri was basically against the idea that the *'ulama'* knew best what the religion was all about, and

[7] Manzur Ahmad, "Niyaz, Roshan-Khayali, Ijtihad aur Islam," *Al-ma'arif* (Lahore, October-December 2005), 64-92.

that there was no other way of looking at it. According to Fateḥpurī, Islam itself has never been in favour of a priesthood; he pointed out as well that this class had been created by the rulers to interpret Islam to suit themselves. Thus despite the fact that the primary cause, kingship or dynastic rule, was itself against Islamic teachings, religious scholars throughout Islamic history have justified it in the name of Islam.

Fateḥpurī argued that there is no reason why authority should belong to one section of people simply because they followed a certain religious course in a seminary. Anyone else that might not be from the same system but who has read and understood widely should be able to interpret Islam – if not for everyone then at least for him/herself.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the study of Niyaz Fatehpuri's views, his own writings on the relevant issues have been used, drawn from his magazine *Nigar* and from his many books. The most famous among his books is *Man-o-Yazdan,* published in two volumes, in which he discusses his views on religion, starting from the question of whether God exists or not. He also discusses the religious views of *'ulamā'* in the book and questions them. Another of his noteworthy books on religion was *Maẓhab*, in which he surveys religion in three chapters: History of Religion, Deviation from Religion and the Future of Religion. His book *Ṣaḥābiyyāt* was useful for understanding his views on the role of women in society. Nevertheless his articles in *Nigār* constituted the major source of research material. He was a

prolific writer; almost half of *Nigar* every month was written by him. In these articles, he sought to understand the concepts of reward and punishment, heaven and hell, free will, the validity of *ḥadīth* and the implications of prophethood as well as the place of Prophet Muḥammad in Islam. Though many people have praised Fatehpuri's courageous stance against conservatism and his logical approach to religion, not much has been written about him and his views. Most of my secondary literature on Niyaz as a person, and as an intellectual is also taken from *Nigar*. There may be some work done on him in Pakistan, but I have been unable to trace any.

As mentioned earlier, Malik's and Zaman's respective works have been extremely useful for developing the framework of the current study. Other secondary sources that have been useful include Daniel W. Brown's *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, in which book he argues that "tradition" is what is subject to change, and the modern Muslims are basically rethinking tradition, whether they call themselves traditionalist or modernist.[8] This argument helped me understand the dilemma in Fateḥpurī's thought. Even though he was propagating changes, he himself was a part of society as it was, and had many of the same notions and beliefs.

Shaista Azizalam's study entitled "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā'" was also very valuable. Since Fateḥpurī's main ire was directed against the *'ulamā'*, her research was helpful in understanding how and why religious authority was challenged by the modernists. In her thesis she explains that when

[8] Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking tradition in modern Islamic thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1996), see "Introduction."

Sayyid Aḥmad was opposing the *'ulamā'*, he did not mean a particular group within it but the *'ulamā'* as a class, which has very similar interests notwithstanding the wide divergences in religious views and social status.[9] Fatehpurī, like Sayyid Aḥmad, was opposed to this class and its interests in keeping religion and society stagnant.

This thesis has been organised into four chapters. The first chapter is Fatehpurī's biography based on his brief autobiography published in *Nigār*,[10] on some facts of his life published after his death and on the views of other scholars. A brief overview of *Nigār* will also be attempted.

In the second chapter, Fatehpurī's views on the religious topics that were much discussed at the time are stated and analyzed in the light of other scholars' views. Since it is not possible to state his views on all the various issues he wrote about, the most frequent will be discussed. He said that his endeavour was to reinterpret religion in the light of "rationality" and bring it forward with the times. How he dealt with religious issues will be analyzed, in the light of how others were dealing with those issues, in the same socio-political environment.

Fatehpurī was very explicit in his criticism of Islamic functionaries, i.e., *maulavīs* and *maulānās*, whom he also referred to as *'ulamā'* in general. The issue will be discussed in the third chapter. He did not, however, designate all Islamic scholars as *'ulamā'*. He meant only those who earned their livelihood through religion. They are the ones who define Islam in a common Muslim's day-to-day

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[9] Shaista Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā': A Study in Socio-Political Context," MA Thesis, McGill University, 1992, 43-44.
[10] Niyāz Fatehpurī, "Dāstān-i Hayāt," *Nigār-i Pakistān*, July 1966, 22-40.

life. He himself could be called an *'ālim*, in the common definition of the term, since he had completed the required religious course and was discussing religion. He was not, however, associated with the class of *'ulamā'*.

The last chapter deals with Fatehpurī's views on the role of women in society. This chapter argues that, although the impression gathered from Fatehpurī's views on religion is that he wanted change in almost everything traditional, in the case of women however, he did not ask for a complete makeover but advised caution. Although not completely traditional, his views on women were quite orthodox compared to his views on other religious issues. There was definitely a need for change in a woman's situation in the Indian Muslim society, according to Fatehpurī, but there was no need for Westernization.

To study the evolution of Fatehpurī's thought, some of his articles in *Nigār* in the beginning years and towards the end, have been included for reference in an appendix at the end of the thesis. Although *Nigār* started publishing in 1922, the *Nigār* collection of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, starts only in May 1926. The first phase in the appendix is from May 1926 to December 1930. Some issues in between are missing as well. In the first phase he was writing and publishing at first, from Bhopal and from 1927 from Lucknow, which he continued to do for most of his life. He spent the last four years of his life in Karachi, Pakistan. The second phase in the Appendix is, therefore from September 1962, till his death in May 1966. The one major thing that stands out in this brief survey is his consistency. He never politicised

or changed his basic ideology, and continued to campaign against religious authority and for reform in religion and society.

CHAPTER 1

Niyāz Fatehpurī's Life and Mission

> To ascertain the family (*khāndān*) situation, generally and traditionally, three things are considered – descent, wealth or education. Unfortunately, me and my family, cannot be proud of any one of these. By descent, you cannot call me *Fārūqī*, *Ṣiddīqī* or *Timurī, Changezī*,[11] and even in terms of wealth and property, I cannot point towards any member of my family. The thing that remains is education, even the mention of which is useless because all my ancestors were very ordinarily educated, and the first person in the family who was enlightened by education in the real sense of the word, was my late father. [12]

It is thus that Niyāz Fatehpurī recounted his family background in his autobiography in *Nigār*. Yet despite this modest account of his background, he did have roots in the *ashrāf*[13] section of society because the family was of Afghan descent (not very high in the *ashrāf* hierarchy but *ashrāf* nonetheless), a fact that he himself pointed out later in his autobiography. Economically, his family belonged to the middle class. His father worked in the British

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[11] The first two surnames signify Arab descent, and the second two signify lineage from the Turkish and Mongolian rulers of India.

[12] Fatehpurī, "Dāstān-i Ḥayāt," 22. Earlier published as "Wālid-i Marḥūm, Meiṇ aur Nigār," *Nigār-i Pakistān*: March-April 1963, 19-37. Unless otherwise mentioned, this biography is based on this autobiography.

[13] The elite in the society, called *ashrāf* (honourables, plural of sharīf meaning noble), mainly consist of Muslims claiming foreign ancestry, from the Arabs, Turks, Afghans, or the Mughals. Higher caste Hindus who converted to Islam also become part of the *ashrāf*. Cora Vreede-De Stuers, *Parda: A Study of Women's Life in Northern India* (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal VanGorcum Ltd., 1968). For further details and particular cases, see: Imtiaz Aḥmad, ed., *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1973). Explained further in Chapter 4.

government's service. His ancestors had generally been employed in the army and as such had no need for scholarly training, but they had always been educated.

Fateḥpurī's father, Muḥammad Amīr Khān (1835-1908), [14] played a major role in Fateḥpurī's intellectual development and education. He was the first person in the family to obtain a good education. Amīr Khān was a police inspector by profession but was a scholar of Persian literature and was much involved with the literary circles of Uttar Pradesh.[15] He was not only well-versed in Persian, but had extensive knowledge of religious subjects and history. From Fateḥpurī's account, it appears that Amīr Khān was a man of enlightened views on religion, and it was from him that Fateḥpurī learnt to question things.

Fateḥpurī's mother died when he was only ten. There is not much mention of her, but he did write a bit more in detail about his paternal grandmother, who was instrumental in getting his father educated. Fateḥpurī's grandfather had died when his father was very young; his grandmother sold even the family heirlooms to get his father educated, although she herself was illiterate. This turned the tide in the family's fortunes, since Fateḥpurī's father found a good job and was much respected.

1.1 EARLY EDUCATION AND TEACHERS

[14] Fateḥpurī was not sure when his father was born, but he knew that his father had completed his education before the revolt of 1857. Fateḥpurī's guess was that he was born in 1835.
[15] Uttar Pradesh was called United Provinces during the time.

Fatehpurī spent most of his early life in Fatehpur itself, where he was born and where his family had been living for generations. He studied in a local school called the Madrasa-i Islamiyya. Afterwards, Fatehpurī went with his father to Lucknow and continued his studies there. He studied at Farangī Mahall[16] when it was under the direction of Maulana 'Ainu'l-Qadā and was famous as a centre for *hadīth* studies. He also studied for some time at the Nadwatu'l-'Ulamā'.[17] Fatehpurī did not say much about his time at these institutions, besides writing that he maintained a low profile in these classes and tried to avoid controversy. He passed his matriculation examinations (British school system) in Fatehpur in 1899.

The Madrasa-i Islamiyya, where he completed his initial education after twelve years of study, had both an English and an Arabic branch; and he studied in both of them. Consequently, he received a traditional religious education as well as a modern education in English at the same time. The Arabic branch of the Madrasa was where he followed the traditional *Dars-i Nizāmī*[18] course. According to Zaman, "With the exception of the madrasas' new and increasing concern with the study of hadith, the texts studied in this new institutional setup

[16] Farangī Mahall, located in Lucknow, is the institution where Mulla Nizamuddin (1673-1748) designed the *Dars-i Nizāmī* syllabus for Islamic education in India in the late seventeenth century. For details, see: Francis Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

[17] Nadwatu'l-'Ulamā' (established in 1891) aimed to create '*ulamā*' as a class - well grounded in traditional sciences, Arabic and Qu'ranic studies and aware of worldly matters and secular subjects.

[18] The traditional syllabus for religious education prevalent in South Asia since the eighteenth century.

have remained largely those that were part of the Dars-i Niẓāmī in its earlier forms."[19] This was the case with Madrasa-i Islamiyya as well.

Fatehpurī's family belonged to the middle class. Therefore, he was not sent to a famous madrasa or a well-known *maulānā*[20] for his initial education, but was educated locally in his township. Students from the nobility and rich households, like Sayyid Aḥmad Khān had home tutors initially and were then sent to eminent *maulānās* for their religious training. However, Fatehpurī read extensively on his own. He not only had very good knowledge of literature, religion and Islamic history, but was also well-versed in Western philosophy since he had learnt English at a very young age. Another part of a student's training at the time was literary and cultural activities and this did not change from Sayyid Aḥmad's time to Fatehpurī's; both of them started writing poetry and participating in poetry-reading gatherings at a young age.

Fatehpurī's first teacher and the biggest influence on him was his father. It was his father's open-mindedness on religious issues that first encouraged him to question the commonly accepted understanding of religious issues. His father taught him all the major texts of Persian literature at home, while he was at school. Under the guidance of his father, Fatehpurī himself developed an interest in Persian and Urdu literature. Fatehpurī also started writing poetry. His main interest outside of his studies was in Sufi literature and at that young age he started translating *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240).

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[19] Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 68.
[20] A title of respect used generally for teachers or religious scholars.

Fateḥpurī wrote in great detail about his time at Madrasa Islamiyya; he believed that the atmosphere there was responsible to a large extent for his approach towards religion. He enumerated his disagreements with his teachers in some detail in his autobiography to illustrate that they were completely unwilling to consider any new idea. His questioning attitude since childhood is also illustrated by these accounts. He tells of how he was the only student in class who ever had questions or disagreements; others, even those much older than him, accepted whatever the teacher said unquestioningly. He also described physical beatings of students, especially in classes where the Qur'an was memorised. Fateḥpurī himself had to run away from school twice to avoid a beating; once when he made the mistake of questioning the authenticity of a *ḥadīth*, and again when he speculated on the usefulness of reading the *isnad* (chain of narrators of a *ḥadīth*) when the characters of the narrators were not known to the students. These incidents made him question the mindset of his teachers, and he began to believe that their aggression was a veil for their ignorance and lack of the ability to think.

Maulana Nūr Muḥammad, his teacher at the Arabic branch of his school, was held up in his autobiography as an illustration of all that Fateḥpurī resented in the *'ulamā'*. This *maulānā* was so conventional in outlook that he removed chairs and tables from the class-room in favour of having students sit on the floor, and was very upset by the fact that English was being taught in the same school. He enforced strict discipline, mostly through the physical beating of students.

Fateḥpurī was very objective in his writing; even while criticizing the *'ulamā'*, he did not forget to mention those who inspired affection. One of his favourite teachers was Maulana Vazīr Muḥammad Khān from Rampur. It was not that Fateḥpurī did not argue with him, and it was not that the *maulānā* was always able to satisfy him, but this *maulānā* argued only for the exchange of ideas and after class was all love and affection, unlike the other *'ulamā'* who lived only to dictate to others and for whom all those who did not agree with them were unworthy, and in some cases not fit to be considered Muslims.

According to Fateḥpurī, the *maulānās* he came across while studying in Lucknow were no better than those in Fateḥpur, in terms of being open to discussion on religious issues. The more he got to know them, the more he disliked them. He began to feel that if religion and its study made a person more like these *maulānās*, then religion itself did not seem a rational and likeable phenomenon. This led him to try to understand religion, since he was not ready to think of religion as irrational or purposeless. From the very beginning, *'akhlāq*[21] (ethical conduct) was the most important aspect of religion for him. And if religion inspired good conduct and right thinking, then it was a worthy religion.

1.2 FROM POLICE OFFICER TO JOURNALIST

Fateḥpurī trained to be a police officer for a year after completing his education in 1899. At first, he worked as a police officer until 1902, and then, gained

[21] The term *akhlāq* is elaborated in Chapter 2.

employment at the English branch of his alma mater, Madrasa-i Islamiyya, as headmaster, where he worked from 1903 to 1905. From 1906 to 1909, he worked in different estates as security officer or police superintendent, until he came back to work at Madrasa-i Islamiyya for a year. His first brief foray into journalism began in 1910 when he worked for a few months at the newspaper *Zamindar*, published by Maulana Zafar 'Alī Khān (1873-1956), considered by some to be the father of Urdu journalism. From 1912 to 1915, Fatehpurī taught at different schools, living variously in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. He moved to Bhopal in 1915, where he lived for some time, holding different jobs, before undertaking the publication of the periodical *Nigār* in 1922.[22]

1.3 *NIGĀR* AND THE *'ULAMĀ'*: CRITICISM AND OPPOSITION

Nigār began publication in Agra[23] in February 1922, although Fatehpurī was living in Bhopal and writing from there. It was published out of Agra for almost a year, before the publication began in Bhopal in 1923, and this is where its founder encountered his first stringent criticism. Even before he started publishing *Nigār*, Fatehpurī's feelings against the *'ulamā'* as a class had become very strong; therefore, he started a campaign against this group through his magazine. He started criticising their beliefs and *akhlāq*, as well as providing a fresh look at the accepted views on religious issues. This was clearly unacceptable to the *'ulamā'* in Bhopal, and they united against him. He had no

[22] Farmān Fatehpurī, "Niyāz Fatehpurī: Eik Nazar mein," *Nigār-i Pakistān*: March-April 1963, 14-15.

[23] The decision to publish *Nigār* was taken in Agra. Subsequently Fatehpurī returned to Bhopal and started writing. It was published in Agra Press by his friend. *Nigār*'s own printing press started much later.

option but to leave Bhopal unceremoniously in 1927, but he stuck to his cause and resumed *Nigār*'s publication in Lucknow.[24]

Fateḥpurī was much appreciated by the intelligentsia in Lucknow but the cloud of criticism still hovered. In fact, the *'ulamā'* formed a group (*jamā'at*) for the express cause of stopping him, but it was not very effective and Fateḥpurī kept on writing. In his own words:

> I have been called a *kāfir* so many times in the last 25 years that even I am forced to think, if truly I have stepped outside the fold of Islam. Does this religion really have no place for people like me? But believe me, I was never convinced of this and the more I thought about my beliefs, the stronger they became.[25]

In the last few years of his life, the opposition may have grown too strong for him to handle. Feeling unsafe living with his family in Lucknow, he left for Karachi in 1962. He was welcomed in Pakistan and was able to restart his magazine there, continuing to write until his death in 1966.

1.4 THE MOVE TO PAKISTAN: AN ENIGMA

It is nevertheless unclear why Fateḥpurī left India and went to Pakistan to spend the last few years of his life. Farmān Fateḥpurī, the editor of *Nigār*, wrote after his death:

> Although in terms of residence Niyāz Sahib came to Karachi only in the last months of 1962, he had made two

[24] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Eik Tārikhī Yādgār," *Nigār*, January 1959, 2.
[25] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Khudā, Qur'ān aur Muḥammad ya Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," *Nigār*, October 1954, 33.

> or three brief visits before that. It seems from some of his writings that his heart was pulled towards Pakistan from its inception. A solid proof of that is the *Pakistan Number* of 1948, which was published only four months after the founding of Pakistan.[26]

However, Fateḥpurī's rationale for publishing the *Pakistan Number* was that everyone in India and Pakistan was disheartened at the time, and since cultural life had come to a standstill, it would have been useless to publish his anniversary issue on literature, rather than on an issue that was on everybody's mind. He wrote the whole issue himself. He said that he could have written on the subject in one of two ways; either by concentrating on the background behind Pakistan, or by providing a blueprint for its future in presenting instances from past Islamic governments that demonstrated their magnanimity, high *akhlāq*, and tolerance to other religions.[27] He chose the latter.

> I want to appeal to the people of Pakistan, that even in the toughest circumstances, they not forget the old Islamic traditions and, disregarding what is happening in India, that they should deal with non-Muslims in the same way as their ancestors did and, by their justice and magnanimity, make the country of Pakistan a heaven on earth.[28]

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[26] Farmān Fateḥpurī, "Niyāz Ṣaḥab Marḥūm aur Karāchī," *Nigār-i Pakistān*, July 1966, 3.
[27] Niyāz Fateḥpuri, "Pesh Lafẓ," *Nigār*, January-February 1948, 6.
[28] Ibid., 7.

Fateḥpurī himself did not write about any attraction to Pakistan as such, but cited only personal reasons for the migration, both in the first issue published in Pakistan[29] and also in his autobiography. He wrote that he did not want to say exactly what happened, but admitted that from 1961, some painful experiences had begun in his life which affected him so much that he lost his appetite and was bedridden. If he only had himself to think of, he would have remained, but since the future of his wife and two young sons was to be considered, he had to leave. All of his and his wife's relatives were in Pakistan, and he was sure that they would be well taken care of there. [30] While he was in Pakistan, he expressed his views in this way:

> I lived such a successful life in India and the government gave me so much respect, that this should have meant that I died there, but unfortunately unfavourable circumstances forced me to migrate. However, the wonderful thing is that my health improved here, and most importantly *Nigār*'s publication did not discontinue.[31]

1.5 FATEḤPURĪ'S MISSION: *NIGĀR*

Fateḥpurī's quest to understand his religion began in his schooldays. The unquestioning attitude of his teachers and their total lack of fresh thinking, prompted him to think that "If this was the mentality (*zihniyyat*) that Islam produced, could it be considered a rational (*m'aqūl*) religion?" Since Fateḥpurī was not prepared to accept Islam, as being irrational, he began to try to

[29] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Mulāḥaẓāt," *Nigār-i Pakistān*, September 1962, 3.
[30] Fateḥpurī, "Dastān-i Hayāt," 40.
[31] Ibid.

understand his religion and bring out a more rational, progressive and socially responsible version of Islam. *Nigār* became the platform through which he elaborated his thinking on various religious issues.[32] Since the version of Islam that the *'ulamā'* propagated was what seemed irrational about Islam in his understanding, he campaigned against them as well.[33]

Fateḥpurī was writing at a time when the impact of Sayyid Aḥmad was still strong in South Asia. Sayyid Aḥmad himself had campaigned long and hard against the *'ulamā'* and for positive change in society.[34] Other scholars, like Muḥammad Iqbal[35] and Shiblī Numānī,[36] were also promoting re-thinking, and coming forth with new ideas and strategies for dealing with the challenges facing society. As such, Fateḥpurī found a generally receptive audience with many prominent intellectuals being influenced by his views. He and his magazine were very popular. He became an icon for those who were looking for reason in religion and who thought that the ideas of modernity were not foreign to Islam.

Sayyid Aḥmad, even more than Fateḥpurī, found himself at a cross-roads; on one side were the age-old and tested beliefs and practices, while on the other there was a completely different system introduced by the British. Although he advocated the new system, he himself could not imagine a total break from the

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[32] For his views on religious concepts and practices, see Chapter 2
[33] For details of his views on the *'ulamā'*, see Chapter 3
[34] For more on Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's views see: Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Aḥmad Khān: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House, 1978).
[35] For Iqbāl's religious views, see: Muḥammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986). Also see: Sheila McDonough, *The flame of Sinai: Hope and Vision in Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2002) and: Abdul Aleem Hilal, *Social philosophy of Sir Muḥammad Iqbal: A Critical Study* (Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2003).
[36] See: Mehr Afroz Murad, *Intellectual Modernism of Shibli Numani: an exposition of his religious and socio-political ideas* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1976).

past and on some issues he took a traditionalist view. For instance, as against the modern idea of complete gender equality in terms of education for women, he was in favour of education percolating down to the women from the educated men in the family.[37] Similarly, Fatehpurī was quite orthodox in his views regarding women's education and their working outside home, in spite of campaigning for change in almost every other sphere. However, since Fatehpurī came later in time, it was easier for him to imagine what the future might be like in the new scheme of things. Hence, he was more progressive on the issue, in the sense that he wanted women to receive a direct education and to be allowed to work if the circumstances so demanded.[38]

Another legacy of Sayyid Aḥmad that Fatehpurī furthered was that of trying to build bridges with other communities. Sayyid Aḥmad's efforts were directed more towards Christians, since that was the demand of the hour. He tried to convey a feeling of tolerance between the Muslims and Christians, starting with simple things like telling Muslims that it is acceptable to eat with Christians at the same table. He also educated the British about Muslims. The British had blamed Muslims for the uprising of 1857 (referred to as the Indian Mutiny or the First War for India's independence) and this had led to widespread discrimination against Muslims; many well-established families (even Sayyid Aḥmad's own) had been destroyed because of this.

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[37] Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 18-19.
[38] For more on women's issues, see Chapter 4.

However, by the time Fatehpuri began actively writing, the British and Indians were on the war-path. He therefore, tried to build bridges between Hindus and Muslims. He published articles written by Hindus in his magazine.[39] The month after partition, he started a series on the contributions of Hindus to world civilization.[40] He published a special issue of his magazine on Hindi poetry in January 1936. In this issue, he wrote on the history of Hindi poetry and on the Hindu religious texts of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. In the few articles that he wrote on political issues, he asked Muslims to be brothers and fellow nationalists with Hindus in the struggle for independence and also bestowed praise on Mahatma Gandhi[41] (1869-1948) and the Indian National Congress. Furthermore, while discussing *'akhlaq*, he concluded that a non-Muslim with good *'akhlaq* is more likely to go to heaven than a Muslim with bad *'akhlaq*.[42]

Fatehpuri kept the language of *Nigar* as simple as possible to reach out to more people. His basic readership, however, consisted of the intelligentsia of Indian Muslim society and also those interested in Urdu literature, since he covered a lot of literary issues; he himself was a well-known literary critic. He

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[39] In a brief survey of the articles published in years, 1939 and 1940 in *Nigar*, the following articles written by Hindus were found:
Shankar Swarup Bhatnagar, "Andhi," (April 1939), 15 & (May 1939), 19.
-------"Bada Ghar," (February 1940), 38.
-------"Eik Raat Aur," (June 1940), 56.
Gulab Chand, "Ishtarakiyat aur uska Mustaqbil," (July 1939), 28
-------"Istamaliyat Jamhuriyat ki Roshni mein," (September 1939), 26.
------"Inqilab Pasandi aur Islah-i 'Alam, " April 1940, 33.
Ram, "M'iraj-i Tamaddun," (December 1939), 37 & (May 1940), 28.
-----"Gandhiji aur Falsafa-i 'Adam-i Tashaddud," (October 1940), 54.
[40] Niyaz Fatehpuri, "Hindison ki Ijad-o Taraqqi par eik Tahqiqi Tabsarah," *Nigar*, September 1947, 20; October 1947, 5 & November 1947, 44.
[41] Niyaz Fatehpuri, "Mahatma Gandhi ki Shakhsiyyat," *Nigar*, March 1948, 5.
[42] Niyaz Fatehpuri, "'Ulama'-i Kiram ka 'Ajib-o Gharib Dini Nazariyya," *Nigar*, January 1959, 52-55.

devoted special issues on various topics, religious as well as literary. He sometimes wrote short stories for the magazine as well. He was a very prolific writer and sometimes the whole magazine would be filled with his own writings.

True to form, Fatehpurī kept the window open to debate in his magazine and a lot of space was reserved for a column called "Istifsārāt" (inquiries/questions), in which people challenged him and his ideas and also asked his views on different topics. These were also compiled in book form later.[43]

The articles published in honour of Fatehpurī in the special *Niyāz Number*[44] of *Nigār* are solid proof of Fatehpurī's impact and influence on the scholars and intellectuals of the time, who were all full of praise for him. The *Niyāz Number* had to be extended to two issues (of over 300 pages each) because of the surplus of contributions. Famous intellectuals of the time like Josh Malīhābādī (1898-1982), called him "Hazrat."[45] He was greatly respected in the intellectual community for his dedication and persistence in his cause in the face of many odds.

[43] Niyāz Fatehpurī, *Majmū'a Istifsār-o Jawāb* (3 vols.) (Lucknow: Nigār Book Agency, 1934-38).
[44] *Salnamah Nigār-i Pakistan*, March-April and May-June 1963.
[45] A term of great reverence used for religious figures.

CHAPTER 2

Religious Issues

2.1 CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY

The conflict between tradition and modernity, or tradition and reason, was dramatized by the Enlightenment thinkers, for whom the light of reason was supposed to dispel the darkness of tradition, according to Daniel Brown. In actuality, however, "tradition is not an enemy of change, but the very stuff that is subject to change."[46] The major contention of his work is that modern Muslims are basically "rethinking" the traditions, even if the modernists deny any connection with traditions; and similarly, even the most conservative traditionalists "cannot help but reshape the very tradition that they seek to preserve unchanged."[47] Zaman would clearly agree with the idea that traditionalists are in fact, custodians of change, but he considers modernists to have brought about a rupture with the past.[48] They are rooted, according to him, solely in modern, Westernized institutions of education, even if they consider Islam to be an important aspect of their identity.

Fatehpurī, at first glance, does seem to fit Zaman's description of a modernist, since he seemed to find nothing at all useful in the thought of the traditionalists. In fact, he was arguing that they did not think, but were simply passing on traditions. However, in his religious writing, one finds more frequent

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[46] Brown, *Rethinking tradition,* 2.
[47] Ibid., 3-4.
[48] Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam,* 7.

mention of Imām Ghazālī (1058-1111), Shāh Walī Allah (1702-1763), Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Shiblī Nu'mānī and Muḥammad Iqbal, than of any Western author. This is not to suggest that he was not influenced by Western thought. Very clearly he was, and did use analogies that prove the same. However, he was still trying to tie his writing to that of his predecessors, remaking tradition, not breaking away from it.

Another noteworthy point is that Fatehpurī declared *akhlāq*[49] to be the purpose of religion, which is a very old Islamic concept and not in the least Western. Brown's argument does make sense; Fatehpurī was simply "rethinking." However, like the Enlightenment thinkers, Fatehpurī can be clearly accused of dramatizing the difference between tradition and reason; such as portraying the *'ulamā'* as totally in the dark and completely oblivious of modern realities, as if no change or fresh thinking could possibly emerge from their ranks. At the same time he portrayed his own thinking as rational, progressive, purposeful, and in tune with modern realities.

The very fact that Fatehpurī was arguing for fresh thinking in the light of new ideas is in itself an illustration of the effect of modernity. He was taught in English since primary school, and was very well-acquainted with modern Western thought. His writing shows that he had assimilated many of those ideas in his thinking. However, he took inspiration not only from Western sources, but from medieval and even recent Islamic scholars. His concern was with Islam, with making Islam more in tune with contemporary realities, so that it might

[49] Explained on pp. 45.

appear rational and progressive. Fatehpurī never argued that there was anything wrong with the Islamic past. The ideas and practices of the medieval period, were justified and rational, according to the needs of the society of the time. However, it made more sense in his eyes, given that the society and the ideas therein have changed so visibly, to rethink and maybe bring about new ways of thinking and doing things. He felt that the *'ulamā'* were opposed to anything new, and certainly, from his experience of being ridiculed and branded an unbeliever; he may have been justified in thinking that way. Even if we agree with Zaman that the *'ulamā'* themselves were bringing about change, they did in fact radically oppose anyone who said that he wanted change.

In speaking about Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Mawlana Maudūdī , Sheila McDonough argues that neither of them thought that modernity meant the end of Islam.[50] They were both trying to assimilate the two, and find ways to be faithful to God in the current situation. The world around them was changing and changing fast; both of them realized that unless Islam adapted to contemporary realities, the religion itself would become extinct. They had different strategies for dealing with it and completely different agendas, but ultimately they were trying to come to terms with the same reality.

Fatehpurī was dealing with a similar situation. Sayyid Aḥmad was introducing new ideas among Muslims. He understood this and so he felt a greater need to justify his views. His agenda was basically social and

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[50] Sheila McDonough, *Muslim Ethics and Modernity – A Comparative Study of the Ethical Thought of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Mawlana Maudūdī* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 4.

educational; the change in thinking that he was asking for was to serve that purpose. Maudūdī and Fateḥpurī, on the other hand, were dealing with a situation in which those modern ideas, acceptable or not, had already become known in the society. Even though Maudūdī was in favour of traditionalism, his way of thinking and expression was that of a modernist. Fateḥpurī was born in the same age and found western ideas to be similar to his own views and thus, readily acceptable. He sought and found justification for these ideas in Islam and was indeed amazed that the *'ulamā'* saw things differently.

2.2 WHAT IS ISLAM?

> "The greatest characteristics of Islam are its simplicity and its teaching of right action, both of which are related to *akhlāq* (ethical thinking[51])."[52]

Fateḥpuri's attempt to write on Islam and to rationalize it had nothing to do with the usual suspects – missionaries' debates, colonial discourse on the topic, or even the views of his contemporaries and predecessors. It was simply because he was interested in both reason and religion. In his own words: "Whenever I used to think (and I used to think often), it was mostly related to reason and religion. Reason because ever since I was a student I had never accepted anything, without satisfying my head and soul. And religion because I was educated in a religious atmosphere and I got the opportunity to study the religious *'ulamā'*."[53]

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[51] Sheila McDonough's translation has been used. McDonough, *Muslim Ethics and Modernity*, 4.
[52] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Islām ka 'Aqlī Jayeza," *Nigār*, January 1959, 57.
[53] Fateḥpurī, "Eik Tārikhī Yādgār," 2.

If there was one thread running through all of Fateḥpurī's writing, it was his argument with the '*ulamā'*. They were the ones who inspired him to write on religion. And it was to them that he posed his questions and was gave his own answers to what he found questionable in their views. He hardly ever took up a new Western idea and discussed it with regard to Islam, or tried to answer an Islamic question only in the light of Western ideas. However, the whole colonial discourse of Islam being backward and medieval, was familiar to him and he kept trying to dispel this notion by saying that what the *'ulamā'* were saying and doing was not the only way to look at Islam.

What is meant by Islam and being a Muslim, can have several interpretations in his opinion. He questioned whether what was practiced in his time was really Islam. Can its believers truly be called Muslims? Fateḥpurī's "real" Islam was rational, in consonance with the times and progressive. Fateḥpurī stated plainly, "If there is one characteristic of Islam then it is that it moves with the times. You cannot define it in one shape or assign it one meaning. It will keep changing with the time and the progress of man's understanding and reason."[54]

Islam took the highest place in Fateḥpurī's hierarchy of world religions. He explained how the advent of religions could be seen in phases and how, although one religion came after another, it had always happened that the existing religion was not completely extinguished before the next came, so that, many religions came to exist side-by-side. Islam came in a similar situation.

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[54] Fateḥpurī, *Istifsār*, vol. IV, 349.

However, what made Islam superior, according to him, was that its vision was much wider. It did not come for a specific time or place but wanted to remain with humanity forever and in the future, to be known as the "complete religion." That, one might think, gave an added responsibility to Islam, or rather Muslims, to explain themselves in every time and place. Islam, if it claimed to be the final and complete religion, should never allow itself to be stagnant since there is no new religion coming to rectify its mistakes.[55]

2.2 a. PURPOSE OF ISLAM

The purpose of Islam was to produce what Fateḥpurī called a "spirit of action." This religious spirit of action did not mean just performing ostensibly religious actions like saying one's prayer (*namāz*), but also meant using the resources available on earth for betterment of one's life here, i.e., in this world, in this life and right now. He said that the logic of the *'ulamā'* – say your *namāz* here (on earth) get houris there (in the hereafter) – did not work for him.[56]

2.2 b. ISLAM IN HISTORY

Fateḥpurī reasoned that the meaning and purpose of Islam had changed over time and that many fallacies had crept into it because the **religion** of Islam was replaced by the **reign** of Islam very early in its history. The characteristics of Islam, like its simplicity, its emphasis on right actions and its *akhlāq*, soon

[55] Fateḥpurī, "Islām ka 'Aqlī Jayeza," 56-80. Also see: Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Maẓāhib-i 'Ālam mei Islam ka martabā," *Nigār*, January 1959, 14-25.
[56] Fateḥpurī, *Istifsār*, vol. IV, 349.

disappeared. The ills of the political regime or government in power filtered into it. He used the analogy of the separation of church and state to explain this – since this never happened in the case of Islam, rulers therefore enjoyed the full opportunity of exploiting religion to suit their personal interests.

In spite of this exploitation, though, Fatehpurī believed that, while the Islamic governments persisted, whether they were right or wrong, there was at least an Islamic structure. Once that was gone, Muslims developed an inferiority complex, and completely stopped experimenting with new ideas. It is then, he insists that the right vision of God was destroyed, the meaning of prophethood changed, the belief in right action was sidelined, and Islam became full of traditional mischief and superstition.[57]

There had always been changes in the religious thinking and intellectual pursuits of humankind in each new age, according to Fatehpurī. Before Islam, new religions used to appear to rejuvenate the way people thought. If it is to be believed that prophets were sent in all historical periods, then when a particular prophet came, he would have been of that time and would have addressed the issues confronting the society in which he found himself. Fatehpurī believed that even the teachings of the prophets evolved; the prophets must have told people to use idols at an earlier stage, but with the development of human intellect, they began to ask human beings to pray in their hearts. It follows, he maintained, from this reasoning that Muslim thinking should have reached new heights in this new age of progress; instead, it seemed to him, to have gone back to beliefs

[57] Fatehpurī, "Islam ka 'Aqlī Jayeza," 57.

that Islam originally came to suppress. Instead of worshipping God, Muslims worship tombs and *pirs* (Sufi masters) and are superstitious.[58]

Fateḥpurī was very clear about who was responsible for a state of affairs in which asking questions is tantamount to unbelief;[59] it was the *'ulamā'*. The latter, according to him, had abandoned the Qur'an and embraced only the *ḥadīth*, believing in them so fervently that if anyone wanted to present an alternative vision of Islam, he was labelled as an unbeliever (*mulhid, kāfir*) and excommunicated from the community of Islam. Almost all the modernists in South Asia were campaigning for a return to the original sources, more specifically to the Qur'an, and for less stress on the *ḥadīth*, to understand how to live in this new age.

Some of the religious issues on which Fateḥpurī differed from the traditional views are discussed in the following pages:

2.2 c. STATUS OF THE PROPHET

Fateḥpurī explained that prophethood was defined in either of two ways in religions of the present day: one where the prophet is seen as a reflection of God on earth, or *Avatar* (as in Hinduism / Christianity) and the other where he is defined as the messenger of God (as in Judaism / Islam). In spite of this difference though, every religion agrees that the prophets came to earth to teach mankind, to tell them the wishes of God and show them the right path.[60]

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[58] Fateḥpurī, *Istifsār*, vol. IV, 346.
[59] For details of Fateḥpurī's critique of the *'ulamā'*, see Chapter 3.
[60] Fateḥpurī, "Islam ka 'Aqlī Jayeza," 63.

Fateḥpurī quoted Shiblī at length to define Prophethood:

> As God has granted different qualities to humankind, so that some people do not possess them and some do in large degrees, in the same way there is a spiritual quality called prophethood, which is related to purity of soul and *akhlāq*. The person who has this quality is perfect (*kāmil*) in *akhlāq* and by his influence, other people become perfect. This person is not educated or brought up in such a way as to achieve this quality; rather, this quality is inborn.[61]

Fateḥpurī agreed with Shiblī on the definition of the concept of prophethood but differed from most Muslims over the priority given to the Prophet. Muslims normally consider God first in order of importance, followed by the Qur'an and Muḥammad. He, on the other hand, considered Muḥammad first, then the Qur'an, then God. According to him, Muslims know the Qur'an and God through Muḥammad, so his actions are to be considered first in themselves.

> People want to understand Muḥammad through the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, and I want to verify the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* through the life of Muḥammad. People say: Muḥammad is what the Qur'an says he is; I say that the Qur'an is what Muḥammad showed through his right actions in his daily life. People follow the Qur'an and Muḥammad because they fear God, and I want to understand God and the Qur'an through my love for Muḥammad.[62]

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Fateḥpurī, "Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," 33-43.

Prophet Muḥammad, according to him, was basically a reformer who was very concerned about the state of his society: its illiteracy, ignorance, social evils like polygamy, infanticide, drinking (etc.), its material culture and idol worship. After all, he sat meditating in a cave for weeks even before the advent of the revelation. Fateḥpurī mused that he must have been thinking about ways to cleanse his society of its ills and it seems, Islam turned out to be a good way of doing so.

Although other modernists also made an effort to humanise the Prophet, not many would have agreed with him that the Prophet had a personal agenda in bringing about Islam. The Prophet might have been concerned about his society, and there must have been a reason why he used to go to that cave, but there is no reason why these two things should be related. Apparently Fateḥpurī was venturing here into the realm of pure speculation.

Fateḥpurī asked, "What is the position of the Prophet in Islam? Was he just a messenger, could anybody have become a messenger?" For him the choice of Muḥammad as the Prophet was crucial. How Muḥammad acted, how he lived his life, was a topic of primary importance for Fateḥpuri. He considered it debatable whether the Qur'an is the speech of God or not, but it was historically proven, according to him, that it did come out of Muḥammad's mouth.[63] His earlier point that the Prophet might have had a reformist agenda of his own in bringing about Islam, and then his insistence that our only certain knowledge is that Qur'an came out of the Prophet's mouth, amounted to placing a question

[63] Ibid.

mark on any involvement of God at all. This was one of the instances where he may have taken his logic too far, expressing views that clearly would not be acceptable to any ordinary believer. He appears an agnostic from these views, but seemingly this was not the case. He simply went wherever his logic took him and was not afraid of expressing radically different views.

Given his views that it was of primary importance to understand the Prophet in order to understand Islam, and given his distrust of the *ḥadīth*, the question arises as to how he wanted to study the Prophet. He was very clear: this could only be done through the Qur'an.

> A man's life can be divided into two parts: one is historical and geographical and the other is spiritual and internal. When we study the Prophet's life we realize that, although the first part is completely clear, the second has been a subject of debate and continues to be so. How was the Prophet personally, what kind of interests nature had bestowed upon him, what were his intellectual capabilities? For knowing all this you do not need to read history books or the *ḥadīth*, because the Qur'an is available. And each and every word of it lets us know how deep his faith was, and how pure his *akhlāq* was. None of the history books were written in the time of the Prophet so they are interpretations of other people in different places and times. Most of the *ḥadīth* are not trustworthy either and can only be believed after thorough investigation.[64]

[64] Niyāz Fatehpurī, *Man-o Yazdān* (Lucknow: Nigār Book Agency, 1947), vol. II, 372-3.

2.2 d. IS THE QUR'AN REALLY GOD'S SPEECH?

As mentioned above, Fateḥpurī believed that the only thing that could be proven was that the Qur'an came from Muḥammad's mouth; whether it was really God's speech is debatable. The only justification of its divine origin generally given, according to him, was that the grammar, literary quality and style of the *ḥadīth* and the Qur'an differ markedly and therefore, they are speeches of different entities, the Prophet and God. Fateḥpurī never found this rationale satisfactory enough to prove such a broad assumption. He agreed that, undoubtedly the Qur'an was truly an extraordinary book in all its aspects and that during that age, nothing like it in either length or quality was produced. However, he argued, it would be going too far to assume that nothing like it *could* have been produced. Arabic literature and poetry at the time was quite developed, and oral tradition was flourishing. And since Prophet Muḥammad was related to the Quraish tribe, which was famous for its oral literature and fluency of expression, it should not be surprising that his language was extraordinarily refined.

Fateḥpurī answered the question of the differences in style and quality of the two works by saying that one's language and actions are determined by the emotion one is feeling, and its intensity. He gave the example of poetry. There can be quite a lot of variety in the different verses written by the same poet, some of them perhaps being of a higher literary quality than others. The reason, he thought, was that the poet reached a certain state of mind when he wrote those particular high-quality verses. Those verses that suddenly come into a

poet's mind, without any effort on his part, are even in literary circles called *ilhāmī* or revelatory.[65]

Coming back to the Prophet and the Qur'an, his basic hypothesis was that the Prophet must have reached a certain state of mind, resulting in the revelation (*wahy*). He explained that, unlike his contemporaries, the Prophet was born with an acute discernment of good from evil. A person like him would naturally be upset with the situation in which he found himself. This, according to Fateḥpurī, prompted him to get out of his world, hide in caves and think. His deep thinking would lead him into such a state where he would start producing this message. Words burst forth like a spring. The words in that message were obviously his, and in the same language that was widespread during the time and in that area. The only noticeable change was in the style of presentation, which according to Fateḥpurī was the result of his state of mind. That is what truly constitutes a revelation, according to Fateḥpurī. And this was what made the language of the Qur'an so different from that of *ḥadīth*.[66]

W.C. Smith was clearly not an admirer of Fateḥpurī's extreme logic; he did not like the fact that Fateḥpurī attacked the very idea of divine revelation. "Accordingly, the Qur'ān was seen as a piece of literature, the personal contribution of Muḥammad to the thought of the world; all of authority, as well as the ritual and formalism, of the religion was rejected."[67]

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[65] Fateḥpurī, *Man o-Yazdān*, vol. II, 413-416.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946), 121.

2.2 e. ḤADĪTH

Fateḥpurī believed that the changes in Islam were brought about by the medium of the *ḥadīth* (plural – *aḥadīth*, sayings of the Prophet). He claimed that many of the *aḥadīth* were simply fabricated to suit the ruler of the day. The reason why he could simply state such a conclusion, taking it for granted that people would agree with him, was that almost all the modernists – Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Shiblī Nu'mānī and even his contemporaries like Muḥammad Iqbal, the philosopher-poet – were to a greater or lesser degree all doubtful of the *aḥadīth* in their entirety and were urging Muslims to be cautious in relying on them.[68] Sayyid Aḥmad disapproved of classical *ḥadīth* criticism since it was based on the characters of the people relating the *ḥadīth*, and not on rational criticism of the actual text.[69] Shiblī Nu'mānī (1857-1914), one of the most prominent intellectuals of that time, and by far the most traditional teacher at the Aligarh school, was also conscious of the need to define *ḥadīth* and its use. Seventy-five pages of his *Sīrat al-Nu'mān*[70] are written just to demonstrate how cautious and critical Abū Ḥanīfah was in accepting a *ḥadīth* as true and binding.[71] Iqbal was responsible for painting the *Khilāfah al-Rāshidah* (the period of the first four Caliphs) as a utopia; it was then that "Islam was 'pure', 'socialistic' and

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[68] On the other hand, the *'ulamā* were emphasizing *ḥadīth*. See: Zaman, *Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 12.
[69] Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistān: 1857-1964* (London; Bombay; Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), 49-50.
[70] Murad, *Intellectual Modernism of Shibli Nu'mani*, 186-245. From: Shiblī Nu'mānī, *Sīrat al-Nu'mān* (Lahore: Kutub Khānah-i Aziziyah, 195?), 170-245.
[71] Ibid.

simple."[72] Later, Islam became an empire and all the trappings of power came with it.

2.2 f. REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

> On the issue of reward and punishment, people of all religions think that when man does not listen to God's instructions, God gets angry with him, and since the world is the place for learning (*dār al-'ilm*), man does not get punished here, but when on the Day of Judgment (q*ayāmat*) God is the judge, all matters will be presented to Him. And God will give punishment to the wrong-doers for their disobedience, and in the same way, those people who have worshipped and obeyed will be rewarded by Him.[73]

Fatehpurī thus expressed commonly-held views on the issue of reward and punishment by quoting Shiblī.

It was the question of Hell that Fatehpurī said he really wanted to clarify in his mind. He felt that the way Hell has been prescribed for the wrongs done on earth did not correspond to his overall impression of a merciful and benevolent God. He said that the Bible and Talmud agree with the Qur'an on the description of Hell; all of them mention burning. In the Qur'an though, hell's fire is described in such graphic detail that no further explanation is needed. After reading this description, it seemed to him that God was like a tyrant or a

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[72] Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 117.
[73] Fatehpurī, "Islam ka 'Aqlī Jayeza," 65-67.

vindictive being, who dealt with weaknesses harshly, as though our actions caused him some kind of personal injury. It was if there was so much hatred and anger for us in His Heart that He could not even be satisfied when offenders were burnt to ashes but had to keep re-burning them for all eternity. Fateḥpurī said if this description did not have an alternative meaning, then man's reason would force him to hate this God, and if that is how He is, His qualities of mercy and blessings did not mean a thing.[74]

Fateḥpurī, trying to be objective, also acknowledged the usefulness of this kind of description of hell and the complete opposite picture drawn of heaven for the masses, especially if it induces them to do good and avoid evil. However, for a man of intelligence and kindness, who does not need to be induced or scared into doing good, this description of hell is disagreeable.[75] To explain this, Fateḥpurī made a distinction between the masses and the intelligentsia, saying that it was quite possible for two understandings of the same issue to exist side-by-side. After quoting Shiblī (cited above), he said that the description found in the Qur'an can be quite appropriate for common understanding and there can be no better way to prevent people from bad behaviour and make them move in the direction of goodness. However, he believed that this can not be the only interpretation of reward and punishment.

The "real" meaning, according to Fateḥpurī, was that if actions are good or bad, they have corresponding results on the doer's psyche. Good actions make one feel satisfied and happy, while bad actions make one feel dissatisfied, alone

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[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

and guilty. He pointed out that these results were not separate from the action; indeed, it was simply cause and effect. He quoted Imam Ghazālī to explain: "The punishment due to bad action does not mean God will be angry, or that He will seek revenge. An example to explain what I mean is that if a man does not go near a woman, he will not have kids (cause and effect). At the time of the Day of Judgment, worship and good actions mean exactly the same thing." Fatehpurī explained further by using the example of a person stealing from another: even if the person who owned the thing forgave the thief, the fact that he stole, would always be a spot on his character that would never be washed away. So, reward and punishment, according to him, are the direct result of one's actions imposed instantaneously by God on this earth only.[76]

Iqbal clearly was of the same belief that heaven and hell were states of mind rather than places; he denounced the static other-worldliness of religion, as being un-Islamic and inherently evil.[77] McDonough explains his views further by saying, "The descriptions in the Quran are visual representations of an inner fact, i.e. character. Hell, in the words of the Quran, is God's kindled fire which mounts above the hearts – the painful realization of one's failure as a man. Heaven is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration. There is no such thing as eternal damnation in Islam."[78]

Shiblī also presented two understandings of the issue in his work, though not as blatantly, and quoted the same lines from al-Ghazālī's commentary on a

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 107.
[78] Sheila McDonough, *The Authority of the Past: A Study of Three Muslim Modernists* (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: American Academy of Religion, 1970), 25.

Qur'ānic verse that Fatehpurī did: "Hell is right inside you," he said, and "if you did not understand the meanings in this manner, then you did not get from the Qur'ān anything except the crust, as the cattle get only the husk from the wheat."[79]

Fatehpurī since he was writing for a magazine audience, made an effort to explain his reasoning in the simplest terms possible and by giving examples. In illustration of this and also to further explain the point, here is a quotation:

> The way that God has ordered some things and stopped man from doing some other things, is like how a physician recommends some medicines to the sick person and asks him not to eat certain things; if that person disobeys the physician and does not do as told, he increases his ailment. The increase in his ailment is the direct result of his not doing the right things, but people might say that he disobeyed the physician that is why the ailment increased. Although, even if the physician had not told him these things, and he had not done the right things, his ailment would have increased anyhow. Likewise, even if God had not told us right from wrong, wrong deeds would still cause injury to the soul.[80]

Fatehpurī believed that even though Islam had generally kept the same meaning of reward and punishment, heaven and hell, as religions before it, nevertheless the best thing about Islam is that it had also stated "reality", although not so openly, and this is what made Islam superior to all other religions. All the other

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[79] Shiblī Nu'mānī, *'Ilm al-Kalām* (Lahore: Shaikh Jān Muḥammad Ilāh Bakhsh, 1945), 139-43.
[80] Fatehpurī, "Islam ka 'Aqlī Jayeza," 65-67.

big religions only talk to the masses (*awām*), according to Fateḥpurī, while Islam has a message for everyone: intellectuals and the ignorant, fools and the intelligent, the upper classes and the lower classes, mystics and literalists (*Sufīs* and *Zāhirīs*).

2.3 WORSHIP IN ISLAM

2.3 a. PILLARS OF ISLAM

Prayer, fasting and charity (*namāz*, *roza* and *zakāt*) are among the most important aspects of practicing Islam. The strange thing, however, is that the Qur'an is silent on how exactly to perform them. For Fateḥpurī, this clearly meant that the Qur'an and Islam did not want to force people to do things in one particular way. Also, it meant that the Qur'an did not come simply to guide the 'Arabs, but all of humankind, and since humankind is divided into different communities, they cannot all be forced to pray in just one language and in one particular way (*tarīqā*). And even if they could, Fateḥpurī believed, their hearts would never be in it.[81]

He explained his point by giving the example of an Eskimo living in an ice house, in a place where there are six months of night. He definitely cannot adopt the Arab ways of worship. How can he do the prayer and fasting (which is dictated by the position of the sun) in the same way? That is why the Qur'an is

[81] Ibid, 69-80.

silent on the right and best way of worship. Worship should merely be of One God and that is the pillar of Islam – it can be through any way.[82]

Fatehpuri questioned the extent to which Islamic rulings had Arab influence and consequently, to what extent, in a different time and place, there is need for fresh thinking (*ijtihad*). He said Shah Wali Allah understood that there was such a need and quoted *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha* to the effect. Chiragh 'Ali, one of the stalwarts of the Aligarh movement, said unequivocally, "The only law of Muhammad or Islam is the Qur'an and only the Qur'an."[83] Fatehpuri agreed and said further that if the Qur'an did not define some issues that are obviously very important, then there must definitely be a reason for this.

2.3 b. PURPOSE OF ZAKAT

The real purpose of *zakat,* according to Fatehpuri, was quite clearly to give rightful help to one's relatives and the needy in the community. All Muslims are aware of this, he said; hence, the issue is not in the least debatable. He asked then why it was that many Muslims, despite being aware of this purpose, simply ignored it, and tried to get out of the responsibility of giving *zakat* by proving themselves incapable of it. Regarding the reluctance of the *'ulama'* in particular,

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[82] Ibid.

[83] John J. Donohue and John L Esposito, ed., *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 44.

he stated: "There are many ways of avoiding *zakāt* in the books of *fiqh*, and many of our *'ulamā'-i karām*, use them."[84]

Fatehpurī described one loophole that people used to avoid *zakāt*. When the year is nearing its end, the husband declares all his assets under his wife's name and when the next year-end approaches, the wife transfers them back to her husband, so that neither of them has enjoyed the assets for the year before the taxation date and are not, thus, liable for *zakāt*. If the purpose of *zakāt* is so clear and obvious, these frauds should not happen, but they do, and the reason for it was very clear in Fatehpurī's mind: it was only because Muslims did not understand the spirit behind the Islamic rulings. It is one thing to follow rules and another to understand their purpose and act on it. As he saw it, every religious act that Muslims performed in his day was carried out merely for the sake of ritual. The real purpose was not at the forefront of anyone's mind. And this was why the religion of Islam had become spiritless; this was what was destroying the community.

A reader asked Fatehpurī in the *Istifsar* (question and answer) column of his magazine whether, in view of the fact that he was giving more taxes to the British government than he would have given *zakāt*, he needed to give *zakāt* as well. Fatehpurī replied that even if the taxes were more than *zakāt*, the real purpose of *zakāt* was not served by that money, which is to help one's relatives and community; therefore, it was not possible to say that one had given it.[85]

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[84] Fatehpurī, *Man o-Yazdān*, vol. II, 396-397
[85] Ibid.

The point he was trying to make was that the purpose of *zakāt* was helping people in need and that one had to do discharge this duty, regardless of what else one had to do to lead a fulfilling life. It was not like a government ruling with which one felt little connection and which could be avoided. Helping people in need should come from within a person; it was part of being a Muslim, not merely a ritual that one is forced to do and that one avoided wherever possible.

2.4 'AKHLĀQ

> If in reality there can be a scale of measurement for the success and failure of a human life, it is surely social. That is, what service a person gave to his/her community, what sacrifices he/she made for the reform of his/her community and nation, and what benefits did he/she bestow on others from his/her intellectual or material wealth... Saying prayers and staying without food or water from dawn to dusk are in themselves activities without any meaning, if they do not result in some *akhlāq*, and *akhlāq* is related only to an individual's social life. Therefore, the measure of the success of a person's worship and prayer, is that the person who prays and fasts the most, should also be the person who serves his/her community the most. "[86]

Akhlāq was the most important characteristic of the religious spirit of action that Fatehpurī wanted to see revived. Being religious was not about saying

[86] Niyāz Fatehpurī, "T'alīmāt Islamī ka Ṣaḥiḥ Mafhūm aur Hamare 'Ulamā' Kirām," *Nigār,* January 1959, 122-123.

prayers; it was about being a better person. "Actions speak louder than words," would describe Fatehpurī's basic belief.

W. C. Smith has translated the term *akhlāq* as the "ethical spirit,"[87] while Sheila McDonough calls it "ethical thinking."[88] It is one of those words that are very difficult to translate since they take on many connotations in different places and times. However, Smith and McDonough have it right when they choose not to translate it simply as ethics, since it is more of a "spirit or thinking" that drives a man to do what is morally correct, and not just a set of moral values.

McDonough uses the word *akhlāq* to mean a concern with ideal human virtues as well as the development of good social, economic, political and religious structures.[89] She also notes that Sayyid Aḥmad Khān used *akhlāq* to mean constructive training given to an individual on how to relate to other individuals, and how to live in society harmoniously. Since the opposite of that would be lawlessness and chaos, for Sayyid Aḥmad then, *akhlāq* was an obligation to live in peace, with the feeling of brotherhood and sharing.[90]

Shiblī also assigned considerable importance to the refinement of morals (*tadhīb al-akhlāq*) and, like Fatehpurī, believed that the Prophets' main concern was to reform the society and instil in it moral values.[91]

Although many reformers then and even earlier recognized the importance of *akhlāq*, Fatehpurī went so far as to say that it is *the* purpose of

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[87] Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 121.
[88] McDonough, *Muslim Ethics and Modernity*, 4.
[89] Ibid., 17-18.
[90] Ibid., 49.
[91] Murad, *Intellectual Modernism of Shibli Nu'mani*, 6-7.

religion. *Akhlaq* meant a number of things to him, most importantly, as in Sayyid Aḥmad's view, it meant social behaviour. A person with *akhlāq* would act for the greater good of everyone, respect people and their opinions, and preserve the feeling of brotherhood and sharing.

Another very important characteristic of *akhlāq* for him was humility. For a Muslim, having *akhlāq* meant to be humble about what one possesses whether of intellectual or material nature. Arrogance is the antithesis of having *akhlāq* – an attitude he observed in the *'ulamā'*, since they believed they knew best about the religion and its practices, and aggressively condemned any re-thinking. They lacked *akhlāq*, according to him.

Having *akhlāq* should mean doing good deeds for their own sake, according to Fatehpurī, and because one decides to, not out of fear of hell or greed for heaven. God has provided us with His guidelines, and has also given us reason to discern right from wrong. It is for us to employ it to decide actively to do what is right. This *akhlāq* is not the domain of Muslims only, but can be possessed by anyone. Fatehpurī debates whether a Muslim with bad *akhlāq* will go to heaven compared to a non-Muslim with good *akhlāq*. He concludes that having *akhlāq* is more important than being a Muslim, if a person is a Muslim in name only and if Islam does not inspire him/her to do good deeds, to be humble and to treat everyone equally.[92]

2.5 FREE WILL OR PREDESTINATION?

[92] Fatehpurī, "'Ulamā' Kirām ka Ajeeb-o Gharīb Dinī Nazariyya," 52-55.

This is one debate that has been going on since Muslim scholars first started pondering Islam. What is interesting in Fatehpurī's analysis was that he took the middle path. He believed that there is free will but that God is aware of each and every action of man. This might seem like a paradox but he explained that, by saying that God having knowledge of what one is going to do is not binding inasmuch as it does not force man to do exactly that. Man has free will to do what he wants; God only has knowledge of how he will employ his free will. Like every element, such as iron, whose heaviness is a predestined quality, human will (*irāda-i insānī*) is a predestined quality of each man. This quality is what makes a particular person choose a certain option in a given situation, and avoid another.[93]

Fatehpurī quoted a saying of Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb (581-644 A.D. c. 634-644 A.D.), in which an evil-doer was presented to him pleading innocence on the ground that God had knowledge of his actions, since they were predestined for him. Caliph 'Umar replied that God certainly had knowledge of the acts but had not forced the man to commit them; they were his choices. Caliph 'Umar quoted a saying of the Prophet to buttress this point, which was that God's knowledge of one's actions is like that of the sky that covers one and the earth on which one walks. Just as one cannot walk away from the earth or run out of sky, one cannot escape from the knowledge of God. And just as the earth

[93] Fatehpurī, *Man-o Yazdān*, vol. II, 28-29.

and sky do not force you to do evil, the knowledge of God does not force one to do anything.[94]

Imam Hasan al-Basrī[95] had said something similar, according to Fatehpurī, that if God wants to keep a man away from some action, He will not predestine one to do so; it has to be one's free will to go against God's indictment. Fatehpurī then stated the basic Mu'tazilite[96] doctrine, that if God had predestined one to worship Him and do good deeds, there would be no reward (*sawāb*) for prayer and right actions. If God has predestined one for evil, one should not be punished.[97]

Fatehpurī thought that most people in his day believed in predestination, as a way of avoiding responsibility for their actions. Predestination is just an excuse for their laziness, their inability to do anything worthwhile. After all, humankind was created to help develop the natural system and was given *'aql* so that he could do so. God bestowed His teachings through revelation, as well as the *'aql* to discern right from wrong, so that, people can act for the greater good out of their free will. Of course, this confers the responsibility to do what one thinks is right. People cannot blame predestination for their incapacities.[98]

2.6 CONCLUSION

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Abu Sa'id ibn Abi al-Hasan Yasar al-Basri (642-728) is one of the most important religious figures of early Islam. He was a teacher in Basra, Iraq. Among his many pupils was Wasil ibn Ata (700-748), who became the founder of the Mu'tazila.

[96] Mu'tazila is a theological school of Islam founded in 8th century Basra, Iraq by Wasil ibn Ata. Mu'tazilites called themselves *Ahl al-Tawhid wa al-'Adl* (People of Divine Unity and Justice). They advocated use of reason in theology, and relied on logic and Greek philosophy.

[97] Fatehpurī, *Man-o Yazdān*, vol. II, 30-31.

[98] Ibid.

Before Fatehpurī began writing on religious subjects, much of the way had already been paved by his predecessors, such as Sayyid Aḥmad and Shiblī. Many new ideas had been introduced and the process of re-interpretation of Islam according to modernist thinking had already begun. The uniqueness of Fatehpurī's thinking lay in his radicalism. When modernists said Islam had in itself all the modern values of liberalism, rationalism, democracy and equality, he took it seriously. He produced an Islam shorn of all its miraculous wonders, but filled with simple ideals. His Islam was totally rational, consisting only of those things that made sense. If the idea of the Qur'an being the word of God and coming through a human being did not make sense, even that was discarded.

Phobia of the super-natural was also another hallmark of Fatehpurī's thinking, even though belief in the "unseen" is also part of Islam. People are attracted to God because He is beyond them; He is someone they can look up to, who is there in time of need, an entity that they must answer to. Belief in religion is ultimately, supernatural, because God is beyond human. If all religion could be reduced to induction and deduction, it loses its mystery and attraction. According to him though, "truth", "ethical thinking" and "right actions" were far more important than "faith." He believed that religion had excellent ideas, which induced man to do good, and urged man to use his reason for the benefit of himself and the world; anything other than that was beyond belief.

As noted earlier, his predecessor, Sayyid Aḥmad, was trying to raise Islam to modern Western standards. He tried to answer the criticisms of Western writers, by showing that Islam was not as backward as it appears, but was

instead progressive. The major similarity between Sayyid Aḥmad and Fatehpurī was that both were able to see the *ḥadīth*, *shariah* (Islamic law) and even the Qur'an, dispassionately. Consequently, they were quite capable of subjecting them to rational criticism, and many new ideas emerged from this scrutiny. Following the tradition of the earlier modernists, like Sayyid Aḥmad, and Shiblī, Fatehpurī tried to show that Islam itself had all the values that are needed to survive in the modern age.

A contradiction in Fatehpurī's thought was that, although he saw so much sense in Islam – it was the most practical, rational and progressive of all religions for him – nevertheless, he saw no good whatsoever in how it was practised. He wanted major changes, not only in practical details of the religion, but in belief systems. For instance, people trying to avoid *zakāt* was an indication of their lack of *akhlāq*. However, *akhlāq* was not something that could be dictated to human beings; it was something an individual either developed or did not. He thought all these changes were possible as long as the "right" understanding of Islam, as he would have it, was developed. However, it was quite impossible for everyone to think along the same lines. Not many people would set about finding the right understanding, and practising it and being good people, just because Fatehpurī thought it was rational. He was showing what was wrong in the prevailing thinking and that the way out was to adopt *akhlāq*, i.e., to "really" practice Islam in daily life. But he did not set out a positive agenda on how that was to be worked out.

W.C. Smith concluded about Fateḥpurī's movement that: "Its lack of positive ideology, however, has meant that it too has soon petered out. Ethical spirit without positive guidance is either inadequate or superfluous".[99] Another of Smith's comments was also very telling, i.e., that the new individual was without authority:

> The nature of his life – bourgeois society is constantly developing, changing, producing new and more complex situations – was such that he [Sayyid Aḥmad] could never develop a new authority. At least, not such a new authority as the old had been, a fixed code with ready-made solutions to his problems. Thus it is that Sir Sayyid, in rejecting the old Canon Law, did not replace it with a new one, nor has any of his successors done so; but emphasized only the general moral principles of the Qur'an.[100]

This is one of the major critiques of the modernist theories of Islam. The old is to be discarded, but to be replaced by what. Fateḥpurī's answer was *akhlāq*. *Akhlāq* though can only be judged individually. Fateḥpurī was convinced that if people think for themselves, if they find out what Islam really meant for them, then even prayer and fasting would lead to the development of good *akhlāq*. Of course, it sounds very rational and shows great faith in humanity, but it is not very practicable for the vast masses. Most people would just find it easier to

[99] Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 121.
[100] Ibid., 21.

follow the ready-made solutions offered by the *'ulamā'*, rather than think for themselves.

CHAPTER 3

Fateḥpurī's Critique of the 'Ulamā'

As seen in chapter one, Fateḥpurī's advocacy of a rational approach to religion began essentially as a fight against the *'ulamā'*. Even as a schoolboy, he began to question the attitudes and beliefs of his teachers. Those questions remained unanswered, leading him to believe that the *'ulamā'* were not even aware of the rationale behind their own beliefs. It was his disappointment with them and their irrational attitude that led to his quest to understand his religion. Fateḥpurī considered the *'ulamā'*, as a class, to be useless and a road-block (*sang-i rāh*) to the progress of Muslims. His criticized the *'ulamā'* for not realizing the "real" meaning of religion, i.e., *akhlāq*, and being over-involved in its external aspects. Moreover, they were unwilling to accept new ideas.

We will compare Fateḥpurī's critique of the *'ulamā'* with Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's views on the issue. Sayyid Aḥmad was the first person in the sub-continent to come out openly against the *'ulamā'*. He questioned their views and gave his own viewpoint. Although, he was more of an educationist and reformer, his views on the *'ulamā'* can provide a useful background to Fateḥpurī's thought.

Zaman has argued that the *'ulamā'* have functioned as the custodians of change throughout Islamic history, and that they have always been experimenting and adapting themselves to the times, while acting as the guardians of tradition. What the modernists were asking for was a complete

break from the past; things had been changing whether or not the modernists asked for it.[101]

Fateḥpurī did seem to be looking for a break from past traditions. He said clearly:

> The reason for the lack of mental progress among Muslims, is following of religious traditions, and for that the responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of our *'ulamā'*.[102]

Fateḥpurī did not seem to find any good in the *'ulamā'* class, nor did he see much change originating from within their ranks. He was forthrightly asking for major changes in beliefs and practices. However, he was not against past traditions as such. He believed that Muslim theology was based on the reasoning employed by people of a certain time-period; however, in the present age those beliefs and practices should be re-thought, and if the past reasons for doing things a certain way were still valid, they should be continued. By teaching people that whatever thinking needed to be done had been done already, the *'ulamā'*, according to Fateḥpurī, were stunting the mental, material and spiritual growth of the Muslim masses.

Fateḥpurī was not objectively arguing the relative merits and demerits of having the *'ulamā'* class. He was striking right at the root by saying that the Prophet never created a priesthood. If Islam as a religion has never been in favour of there being a class of people to interpret religion for the masses, then

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[101] Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam,* 7.
[102] Fateḥpuri, "Eik Tārikhī Yādgār," 2.

why did it have a priesthood? Why was it that some people were allowed to define Islam for everyone else? It is true, he admitted, that not everyone can become an *'ālim* or make a thorough study of everything related to the religion. However, Fateḥpurī asked: Is wisdom (*'ilm*) defined by reading only the books in *Dars-i Nizāmī* and refusing to think afresh?

Fateḥpurī examined what it meant to be an *'ālim* and concluded that going to a religious seminary, following a particular course and acquiring a little knowledge of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*, is not the definition of *'ilm*. Furthermore, if this knowledge makes the person arrogant or caused him to feel superior to other people (as he thought the *'ulamā'* felt), then it was obviously worthless. He explained what being an *'ālim* meant for him:

> If being an 'ālim means an understanding of nature; if it means a person who gives the lesson of sacrifice, by setting aside the worldly luxuries in the quest for reform of his community and his nation... If it means a person who does only the things that God has suggested, and by doing so, become an example for other people.[103]

He argued that the *'ulamā'* of his time did not live up to the standard that he imagined for them. He suggested that, if before reforming others, they ought to try to reform themselves.[104]

The reason why progressive ideas were not readily acceptable to the *'ulamā'* or even generally among the Muslim masses, according to W.C. Smith,

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[103] Ibid., 5.
[104] Ibid.

was not only that "psychologically men are uncomfortable with mental novelty, but also because socially certain groups of men would not benefit, or imagine that they would not benefit, from social change."[105] This is something Fatehpuri also felt, which he expressed by saying that people develop a vested interest in how things are, and therefore, any change is aggressively resisted.

3.1 'ULAMA' – ISLAM, SOCIETY AND REASON

> The sad part is that our *'ulama'-i karam*, have accepted only *roza* and *namaz* out of the teachings of Islam, but have ignored the qualities that Islam wanted to create through worship – good actions and a passion to progress. They remember the fire of hell and the houris of heaven, but they have ignored the reality that the fire in hell is just another face of the humiliation faced by a community in this world, and the indulgence of heaven which is called a houri, is only a name for progress, through which a group can make this world a heaven.[106]

As demonstrated in chapter 2, Fatehpuri believed that Islam is a rational and progressive religion which promotes both material and spiritual progress, and is not just a list of do's and don'ts (*haram–halal*). There are reasons behind its instructions. Islam is not solely concerned with the hereafter, or with the notion that whatever one does on earth will yield rewards and punishments in the afterlife, as the *'ulama'* teach. Islam, according to him, wants people to make this earth a paradise, and right now. It urges everyone to think for themselves, to

[105] Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 100.
[106] Fatehpuri, "T'alimat–i Islami ka Sahih Mafhum," 126.

discern good from bad, and to take the initiative in promoting peace and brotherhood. It has never taught penury or ascetism as being religious, but instead teaches people to be part of this world and progress with it, while having a moral compass in the form of religion, which reminds them of God and of doing good deeds.

Fateḥpurī believed that there was no conflict between reason and revelation, since the Qur'an enjoins man to think and to reason, and because thinking and reasoning will lead to the same conclusions that the Qur'an has propounded. In his view, the only contention arose because some people, the *'ulamā'*, thought they knew best what Islam is all about and did not want people to exercise their reason as this would dislodge them from their comfortable position of being interpreters of Islamic scriptures. To quote him:

> There is no actual fight between *'ilm* and *maẓhab* (religion) because if the purpose of religion is only worship of God, then tell me which *'ilm* in the world does not reach this conclusion. No, this fight is about those people who are so self-worshipping that they deny God.[107]

Fateḥpurī's belief that reason ultimately confirmed the truths of religion was in consonance with the standpoint of the Mu'tazilites, one of the earliest schools of Islamic theology. These scholars believed that people can discern from their own reason what is good and ought to be done and what is evil and ought to be avoided, and that the revelation only encourages them to do what they already

[107] Fateḥpurī, *Man-o-Yazdān*, vol. I, 5.

know. Acts are good because of their intrinsic worth and not just because God says they are. If there was no human standard of judgment, then God could have been as despotic as He wanted and people would have had to accept whatever He might say or do as good; but since we can discern good from evil on our own, we can fully appreciate His goodness and understand the reasons behind His commandments.[108]

There had been many advocates of progress and change, like Sayyid Aḥmad, Shiblī, and Iqbal, but even they did not go as far as Fateḥpurī in clearly assigning an upper hand to reason. No one was arguing for rationalism in the subcontinent like him. It was very important, Fateḥpurī thought, that Muslims think rationally on Islam. Islam should not be an impediment to the progress of Muslims, but the reason why they progress.

Fateḥpurī did go to extremes with his logic sometimes, and stated views that clearly could not have been acceptable to most Muslims. However, his basic philosophy was very attractive to any educated mind: Real belief comes with knowing. Knowledge of why one is doing what he/she is supposed to be doing simply makes more sense. If one is a believer and is praying to one God, Who is omnipresent, omnipotent and all-knowing, how does it matter how one prays and in what language. The fact that one prays five times a day in a certain way is in itself, not an indicator of belief.

Sayyid Aḥmad argued that there is a distinction between religious values and the principles on which a society is organized. The fundamental religious

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[108] McDonough, *Muslim Ethics and Modernity*, 16.

values are unchanging through time and place but a society is different in each new age and location.[109] He justified the use of reason by saying that he was employing it in the social domain. Shaista Azizalam points out that Sayyid Aḥmad felt the need for distinction between religion and society, because he wanted the society to change and adopt Western ideas and institutions, and argued that religion did not forbid a Muslim from doing so, since social behaviour did not come within the ambit of religion in the first place. Religion was immutable but belonged to a personal domain.[110]

Fatehpurī, unlike Sayyid Aḥmad, did not try to separate religion from worldly matters. For him, working for material prosperity, bringing about change and progress and making an effort to better the world, were not secular but religious pursuits. He argued that Islam enjoins individuals to work towards making a better society and bringing about the reform of humankind. This made his position even more challenging for the *'ulamā'*; since the latter also believed that the domain of society and religion are the same, and that Islam is a comprehensive way of life. Therefore, the radically different interpretation that Fatehpurī brought to this proposition was even more awkward for the *'ulamā'* than the distinction that Sayyid Aḥmad had made between society and religion.

3.2 THE QUESTION OF ḤADĪTH

> And since the books of *ḥadīth* are filled with irrational things, therefore, only two approaches remain: either I

[109] Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā'," 51.
[110] Ibid., 52.

> accept them as the sayings of the Prophet and insult him by doing so, or I reject the *aḥadīth* and allow myself to be labelled as the "Denier of *Bukhārī*",[111] And since I consider the character of the Prophet to be beyond *Bukhārī* etc., so, it is very obvious why I cannot be convinced by the *aḥadīth*.[112]

Fateḥpurī's major point of contention with the *'ulamā'*, which started as far back as his schooldays, was over the question of the *ḥadīth*. He was very sure that not every *ḥadīth*, just because it was in *Bukhārī*, or *Muslim*,[113] was correct. Some of the *aḥadīth*, even to Fateḥpurī's then young mind, sounded simply childish and could not possibly represent the sayings of the Prophet. When he was young, he wanted to get the answers to his questions from his teachers, but he was always silenced and told that using reason and *'aql* in religion is the work of non-believers.[114]

Hence the first fatwa of *kufr* (heresy, unbelief) for him came in his youth, provoked simply by the fact that he asked questions, which was supposedly the work of unbelievers. He was even forced to think that if his teachers were really Muslim, then he definitely was not, especially since for them Islam meant following tradition (*taqlīd*) blindly – a *taqlīd* that he suspected was not of the Prophet. Even in his youth, he realized that his teachers were not trying to understand the spirit of the Prophet's teachings, but only follow what was

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[111] Refers to the *ḥadīth* collection called *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Explained further in footnote 13.
[112] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Kharistān-i Aḥadīth," *Nigār*, January 1959, 47.
[113] It refers to two hadith collections considered to be most accurate. *al-Jāmī al-Ṣaḥīḥ* or *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* of Imām Abū Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāīl al-Bukhārī (810 - 870) and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* of Imam Abū al-Hussain Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Nisapuri (772 – 831)
[114] Fateḥpurī, "Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," 34.

written in *Bukhārī* or *Muslim*. Fatehpurī believed that a real state of belief does not come until a person thinks for himself and reaches a conclusion.[115]

There is an anonymous article on the subject of *ḥadīth* in the January 1959 issue of *Nigār*, written by "A Muslim," that based on language and style of presentation, appears to be Fatehpurī's work. This article is very stringent in its criticism of Muslim dependency on *ḥadīth*. Although the author acknowledged that there was need for *ḥadīth* and that not everything was clear from the Qur'an, he argued that it would be assuming too much to think that the Qur'an could not be understood without the *ḥadīth*. The article argued that most of the *ḥadīth* were fabricated and gave various instances to prove it. It went even to the extent of saying that the fabrication started with the companions of the Prophet themselves.[116]

3.3 LIFE HERE OR HEREAFTER?

The *'ulamā'* would have Muslims living for the hereafter (*ākhirat*), whereas in Fatehpurī's view, it is an Islamic act to reform the society one lives in and participate in the activities of the world to better it. He said categorically: "Islam is the first religion that gave equal importance to both religion and the world."[117] He emphasized that this world could become a paradise if all work towards it. He wrote that Muslims have to spread Islam and progress in the world, using progress almost as a synonym of Islam, and specified that this progress must not

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Eik Musalmān, "Ahadith kī koi Dīnī Qīmat nahīn hai," *Nigār*. January 1959, 104-110.
[117] Fatehpuri, "Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," 39.

only be spiritual but material.[118] Fateḥpurī argued that if Islam and its believers throughout history had only believed that what they were doing was for the sake of life in the hereafter, they would never have conquered new countries, interacted with new cultures, or brought about a new civilization.

This is one fact that Sayyid Aḥmad likewise took pains to point out. Muslim theologians and philosophers assimilated many ideas from Greek philosophy. They were ever willing to understand and experiment with knowledge and culture wherever they found them, and even use them to answer questions related to their own religion. When a person from a new land asked them questions related to Islam, they tried to present a logical and rational argument in favour of Islam, taking even the knowledge and culture of that person into consideration. To quote Sayyid Aḥmad:

> You know well that in our time a new wisdom and philosophy have spread. Their tenets are entirely different from those of the former wisdom and philosophy [of the Greeks]. They are as much in disagreement with the tenets of ordinary present-day Islam as the tenets of Greek wisdom and philosophy were with the tenets of customary Islam during their time... Yet the Muslim scholars of that time accepted them like religious tenets.[119]

[118] Fateḥpurī, *Istifsār*, vol. IV, 369.
[119] Donohue and Esposito, *Islam in Transition*, 41.

3.4 FATEḤPURĪ & 'ULAMĀ' AS A CLASS

> At this point in time, the group of *'ulamā'* is only a fossil, and there is no use for them in the business of life, in today's world.[120]

Fateḥpurī was quite impudent in his stance against the *'ulamā'* and did not mince words when speaking about them. His major grudge was that they, by promoting a certain worldview, denied the flexibility of interpretation inherent in the Qur'an. His argument was that the *'ulamā'* did not acknowledge that even their worldview was an interpretation made at a certain point of time, at a certain place and by certain people. Why then, Fateḥpurī asked, did it have to remain stagnant and impervious to rethinking by people of a different age or a different place? He reasoned that this was because this view suited their class interests, and the more ritualistic the religion, the more there was need for the *'ulamā'* as a class.

What needs to be clarified here is that, Fateḥpurī was not targeting any particular group within the *'ulamā'* or a particular ideology or sect. What he was against was the discouragement of thinking and reasoning propagated by the *'ulamā'* as a class. It seems that Sayyid Aḥmad had similar views with regard to the *'ulamā'*. He believed that the interests and outlook of the *'ulamā'* were very similar, in spite of the divergences in religious knowledge and social status. Thus, it was possible for them to be regarded as a class.[121]

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[120] Fateḥpurī, "Eik Tārīkhī Yādgār," 7.
[121] Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā'," 43-44.

The term *'ulamā'-i kirām* means "respected scholars of Islam," but wherever Fatehpurī used it, he was being sarcastic; who he was usually addressing the *maulānā / maulawi* (a primary school teacher in and Islamic madrasa), or the *imām* (the one who leads prayer in a local mosque). Sometimes he did mean scholar, but he was not usually employing the term with respect. Maulana Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi (1863-1943 A.D.) and Maulana Abdul Mājid Daryabādī (1892-1977 A.D.) were truly scholars, and he did exchange views and answer questions raised by them. However, he included them with other *maulawis* and *maulānās*, since he believed that all of them together, as a class, were against rethinking.

Unlike the Shi'i religious elite, the Sunni *'ulamā'* are not generally organized or hierarchal, and Sunni Muslims do not have to follow them. The Sunni *'ulamā'* in South Asia are generally structured in two layers. The first group is trained in Islamic religious sciences, is associated with research-based institutions and issue juridical opinions (*fatwas*) on religious, political and social issues, while the second group is of local *maulawis* who either teach in *madrasas* or lead prayers in local mosques. These were a dispersed lot and usually had no formal affiliation to any institution. The Muslim masses were generally more influenced by the latter, as they lived amongst the people. Although in principle, the masses did not have to accept all their religious views, nevertheless since most people did not study religion for themselves, and since *maulawis* had done nothing but study religion, their word was accepted without question.

3.5 THE 'ULAMĀ' AND THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM AND ITS PRACTICE

Fatehpurī, like Sayyid Aḥmad, thought that there was a difference between what he perceived "real" Islam to be, and that which was practised. The latter had been tailored by the *'ulamā'*; and the *'ulamā'* were unwilling to accept any changes to it. Practising Islam and being a Muslim meant certain things in the eyes of the *'ulamā'*, and could not possibly denote anything else. Sayyid Aḥmad said in a speech:

> What I acknowledge to be the original religion of Islam which God and the Messenger have disclosed, not that religion which the *'ulamā'* and blessed *maulwīs* have fashioned. I shall prove this religion to be true and this will be the decisive difference between us and the followers of other religions.[122]

Fatehpurī went even further and proclaimed that the *'ulamā'* had a vested interest in keeping the Muslim masses ignorant about the "real" religion. The real religion insisted on good actions more than prayer; that was based on a conscious decision to be good and do good, and not on traditions which dictated what is good and had to be done; and that meant making an effort in the path of progress rather than blaming setbacks on fate. It was in ignoring this religion, according to Fatehpurī, that the primacy of the *'ulamā'* was constructed. For this reason, they emphasized trivial matters to control the people and involve them in issues such as whether one should put the right foot forward when entering the

[122] Donohue and Esposito, *Islam in Transition*, 41; Also see: Troll, *Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān*, 316.

rest-room, whether a man should wear a certain kind of pants (*pajama*) and how a woman's prayer is incomplete if some of her hair is showing. Fateḥpurī believed that the religion that had been revealed to and practiced by Prophet Muḥammad was not restricted to these inconsequential issues. Islam, for Fateḥpurī, gave the message of *akhlāq*, brotherhood and peace. It is not overly concerned with what kind of *pajamas* one wears. Sayyid Aḥmad also ridiculed the undue importance that the *'ulamā'* attached to such trivial questions.

> These scholars have made people wonder what kind of religion this is, which promises heaven if you wear trousers two inches above your ankle and sends you to hell if you wear it two inches below your ankle.[123]

Fateḥpurī believed that in addition to distracting people with useless questions, Arabic was another prime means through which the *'ulamā'* kept the Muslim masses away from "real" Islam in South Asia. Genuine devotion could not possibly be produced in a language one does not understand. Prayer can only be mechanical when the words in it are learnt by rote; it could not mean anything to a Muslim who had not gone to *madrasa* and consequently had not learnt Arabic.[124] Of course, the way was open for that person to learn the meaning of what he/she was reciting and make an effort to try to understand the religion. However, it was very clear that most people did not do so.

A consequence of the *'ulamā'* losing touch with "real" religion, according to Sayyid Aḥmad was that they had distanced religion from the reach of the

[123] Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā'," 44-47.
[124] Fateḥpurī, "Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," 35.

common man and created a space for themselves between man and God.[125] They were exploiting religion to earn their livelihood. And since their interests were best served by keeping things a certain way, all the *'ulamā'*s energies went into doing so and into opposing any effort that would constitute any real change or a return to "real" Islam, as Fateḥpurī and Sayyid Aḥmad would have had it.[126]

According to Fateḥpurī, *maulawīs* wished to restrict the meaning of Islam to the extent that they could control. However, the real meaning of Islam is much vaster – it is a universal religion and for all time. And logically speaking, for being so, it has to be adaptable and able to progress and answer questions raised at all times and in all places. He said: "Islam is merely the name of the progress and betterment of mankind and it shapes itself into new shapes according to the stage of humanity. If it is possible for the *maulawīs* to give such a vast understanding of Islam then I am sure everyone is ready to accept it."[127]

It was one of the principal criticisms of Sayyid Aḥmad that the *'ulamā'*s primary concerns did not consist of anything that could be of any social or material benefit to the Muslims. He asked:

> Is this then the duty of the well-wishers of Islam that like the self-claimed *pīr* or *ḥazrat* or *maulawī*, he should just sit and preach those things which are not needed and earn the world by cunning and deceit, or work towards those solutions which are actually needed by Muslims and Islam itself.[128]

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[125] Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, *Maqālāt-i Sir Sayyid* (Aligarh: National Printers, 1952), vol. 5, 85.
[126] Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulama'," 49-50.
[127] Fateḥpuri, *Istifsār*, vol. 4, 349.
[128] Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, *Maqālāt*, vol. 5, 585.

Bigotry was at the root of what Fatehpurī was opposed to, a fact that Sayyid Aḥmad realized as well. The *'ulamā'* just gave a list of absolutes: one had to practice religion in a particular way and go to heaven; the alternative was very clear. They made no effort themselves nor did they encourage others to try to understand the reasons behind the religious rituals. Fatehpurī thus explained:

> My initial education was completed in the *Dars-i Nizāmī* course. For twenty-five years of my life, I got the chance to study the *maulawīs*. And I have reached the conclusion that they say their prayer (*namāz*) only for the sake of the prayer. The meaning of religion in their thinking is nothing but that the rituals of worship are accomplished at a fixed time, in an established way. They do not care if those rituals bring about any change in the heart and the soul.[129]

As Sheila McDonough puts it, both reason and revelation warn against bigotry, since the bigot becomes so wrapped up in his own way of thinking that he refuses to see any other point of view. He becomes incapable of dispassionate analysis and becomes completely wrapped up in himself. For Sayyid Aḥmad, according to McDonough, the antithesis of good behaviour was bigotry. It was the most reprehensible characteristic, as close to sinning as one can get. And Sayyid Aḥmad thought that it was not just the *'ulamā'* but common Muslims who had this characteristic; this, according to him, was what prevented their progress.[130]

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[129] Fatehpuri, "Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," 34.
[130] McDonough. *Muslim Ethics and Modernity*, 51.

3.6 'ULAMĀ' AND REFORM

One of the primary aims of Islam, according to Fatehpurī, was the reform of humankind. The one major achievement of the Prophet, he reiterated, was the reform of his society. Moreover, as we noted earlier, he considered the Prophet to be before the Qur'an and God Himself. Since the Prophet was a tangible form of Islam, his actions defined how Islam should be lived. Fatehpurī wondered what the Prophet must have been thinking on those days when he went to the cave known as *Hirā* before the advent of Islam. In his view the Prophet must have been very disconcerted with the society in which he lived, its idol worship, infanticide, immoral behaviour and absolute materialism. Islam brought with it the reform of society, a sense of community beyond tribal affiliations, and a feeling of brotherhood. The Prophet time and again demonstrated the importance of community, by going out of the way to accommodate everyone.[131]

Shiblī Nu'mānī held a similar view that the Prophet's main concern was the refinement of morals (*tadhīb al-akhlāq*), and added that since the Prophet did not explain their natural causation, then the domain of nature and prophecy must be different.[132] This viewpoint was opposed to that of Sayyid Aḥmad, who considered good behaviour to be what was in consonance with nature. He argued that "the only criterion for the truth of the religions which are present before us is whether the religion [in question] is in correspondence with the natural disposition of man, or with nature."[133]

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[131] Fatehpurī, "Muḥammad, Qur'ān aur Khudā," 34.
[132] Murad, *Intellectual Modernism of Shiblī Nu'mānī*, 6-7.
[133] Donohue and Esposito, *Islam in Transition*, 41.

Fateḥpurī agreed more with Sayyid Aḥmad on this point. However, he, like Shiblī, emphasized that Islam's primary concern was the reform of humankind and that Islam is a natural religion. Then whatever is Islamic should be in consonance with human nature in order to work effectively with humankind.[134] For this reason the *'ulamā's* stance against any kind of reform of society or to how religion was practiced in it, was considered un-Islamic by Fateḥpurī. For him, it was against the basic reason why Islam came, and against the Prophet's reformist agenda.

3.7 'ULAMĀ' AND SECTARIANISM

> If we accept that Islam is what the *maulawis* say it is, then which kind of *maulawi, Sunnī, Shīa, Waḥḥābī*? One group of them would consider the other heretic and outside the fold of Islam. If a person really wants to understand Islam and goes to the different sects, and reads their literature, he would find that each is criticizing the other and in the end would be disappointed with all the sects since none of them is really promoting Islam... Tell me one meaning of Islam on which the whole community agrees. If you say people should accept religion, then, which religion? Until there is one religion, people will keep fighting.[135]

Sectarianism was one of the major problems that Fateḥpurī had with the *'ulamā'*, as did Sayyid Aḥmad. According to Sayyid Aḥmad, it was one of the direct consequences of the bigotry of the *'ulamā'* and their refusal to reason and think

[134] Fateḥpurī, *Istifsār*, vol. IV, 345.
[135] Ibid., 347-8.

afresh. Hence any religious viewpoint that did not conform exactly to their own perception constituted unbelief![136] To this Fateḥpurī added that, since they did not have the ability to think critically and explain the basis of their views, they were forced to suppress any criticism by branding whoever questioned them as a heretic.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Fateḥpurī was much maligned by the *'ulamā'* for his views; he was referred to as an unbeliever (*kāfir, mulḥid, dehriya*) on numerous occasions. He faced stringent criticism and, in his own words: "no avenue to slander me was left unexplored."[137] Fateḥpurī though ridiculed this and said that it was only because the *'ulamā'* were not capable of answering questions raised that they had to silence their opponents. He was further heartened by the fact that all the famous names in South Asian Islam in his day who were advocating some kind of change – such as Sayyid Aḥmad, Allamā Iqbāl, Shiblī Nu'mānī, Ghulām Aḥmad Parvez (1903-1986), etc. – received a *fatwa* of unbelief (*kufr*) against them. This did not stop the modernists from continuing with their work, and people who agreed with them continued to do so.

Although there are a number of similarities between Sayyid Aḥmad's and Fateḥpurī's respective critiques of the *'ulamā'*, there is one fundamental difference. Sayyid Aḥmad had a reformist agenda separate from this critique which he was trying to promote. By pointing out the weaknesses of the *'ulamā'*,

[136] Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā'," 55-56.
[137] Fateḥpurī, "Eik Tārikhī Yādgār," 7.

he was also simultaneously pointing out the strengths of his own movement. When he said that the *'ulamā'* had lost touch with real Islam and were unfit to be the representatives of Muslim religious opinion, he in effect meant that he was fit for this task.[138] Fateḥpurī, on the other hand, had no other personal or reformist agenda. He was simply promoting reason and rethinking; that in itself was his movement. This was his strength as well as his weakness – strength since he really believed what he was saying and had no ulterior motive, and weakness since he did not suggest any alternative. What did thinking rationally ultimately mean? Exactly in what direction was he driving Muslim society? If the *'ulamā'* were all wrong in everything, and if, therefore, there was no need for such a class; then what would replace them? Would each man become his own *maulawī*? This does not seem very likely.

The above questions may well explain why most South Asian Muslims were ready to accept the *maulawīs* and their much more "restricted meaning of Islam," and why Fateḥpurī, despite his broader interpretation had such a limited impact. Another obvious factor is that the *'ulamā'* were naturally more institutionalized; they constituted a whole class of people spread all across South Asia. They had a specific agenda, a worldview and customs that formed a continuum from the past. It was simply easier to follow them than to take Fateḥpurī seriously and think afresh about everything. An equally important reason was that of breadth of influence. The *'ulamā'* were capable of reaching the farthest corners of South Asia, while Fateḥpurī was speaking only to the

[138] Azizalam, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the 'Ulamā'," 61.

intelligentsia and educated people through the medium of a magazine; his impact, therefore, was of a different type and at a different level.

Also, the *'ulamā'* seemingly and Indian Muslims in general were infected with a defeatist mentality that did not let them experiment with new ideas. This, in itself, was a modern phenomenon. It came over the psyche of Indian Muslims once they had formally shifted from constituting the ruling classes to being the ruled. Sayyid Aḥmad had written extensively on this topic. His own family fortunes were completely ruined. He took the path of confrontation as well as assimilation, but for most people a sort of inferiority complex developed. They wanted to preserve what they could of their glorious history, but in doing so were actually preventing new glorious histories from being made. Sayyid Aḥmad considered this bigotry, while Fateḥpurī saw it just as an attitude that prevailed because of historical reasons and could be overcome by fresh thinking. Fateḥpuri was questioning this defeatist mentality, and forcing people to ask questions so that they could progress. For him, it was an Islamic act to work towards progress.

Chirāgh 'Alī (1844-1895), one of the foremost scholars in the Aligarh movement who re-examined the sources of Islamic Law and advocated reform of Islamic legal and political institutions, also had his own definition of Islam which seems to have been quite close to that of Fateḥpuri:

> Islam is capable of progress, and possesses sufficient elasticity to enable it to adapt itself to the social and political changes going on around it. The Islam, by which I mean the pure Islam as taught by Muḥammad in the

> Qur'ān, and not that Islam as taught by Muḥammadan Common Law, was itself a progress and a change for the better. It has the vital principles of rapid development, of progress, of rationalism, and of adaptability to new circumstances.[139]

It seems as if both Fatehpurī and Chirāgh 'Alī were expressing similar views. Islam meant "progress" for those who were seeking a way to deal with modernity. They did not want to put Islam on the backburner, as though it were a relic from the past, and adopt full-fledged European modernity. They wanted Islam itself to adapt to contemporary circumstances. They wanted to find justification for their modern views in Islam believed that they found them.

[139] Donohue and Esposito, *Islam in Transition*, 47.

CHAPTER 4

Fateḥpurī on the Role of Women in Society

> It is possible for a woman to be more hardworking and diligent than a man in the field of action, where progress happens. It is also not impossible that, in the field of knowledge and talent, she should lead (us) to phenomenal expansion by her inventions and discoveries. But if her *akhlāq* (morals) are not high, and if she has forgotten her real femininity, then all her progress is useless.[140]

One of Niyāz Fateḥpurī's major concerns was the reform of Indian Muslim society. He emphasised that the purpose of religion was to inspire one to do good deeds, work towards progress, and ultimately, to build a better society. He addressed the issue of women in the same vein. His comments regarding the education and employment of women were based on what their effect would be on society. He wrote specific articles on the issue of confinement (*purdah*), women's education and working women, and also commented on them as part of larger societal concerns. He also wrote a book on the women companions of the Prophet, called *Ṣaḥābiyyāt*, whose purpose was to provide good role models for the girls and women of his time.

This chapter argues that, although it may seem that Fateḥpurī's interpretation of religion was radically opposed to accepted Islamic ideas and practices – as if he were determined to challenge everything about it – this was,

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[140] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, *Ṣaḥābiyyāt* (Karachi: Nafīs Academy, 1957), 23.

however, not universally the case. Sometimes, he accepted the reasoning behind traditional Islamic practices. One of the instances of this was his views on the role of women. One might expect a "modernist" like him to be at the forefront in promoting secular education and professional employment for women. However, Fatehpurī did not do so. He did promote education for women, but he had a clearly defined curriculum in mind for them; if they were to be educated in a mainstream school, it could be done only under certain conditions. He defined the role of women in a very traditional way, i.e., that women were made to give solace and bring about peace in the family. If it is the husband's duty to earn money, then it is a woman's duty to invest it wisely, to educate the children well and to take care of her husband.[141] It is perhaps to the credit of Fatehpurī that he judged each issue on its own merit, and if the modern view was not rational to his understanding, then he adopted the traditional one.

4.1 NATURAL ORDER

Why was it so difficult for a person like Fatehpurī to see women as having a role outside the home? Why was it so irrational that, uncharacteristically for him, he had to adopt the traditional view to a certain extent? If all that women had to do was to run a household wisely and effectively, why did he even say that they needed to be educated? What kind of equality of the sexes was he talking about?

To Fatehpurī, however, complete gender equality in theory, coupled with only limited education for most women in practice, made perfect sense. He

[141] Niyāz Fatehpurī, "Tabqa-i nisvān aur t'ālīm," *Istifsār*, vol. I, 296-297.

explained it by his theory of doing things according to the laws of nature. According to him, nature has perfect balance; it has designed a certain person to do a certain thing, and another to do another. Within the same gender there may be some people who are good at technical work, some others at intellectual tasks, and still others at creative pursuits. If within one gender there are so many differences, and since nature has created two genders that are so different in looks, behaviour and ways of thinking, then why is it that we expect them to do the same things and behave in the same way.[142]

Fateḥpuri believed that there is perfect division of labour in nature and that every human being is created to do a certain job. "If the aim of nature had been that women do exactly the same thing that men do, there would have been no need for a separate gender."[143] Since nature had different plans for both genders, it made them totally different; for this reason, they look and act differently from each other.

Nature intended a man to be the provider for the family and so endowed him with a mind and body capable of bringing about material prosperity to the family, according to Fateḥpuri. Likewise, it made a woman capable of bringing about peace in the family through her natural ability to give solace. If women think they are equal to men, they have every right to do so, but that does not mean that they have to start doing what men do. Fateḥpurī thought that women are equal to men because their role in society is as important as that of men.[144]

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., 296.
[144] Ibid., 301.

He further explained that he in no way regarded a woman's intellect or ability to be any less than that of a man. He had seen female doctors and lawyers work as hard as men and do as good a job. Even in early Islamic times, women who were expert in a science or skill were encouraged to further themselves in it. It was acceptable for women to excel in whatever they are good at, but in the process of doing so, they should not lose their femininity or forget the role that nature has assigned to them.[145]

This was something that the traditional *'ulamā'* and Fateḥpuri had somewhat in common, although on almost every other issue he differed from them strongly. "The teachings of the ulema, grounded in Qur'an and Hadith, were striking in the significant respect that they did not elaborate a difference between women and men. There was of course the crucial difference of role that placed women squarely in the home. But in terms of essential nature and potential, women and men were regarded as one."[146]

4.2 LEGACY OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION

In spite of Fateḥpurī's view that women belonged at home, he acknowledged their achievements in all walks of life, and pointed out that many of them have been inventors and creative thinkers. He seemed very aware that he was dealing with a patriarchal society and that it would mostly be men who would read his articles, so he took pains to point out that men should not think that all material

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[145] Fateḥpurī, *Ṣaḥābiyyāt*, 16.
[146] Barbara D. Metcalf, "Reading and Writing about Muslim Women in British India." In Zoya Hasan, ed., *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities, and the State* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 7.

development in the world was due to their efforts alone, women have contributed equally. They have contributed directly by their skills and knowledge, as well as indirectly by giving support to men in whatever they were doing.[147] He especially pointed to Islamic history, where women, since the beginning, played an important role and faced the same, if not greater hardships, that the male companions of the Prophet faced when they converted. He wrote a book on the lives of the *ṣaḥābiyyāt*,[148] which was meant not only to give Muslim girls good role models to follow in their lives, but also to educate men about the contributions of women in Islamic history.

4.3 WOMEN: SYMBOL OF HONOUR

When Muslim traditionalists as well as reformers take it for granted that a woman is equal to a man in her abilities, it seems strange that they see her role as being restricted to the home. Part of the reason for this might be the concept of honour (*izzat*). A woman was considered to be the honour of the household, so that if she had to go outside the house to earn, it reflected badly upon the ability of the man in the household to provide for her and thus, safeguard his honour. A man's status in society depended on whether he earned enough to maintain his family so that his wife did not need to work. This also implied that seclusion

[147] Fatehpuri, *Ṣaḥābiyyāt*, 9.

[148] In *Ṣaḥābiyyāt*, he enumerated the achievements and the hardships endured by 58 women who lived in the time of the Prophet. The first women he wrote about was Hazrat Khadijā, the first wife of the Prophet. His other wives and daughters were also mentioned. He wrote about Muslim women who endured great hardship and faced the fury of the Quraish tribe, and sometimes even their own husbands and brothers, for having converted to Islam. He lauded those Muslim women who were exemplary for their charity and worship.

(*purdah*) of women was an *ashrāf*[149] practice, meaning that only the prosperous could afford to observe it.

Another important reason that Elizabeth Mann has suggested is the woman's role in maintaining minority identity, where "through her understanding of Islam and through men's understanding of her expected behaviour and status, a Muslim woman in the north (northern India) is responsible for continually renewing the foundations of a Muslim community and preserving the fabric of a system of ideals. She is not only the embodiment of this system, but the transmitter of its values...There is a sense of women as the preservers of knowledge, the arbiters of social values, the definers of social space."[150]

Instead of the woman's role at home being perceived as an example of her "oppression," it can actually be seen as indicative of her enhanced status in that she has to be protected as the "preserver of knowledge." Similarly, man's honour can be said to lie in maintaining his family well, so that his wife does not need to face hardships outside the home. Fatehpuri, though, was also affected by the European idea of the oppression of women in the East and he himself used the word "oppressed" (*mazlūm*) in reference to them, but only in the context of women being forced to stay inside the home and being denied an education. In his opinion, they should be allowed to go outside and be educated (within certain

[149] *Ashrāf* is explained on page 85.
[150] Elizabeth A. Mann, "Education, Money, and the Role of Women in Maintaining Minority Identity," In Hasan, *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities, and the State*, 134.

limitations).[151] His use of the word "allowed" reinforces the Western concept of men being the lord and master of women in the East, but when Fateḥpuri employed it in his argument, it did not seem odd, because while writing he was taking it for granted that he was dealing with a patriarchal society.

4.3 a. THE QUESTION OF PURDAH

The practice of *purdah* was still being debated in the Indian Muslim scholarly circles at the time Fateḥpurī was writing. He campaigned against *purdah* as practised in India where women were usually confined at home and even when allowed to go outside had to be covered from head to toe in a *burqa*.[152] This *purdah*, he argued, was not even Islamic, as even in Arab countries women show their face and attend congregational prayers.[153] He took a novel approach in his campaign against *purdah*, declaring that women should not be confined since it is bad for their health and consequently bad for the health of the future generations of Muslims of whom they are mothers. However, he placed limitations on this "freedom;" when he said that they should enjoy social activities, he meant that they should be allowed to go to women's lectures and women-only parties, and when he said that they should be allowed to go for walks, he did not mean alone, but either with a man of the family or a maid-servant. Hence, even in his campaign against *purdah*, he did not stray too far from the traditional stance.[154]

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[151] Niyāz Fateḥpurī, "Purdey kā Aṣar," *Nigār*, June 1960, 81-82.
[152] A long, loose, tent-like garment, in white, black or blue colour.
[153] Muslim women in India usually pray at home until today.
[154] Fateḥpurī, "Purdey," 81-82.

4.4 EDUCATION OF WOMEN: AN ISLAMIC INJUNCTION

"Indeed all the Quranic verses which relate to education and which advocate the acquisition of knowledge were directed to both men and women alike."[155] What this means in terms of Indian Muslim society is that every Muslim, man or woman of any section of society, is supposed to be taught how to read the Qur'ān (whether they understand it or not) and to say their prayers correctly. Therefore, most Muslims have a basic ability in reading texts written in Arabic alphabet.

This is why the issue of whether women should be educated was never raised, given that education was always considered a virtue in the Muslim society, and for utilitarian reasons, "given that educated women were better able to raise children, manage their homes, improve their language, morals and religion (and so perhaps their marital prospects as well), provide intelligent company to their husbands (keeping them away from courtesans), and advance their community in the world."[156]

Even the traditionalists were concerned about the education of women. An "unreformed, uneducated woman who did not know Islamic doctrine, was caught up in expensive and corrupting ceremonial practices and handled badly the responsibilities of her everyday life"[157] was considered an "enemy within." The *'ulamā'*, according to Metcalf, "explicitly drew the line between the proper,

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[155] Haifaa A Jawad, *The Rights of Women in Islam: An Authentic Approach* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998), 20.
[156] Faisal Fatehali Devji, "Gender and the Politics of Space: the movement for women's reform, 1857-1900," In Zoya Hasan, ed., *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities, and the State*, 22-23.
[157] Metcalf, "Muslim Women in British India," 6.

well-brought up Muslim woman and the ignorant one whether she was rich and self-indulgent or poor and misguided."[158]

4.4 a. THE CHAMPIONS OF FEMALE EDUCATION: ASHRĀF MEN

A movement for the education of women and improving their conditions had already developed in Muslim India before Fatehpurī began publishing his magazine *Nigār* in 1922. Faisal Devji outlines the chronology thus:

> "In 1869 Nazir Aḥmad published his first novel promoting women's education titled the *Mirat al-Arus*; in 1874 Altaf Husayn Hali produced the *Majalis un-Nissa*, a didactic work on the benefits of female education; in 1896 a women's section was created at the Mohammadan Educational Conference; in 1898 Mumtaz Ali began publishing a women's magazine called *Tahzib-e Niswan*; in 1904 Shaikh Abdullah began another women's journal, *Khatun*; in 1905 was published Ashraf Ali Thanawi's monumental female curriculum, the *Bahishti Zewar*; and in 1906 the Aligarh Zenana Madrassa was opened."[159]

According to Devji, "late nineteenth century Muslim India (or rather elite Muslim north India) witnessed the emergence of a powerful new movement concerned with the reform of women's conditions."[160] Devji's identification of Muslim India as represented by the elite Muslims of north India is especially important. The Indian Muslim scholars (mostly men) who were debating

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[158] Ibid.
[159] Devji, "Gender and the Politics of Space," 22-23.
[160] Ibid.

women's issues and their audience, were all *ashrāf* (of noble descent). The effect of the Hindu caste system on how the Muslim community is organised in India, is quite apparent here from the basic division of society into the *ashrāf* and *ajlāf* (of low descent). The *ashrāf* mainly consist of Muslims claiming ancestry from the Arabs (in hierarchal order, from the Prophet's family, from the Quraish tribe, the Ansar or the first three Caliphs) or from the Mughals (from Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan). Higher caste Hindus who converted to Islam also become part of the *ashrāf,* while the *ajlāf* are mainly converts from the lower ranks of the Hindu caste system.[161] The division of society, though, is not as sharp among the Indian Muslims as it is among the Hindus, since, for instance, there is no concept of untouchability; also, a person from the *ajlāf* community, through his education or material prosperity, can raise himself to a level where he may marry among the *ashrāf* – the highest honour possible.

Fatehpuri and his audience were also from the *ashrāf* section of Muslim society. This is illustrated, first of all, by the fact that he was publishing a magazine and was therefore addressing himself to the literate and intellectual segment of society. Also, his Urdu is replete with Arabic and Persian – a sign of his basic *ashrāf* education and, much less encountered in the commonly spoken language.

The role of women was seen by Fatehpurī primarily as the sole concern of Muslim society, outside of British or Hindu influence. Metcalf points out that "some Muslims engaged with the official British discourse on women, much as

[161] Stuers, *Parda: A Study of Women's Life in Northern India*, See: "Introduction."

Bengali Hindu reformers did, but others, although still responding to the colonial context, forged a more autonomous agenda."[162] Fatehpuri was one of the latter, but it was not completely without parallel. Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Altaf Hussain Hali, his predecessors, had somewhat similar views with regard to the role of women.

4.4 b. MODERN EDUCATION: A THREAT TO THE IDEAL MUSLIM WOMAN

The issue under debate was not education, but what kind of education and to what level it should be given to women. Muslims also asked: "would not too much learning, going to school, and perhaps associating with male teachers and students lead to disobedience, immorality and a rejection of domesticity?"[163]

Fatehpuri expected the worst possible results if girls went unchecked to schools and colleges – disobedience, immorality and rejection of domesticity were sure to be the result. He was not in favour of girls going to school unless these were women-only institutions. He was dissatisfied even with the idea of them going to girls' schools, since he believed that the atmosphere in those schools was not conducive towards their developing moral values but would instead influence them to behave and dress in a certain way to be acceptable. He was against the ideas of feminism inculcated in those schools which made girls look at everything that was done in the family as an act of cruelty to them.[164]

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[162] Metcalf, "Muslim Women in British India," 3.
[163] Devji, "Gender and the Politics of Space," 23.
[164] Fatehpuri, "Tabqa-i nisvan aur t'alim," 299-305.

His criticism was basically of the existing girls' schools (mostly missionary or government schools) which failed to teach students the fundamental values of good behaviour and *ādāb* (respect).[165] He asked that proper Islamic girls' schools be established by the community, so that girls could be sent to school without any worries on the part of the parents.[166]

This distaste for the government schools was also shared by his predecessor, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, who said, "I cannot blame the Mohammedans for their disinclination towards Government girls' schools, and I believe that even the greatest admirer of female education among European gentlemen will not impute blame to the Mohammedans if he is only acquainted with the state of those schools in this country."[167]

Sayyid Aḥmad, however, was quite satisfied with education percolating down to women, "When the present generation of Mohammedan men is well educated and enlightened, the circumstance will necessarily have a powerful though indirect effect on the enlightenment of Mohammedan women, for enlightened fathers, brothers, and husbands will naturally be most anxious to educate their female relations."[168]

Fatehpurī, on the contrary, was in favour of direct education of women at home and, if required and where possible, in schools. A close parallel can be found in the thought of his predecessor Altāf Hussain Ḥalī, whose novel *Majālis un-Nissa* gave the message that, "women should be educated because they are

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[165] Explained on pp. 89-90.
[166] Fatehpurī, "Tabqa-i nisvān aur t'ālīm," 305.
[167] As quoted in G.F.I. Graham, *Sir Syed Ahmed Khān*, (Edinburgh: Blackwoods, 1885).
[168] Ibid.

the real managers of the household, the focus of family life, responsible for the early training of the children."[169]

4.4 c. AN IDEAL CURRICULUM

The fact that he was against the public schools, even when they were girls-only, does not mean that Fateḥpurī rejected education for women as such; he put forward a scheme for educating them. Their initial education should be at home, where they would imbibe religious knowledge, learn Arabic and Persian and absorb moral values. After reaching the age of thirteen, if the girl was capable, she should be taught English, history, geography and mathematics. And if such instruction was not possible at home, she could be sent to school, but only if her judgement could be trusted and she had been given a good moral grounding. By the sake token, if one could not be sure of her judgment or if she were to start behaving waywardly after being admitted to a school, then she should be kept at home.[170]

His inclusion of history, geography, mathematics and the English language in the ideal curriculum for women is noteworthy. Since learning these subjects had nothing to do with home life, it can only be useful in a general educational sense, by making her well-read and knowledgeable. The inclusion of these subjects is something that the traditionalists campaigned against; they saw no reason for women to learn those subjects. The traditionalists' ideal

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[169] Gail Minault (tr.), *Voices of Silence*, English translation of Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali's *Majalis un-Nissa* and *Chup ki Dad* (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1986), 12.
[170] Fateḥpurī, "Tabqa-i nisvan aur t'alīm," 303-305.

curriculum, found in Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī's *Bahishti Zewar*, first published in 1905, embodies modes of letter writing, polite conversation, recipes, medicines, managing household accounts, sewing, and the rules and regulations of religion.[171]

4.4 d. THE OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

According to Fatehpurī's model of instruction, even if girls were not sent to school, they would not remain uneducated since they would already have received religious education, learnt two languages other than their mother tongue, and absorbed lessons of good behaviour. Moreover, being educated in the Indian Muslim context also meant being well-mannered and showing proper respect. A person with a university degree might still be referred to as *jāhil* (ignorant or uneducated), not in the sense of being unlettered but of being ill-mannered. "For Muslims, knowledge is expressed in several forms: first, it means literacy, being able to read and write. Second, it means formal schooling leading to qualifications of secular higher education, such as a B.A. degree. Third, it means knowledge of the Quran and of the appropriate ways for a Muslim to conduct himself. Lastly, it has the more diffuse quality of social behaviour associated with *ādāb*."[172] Thus, even if a girl does not receive a secular higher education, she may still be considered educated.

In Fatehpuri's view, western culture and society were very attractive, and if the same system was adopted in India, and women had to work in the public

[171] Devji, "Gender and the Politics of Space," 23.
[172] Mann, "Education, Money, and the Role of Women," 135.

sphere, he had no doubt that they would be as capable of competing with and excelling men in any chosen field of work. His only concern was that they should not forget their *akhlāq* and *haqīqī nisvānīyat* (real femininity) in the process. If, in the modern age, one has to develop in them an interest in knowledge and progress, then one also has to inculcate *akhlāq*, and this can be done by giving them religious education. For him, *akhlāq* had a much wider meaning than *ādāb*. But *ādāb* can be seen as the first step in developing *akhlāq* since this too was more of a social behaviour than a religious practice. To understand the concept of *ādāb* in the South Asian context, Metcalf's explanation is quoted at some length here:

> *Adab* (singular of *ādāb*) in all its uses reflects a high valuation of the employment of the will in proper discrimination of correct order, behaviour, and taste. It implicitly or explicitly distinguishes cultivated behaviour from that deemed vulgar, often defined as pre-Islamic custom. Moral character is thus the fruit of deliberation and effort. *Adab* means discipline and training. It denotes as well the good breeding and refinement that results from training, so that a person who behaves badly as "without *adab*" (*be-adab*). *Adab* is the respect or deference one properly formed and trained shows to those who deserve it.[173]

A girl can, therefore, be considered educated after receiving religious instruction and *ādāb*.

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[173] Barbara Metcalf, "Introduction," in Barbara Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2-3.

4.5 FEAR OF "FREEDOM"

One of the reasons why Fatehpuri was wary of secular higher education for women and of their going to government schools was the danger that Muslims girls might absorb ideas of Western feminism. This would sow the seeds of "freedom" in them, causing them to become disobedient; indeed, and the ultimate travesty would be that they might even demand to make their own choice in the matter of marriage.[174]

On the face of it, this idea of his seems to fit perfectly into the Western paradigm of how Easterners think – a notion that the modern mind rebels against, now that women take this "freedom" for granted. But when one looks at his reason for saying so, it does not seem so implausible in the context of the time he lived in. What he was against was what he called *be-jā azādī* (unrestrained freedom) for both men and women, the kind of freedom that makes them rebel against their family values and social mores. Being disobedient to one's parents and not showing proper respect to one's elders and their decisions meant, to his understanding, being uneducated, uncivilized and *be-adab*. As he saw it, the right education should have brought with it *adab* (respect and obedience).

Consequently, the seats of secular higher education are not the right places for "education" the way he understood it. His touching upon choice in marriage being the ultimate form of *be-jā azādī* is also significant. In his opinion, young men and women are not experienced enough to take such an important

[174] Fatehpurī, "Tabqa-i nisvān aur t'ālīm," 300.

decision. Marriage, in Indian Muslim society even today, sees marriage not just as a tie between the two individuals but between their immediate and even extended families. If the families do not match in status or thinking, or if the marriage is tense, it will lead to perpetual conflict for a great many people.

4.6 WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Fateḥpurī, in general, was not in favour of women working outside their home, and defended the traditional role of men as providers of family. However, exceptions could be made to this rule, such as in a family where there is one man but many women dependent on him. Also, he thinks that women should be given some sort of education and skills, so that in an adverse situation they would be able to do something for themselves.[175]

As mentioned earlier, in Fateḥpurī's opinion, women working outside the house disturbs the natural order. Since a woman's natural role, according to him, is to be the source of peace and spiritual bliss in the household. She creates order in the family and sees to it that the money her husband earns is invested wisely, that the children are educated well and learn good behaviour, that the elders of the family are looked after, and that, when the husband comes home after a day of hard work, she is there for him to enable him to relax. His description of family life, where a man and woman fulfil their natural roles is almost poetic, his idea of perfection.

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[175] Fateḥpurī, "Purdey," 82.

He also said that the Western lifestyle, since it goes against the law of nature, affords no peace as both husband and wife are always working. Who is to give solace to whom? Both of them are tired from their work and too full of their individual life and concerns, with the result that the "family," as understood by him, ceases to exist.

Although in debating other religious issues he was constantly adapting Western concepts to suit his idea of Islam, here he critiqued the Western concept of "progress". He did not consider it intellectual but just mechanical progress because instead of preserving the natural order of things and spreading compassion and brotherhood, it constituted the first step towards disturbing the shape of society as it was. In India, he thought that there was need for a system (*niẓām*) in which there was not only mechanical but intellectual and spiritual progress.[176]

4.7 CONCLUSION

The traditionalists as well as reformers in Indian Muslim society of the time had both taken a more or less similar line on the question of the role of women and their education, i.e., that a woman's basic role was in the home and that she should be educated only so far as it helped her fulfil this task. In defending themselves against Western criticism, similar reasons were given. Western concepts could be imbibed only to the extent that they did not lead to

[176] Fateḥpurī, "Tabqa-i nisvān aur t'ālīm," 294-296.

compromise on the Islamic social mores and family values. "Honour" should not be compromised by women going outside of home for education or work.

In sharp contrast to his general inclination to question everything traditional, Fateḥpuri was not much different from traditionalists on the issue of women, to the extent that he defended the conventional role of women. However, there was a qualitative difference; he did not offer any absolutes. Women should not work, but if there is need for it, then it is acceptable. Women should not be sent to school because the atmosphere is likely to be inappropriate, but if there are good schools available or if one trusts their judgement, then they should be sent.

By contrast, Fateḥpurī was against *purdah* and saw a role for women outside the home as well. Despite the fact that at first he set a lot of limitations on what abandoning *purdah* would mean, he was open to the possibility that modern life might lead to changes in family life as he envisioned it. Thus, if women have to participate in public life then they should be allowed to do so, provided that they have imbibed *'akhlāq* and *ādāb* and do not forget their traditional role.

Also, he included secular subjects in his ideal curriculum for women, differing here again from the traditionalists, who saw no reason why they should be so taught. Religious education and literacy were quite enough for women in their opinion. Even Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, the educationist, was quite satisfied with education reaching women indirectly through the men of the family, if the latter felt like teaching them.

Fatehpurī's view of the role of women, though it leaned towards the traditional view, did not give in to it completely. He was giving what he believed to be the rational view. For him the natural differences between man and woman are too obvious to be missed and if that is so, then of course, the intention of nature for both of them was different.

CONCLUSION

Niyāz Fatehpurī's socio-religious views, as seen in the preceding chapters, were and remain controversial. Although he was a well-known name in South Asia, not just for his religious views but also for his literary criticism, people were not quite sure what to make of his religious ideas and his campaign against the *'ulamā'*. On the one hand his articles were extremely believable and well-argued; on the other, they were sometimes overly logical and strayed too far from popular belief. They should be read with caution like everything else, including the pronouncements of the *'ulamā'* – this was all he was arguing. Everything in Islam is meaningful, according to him, and should be thought about and not blindly accepted.

Akhlāq was the most important religious teaching for Fatehpurī, as it was for his predecessors and contemporaries like Shāh Walī Allāh, Sayyid Aḥmad, and Shiblī Nu'mānī. He, however, was the first to declare *akhlāq* to be *the* purpose of religion. Fatehpurī took pains to point out the fact that Islam, more than any other religion, has emphasised social relations, behaviour and law. He emphasised how important it was in Islamic context to have righteous conduct, a feeling of sharing and brotherhood, and a belief in progress of all people. There was no doubt, according to him, that prayer and fasting were important in themselves, but they should also teach people to become better human beings. Religion should not merely be ritualistic, but should actively teach humility, kindness and a feeling of brotherhood; only then would it be, a complete religion.

Fateḥpurī envisioned an Islam shorn of all its miraculous wonders, but filled with simple ideals. According to him, "truth", "ethical thinking" and "right actions" were far more important than "faith."

There is a fundamental difference between Sayyid Aḥmad and Fateḥpurī's respective critiques of the *'ulamā'*. Sayyid Aḥmad had a reformist agenda separate from this critique which he was trying to promote. Fateḥpurī, on the other hand, had no other reformist agenda. He was simply opposing the *'ulamā'* since their worldview was irrational, according to him, and since fresh thinking on religious issues was essential for any progress of the Muslim community. Promoting reason and rethinking in itself was his movement. This was his strength as well as his weakness – strength since he had no ulterior motive, and weakness since he did not suggest any alternative.

Fateḥpurī wanted major changes in the attitudes and beliefs of people, so that their dependency on the *'ulamā'* would be reduced. He thought all these changes were possible if the "right" understanding of Islam was developed. However, not many people would try to achieve the right understanding and practise it and be good people, just because Fateḥpurī thought it was rational. He was showing what was wrong in the prevailing thinking and that the way out was to adopt *akhlāq*, i.e., to "really" practice Islam in daily life.

One might or might not agree with his rational interpretation and his "real" Islam, but this does not take away from his argument that Islam should be re-interpreted, as has been done time and again, throughout Islamic history. Why is it that on religious issues, no questions were encouraged? This was a sign of

decline for Fateḥpurī. A progressive religion and people are always ready to adapt and move forward with the times. The inability of Muslims and Islam to do so in his day, he believed, was to their own disadvantage. Thinking rationally, employing one's *'aql*, was an inherent part of being Muslim for Fateḥpurī. The fact that the *'ulamā'* actively discouraged any new thinking made them his adversaries. He juxtaposed his own thinking with the belief of the *'ulamā'* to explain how his own views were more rational than theirs. He was quite willing to hear their responses, but he claimed that he never received any.

However, the *'ulamā'*s version of Islam persists in South Asia and Fateḥpurī, despite his broader interpretation of Islam, had only a limited impact. An obvious factor in this was that the *'ulamā'* were naturally more institutionalized; they constituted a whole class of people spread all across South Asia. This enabled the *'ulamā'* to reach the farthest corners of South Asia, while Fateḥpurī was speaking only to the educated people through the medium of a magazine.

He was individualistic in many ways – one major instance of this can be seen in the fact that he was individually taking on a whole class of people very much entrenched in society. On the other hand, he was a believer in societal values, since he wanted to sustain the basic structure of society as it was while working for progress and not completely Westernize it. Quite modern in many ways, but as seen in case of women, he could be closer to traditional values as well. Fateḥpurī refused to be bracketed and went wherever his logic and reason took him. This fact attests to his credibility as well, since he did not seem to be

promoting a particular world-view, except teaching Muslims to believe in progress and fresh thinking.

Zaman argues that the scholars that are borne out of the impact of Western modernity were themselves a disruption in the history of discursive practices. Since in responding to their perception of the challenges of modern age, they have tried to find ways to make Islam compatible with it and in the effort to do so, far-reaching changes have been proposed which do not come from within but will be super-imposed because of certain people's perception of what ought to be.[177] While it is true that all the modernists were products of the same colonial age and were grappling with a similar onslaught of new ideas, they were not all lay-persons imposing what they thought was appropriate, like Zaman puts it. Many of them were *'ālim*s themselves and had arrived at their conclusions rationally. They were not part of the *'ulamā'* as a class, which is probably why they were able to say things against it.

Most modernists were either appropriating or reacting to Western ideas and the model of modern society facing them. Some of them became reactionaries, totally rejecting anything Western and campaigning for a return to Islamic roots. Yet others adopted a more pro-Western attitude. Fatehpurī is special in this regard, since he judged each issue on its own merit and did not really belong to either of these streams. He discussed Western philosophy, and appropriated progressive ideas that he found useful in an Indian Muslim context, but he never argued that what the West had achieved *was* progress. In fact, he

[177] Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 7.

argued that the West enjoyed only mechanical progress, that it did not have a responsible society and that its progress was devoid of any connection to religion and culture. Whatever new ideas he proposed were supported with careful argument and logic, keeping Indian Muslim society in mind.

W.C. Smith said that *Nigār* provided leadership to those people who wanted to find the justification for modern concepts like naturalism, socialism and rationalism in Islam.[178] It can be argued that there is nothing wrong with trying to make the religion flexible and in tune with the times by constant questioning and re-interpretation in the light of new knowledge and ideas. Smith, however, is right in the sense that Islam becomes secondary in the minds of scholars like Fatehpurī; Islam is acceptable because it is rational according to their interpretation. Smith insists in fact that Fatehpurī was a progressive and was looking for a religion of the future.

Fatehpurī, like other Muslim reformers of the time, was basically talking to only one community, the "South Asian Muslim." His agenda was the reform of this community, and for that he re-interpreted religious issues that were proving to be an obstacle to its progress. He was against the *'ulamā'* since their philosophy, he believed, was also an impediment. He expressed himself using instances, rhetoric and terms that could only be understood by a Muslim from South Asia. In spite of this he remains a very secular figure. He hardly touched politics, and even in 1947 when the country was being partitioned, he was publishing a series of articles on the contributions of Hindus to world

[178] Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 121.

civilization. Even though he spent the last four years of his life in Pakistan, he said that it was only due to personal reasons and that the Indian government had treated him well. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan, one of the highest civilian awards in India, in 1962.[179]

One of his major characteristics was consistency in his thought and ideas. Throughout his journalistic career, in spite of the upheavals of history he witnessed, he never changed his stance or politicised himself, unlike his younger contemporary Maulānā Maudūdī.

His work speaks for itself and is very appealing. The language is simple and straightforward. Since it was written for a magazine it is directed towards the reader, and catches and holds the attention. Fateḥpurī explained everything with various examples and anecdotes. The ideas are well thought out and seem to flow. His mind was very analytical and did not take anything for granted. Sometimes, though, he got too logical and reduced important religious issues to simple induction and deduction, and his conclusions lack credibility. However, thinking rationally was his mantra, and he stuck to it throughout.

This thesis is just an introductory overview of his work; Fateḥpurī deserves a lot more study, not just in terms of his socio-religious thought but also of his contributions to Urdu language, literature and literary criticism. He has left behind a huge corpus of writings which was beyond the scope of the time and resources available for an M.A. thesis.

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[179] Farmān Fateḥpurī, "Niyāz Fateḥpurī - Eik Nazar Mein," *Nigār-i Pakistān*, March-April 1963, 12.

APPENDIX A

FIRST PHASE (May 1926 - December 1930)

The layout of the content in the May 1926 issue of Nigār was as follows:

- Mulāḥaẓāt (contemplations/ remarks) (p. 2)
  Editorial written in the beginning of each issue, introducing the topics covered in it, and sometimes detailed discussion of an important issue. Topic in the editorial page: "Theory of relativity and related scientific terms".
- Faraib Khayāl (deception of imagination) (p. 43) (Fiction)
- Istifsārat (inquiries/questions) (p. 89)
  This was a regular column in almost every issue, renamed later, "Bāb al-Istifsār." (section/chapter for questions). It comprised reader's questions with regard to earlier columns or new subjects related to literature and religion, and Fatehpuri's responses.
- Iqtabāsat-o Ma'alūmāt (excerpts and knowledge/information). (p. 94)
  This was a regular column for a long while, although in the last phase it is not found. The column had snippets of information regarding topics of general knowledge, pertaining to any subject or country. Most of them were totally unrelated to each other, or to the topics discussed in the rest of the magazine.

It would be too lengthy and confusing to give entries of each issue. I will enumerate the themes/topics of each year as well as his extensive discussions on particular subjects, and comments on social and political developments.

In 1926, the major theme was to learn from the new things that have been introduced in society.

- Cinema and education (July, p. 65)
- The method of education in England (July, p. 76)

Religious Issues:

- Istafsārat - Discussion on Khiẓr (July, p. 81)
  The debate on Khizr, which continued for many years in various articles in *Nigār*, began this year.
- Fine Arts and Islam (August, p. 6)
- Istafsārat - Jesus (September, p. 65)
- Istafsārat - *Purdah* and Islam (October, p. 84)
- Istafsārat - Tradition of traveling among Muslims (June, p. 81)

In 1927, the emphasis was very clearly on literary issues and articles; even the "Istifsarat" columns were almost exclusively devoted to it.

- 'Ilm Firasat Alid (June - December)
  A series of articles on palmistry.
- The mentality of our respected 'Ulama' (December, p. 70).

The first three months of 1928, his articles were almost completely literary; the January issue was dedicated to the poet, Momin. He wrote a lot this year, most of it being stories and literary articles.

Social issues:

- Bab al-Istifsar - *Purdah* (April, p. 89)
  He called it an insult to women.
- Status of *purdah* in the Qur'an (October, p. 78)
- The constituents of communal life (July, p. 5)
- Bab al-Istifsar - Why he did not have a column on political issues (August, p. 74)
  He said that it was not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of time, it will require too much commitment. He praised Gandhi, but said it was not easy to do what Gandhi said.

Religious issues:

- Discussion on Khizr between Nasr al-allah Buldanawi, Abd al-majid Daryabadi and Niyaz Fatehpuri (May, p. 77).
- Bab al-Istifsar - Hereafter (*m'ad*) (June, p. 84 and July, p. 84)
  Niyaz's interpretation of heaven and hell as states of mind like happiness and pain, and not being places, as well as his views on the question of hereafter in general; it ran for two issues.
- Philosophy of religion (August, p. 65)
- Reflecting on the Qur'an (September, p. 76)
- Bab al-Istifsar - *Namaz* should be five times or three times (October, p. 78)
- Bab al-Istifsar - *Namaz*'s significance and philosophy (December, p. 88)

A new column was introduced in September 1928, and was part of the magazine throughout, "Bab al-Murasila wa al-Munazara" (letters and dialogue). Readers wrote letters expressing their views in this column, and Fatehpuri gave his viewpoint in reply. It was a forum for discussion unlike "Istifsarat" which was basically for questions and answers.

The issues for 1929 were unavailable to me. In 1930, as in 1928, the January issue was dedicated to a poet, Zafar.

Religious issues:

- Mulahazat – Discussion on whether there is God (March, p. 2)
- Bab al-Istifsar - Discussion on what is revelation (*wahy*) (April, p. 76)
- Bab al-Istifsar - Prayer and Repentance (*Dua awr Toba*) (August, p. 81)
- What was before Adam and Eve? (April, p. 72)

- Bāb al-Istifsār - Bible and Qur'an (June, p. 74)
- Does the world need religion, if so which religion? (September, p. 49, October, p. 55 and November, p. 39)
  The above was a series of articles, in which Fatehpurī discussed different types of religions as well as religious concepts. He also wrote on western philosophy, rationalism, and different trends among Christians like Jesuits, anti-Christ etc. In conclusion, Fatehpurī wrote that there was definitely a need for religion; since for teaching *akhlaq*, one needs a basis to impose laws on people. And Islam is only religion capable of it, since it is open to everyone, and its teachings are suitable for any country, in any age.

On his relations with the *'ulamā'*:

- Bāb al-Murāsila wa al-Munāẓara - A letter on Fatehpurī relations with the *'ulamā*, and his reply (June, p. 66)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – On mental illness (September, p. 2)
  He wrote that a person who did not think and did not allow others to think, was mentally ill. This kind of mental illness, according to him, was found among religious people, obliquely referring to the *'ulamā'*.
- Mulāḥaẓāt – Criticism of the magazine *Qiyām al-Dīn*, published by Muḥammad Qutb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Walī of Farangī Mahall (July, p. 2).

Social issues:

- Mulāḥaẓāt – What constitutes progress (October, p. 2)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – About the progress of nations (June, p. 2)
  He believed that India is progressing, albeit slowly
- Bāb al-Istifsār - A series on history of Islam in India (September, p. 79, October, p. 89 and November, p. 74)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – On the social and political scene (December, p. 2 and continued p. 93)
  A significant article, he wrote that Hindus did not seem to be treating Muslims equally. Even though he was sure that Hindus wanted Muslims to be part of their polity and fight for *Bharat Mata* (Mother India), still, he felt that they did not consider Muslim language and culture to be part of their country and were even depriving Muslims of things vital for their development. Fatehpurī noted that everyone was aware that he supported the Indian National Congress, and always told Muslims that to live in India, it is necessary to be fellow nationalists and brothers with Hindus. However, he then gave examples of the way Hindi was being blatantly promoted (and Urdu ignored), not just by the Congress party, but by common Hindus.

APPENDIX B

LAST PHASE (September 1962 - May 1966)

In September 1962, the name of the magazine was changed to *Nigār-i Pakistān*. Niyaz Fatehpuri was no longer "editor" but "patron" of the magazine. The editor of this issue was 'Ārif Niyazi. Beginning in January 1963, Farmān Fatehpuri became co-editor and is now the editor.

Fatehpuri did not write much in 1962; even his regular columns were much shorter. The most striking difference was in his question and answer column, where earlier he used to give such lengthy replies, here there were generally just two or three paragraphs.

- Mulāhazāt - Reason for coming to Pakistān (September, p. 3)
  He wrote that he was hurt by the environment in Lucknow, and it had left him with no choice but to leave and go somewhere else, and he chose Karachi, because he had a number of relatives and friends here.
- Man's journey to the moon (September, p. 21)
- This Universe (September, p. 56)
- Bāb al-Istifsār - Discussion on the *ḥadīth* called "al-Harb Khad'ateh"
  A question was asked if it was true, looking at this *ḥadīth*, that the Prophet allowed lies and cheating in situation of war?
- Mulāhazāt - Pakistān needs jurists (who make new laws), rather than 'ulamā' (who depend on traditions) (November, p. 3).

The highlight of the year 1963, were the two "Niyāz Numbers", (March-April and May-June), both of them running to over 300 pages.

- My late father, me and Nigār (March-April, p. 19)
  This was his autobiography; it was later re-published as "Dāstan-i Hayāt" (July 1966)

Religious issues:

- Bāb al-Murāsila wa al-Munāzara - The battle of *Khad'ata* (February, p. 49; August p. 62; and October p. 50)
- The political system of Islam – according to Dr. Taha Hussain (February, p. 24).
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Who were the *Ṣābi'īn*? (January, p. 46)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – On Shiite sub-sects like *Qaramitis*, *Isma'ilis*, *Khojas* and *Bohras* (February, p. 51)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – *Shi'a* and *Rafāza* (a Shiite sub-sect) (October, p. 54)
- Jesus' crucifixion and coming back to life (September, p. 11)
- Bāb al-Murāsila wa al-Munāzara – On Jesus (December, p. 60)

- Bāb al-Istifsār – Beginning of Islam in Kashmir (October, p. 54)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Free Will and Predestination (December, p. 66)
- A brief analysis of the thought of (Ghulām Aḥmad) Parwez (September, p. 3)
  Fatehpurī wrote in praise and analysis of a speech of Ghulam Ahmed Parwez, in which the latter had argued that *dīn* and *maẓhab* are two different things.

Politics:

- Mulāḥaẓāt – World political situation (January, p. 4)
  Uncharacteristic for him, this was an article exclusively on the then current political situation, it discussed different issues, a) Conflict between USA and Russia. b) India-China relations. c) Kashmir issue d) Atomic experience

Only three issues of 1964 were available to me. One of them was on Momīn (the poet), although the month of this issue is not clear. Fatehpuri wrote a number of articles on the subject. He did not write anything for the May-June issue, in fact, he wrote a separate page "Harf-i Awwal", saying that this was the first time since *Nigār* began publication that he has not written anything in it. The December issue is also dedicated to a poet; it is called the "Majid Walīn Number," for which Fatehpurī wrote just one article.

In 1965, he stopped writing Mulāḥaẓāt from the November issue, and gave full editorial responsibility to Farman Fatehpurī. He, however, wrote a number of articles this year, although all of them were much shorter than they used to be.

Islamic History:

- Bāb al-Istifsār – the conflict between Hazrat 'Ali and Amir Mu'awiyah (January, p. 51)
- 'Abd al-Allāh bin Sabā and the murder of Caliph Usmān (March p. 43)
- Who killed Imam Hussain? (May, p. 28)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – Best time in Islamic history (September, p. 3)
  For him, it is the time of the Prophet, simply because of the spirit he infused, which made an ignorant and backward community into such a progressive one.

Religious Issues:

- Bāb al-Istifsār – Discussion on *ḥadīth* books, *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* (June, p. 71)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Islam's vision of government and the constitutional and political position of the first four Caliphs (January, p. 51)
- Bāb al-Murāsila wa al-Munāẓara – Discussion on reason and religion (February, p. 63)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Discussion on destiny (*taqdīr*) (April p. 66)
- Bāb al-Murāsila – Discussion on Islamic laws (June, p. 61)
- Military ethics of Muslims (November, p. 18)
- On Iqbāl's religious views as reflected in his writings (January, p. 12)

Social Issues:

- Mulāḥaẓāt – a) Kashmir dispute (February, p. 4)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – b) Students of Pakistān (February, p. 4)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – India and the problem of language (March, p. 5)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – The trials and tribulations of progress (April, p. 5)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – The problems of the middle class (May, p. 4)
- Mulāḥaẓāt – Muslim University in Aligarh (June, p. 4)

Fatehpurī passed away in May of 1966, but he was writing until the very last issue.

Religious Issues:

- Bāb al-Istifsār – The reality of *Ruḥ* (soul) (January, p. 57)
- Amazing story of the soul and its immortality (May, p. 18)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Discussion on *Ilhām* and *Waḥy* (revelation) (February, p. 70)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Whether it was better to say *namāz* with the translation of Qur'an in one's own language (March-April, p. 103)
- Bāb al-Istifsār – Time of prayer (May, p. 75)
- Organization of Islamic armies (May, p. 47).

Politics:

- Mulāḥaẓāt – An article about the Tashkent agreement between India and Pakistān (March-April, p. 3).

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