

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALS BEFORE AND AFTER INCEPTION OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

To promote religious practices and dogmas, journals and publications are used as a rich source for doing so. This tradition has been present in the sub-continent. Since the inception of Pakistan, hundreds of such religious publications through journals are published that have influenced reader's religious practices. The prime job of journalism is preaching which has been the major task of Messengers and Sufis in particular.

This paper focuses on the role of religious publications before and after inception of Pakistan. It deals with the characteristics and editorial profiles. The emphasis is on non-effectiveness of these religious journals and publications despite the fact that they are published in a huge number. It is assumed that these journals can play a lead role in disseminating religious preaching and effective dogmatic concepts. One of the reasons why these journals have not been able to attract effectiveness is these publications have been promoting entangled and unclear religious frameworks, concepts and rituals.

Keywords: *Religious Practice, religious publications, religious preaching, religious framework, Messengers and Sufis*

Introduction

Religion is a fundamental need of humans. It leads man towards leading a better life to correct one's own behaviour and action. This is a fact that most nations, except communists have made abundant use of these religious publications to promote religious practices and concepts.

It has been a tradition in the sub-continent to publish religious magazines and journals throughout. They have influenced the religious behavior, concepts and

code of conducts of readers to a large extent. The first publication in this regard was in 1837 published in Mirzapur in India. The journal titled *Khairkhwah-e-Hind* spoke on behalf of missionaries. The prime focus of this journal was to promote religious concepts of Christianity along with the preaching's of Protestants. These journals also promoted valuable information including historic aspects. The owner of this journal was father F.G. Briat, editor was Father R.C Mathur and publisher Dr. Hyder. To promote religious practices and dogmas, journals and publications are used as a source for doing so (Naz 2012 p. 116). This tradition has been present in the subcontinent since the inception of Pakistan. Hundreds of such religious publications through journals are published that have influenced readers' religious practices. The prime job of journalism is preaching which has been a major task of Messengers and Sufis in particular.

This paper focuses on the role of religious publications before and after inception of Pakistan. It deals with the characteristics and editorial profiles. The emphasis is on non-effectiveness of these religious publications and journals despite the fact that they are published in a huge number. It is assumed that these journals can play a lead role in disseminating religious preaching's and effective dogmatic concepts.

Journals of these times included *Tafseer-ul-Quran* published from Lahore in 1909 by Molvi Insha Allah Khan. This journal published *Tafseer* of the Holy Quran which was later compiled into an organized volume. *Al-Burhan* was the other journal published from Lahore in 1910 by Molvi Syed Mohammad Sibtain. The purpose of this journal was to promote the virtues and goodness of the Holy Prophet's (P.B.U.H) noble characters and charismatic aspects. In 1916, from Azam Garh Dar-ul-Musannafeen published '*Muaarif*', whose editor was Allama Syed Suleman Nadvi. This was primarily an informative publication focusing religion. This promoted Islamic practices through logical aspects and reasoning. This also promoted Islamic knowledge and organized biographies of many religious scholars. The most significant contribution of this journal was to publish logical, literal, historic, traditional, ethical and social research-based knowledge dissemination (Ibid p. 119).

Peer Mohammad Ashraf published *Al-Ashraf* from Lahore in 1927 which focused on Messengers, Muslim emperors, historic events, meditations, rituals and spiritual studies (Ibid p. 120). The publication of these journals was abundant even before the inception of Pakistan from all parts of India. These are approximately 135 in numbers published from various places in the sub-continent. The common publishing areas included Bombay, Luknow, Lahore, Devbonb, Bareli, Gordaspur, Meerath, Kaanpur, Jaypur, Banarus, Muradabad, Jalindher,

Qadyan, Rangoon, Saharanpur, Dehli, Ludhyana, Bangalore, Ambala, Hyderabad Deccan, Muzaffar Nagar and Faizabad.

Most of these journals were monthly publications. Daily, weekly, fortnightly, quarterly and annual publications were scarce. Each of these journals was different in volume and price. They were also different in terms of presentations and contents. Despite a great volume in nature of publications, these could not unite the Muslims all over the globe. Every journal criticized the other Muslim sect based on religious doctrines and differences. One publication was counterfeited by another publication to shun and deny practices of the other group. There were only a few of these journals that abstained from being religiously biased and isolated in dogmatic practices. Same was the condition of other publications of other religions whether Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Qadyanis or any other religion in nature. Most of these journals by and large mocked other religions' practices contrary to the ethical codes of spiritualism.

Post-Pakistan Inception of Religious Journals

Around 300 religious journals were published after the inception of Pakistan, published widely from Karachi and Lahore. These were monthly publications in nature which later were also published on weekly and quarterly basis. Each journal published was again different in volume and price. Amongst these comprised Fikr-o-Nazar, Tarjuman-ul-Quran, Tulu-ul-Islam, Al- Bilagh, Tarjuman-ul-Hadees, Furqan, Payam-e-Haq, Chiragh-e-Raah, Muhaddis, Al Irshaad, Dars-e- Quran, Muaarif, Islamic Studies and Tehreek.

Since the inception of Pakistan, no journal could win international repute. Each of these journals promoted a typical religious concept of a particular sect and faction. Since they were specific in conceptual concentration and religious association, they presented only a specific thought with low standard and were not popular amongst readers.

Only a few of such journals translated Quranic revelations effectively, presented Hadees, Islamic history and contributions of religious leaders to the readers. On the other hand, most of these present and promote religious bias, factions, narrow mindedness and defiance. They gather financial strength as a major act. In Pakistan, other religious publications including Ahmediyat and Christianity are also alongside Muslim religious publications. This indicates religious freedom to publish concepts specific to Islamic code and ideology. The following is the list of some of the religious journals published after the independence of Pakistan at various times. These compromise their publication details, contents and the portfolios of the editors.

Mahnama Tarjuman-e- Quran -Lahore

Molana Syed Abul Aala Modudi published a religious journal in 1925 titled Tarjuman-e-Quran. This focused on Quranic knowledge, facts and figures in particular. The volume comprised 88 pages and the cost was Rs.20. It was published earlier by Abul Aala Modudi Printers and Publishers Lahore at the office of Tarjuman-ul-Quran. Later, it was published by Malik Eid Mohammad Printers, Achrah, Lahore.

Tarjuman-ul-Quran was a religious journal that promoted Molana Modudi's concepts and thoughts forcefully. It comprised editorial, theses Muaarif-ul-Quran publications and other research-based topics. These made their presence felt with emphasis on purpose of its publication on the main page. This is one of its types of a journal in the entire independent India. Its purpose was to promote the very concept of the Oneness of ALLAH and invitation to participate in the way of ALLAH. One of the other features of this journal was to promote the thoughts and assumptions and principles of cultures and traditions that disseminated through Quranic logic in alignment with science and philosophy, politics and economics, social development and propagation of principles of life based on Quranic interpretations in conjunction with modernity of life principles. This journal also invites the Muslim Ummah to lead a newly celebrated life that enabled the heart and soul to be truly practicing Muslims. It shuns such practices of ignorance and oblivion to lead a life that was truly enriched with Islamic principles to rule the world.

Soon this journal got popularity with a mosque invitation to spread its message throughout India. It guided the Muslims religiously and conceptually when the Muslims and Hindus were in contest with one another and Muslims were trying to associate themselves with a specific cause. Molana Modudi addressed these Muslims in the following words, "All Muslims must realize that as a Muslim nation, our leader of movement is the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). Every movement is focused on a specific school of thought and system. Islamic school of thought is found in the Prophets of ALLAH regardless of our national way of identity, location, circumstances and social issues, our guiding principle and the aim of life is the same as that of the Messengers of ALLAH. We can reach our destination by following the path of these Messengers of ALLAH. Our standards and values must match with that of ALLAH's Messengers. Our collective policy must also be in conjunction with theirs. If we did not follow their belief system and adopted any other, we would go astray." (Tarjuma-e-Quran May 1940 P-182)

Molana Modudi had to face challenges promoting the truth and reality particularly the financial lack constrained the publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran. Molana

writes, “We have been facing financial constraints for a few months so much so that the issue of Rabi-ul Awwal got published in the middle of Rajab that outran the patience of readers and office of editor received countless complaints pertaining to publication delay. I find myself helpless disclosing the reason of delay in the publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran and the cause of delay is the financial constraint that we have been facing for the past few months. The preaching of this journal displeased some segments of the society and pleased some other. Some departed us and some joined hands, but the trend was to set the prologue of the purpose. When the prologue followed the real purpose of the publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran, none of the religious factions in the independent India agreed to its purpose. Consequently, the readership of the journal redirected causing constrained revenue. One aspect was the low readership of the journal and the other challenge was increasingly higher cost of paper resulting in intermittent publication. These two causes have given birth to constraints in publishing this journal in timely manner.” (Ibid p.340).

Despite this severity of financial lack, Molana was determined to regulate the publication. He did not let anyone amend the policy of publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran in anyway. He wrote “No one must assume that I will change the policy of publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran in order to keep the journal status alive to please a specific faction and which displeases ALLAH. I do not expect my followers either to support me financially to carry on this publication. They must ask their conscience to probe their thoughts whether I am on the right path with the clear purpose to publish Tarjuman-ul-Quran. They must conclude whether my defiance is justifiable in the cause of ALLAH”. (Ibid p.340-34)

Tarjuman-ul-Quran continued being published even after inception of Pakistan. Prior to independence, Molana Modudi continued his struggle to guide the Muslims of India in achieving independence through following the righteous path of nobility and virtue. He also trained the Muslims of independent Pakistan in their mental growth, knowledge base and thought trading through this journal. Tarjuman-ul-Quran was above the purpose of financial gains, but purely restricted to a definite religious purpose and a mission. This purpose was to convert India into a land of Islamic preaching's and form a group of unified people that could preach the solidarity in the teachings of the Holy Prophet, oneness of Allah and propagate Islamic ideology, virtue and nobility following the Quran and Sunnah. This was a journal full of wisdom and research orientation that religious factions prefer referring to even in the current times. This can be declared as the greatest achievements of Molana Modudi.

After the death of Molana Modudi, Molana Naeem Siddiqui was appointed its editor. These days Professor Khurseed Ahmed is known as the editor of this journal. He writes in Tarjuman the issues of politics and society. Practically speaking, Muslim Sajjad is the editor to look after editorial affairs of the journal. The ownership of the journal was transferred to the son of Molana Modudi, Hyder Farooq Modudi. He advised the stakeholders in Jamat-e-Islami not to publish the journal any longer. This journal is now published as “Alimi Tarjuman-ul-Quran”.

Molana Syed Abdul Ala Modudi

Molana Syed Abdul Ala Modudi was born on September 25, 1902 in Aurangabad Hyderabad Deccan. The father of Molana Syed Ahmed Hassan came from the descendents of Saadat. He belonged maternally to Turkey Lasil. He also belongs to the family of Sufis. His family tree originates from the famous Sufi Khuwaja Qutbuddin Chishti (430-527). He stepped into journalism at the age of 17. He commenced his life as journalist working for Taj, a weekly from Jabalpur. His elder brother Abdul Khair Modudi was appointed the editor of Taj which published during 1917 through 1920.

In 1921, Molana met Mufti Kifayatullah and Molana Ahmed Saeed who was also the president of Jamiat Ulma-e-Hind in 1921. He published a newspaper “Muslim”. Molana Modudi was appointed editor of this publication. This paper closed publication in April 1923. He joined on May 14, 1928 as editor of Al-Jamiah and a critical writer. After his resignation from Al-Jamiah, he left Dehli and came to Hyderabad Deccan. He lived there from 1927 to 1929. He commenced publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran. He had also written Al Jihad Fil Islam in the meanwhile, which received international recognition. The publication of Tarjuman-ul-Quran was the real basis of forming a movement called Jamat-e-Islami. He also wrote a popular book “Dinyat in mere fifteen days. The publication of “Dinyat” and Tarjuman-Ul-Quran made him popular in the Sub-Continent.

He married in 1928. On a special invitation from Allama Iqbal, Molana Modudi moved to Pathan Kot, district Gurdaspur with his wife in 1938. Dar-ul-Islam Pathan Kot was established in October 1938 in a serious deliberation of three days. He was appointed as the President as the nature of his journal was mainly research oriented for the dissemination of knowledge and Islamic information. This also served as a training institution of academic nature. The sole purpose of this establishment was to guide the Muslims in the light of Islamic thought and cognitive development.

Molana Modudi stayed in Lahore from 1939 to the middle of 1942. He taught as honorary Professor of Islamic studies in Lahore. Dar-ul Islam Pathan Kot was merged as a result of establishment of Jamat-e- Islami in 1941. This Jamat had seventy five members initially. After Pakistan's independence, Molana Modudi arrived in Pakistan on August 29, 1947 and soon began his mission to guide and counsel the Muslims in the true Islamic way. He also participated in the establishment of Islamic jurisprudence and social order code through amending key aspects of the enforced principles. On the contrary, his party lost the major general election the following years. After his retirement as president of Jamat-e- Islami, he restricted his movements and concentrated on the completion of Tafheem-ul-Quran. While on a religious mission, he met his Lord on December 22, 1979. (Amin-2006)

The Monthly Mahnama Fikr-o- Nazar-Rawalpindi/Islamabad

In 1963, the monthly periodical Mahnama Fikr-o-Nazar was published simultaneously from Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Amongst the most famous of the editors of these periodicals were Dr. Fazl-ur-Rehman, Dr. Sagheer Hassan Masoomi, Muhammad Sarwar and Dr. Sahibzada Sajid-ur-Rehman. The dimension of the publication was 6.8x9.7 and was prized Rs.100. It is published under the auspices of department of publications, Institute of Islamic Research, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

This was a top class publication based on religion and research which constituted the knowledge of editing and evolution of Quranic recitation, essays and theses pertaining to Hadees (Saying of Prophet Muhammad PBUH), an analysis of issues in the light of Silsila-e- Mujaddadya, bibliographic abstracts, comparative study of Islam and other religions, essays on logic-driven religious issues, the conduct per the religious code, the economic trend of Quran, survey of Islamic economy, critiques, introduction and discussion on various religious books and other religious, sectarian information based on thorough research and knowledge. On the issuance of Fikro- Nazar, in Shuzrat, the following quote reads to praise the worthy Lord:

“We are indeed indebted to the Lord, the Almighty to bestow upon us the blessing to bring the monthly periodical Fikr-o-Nazar under the auspices of Institute of Islamic Research to the people of Pakistan. We are delighted to present the first issue of Fikr-o- Nazar on August 1, 1963, 10th of Rabi-ul-Awwal 1383, the Islamic year. This month also marks the blessed and celebrated birth of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). We pray pleadingly to the Lord that He, the Almighty help us spread the benefit of this publication to the entire universe equally and let the

publication offer its fruit to the entire Muslim Ummah. Amen”. (Fikr-o-Nazar 1963 p-1)

The issuance of Fikr-o-Nazar was primarily to disseminate the activity of research-oriented religious knowledge publicly. The purpose of this publication was narrated as under:

- To promote research-based dissemination of Fikr-o-Nazar
- To propagate the knowledge-oriented work of the periodical
- To make it known to the public and promote its publication
- To encourage its wider knowledge orientation
- To conclude specific consequential thoughts to promote and propagate them
- To shun any practice of indoctrinating rituals in the minds of people

It must therefore be necessary to realize that the thoughts prompted through Fikr-o- Nazar were not to raise the voice of the publication in the minds of people neither do they represent the concern of the stakeholders by any means. We may concur with them or deny any such implication as represented in the publication. Our only purpose is to encourage and promote research-based knowledge dissemination, thought development, critical pondering over the issues. Any such ideas , if represented by the issues in Fikr-o- Nazar, must be present for the common insight of the people in general and the stakeholders in particular. People must decide the extent to which the research-based articles in the journal represent the truth and the mastery and the expertise of the writer to influence the readers and unfold the knowledge and representative sectarian information. We, in no way, would deprive the people of their right to conclude this. (Ibid p-2)

Fikr-o-Nazar was published as representative of the Institute of Islamic Research and its purposes were as follows:

1. To promote Islamic concept and principles based on logic and critical thinking alongside other aspects such as universal brotherhood, patience and social justice.
2. To represent Islamic teachings that associate with scientific rationale and evolution.
3. To conduct research in a way that the Muslims could regain their lost glory through scientific thoughts, culture and critical thinking.
4. To represent Islamic history, philosophy, law, and jurisprudence, in such a way that it could logically organize and promote research-based endeavors. (Ibid p.3)

“The periodical Fikr-o-Nazar represented the same purposes, which was also the task of its publication and opened the door of rationale and reasoning of the readers and attract them towards critical thoughts regardless of association with an individual clan or a group. This journal also denounced any competition to super cede either an individual or a group.” (Ibid p.4)

This journal not only opened the door of research, but also gave birth to positive criticism and openness to disagree amongst the literate people through essays and thesis published in it. Amongst the religious journals, this journal made its presence felt as it outdid others on the basis of research.

Analysis

By virtue of constitution, Pakistan is a religious state. Most of its people fundamentally practice Islamic thoughts and doctrines, so Pakistani society is deeply influenced by religion. Pakistan is also one of the most selling countries in terms of religious publications and there are abundant religious journals that represent the voice of various schools of thoughts, dogmas and doctrines. Various institutions of religion under the departments of publications release religiously-enriched periodicals. Religious scholars and experts also guide such publications and the editorial tasks. Apart from one or two religious publications, most of these represent almost the same standard and voice their concern within the religious framework almost identically.

Some of these publications merely propagate religious bias and discord to disdain factions and sects yet fail to achieve their obnoxiously-planned inspirations. Probably their owners satiate their ill sectarian fervor endorsed with contempt and coercion.

The qualitatively compatible periodical of Jamat-e- Islami, Tarjuman-e- Quran and the religious publication of Islamic Research Academy, Islamabad called Fikr-o- Nazar are amongst the fewer journals that shun the religious bias, abstain from disdain and provide reliable religious content to the readers all around the country. One of the dilemmas of such religious publications is that they are not available at all local stores conveniently. Most other periodicals are sent to the readers through postal services free of cost, but the above mentioned two journals do not fall in this category.

Religious journals have also failed to form Islamic societal set up, promote Islamic values, implement and inculcate the spirit of Islamic teachings in society and infuse critically-translated Islamic thought to guide people in life. Their presence is next to oblivion. The cause of these tragedy-borne insufficient publications is their ineffective contents to invite attraction. These journals are

edited by professionally incompetent personnel who disregard the quality of the paper, get up and lay out. Consequently, they also fail to fetch financial strength. Like the representative Christian and Qadianian religious publications, these journals have also remained restricted to their limited readership.

It is required that such religious publications, journals and periodicals be managed and administered by competent personnel with sound and apt professional core competency to demonstrate positive Islamic image and aspects. It is also hoped that such acts would delineate religious harmony, unity and solidarity in the society and prevent co-called rituals, narrow mindedness and factionist formation.

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