

# BEING A MUSLIM A FACT OR A CHALLENGE AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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## A B S T R A C T

This article investigates the issue of self-identity and its implications for a Muslim. The article further explores the consequences for Muslims for making their identity as Muslims an issue, and then makes tentative suggestions regarding education that would follow from such a decision. This exploration is guided by the logic of the distinction between ‘who is a Muslim’ and ‘what is it to be a Muslim.’ The issue of identify is framed not in the context of such cultural phenomenon as identity crisis but couched in terms of existential challenge of being either a Muslim by accident of birth or consciously and purposely designing oneself as a Muslim by making it as one’s life-project. The choice being between being Muslim as a social fact with little or no input of one’s own or taking the ethical responsibility to fashion oneself in the light of the Qur’ān.

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*BAY'AH* AS A POLITICO-LEGAL PRINCIPLE  
PRACTICES OF THE PROPHET (PEACE BE ON HIM)  
AND THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS  
AND VIEWS OF THE EARLY *FUQAHĀ'*

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A B S T R A C T

This paper explores the nature and meaning of *bay'ah* in the historical perspective and explores its significance in Muslim socio-political thought. The study also attempts to examine various socio-political and legal dimensions of *bay'ah* that were exercised by the Messenger of Allah, Muḥammad (peace be on him) and the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*). An attempt has been also made to study the theory of *bay'ah* in the discussions of the classical *fuqahā'* and *mutakallimūn* and its application to the socio-political structure of the Muslim society of that era. A comparison between the views of the *fuqahā'* and practices of the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and the early caliphs has also been under taken. Thus this study presents the programmatical dimension of *bay'ah* for contemporary scholars who are interested not only in the Islamic politico-legal thought but also in the experiences of *khayr al-qurūn* (the best of eras/the model society) searching principles and practices for good governance in the contemporary Muslim Societies.

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MOHAMMAD ABDUL HAKIM KHAN'S  
*THE HOLY QURAN* (1905): THE FIRST MUSLIM  
OR THE FIRST *QĀDIYĀNĪ* ENGLISH TRANSLATION?

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A B S T R A C T

Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan (MAHK) has been all along hailed as the *first Muslim* English translator of the meanings of the Qur'ān. This article explores the circumstantial as well as textual evidence to determine the fact whether MAHK was really the first Muslim who translated the meanings of the Qur'ān into English truly. This article brings to the fore, as a result of this exploration, what has gone unnoticed all along, for more than a century, in the Qur'ānic scholarship that MAHK who has been considered as the first Muslim English translator of the meanings of the Qur'ān actually happens to be *the first Qādiyānī translator*. Unlike other Qādiyānī translators who underscore their Qādiyānī credentials MAHK, however, provides no clue whatsoever about his dogmatic presuppositions. On textual scrutiny it emerges that despite his craftiness in suppressing outwardly his adherence to Qadianism, his elucidation of the meanings of the Qur'ān is vitiated by unmistakable Qādiyānī colouring. It is indeed inexplicable how for more than a century MAHK's work, abounding in Qādiyānī contents and other serious blemishes, escaped critical scrutiny. It, nonetheless, deserves the unenviable distinction of being the *first Qādiyānī* English translation of the meanings of the Qur'ān. Notwithstanding, that in the last years of his life, according to some reports, MAHK had recanted his belief in Qadyanism and reverted to Islam, nonetheless, his English translation abounds Qādiyānī beliefs.

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THE IMPACT OF THE QUR'ĀN  
ON  
THE STYLE OF ḤADĪTH

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A B S T R A C T

According to Islamic sources revelation (*wahy*) from Allah the Almighty to the Prophet (peace be on him) was of two types. The revelation (*wahy*) of the Qur'ān was conveyed through the recitation of an *āyah*, a part of an *āyah* or a set of *āyāt* or a *sūrah* by the angel Jibril each time he descended. The other form of revelation (*wahy*) was in the form of inspiration of meanings in the mind of the Prophet (peace be on him) or conversations of the angel Jibril with him. In either case, the Prophet (peace be on him) used to convey this second form of revelation (*wahy*) in his own wordings or through his actions or through his tacit approvals.

There is a marked difference between the style of the Qur'ān, a divinely composed diction, and that of *aḥādīth* containing the sayings of the Prophet (peace be on him), a diction composed by a human Messenger. However, given to the fact that the Prophet (peace be on him) had no human teacher rather he was taught by Allah Himself, a deep imprint of the Qur'ān upon the ideas, language and wording of the sayings of the Prophet (peace be on him) is quite clear, visible and easily traceable in its style both from syntax and semantics point of views. This article explores the *āyāt* of the Qur'ān and collections of *Ḥadīth* to presents a few examples for the purpose of comparison and analysis.

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THE PROPHET (PEACE BE ON HIM)'S STRATEGY  
WHILE WINNING OVER MAKKAH (*FATH MAKKAH*)  
A PARADIGM FOR TOLERANCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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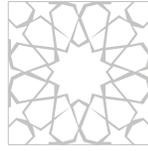
A B S T R A C T

According to Islam, one of the basic missions of all the Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be on them all) has been connecting and reconciling people with their Creator as well as with each other and other creations.

The mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) was no different than that of his predecessors. The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) started conciliatory role embedded in his nature even before he was commissioned to pronounce Prophethood. Having been brought up and trained under divine supervision, he (peace be on him) showed the best examples of reconciliation process throughout his life in varying circumstances. However, the prime example of this reconciliation process was manifested during his winning over of Makkah (*Fath Makkah*). This article primarily focuses on what the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) taught both the oppressor and the oppressed how to drive out long term hatred and enmity through his actual conduct, acts as well as words and tacit approvals, while taking over Makkah.

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A MUSLIM INTERFAITH INITIATIVE  
(*A COMMON WORD BETWEEN US AND YOU*)  
AND ITS CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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A B S T R A C T

Muslims and Christians constitute a very major chunk of the world's population today. In the modern times, when the world has shrunk to a much smaller place than it ever was in the past, mutual understanding between the two communities has become an imperative in the best interests of humanity. Realising that the basis for friendship and understanding already exists in the scriptures of the both, some 138 distinguished Muslim scholars from across the world addressed an open letter "A Common Word between Us and You" to the Christian leaders.

The letter is an impassioned appeal to rally around two common denominators—love of God and love of humanity.

This paper attempts to present a chronological account of the major responses that came forth to *A Common Word* from the Christian world for the benefit of researchers and all those who are interested in the interfaith initiatives. The paper also presents four important documents in this regard.

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## HER STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY

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### Prologue

I met Michelle in a mosque in Western Canada.<sup>1</sup> She entered the room with an aura of peacefulness and tranquility and settled into a chair beside twelve other reverted Muslims and two born Muslims. She was beautiful, young Western woman, fully covered in a pink Eastern style abaya [*‘abāyih*] and headscarf. We were meeting to discuss issues surrounding the challenges faced by Muslim women in Western communities. In particular, we were sharing our experiences of retaining the traditions of our faith while participating in secular schools and employment situations. This is a balance all people of faith struggle to achieve — to live wholly by the faith,

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1. It is a true story and the purpose of making it public is to invite Muslims to think and reflect: Are we practicing what we know and rethink and reflect on being Muslim and becoming Muslim. According to Canadian research ethics board, names of the research participants are not being made public. I interviewed them and wrote their story in the narrative inquiry research method which is popular in North America. The readers may feel free to forward their queries through my e-mail address I will be happy to have them answered.



PROFESSOR ABDUL JABBAR SHAKIR

(1366-1430/1947-2009)

A MAN AND AN INSTITUTION

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Writing obituary is always somewhat an emotional exercise, as one is supposed to be writing about departure of the one who has been personally known. And well, no serious obituary can be written by anyone who did not personally know the deceased. Professor Abdul Jabbar Shakir's obituary is not merely a sentimental endeavour but a surprise as well. His death was so unexpected that one can fairly say that being entrusted with the task of writing obituary when one is still not out of the state of disbelief over the news of his demise is in itself a herculean task.

Writer, researcher, teacher, orator, *khatīb*, and one of the most well known Bibliophile in Pakistan's history, Professor Abdul Jabbar Shakir, breathed his last during — what could otherwise be described as a routine — heart surgery, at the Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad on October the 13th, 2009, which was, sadly enough, not successful.

At the time of his death, Professor Shakir was not too old; in fact, he had formally retired only three months less than three years before his

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JOHN RENARD, ED.  
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Sufism (Islamic) is rightly called “the inner dimension of Islam” by Hamid Algar,<sup>1</sup> and is also said to be a “reality without name.” Though the word ‘*ṣūfī*’ does not appear in the Qur’ān, nor did it exist in the life span of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) and his Companions (*Ṣaḥābah*) yet its reality is rooted in the concepts propounded by the Qur’ān and practiced by the Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions. Ever since its origin (late 1st/7th century) it has made an important contribution in the propagation of Islam from the Atlantic coast of West Africa to the entire region of South Asia and far eastern terrain of Indonesia and Malaya. Sufism’s

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1. See, Hamid Algar, Trans. Intro and Anno., *The Path of Gods Bondsmen from Origin to Return*, “*Mersād al-‘ebād men al-mabda’ ela al-ma‘ād*,” a Ṣūfī compendium in Persia by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya (North Haledon, NJ: Islamic Publications International, 1980).