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## Religious Harmony in India's Post-Independence Phase: A Comparative Study of the Approach of Abul Hasan Ali Nadawi and Wahiduddin Khan

Khalil Ahmad<sup>\*</sup>  
Muhammad Mumtaz Ali<sup>\*\*</sup>  
Yousuf Azim Siddiqi<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

### Abstract

In post-independent India, most of the Muslim intellectuals, scholars and organizations urged people to establish religious harmony in the country. However, Abū al-Hasan Ali Nadwi (1914-1999) and Wahiduddin Khan (b.1925) emerged as the most influential Muslim scholars as they played a significant role in establishing religious harmony in the country. This research uses analytical and comparative methods to explain the approach of Nadwi and Khan concerning religious harmony. It critically investigates their approaches to determine the validity and relevance of their thoughts in contemporary India. The study found that Nadwi considers Muslims as significant contributors to Indian civilization and culture. Nadwi's suggestions do not only restore the courage among Muslims in India but imbue the essence of love, humanitarianism, peace and co-operation among all Indians. On the other hand, Khan's ideas are passive, unilateral and apologetic, and he considers Muslims as the cause of communal riots in the country. The study concludes that Nadwi's approach is more relevant and appropriate to contemporary Indian society to establish communal harmony. His approach appeared as courageous, especially for Muslim youth to contribute to the development of the country without compromising their faith and identity.

**Keywords:** Abū al-Hasan Ali Nadwi, Wahiduddin Khan, Religious Harmony, Post-independent India, Communal Riots.

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## Introduction

As of today, India can be considered as one of the most complex pluralistic states in the world. India is a home of various tribes, caste, religions and ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> As a secular and democratic country, India promises equal rights to all citizens of the state irrespective of religion, caste, colour and race. The constitution of the country guaranteed fundamental rights to all citizens of the state, such as Rights to Freedom of Religion (Article 25-28), Right to Freedom (Article 19-22) and Right to Equality (Article 14-18). It was stated in Article 15 (1) that:

The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

Also, Article 16 articulates:

*No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment of office under the state.*<sup>2</sup>

Muslims in India constitute 14.2 per cent of the entire population. The partition of India and the rise of rightwing Hindu nationalists posed challenges to Muslim intellectuals regarding maintaining religious harmony in the country. However, the Muslims community is the most vulnerable and backward in the country as per the findings of Dr. Gopal Singh Committee (1983), the Justice Sachar Committee (2006) and the Justice Ranganathan Mishra Commission (2007). Further, the rise of the fascist groups in the country putting the rights of the community under threat.<sup>3</sup> The current riots in February 2020 in the capital city of the country illustrates the failure of the system to protect Muslim's life and wealth. Now, Muslims faced various challenges in maintaining their identity and

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<sup>1</sup> As per the anthropological survey conducted by Ministry of Culture, Government of India, there are around 4,599 different communities with 1,652 languages living in the India. The forefathers of India envisioned a modern and diverse India and developed the constitution recognizing individual and collective cultural rights of all social groups and religious groups. (Guaranteeing the protection to all religious and linguistic minorities of the country). [http://ansi.gov.in/people\\_india.htm](http://ansi.gov.in/people_india.htm), accessed: 4 July, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Anwar Alam, *India: The Struggle of Identity Politics in India*. [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/1435114/Professor\\_Anwar\\_Alam\\_The\\_struggle\\_of\\_identity\\_politics\\_in\\_India.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1435114/Professor_Anwar_Alam_The_struggle_of_identity_politics_in_India.pdf), accessed: 4 July, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Arshi Khan, *Exclusion of Muslims in India*, (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2018), p.5.

cultural values. However, one of the most critical challenges for the country is to protect its diverse and secular nature and religious harmony.

Nevertheless, Abū al-Hasan ‘Alī Nadwi and Waḥiduddīn Khan emerged as the most influential Muslim scholars as they played a significant role in establishing religious harmony in the country. Both were products of traditional religious seminaries. Later, Waḥiduddīn Khan adopted a variant approach and developed a different thought. They both were also active members of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, founded by Sayyid Abū al-A‘lā Maudūdī (1903-79). However, they detached from the *Jamā‘at* because Maudūdī’s understanding of Islam was confined to the political domain. Further, they both endeavoured to work on the communal issues between the Hindus and the Muslims and proposed their approaches to solving the problems of the Muslim community. It was also contended that their views were based on the foundation of Islamic teachings: the Qur`ān and the Sunnah.

The communal turmoil between the societies led Abū al-Ḥasan Nadwi to launch a movement known as *Tahrik Payam-e-Insaniyat* (The Message of Humanity Movement) to work for religious harmony in the country. On the other hand, Wahiduddin Khan worked as an individual scholar and established an Islamic centre at New Delhi in 1970 and started the magazine, under the name of *Al-Risala*, in 1976. Khan adopted a variant approach and developed a different thought than the existing Muslim authoritative bodies in India. Nadwi, on the other hand, had a significant role in establishing a federation of Muslim organizations, individual scholars and leaders called *Muslim Majlise Mushawat* (i.e. The Muslim Consultative Assembly) to address the political detriment of Muslims in the country. However, they both fundamentally focused on religious harmony in post-independent Indian society. Nadwi adopted a different approach and asked Muslims to take the lessons from their glorious past while Khan preferred Muslims to make a unilateral step and avoid any confrontations. He suggested that the Muslim community should not focus on demanding their religious rights because it may lead to unwanted religious conflicts. Instead, he emphasized on the need of individual reform and purification.<sup>1</sup> These two scholars intellectually responded to the challenge of religious harmony in the country. They

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<sup>1</sup> Irfan. A. Omar, “Islamic Thought in Contemporary India: The Impact of Mawlana Wahiduddin Khan’s Al-Risala Movement.” In *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*, ed. By Ibrahim Abu Rabi’, p. 77.

believed that their views are following the teachings of Islam. However, Khan's approach and opinions are different from Abū al-Ḥasan Nadwi.

Their writings have been translated and disseminated broadly. The influence of their writings was not confined within the Indo-Pak subcontinent but also expended to other continents, and people around the world benefited from them. Through their writings, Nadwi and Khan addressed various issues, especially concerning socio-political aspects of post-independent Indian society and provided new insights to reform Muslim society. Their views were considered as new developments in Islamic thought in post-independent India.

Nadwi and Khan had responded to these challenges and provided general guidelines for the Muslims to overcome the issues they face. They suggested that the Muslim community need to establish a constructive relationship with people of other faiths and convey the message of Islam through *da'awah* (i.e. preaching) work. They urged Muslims to maintain their distinctive characteristics of *khayr al-ummah* (i.e. the best nation) and play an active role in the development of the country. However, their analysis of the socio-political scenario and methods were different from each other. The paper shall compare and analyse their approaches of religious harmony and will investigate their relevance to Indian society.

In post-independent India, most of the Muslim intellectuals, scholars and organizations urged people to establish religious harmony in the country. Nadwi and Khan both developed their thoughts based on their understanding of Islam and thoughts on the socio-political scenario of the country. To study the contribution of both the scholars in this regard, it would be relevant to look at their joint, as well as unique, contributions in this field. Hence, the paper will look into a) their view on Muslims in India, b) Khan's view of Ḥudaybiya, and c) *Payam-e-Insaniyat* Movement by Nadwi.

### **Nadwi's Views on the Status of Muslims in India**

Nadwi believed that Indian Muslim are equal citizens of India, as other and religious harmony, should be based on human values, such as peaceful co-existence, mutual respect, brotherhood, love and tolerance between people of different faiths are needed in the country to ensure its development.

Nadwi stated that the Muslims were not only the equal citizens of India, but they were also the prime contributors to the country. They managed to enhance Indian civilization with a new spirit and awakened the people of the country with dynamic moral and spiritual values. The



Muslims also initiated and led the freedom struggle against the British imperialism and gave up their lives for the freedom struggle.<sup>1</sup> Further, as a secular and democratic country, India promises equal rights to all citizens of the state irrespective of religion, caste, colour and race. The constitution of the country guaranteed fundamental rights to all citizens of the state, such as Rights to Freedom of Religion (Article 25-28), Right to Freedom (Article 19-22) and Right to Equality (Article 14-18).<sup>2</sup> Based on these self-evident realities, Nadwi believed that the Muslims in post-independent India have equal rights in the country.<sup>3</sup>

Nadwi's point of view was appealing. Commenting on the adverse environment of post-independent India, Nadwi stated that:

We firmly and clearly declare that in many respects, the Muslims in India are discontented, they have many just and legitimate grievances and they are passing through a most critical period of their history. but we have lost faith neither in the Mercy of God, nor in our strength and ability to live, nor in the destiny of India, nor in the future of democracy, nor in the spirit of our constitution. We have resolved to live here and nowhere else, and to tell you the honest truth... were we not born here? Have we not been living here for a thousand years? Is not our existence a greater reality and far more enduring than the Himalayas or the Ganges? We are older than the Qutub Minar and Taj Mahal and our claims on India is stronger than of these monuments, which we ourselves gave to the motherland. They owe their existence to us. We must and we shall solve all the problems and difficulties that are plaguing the country at present. We are an inseparable part of Indian nationality, Indian culture, and Indian civilization. We will complain and protest a thousand times; we get angry and we will forgive and forget and be friend again. In any case, we have got to live in this country and with all our distinctive attributes and characteristics. We are confident that it will be possible for us to do so. The clouds that

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<sup>1</sup> Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Muslims in India*, (Lucknow: Islamic Research and Publication, 1980), p.5.

<sup>2</sup> Anwar Alam, *India: The Struggle of Identity Politics in India*.

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/1435114/Professor\\_Anwar\\_Alam\\_The\\_struggle\\_of\\_identity\\_politics\\_in\\_India.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1435114/Professor_Anwar_Alam_The_struggle_of_identity_politics_in_India.pdf), accessed: 4 July, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Welcome Address to all India Muslim Consultative Convention*, (Lucknow: Islamic Research and publication, 1964), pp.3-4.

darken the horizon today will ultimately disappear. Communal peace and society are bound to return to the land.<sup>1</sup>

Nadwi's views had a broader scope and direct application which do not only restore courage among the Muslims in the country but inculcate the essence of love, humanitarianism, peace and co-operation. Earlier, people of India have experienced the message of peace, love, compassion and selfless service to humanity by the great Muslim saints and Godly oriented people such as Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 1236), Niẓām al-Dīn Awliya (d. 1325) and many other Muslim preachers. Also, Nadwi's stand for Muslims in India is evident. He contended that the Muslims were chosen by God to be Indians and that India is their home. This should encourage them to contribute devotedly to the progress and development of India. Nadwi believed that by revealing their positive behaviour to their fellow citizens, the Muslims would regain dignity and respect as the most significant minority in the country. They need to engage with people and prove that Islam offers sustainable solutions for the problems of the country. By following Nadwi's ideas, the Muslims may win over the hearts of fellow citizens and establish a peaceful society which is free from any religious conflicts.<sup>2</sup> They also can re-emerge as part of the contributors to the country and at the same time play their role as *khayr al-ummah*.

### **Khan's Views on the Status of Muslims in India**

Khan suggested Muslims in India to practice self-criticism and take unilateral steps to end the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims. He also considered Muslims to be responsible for the communal riots in the country.<sup>3</sup>

As per Khan, the fundamental reason for the marginalized condition of the Muslims in India was due to their negative mentality and attitude towards the majority community. However, this might be against reality as per the findings of other official reports.<sup>4</sup> His suggestion for the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid ..., pp.10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Sikand, *Muslims in India since 1947...*, pp.46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Tahrik Payam-e-Insaniyat*, (Lucknow: Message of Humanity Forum, n.d.), pp.1-2.

<sup>4</sup> See, Prime Minister's High-Level Committee Cabinet Secretariat Government of India *Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India*. New Delhi: Cirrus Graphics, 2006), 8-16. and Rakesh Basant, Abusaleh Shariff. *Handbook of Muslims in India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University press, 2010), M.K.A Siddiqui, *Muslims in free India*, (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 1998) and see also, Omer Khalidi, *Indian Muslims Since Independence*, (New Delhi, Vikas publishing house, 1995).

Muslims to be apologetic before the majority community was also less encouraging and demoralizing, especially among the Muslim youth.

Khan blamed the Muslim community and believed that they were in need for self-criticism. Although his ideas were based on non-violence and reconciliation which the Muslims in India also found in, it cannot always be based on the Treaty of *Hudaybiyah*. Further, the notion, by Khan, to blame Indian Muslims of hating non-Muslims could be disputed.<sup>1</sup> However, earlier Khan's stand was different. He used to believe that the Muslims were the primary victims of communal riots in the country.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Khan seemed to be undermining the Muslims in India and their contribution to the country.

### **The Thought's of Khan towards Ḥudaybiya**

Khan suggested that Muslims should avoid any forms of confrontations. They also give up all idealistic and political approaches and develop good relations with other communities. He even criticized the Muslims as the leading cause of religious disharmony in the country. Khan firmly claimed that his approach of religious harmony in India is based on his reading of the Treaty of *Ḥudaybiya*.<sup>3</sup> Overall, Khan asserted that the foundation of the relation between the Muslims and the non-Muslims is *da'wah*. The Muslims are *dā'ī* (preachers), and the non-Muslims are their addresses (*mad'ūs*). Thus, according to Khan, Muslims are responsible for establishing a constructive relationship with people of other faiths.<sup>4</sup> In such a way, Muslims may follow the method of the Prophet (PBUH). Khan stated that the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized displaying mercy towards humankind as it is essential for establishing peace and religious harmony. According to him, Muslims should prefer peace over the conflict as it was demonstrated by Prophet (PBUH). As per Khan, only a defensive war was allowed by The Prophet (PBUH).<sup>5</sup> To him, a believer must observe two essential characteristics, as mentioned in *āyah* of the Qur`ān:

*I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser.*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, *Dawate Haq, (The True Message)*, (New Delhi: Maktaba Al-Risala, 2016), pp.68-69.

<sup>2</sup> Magazine *al Furqan*, (April – May 1964), pp.36-56.

<sup>3</sup> Safiyur Rahman Mubarakpuri, *Al Raḥīqul Makhtūm*, (Makkah: Rabita 'Alam al Islami, 2005), pp.289-299.

<sup>4</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, *Rahe Amal, (The Way of Action)*, (New Delhi: Maktaba Al-Risala, 1990), p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, "Rahmatul Lil'alamin (The Mercy to Mankind), *Al-Risala*, 159 (February 1990), p.28.

<sup>6</sup> Qur`ān, al-A`rāf: 67.

An essential quality of a true *dā'ī* is to be a sincere sympathizer for his or her addressees irrespective of their negative behaviour or reaction towards him or her. The message of *da'wah* is a trust (*amānah*) from God with believers. Hence, *dā'ī* must be trustworthy (*amīn*) in conveying the message of God. Khan viewed that through *da'wah* work, Muslims can develop personal relations with the people of other faiths.<sup>1</sup>

Khan claimed that his approach of religious harmony in India is based on his reading of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya. He says that his model of Ḥudaybiya is the only possible approach for Muslims to establish religious harmony in the country. It appears that he overlooks all the other incidents and occurrences in the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and refers to only one incident for all situations. A careful study of the *Sīrah* (the life of Prophet (PBUH)) illustrates that the Prophet (PBUH) used to deal with the issues that occurred in his life as per circumstances. Indeed, Islam always prefers to establish peace over conflicts. Still, it had prescribed some fundamental laws of war and peace agreements with the opponents and allowed Muslim leaders to deal as per the present conditions. It reflects that there is no status-quo command which should be followed by Muslims. For example, the battle of *Uḥud* was a defensive war while during the battle of Trench (Khandaq) the Prophet (PBUH) thought of establishing a treaty of peace with some tribes by giving them some portion of yearly dates production and, during Ḥudaybiya all provisions of *Quraysh* were agreed upon.

On the other hand, the Prophet (PBUH) ignored the request of Abu Sufiyān to continue the treaty, and it resulted in the Opening of Makkah. Overall looking at all the battles mentioned above, one may understand that all incidents share some divine wisdom that the Prophet (PBUH) had displayed via adopting different methods to deal with opposition. However, the peaceful situation was the aim in all the cases. Nevertheless, emphasizing on one particular practice of the Prophet (PBUH) for all contemporary circumstances and claim it to be required and possible method seems to be a selective approach. Thus, Khan has developed his thought based on his reading which appears to be limited in driving the results.

Moreover, his understanding of the treaty also was different compared to other scholars. Khan viewed that, during *Ḥudaybiya*, the Prophet (PBUH) aimed to establish peace and avoided any confrontations

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<sup>1</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, *Rahe Amal, (The Way of Action)*, (New Delhi: Maktaba Al-Risala, 1990), p.111.

even when he was provoked. He further stated that the Prophet (PBUH), also, sent ‘Uthmān, the softest person, as his envoy to inform *Quraysh* about his intention of performing ‘Umrah.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, according to scholars of *Sīrah*, the Prophet (PBUH) insisted the people of Makkah to either establish the treaty or to conflict. Thus, the claim of Khan that Prophet (PBUH) returned to Madinah after he was denied the entry in Makkah is incorrect.

Moreover, firstly ‘Umar was chosen by the Prophet (PBUH) as his envoy to inform *Quraysh*. ‘Umar used to be strict in dealing with pagan Arabs as mentioned by the famous Muslim scholar and historian Ibn Hishām. Also, he had no one from his clan to support him. ‘Umar suggested ‘Uthmān’s name as ‘Uthmān had many relatives in Makkah at that time.<sup>2</sup>

Further, Khan argues that the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions agreed to pledge, the *Bay‘u al-Riḍwān*, mainly because he wanted to ensure them to be steadfast at *Ḥudaybiya* and, if the *Quraysh* attacks Muslims, they will retaliate. However, if they come to compromise, Muslims should agree and accept all their conditions. Khan concluded that the pledge- *Bay‘u al-Riḍwān* primarily was not for the war or else the Prophet (PBUH) would not have been agreed with their conditions.<sup>3</sup>

To validate his argument, Khan takes the view of Jābir b. ‘Abdullah who narrated that the pledge was for companions to remain steadfast at *Ḥudaybiya*. Khan seems to be ignoring the opinions of other companions of the Prophet (PBUH). As per Ibn Hishām, when the Prophet (PBUH) heard the news of ‘‘Uthmān’s assassination by the people of Makkah, he (PBUH) said “we will not move from here (*Ḥudaybiya*) until we take the revenge of ‘Uthmān,” and he pledged with his companions for *Jihād* and death as mentioned by most of the companions.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, the conclusion, that the *Bay‘u al-Riḍwān* primarily was not for the war or the Prophet (PBUH) would not have been agreed with unilateral conditions, can be proved the other way. As per the scholars of *Sīrah*, Prophet (PBUH) pledged after hearing the news of ‘Uthmān’s

<sup>1</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, “*Bi’at Ridhwan*” (The Treaty of *Ḥudaybiyyah*), *Al-Risala*, 164 (January 1989), p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hishām writes that the Prophet (PBUH) firstly wanted to send ‘Umar to convey the message of Muslims. However, he suggested the name of ‘Uthmān saying that people of Makkah keep tremendous enmity for him, and he does not have any relative in Makkah to protect him. On the other hand, ‘Uthmān has many relations in Makkah. Thus, ‘Uthmān was sent to Makkah as the convoy of Muslims. See, *Al Sīrah al Nabawiyyah*, vol. 3..., pp. 225-226.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, “*Bi’at Ridhwan*” (The Treaty of *Ḥudaybiyyah*)..., pp.4-5

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al Sīrah al Nabawiyyah*..., vol. 3, p.226.

assassination, and it was fundamentally for the revenge of 'Uthmān's assassination. However, after knowing that the news was untrue and 'Uthmān arrived safely, the Prophet (PBUH) withdrew his intention of military action.<sup>1</sup> Besides, during the hostile situation, Prophet (PBUH) used to consult with his companions and sought their consensus. Sometimes, he (PBUH) preferred the views of companions. However, the Treaty of *Hudaybiya* was complete as per the divine revelation from God to Prophet (PBUH). Thus, it is exceptional, which cannot be taken as a model and applied in all the circumstances.

Additionally, if one analyses the situation of the battle of Trench (Khandaq), it can be concluded that the Muslims in Madīnah found themselves in the most hostile state. Abu Sufiyān united most of Arabs against Muslims to exterminate them and to safeguard the political and economic supremacy of *Quraysh* of Makkah. They prepared for two years and accumulated an army of ten thousand soldiers. On the other hand, Muslims were panic to know this news. The Qur'an describes the hostile situation:

[Remember] when they came at you from above you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats, and you assumed about Allah [various] assumptions. There the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking.<sup>2</sup>

During this time, the Prophet (PBUH) thought to establish a treaty with some tribes by giving them some portion of yearly date production.<sup>3</sup> The Prophet (PBUH) thought it might soften the situation, and those tribes will withdraw their support from Abu Sufiyān and leave the battlefield. However, the companions presented a different opinion to the Prophet (PBUH), after knowing that it was the Prophet's suggestion, not a revealed order from God. They expressed their will to fight; even Sa'ad Ibn Waqāsh erased the clauses of the agreement.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., see also Abil fidā Ḥafiz Ibn Kathīr al Dimashqī, *Albidayah wal Nihayah*, (Lebanon: Dār al Kutub al 'ilmiyyah, 2003), vol. 3, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'an: al-'Aḥzāb: 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al Sīrah al Nabawiyah*, vol. 3..., pp.150-151.

<sup>4</sup> Idris Kandhlawi, *Sirate Mustafa*, (Karachi: Altaf and Sons, n.d.), pp.317-318.

The Qur'an mentions the enthusiasm of Prophet's companions during the battle saying, "And when the believers saw the companies, they said, "This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth." And it increased them only in faith and acceptance" (Al-'Aḥzāb: 22).

short, he (PBUH) also did not emphasize that compromise is mandatory for all the circumstances.

On the other hand, during *Hudaybiyah*, the method of the Prophet (PBUH) was completely different from all other incidents. Although, 1400 Muslims were with him (PBUH) and they had a better defensive strength than the battle of Badr. Additionally, Makkah's behaviour was provocative and distrustful still the Prophet (PBUH) established the Treaty of *Hudaybiyah* without consulting with any of his (PBUH) companions. He (PBUH) agreed with all the conditions of Makkans even with the fifth clause, which stated that if anyone from Makkah goes to Madinah, then Muslims must return him and not vice versa. Muslims, including 'Umar, objected it. However, the Prophet (PBUH) replied to his companions "I am Allah's servant and prophet, and I cannot disobey Him, nor He will destroy me".<sup>1</sup> Imām Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Kathīr quoted the ḥadīth of Bukhārī, "Indeed, I am the Prophet (PBUH) of God, and I do not disobey Him."<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Ḥajr asserted that the Prophet (PBUH) was guided by revelation in implementing the Treaty of *Hudaybiyah*.<sup>3</sup> Further, the Muslims were in severe grief with the clauses of *Hudaybiyah*.<sup>4</sup> If compromising in all situations, even with unilateral conditions of opponents was the fundamental philosophy of Islam, then, Muslims would not have been surprised and sad during the treaty; instead, they would have been happy. Moreover, after a few years in 8 AH, Fath Makkah (the conquest of Makkah) took place as a result of the violation of the Treaty of *Hudaybiyah* by the *Quraysh*. Abu Sufiyan requested the Prophet (PBUH) to maintain the treaty and ask recommendations from his close companions. However, his request was turned down.

Consequently, the opening of Makkah took place.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the discussion above clearly supports the notation that the incident of *Hudaybiya* was exceptional. It was not a fundamental teaching of Islam as presented by Khan.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al Sīrah al Nabawīyah...*, vol. 3, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqlanī, *Fathl Bārī bisharḥil Bukhārī*, (Riyadh: Dar Ibn Ḥzm, n.d.), vol. 2, 1350. See also, Abil fidā Ḥafiz Ibn Kathīr al Dimashqī, *Albidayah wal Nihayah*, (Lebanon: Dar al Kotob al 'ilmiyyah, 2003), vol. 3, 183 and Abdur Raḥman Ibn Khaldūn, *Tarīkh Ibn Khaldūn*, (Lebanon: Dar al Kotob al 'ilmiyyah, 1992), vol. 2, pp. 432-434.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid..., p. 1356.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al Sīrah al Nabawīyah...*, p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid..., vol. 4, pp. 26-28.

Khan's view on the unity of religions is a distinct contribution to the knowledge. He firmly asserts that the concept of the unity in religion is unrealistic and illogical. On the other hand, the differences in terms of religions are a proved reality. Instead of claiming that all religions are the same, the spirit of tolerance, compassion, and dignity among the people must be established. This is because the unity implies accepting the differences and promoting a state of peaceful co-existence in the society.<sup>1</sup> In order to create a peaceful society, the people must develop a sense of harmony by accepting such differences. Having disagreements is the nature of human beings that can never be abolished. Hence, the key to establish harmony in society is mutual respect. Differences, indeed, are not a sign of evil, but a quality to accomplish success and to respect other human beings.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Payam-e-Insaniyat Movement of Nadwi***

Nadwi suggested that the Muslims and other communities should adapt his concept of Payam-e-Insaniyat Movement, which was based on a confederacy of *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl* to establish religious harmony in the country.<sup>3</sup>

Nadwi aimed to create religious harmony based on love, co-operation and mutual understanding.<sup>4</sup> The demand of the time and his consciousness led Nadwi to establish the *Payam-e-Insaniyat Movement*. Besides, contrary to Khan, Nadwi did not confine his mission within the Muslim society but broadened it by approaching all communities in the country. He stated that:

After waiting for a long period, we decided to take the problem head on and approach all people without any distinction of colour, creed and race. Though we were well aware of our limitations and lack of resources. When a neighbourhood or a village is on fire nobody looks for his or her handicaps or weakness, even dumb people shout and handicapped start to run.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, the foundation of his movement was based on the confederacy of *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl*, reflects that it united the pre-Islamic Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, "Ek Interview (An Interview)," *Al-Risala*, 267 (February 1999), p.40.

<sup>2</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, "Pur amn Zindagi ka Raz (The Secret of a Successful Life)," *Al-Risala*, 284 (July 2000), pp.14-15.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid..., pp.54-55.

<sup>4</sup> Sheikh Jameil Ali, *Islamic Thought and Movement in Subcontinent*, (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2000), p. 307.

<sup>5</sup> Nadwi, *Karwane Zindagi...*, vol. 2, pp.110-111.



society based on human values which we need even in today's world. All known clans of *Quraysh*, which included Banū Hāshim, Banū Muṭalib, Banū 'Asr, Banū Zuhrā and Banū Tamīm united together to fight against injustice and violence, defending the rights of the poor and the weak in the society. It, also, aimed to encourage people towards goodness and protect them from evil practices.<sup>1</sup> Nadwi had relevant experience and exposure of the post-independent Indian society. Hence, he suggested possible methods for establishing religious harmony in the country. He commented on the situation and stated that:

It is natural, and an instinct, that a person cannot see the destruction of his home, which has been built and decorated by the best of his efforts and energies and those of his forefathers. Nor can the same person let anybody make a hole in the boat in which he is travelling.<sup>2</sup>

The fundamental objective of *Payam-e-Insaniyat* Movement was apolitical but to focus on the issues which were central for the development, prosperity and peace for the country. In brief, the movement was to create an ideal society where people would be able to live in harmony and peace. Nevertheless, Nadwi's suggestions were broad and appeared to be more appealing in the Indian context as compared to views of Khan. Nadwi believed that everyone in India should work together for the betterment of the country. In 1988, Nadwi said:

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<sup>1</sup> After the battle of *Fijar* in the month of *Zi Qa'ada* 'Āas Ibn Wail bought some stuffs from a Yamani trader who came to Makkah for business and refused to pay the price. Zubair Ibn Abdul Muṭalib stood for his help. Finally, leaders of different tribes such as *Banu Hashim, Banu Muṭalib, Banu Asar, Banu Zohra and Banu Ta'im* together with the Prophet (PBUH) gathered at the house of Abdullah bin Jad'ān, the leader of *Banu Ta'im* and established a confederacy against the oppression for suppressing injustice and violence, and vindicating the rights of the destitute and the weak. The Prophet (PBUH) was much influenced by the confederacy. He said after he announced his prophethood that "I witnessed a confederacy in the house of 'Abdullah bin Jad'Ēn. It was more appealing to me than herds of cattle. Even now in the period of Islam I would respond positively to attend such a meeting if I am invited" see, Safiyur Rahman Mubarakpuri. *Al Raḥīqul Makhtūm*, (Makkah: Rabita 'Olam al Islami, 2005), 54-55. Ibn Kathīr says that the confederacy of *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl* took place twenty years before the *b'athat* of the Prophet (PBUH) and after four months of the battle of *Fijār* during the month of *Zi Q'ada*. See, Abī al-Fidā Ḥafīz Ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī *Albidayah wal Nihayah*, ed. Muḥammed Abdul Hamīd al Numaisī, (Lebanon: Dār al fikr al 'Ilmī, 1986), vol. 2, p.291.

<sup>2</sup> Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Tahrik Payam-e-Insaniyat*, (Lucknow: Halqa Payam-e-Insaniyat, 1988), pp. 6-7.

I would like to tell you without any preface or philosophical and learned explanation that every Indian has two homes. One is his own house in which he lives with his family and children. It is essential that there should be peace, security and affection and atmosphere of harmony and fraternity in every house. There is another home, a bigger one, and this is his country. But we all often forget that both are our own homes- the smaller one in which we live with our family and the bigger one composed of innumerable small houses in which reside our small family, we also belong to the larger family- the society and the country. We also lose sight of the fact that both these homes are fated to go together. Or, the fact is that the future of the bigger home does not hinge on our smaller house to the same extent as its fate rests on the bigger one. If this bigger house has peace and harmony, its members have love and regard for one another, everyone is aware of his duties and obligations to the other, has a respect for the life and property of the other and is willing to defend it, then that house and country is fortunate. It is then a home worth living and dying for, and safe for every danger. But if we do not recognize this bigger home- the country- as our own house, or remain indifferent to it, or make no effort to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony and mutual trust in it, or else we fail to adore it as our own house, then our own smaller house will neither be safe nor have any future.<sup>1</sup>

Nadwi knew that communal tension and disharmony could hinder the development of India. If people's life and wealth are always at risk, the process of development of the country will no longer continue. Hence, he suggested that the Indians should work hard to establish religious harmony and peaceful environment in the country.<sup>2</sup> These provisions were related to ground realities to ensure peace between the societies. His movement did not only engross to eliminate communal tension and disharmony, but it focused on some other important problems such as extravagance, corruption and immorality in the country. He pointed out that such behaviours had caused the downfall of various empires.<sup>3</sup> He stated that:

Immorality in any society disregarded for ethical norms and values, self-gratification, excessive greed, violence and operation

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<sup>1</sup> Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Tahrik Payam-e-Insaniyat*, (Lucknow: Message of Humanity Forum, n.d.), pp.1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Nadwi, *Karwane Zindagi...*, vol. 2, pp.112-113.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

do not have a corrupting influence only on those who commit these evil deeds but work upon the entire society and vitiate the whole atmosphere if no effort is made to check them. The society which closes its eyes to these iniquities falls prey to them.<sup>1</sup>

The aims of *Payam-e-Insaniyat* Movement were designed to promote an atmosphere of brotherhood and love and to abolish communalism, corruption, sectarianism and economic exploitation in the society. It, also, aimed to protect the right of a marginalized community and to remove tyrannical or unethical customs and practice from Indian society. Nadwi argued that the main concerns of his movement were to help and assist the poor and the oppressed, irrespective of race, colour and religion while inculcating the spirit of social service and its seriousness, especially among the younger generation.<sup>2</sup> Besides, contrary to *Hudaybiya*, the Prophet (PBUH) desired to join- Hilf al-Fuḍhūl again, he (PBUH) said:

I witnessed a confederacy in the house of ‘Abdullah bin Jad‘Ēn. It was more appealing to me than herds of cattle. Even now in the period of Islam, I would respond positively to attend such a meeting if I were invited.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the *Payam-e-Insaniyat* Movement is more relevant, has a broader scope and message for post-independent India, as compared to Khan’s suggestions.

## Conclusion

The historical facts of recent times show that the current scenario of post-independent India has been polarized significantly. The establishment of religious harmony and bridging the gap between the communities became the most critical challenge before the secular and diverse minds, especially for Muslim scholars. However, the analysis of the views of Nadwi and Khan suggests that Nadwi’s approach is more relevant and appropriate to contemporary Indian society. Khan’s ideas are passive and unilateral, which may discourage Muslim youth, especially his blame of communal riots on Muslims. On the other hand, Nadwi considers Muslims as

<sup>1</sup> Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Dangerous Situation in Our Country and Responsibilities of Patriots*, (Lucknow: Message of Humanity Forum, 1988), p.5.

<sup>2</sup> Nadwi, *Tahrik Payam-e-Insaniyat...*, pp.6-9.

<sup>3</sup> Safiyur Rahman Mubarakpuri. *Al Raḥīqul Makhtūm*, (Makkah: Rabita ‘Alam al Islami, 2005), pp.54-55.

significant contributors to Indian civilization and culture. His suggestions do not only restore the courage among Muslims in India but inculcate the essence of love, humanitarianism, peace and co-operation among all Indians. He suggests Muslims, together with the people of other faiths, can play a constructive role in the development of the country. Khan's views are based on his framework of peace (*amn*) and compromise (*sulh*) and Nadwi's observations show his context of peace (*amn*) and steadfastness (*istiqāma*). This study concludes that Nadwi's approach was based on universal values and appeared as courageous, especially for Muslim youth to contribute to the development of the country without compromising their faith and identity. Muslims in India need to recuperate Nadwi's approach. They may play their role as *khayr al-ummah* (best nation) and deliver sustainable solutions for the issues offered by Islam.

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