CHAPTER 7

ALI MIYAN’S THOUGHT RELATED TO WEST

Introduction of Ali Miyan to the West

Though Ali Miyan was, a great Islamic Scholar received his education from Madrasah but keenly observed the Western culture and its negative impacts on humankind. According to Ali Miyan, the Western civilization is based on materialistic thought. There is no scope for spirituality and morality in it. This is because its origin based on Greek philosophy and thoughts. The West has a genealogical relation with the Greek civilization. Whereas, the Greek civilization was purely materialistic and there is no or very little scope for spirituality in it. We are explaining here the fundamentals of the Greek Civilization.

Distrust in spiritual truths, worship of material comfort, exaggerated communalism were the outstanding features of Greek civilization.¹

The Greeks did not believe in God without giving him physical forms and shapes, and making images of his attributes and installing them in their temples. A logical list on ten kinds of gods with different shapes and “Categories” was included in Aristotle’s writings.²
An appropriate interpretation of the Greek civilization, was given by Dr Haas, a German Scholar, in the three lectures he delivered at Geneva on “What is European Civilization?” He said, “The first stage of European Civilization was set by Ancient Greece where ‘the aim was to develop man harmoniously’. The supreme measure was a beautiful body. It clearly emphasizes the senses. The physical education, games, dancing, even mental education, poetry, music drama, philosophy and natural sciences were kept in proportion to develop the mind but not at the expense of the body. Its religion had no spirituality, no theology and no mysticism etc”. 3

Ali Miyan pointed out, “The Greek spirit was rationalistic and electric. The Egyptian spirit was mystical and devotional. It was observed that, the Egyptian deities were chiefly honoured by lamentations and the Greek deities by dances”. 4

The basic structure of the theological metaphysics of the Greeks was such that it left very little room for the development of the spirit of religious reverence and awe. Thus The Greek Civilization was agnostic. They did not strictly deny the existence of God but they had no place for Him in their practical life. 5
In the Book “Maza Khasir al-Aalam bil inhitatil Muslimeen” (Islam and the World), Ali Miyan presents his opinion on the mishandling of scientific inventions. He holds, scientific inventions are in themselves neither good nor bad. They rendered good or bad by the use, which we have for them. Material well-being, power and prestige have to be the most acceptable thing in the West. All the assets of mind and matter aimed persistently towards discovering means and contrivance, which can safeguard the realization of these objectives with utmost ease and speed. Gradually, the means turned into the objectives.

Ali Miyan demonstrates, Europeans have developed a strong urge for machines and in thousand ways delegated them to the very function of living. Before half a century ago, comfort regarded by them, as the aim of the life. Then, due to various reasons, the emphasis shifted to speed and now everyone is in pursuit of it. Westerners talked of progress because with the aid of a few scientific discoveries, they have succeeded in establishing a society, which progresses for comforts only. Indeed, it might be true to say that, the ability to change the position of his body on the surface of the earth with ever-increasing speed is probably the most concrete conception of Utopia in the mind of the contemporary young person. Speed, definitely, is his peculiar God, and upon its altar, peace,
comfort, security and consideration for other persons are heartlessly sacrificed.  

Ali Miyan judge the moral declining of the West appropriately he emphasized, the coupling of moral and religious depravity with a phenomenal progress in the scientific and industrial fields led to the creation of a striking disparity between power and ethics. Men learnt to fly in the air like birds and to swim in the water like fish, but they forgot how to walk straight on the earth. Undisciplined knowledge and unenlightened wisdom furnished every highwayman with a sword. Deadly weapons were placed in untrained hands, which repeatedly plunged the world into horrible blood baths. Now Science has given the atomic and Hydrogen bombs to humankind as a weapon for suicide. Have the contemporary achievements of science brought man near to fulfillment of the purposes and end of his life? Does modern man, with all his power over nature, find himself in a happier position than with those who lived earlier? We enabled to travel very fast from place to place, but places to which we travel are diminishing the worth to travel. Distances destroyed and nations brought to one another’s doorsteps, with the result that international relations are getting worse, and the strains and stresses engendered by these new facilities for knowing our neighbors engulf our world in war. The
invention of broadcasting enabled us to speak to neighboring nations, with the result that, each nation exhausts its resources for irritating its neighbors. By attempting to convince others, of the superiority of its form of government.\textsuperscript{8} All of today’s inventions; the aircrafts humming in the sky, the knowledge of mathematics, dynamics, mechanics, familiarity with electricity and internal combustion, ingenuity in the application of knowledge, the skill in the working of woods and metals, suggest that their inventors were supermen.\textsuperscript{9} Now consider the purposes for which the modern aircrafts has been, and then notice how increasingly they are used to drop bombs to shatter, choke, burn and dismember, defenseless people. These, are the purposes of either idiots or devils.\textsuperscript{10}

Hence it should be noted that the Islamic attitude is different with regard to modern technological development, it doesn’t deny totally the use of new sciences and technologies, but rather credits it as a blessing and mercy from Allah. In the words of Maulana Ali Miyan, “We believe that the real purpose of science is to remove hindrances in the way of true development of man’s personality by harnessing the forces latent in nature in such a way so as to broaden life and make it rich in all its aspects”.\textsuperscript{11}
Ali Miyan elaborates, in pre-historic time man travelled on foot. Then he learnt the use of the beasts of burden, later on he invented the cart. But man is a restless soul. He is never satisfied with his situation and is always striving to make himself more and more comfortable. As his needs multiplied, his standards of comfort and speed also changed. Better and quicker modes of transport were developed. The steamship has replaced the sailing vessel, and new marvels of speed and efficiency invented to travel both, by land and air. These inventions used as a means to make life good and comfortable, they are a blessing of Allah. The Qur’an has described it as a bounty from our Lord. The advantage man enjoys over other creatures in the matter of travel is a bounty from lord. The Qur’an affirms,

لا أُنفَعُوا بِالْأَنْفُسِ إِلَّا بِذَٰلِكَ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَحِيمٌ

“And cattle He has created for you (men), from them ye derive warmth, and numerous benefits, and of their (meat) ye eat. And ye have a sense of beauty in them as ye drive them home in the evening, and as ye lead them forth to pasture in the morning. And they carry your heavy
loads to lands that ye could not (otherwise) reach except with souls distressed, for your Lord is indeed Most Kind Most Merciful. And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and use for show and he has created (other) things of which ye have no knowledge” (Qur’an 16:5-8).

"We have honored the sons of Adam, and we have provided them with transport on land and sea, and we have given them for sustenance things good and pure, and we have conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation.” (Qur’an 17:70).

"And He it is that has created pairs in all things, and has made for you ships and cattle on which ye ride, in order that ye may sit firm on their backs, and when so seated, ye may celebrate the (Kind) Favour of your Lord, and say, “Glory to Him Who has subjected these to our (use), for we could never have accomplished this (by ourselves), and to our Lord, surely, must we turn back”. (Qur’an 43:12-13)
“And to Solomon (We made) the wind (obedient), its early morning (stride) was month’s (journey) and its evening (stride) was a month’s (journey)”. (Qur’an 34:12)\textsuperscript{12}

But there is a profound difference between the approach of a Believer and that of a non-Believer to these gifts bestowed by God. When a Believer avails them, he does it with a strong feeling of humility, because he knows in his heart, that it is only the Mercy of Allah that has enslaved the free, high-spirited animals and the inert steel and wood to his will, otherwise, he himself was helpless.\textsuperscript{13}

Ali Miyan predicts the moral degradation of the West, he thought, in the West, today, ethical questions confined to the considerations of practical utility alone. It is just the other way round in Islam, where the real goal is the inner progress of man. Material utility came to dominate Western thought and morals in around the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, when its social philosophers propagated the view that all those ethical principles which did not have a direct bearing on the material betterment of society did not deserve serious attention. Eventually this view gained a stronghold and commanded all fields of human activity. The virtues that had purely ethical values credited to a doubtful background of life, and condemned to a mere theoretical existence, left without the least power of influencing humanity.
In recent times, Western literature has exhibited a striking fondness for the word “nature”. But the context in which it is used, and the meanings that are sought to be conveyed through it show that it implies only animal nature. It stands for the world of flesh and shuts out the soul. Now, as the Western society becomes more and more hi-tech eventually, even the animal warmth, begun to fade from the nature of man and the individual is turning into a heap of unresponsive matter.  

Ali Miyan quotes Muhammad Asad, “The West, brings forth the new, utilitarian morality which daily grows more and more visible. All virtues, which have direct bearing upon the material welfare of the society. For example, technical efficiency, patriotism, nationalist group-sense etc, are being unduly exalted and sometimes absurdly exaggerated in their value, while virtues, which, have been, valued from a purely ethical point of view, for example, unselfish love or sexual fidelity, rapidly lose their importance because they do not confer a substantial benefit upon society. The age when the assertion on strong family bonds was decisive for the well-being of the group or the clan becoming rapidly outdated, in the modern West, by an age, of collective organization under far broader headings. In a society, which is essentially technological and is being organized at a rapidly increasing pace, on purely mechanical
lines, the behavior of a son towards his father is of no great social importance, so long as these individuals behave within the limits of general decency imposed by the society on the intercourse of its members. Consequently, the European father daily loses more and more authority over his son, and the son loses respect for his father. Their mutual relations get slowly overruled and for all practical purposes annihilated by the postulates of a mechanized society which has a tendency to abolish all privileges that could be exercised by one individual over another, and in the logical development of this idea also the privileges allowed by family relationship and therefore, the old relation between father and son or other such relations is becoming old-fashioned.\textsuperscript{15}

Ali Miyan observed, when the spiritual vacuum created, Europe took a tragic turn. It descended by degrees into the depth of materialism. Its social thinkers and scientists proceeded to investigate the nature of the world and of life, as if there were no absolute power, which created them and ruled over them. They interpreted the material universe and its manifestations along mechanical lines and considered it as their “aim”. They examine every object and concept through scientific methods, rejecting scornfully whatever based on Faith and morality. One by one they rejected everything, that existed apart from matter and energy, everything that was not realizable in experience or could
not be weighed and measured. For a long time the Europeans, did not openly reject the Faith, and all of them are not atheists even today, but the intellectual and moral position, they had adopted definitely reflect their preference for worldly comforts over the element of Faith. Attempts made after the Renaissance to produce reconciliation between Religion and Science, as some sort of religious arrangement always thought necessary, to preserve the tranquility of society by influencing social relations of men. But the pace set by materialistic civilization was so hot that religion could not stand it. It also entailed a good deal of inconvenience to keep materialism in harmony with transcendental truths. As decades and centuries passed, the ceremony waived off, and Europe took unconditionally to the worship of materialism. Significantly enough, there appeared a number of outstanding social and political writers and teachers, who indiscriminately sowed the seeds of materialism in the minds of people. Materialism had already paved the way for them by divorcing politics from ethics and prescribing a dual standard of morality, one private and the other public. If religion must exist, he taught, let it confined to the personal sector of life only. It has no business in politics. The State was a law unto itself. The subject matter of Christianity was the other world, it had nothing to do with the world man lived in. The State had no use for religious persons, for their religiousness often acted to its
detriment and prevented them from disregarding the postulates of morality in the hour of its need. Princes and officials of the State should cultivate the virtues of a fox and be ready to take recourse to deceit, falsehood and treachery in the pursuit of national objectives.¹⁷

Ali Miyan observed, “Western philosophers and writers devastated the standards and values of religion. They scoff at the age-old notions of religious morality and, after presenting sin in highly fascinating colours, invited people to give a free rein to their wills. Western Civilization had reverted to its origins. It became merely a new edition of the pagan civilizations of olden Greece and Rome. All the marks and traits of these ancient civilizations that had got subdued under the influence of Oriental Christianity revived by the cultural craftsmen of the 19th century. The same lack of spiritual feeling, the same inability to believe that characterized the religions of the Greeks and the Romans is apparent in the religious make-up of the modern West. The same extravagance of sensuality that once encountered in the cultures of Greece and Rome in olden days exhibited in full colours in the Western Civilization. The soul of the modern Western young man is not a bit different from the soul of the democratic young man of ancient Greece as portrayed by Plato in his Republic”.¹⁸
Impact of Materialism on the East

The Asiatic Nations, which are following in the footsteps of the European nations, are facing an even darker future. They lack the spiritual power, which alone can save humanity from the slavery of desire. The great teachings of the ancient Prophets (pbut) which once had cast their healthy and beneficial influence on the society of the East have become a spent force. The nations of East lack the sense of national solidarity and the consciousness of the citizenship possessed by the nations of the West, the result they cannot raise above petty selfish ends and are suffering from moral and social weakness of a destructive character, which is undermining their social fabric. In consequence, innumerable social and moral evils like bribery, corruption and partisanship come to the surface.19

Analyzing the situations of East and West Ali Miyan acknowledges, the West has all the resources in the world but it is devoid of a healthy sense of purpose whereas the East (Muslims) is endowed with the soundest of aims and ideals but very backward materially.20 What may have been the reason, it is clear that the East, with its distinctive personality and its message, remained isolated from the West and vice-versa. Even when the two came together, it was in an atmosphere of suspicion and doubt, of bitterness and hatred”.21 The people all
over the world regards the East and the West as two hostile entities, which can never be reconciled. If they were to meet together, anywhere else it could be only on the battlefield and if they were to come together anywhere else, it would only be for mutual abuse. However the only way to alter the situation is that, the Muslims should make the fullest use of the physical sciences and technology of the West by learning them wholeheartedly and then subordinating them by means of their own intelligence and industry, for the lofty purposes which the last Prophet (pbuh) has bequeathed to them and by virtue which they have won the distinction of being proclaimed as the “Best of the people”.

Ali Miyan advised Muslims to carry out their duty in these words, “The Muslims could discharge their sacred obligation only when they are able to produce in themselves that strength of Faith and courage of conviction skill and sincerity which can repulse the onslaught of imitative tendencies and glittering catchwords and overcome the petty considerations of immediate gain, both individual and collective. For this their leaders too, will have to make the necessary sacrifices, but even from the personal point of view these sacrifices will not be in vain.”

To Ali Miyan, the Western civilization is doomed. If it is still surviving it is not at all, due to any of its latent qualities but
because no other civilization is ready to take its place. The other civilizations in the world are, at the utmost, its own hazy carbon copies of third caricatures on they are so weak and frail that it is not easy for them to stand against it face to face. Now if a Muslim country or the world of Islam as a whole, can muster enough strength and competence to fill the void that is going to be created by the fall of the Western civilization, it can be re-establish its claim to the leadership of mankind. The Muslims therefore, have to decide whether it is more honourable to approach the West with a begging bowl or to assure the exalted position of the stewardship and guidance of humanity, than which there is no greater glory in the world after apostleship”.

Ali Miyan’s missionary thought

Ali Miyan visited almost all famous countries of the West, particularly USA where he delivered many lectures and sermons. In these lectures, he addressed the public of the country and openly conveyed to them the message of Islam alongside warning them against the shortcomings of their civilization. Many of those lectures compiled in a book named as “Nai dunya Amrica men saaf saaf baten”.

Here we are presenting his missionary thought from his lectures delivered at the congregations held in different
universities of USA, like Harvard, Columbia and Detroit Universities etc.

To Ali Miyan, America is fortunate because Nature has been most generous to it. The Lord has bestowed His gifts lavishly upon this country. Its people are resourceful and enterprising. They are full of enthusiasm for living. They have been granted such a tenacity of purpose, resoluteness and pertinacity that they have made their country a paradise on earth. They have unraveled the mysteries of nature and harnessed its forces to their use. They have turned dust into gold. Now, in this land, wealth pours down from the sky, and rivers of milk and honey flow. This is the result of the galvanic spirit, robust imagination and unflagging eagerness of the American people. The United States not only abounds in mineral resources, but has, also, the hands to exploit them. In this respect, it is exceedingly fortunate and the whole world is, as if it were, keenly desirous to prove this. Everyone is a beggar at its door, eager to solicit its favors. By their ingenuity, sense of discipline and capacity for management, the people here have organized their life so well that the world at large is benefiting from this. In the material and economic fields, they are supreme. However, at the same time, this country is most unfortunate also. It has been a tragedy not only to America, but also to the entire humankind
that it has concentrated entirely on material progress and made the physical world the sole sphere of its activity. It would have been a different story if it received correct guidance, and the boon and blessing of true faith had reached it. If the intellectual faculties of the Americans had been directed altogether towards finding a clue to the mysteries of nature done and they cared to discover the secrets of the heart and the soul, they would have realized that the world of the heart was immeasurably more extensive than the world of matter, so much so that if the whole of the universe was dropped into the heart of man it would be lost like a pebble in an ocean. The people of America would then, have been able to appreciate correctly the place of man in the grand design of creation. Whichever field man chooses for him, Allah will grant him success in it. There is no limit to it, no thus far and no further. The consequences of the enterprise and industry of the West are apparent. The world has shrunk and man has subjugated it to meet his own ends and interests. Had the Westerners exerted themselves, in the same way, in the heart, soul, and belief, the world would have known the true station of humanity. When the West worked on a tree, it produced from it, a fruit no one could dream of identically, when it turned to Physics, Chemistry and Botany, it discovered new worlds. In the earlier days, people were not inclined to believe in the plurality of the worlds and those who made such a
claim, harshly punished by the Papal authority. However, today, a new world being discovered in almost everything. In the same way, had the West known the true station of humanity, and appreciated the distinction that Allah had conferred upon man, the history of our race would have been different. The Western Civilization has reached the highest point of its development. No one knows the mysteries of the universe save Allah, nor can anyone exactly guess, what lies for us in store of tomorrow. But, as the case is at present, this Civilization has brought forth the best fruits it was capable of bearing. Now, we are standing at the crossroads of history. The Western Civilization has almost completed its action, and America, which is a major centre of it, is lapping up cheerfully the surge of its attainments. It can proudly claim to have lifted every veil from the face of Nature and unfolded all its secrets and all the facilities capable of being thought. Nevertheless, the heart of man is devoid of peace. His soul is unhappy. He has reached a stage where life seems meaningless. He is at present, dazed and bewildered. What needed now, to pull him out of the morass of frustration and disillusionment, give it a new message and breathe a new life into it. Life here is moving at a pace, that has left man breathless. The Modern civilization is taking him at break-neck speed, without knowing its results. Neither the reins are in his hands nor are his feet in the stirrups".
Ali Miyan highly motivated the Muslim students and migrants to USA, to pursue missionary work to the West. He advised them to use their education and skills for this prestigious task. He inspires, “you are here in large numbers. There are not merely manual workers among you, but some highly gifted Muslims as well who are studying in the universities, and engaged in valuable scientific investigation. Many of you have made your mark as scholars and researchers. What is more, Islam is spreading in America. It has made a dent. A number of Americans have either embraced Islam or are ready to do so. Our Black Muslim brethren are a source of strength to us. This country, in brief, seems to be taking a new turn and a new ray of hope is appearing. Due to our shortsightedness and internal conflict, we in the past, lost the opportunity to come to its aid. Had Islam been propagated in Europe when the Ottomans had established their rule over a part of the Continent, or, even earlier, when the Moors had swept over Spain, the West, today, would not be finding itself in this position? It would not have been caught in the swamp of materialism. But, unfortunately, we did not rise for its help in the hour of need. The Muslim sailors had reached here, when they had set out into the world in the early centuries of Islam. It is said that the Muslims had discovered America before Columbus. How wonderful it would have been, had they taken advantage of it and given the message
of Islam to the New World. But it was not to be, and the Islamic countries have been paying the penalty for the last two hundred years. I believe that the way the Muslim countries have today, become the prey of the West and, the treatment they are receiving at its hands, is a punishment for the failure of the Muslims to convey, to it, the Message of Allah at the proper time. Now, circumstances are taking a favorable course. Muslims are migrating to America, in a steady stream, from different lands and for different reasons. There is no Islamic country whose finest young men are not found here. Lastly, a large number of enterprising people are coming to it from the country where the House of Kaba is situated. You should now realize your responsibility does not lie merely in acquiring higher education or solving your economic problems. You are not here only to earn and take back the money to your native lands and provide for your families. You should know that, it is your duty to give this country what it lacks. If you look at its material attainments and scientific advancements, then it presents a true picture of the greatness of man, but if you think about its moral bankruptcy and degradation of its soul, you will find it, at the lowest level. Intellectual maturity and criminal mentality exist side by side in America. On the one hand, the Americans are going to the moon, and, on the other, they are sinking into the lowest depths of moral degradation. The country that has done
so much is now finding itself helpless in providing a solution to the moral crisis of its youth. I say it without hesitation that there is no Muslim country, which can look at the Westerners in the face, and say ‘see, it is here that you stumbled. With us is the solution of your problems and the ointment for your inner wounds. “It is the Qur’an and the teachings of our Prophet (pbuh)”. The bitter truth is that we have made ourselves unworthy of speaking to the West like men. We carry a heavy load of gratitude on our heads, and immersed from head to foot in its favour. Our ignorance deposes against us. Our poverty shouts from the housetops. Our arm always stretched out for alms. Such being the case, how can an Islamic country speak, like an equal, to the West, which has the whip hand and enjoys every kind of superiority intellectual, political and economic? Which Muslim country is there, that can express the mildest criticism of the West or offer a suggestion”.

The message of Ali Miyan to Americans

Ali Miyan conveyed the message of Islam to Americans. He exposes, “Oh, citizens of the United States! My best wishes to you. I do not grudge against you and your attainments. I do not look at your progress with contempt. What I ask you most earnestly is only to add Masha Allah, wa laa quwati illa-billaah to what you have. Subordinate your worldly possessions and
phenomenal achievements to the will of Allah. Place it all under the control and authority of the Divine Law. Use it for the rebirth and redemption of humankind and to generate an atmosphere of equality, fraternity, justice and freedom from fear in the world. Let there be no distinctions of race, color or wealth between man and man. Use your enormous resources for reconstruction of the world. You will thus, be helping yourselves as well for, without it, your civilization cannot survive. Its days are numbered”.

Ali Miyan’s works on the West

1. Between East and West

“Between East and West” is a lecture, which delivered by Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi at the University of London Union in October 1963. It can be identified as an analysis of the shortcomings of the East and the West, as well as a call to unite the Eastern Faith with Western Sciences.

Ali Miyan elaborates, the West has confined its activity and devoted all its intelligence and will power, to the external world, also it has concentrated all its efforts on the outer world, withdrawing its attention from man himself, who is the very soul of the universe, and a masterpiece creation. Even when it paid any attention to man’s inner self, its approach was tainted by
crass materialism, which makes it possible to plumb the depth of man’s inner reality, to come to grips with the very solid fact of the inner life, and appreciate faith and belief and morality. Unfortunately, even if the West wants to profit from the heart and guide humanity by it, it will not be capable of doing so, for it has lost the key, to open this lock. However impressive the industries of the West may be, however fine their products, and however the genius of the people of the West, they are incapable of opening or breaking the lock, for it is not the lock of banks and factories, it is the human lock, and the only key that can be applied to it is “Faith”. This key of “Faith” which obtained by humanity from the Prophets (pbut), has been lost or lies buried amidst the heavy burdens of Modern civilization or lost in the shambles of old religious centers. The affliction of humanity lies in the separation of the West from the East, the separation of knowledge and Faith, a separation that has led to great disasters in the past. Faith has been making its strides and growing for long ages in the East, while in the more recent centuries knowledge has been making strides and growing in the West. In addition, Faith continues to wait for the championship of Science, while science stands waiting to submit itself to guidance of Faith. Humanity meanwhile is waiting for the two to come together and co-operate with each other in order to produce a new
generation. There can be no hope of peace or true happiness without this blessed cooperation between Faith and Science.

2. Naya Tufan aur uska Mukabla (A new menace and its answer)

In this short treatise, Maulana Ali Miyan has analyzed the present situation of Muslim Ummah. According to Maulana Ali Miyan, the Muslim Ummah is facing the greatest danger it ever faced previously. This is "Irreligiousness". Ali Miyan Divulges, a wave is sweeping across the Muslim world and carrying away with it the glorious heritage of Islam. Never has Islam experienced a danger so powerful as prevailing. And the tragedy is that there are only a few who are willing to take stock of this dismal situation and fewer still, to place all that have at stake to combat it. The real problem of Islam now is not that of moral degradation or slackness in matters of prayer etc, but the real issue is "belief and unbelief". It is that wither Islam will survive or be cast away like an old garment. The battle being fought today in the Muslim world is between Western Materialism and Islam. On one side, there is agnosticism, and on the other side is Divine law. I believe that this is the last struggle between religion and irreligiousness, after which the world will swing full-scale towards either one side or the other.
The cure of the ill Muslim world lies in our capacity to produce a band of dedicated workers who will keep religion above all personal considerations and will have no worldly aspirations for themselves. Their entire endeavor should be directed towards loosening the intellectual and psychological knots of the ruling classes, establishing personal contacts with them and bringing forth for them an effective religious literature and influencing them through their own piety, sanctity of character, earnestness of purpose, sincerity and selflessness and a moral conduct like that of the Prophet (pbuh).

3. Islamiyat aur Maghribi Mustashriqeen aur Musalman Musannifeen (Islamic studies, orientalists and Muslim Scholars)

This book is a long essay on orientalists and their intellectual activities. The paper was read in an International Seminar entitled as “Islam and orientalists” organized by Darul Musannifin, Azamgarh on February 21-23, 1983. It is an analytical work on the intellectual contributions of orientalists to Islam. Very open heartedly Maulana Ali Miyan appreciates the intellectual efforts of some famous orientalists. To Ali Miyan, it is a moral duty of every Muslim Scholar to acknowledge the services rendered by the orientalists to the Islamic branches of learning. Several among them have employed themselves to the
study of Islamic Sciences, not with any political, economic or missionary motives but for the satisfaction of their scholarly passion with devotion and diligence, it would be sheer injustice, if one woe to deny the fact that numerous valuable manuscripts, historical documents and source materials on important topics have seen the light of the day through their efforts and that they have contributed to further studies and researches in Islamics. Had these manuscripts been left to the care of their owners they would have in all probability been destroyed. But simultaneously he condemns those orientalists who try to destroy the real figure of Islam. There only purpose to study Islam was to point out objectionable concepts and to criticize it on intellectual grounds as well as to misguide Non-Muslims particularly the West, against Islam and to widen the differences between Islam and the West. These orientalists are actually the agent of Imperial powers and serving for the false interests of Imperialism. To quote him, “I do not consider it improper to invite attention towards the prevailing penchant a majority of this class which exhibits a censorious attitude towards Islam, and always tries to bring out something to take a rap at the Shariah, History and Culture of Muslims. These scholars make mountains out of molehills with a view to serving certain political or religious ends. Their attitude in this regard is not different from the drains inspector of a local body who can see only sewers, drains and
heaps of rubbish in a nice and beautiful laid out town. There works too do not differ from the reports of officials charged to bring out deficiencies in any system. There only target to study Islam is to highlight dark features and misguide to common people”.

To him, very often they enumerates the merits of a respected luminary of Islam, held dear by the Muslims but also input some moral failings to him which can condemn him in the eyes of the readers. Their writings give the impression that, the time in which that call of Islam was given, was ripe for a revolution of that kind and the only contribution of the great personage was to make a correct assessment of the then situation and pull the strings of a drama already set for the occasion. Such misinterpretations camouflaged by coloring the events in a careful and cautious manner, that the reader never given a cause of alarm and continues to take the writer as an honest scholar trying to make an objective analysis of the events and circumstances. The writings of such orientalists are much more harmful than those who openly attack Islam through perversion of distortion of facts. Therefore, there is need for Muslim Scholars, that they should headed and pursue the academic efforts equivalent to these orientalists as well as to present the true figure of Islam in front of the West, so that they realize the
advantage of Islam. It is necessary that the Muslim Scholars should produce original works on different topics in keeping with norms of modern scholarship to counteract the negative influences exerted by the orientalists as well as to provide the Muslim World with correct, authentic and dependable facts and concepts relating to Islam. These works have to excel the creations of orientalists in literary presentations, scholarship, method of investigation, persuasive reasoning, and depth of knowledge and breadth of vision and to expose the fallacies and mistakes, so commonly found in the works of orientalists. It is also necessary that the works of the orientalists should thoroughly survey and critically analyzed in the light of Islamic sources. The sources used by them should critically examined and mistakes committed in the rendering of Arabic text into European languages should be brought to light so that the wrong conclusions and erroneous theories based on illogical and doubtful premises may be demolished. It would also be necessary to highlight the underlying political and missionary motives underlying the facade of scholarly endeavors implicit in most of the works of orientalists.

In later pages Ali Miyan discuss in detail the literary and intellectual effort made by great Muslim Scholars in different Islamic countries.
Critical remarks

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi sincerely observed and deeply studied the Western Civilization. However, he did not criticize it blindly like other Islamic scholars. He analyzed its merits and demerits, impartially, as well as very kindly, he appreciated its merits, but on the other hand, he condemned its evils and wrong approaches according to the rule of “adopt the merits and give up the demerits”. He pointed out its positive approaches and advised people to follow them, he even gave evidences in their favour from Islamic sources. According to him, the most dreadful evil of the West is their extreme dependence on “Materialism” and denying “Spirituality”. While the most important shortcoming of eastern thought, is its extreme dependency of Faith and Spirituality, and ignoring worldly matters. Both have opposite thoughts and extreme approaches.\(^{31}\)

In the words of Ali Miyan, “The outlook in the East being basically spiritualistic, there have been cases here of mystics raising the cry of *nothing exists but Allah* in the stage of ecstasy. The spirit of the West is dominating by materialism. When, therefore, its thinkers are in an exalted state of feeling, they reject everything that does not have a direct bearing upon economic materialism and cry out “nothing exists but sex and hunger”.\(^{32}\)
Ali Miyan further says, “The Sufi saints of the East regard man as the ‘Shadow of Allah upon earth’. Overwhelmed by this notion, some of them let to declare, “I am Allah”. The materialists of the West do not credit man with anything higher than an animal existence. Hence they shout “I am a beast” are being heard on all sides today”.

Ali Miyan assumes that, materialism claims that life is not more than what it explains and only that is to be believed which is tangible and capable of being comprehended by human perception, which is perceptible is real and the rest is non-existent, visionary and baseless. Man is the rightful owner and master of this world. Materialism elevates man to the position of lawgiver, claims perfection or human knowledge and assumes that nothing in this vast and complex universe is beyond human comprehension.

He also termed the materialism as “Modern Irreligiousness”. Materialism elevates natural resources, technological contrivances and professional expertise to the level of Allah. Man has today pinned his hope in material objects and thrown himself on the mercy of specialists and experts. For success and failure, prosperity and adversity, honour and infamy, life and death of nations have now been committed to the case of one expert or the other. The arrogant spirit of extreme phenomenalism, the
reverence for materialism and physical forces, and the overwhelming confidence in experts, scientists and technologists are the new forms of irreligiousness, invested with a halo, which makes them partners of Allah. These are suppose to be sharers of Divinity, the new Gods of modern age.
Chapter: 7

Notes and References:


2. Ibid., pp. 116-17.


6. Ibid., pp. 87-88.


12. Ibid., pp. 41-42. See also, http://muslim-canada.org/islamonlyway.html


15. Ibid., pp. 134.


18. Ibid., p. 58.


20. Ibid., p. 89.

21. Ibid., p. 113.


23. Ibid., P. 84.


28. *Masha Allah, wa laa quwati illa-billaah* means what Allah desires there is no power accept Allah. It is a Qur’anic phrase used to appreciate something.


32. Ibid, pp. 24-25.
33. A Sufi of Basra known as Mansoor Al-Hallaj proclaim himself as “Ana-al-Haq” (I am Allah). The authorities gave him the death penalty.


37. Ibid., p. 72.