CHAPTER 8

RELIGIO-POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MAULANA ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI
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Background

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was an eminent Islamic scholar, socio-religious reformer and a political thinker. He spent his entire life for the cause of Islam. For this purpose, he toured almost all the important cities of India and visited a number of foreign countries as well. His Islamic ideas were very much clear and he invited the West to adopt the teachings of Islam. Ali Miyan believed, Islam to be the only solution to the crisis of the present world. The West has made tremendous progress in the fields of Science and Technology. Everybody welcomes scientific development but the misuse of it is very dangerous and is a great threat to our civilization. Most of the Americans are materialistic. Though they are Ahl-e-Kitab, yet they have little faith on their own revealed books. Due to ego problem, they do not accept Islam, though it is known to them that, Islam is the final form of religion. They also know that there is a need for the faith, to provide a bright future to humanity and this can alter the prevailing situation. For this purpose, Non-Muslims should embrace Islam. Islam is the complete code of life
and is the most appropriate religion in all dimensions. According to the Holy Qur'an, Islam is the final form of religion for the entire Humankind. In addition, Ali Miyan addressed the whole Ummah, particularly the Muslim elite and Arabs with these words, “We should feel the pain of humanity. We can only cure it through the teachings of the Messengers (pbut). Because the way, that was adopted by Messengers (pbut) is the best one”. In every speech and congregation, Ali Miyan demonstrated, the way adopted by Messengers (pbut) in different ages for the reformation of society. It was their divine duty to take on their responsibilities and convey the message of Islam to humankind. Ali Miyan had tried his best to convince non-Muslims that they were in the wrong path, and if they did not accept the true message of Allah then, they would have to face its consequences on the Day of Resurrection. If they accept Islam, they would enjoy everlasting peace in Paradise. Ali Miyan also advised the Muslims to behave well with their non-Muslim brethren, so that they may put their faith on them.

Ali Miyan yearns to remind the entire humanity, the status and responsibilities of a man. According to him, humankind may be divided into many communities, like religious, national, and tribal, but the most durable relation between human beings is that of “humanity”. All the Prophets (pbut), Sufi saints, and
religious reformers adopted this method of reforming the society.

The Messengers and Prophets (pbut) tried to reform the moral conditions of human beings, and did not make effort to develop materialistic resources. They preached that, *there is a Lord (Allah) who is the Creator, Sustainer and Supervisor of the world.* To admit the autonomy and worthiness of Allah, is known as "Iman". All messengers (pbut) conveyed that, "there is none to worship except Allah". This is the base of Religion. There is only one way to salvation of Mankind, and that is following the true spirit of Religion.

However, Ali Miyan’s exposition of Religion (Islam) was marked by moderation. He was not a fanatic in any sense of the term and believed in Islam as a blessing for humankind and a positive and creative factor in human history. To him, Islam is a civilizational force, which has retained its relevance even in the modern age, and is a viable counterpart to the Western civilization with all its excuses.

Ali Miyan believes that “Faith” which is absolute, stands in no need of Renaissance. On the contrary, there is a need to harmonize and customize modern technology and infrastructure according to the faith of Islam.
At a very young age, he began to convey the divine message of Islam among the Indian Non-Muslim masses. His greatest anxiety was to protect every human being from the eternal loss, that is life hereafter and from the fire of hell.

For this very purpose, he met Dr. Ambedkar and conveyed to him this divine message. At that time, Maulana Ali Miyan was merely a youth of only 22. He did not succeed, yet he continued this divine mission throughout his life. Realizing that the Muslims are facing numerous problems and it requires a political solution, Ali Miyan forced himself, against his will, to enter politics. However, he was a stranger to the world of politics. A sudden burst in violent attacks against Muslims instigated by Hindus, in which, scores of Muslims lost their lives, as well as the continuing discrimination of the government to Muslims, forced him to turn his attention to politics from 1964 onwards. At a time when the role of the state had extended into almost every sphere of personal and collective life, he wrote, “The Muslims could not afford to remain aloof from politics. To do so would be tantamount to collective suicide, for they would not be able to protect their identity, their personal laws, their religious traditions, and even their lives, in the face of the growing threat of Hindu aggression as well as the Hinduisation of the state”. Therefore, in 1964 Ali Miyan, along with other leading Muslim
social, political and religious figures, set up the All-India Muslim Majlis-i Mushawarat (The Muslim Consultative Assembly), an umbrella body of several Muslim organizations, to chalk out a coordinate political strategy for the Muslim community. Ali Miyan saw the Majlis, as playing a central role in politically awakening, mobilizing and uniting Muslim voters scattered all over the country in order to make them a powerful, consolidated political force. The Majlis intended to hold dialogue with established political parties in order to convince them of the need to pay attention to the problems and concerns of the Muslims, as well as to promote inter-communal amity in the country, which Ali Miyan believed, as indispensable for Muslims as well as others to prosper. It actively promoted communal harmony while at the same time promoting Muslim rights and interests. Seeking to politically integrate the Muslims into the mainstream of social and political life in India, the Majlis, was also intended to enable Muslims to prove to others their Qur'anic status of *Khair-al-Ummah* (the best community). All this was possible only in a climate of peace. Ali Miyan states, "The setting up of the Majlis was a sign that the Muslims were no longer willing to be treated as a passive vote-bank. Angered at the Government’s lack of attention to Muslim problems, particularly to the growing wave of attacks on Muslims and the woeful economic conditions of Muslims, the Majlis leaders argued the need for Muslims to enter
into alliances with other political parties, to bargain with them, promising Muslim votes in return for assurances of protection of Muslim interests".¹⁰ Ali Miyan observed that, the Muslims did not write a proclamation of slavery for any party, arguing that the Congress could no longer take the Muslims vote as for granted. Muslims, acting within the framework of the Indian Constitution, would support political forces that could guarantee protection of their lives, property and religious freedom".¹¹ Contrary to Ali Miyan’s expectations, the Majlis died a premature death not long after it was established.¹² After many experiments, Ali Miyan concluded that as a minority and an increasingly threatened one, Muslims needed to work along with existing political parties, rather than set up one of their own. The legacy of the Muslim League and its involvement in the partition of India left behind too many scars to allow Ali Miyan to contemplate the possibility of a separate Muslim party. This did not mean, Ali Miyan insisted, that Muslims should not organize their own separate party and on this basis seek to have a dialogue with other political forces to protect and promote their own interests. In fact, Ali Miyan believed that, if Muslims attempt to make a separate party of their own, it would tantamount to unite Hindu voters against Muslims.
In addition to the Majlis, Ali Miyan played a leading role in the establishment of the *Muslim Personal Law Board* (MPLB) and the *Babri Masjid Action Committee* (BMAC). The Muslim Personal Law Board (MPLB) was set up in 1972, and Ali Miyan headed it from 1983 until his death in 1999. Its primary purpose was to protect Muslim Personal Laws from interference by the state and Hindu chauvinist forces as well as to combat what were seen as un-Islamic practices among the Muslims, exhorting them to abide by the rulings of the *Shariah* in their personal lives. It played a central role in mobilizing Muslim opinion against the 1984 verdict of the Supreme Court of India in the well-publicized Shah Bano case, by organizing mass rallies and meeting with political leaders, including the then Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, urging them to ensure that Muslim Personal Law will not be interfered by Government. In a country where the *Shariah* was applicable only to the realm of personal affairs, specifically in matters of endowments, marriage, divorce and inheritance, Ali Miyan saw the threat of tampering of Muslim Personal Law by the state, under pressure from both secularists as well as Hindu chauvinists, and as tantamount to a conspiracy against Islam as such. Thus, he asserted, “We cannot ever allow anyone to impose on us any other social and cultural system and personal law. We presume this as *Dawat-i-Irtidad* (invitation to apostasy), and so we must oppose it as we would oppose any
invitation to renouncing our faith. This is our constitutional right as citizens of this country, and the Indian Constitution not only allows this but positively supports us in our quest for the preservation of our democratic rights and freedoms". 13 Although Ali Miyan envisioned the Shariah as all-encompassing, extending even to collective affairs, by accepting its jurisdiction being restricted to personal affairs as the basic minimum acceptable to Muslims, he saw the possibility of the Indian Muslims coming to terms, at least for the present and the immediate future, with what, in theory at least, was a secular polity. Ali Miyan saw secularism, understood both as state of neutrality towards all Faiths, as well as harmony among followers of different Faiths, as indispensable for a plural society like India, and especially for protecting Muslim interests. Even at the height of the Babri mosque controversy, in the early 1990s, when Hindu zealots, targeting a mosque in the town of Ayodhya which, allegedly had been built on the ruins of a temple dedicated to the Rama, unleashed a wave of attacks against Muslims, Ali Miyan counseled dialogue and restraint, rather than retaliation and conflict. Warning Muslims not to take to the path of violence against the Hindu attacks, he sought to present a solution to the dispute, that would satisfy both sides. He met several Hindu religious leaders to help evolve a mutually acceptable solution, believing that the matter should not be left to professional
politicians who had their selfish interest in prolonging communal conflict. When Hindus began a mass, nation-wide campaign to destroy the mosque, promoting anti-Muslim emotions and violence, Ali Miyan reacted by issuing a public statement calling for peace and tolerance, pleading that the matter be resolved through constitutional means. At a peace rally in Lucknow in 1990, he said, “in the face of mounting Hindu militancy, Muslims must respond by turning to Allah, refraining from sin, inviting non-Muslims to Islam and adopting the path of steadfastness, tolerance and bravery”.14 In the wake of the destruction of the Babri mosque in December 1992, Ali Miyan reacted by issuing another appeal for calm. He called for the reconstruction of the mosque on its original site, a ban on all organizations preaching communal hatred, and a storm-like movement for promoting inter-communal harmony and patriotism. He bitterly criticized the action of some Muslims in Pakistan and Bangladesh who reacted to the destruction of the Babri mosque by attacking Hindu temples there.15 He condemned this as a negation of the teachings of Islam. Ali Miyan said, “Adding that, in the present situation, Muslims in these countries should protect their non-Muslim minorities and serve as a model for Hindus in India, to be emulated by their own minorities”.16 Appealing to Muslims not to lose heart in the face of mounting attacks from Hindu chauvinist groups and to desist from counter-violence, Ali Miyan
asserted that “the Muslims must respond by seeking to protect their separate communal identity and by engaging in Islamic missionary work, and, in this way, try to bring India to the right path”. In another place Ali Miyan said, “turn to Allah for help, repent for your sins, abide by the commandments of Allah and recite the Qur’an regularly particularly those verses that talk about peace, security, victory and Nusrat (divine assistance)”. Also, he pointed out that, Muslims must remember that, they are a minority, they should strive for peaceful coexistence with people of other faiths, and work with them for social justice. They must not despair in this hour of trial, but, instead, should steadfastly endure tribulations in the path of Allah, not hesitating even to sacrifice their lives as martyrs for their faith.

In the wake of mounting attacks against Muslims, instigated both by Hindu militants as well as by elements within the Government, in which large numbers of Muslims lost their lives, inter-religious dialogue assumed a particular urgency. While appreciating the work of the movement of “Tableegi Jamat” among the Muslim masses, he felt that it had tended to neglect the role of the Ulama in the affairs of the country as a whole. The Ulama, had a special role to play in promoting awareness among the Muslims of the changing social conditions in the country, in order to make them both ideal citizens as well as capable of
obtaining the leadership of the country. In the words of Ali Miyan, “If you make Muslims one hundred per cent mindful of their Nawafil (optional prayers) making them all very pious, but leave them cut off from the wider environment, ignorant of where the country is heading and of how hatred is being stirred up in the country against them, then, leave alone the optional prayers, it will soon become impossible for Muslims to say even their five daily prayers. If you make Muslims strangers in their own land, blind them to social realities and cause them to remain indifferent to the radical changes taking place in the country and the new laws that are being imposed and the new ideas that are ruling people’s hearts and minds, then let alone (acquiring) leadership (of the country), it will become difficult for Muslims to even ensure their own existence”. Therefore, Ali Miyan made efforts to reach out to non-Muslims, seeking establish better relations between both Muslims and Non-Muslims, this being seen as necessary for missionary work among them. Such efforts at interaction took various forms. Thus, for instance, Ali Miyan began taking an interest in the efforts of the Dalits in their struggles against caste oppression, having as early as in 1935 met with Dr. Ambedkar, the Dalit leader, inviting him to adopt Islam along with his followers. He established close ties with the Bangalore-based English fortnightly Dalit Voice, releasing its inaugural issue in 1980. Dalit Voice advocated an alliance
between all marginalized communities in India, including Dalits, Backward Castes, Tribals, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims, against upper caste Hindu oppression, and Ali Miyan was an enthusiastic supporter of the cause. In order to reach out to well-meaning non-Muslims, as well as to highlight Muslim concerns and problems, Ali Miyan set up the English-weekly ‘One Nation Chronicle’ which failed to take off, however it was replaced by the fortnightly ‘Nation and the World’. Both names were deliberately chosen to reflect an insistence that Muslims, too, considered themselves part of the Indian nation, and, therefore, could not afford to be ignored. Ali Miyan served as head of the trust under whose auspices the journal was published. Ali Miyan saw the journal promoted balance and goodwill between people of different communities. Ali Miyan called for an inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and others, particularly Hindus, envisaging this as going beyond mere theological exchange to take the form of joint efforts for building a more harmonious and liberal society. To Ali Miyan, for the people of different faiths to live together in peace and cooperation, it is necessary that they should understand each other’s religion, culture and traditions. When two civilizations meet, there is always a two-way process of interaction between them, both being influenced and molded by each other. Such interaction must not be seen as negative; because human
existence is based on the noble principle of *give and take.*\textsuperscript{22} It was because of such exchanges in the past, numerous reformers, influenced by Islam, emerged among the Hindus, preaching the unity of Allah and the oneness of all humankind. On the other hand, because of being open to indigenous cultural influences the Muslims of India developed their own individual national character that sets them apart from Muslims elsewhere. Not all these influences may be healthy for instance, existence of caste system, social discrimination and extravagant customs and ceremonies among the Indian Muslims are examples of the baneful impact of their encounter with Hindu society. However, there were also positive features of the surrounding culture which were adopted, Indian Muslim culture had developed a beauty and richness which was characteristically its own. He said, “Muslims had actually benefitted immensely from the ancient cultural heritage of India. It enabled them, to successfully meet the onslaught of Western culture, while preserving their cultural heritage largely intact; in contrast to Muslims living in other Islamic countries”.\textsuperscript{23}

Further, he added, “the depth and profundity of Indian Muslim thought, particularly Sufi Thought, was a result of the interaction of Islam with social, cultural and intellectual processes native to India. This cultural dialogue had endowed the
Muslims with a rootedness in the Indian context so that they operate not like an alien or a traveler but as natural, permanent citizens who had built their homes in the light of these peculiar needs, circumstances, past traditions and new impulses.\(^{24}\) Ali Miyan insisted that it was thus utterly futile to expect Muslims to lead a life of complete immunity from local influences. While not advocating a form of inter-faith dialogue that might lead Muslims to compromise in any way on their faith, being convinced that Islam was indeed the only perfect religion, Ali Miyan advocated what could be called a dialogue of life, appealing for people of different religions to work together on common grounds. He saw the struggle against violence as the single most urgent need of the times, and here Muslims could work together with others to establish a more peaceful and just society. He often spoke against extremism of all sorts, insisting that, what was required was a band of missionaries who could douse the flames of hatred and enmity.\(^{25}\) In this way, Ali Miyan taught the Indian Muslims how they could live in a religiously plural society in such a way that their beliefs could remain free from the stain of communal prejudices and conflict, while at the same time being in harmony by respecting each others religious beliefs.
He insisted that rather than being a barrier in the path of Islamic missionary work, Muslims should be facilitators. Due to these circumstances, which have been discussed earlier, Maulana Ali Miyan with some of his companions established a reformist movement in 1944. Which was later named as “Payam-e-Insaniyat” (Message of Humanity). The very purpose of this movement was to bridge up the void among different faiths, to clarify the misunderstandings against Islam, to convey the revealed message to humanity with peace. Until day, this movement is working successfully. Here we present a passage of his speech in which Ali Miyan demonstrated the purpose of the Movement. “We think our message is essential for every party and our existence is necessary more than any other party. If we will succeed in our goal, the palace of Humanity will be able to be constructed. These days thorns are growing instead of flowers. Humanity has started diminishing. We ask to regain the elegance, to bleach humanity. Today bitter fruits and thorns are growing in the tree of humanity. We should grow sweet fruits on it. We do not want to create hurdles in your routine but we want to draw your attention towards the evils of the modern world. Please take care of humanity. May the anxiety of it emerge in anyone’s heart. This was the message of all Messengers (pbut). We are merely reminding you of it. Today some are confined only to thought, some are worried only for
food, cloth and shelter. But nobody is concerned over the wrong path on which humankind is today. The only solution is to follow the true spirit of Islam. Because, it is the way of all Prophets (pbut). Through the efforts of Messengers (pbut) only depressed people receive peace and worried people are satisfied.\textsuperscript{27}

**His missionary work in the West**

We have already discussed that Maulana Ali Miyan visited a number of countries in the East and West. During his visit to USA, Britain, Germany and Spain, he preached Islam. He invited Non-Muslims to Islam and preached the doctrines of Islam. Many of his speeches published in different journals and books. We present his missionary thought from one of his speeches, which was delivered in the University of London Union.\textsuperscript{28}

He expressed, the message of Islam is an open invitation to the worship and surrender to Allah and belief in the apostleship of the Prophets (pbut), particularly that of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and in resurrection and final judgment. In return for submitting to this call, the world will emerge from the darkness of ignorance and the spirit of man will be set free. Man will rediscover his equilibrium and from the narrow confines of the world of matter, he will come out into a world, which, although enclosed within him, stretches beyond time and space. There
never was as strong requirement of this message as today. The
civilization of ignorance has been publicly disgraced. Its shame is
flagrantly exposed. People have become disgusted with life and
are despaired of the intellectual and cultural leaders of the West.
Modern civilization is seriously ill. The only cure to these
present illnesses and ailments is that its leadership should pass
from the hands that are coloured with the blood of humanity to
those that were destined to guide humanity, i.e. from the hands
of Britain, America and Russia into the hands of the true
followers of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Ali Miyan continued,
today, again it is necessary to ‘deliver men from the oppression of
other faiths to the equality and fairness of Islam’. Even in the
twentieth century there are faith abounding in superstitious
beliefs and fanatic teachings that tyrannize their followers and
drive them like deaf and dumb animals. In addition, there are
new political and economic ‘faiths’ like collectivism, nationalism
and socialism that are just a step ahead of the ancient pagan faiths.
The two last World Wars were the gifts of these very dogmas.

In a very beautiful manner, he conveyed the message of
Islam to the West. Ali Miyan said, “As for East, my friends of
the West, its wealth does not consist of “oil”, the black gold
which you transport to your respective countries and then use it
to run airplanes and automobiles. The real wealth of the East is
its “Faith” which sprang up and blossomed there. You already benefited to some extent from this wealth at the beginning of your Christian era. Then again, in the opening decades of the seventh century, the same treasure of wealth opened again, in the forlorn desert of Arabia, and burst forth with a force and speed. Springing up from a remote valley in Makkah, it reached in no time the farthest ends of the known World. Showering its blessings everywhere and refreshing, revitalizing and enriching each and every nook and corner of the world, so much so that the entire earth blossomed forth with a whole new revolution. It is still capable of overcoming all the problems confronting our modern civilization, and it can inject fresh vigor and vitality into our present civilization, giving it a new lease of life by providing it with a fresh sense of purpose and renewing its message, and reorienting the instruments and institutions of science and technology to worthwhile purpose. This can have momentous results and to the creation of a new society in the best interests of humankind, the society for which the present age is yearning upon, you who belong to this great country lies a great responsibility, because you were the pioneers of modern civilization”. The Qur’an addresses us by saying, “There hath come to you from Allah a new light and perspicuous book wherewith Allah guideth all who seek his pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and drag
them out of darkness, by his will, into the light, and guideth them to a path that is right” (al-Maida 15, 16).

Islam: an outstanding Religion

To quote Ali Miyan, “It is an incontrovertible fact that the ancient faiths which have come to the aid of mankind and furnished it with right guidance at the hour of need and whose glorious contribution to human upliftment is unforgettable have lost their vitality owing to the vicissitudes of time. They are a spent force today and cannot be depended upon to repel the onslaught of materialism in the modern age. Even the upholders of these faiths have lost faith in them. They are not suited to exigencies of the present days and religious fervor, and the spirit of endeavor is lacking in them. They are as powerless as a paralyzed limb, as far as meeting, the menace of the modern civilization is concerned. Most of the cultures have already laid down their arms before the Western civilization and accepted that, there is no escape from materialism, which is the last stage in the evolution of human civilization. But at this critical juncture there is a religion which is safe and unpolluted, and is both living and life giving, true and realistic, pure and free from all faults and weaknesses. Its followers know that they are responsible for the superintendence of the world. They will have to render
account of the way they discharge their duty. This faith is distinguished from other faiths in four respects.

1) Qur’an: It possesses a great Book, which vibrates with life and is affluent with human felicity. It provides a sound guidance to humankind and contains knowledge, which is both profound and unbounded. For mind and intellect, it is an everlasting source of joy and hopefulness, a springhead that never dries up. Its ever flowing strait does not get isolated from life. It has wrought a mighty revolution in the lives of men and can do it again any day. It can once more infuse a new life into leadership and cause a tumult in its waves.

2) Hadith: The second is the record, sayings, and doings of the sacred Prophet (pbuh) and his life-account. It is a fragrant legacy, which is extremely beautiful as well as incandescent. It is the most shining page in the story of human advancement, which can be recreated by reminding humankind of its true station. Its reading restores the confidence of man in himself and revives in him the awareness of his nobility. Man will then be seized with the ambition to attain heights by emulating the Prophet’s example, and may lead his life with sublimity, peace and magnanimity. It unties the knots of intellect and unravels the hidden mysteries. This wonderful portrait of lofty virtues and splendid accomplishments is present to this day in its pristine
glory and the alteration of circumstances and the passage of time have done nothing to rob it of its purity and radiance.

3) Islamic Shariah: The preserved treasure of the Islamic Shariah which is present, without any distortion or amendment, as it was left behind by the bringer of the Shariah (the Prophet (pbuh)). The Shariah is the perfect Jurisprudential System in the world. It denotes and admirable blending of the ancient with the modern and can serve the needs of all ages and times. It is also well established for the future. It possesses such wise and sound foundations that the edifice of a healthy society and civilization, can always be built on them.

4) Enthusiastic adherents: The adherents of Islam, characterized by religious fervor and enthusiasm, which no other community can boast of. In spite of all their lethargy, listlessness and neglect of Faith, the spark of Islam is still hidden in their hearts. They are ready to the call of an earnest preacher, even to make the supreme sacrifice in the path of Allah. This is the charming aspect of belief and vitality of which, the Western nations are devoid, today.  

Simultaneously, Ali Miyan asked the Muslim Ummah to perform its duty faithfully. Muslims are the custodians of the true faith in which the success of the entire humanity is encompassed.
It is the responsibility of Muslims to inform the whole world about divine faith and its importance. The whole *Ummah* and particularly the Arabs are guilty of hiding the true message, and they will be liable for this on the Day of Judgment.\(^{33}\)

Ali Miyan motivated Muslim youths with respect and appreciation in the hope that they will be potential *Duat* (missionaries). He asserted that, their studies in Western institutions should empower them to maintain a viable Islamic presence. The desire of education in the West has enfeebled them to utilize the immense potential within them. By truly practicing their faith, they can touch the hearts of people in their respective countries.

Ali Miyan rightly remarked, “How unfortunate it is, that the people living in these Muslim nations are still zealous believers, and can produce Muhammad bin Qasim, Tariq ibn Ziyad, Musa bin Nusair and Muhammad the Conqueror. In addition, the leaders presiding over their destinies have lost their faith in Islam. They have given it up as a lost case; they have abandoned all hopes in its future and have not the least interest in it! Muslim Youths should have gone to Europe to learn arts and sciences and even to master technology and industry of the West to put these assets to the service of Islam”.\(^{34}\)
Ali Miyan stressed on the importance of an Islamic environment that nurtured faith and love for Allah and His Prophet (pbuh). He believed that, this can provide an enduring and stable foundation for a truly Islamic brotherhood. Muslims residing in Europe should redefine Islam to Europeans by firmly practicing it and by challenging the stereotypical European understanding about the Muslim world. Then, the Christian believers in European world will find common cause with Muslims, with whom they share so much of the same prophetic tradition. This process would open honest lines of inter-faith communication sustained by common interests of understanding, peace and harmony. There is a long history of the Muslim and the Christian civilizations drawing on each other, and being enriched by each other. Even now, there are many bridges across the fault lines between the two civilizations. Nonetheless, these two great civilizations (Muslims and Christians) can help to make them better signposted and better used.

Ali Miyan observed, "the failure of Muslims residing in the West, to maintain a visible Islamic identity, has hampered the progress of Dawah there. The challenges ahead can only be met by the tempo of Islamic Dawah. In the words of Ali Miyan, "The world today has reached a state very similar to that in which it found itself in the 6th century. The time has come, when the
Arabs should come forward and offer once again their lives in order to change the fate of humanity. To release it from its present miseries and save it from impending disasters, they should risk once again their ease and comforts, wealth and possessions and even their future prospects. Then would life be transformed once again and man walk in dignity towards the goal of higher destiny. The other alternative is that the Arabs remain engrossed in petty aims of personal gain, of preferment for offices and posts, salaries and income and securing better and still better means of personal comfort and ease. In such a case the world would remain in the slough in which it has been floundering for some time now.\textsuperscript{35}

Further Ali Miyan says, "there is once again a need to encourage Muslim youths for sacrifice, build a bridge so that life could go across to its essential nobility and happiness. Life is like soil, which needs fertilizers. Which can enrich life so that it gives of its best fruits? The renunciation of the Muslim youth of its personal ambitions in order to bring Islam to its full fruition and fill Allah's earth with peace and prosperity is the need of the hour."\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{Ali Miyan's works related to missionary work in the West}
1. **Nai dunya Amrica me saaf saf Baten (From the depth of Heart in America)**

   This is among one of the famous works of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. Originally, it is a collection of Maulana Ali Miyan’s lectures, which he delivered upon a visit to USA in 1977 on the invitation of “Muslim Students Association”. The English version of this book is entitled “From the depth of heart in America”.

   A number of Muslims from India, Pakistan and Arab countries, who had gathered to hear these sermons. Ali Miyan’s main advice to Muslims of USA was on, how to preserve their faith in such a materialistic culture as America. In one sermon, he stated, “Brothers and sisters, you are not here merely to earn and spend. This any community can do. You are here to earn according to your need, but you must also know your status and should present before the Americans a new design of life. You should give the Azan which may stir their minds and offer Namaz (Salat), so that they may see and ponder over it”. 37

   In another place he states, “Today only the Muslims can give a message, but where are they? Has any Muslim country or community the courage to tell the Americans that “in the remembrance of Allah, only do the hearts find rest” Muslims no longer believe in themselves. How can they convey the message
of divine unity to others, which they themselves have lost faith in
the power and efficiency of Namaz, in the truth and veracity of
the Kalima, in the control and authority of Allah over gain and
loss, and in the pre-ordination of good and evil, and made the
Americans providers of their daily bread? How can they tell them
‘there is no giver of sustenance, except Allah’.

He further said, “First try to produce Faith within
yourselves, perform Namaz and spend some time everyday in
meditation, produce the warmth that has been destroyed by the
smoke of factories, refresh your soul, set right the aim of your
life, read the Qur’an daily, study the life of the Prophet (pbuh)
and seek light from it, and then convey the message of the
religion of nature to the Americans”.

Maulana Ali Miyan addressed not only Muslims; but also
gave speeches in five leading American universities, Columbia,
Harvard, Detroit, South California and Utah. He also gave Friday
sermons in the prayer hall of the United Nations Headquarter
and Jama Masjids of Detroit and Toronto. In these gatherings, he
spoke frankly to the public and conveyed the message of Islam
plainly to the Americans. He said that, ‘despite all technical
advancements and economic achievements there existed a lack,
or even absence of religious practice in the American society.
Without these spiritual values and degradation of soul, any
society would head towards destruction. Therefore, it is essential with all the technological development that, there should be an enlistment of soul and increased religious adherence. This can only be attained by following the teachings of Islam, because Islam is the only religion that has so complete an organization of guidance to humankind, i.e. it is the last and final message of Allah to humankind, every individual’s success is implicit in it. Therefore, Islam is the only religion that can cater to the spiritual requirements of Americans”.\(^{39}\)

Ali Miyan stated “Oh citizens of the United States! My best wishes to you. I do not grudge at you and your attainments. I do not look at your progress with contempt. What I ask you most earnestly, is only to add ‘\textit{Mashallah, wa la quwwata illa billah}’, to what you have. Subordinate you worldly possessions and phenomenal achievements to the will of Allah. Place it all under the control and authority of divine law. Use it for the rebirth and redemption of equality, fraternity, justice and freedom from fear. Let there be no distinctions of race, colour and wealth between man and man. Use your enormous recourses for reconstruction of the world. You will thus be helping yourselves as well as others. Without it, your civilization cannot survive and its days are numbered”\(^{40}\).
2. Mazhab Ya Tehzeeb (Religion and civilization)

Mazhab Ya Tehzeeb is a short treatise, which is a collection of the lectures of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi delivered at Jamia Millia University, New Delhi in 1942. In this book Maulana Ali Miyan tried to explain the Religious and Spiritual requirements of a man through strong logical arguments. In this Modern Age, due to tremendous advancement in Science and Technology, man tried to escape the foundations' of Religion and seems to have a sense of hostility with regard to spiritual and religious values. He thinks that it is sufficient to achieve worldly possessions and materialistic development. According to him belief in religion should be maintained because it is a practice of ancient ages, when civilization was not completely developed.

Ali Miyan pointed out some basic questions and says, “There are some questions which are common to Religion, Philosophy and Civilization and on the answers to these, rest the very foundations of all human activities; such as, what is the beginning and the end of the Universe? Is there any life after death, and if there is, what sort of life is it? Is there any particular code of conduct necessary for success in the hereafter and so on”. 41
Ali Miyan then went on to illustrate the necessity of religion and spirituality for a man in order to attain success in this life and the hereafter. There is no way one should ignore the importance of religion in one’s life.

3. Muslims in India

Ali Miyan’s book "Muslims in India", is a collection of his articles on politics. He portrays the Muslim contribution that has gone into the making of Indian history and culture. Their presence at every forum of life throughout the most important period of Indian history drew out the best in them, laying the foundations of a broad-based and composite culture. The contribution of Muslims at all levels of life and society left its multi-dimensional impacts on almost all-human activity, including statecraft and land management. Their assimilation with fellow citizens set into motion common objectives at national levels; and aided by healthy influence exercised

The book was published in 1953. When Muslims in India were in desperate search for such objective writing, as would project the real image with accuracy to help ward off senseless onslaughts on their identity and existence in their very homeland. This work was well received at all levels and especially welcomed by the elite class.
Critical remarks

Ali Miyan spent his entire life for the cause of Islam. For this purpose, he toured almost all the important cities of India and visited a number of foreign countries as well. His religio-political thought based on understanding with others (Ifham-o-tafheem). He favoured the interaction with others and positive thinking with others. His earnest desire was to establish healthy relations with others particularly with the political leaders. His political insight was wide, he very carefully analyze the events and their far-reaching consequences. When Indian history took a serious turn, with the partition in 1947, differences started and increasing among the different faiths in India. Ali Miyan was very anxious to cure this, and to unify the nation on common grounds. Consequently, this was the theme, included in his every speech and writing. Surveying Muslim presence in India, Ali Miyan keeps political aspects separated from social and cultural history, which is central to his theme. He surveys the panorama closely, analyses the currents and reviews the output of centuries with a calculated calm, leaving the reader in no doubt about such fair handling of the subject and objective writing emerging thereon as both example and model for contemporaries.
All India Radio, after serializing the articles topic wise, broadcast the series on the national network; and soon it was translated into English as "Muslims in India" corresponding to Hindustani Musalman," written in Urdu. Ali Miyan advised all citizens of India and says, "it is the responsibility of every citizen of India, to make efforts to bridge up the void between the people of different faiths. If, serious circumstances occur, every individual will suffer. Even the educational institutions, industrial establishment and expensive markets will not remain untouched".42

Though, he never participated in party or electoral politics. He did not even join the All India Muslim Majlis, established by his contemporary Dr. A.J. Faridi in 1967, as it took to electoral politics. Ali Miyan was one of the founders of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (1964), the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (1972) and the Ail India Dini Talimi Council. He presided over the Milli Convention in 1979. He also extended his patronage to the Islamic Fiqh Academy and the All India Milli Council when they were established.

To promote communal harmony, Ali Miyan became one of the founders of FOCUS which was later transformed into Society for Communal Harmony. He also established a movement 'Payam-e-Insaniyat' to preach the gospel of universal love and brotherhood.
Ali Miyan valued the Constitution and the secular order as a guarantor of the Islamic identity of the Muslim community and on non-discrimination against them in various spheres of life. But he clearly saw the historic process of assimilation at work in India and the long-term objective of Hindu Nationalism to Absorb the Muslim Indians into the Hindu fold. Regarding Muslim Personal Law, Maulana's stand is clear and he is against any interference through legislation or through judicial pronouncement and on introduction of Saraswati Vandana in Schools in UP or others parts of India.

Some important religio-political issues of Muslim community during the last decades of the 20th century were solved under his guidance. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board launched in 1985 the movement for legislative nullification of the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano Case, which the Muslim Indians saw as the thin end of the wedge for interference with the Shariat and for distorting the Islamic identity of the community. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorcees) Act, 1986 was its fruit, though it had several inbuilt flaws which had landed the community subsequently in endless litigation.

With Ali Miyan's consent in 1986, the AIMMM and the AIMPLB took up the question of restoration of the Babri Masjid when the unlocking of its doors in January 1986 for regular
darshan and puja converted it into a temple. Though he did not directly involve himself in the Babari Masjid Movement (whose Co-ordination Committee was later split to form the Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC), he guided it at all critical points and participated in negotiations with the government as well as Hindu representatives. Subsequently to the demolition, the AIMPLB, under his presidency took the question in its own hands including the direction of the proceedings in the title suit, the criminal case and the inquiry.

In the last decade of his life Ali Miyan served as the final arbiter, the last word, the Marja, the ultimate point of reference, on any intra-communal differences, even if he did not play any active role in resolving them. He counseled commitment with patience and wisdom, movement within the framework of democracy and rule of law, and dignity and not rhetoric in utterances.

Ali Miyan, assiduously sought by eminent political personalities from Indira Gandhi to Atal Behari Vajpayee, Ali Miyan acted as the bridge between the government and the national parties, on the one hand, and Muslim community, on the other.

All his active life, with Lucknow as his base, he wandered ceaselessly, not only within the country but also in the Arab world and the West, in a constant search; it seems to me, for reconciliation between Islam and the West, between rival
ideologies in the Arab world, between India and Pakistan and
between the Hindu and Muslim Indians. Cautious in taking posi-
tions, he always looked beyond the turbulence of the time,
through the flames of the current controversy. Even if he took
part, his role was that of a mediator, of counseling patience, of
avoiding confrontation, of appealing to reason.

A man who personified Islamic values, soft-spoken,
cultured and courteous to the core, humility and modesty,
patience and tolerance, moderation and balance, generosity and
compassion all Islamic values marked his personality. Neither a
politician, nor a publicist, essentially a scholar a man of religion,
a spiritual person, a modern Dervish, a Mard-e-Momin who
combined in himself the highest values of the Shariat and the
Tariqat, of orthodoxy and Sufi Thought and who commanded
respect for this transparent sincerity, for his simple living and for
his selfless devotion to the common cause of the Community and
the Nation, a man who lived for Allah alone and who wanted
nothing but the good of all is no more.
Notes and References:


3. Ibid., p. 79.

4. Ibid., pp. 67-68.


6. Ibid., pp. 95-96.


9. Ibid., p. 34.
10. Ibid., p. 43.

11. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

12. Ibid., pp. 21-22.


15. Ibid., pp. 32-3.


17. Ibid., pp. 76-77.


19. Ibid., p. 53.


24. Ibid., p. 42.


27. Ibid., pp. 188-89.

28. Ibid., p. 254.


32. Ibid., p. 43. See also, http://muslim-canada.org/ismonlyway.html


38. Ibid., pp. 18-19.


40. Ibid., pp. 39-40.


42. Ibid., pp. 86-87.