CHAPTER 9

ALI MIYAN’S THOUGHT AND CONTRIBUTION to
ISLAMIC HISTORY AND CULTURE
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1. Maza khasir al-alam bil inhitatil Muslimeen (Islam and the World)

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Miyan’s most famous book Maza Khasir al-alam bil inhitatil Muslimeen, originally written in Arabic. This book critically analyses the rise and fall of Muslims and its impacts thereafter. The author’s main contribution, however, is the appreciation of Muslim rulers of the Arab world and their rise to power, their enthusiasm towards Islam, their contribution towards Human civilization and their zeal for the promotion of Islam. After the glorious period of Islam, author highlights the decadence of Muslim power because of their luxurious life and they lost original fervor to Islam, due to which later Muslim rulers became the victim of their enemies and downfall came to existence. This book is considered by Von Grunebaum, as a representative self-review of contemporary Islam. The book is an analysis of history from Pre-Islamic Arabia to the Modern age. Firstly, the author presents a picture of the moral degradation of societies before the advent of Islam, their political, social, economic and moral deterioration. He particularly discusses the
societies of the Roman and Persian Empires, Arabs, Christians and Jews etc. The age before Islam was an age, steeped in ignorance, in which the mind and the spirit of man had become detoriated and the high standards of morals and values of life had become debased. Sayyid Qutub of Egypt has stated in his foreword, “What was the condition of the world before the advent of Islam and the state of affairs in the east and the West, the north and the south? What was the intellectual temper of man from China to India, and from Persia to Rome? What was the colour and texture of contemporary societies? In what state were those Faiths of the world, which based on heavenly sanctions like Judaism and Christianity, and those, that worship idols and fire like Hinduism and Paganism? The questions with which the book actually starts, dealt with in a concise and comprehensive manner. The figure that the book presents of that age is clear-cut and delineates its futures with accuracy and insight. There was not a single man and movement of reformation that exists in the whole world. Even the religious sections in various societies like priests and rabbis, have introduced unrecognized activities and rituals in their religion for the sake of their materialistic interests. In the words of Maulana Ali Miyan, “the previous Faiths become play things in the hands of debased ecclesiastics who corrupted and twisted them beyond recognition, so much so that if it were possible for their founders
to return to physical life, they could not have to recognize them".¹

After discussing the Pre-Islamic age of ignorance and gloom, Ali Miyan elaborates the revolution of morality and prosperity, which began with the commencement of the new faith. The age of darkness turned into a golden era of history. Before the rise of Islam, pre-Islamic people fight each other on small issues even on drinking water of Camels. After embracing Islam, these people turned friends and adopt death before his dying thirsty companion. The people who looted passersbys now turned hospitable. Women empowerment took place, and women attain all their due rights that the nature had conferred upon them. Women who were living a life of slavery and bondage, and who had no right to choose their spouse, according to their own choice, who had no right to personal property, now given their due rights. They provided right and facilities to get education. Ali Miyan discusses in detail the virtues of the Salafis (first Muslim generation) under the heading, "history's most remarkable revolution". Their Faith, self-criticism, honesty and trustworthiness, humanity, social responsibility, exceptional devotion, incredible obedience etc. These poor Arabs, who got divine guidance, and due to the fear of Allah and peaceful life hereafter for everybody they preached the doctrines of Islam to
the entire world. Though it was a gradual process. For example, in the very early phase of Islam, they conveyed the message of Islam to Rustam (the commander in chief of Persian Empire). As Ali Miyan states, “Rustam receipt Rabi bin Amir in a grand hall which was decorated with magnificent carpets. Rustam wore a crown and robes, which sparkled with gems, while Rabi bin Amir was very poorly attired, He was almost in rags and carrying a shield which was too small, his horse was also of a small breed, on which he rode straight towards Rustam, the horse trampling the luxurious carpets under its hoofs. The officers of the court frowned on it. They said that he should at least take off the helmet before going in front of the Commander in Chief. But Rabi retorted, ‘I have come at your call instead of my own wish. I am willing to go back if you do not want me’. Rustam intervened and told his officers to, let Rabi bin Amir come. Rabi proceeded, leaning up his lance, and piercing the carpets with it at each step. The people enquired about the purpose of his visit. He said, “We have been sent by Allah to deliver you from the overlordship of his slaves (men) to his own overlordship, and from the narrow confines of the world to the boundless world of hereafter and from the oppressiveness of other religion to the fairness and justice of Islam”.
These Arabs presented the brightest examples of courage and acts of moral height in the human history. They made great efforts to revive humanity. In the words of Ali Miyan, people who had entered the fold of Islam could now exert themselves more effectively for the moral and spiritual revival of humanity. They performed the task of establishing right and prohibiting wrong with much greater success. The rejuvenating current of Islam ran through the world, influencing men everywhere with a new life and an unparallel enthusiasm for progress. The values of the life had been, rediscovered. Paganism became a sign of reaction, while it considered progressive to be associated with Islam. Even nations, that did not come directly under the influence of Islam, profoundly though unconsciously, benefited by the freshness and vitality of the new creative impulses released by its effects on a large part of the world.

For example, the development of Europe, which made a huge development in natural sciences and technology but the initial contribution behind these developments, is that of the Arabs.

Maulana Ali Miyan thinks, It was not, however, in the field of religion alone that Islam imparted a new glow of life to Europe. There is not a single aspect in which Europe made progress and was not indebted to Islamic thought. To quote from
Robert Briffault, “For although there is not a single department of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic civilization is not traceable”. 3

Not only in natural sciences, but on religious parameters too Islam asserted indirect influences on Europe. A movement started in Europe in the eighth century against the practice of making confessions before priests. It asserted that man should address himself directly to his creator, without the aid of any intercessor. In addition to this, a feeling of revulsion produced throughout Christendom, with the support of powerful Roman Emperor, Leo 4th against paintings and statues in churches. Emperor Leo 3rd issued a decree in 726 A.C. prohibiting the adoration of images. In 730 A.C. he proclaimed that the art of painting pan, sculptures were actually the remnants of Paganism. This new development in the very heart of the Greco-Roman culture zone was undisputedly an echo of the massage of Islam that reached Europe through Spain. Claudius, one of the pioneers of this movement, had actually been born and brought up in Muslim Spain. It was his custom to set fire to any image or painting that was found in his diocese, The reformation itself, in spite of all its shortcomings, was inspired by Islam. These are some of the impacts and outcomes of the new civilization that founded through the influence of Islam. Not only Muslims, but
people of all other faiths also enjoyed the glorious, peaceful and impartial environment of Islam.

Having discussed the glorious age of Islam, Maulana Ali Miyan then presents the factors and impacts of Islamic decline. Due to the moral degradation and lack of intellectual vigor on the one hand and, on the other hand European progress in Natural sciences and technology and rise of European imperialism, the world suddenly turned to a new phase of historic peril. Ali Miyan explains the negligence of Muslims towards these progressive activities in these words, “The destiny of mankind was being recast in the West. The world was changing at a breath-taking pace. He who lost a moment in idleness, lost a great deal. The Muslims alas! Neglected not minutes but centuries, whereas the European nations realized the value of time and covered the distance of centuries in years. The Turks legged behind so much in the field of industry that shipbuilding could not be started there before the 16th century. The printing press, health services and the defense academics introduced in Turkey only in the 17th century. Towards the end of the eighteenth century a balloon was seen flying over Constantinople and the Turks thought that it is a magic trick”.

With the decline of the Turks, the international leadership passed from the hands of the Muslims to the Non-Muslim nations
of the West, which had been preparing since the long time and
now left without a rival in the field. By virtue of conquests,
cultural, economic and political penetration, their influence
spread all over the World. With economic growth and
technological advancement, Europe lapsed into materialism,
which was the product of this technical advancement. The only
goal of Europe then became materialistic progress. There are no
moral values and religious visions, left in European Society. In
the words Muhammad Asad the author of *Islam at the crossroad*,
“No doubt there are still many individuals in the West who feel
and think in religious way and make the most desperate efforts to
reconcile their beliefs with the spirit of their civilization, but they
are only exceptions. An average occidental be he a democrat or
fascist, a capitalistic or a Bolshevik, a manual worker or an
intellectual, knows only one religion, and that is the worship of
material progress. They believe that, there is no goal other than
to make life continually easier or as the current expression goes
independent of nature. The temples of this religion are the
gigantic factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, dancing halls,
hydroelectric works, and its priests are bankers, engineers, film
stars, captains of industries etc. The unavoidable result of this
craving for power and pleasure is the creation of hostile groups
armed up to the teeth, and determined to destroy one another,
whenever and wherever their respective interests clash. And on
the cultural side, the result is the creation of a human type whose morality is confined to the question of practical utility alone, and whose highest criterion of good and evil is material success". The very nature of this modern materialistic civilization is that everyone works for his selfish interests. There is no concern for the welfare of humanity as such but many promises made to work for social welfare.

As a result, people who adopted Western civilization forgot their spiritual heritage, or it can be said that they become hostile to spiritualism. This is a real loss to humankind, which is a result of the rowdy technical advancement of Europe. Ali Miyan pointed out that, the real loss of humanity under the leadership of Europe is the rise of materialistic thoughts. In the words of Ali Miyan, “Question pertaining to spiritual truths arose in Europe before Renaissance, but as the innate character of civilization gradually unfolded itself, and the West lost itself in the acquisition of materialism, these questions were disregarded. If one still hears of them there, it is only as a problem of Metaphysics. They do not occupy any place in practical life. The anxiety, the solicitude, the uneasiness, which for thousands of years these questions evoked in the east is not at all felt there”.

In the end, Ali Miyan advised to the Muslim Ummah, particularly Arabs, and said they should come forward for a
peaceful solution. The true spirit of Islam is prevailed in Saudi Arabia. According to Ali Miyan, Arabs can solve the materialistic approach of the West. Peaceful co-existence and peaceful preaching particularly among the Ahl-e-Kitabis possible through dialogue and quotations from the Holy Books regarding life here and hereafter. In the words of Ali Miyan, “The Muslims will have to correct themselves internally. They can only face the onslaught of the materialistic West by, imitating its empty cultural forms, customs and social concepts, for these things have no place in the growth and rise of nations. All un-Islamic cultural imitations are bound to make people immoral, though materialistically progressive. The Muslims can exert themselves only by means of that inner spiritual force, in respect of which the West and other Non-Muslim world may accept the call of true spirit of Religion for peace here and hereafter. At another place he writes, “the world of Islam can still give the message of faith and life to the disillusioned humanity. The message of Prophet (pbuh), who had imparted it about 1400 years ago will be valid forever. It is a simple, dynamic, radiant and more majestic message than which the world can ever hope to receive”.7

Sayyid Qutub rightly remarks in the preface of the book, “the historical analysis the author gives, compels one to believe
that a time has come when the leadership will change, and
humankind will be brought back to the real fountain head of the
guidance, which aimed at leading man away from darkness to
light, and from ignorance to knowledge and wisdom. The reader
of the book soon realizes how very important such guidance is to
the world today and what a terrible loss humankind will suffer
upon losing it. This loss will sustain not by the Muslims only, but
by the whole world. It is a loss that encompasses the past, the
present and the future, both immediate and distant. By reading
this book, a Muslim filled with shame and contrition for his
criminal neglect and carelessness, he also becomes acutely aware
of the tremendous potentialities that have been given to him, and
begins to feel the overpowering desire to regain the leadership he
lost through his own neglect and lack of appreciation of its
quality.

Hasan Ali Nadwi)

This is a voluminous autobiography of Maulana Abul Hasan
Ali Nadwi. Originally, the book was written in Urdu. In this
work, Ali Miyan tried to cover all the information related to
himself as well as the remarkable events of his life. Ali Miyan’s
motivation for writing his autobiography is not merely to
recount memorable milestones in his life but to provide an all-
encompassing spectrum of his activities that delineates his intellectual growth and development the historical incidents in his life are contextualized to provide the reader an opportunity to examine his role in the said events, in which Ali Miyan was an active participant. Furthermore, his autobiography makes copious reference to his prolific writings to highlight his contribution to contemporary Islamic thought. The Carvan-e-Zindagi also attempts to explore Ali Miyan’s vision and thought regarding Islam and humanity as well as what was his attitude for the renaissance of Islam in the modern age. As Ali Miyan states in his autobiography that, he believes in steadfastness, progress, to make use of everything old which is beneficial, welcomes everything new which is sound, adopts from tradition what is sincere and rejects what is dubious.

Ali Miyan’s contribution to producing a cadre of scholars who could effectively discharge the duty of Dawah and who could expound the Shariah as the way of life compatible with modern needs has been critically examined by a number of contemporary scholars.

The theological context is also a salient feature of Carvan-e-Zindagi, which shapes his progressive outlook and enables him to interact with scholars and movements with divergent viewpoints. Ali Miyan’s Carvan-e-Zindagi represents a synopsis of his other
important works, which analyzed for a more complete appreciation of his contribution to contemporary Islamic thought.

The dissertation is very interesting and informative, because Ali Miyan does not confined only to the events, related to him personally but he included the social and political circumstances of his age. Since both the freedom of India and the partition of India, occurred during his lifetime, therefore he has covered all of these happenings. His concentration lies in not only the political conditions but also the remarkable events such as, the starting of reformist movements and institutions like Jamat-e-Islami, Tableeghi Jamat, Madrasah Darul-uloom Deoband and Madrasah Nadwatul Ulama etc. Because these were founded owing to the result of the failure of 1857 struggle of Freedom. Beside all of this, he has also illustrated short life sketches of famous contemporary personalities like Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori, Allama Iqbal etc. Rightly, we can say this autobiography has included many little biographies of famous Muslim personalities. Besides all this he has illustrated his memorable journeys to other countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Great Britain, USA, Rangoon, Kuwait, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Turkey and Spain etc. Simultaneously, he discusses in brief the history, religious and social conditions of
Muslims in these countries and his personal impression of them. For example, when he visited Spain, the country in which the Muslims had ruled for over eight centuries, he visited all famous historical monuments of Muslims. He expressed his impressions in these words, “Islamic historical monuments were located more in Toledo (former Tulaitalah) than Madrid. Therefore, we arrived there by a tourist bus. The visitors were divided among English and French speakers. Our guide introduces all monuments in English. Whenever he introduced us to a new monument, he used to say, “When we expelled the Arabs”. I heard it two or three times, but it was unbearable to me. So, I requested him, “Please do not say like this, it hurts my emotions”. So, he stopped to say the sentence and said sorry. During the journey from Madrid to Toledo, I remained in front of the window and recalled the couplet of Iqbal, which is related to Masjid-e-Qurtaba. The six churches, which were constructed in the court of the Masjid, faded the figure of the Mosque. Therefore, it was very difficult to trace the direction of Qibla, after making a guess, I stood under an Arch. The guide told that, if anyone spoke loudly under this arch, the voice would reach to the last corner of the Masjid. It was a natural mike invented by Spanish-Arab architects. I boldly recite the verse of Qur’an

\[ \text{وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَرَّآهُ الْبَاطِلُ إنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَرُّوقًا} \]
And say: "The truth has now come [to light], and falsehood has withered away: for, behold, all falsehood is bound to wither away!" (Qur'an 17:81)⁹

In another place despite of prohibition, he performed two rakat Salat, after a while the time of Asar Salat occurred, so we performed the Asar salat in the court of the Mosque, which many Christian natives witnessed with surprise”.¹⁰

Hence, Carvan-e-Zindagi is a complete document, which reflects the life, thought and attainments of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. In addition, it examines his religious approach and reformist as well as political and social circumstances of his life. Therefore, this book helps the reader to understand the personality of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi efficiently.

3. Nuqoosh-e-Iqbal (Glory of Iqbal)

Nuqoosh-e-Iqbal, is among the most famous work of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, well accepted across the Muslim world, particularly in India and the Arab world. The strength of his work lies in inspiring the Muslims by reminding them of their glorious past.

To Ali Miyan, Iqbal, the greatest Muslim poet-philosopher of the Indian subcontinent, was a phenomenal personality who endowed with profound spiritual power, a keen sense of
attachment to the *Ummah* of Islam, as well as a comprehensive knowledge of the Western philosophical and economic systems. His poetry awakened the Muslims of India who make up a significant ration of the Muslim world, both in numbers as well as in terms of civilization and scholarly contribution to Islam. The author traces the greatness of Iqbal and his message through his texts, and enumerates six such factors apparent forms of his life and poetry. First, it is Iqbal’s faith in Islam, which grew stronger as he matured and studied the Eastern and Western philosophies. Iqbal was an immensely learned man, and few modern Muslim intellectuals can boast to be equal to Iqbal in their knowledge of the West and its philosophical foundations. Iqbal’s faith also grew stronger as he toured Europe and obtained his degrees in philosophy, economics, and law. Secondly, the author shows Iqbal’s attachment to the *Qur’an*. The secret of Iqbal’s sound *Qur’anic* knowledge was that he would read the *Qur’an* with such concentration and attention that it appeared as if it were being revealed to him there and then. Those who are familiar with his poetry can easily realize the truth of this statement. Thirdly, Iqbal’s strength came from his paramount emphasis on, *Khudi* (selfhood). He sought to know himself, and prescribed the same path to all Muslims, to develop a strong sense of *Selfhood* (confidence in own self) through reliance on Allah alone. Scholars of the older times have said truthfully, “one
who knows himself, knows Allah”. Iqbal came to know Allah and the secrets of this world by getting to know himself deeply and intimately. The fourth aspect was Iqbal’s strictly followed routine of contemplation, worship, and recitation in the early hours of the day. The fifth and last source of Iqbal’s fountain of inspiration was the great Persian scholar, the famed poet of Mathnawi, Jalaluddin Rumi. Iqbal sought to speak against materialism and atheist philosophy like Rumi had once fought the ill effects of Greek philosophy on the Muslim world.  

The author then goes on to explore major themes that underline the great poet-philosopher’s works. Iqbal viewed the European civilization with the eye of a keen observer and came to despise it. At that time, Europe was just on the brink of World War and had painted the most monstrous picture of human evilness that had ever been seen. Iqbal predicted that the Western civilization will commit suicide, and will vanish shortly, for it had disconnected itself from the inner world of the soul and spirituality and had become excessively engrossed with materialism. Iqbal’s criticism was crucial in setting the mood for a Muslim evaluation of the West that was to follow soon. His censure of European materialistic civilization, despite its flourishing industries and luxurious lifestyle, complemented by his disapproval of Westernizing trends among Muslims, who had
by now been influenced and, in Iqbal’s words, enslaved by the Western mind set. While the Arab world of that time found its great literatures in the secularist Taha Hussain, who was pro-western and self-hating. The Indian Muslims were fortunate to have Iqbal as their matchless poet. Later, upon the insistence of Islamic circles in the Muslim world, Iqbal’s poetry was translated into Arabic and other languages, and his message, universal and pan-Islamic as it was began to, transcend all borders. Iqbal’s early twentieth-century appraisal of the West continues to have relevance and value for us. European hegemony was to end, soon giving way to America as its civilizational offspring. While the “new world” of America is not the same as the “old world,” there are some fundamental similarities, and thus Iqbal’s insight continues to be of relevance today. Ali Miyan has done us a great service by introducing Iqbal’s thought to his readers.

4. Asr-e-Hazir men Deen ki Tafheem-o-Tashreeh

(Appreciation and Interpretation of Religion in the Modern Age)

This book is a critical analysis by Maulana Ali Miyan of the book “The four basic Qur’anic terms” of Maulana Abul Ala Maududi (founder of Jamat-e-Islami). In his book Maulana Abul Ala Maududi interprets the four basic Qur’anic terms “Ilah, Rab, Din, Ibadat” in an innovative manner. To Maulana Abul Ala Maududi,
except a little period when the Qur’an was in the process of being revealed the concept of these four terms had changed far from its real meaning or those, which prevailed among the early Muslims in the time of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions. In the words of Maulana Maududi, “as centuries passed, the real meanings of these terms gradually underwent subtle changes so that, in course of time, instead of full connotations, they came to stand for only very limited meanings on restricted and rather vague concepts”. Describing the consequences of this change of the meanings of the four terms Maulana Maududi states “ This being the case, is it any wonder that through the mist that had come to surround the precise essence of the four terms in question, more than three fourth of the teachings of the Qur’an, or rather, the real spirit, thereof, had become obscured? This is the main cause of the shortcomings that are to be seen in peoples beliefs and acts now despite the fact that they have not formally given up the faith of Islam but are still in its fold.

Maulana Ali Miyan in his book, “Asr-e-Hazir men Deen ki Tafheem-o-Tashreeh” condemned this innovative idea of Maulana Maududi and considered it as an effort of Modernization of Islamic thinking. It is a new concept, different from the traditional concept, temper and culture of Islam. It has resulted in the evaluation of new concepts, which are different from the
well-accepted norms of Islam, which prevailed uninterrupted from the time of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions until today. In the words of Maulana Ali Miyan, “I decided to take up the writing of this book when I observed and realized that the literature which the party was bringing out was giving a new direction to religious attitudes, and there was a great danger that a new meaning and interpretation of religion, and a new set of values and new standards would evolve. There was a danger that the thinking and endeavor of the intelligent, educated, sincere, active and determined class was likely to leave the straight path of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, i.e. the way of the Prophet (pbuh), concern for the Hereafter, faith and accounting, and to deflect in the direction of party organization in order to regain for Muslims, the political powers and governmental rule, so much so that its return to the straight path might become difficult”.

From the above illustration, it appears that the objective of this book is to defend the traditional Islamic norms, which lay uninterrupted in the entire Islamic history, and to present them in a new thought provoking style, so that an educated fellow could easily realize its importance. Therefore, Ali Miyan gave logical proofs in favour of his viewpoint.
Critical remarks

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi is originally a historian. His writings, including those on religion, bear distinct historical roots and reflect an in-depth study of the subject, Islamic history in particular. His thought and philosophy reflect significant influence of the subject; and his writings, tempered with the cold logic of history, are replete with citation of lessons that it holds out in abundance. The scholar and philosopher of Islam that he is, Ali Miyan in more places than one introduces himself "as an humble student of history."

May it be the penning of a martyr's biography; or a thesis recounting the rise and expansion of Muslim power; or lamentations on civilizational maladjustments following the waning fortunes of Muslims; or the multi-splendored achievements of the Musalmans in India; or the obligation to pay literary tribute to the Spiritual orders, Maulana derives an inherent satisfaction in heaping himself with the debris of history. He delves into it and digs with the spirit of a research scholar and spade, until convincing proof is forthcoming to clear the haze on views taken for granted and to report on events of history hitherto ignored by the historians at large.

He made his debut as a historian through the gateway of biography, remaining well within the ambit of historiographer's
classification of scholars researching and contributing to political, historical and religious biographies as historians in their own right. His biography of Syed Ahmed Shaheed made an instant success and received wide acclaim, both within and abroad. Written originally in Arabic, then Urdu the book, as if, through intuition was published at a time (1939) when the intellectual revolution was taking shape among the Muslims of India. Their urge for independence, their struggle for regaining political power, their resolve for sacrifice, their endeavour for restoring a lost heritage, all stood personified in the person of 'the martyr' (Shaheed). As a piece of objective writing, the book written after a painstaking research added to the literary shelf of Indian history. The biography qualified as an authority on the life and times of Syed Ahmed Shaheed, pioneer and pivot of the resistance against an alien hegemony in 19th century. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Tazkirah, and that of Maulana Mohammed Zakariya 'Biography of Zakariya' fall in the same category of writing Islamic history through the media of biography, each book proving a valuable source of information for the reader and research scholar alike. The biography of Shah Abdul Quadir Raipuri is Maulana's spiritual as well as a literary tribute to the great divine of the era. A parallel publication covers the "Life story of Maulana Ilyas"; pioneer of the Tablighi Jamaat whom he held with high reverence. Ali Miyan not only records the copious details of the
simple life style of llyas, but also remains witness to the growth of the movement, from its humble beginnings, into a voluntary mass of roving evangelists, who steering clear of the temporal track, spread out in all directions carrying the word of Allah.

Ali Mian's another monograph 'Al Murtaza' was published in 1988 it was well received, satisfying the aspirations of all groups, especially those who hold Syedna Ali in special veneration. His important work is (Purane Chiragh). In "Purane Chiragh" the author counts the lampposts down memory lane, ascertains their identity, recognizes each by names. The 21 years from 1936 to 1957 form an important period in Maulana's life, as it is this period which witnessed the best of his works on Islamic History, "Seerat Ahmed Shaheed" was commenced in 1936 and completed in 1939."Maaza Khasaral Aiam" was commenced in 1944, completed in 1950."Tarikh-i- Dawat-o-Azeemat" was commenced in 1952, the first volume completed in 1954, the second in 1957 and subsequent volume following as a matter of course in 1963 and 1980.

In "Maza Khasarai Alam" he examines the phenomenon causing the decline. He is not prepared to believe that a people endowed with an invincible faith could succumb to worldly temptations and, divesting themselves of the Book, get lost in maize's of their own creation. The chapter entitled "The Ebbs and Tides in the History of Islam" makes some tragic reading, as
the author seems reluctant to pen down what he sees and what his sense of history seems to perceive. Nevertheless, the realities of time and history must prevail. He is prepared to concede the toll taken by time, paralleled by an evolutionary process; but he does not *prima facie* believe in the continuance of this phase for all time. What concerns him most, however, is the record of accomplishment of the followers, which is a sordid story of desertion of values and precepts handed down the generations. As a historian, he is in love with the past, especially his Islamic and humanitarian heritage, on which the Present flourishes. He is therefore, not prepared to take the future as a speculative commodity. He is guided by a sense of perception to prove that the Future is as the Present makes it, to which the followers of Islam, the world over, are no exception. The years intervening the publication of "Maaza Khasaral Alam" (1950) and of "Tarikh-i-Dawat-o-Azeemat" (1954) was a period when a new optimism dawned, visibly replacing the despondency that dominated the former work.

He introduced a new outlook in the latter publication, pinpointing the student’s attention to the perennial change that was yet underway at each step of Islamic civilization and redeemed successfully through the efforts and foresight of the Saviours. In this marathon thesis running into four volumes (1954-1980) Ali Miyan is at his best whilst Illustrating from the
life and times of Saints, Seers, Scholars and Islamic thinkers that it was adherence to faith alone which helped reinstate the believers to their original status. For them it was ever a changing scenario at each crucial phase and each time a Saviour, a saint, a theologian, a scholar was at hand to confront the powers and movements designed to keep their tracks blocked. Each such period has had its share of men destined to provide succor and sustenance. From the days of Khalifa Umar-bin-Abdul Aziz in Syria to the saints of Basra and Baghdad and events moving Imam Taimiah into action, followed by the Saintly Orders in India (Hzratt Nizamuddin Aulia, Yahya Maneri, Mujaddid alf-i-Sani), right down to the exhortations of Shah Waliullah, Islamic resurgence made itself felt whenever the "Ummah", reacting to the winds of change turned to their faith for survival and relief. And never did the divine will fail.

Forsaking Islamic scenario for a while, if we turn to world history, the foremost name of Edward Gibbon appears for scrutiny. In his "Decline and fall of Roman Empire", he recounts the story of Romans, and their one Empire. The might attained over a period spanning a thousand years (approx) came to naught within a few generations, which Gibbons attributes to "the triumph of barbarism and religion". He holds Christianity responsible for the disaster oblivious of the truth that the inbuilt
mechanism of the System proved unequal to the strength of the new Faith and hence it failed to stem the fall.

Maulana's view is diagonally opposite that of Gibbon's. He is not in agreement with the proposition that religion can be bracketed with barbarism or else the power of the State would be rendered futile. He believes that faith is a cementing force and aids the continuity of History, citing Islamic history as an example where bad periods, amidst crisis and strain, have been overcome by the will to survive; to continue, regardless of prevailing odds.

He believes that faith, which is absolute, stands in no need of Renaissance. What, contrarily is needed, is the infrastructure of civilization, which must have the strength to resist in order to survive. Muslims, at critical phases of their history, have later regained what they had lost earlier, primarily through their dependence on restructuring by men with foresight and builders endowed with the spirit of humanity.

As a component of the same continuity of history, no system however perfect, has ever been able to counter opposition without the soothing, touch of religion. Religion is integral to historical growth and, devoid of it, systems and civilizations ostensibly invincible collapsed and faded into oblivion.
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Notes and References:


2. Ibid., p. 174.


4. Ibid., p. 111.

5. Ibid., p. 131. See also, Muhammad Asad, *Islam at the Crossroads*, pp. 55-56.

6. Ibid., p. 139-40.

7. Ibid., p. 192-93.


9. Ibid., pp. 176-77.

10. Ibid., pp. 194-95.

12. Ibid., p. 82.

13. Ibid., p. 89.


15. Ibid., pp. 21-22.