CHAPTER 3

ALI MIYAN’S THOUGHT AND CONTRIBUTION TO

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ALI MIYAN’S EDUCATION IN QUR’AN AND QUR’AN EXEGESIS

Ali Miyan’s basic education started with the learning of the Holy Qur’an. At the age of four, his Tasmiyah Khwani held. Then he admitted to a maktab in a nearby Mosque Nawazi. According to the custom, he finished memorizing the Qur’an at the age of seven. His adherence to the Qur’an strengthened as time passed. His mother played a vital role in developing his interest to the Qur’an. He studied Tafsir (commentary of the Qur’an) from Shaykh Khaleel Arab, Khwaja Abdul Hai Farooqui, Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori, Maulana Sayyid Husain Ahmad Madani, Allama Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi and Manazir Ahsan Geelani etc.

At first, Maulana Ali Miyan appointed as a teacher of Tafsir and Arabic Literature at Nadwa. Teaching Tafsir enhanced his command and hold on the subject largely. To quote Ali Miyan, “I brought old and big works from the library. I read Kashaf, Muallim Al-Nazed, Baghawi and Madarik completely. Among the latest works, I read Tafsir Al-Manar and Tarjuman al Qur’an. I got much guidance from Ruhul Moani from the point of view of
teaching and answering the queries of the students. For current affairs and comparative study I corresponded to Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, and I even travelled to Daryabad a number of times”.

**His Quranic approach**

Ali Miyan has profound Qur’anic approach and elaborates many Quranic verses so that readers get new wonderful concept from it. To understand his *Qur’anic* approach, three writings of Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi are very important which are as follows.

1. Moarka-e-Iman-o-Maddiyat (Faith verses Materialism)
3. Qur’an ke Usool o Mubadi

Here we discuss each book in brief to show his thoughts regarding the *Qur’anic* Text.

1. **Moarka-e-Iman-o-Maddiyat** (Faith verses Materialism)

This book firstly written in Arabic entitled “*Al-Sara bainal Iman wal Maddiya*”. Originally, it is a detailed interpretation of *Surah-
The purpose of this book in the words of Maulana Ali Miyan is, “how this book came to be written, what is the nature of exegesis of Surah-al-Kahaf propounded here, from whom, I drawn inspiration in arriving at the conclusions drawn by me? How this verse is relevant to the challenging issues of the modern times and what guidance can be laid from the Surah to solve these problems. It demonstrates an unending struggle between the two Ideologies or concepts diametrically opposed to each other. One of these is Materialism denoting the primacy and objective to the external material world. The other one is the existence of realities, which lie beyond the range of human perspectives, as for instance the existence of Allah, moral and spiritual forces and their interaction and so forth. To Ali Miyan, at first, it seems that the people of faith will be defeated but they ultimately succeed in their objective. Therefore, the true believers in every age, like the companions of cave, given preference to their faith, righteous behavior and propinquity to Allah over worldly gains and material beliefs”. Unlike, the materialistic people, they have ever sought inward and spiritual satisfaction even if it meant renouncing earthly powers, honor and richness. This is the moral lesson inherent in this Surah.

Maulana Ali Miyan elaborates the theme of the story as “Victory of Faith over Materialism”. The story tells us of the struggle
between faith and materialism and demonstrates how faith overcomes materialism and it gives us a deep and sincere conviction in the ultimate cause of all causes. The youths of Ephesus \(^7\) opted for faith rather than materialistic gain. They preferred poverty along with faith instead of wealth and power. They did not allow the gloom of materialistic gains to tarnish their faiths and sentiments, even though they had to bid farewell to their homeland, friends and family members. The lesson ends portraying the uncompromising faith of the companions of the cave who endured the persecutions with great courage and matchless fortitude until the very empire that persecuted them embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is not a rare event in world history. It happens several times that when a man or a group strongly obeyed the commandments of Allah and his Prophet (pbuh) and develop firm faith in them, the interests of greedy and materialistic people clashes with them and a conflict occur between faith and materialism. This is a test of the endurance of believers on their faith.

Ali Miyan says, “This is a story which is repeated again and again by the un-ending conflict between faith and materialism. The story of the companions of the cave demonstrates that the causes and effects are subservient to the will of Allah. The
correct way for the believer, is to base his faith on the Omnipotence of Allah and seek his blessings through unflinching conviction and righteous action”.  

The Qur’an addresses the entire humankind through the Prophet of Islam (pbuh):

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يُذَرَّونَ رَبُّهُمْ بِالْغَدَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجِهَةً وَلا تَغْضَبْ عَيْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ تَرَى رَبِّكَ الْحَيَاةَ الْبَيْتِيَّةَ وَلا تَطْعُمْ مِنْ أَغْضَلَةَ قُلْبِهِ بِقُلْبِهِ وَأَنْتَ هُوَ أَمْرُهُ فَرُطْنَا ُ

“Restrain Yourself along with those who cry unto their lord in morning and evening. Seeking his countenance, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp of the life of the world. And do not obey him whose heart we have made careless to our remembrance who follow only his own lust and whose case has been abandoned”.

قَلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى سَرَارَتِ مُسْتَقِيمَ دِينِي قَيِّمًا مَّلَأَهُ إِبَرَاهِيمُ حَنِيفًا وَمَعًا كَانَ مِنَ المُشْرِكِينَ

“Say Lo! As form, my lord had guided me unto a straight path, a right religion, the community of Abraham, the upright, who was not an idolater (Qur’an 6:161).

Thus, we can conclude that moderate and temperate behavior is the lessons highlighted in Islam. In fact, Islam condemns unruly behavior of people’s intolerant nature
materialistic approach in all cases, which form the base of the modern materialistic civilization of the West. To Ali Miyan, Materialism has never displayed equilibrium. Its social philosophies exhibit desperate extremism, its thought and wisdom are strangely erratic, its manners and morals smack of reckless extravagances and it always prefers to adopt the most difficult and crooked course.9

The second story included in Surah-al-Kahaf is the story of the owner of two gardens.

“Each of the two gardens yielded its produce and never failed therein in any way, for We had caused a stream to gush forth in the midst of each of them.” (Qur’an 18:33).

The owner of the groves thrived because of the invisible forces working for his success and prosperity. It was at this stage that the vision of the owner of two gardens coloured by the materialistic belief, which usually entertained by the ruling circles, feudal lords, leaders, industrialists etc. The owner ascribed the reason for his prosperity is due to his own capabilities.

قال إنما أوتِبْنا على علم عندِي 0
“He said I have been given it only on account of knowledge I possess” (Qur’an 28:70). Nevertheless, one of his friends who had firm faith on Allah tried to convince him that, this whole property and prosperity is by the blessings of Allah. Hence he should not be a greedy regarding the possessions Qur’an says,

قالَ لَهُ صَاحِبَهُ وَهُوَ يُحاوِرُهُ أَكْثَرَتْ بَالَّذِي خَلَقَهُ مِن تَرَابٍ لَمْ تُطَأِفَهُ

ثمْ سَوَاءَكَ رَجُلًا

“His comrade, when he (Thus) spoke with him, exclaimed Disbelieves their in his who created thee of dust, then of a drop (of reed), and then fashioned thee a man (Qur’an 18:37). Thus his attention was invited by his comrade toward the imperative need of restoring his faith in the omnipotence and beneficence of Allah”. (Qur’an 18:37)

واللَا إِذْ دَخَلَتْ جَنَّتُكَ فَلَتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنَّ أَنَا أَقْلُ

مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوُلْدًا 0

"Alas, if you said, on entering your garden, whatever God wills [shall come to pass, for] there is no power save with God!’ Although, I have less wealth and offspring than you”. (Qur’an 18:39).

Ali Miyan concluded the story, “the materialistic outlook of life, arising out of one’s absolute reliability on the efficiency of one’s own resources and contrivances. Plans for social and economic development, are regularly drawn up by materialistic governments, who proclaim from rooftops the production
targets that they must achieve within a given time. But man is
not the dictator of all events, he is merely an instrument of
dictation. The actual role is of Allah”. Therefore, His desire
settles the destiny of man as well as the entire Universe. He has
full autonomy on everything or every particle existed in the
Universe.

The third story ascribed to Prophet Moses (pbuh). In this
story, his journey with Khidr described. In which Khidr acted in
an unexpected manner and annoyed Prophet Moses (pbuh),
initially. Nevertheless, in the end Khidr defined the secrets
behind those events. The story has relevance even in this age. It
proposes that life is not an iota more than what it explains. Only
that is to be believed which is tangible and capable of being
comprehended and the rest is non-existent. In addition, man is
the rightful owner and master of this world. Surah-al-Kahaf in
general and the episode of Moses (pbuh) in particular, strikes at
the root of materialistic thought. The story concludes with these
words of Khidr.

ذلك تأويل لما لم تطع عليه صبرًا

"Such is the interpretation of that wherewith you could not bear”.
(Qur’an 18:82)
The last story, described in *Surah-al-Kahaf* is the story of King Zul-Qarnain. However, modern historians cannot identify him clearly, but according to the *Qur’an*, Zul-Qarnian was a mighty emperor, in spite, of this, his conquests never filled him with conceit and self-admiration. He never said, “I have been given it only on account of knowledge I possess” but only by the blessing of Allah. Just like a true believer in Allah and hereafter, he laid more stress on the help and grace of Allah.

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِن رَبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعَدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ ذَكَاءً وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي

“He said this is a mercy from my lord, but when the promise of Lord comes to pass, he will lay it low, for the promise of my lord is true”. (*Qur’an* 18:98).

He never forgets his Lord, not when he was crowned or when he won the most brilliant victories and began to control gigantic resources and sinews of earthly power. This was the noble and virtuous path trodden by Prophet Solomon (pbuh), King Zul-Qarnain, Khulafa-i-Rashidun and other religious leaders of Islam during their own times in different ages and parts of the worlds.
2. **Mansab-e-Nabuwwat aur uske aali muqam hamileen (Islamic concept of Prophethood)**

Another one of Ali Miyan’s works related to Qur’anic interpretation is “Mansab-e-Nabuwwat aur uske aali muqam Hamileen”. It is a collection of the lectures of Ali Miyan. In these lectures, Ali Miyan tried to highlight the importance and relevance of Prophetic guidance to the entire humankind particularly in the modern age. In these lectures, Ali Miyan gave references only from the Qur’an. In his first lecture, he stated the “Prophetic guidance” is the only solution to the challenges facing the present world scenario. Moreover, it is the only means to attain successful, satisfactory, and prosperous life. All other thoughts and philosophies even the Greek Philosophy has been proved a failure. The only way to success in this life and the hereafter is what revealed on Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In the words of Ali Miyan, “The positions of Prophets (pbut) are like the peak of a high mountain. They can see both lives and their results, simultaneously. Therefore, their guidance is reliable to all those human beings who cannot see the life and requisites of the hereafter”. Holy Prophets (pbut) warn people from the robbery of ethics from humankind and pointed out the dangers and harms, which cannot be seen from worldly eyes.
They also work, with the emotions of pity, sympathy and love and regardless of any reward from people and they pleaded people to adopt the revealed guidance of Allah.

In the second lecture, he described the rank, and status of the Prophets (pbut), their noble characters that were landmarks for the entire humankind. They served humankind without any hope of reward and desire for materialistic gain. They did as directed by Allah because they believed that they would be rewarded on the Day of Judgment. He also explained that the foremost important teaching of all Prophets (pbut) was “to believe in the omnipotence of Allah”. In addition, he shed a light on what were their contributions in the evolution and progress of human civilization.

In his third address, he tried to explain what losses and harms faced by humankind, upon following the leaders other than Prophets (pbut). He underlined that, there is difference between the Intention and interests of Holy Prophets (pbut) and other leaders. Prophets (pbut) do not work for their selfish interests but on the revealed guidance of Allah. They deserved to be followed. They are reliable leaders, who can appropriately guide humankind, to success both, in this life and the hereafter, whereas the worldly leaders work mostly for their selfish interests, and their activities and words come from their limited
confined intellect. Therefore, there are always chances of mistakes and accidents in their judgments. Rulers, politicians, lawyers and leaders always experiment with the sentiments of the common people but they fail at last. They play with the lives and future of humankind. There example is akin to a child with a piece of paper in his hand, who in accord to his wish can, open it, tear it into pieces or burn it.

In the fourth lecture, he describes that the answer to a number of challenges faced today lie in the teachings of the Prophets (pbut). There are always only two options against humankind either follow Prophetic guidance or bear eternal loss. It is a natural phenomenon, which has always existed in all the ages of human history. The Qur’an has exemplified this through the description of many events of the past, such as the story of Firoun of Egypt and the people of Aad and Samood, etc.

In his fifth lecture, he described social, economic and religious conditions of the world prevailing at the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbut). Ali Miyan writes, “the intensity of unrest in the society touching its zeal, is the appropriate time for a Prophet to come”. All the nations and societies of the world were living in deep darkness of ignorance at that time therefore, it was the appropriate moment for the arrival of the Prophet (pbut). Makkah, which was previously the greatest centre of the
believers of Allah, had turned into a temple of 360 idols. Many inhuman and animistic customs and practices prevailed in the society, like the burying of daughters alive, marrying with sisters and daughters and stepmothers, worshiping idols, nude Tawaf of Kabah, harsh behavior with slaves, illiteracy etc.

In the sixth address, he pointed out the revolutionary impact of the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) mission on the society. The gradual changing in the lifestyle and the interests of Arabs. Those who were far away from civilized characters and moral values, turned good. The stories of their high moral character and sacrifices, for each other’s welfare, presented as principle chapter in human history. They became good friends, good neighbors, sympathetic warriors and ideal leaders. He talked of the Islamic society of the first century Hijrah, which was the fruit of Muhammad’s mission. He briefly explained some stories of Muhammad’s (pbuh) companions as representations of their excellent moral characters.

In the seventh lecture, he explained some special features of Prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh). He particularly tried to explain that he was the last Prophet of Islam (pbuh). To prove his statement he gave evidences from the Qur’anic verses and authentic narratives (Ahadith). Other previous revealed books
also foretold about the last Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Simultaneously, he condemned those false prophets who claimed after Muhammad (pbuh) and the hatred of great Islamic Scholars against these false prophets and collected evidences against them.

In the eighth address, he talked about some conspiracies against Islam. Prophetship is sealed with Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)” and it is a blessing of Allah on the entire Humankind.

3. Qur’an Ke Usool-o-Mubadi

This is his third book on the Qur’an. In this book, Ali Miyan described some amazing facts and miraculous aspects of the Holy Qur’an. Ali Miyan stated that the Qur’an itself claims that it is a "Mujiza" (Prophetic Miracle). It is a Book in which analyses has been done about the miracles and lingual beauty of Qur’an. Ali Miyan quoted many verses from the Qur’an and elaborated their meanings and miraculous aspects. According to him, Islam is the greatest miracle of Qur’an, another miracle is its depth as a source of knowledge and the third, stories of previous Prophets (pbut).

He has also described many other miraculous aspects of the Qur’an in detail. In the end, he stated that there are three bad
features of a man, which create hurdles in availing advantages from the Qur'an. They are Self Admiration (Proud), Debate (arguing in favour of the wrong deeds) and Infidelity (Kufr). While, some good habits are necessary to avail and without these good habits, one cannot approach the miraculous aspects, and deep knowledge of Qur'an. These habits are curiosity for religion, listening with respect, following the commandments of it, fear of Allah, faith in hereafter, hard work, and respect and admiring dignity of the Qur'an.  

**Critical remarks**

Ali Miyan’s Qur’anic approach is profound and in-depth. He applied deep thinking and intellect to study the inherent philosophical quotations of the Qur’an. Most of his writings contain several references from the Qur’an. He used Qur’anic verses extensively to prove his thoughts and opinions. However, most of his interpretation of Qur’an is Tafsir-bil-Rai, because very little number of Ahadith were quoted in his Tafsir. He always tried to interpret Qur’an in modern context and current world scenario, because he believes that Qur’an is the last word of Allah and is a light for every era till dooms day. Therefore, Qur’an is fully competent to modern age also. In his work *Faith vs Materialism* he tried to put forth the theme of Surah and thinks
that this Surah give the lesson in the especially current evils of the world among them is Materialism. No one can say that Qur’anic teachings were outdated and not have solutions of the present day issues.

He put forth amazing illustrations of Qur’anic verses in his own specific way. Although he did not write a full commentary of the Qur’an but he explained some specific verses of the Qur’an and highlighted their lingual beauty. These new philosophical illustrations present a wonderful aspect of the Qur’an to readers and increase its significance to manifold. It was his life mission to introduce the world with the message and teachings of Qur’an, because he believes that Qur’an is a letter of Allah to every human being though he is a Muslim or not. It is the duty of every Muslim to introduce the Qur’an to every human being and convey the message of Islam.
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Notes and References:

1. Inaugural function of Qur'anic education of a child.


4. Ibid., pp. 147-48.


7. Companions of Cave.


9. Ibid., p. 27.

10. Ibid., pp. 32-33.
11. These lectures delivered in a conference at Madinah University.


13. Ibid., p. 19.
