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Yıldız Sarayı, Seyir Köşkü, Barbaros Bulvarı
Beşiktaş 34349 İstanbul, Türkiye

PHONE | +90 212 259 1742
FAX | +90 212 258 4365

ircica.org
ircica@ircica.org

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The Arabic Language: A Source of Islamic Civilization and Culture in India

Mohammad Iqbal Husain*

In India Islam is the second most-practiced religion after Hinduism. There are approximately 151 million Muslims in India's population as of 2007 (according to the government census of 2001), i. e. 13. 4% of the population. Currently, India has the second or third largest population of Muslims in the world. Contrary to popular belief, Islam came to South Asia long before the Muslim invasions of India. Islamic influence first came to be felt in the early 7th century with the advent of Arab traders. Trade relations between Arabia and the subcontinent are very ancient. Arab traders used to visit the Malabar region, which was a link between them and ports of South East Asia, to trade even before Islam had been established in Arabia. The first Indian mosque was built in 612 AD in Kodungallur by Malik Bin Deenar at the behest of Cheraman Perumal during the life time of Muhammad (c. 571-632). In the 8th century, the province of Sindh (Pakistan) was conquered by Syrian Arabs led by Muhammad bin Qasim. Sindh became the eastern province of the Umayyad Caliphate. In the first half of the 10th century, Mahmud of Ghazni added the Punjab to the Ghaznavid Empire and conducted several raids deeper into present day India. A more successful invasion came at the end of the 12th century by Muhammad of Ghor. This eventually led to the formation of the Delhi Sultanate.

The emergence of Islam in the region is concurrent with the Turko-Muslim invasion of medieval India (which included large parts of present day Pakistan and the Republic of India), where these rulers took over the administration of large parts of India. Since its introduction into India, Islam has exerted a significant religious, artistic, philosophical, cultural, social, and political influence on Indian history. The term "Turk" was commonly used to refer to their higher social status.

The Arabic language as the medium employed in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith literature is the source of Islamic civilization and culture. A number of writers

* Professor, Department of Arabic, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India

have discussed the source of Islamic civilization and culture. In this article, I would like to refer to the *Cambridge History of Islam*, particularly the articles written by G. E. Von Grunebaum (formerly at Near East Centre, University of California) entitled “The Source of Islamic Civilization” and the article by Louis Gardet (Collège Philosophique et Théologique, Toulouse) entitled “Religion and Culture”, as well as J. J. Saunders’ book *A History of Medieval Islam*. In this book, in a chapter entitled “Civilization of Medieval Islam,” Von Grunebaum discusses the sources of Islamic civilization. He quotes a sentence by Leopold Von Ranke as the preamble to his article: “The Spiritual force which suddenly arises as concrete Phenomenon before our eyes in unimagined uniqueness cannot be derived from a higher principle” (p. 469). This sentence as a preamble reflects that the spiritual force (Islam) provides unimagined uniqueness and cannot be derived from a higher principle. This sentence has been quoted in the discussion of the source of Islamic civilization. It means that Islam is the source of an unimagined uniqueness, although the Qur’an and its teaching elaborate imagined uniqueness and the Holy Qur’an is at the highest place of Principle. In fact, the preamble has been adapted to give a concept that, whatever sources of Islamic civilization are found, is based on different sources unrelated to the basic Islamic sources – the Qur’an and Hadith literature. He goes on to defend his ideas in these words: “That a civilization should have neatly identifiable sources is a concept of a more limited validity than recent intellectual habituation and customary techniques of scholarship would suggest” (p. 469).

In this paper, I try to examine his views regarding the sources of Islamic civilization. As he writes: “The concept of sources becomes meaningless in a context in which cultures of civilizations are perceived as essentially unchanging, belonging to the world of ideas and withdrawn from historical processes which affect or mould only their surface manifestations” (469). Grunebaum’s discussion of Islamic civilization and its sources can be summed up as follows. His use of such words as “unidentifiable sources,” “intellectual habituation and customary techniques scholarship”, “withdrawn from historical process” may represent scholarly concepts in the analysis of a civilization and its sources in general, but will not be fully acceptable in the discussion of an Islamic civilization which has its own principles, facts, sources, concepts, and particular spirit. In his discussion, Grunebaum has specifically identified problems and sources of Islamic civilization. He looks at the nature of Islamic civilization from a very narrow point of view as basically an Arab phenomenon. In this regard, he talks of: (1) radical monotheism as understood by Muhammad (p. 475) and (2) The Qur’anic text, which emphasizes the specifically Arab mission of the Prophet (p. 475).

This means that his concept of “Islamic Civilization” is not based on a broad view of Islamic philosophical, ideological and religious principles and that he tends to establish his concept of Islamic civilization on purely national, sociopolitical and secular principles. Hence his orientalist perception of Islamic civilization is based on contemporary philosophical and sociopolitical theories of modernism, nationalism and anthropological studies. He writes:

“The dominant concerns of Muslim civilization originated in the Arab milieu. Every religion of universal aspiration and, more particularly, a religion which has captured the dominant sectors of society, must sooner or later come to terms with, integrate and explain itself by means of the highest non-religious thought of the times” (p. 503).

At the end of the article he writes:

“but the religion and the state are Arabic. It is the Arab strain that gives the sense of oneness to a pluralistic civilization that has come to express itself in many different languages – universalism does not destroy specific character” (p. 510).

It is a fact that pluralistic civilization comes into existence, where different kinds of cultures and civilizations co-exist; each civilization has its own identity. But it is a mistake to think that civilization developed in the Muslim world; it was because of the concept of oneness of the Arab strain. Grunebaum gave a wrong conception of Islamic civilization in choosing the title “Sources of Islamic Civilization”. It would have been better to have chosen a title such as “Source of Arab Civilization” or some other suitable title as there is no Islamic concept of civilization.

In the same way, Saunders, in his book *A History of Medieval Islam*, included a chapter entitled “The Civilization of Medieval Islam.” His analysis of Islamic civilization is on the Grunebaum pattern. On the subject of this civilization he says: “it has been variously styled Arab, Muslim, Islamic and Arabic. The second and third terms (Muslim, Islamic) define it too narrowly in religious terms as many of its most distinguished figures were Christians, Jews or pagans and not Muslims at all” (Saunders 187). He prefers to use the term “Arabic Civilization” rather than Islamic civilization. He points out that: “like all civilizations, the Arabic was highly selective in its borrowing from abroad” (194). It is a fact that the civilization that flourished in the Islamic world was based on Islamic teaching, the Qur’an and Hadith literature. He ignores this fact. Muslims became eager to obtain knowledge from other civilizations, as the Islamic spirit inspired them to, and Islamic civilization became rich. Islamic civilization did not, and encouraged mere imitation and copying. Nevertheless, it gave rise to all kinds of sciences. This is a historical fact. Saunders’ remark is

highly controversial when he says:

"Established in an educated society, the invaders grew ashamed of their ignorance, and the Caliphs encouraged learned Christians and Jews to turn these books into the dominant language of the Empire" (p. 190)

Louis Gardet's article "Religion and Culture" in *The Cambridge History of Islam* presents a different worldview, although his approach resembles to some extent those of Grunebaum and Saunders. In his prefatory remarks he says

"Islam is a religion. It is also, almost inseparably from this, a community, a civilization and a culture. It is true that many of the countries through which the Qur'anic faith spread already possessed ancient and important cultures. Islam absorbed these cultures and assimilated itself to them in various ways, to a far greater extent than it attempted to supplant them" (Gardet, p. 569)

But he says:

"We shall, however, give a few landmarks. The Medina period and the Umayyad age, particularly the latter, saw the establishment of the first Muslim culture, in which were combined the influences of ancient Arabia and Byzantium" (Ibid., p. 569)

In relating Arabic language to Arab culture, instead of Islamic civilization he gives the concept of Arabisation. Under the subtitle, "Muslim Culture: Its background and its constituent" he discusses the Qur'an as a religious cultural value" and selects the verses "Qur'an, 16:103, Qur'an, 41:3, 42:7, 43:3 etc., Qur'an, 39. 28. " R. Blachere translates this: '*exempte de tortuosite*' (Gardet 571) in which there is mention that the Qur'an is in Arabic. The significance of the Qur'an can be understood through knowledge of the Arabic Language, Gardet writes: "And this is speech Arabic, manifest". To the Muslim this is not a simple question of fact. The Qur'anic text emphasizes that God sent down to Muhammad a revelation or a preaching in the Arabic language 'wherein there is no crookedness'. If we consider the veneration in which from the beginning Muslims have held their Book, it is possible to understand that for the devout believer every phenomenon of Arabisation is of directly religious significance" (Gardet 571-572). Thus, Gardet's aim is to present Islamic culture as Arab culture and he writes:

"The Qur'an was certainly not the only factor of Arabization but it was nevertheless an essential factor. To it the Arabic language owed the distinctively religious cadences which for centuries were to characterize so many expressions and vocables, and to impregnate it down to the primary meaning of the trilateral roots" (Gardet, p. 572)

Generally, Arab civilization, Muslim civilization and Islamic civilization are generally regarded as all the same. This is not true. There is a difference in

religious spirit, customs and habits.

"It is probable that the development and establishment of an Arab culture would have been possible without the appearance of Islam, but it nevertheless remains that Islam gave its own form to Arab Culture." (Gardet, p. 572)

Islamic civilization remains with its faith, spirit of life and identity in the society. Certainly the Muslim faith presents itself as a universal religion. Every man, without distinction of race or language, is called by the *Shahada* sincerely pronounced to witness to the Oneness of God and to the mission of Muhammad. Consequently every man is called to adopt the *shā'ir* al-Islam (the marks of Islam): that is, the personal obligations determined by the 'four pillars' - prayer, statutory alms-giving, the Ramadan fast and the Pilgrimage to Mecca; and the rules concerning food, circumcision, family life, wills, cemeteries etc., with which the life of the believer is surrounded from birth to death. The statement of faith is simple, consisting of the four Qur'anic affirmations: 'The believer believes in God, in His angels, in His books, in His messenger' - these are explained in Hadiths which mention the future life, the resurrection, and the Divine decree (Gardet, p. 573)

A noted scholar, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, wrote about the Indo-Islamic culture that is common to Islamic civilization throughout the world. He says:

"The cultural structure of Muslims everywhere is determined by two major factors: (i) Islamic belief, way of life and system of ethics; and (ii) the indigenous civilization and local customs which are bound to exert an influence but are felt as a result of living and mixing with the original elements of the population.

The first constituent – Islamic Faith, way of life and code of ethics – is the common attribute of the cultural make-up of Muslims all over the world. Wherever they may be living and whatever their language or dress, this attribute is shared by them universally, and by virtue of which they appear as members of a single brotherhood in spite of the many things that differentiate them locally. The other component signifies that part of their culture which distinguishes them from their co-religionists living in other parts of the world and imparts to them their individual national character". (Nadwi, p. 66)

It is a well known fact that the main source of Islamic civilization, culture and literature is the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith. The emergence of Muslims in India was due not only to carry on trade and to take over the rule of the country. Scholars and religious people who migrated from Iran and other parts of the Arab world to the northern and southern provinces of India made a great contribution to the establishment of civilization and culture in India. In fact, Islamic civilization and culture was introduced to Indian territory by scholars who possessed the Islamic spirit and knowledge of Islamic sciences. The Arabic

language was the main source of Islamic knowledge, sciences, civilization and culture. The cult which surrounded the text of the Qur'an was to make Arabic the liturgical language of Islam. The language of the Qur'an, the only language in which prayers are liturgically valid, is one of the chief factors in the cohesion of the Muslim world.

Muslims settled in Sindh in northern India and in Kerala in southern India. They built mosques in the areas in which they settled. To establish religious identity in society and to fulfill their religious duties they started teaching the text of the Qur'an and other Islamic sciences. Mosques were the centers of education, culture and civilization in the early Muslim period in India. Mahmood Ghaznawi is said to have been the first ruler who, having captured Kannauj, built a mosque and a madrasa at Ghazna in 409 H. A. for the teaching of the Arabic language and the provision of an Islamic education. (*Tarikh Farishta* vol I. -Abul Hsnat-p. 1516). The result was that people followed his path and established madrasas everywhere in India. Mahmood Ghaznawi's son Shahabuddin encouraged scholars and the religious to spread education and establish madrasas. In the Ghazni regime Shahabuddin Ghazni was a man with different interests who ordered the building of madrasas at Ajmer after his victory in 587 AH. In 589 AH, during the Qutubuddin Aibak period, Delhi became the capital of India. In his time a number of madrasas came into existence in Delhi. The most famous madrasa, 'Madrass Muzzi' was built under his patronage (A Shirnam was Muizzuddin Mohammad Ghazni). Shamsuddhin Eltutmish built a madrasa at Badayun and used the same name. In the same period, madrasa Nasiria acquired recognition in the field of education. Its principal was Sirajuddin Afeef, (*Ibid* 18). Sultan Khilji constructed the Madrasa Hauz Khas in 696 AD in Delhi. Madrasa Firoz Shahi (1753 AH) was one of the most famous madrasas in Delhi. Jalaluddin Rumi was a teacher of theology and Islamic studies in this madrasa. During the Mughal period a number of madrasas were established in Delhi and other parts of the country with Lahore as the centre of Islamic education. In Agra, the Fatehpur Sikri, Badam, Rampur, Shajhanpur, Awadh, Lucknow, Sohali, Launpur, Bihar, Sahsaram, Danapur, Phalwari, Patna, and Bengal Madrasas were centers of Islamic civilization and culture.

In Dhaka, Shaista Khan built a madrasa and a mosque close by the river. This madrasa building now forms part of Eiden Hospital. There was a madrasa in the village of Mughazar. There was also a mosque called Khan Mohammad Dah that formed a centre of education. At Azampura (Mohammad Azad was the son of Aurangzeb) there was a two-storey mosque which was used both for teaching purposes and as a student hostel. In south India Daulatabad,

Hyderabad Deccan, Bidan (the madrasa of Mahmoud Ghazwan), Gulbarga and every part of the country every Muslim village possessed a madrasa. The city of Madras is known as Madras because there were a number of madaris. "In early times there were no schools or colleges for teaching Arabic in Kerala. Mosques were the only centers where Arabic was taught to Muslim youth and adults but it may be noted that in these mosques Arabic was taught, not for its own sake but as part of Islamic religious instruction. The teaching of the Arabic language and literature as an independent subject is a later development" (Kutty 52-53).

At the early stage, education system in Madaris was not organized. They did not use a particular syllabus. The Arabic language was taught in order to promote an understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith literature as well as Islamic sciences. However, during the tenth century, we find that a common course and syllabus was used by the teachers in the madrasas and private institutions. Generally the subject was taught by experts in a particular subject or field. Students chose the teacher of the subject on the basis of his reputation in that particular field. During the tenth century of the Hijra, the teaching of Arabic was not restricted to the language of the Qur'an and Hadith. The teaching of the Arabic language extended to other sciences and these became integrated parts of the syllabus. The following books were taught and the syllabus was as follows:

Grammar: Misbah, kafia, Lubbul Albab, and Irshad of Qazi
 Shahabuddin
 Fiqh- Hidayah
 Usool fiqh- Manaar, Usool Bazdawi
 Tafseer (exegesis) Madarik, Baidawi, and Kashaf
 Mysticism- Awaarif, Fosusul Hekam, Naqd-al-Nosus, Lamaat
 Hadith- Mashaariq-al-Anwar, Masabih-al-Sunnah
 Literature- Maqaamaat Hariri
 Mantiq (logic)- Sharah Shamsia
 Scholastics- Sharah Sahaef

After that there were some changes in the common syllabus. Emphasis was laid on philosophy, logic and scholastic sciences under the influence of Iranian scholars who had migrated from Iran to India. The following were added. Matele-wa-Mawaqif, Mutawwal, Mukhtasar, Talweeh, Sharah Aqaid, Nasfi, Sharah waqaya and Sharah gami.

In the third phase, although logic and philosophy were dominant, Shah Waliullah laid emphasis on the teaching of Hadith literature with a view to bringing about a revolution in Islamic civilization and culture. Accordingly the syllabus was as follows:

Grammar – Kafia, Sharah Jami
 Logic – Sharah Shamsia, Sharah Mataale
 Philosophy- Sharah Hidayat- al-Hikmat
 Scholastics- Sarah Aqaed Nasfi, and Hashia Khayali, Sharah Mawaqif
 Fiqh- Sharah Waqay, and Hidaya
 Usool Fiqh- Huami and taudih wa Talwih
 Rhetoric- Mukhtasar wa Mutawwal
 Mathematics- some treatises
 Medicine- Majaz-al-Qanoon
 Hadith-Mishkat-al-Masabih, Shamal-al-Tirmizi and Shahih Bukhari
 Tafseer- Madarik and Baidawi
 Mysticism- Awarif, Rasaan Naqshbandia, Sharah Rubaiyat Jami,
 Muqaddame Shara Lamaat, Muqaddam Naqd-al-Nosus

The fourth phase started in the 12th century of the Hijra. Mulla Nizamuddin Faruqi Farangi Mahalli prescribed a syllabus that is known as Dars Nizami. It was as follows:

Literature:

- ¹ Maqamatul-Hariri (extracts)
- ² Diwanul- Mutanabbi (extracts)
- ³ Sab' Mu'allaqat
- ⁴ Hamasatu'l- Arab
- ⁵ Nafhatu'l-Yaman
- ⁶ Al-Ajabul-Ijab

Grammar- Etymology:

- ¹ Mizan
- ² Munsha'ib
- ³ Panj-ganj
- ⁴ Zubdah
- ⁵ Sarf Mir
- ⁶ Fusul-i-Akbari
- ⁷ Shafiyah
- ⁸ Dasturul-Mubtadi

Syntax:

- ¹ Mi'atu Amil
- ² Sharh Mi'atu Amil
- ³ Nahw Mir,
- ⁴ Hidayatu'n-Nahw

⁵ Kafiyah

⁶ Daw'u Sharh Mulla

Rhetoric:

¹ Mukhtasaru'l-Ma'ani (complete)

² Mutawwal (upto Ma ana qultu)

³ Mullazada: Mukhtasar

Philosophy and Logic:

¹ Isaghoji,

² Qala-Aqul

³ Mir Isaghoji

⁴ Sharh Tahdhib Mulla Yazdi

⁵ Badi'ul-Mizan

⁶ Qutbi

⁷ Mir Qutbi

⁸ Tasawwurat

⁹ Sharh Sullam of Mulla Hasan

¹⁰ Tasdiqat Sharh Sullam of Mulla Hamdulah

¹¹ Tasawwrat, Sharh Sullam of Qadi Mubarak

¹² Mir Zahid

¹³ Risalah Ghulam Yahya

¹⁴ Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal

¹⁵ Annotations of Bahrul-Ulum on Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal

Physics and Metaphysics:

¹ Maibudhi (complete)

² Sadra (up to Falakiyyat)

³ Shams Bazighah (complete)

Arithmetic:

Khulasatu'l- Hisab

Geometry:

Euclid - ordinarily Book 1, in several cases up to Book IV,
and in exceptional cases more than that

Astronomy:

¹ Tashrihu'l-Aflak including Mahiuuat (or Tasrih Sharh Tashrihu'l- Aflak)

² Quashajiyah

³ Sab' Shidad

⁴ Sharh Chaghmini

Scholastics:

- ¹ Sharh Aqaidu'n-Nasafi
- ² Khayali
- ³ Sharh Mawaqif
- ⁴ Mir Zahid Umur Amman
- ⁵ Sharh Aqaid of Jalali
- ⁶ Aqidah Hafiz
- ⁷ Annotations of Fadil Qarabaghi on Sharh Aqaid of Jalali

Muslim Law:

- ¹ Sharhu'l-Wiqayah-Ibadat
- ² Hidayah-Mu'amlat
- ³ Kanzu'd-Daqaiq (whole)
- ⁴ Wiqayah and Quduri (abridged editions)

Principles of Muslim Law:

- ¹ Shashi
- ² Nuru'l-Anwar
- ³ Taudih
- ⁴ Talwih
- ⁵ Musallamu'th-Thult
- ⁶ Dairu'l-Usul
- ⁷ Husami

Hadith:

- ¹ Mishkatu'l- Masabih,
- ² Muwatta
- ³ Sihah Sitah, consisting of –
 - ⁱ Sahih Bukhari
 - ⁱⁱ Sahih Muslim
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Jami' Tirmidhi
 - ^{iv} Shih Nasai
 - ^v Sunan Abi Daud
 - ^{vi} Sunan Ibn Majah

Principles of Hadith:

- ¹ Nukhbatu'l-Fikr (some also study its sharh or commentary)
 - ⁱ Tafsir Jalalin
 - ⁱⁱ Baidawi
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Kashaf and Madarik (the last two in selections only)
- ² Faraid (law of inheritance)-Sharifi

- ³ Dialectics-Rashdiyyah
- ⁴ Ilmu Wadi il Alat-Tusi's Risalah on Usturlab, entitled bist Babi

Lexicography- Qamus Medicine:

- ¹ Qanuncha
- ² Mujaz
- ³ Kulliyyat of Nafisi
- ⁴ Mualajitj of Sadidi
- ⁵ Sharh Asbab
- ⁶ Hummayatush-Shaikh

Sayed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi discussed the features of this educational system and wrote: "With all their intellectual and literary attainments and importance, the learned scholars of old were fully alive to their spiritual needs and strove hard for self-purification and the cultivation of a living, all-pervading consciousness of the Almighty. They believed that it was as necessary for their fulfillment to render respectful service to spiritual guides and mentors as it was to sit at the feet of secular teachers for the acquirement of secular knowledge and learning. They allowed no considerations of prestige to stand in the way. They upheld their honor and dignity zealously before worldly kings and notables and gave not even an inch in their obedience to them, and yet displayed submissiveness and humility itself when it came to humble lords of the spiritual domain. A unique combination of awareness of the self and self-denial formed a distinguishing characteristic of the educational history of medieval India while the exceptional personalities belonging to it were all unfailingly bound in allegiance and loyalty to some spiritual leader of the time.

The entire educational and intellectual structure of India bore, in its initial stage, the impress of these three masters, Allama Abdul Muqtadir Kindi Thanesari (d. 1388), and his two pupils, Maulana Khwajgi Dehlavi (d. 1406) and Sheikh Ahmad Thanesari (d. 1398). All three were disciples of Sheikh Naseeruddin Chiragh-i-Delhi.

And now we come to the name of Allama Wajihuddin bin Nasrullah Gujerati (d. 1589), "who devoted 67 years of his life to teaching religious and secular sciences at Ahmadabad. His pupils were scattered over a wide area, from Ahmadabad to Lahore, spreading light and learning wherever they went. He had the signal honor of being elevated to the rank of 'Master of Masters' in his own lifetime. " The famous educational centers of Kora Jahanabad, Amethi, Jaunpur and Lucknow shone solely with his radiance. He, in his turn, was the spiritual protégé of Sheikh Mohammad Ghaus Gwaliori and received numerous blessings from him. Two other notable scholars and teachers of the

time, Shah Pir Mohammad and Maulana Ghulam Haqshband, who were an institution in themselves, also belonged to the same line of spiritual guidance and instruction.

Finally, it was the turn of Mullah Nizamuddin to dominate the educational scene from India to Iran and Afghanistan. He was not only a devoted follower of the Qadria divine Syed Abdul Razzaq Bansawi, but was literally intoxicated with the love for his mentor. Every word of his biographical study, *Manaqib-i-Razzaqia*, manifests the depth and intensity of his devotion.

Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanwtawi (d. 1879), the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband with its country-wide activities of religious and spiritual guidance and reform, and its other patron and benefactor, Maulana Rasheed Ahamad Gangohi (d. 1950), were also the disciples and khalifas of Hazrat Haji Imadullah Mahajir Makki. Likewise, Maulana Syed Mohammad Ali Monghyri, who founded the Nadwatul Ulema at Lucknow, was a khalifa of Hazrat Maulana Fazlur Rahman of Ganj Moradabad in the district of Unnao. Thus, at every turn of its history, we find the educational endeavor of medieval times illuminated by the spiritual magnificence of some deep-hearted man of God. Therein, we imagine, lay the secret of its strength, effectiveness and spiritual glory.

Curiously enough, teachers and scholars of impeccable worth and ability were sometimes bound in allegiance to such spiritual leaders as were technically not scholars themselves and were not considered as learned by their contemporaries. Till the very end, it was a tradition with Arabic institutions that their students, after they had completed their studies, went to live for some time with spiritual guides whom they or their teachers held in high regard and with whom they also felt themselves to be spiritually in tune, in order to complete the development of that aspect of their personality which could not be nurtured in a purely academic environment. The students graduating from the institution founded by Maulana Lutfullah (which was an international seat of learning in the last phase), sought the haloed society of Maulana Fazlur Rahman of Ganj Moradabad, while the inclination of the teachers and pupils of the madrasas of north-western India (like those of Deoband and Sahanpur) was towards Thana Bhawan, Gangoh and Raipur, where Haji Imadullah Mahajir Makki, Hazrat Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and others served as beacons of moral and spiritual guidance (Nadwi, p. 84-87).

After the failure of the uprising of 1857 and the suppression of the Muslims by the British in India it was feared that future generations would be lost, for all practical purposes, to Islam. They would have nothing in common with the Islamic Shari'a, moral system and civilization. In these circumstances, the courageous and far-sighted Ulema awoke to the need of establishing

theological institutions which could preserve the allegiance of the rising Muslim generations to their Faith and also be instrumental in the preservation and promotion of Islamic religious and moral knowledge. The Darul Uloom of Deoband occupies a position of prime importance among the Muslim religious institutions thus established. Unflinching loyalty to the Faith, strict adherence to the Hanafi School, continuation of the way of the pious precursors and the defense and safeguarding of the Sunna of the Prophet can be said to be the major ingredients of the tradition of the Darul Uloom (Nadwi, p. 89-91).

The role of the Nadwatul Ulema differed from the role played by these institutions. It played an important role during the 20th century in using Arabic as a source of Islamic civilization and culture: “The Nadwatul Ulema focused its attention primarily on the teaching of the Qur’an as an eternal program for living. It also took up the teaching of Arabic as a living language since it held the key to the understanding of the Qur’an. It did not commit the error – as was the case in India generally – of regarding Arabic as a dead, classical language which was no longer current and in everyday use anywhere in the world. It excluded from its curriculum, or reduced the importance of such sciences as had ceased to be of real value in the contemporary world, and, in their place, introduced those modern branches of study whose knowledge was essential to the Ulema in rendering an effective service to Islam in the prevailing circumstances.

Another major aim and purpose was to produce preachers and interpreters of Islam who could present Faith to the present-day world in a bold and effective manner and in an easily comprehensible form and language. By the grace of God, commendable success has been achieved in all these fields. The result has been the production of exemplary servants of Islam and high-ranking scholars who can be held up as models to the World of Islam. These scholars have made invaluable contributions to the study of Islamic history, literature, scholastic theology and the biography of the Prophet” (Nadwi 95-96). A number of institutions are active in the country and utilize the Arabic Language as a source of Islamic civilization and culture in India. This is a historical fact that cannot be ignored. The development of Islamic civilization and culture in Indian society progressed through the teaching of the Arabic language, the Qur’an, Hadith literature and Islamic sciences. It was from the Qur’anic foundation and the Arabic language that these disciplines and sciences were developed in the past. The corpus of the religious sciences and their subsidiary sciences were the basic foundations for Islamic civilization and culture in India. The teaching and learning of the Arabic language was directed to the understanding of the Holy Qur’an and other sciences as well as the promotion of Islamic culture. In order to develop Islamic civilization in India, Indian scholars undertook the

writing of learned books and treatises on different topics related to Islamic thought which could promote awareness of Islamic civilization. They wrote in different languages. Of the various languages in India importance was given to Arabic, which remained a subject of special interest.

The Qur'anic commentary or *tafsir* is certainly one of the main pillars upon which Islamic civilization and culture in India was based. We shall limit our discussion here to certain *tafsirs* and *mufasssirun* that have been accepted as authoritative in the world of Islamic studies in India. Among the Qur'anic commentaries in Arabic written by Indian authors are the following: *Tafseer Tabseer-al-Rahman wa Fath-al-Mannan* by Makhdoom-al-Mahayami, a unique work. His theory of "Nazm-e-Ayaat" is a distinguished achievement which is superior to the attempts of other writers. *Sawate-al-Ilham* by Abul Faiz Fazi is a unique type of *tafsir*. In it he uses the letters without a stroke, a literary achievement of the writer that cannot be compared with others. *Tafsir Fath al-Bayan fi Maqasid al-Qur'an* by Siddiq Hasan Khan has received recognition among scholars for its comprehensive study. Abul Hasan Ali writes: "In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries India can proudly boast of having produced Islamic scholars who were and are the envy of the whole Muslim world for the prodigious scope of their literary output. For instance, Nawab Siddiq Hassan Khan of Bhopal (d. 1889) had 222 books to his credit, of which 56 were in Arabic, including *Fathul Bayan Fi Tafseeril Qur'an* (ten vols.), *Abjadul Uloom*, *Ei-Tajul Mukallal*, *El-Bulghah-Fi-Usoolil Lugah*, and *El-Alamul Khaffaq-Fi-Ilmil Ishtiqaq* (Nadwi, p. 28).

Al-Tafseer-al-Mazhari by Dazu Sanaullah Pani Pati is a complete *Tafsir* of the Qur'an. It treats grammar and fiqh (Islamic laws) in accordance with the author's opinions in the *Tafsir* sciences. It is also considered an important work in the field of Qur'anic hermeneutics in India. The above-mentioned four *Tafsirs* have been published. A number of other *Tafsirs*, complete and incomplete, are in manuscript. There is no space to include a mention of those manuscripts in this paper. Shah Waliullah's book, *Al-Fauz-al-Kabir*, is a noteworthy book in the field of uluum al-Qur'an and particularly in the study of the principles of *Tafsir*.

The science of Hadith (the Prophet's Traditions) arose from the devotional attachment of Muslims to the legacy (*Aathar*) of the Prophet and his companions. Indian Muslims have made great contributions in the field of Hadith literature. They have compiled books following the prescribed research methods to examine the authenticity of the Hadith. They have edited a number of manuscripts and written explanations and commentaries of high standard which have received due recognition in the Arab world. In this regard, I shall mention here a few writers. Hasan bin Mohammad-al-Saghani was a

magnificent traditionist and lexicographer of the thirteenth century: “His book, *Mashariq-ul-Anwar*, on the Traditions of the Prophet, was for a long time prescribed as a textbook in the educational institutions of various Arab countries and is still popular in the Islamic world.

Belonging to the same class of books is Sheikh Ali bin Husamuddin el-Muttaqi Burhanpuri’s *Kanz-ul-Ummal*, written in the 16th century. It is an edited version of Allama Suyuti’s *Jam-ul-Jawame* and ranks among books on the Traditions that have been of immense benefit to students by saving them the trouble of having to plod through thick volumes of source-books and bibliographies. Commenting on the book, Sheikh Abul Hasan el-Bhakri el-Shafai, a noted Hejaz scholar belonging to the same century, has very appropriately remarked that “the entire world of learning is indebted to Allama Suyuti, and the Allama himself to Sheikh Ali Muttaqi.” Then there is Allama Tahir Pattani’s (d. 1578) *Majma-i-Bihar el-Anwar fi Gharaib-il-Tanzil wa Lataif-il-Akbar* of which Maulana Abdul Hai writes in *Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir*: “In this book the author has explained the meanings of difficult words and expressions occurring in the Traditions and has also noted down under each word or expression what the different Traditionists have said with regard to it. It has thus become a sort of key to the Sihah Sitta. Allama Mohammad Tahir’s *Tazkiratul Mauzuat* is also a highly successful work on the subject of the apocryphal Traditions” (Nadwi, p. 24-25).

Other writers who have produced very valuable books and commentaries are Shah Wali Ullah Dehlawi and Sheikh Abdul Haq Mohaddis Dehlawi: “These include Maulana Mohammad Ashraf Daynawi’s *Aon-ul-Ma’bood Fi Sharh-i-Abi Dawood*, Maulana Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri’s *Bazl-ul-Majhood Fi Sharh-i-Sunan-i-Abi Dawood*, Maulana Abdul Rahman Mubarakpur’s *Tohfatul Ahwazi Fi Sharh-i-Sunan-i-tirmuzi*, Maulana Shabbgir Ahmad Osmani’s *Fathul Mulhim-Ri-Sharh-Sheeh-e-Muslim* and Sheikhul Hadees Mualana Mohammad Zakarya Kandklawi’s *Aojezul Masalik Ila Sharh-i-Mowatta-i-Imam-i-Malik*. In addition to these, Mualana Anwar Shah Kashmiri’s commentary and annotations on the *Saheeh al-Bukhari*, published under the title of *Faiz-ul-Bauri*, are still looked upon as an invaluable treasures-house of knowledge on the subject of the Traditions. Maulana Zaheer Ahsan Shauq Neemwi’s unfinished work, *Aasar-us-Sunan*, on the Traditions and the exposition of the Hanafi school also shows rare insight and understanding” (Nadwi, p. 31).

Imam Abdul Hai Lucknowi (d. 1304 AH), the great Indian traditionist of hadith, wrote one hundred and twenty books of which eighty-six are in Arabic. The most popular of these books is *Al-Ta’aleeq al-Mumajjad Sharh al-Mowatt’a lil Imam Mohammed*, which was published several times in many

parts of the Arab and Islamic world. Other Arabic books of Lucknowi include *Dhafr al-Amani*, *Al-Raf'a Al-Takmeel* and *Al-Ajwibah Al-Fadhelah Al-Ashrah*. The Imam of hadith Khaleel Ahmed As-Saharnifori wrote also a book in four volumes entitled *Bathl Al-Majhood fi Hal Sunan Abi Dawud*. Other books of hadith include *Ghayat al-Maqsoud fi Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud* by Shamsul Haq Al-Azmabadi, *Awn al-Ma'bood* and *Tuhfat Al-Ahwathi fi Sharh al-Turmithi* by Mubarakafori, *Ma'arif Al-Sunan* by Sheikh Allama Mohammed Yousuf Al-Benouri, *Fath al-Mulhim fi Sharh Sahih Muslim* by Allama Shabeer Ahmed Osmani and *Pila al-Sunan* by Dhafr Ahmed al-Tahanawi.

Sheik Mohammed Zakariya Al-Kandahlawi wrote around 100 books including *Lam'a al-Darari ala al-Jam'a as-Sahih lil Imam al-Bukhari*, *Al-Abwab wa al-Tarajim ala Al-Bukhari*, *Al-Kawkab al-Durri* and *Awjaz al-Masalik fi Sharh Al-Mowatt'a lil Imam Malik*. Sheikh and preacher Mohammed Yousuf Al-Kandahlawi wrote *Amani al-Ahbar fi Shrh Ma'ani al-A'athar*. The Allama Sheikh Habeebur Rahman Azumi wrote and revised a number of Arabic books on hadith literature, such as *Kitab Al-Zuhd libn al-Mubarak*, *Musnad Al-Humidi* and *Musanaf Abdul Razzaq*. In fact, the Muslim Ulema of India were famed for their deep interest in religious studies. The Egyptian scholar Rashid Ridha has acknowledged that the study of hadith literature flourished and progressed in India more especially after its decline in the Arabic world (Taqiur Rahman 15-16). Almost all the above-mentioned books were published and taught in many universities and study centers around the Arab and Islamic world. In short, a number of books by Indian writers have been held as unique in their field throughout the world of Islam. They wrote on Islamic Law, its principles, logic, philosophy, history, biographies, bibliography, grammar, syntax, rhetoric, prosody and lexicology. They composed poetry and wrote literary works. There is no space here to give details of all these works and their authors.

Due to the influence of the Holy Qur'an, Arabic became the language of Islam and when Islamic civilization spread beyond the frontiers of the Arabian Peninsula, it took the Arabic language with it. The religion of Islam has been one of the causes of the infiltration of Arabic vocabulary into other languages. The Arabic alphabet is used by many other languages, such as Persian, Urdu, Malayalam, Swahili etc., while the influence of Arabic grammar and vocabulary on Malayalam is far reaching and has to be treated as positive evidence of close contact between Arabic and Malayalam languages In bygone days (Kutty 110-125). In fact, the impact of Arabic language is found in all Indian languages. Arabic language and literature is greatly influenced by Islamic culture and civilization. Malayalam, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, and other Indian languages contain a number of Arabic words.

Urdu has been profoundly influenced by Arabic. Many Arabic words are used in Urdu although some of them have acquired a slightly different pronunciation from that of the original Arabic. For example, *tanour* in Arabic became *tandour* in Urdu, *muskeen* became *mushkeen*, *khasm* became *kahsm*, etc. (See Ibrahim 16). Some scholars have divided Arabic loan words in Urdu into three categories: 1) “*Dakheel*” words: words borrowed in their full form and still used in their original form, such as *kitab*, *qalam*, *hawdh*, *sahn*, etc. 2) “*Muwarrad*” words: words that lost their original form because of some morphological inflections, such as *minar* (minaret), *adalah* (muscle), etc. 3) “*Muwalad*” words: words transformed due to Urdu grammatical rules, such as *badalna* (*Badal*), *takhleeq*, *tanqeed*, etc. (See Kutty, p. 19).

Arabic influences in the Malayalam language is evident in the Malayali use of gender suffixes in some words such as *kallan-kallanthi*; *kollan – kollanthi*. The first person singular in Arabic is ‘*ana*’ and sometimes plural ‘*nahnu*’ is used for singular. In Malayalam, first person singular pronoun is ‘*nan*’, ‘*en*’, ‘*ena*’, ‘*eni*’. Like Arabic, many Dravidian languages do not have a future tense. Prepositions like ‘*inda*’ ‘*wa*’, *fowq-pokkam*, *That-tazhat*, etc. are found in Malayalam and Arabic (*Ibid.*, 115). There are a lot of Arabic words which found their way into Malayalam. We can mention a few: *Asl* (original), *Ta’am* (food), *halwa* (sweet), *himdh* (acid), *sukar* (sugar).

During the 20th century Arabic language and literature in India entered a new era. This is due mainly to two factors. One important factor is that the Movement of Nadwatul Ulema and the establishment of its Darul Uloom in 1898 initiated a new approach to Arabic language and literature as well as to Islamic culture, civilization and its teaching. Allama Shibhi, and other members of this body realized the fact that the syllabic nature of the Arabic language and the proper methodology of teaching it were not applied in the oriental institutions that were the centers of Arabic learning. Philosophy and logic were taught as the main core courses so with result that the students were very poor in the Arabic language. They could not speak or write the language well nor could they appreciate the literary beauty of the Qur’an and the sayings of the prophet. There was no proper environment for students of the Arabic language. As a result, the future of the Arabic language and literature remained in darkness. Nadwatul Ulama laid special emphasis on the teaching of the Arabic language and literature, which resulted in the production of a number of Arabic scholars and a large number of works on Islamic subjects and sciences, literature, history, literary criticism, biography, and other subjects.

The second factor is related to oil exploration in the Middle East, which added a whole new dimension to the Arabic language in India. To gain

economic benefit, Indo-Arab relations were strengthened and to achieve the goal, some oriental institutions followed the pattern of Nadwatul Ulama and produced a number of graduates who were able to write books and articles. It is not possible in such a paper to give a detailed account of the achievements of the Indians in the field of Arabic language studies and literature. Here I shall merely briefly indicate some points in this regard.

Journalism is an important aspect of Arabic language and literature. It has played an important role in giving the Arabic language an important position in India. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Maulana Abdullah Amadi were the founders of Arabic journalism in India. *Al-Zia*, edited by Masoud Alam Nadwi, was an organ of the Nadwatu Ulama while *Al-Bathal-Islami* has been the most important high standard magazine for more than 55 years. *Sautul Umma*, *Al-Raid*, *Al-Dawa*, *Al-Kifah*, *Al-Sahwa-al-Islamia*, *Thaqafat-al-Hind*, *Al-Thaqafaa Mojalla* and *Al-Majam-al-Hindi* are the most notable magazines and journals published in India and there are many other such magazines published by oriental institutions and University departments. In the past, translations were not given any importance as literary works but at present translations are considered as important literary works, especially when the language of the interpreter/ translator is skillfully written in an eloquent and artistic style. A number of books from Urdu, English and regional languages have been translated into Arabic. This is a very important dimension of the Arabic language in India.

The genre of fiction flourished in Arabic and other Indian languages during the 20th century although, to my knowledge, no original novels or short stories have been written in Arabic in India. A number of short stories have been translated from Indian languages into Arabic and published in some Indian journals such as *Thaqafat-al-Hind* and *Saut-al-Hind*. These attempts are seen as the contribution of Indians to the development of the art of fiction in Arabic language and literature. Some collections of translated short stories have been published. The travelogue is a classic genre of Arabic literature, but no Indians wrote travelogues in Arabic. During the 20th century Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi wrote many travelogues in Arabic. Oratory is one of the oldest genres of Arabic prose. Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was very famous as an orator in Arabic. His speeches are a true reflection of Islamic culture and civilization, and his speeches are considered as masterpieces of Arabic literature. At present, the speeches of Maulana Mohammad Rabey are published in *Al-Raid*.

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