

Need of Hour: Role of Muslim Scholars

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In Islam, there are four sources from which Muslim scholars extract religious law or rulings, and upon which they base their fatwa. The first is the Quran, which is the holy book of Islam, and which Muslims believe is the direct and literal word of God, revealed to Prophet Mohammad. The second source is the Sunnah, which incorporates anything that the Prophet Mohammad said, did or approved of. The third source is the consensus of the scholars, meaning that if the scholars of a previous generation have all agreed on a certain issue, then this consensus is regarded as representing Islam. Finally, if no scripture is found regarding a specific question from the three first sources, then an Islamic scholar performs what is known as ijihad. This means that they use their own logic and reasoning to come up with the best answer according to the best of their ability. Muslims believe that any given action that they perform in their lives falls into one of five categories: > Obligatory > Commendable > Permissible > Despised > Not Permitted "In Sunni Islam, a fatwā is nothing more than an opinion. It is just a view of a mufti and is not binding in India" As per Maulana Mehmood Madani, president of the Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Hind however Fatwa carries substantial weight and significance due to involvement of Muslim scholars and erudite fellows. In the early days of Islam, fatwās were pronounced by distinguished scholars to provide guidance to other scholars, judges and citizens on how subtle points of Islamic law should be understood, interpreted or applied. There were strict rules on who was eligible to issue a valid fatwā and who could not, as well as on the conditions the fatwā must satisfy to be valid. Gradually, it became one of the weapons in hands of self styled Maulana/Mufti like it happens in case of Panditji and misuse was corollary to the same. What heinous did not happen in the name of Fatwa;

- On December 2, 1947 the University of Al-Azhar religious scholars, the most respected in the Sunni Muslim world, called for holy war against the Zionists.- In April 1974 the Muslim World League issued a fatwa stating that followers of the Ahmadiyyah movement are to be considered "non-Muslims". - Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989 pronounced a death sentence on Salman Rushdie, the author of The Satanic Verses. - In 2001, religious authorities in the United Arab Emirates issued a fatwā against the children's game Pokémon, after finding that it encouraged gambling, and was based on the theory of evolution, "a Jewish-Darwinist theory, that conflicts with the truth about humans and with Islamic principles". - Indian Muslim scholars issued a fatwā of death against Taslima Nasreen, an exiled controversial Bangladeshi writer. Majidulla Khan Farhad of Hyderabad-based Majlis Bachao Tehriq issued the fatwā at the Tipu Sultan mosque in Kolkata after Juma prayers as saying Taslima has defamed Islam and announced an "unlimited financial reward" to anybody who would kill heSheikh of al-Azhar in Cairo, Muhammad Sayid Tantawy, who is the leading religious authority in the Sunni Muslim establishment in Egypt, alongside the Grand Mufti of Egypt, said the following about fatwās issued by himself or the entire Dar al-Ifta:"Fatwā issued by Al-Azhar are not binding, but they are not just whistling in the wind either; individuals are free to accept them, but Islam recognizes that extenuating circumstances may prevent it. For example, it is the right of Muslims in France who object to the law banning the veil to bring it up to the legislative and judicial authorities. If the judiciary decides in favor of the government because the country is secular, they would be considered to be Muslim individuals acting under compelling circumstances." Otherwise, in his view, they would be expected to adhere to the fatwā. How many Fatwas were actually followed and how many fatwas could pass the test of reason is another debatable issue, which can be taken subsequently. Whenever we take a stock of Muslim practices and thoughts outside SE Asia, we find moderation has not ebbed; logic has not bowed down to tyranny of time and humility and sensibility remain as deeply carved as carving in Ajanta Ellora cave walls who refuse to diminish despite human

intervention for last 2500 years. A significant change happened on 19 Nov 2015 though not at large level involving public platform yet the change which cannot be ruled out as minor occurrence. Describing the acts and actions of Islamic State as against the basic tenets of Islam, over 1,050 Islamic scholars in India have issued a fatwa against the terror group. This is the first time that such a large number of religious leaders and Imams have issued a joint fatwa against Islamic State - also known as Daesh - which has unleashed a reign of terror in the Middle East, killing thousands of innocent people. "Islam shuns violence while Daesh perpetuates it," the edict said. Abdul Rehman Anjari, president of the Mumbai's Islamic Defence Cyber Cell, collected the edicts from Muslims scholars and leaders over the past few months. These fatwas are in 15 volumes, and copies were sent to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and other leaders to convey Indian Muslims' views on IS activities. It urged the international community to take immediate steps to eliminate this terror group that has caused mayhem in the region and is spreading its tentacles in the South Asian region. The signatories to the fatwa include the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid Syed Ahmed Bukhari, head priests of Dargah Ajmer Sharif and Nizamuddin Aulia, functionaries of Mumbai's Raza Academy, Mumbai's Jamait Ulema and the Ulema Council. Hundreds of Imams and various religious leaders have also endorsed it. Anjari said Muftis and Imams of all sections and sects of Islam have condemned the activities of Daesh and acknowledged the fact that it has tarnished Islam's image. The fatwa was issued at a time when reports said that Daesh mercenaries are trying to lure Indian youth to join them.

Which spoilt and brainwashed Muslim youth may contemplate ever join IS if the social, spiritual and religious leaders of the Muslim community join hands in taking pro active role for the larger benefit of the nation? The fatwa issued with right earnest requires appreciation with sobriety and sombre gesture. Such gestures carry at times sees to bring changes which humanity may remember forever. Such gestures do not take much time in causing revolutions in heart and minds which are required more than ever today. I tend to agree with Pak lady writer and journalist Zoia Tariq that Quran needs to be revisited and reinterpreted, if needed from the perspective of contemporary world. The job can be best done by Muslim scholars only. A text brought to permanence in writing by disciples of Hazrat 2 years after his death may have impact of 6-7 AD which needs to be seen microscopically and if need be, be put through fusion and integration of contemporary world in the light of soothing interpretation, if possible. If one facet of Hindu ways of life which let it survive despite onslaughts for thousand years since Mohan Jodero and Harappan civilization, it is none other than evolving and flexible nature and absence of fixations and rigidity. Comparisons remain futile nor the write up aims for the same except for emphasizing that subsequent social practices followed by many in Hindu religion subjugated a sizable population to subservience and abject status but some persons could not be stopped from bringing reforms due to inherent flexibility and acceptance in the system. Nobody became less Hindu due to following and practicing as per his ways; where ever rigidity infused, we see trouble at the first sight. Time has come to carry out micro analysis of religious text books which may be giving some illusions and fantasies to feeble minded people who may think of some other world or birth where they may enjoy company of the Hoors. Brain washing after all involves some interests which are created only if some where it has figured in some obscure form even. What is wrong in carrying out study of all concerned writings and practices by Muslim scholars only? If they are wise enough to issue this fatwa (most sensible in recent times), well they can do that job also and recommend suitable interpretation. Ex: Banking -can we think of existing without Banking system? Ex: Marrying four times. Justification to do welfare to war widows. Impact today - Arabs marry Indian Muslim girls for 1 month and give lots of money all for their physical urge. And why only Arabs, a professor Saheb in famous professional college unable to move comfortably has created unique status by keeping three wives in Professors quarters, duly married to them. Most of the young Professors are stumped and shocked with envy and genuine surprise however the status is justified as per Muslim laws based on Sharia. It is time to see reason. Which modern Muslim girl would like it to happen so easily?

Today wise people find themselves in quandary and in order to justify come out with one or the other incredible pretexts/explanations & literally do reverse engineering mode. They say quote 'unka yeh matlab tha' Unquote.

It is time that we think of humanity at the first place. A religion or practices associated can not be bigger than the concept of humans. If humans survive, so survives Quran and Gita both direct messages of Almighty in one or the other way for the betterment of humanity.

In the name of humanity, if hundred religious practices and interpretations have to be sacrificed; let them be. We know it is interpretations what suited to people at different times and so caused ills in all religions which did their possible harms to humanity in one way or the other. It is call for Islam to show depth and size this time to take proactive reform role within itself and emerge as one facilitating humanity survive instead other way round. Surely sanity will prevail and initiative undertaken by Muslim scholars will continue unabated with overall purpose to sanctify our primitive religious practices and come out clean with generally accepted social conditions which will allow humanity to survive and thrive.

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 [About the Author](#)

Lt Col Atul Tyagi retd

Lt Col Atul Tyagi (retd) was commissioned in traditionalist Regt of Artillery of Indian Army on 20 dec 1986. He served in multiple number of outfits in the regiment from Basic & core field units to highly technical Surveillance & target acquisition units till he voluntarily sought premature retirement in 2008.

He did a number of Army courses & programmes including competitive Long Gunnery Staff Course which catapulted him to be covetous '**Instructor in Gunnery**' & a Post graduate in tech equipment from Pune University. During his inning in Indian Army, he traversed length & breadth of the country & having been stationed at multiple places for multi fold tasking, he acquired vast experience in administration, operations, logistics & man management. He served physically in field in active Kargil Battle Zone in 1999 & had his inning in Counter insurgency operations in J& K with close shaves many a times. Lt Col Atul Tyagi attended Executive programme in Business Administration for Armed forces from Management development Institute, Gurgaon. Besides that, he credited himself by acquiring LL.B, M.Sc (Guidance & Counselling), MBA, MDBA, Symbiosis. He is likely to accomplish LL.M & Ph.D in coming months. He is also a certified trainer in the field of human development.

Lt Col Atul Tyagi re initiated his career in Education management as Associate Professor in professional Engineering & management institutions with reach on variety of non financial subjects with special emphasis on human development. Lt col Atul Tyagi has also had stints in corporate world - Indorama synthetics and very recently in Bhushan Steel Plant, Orissa. as General Manager- Administration & Human resource Presently Lt col Atul Tyagi is an Attorney at NCR with his close touch to Education world also.

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