Constructions of Masculinities in Islamic Traditions, Societies and Cultures, with a specific focus on India and Pakistan between the 18th-21st Century

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by

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Abstract

This thesis presents constructions of masculinities in Islamic traditions, societies and cultures with a specific focus on India and Pakistan between the 18th – 21st century. The basic premise of this thesis is through an understanding that masculinity, femininity, gender and sexuality are socially constructed yet interlinked and often shaped through biology.

The focus of this thesis is exploring the many colourful and diverse images of masculinities in India and Pakistan. A key finding is that their appreciation or rejection within Islam is dependent upon idealized notions of masculinity, femininity, morality and ethics that are essentially derived from patriarchal structures, such as the 'family' and 'procreation'.

Through an elaboration of the Qur'ānic concept of Islamic spirituality, piety and submission to none other except God, using the prophet's lives as examples, it becomes apparent that varieties of masculinities and femininities – including flawed and imperfect forms – need not be seen as a weakness but a strength, as multiplicity in all matters is presented as a means to strengthening individual relationship with God.

At a time when there is much debate about the necessity of a reformation in Islam, it may just be the case that one finds the buried treasures that reformers seek through unveiling and appreciating the rich diversity of Islamic traditions, societies and cultures.

Dedicated to the memory of Miss F. E. Mc Glade (b. 1915- d. 1993)
Her vision of my academic abilities bear fruit...

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Chapter One

No matter: she was not happy, and never had been.
Why was life so unsatisfying?
Why did everything she leaned on instantly crumble into dust?
But if somewhere there existed a strong,
Handsome man with a valorous, passionate and refined nature, a poet's soul in the form of an angel,
a lyre with strings of bronze intoning elegiac nuptial songs to the heavens,
why was it not possible that she might meet him some day?
No, it would never happen! Besides, nothing was worth seeking, everything was a lie!
Each smile hid a yawn of boredom, each joy a curse, each pleasure its own disgust;
and the sweetest kisses only left on one's lips a hopeless longing for a higher ecstasy.[1]
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Masculine identities are lived out in the flesh,
but fashioned in the imagination.[2]

Part One

1.0   Aim, Objective and Methodology of Research

The title of this thesis is 'Constructions of Masculinities in Islamic Traditions, Societies, and Cultures, with a specific focus on India and Pakistan between the 18th – 21st Century. As such, this study aims to evaluate constructions of masculinities in Islamic traditions, chiefly the Qur'ān[3], and the impact such notions have on the lived realities of Muslim men (and women) in India and Pakistan between the 18th – 21st Century. In order to do this a pre-discussion must take place that highlights the difficulty and tension that arises in seeking a discussion into Islamic masculinities from a sociological, anthropological and Islamic studies point of view. This also requires a clarification on the understanding of terms, such as 'gender', 'sexuality',

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[1] 'N'importe ! elle n'était pas heureuse, ne l'avait jamais été. D'où venait donc cette insuffisance de la vie, cette pourriture instantanée des choses où elle s'appuyait ?... Mais, s'il y avait quelque part un être fort et beau, une nature valeureuse, pleine à la fois d'exaltation et de raffinements, un cœur de poète sous une forme d'ange, lyre aux cordes d'airain, sonnant vers le ciel des épithalames élégiaques, pourquoi, par hasard, ne le trouverait-elle pas ? Oh ! quelle impossibilité ! Rien, d'ailleurs, ne valait la peine d'une recherche ; tout mentait ! Chaque sourire cachait un bâillement d'ennui, chaque joie une malédiction, tout plaisir son dégoût, et les meilleurs baisers ne vous laissaient sur la lèvre qu'une irréalisable envie d'une volupté plus haute.' in Flaubert, G., *Madame Bovary – Moeurs De Province* (Paris: Michel Levy Freres, Libraires-Edituers, 1857) pp. 399-400.
[2] Dawson, G., 'The Blond Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, Imperial Adventure and the Imagining of English-British Masculinity' (eds.), Roper, M., and Tosh, J., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, Routledge: London, 1991) p. 118.
[3] All Qur'ānic translations are taken from Asad, M., *The Message of the Qur'ān* (Bristol: The Book Foundation, 2003) throughout this thesis but translations used by authors in their work are not changed in any way.

'masculinity' and 'femininity', which are used extensively throughout this thesis and hence require an overview of the prevailing scholarly work pertaining to such terms.

As this thesis aims to centre itself within a theological debate, it begins through a critical enquiry into the Qur'ānic world of men and women through its various stories. What examples are prevalent in the Qur'ānic world to support masculinity and masculinities? In what way does the interpretation of the Qur'ān have an impact upon such constructions? Are notions of an Islamic masculinity led by the Islamic belief that God is a 'he', as addressed in the Qur'ān, and that all the prophets mentioned in its sacred text are also men? Such a discussion requires an awareness of the realities of the lives of Muslim men (and women) that sociologists and anthropologists present but also a suitable methodology in bridging such discussions with Islamic studies.

Khaled Abou El Fadl stated that raising questions in Islamic studies required 'self restraint and reasonableness'. He elaborated on these terms by stating that 'by self restraint and reasonableness I mean that an author should resist the temptation to use the Muslim experience as a text upon which to continue a debate about the Western historical experience.'[4] It is for this reason that this study attempts to root its analysis from the core of the Muslim experience, namely the Qur'ān, and the way it manifests itself into the lives of Muslims. This would support the view of El Fadl as he stated,

> One should start with the Muslim experience and then carefully consider the ways that either Gadamer or Habermas, or both, might be utilised in the service of the Muslim experience. However, even in this process of utilisation, reasonableness demands that

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[4] El Fadl, K. A., *Speaking in God's Name – Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003) p. 99.

one not pillage through the Muslim experience with categories that reconstruct and re-model that experience according to Western paradigms.[5]

Although this research is written from the perspective of a Muslim believer it does not limit any question in terms of masculinity. The Qur'ān is approached as a text that is believed by Muslims to be a revealed from God through the prophet Muḥammad and as a central and core doctrine shaping the belief system of millions of Muslims throughout the world. This research hence bears in mind Qur'ānic criticism[6] but aims to work with the text as opposed to alienate it, for such a method of alienation would be contrary to the above statement on the significance of the Qur'ān in the lives of Muslims. If one is to seek varieties of Islams or Islamic masculinities then one must seek an alternative image of Islam beyond the Arab lands, which have often dominated discussions on Islam. This could be due to the fact that the Qur'ān was revealed in the Arabic language and the last prophet of Islam, Muḥammad, was located in the Arab lands too. However, belief in the oneness of God, a central Islamic teaching, is not limited to a geographical location, as is mentioned in the Qur'ān itself,

> O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him, God is all-knowing, all-aware.[7]

Through an understanding that there is no one form of homogenous Islam, it is then not an aim of this research to 'defend' or 'apologise' on behalf of a monolithic 'Islam' but to conduct this

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[5] Ibid.

[6] See: Crone, P., and Cook, M., *Hagarism – the Making of the Muslim World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[7] Qur'ān 49:13.

research with the central belief that if God is understood in Islamic theology as 'the greatest' then such a God does not need a defence, be it from a sociologist, anthropologist or Islamic studies perspective. In upholding the methodology of approaching the Qur'ān by the Indian modernist, Sir Syed Aḥmed Khān (b. 1817 – d. 1898), this research focuses extensively on the Qur'ān itself, although utilising classical commentaries where necessary, rather than a Ḥadīth (sayings attributed to the prophet Muḥammad) based interpretation,

> The principles of interpretation which he (Khān) lays down free the discipline of *tafsīr* from Ḥadīth, substituting instead the principles of reason and "nature." He assumes, throughout his work, that the Qurān stands on its own, requiring only the application of a dedicated and enlightened mind for its understanding.[8]

The main reason for adopting Khān's method is to avoid the amalgamation of the prophetic voice from God's, based on an understanding that the Qur'ān is divine and the prophet Muḥammad (and all other prophets) are not. This research also emerges from the split identity of the one conducting it, between Scotland and Pakistan. It is for this reason that if one was to feel inclined in supporting the views of the sociologists who raise an objection to questions of masculinities as another form of 'western imperialism' or in categorising them as 'orientalist' then this research aims to bridge that divide by raising the debate from the basis of a mix identity to one that appreciates, equally both 'worlds' as complimentary to the study of Islam. Such a predicament has also been experienced by El Fadl, who stated,

> The problem is only exacerbated by concerns over the infiltration and dismantling of the Islamic intellectual heritage by Western values and foreign systems of thought.

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[8] Brown, D. W., *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 44.

Some of my teachers, for instance, tended to brand the use of non-customary or unfamiliar methods of analysis as part of the Western cultural invasion. Admittedly, some of these methods did, in fact, originate with Western writers. At other times, however, at least from my point of view as a student, I would sincerely believe that my method was simply original and unprecedented, and was honestly my own. Nevertheless, the method would be stigmatised as Western simply because it was unprecedented or different.[9]

1.1   Islamic Masculinities Studies: Challenging the Parameters of Understanding Islam and Muslims

Most discussions on understanding Islam are often centred on its five pillars[10] as if to be the hallmark of not just every Muslim but of every Islamic society. This often leads to bewilderment when one is (hypothetically) faced with a non-fasting Muslim during the month of Ramadhan drinking an alcoholic beverage[11] in the one hand and holding a pork sausage[12] in the other yet still proclaiming his faith in Islam as a Muslim. How is one to reconcile monolithic approaches to Islamic traditions and the diverse lifestyles of Muslims in various cultures and societies? The initial discussion must be on acceptance that one cannot talk about 'Islam' but of 'Islams', as Karamustafa has argued that a 'civilizational' approach is needed for such a debate on varieties of Islam,

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[9] Ibid., p. 11.
[10] Namely, belief in God and Muhammad, the five daily prayers, giving the alms tax to the poor, fasting during Ramadhan and making pilgrimage to Hajj.
[11] For further discussions on Islam and alcohol, see: Kueny, K., *Rhetoric of Sobriety – Wine in Early Islam* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001).
[12] 'He (God) has forbidden to you only carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any name other than God's has been invoked.' Qur'ān 2:173.

A civilizational tradition, simultaneously in and above specific cultures, is fundamentally interactive with and inclusive of culture. As an ongoing civilizational discourse, Islam is an interactive and inclusive tradition: it interacts with the cultures it comes into contact with and, where it takes root, reshapes and reforms cultures inclusively from within. As a result, there are numerous different Islamic cultures on the globe, and they are all equally Islamic, equal partners in the making and remaking of the Islamic civilizational tradition.[13]

Islamic cultures and civilizations are shaped not just through Islamic traditions but factors such as geography too.[14] This has given rise to a multitude of studies on Muslims throughout the world, usually by sociologists and anthropologists. However, if one has a monolithic understanding of Islam then this would ultimately lead to a monolithic understanding of men and women. This is evident in the debates surrounding 'Muslim women' who are often understood as a monolith with a stereotypical understanding related to a form of 'Islamic' oppression and degradation, usually through a discussion on the veil. In the same way discussions surrounding Muslim men are also limited to idealized forms of masculinity usually relating to an Islamic patriarchal society. Such a narrow understanding of Islam and Muslims then hijacks questions relating to sexuality as the thought of a lesbian veiled Muslim women or a transsexual Muslim male in the Mosque are questions that many sociologists and anthropologists may highlight for the 'shock and reveal factor' but Islamic theologians have often dismissed as 'un-Islamic' and far removed from Islamic traditions. Is this truly the case? Can such alternative forms of masculinities and femininities not be encompassed in Islamic traditions? These are some of the questions that this thesis aims to discuss and elaborate upon.

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[13] Karamustafa, A., 'A Civilizational Project in Progress' (ed.), Safi, O., *Progressive Muslims on Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004) p. 110.
[14] For an anthropological and sociological discussion on masculinities and the Muslim and Arab Middle East see: Ghoussoub, M., and Sinclair-Webb, E., (eds.), *Imagined Masculinities – Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2000).

Turning to what is understood as 'Western civilization' it is evident that it is not understood in the same restrictive way that the 'Islamic world' is and has been open to issues relating to diversity, especially in challenging idealized notions of gender and sexuality. Raising such questions has led to a detailed debate on masculinities in the West, however, so far, such debates have not received widespread discussion in Islamic theology and practice,

> Studies of Islamic masculinities are surprisingly rare. At a time when masculinity studies is experiencing a boom in the West, dominant masculinity in Islamic cultures has so far remained an unrecognised category that maintains its power by refusing to identify itself. There are very few studies that make Muslim *men* visible as gendered subjects and that show masculinities have a history and clear defining characteristics that form and integral part of the gender relations in Muslim cultures.[15]

There is an emerging variety of narratives that present various images of gender and sexuality in novels and travel writings on homosexual Muslims[16] (almost always male[17]) or the personal writing of Muslim women in patriarchal society, a focus later in this thesis. Unfortunately, these are most often left at the fringes of an 'un-Islamic' discussion on masculinity and femininity as the monolithic notions of Islamic traditions dismiss these narratives as 'unacceptable'. Lahoucine Ouzgane has edited a collection of essays in a book entitled, 'Islamic

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[15] Ouzgane, L., 'The Rape Continuum: Masculinities in Ben Jelloun's and El Saadawi's Works' (ed.), Whitehead, S. M., *Men and Masculinities – Critical Concepts in Sociology*, Vol V (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) p. 88.
[16] For further reading on homosexual Muslim male experience see: Dhalla, G. S., *Ode to Lata* (Los Angeles: Really Great Books, 2002), Whitaker, B., *Unspeakable Love – Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2006), Kabil, A., *Straightening Ali* (Herndon: Star Books Press, 2007), Khan, B., *Sex, Longing and Not Belonging: A Gay Muslim's Quest for Love and Meaning* (Oakland USA: Floating Lotus Press, 1997), Jama, A., *Illegal Citizens: Queer Lives in the Muslim World* (Los Angeles: Salaam Press, 2008), Schmitt, A., and Sofer, J., (eds.), *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Moslem Society* (Binghamton: Harrington Park Press, 1992), Murray, S. O., and Roscoe, W., (eds.), *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History and Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), Luongo, M. T., Gay *Travels in The Muslim World* (ed.), (Binghamton: Harrington Park Press, 2007).
[17] For further reading on female homosexuality see: Habib, S., *Female Homosexuality in the Middle East – Histories and Representations* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Masculinities', which is the only current book that deals with Islamic masculinities.[18] This book has three sections, 'masculinities and religion', 'masculinities and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict' and 'masculinities and social practice'. Ouzgane outlined the rationale and aim of his book as such,

> Islamic masculinities adopts a social constructionist perspective and is premised on the belief that men are not born; they are made; they construct their masculinities within particular social and historical contexts. Thus, masculinities in Islamic contexts emerge as a set of distinctive practices defined by men's positionings within a variety of religious and social structures.[19]

One of the initial chapters looks at gender and Islamic spirituality with an interesting commentary on 'high' and 'low' Islamic fundamentalism, which Ahmed argued, was rooted to psychological education and impulses.[20] This then drove notions and lived realities of Islamic masculinity in Pakistan,

> *The Islamic state and masculinity* – itself a literalization of religion, from its inception the Pakistani state has had to confront questions of religious identity-politics. And whereas questions of gender per se may not have been prominent in the formulation of identity, the emergent profile and the status of its women indicate its largely negative and hyper-masculine nature. Masculinity in Pakistan today has less to do with the

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[18] Ouzgane, L., (ed.), *Islamic Masculinities* (London: Zed Books, 2006).
[19] Ibid., p. 2.
[20] Ahmed, D. S., 'Gender and Islamic Spirituality: a psychological view of 'low' fundamentalism' (ed.), Ouzgane, L., *Islamic Masculinities* (London: Zed Books, 2006) pp. 11-34.

visions and teachings of Islam and more with literalism and the pursuit of patriarchal power agendas in the name of Islam.[21]

Although speaking about Islamic spirituality the chapter by Ahmed does little to grapple with the acceptance of 'Islams' and leads one to believe that the prevalent Islamic masculinity is in some way incorrect according to an 'ideal Islam', which she believes can be corrected through Islamic mysticism as a way of salvaging the 'ugly' face of Islam,

> To the extent that mysticism can be considered the "inner", "private" and "hidden" dimension of religion, it can be regarded as its feminine expression. As the counterpoint to a more public, outer, moralistic, codified expression of religiosity, its doctrines and practices tend to focus more on the experiential dimension of the divine, rather than the cerebral explanation.[22]

However, the book made no claim to offering theological discussions on masculinities and it is for this reason that Ouzgane clarified his understanding of 'Islam' at the outset,

> One should be particularly uncomfortable with the use of the word 'Islam' as a category, especially when it is deployed in the West, for the reasons Edward Said explained at length in *Orientalism*[23] (1978) and, more recently, in *Covering Islam* (1997). … As the essays in this collection attest, gender and patriarchy lie at the heart of the ongoing crisis of Arab and Muslim society, thought and politics, all of which lay claim to 'Islam' in one way or another. So the challenge I faced when putting together this

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[21] Ibid., p. 21.
[22] Ibid., p. 17.
[23] Said, E., *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

book was how to allow a discussion of such issues productively and honestly without fuelling Eurocentric, anti-Arab, anti-Islamic bigotry.[24]

Although Edward Said's critique of 'Orientalism' won him many high accolades it has, at times, made it an uncomfortable task for critical scholarship on Islam (or Muslims), especially by non-Muslim or western scholars who may forever be labelled as 'orientalists' looking to study the 'Islamic east' as a form of dismissing not just their work but also their questions. Such sentiments are increasingly finding their way into contemporary studies that aim to 'correct' the perceptions of Muslims by 'Orientalists'. Joseph Massad's book 'Desiring Arabs' is a detailed analysis into the development of perceptions of Arabs from an Orientalist and Arab point of view. Massad used Said's argument on Orientalism as a way to introduce his research focus,

> Edward Said's[25] *Orientalism* showed how Orientalism created the Oriental and how it shaped and still shapes the views of that Westerners hold about Arabs since the European Enlightenment. *Orientalism* generated an important body of scholarship about various kinds of Orientalism representations of Arabs and Muslims in Europe but, unfortunately, little if any scholarship was produced in its wake about Orientalist representations in the Arab world, whether in Arabic or in European languages.[26]

Studies that use Said's Orientalism as a key method in research focus strengthen the divide between the 'east' and the 'west' using a post-modern, post-colonial argument to create some form of legitimacy.   The effects of such are now being felt on the ensuing discussions and debates on Islamic masculinities studies. As Shahin Gerami questioned in the following

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[24] Ouzgane, L., (ed.), *Islamic Masculinities* (London: Zed Books, 2006) p. 2.
[25] Massad was the student of Edward Said.
[26] Massad, J. A., *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) pp. 47-48.

statement whether Masculinities studies was a form of 'cultural imperialism' on Islamic societies,

> When we incorporated feminist ideas in our women's movement, we were addressing injustice, exploitation, and the dehumanization of women in the name of tradition, religion or authenticity. That is different from masculine or even social cleavages, but we are still a long way from claiming any victory for women's rights, despite incremental gains. We, the others, have accused the Orientalists of being intellectual thrill seekers, the upper-class equivalent of soldiers of fortune or academic bungee jumpers. Since feminism frowns upon exploring the other for our thrills, what can be gained from masculinity research in cultures struggling with basic human rights for women.[27]

Gerami seemed to overlook the way that idealised notions of an Islamic masculinity have played an essential role in restricting the basic human rights of women or Gerami may be separating discussions on masculinity from Islam. Such separations have led to some adopting a more 'secular' approach in their work on gender and sexuality in societies and cultures without seeking answers from Islamic traditions. Shazia Mohamed highlighted the problem of promoting sexual health information in Pakistan in an article entitled, 'Challenging Moral Guardianship in Pakistan'[28], in which she stated that 'the tendency of the state to claim the authority of a moral space and impose values on its citizens is what I term 'moral

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[27] Gerami, S., 'Mullahs, Martyrs, and Men – Conceptualizing Masculinity in the Islamic Republic of Iran' (ed.), Whitehead, S. M., *Men and Masculinities – Critical Concepts in Sociology*, Vol. V (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) p. 103.
[28] Mohamed, S., 'Challenging Moral Guardianship in Pakistan' (eds.), Misra, G., and Chandiramani, R., *Sexuality, Gender and Rights – Exploring Theory and Practice in South and Southeast Asia* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005).

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guardianship'.[29] Mohamed felt that a secular approach was the only way to raise an awareness of sexual health and rights,

> Reinterpretations of religion comprise one effort to directly engage with, confront and challenge the religious discourse around gender. Current interpretations focus on issues on gender equity, but they stop short of taking on issues of sexuality. It may be possible to push religious discourse to address some issues of consent and coercion. But it is unlikely that the religious discourse on sexuality will support an affirmative vision of sexual diversity; there is a danger of ending up like the abortion debate, discussing what is and is not morally sanctioned by God.[30]

It is then evident that the realities of masculinities and femininities have been an interest for sociologists and anthropologists mostly from the West whose method and presentation of diversity has not explored such realities through a theological discussion. This could be due to the limitations of the work of sociologists and anthropologists but one of the core reasons for this is due to prevalent understanding that such discussions and debates are located in the West and in imposing such discussions on the Islamic world a new form of Orientalism is taking place.

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[29] Ibid., p. 205.
[30] Ibid., p. 217.

Part Two

1.0   Constructions of Masculinities in Sociological and Anthropological Studies

In order to raise questions on Islamic masculinities one must reveal the realities, images and ideas on masculinity and femininity that emerge from the work of sociologists and anthropologists and then to seek their location in Islam(s). The first question is then to understand what is meant by masculinity? Connell argued, 'masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structure, prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting.'[31] Every attempt is made by society and its structures to mould men into a form of an ideal masculinity, even if this is not through an explicit concentrated effort there still remains multiple forces promoting institutionalized masculating processes. As Connell argued

> Masculinities are configurations of practice within gender relations but requiring a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations over and above the face-to-face relationships and sexuality. Masculinity is then institutionalised in this structure, as well as being an aspect of individual character or personality.[32]

Idealised masculinity would lead to an understanding that every man is happily married to a wife who bears him children. It is then not just masculinity that society idealises but also 'the wife', 'the child' and 'the family'. This reality is not always the case and shatters the myth of masculinity,

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[31] Connell, R. W., *The Men and the Boys* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2000) p. 12.
[32] Ibid., p. 29.

What is clear is that the lived reality of family life is increasingly diverse with less marriage, more divorce and more lone parents. Statistically the classic nuclear family accounts for only twenty four percent of households, while lone parent families now constitute nine percent of families; and with the growing age of the population twenty six percent of households are single person households (General Household Survey 1993). Fertility rates have fallen and women, on average, have their first child at twenty-eight.[33]

The way in which Islamic traditions play a role in shaping and policing masculinity in Islamic societies effects not just the interaction of men and women but also understandings of Islam, the two notions are interlinked. Such processes are not just affected by discussions from the pulpit in the Mosque but also through a variety of other means as society as a whole, not just Islam, is focused on constructing specific forms of masculinity, a point argued by Franklin II who commented,

> Television, radio, newspapers, magazines, popular lyrics and the like all contribute to sex-role socialisation. Inauspiciously, research shows that many mass media messages contain stereotypes of male and female sex roles.[34]

Pleck argued for the theory of male sex-role identity (MSRI), which is the theory that states that for men and women to become psychologically mature as members of their sex, they must acquire male or female 'sex role identity'. Men and women were expected to have sex-appropriate traits, attitudes, and interests that psychologically 'validate' or 'affirm' their

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[33] Westwood, S., 'Feckless fathers: Masculinities and the British State' (ed.), Mac an Ghaill, M., *Understanding Masculinities – Social Relations and Cultural Arenas* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000) p. 26.
[34] Franklin II, C. W., *The Changing Definition of Masculinity* (Plenum Press: USA, 1986) p. 41.

biological sex.[35] Connell disagreed with the theory by stating that two of the most politically influential accounts of gender are accounts that we know to be wrong – 'sex roles' and the 'categorical theory',

> [The role theory] explains gender patterns by appealing to the social expectations that define proper behaviour for women and for men. Exposing the irrationality of these norms, or their oppressive effects, has been key to the popular success of feminism in fields such as girls' education.[36]

The categorical theory, he stated, 'treats women and men as pre-formed categories. Biological essentialism is one version of this, but there are many writings about gender which are categorical without being biological-reductionist.'[37] Connell further maintained that two alternatives are 'post-structuralist and materialist as issues of complexity, ambiguity and fluidity are central themes in these theories of gender'. The disintegration of sex roles that Connell highlights has led to a re-evaluation of masculinity. However, this thesis explores the way in which Islamic traditions continue to uphold the sex role theories surrounding an Islamic masculinity. The term Islamic masculinity then assumes a single trend of masculinity, which is rarely the case, 'it is clear from the new social research as a whole that there is no pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. We need to speak of 'masculinities', not masculinity. Different cultures, and different periods of history, construct gender differently.'[38] The term 'masculinities' is then a word that surprises many but requires a focus in the study of Islam and Muslims,

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[35] Pleck, J. H., 'The Theory of Male-Sex Role Identity: Its Rise and Fall, 1936 to the Present' (ed.), Brod, H., *The Making of Masculinity* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987) p. 21.
[36] Connell, R. W., *The Men and the Boys* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2000) p. 18.
[37] Ibid., p. 18.
[38] Ibid., p. 10.

It is hardly surprising that when first encountered, the plural form surprises because it contradicts the widely held, commonsensical assumption that masculinity is a standardised container, fixed by biology, into which all 'normal' men are placed, something 'natural' that can even be measured in terms of psychological traits and physical attributes.[39]

Many young boys, including Muslim boys, are bombarded with masculine role models to emulate. Sociologists have found that this dominant form of masculinity 'influences boys and men's understanding of how they have to act in order to be "acceptably" male, and that this dominant mode is associated with heterosexuality, toughness, power, and authority, competitiveness and the subordination of gay men.'[40] Heterosexual masculinity is most often presented in normative fashion in society, all else, especially homosexual masculinity, is stated in relation to it, 'the gay man is a threat to the macho man, since he reveals explicitly that which the macho man must suppress as deeply as possibly: his need for the love of other men, and the possibility of taking the feminine role.'[41] This has led to many different forms of sexual identity such as transgendered, transsexuals and hermaphrodites, amongst others.[42] Whether their surgical or non-surgical alteration is based on biology or society is difficult to define as every individual's life experience is different and unique yet the sex that they are born with allows them the ability to follow specific constructions of gender or dismiss them. It is the understanding of this thesis that gender and sexuality are constructed through a range of individual experiences and abilities, be they biological or social. This thesis makes no attempt to justify the gender or sexuality of believing Muslims through a premise of 'right' and 'wrong'

[39] Beynon, J., *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002) p. 2.

[40] Frosh, S., Phoenix, A., and Pattman, R., *Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society* (Palgrave: Basingstoke, 2002) pp. 75-76.

[41] Horrocks, R., *Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1994) p. 91.

[42] For an illustrative discussion on the varieties of sexualities, see: Queen, C., and Schimel, L., (eds.), *Pomosexuals – Challenging Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality* (San Fransico: Cleis Press, 1997).

as such a discussion is rooted in an understanding that there is an 'ideal' gender and sex and all must be constructed upon such understandings. Homosexuality is a prime example of this as there is an abundant amount of literature that aims to justify such orientations by stating that there is 'no choice' in the sexual orientation of men and women but why could it not be conceivable to accept that through biology and social interaction a man or women feels more comfortable in having a loving or sexual relationship with the same-sex? What is so 'wrong' about making a choice about sexuality and gender? There seems to be an element of guilt trapped behind such choices and the role of religion cannot be overlooked in such guilt as religion has played a pivotal role in policing and constructing such sentiments in Islam, and other monotheistic faiths such as Judaism and Christianity, the prevalent understanding is that heterosexuality is 'natural' and all else must be understood in relation to it.

Interestingly even though such discussions of homosexuality and Islamic societies and traditions are from the sermons preached at the Mosque they play a central role in constructing masculinity amongst Muslim boys and men. As the age old saying that 'boys will be boys' sees no religious boundary and if one was to generalise masculinity then the dominant form of masculinity that is prevalent would involve being 'good at sports', such as football or rugby, and making crude or vivacious remarks on girls' bodies. Franklin II stated on this matter, 'all boys do not have to play baseball, but if they don't they should play softball, soccer, football or something that will teach them the competitive spirit...teach them to be a *man*.'[43] Such examples are also prevalent in Islamic traditions, in one ḥadīth it is stated,

> Yahya related to me from Abdullah ibn Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Ma`mar Al-Ansari that Ata
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> Ibn Yasar said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace,

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[43] Franklin II, C. W., *The Changing Definition of Masculinity* (Plenum Press: USA, 1986) p. 30.
Further information on masculinity and sport, see: Bonde, H., 'Masculine Sport and Masculinity in Denmark at the Turn of the Century' (eds.), Ervø, S., and Johansson, T., *Among Men – Moulding Masculinities*, Vol. 1 (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003).

said, "Shall I tell you who has the best degree among people? A man who takes the rein of his horse to do Jihād in the way of Allah. Shall I tell you who has the best degree among people after him? A man who lives alone with a few sheep, performs the prayer, pays the zakat, and worships Allah without associating anything with him."[44]

The power of education and the teacher then plays a much wider role in not just education of different subjects, but of gender too, 'corresponding to theoretical arguments about masculinity, schools exist as sites where styles of masculinities are produced and used. Within the school there are particular spaces where "masculinity-making" appears both explicit and abundant.'[45] With a great emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge in Islamic traditions[46], the prophet Muḥammad, understood as a teacher, and his sayings as lessons are then also key in producing Islamic norms of masculinity, a key focus of this thesis in later sections.

In amongst this male/male construction of masculinity it is also important not to forget the significance of the female,

> Theories of identity have come to value the concept of alterity. Alterity refers to the 'otherness', one's status as an outsider. The implication is that identity formation occurs through a process of 'othering' – marking groups as different and excluded. ... Ever since classical Greece, we have defined and understood gender as a series of binary polarities. For example, in order to have a paternalistic masculinity, it is necessary to

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[44] Mālik bin A., *Kitāb al-Muwaṭṭa'* (trans.), at-Tarjumana, A. A., and Johnson, Y., (Norwich: Diwan Press, 1982). p. 198.

[45] Haywood, C., and Mac an Ghaill, M., 'Schooling Masculinities' (ed.), Mac an Ghaill, M., *Understanding Masculinities* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000) p. 52.

[46] Further information on seeking knowledge and Islam, see: Netton, I, R., *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Knowledge in the House of Islam* (Richmond: Curzon, 1995).

have an image of women in need of protection from the harsh world of business and politics.[47]

Such images are also prevalent in Islamic traditions, namely through the story of Adam and Eve, and what emerges from the creation story is the basic premise that notions of an ideal Islamic masculinity were not produced in isolation, as will be discussed later in this thesis, but through a series of interaction(s) with the other(s), in the Qur'ānic case, Eve, to show its dominance,

> Manhood was "made" in the course of proving oneself "one of the lads", by demonstrations of physical strength, sporting ability, sexual prowess, and so on. Moreover, manhood was made in a fixed mould. The injunction 'be a man!' implied that there were only certain ways in which one *could* be a man, and that they demanded a high degree of effort and a suppression of self. Proving one's manhood was an experience with profoundly oppressive implications.[48]

Sociologists and anthropologists have highlighted a number of methods that normative masculinity uses to uphold its dominance. This can be through their specific acts, such as the sports mentioned previously or the way that men (or women) dress. At formal gatherings one sees men most often dressed in suits and women wearing dresses. It would seem 'strange', to say the least, to find a man wearing a dress at such events for the very reason that men and women dress to uphold masculine and feminine traits, 'clothes and other accompanying accoutrements are commonly used to signify gender (and, at times, sexual) identity. How a

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[47] Whitehead, S. M., and Barrett, F. J., 'The Sociology of Masculinity' (eds.), Whitehead, S. M., and Barrett, F. J., *The Masculinities Reader*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) p. 22.
[48] Tosh, J., *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain* (New York: Pearsons Longman, 2005) p. 14.

person dresses says much about self definition and identity formation.'[49] This also resonates in Islamic societies too through the tradition of veiling amongst women and growing a beard for men. In what way do these specifically feminine and masculine external symbols develop from understandings of Islam and what role do they play in the social relationships between Muslim men and women? Such questions will also be answered in later sections of this thesis.

This then leads to a discussion on the role of biology on Islamic masculinity. Treadwell presented a summation of the procedures that create a man,

> Each embryo starts on its trek towards maturity with the beginnings of female characteristics. Only if it has the Y chromosome does it begin to modify itself toward a male anatomy and physiology. About the second month of gestation, the foetal gonads become testes and begin to produce testosterone and related androgens. These hormones change the physical anatomy and, most important, create a male brain. Differences in male and female brain structure can be observed at least 3 months before birth... It appears that the masculinisation and feminisation of the brain depends on the interaction of hormones-dose response. Increasing concentrations of oestrogen and testosterone determine the numbers, connections and sensitivity to stimuli of many nerve-cell groups.[50]

Every male foetus then begins his journey as a female and it is only through the addition and subtraction of certain hormones that biological sex is defined. What is interesting in terms of

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[49] Gutterman, D. S., 'Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity' (eds.), Whitehead, S. M., and Barrett, F. J., *The Masculinities Reader*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) p. 63.

[50] Treadwell, P., 'Biological Influences on Masculinity' (ed.), Brod, H., *The Making of Masculinity* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987) p. 263.

gender construction is that the increase and decrease of testosterone within men requires a stimulus. Such stimulus comes from the environment in which that male finds himself. Treadwell stated that men's studies must take into consideration three key points, that testosterone levels are associated in some way with aggression, men have a broad range of biologically determined testosterone levels and that these levels can be enhanced or reduced by the social environment.[51] The biological difference between a man and women are then defined and fixed, through sexual organs, but the differences that occur in terms of masculinity and femininity are socially constructed. There is then a difference between 'the male' and 'maleness' for the latter is a mixture of the way biology and sociology interacts and the former is a biological given. Treadwell argued against notions that masculinity was purely a social construct. He commented that the concept of masculinity developed over millennia as an interactive process between what males were capable of doing and what male as a class determined they should do. This mix of sex and society produced the generic concept of masculine and feminine. When this generic concept is imposed on the individual boy, his masculinity depends on how well he physiologically and psychologically fits the masculine mould. In this way Treadwell promoted his idea that a male's concept of his masculinity has also a biologic component.[52] This leads us further to consider the difference between gender and biological sex. Franklin II stated that sex is a 'descriptive biological concept and that male foetuses develop reproductive systems, musculature, and other biological features that distinguish them from females'. His idea on defining gender refers to an achieved status which is 'a function of socialisation and has social, cultural and psychological components and as a result of direct and indirect experiences, formal and informal learning, we develop images, conceptions, perceptions and the like, of masculinity and femininity'.[53] Connell supported this

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[51] Ibid., p. 284.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Franklin II, C. W., *The Changing Definition of Masculinity* (Plenum Press: USA, 1986) p. 2.

argument by stating that 'gender is a social structure, but of a particular kind as it involves a specific relationship between bodies leading to the bodily difference of male and female'.[54] The role of biology and society are then both important to understand the construction of masculinities and femininities in this thesis as the emphasis on pro-creation in Islamic traditions is inextricably bound to such societal constructions of gender and sexuality.

Kaufman argued that masculinity is 'power' yet also terrifyingly fragile as it does not exist in the way that we are led to believe that it exists within our biological make up. He further stated that it does exist as an ideology, as scripted behaviours and within "gendered" relationships but it is a social institution, 'the young child does not know that sex does not equal gender and so equates his biology with masculinity and so to be unmasculine is to be desexed – "castrated"'.[55] As the neatly boxed gender roles are challenged, the power that men drew from them was also diminishing. McInnes stated that, 'men have lost a great deal of their power over women, [men] have become more aware of this process, [men] have started to realise that they constitute a 'gender' and have started to discuss and debate this.'[56] This has led to a process of questioning what does it mean to be a man?

> In the west heterosexual men have responded to the challenges of feminism and gay
> liberation in different ways, but they have left many men feeling uncertain and
> confused about what it means 'to be a man' as we approach the millennium. There
> seems to be a crisis of masculinities initiated through the feminist questioning of

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[54] Connell, R. W., *Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002) p. 9.
[55] Kaufman, M., (ed.), *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 13.
[56] McInnes, J., *The End of Masculinity* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998) p. 1.

traditional forms of male power and superiority that have been structured into the very terms of an Enlightenment vision of modernity.[57]

There also remain a large number of men and women who then fail to uphold societal norms of being 'butch' men and 'coy' women. The gay liberation movement broke away from religious traditions and have made it easier for men and women to be proud of themselves, 'another movement altering definitions of masculinity has been the gay liberation movement. Following the now-famous "Stonewall Rebellion" in 1969, when homosexual men and women resisted the tyranny of New York police in Greenwich Village, the gay liberation movement was born.'[58] As Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argued,

> There is a tendency within sex role theory to assume that these ahistorical gender essences are quantifiable and measurable. Hence a wide range of individual men and male groups, such as effeminate boys and gays, are seen as *not having enough masculinity*, which is explained in terms of deficient levels of testosterone, inadequate role models, or overpowering mothers.[59]

The important question is then to ask who has actually been liberated for the gay liberation movement removed themselves from 'religion' and left those upholding the 'natural order of heterosexuality' to do so in their religious circles. There is now an emergence of literature that aims to bridge the divide but how are such orientations negotiated in Islamic societies and cultures? Has there been an Islamic gay liberation movement in the Indian and Pakistani context? What are the connotations of using such language in that specific context? The

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[57] Seidler, V. J., *Man Enough – Embodying Masculinities* (London: Sage Publications, 1997) p. 1.
[58] Franklin II, C. W., *The Changing Definition of Masculinity* (New York: Plenum Press, 1984) p. 9.
[59] Haywood, C., and Mac an Ghaill M., *Men and Masculinities – Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003) p. 9.

examples from Ṣūfī thought and practice, a key focus of this thesis, could be understood in similar fashion to the gay liberation movement but the difference between the two was that the former used God as a means for their liberation and the latter an emerging awareness of human rights law.

This leads to the question as to whether notions associated with masculinity must be located solely with the male. Judith Halberstam argued that there needs to be an acceptance of a female masculinity which is masculinity without men, 'female masculinities are framed as rejected scraps of dominant masculinity in order that male masculinity may appear to be the real thing. But what we understand as heroic masculinity has been produced across both male and female bodies.'[60] Halberstam identifies heroism with men and masculinity and aims to relocate the terms masculinity with femininity but could this be the shortcoming of understandings of masculinity and femininity in their most idealized fashion? As Connell stated, 'unless we subside into defining masculinity as equivalent to men, we must acknowledge that sometimes masculine conduct or masculine identity goes together with a female body. Without the concept such as "masculinity" and "femininity" we would be unable to talk about the questions of gender ambiguity that have been so important.'[61]

In the Western study of masculinities there is a desire to understand non-patriarchal masculinities, 'the terms "masculinity" and "patriarchy" are closely linked in a historical sense, since both were taken up by socialists and radical feminists during the late 1960s as part of the process of theorising male dominance.'[62] Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argued that until recently masculinity has tended to be absent from mainstream academic research. This was largely due

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[60] Halberstam, J., 'An Introduction to Female Masculinity: Masculinity Without Men' (eds.), Adams, R., and Savran, D., *The Masculinity Studies Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002) p. 355.

[61] Connell, R. W., *The Men and the Boys* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2000) p. 17.

[62] Roper, M., and Tosh, J., (eds.), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991) p. 8.

to a 'unitary notion of masculinity', which was often employed, largely concentrated on women and girls. In much of the previous academic work on masculinity it has assumed to be a 'monolithic unproblematic entity, with patriarchy attaining a universal status as the single cause of the oppression of women.'[63] They further commented on the work of Maynard who argued that men's studies cannot be regarded as a new focus of research since the current interest in gender arose in response to the fact that sociology had previously been concerned almost exclusively with men.[64] If one was to locate such a discussion in Islamic societies then it becomes evident that discussions surrounding patriarchy and masculinity have not been had and so there are immense possibilities of research on Islamic masculinity and Islamic masculinities; this thesis is then a desire to begin such discussions.

Part Three

3.0   Chapter Outlines

Chapter one is presented in three parts as it aims to highlight pertinent questions and limitations in raising a discussion on Islamic masculinities in light of an evaluation of the work being carried out by sociologists and anthropologists. Chapter two conducts a critical analysis of the Qur'ānic world and highlights the necessity of appreciating masculinities in order to understand the role of submission to God in the lives of men and women. This chapter uses the lives of the prophets as key examples to highlight the many ways that notions surrounding gender and sex can be understood in a variety of ways.

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[63] Mac an Ghaill, M., (ed.), *Understanding Masculinities – Social Relations and Cultural Arenas* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000) p. 1.
[64] Haywood, C., and Mac an Ghaill M., *Men and Masculinities – Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003) p. 8.

Chapter three begins to locate discussions on the Qur'ān in India and Pakistan through the Mughal example of, what would essentially be perceived as, a hedonistic Islamic masculinity in the life and work of Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib, the renowned 18th/19th century Urdū and Persian poet who raised an interesting tension between his spiritual existence against the prevalent Islamic norms. Ghālib is often understood as an unusual focus of any discussions on Islamic theology even though his life and works were imbued with his unique relationship with God, which highlights the way in which the Qur'ānic notion of submission developed into specific norms and labels such as 'Islamic' and 'non-Islamic'.

Chapter four focuses on Ṣūfī doctrine, shaped through Qur'ānic interpretation, and its physical manifestations of gender and sexuality in the life of Ṣūfīs. A thorough examination of Ṣūfī thought revealed that although Ṣūfī thought is based on the same un-gendered notions of submission in the Qur'ān, such as love, it continued to uphold patriarchy and idealized Islamic masculinity through gendering such notions. Particular emphasis is placed on the social relationships that such Ṣūfī doctrine has constructed, namely that of the *Murshid* (master) and *Murid* (disciple). The example of the Qalandars and Malangs in India and Pakistan is also used in this chapter as a non-conformist, antinomian example of Islamic masculinity and the example of Shah Hussayn, a 16th century saint who challenged the prevalent conformist approaches to Islamic understanding through his unruly 'spiritual dance' and his romantic relationship with a Hindu boy, Madho Lal.

Chapter five highlights the work of Muslim feminists in the 20th and 21st Century who aim to challenge male hegemony and patriarchal Islamic structures for a more egalitarian existence. The key focus of this chapter is the work of Asma Barlas, which she states is on 'un-reading patriarchy from the Qur'ān' but other leading Muslim feminists not specifically from India and

Pakistan, such as Amina Wadud, have also been used extensively to highlight the similar debates and questions of Muslim feminist writings. This chapter reveals the tension that many Muslim feminists have in challenging patriarchy through submission to God as they do not dismiss patriarchal structures, such as the significance of the family, but negotiate their position within this. Muslim feminists concede the limitations of their argument as they stress the difficulty in establishing an Islamic egalitarian society.

Chapter six explores the limitations that Muslim feminists are alluding to through the work of Syed Abūl A'lā Mawdūdi, the 20th century political Islamist, as it highlights the impact of his political aim on his vision of Islam, which in turn impacted on his view of gender and sex and constructed not just a political Islamic masculinity but femininity too.

The final section concludes this research into constructions of masculinities in Islamic traditions, societies and cultures, with a specific focus on India and Pakistan between the 18th – 21st Century. Through the various questions that this thesis has raised one becomes aware of the relationship that each image has towards the central commandment of submission and subservience to God in Islamic theology and begins an exciting discussion on Islamic masculinities.

Chapter Two

A Qur'ānic Masculinity or Masculinities?

> *Are thou not aware that God sends down water from the skies,*
> *whereby We bring forth fruits of many hues –*
> *just as in the mountains there are streaks of*
> *white and red of various shades,*
> *as well as [others] raven-black,*
> *and [as] there are in men, and in crawling beasts,*
> *and in cattle, too, many hues?*
> *Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with [innate]*
> *knowledge stand [truly] in awe of God: [for they alone comprehend that,]*
> *verily, God is almighty, much-forgiving.*[65]

1.0   Introduction

Chapter one outlined the types of questions that sociologists and anthropologists pose to Islam and Muslims and the difficulty encountered in raising such debates. In order to bring such discussions and debates closer, this chapter aims to examine the extent to which the Qur'ān presents an Islamic masculinity or Islamic masculinities through an understanding of God, prophets, prophecy, and creation.

This chapter is concerned with the Qur'ān as it is understood to be an essential source for Islamic faith and practice. The Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad in the 7th Century AD and it contains a mixture of statements that lead to discussions on ethics, morality and most importantly understanding of God. It is through the Qur'ān that Muslims are made aware of the images of prophets, which they try to emulate in social relationships and actions. The lives of the prophets are then essential for understanding gender construction, especially masculinity. Such discussions will also lead to subsequent chapters that highlight the way in which Islamic traditions act as a potent force in shaping gender construction in Islamic societies and cultures. The lives of four prophets, Adam, Joseph, Muḥammad and Jesus will be discussed in this chapter as key Qur'ānic examples for exploring Islamic masculinities.

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[65] Qur'ān 35:26-28.

Medieval scholarship[66] which elaborates on the lives of the prophets are used extensively as they offer a thorough narrative into the lives of these prophets.

1.1   Prophets and Gender in the Qur'ān

All prophets understood in Qur'ānic traditions are male. Prophets have been defined as those 'extraordinary men' who 'receive divine revelation and their collective vocation.'[67] The prophetic role is to convey a message from God to humankind through a two-fold method, firstly, through revelation and secondly through their agency as human beings on earth,

> All mankind was once one single community; [then they began to differ] whereupon God raised up the prophets as heralds of glad tidings and as warners and through them bestowed revelation from on high, setting forth the truth, so that it might decide between people with regard to all on which they had come to hold divergent views.[68]

This Qur'ānic verse clearly stipulates the key concerns of a prophet, Denny stated, 'In 2:213 the office of the prophet (*nabi*, but also by extension *rasul*) is clearly delineated as entailing the announcing of good news, the giving of warning, and the custody of the book.'[69] Prophets are described in the Qur'ān as human but because of their prophetic mission from God they are not entirely equal with other human beings,

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[66] Al-Kisā`i – *Tales of the Prophets*, Ibn Kathir – *Stories of the Prophets*, Ibn Saad - *Tabaqat* to name a few. For a more in depth discussion on the philosophy of prophecy see: Rahman, F., *Prophecy in Islam* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Publishers, 1958).

[67] Rahman, F., *Major Themes in the Qur'ān*, (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980) p. 80.
 Rubin, U., 'Prophet' (ed.), McAuliffe, J., *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 4. (Leiden: Brill 2004) p. 289.

[68] Qur'ān 2:213.

[69] Denny, F., 'Meaning of Ummah in the Qur'ān' (ed.), C, Turner *The Koran – Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* Vol. 2. (Oxford: Routledge 2006) p. 35.

And we bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; and We guided each of them as We had guided Noah a foretime. And out of his offspring, [We bestowed prophet hood upon] David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron: for thus do we reward the doers of good; and upon Zacharia, and John, and Jesus, and Elijah: every one of them was the righteous; and [upon] Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lot. And every one of them did We favor above other people.[70]

The Qur'ān states that, 'it is not conceivable that a prophet should deceive.'[71] Prophets hold no divine position yet they were divinely guided. They were human beings who had to function and live in the world just as every other human being does. This in turn creates a conflicting identity of prophets that sees them elevated between human beings yet kept at a fair distance from God's supremacy. God created prophets for the sole purpose to uphold morality and goodness, 'God started sending prophets after humankind became separated, when the initial state of righteousness was replaced by moral corruptness.'[72] As God created human beings who would live on earth the message of good needed to be one which would suit the prevailing conditions. In this way the prophets serve this purpose through their human agency. The good qualities of the prophets are mentioned in numerous passages of the Qur'ān, such a 'righteous' and 'truthful'.[73]

The prophetic mission inextricably binds the prophet to God's command, the term *rasul Allah*[74] (prophet of God) emphasis this link. It is God who remains the prophets most loyal companion,

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[70] Qur'ān 6:85.
[71] Qur'ān 3:161.
[72] Qur'ān 2:213.
[73] Qur'ān 3:39, 19:41, 19:56, 19:54.
[74] The term *rasul* occurs 236 times in singular in 49 chapters and 95 times in the plural in 36 chapters. There are a total of 331 occurrences in total in the Qur'ān. Bijlefeld, W. A., 'A prophet and more than a prophet? Some observations on the Qur'ānic use of terms "prophet" and "apostle"', (ed.), Turner, C., *The Koran – Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* Vol. 2. (Oxford UK: Routledge 2006) p. 301.

'God's prophets', then, are humans divinely chosen but most often rejected by their people.'[75] Human acceptance is not as important for prophets than acceptance and selection by God. An image of God's will is exemplified in the lives of the chosen prophets. The Qur'ān's emphasis is on their virtues and morality that is shaped by God's will, 'the guided and divinely chosen prophets possess moral virtues that render them immune to sin and misbehavior'.[76] The Qur'ān highlights the fact that God has created everything for a reason, 'God in His wisdom creates nothing without setting a worthy end for the object created'.[77] The subservient nature of the prophet in relation to God is essential for the task of prophecy. The nature and nurture of the prophets is controlled by God.[78] The prophet has the capability of communicating with God but must accept the superiority of God, if not, they are constantly reminded in their lives of their limitations in relation to God's infinite power over them. God's superiority is additionally asserted through the creation of Adam.

This leads us to question what is the essential factor in prophets and prophecy, is it their selves or their vocations? Their role is only functional in the context in which they find themselves, and so in order for this to be strengthened God had to make sure that in any given context their 'self' and 'vocation' were equally positioned. The link between self and vocation is an important one when the question of female prophecy is raised. Why are women not elected as prophets in Islamic tradition? Classical and contemporary scholars have discussed at length the issue of male only prophets. Based on the key role of prophecy and the prophet outlined above, it could be argued that those who receive revelation or guidance from God are regarded as prophets in Islam. This raises an important question as to why certain female figures in the Qur'ān are not regarded as prophets. Ibn Kathir's famous work, 'Stories of the Prophets',

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[75] Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (UK: Oxford University Press 1994) p. 15.
[76] Qur'ān 3:161.
[77] O' Shaughnessy, T. J., 'The Qur'ānic View of Youth and Old Age' (ed.), Turner, C., *The Koran – Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* (Oxford UK: Routledge 2006) p. 264.
[78] 'Yea, indeed, We have created you, and then formed you.' Qur'ān 7:12.

highlights only male prophets without any mention of the possibility of female prophets. The *Zahirite* (literalist) scholar, Ibn Ḥazm, who lived in the 11th Century AD in Muslim Spain (Andalucia), mentioned in one of his writings[79] that a clear distinction needed to be made between prophet hood *(nubbuwa)* and messenger hood *(risala)* and although he believed both men and women could be prophets he believed messenger-hood was restricted to men alone. If the sex of the prophet takes precedence over the act of message bearing then this leads to a discussion of why God chose the male over the female to be a prophet? If one accepts that the prophetic role is not gendered then the question of male or female prophets is a secondary issue. However, with the exception of some, such as Ibn Hazm who was also not willing to go as far as full acceptance for female prophecy, most classical scholars accepted male only prophets and the question of female prophets was not an issue to consider,

> The woman's role as mother and housekeeper has made it difficult for the general body of exegetes to accept that women could be prophets. Since such office would mean interaction with society at large, an image seemingly at odds with Arab tribal concept. The Qur'ān does not even hint at female prophets, and many use Qur'ān 21:7 to insist on maleness as a prerequisite for prophethood, since the verse states, "We did not send before you but men to whom we revealed."[80]

The gender-neutral message of God's oneness and obedience only to God has become gendered through the interpretation of classical scholars through the gendered roles of men and women. It seems evident from the Qur'ān that God leaves many issues in ambiguity, especially when one attempts to make sense of them through earthly experiences,

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[79] Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd., *Kitāb al-Fasl fi al-milal wal-ahwa' wal-nihal* (eds.), Nasr, M. I., and Umayra, A. A., Vol. 5. (Jeddah: Uzak Publications, 1982). pp. 119-120.
[80] Khaleel, M., 'Sex, Sexuality and the Family' (ed.), Rippin, A., *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān* (Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2006) p. 300.

And they say, too, "Why was not this Qur'ān bestowed from on high on some great man *(rijāl)* of the two cities?" But is it they who distribute thy sustainer's grace? [Nay, as] it is We who distribute their means of livelihood among them in the life of this world, and raise some of them by degrees above others.[81]

The tension between the ultimate message of God, the Qur'ānic text, commentators and gender are highlighted through the examples presented above. It is for this reason that there remains unanswered questions as to whether the identification of only male prophets from the Qur'ān by Islamic traditions is worthy of rejecting female prophecy over male prophecy. The prophetic role of conveying a message includes no task which could only be carried out by men. It could also be argued that in the current age, when there are no prophets, the Qur'ān, as a text/book, conveys that same message that prophets conveyed and further challenges the notion that prophecy can only be located with the male. However, it must be added that the social and cultural environment could be a limiting factor for the success of either a male or female prophet but in essence there is no justifiable reason to bar female prophets.

2.0   Prophets in the World of 'Family'

Since the message of prophets was addressed to human beings this requires an exploration of human creation in relation to God's power to create. As a text relevant to pro-creating human beings, it is understandable to assume that the Qur'ānic world promotes the idea of pro-creation, especially through the story of Adam and Eve. The story of Adam and Eve, as the first man and woman to be created by God, strengthens the link between human beings through the

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[81] Qur'ān 43:31-32.

process of pro-creation. This promotes a wider understanding of the concept of 'family' with one initial 'father' and 'mother'. Many stories in the Qur'ān give us a clear impression of a shared value system between members of the same family, humanity. Cain and Abel are the sons of Adam and Eve but they are symbolic of the flaws of humanity, which are corrected through submission to God. The family has created different identities associated with the role of 'father', 'mother', 'son' or 'daughter'. In time the wider understanding of family has diminished and divisions of families have emerged through a lineage system. The way in which these identities are understood differs greatly over time and place. Through these varying understandings of the term 'family' have emerged prophets who have had to function in the social set up of family throughout history. The important question is how did the prophets fit into the socially constructed forms of family and the 'family of humanity'.

The Qur'ān has many passages that uphold the relationship and roles within families and goes into great details on how to conduct the affairs of a family. Sura al-Nisā is one such chapter of the Qur'ān which outlines clear guidelines for men, women and children. The chapter opens with, 'O Mankind! Be conscious of your sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand your rights from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!'[82] There are numerous prophetic and Qur'ānic traditions which elaborate on the rights of parents, children and the respect expected between them, 'we have enjoined upon man goodness towards his parents: his mother bore him bearing strain upon strain, and his utter dependence on her lasted two years: [hence, O man,] be grateful towards Me and towards thy parents, [and remember that] with Me

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[82] Qur'ān 4:1.

all journeys end.'[83] However, the lives of the prophets did not always fit into idealized families. Prophets as the great examples to human beings would be expected to be a part of the same family that the Qur'ān mentions as an idealized family structure. It is then essential to explore the way in which the prophetic vocation positioned itself in the world of family. The lives of Adam, Joseph, Muḥammad and Jesus, as presented in the Qur'ān, will now be examined in order to evaluate the way in which their lives relate to the concept of family in the Qur'ān, which will lead to an understanding of Islamic masculinity.

2.1   *Adam*

Adam is created as the first human being. In Sura al-Baqarah the creation story is recalled, 'And Lo! Thy sustainer said unto the angels: "Behold, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall inherit it."'[84] This is the first instance where God's relationship with the human form is presented and also the first presentation of human creation by God. The first events of the creation story are important to understand the created form in relation to God as creator. This is revealed even within the name of the first created man as God called him Adam which comes from the Arabic *'adim al'ard'* meaning from the 'surface of the earth'[85] and his name is mentioned eighteen times in the Qur'ān and 'sons of Adam' meaning humankind is used seven times.[86] Ibn Kathir highlighted the diversity of human kind in God's creation,

Imam Ahmad has narrated from Abu Musa, who said that the Prophet said,

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[83] Qur'ān 31:14.

[84] Qur'ān 2:30.

[85] Wheeler ctd. Suyuti as saying that the name Adam comes from the Arabic *'adim al'ard'* meaning from the 'surface of the earth'. Suyuti ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 17.

[86] Schock, C., 'Adam and Eve' (ed.), McAuliffe, J., *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003) p. 22.

Allah has created Adam from a handful (soil) which He had gathered from all over the earth. That is how the children of Adam came according to the (color and nature of the) earth. There are white among them, as well as red and black, and cross colors. There are those among them who are of bad nature and good nature, soft as well as harsh and in between.[87]

God created the angels with 'wings'[88] and *Jinn* from fire[89] and chose to create Adam from 'dust'[90] or 'clay'[91]. The essence of God's creation is linked to the environment in which it is to dwell. The human body, in all its diverse shades, is then best suited for the earth with the ultimate task of submitting to God, which is not dependent on anything. This is evident in the story prior to the creation of Adam where it was the angels who were God's most obedient creation. God's decision to create a something new shocked the angels who questioned God on this new creation,

> "Wilt thou place on it such as will spread corruption thereon and shed blood – whereas it is we who extol thy limitless glory, and praise Thee, and hallow Thy name?" God answered: "Verily, I know that which you do not know."[92] Abdullah bin Umar said, 'Jinn lived about two thousand years before Adam on the earth, and they shed blood. God sent an army of angels who expelled them to remote Islands.[93]

Angels, as God's most submitted creatures, carried out actions to uphold goodness over evil,

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[87] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 30.
[88] Qur'ān 35:1.
[89] Qur'ān 15:27.
[90] Qur'ān 3:59 compares the likeness of Adam with Jesus.
[91] Ibn Masud ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 17.
[92] Qur'ān 2:30, According to the exegete and historian, al-Tabari, God wanted to expose Iblīs' arrogance. See al-Tabari ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 18.
[93] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 16.

O You who have attained to faith! Ward off from yourselves and those who are close to you that fire [of the hereafter] whose fuel is human beings and stones: [lording] over it are angelic powers awesome [and] severe, who do not disobey God in whatever He has commanded them, but [always] do what they are bidden to do.[94]

Angels are hence referred to in the most honorable way in the Qur'ān,[95]

Say [O Prophet]: "Whosoever is an enemy of Gabriel" – who, verily, by God's leave, has brought down upon thy heart this [divine writ] which confirms the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations], and is a guidance and a glad tiding for the believers: - "whosoever is an enemy of God and His angels and His message bearers, including Gabriel and Michael, [should know that,] verily, God is the enemy of all who deny the truth."[96]

The distinct form in which God has created angels is highlighted in a Ḥadīth of the prophet, in which he has a dialogue with Gabriel,

It is related that the prophet said to Gabriel one day, "Gabriel, I should like to see you in the most magnificent form that God created you." "Beloved of God," said Gabriel, "I have such an awesome form that neither you nor anyone else could bear to see it without falling down in a swoon." "But I want to gaze upon you in your greatest form," insisted the prophet. "Where then do you want to see me?" asked Gabriel. "Outside

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[94] Qur'ān 66:6.
[95] 'Whoever pays heed unto the apostle pays heed unto God thereby; and as for those who turn away – we have not sent thee to be their keeper.' in Qur'ān 4:80.
[96] Qur'ān 2:97-98.

Mecca, the valley." "Beloved of God," said Gabriel, "the valley is not big enough." "Then on Mount Arafat." As the prophet was headed for Arafat, suddenly there came a great rustle and clashing, and a face was blocking out the horizons. When the prophet looked, he fell down in a swoon. Gabriel resumed his former shape and came to the prophet, embraced and kissed him, and said, "Fear not, beloved of God, for I am your brother Gabriel." "You spoke the truth Gabriel," said the prophet. "I did not suspect that any of God's creatures had such a form!" Then Gabriel said, "O beloved of God, if you were to see Israfael, you would think *my* form but small and insignificant!"[97]

This prophetic dialogue with Gabriel highlights the important feature of all God's creation being as 'one family', united in their ultimate role of obedience and submission to God. Gabriel's comparison to Muḥammad and Israfael alludes to the way that angels also reflect upon their form amongst each other, in similar fashion to the construction of masculinities and femininities, yet Gabriel's use of the fraternal address of 'brother' to the prophet highlights that regardless of how powerful God creates his creation they all remain equally disempowered in relation to God. Ka'ab al-Ahbar stated that the angels never cease to glorify and praise God, be they 'standing, sitting, kneeling, or prostrate'.[98] Even though their form is far from similar to human beings, as mentioned earlier, 'All praise is due to God, originator of the heavens and the earth, who causes the angels to be [His] message-bearers, endowed with wings, two, or three, or four.'[99] In the case of Gabriel specifically, as an example of an angel, one is unsure of his sex, even though he is presented in the masculine 'he' throughout. It is also not clear whether he procreates in the same way that Adam was expected to. The Qur'ān clarifies that those who convey God's messages are selected from within their own created community in

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[97] al-Kisā`i, Muḥammad Ibn Abdullah, *Tales of the Prophets* (trans.), Thackston Jr, W. M., (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1997) pp. 13-14.
[98] Ibid., p. 12.
[99] Qur'ān 35:1.

order to strengthen the divine message in its given context, 'Say: "If angels were walking about on earth as their natural abode, We would indeed have sent down unto them an angel out of heaven as Our apostle."'[100]

The creation of Adam is more cause for concern to Iblīs (Satan) who in Qur'ānic exegesis is seen to being replaced by God,

> In the days of the rule of Iblīs, God created Adam, our father, the father of humanity. The reason for this is that the other angels did not know about Iblīs being arrogant, so God wanted to expose this matter to them, to show them what had gone wrong with Iblīs and why his authority and kingship came to an end.[101]

Iblīs' kingship comes to an end because there could be no arrogance shown by God's created form as this was not conducive to their submission. al-Tabari stated, 'God created Adam with his own hands so that God could say to Iblīs (Satan) that he was exalting himself over that which God formed with his own hands. So God created Adam as a human and his body was from clay.'[102] Iblīs attempted to undermine Adam's formation,

> The angels used to pass by him (Adam) and kick him because they were frightened, the most frightened being Iblīs. Iblīs told the other angels not to be afraid because whereas God is solid, Adam is hollow. Iblīs entered Adam's mouth then out of his anus, then in the anus and out the mouth. Iblīs said: "You are not an instrument for making sounds,

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[100] Qur'ān 17:95.
[101] al-Tabari ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 15.
There are further illustrations of this interpretation in the works of Ibn Abbas, Rabi'a b. Anas, and Tabari in Wheeler's translation.
[102] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 31.

so why were you created? If I am given authority over you, I will ruin you and if you are given authority over me, I shall destroy you.[103]

Iblīs' statement that God is *solid* and Adam is *hollow* distinguishes God's superiority and position in comparison to the rest of creation. It is also an indication of Iblīs' respect for God in that although he shows arrogance to other creations he still places God's position superior to all. However, Iblīs fault was that he was showing arrogance to God's other creations, especially Adam, and believed that God had created superiority and inferiority through the different forms of creations. Such shortcomings on behalf of Iblīs are exposed by God.

In a further attempt to isolate Iblīs and the powers bestowed upon him by God, Adam is given knowledge.[104] The Qur'ān states that Adam's knowledge was implanted by God, 'And He (God) imparted unto Adam the names of all things.'[105] Iblīs was also given knowledge by God and was known for this attribute, 'Iblīs used to be called 'Azazil and was one of the most zealous and knowledgeable of the angels. This led him to pride.'[106] al-Tabari stated,

> Iblīs was sent by God to judge among the Jinn on the earth. He did so truthfully for 1,000 years and was eventually called the "Arbiter" by God. Because of this, Iblīs considered himself great and became arrogant, and among those to whom God had sent him as an arbiter, Iblīs caused affliction, enmity and hate. These creatures fought

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[103] Ibid.

[104] 'Ibn Abbas said: Adam spoke seven hundred languages, the best of which was Arabic.' in al-Kisā`i, Muḥammad Ibn Abdullah, *Tales of the Prophets* (trans.), Thackston Jr, W. M., (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1997) p. 28.

[105] Qur'ān 2:31.

[106] al-Tabari ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 17.

among themselves on earth for 2,000 years, causing so much bloodshed that their horses waded in their blood.[107]

Even though Adam, angels and Iblīs are seen to assert their own role and position amongst each other, God once again highlights their equal, disempowered submitted position and function when he presented Adam to them all. The angels were asked about some matter that was imparted to Adam, 'Limitless art thou in Thy glory! No knowledge have we save that which Thou hast imparted unto us. Verily, Thou alone art all-knowing, truly wise.'[108] The immediate response from God was, 'O Adam, convey unto them the names of these (things).'[109] Adam was then able to present his knowledge by conveying what he had been commanded. Such knowledge could be understood as a means to empower an Islamic masculinity yet the power of the knowledge was with God as God responded, 'Verily, I alone know the hidden reality of the heavens and the earth, and know all that you bring into the open and all that you would conceal.'[110] The angels accepted God's decision to create a human being with more knowledge than them, and they highlight God's knowledge of all things and concede that God has the power to bestow as much or as little of his knowledge upon his creation.

All the angels were commanded to prostrate before Adam but it was Iblīs who refused to prostrate, 'They all prostrated themselves, save Iblīs, who refused and thus refused and gloried in his arrogance: and thus he became one of those who deny truth.'[111] Iblīs answered, 'I am

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[107] Ibid., p. 16.
[108] Qur'ān 2:32, Hasan Basri said, 'when God intended to create Adam, the angels said, "Our Lord does not create any creature but we are more knowledgeable than that creature." So they were put to a test, and that is why He said: "If you are truthful"'. – Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.) Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 17.
[109] Qur'ān 2:33.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Qur'ān 2:34 'Hasan Basri commented that Iblīs was the first to draw analogous conclusions between himself, made from fire, and Adam, made from clay (see Qur'ān 17:61-65). His origin is further obscured by the saying of the Prophet Muḥammad in which he says, "The angels are created from light, and jinn

better than he: Thou hast created me out of fire, whereas him Thou hast created out of clay.'[112]

God stripped Iblīs of his grace primarily due to the arrogance he was showing, and shunned

him from heaven, 'for it is not meant for thee to show arrogance here! Go forth, then: verily,

among the humiliated shalt thou be!'[113] Iblīs quite correctly drew the distinction between him

and Adam but the important point of this event was less about creation than obedience and

submission to God. Ibn Kathir stated that the distinction would not stand in any case as 'soil is

more beneficial than fire as soil has qualities serenity, gentleness, perseverance, and growth.

While in fire there are qualities of frivolity, impatience, haste and burning.'[114] However, al-

Tabari and Ibn Abbas stated that God created Iblīs beautiful and made him the keeper of

paradise and gave him authority over the earthly heavens and earth. It is for this reason that

Iblīs was angry at the love that God was showing Adam over him. Iblīs vowed to divert the

attention of human beings who were 'righteous on the straight path'[115] to the path of evil. God

promised a punishment for those who followed Iblīs 'as for such of them as follows thee – I will

most certainly fill hell with you all!'[116] As Stowasser stated, 'Satan is shown to have started his

career together with Adam, as Adam's coeval; thus his role is essentially linked with man, his

nature is brought out by antagonism against man, he is an "anti-man" force.[117] It is then for no

other reason but disobedience to God that Iblīs was shunned and it was his fixation with other

details apart from submission to God that drew him the wrath of God.

The story of creation is then essentially a story about God's submitted creatures and the lessons

to be learnt from the way in which God's creation turn to anger and dispute between each

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are created out of searing fire. And Adam is created from what it had been described to you."' - Ibn
Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) pp. 19-20.
[112] Qur'ān 7:12.
[113] Qur'ān 7:13.
[114] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 19.
[115] Qur'ān 7:16.
[116] Qur'ān 7:18.
[117] Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)
p. 26.

other. Each of the created, Adam, Angels and Satan vie for the love and attention of God, the creator. The angels remain obedient to God's commands, Adam is established as the new creation on earth and Satan is the rejected one who promises God that he will succeed in creating chaos on earth. As all of creation remains submitted to God's power such a dynamic disempowers any form of hierarchy amongst them, especially amongst and between men and women.

2.1.1   Eve

The Qur'ān uses the term *'zawjaha'* to mean companionship between a male and female, 'and among his wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your own kind, so that you might incline towards them, and he engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think.'[118] Penrice stated that the root verb is 'zā ja' which he translated as 'to stir strife up'[119] and then translated the Qur'ānic word 'Zawj' illustratively as

> A companion, mate, spouse, husband or wife, and individual when consorting with
> another; that in which individuals are united, as a kind, species, class, or sex, also a pair,
> a couple; Examples, "And we have caused (vegetables) to spring up in it of every
> generous species."[120]

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[118] Qur'ān 30:21.
[119] Penrice, J., *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran – with Copious Grammatical References and Explanations of the Text* (Karachi: Darul-Ishaat, 1998) p. 63.
[120] Ibid., p63

However, legal scholars have used the term to mean 'marriage' between a man and woman in order to create laws relating to this.[121] Marriage between a man and women has become a part of Islamic tradition for the purpose of legitimizing, in some way, pro-creation, 'and God has given you mates *(azwajun)* of your own kind and has given you, through your mates, children and children's children, and has provided for you sustenance out of the good things in life.'[122] Marriage traditions between men and women have also helped to regulate the gender roles, 'Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter. And the righteous women are the truly devout ones, who guard the intimacy which God has ordained to be guarded.'[123] This passage has been discussed and rejected by many feminist scholars, as will be discussed later in this thesis, but the point to note is that it has shaped gender roles for a husband and wife. To this end the Islamic legal schools wrote extensively on marriage and divorce law, 'according to Imams Abu Hanifah, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Mālik bin Anas, although marriage in its origin may be deemed to be recommendatory, in cases of certain individuals, it becomes obligatory (wājib).'[124] The ḥadīth traditions also speak extensively on the issue of marriage also, 'It is narrated by Anas that the messenger of God said, 'When a man marries, he has fulfilled half of his religion, so let him fear God regarding the remaining half.''[125] Adam and Eve are then understood as a central story for understanding the concept of marriage, pro-creation and gender.

This leads to the story of Adam and Eve. The creation of Eve from Adam is not mentioned in the Qur'ān. Stowasser commented that al-Tabari quoted ḥadīth which names Adam's wife as

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[121] See Doi, A. R., *Sharī'ah: The Islamic Law* (London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1984) pp.114-127., al-Misri, A. I. N., *Reliance of the Traveler: a Classical Manual of Islamic Sacred Law* (trans.), Keller, N. H. M., (Evanston: Sunna Books, 1994) pp. 506-553., and Mālik bin A., *Kitāb al-Muwaṭṭa'* (trans.), at-Tarjumana, A. A., and Johnson, Y., (Norwich: Diwan Press, 1982).
[122] Qur'ān 16:72.
[123] Qur'ān 4:34.
[124] Doi, A. R., *Sharī'ah: The Islamic Law* (London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1984) p. 118.
[125] Ibid., p. 119.

'Hawwa' as it is not mentioned in the Qur'ān.[126] They commented that Adam dwelled in paradise alone and fell asleep. When he awoke he saw a woman sat beside him. Ibn Ishaq said that God took a rib from Adam's left side and fashioned her to become a woman so that Adam could live with her. When Adam awoke he said, 'My flesh and my blood, and my spouse.' Ka'ab al-Ahbar stated,

> Adam saw her in a dream. When he awoke he said, "O Lord, who is this who was so kind to me when she drew near?" "This is my handmaiden," said God, "and thou art my servant, O Adam. I have not created anyone nobler in my sight than you two, for you have obeyed me and worshipped me. I have created for you an abode and called it Paradise: whosoever enters therein shall be my friend in truth, and whosoever enters not therein shall be my enemy in truth. Adam grew alarmed and said, "O Lord, dost thou have enemies? Thou art the Lord of the heavens and the earth." "Had I willed all of creation to be my friends I should have done so," said God, "but I do what I will and I decree what I desire!" "O Lord," said Adam, "this thy maid Eve, for whom hast thou created her?" "O Adam," said God, "I created her for thee that thou be content with her and that thou not be alone in paradise." "Lord," said Adam, "marry her to me." "O Adam," said God, "I will marry thee to her on one condition: that thou teach her the precepts of my religion and be thankful to me for her." And Adam accepted.[127]

The central characteristic of Eve, like all other creations, is to worship and submit to God's command like all other creations. God clarifies here to Adam that the central significance is for the created to worship him which is secondary to their enjoyment with one another. God

[126] Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 29.
[127] al-Kisā`i, Muḥammad Ibn Abdullah, *Tales of the Prophets* (trans.), Thackston Jr, W. M., (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1997) p. 32.

allowed them both to dwell in paradise as companions or mates to each other. The only command Adam and Eve were to observe was not to eat from the forbidden tree, 'lest you become wrongdoers.'[128] Wahb Bin Munabbih, the 8th Century scholar of Jewish and Islamic traditions, stated that the 'tree's branches were intertwined and it bore fruit which the angels ate to live forever, and it was this fruit that God prohibited to Adam and Eve. The tree is the most excellent in paradise, and on earth, the acacia (talh) and the lotus tree *(sidr)*.'[129] Ibn Kathir narrated a ḥadīth of the Prophet Muḥammad in which he said, 'In paradise is a tree in the shade of which the stars course 100 years without cutting it: the tree of immortality.'[130] The tree was used as a symbol of ultimate submission to God and his commands. That Adam and Eve were given an instruction that they had to obey and that no one (Iblīs or the tree) could extend or shorten their lives. The tree was then a symbol of curiosity and ambiguity as it was up to Adam and Eve to show the strength of their faith and submission to God.

Iblīs began his campaign of 'stumbling Adam and Eve' and began to whisper to them to eat from the tree.[131] Iblīs attempted to gain the trust of Adam and Eve and successfully 'led them on with deluding thoughts.'[132] It is here that Adam and Eve both eat the forbidden fruit from the tree and as result of their wrongdoing become conscious of their nakedness. It could be that nakedness is used as a symbol of disobedience to God. Adam and Eve covered themselves with

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[128] Qur'ān 2:35.

[129] Munabbih, Wahb Ibn, ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 23.

[130] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 27.

[131] Qur'ān 2:36 & Qur'ān 7:20 Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud and Wahb Bin Munabbih state that Iblīs persuaded a snake-like creature, which looked like a camel with four feet, to let him enter its mouth and take him to Adam in paradise. Iblīs was unable to convince any other creature to undertake him and God was fully aware of the situation. The snake is said to have been covered and walked on four legs but God's wrath has made the snake naked and crawl on its stomach. The Muslim tradition of killing snakes is based upon the covenant the snake made with Iblīs. Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud and others ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 24.

[132] Qur'ān 7:22.

leaves, which symbolised their discontent and embarrassment of nakedness.[133] God then called

them, 'Did I not forbid that tree unto you and tell you, Verily, Satan is your open foe?'[134] Adam

and Eve were then sent down to earth[135] where they were to spend their lives, awaiting their

resurrection back to God. It was only after the event that God stated,

> Say, "Who is there to forbid the beauty which God has brought forth for his creatures,
>
> and the good things from among the means of sustenance? Verily, my sustainer has
>
> forbidden only shameful deeds, be they open or secret, and (every kind of) sinning, and
>
> unjustified envy, and the ascribing of divinity to aught beside Him."[136]

God's reprimand to Adam and Eve is based on their failure to submit fully only to him. Adam

and Eve as a creation of God were admonished for their misbehavior. The Prophet Muḥammad

said, 'your father Adam was like a tall palm, 60 cubits in height, with a lot of hair, his nakedness

covered. When he sinned in paradise, his private parts were revealed to him and he left

paradise. A tree caught him and took him by his forelock and his Lord called to him: "Are you

running from me, Adam?" He said: "No, I am ashamed for that which I have done."'[137] The

companionship or marriage that God blessed Adam and Eve with was secondary to their

ultimate role of submission. The addition of Eve could then be understood to support God's

divinity as the only one who did not require a mate or companion for enjoyment or pro-

creation. Further highlighting the biological fact that it is human beings who require an

opposite sex to pro-create but this enjoyment and procreation must always relate back to

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[133] According to Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud. Wahb Bin Munabbih their clothes were made of light, covering their genitals. Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud and others ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) pp. 24-25.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Tabari, Ibn Abbas, Hasan al-Basri, Suddi, Abu al-Aliyah all stated that when Adam was sent to earth he was dropped in India. Ibn Abbas states that Eve was cast down in Jeddah. Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud and others ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) pp. 25-27.
[136] Qur'ān 7:32-33.
[137] Ubayy bin Ka`b ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 25.

submission to God. There is also no mention of any sexual relations of Adam and Eve in heaven but this only takes place when they are on earth.[138] It is on earth that we are introduced to their children, Cain and Abel. Ibn Kathir stated,

> They were commanded (by God) that every son of them would marry the sister of his brother with whom she was born and every daughter would marry the brother of her sister with whom he was born. No one was allowed to get married with his sister with whom he was born.[139]

As human beings started to populate the earth, God as a way of teaching lessons to humanity also used stories relating to Cain and Abel to this end. Adam asked Cain to marry his sister to Abel but Cain refused to do this, as he wanted to marry his twin sister himself because she was so beautiful. Adam and Eve produced twin children at any time and it was said that twin children were instructed by God not to marry. Upon hearing of Cain's decision Adam tells his sons to offer a sacrifice to God while he went on pilgrimage to Mecca in hope of finding a solution to this dispute. Abel offered a lamb and Cain offered his worst crops. This led to a horrific fire that destroyed Cain's crops but left Abel's lamb untouched. The distinction between the obedient son (Abel) and the disobedient son (Cain) are highlighted through the sacrifice scene that leads to Cain killing Abel. This is also evident in the Ḥadīth of the prophet,

> When Muḥammad passed by Adam on the first heaven (on his night journey to Jerusalem and then to the heavens), he said, "welcome to the pious son and pious prophet." Muḥammad said, "On his right side was a huge crowd, and on his left side was a huge crowd. When he looked on his right side, he smiled; and when he looked on

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[138] Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 29
[139] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 38.

his left side he cried. I (Muḥammad) said: "O Gabriel! What is the matter?" He replied: "He is Adam, and they are the souls of his children. When he looked on his right, who were the people of paradise he smiled and when he looked on his left, who were the people of hell, he cried.[140]

Cain and Abel are used to exemplify good and evil, 'Be like the better of the two of Adam's sons'[141], in the same way that all stories related to creation show the way in which good overcomes evil through the ultimate submission to God. Cain and Abel exemplify a typical form of dominant masculinity that aims for power over the other but from a theological perspective it highlights the way in which multiplicity in gender is a means towards ethics and morality as relationships help to identify 'good' from 'bad'.

2.2   Joseph

Joseph is one of the few prophets whose life has been documented in one full chapter of the Qur'ān. Sura Yusuf (Joseph) is a Meccan sura which recounts the life of Joseph, which is very different from that of Adam as there are more human characters within it and sexual ethics are explored in more detail. The story is also based in a family setting and the very fact that Jacob, who was also a prophet, was the father of Joseph, one of twelve sons, gives an understanding of family roles, such as 'father' and 'son' in this case. Joseph was said to be 'the most noble, the most exalted, the greatest' of all other sons of Jacob.[142] The close relationship between Jacob's two sons, (from his wife Rachel), Joseph and Benjamin, adversely affected the relationship between the other ten brothers and Jacob, Benjamin and most notably Joseph, 'The close

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[140] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.) Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 46.
[141] Ibid., p. 42.
[142] Ibid., p. 231.

fraternal relationship between Benjamin and Joseph is a leitmotiv in the Qur'ānic story'.[143] This

then offers an understanding of the roles expected of 'brothers'. Joseph was distinct from all

his other brothers for several reasons and Kisai stated that this was also evident in the fact that

Joseph was given a staff of light which had five branches. On the first branch was written,

'Abraham, friend of God'; on the second, 'Isaac, sacrifice of God'; on the third, 'Ishmael, pure of

God'; on the fourth, 'Jacob, Israelite of God'; and on the fifth, 'Joseph, Righteous of God.'[144]

The Qur'ānic chapter begins with Joseph recalling a dream to his father, Jacob, indicating God

choosing him as a prophet, 'O my father! Behold, I saw [in a dream] eleven stars, as well as the

sun and the moon: I saw them prostrate themselves before me!'[145] It is widely accepted that this

dream took place when Joseph was young, before maturity. The eleven stars signify his eleven

brothers and the sun and the moon his parents.[146] This dream highlights the way in which

Joseph was to gain high merit for his actions and it was for this reason that Jacob worries that

Joseph's brothers may envy him, 'O my dear son! Do not relate thy dream to thy brothers lest

[out of envy] they devise an evil scheme against thee; verily Satan is man's open foe.'[147] God

makes it clear at the outset that Joseph's end will be successful, possibly to re-assure before his

life was to change.

In the Qur'ānic story, Joseph is bought by Zulaykha[148], wife of Potophir (Al-Aziz), after he is

found in the well that his brothers threw him into and sold. Joseph is adopted into the house of

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[143] Goldman, S., 'Joseph' (ed.), McAuliffe, J., *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003) p. 227.
[144] al-Kisā`i, Muḥammad Ibn Abdullah, *Tales of the Prophets* (trans.), Thackston Jr, W. M., (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1997) p. 32.
[145] Qur'ān 12:4.
[146] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 230.
[147] Qur'ān 12:5.
[148] Ibn Kathir said that al-Aziz's wife was called Ra'el Ibn al-Walid. Tha'labi said her name was Fakka Ibn Yunis. It is widely accepted amongst the classical exegetes that Zulaykha was her nickname. Ibn Kathir and Tha'labi ctd. in Wheeler, B. M., *Prophets in the Qur'ān* (London: Continuum, 2002) p. 132.

al-Aziz as a son and the Qur'ān comments how God gave Joseph a 'firm place on earth'[149] which would give him the security and comfort for God to 'impart unto him some understanding of the inner meaning of happenings.'[150] The narration then continues when Joseph is older, 'and when he reached full manhood, we bestowed upon him the ability to judge [between right and wrong], as well as [innate] knowledge: for thus do we reward the doers of good.'[151]

As a prophet of God, Joseph's life had to convey the message of God, as was the instruction to all prophets. In the case of Joseph this was to take place through his relationship with the wife of al-Aziz, Zulaykha, 'And [it so happened that] she in whose house he was living [conceived a passion for him and] sought to make him yield himself unto her; and she bolted the doors and said, "Come thou unto me!"'[152] Although Joseph sought salvation from God he was equally tempted.[153] Joseph did not resist Zulaykha before this time because he also felt attracted to her,

> May God preserve me! Behold, goodly has my master made my stay [in this house]!
> Verily, to no good end come they that do [such] wrong! And, indeed, she desired him,
> and he desired her; [and he would have succumbed] had he not seen [in this
> temptation] an evidence of his sustainer's truth: thus [we willed it to be] in order that

[149] Qur'ān 12:21.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Qur'ān 12:22.
[152] Qur'ān 12:23 Ibn Kathir stated that Zulaykha's invitation was an 'act of seduction'. She was said to dress in her most elegant clothes and was beautiful. Zulaykha's attraction was only 'because of his handsome youth and of his awesome appearance'. Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p.238. Stowasser cited al-Tabari's comments on what happened between the two of them, 'Joseph unfastened the belt of his trousers and sat before her 'as the circumciser sits'; she lay down for him and he sat between her legs; she lay down on her back and he sat between her legs and loosened his garment (or her garment); he dropped his pants to his buttocks; he sat with her as a man sits with his wife, etc.' Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 52.
[153] Ibn Kathir commented, 'his Lord saved him from committing indecency and protected him from women's evil plot' and further states 'what is important for our belief is that God saved him from that indecent act and protected him from the evil of that woman.' Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p.239. In contrast Tabari places great emphasis in his commentary on Zulaykha's 'true love' for Joseph - Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 53.

we might avert from him all evil and all deeds of abomination – for, behold, he was truly one of Our servants.[154]

Joseph and Zulaykha's temptation was mutual. However, Joseph resisted his feelings for her only because of God's command and fear,

"O Joseph, I love you with all my heart. Lift up your head and look at me in the fullness of my beauty!" "Your master (husband) has more right to that than I do." "Come close to me, Joseph." "But I fear lest my portion of paradise be lost." "I have discretely veiled my affair from the people, so come close to me!" "But who will veil me from God, the Lord of the universe?"[155]

The dialogue between Zulaykha and Joseph shows the tension that existed between mutual desire and obedience and submission to God. Joseph is clearly tempted by Zulaykha's beauty and charm but his concern is with fulfilling his obligation and submission to God in the correct way. It is apparent that Joseph and Zulaykha loved each other greatly and an additional quality was their physical beauty.[156] The Qur'ān and Ḥadīth elaborate on the connection between beauty and temptation in an attempt to present a moral framework for sexual ethics, true love is far from the debate. The lessons of sexual ethics and morality that emerge from Joseph's relationship with Zulaykha are more likely to highlight the role that Joseph was to play in the

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[154] Qur'ān 12: 23-24.

[155] al-Kisā`i, Muḥammad Ibn Abdullah, *Tales of the Prophets* (trans.), Thackston Jr, W. M., (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1997) pp. 174-175.

[156] Ibn Kathir states, "in a report about the Prophet's night journey the prophet saying, "I passed by Joseph and he had been given half of the beauty." Suhayli and other scholars say that the meaning of this is that Joseph has half the beauty of Adam because God created Adam with his own hands, blew his breath into him, and he was the ultimate of human beauty. Because of this, the inhabitants of paradise enter paradise with the stature of Adam and beauty of Joseph. Joseph had the half that was the beauty of Adam. Between them there is none more beautiful, and likewise there are no two after Eve and Sarah, the wife of Abraham who resembled Eve." Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 242.

house of al-Aziz as a son. As a son he could not have a sexual affair with Zulaykha who was the wife of al-Aziz, who he considered his father. Ibn Kathir narrated a Ḥadīth on this matter,

> Allah will provide with refuge under His shelter to seven peoples on the day of judgment when there will be no shelter except His shelter: the just ruler; and to a man who remembered Allah in his solitude that his eyes overflowed with tears; and to a man who is always in the mosque when he goes out from it till he returns from it; and to two people whose friendship was only for the sake of Allah, they came together for this reason and they departed each other for this reason; and to a man who gave in charity secretly that what his right hand spent was not known to his left hand; and to a youth who spent his life in Allah's devotion; and to a man who was seduced by a woman of beauty and position but he said fear Allah.[157]

Ibn Kathir stated that Joseph is mentioned within these seven categories as he resisted the seduction of a beautiful woman. Stowasser challenged this interpretation to be demeaning to women, 'both (Joseph and Zulaykha) appear in the Ḥadīth as symbolized in the concept of *fitna* (social anarchy, social chaos, temptation), which indicates that to be a female is to be sexually aggressive and, hence, dangerous to social stability.'[158] However, the Qur'ān reminded human beings to remain focused on remaining submitted to God,

> Alluring unto man is the enjoyment of worldly desire through women, and children, and heaped-up treasures of gold and silver, and horses of high mark, and cattle and lands. Say: 'Shall I tell you of better things than those [earthly joys]? For the God

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[157] Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets* (trans.), Azami, R. A., (Jeddah: Darussalam Publishers 1st Edition) p. 239.
[158] Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 52.

conscious there are, with their sustainer, gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide, and spouses pure, and God's goodly acceptance.[159]

As is illustrated through the commentary of the exegetes, this story is interpreted in a negative manner towards women, as Zulaykha's attraction is not understood as woman's love but as an essential 'flaw' in female nature.[160] Stowasser argued that according to tradition, 'God has instilled an irresistible attraction to women in man's soul, which works through the pleasure he experiences when he looks at her or deals with anything related to her.'[161] It is evident from the Qur'ānic narrative that God is not chastising the mutual attraction and love between Zulaykha and Joseph but the associated factors in which they were about to conduct their affair. These issues are highlighted in the gossip that spreads, 'the wife of this nobleman is trying to induce her slave-boy to yield himself unto her! Her love for him has pierced her heart; verily, we see that she is undoubtedly suffering from an aberration!"[162] This section of the Qur'ān attempts to show the affection that Zulaykha had for Joseph. Indeed the Qur'ān is not admonishing the attraction that each had for one another but is against the way in which this relationship was taking shape. The relationship between Joseph and Zulaykha could be understood as an exploration of the way in which God allowed love to grow between Joseph and Zulaykha but wanted to make an example of the two in deceiving and hurting others, especially al-Aziz. It is also a relationship which highlights the way that gender, sex and submission to God are inextricably bound to morality and ethics, Muslims are expected to be cautious that their physical relationships do not infringe on the rights of others, for this would be contrary to submission to God.

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[159] Qur'ān 3:14-15.
[160] Stowasser, B., *Women in the Qur'ān, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 53.
[161] Ibid., p. 52.
[162] Qur'ān 12:30.

2.3   Muḥammad

Muḥammad, as the last and final messenger of God, is often understood as the 'ideal' male in Islam. His life has been documented and commented on numerously throughout history for various reasons. There are two main concerns when approaching Muḥammad's life in this chapter, his prophecy and his personhood in relation to his family. Muḥammad's life is covered in the most detailed of biographies as opposed to all other prophets but to what extent can he be accepted as the 'perfect example' of masculinity? Kecia Ali stated, 'it is a tricky proposition to accept that the prophet is a model of conduct for all Muslims while simultaneously believing it would be wrong of a Muslim man to follow his example in consummating a marriage with a nine year old.'[163] Muḥammad's marriages are then one of the most contentious areas of interest and many scholars have presented their views on Muḥammad as a man and prophet through these examples. It is then important to focus on the way that Muḥammad's vocation as a prophet was linked to his life, if at all, and the way that this has shaped an Islamic masculinity.

Muḥammad was born into a broken family and was born to Amina Ibn Wahb and Abdullah Ibn Mutallib. Abdullah, his father, died whilst he was away on a business trip to Palestine and Syria.[164] When Amina was pregnant she heard a voice which said, 'thou carriest in thy womb the lord of this people; and when he is born say: 'I place him beneath the protection of the One, from the evil of every envier'; then name him Muḥammad.'[165] Muḥammad had been denied a

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[163] Ali, K., *Sexual Ethics and Islam – Feminist Reflections on Qur'ān, Hadith and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006) p.147. Ali recalls the Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī hadith at the beginning of her chapter on the prophet Muḥammad, 'Aisha narrated that the prophet married her when she was a girl of six and he consummated the marriage when she was a girl of nine.' Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (trans.), Khan, M. M., Vol. VII. Hadith Number 64 (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1986) p. 50.
[164] Lings, M., *Muḥammad – His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983) p.21. (Martin Lings biography of the prophet Muḥammad is based on the writings of Ibn Ishaq - *Sirat Rasul Allah*, Ibn Sa'ad - *Kitāb al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Waqidi - *Kitāb al-Maghazi*, Azraqi - *Akhbar Makkah*, Tabari – *Ta'rikh ar-Rasul wa'l-Muluk* and Suhayli – *ar-Rawd al-unuf*.)
[165] Ibid., p. 21.

father and in this way the nuclear family system is challenged. In patriarchal Arabia, Amina's shock and despair at being told that she will give birth to a boy named Muḥammad is inevitable. Muḥammad is initially adopted by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who tells his own new born son, Abbas, to kiss Muḥammad as he is his 'brother'.[166] Muḥammad is then sent to a wet nurse, Halima, who was to care for him in the open fresh air of the desert. It is here that Halima experienced something extraordinary, Muḥammad explained the events as such,

> there came unto me two men, clothed in white, with a gold basin full of snow. Then they lay upon me, and splitting open my breasts they brought forth my heart. This likewise they split open and took from it a black clot which they cast away. Then they washed my heart and my breast with the snow. Satan toucheth every son of Adam the day his mother beareth him, save only Mary and her son.[167]

Halima returned Muḥammad to his mother, Amina, but she also died whilst Muḥammad was at a young age. It is clear that Muḥammad's role from the onset is much broader than the bounds of his biological family. Muḥammad was protected from Satan in order for him to fulfill his duty to God. It is for this reason that Halima decided not to look after Muḥammad any longer as he was so unusual for a young boy which she compared with her own son.

After the death of his mother Muḥammad was placed under the full care of Abdul Muttalib, his grandfather. However, this was also short lived due to his death too and so his uncle Abu Talib cared for him. It was during a business trip with his uncle that Muḥammad met Bahira the monk, in Bostra, who identified Muḥammad as a special prophet and told Abu Talib to look

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[166] Ibid., p. 22.
[167] Ibid., p. 26.

after him, Bahira stated, 'this (Muḥammad) is the master of all humans. Allah will send him with a message which will be a mercy to all beings.'[168]

Muḥammad grew up in the household of his uncle Abu Talib and quickly became fond of his cousin, Fakhita who he asked his uncle to marry.[169] However, this was not to be as she married her cousin, Hubayrah.[170] It was later that he met Khadija, the rich merchant, who had been married twice before. Khadija offered Muḥammad a job and he went on a business trip for her. Khadija sent Maysarah, a young boy, to accompany Muḥammad on this trip. During this trip Muḥammad met another Christian monk Nestor who stated to Maysarah that Muḥammad was the awaited prophet. On his arrival back Khadija became more attracted to Muḥammad and he consulted her friend, Nufaysah, to ask Muḥammad if he would marry her.[171] Muḥammad and Khadija were then married.

Muḥammad's initial attraction and love towards his cousin Fakhita was something that had developed over a long period of time and had that marriage taken place Muḥammad's life would have been very different. Fakhita was not as powerful in society as Khadija and with what was to become of Muḥammad in later life he most likely needed the support of powerful

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[168] al-Mubarakpuri, S., *Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum – Biography of the Noble Prophet* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 1996) p. 60

[169] The main story is narrated by Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 204/820) and appears in Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat al-Kubra (Beirut: Dār Ṣadir edition, 8:151 ff) and in later sources as well, but there are other versions with slight differences in wording and detail. The story is narrated by Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 204/820), who told it directly to Ibn Sa'd, who put it in his Tabaqat al-kubra in Umm Hani's biography. The story tells of the Prophet telling how he had proposed to her before the revelation, but that she had rejected him for Hubayra bin Wahb, who became her husband. After the conquest of Mecca, she became Muslim but her husband did not (he fled to Najran), and the Prophet proposed again. She said, "Indeed I loved you in the Jahiliyya, so what about in Islam? But I am a women with young children." (I am grateful to Professor Jonathan A. C. Brown from the University of Washington for this citation)

[170] Lings, M., *Muḥammad – His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983) p.33.

[171] al-Mubarakpuri, S., *Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum – Biography of the Noble Prophet* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 1996) p. 62

people, including his wife. Khadija was also fifteen years senior than Muḥammad and raises the question if marriage was rooted in financial and social status during this time,

> There is the verse in Sūra 93 about being poor and then enriched. The obvious reference is to Muḥammad's marriage to Khadīja, and it is unlikely that he could have been enriched at any other point before Hijra. ... The absence of a father must have produced a sense of deprivation in Muḥammad, and the real experience of poverty as a young man may well have nourished the sense of deprivation. These verses assert, that despite the unfortunate circumstances of his early life, God's care and activity on Muḥammad's behalf made life tolerable; and he is commanded to try to meet the needs of those in similar troubles and to speak of God's favor.[172]

This may not be a surprising conclusion as this was the same reason why Fakhita married Hubayrah. The first love between Muḥammad and Fakhita and the first marriage between Muḥammad and Khadija raises the question about the significance of marriage in Islamic traditions and its implications for an Islamic masculinity. The prophet Muḥammad mentioned what was required by men from eligible women for marriage,

> Jabir bin Abdullah reported, I married a woman during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger. I met the Apostle of Allah, whereupon he said, 'Jabir, have you married?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'a virgin or one previously married?', I said, 'with due previously married', whereupon he said, 'Why did you not marry a virgin with whom you could sport?', I said, 'Allah's Messenger, I have sisters; I was afraid that she might intervene between me and them', whereupon he said, 'Well and good, if it is so. A woman is

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[172] Watt, W. M., *Muḥammad's Mecca – History in the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988) pp. 50-51

married for four reasons, for her religion, her property, her status, her beauty, so you should choose one with religion.[173]

In a Bukhārī ḥadīth it is stated, Abdullah (b. Mas'ud) reported that Muḥammad said: "Oh young men, those among you, who can, should marry, for it restrains eyes and preserves one from immorality; but he who cannot should fast for it is a means of controlling sexual desire."[174] Also in Bukhārī is a similar ḥadīth, 'he who has the ability to marry should marry, because it will help him lower his gaze and guard his modesty. ... And he who cannot afford to marry is advised to fast, as fasting will diminish his sexual power.'[175] Through this advice Muḥammad created two forms of Islamic masculinity as he emphasized the importance of marriage to some 'young men' who were to marry for the sole purpose of 'restraining the eyes and immorality' but for those unable to do so, they were urged to fast. This then presents a difference between the advice of Muḥammad to the 'potent young man' and the 'impotent young man' as the former takes on an active male role within his community through marriage but for the latter, who is expected to fast, he is expected to take a more submissive role in relieving himself from his sexual frustration through hunger. The physical impact of fasting weakens and slows the body cycle and it could be understood as a way of castrating sexual urges, however to what extent this is the case for a fasting young man requires another form of research focus, beyond the scope of this thesis. Muḥammad's advice gives us a clear image that there are some 'young men' who are capable and best suited to adopt the active potent male role and some who are better suited to take a more submissive impotent male role. Was such advice given by the prophet Muḥammad to restrict sexual liberty of men and emphasize marriage or to remind

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[173] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (trans.), Siddiqi, A. H., Vol. II, Hadith Number 3458 (Lahore: Ashraf Publishers, 1993) p. 749.

[174] Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (trans.), Khan, M. M., Vol. VII, Hadith Number 4 (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1986) p. 4

[175] Ibid., Hadith Number 2 and 3., p. 3.

young men of their ultimate role in submission to God and not be led solely by sexual satisfaction?

Muḥammad himself did not lead a celibate life and in the year 619 AD his first wife Khadija died. Muḥammad had been married to her for twenty-five years and during this time they had six children, two boys and four girls. The boys all died in infancy. Muḥammad had received revelation and people were converting to Islam, Khadija being the first to do so. Lings commented that this year was the 'year of sadness' as it also saw the death of his much loved uncle Abu Talib, Lings commented, 'It was now becoming difficult in Mecca for almost all those who had no official protection'.[176] al-Mubarakpuri commented that after the death of Khadija the prophet decided to marry Sawdah, the first wife of the prophet after the death of Khadija, because he was 'lonely'.[177] The marriage of the prophet to Hafsah, the daughter of Umar, only happened because her first husband Khunays had died in the battle of Badr. Hafsah might have lived a widow's life had it been acceptable in Arabian society at the time for a widow to live happily but this was clearly not the case. It was for this reason that Umar was frantically trying to find a husband for his daughter. Umar asked Uthman, who had just recently become a widower himself after the death of Ruqayyah, the prophet's daughter. Uthman refused as he argued that he was not ready for marriage at the time. Umar then asked Abu Bakr who also refused only because he had been confided in by the prophet himself who had shown an interest in Hafsah. It was for this reason that the prophet asked Umar for Hafsah's hand and in doing this gave his other daughter, Umm Kalthum, to Uthman to marry. On this marriage, Watt stated that the 'binding together of the leaders of the emigrants' was 'another form of consolidation that was evidence in the year following Badr'[178] The wives of the prophet were,

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[176] Lings, M., *Muḥammad – His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983) p. 97.
[177] Al-Mubarakpuri, S., *Ar-Raheeq Al-Maktum* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 1996) p. 126.
[178] Watt, W. M., *Muḥammad – Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p. 131.

Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Sawda bint Samah, Aisha bint Abu Bakr, Hafsah bint Umar ibn al Khattab, Zaynab bint Khuzayma, Umm Salama Hind bint Abi Ummaya, Zaynab bint Jahsh, Juwayriya bin al-Harith, Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan, Safiyya bint Huyayy, Maymuna bint al-Harith, Mariya al-Qibtiyyah, Raihana bint Zaid. It is important to note that Safiyya was Jewish from the Nudair tribe and Mariya was a Christian Copt. There are conflicting narratives about whether either of these women converted to Islam.[179] Watt argued that there was a definite purpose to these marriages, 'these marriages, like all the marriages Muḥammad contracted himself or arranged for his followers, had thus a definite political purpose, whatever else may have been involved.'[180]

The Qur'ānic injunction which allows men to have more than four wives has supported a particular form of Islamic masculinity too.[181] The Qur'ān states, 'marry from among women such as are lawful to you – [even] two, or three or four; but if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then only [one]'[182] Some commentators have argued that such divine commandments emerged in the context of the prevailing condition, 'pre-Islam Arabs had no limited number of wives. They could marry two sisters at the same time, or even the wives of their fathers if divorced or widowed. Divorce was to a very great extent in the power of the husband.'[183] Fazlur Rahman argued that the Qur'ān sought to resolve the situation in small strokes of progress, 'the truth seems to be that permission for polygamy was at a legal plane while the sanctions put on it were in the nature of a moral ideal towards which the society was expected to move, since it was not possible to remove polygamy

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[179] For further information on the wives of the Prophet Muḥammad see, Bennet, C., *In Search of Muḥammad* (London: Cassell Publications, 1998) pp. 249-252.

[180] Watt, W. M., *Muḥammad – Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p. 132.

[181] A more detailed analysis of this verse will be covered in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

[182] Qur'ān 4:3.

[183] Al-Mubarakpuri, S., *Ar-Raheeq Al-Maktum* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 1996) p. 44.

legally at one stroke.'[184] Rahman used the issue of slavery in the same vein by stating that
although the Qur'ān 'legally accepts the institution of slavery' it also strongly urged the
emancipation of slaves.[185]

Roald argued that the prophet Muḥammad's multiple marriages arose from the fact that there
were many war widows during the time and in a society where men were the leaders and
rulers, women needed the protection of men in order to have any form of social status.[186]
However, there are difficulties in understanding the multiple marriages of the prophet
Muḥammad as purely an act of support to the women he married and not sexual as the
companion of the prophet, Anas, narrated, 'The Prophet used to go round (have sexual
relations with) all his wives in one night, and he had nine wives.'[187]

The multiple marriages of the prophet Muḥammad are both an issue of contentious debate in
terms of his vocation of submitting to God and upholding sexual ethics through them.
Returning back to the role of the prophet then one would understand that Muḥammad's main
mission was to serve God and make others do the same. During the prevailing time, this was
not affected by his multiple marriages but in fact strengthened as his focus was on securing a
one to one relationship with God and not any other human being. This further challenges the
concept of marriage and monogamous relationships, which could become a hindrance to
submitting fully to just God. This would be supported by the Qur'ānic passage which states,
'Never can there be a secret confabulation between three persons without His (God) being the

[184] Rahman, F., *Major Themes of the Qur'ān* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980) p. 48.
[185] Ibid., p. 48.
[186] Roald, A. S., *Women in Islam – The Western Experience* (London: Routledge, 2001) p.202., and also
mentioned by Motzki, H., 'Marriage' (ed.), McAuliffe, J., *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 3. (Leiden: Brill
2003) p. 278.
[187] Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (trans.), Khan, M. M., Vol. VII, Hadith Number 6 (Lahore: Kazi Publications,
1986) p. 5.

fourth of them, nor between five without His being the sixth of them; and neither between less than that, or more, without His being with them wherever they may be.'[188]

Such ideas on marriage could have been the reason for the spread of the concept of *Nikāḥ Mut'ah* (temporary marriage) in the *Shi'a* legal system and *Nikāḥ Mis'yār* (travelers marriage) in the Sunni legal system, which were fully adopted during the medieval times and also in certain parts of the Islamic world today.[189] Hughes argued that some Shi'a accounts state that Muḥammad had as many as twenty-one wives.[190] The Qur'ānic injunction which supports such temporary marriages reads, "But lawful to you are all [women] beyond these, for you to seek out, offering them of your possessions, taking them in honest wedlock, and not in fornication."[191] In one ḥadīth tradition the prophet had authorized his companions to have temporary marriages, 'Abu Sirma said to Abu Sa'id al Khadri: "Abu Sa'id, did you hear Allah's Messenger mentioning al-'azl? He said, "Yes", and added, "We went out with Allah's Messenger on the expedition to the Bi'l-Mustaliq and took captive some excellent Arab women; and we desired them, for we were suffering from the absence of our wives, (but at the same time) we also desired ransom for them. So we decided to have sexual intercourse with them but by observing *'azl* (withdrawing the male sexual organ before emission of semen to avoid-conception). But we said, We are doing an act whereas Allah's Messenger is amongst us; why

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[188] Qur'ān 58:7.
[189] 'Sabra Juhanni reported: Muḥammad permitted temporary marriage for us. So I and another person went out and saw a woman of Bana 'Amir, who was like a young long-necked she-camel. We presented ourselves to her (for contracting temporary marriage), whereupon she said: What dower would you give me? I said: My cloak. And my companion also said: My cloak. And the cloak of-my companion was superior to my cloak, but I was younger than he. So when she looked at the cloak of my companion she liked it, and when she cast a glance at me I looked more attractive to her. She then said: Well, you and your cloak are sufficient for me. I remained with her for three nights, and then Muḥammad said: He who has any such woman with whom he had contracted temporary marriage, he should let her off.' Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (trans.), Siddiqi, A. H., Vol. II, Hadith Number 3252 (Lahore: Ashraf Publishers, 1993) p. 706.
[190] Hughes, T. P., *A Dictionary of Islam* (Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1988) p. 400.
[191] Qur'ān 4:24.

not ask him? So we asked Allah's Messenger, and he said: It does not matter if you do not do it, for every soul that is to be born up to the Day of Resurrection will be born."'[192]

Muḥammad's family life and his role as a prophet of God offer an interesting insight into issues relating to sexual ethics and submission to God in a similar way to Joseph, except that Muḥammad was expected to show submission to God through multiple marriages (and sexual partners) and Joseph was to show it through the abstention. It is through such understandings that commentators can present the prophet Muḥammad as either a pedophile who married for reasons relating to sex or to save Muḥammad's honor by saying that these marriages were the outcome of variable difficult social factors for the women married to him. The most significant factor in all these relationships was the ultimate role of the prophet which demanded his life be an example to humanity of obedience and submission to God.

2.4 Jesus

Jesus' life events differ greatly from the lives of any other prophet. It is for this reason that most writers, Muslim or non-Muslim, seem fixated on comparing and contrasting the position of Jesus in Islam and Christianity.[193] Comparing and contrasting the Muslim and Christian Jesus is also a concern within the Qur'ān. Jesus is mentioned twenty five times in the Qur'ān[194], insofar as it seeks to define Islamic theology from Christian theology. Khalidi presented four key concerns of the Qur'ān when narrating the life of Jesus; his birth and infancy, his miracles, his conversations with God or the Israelites and any divine pronouncements on his humanity.[195]

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[192] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (trans.), Siddiqi, A. H., Vol. II, Hadith Number 3371 (Lahore: Ashraf Publishers, 1993) pp. 732-733.

[193] See Bell, R., *The Origins of Islam in its Christian Environment*, (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1926) and Ata'ur Rahim, M., and Thomson, A., *Jesus – Prophet of Islam* (London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1996).

[194] Robinson, N., 'Jesus' (ed.), McAuliffe, J., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill 2003) p. 22.

[195] Khalidi, T., *The Muslim Jesus* (Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press, 2003) p. 14.

The life of Jesus is not fully narrated in either biblical or Qur'ānic scripture. Goddard stated that, 'little is known about Jesus' early life'.[196] Cragg further supported this view by commenting that there is no narrative description of Jesus' ministry.[197] Khalidi argued that as with stories associated with other prophets, the Qur'ān presents key events for a purpose, 'his (Jesus) miracles are not mentioned so much as listed as reminders of the power granted to him by God to cure the sick and raise the dead.'[198]

Jesus' life begins and ends in circumstances that defy every social and scientific norm that supports notions of a nuclear family or the roles found within them. Jesus, son of Mary, was born through the process of a virgin birth, unlike Muḥammad. However, Muḥammad and Jesus are similar in the sense that they had no father role model in their lives. Jesus did have the surrogate father in the form of Zachariah who prayed to God for a child.[199] God addressed him through the angels, 'the angels called out unto him: "God sends thee the glad tiding of the birth of John, who shall confirm the truth in the word of God, and shall be outstanding among men, and utterly chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous."[200] Zachariah then stated to God that he is 'of old age' and his wife is 'barren' but the angels proclaimed that 'God does as he wishes'.[201] Affirming the fact that although He (God) had created the system of creation through the copulating of male and female he also had the power to over rule it. God then spoke to Mary, 'O Mary! Behold, God sends thee the glad tiding, through a word from him, (of a son) who shall become known as the Christ Jesus son of Mary, of great honor in this world and in the life to come, and (shall be) of those who are drawn near unto God.'[202] Even Mary stated to God that

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[196] Goddard, H., *Christians and Muslims – from Double Standards to Mutual Understanding* (Cornwal UK: Curzon Press 1995) p. 19.
[197] Cragg, K., *Jesus and the Muslim – an Exploration* (Oxford UK: Oneworld Publications, 1999) p. 25.
[198] Khalidi, T., *The Muslim Jesus* (Cambridge USA: Harvard University Press, 2003) p. 14.
[199] Qur'ān 3:38.
[200] Qur'ān 3.39.
[201] Qur'ān 3.40.
[202] Qur'ān 3.46.

it is not possible for her to bear a child as no man had ever touched her but God stated that it was his will. These miraculous events once again highlight the way in which God's glorification in Islamic traditions breaks all societal and scientific norms.

Unlike Muḥammad, Jesus' life is difficult to compare with any other human being. Muḥammad was born from a male and female, married, had children, grew old and died. Jesus on the other hand did not have such life events. In this way commentators have attempted to compare the lives of Jesus and Muḥammad in terms of their miracles, 'he (Muḥammad) is considered as the most perfect 'perfect man' and this idealized Muḥammad is very different from the Muḥammad that emerges from a literal reading of the Qur'ān. Indeed, it may be argued that after a literal reading of the gospels, Jesus appears as a more remarkable prophet than Muḥammad due to the detailed portrayal of the miraculous events in the formers life.'[203] Although Ridgeon highlighted scriptural comparison on the lives of the prophets, the extent to which a comparison of their personal miracles is more important than their ultimate role as prophets of God and conveying the message of God's oneness is one which the Qur'ān clarifies,

> And We caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow in the footsteps of those [earlier prophets], confirming the truth of whatever there still remained of the Torah; and We vouchsafed unto him the Gospel, wherein there was guidance and light, confirming the truth of whatever there still remained of the Torah, and as a guidance and admonition unto the God-conscious.[204]

A literal reading of the Qur'ān leaves many gaps in the stories of any prophet, not forgetting the prophets who were totally omitted from the Qur'ān. Could this be in order not to present

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[203] Ridgeon, L., *Crescents on the Cross* (Glasgow: Trinity St. Mungo Press, 1999) p. 46.
[204] Qur'ān 5:46

any prophet as an 'ideal man' but to present them as mere messengers who offer lessons on ultimate submission to God through a variety of different lives? The virgin birth of Jesus has left many in confusion. Although born as a man, God removes the biological issues in Jesus' being, in a similar fashion to Adam, although making it evident that he was created from at least a substance. God raised Jesus' agency beyond biology and family matters. However, his ultimate role submitted to God as a messenger is exactly the same as all other prophets, including Muḥammad whose family life is more conventional, 'like Muḥammad, the Qur'ānic Jesus is called a 'prophet' (*nabi*) a messenger (*rasul*) and a servant (*abd*) of God. Like him too he is said to have been sent as a 'mercy' (*rahma*). He received a revelation called the Gospel just as Muḥammad subsequently received the Qur'ān.'[205]

Jesus' explained his own role, 'And (I have come) to confirm the truth of whatever there still remains of the Torah, and to make lawful unto you some of the things which (aforetime) were forbidden to you. And I have come unto you with a message from your sustainer; remain then, conscious of God, and pay heed unto me. Verily, God is my sustainer as well as your sustainer; so worship Him (alone): this is the straight way.'[206] Jesus is also believed to have distanced himself from worldly matters and power,

> O Lord, verily have I arrived at the state where I am incapable of repelling that which I do not care for or of acquiring that which I aspire to have, and where the control of matters is out of my hands, and where I am subject to my actions; and there is no pauper more impoverished than I.

[205] Robinson, N., *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (New York: State University of New York, 1991) p. 37.
[206] Qur'ān 3:50-51

O Lord, let not my enemies rejoice, nor turn my friends against me, nor visit affliction on me with respect to my faith, nor make the world my greatest concern, nor let those who are ruthless towards me have power over me.[207]

Unlike Adam, Joseph and Muḥammad there is no mention of Jesus having a female companion in the Qur'ān, which further distances Jesus from the others. This in turn raises the question of Jesus' masculinity and in what way it is to be understood, if at all. The Qur'ān does mention that Jesus was of the same nature of Adam, 'verily, in the sight of God, the nature of Jesus is as the nature of Adam, whom he created out of dust and then said unto him, "Be" – and he is."[208] If God believed that Adam needed to have a partner in the form of Eve as an essential part of Islamic masculinity then would Jesus not also have had a wife?

The Qur'ānic narrative on the prophets is then rooted on the role of submission to God. The events in the lives of the prophets may differ or seem extraordinary but the message which they present is essentially the same. Khalidi stated, 'words spoken by a prophet or to him by God tend to find echoes, sometimes verbatim repetition among other prophets.'[209] It is a human endeavor to make sense of prophet's lives as an 'idealized masculinity' which contradicts the very diverse nature of every prophet mentioned in the Qur'ān. Ridgeon concluded, 'the Qur'ān states ideas that all prophets are fundamentally the same, and there is no distinction between them (2:136). So they can be considered as perfect men who manifest the appropriate attribute at the correct time.'[210]

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[207] Jesus' prayer from Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī's Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn (vol. 2), ctd in Nurbakhsh, J., *Jesus in the Eyes of Ṣūfīs* (trans.) Graham, T., Lewisohn, L., and Mashkuri, H., (London: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Publications, 1992) p. 71.
[208] Qur'ān 3:59.
[209] Khalidi, T., *The Muslim Jesus* (Cambridge USA: Harvard University Press, 2003) p. 10.
[210] Ridgeon, L., *Crescents on the Cross* (Glasgow: Trinity St. Mungo Press, 1999) p. 46.

3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the lives of the prophets are used as examples to human beings as God made sure to present prophets and messengers best suited to the environment. Their lives tell us much about ethics and morality but little about a uniform Islamic masculinity. Like any story there are multiple ways of interpreting them and at times this has led to creating images of an ideal Islamic masculinity. Every commentator on the lives of the prophets has interpreted the stories to suit and support gender roles, especially through the social construction of 'family'. The family becomes the means to support any type of gender construction, including gender inequality, bias and dysfunction, especially in terms of the prophets lives.

The fact that the Qur'ān is read to only support men having up to four wives but not allowing women the same liberty is one such example of gender inequality. Even if one were to believe that in the context of the 7th century this was beneficial, in the contemporary world this issue has attracted many heated debates. Could one then argue for the legitimacy of multiple husbands for women through the premise that the prophet Muḥammad's multiple wives and Joseph's abstention from a sexual affair with Zulaykha were means to ultimate submission to God? The difficulty in raising such a question could be partly due to understanding masculinity in Islam as uniform and monolithic without appreciating the diverse lives of prophets.

The story of Adam and Eve challenges the very roles that families construct themselves on. Adam and Eve were given the same command to submit to God but they failed to uphold this. Their gender was not significant in this commandment and Adam was not given the role of 'breadwinner' and Eve that of 'homemaker'. Pro-creation was then to be understood as a way to highlight God's divinity, as 'the One'. The lesson being taught was that it was Adam and Eve

who needed one another in order to create other human beings but God only needed to say 'be' and it was. At certain stages of human history God has challenged family roles by creating prophets without biological parents, Adam and Jesus. Could this be another lesson from God to highlight his perfection by creating human beings, including prophets, into dysfunctional families but making clear that such deficiencies are resolved when creation submits to God?

The ideals of Islamic masculinity are then very difficult to read from the lives of prophets. Adam was given a female companion for the purpose of companionship and pro-creation but Jesus was not and there is no mention of Jesus pro-creating and having his own family. In the case of Joseph he is created and nurtured by a biological father but finds himself shunned by his brothers and adopted by a wealthy nobleman and falls in love with his step-mother. It is once again not clear if Joseph finds his companion and has a family but the Qur'ān does go into great depths in narrating the love that Joseph and Zulaykha had for one another. Muḥammad loses his biological father at an early stage and although the role of father is taken up by his grandfather and uncle his true vocation is beyond the family.

Through the study into the lives of prophets there are a number of key conclusions into constructions of masculinity in the Islamic tradition. Masculinity or masculinities are inextricably bound with the act of submission to God and are not identified as separate notions in understanding men in the Qur'ānic world. The fact that there are numerous prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān and each one has a different biography is evident of the fact that there is no ideal masculinity in Islam. The first relationship that man (Adam) had was with God. This was not based on any roles or on pro-creation but on the main premise that Adam, who represented the whole of human creation, would submit to God as creator.

Masculinities studies is fully complementary to the Qur'ānic view of Islamic masculinities through the varying lives of the prophets. The Qur'ān upholds the notion that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed at any given time but the only constant overarching power above men and women is God. It would then be important to state that Islamic cultures and traditions have attempted to embed and impose certain ideals upon every male and female. This has led to men and women reacting to such ideals, causing many conflicts in society relating to gender, sex and roles. However, in the Islamic traditions, which have been highlighted in this chapter, adding God to these relationships relieves men and women from adopting any role or ideal as God only demands his creation to obey his command. In this way piety and submission to God relieves men from conforming to societies' ideals and gender roles and supports Islamic masculinities.

Chapter Three

Hedonistic Islamic Masculinity: Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib (b. 1796- d. 1869)

> *The ocean of sins was not vast enough; it dried right up*
> *And still my garments hem was barely damp with it*
>
> *Note too how I regret the sins that I could not commit*
> *O Lord, if you would punish me for these committed sins.*
> *Mirzā Ghālib[211]*

1.0   Introduction

Every culture and society plays a part in shaping a particular form of Islamic masculinity. There are a variety of ways in which these masculinities can be expressed, through its art, architecture or literature, to name a few. As the Qur'ān was revealed at a specific time in history and presented many different stories and parables, it is then also a source to understanding these varieties of masculinities. As a historical document, over and beyond its religious and spiritual importance, the Qur'ān has highlighted the fact that masculinities are essential to understanding the nature of human beings and the centrality of God to creation. The Qur'ānic world has enough icons and figures to orient it within the Arab world. The key geographical locations of Makka, Medina and Jerusalem add to this assumption. It is then important to understand the construction of an Islamic masculinity in a location that is beyond Arabia and it is for this reason that this chapter now concentrates on Mughal India during the 19th Century.

Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib, one of the greatest poets of the Persian and Urdu language in the 19th century, is a Mughal male example whose life will be explored to deconstruct another image of Islamic masculinity. In what way did the Islamic ideals of masculinity presented in Arabic by the Qur'ān live itself out in the lives of Persian and Urdu speaking Mughals? What

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[211] Russel, R., 'Getting to Know Ghālib' (ed.), Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 319.

were the prevailing conditions of the Mughal empire in terms of its religious culture and in what way did this shape an Islamic masculinity? Was there difficulty for the Mughal man to accommodate or negotiate himself in the prevailing Islamic understanding of masculinity? What were the influences that affected the way in which men lived their lives in Mughal society? In a land that saw the emergence of a variety of different faiths and spiritualities were there signs of an overlap or were each defined in themselves? These are just some of the questions that will be discussed in this chapter with the key focus on Ghālib.

1.1   The Context: Mughal India

The Mughal Empire reigned from the early 16th century to the mid 19th century and covered the land of what is today Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and parts of Afghanistan. The estimated population of the empire at its peak was between 110 and 130 million inhabitants over a land mass of around a billion acres. The splendour and culture of Muslim Mughal India was one infused with religion, politics and culture.

It was during the reign of King Bahadur Shah Zafar (b. 1775 – d. 1862) that we find some of the most extraordinary Muslim intellectuals at work.[212] An environment of relative peace is conducive to a healthy output from any society and this was, to a certain extent, the case of Mughal India under the rule of Zafar. Varma commented that King Bahadur Shah Zafar was devoutly Muslim but there were no sectarian divisions.[213] Indeed the court celebrated *Raksha Bandan*, which is a Hindu festival that celebrates the relationship between a brother and sister, *Dussehra*, which is a Hindu festival of dance, *Holi*, which is the spring festival of colours, *Diwali*, which is a Hindu, Sikh and Jain festival of lights, *Shivratri*, which is a festival associated with the

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[212] Further information on King Zafar, see: Dalrymple, W., *The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857 - The Last Mughal* (London: Bloomsbury Publications, 2007).
[213] Varma, P. K., *Ghālib: The Man and Times*, (India: Penguin, 1989) p. 41.

Lord Shiva and *Basant Panchami*, which celebrates the Goddess Saraswati in Hinduism in earnest. It is said that the Muslim intellectual progress was prosperous during this time,

> The world of Islamic learning had the Delhi College for a centre, and here, after an English department had been added to the existing Oriental, something of a Muslim renaissance began in the late forties and fifties. There was a sudden enthusiasm for western knowledge, especially scientific, and the first sign of recognition of and interest in, a new world beyond that of Islam among the Indian Muslims.[214]

The question which this raises is to what extent would it be true to say that creativity in thought and action is heightened in Muslim societies when the identity of the Muslim is strong enough to be open to cultural and religious differences? At the fall of the Mughal Empire, direct British rule brought with them their own cultural identity and power. This in turn gave the Mughals two options. Either they could adopt the new culture and assimilate or they could reject and react against it. The strength of local sentiment may have been underestimated by the colonial powers as the political situation caused the Muslims much distress and at a time of turmoil and bloodshed the intellectuals turned to producing work lamenting the demise of the Mughal Empire and return to the times gone by, more will be explored on this later in this chapter. This was one way of rallying and rousing the emotions of the Muslims. The political situation created euphoria amongst the Mughal Muslim Indians which found it difficult to evade the political question. The economic situation was in disarray if not dire,

> A background of decay and corruption, salatins or imperial descendents lived in squalor living on pensions of Rs. 5 or less a month, spending time in gambling or

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[214] Spear, P., 'Ghālib's Delhi' (ed.), Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 277.

cockfights or bemoaning their lot and an underworld of vice stimulated by idleness and frustration.[215]

Spears argued that due to the economic hardship it was no wonder that Ghālib's writing was so introverted and fixated on eternity in another world rather than the hardships that had befallen him on earth.[216] This leads to an introduction to the man who was to become forever associated with the Urdu and Persian language. Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib is understood to be the greatest Muslim Indian poet of the 19th Century and his work relates to every matter of life, 'happiness and despair, jolly drinking and solemn praise, surprise and nostalgia, longing for death and eternal restlessness.'[217] Ghālib's life offers an insight into an image of Islamic masculinity that has so far not been exposed in such light. An exploration of Ghālib's life and work shows how he remained committed to the central tenet of submission to God yet he remained plagued with the demons of religiosity throughout his life and times. Mirzā Ghālib's life was far from the law abiding Muslim life that many commentators would associate with the term 'good Muslim' but through his poetry and letters one sees the way in which his entire existence is associated with his deep spirituality with God which has left many wondering if indeed he was quite the opposite to what he is deemed. This is not surprising given the way in which, at times, those following ritualistic Islam are seen as more 'Islamic' than those who are not.[218] This indicates the way in which understandings of religiosity are linked to understandings of Islamic masculinity or masculinities. To deem Ghālib's masculinity as 'Islamic' one needs to appreciate spirituality in a multitude of ways, as presented in the previous chapter through the examples of the prophets.

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[215] Ibid p. 277.
[216] Ibid p. 279.
[217] Schimmel, A., 'Foreword' in Rahbar, D., *Urdu Letters of Mirzā Asadu'llah Khān Ghālib* (New York: State University of New York, 1987) p. x.
[218] Those who observe a strict dress code (for women), grown their beards, pray five times a day and refrain from alcohol are just some examples of the ritualistic Islamic practices which this alludes to.

Apart from his poetic genius, Ghālib enjoyed writing letters and his letters have been published in numerous volumes. These letters, written to his friends and students *(shāgird)*, offer an interesting insight into his personal relationship with others, especially men, upon whom he shaped his own masculinity. Some of Ghālib's companions were important figures in society at the time. Ghālib's closest friend and biographer was Altaf Hussain Hali (b. 1837 – d.1914) who wrote an extensive biography on Ghālib called 'Yādgār-i-Ghālib'. Sir Syed Ahmad Khān (b. 1817 – d. 1898), the Indian modernist who set up the Aligarh movement which later became a university, was another key figure who was closely associated with Ghālib. Ghālib's interaction with them will also be explored in this chapter. The key texts which will be used are the biographical accounts of Hali, the autobiographical accounts of Ghālib himself (his own writing and letters) and some contemporary analysis of his work.

1.2   Ghālib, Family and Early Life

Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib was born on the 27th December 1797 in Agra, India. His name at birth was Asadullāh Beg Khān but he later adopted 'Ghālib' as his *'takhallus'[219]*. As a child his nickname was *Mirzā Nausha*, which he also used for a certain time as his pen name. To use the name 'Ghālib' as his *Takhallus* is interesting as its meaning in Urdu is 'victor, victorious'. To adopt such a grand pen name by a poet suggests a sense of achievement and pride, and his life story is evident of the fact that he was victorious at a number of levels. Ghalib showed utmost poise and conviction in his work, unless, of course, he was being ironic, a fair trait of the man.

Ghālib came from a family of soldiers with a Turkish descent. He had a brother named Yousaf and a sister who was known as *Choti Khānum* (little lady). The family were wealthy and Ghālib

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[219] Pen name.

grew up with every comfort offered to him and received a good education. He was taught

Persian, Arabic, logic, philosophy and medicine amongst other subjects. Ghālib began writing

his poetry at the age of eight or nine but he is said to have 'regretted' that he could not follow

in the footsteps of his ancestors.[220] Ghālib's grandfather had served under the Emperor Shah

Alam and his own father had died in battle. On this matter he stated,

> Alas for my fate! Born to be struck down by misfortune and to see the granaries
>
> reduced to ashes. I had not the means to ride to war like my ancestors...nor the
>
> capacity to excel in knowledge and ability like Avicenna and the wise men of old. I said
>
> to myself, 'Be a dervish and live a life of freedom.[221]

Ghālib's reflection on himself is a clear indication of the way in which being a soldier was seen

as one of the ideals to which a man should aspire. It is difficult to distance Islamic traditions

from war and fighting.[222] The physical Jihād which was prevalent during the expansion of the

Islamic empire has given growth to the notion that a man battling in war is not only the

ultimate form of masculinity but of masculine spirituality.[223] Through this the soldier is not

only living to societal ideals of masculinity but is also understood to remain submitted to God

through his acts in 'holy war'. It is for this reason that Jihād tends to be associated with a more

brutal and bloody form rather than the understanding that is in an 'inner spiritual struggle' to

which Muslims must adhere. Ghālib comes across as being apologetic; being unable to 'ride to

war' made him feel ashamed that his masculinity had not lived up to the level of his ancestors.

In a more illustrative understanding of the term Jihād (struggle) it could be understood as a

struggle to understand and submit to God. Through his writings, one may interpret Ghālib's

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[220] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.), Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 3.
[221] Ibid. p. 3.
[222] See Qur'ān 8: 1-75, 'al-`Anfāl – The Spoils of War.
[223] See Renard, J., *Islam and the Heroic Image*, (Georgia, USA: Mercer University Press, 1999).

sacred struggle as carried out through his pen and not the sword. However, what is more

surprising is that Ghālib failed to associate his intellectual genius with his spiritual struggle and

in turn his masculinity. Ghālib declared that he had opted to be a 'dervish' to live a life of

freedom as if to release himself from his imagined masculine ideals. Ghālib's use of the words,

'Alas for my fate!' indicated his religious conviction regarding divine decree and

predestination, which is a central tenet of Islamic creed. Ghālib seemed content on giving

himself no distinction when he said that he was not like the 'wise men of old' such as Avicenna.

There has been a long-standing conflict between poets and philosophers and so this could be an

indication of Ghālib's feeling that poets are inferior to philosophers, which is between emotion

and rationality.

Ghālib's attitude has all the bearings of feeling inclined towards an ideal Islamic masculinity,

yet feeling despondent at the reality of his life. Yet Ghālib exemplified his submission and love

to God alone clearly in this poem. The poem 'Bayān-e-Musanif', 'The Writers Apology', by

Ghālib summed up his sentiments,

> My intent is to convey what I truly feel,
> And not to show my expertise in the poetic field.
>
> My ancestors, for generations, have been men-at-arms,
> I take no special pride in my poetic zeal.
>
> A man of independence will, "love all" is my creed,
> No ill-will or malice, for anyone I feel
>
> Is it not a rare privilege to serve Zafar, the king,
> What if wealth, state or honour do not form my need!
>
> To join issue with the king's mentor is beyond my thought,
> Who has strength or courage or guts, to undertake this feat?
>
> The king's conscience is a mirror reflecting people's hearts,
> No vow, no pledge, no evidence does my conduct need.

I, and to write in Urdu, not my preferred task,
The marriage song was composed, my lord and liege to please

It was my duty to submit to his desire,
The prothalamion was meant to serve a special need.[224]

1.3   Ghālib the Teacher

Ghālib was accepted as a poetic genius during his time and this led to many who sought his instruction when it was common to have male teachers than female, especially for male students; Ghālib's own teachers were male. Initially, he received his education privately from Shaikh Mu'azzam who was quite a popular teacher from Agra.[225] There are also numerous stories relating Ghālib to a teacher named Mulla Abdu's-Samad who was an Iranian wanderer who came to stay with Ghālib's family for two years and during this time taught him Persian.[226] Ghālib commented on this by saying, 'I never had tuition from any person except the ultimate munificence (God) and Abdus Samad is only a fictitious name. But since people used to taunt me for having had no teacher, to close their mouths I have invented a fictitious teacher.'[227] However, this might not be altogether true as Hali mentioned a letter from Abdus Samad to Ghālib in which he mentioned how he constantly remembered Ghālib, 'My dear one, what are you?, despite all my freedom and independence you constantly come to mind.'[228] Ghālib had obviously left a lasting mark on his teacher who seemed to come across as rather obsessed with Ghālib through his statement, 'what are you?'.

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[224] Kanda, K. C., *Mirzā Ghālib: Selected Lyrics and Letters* (New Delhi: New Dawn Press, 2007) p. 281.
[225] Hali, M. A. H., *Yādgār-i-Ghālib*, trans. By Qadiri, K, H, (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 14.
[226] Ibid p. xxiii.
[227] Ibid p. 14.
[228] Ibid p. 16.

Hali related that Ghālib was offered a professorship at Delhi College[229] in Persian by a Mr Thompson, Secretary of the Government of India. There is an interesting story relating to the interaction between the two when Mr Thompson invited Ghālib for interview. Upon arrival Ghālib waited for Mr Thompson to come out to welcome him. Mr Thompson did not go out in the first instance but after being told that Ghālib was waiting went out and told Ghālib that this type of welcome could only be offered to him when he was a guest at the Governors' Durbar. Ghālib responded, 'I contemplated taking a government appointment in the expectation that this would bring me greater honours than I now receive, not a reduction on those already accorded to me.' The Secretary replied, 'I am bound by regulations.' 'Then I hope that you will excuse me', Ghālib responded and left.[230] At this stage in his life, Ghālib was an established poet and although he had his admirers and critics he was still highly regarded in society. It was such awareness that made Ghālib fully aware of his position and this is reflected in the way he demanded respect from Thompson. As a future employer of Ghālib, Thompson was clearly in the position of power too and could well have shown this by not going outside to welcome Ghālib but he did and in turn attempted to explain why he did not come out in the first instance. Ghālib's attitude in this instance is very different from his previous sentiments of selflessness but could be an indication of the way he responded to other men in power and God's ultimate power over him.

Even though Ghālib walked away from the professorship at Delhi College he was destined to teach. Throughout his life he remained committed to his students as a teacher. Ghālib was renowned for his poetic expertise and this attracted all sorts of students. In numerous letters

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[229] Schmidt stated, 'In the generation between 1827 and 1857, Delhi College contributed to the development of Urdu prose through its teaching, sponsorship of translations, and the publication of its students, and encouraged the development of new literary forms such as the novel, short story, essay and literary criticism.' Schmidt, R. L., 'Urdu' (eds.), Cardona, G., and Jain, D., *The Indo-Aryan Languages* (London: Routledge, 2003) p.289.
[230] Ibid., p. 38.

he wrote to his students explaining how he awaited their next communication and also drafts of their new work. This was the case with one of his closest friends, the Hindu Harghopal Tufta, 'it is a matter of pride for me that I own one friend in India who is sincere and steadfast. His name is Hargopal, and his poetic name is Tufta.'[231] In his royal appointment, Ghālib taught King Bahadur Shah Zafar the art of poetry and in the year 1850 AD this reaped him the benefit of being conferred the honorific title of 'Najmu'd-Daula Dabiru'l-Mulk Nizam Jang', which exalted him as a shining example in the Kingdom. He was also asked by the King to write a history of the royal descendants of Timur at an annual salary of six hundred rupees.[232] Ghālib also took the heir apparent, Prince Fathu'l-Mulk (nicknamed Mirzā Fakhru), as his poetry student too.

Ghālib's role as a teacher highlighted the type of aura and presence that he had in society as he was not employed by an institution and the students that he had were paying a private tuition to him. The fact that Ghālib was a man was an added advantage as the culture of Mughal India was male dominated and men would excel in areas of teaching far more easily than women. This is not to say that women were not at the forefront of poetry and the arts. This will be later explored through the courtesan culture.

1.4   Ghālib and his Wife

In fairy tales marriage is the ultimate fantasy of love and compassion between a man and a woman but in reality, as mentioned in the previous chapter, marriages in Islamic cultures occur for a variety of different reasons, not always linked to romanticised love. Marriage can be seen as milestones for Muslim men in many Islamic societies. Spear commented on the way in which marriage was a huge phenomenon in Mughal India,

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[231] Kanda, K. C., *Mirzā Ghālib: Selected Lyrics and Letters* (New Delhi: New Dawn Press, 2007) p. 310.
[232] Schimmel, A., 'Foreword' in Rahbar, D., *Urdu Letters of Mirzā Asadu'llah Khān Ghālib* (New York: State University of New York, 1987) p. xxxii.

Marriage is an alliance between families and its aim is to maintain the social status, the purity of lineage and the standards of social and economic security which the families of the boy and girl who are to be married have been accustomed to.[233]

Spear further argued that early arrangement of marriage by parents was to allow an outlet for sexual satisfaction and finding their own marriage partner was to be made by the parents as the children lacked 'maturity, experience and skills'.[234] Such an attitude and interpretation of Islamic traditions by Muslim parents confirms some of the aspects highlighted in the previous chapter. In keeping with this culture, Ghālib was married off at the age of thirteen to a wife eleven years in age. Ghālib and his wife moved to Delhi after marriage, 'little is known in detail about his family life, for in Indian Muslim society one did not (and does not) talk about one's wife and children. His marriage was, as far as we know, no more and no less successful than most in society, but he seems always to have felt that a wife was an encumbrance he could very well have done without.'[235] It seems likely to conclude that Ghālib was a *ghar ja'mai*, the name given to a man in Urdu who comes to live with his in-laws. At such a young age Ghālib would have needed the support of others and in this case his Father in-Law.

Ghālib's wife was called Umrao Begum. Hali stated, 'Ghālib's wife, the daughter of Illahi Bakhsh Khān Maruf, was an exceedingly pious and sober lady, meticulous in keeping the fasts and in saying her prayers. She was as strict in her religious observance as Ghālib was lax in these matters.'[236] Ghālib had seven children but none of them lived more than fifteen months.

[233] Spear, P., 'Ghālib's Delhi' (ed.), Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 293-294.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.), Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 105.
[236] Hali, M. A. H,, *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 111.

Varma commented that children were seen as a bridge between husband and wife during Mughal times,

> Men were educated, abreast of the affairs of the world, while women, mostly illiterate, and confined to *purdah*[237] and the home was considered – true to stereotypical definition – narrow in outlook and concerned exclusively with petty gossip and the mundane problems of running a home. Between this divide children were the bridge. Their absence seriously eroded the anchorage and solace a home and marriage could traditionally provide.[238]

Prigarina argued that Ghālib and his wife's marriage was not 'happy' or 'successful' but as time went on they had become accustomed to each other and learnt to understand and respect each other. She further recalled an account of Illahi Bakhsh Hakim Khān the day that Ghālib married her who narrated that Ghālib fell in love with the songstress at his wedding. Ghālib later mentioned this courtesan in his letters.[239] Ghālib stated himself in a letter his marriage as a negative event in his life, 'then on the seventh Rajab, 1225 (1810, the year of his marriage), sentence of life imprisonment was passed on me, fetters were put on my feet.'[240]

Although Ghālib remained committed to Umrao Begum throughout his life he was not at ease with the concept of monogamy,

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[237] In this case Varma is alluding to the physical separation of the sexes, as opposed to the head veil that will be discussed at length later in this thesis.

[238] Varma, P. K., *Ghālib: The Man and Times* (India: Penguin, 1989) p. 112.

[239] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) pp. 96-99.

[240] Varma, P. K., *Ghālib: The Man and Times* (India: Penguin, 1989) p. 113.

When I visualise paradise, and dream of the eventuality of being absolved of my sins and being lodged in a palace along with a *houri*[241] where I will have to live till eternity with the same blessed person, the idea sickens me and unbearable anguish oppresses my heart. Good God! That *houri* will become a pain in the neck! And that is but natural. Eternally the same emerald palace and eternally the same branch of the heavenly tree and, God forbid, the same *houri* for all time![242]

Even though Ghālib seemed saddened by the idea of being with the same person throughout his life he did not separate from or divorce his wife at any time. It must also be considered that his sentiments could well be understood as banter between 'lads', which quite often related to their wives. In order to strengthen their own masculinity they quite often belittle the position of their wives amongst one another, even though they would dare not utter words in front of their wives.

Marriage brought added pressure on Ghālib as the 'man' and provider of his family. The fact that his seven children all died at an early age did not reduce the financial burden on him. During his lifetime he adopted nephews whom he felt obligated to help,

Not a penny comes in, and there are twenty mouths to feed. The allowance I get from you know where (Rampur[243]) is just enough to keep body and soul together. And I have so much to do that during the twenty-four hours I get practically no time to myself.

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[241] A virgin female understood in some Islamic traditions as a reward to pious men in heaven.

[242] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 261.

[243] Ghālib's pension was said to come from here.

There is always something to worry about. I am a man; not a giant, and not a ghost.

How am I to sustain such a heavy load of care? I am old and feeble.[244]

These words from Ghālib indicate the pressure that he was under in order to provide for his

family, something expected from a man in Mughal society. What was expected of Ghālib's wife

to remain at home and uphold the role of wife and mother. Ghālib and Umrao had two separate

areas in their marital homes. Hali recalled that there was a 'zanana' (female) part of their

house where Umrao would welcome female guests.[245] In Islamic cultures there have always

been multiple interpretations of what *'hijab'* (veil, separation) is, this will be addressed later in

this thesis. Hali commented that Ghālib spent a fixed amount of time every day in the female

quarters of the house with his wife.[246] The Prophet Muḥammad was also known to have

allocated time to his numerous wives, as stated in the previous chapter, which allows one to

conclude that the physical separation of males and females in the household seems to have

become a cultural tradition of sort in Islamic societies.

Ghālib and wife differed in character greater and it was Hali who commented that Umrao was

the one who came across as more pious and observant of her faith than Ghālib which also led to

conflict between them. Umrao decided to separate the pots and pans that Ghālib used from

hers, most probably due to the fact that Ghālib drank alcohol copiously, something frowned

upon in strict Islamic societies and cultures, but she continued to care for Ghālib.[247] In typical

Ghālib style, Ghalib sought solace in hell from the quandary of married life,

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[244] Spear, P., 'Ghālib's Delhi' (ed.), Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 164.

[245] Hali, M. A. H., *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 111.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Ibid.

True that when you are thrown into hell, on doomsday, they put a lid on the entrance. But in that difficult condition, you would not have the trouble of earning bread, providing clothes and quarrelling with your wife. And in that troubled spot, there would not be the menacing demands of the money-lender either.[248]

The 'arranged marriage' system in which Ghālib's marriage was conducted has been said to be the main reason why his poems are soaked in tragedy,

This is not because the poets select only tragic stories for their themes, but because in the society in which they lived, love was a tragedy. In their day love and marriage were two separate things, and were generally regarded not only as separate but also as mutually opposed. ... Before marriage the boy was to have no chance to fall in love; after marriage society hopes, he would have no occasion to.[249]

1.5 Ghālib and his Adopted Sons

Although Ghālib did not have any children of his own he was able to play the role of father to his adopted nephews, the first being, Zain al-Abidin Khān Arif. Arif was not just an adopted son to Ghālib but also a student. Ghālib educated him as he grew up and guided him on life matters. Hali mentioned that at the time of Arif's death both Ghālib and his wife 'felt the pangs of separation severely'.[250] In 1857, Arif died and left behind his wife and two sons Baqar Ali Khān and Husain Ali Khān. Initially they were looked after by their grandmother but when she also died Ghālib took charge of them. Hali recalled how they were both 'true gentlemen of excellent

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[248] Ibid., p. 113.
[249] Islam, K., and Russell R., *Three Mughal Poets – Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp. 98-99.
[250] Ibid., p. 48.

character and were able young poets of some promise.'[251] At the time of Arif's death Ghālib

wrote an elegy to him in which he called upon Arif to explain why he had to die so soon having

not even had time to play with his two sons.[252] Through this elegy it becomes apparent that

Ghālib held family relationships and roles highly.

To this end Ghālib was never able to be a father to grown children but played out the role of

father to those who he adopted. They gave him the same sense of fatherhood that he so

yearned for from the seven deceased children his wife bore him. In a society that expected a

man to have a wife and children, Ghālib tried very hard to conform to society's pressure but

that was not to be and it seemed that he spent his entire life working to perfect the poetry

which he was so good at and using the effect of lost ideals and sadness as a muse to his writings.

2.0   Ghālib and other Male Poets

It is not uncommon for men to compete between each other. This can take shape in many

different ways. During the time of Ghālib men competed against each other in exactly the same

way. Although Ghālib was never competing athletically with his peers he was competing with

them intellectually. From an early age he would attempt to outsmart those around him. The

art of poetry and ghazal was one way in which male poets would act and react against the

writing of other men in order to show their strength. The following narrative of Ghālib's life

outlines the variety of relationships that Ghālib had with other men and the way in which they

shaped his Islamic masculinity. Some questions which arise from these acquaintances are as

follows. How did these men shape Ghālib's Islamic masculinity? What did Ghālib make of their

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[251] Ibid., p. 47.
[252] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

masculinity? Keeping in mind that he was not one to withhold his sentiments we learn much from his outspoken manner in terms of his analysis on them.

2.1.1 Ghālib, Zauq and Momin

Ghālib's passion was his poetry and hence he took great pride in his work. During his time his contemporary and greatest nemesis was Ibrahim Zauq (d. 1854). Zauq was appointed as King Zafar's poet laureate *(Malik ush-Shuara)*, an appointment that Ghālib bitterly resented. The rivalry between the two was often intense. On one occasion Ghālib saw Zauq pass by him on his way to the Royal palace. Unable to contain himself, Ghālib retorted, 'But a courtier of the King, he struts about so'. This angered Zauq who immediately complained to the King who summoned Ghālib to the palace from the tavern where he was still sitting. Ghālib was not concerned for Zauq but felt that the King would take this personally as an attack on him. Ghālib then immediately altered the statement into a poetic stanza,

> But a courtier of the king
> He struts about so
> Ghālib's prestige in the town
> What else – if not this[253]

Momin Khān was another great poet at the time of Ghālib and Zauq, although not as bitterly opposed by Ghālib than Zauq. Momin was also an 'intimate friend' of Ghālib from the time that he arrived in Delhi.[254] Momin died in 1851 AD and his death effected Ghālib greatly. Ghālib wrote in a letter,

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[253] Varma, P. K., *Ghālib: The Man and Times* (India: Penguin, 1989) p. 133.
[254] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 119.

Just see, my friend, one after the other people of our own age die; the caravan moves

off, and we ourselves are waiting one foot in the stirrup. Momin Khān was of the same

age as I, and was a good friend too. We got to know each other forty-three years ago

when we were no more than fourteen or fifteen years old...And my good sir, you'd be

hard put to it to find even an enemy of forty years standing, let alone a friend.[255]

Ghālib was known to be sociable and helpful to those men who wanted to learn poetry. Abdu'r-Ra'uf Uruj has compiled an extensive biographical text in which he introduces the reader to 203 of Ghālib's friends and Malik Ram introduces the reader to 146 poets who were tutored by Ghālib, including Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal King.[256] This is evident through his commitment in writing and responding to letters from his male friends. Schimmel stated that letter writing required fine tuning and this was mastered by Ghālib through his ability to write letters which had a mixture of Persian, Urdu, Arabic culture and 'the religious background of a mystically tinged Islam as it has lived in the hearts of millions of people.'[257]

Gatherings of poets presenting their work, or 'Mushairas' in Urdu, during Ghālib's time were a place where poets would assemble to recite their new pieces of work. Hali outlined what he experienced at one specific gathering,

His style of reciting his verse, especially in Mushairas, was most moving and effective. I

myself only heard him once at a Mushaira, a few years before the Mutiny, when

Mushairas used to be held in the Hall of General Audience. His turn came at the very

end, so that it was already morning when he rose to recite. "Gentlemen", he said, "I too

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[255] Varma, P. K., *Ghālib: The Man and Times* (India: Penguin, 1989) p. 138.
[256] Rahbar, D., *Urdu Letters of Mirzā Asadu'llah Khān Ghālib* (New York: State University of New York, 1987) p. xviii.
[257] Schimmel, A., 'Foreword' in Rahbar, D., *Urdu Letters of Mirzā Asadu'llah Khān Ghālib* (New York: State University of New York, 1987) p. xi.

must sing my lament". Then he recited, first an Urdu *ghazal*, and then one in

Persian...in a voice so full of feeling that his voice alone seemed to be saying that in this

whole assembly he sought in vain for one who knew his worth...[258]

Mushairas would run very late into the night and on one occasion Ghālib recalled how he

arrived home at midnight from a Mushaira.[259] Ghālib wrote in one of his letters to Mir Mahdi

Majruh how an evening Mushaira proceeded in which he goes into detail about all the poets, all

male, who presented their work.[260] The Mushaira could be understood as a form of battle arena

of the male poets. Each vying for the accolades of the host, at times this would be the King

himself. Every male poet was aiming to outdo the previous and this became the impetus to

write poetry of the highest calibre. There was always some confusion when it came to Ghālib's

turn to recite his poetry, as his poetry was often difficult to comprehend. The mixture of

Persian and Urdu was something that not many poets used. Prigarina argued that Ghālib may

have added Persian to his poetry for a reason,

> Perhaps of considerable importance here is the rivalry between Ghālib and Zauq, veiled
>
> for the time being but about to become open enmity. Ghālib wanted to emphasis that
>
> poetry in *Rekhta*,[261] on which Zauq prided himself, was for him something absolutely
>
> secondary. It is doubtful whether Ghālib was unaware of the importance of his Urdu
>
> poetry; he nevertheless emphasised that he set the greatest store by his Persian
>
> poetry.[262]

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[258] Hali, M. A. H,, *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 99.

[259] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 239.

[260] Ibid., pp. 273-274.

[261] Rekhta is a highly Persianised form of Urdu that was prevalent between the 17th-18th Century India.

[262] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) pp. 240-241.

Ghālib's relationship and interaction with the male poets at the time shaped his own, unique Islamic masculinity.

2.1.2   Ghālib and Altāf Hussain Hali

Altāf Hussain Hali (1837-1914) was a poet, biographer and dear friend of Mirzā Ghālib. It is for this reason that a discussion on their special relationship be highlighted here. Hali was named at birth as Khwaja Altaf Husain but his *takhallus* (pen name) was Hali. Hali went through a turbulent early life as his father died while he was a boy and his mother was deemed insane and so he was brought up by his sister in Panipat, India. Ghālib and Hali's relationship began when Hali was around seventeen years old. Prigarina stated that Hali was studying at a Madrasah (traditional school) in Delhi and had a fondness for poetry. He would frequent the *Mushairas* of Ghālib, as mentioned earlier, and quickly became attached into a close friendship with Ghālib. Ghālib would explain difficult *ghazals* to Hali. Ghālib said to Hali on one occasion, 'I never advise anyone to devote himself to poetry, but as far as you are concerned, I think if you didn't write poetry you would be doing violence to your capabilities.'[263]

Halli explained the impact of the friendship he had with Ghalib,

> I thought that in all God's creation only the Muslims, and of the seventy-three Muslim
> sects only the Sunnis, and of the Sunnis only the Hanafis, and of the Hanafis only those
> who performed absolutely meticulously the fasts and prayers and other outward
> observances, would be found worthy of salvation and forgiveness – as though the scope
> of God's mercy were more confined and restricted than Queen Victoria's empire, where

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[263] Ibid., p. 280.

men of every religion and creed live peacefully together. The greater the love and affection I felt for a man, the more strongly I desired that he should meet his end in the state in which, as I thought, he could attain salvation and forgiveness; and since the love and affection I felt for Ghālib were intense, I always lamented his fallen state, thinking, so to say, that in the garden of *Rizwan* (In Paradise) we should no more be together and that after death we should never see each other again.[264]

By comparing himself, God, Queen Victoria and then Ghālib, Hali presented an interesting method in which he justified his love for Ghālib and his desire for his entry to paradise. It was as though Hali was trying to make sense of his attraction to Ghālib but cannot justify it on any religious terms since Ghālib was open about his hedonistic way of living Islam. Hali then conceded that there is more than one way to lead a life in submission to God – more than one way to lead a life as a Muslim man. He then declared his love towards Ghālib and it is through this love that he finds a path to justify how God must also accept Ghālib as His creation. After presenting his argument, it is as though he still remained unsure if Ghālib would gain entry to the gardens of paradise and whether he (Hali) would be able to join him. This statement shows the way in which Ghālib challenged Hali to consider, or re-consider, theological issues. Such a dilemma, for Hali, is further credit to Ghālib's poetry in terms of its relationship with the divine. The intensity in which Hali declared his love for Ghālib raises the question whether there was more than just friendship between the two. However, Shackle and Majeed argued that this could well be related to the fact that he looked towards Ghālib as his mentor since his father had died when he was young.[265]

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[264] Hali, M. A. H,, *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) pp. 64-65
[265] Hali, M. A. H., *Hali's Musaddas – The Flow and Ebb of Islam* (trans.), Shackle, C., and Majeed, J., (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 2.

2.2   Ghālib and Sir Syed Aḥmed Khān

Sir Syed Aḥmed Khān (b. 1817 – d.1898) was another contemporary of Ghālib and this

relationship also offers an interesting insight into Ghālib's Islamic masculinity. Khān was born

into a noble family and worked for the East India Company[266] in 1839 but was also a court

worker for the nominal Mughal emperor of Delhi 'who had conferred upon him several

honorific titles'.[267] Khān was known for his westernised ways and this was strengthened

through his interaction with Great Britain. He visited Great Britain between 1869-70 and it was

during this visit that he met many members of the aristocracy, which made him feel at ease

with the British lifestyle. It was Khān's dream to establish an educational institution that

would promote 'liberalisation of ideas, broad humanism, a scientific world view, and a

pragmatic approach to politics.'[268] Khan established a Muslim academic institution known as

Aligarh against the will of his critics,

> Aligarh's MAO College was a western style institution, unlike Dar ul-Ulum at Deoband
>
> and that of the same name started by the Nadwat al-Ulama in Lucknow in the 1890s. It
>
> shared with them a sense that Islamic education needed reform in order to be
>
> meaningful in the late nineteenth century.[269]

Khān's ideas were rejected by the founders of the seminary in Deoband led by Muḥammad

Qasim Nanotawi (d. 1879) and his close associate Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1905), which

became known as the Deobandi religious movement. Gongohi stated that Khān might well be a

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[266] Further information on the East India Company see: Keay, J., *The Honorable Company: History of the English East India Company* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

[267] Aḥmed, A., *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 31.

[268] Ibid., p. 37.

[269] Sanya, U., *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi – in the Path of the Prophet* (Oxford: Oneworld Publishers, 2005) pp. 44-45.

well wisher of Muslims but regarded his religious ideas as a 'deadly poison' for Islam.'[270] His belief was led by the understanding that their land under occupation needed to be liberated from the British and they found great power in using the example of the past Islamic empire as a great weapon to rouse the feeling of Muslims. Where Khān wanted Muslim men (and women) to bridge the gap between Islamic and British culture in order to have a prosperous society, Gongohi and Nanotawi wanted a more puritanical form of Islam to take shape.

Khān found no difficulty in bridging the west and India in educational ventures,

> Syed Aḥmed's mission was to emphasize the rational, secular, and scientific dimension in Islam and educate Muslims along the modern lines, in order to enable them to comprehend the objective and secular correlates of the religious and spiritual dimension and to incorporate these principles in their society and life.[271]

Such a belief sparked outrage by the political Islamists at the time; a more in depth analysis of political Islamist masculinity will be discussed in a later chapter of thesis. Another fierce opponent to Khan's vision was Jamāl al-dīn al-Afghānī (b. 1839 – d. 1897) who was also a political Islamist who called for pan-Islamic unity, 'the crucial difference that made Afghani an unforgiving critic of Syed Aḥmed was Afghani's stress on Islam 'as a force to ward off the West', against Syed Aḥmed's loyalist approach to the British rulers in India.'[272]

However, Ghālib did not reject Khān's views and this was most probably what brought the two men together. Ghālib was not unforgiving in critiquing Khān's work either. On one occasion

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[270] Ibid., p. 106.
[271] Irfani, S., 'The Progressive Islamic Movement' (ed.), Khan, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 37.
[272] Ibid., p. 35.

Khān had just finished editing the work of Abul Fazl, who was the official state historian of Akbar the Great who reigned over the Mughal Empire from 1556-1605, and had asked Ghālib to write an introduction to this edition. Hali narrated the events that followed,

> Prominent men in Delhi had written prose introductions to the work, and Ghālib wrote
> one in verse… He was very attached to Sir Syed, and was on intimate terms with him
> and his family. But he was not an admirer of Abul Fazl's style; he thought the system of
> administration which Ain-i-Akbari describes beneath all comparison with those of
> modern times; and, as he himself admitted, he felt no interest in history. Hence he
> regarded the editing of Ain-i-Akbari as a pointless task…and could not restrain himself
> from saying so in his introduction.[273]

Khān did not include this and the relationship between Ghālib and Khān was strained for a number of years.[274] Hali recalled the humorous way that the relationship was once again strengthened at an occasion when Ghālib had visited Khān's residence and brought a bottle of wine with him. Khān removed this and placed it into his storeroom and it was only when Ghālib asked where it had gone that Khān told him it was in the storeroom. Ghālib insisted upon seeing it and when it was presented to him he saw that some was missing. Ghālib asked Khān who drank some of the wine at which Khān only laughed. Ghālib then remarked,

> Perhaps that's why you took it away to the storeroom. Hafez[275] was right:
> "These preachers show their majesty in mosque and pulpit
> But once at home it is for other things they do."[276]

[273] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 93.
[274] Ibid., p. 174.
[275] Persian poet (b. 1315 – d. 1390).

Khān, who was a Sadr us Sadur (a judicial post) helped to secure Ghālib's pension with the British in 1860.[277] Ghālib and Khān were two very different types of Mughal men. Both had a concern with God but displayed their religiosity in different ways. Ghālib was a poet and Khān bore credentials as a Muslim modernist yet with a political edge to his work as he was determined in establishing a link between the British west and Mughal India. In order to do this he needed to follow the established system and the changes that he sought had to come in small steps as opposed to the bold, hedonistic statements that Ghālib was writing about,

> The evolution of Syed Aḥmad Khān's ideas presents us with a microcosm of the
> transition through which Indian Muslim thought was passing during his career. His
> admiration of the West pulled him farther and farther in the direction of adaptation,
> but he always maintained a deep rootedness in the tradition. Western ideas and
> western challenges were important in shaping Syed Aḥmad Khān's views, yet these
> external influences were not, on their own, decisive. They were, rather, a challenge
> and a catalyst leading him back to re examine and draw inspiration from the sources of
> his own intellectual tradition.[278]

At an intellectual level both men were trying to find an enlightened future for Indian Muslims but their approaches were in stark contrast to each other. The situation with the wine bottle is an important event to understanding the similarities and differences between the two men. Could the wine bottle signify the way in which Ghālib was open about his vices and thoughts as opposed to Khān who preferred to not just hide the bottle but also deny that he had drank from it?

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[276] Ibid., p. 174.
[277] Ibid., p. 173.
[278] Brown, D. W., *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 37.

2.3   Ghālib and Mirzā Hātim Ali Mihr

Ghālib and Mihr became acquainted through poetry and beauty. For they both enjoyed writing poetry and frequenting the beautiful courtesans of Delhi. In 1857 Hatim Ali Mihr, with his uncle's help, had saved the lives of seven Englishmen by giving them shelter in his house and this moment of valour had earned him great distinction amongst his friends, especially Ghālib. The British authorities rewarded him with an estate of two villages and with other honours. Ghālib wrote to him saying,

> You showed great courage, and staked your life on it. It is your manly and resolute
> conduct which has brought you this reward. What more can the world give than
> wealth with good repute? ...How well I remember the time when Mughal (a courtesan
> both Mihr and Ghālib knew) spoke to me about you, and how she showed me the verses
> in praise of her beauty, which you had written with your own hand. Now a time has
> come when letters pass between us. But if God almighty wills it, the day will come
> when we shall sit and talk together and lay our pens aside.[279]

Ghālib was known for his good looks during his younger days. As he was growing older he knew that his looks were fading and this he mentioned as a cause for concern to Mirzā Hatim Ali.

> Your auspicious portrait has gladdened my sight. Do you know what Mirzā Yusuf Ali
> Khān Aziz meant by what he said to you? I must have said some time in the company of
> friends, 'I should like to see Mirzā Hatim Ali. I hear he's a man of very striking

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[279] Ibid., p. 145.

appearance.' And, my friend, I had often heard this from Mughal Jan.[280] In the days

when she was in Nawwab Hamid Ali Khān's service I used to know her extremely well,

and I often used to spend hours together in her company. She also showed me the

verse you wrote in praise of her beauty. Anyway, when I saw your portrait and saw

how tall you were, I didn't feel jealous because I too am noticeably tall. And I didn't feel

jealous of your wheaten complexion, because mine, in the days when I was in the land

of the living, used to be even fairer, and people of discrimination used to praise it. Now

when I remember what my complexion once was, the memory is simple torture to me.

The thing that did make me jealous – and that is no small degree – was that you are

clean-shaven. I remember the pleasant days of my youth, and I cannot tell you what I

felt. When white hairs began to appear in my beard and moustache, and on the third

day they began to look as though ants had laid their white eggs in them – and, worse

than that, I broke my two front teeth – there was nothing for it but to...let my beard

grow long.[281]

The interesting point in this letter is the fact that Ghālib is highlighting those aspects of Ali that

he feels are attractive to other women and envious to him. Ghālib is reflecting his own

masculinity to what others had said about Ali's good looks, which in turn led him to request a

portrait of Ali. Ghālib has meticulously compared himself with Ali in details such as his

complexion, his height, his beard and moustache. Clean shaving seems to be a symbol of youth

during Ghālib's time but it was also a part of the 'uniforms' that different men had to follow in

society, Ghālib stated, 'but remember that in this uncouth city (Delhi) everybody wears a sort of

uniform. Mullahs, junk-dealers, hookah-menders, washermen, water-carriers, inn keepers,

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[280] Most likely a courtesan.
[281] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 158.

weavers, and greengrocers – all of them wear their hair long and grow a beard.'[282] The growing

of the beard has long been a sign of maturity and masculinity in Islamic cultures and so it is not

surprising that Ghālib would be following and reflecting on this trend. There are also Islamic

traditions that talk about the growing of the beard but it is unclear from Ghālib's comments if

this was the reason why he kept one. It could also not be said that the growing of the beard was

because it was too expensive to go to the barbers, as it is clear from Ghālib's biographers that

his lifestyle was a good deal better than he could afford.[283] This account then gives an insight

into the way that Ghālib seemed meticulous in shaping his personal appearance with those

beautiful men surrounding him.

2.4   Ghālib and Ilahi Bakhsh Maruf

Ghālib's father-in-law, Ilahi Bakhsh Maruf, was a distinguished member of the Delhi

aristocracy, a poet and a religious man who would attract students to seek spiritual guidance.

On one occasion he attempted to impress Ghālib by asking him to copy the line of his spiritual

descent through all the principals of his order. Ghālib was not impressed at all by this and

copied the line only with alternate names. Maruf became angry and demanded an explanation

from Ghālib who stated that the ladder is used to climb to a higher level so if there are steps

missing then the onus is on the climber to have a spring in their step to achieve a higher level.

Maruf then tore up the scroll. Had Ghālib been one who wanted to emulate the method of

Maruf as a poet and spiritual guide he would have copied the line perfectly.[284]

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[282] Ibid., p. 5.
[283] Ibid., p. 7.
[284] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 43-44.

There is an interesting power dynamic between the two men at various levels that displays the tension between masculinity and authority. Ghālib had to remain respectful to Maruf as he was the father of his wife and it is also clear from his biographers that at the beginning Ghālib remained under the financial concern of Maruf to provide for his family, namely his wife. The impact of such a reliance may have been an embarrassment to Ghālib's, especially since he was known for his earnest stature and although was quick to seek a financial loan was always reluctant on receiving favours from other men.[285] This event could have been a reaction to this financial dependency that Ghālib had to live with from a young age and was now rebelling against his father in law who was trying to assert his intellectual and religious superiority over Ghālib too.

2.5   Ghālib and Mustafa Khān Shefta

Another significant friend of Ghālib's was a Delhi based highly educated man in Persian and Arabic named Shefta. It is said that in his youth he enjoyed the usual pleasures of a young Delhi aristocrat, which were wine and women. This formed part of the regular pleasure alongside his liaison with the stylish, wealthy, and cultured courtesan named Ramju. However, this did not last and Shefta decided to turn to religion, give up these pleasures and set out for pilgrimage in 1839 to Mecca.[286]

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[285] Prigarina identified one occasion when lenders took Ghālib to court in order to receive their dues from him. On one such occasion the Mufti (Azurda) was known to be Ghālib's friend and when he asked Ghālib why he was being dragged to court for debt repayment. Ghālib responded, 'we used to drink by borrowing, even though we knew that drinking, when we were starving, would bring us problems one day.' The Mufti burst out laughing at this and then proceeded to pay the amount on behalf of Ghālib. Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 213.
[286] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 70.

It is noted that on one occasion in the cold season Shefta came to visit Ghālib who was drinking wine. Ghālib invited him to join in but Shefta declined and told him he had given up. Ghālib smirked, "Even in winter?"[287] Ghālib was never apologetic about his love for alcohol.[288] This is also evident in his verse on alcohol and God,

> They offer paradise to make up for our life below
> It needs a stronger wine than this to cure our hangover
>
> All that they say in praise of paradise is true. I know
> God grant though that it be illuminated by your radiance
>
> He who drinks wine unceasingly alone with his beloved
> Knows well the worth of *houris* and of streams of paradise[289]

Two contrasting images of masculinity appear in the relationship between Ghālib and Shefta. In the same way that Hali spoke highly of Ghālib, Shefta also felt that his friendship with Ghālib was important. This is further strengthened later when it was Shefta who stood by Ghālib when he was imprisoned after a raid on his home for a gambling crime. Shefta visited Ghālib regularly and said to him,

> My deep regard for Ghālib was never based upon his sobriety or his piety, but on his
>
> greatness as a poet. Today he is accused of gambling, but that he drinks wine has
>
> always been known. Why should it make any difference in my regard for him that he

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[287] Ibid.

[288] Ghālib writes about his Hindu friend, Mahesh Das, 'But these days in Delhi foreign wine is very dear and my pockets are empty. What would I have done had not my stalwart God-fearing...friend, the generous and bounteous Mahesh Das sent me wine made from sugar cane (possibly rum), matching French in colour and excelling it in fragrance... In short he is a good man, who does good to his fellow men and leads a good life amidst music and wine.' Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 136.

[289] Russel, R., 'Getting to Know Ghālib' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 302.

has been charged and sent to prison? His poetic talent is the same today as it ever was.[290]

Shefta attempted to legitimise the reason why he had a concern for Ghālib by basing this upon the greatness of Ghālib's poetic achievement and not his 'piety'. Such a statement may have been important for Shefta to make in order for Ghālib's lifestyle not to be reflected unfavourably on him as a 'religious person' and so it this may have been a help to Shefta's reasoning to remain friends with Ghālib in order to highlight his own Islamic masculinity in relation to Ghālib.

3.0   Same-Sex Love in Ghalib's Mughal India

Ghālib's countless love poems have displayed that love was a special concern for him.[291] However, love poetry in the form of ghazals for Ghālib had a special concern,

> Along with most ghazal poets, Ghalib also uses the common mystic concept of God revealing Herself (or Himself) in the beauty of the universe and therefore equates the worship of beauty with the worship of God, wheteher it be the beauty of nature or of a beautiful woman or of a handsome boy.[292]

It would be correct to state that Ghālib was a heterosexual man who enjoyed the pleasures of women as this is illustrated through his relationship with Umrao Jaan, his wife and Mughal

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[290] Ibid., p. 70.
[291] For further reading on Ghālib's verses on 'Love', See: Ghalib, M. A. K., *Love Sonnets of Ghālib* (trans.), Niazi, S. K., (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006), Ghālib, M. A. K., *Ghazals of Ghālib – Versions from the Urdu* (ed.), Aḥmad, A., (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Ghalib, M. A. K., *Divan-e-Ghālib* (trans.), Rana, K. R. S., (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2005).
[292] Russel, R., 'Getting to Know Ghālib' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 305.

Jaan, his beloved courtesan. However, it was not uncommon during Mughal times for same-sex love to develop too,

> Male homosexuality in Muslim culture existed during the Mughal period in India. Under the Muslim rulers homosexuality entered court life. In Islamic Ṣūfī literature homosexual eroticism was used as a metaphorical expression of the spiritual relationship between God and man, and much Persian poetry and fiction used homosexual relationships as examples of moral love. Although the Qur'ān and early religious writings display mildly negative attitudes towards homosexuality, Muslim cultures seemed to treat homosexuality with indifference, if not admiration.[293]

This shows the way in which alternative sexualities negotiated their position in Mughal society. It may also be important to clarify that the way in which men and women label their sexuality has not always been the same in non-western societies, as Vanita stated,

> Michel Foucault, Lillian Faderman, David Halperin, and others have argued that it was only in the late nineteenth century that European and American psychologists and sexologists such as Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfield, and later, Sigmund Freud began to think of people as falling into categories based on their sexual-emotional preferences, thus creating the categories of "heterosexual" and "homosexual" people. These scholars claim (a claim widely accepted today but also challenged by many other scholars) that prior to this period, many people performed homosexual acts but were not identified or categorised according to their sexual inclinations.[294]

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[293] Abraham, K. C., and Abraham, A. K., 'Homosexuality: Some Reflections From India' *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 50. Number 1., (Jan, 1998), p. 23.

[294] Vanita, R., 'Preface' (eds.), Vanita, R., and Kidwai, S., *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, (New York: Palgrave Publishing, 2001) p. xx.

However, this is not to say that there were no words used to describe those having same-sex relationships. Vanita commented, 'in late medieval Urdu poetry, *chapti*, (clinging or sticking together) was a word for sex between women as well as for the women who practiced it.'[295] Kidwai stated that the word *amrad parast* (boy lover) was used to identify men inclined to other boys and men.[296] What emerges from the practices of men in Mughal society was the way in which homosexual practices were accommodated and not excluded. Kidwai elaborated,

> Homoerotically inclined men could be conveniently accomodated within the framework of heterosexual patraiarchy. As long as a man fulfilled his duties as a householder, he was free to seek emotional involvement anywhere he pleased. Romantic attachments outside the family were not only widespread but considered legitimate.[297]

The relationships that men had with other men would not necessarily be constituted as declaring the man a homosexual but was an additional relationship that they pursued at the same time as their marital one. It was common to see such practices kept private as opposed to public. The reasons for this are numerous but most importantly is the threat that such 'deviant' sexualities posed to the Mughal family structure. The family structure was one which empowered men in Mughal society as a sign of fertility and masculinity. As Kidwai explained,

> Procreation was considered a social duty, but since procreation did not necessitate erotic commitment, erotic commitments were not seen as threatening to marriage. This is evident in the conventions prevailing among the heterosexually inclined male

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[295] Ibid., p. xxi.
[296] Kidwai, S., 'Introduction: Medieval Materials in the Perso-Urdu Tradition' (eds.), Vanita, R., and Kidwai, S., *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, (New York: Palgrave Publishing, 2001) p. 120.
[297] Ibid., p. 124.

elites – they were allowed not only multiple wives and concubines but also liasons with ever-present courtesans. Hence it was either courtesans or other males who became the focus of attention.[298]

The famous Urdu poet named Mir Taqi Mir (real name Mir Muḥammad Taqi – b.1723 –d.1810) is understood to be the most explicit of Urdu poets on same-sex love. Mir was was born in Agra, lived most of his life in Delhi and died in Lucknow and has on occasions been compared to Ghālib. It was Ghālib who once wrote, 'you are not the only master of Urdu Ghālib...they say there used to be a Mir in the past.'[299] Mir was also married and had children but his poetry was rooted in pedarastic affection,

I stood before his horse
Like weakened prey

God having given these boys such beautiful faces
Should have given them a bit of compassion too

It would be strange if an angel could hold its own
The fairy-faced boys of Delhi are far ahead of them

Even though the sprightly one is still at school
He can teach just about any one a few tricks.

After I kissed him, I too slipped away
Say what you will, I care only for myself.[300]

Naim stated that Mir made no secret of his love for the son of a perfumer and the son of a mason,

In so far as the Indo-Muslim milieu of the 18th Century Delhi was not blatantly sex-negative it tolerated homosexuality, and did not condemn a person merely for being a

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[298] Ibid.

[299] Gulzar, *Mirzā Ghālib – A Biographical Scenario* (Delhi: Rupa & Co Publishers, 2006) p. 45.

[300] Kidwai, S., 'Mir Taqi "Mir": Autobiography (Persian) and Poems (Urdu)' (eds.), Vanita, R., and Kidwai, S., *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, (New York: Palgrave Publishing, 2001) p. 189.

homosexual so long as he fulfilled the other demands made on him by society. In so far as that milieu was no actively sex-positive either, it produced an attitude towards the life of the senses that was not hedonistic but, at best, licentious.[301]

It is also said that Mir had a relationship with a poet senior in age named Mir Muḥammad Yar Khaksar and was regarded as his *manzur-i-nazar* (beloved).[302] Naim also used the term *amrad parasti* in Urdu for the love of a man for a boy.[303] Such practices were then flourishing under the premise of a 'don't ask, don't tell' understanding in Mughal society, 'In the cultured society of Ghālib's day, such love, strongly condemned though it was in orthodox Islam, was commonplace and in practice evoked no hostile reaction.'[304] Russell further stated,

> As in any other society where the sexes are strictly segregated, love found one outlet in homosexuality, and one of the 'beloveds' of the Urdu ghazal is a beautiful boy. Most Urdu poets must have had at least some emotional experience of homosexual love and this experience will have been part of the raw material of their poetry.[305]

Ghālib speaks quite openly about this issue of same-sex love with his friend Ala ud Din Ahmad Khān Alai on 4th April 1861. Ghālib said, 'listen to me, my friend. It's a rule with men who worship beauty that when they fall in love with a youngster they deceive themselves that he's three or four years younger than he really is. They know he's grown up, but they think of him as a child.'[306] Although not explicit about same-sex love, such statements surely allude to same-

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[301] Naim, C. M., *Zikr-I Mir: The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet: Mir Muḥammad Taqi Mir, Translated, annotated and with an introduction* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 201
[302] Ibid., p. 199.
[303] Ibid., p. 198.
[304] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 295.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ibid., p. 189.

sex love. In this sense Ghālib points out that appreciating beauty is not limited to just women but can be experienced through men too. In another letter Ghālib rebuked his friend who has left his wife for the love of a boy, 'is this any way to go on – to leave his wife for a boy?'[307]

Such glimpses into Mughal same-sex love offer an interesting image of Islamic masculinity that has most often been hidden for its failure to conform to an ideal form of Islamic masculinity. It was for this reason that alternative forms of sexualities flourished alongside the more acceptable ones located in the Mughal family structure. Naim's questions relating to Mir's sexuality can then be extended to include a general overview of the prevailing sexual culture of Mughal times,

> Was Mir a homosexual? There can be no easy answer. ... Should we then see Mir as a pederast hiding behind a façade of conjugal heterosexuality? Should we say he was a heterosexual, but felt compelled by poetic conventions to write about pretty boys? Or should we posit a bisexual orientation on his part? Obviously, given the paucity of our information concerning Mir himself, any categorical statement would be unsound. All we can assert with some certainty is that Mir had intense emotional/erotic involvement with more than one person outside of conjugal relationships.[308]

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[307] Ibid., p. 295.

[308] Naim, C. M., *Zikr-I Mir: The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet: Mir Muḥammad Taqi Mir, Translated, annotated and with an introduction* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 203.

3.1   Ghālib and the Female Courtesans

Female courtesans played an essential role in Mughal society as an alternative means for married men to satisfy their desires.[309] Russell stated,

> Like homosexual love, resort to courtesans was formally frowned upon, but in polite society in which the poets and their patrons moved, courtesans were a normal part of the social scene and many poets experienced some sort of relationship with them.[310]

To equate courtesans to prostitutes may be a simplistic analogy and hence in order to understand the culture of the Mughal courtesan a brief analysis of two of the most famous Bollywood movies centred on the life of a Mughal courtesan will be discussed, those being Pakeezah and Umrao Jaan.[311]

Pakeezah[312] was directed by Kemal Amrohi and released in 1981. Meena Kumari, as the courtesan, and Raaj Kumar, as the Mughal 'lad' from an aristocratic background, played the featured roles. Derek Malcolm commented in the UK's Guardian newspaper, 'among these directors was the Muslim Kamal Amrohi, whose Pakeezah qualifies as one of the most extraordinary musical melodramas ever made – "poetry, fantasy and nostalgia rolled into one on an epic scale", as one Indian critic has said.'[313] The plot, narrated by Malcolm, is as follows,

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[309] It should be noted that the culture of Mughal courtesans does draw parallels within other regions such as the Geishas in Japan but the Geishas do not have sex with their clients in the way that the courtesans of Mughal India did.

[310] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 296.

[311] It is important to note that Pakeezah is a fictional movie and Umrao Jaan is based on a true story.

[312] lit. meaning: virgin, pure

[313] http://film.guardian.co.uk/Century_Of_Films/Story/0,,71138,00.html (Date accessed: February 24th 2009)

Set in Muslim Lucknow at the turn of the century, its central character is a courtesan (Nargis) and dancer who dreams of leaving her life behind but gets rejected by her man's family as unmarriageable and dies giving birth in a graveyard. Her daughter (also played by Kumari – Sahib Jaan) grows up in her mother's profession, desired by men for everything but a respectable marriage, and is even prevented from seeing her father. She then falls for a mysterious stranger who turns out to be her father's nephew. When the marriage is forbidden, she is forced to dance at her lover's arranged wedding. There, her father at last recognizes her, claims her as his child, and she's able to marry.[314]

The second Bollywood movie based on a Mughal courtesan is Umrao Jaan (first released in 1981 under the direction of Rana Sheikh and then in 2006 under the direction of J.P Dutta). The movies are based on a novel written by Mirzā Hadi Ruswa[315] in 1905. Ruswa stated in his preface the reason why he wrote this story,

About ten years ago a friend of mine, Munshi Ahmad Husain, who lived somewhere near Delhi paid a visit to Lucknow and rented an upper storey flat in the Chowk. Here a party of friends used to meet in the evenings and pass a few pleasant hours reciting and discussing poetry. The apartment next to Munshi Ahmad Husain's was occupied by a courtesan whose ways were quite different from those of other women of her profession. She was never seen on her balcony not was known to receive any visitors. The windows in her apartment were draped with heavy curtains and the door opening on the main street was always bolted – her servants used the back entrance. ... One evening, we were as usual reciting ghazals. I recited a couplet, and a soft voice in the

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[314] Ibid.
[315] b. 1857 in Lucknow, India.

neighbouring apartment exclaimed "Wah Wah!" "It is no good applauding a poet in this manner; if you are fond of poetry why not honour us with your presence?" ... Shortly afterwards, a maid servant came in and asked, "Which of you gentlemen is Mirzā Ruswa?" My friends pointed to me. "Will you please oblige my mistress by having a word with her?"[316]

It is here that Ruswa met Umrao Jaan who tells him her life story. This is the story of a girl named Ameerun who is kidnapped and sold to a Madam named Khānum Jaan. It is here that Ameerun is given the name Umrao Jaan (beloved). Umrao Jaan then meets the noble Nawab Sultan and they fall in love but his parents have already arranged his marriage. Nawab Sultan still proceeds to visit her on numerous occasions at the courtesan's mansion and she spends time reciting poetry, dancing and entertaining him. However, this was not to last and he eventually gets married. In a bid to move on with her life, Umrao Jaan is courted by a dashing dacoit who promises to take her away from a life as a courtesan but this was also not be and he dies. There is further distress in her life as the British attack on Lucknow forces her to flee the city and she ends up in the city that she grew up and finally locates her family. They are embarrassed to hear that their daughter is now a renowned courtesan and reject her. The story ends with Umrao Jaan left all alone lamenting her past,

Umrao Jaan and Sahib Jaan's stories are typical of the way in which Mughal men would treat courtesans. Their relationship with them would start as entertainment and fun but most usually would lead to a deep love and affection for them. Even though courtesans had the desire to marry the men that they fell in love with, Mughal society saw them as the most destitute. The men who frequented the courtesans parlours would leave with their honour in

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[316] Ruswa, M. M. H., *Umrao Jan Ada* (trans.), Singh, K., and Husaini, M. A., (Delhi: Disha Books, 1982) p. v-vi.

tact but it was the courtesans who would be ridiculed because of their profession. Ruswa ends

his novel with what seems like Umrao Jaan's plea of guilt, even though it was a profession she

chose herself,

> O foolish women never be under the delusion that anyone will ever love you truly.
>
> Your lovers who today forswear their lives for you will walk out on you after a while.
>
> They will never remain constant because you do not deserve constancy. The rewards
>
> of true love are for a women who only see the face of one man. God will never grant
>
> the gift of true love to a whore.[317]

Prigarina argued that courtesans were distinguished because of their 'education and culture'

and the fact that they had 'refined manners' and the ability to 'hold agreeable conversation.'[318]

These courtesans had refined their skills greatly, 'the courtesan was the one who had learnt all

the skills in lovemaking as a professional accomplishment and added the cultural attainments

which are also necessary to the satisfaction of a cultured man.'[319] Ruswa narrated from Umrao

Jaan the type of education she had from a Maulvi (learned person, religious),

> Khānum's girls were not only trained in dancing and singing, there was also a school to
>
> teach reading and writing, to which I had to go. The school was under the supervision
>
> of Maulvi Sahib. ... After teaching me the alphabet, Maulvi Sahib started me on books of
>
> elementary Persian like *Kareema*, *Mamakeema*, and the *Mahmud-Nama.* After going
>
> through them quickly he made me memorise the grammatical tables of the *Amad-nama.*
>
> After that we took *Saadi's Gulistan.* ... The Maulvi Sahib taught me for nearly eight years.

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[317] Ibid., p. 151.

[318] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 100.

[319] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 296.

I need hardly add that he fostered my interest in poetry till it developed into a passion.[320]

Ghālib also fell in love with a courtesan named Mughal Jaan and made every attempt to seduce her but she resisted his temptation still one day she succumbed. Ghālib wrote a poem during this time, 'what ails thee, my silly heart? What cure for your ache, at last? I adore her, she repels. What a predicament, O Lord.'[321] Illahi Bakhsh mentioned that Ghālib was in a temporary marriage contract with this courtesan, Mughal Jaan.[322] Even the religious elite frequented courtesans as Fazle Haqq's example highlighted. Haqq was one understood to be one of the most famous and respected Muslim religious leaders in Delhi during the time of Ghālib, and it is clear that his keeping a courtesan as a mistress caused no scandal. Ghālib narrated a time when he met the *Maulvi's* (an honorific given to religious men in Mughal society) courtesan, 'they had barely sat down when the *Maulvi Sahib's* (Fazle Haq) courtesan came in from the other room and sat down with them.'[323]

On one occasion Ghālib consoled his friend Mihr whose courtesan lover (Chunna Jaan) had just died,

> I felt extremely sorry, and deeply grieved… Friend, we 'Mughal lads' are terrors; we are the death of those for whom we ourselves would die. Once in my life I was the death of a fair, cruel dancing-girl. God grant both of them his forgiveness, and both of us, who bear the wounds of our beloveds' death, His mercy… I know what you must be feeling.

[320] Ibid., pp. 18-19.
[321] Kanda, K. C., *Mirzā Ghālib: Selected Lyrics and Letters* (New Delhi: New Dawn Press, 2007) p. 197.
[322] Prigarina, N., *Mirzā Ghālib: A Creative Biography* (trans.), Faruqi, M. O., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 103.
[323] Ibid., 296.

Be patient, and turn your back on the turmoil of earthly love...God is all sufficient: the rest is vanity.[324]

This letter gives a sense of an expression of dominant comradery between Ghālib and Mihr. As if to console their broken hearts, Ghālib initially raves about the 'Mughal lads' who are 'terrors' but who are now left heartbroken and wounded by courtesans. In the spirit of consoling the ego of brave masculinity, Ghālib uses the Ṣūfī notion of all earthly love being allegorical and advised Mihr to concentrate on the love of God.

As was the prevalent culture of Mughal India, Ghālib felt at ease with his sexuality without many boundaries. It is on this matter that he said,

In the days of my lusty youth a man of perfect wisdom counselled me, "Abstinence I do not approve: dissoluteness I do not forbid. Eat, drink and be merry. But remember, that the wise fly settles on the sugar, and not on the honey."[325]

Ghālib's life was led by variety and difference, 'take a new woman each returning spring, for last year's almanac's a useless thing.'[326] This may well have been due to the good looks of Ghālib, of which Hali stated,

Delhi people who had seen Ghālib in his youth told me that he was generally regarded as one of the most handsome men in the city, and even in his old age, when I met him for the first time, one could easily see what a handsome man he had been...[327]

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[324] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 18.
[325] Ibid., p. 18.
[326] Ibid.

Hali further mentioned,

> This well illustrated his aversion to following the common herd, an aversion which made him go out of his way to be different, not only in his poetry, but also, says Hali, 'in his ways, his dress, his diet, and his style.' He was a man to whom people quickly felt attracted.[328]

Courtesans, in Mughal times, played an essential role in shaping the masculinity of the men at the time. They were used, most often, as additional entertainment for married men, this was especially true in the case of Ghālib. Courtesans were also seen to lead a much more independent life, than other women in society, especially those married and restricted to one sexual partner. However, from the limited discussion of courtesan life highlighted above, one sees that the courtesans all yearned to be released from their lives as entertainers and into a life of marriage with a loving husband. This is another indication of the way that family life was central to not just a respectable Mughal life, but also an idealised Islamic one too. It is clear from the correspondence between Ghālib and his acquaintances that married life could not wholeheartedly be understood as a matter of 'love' but more a societal requirement in order to be accepted as respectable and most of all masculine. From the courtesans to the men who frequented them, it seems obvious that there was a desire to reach an ideal form of masculinity and femininity.

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[327] Hali, M. A. H., *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 17.
[328] Ibid., p. 49.
Indeed Ghālib's poetry also reflected this, Azad, a contemporary of Ghālib, stated in a poem, 'what is the point of writing verse which only you can understand? A poet feels the thrill of joy when others too can understand; We understand the verse of Mir, we understand what Mirzā wrote; But Ghālib's verse! – Save he and God, we know not who can understand!' Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 47.

4.0   Ghālib and God

Ghālib's relationship with God was unusual but spectacularly strong, contrary to comments of

those surrounding him. Even though Ghazal writers were known for their deep spirituality,

> I said earlier that the ghazal poet, in his role as the mystic lover of God, shares with the
>
> real mystics a great many values. He lives his life by principles radically different from
>
> those of the orthodox, personified in the ghazal as the 'shaikh', a word which originally
>
> meant an older man but subsequently acquired the connotations of an elder, a
>
> presbyter, a religious leader. Thus he rejects with contempt their doctrine of a conduct
>
> of life motivated by hope of reward and fear of punishment in the life to come.[329]

The main reason why Ghālib was understood to be a 'bad' Muslim was because of his free

character, love for women, wine and all things hedonistic. One of his commentators, Ikram

wrote, 'Ghālib, you write so well upon these mystic themes of Love Divine. We would have

counted you a saint, but that we knew your love of wine.'[330] Ghālib had no intention of being a

saint either, and wrote a letter to his friend as such,

> They say that to despair of God's help is to be an infidel. Well, I have despaired of Him
>
> and am an infidel through and through. Muslims believe that when a man turns infidel,
>
> he cannot expect God's forgiveness. So there you are, my friend: I'm lost to this world
>
> and the next. But you must do your best to stay a Muslim and not despair of God. Make

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[329] Russel, R., 'Getting to Know Ghālib' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals*
(India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 302.
[330] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 103.

the text [of the Qur'ān] your watchword: "where there is difficulty, there is ease also."

All that befalls the traveler in the path of God, befalls him for his good.[331]

Even Ghālib's advice contradicts itself as he tells his friend of the reason why he falls out with the bounds of God's mercy and then proceeds to raise hopes of a better future using God's mercy. Hali, mentioned Ghālib's religious stance in clearer,

> From all the duties of worship and the enjoined practices of Islam he took only two – a belief that God is one and is immanent in all things, and a love for the Prophet and his family. And this alone he considered sufficient for salvation.[332]

Ghālib's simplistic understanding of Islam was presented as a convoluted affair when he wrote about God, for he found the concept of God's oneness in relation to life as a playground,

> The world is but a game that children play before my eyes
> A spectacle that passes night and day before my eyes
>
> The throne of Sulaiman (the prophet) is but a toy in my esteem
> The miracles that Isa (Jesus) worked, a trifle in my eyes
>
> You need not ask how I feel when I am away from you
> See for yourself how you feel when you are before my eyes
>
> True, I am lost in self-esteem, in self display. Why not?
> In all her radiant beauty she sits there before my eyes
>
> My faith restraints me while the lure of unbelief attracts me
> That way, the Kaba; and, this way, the Church before my eyes[333]

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[331] Ibid., p. 221.

[332] Hali, M. A. H., *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 91.

[333] Russel, R., 'Ghālib's Urdu Verse' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 388.

On another occasion Ghālib wrote,

> What joy unless you tread a path beset with thorns?
> Don't set out for the Kaba if the way is safe
>
> I am a poet, not a theologian
> And wine-stained clothes are no disgrace to poetry
>
> Bring him, if there be any here that knows my tongue
> A stranger to your city has something to say[334]

Ghālib found no interest in following the pre-requisite Muslim ritual practices and would make no attempt at hiding this, especially prayers. On this matter Ghālib wrote,

> If you are sure that God will grant your prayer, then do not ask
> That is, ask only for a heart that has nothing to ask
>
> It calls to mind the number of scars of thwarted yearnings
> So do not ask me, God, to count the number of my sins[335]

Hali recalled a time when Ghālib made no attempt at hiding this and at the end of the Islamic fasting month one year the Mughal King asked him, 'Mirzā, how many fasts did you keep?' Ghālib replied, 'My Lord and Guide, I failed to keep one.''[336] On another occasion, Hali mentioned, during the Islamic month of fasting a religious leader came to see Ghālib. It was the middle of the afternoon when Ghālib asked his servant to bring some water. The Maulvi was astonished and asked Ghālib if he was not fasting. Ghālib replied in humour that he was a Sunni and that he opens his fast two hours before sunset![337] Ghālib's love of alcohol was most likely the main reason why his 'Islamic' credentials were questioned. Ghalib wrote on this

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[334] Bausani, A., 'Ghālib's Persian Poetry' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 462.

[335] Russel, R., 'Ghālib's Urdu Verse' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 349.

[336] Hali, M. A. H., *Yādgār-i-Ghālib* (trans.), Qadiri, K. H., (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyāt, 1990) p. 10.

[337] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 45-46

matter, 'I talk of contemplating God but cannot make my point, Unless I speak of wine-cup and intoxicating wine.'[338]

A certain Maulvi Hamza Khān once asked his student Alai to write to Ghālib saying that he should give up drink in his old age. Ghālib responded by saying 'you who have never known the taste of wine, we drink unceasingly'.[339] Ghālib spoke openly about his faith and insisted that it was still intact albeit under the influence of his love of alcohol,

> Hell is for those who deny the oneness of God, who hold that His existence partakes of the order of the eternal and the possible, believe that every Muslim shares with the Prophet the rank of the seal of the prophets, and rank newly-converted Muslims with the father of the Imams. My belief in God's oneness is untainted, and my faith is perfect. My tongue repeats, 'There is no god but God,' and my heart believes, 'Nothing exists but God, and God alone works manifest in all things.' All prophets were to be honoured, and submission to each in his own time was the duty of man. Yes, and there is this more to be said, that I hold freethinking and atheism to be abhorrent, and wine drinking to be forbidden, and myself to be a sinner. And if God casts me in into hell, it will not be to burn me, but that I may become added fuel to the flames, making them flare more fiercely to burn those who deny God's oneness and reject the prophet hood of Muḥammad and the Imamate of Ali.[340]

Ghalib then had something in common with the courtesans that he frequented; both had understood their lives as 'un-Islamic',

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[338] Russel, R., 'Ghālib's Urdu Verse' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 347.

[339] Russell, R., 'Ghālib – A Self Portrait' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 20.

[340] Ibid.

Elsewhere he (Ghālib) admits indirectly to less innocent pastimes, speaking in vague poetic terms of a love of wine, woman and song – a love of which other contemporary writers speak more directly, if in suitably delicate terms. In his society these things were a graver offence against the conventional morality than they are in ours, for the drinking of wine is specifically forbidden in Islam, and the *Purdah* system – that most drastic forms of segregation of the sexes – left association with courtesans as virtually the only way in which a man could freely enjoy the company of women.[341]

Ghālib's life at the fringes of the more acceptable, mainstream forms of Muslim life was something that followed him throughout his life,

He (Ghālib) had felt keenly that others had regarded him as inferior to themselves – all the more keenly because he himself had accepted the yardsticks – birth, wealth, profession, rank, and social and political influence – with which he measured him, and knew that he could not compete in these fields.[342]

This may have made him all the more critical of God and so Ghālib constantly questioned God in his poetry and writing. On one occasion he was lying in his bed when he looked up at the distribution of the stars and sees no real order. Ghālib then questioned, 'just look at the stars – scattered in complete disorder. No proportion, no system, no sense, no pattern. But their King has absolute power, and no one can breathe a word against Him."[343] Ghālib's constant questioning *(shikwa)* with God led him to reject the more irksome restrictions that were

[341] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 34.
[342] Ibid., p. 36.
[343] Ibid., p. 44.

prevalent at his time.[344] Hali quoted the time when a man said to Ghālib that the prayers of a

drunk will not be answered at which Ghālib retorted, 'If a man has wine, what else does he *need*

to pray for?'[345] Ghālib wrote in another verse,

> Forget tomorrow! Pour the wine today, and do not stint
> Such care reflects on him who pours the wine in paradise
>
> Today we are abased. Why so? For yesterday You would not brook
> The insolence the angel showed towards our majesty
>
> The steed of life runs on. None knows where it will stay its course
> The reins have fallen from our hands, the stirrups from our feet.[346]

Hali also highlighted that Ghālib wrote most of his poetry under the influence of alcohol.[347]

Ghālib can also not be understood as against Muslims, as Hali wrote, 'Although he paid very

little regard to the outward observances of Islam, whenever he heard of any misfortune

befalling the Muslims it grieved him deeply. One day in my (Hali) presence when he was

lamenting some such occurrence, he said, 'I have none of the hallmarks of a Muslim; why is it

that every humiliation that the Muslims suffer pains and grieves me so much?'[348]

It is evident from Ghālib's life and writing that the hedonism that shaped his masculinity was

one coupled with a deep spiritual love for God. As a poet he was creative in his thoughts on God

and was not interested in the narrow interpretation of God that existed in the Islam that he saw

practised around him. Ghālib's love for alcohol was almost always directly linked to his

spirituality, which raises the question whether this intoxication was in his love for God, a

particularly Ṣūfī practice, as will be discussed in the next chapter. On this matter Ghālib stated,

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[344] Ibid., p. 45.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Russell interpreted 'tomorrow' as the life after death, 'you' as God, 'the angel' as Iblīs and 'we' as humankind, the descendant of Adam. Russel, R., 'Ghālib's Urdu Verse' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 358-359.

[347] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 45.

[348] Ibid., p. 46.

'the worship of God means the love of God, and love as all consuming as that between human lovers. Rituals of worship are of no significance as compared with this.'[349]

Russell argued that Ghālib was of the understanding that the ritualisation of worship such prayer, fasting, alms giving and pilgrimage in Islam may help one to draw closer to God but in actual fact they are harmful to true religion for they may lead to an arrogant self satisfaction that one is not like other people.[350] It was this understanding that gave Ghālib freedom to lead a spiritual yet hedonistic life. Ghālib's final words were rooted in his spiritual position and relationship with God, 'my dying breath is ready to depart, And now, my friends, God, only God, exists'[351]

5.0   Conclusion

Ghālib's life presents an image of Mughal masculinity that was at total ease in its hedonistic and spiritual outlook. The intricate way in which Ghālib fused both without blaspheming against each other was through the liberation of ultimate submission to God, not ritualistic Islam, society or culture. In relation to each of the relationships that Ghālib had, with other men, women and God there was much that society had determined as ideals. These ideals were something that Ghālib aspired to live up to even though he failed miserably. Ghālib failed to locate himself in any of the Islamic movements that were shaping society at the time. From the more conservative and traditional movements in the form of Nanotawi's and Gongohi's Deobandi seminary who adhered strictly to Islamic Law to the more liberal and progressive movements in the form of Khān.

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[349] Russel, R., 'Getting to Know Ghālib' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 304.
[350] Ibid., p. 304.
[351] Russel, R., and Islam, K., 'Ghālib: Life and Letters' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 260.

Ghālib found himself under immense pressure to achieve the ideals of Mughal masculinity. Not being able to follow in the military footsteps of his forefathers and not being able to father any children of his own are just two examples that played an impact on his Islamic masculinity. Even as a poet he felt he was a far cry from the pinnacle of masculine identity and this predicament was one that Ghālib felt most unfortunate about. However, he competed with the male poets of his milieu who wrote in Urdu by presenting poetry between Persian, Arabic and Urdu and used this as a tool to strengthen his own image. The physical Jihād, which Ghālib had always aspired to, had become a Jihād of the pen, even though he failed to see its worth.

Ghālib followed many of the social norms at the time and in keeping with a culture of arranged marriage, was married at a young age. Marriage was seen as a milestone with which boys would become acceptable men in Mughal society. Ghālib felt at ease in his married life with Umrao Jaan and also frequenting his beloved courtesan Mughal Jaan. Ghālib, as a hedonist, found inner spirituality in the taverns and the courtyard of his courtesan. Ghālib's relationship with God played a significant role in his life, even though he remained sceptical of God. Ghalib concludes,

> When nothing was,
> then God was there,
> had nothing been,
> God would have been,
> my being has defeated me,
> had I not been,
> what would have been?[352]

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[352] Russel, R., 'Getting to Know Ghālib' (ed.) Russell, R., *The Oxford India Ghālib: Life, Letters and Ghazals* (India: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 307.

Chapter Four
Ṣūfīsm, Qalandars and Islamic Masculinities

The beauty of each lovely boy
each comely girl
derives from His [God] –
on loan.[353]

1.0   Introduction

The mystical strand of Islam, known as Ṣūfīsm, has often detached itself from mainstream

legalist movements in Islamic culture and society. However, it must be stated at the outset that

Ṣūfīsm is not simple to define. It is understood in a variety of ways and differs from location to

location. The term 'mystical' may also ignite many different understandings and approaches

within the tradition. The various ways of interpreting the term 'Ṣūfīsm' has best been

identified in the previous chapter in the case of Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib who held strongly

to many Ṣūfī tenets and ideas but was never acclaimed as a Ṣūfī, nor did he protest that he was

one. This chapter leads on from Ghālib and explores the way masculinity is understood within

the Ṣūfī traditions, with particular focus on South Asia, and an analysis of how this fits into the

Qur'ānic theory of Islamic masculinities.

South Asian Ṣūfīsm brings with it its own unique flavour, which is distinct from that of other

regions, such as in the Arabian Peninsula. There must be no surprise to this statement as all

religions, including Islam, do not flourish in a vacuum but develop their own distinct setting.

In this way when Arabo-centric Islam moved to South Asia it was faced with an Indian culture

and land that was resplendent in religion, namely Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, to name a few.

This leads to an important question of how an Arabo-centric Islamic culture and tradition deals

with something completely other? Were there similarities between the incoming Islamic

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[353] Iraqi, F., *Divine Flashes* (trans.), Chittick, W. C., and Wilson, P., (Paulist Press: New York, 1982) p. 85.

culture and the prevalent culture of India at the time? In what way did this affect gender in general and Islamic masculinity in particular? This chapter will discuss the many tensions that emerged from the varieties of Ṣūfī thought and practice that shaped a South Asian Islamic masculinity. The way in which South Asian Ṣūfīsm complemented the Hindu Bhakti movement is something that will emerge from this chapter. This will require some analysis of events prior to 1800, which is the focus of this study, in order to place current trends in Ṣūfī practices in India and Pakistan in its given context, especially in the case of the Malangs. This chapter focuses particularly at the notion of 'dualism' in Ṣūfī doctrine and its role in constructing another image of Islamic masculinity. What image of masculinity emerges from Ṣūfī thought and practice? In what way are the Qalandars of South Asia today embodying the notions of masculinity in their thought and practice? These are just some of the questions which will be explored in this chapter on Ṣūfīsm, Qalandars and Islamic masculinities.

1.1   Ṣūfīsm, Creation and the Human Condition

Ṣūfī's have focused considerable attention to the relationship with God and it is through this understanding that one becomes aware of the way that gender, sex, sexuality, masculinity and femininity plays a role in this ultimate relationship. One of the foremost commentators on the Ṣūfī path, Reynold Nicholson (b.1868 – d. 1945) has described Ṣūfīsm as having seven stages. It must be accepted that other scholars on Ṣūfīsm may identify alternatives but some of the key stages that seem to be generic are encapsulated in the ones that Nicholson highlighted.[354]
These are, repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, trust in God and

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[354] For further information on the rituals that Ṣūfīs practice, such as *dhikr* (litany) and *sama'* (mystical concert) see: Netton, I. R., *Ṣūfī Ritual – The Parallel Universe* (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 2000).

satisfaction.[355] These pre-requisites of Ṣūfī practice are centred on a relationship with God.
Nicholson further commented,

> The Ṣūfī's path is not finished until he has traversed all the 'stages' making himself
> perfect in every one of them before advancing to the next, and has also experienced
> whatever 'states' it pleases God to bestow upon him. Then and only then, is he
> permanently raised to the higher planes of consciousness which Ṣūfīs call 'gnosis'
> *(marifāt)* and 'the truth' *(Haqiqāt)* where the seeker *(Ṭālib)* becomes the 'knower' or the
> Gnostic *(arif)* and realises that knowledge, knower and known are one.[356]

Nicholson affirmed the fact that the way of the Ṣūfī has no set path. In this way the 'other
states' or experiences that are 'bestowed' by God upon the Ṣūfī are added obstacles or tests that
must be accepted in the life of a Ṣūfī in hope that they are overcome. Hujwiri, the 11th Century
Persian mystic, stated, 'in the time of the companions and the ancients – may God have mercy
on them! - this name did not exist, but the reality thereof was in everyone; now the name
exists, but not the reality.'[357] In short, Hujwiri seems to be stating that defining the act of
tassawuf has led to set definitions of the 'ism' known as Ṣūfīsm and is reminiscing about the
time when those who practised *tasawwuf* were not led by these definitions and now with the
definitions, people still fail to live by them. Martin Lings[358], the renowned English Ṣūfī convert
to Islam, quoted the great work of Ibn Khaldūn[359] on universal history, the *Muqaddimah*, 'When
worldliness spread and men tended to become more and more bound up with the ties of this
life, those who dedicated themselves to the worship of God were distinguished from the rest by

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[355] Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963) p. 29.
[356] Ibid., p. 28.
[357] Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub of al-Hujwiri* (trans.), Nicholson, R. A., (London: Luzac and Co., 1911) p. 45.
[358] b. 1909 – d. 2005.
[359] b. 1336 – d. 1406.

the title Ṣūfīs.'[360] However, it is difficult to separate human beings from the world for every human being must live their faith in this world. Even those who have attempted to separate their lives from the world are still connected to it. The role of the family is one such example, which has been a highlight of this thesis throughout.

The basis of this Ṣūfī path is said to be love, 'Love', said Jalal al-Din Rumi[361], 'is the remedy of our pride and self-conceit, the physician of all our infirmities. Only he whose garment is rent by love becomes entirely unselfish.'[362] The love that Rumi talked about is a love that must be shown to God and that which surrounds the believer.[363] It could be argued that pride, self-conceit and infirmities are human characters, which have binary opposites and so the love that Rumi alludes to is only known as love because of the existence of hate. In this way Ṣūfī love is constantly reflected with God and aims to transgress the boundaries of all things against love.

According to the Persian mystic Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922),

> The essence of God's essence is love. Before the creation, God loved Himself in absolute unity and through love revealed Himself to Himself alone. Then, desiring to behold that love-in-aloneness, that love without otherness and duality, as an external object, He brought forth from non-existence an image of Himself, endowed with all His attributes and names. This divine image is Adam. In and by whom God is made manifest – divinity objectified in humanity. Hallaj, however, distinguishes the human

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[360] Lings, M., *What is Ṣūfism?* (Surrey: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1975) p. 45.
[361] b. 1207 – d. 1273.
[362] Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963) p. 107.
[363] For further insight into Rumi's life see: Arasteh, A. R., *Rumi the Persian – The Ṣūfī* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

nature (*nasut*) from the divine (*lahut*). Though mystically united they are not essentially identical and interchangeable.[364]

al-Hallaj's understanding of God and creation attempts to show the existence of Adam as a singular divine image without any mention of Eve. Lings commented that Eve is encompassed within Adam before her creation and that Adam's position is lowered after the creation of Eve,

> The creation of Adam and his adoration by the Angels is taken to refer to a period when man was born with consciousness of the Self, that is, with the Truth of Certainty. The creation of Eve thus augurs a later period when man would be born in possession of the Eye of Certainty only, that is in the state of merely human perfection: in the beginning Eve was contained in Adam as the human nature is contained in the Divine, and her separate existence foreshadows the apparently separate existence of the perfect human nature as an entity in itself.[365]

Even though Ṣūfī commentators on creation root their understanding on love they still use the creation of Adam and Eve to signify a patriarchal position of Adam. The Andalusian Ṣūfī, Ibn al-Arabi, used the term *'al-Insān al-kāmil'*, the perfect man, in his treatise *'Fusas al-hikam'*. Nicholson summarised Ibn al-Arabi's views as such,

> Perhaps we may describe the perfect man as a man who has fully realised his essential oneness with the divine being in whose likeness he is made. This experience, enjoyed

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[364] Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963) p. 80. For further reading on al-Hallaj's work see his most renowned work on understanding and knowing God: al-Hallaj, *Kitab al-Tawasin* (Paris: Geuthner, 1913).
[365] Lings, M., *The Book of Certainty – The Ṣūfī Doctrine of Faith, Vision and Gnosis* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1996) pp. 17-18.

by prophets and saints and shadowed forth in symbols to others, is the foundation of the Ṣūfī theosophy.[366]

The notion of Ṣūfī empowerment conflicts with another key task of the Ṣūfīs, 'Ṣūfī training emphasised the spiritual value of submission and dependence.'[367] The Ṣūfī view of creation and the human condition are understood to be connected,

> The proper relationship between God and the believer is one based on servitude and obedience, indeed, one common term for the Muslim, or the believer, is *abd* (slave). The structure of this primary relationship is fundamentally hierarchical and unequal. In this worldview men as well as women must learn to be subordinate and submissive.[368]

Although Ṣūfī thought, rooted in love, seems to offer a basic outlook of equality between the sexes in terms of spirituality, at a more practical level this is not easily implemented:

> Aside from any spiritual motivations, there is a purely practical consideration: the burden placed upon women by marriage, in the form of household responsibilities an childbearing, would leave very little time or energy for lengthy devotional exercises.[369]

The Ṣūfī Jamal Hanswi (d. 1333) stated, *'tālib ad-dunyā mu'annath tālib al-ākhira mukhannath, tālib al-mawlā mudhakkar*: "The seeker of the world is feminine, the seeker of the otherworld is a

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[366] Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963) p. 78.
[367] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 94.
[368] Ibid., p.103.
[369] Elias, J. J., 'Female and the Feminine in Islamic Mysticism' *The Muslim World* 78, nos. 3-4 (October 1998) p. 210.

hermaphrodite, and the seeker of the Lord is masculine."[370] If Ṣūfī thought is about servitude
and submission to God regardless of gender and sex then all seekers, including men and
women, should be submissive without creating a gender hierarchy in the act yet through this
quotation it becomes evident that masculinity is given preference to carry out the act of
spirituality. This is also problematic if one was to consider one of the core teachings of Ṣūfīsm,
which is to remain obedient and submitted to God and if this is a necessity then should the
more obedient, subservient gender stereotype found in the feminine not be raised to a more
superior status than the masculine? However, when such notions materialise with notions of
empowerment towards and into God's oneness then it follows the trends of patriarchal society
as Ṣūfī men have still played the more dominant, active role and this has led to the male being
placed on a pedestal.

The case of the famous 8th Century Iraqi female mystic Rābi'a al-Adawiyya offers further
insight into the significance of masculinity in Ṣūfī thought over femininity,

> Not only was Rābi'a al-Adawiyya considered to be equal to or even surpass men, but as
> late as the eighteenth century the mystical folk poet Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit in the
> Indus Valley applied the old Indian Ṣūfī saying *tālib al-maula mudhakkar* ("he who seeks
> the Lord is male") to his heroine. She represented the longing soul which braved all
> the difficulties on the path toward the Divine Beloved.[371]

The Ṣūfī doctrine of mysticism begins on a basis of un-gendered notions such as love,
submission and subservience yet this has often been gendered through an understanding that

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[370] Schimmel, A, 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring
1996) p. 35.
[371] Helminski, C. A., *Women of Ṣūfīsm – A Hidden Treasure, Writings and Stories of Mystic Poets, Scholars and Saint*
(Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2003) p. 102.

masculinity is better suited to carry out such acts as opposed to femininity. Even if one is to accept that the 'perfect man', according to Ibn al-Arabi, is genderless which in turn empowers female mystics there still seems to be a gender bias towards the 'masculine'. This gendered image of Ṣūfīsm will be explored with more particular examples below.

1.2   Ṣūfīsm and Marriage

The Ṣūfī path to God has many different and conflicting views on sex and marriage. The Persian mystic Baba Afdal Kāshāni (d. 1213-1214) argued that 'the (human) form is the greatest, grandest and most perfect correspondence. For it is "one of a pair" [*zawj*]. In other words, it made the Being of the Real into two. In the same way, the woman makes the man two through her existence. She turns him into one of a pair.'[372] Murata argued that contemplation or witnessing of God through woman is the most perfect kind of witnessing given to a human being.[373] Murata makes this assumption from a family-heteronormative position that every man is paired with a woman and then makes it essential, or even divine, for a man and woman to pair together. The example of the Prophet Muḥammad and his love of women is used by Ibn al-Arabi to state that 'women were made lovable' to the prophet and 'he (God) could not have been made to love something other than God, since nothing other than the real is truly worthy of love'.[374] Ibn al-Arabi's statement moves towards equating women as a form of the divine yet it continues to uphold an ideal Islamic masculinity because it places the act of submission in a gendered space, between husband and wife, whereas the very nature of submission of all created form is not relational to one another. If the aim is to reach the essence of love then why must gender roles and masculinity play a part? The essence of God's love could well be

[372] Murata, S., *The Tao of Islam – A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992) p. 190.
[373] Ibid., pp. 191-192.
[374] Ibn Arabi, M., *Fusus Al-Hikam* (trans.), Rauf, B., Vol. 4. (Oxford: Muhyiddun Ibn Arabi Society, 1991) p. 1059.

attained through specific objects or beings but is there a need for constructions of gender and sexuality in this process? There are other mystics who uphold the masculinist ideals more boldly. The most celebrated and renowned Persian Ṣūfī mystic of the 8th century, al-Ghazālī stated that, 'wives should devote themselves to their husbands and homes, secluding themselves as much as possible from the outside world. Like disciples, women were trained to defer, obey, and submit, women served their husbands and fathers, honoured and respected them, and did not contest their authority.'[375] Ghazālī and Ibn al-Arabi strengthen ideals in gender and sexuality. Ṣūfī practices strengthened the insignificance of women,

> In later times it was indeed not unusual for female family members of faithful followers to be offered to the *shaikh* or *Pir* for temporary use. ... *Urs*, literally 'wedding', is the term for the anniversary of a saint's death, called so because his soul has reached the final union with the divine.[376]

The way in which women were understood amongst some Ṣūfīs materialised in their views and actions on marriage. Marriage was permitted for Ṣūfīs but it was understood as a means to an end, 'if the Ṣūfī is married, it would be better for him to follow 'Ali's alleged advice: "Let not your wife and children be your chief concern." Did not even Abraham leave Hagar in loneliness, and Moses the daughter of Shu'ayb?'[377] This statement creates many difficulties, as on one side it attempts to return back to a genderless submission to God but on the other by dismissing the female, in some superior act of submission it upholds the hegemonic position of

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[375] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 109.
For further reading on Ghazālī see: Ghazālī, M., *Ihya 'ulum al-din* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Amirat al-Sharafiyya, 1908-1909).
[376] Schimmel, A, 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring 1996) p. 30.
[377] Ibid., p. 34.

men. The Ṣūfī's dismissal of the wife could then be used to justify many injustices against women for the belief that they (women) cannot be the 'chief concern' in Islamic masculinity.

Hujwiri felt that the ideal spiritual state for a husband and wife is one in which the husband and wife feel no sexual attraction to one another, and to illustrate this point he relates an account of Ibrahim al-Khawwas who was said to have visited a pious old man. When he entered the house, he saw an old woman who turned out to be the old man's wife, although by their demeanour he had assumed them to be brother and sister. The old man then informed Ibrahim al-Khawwas that they had lived together in a celibate manner for sixty-five years.[378] Although appearing as a story promoting submission to God without sex, the very fact that they were married, due to societal pressures or not, is indicative of the way that marriage has played a central role in acts of submission in some Ṣūfī practices too.

However, there are some Ṣūfīs who raise caution on celibacy and marriage within their spiritual path. Hujwiri makes the most outspoken statement in this respect,

> The evils of celibacy are two: 1) the neglect of an apostolic custom, 2) the fostering of lust in the heart and the danger of falling into the unlawful ways. The evils of marriage are also two: 1) the preoccupation of the mind other than God, 2) the distraction of the body for the sake of sensual pleasure. The root of this matter lies in retirement and companionship. Marriage is proper for those who prefer to associate with mankind, and celibacy is an ornament to those who seek retirement from mankind.[379]

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[378] Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub of al-Hujwiri* (trans.) Nicholson, R. A., (London: Luzac and Co., 1911) p. 362.
[379] Ibid., pp. 361-362.

On another occasion, Hujwiri asserted, 'there is no flame of lust that cannot be extinguished by strenuous efforts because whatever vice proceeds from yourself, you possess the instrument that will remove it.'"[380] Schimmel argued that the main reason for this was because,

> The Ṣūfīs felt that sex disturbs the pure surrender of the soul. And since their aim was to be with God alone, without the world and its distractions, one can very well understand their aversion to everything worldly; they were disgusted by the world and had therefore come to hate women, since through woman this world is renewed and continued.[381]

Sulami, a Ṣūfī master, states 'one of the most important aspects of Ṣūfīsm is to preserve ones haya (sexual modesty; also: sense of decency, or shame) in every state, for "haya is part of faith"'[382] Nicholson mentioned abstinence in his seven steps, mentioned earlier, but in what way is abstinence understood? It seems that anything that derails the Ṣūfī from their spiritual path would be approached with caution,

> The fear of the demonic power of sex and its dangers are well known in Ṣūfīsm. The very fact that the sexual act requires a ritual bath of the whole body indicates the danger of this act, in which demonic powers might easily interfere as they were thought to do in older religions in childbirth, marriage and death.[383]

It was through this abstinence that Ṣūfīs felt they were achieving a greater path to God. They tried their utmost not be tempted and waver in the path of sex and lust,

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[380] Ibid., p. 364.
[381] Schimmel, A., 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring 1996) pp. 32-33.
[382] Ibid., p. 32.
[383] Ibid., p. 33.

Some Ṣūfīs were immune to the other sex, and would have agreed with Kazaruni's statement that he would have married if there had been a difference, for him, between a woman and a pillar. He prohibited his disciples from sitting with women and with un-bearded young men, but advised them to get married if they could not restrain their lust.[384]

Kazaruni's understanding of women is not just a hindrance but also un-worthy of anything, which is evident in his usage of the word 'pillar'. In the context of his other words, it would be optimistic to understand the word 'pillar' as something supportive. Al-Hujwiri seconded the opinion of Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi who said that a celibate life is best for the Ṣūfī, 'It is the unanimous opinion of the shaykhs of this sect that the best and most excellent Ṣūfīs are the celibates, if their hearts are uncontaminated and if their natures are not inclined to sins and lust.'[385] Even through the acts of celibacy some Ṣūfīs have based their thoughts on masculine ideals.

There have been cases in Ṣūfī communities where women have also taken up a vow of celibacy as a vehicle to God. However, the extent to which societal gender roles can also be abstained from is another issue, 'aside from any spiritual motivations, there is a purely practical consideration: the burden placed upon women by marriage, in the form of household responsibilities and childrearing, would leave very little time or energy for lengthy devotional exercises.'[386] This is not to say that women have not lived their lives opposed to such societal pressure but their femininity is transformed and elevated to a higher 'masculine' form, as

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[384] Ibid.
[385] Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub of al-Hujwiri* (trans.) Nicholson, R. A., (London: Luzac & Co, 1911) p. 363.
[386] Elias, J. J., 'Female and the Feminine in Islamic Mysticism' *The Muslim World* 78, nos. 3-4 (October 1998) p. 210.

discussed earlier in this chapter. The great Egyptian Ṣūfī of the 8th Century, Dhu 'l-Nun al-Misri, is said to have met many such women during his travels, some of whom impressed him with their asceticism *(zuhd)*, others with their divine love, 'love induces continual striving, and when their spirits attain the highest purity, it [love] makes them drink from the delicious goblet of His love.'[387] The example of Rabi'a al-Adawiyya is renowned on this matter. Elias stated,

> Rabi'a is presented in literature as an ascetic par excellence; her asceticism combined with her karamat makes her an important model of the early female mystics of Islam. From the very start she had vowed total reliance on none but God, and although many of her friends and disciples would have been more than glad to provide for her physical needs, she persistently refused them. A freed slave, she lived an ascetic and celibate life in total devotion to God, unaware of her physical misery and pain: "O my Lord, if I worship You for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell. If I worship You from hope of Heaven, exclude me from there. But if I worship You for Your own sake, do not withhold Your eternal beauty".[388]

Masculinity and femininity is still constructed in Ṣūfī thought as a means to the beloved. Ṣūfī doctrine may well be based on ideas of submission and subservience yet they materialise in society using the same patriarchal prevalent structures of gender roles. This is indicated in the way that Ṣūfī thought becomes so engrossed in seeking love and the beloved (God) that its instruction on marriage and celibacy becomes a means to use women as a an inferior commodity which in turn upholds masculine hegemony. The concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* (the perfect man), which Ibn al-Arabi coined, may indeed have been exactly that. The way in which Ṣūfīs present two options of marriage and celibacy is an indication of the way in which

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[387] Ibid.
[388] Ibid., pp. 212-213.

masculinity seems greater than femininity. The pro-creating power remains, as the Ṣūfī man has the power to create, through marriage, or not to create through celibacy. In both instances of marriage and celibacy a 'marriage' takes place, one is with a woman and the other with God. Whether the marriage is for the man to seek the beloved through the female (Ibn al-Arabi) or for the women to seek the beloved through devotion of her husband (Ghazālī), both these models elevate the position of men over women. As Elias stated, 'in order to understand his own essence, man, or Adam, can contemplate himself in two aspects: as creator (*khaliq*) from which Eve emanates, or as God's creature (*makhluq*).[389] Man is therefore elevated to a superior position by understanding man as a creator. This understanding upholds the ideals of masculinity because if man has the power of creation then he has similar powers to God. However, this is to the detriment of women who are expected to emulate the path of Eve, which is understood to be inferior to Adam in Ṣūfī thought. Marriage and pro-creation then become a means to define and uphold the ideal Islamic masculinity for some Ṣūfīs but this in turn loses sight of the act of submission to God which is genderless, sexless and beyond pro-creating.

1.3   Ṣūfīsm and Homosexuality

Homosexuality has also been a challenging form of sexuality for Ṣūfīs as it challenges the very foundations of Ṣūfī thought based on 'love'. The Ṣūfī traditions contain numerous examples of episodes describing same-sex love,

> Some Ṣūfīs practiced *nazar*, the contemplation of a beautiful young man, considered to be witness *(shahid)* to the beauty of God. Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu poetry

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[389] Ibid., p. 217.

contains many descriptions of love *(ishq)* for the beardless youth *(amrad)*. When pressed to defend the practice, Ṣūfīs claimed *nazar* was a pedagogical experience, a ladder toward the love of God.[390]

The 15th Century Egyptian mystic, Abū al-Muwahib al-Shādhili stated,

> The manifestation of beauty in objects varies with the gift of the observer. Thus the common folk do not see other than the appearance of physical beauty while the chosen have unveiled before them the picture of abstract beauty in which is manifested the splendor of His name, the Exalted, that is resplendent in all creation through various phenomena.[391]

One such example of same-sex love is found in the life of Fakhruddīn Irāqi, the Persian philosopher and mystic of the 13th Century, who was said to have been attracted to the spiritual master Shaykh Baha'uddin Zakariyya' Multani who was the head of the Suhrwardi Order in Multan (current day Pakistan). On one occasion Iraqi tried to distance himself from Shaykh Baha'uddin but events brought them back together. Shaykh Baha'uddin chided Iraqi on fleeing from him and Iraqi's response was as follows,

My heart will not

> for an instant

> > flee from you

for how can the body

[390] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 99.
[391] al-Shadhili, Abu-al-Mawahib, *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism - A translation, with an introduction and notes, Based upon a critical edition of Abu-al-Mawahib Al-Shadhili's treatise entitled Qawanin Hikam al-Ishraq,* (trans.), by Jurji, J. A., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938) p. 36.

> wrench itself
>
> > from the soul?
>
> The nursemaid
>
> > of your kindness
> >
> > > folded me in its arms;
>
> Even before my mother
>
> > it fed me with
> >
> > > a hundred kinds of milk[392]

Schimmel argued that, 'many a Ṣūfī deemed the presence of a beautiful boy necessary for a perfect performance of *sama*.'[393] Chittick explained that *sama* is practised, 'in order to come to exist, things need to "hear" (sama') God's command to them. This word *sama'* is also employed to mean "listening to music" and, by extension, "music".'[394] Singing and music[395] have also been a powerful way for Ṣūfīs to connect with God,

> As a Ṣūfī must train his mind to appreciate beauty and by the same means stir up his
> inner spiritual feeling and music is considered to be beauty and harmony in sound,
> some Ṣūfī leaders, particularly Chistis and Moulvis, approve of the hearing of songs and
> the playing on musical instruments on condition that the purpose be to stimulate
> spiritual emotion. There is a common saying among Ṣūfīs that earthly beauty with its
> appreciation, is a bridge to the universal beauty.[396]

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[392] Iraqi, F., *Divine Flashes*, trans. by Chittick, W. C., and Wilson, P., (Paulist Press: New York, 1982) pp. 38-39.
[393] Schimmel, A., 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring 1996) p. 39.
[394] Chittick, W. C., *Ṣūfīsm – A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000) p. 78.
[395] See: Farmer, H. G., *A History of Arabian Music* (India: Goodword Books, 2001).
[396] Shushtery, A. M. A. 'Traditional Ṣūfīsm – Ideas and Teachers, Philosophy, Training, Orders and Ethics', in N, P., Archer (ed.), *The Ṣūfī Mystery* (Kent Octagon Press, 1980) p. 74.

There also seems to be a preference for young boys,

> The brief period between childhood and entry into the world of adult males was a time
> when gender boundaries were not yet fully formed, and young men were in an
> ambiguous situation. ...in Arabic homoerotic literature the appearance of a beard
> signaled the end of a youth's desirability.[397]

Schimmel placed the love of 'boys' alongside the spiritual path of the Ṣūfīs, 'But we have to admit that in the case of many Ṣūfīs of the lower order the constant complaint of the critics was justified, that is, that their *qibla* consisted of *shikam*, *sham* and *shahid*: stomach, candles (in festivities), and a beautiful boy.'[398]

Ṣūfī commentators have used a saying of the prophet Muḥammad to justify these relationships, 'I saw my Lord in the shape of a beautiful young man with his cap awry'.[399] Same-sex love in Ṣūfīsm has more often than not been covered through the veil of heterosexuality in order to fit heteronormativity. Kugle stated,

> It is logical to conclude that the only basis for such socially unlikely pairing is erotic.
> Despite, this, most modern writers equivocate on the issue of erotic friendship or
> openly sexual relations between the mystic and his beloved. They either fail to
> mention the possibility or apologetically assert that such love was purely 'platonic'.
> Sometimes they even translate the gender of the beloved surreptitiously, transforming

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[397] Ibid., p. 107.
[398] Schimmel, A., 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring 1996) p. 32.
[399] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 99.

a young man into a young woman to better fit their own conception of what love should look like.[400]

Same-sex love is often dismissed on the basis that true love must be heterosexual and that same-sex acts must be void of love. It is for this reason that the age of the male becomes raises the question if the young boy who becomes a man cannot still fulfill the role of bringing the lovers closer to God? The prolific Persian Ṣūfī writer Ahmad Kasravi (d. 1946) wrote a blistering account of some Ṣūfī practices in which he stated that Ṣūfīs 'coined a good name for each evil act of theirs'.[401] Kasravi used the story of Sheikh Owhad al-Dīn Kermāni as an example,

> In *Nafahat al-Ons*, the name of one of the great Ṣūfīs, Sheikh Owhad al-Din Kermani (May God Most High bless him) is mentioned. It states, "In witnessing the Truth he used to turn to manifestations of the upper body, and he witnessed Absolute Beauty in fixed forms." The author wants to say Sheikh Kermani was a homosexual, but he clothes his ugly acts in other garments. He says, "He contemplated the beauty of God in the faces of the youth."[402]

Kasravi dismisses the existence of same-sex love as an appreciation of the ultimate beloved, God and indicates his own reluctance to the issues because it does not fit Kasravi's ideals of Islamic masculinity. It is important to construct an overview of the same-sex relations amongst Ṣūfīs that took place in Islamic history, especially in the Arab lands. Al-Rouayheb recalled numerous stories which affirm the claim that same-sex activity was prevalent in Islamic history but more often than not it was seen as an 'evil'. He narrated the time when the

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[400] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 196.

[401] Ridgeon, L., *Ṣūfī Castigator: Ahmad Kasravi and the Iranian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford UK: Routledge, 2006) p. 79.

[402] Ibid.

prophet Muḥammad had seated a handsome man from the tribe of Qays behind him so as to avoid looking at him, the time when Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 778) fled from a handsome boy in a bath because he said that a devil was with every woman and seventeen devils were with every beardless youth and the time when the legal scholar Abu Hanifa (d. 767) seated a handsome student behind him for 'fear of betrayal of the eye'.[403] al-Rouayheb gives detailed summaries of the views that legal scholars held on the issue of *liwat* (same sex intercourse) but concludes that although it would be correct to state that this practice was forbidden by all legal schools it was practised by many,

> Having established that the recognized interpreters of Islamic law held that an act was not permissible, we are faced with abundant evidence that it was nevertheless indulged in openly, by belletrists who had close personal ties with religious scholars, and often by religious scholars themselves.[404]

Kugle has written an extensive essay on 'sexuality, diversity and ethics' in which his main point is that the Qur'ān is silent on the issue of 'homosexuality' because there is no such term used in the Arabic language and further argued the term is a late addition to Western vocabulary, a similar argument to that of Vanita highlighted in the previous chapter. Kugle stated that anti-homosexual sentiment has developed in Islamic culture after a narrow interpretation by Qur'ān scholars and that in modern times one must adopt a 'sexuality-sensitive interpretation' of the Qur'ān which acknowledged the fact that there are multiple sexualities in society.[405] In his essay he questioned whether the Prophet Muḥammad even saw homosexuality as a crime to punish,

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[403] Al-Rouayheb, K., *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005) p. 113.
[404] Ibid., p.147.
[405] Kugle, S., 'Sexuality, Diversity, and Ethics' (ed.), Safi, O., *Progressive Muslims – On Justice, Gender and Pluralism* (Oneworld: Oxford, 2005) p. 203.

The Prophet certainly did encounter people in his Arab society in Mecca and Medina who had uncommon sexual identities and practices that contradicted the heterosexual norm. Researchers in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic literature have uncovered a wealth of examples. Salah al-Din Munajjad has documented that same-sex practices existed among both men and women in pre-Islamic Arabia. ... These people were ambiguous in their gender and in their sexuality. Yet, the Prophet is not known to have censured any of them for sexual acts or sexuality in the wider sense. There is no report of the Prophet having any of them burned or stoned for sexual practices.[406]

In an Islamic tradition which is largely heterocentric and family-centric, alternative forms of masculine sexualities are often deemed 'un-Islamic' because they are the biggest threat to pro-creation. This is affirmed by Al-Rouayheb in a saying of Ali attributed to Muḥammad al-Hurr al-Amili from the Shi'i tradition in which Ali is asked by a heretic (*zindiq*) why *liwāt* is prohibited, 'if carnal penetration of a boy (*ityān al-ghulām*) were permitted, men would dispense with women, and this would lead to the disruption of procreation and the inoperativeness of vaginas and from allowing this much evil would arise.'[407]

The sexual act in homo or heterosexual relationships has often been understood in a form of 'active' or 'passive'. Such definitions have also played a role in Islamic sexualities too,

Muslim homoeroticism structured relations according to patterns of domination and submission, activity and passivity. Male sexuality was constructed as domination

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[406] Ibid., p. 222.
[407] Ibid., p. 129.

expressed through penetration, and domination in the sexual act signified power, honour, and status in other spheres.[408]

The very act of sex between a man and a woman in which the man penetrates has then influenced the way in which gender is constructed. The activity and passivity has materialised in constructing the same dynamic amongst the sexes. The sexual act between two men challenges and disrupts the heterosexual ideals of power-play in Islamic masculinity and this is another reason why homosexuality has always been excluded as un-Islamic. If the sex act was to be deconstructed as an extension of the ultimate role of submission to God then passivity is not just an alternative sexual pleasure but also a divine act,

> The passive position for adult males was considered shameful and a sign of weakness, those who enjoyed being penetrated were subject to scorn and even legal punishment. The normative role for adult males was active and insertive; passive roles were held by women, boys, and prostitutes of both sexes. Men who penetrated boys were as "masculine' as those who penetrated women, but those who submitted to penetration (and even desired it) risked humiliation and dishonor.[409]

The issue of celibacy has different implications when it comes to same-sex love and Ṣūfīsm. It seems that rejection of marriage need not mean rejection of sexual activity,

> Rejection of marriage, or even of the female sex, does not entail complete abstinence from sexual activity. Celibacy, in this context, meant primarily the refusal to participate in the sexual reproduction of society and did not exclude unproductive

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[408] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 106.
[409] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

forms of sexual activity. It is likely, therefore, that antisocial ways of sexual gratification came to be included in the deliberately rejectionist repertoire of some dervishes. The existence of a distinct group of youths known as *koceks* (from Persian *kuchak*, "youngster") among the Abdals is certainly suggestive in this regard.[410]

However, due to the pressure of a prevalent tradition that same-sex love was un-Islamic many opted for total abstinence. Schimmel recalled an interesting story relating to Rumi that shows the way in which celibacy created pent-up frustration which even Rumi found unnecessary,

> Rumi was apparently of a similar opinion, holding that a temporary fulfilment was more practical for a balanced and normal life than endless yearning. He simply put it somewhat more crudely when he was told that Awhaduddin Kirmani's love for young boys was chaste (although he used to tear their frocks during sama, dancing breast to breast with them). Rumi's short remark about this kind of relation was simple: "*Kash kardi u gudhashti*" ("Wish he had done it and been done with it!").[411]

Ṣūfīs have long stated that same sex relationships are a means to the beloved. This could also be said about heterosexual acts too. However, homosexual acts have most often than not been dismissed as an 'evil' amongst non-Ṣūfīs because it was a serious challenge to the masculinist ideals that society wished to uphold. Ṣūfīsm took positive steps towards an un-gendered understanding of creation and submission to God but it seems the more traditionalist views lingered on in their lives. The Ṣūfīs who had same-sex relations would often deconstruct their activities through a heteronormative understanding. The way in which active and passive acts

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[410] Karamustafa, A. T., *God's Unruly Friends – Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006) pp. 20-21.
[411] Schimmel, A., 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring 1996) p. 36.

were understood as a power dynamic are essentially heteronormantive methods which have given rise to masculinist ideals in Islamic thought and practice.

2.0   The *Murshid* (Master) and *Murid* (Disciple)

The relationship of the *Murshid* (Master) and *Murid* (Disciple) is another relationship in Ṣūfī communities that plays a significant role in gender construction and Islamic masculinity in Ṣūfīsm. As with all matters, it is based on the premise of deepening spirituality and striving to the beloved through a fixed being or entity:

> He (the disciple) will take a director, Shaykh, Pir, Murshid i.e. a holy man of ripe
> experience and profound knowledge, whose least word is absolute law to the disciple.
> A 'seeker' who attempts to traverse the 'path' without assistance receives little
> sympathy. Of such a one it is said that 'his guide is Satan', and he is likened to a tree
> that for want of gardener's care brings forth 'none or bitter fruit'.[412]

Malamud compared the relationship of master-disciple with that of husband-wife,

> The parallels between the behavior expected of disciples and those of women are
> apparent. Both relationships were fundamentally hierarchical, and the justification for
> inequality was connected to the divine will and order. Submission and effacement of
> personal identity were considered virtuous behaviors and ultimate expressions of piety
> for both disciples and wives. Clearly, dependence, obedience, and submission were key
> spiritual values.[413]

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[412] Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963) p. 32.
[413] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 110.

O'Halloran talked about the disciples of Jesus and how Christians are 'hovering for such a status but the Church replaces the 'institution of discipleship'.[414] O'Halloran further stated that the first duty of the Ṣūfī master, as given by classical masters, is 'not to perform miracles, but to provide what the disciple needs'.[415] There are many examples of great Ṣūfīs in history who were either masters or disciples, Ibn Arabi was the Murshid of Sadr al-Din Qunawi, Shams-e Tabrizi was the Murshid of Rumi, to name a few. It was the task of the disciple to reap the benefit of the master, 'Gnostics, says Ibn al-Arabi, cannot impart their feelings to other men; they can only indicate them symbolically to those who have begun to experience the like'[416]

The relationship was unable to survive without constructing it within the existing gendered examples, such as that of a mother[417] and child,

> Yet guides were also described as mothers and the beloved, and novices as children or lovers and brides. How should we interpret the nurturing and at times erotic language used to describe relations between masters and disciples? ... gender, power, and hierarchy converge in the Ṣūfī discourse on the master-disciple relationship.[418]

The mother-child analogy is a safe one as it could be seen as an attempt to remove any illicit interpretations of the relationship. However, the master is understood to be the 'creator',

[414] O'Halloran, F. X., 'A Catholic Among the Ṣūfīs', in Archer, N. P., (ed.), *The Ṣūfī Mystery* (Kent Octagon Press, 1980) p. 23.
[415] Ibid.
[416] Nicholson, R. A., *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1963) p. 103.
[417] 'The image of the child at the breast symbolises the utter dependence of the novice on the sheikh, a dependence that is analogous to his reliance on a gentle and loving God.' Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 97.
[418] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 90.

Muslim men are often represented in texts and rituals as procreators and women the passive receptacles or "fields" for the masculine seed. In Ṣūfī discourse spiritual guides have metaphorical procreative powers and are able to produce their own progeny.[419]

It was Ghazālī who suggested that the rights of the teacher were to be understood as greater than the rights of the parents. He explained that parents are the cause of the children's temporal existence, but teachers are the cause of their immortal existence.'[420] The spiritual masters were loved dearly because they helped to provide a path to God. As Kugle stated,

> For Islamic mysticism is based upon the goal of experiencing God's presence directly, a goal only attainable through the guidance, mediation, and help of a holy person. By placing trust in such persons, one's shaykh or spiritual guide, and turning to them with deference and respect as channels through which God's protection and nurture come, one can hope to internalize virtues, overcome selfishness, and render one's heart open to experiences of God's compassionate presence.[421]

This meant that, on occasions, some extraordinary ritual practices would take place, 'Qushayri so revered his master that he would fast and make complete ablution (*ghusl*) on the day he went to see him. ... *Fana* in the Sheikh was considered an aid in the disciple's quest for annihilation and subsistence (*baqa*) in God.'[422] The disciple was obligated to follow every command of the master, 'Ghazālī maintained that whoever had the good fortune to find a sheikh must honour and defer to him in every way. He must not, for example, argue with him about any issue even

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[419] Ibid., p. 91.
[420] Ibid., p. 105.
[421] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 277.
[422] Ibid., p. 93.

if he knows the sheikh is wrong.'[423] This view was not just held by Ghazālī but also al-Razi, 'In his chapter on *dhikr* (remembrance), Razi recommended that the disciple should fast for three days before receiving the prayer. Just before the transmission, he should perform total ablution (*ghusl*), performing it with the intention of one who was about to embrace Islam.'[424] Al-Razi uses the analogy of a good fruit bearing date palm and the Ṣūfī disciple, both need to be 'impregnated with semen and fertilised' to bear fruit,

> Al-Razi says, "The date palm resembles the believer in this sense. The female date palm will not yield good dates unless it is given semen, impregnated, and fertilised. It is well known that each year a substance is taken from the spathe of a male tree and grafted onto that of a female tree in order for it to produce good dates. If this is not done, it will not bear fruit properly. Similarly, when it is desired that a believer should yield fruit of sainthood, he is impregnated through the transmission of dhikr by a sheikh."[425]

The master and disciple relationship then appears to strengthen the understanding that dualism plays an essential role in spirituality. At times this dualism that appears through love, to other men and women, undermines the very existence of socially constructed gender ideals and breaks into new forms of Islamic masculinities. The master-disciple relationship constructs a powerful gender dynamic and struggle as the master is in command of the disciple and carries the burden of putting the disciple through a thorough training process in order to achieve the divine aim,

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[423] Ibid., p. 94.
[424] Ibid., p. 95.
[425] Ibid.

In the fluid and ambiguous state of discipleship, passivity and subordination were practiced without fear of humiliation and loss of manliness, indeed, they were valued behaviours. Power and authority were in the possession of the master, and it was through acts of surrender and subordination that a disciple attained spiritual power and maturity.[426]

The master trains the disciple to physically appreciate that the submissive role is the role that every submitted Muslim is expected to refine. What then of the master's Islamic masculinity? Is the master equating him/her self with God? Hermann Landolt commented on this issue through the example of Aynulquẓāt-I Hamadānī,

> For the most important rule for the disciple is the contemplation of God in the mirror which is the spirit of his master, whether the latter be physically present or not. When he has become master in his turn, he will contemplate himself in the mirror which is the spirit of his disciple, just as God, through creating the world, creates the mirror in which He contemplates Himself.[427]

3.0   Ṣūfīsm in India and Pakistan – A Brief Overview

The next section of this chapter looks at two examples from South Asia, the Ṣūfī saint Shah Hussayn and the Malangs. In order to elaborate further on these two examples a brief overview of Ṣūfīsm and Islam in India and Pakistan will be discussed.[428] This should not be regarded as an

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[426] Malamud, M., 'Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Ṣūfīsm', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1996) p. 108.
[427] Landolt, H., 'Two Types of Mystical Thought in Muslim Iran – An Essay on Suhrwardī Shaykh al-Ishrāq and Aynulquẓāt-I Hamadānī' *The Muslim World* Vol. 68 Issue 3 (April 2007) pp. 195-196.
[428] For further information on the Mughal empire see: Alam, M., and Subrahmanyam, S., (eds.), *The Mughal State – 1526-1750* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

in-depth analysis but as an overview of the developments that have shaped Ṣūfīsm and Islam in the South Asia, specifically India and Pakistan. Although there are histories which recall the differences and conflicts between Muslims and other religions, there is an understanding that Ṣūfīs quite happily encompassed Hindu traditions in the Ṣūfī path,

> There is also evidence of an attitude of understanding and admiration by Ṣūfīs towards Hindu cults and creeds. In the words of an early Ṣūfī, infidelity and faith, orthodoxy and heresy were all mere expressions: there was no such thing as absolute opposite or antagonism; everything was conceived in relative terms because in the final analysis all were God's creatures.[429]

Ṣūfīs believed that God could be witnessed through any fixed or living object so this would allow a lot of Ṣūfīs to find alternative cultures and traditions as complimentary to their paths. Focusing on the most prominent religion in Mughal India, Hinduism could quite easily be seen as in conflict with Islamic traditions. Hindus are not always considered monotheists if one considers that the individual Gods and Goddesses, such as *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, *Hunuman* are idols alluding to blasphemy of God's supreme position. However, if one considers that they are all the embodiment or incarnation of the over arching concept of God (or Brahma, in Hinduism) pushes one to reflect on classifying them as monotheist also. Each God and Goddess in Hinduism has its own characteristic, which is seen as an attribute of Brahma. The Gods and Goddesses are understood to be a means to understanding the great Brahma. The various names, ninety nine or so, of Allah in Islamic tradition are also different characteristics of God, although not figuratively depicted. The way in which Hindus seek Brahma, through Gods and Goddesses or the Guru (teacher), could be compared to the way the Ṣūfī seeks God through the

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[429] Alam, M., *The Languages of Political Islam – India 1200-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) p. 82.

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'master' or the varying paths.[430] The famous Mughal Ṣūfī, Mazhar Jān-I Jānān (b. 1699 – d. 1781) believed that Hindus should be accepted as 'people of the book', which is a category created in the Qurān and usually reserved for Jews and Christians,

> He (Jān-I Jānān) believed that Allah had promised in the Qur'ān to send guides to all
>
> nations (Qur'ān 13:7) and Mazhar Jān-I Jānān argued from this that Allah could not
>
> possibly forget to send His guides to such a great country as India. Ram and Krishna,
>
> highly revered religious guides of India, might have been prophets of Allah.[431]

However, mystical paths to God, be they Hindu or Muslim, were placed within a political context which did not always accept them with open arms. Two Mughal Emperors worth mentioning here are Akbar the Great, who reigned from 1556-1605, and Aurungzeb, who reigned from 1658-1707. Jalaluddin Muḥammad Akbar, known as Akbar the Great, has been hailed as one of the greatest Mughal emperors with a vision for pluralistic India.[432] Akbar preserved and enhanced art and architecture during his rule but his most significant contribution was his peace initiative towards Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths in the land. He is known for his bold political step that repealed the law which demanded that non-Muslims, especially the Hindus, pay the *jizyā* monetary tax. Akbar tried in vain to establish a religious outlook that would encompass all the faiths of the land, known as *Din-i-Ilahi* (Divine Faith)[433] but this never happened,

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[430] See: Lorenzen, D. N., (ed.), *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community, Identity and Political Action* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) and Klostermaier, K. K. *A Survey of Hinduism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

[431] Engineer, A. A., 'A Muslim View of Hinduism' (eds.), Schmidt-Leukel, P., and Ridgeon, L., *Islam and Inter-Faith Relations – The Gerald Weisfeld Lectures 2006* (London: SCM Press, 2007) p. 172.

[432] Further reading on Akbar the Great see: Smith, V. A., *Akbar the Great Moghal 1542-1605* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917).

[433] The idea of a divine faith has been rejected by some, 'while many scholarly works on the Mughal period claim that Akbar invented a new religion known as Din-I Ilahi, this is an older view based on mistranslations of Abu al-Fazl's writings about Akbar. In fact, the Din-I Ilahi was a discipleship order

Akbar created the Mughal empire from two sets of components, what he found in Hinduism and what he, or rather his father, had brought with him from central Asia. He synthesised these two legacies to produce a distinctly Mughal polity and culture. The fusion involved individuals, institutions, patterns of behaviour and literary and artistic styles. Understanding the Mughal synthesis requires examining its component as Akbar found them.[434]

Akbar is said to have married a Hindu woman, popularly known as 'Jodha'. On 15th February 2008 a Bollywood movie directed by Ashutosh Gowariker was released under the name *'Jodha Akbar'*. There was much protest about the name of this movie as experts argued that the name Jodha had not been mentioned in any text from that period of Indian history.[435] Professor Shirin Moosvi, a historian at Aligargh Muslim University in India, argued that Jodha was called Maryam Zamani and had converted to Islam.[436]

Aurungzeb, also known as Alamgir, could be seen as the antithesis of Akbar as he enforced strict adherence to Islamic law during his reign.[437] He commissioned a new legal code known as *'Fatawa Alamgiri'*, Alamgir's Fatawa. Aurungzeb repealed and restricted a lot of the laws that Akbar had enforced. He reinstated the *jizya* monetary tax, the advancement of arts because he was against any form of figural representation and the prohibition of music. He was also

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intended to bind the highest ranking nobles in complete loyalty to the emperor, not unlike the relationship that bonded the first Safavid ruler Ismail (r.1501-24) and his Qizilbish supporters. Akbar was seen as a master (*pir*) in the Ṣūfī sense and his devotees were like students (*murids*).' Asher, C. B., and Talbot, C., (eds), *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 130.

[434] Streusand, D. E., *The Formation of the Mughal Empire* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 23.

[435] *Fact, myth blend in re-look at Akbar-Jodhabai*, 10 Dec 2005 http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1326242.cms (Date accessed: February 24th 2009).

[436] Ibid.

[437] For further information on Aurungzeb's life see: Richards, J. F., *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Schimmel, A., *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).

known for his anti-Hindu views and believed that all non-Muslims should be converted to Islam.

The varying views of Islam are evident from these two Mughal kings but at the fall of the Mughal empire only one reigned supreme,

> As the Mughal empire weakened, Muslims began to assert very different notions of 'orthodoxy'; voices of theological rigidity that were minorities in the Mughal heyday amplified to define the majority belief.[438]

4.0   The Case of Shah Hussayn (b. 1539 – d. 1599)

There are numerous colorful Ṣūfī saints in South Asian history who are revered to this very day.[439] However, in this section the focus is on one Ṣūfī saint who encompasses, and challenges, all that has been discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. This section also serves as a prelude to the more contemporary phenomenon of the Malangs. Shah Hussayn was born in 1539 in the Punjabi city of Lahore, current day Pakistan.[440] He was understood to be a

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[438] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 223.

[439] See: Types of Ṣūfī orders around the world are presented by Shushtery, A. M. A., 'Traditional Ṣūfīsm – Ideas and Teachers, Philosophy, Training, Orders and Ethics', in Archer, N. P., (ed.), *The Ṣūfī Mystery* (Kent: Octagon Press, 1980) pp. 57-77, Rizvi, S. A. A., *History of Ṣūfīsm in India* (Delhi: Munishiram Manoharlal, 1989).
See also the life of the Sarmad, Persian mystic of the 17th century, understood to be a Jew who converted to Islam but then alleged to have renounced Islam to Hinduism. Sarmad became known as the naked mystic who smoked *bhang* (marijuana), believed in the Hindu Gods, and had fallen in love with a Hindu boy called Abhai Chand in Katz, N., 'The Identity of a Mystic: The Case of Sa'id Sarmad, a Jewish-Yogi-Ṣūfī Courtier of the Mughals' *Numen* Vol. 47, No. 2 (2000), pp. 142-160.

[440] Further information on Shah Hussayn's life: The most in depth biography was written by Shaikh Mahmud ibn Muḥammad Pir (ca. 1662), *Haqiqat al-Fuqara* (The Truth of Those Impoverished by Love), housed at Punjabi University Library, Pakistan, number 3253/248 Farsi. Mirza, S. T., *Shah Hussayn* (Islamabad: Lok Wirsa Isha'at Ghar, 1989).

theologian but best known for his prolific Punjabi poetry, known as *kafi*.[441] What makes

Hussayn an interesting Ṣūfī saint is his heterodoxies,

> Shah Hussayn was more open about his sex life than most pre-modern historical
>
> personages and appears to have been gay. At least we can say, in more clinical
>
> detachment, that he never married, never raised children, never was a patriarchal
>
> leader of a household, and had a primary erotic attachment to another man who also
>
> never married. He displayed behaviour that called into question the 'naturalness' of
>
> gender and the social power inherent in inverting gender expectations.[442]

Hussayn, unlike Ghalib, was accepted as a Ṣūfī saint even though his practices would be

frowned upon by the religious *Ulama* (religious scholars). Hussayn rooted his approach within

the Islamic traditions. It is understood that Hussayn interpreted the Qur'ānic verse, 'The life of

the world is nothing but play and pleasurable distraction', to mean that everything in life

should be played.[443] Kugle stated that this verse suddenly struck Hussayn as profoundly true,

and he resolved then and there to an understanding that his way to live a life of submission was

to 'throw of constraints of ascetic piety, legal rectitude, and rational seriousness; he would

instead lead his life as a child at play, abandoning all pretence, hypocrisy, and ambition as well

as fear of social blame.'[444]

The hagiographic poem records him as declaring;

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[441] See: Anwar, G. Y., (trans.), *The Paths Unknown: Kafiyan Shah Hussain* (Lahore: Majlis Shah Hussain, 1966).
[442] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 184.
[443] (Qur'ān 6:32, echoed in Qur'ān 29:64 and Qur'ān 47:36).
[444] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) pp. 185-186.

> Isn't it better to dance through the marketplace
> than to study knowledge without putting it to practice?
> This verse has opened wide eyes of my understanding
> that I make myself into the living interpretation of its words
> The life of this world is such a burden
> escape complaining by abandoning yourself to play![445]

Hussayn's master was outraged when he heard that he had misinterpreted the verse. Shaykh Bahlul is said to have rushed to Lahore to urge his disciple to change his ways,

> But when he saw Hussayn in ripped red clothes, dancing and drinking wine, he realised that this was his personal path to religious sincerity. The Shaykh blessed him and returned to his home. These two diametrically opposed reactions, initial rejection followed by consideration acknowledgement and respect, would set the pattern for Hussayn's reception in the wider society.[446]

The relationship of master and disciple, which seem to be set on specific gender identities, was challenged, by the master, but dismissed by the disciple and in this way what emerges is an acceptance of not just an alternative path to God but also of Islamic masculinities. Hussayn then began to live a life of spirituality mixed with ample amounts of 'play' and had the 'blessing' of his master on his practices. Hussayn was initiated into the Qadiri lineage by Shaykh Bahlul when he was ten years old.

Hussayn understood the Qur'ān as supportive of alternative paths of spirituality and masculinity. This masculinity did not conform to any of the ideals or roles that society had laid out for him. Society had placed many boundaries for grown men such as Hussayn but he had

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[445] Ibid.
[446] Ibid., p. 211.

no intention of upholding any of them. This was further strengthened through another 'play' interest of his, Madho Lal. Madho Lal was a Brahmin Hindu boy with whom Hussayn fell in love. Initially the teenager Madho resisted the advances of the forty odd year old Hussayn but finally gave in. It is said that Hussayn would follow Madho wherever he went and would spend the night on his doorstep. However, the union was destined to be and this happened at the spring Basant festival where the two 'frolicked and played'.

After some difficulties that involved the resistance of Madho's Brahmin family, the two began to live together in a place known as Baghabanpur, just outside of Lahore. The onlookers found this to be peculiar,

> The sexual nature of their relationship was widely known, for the poet notes that some of Hussayn's followers observed their sexual play through the keyhole and were troubled for a time by doubts of posterity. The poet defends their sexual play as a 'spiritual initiation' in which Hussayn passed on to Madho the spark of divine love through touch, which conveyed to him mystical knowledge more holistically and powerfully than words possibly could.[447]

Madho joined the army for a time but then returned back to Hussayn. When Hussayn died at the age of sixty Madho fell into a deep depression and spent thirty-five years at the tomb of Hussayn, longing to be united with him. 'He became the spiritual successor of Hussayn's saintly authority, and upon his death, Madho was buried directly beside Hussayn.'[448] There is much controversy surrounding this love affair and whether it actually existed. Kugle argued that those who deny that this existed have their own prejudices. He gives the example of Lajwanti

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[447] Ibid., p.194.
[448] Ibid., p.198.

Ramakrishna who dismisses the love as just a 'rumour' and 'un-natural'.[449] Ramakrishna is also critiqued by Kugle for stating that Hussayn wanted to 'possess' Madho which Kugle says shows how she excludes the element of love between the two. Something she is 'obviously uncomfortable with', Kugle retorts.[450] Once again masculine ideals and roles are being read into the love story of Hussayn and Madho. It is these ideals that scholars such as Kugle attempt to correct with a more accurate narrative of the story in order to show the way in which spiritual Ṣūfīs were led to a path to God which was often heterodox,

> Most modern scholarship has shown a deliberate misrecognition of the queer erotic dimension of Shah Hussayn's relationship, even though the Ṣūfī mystical tradition among the Muslims of South Asia is rife with stories of saintly persons 'falling in love' with young men.[451]

The ideals of society are lost in the path of submission to God. Hussayn exemplified this as he used the basis of play and love to get closer to God. It was through his true love for Madho that he felt spiritually uplifted,

> The kiss as a bestowal of grace or spiritual power is common trope in Ṣūfīsm, but Shah Hussayn took it very literally. He asserted that sexual play is the best path toward spiritual cultivation. In the gesture of the kiss, empowered with erotic attraction and

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[449] Ramakrishna, L., *Punjabi Ṣūfī Saints* (New Delhi: Ashajanak Publications, 1973).
[450] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 197.
See also for further discussion on this: Alhaq, S., *Forgotten Vision: A Study of Human Spirituality in the Light of the Islamic Tradition*, (London: Minerva, 1996).
[451] Kugle, S, *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 196.

refined with spiritual care, he found the intimate mingling of souls; the kiss was a gesture of self-abnegation and spiritual renewal.[452]

The life of Shah Husseyn highlights some of the key features of Ṣūfīsm such as marriage, sex, dualism, master/disciple relationships and submission to God. All of these practices helped Shah Husseyn to create his own spiritual path and masculinity. The example of Shah Husseyn is then another example of the prevailing culture of Mughal society in terms of gender and sex,

> Shah Hussayn's homoerotic play, suggested that the medieval and early modern periods were a time of flexibility and pluralism in Islamic communities, when understandings of gender were more fluid, norms of sexuality more flexible, and boundaries of communal allegiance more permeable.[453]

5.0   The Malangs

The Malangs[454] are possibly one of the largest groups of individuals who challenge Islamic traditions and societies, masculinity and masculinities. It is for this reason that they are understood as 'marginalised' Ṣūfīs in South Asia.[455] The Qalandars, as the Malangs call themselves, emerged as a playful force in South Asia, in the same way that Shah Husseyn lived, 'The Qalandars were radical Ṣūfīs who stormed across Islamic boundaries of social etiquette and legal rectitude in an attempt to rescue ritual from the demands of order and restore it to its

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[452] Ibid., p. 194.

[453] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 222.

[454] Platts translated the Urdu word 'Malang' as, 'a kind of Mohammadan derwish, who lets the hair of his head grow to its full length, and leaves it uncombed and dishevelled; - a derwish in a state of ecstasy; a religious enthusiast; - a careless or inconsiderate person; - a tall, robust fellow; - a kind of bird.' Platt, J. T., *A Dictionary of Urdū Classical Hindi and English* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006) p.1066.

[455] Karamustafa used the word 'marginalised', Karamustafa, A. T., *God's Unruly Friends – Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006) p. 102.

primordial status as 'play'.[456] Karamustafa highlighted the main features of Qalandars as those who reject all property (even clothing at times), are celibate, do not gain any employment (but alms-taking became fairly regulated), are homeless wanderers and thoroughly antinomian in appearance and behavior.[457] The Qalandars also use hashish as a 'hallucinogen'.[458] They are also understood to offend 'social sensibilities through their conspicuous elevation of music and dance to the status of ritual practice. Though largely domesticated by Ṣūfīsm, the use of music and dance in religious contexts remained, in legal terms, a suspicious practice in Islamic societies in the Early Middle Period.'[459] Karamustafa further quoted Abu Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234) from the ninth chapter of his *Awarif al-ma'arif* where Qalandars are discussed,

> The term Qalandariyah denotes people who are governed by the intoxication [engendered by] the tranquillity of their hearts to the point of destroying customs and throwing off the bonds of social intercourse, travelling [as they are] in the fields of the tranquillity of their hearts.[460]

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[456] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 199.
'At a more popular level, Ṣūfīsm developed several offshoots, absorbing some local Hindu features. The Gurzmars a branch of the Rifa'is, carried maces, and with them inflicted wounds upon themselves; the Jalalis took hashish, ate snakes and scorpions, and allowed their leaders sexual promiscuity with female members of the order. The Qalanders shaved their heads and facial hair, used intoxicants, and sometimes roamed naked; the Madaris consumed hashish, rubbed ash on their bodies, and wandered naked. The Haidaris adorned themselves with iron necklaces and bracelets and wore a ring attached to a lead bar piercing their sexual organs, there by eliminating the possibility of sexual intercourse. Like a number of other heterodox orders that developed outside India, these locally influenced Ṣūfī orders paid little care to regular Islamic rituals and prayers. The violation of Islamic norms and the absorption of the evidently anti-Islamic features were, however, glaringly blatant.' Alam, M., *The Languages of Political Islam – India 1200-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) pp. 90-91.
[457] Karamustafa, A. T., *God's Unruly Friends – Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006) pp. 16-17.
[458] Ibid., p. 19.
[459] Ibid., p. 20.
[460] Ibid., p. 34.

Custom or tradition are terms often used to limit spiritualities and in turn masculinities. In Islamic culture and tradition the notion of *umma*, community, plays a great role in carrying out this task, as Netton argued, 'tradition, and return to tradition/Tradition, may be one route to the Sacred, but it is not the only one. For both Islam and Christianity, the Sacred may be achieved by community, *umma*. Notions of community may transform that which is merely profane.'[461] This in turn creates a tension between the acts of a 'united umma' and the marginalized few, such as the Malangs. Netton presented four paradigms to understanding the tension, or struggle, that emerges when traditions conflict with spiritual activities. Firstly, the *Neo-cycle of Tradition*, this is 'the basic attempt to re-clothe- or even 're-invent' a community – in the case of Islam, the *umma* – in a more 'traditional' or 'traditionalist' guise in order to access the fundamentally sacred.'[462] He explained this through the following example,

> There is a prophetic grounding (Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Muḥammad) which yields an oral and written tradition/Tradition. This, in turn, with the passing of the years, is given a liberal/modern/Modernist slant or *tafsir*, after which an animated reaction emerges: there is an attempt to return to that early tradition/Tradition, to the *salaf*, in the case of Islam.[463]

The second paradigm is the *'Paradigm of Purification'* which Netton based on the view of the influential social anthropologist, Mary Douglas that sacred things and places are to be protected from defilement.[464] The third paradigm for Netton is the *Paradigm of Kenosis* in which the Greek translation of the word kenosis means 'emptying' so to access the truly sacred and return to tradition all the elements of 'modern' or 'liberal' in faith, society, custom and ritual

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[461] Netton, I. R., *Islam, Christianity and Tradition – A Comparative Exploration* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) p. 145.
[462] Ibid., p. 144.
[463] Ibid.
[464] Ibid.

must be emptied.[465] The final paradigm is the 'Paradigm of Return' in which the return to

'Tradition' is based on the understanding that everything created has come from God and so it

must return.[466] The paradigms of Netton highlights the way in which 'tradition' has played a

significant role in understanding the development of Islamic thought in practice but more

importantly the way in which such notions of traditions and traditional have been understood

in terms of gender, sexuality and masculinity. The more 'traditional' a Muslim society tried to

be, the more controlling it was of gender and sexuality. It is this rigid tradition that the

Qalandars reacted against and challenged as they developed their unique spiritual existence.

The way in which the Malangs are perceived in Indian and Pakistani society seems to be based

on a scale of acceptable and unacceptable religious living,

> Dervish piety has not normally been viewed as the manifestation of a new mode of
> religiosity. Instead, it has been subsumed under the larger and seemingly permanent
> category of "popular religion". The operative assumption here has been that there was
> a watertight separation in premodern Islamic history between high, normative, and
> official religion of the cultural elite on the one hand and low, antinomian, and popular
> religion of the illiterate masses on the other hand.[467]

Another way of controlling tradition has been through the establishment of the specific law

schools in Islam or the establishment of Ṣūfī orders. There are many reasons why these schools

or orders emerged but Qalandars have no intention of being restricted by these. The Qalandars'

devotion lies to God only and through their anti-social ways they confirm their submission to

God.

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[465] Ibid.
[466] Ibid., p. 145.
[467] Karamustafa, A. T., *God's Unruly Friends – Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006) p. 5.

The emergence of these 'mendicants'[468] originates from the Middle East,

> Two widespread movements: the Qalandariya, which first flourished in Syria and Egypt
> under the leadership of ethnically Iranian leaders, most notably Jamal al-Din Savi (d. ca.
> 630/1232-33), and the Haydariyah, which took shape in Iran as a result of the activities
> of its eponymous founder Qutb al-Din Haydar (d. ca. 618/1221-22). Both movements
> rapidly spread from their respective places of origin to India and to Asia Minor.[469]

However in the Indian subcontinent they were associated with Shaykh Usman Marandi (1177-
1274) of Sindh, current day Karachi, Pakistan. He was better known as La`l Shahbaz Qalandar,
La`l because of his habit of dressing in red and Shahbaz ('Royal Falcon') conferred by his
shaykh. Shah Khizr Rumi, and Bu Ali Walandar of Panipat are also key figures who helped
establish the Qalandari way in South Asia. They all emerged in and around 7-8th/13th-14th
centuries.[470] Schimmel stated that, 'Although this La`l Shāhbaz Qalandar is described as a stern
ascetic, his followers belong to the group of Qalanders who claim not to be bound to the law,
and his asceticism manifests the jalal-side of religion as do the strange acts of worship at his
tomb.'[471] Ewing mentioned that the central meeting place for Malangs in Pakistan is at the
shrine of La`l Shābaz Qalandar because they believe that their lines of spiritual descent can be
traced back to him who they see as the spiritual and physical focus of their order.[472] A famous

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[468] Ibid., p. 4.
[469] Ibid., p. 3.
[470] Ibid., p. 59.
[471] Schimmel, A., 'Eros – Heavenly and Not So Heavenly – In Ṣūfī Literature and Life' *Ṣūfī*, Issue 29 (Spring 1996) p. 30.
[472] Ewing, K. P., 'Malangs of the Punjab: Intoxication or Adab as the Path to God?' in Metcalf, B. (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) p. 364.

song that has been sung by many Pakistani (and Indian) singers commemorates La`l Shābaz

Qalandar in the most positive light[473],

> *Ho Lal meri put rukhiyo bala jhoolay la lun*
> O red-robed Qalandar may I always have your protection
> *Sindhri da, Sehvun da, Sakhi Shahbaz Qalandar*
> O great saint of Sindh and of Sehwan, O companion Shahbaz Qalandar
> *Dama Dum Mast Qalandar, sakhi Shahbaz Qalandar*
> In every breath of peace is Qalandar, O companion Shahbaz Qalandar
> *Ali dum dum dey undur, Ho Lal meri*
> Ali is in every breath of peace, O my red robed Qalandar
> *Char charag teray bulan hamaysha*
> May the four lights always be lit in your shrine
> *Punjwa balun ay'o bala jhoolay la lun*
> Here I am to light the fifth O grand master[474]

On June 13th 1969 Asad Bukhāri produced a movie in Pakistan called 'Dillan Dey Souday' ('The

Transactions of the Heart')[475] in which the famous Pakistani singer Noor Jehan (b. 1926 – d.

2000) sang this song. In the movie a female is seen dancing at the shrine of what seems to be

the grave of Shāhbaz Qalandar. It is not clear who wrote the lyrics for this famous 'dhamāl'

(Ṣūfī trance music) to which many Malangs dance into a mystical frenzy. The dhamāl is very

different from the dance movements of the whirling dervishes of Turkey as there is no

sequence or rotation in the Qalandari dance as it is without any structure and the Malang may

get carried away in remembrance of the beloved at any given time. It is also important to

mention the use of *Qawalli*, Ṣūfī devotional music, at the shrines of dead Ṣūfī saints. These are

normally sang by groups of men but the famous female Qawwali singer Abida Parveen, of

Pakistan, is an example which goes against the male dominated set up. The Malangs position

during Qawwalis is also interesting,

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[473] Famous South Asian singers who have sang these lyrics are, to name a few, Noor Jehan (Pakistan b. 1926 – d. 2000), Reshma (Pakistan b. 1947 -), Muḥammad Rafi (India b. 1924 – d. 1980), Asha Bhosle (India b. 1933 -) and maybe most importantly Abida Parveen (Pakistan b. 1954 -), Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (Pakistan b. 1948 – d. 1997) and Maqbool Ahmed Sabri (Pakistan b. 1956 -) & Mehmood Ghaznavi Sabri (Pakistan b. 1975 -) known as 'Sabri Brothers'.
[474] Translation my own.
[475] Translation my own.

In the space outside the *diwan khana*, the musicians sing *qawwali* and the Malangs

gather, though at some shrines the space set aside for "respectable" qawwali is

separated from the open space where the Malang establish themselves.[476]

Adopting the path of a Qalandar Ṣūfī is not a simple task as it requires the follower to dislocate

themselves from society,

> The term (Qalandars) signifies one who resists the conventions of the prevailing social
>
> order, the dress and etiquette of polite society. Typically, those who are identified as
>
> Qalanders live in violation of shari'at openly and publicly.[477]

The Malangs are known to roam from shrine to shrine of long dead Ṣūfīs and their dress defies

the social norms and expectations from men in South Asian society. In the photographs that

Ewing included in her book one can see the Malangs have an appearance which is

stereotypically challenging to the feminine and masculine norms of clothing and appearance.[478]

Malangs are seen to cover their hair partially, wear large pieces of jewellery around their necks,

hands and ears. The Malangs challenge the social order so drastically that they are not looked

upon favourably by others,

> Qalandars embody this intense reaction against bourgeois notions of work, countering
>
> them with 'holy waste'. They renounce productive work, refuse reproduction of the

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[476] Ewing, K, P, 'Malangs of the Punjab: Intoxication or Adab as the Path to God?' in Metcalf, B. (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) p. 367.
[477] Ewing, K. P., *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam* (Durham: USA, Duke University Press, 1997) p. 203.
[478] Ibid., p. 204.

family, and resist the labour it takes to conform to religious customs and law. Those who oppose Qalandars see their lives as waste – wasting their time, living as parasites off productive society, and squandering the opportunity to earn religious merit through conventional morality.[479]

The way in which the Malangs are distanced and dismissed in society highlights another important issue in submission, spirituality and masculinity. When the Malangs dismiss all that is worldly they aim to perfect a positive loving union with their beloved but through this theology of absolute love they also reduce their position to the most submitted and vulnerable in society. For if the Malangs wanted they could adopt the social standards of the environment that they live in and be accepted in society, but they opt for a more radical appearance which leaves them submissive and vulnerable not only to God but also human beings too. The image which Ewing showed in her book of the *nanga baba* (naked old man) highlighted the commitments of Malangs and qalandars to their theological approach to God.[480] Ewing found in her anthropological research with the Malangs in Pakistan that they were equalled, at times, to nothing but beggars.[481] Ewing wrote, 'Qalandars are considered beyond the social pale. They are shunned for their reliance on hashish and their rejection of the outer, visible aspects of Muslim law.'[482] However, their use of hashish plays a role in their spiritual existence,

> To allow the orders of God to structure one's life, the qalandar must completely abandon the social and material world of ordinary people. He thus becomes utterly exterior vis-à-vis the social world in order to enter the inner, spiritual world. Ordinary

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[479] Kugle, S., *Ṣūfīs and Saints' Bodies – Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2007) p. 200.
[480] Ewing, K. P., *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam* (Durham: USA, Duke University Press, 1997) p. 207.
[481] Ibid., p. 206.
[482] Ibid., p. 201.

people must follow the shar'iat, which regulates the external, visible aspects of daily life, in order to demonstrate their submission to God. The qalandar, in contrast, is concerned only with the interior life. Having rejected the external world, he need not worry about or adhere to the shar'iat. His relationship to God need not be mediated by external rules. Rather every action involves a direct infusion of the power and spirit of God into everyday life, through direct communication with God or a saint. The order often comes in a dream or in a state of intoxication brought on by hashish.[483]

Different approaches to the beloved by men and women are the biggest challenge to the ideals of Islamic masculinity but the Malangs challenge this 'naturally',

> The qalandar operates as an "other" within a Muslim discourse of community. As sign the qalandar is a bearer of difference that explicitly challenges the naturalness of the prevailing social order from within.[484]

Muslim society, through its laws, attempts to structure itself very systematically; the legal obligations and daily rituals are evident of this; in the same vein the physical attributes, especially clothing, of Muslims are also expected to be regulated in the same way,

> But the qalandar challenges even practices that fall within this realm of habit: the qalandar might not brush his hair; he might not be obviously male or female; he might not even wear any clothes to speak of. The qalandar thus disrupts even the most unexamined habits, the established hegemonies, of everyday life.[485]

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[483] Ibid., p. 215.
[484] Ibid., p. 217.
[485] Ibid., p. 217.

In contemporary Pakistani politics where some religious and political movements are trying to establish a uniform 'Islamic state' we can see why the qalandari Malangs are shunned from society because they fail to uphold not just the Islamic legal requirements of faith but also the societal requirements of citizenship.

Ewing stated that the ideals of Ṣūfīsm when mixed with prevalent politics loses its idealistic qualities,

> Islam is not easily encompassed within the category of "religion" that has been imposed on it, and even Ṣūfīsm, with its emphasis on inner experience, is not readily relegated to a private sphere. Ṣūfīs themselves have recognised the important role of desire in the constitution of the political subject and the potential significance of Ṣūfīsm.[486]

The push and pull between Ṣūfī ideals and gender construction in society is not just confined to South Asia,

> The popular Ṣūfī rituals of North Africa and Central and South Asia are a means for women to become involved in the communal Islamic existence which, within the realm of orthodox Islam, is solely the domain of men. Within the framework of the mystical orders, however, they continue to occupy the secondary inferior role assigned to them in mainstream Islam.[487]

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[486] Ibid., pp. 253-254.
[487] Elias, J. J., 'Female and the Feminine in Islamic Mysticism' *The Muslim World* 78, nos.3-4 (October 1998) p. 223.

Ewing does recall an incident where she meets a female Malang.[488] It is interesting that during this conversation she keeps relating back to her spiritual masters who are all men.[489] In the story that Bava Sahib, the female Malang, told Ewing she was not as antinomian as some Qalandars, 'she expressed links not only to the *be-shar* (in violation of shar'iat) Qalandari order, but also to the *ba-shar* (in accordance with *shar'iat*) Qadiri order and its founder.'[490] It is then not simple to generalise all malangs as the same. However, there are some clear guiding principles, 'the qalandar considers his life to be regulated and guided by such commands. These commands come either directly from God or from a dead saint who requires the service of the qalandar.'[491] In the case of the Bhava Sahib, Ewing stated that she thought these communications with her spiritual master were through dreams and visions.[492]

Bhava Sahib shows the way in which the Malangs are committed to their dead masters and God, whose existence they experience in their mystical trances but are not visible to the Malangs. This is where Malangs differ from *pirs*,

> The most explicit feature that distinguishes the Malang from a *pir* attached to one of
>
> the four regular Ṣūfī orders present in the Lahore area is the difference of opinion and
>
> practice with respect to adherence to the *shari'a. ...* The *ba shar* ("with the *shar'ia*") Ṣūfī
>
> *pirs* maintain that obedience to the *shar'ia* is the first necessary step on the Ṣūfī path to

[488] Ewing, K. P., *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam* (Durham: USA, Duke University Press, 1997) pp. 209-217.
[489] Ibid., p. 213.
[490] Ibid., p. 214.
[491] Ibid.
[492] Ibid., p. 215.

ultimate reality. *Tariqa* (the mystical path), which develops the inner man, can be practised only by one who already follows the *shar'ia.*[493]

The Malangs believe that this approach to God is internal as opposed to external,

> The Malang considers himself in opposition to ordinary men and their concern for the external world. Because ordinary men are involved in the external world, they must, in order to demonstrate their submission to God, follow the *shar'ia*, which regulates the external, visible aspects of daily life.[494]

The Malangs distance themselves from the *pir* for the main reason that they are too involved in the external part of the world which includes marriage and children,

> The *pir* lives in this outer world among ordinary men. He marries and has children. Thus, he passes back and forth between inner and outer social world. His body must be purified through the prescriptions of the *shar'ia* so that he can make transitions from the everyday social world in which he is enmeshed to the inner spiritual world, which he reaches through Ṣūfī discipline and meditation.[495]

Malangs identify their spirituality by distancing themselves from the 'inside' world by not living in houses and this is the very reason why they are often seen at the side of the graves of Ṣūfī saints.[496] However, Ewing argued that this is done to avoid any contact with women as she

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[493] Ewing, K, P., 'Malangs of the Punjab: Intoxication or Adab as the Path to God?' (ed.), Metcalf, B., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) p. 360.
[494] Ibid.
[495] Ibid., p. 361.
[496] Ibid., p. 362.

explained in detail the way in which women are generally located in the 'house' but her own field research has shown that there are also female Malangs.[497] Malangs then do not challenge the prevailing gender constructions and roles but negotiate their position within this. This is more evident in the way in which Malangs relate to God,

> An analogy emerges in the symbolic system, that quite explicitly equates the Malang with woman. Directly stated, the analogy implies that God is to Malang as man is to woman. Just as woman is married to man and subservient to him, the Malang considers himself to be betrothed to God and is, of course, subservient to him. At death, the Ṣūfī achieves his life goal: marriage to God.[498]

The masculinist ideals that equate dominance with the husband and subservience with the wife has been adopted by the Malangs to construct their relationship with God but by also breaking out of the prevailing order. The use of the term 'bride' in Malang theology is not metaphoric as they are known to dress as women and wear women's jewellery too.[499] This then implies that Malangs have firmly grasped the gender-less aspect to subservience but by realising this they have moved to another gendered space – the feminine.

6.0   Conclusion

Ṣūfīsm is deeply committed to achieving a mystical union with the beloved (God). The way in which this is achieved in Ṣūfīsm varies not just from region to region but from person to person. It is for this reason that Ṣūfīsm has conflicted with legalist Islam, which has been seen to lose sight of 'love'. Love being the essence of this path and understood to be the essence of

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[497] Ibid. The case of the female Malang, Bhava Sahib, as highlighted earlier in this chapter.
[498] Ibid., p. 363.
[499] Ibid.

God. If love is the guiding factor then it, in essence, is genderless, in the same way as God, but Ṣūfī commentators such as Ibn al-Arabi and Ghazālī have added socially constructed gender to Ṣūfī thought and in turn supported an ideal Islamic masculinity.

At a more practical level Ṣūfī doctrine becomes more enmeshed in gender roles and construction through the issue of marriage where there are conflicting views for and against it. It is generally accepted in Ṣūfī practices that every man (and woman) has sexual needs, but it is believed that marriage is not the only means to regulate this. Some believe that marriage is an integral part to the path to God whereas some believe that celibacy is. Women are either a means to God or an obstruction to God, which becomes a basis to support marriage or celibacy. Celibacy is also understood to mean celibacy from pro-creation/women but not necessarily sexual fulfilment.

Homosexual relations have long been associated with Ṣūfīs who have had same sex relationships with the basis firmly in accepting that an object or being can help 'witness' or achieve oneness with God. However, such acts have been a way to ferment anti-Ṣūfī sentiment which has led to Ṣūfīs in homosexual relations to try and justify their actions through a heteronormative glaze.

The master/disciple relationship is one that Ṣūfīs would argue is another means to the beloved. The master is expected to help the disciple in understanding what is required of them in order to strengthen their spirituality. The binaries used in Ṣūfī thought and practice, such as master/disciple, mother/son, are analogous of the prevailing power dynamics in social gender relationships between men and women, namely through marriage as husband and wife.

The Qalandars of South Asia embody centuries of interaction between Islam and Hinduism. The Qalandars are the antinomian movement who dismiss all forms of societal/religious structures. The case of Shah Hussayn embodies this through his rejection of rules and obligations over his acceptance of the world as a 'playground'. The extent to which rules are dismissed is indicative in the life of Shah Hussayn who falls in love with his disciple, Madho Lal who is a Hindu boy. It is evident from the sources that this was a relationship rooted in love and spirituality. This love and spirituality flourished beyond religious barriers and continued in Madho even after the death of Shah Hussayn. Even though historians and theologians have attempted to deconstruct their story through heteronormative masculinist eyes they have been unable to conceal the fact that their love was beyond gender roles and construction.

The contemporary case of the Malangs of Pakistan today highlights the fact that amongst legalists and religious orthodoxy the practices of the religious heterodox still flourish. The Malangs defy social norms in search of perfect union with God. They intoxicate themselves with *hashish* in hope that it helps release them into a religious frenzy. However, Malangs have tried to un-gender their spiritual subservient position by adopting the feminine role, which they believe is the ultimate societal role of submission, but by doing this they are also strengthening ideals in Islamic masculinity. From its ideals to its varied practices, Ṣūfīsm presents a conflicting view of masculinity as its core notions seek liberation from all to God yet in prevailing conditions of Islamic society and culture it makes a return back to tradition.

Chapter Five

Islamic Feminism and Islamic Masculinity

> *You do not do, you do not do*
> *Any more, black shoe*
> *In which I have lived like a foot*
> *For thirty years, poor and white,*
> *Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.*
>
> *Daddy, I have had to kill you.*
> *You died before I had time--*
> *Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,*
> *Ghastly statue with one gray toe*
> *Big as a Frisco seal*
> *Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)[500]*

1.0   Introduction

The work of feminist writers has challenged discussions surrounding gender and sexuality for a number of years. The early pioneer of feminism, Betty Freidan, argued in her 1963 book that stereotypical gender roles could not be used to identify 'women'.[501] As has been discussed earlier in this thesis, gender roles emerge from a series of relationships. In recent times there has emerged a vast array of scholarship in the area of feminist studies and feminine identity. Such is the vastness of these voices that one is left perplexed in defining feminism and its aims, especially in Islamic terms. What are the aims of Islamic feminism? Is Muslim feminism a movement towards 'equality' with men? Or is it simply to express a female voice? How do these voices deal with the question of Islamic masculinity and masculinities? These are just some of the questions that arise at the outset when approaching Islamic feminism and the writing of Muslim feminists.

In Muslim feminist studies the debates are between men and women, between patriarchy and egalitarianism. Islamic traditions play a pivotal role in shaping the construction of gender in Islamic society and culture. Muslim feminists have been voicing a challenge to patriarchy through two key methods. Firstly, through a reflection of their own experiences and offering a

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[500] Plath, S., *Collected Poems* (ed.), Hughes, T., (London: Faber and Faber, 1981) p. 222.
[501] See: Friedan, B., *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 1992).

critical inquiry of their distinct individual circumstances. Secondly, through the grappling of religious texts, especially the Qur'ān, in understanding the traditions that have become an Islamic society and culture. These two methods will be explored in this chapter. As far as possible the voices of those Muslim feminists connected to India and Pakistan have been used but as the focus of this chapter is two-fold it has been necessary to include the voices of those Muslim feminists who are not connected with the geographical location but are essential voices in the debate. It must also be stated at the outset that the Muslim feminist writers that this chapter focuses on do not present their argument on feminism by using specific Pakistani and Indian examples, such a narrative would be found in sociological and anthropological works, but use the term 'muslim women' in its more generalized and global form. However, an effort has been made to highlight the voices of Muslim women who have a connection to Pakistani and Indian society and cultures.

Asma Barlas[502], one of the foremost Muslim feminist commentators on the Qur'ān, stated, 'treating women and men identically does not always mean treating them equally'.[503] An exploration of this statement leads one to question the extent to which the notion of 'same but not equal' is an Islamic concept? Are social constructions of gender equality different from theologically constructed ones?

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[502] Asma Barlas is a Pakistani academic who is currently Professor of Politics and the Director of the Centre for the Study of Culture, Race and Ethnicity at Ithaca College, New York State, United States of America. Although not a Islamic Studies specialist, her book on women and Islam has received widespread coverage and ignited much discussion and debate. Barlas started her academic career at Kinnaird College for Women in Pakistan where she graduated with her B.A in English Literature. This was followed by a Masters degree in Journalism from Punjab University and subsequently a PhD at the University of Denver in International Studies. This chapter will cover key areas of discussion from her book and discuss them in relation to other Muslim women feminists through a thematic approach to understanding their construction of masculinity.

[503] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 132.

Amina Wadud[504] stated, 'to disagree with the idea that men are superior can be projected as anti-Islam! This is why theological theories behind gender reform also need elaboration.'[505] It is the theological theory of Islamic masculinities that this chapter aims to use in relation to the particular form of masculinity that Muslim feminists challenge. This chapter is then concerned with the thought of Muslim women feminists and the way in which they have constructed and challenged mainstream masculinity in Islamic societies and traditions. The definition of feminism seems to vary from woman to woman and through the writing of these Muslim women a general consensus will emerge on those themes and issues which define Islamic feminism.[506]

It is important to highlight that Muslim feminist debates are largely limited to forms of Islamic masculinity that are heterosexual. The Muslim feminists who have been highlighted throughout this chapter all speak from a heterosexual viewpoint. The main reason for this is because it is in the heterosexual Islamic masculinity model that Muslim women have suffered the most. Other forms of Islamic masculinity (e.g. homosexual) or Muslim femininity (e.g. lesbian) linked to sexual preference are void from the Muslim feminist debate because such forms are also marginalized communities who are battling against the heteronormative mainstream in Islamic societies and traditions. It is for this reason that the term 'Islamic masculinity' used throughout this chapter is restricted to this fact and a sole emphasis is placed on its usage by Muslim feminists.

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[504] Amina Wadud is an African-American Muslim feminist scholar of Islam who was born in Bethesda, Maryland, United States of America. Wadud's father was a Methodist Minister and her mother is said to have descended from 'Muslim slaves' in Africa. Wadud completed her Ph.D at the University of Michigan in 1988 and studied Arabic and Islamic Studies for a short time in Cairo, Egypt. Wadud has been a controversial figure due to her leading the prayers of a mixed-sex Muslim congregation in various cities around the world. Her books on Muslim feminism have received international coverage and she has presented her thoughts and ideas globally.
[505] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 93.
[506] The term 'Muslim feminist' will be used to refer to all Muslim women who have challenged the prevalent understanding and construction of Islamic masculinity and femininity regardless if they do or do not self identify with this term.

1.1 Defining Islamic Feminism

The term Muslim feminist used throughout this chapter will deal specifically with female Muslim feminists, as men could also be understood as feminists too.[507] However, there seems to be a debate within feminist writers on who wants to be understood as a 'Muslim feminist', as Wadud clarified, 'that is why I still describe my position as pro-faith, pro-feminist. Despite how others may categorize me, my work is certainly feminist, but I still refuse to self-designate as feminist, even with "Muslim" put in front of it, because my emphasis on faith and the sacred prioritize my motivation in feminist methodologies.'[508] Muslim feminists, such as Wadud, link their work directly with faith which they believe is essential in distinguishing them from those who may have an anti-faith or anti-Islam agenda when dealing with the position of women in Islam. It may also be the case that such a self-identification is for the purposes of locating the debate within the Muslim communities in order for it to be debated by and amongst Muslims in order for change to occur.

Asma Barlas begins her own writing by stating her aim in re-reading the Qur'ān and shows the same faith based conviction that Wadud highlighted,

> The central question I have posed in this book, whether or not the Qur'ān is a patriarchal text, is perhaps not a meaningful one from the Qur'ān's perspective since its teachings are not framed in terms of the claims made by either traditional or modern patriarchies. However, since the Qur'ān was revealed in/to an existing patriarchy and

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[507] See: Amin, Q., *The Liberation of Women – The New Woman* (trans.), Peterson, S. S., (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2004).

[508] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 8.

has been interpreted by adherents of patriarchies ever since, Muslim women have a stake in challenging its patriarchal exegesis.[509]

For Barlas it is a search for an alternative reading,

> To accept the authority of any group and then resign oneself to its misreadings of Islam not only makes one complicit in the continued abuse of Islam and the abuse of women in the name of Islam, but it also means losing the battle over meaning without even fighting it.[510]

It would be true to state that the 'group' that Barlas alludes to is most likely 'men' since it has been the business of men in past and present to comment on the Qur'ān. This is evident in the majority of medieval *tafsīrs* (interpretation, commentary), such as Ibn Kathir and al-Tabari.[511] Lived experiences have also pushed Muslim feminists to raise questions. Riffat Hassan, Professor of religious studies at the University of Louisville, stated

> The more I saw the justice and compassion of God reflected in the Qur'anic teachings regarding women, the more anguished and angry I became, seeing the injustice and inhumanity to which Muslim women, in general, are subjected in actual life. I began to feel strongly that it was my duty – as part of the microscopic minority of educated

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[509] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. xi.
[510] Ibid., p. xi.
[511] See: al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabari: Jāmi` al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al Fattāh al-Khālidī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam; Beirut: Dār al-Shāmiyya, 1998) and Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathir*, (Riyadh: Dar al-Islam, 1998).

Muslim women – to do as much consciousness-raising regarding the situation of Muslim women as I could.[512]

Riffat Hassan was born in Lahore, Pakistan in 1943 into an upper class family, 'my father and mother came from among the oldest and most distinguished families in the city and were both "good" parents in that they took care to provide us with a high quality of life.'[513] Hassan recalled a difficult relationship with her mother and father and commented on the difficulty being torn between a mother who always expected too much from her and said to her, 'I do not love you, I love your qualities' to a father whose 'traditionalism' she 'hated' because he believed that girls should be married at sixteen years of age.[514] The distance grew between Hassan and her father who was regarded as an honest and kind man in society but Hassan was unable to see any of these traits in her father.[515] Her father wanted her to enroll in an all-girls school, something she resisted but her mother received the brunt of her father's wrath who accused her of 'spoiling and misguiding' the young Hassan.[516] Hassan enjoyed writing poetry at this early age and found it a way to escape from the world she was not enjoying,

> This humble work of mine do bless my God,
> My fervent message to the world proclaim,
>
> I do not covet wealth or power or fame,
> I just want satisfaction for reward.
>
> I felt it was Your Will that I should write
> Of Beauty, Love and Joy, Eternal Peace,

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[512] Hassan, R., 'The Issue of Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition' (eds.), Grob, L., and Hassan, R and Gordon, H., *Women's and Men's Liberation – Testimonies of Spirit* (Westport, USA: Greenwood Press, 1991) p. 66.

[513] Hassan, R., '"Jihād Fi Sabil Allah": A Muslim Woman's Faith Journey from Struggle to Struggle to Struggle' (eds.), Grob, L., and Hassan, R and Gordon, H., *Women's and Men's Liberation – Testimonies of Spirit* (Westport, USA: Greenwood Press, 1991) p. 12.

[514] Ibid., p. 13.

[515] Ibid., p. 14.

[516] Ibid., p. 18.

> Of Sorrow, Struggle that a Death does cease,
> Of Hope, its sweet illuminating light.[517]

Hassan was becoming considerably worried as she grew older of an imminent arranged marriage and in order to avoid this she moved to Durham, UK to study. It was here that she spent seven years, firstly completing a degree in English and Philosophy and then a PhD, which focused on the work of Allama Muḥammad Iqbal, the national poet-philosopher of Pakistan.[518] After returning to Pakistan Hassan married a man named Dawar who she states 'seemed to need me intensely'.[519] There seemed to be an intellectual gap between Hassan and her husband who was not as highly educated as her. Needless to say this marriage did not last,

> Dawar was a typical product – victim – of the patriarchal society and had a compelling need to be "head" of the family. He found it impossible to fulfil this need being married to a woman who was a super achiever, while he regarded himself as a loser. He was attracted by my strength but resented it at the same time.[520]

Hassan was left with a daughter named Mona. She did embark on a second marriage with Mahmoud, an Egyptian Arab Muslim, who was more than thirty years older than her but the happiness and love that he promised was also short lived,

> I came near to total destruction, physically and mentally, at the hands of a man who was not only a male chauvinist par excellence but also a fanatic who could invoke the

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[517] Ibid., p. 15.
[518] Ibid., p. 21.
[519] Ibid.
[520] Ibid., p. 22.

holy name of God in perpetrating acts of incredible cruelty and callousness upon other human beings.[521]

Such stories of Muslim feminists are a glaring example of the way in which their scholarship is highly personalized by their own lived experience. Hassan's experience of men was not a pleasant one. The three men that she recalled, her father and her two husbands, all present a form of Islamic masculinity that can easily be identified in Islamic traditions, societies and cultures, especially in the case of India and Pakistan. Hassan's life experience also identifies the way in which the three men in her life wanted her to conform to the roles which they understood to be for men and women yet she challenged all three of them and sought an alternative.

There may be disdain at the personalizing of scholarship by Muslim feminists but such a response has been argued as essential. The South African Muslim feminist, Sad'iyyah Shaikh who has written about 'a *tafsīr* (interpretation) of praxis',[522] commented in her article, 'lived experiences constitute a mode of *tafsīrs*' (interpretation of text). Such a procedure in understanding the Qur'ān could be an extension of the legal method of Ijtihād (independent creative reasoning) that has so far been a discussion located to the legal debates in Islamic law. It is for this reason the lived experience of Muslim feminists will be elaborated in as much detail as possible throughout this chapter.

Hassan believed there are three theological assumptions on which the inequality of men and women is erected in Islam. These three theological assumptions also indicate the way in which

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[521] Ibid., pp. 24-25.
[522] Shaikh, S., 'A Tafsīr of Praxis: Gender, Marital Violence, and Resistance in a South African Muslim Community' McGuire, D., and Shaikh, S., (eds.), *Violence Against Women in Contemporary World Religion: Roots and Cures* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007).

Hassan defined Islamic masculinity for her purposes. Firstly, she argued, that man, not woman, is God's primary creation since women are believed to have been created from Adam's rib. This has led to the understanding that by men that they are closer to God or even loved more by God. Secondly, that the woman and not man was the primary agent of the 'fall' of Adam and expulsion from heaven to earth which makes her a figure to be 'hated'. Such an assumption could be understood to mean that men are not capable of making mistakes and that it was the woman, and here generalizing all women, who brought man down from a heavenly abode. Thirdly, that woman was not only created 'from' man but 'for' man which makes her merely instrumental and not fundamentally important.[523] This is probably the most dangerous of assumptions as it reduces women to a mere object to glorify the position of the Muslim man. This could also fuel an understanding that women are to be used by men 'for' the purposes of sex and pro-creation. Hassan has highlighted the broad parameters of a generalized image of Islamic masculinity in contrast to Barlas who begins the process of re-asking the questions before making such assumptions,

> Does Islam's scripture, the Qur'ān, teach or condone sexual inequality or oppression? Is it, as critics allege, a patriarchal and even sexist and misogynistic text? Intimately related to that question is the second: Does the Qur'ān permit and encourage liberation for women?[524]

Asra Nomani is another Muslim feminist whose life experience highlights the way in which Islamic traditions and gender understandings are not easily challenged. Nomani is an Indian-

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[523] Hassan, R., 'The Issue of Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition' in Grob, L., and Hassan, R and Gordon, H., (eds.), *Women's and Men's Liberation – Testimonies of Spirit* (Westport, USA: Greenwood Press, 1991) p. 70.
[524] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 1.

American feminist journalist who has written two books.[525] Nomani's struggle, similar to

Hassan, came in the form of strict family values,

> Over the years my mother had warned me: "if you marry an American, your father will
>
> have a heart attack." Muslim guilt set in. Within weeks I left an American Lutheran
>
> boyfriend who loved me fully, said he was willing to convert to Islam, and was ready to
>
> learn Urdu. I got engaged, sold the condo I had bought off Chicago's Lake Shore Drive,
>
> and moved to Washington to prepare for a wedding in Islamabad, Pakistan. The deeper
>
> voices of my religion were speaking to me: the ban on Muslim women marrying non-
>
> Muslim men, the disapproval toward sex before marriage. I was looking for a reunion
>
> between my two selves.[526]

Honor is another tool used to police the way in which Muslim women are expected to uphold

the ideals of Islamic masculinity. Nomani's mother used 'family honor' to dissuade Nomani

from her path of love in order to support her husband, and Noman's father, the archetypal

patriarchal man. Nomani's statement that the deeper voices retracting her from her path were

of 'religion' highlights the way in gender and sex also become a matter of religious rights and

wrongs.

Nomani's arranged marriage by her parents did not last but by honoring her parent's wish she

strengthened her Father's role by agreeing and in turn failed to reach that sacred union that

she set out to achieve. Nomani once again embarked on finding that perfect man and it was in

Pakistan on a working visit that she felt she found that 'perfect man' but this also turned out to

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[525] See: Nomani, A. Q., *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) and Nomani, A. Q., *Tantrika: Traveling the Road of Divine Love* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003).

[526] Nomani, A. Q., *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) p. 14.

be a disaster. The man who she fell in love with had made her pregnant but as soon as he found

out about the child he left her. This all happened during the kidnapping and killing of the

American Jewish journalist, Daniel Pearl[527], who was a dear friend of Nomani's,

> Throughout my pregnancy I tried to make peace with my boyfriend so that we could
>
> marry and make the nuclear family that so many people in my religion and culture
>
> expected. But my baby's father broke promise after promise, leaving me empty and
>
> depressed.[528]

Nomani tried to live up to the expectations of being a wife and a mother but desperately sought

that perfect husband and father. Nomani believed that for her family to be fully 'Islamic' it

would be incomplete without the 'man'. Patriarchy is a deep tension in the world of Nomani

and she uses a trip to Mecca to identify its significance in Islamic societies. One story she

recalled is when she is in Mecca with her parents, her son, her neice and nephew. With her

Father absent her nephew wanted to go to Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) to get some food but

with Saudi strict laws forbidding women to travel alone without male chaperones this was

looking like a difficult task,

> In the Mecca Sheraton, my mother wasn't about to let her grandson stay hungry. She
>
> gathered up her resources and pulled her hijāb over her head. "Okay, let's go," she
>
> said. As they crossed the street in their stealthily KFC run, Samir looked both ways for
>
> any religious police ready to swoop down on them. He urged my mother to move more
>
> quickly. "Hurry, Dādī! (Gran) You might get arrested!" In front of the counter at KFC,

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[527] Further information on Daniel Pearl see: Pearl, M., *A Mighty Heart: The Daniel Pearly Story* (London: Virago Press Ltd., 2004).

[528] Nomani, A. Q., *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) p. 22.

Samir felt scared. "Are people going to say, 'You can't come here'?" They ordered carryout.[529]

Nomani highlights the way in which strict Islamic societies have made it difficult for women to even go to buy food from shops without men, forcing women to have men around them at all times. Initially fathers would take this role, or brothers, but ultimately women would be expected to have husbands 'chaperoning' them.

The few biographies presented above highlight the difficulty in defining and understanding the parameters of Islamic feminism, every life brings with it an alternative story with its own battles. However, what does emerge definitively is that each Muslim feminist's voice expresses an opposition to the prevalent, generalized Islamic masculinity that is oppressive and dominant. Muslim feminists seek to challenge this understanding in the first instance but most of all see this challenge materialize into change.

1.2   Muslim Feminists on Creation, Sameness and Difference

The creation story has played a part in the way gender is practised and understood in Islamic tradition and society which makes it both an interesting and important vantage point for examining the way Muslim feminists interpret creation. In what way do Muslim feminists understand creation to challenge dominant, oppressive forms of Islamic masculinity? It has been stated in an earlier part of this thesis that in creating human beings God created not on the basis of gender but on the basis of a creation that would submit. So in its essence, as creation, there is no distinction between men and women as both are expected to submit to

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[529] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 91.

God but it is when creation becomes 'man' and 'woman' in society that inequality is evident. Muslim feminists do not begin the debate from the basis that men and women are created the same,

> Sameness is extremely illusive and difficult to achieve. Sameness cannot be sustained with regard to any two people for more than an instant in the course of a single day – let alone in the course of a whole lifetime. While I support the notion of distinctions between women and men unequivocally, and believe those distinctions are worth celebrating – especially for women, who have been compared to and contrasted with men for too much of our lifetime in civilization – I am likewise unequivocal about the notion of egalitarian family.[530]

Wadud rejected notions of equality but in order for there to be a solution to the predicament that Muslim women find themselves there has to be a shift of power in gender construction. This could be resolved by understanding the role of submission to God, as ultimate power, as a uniting factor for men and women but still allowing differences in their (men and women) acts and practices. This would allow Muslim feminists, such as Wadud, to advocate core differences between, and amongst, men and women without creating a power struggle. Such a theological model of gender challenges the significance and centrality of the nuclear family, something that Wadud believes should be unequivocally egalitarian. In order for there to be unequivocal egalitarianism in any social relationship between men and women power needs to be fixated with the ultimate power, God.

The dismissal of 'sameness' is also supported by Barlas,

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[530] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 155.

It should thus be easy to understand why feminist theorising on sexual equality, especially in its earliest stages, focused on trying to establish the sameness/similarity of women and men and why feminists have been so persistent in calling for identical treatment of both. Arguably, however, it is not only the notion of *sexual difference* (the two-sex model) that is phallocentric, but also of sexual *sameness* (the one-sex model), in that both view man as a Subject and woman as the Other. And elements of both persist in modern patriarchal discourses in which woman is re-presented not only as the opposite of man but also as a "lesser man".[531]

The point to note in Wadud and Barlas' work is the disdain to being 'compared' and 'contrasted' to 'men' yet Barlas still believed that men and women are intrinsically linked together,

> In other words, man and woman – two sexually-differentiated human beings – created by God from a unitary source (*nafs in wahidatin*) are related to each other ontologically, not merely sociologically. The creation and sexuality of one is, thus, inseparable from the creation and sexuality of the other. That man and women, or men and women, are bound together not only by virtue of their common source but also by virtue of their interdependent (though different) sexualities seems to be implicit in a number of Qur'ānic statements about human creation. These statements warrant the inference that sexual differentiation between man and woman was intended by God to create closeness, not opposition, between them.[532]

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[531] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 132.
[532] Ibid., p. 98.

Such an understanding of the relationship between men and women is read from the pro-creation models of the family. The relationship of human beings as a single humanity has been a central understanding in Islamic traditions, as stated earlier. But does this require men and women to be 'bound together' or 'interdependent'? Such a question may be linked to the act of submission as Muslim feminists are also skeptical about the term 'submission'. Wadud rejected this by stating,

> After some thought, I departed from one norm by rejecting the word submission. I prefer to use Islam as a "engaged surrender." Although subtle, the idiosyncrasy between submission and surrender is significant. I understand the word submission as involuntary, coerced externally and limited to a prescribed set of required duties. Many Muslims actually confess that a Muslim *must submit* to their understandings of a prescribed set of required duties as if there is no choice. Submission is enforcement situated completely outside of the one who submits. However, if such a coercive construction really existed, then the extensive and continual failure of Muslims to submit – as evident throughout Muslim history and in the present – would be impossible. Islam would be universally sanctified and religiously exemplary. Muslims disobey Allah's will obviously because they *can* exercise choice.[533]

Wadud's rejection of the term 'submission' is based on the most negative understanding of the word being, 'involuntary', 'coerced', 'limited' and following 'required duties'. Is submission to God a limited and forced act? As stated in earlier chapter two, the term 'submission' has been understood in the most illustrative manner in the Qur'ān through the lives of all those submitted individuals, such as prophets. The Qur'ānic model of understanding 'submission' is

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[533] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 23.

not as narrow as Wadud's. Both Adam and Eve were reprimanded for seeking power from something that was created by God, Satan. It was the 'choice' that allowed Adam and Eve to take from the tree, on the invitation of Satan, but they were reprimanded for shifting power from God to another form of creation. There is also a difference between the terms 'engaged surrender' and 'submission' for the former is based on retaining some form of power and the latter is ultimately submissive, uniting men and women in submission to God. If Muslim feminists are battling against their oppression and submission to men in society could it be that this has led them being reluctant to accept ultimate submission even to God?

In order to retain this power in her model of 'engaged surrender' Wadud formulated a '*Tawḥīdic paradigm*'

> *Tawḥīd* is the operating principle of equilibrium and cosmic harmony. It operates between the metaphysical and physical realities of the created universe, as well as within them both. On a theological level, *tawḥīd* relates to the transcendent and yet eminent divinity or ultimate reality, the "unicity" of Allah. Allah is not only one and unique, Allah is uniform, and unites existing multiplicities or seeming dualities in both the corporeal and the metaphysical realm.'[534] 'As an ethical term, *tawḥīd* relates to relationships and developments within the social and political realm, emphasizing the unity of all human creatures beneath one Creator. If experienced as a reality in everyday Islamic terms, humanity would be a single global community without distinction for reasons of race, class, gender, religious tradition, national origin, sexual

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[534] Ibid., p. 28.

orientation or other arbitrary, voluntary, and involuntary aspects of human distinction. Their only distinction would be on the basis on *taqwā* (Qur'ān 49:13).[535]

Wadud uses God as a unifying force in men and women and stated that 'Allah is one and in our true state of surrender we are all at one with Allah'.[536] Benazir Bhutto, the first female Muslim prime minister of Pakistan, also believed that equality between human beings was based on their origin,

> Since men and women came from the same being, neither gender has an inherent superiority over the other. They are equal. All the children of Adam (the common ancestor of all humans) are honored, regardless of sex. The Qur'ān says: "And surely We have honored the children of Adam." Because both are honored equally, they must be equal in God's eyes and in Islam's practice.[537]

Wadud and Bhutto sought equality of creation through empowering them as 'one' with God raising their position as powerful but the very act of submission, or surrender, has united creation as *powerless*. Wadud also recognized the significance that *taqwā* (God consciousness) can play in keeping the balance between men and women,

> To keep Allah present in all our encounters on the corporeal level a certain moral consciousness is required. That moral consciousness is *taqwā*, according to the Qur'anic worldview. Yet *taqwā* is a volitional function of our *khilāfa* or agency. If consciousness

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[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid., p. 29.
[537] Bhutto, B., *Reconciliation – Islam, Democracy, and the West* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2008) p. 41.

of Allah is absent, it is possible to think of others on the vertical plane of inequity and transgression, leading to oppression, abuse, and transgression.[538]

Wadud makes an important point of highlighting no distinction between men and women but this ideal can only be achieved when human beings are all submitted to God, 'the Qur'ān does not consider woman a type of man in the presentation of its major themes. Man and woman are two categories of the human species given the same or equal consideration and endowed with the same or equal potential.'[539] However, Wadud also highlighted the necessity of 'pairs' in her argument, similar to Barlas,

> I am interested in the Qur'ānic use of *zawj* as one in a necessary or contingent 'pair' essential to the Qur'ānic accounts of creation: everything in creation is paired. "And of all things We have created (*zawjayn*) pairs, perhaps you [will all] reflect [on this fact]." (Qur'ān 51:49). Dualism becomes a necessary characteristic of created things.[540]

Dualism, typically understood in the family structure, then becomes essential for men and women, according to Wadud.[541] Has this necessary dualism found in the form of the family structure created the patriarchy that Muslim feminists seek to challenge? Is this dualism restricted to heterosexual, childbearing couples? However, on the issue of masculinity and femininity Wadud does accept that God does not create ideals,

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[538] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 31.
[539] Wadud, A., *Qur'ān and Woman – Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 15.
[540] Ibid., pp. 20-21.
[541] 'The Qur'ān first establishes that all created things are paired, then reinforces this mutual necessity by depicting theoretical pairs in the rest of creation.' Ibid., p. 21.

Femininity and masculinity are not created characteristics imprinted into the very primordial nature of female and male persons, neither are they concepts the Qur'ān discusses or alludes to. They are defined characteristics applied to female and male persons respectively on the basis of culturally determined factors of how each gender should function. They have figured very strongly in interpretation of the Qur'ān without explicit Qur'ānic substantiation of their implications.[542]

In their attempt to raise the position of women in Islamic traditions and society, Muslim feminists have sought a method of empowering women. 'Men' as a standard to which equality is measured has been rejected by Muslim feminists with the method of locating all of creation into the oneness of God. However, even though such a theory is supported by classical philosophers,[543] there are many examples in the Qur'ān which specifically distance human creation from God, as stated in chapter two. It is for this reason that disempowering all of God's creation, including men, could be a better balance of power for harmony between and amongst God's creation.

1.3   Patriarchy and Power

Patriarchy[544] is generally understood as a system in which the man holds the power. This could be either in society, politics or family structures. The patriarch, for most Muslim feminists is

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[542] Ibid, p. 22.

[543] See, Elkaisy-Friemuth, M., *God and Humans in Islamic Thought – 'Abd al-Jabbar, Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) pp. 1-40.

[544] Barlas defined it as such, 'I define patriarchy in both a narrow (specific) and broad (universal) sense in order to make a definition as comprehensive as possible. Narrowly defined, patriarchy is a historically specific mode of rule by fathers that, in its religious and traditional forms, assumes a real as well as symbolic continuum between "father/fathers"; that is, between a patriarchalized view of God as Father/male, and a theory of father-right, extending to the husband's claim to rule over his wife and children. ... Patriarchy, broadly conceived, is based in an ideology that ascribes social/sexual inequalities to biology; that is, it confuses sexual/biological differences with gender dualisms/inequality.' Barlas, A.,

namely a heterosexual, childbearing, brave, and powerful man.   Barlas' main query against

patriarchy is based on the assumption that

> God is understood as "father/male" or that the Qur'ān teaches that God has a special
>
> relationship with males or that males embody divine attributes and that women are by
>
> nature weak, unclean, or sinful. Further, does it teach that rule by the father/husband
>
> is divinely ordained and an earthly continuation of God's rule, as religious and
>
> traditional patriarchies claim? Alternatively, does the Qur'ān advocate gender
>
> differentiation, dualisms, or inequality on the basis of sexual (biological) differences
>
> between women and men?[545]

Barlas argued that the Qur'ānic passages have been read in isolation to other parts and this can

be corrected by 'recognizing the Qur'ān's textual and thematic holism, and thus the

hermeneutic connections between seemingly disparate themes, is absolutely integral to

recovering its antipatriarchal epistemology.'[546] Patriarchy is then bound with leadership and

power. Such attributes are embodied in various ways in theology, to God and 'men'. As Barlas

stated,

> For I do not limit patriarchy to merely an affirmation of men and men's experiences
>
> but also extend it toward a hegemonic presumption of dominance and superiority.
>
> That includes both the presumption of male as normative human and the tendency to
>
> extend humanity to women only in functional juxtaposition to that norm.[547]

Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) pp. 11-12.

[545] Ibid., p. 1.

[546] Ibid., p. 8.

[547] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 96.

The issue of 'dominance' and 'superiority' is then something that Muslim feminists associate with Islamic masculinity. Muslim feminists seek various ways to end patriarchy,

> Even though a Qur'ānic hermeneutic cannot by itself put an end to patriarchal,
> authoritarian, and undemocratic regimes and practices, it can nonetheless remain
> crucial for various reasons. First, hermeneutics and existential questions are
> ineluctably connected. As the concept of sexual/textual oppression suggests, there is a
> relationship between what we read texts to be saying and how we think about and treat
> real women.[548]

The relationship between patriarchy, text and society is seen most fervently upheld in the 'family', as Barlas stated,

> The family in Islam is not patriarchal inasmuch as the Qur'ān's treatment of women
> and men in their capacity as parents and spouses is not based in assumptions of male
> rule/privilege or sexual inequality. Of course, if we consider the heterosexual family
> patriarchal by definition, then the family in Islam also is patriarchal. However, if we
> find such essentialisms problematic, we might also be able to read the Qur'ān's
> teachings differently.[549]

The problematic nature of family in Islamic societies and the family structure becomes one of the key structures which supports patriarchy,

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[548] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 3.
[549] Ibid., p. 167.

That is why the principal institution of patriarchy was said to be the "patriarchal marriage", which blurred the distinction between the male's authority as father and his authority as husband and which, while designating the father-husband God's surrogate on earth, established, the woman/wife as (his) property/child.[550]

The family roles, with the patriarchal head, is then an issue that Muslim feminist raise yet believe is difficult to challenge, 'No Muslim culture that I have ever visited or read about constructs their families around the notions of equality. Neither do non-Muslim cultures either, despite various small experiments.'[551] In Barlas' view, the family can be whatever the members want it to be. The way in which Islamic societies have centered society on the family structure with the spiritual life of a Muslim has then upheld the status quo of the patriarchy. Muslim feminists have exemplified from their own lived experiences that the family is not essential in strengthening a relationship with God. The very fact that Nomani's spirituality remained throughout the difficult times she had is indicative that the institution of 'marriage and 'family' bears significance only at a societal level and bears little in terms of piety and submission to God, something that is supported even within the Qur'ān. However, Muslim feminists highlight the limitations of 'family' when seeking its egalitarian construction,

> In view of the broad range of views, it is difficult to establish the family and marriage in Islam as nonpatriarchal and nonoppressive on all counts. Those who view biology, monotheism, or heterosexuality as oppressive – confusing sex, sexuality, biology, and monotheism with their social constructions – also are unlikely to view as egalitarian a

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[550] Ibid.
[551] Ibid., p. 154.

monotheistic perspective which legitimises heterosexuality and sees the role of childbearing, but not necessarily childrearing, as the women's function.[552]

The construction of family is one that cannot be 'done away with' in order to eradicate patriarchy, which leaves Muslim feminists with the difficult question on its challenge. Male privilege and patriarchy is not just evident in Islamic societies but also closely associated with its religious text, the Qur'ān, as Wadud states,

> I wrestle the hegemony of male privilege in Islamic interpretation ("master's tools") as patriarchal interpretation, which continually leaves a mark on Islamic praxis and thought. Too many of the world's Muslims cannot perceive a distinction between this interpretation and the divine will, leading to the truncated notion of divine intent as well as of the divine nature and essence limited to the maelstrom perspective, hence violating the actual transcendent nature of Allah.[553]

Wadud argued that even the most progressive of Muslim men are comfortable in their situation,

> On the contrary, most Muslim male reformists want only to secure their own families according to patriarchal traditions. The number of women in the Muslim world whose lives and suffering are allowed to remain invisible discredits the aspirations articulated by such men as progressive Islam. It is disappointing to note how frequently some who

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[552] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 201.
[553] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p 81.

are considered the most progressive are at best liberal in their gender agendas as evidenced by the embodiment of their own domestic experiences.[554]

As Mernissi stated,

> Everyone is afraid of change, but Muslims are more so, because what is at stake are their fantasies about power. And women all over the world know very well how important power fantasies are to one's self empowerment. The secret of Islam's sweeping resurgence today is that it gives men at birth an inherited right to claim world hegemony as a horizon and a guiding dream.[555]

Barlas used the sovereignty of God to challenge patriarchy,

> In its simplest form, Tawḥīd symbolizes the idea of God's indivisibility, hence also the indivisibility of God's sovereignty; thus, no theory of male (or popular) sovereignty that pretends to be an extension of God's Rule/Sovereignty, or comes into conflict with it, can be considered compatible with the doctrine of Tawḥīd.[556]

This shows the way in which ultimate power with God could disempower patriarchy. However, in reality, Islamic societies are not so egalitarian,

> Male dominant civilization discriminates between male and female children. The male child is taught from the very beginning how to project his personality and how to

[554] Ibid., p. 127.

[555] Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indiana: 1987) p. x.

[556] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 13.

prepare for a man's life involving strength, responsibility, authority and a positive attitude in the face of difficulties. A girl, on the other hand, is trained and educated right from the start to shrink into a corner, to withdraw and to hide her real self because she is a female and is being prepared for the life of a woman, a life where she must be passive and weak, and must surrender to the domination of the man and be dependent on him.[557]

Muslim feminists argue that patriarchy is embedded in men as they grow up and is strengthened through the gender roles in Muslim families but also through patriarchal readings of the Qur'ān. Muslim feminists have challenged patriarchy in theology and society but to what extent can such a challenge materialize as change when the overwhelming structure of social relationships in society supports and upholds patriarchy in general and Islamic Masculinity in particular.

2.0   Masculinity, God and Prophet – In the Eyes of Muslim Feminists

For the disempowerment of Muslim women to take place, the Muslim man has needed significant tools to empower his status. This section explores the way in which masculinity has become synonymous with God and prophets as a way of empowering Islamic masculinity. This section will also focus on each role that a man takes in the heterosexual family and the way in which an understanding of Islamic traditions has shaped an Islamic masculinity. This will then be critiqued using Muslim feminist perspectives.

In its most powerful method, man has equated himself with God,

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[557] El Saadawi, N., *The Hidden Face of Eve – Women in the Arab World* (London: Zed Press, 1980) p. 81.

To the extent that theories of male rule over women and children amount to asserting sovereignty over both and also misrepresent males as intermediaries between women and God, they do come into conflict with the essential tenets of the doctrine of *Tawḥīd* and must be rejected as theologically unsound.[558]

Such an understanding also conflicts greatly with the ultimate role of submission that both men and women are expected to adhere to. Sovereignty and rule are also associated with the 'male' because of the widespread understanding that God is male,

> The Qur'ān's tireless and emphatic rejections of God's sexualisation/engenderment – as Father (male) – confirm that God is not male, or like one. However, if God is not male or like one, there also is no reason to hold that God has any special affinity with males (thus positing of such an affinity allows men to claim God as their own and thus to project onto God sexual partisanship).[559]

Muslim feminists have also grappled with notions that the prophetic example is entirely an image and empowerment of men. The prophet Muḥammad's life is then understood as an idealized form of Islamic masculinity but Muslim feminists argue that when reflected upon they are contradictory,

> In other words, the Prophet was unconventional by the hyper-masculinist standards not only of traditional Arab culture, but also by modern ones, that disparage tenderness, gentleness, and humility in men.[560]

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[558] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 14.
[559] Ibid., p. 15.
[560] Ibid., p. 122.

The prophet Muḥammad's mission was set in a deeply patriarchal society so it raises further question on the prophet's masculinity, 'no society in the seventh century was egalitarian since no society at that time recognised women as full human beings, or as moral agents, or as independent legal persons.'[561] The contradictory nature of the prophet Muḥammad's masculinity is used by Muslim feminists to highlight how incorrectly it has been understood,

> It should be noted here that the Muslim Prophet's heroism does not lie in any relation of aggression, conquest, or exercise of brute force against women, but on the contrary in his vulnerability. It is because he is vulnerable, and therefore human, that his example has exerted such power over generations of believers.[562]

God consciousness (*Taqwā*) then has an affect on not just ethics and morality but also the construction of gender and sexuality,

> *Taqwā* – which defines the essence of moral personality by orienting us towards God – consists, then, in our willingness to embrace virtue and refrain from evil by exercising our reason, intellect, and knowledge. In no context does the Qur'ān suggest that men, either in their biological capacity as males, or in their social capacity as fathers, husbands, or interpreters of sacred knowledge, are better able than women to acquire *taqwā* or to practice their *din*. Indeed, the Qur'ān is rare among Scriptures in teaching that women and men are able equally to acquire *taqwā* (moral personality).[563]

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[561] Ibid., p. 169.
[562] Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indiana: USA, 1987) p. 57.
[563] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 143.

Other than the patriarchal image, there also seems to be the view amongst Muslim feminists that men are predatory and intrusive,

> It is noticeable that men in Eastern societies concentrate their attention on women's calves or thighs or even buttocks. Whereas in American society during the first half of the 20th century a women's breasts were considered that part of her body most worthy of attention in provoking male interest. The actress with big provocative breasts had a very good chance of getting on in the world of films, and of becoming a famous artist.[564]

Even though this view uses a American society as an example, Muslim feminists believe that Islamic traditions have aided existing attitudes in Islamic societies and cultures too, 'There is a famous saying of the Holy Prophet that "the best veil is the veil in the eyes." That means that men should be God-fearing and look at women with respect.'[565] Muslim feminists argue that the prophet Muḥammad is central to these understandings, 'the story of Islam is the saga of a happy man who in his youth dreamed of a different world and realised all his dreams in his maturity and vigorous old age, when, filled with success with women and military triumphs, he bent most recalcitrant of his enemies to his will.'[566]

Muslim feminists challenge the way that God and the prophet Muḥammad's life are used to strengthen and uphold an Islamic masculinity. When men equate themselves with God and prophet, men elevate their position, 'It is in this way that some progressives and conservatives actually embrace the same paradigm: to be fully human, a moral agent, and a public leader, one

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[564] El Saadawi, N., *The Hidden Face of Eve – Women in the Arab World* (London: Zed Press, 1980) p. 76.
[565] Bhutto, B., *Reconciliation – Islam, Democracy, and the West* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2008) p. 43.
[566] Mernissi, F., *Women and Islam – An Historical and Theological Enquiry* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994) p. 25.

must be male.'[567]   Maleness becomes a means to power but Muslim feminists believe that this power is not complete,

> It is time for men to be *empowered with* and not exert power over female identity and contributions. It is time for women and men to accept the full humanity of women by removing the veils put over women being female. ... Those "manly" traits, which perhaps once helped the whole human race to move out of subjectivity to the vicissitude of nature's unpredictability, have long outstripped their merits.[568]

Muslim feminists also encourage Muslim men to reject their 'entitlements', 'So often, Muslim men – just like men in so many other cultures, societies, and religions – accept the entitlements that they receive by virtue of their gender, but men have the choice to reject those privileges unless they are also granted to women.'[569] Muslim men must then realize that they yield equal power in relation to women and no power in relation to submission to God. Such a realization demands an acceptance to reject male privilege rather than a choice to act in this way.

2.1   The Husband

If masculinity is constructed around the tenets of power then the powerful need a power base. In the lives of most Muslim men it has become the heterosexual family in which they yield most power. Muslim feminists have argued that this family structure has now become a part of Islamic culture,

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[567] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 183.
[568] Ibid., p. 256.
[569] Nomani, A., *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) p. 108.

Human civilization benefits from our romantic ideals about "family," no matter how crucial it is as the cornerstone of society and community life. Critical analysis of the basic oppressive nature of the patriarchal family structure, past and present, is not always integrated into discourse over policy reform.[570]

There have been numerous ways of driving the Muslim man towards family life, 'the word *zina* means illicit intercourse. ... *Zina* was one of the practices the Muslim recruits were required to renounce. ... As a protective device against *zina*, marriage is highly recommended to believers of both sexes. A sexually frustrated member of the community is considered dangerous.'[571] As has been discussed in chapter two, it then becomes a necessity for Muslim society to be regulated by the curbing of sexual fulfillment but could this be a guise for policing the independence of the male and female in society, which poses a serious challenge to the patriarchal structure of family life?

The ultimate patriarch, the husband, heads family life,

It is important to note that, in the context of human creation, the Qur'ān describes man and woman as each other's *zauj* or "mate". The term "zauj" is generally used to refer to one of two in a pair when reference is made, for instance to "a pair of shoes" or "night and day". Not only are both parts necessary to complete a pair but also the proper functioning of each requires the presence of the other.[572]

[570] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 41.
[571] Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indiana: USA, 1987) p. 59.
[572] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 97.

Hassan makes no attempt at challenging this 'pairing' at the onset but then later quotes the Ḥadīth in which the Prophet had stated that had it been permitted for a human being to bow down to anyone except God it would be to the husband 'when he enters into her',

> A faith rigidly monotheistic as Islam cannot conceivably permit any human being to worship anyone but God, therefore the hypothetical statement "If it were permitted..." in the above sited ḥadīth, is, *ipso facto*, an impossibility. But the way this ḥadīth is related makes it appear that if not God's, at least it was the Prophet's will or wish to make the wife prostrate herself before her husband. Each word, act or exhortation attributed to the prophet is held to be sacred by most of the Muslims in the world and so this ḥadīth (which, in my judgment seeks to legitimize *shirk*: associating anyone with God – an unforgivable sin according to the Qur'ān) becomes binding on the Muslim woman.[573]

The Muslim husband's role in creating the 'Islamic' family is further legitimized by Islamic law,

> Because of the novelty of the family structure in Muḥammad's revolutionary social order, he had to codify its regulations in detail. Sex is one of the instincts whose satisfaction was regulated at length by religious law during the first years of Islam. The link in the Muslim mind between sexuality and the *shar'ia* has shaped the legal and ideological history of the Muslim family structure and consequently of relations between the sexes. One of the most enduring characteristics of this history is that the family structure is assumed to be unchangeable, for it is considered divine.[574]

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[573] Ibid., pp. 114-115.
[574] Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indiana: USA, 1987) p. 18.

Islamic law has also played a role in constructing the dominant form of Islamic masculinity.[575] To evaluate the extent to which this is the case would require extensive research on legal texts, something that is beyond the remit of this chapter. However, a general observation into the link between law and religion is essential,

> With Islamic legal texts, it is the symbiotic relationship that religion shares with law which is its most distinguishing characteristic, making Islamic law a reflection of the religion. The texts reveal the interaction between Islamic religious values, how they determine legal principles and how these principles subsequently formulate their own life forms. Law articulates a way of looking at society and Islamic law is no exception. Its "essence" is its religion but its "expression" is a response to the formal exigencies of juristic style in language, logic and structure.[576]

Islamic law becomes another means of constructing Islamic masculinity, except in this case it carries a lot more weight than just an 'interpretation',

> In spite of its "assumed religious authority and inviolability," the Sharī`a is "not the whole of Islam" but "an interpretation of its fundamental sources as understood in a particular historical context." ... "Sharī`a was constructed by its founding jurists."[577]

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[575] 'For example, the patriarchal formulations of Islamic law through out history hold condescending utilitarian perspectives on women. Not only is the female looked down upon, she is treated as an object in Sharī`a discussions, not as a discussant. The woman is a recipient of its decisions, not a decision maker. Decisions made concerning her role in the family and society were made from the perspective of those who did not and could not share her experience and therefore judged on the basis of second hand perceptions.' Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) Ibid., p. 96.

[576] Siddiqui, M., 'Law and The Desire for Social Control: An Insight into the Hanafi Concept of *Kafa'a* with Reference to the Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī (1664-1672)' (ed.), Yamani, M., *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 1996) p. 49.

[577] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 74.

Gender construction is then policed, shaped and enforced in Islamic societies, especially on issues relating to family law. Siddiqui examined the concept of *kafa'a*, which generally translates as 'equality or compatibility between husband and wife' in Ḥanafī law (specifically in the Mughal Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī 1664-1672). Siddiqui concluded that it was unacceptable for a women to have a higher status than a man in the law but it was acceptable for the man to be of a higher status which then leads to the understanding that through the institution of marriage and *kafa'a* the position of women has been established in a far less inferior one than that of the man.

This patriarchal husband has then become a part of the tradition and culture of Muslim families,

> Yet, not surprisingly, gender disparity occurs first within the family. Women are oppressed *by those who love them*: their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons who enjoy the fruits of their labor without acknowledging the full extent of that labor as a set of moral or volitional acts performed through the graciousness of female agency with indispensable moral impact on the well-being of society.[578]

The life of the prophet Muḥammad, as a husband to a number of wives, has also played a role in shaping this identity of 'Muslim husband'. Muslim feminists advocate that the way in which the prophet's role was strengthened by having so many wives is argued over his egalitarian ways,

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For further information on family law and women, See: An-Na`im, A, A., *Toward an Islamic Reformation – Civil Liberties, Human Rights and International Law*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), An-Na`im, A, A., *Islamic Family Law in a Changing World: A Global Resource Book*, (London: Zed Books, 2002) and Welchman, L., *Women and Muslim Family Laws in Arab States: A Comparative Overview of Textual Development and Advocacy (ISIM Series on Contemporary Muslim Societies)*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).
[578] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 41.

Yet, it is usually not these egalitarian aspects of the Prophet's *Sunnah* that many Muslim men want to emulate today; rather, they place a great deal more emphasis on the fact of his multiple marriages, as also on the age of one of his wives, 'Aysha, which they use to legitimise marriages to little girls.[579]

Muslim feminists believe that polygamy in Islam teaches more than what men learn from it,

Contrary to what patriarchies and many feminists claim, its provisions on polygamy are not meant to pander to male sexual needs or lusts. Indeed, the Qur'ān counsels chastity both outside of marriage and within it, and extends its notion of chastity – associated with "the feminine" – to men as well.[580]

The issue of polygamy has also helped shape a masculinity of power,

That if a man's sexual needs cannot be satisfied by one wife, he should have two. Presumably, if his lust is greater than that, he should have three, and on until he has four. Only after this fourth are the Qur'ānic principles of self-constraint, modesty, and fidelity finally exercised. As self-constraint and fidelity are required at the onset for the wife, these moral virtues are equally significant for the husband. It is clear that the Qur'ān does not stress a high, civilized level for women while leaving men to interact with others at the basest level. Otherwise, the mutual responsibility of *khilāfah*

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[579] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 125.
[580] Ibid., p. 153.

(trusteeship) would be left to one half of humanity while the other half remains near the animal state.[581]

Polygamy becomes another means to support the power base of Islamic masculinity,

> Polygamy also has a psychological impact on the self-esteem of men and women. It enhances men's perception of themselves as primarily sexual beings, and emphasizes the sexual nature of the conjugal unit. Moreover, polygamy is a way for the man to humiliate the woman as a sexual being; it expresses her inability to satisfy him. For Moroccan folk wisdom, this function of polygamy as a device to humiliate the woman is evident: "Debase a woman by bringing in to [the house] another one."[582]

2.2   The Father

Understanding God as 'father' has been a topic of debate between faiths throughout history, especially Islam and Christianity. However, Muslim feminists have highlighted the way in which such understandings have helped to construct a specific form of Islamic masculinity. Through a process of deductions that begin with God being understood as a father who created human beings and that same God being addressed in the Qur'ān in the masculine 'he', Muslim feminists have raised the question whether such a deduction is viable. Muslim feminists believe that such notions must be read in their wider context,

> Given the Qur'ān's unrelenting rejection of God's sacralization as Father, it seems unconscionable to read Islam as a theological patriarchy. If God can only be a patriarch or, rather, God can only be patriarchalised, to the extent that God can in fact be

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[581] Ibid., p. 85.
[582] Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indiana: USA, 1987) p. 48.

sacralized as Father, how can God's Self-Disclosure in the Qur'ān be interpreted as providing basis either for patriarchalised views of God or for theories of father-right/rule based in such views? If God is not Father in heaven in either a literal or a symbolic sense, how can fathers represent their rule on earth as replicating the model of divine patriarchy? And if – as the Qur'ān makes clear – we cannot, in what sense is God "on the side" of fathers or of patriarchy? Indeed, if God is not father, son, or husband, in what sense can God be male ("He").[583]

Reading the Qur'ān from a male God brings with it its own implications,

> Most see no problem in continuing to masculinise God linguistically and to propagate, on the basis of this view, theories of male rule/privilege over women. One needs therefore to inquire into the paradox of masculinist conceptions of God and the idea of a symbolic continuum between God's Rule and man's in the absence of the Qur'ānic view of God as Father/male.[584]

Even though the Qur'ān promotes a separation of God from all that God creates, God has still been understood as a male. Human logic and patriarchal examples have constructed a masculinised God rather than promoting the gender ambiguous nature of God revealed in the Qur'ān,

> It is not only social constructions of gender, including our ideas of masculinity and femininity, that have led Muslims to anthropomorphize God; so have the discursive

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[583] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 98.
[584] Ibid., p. 99.

strategies they have employed to read the Qur'ān.'[585] Such a debate is linked to the contemporary issues surrounding 'honor killings'.[586]

The most destructive form of parenting was exhibited through female infanticide during the medieval period. The commandment against such practices separates men from God, feminists argue,

> Had the Qur'ān given fathers powers of life and death over children, or designated girls their parents property, it could not have held them to account for murdering or abusing their daughters; nor would it have enjoined on the children the duty of disobeying parents in matters of faith. Thus, Muslims who view children, or wives, as the father's or husbands property fail to consider that the Qur'ān delineates relationships between parents and children, husbands and wives, and even masters and slaves, in terms that rule out the idea of ownership altogether.[587]

2.3   Men as Maintainers

The Muslim man as the maintainer (or breadwinner) of the family and the Muslim woman as the homemaker has become synonymous with Islamic societies and cultures. It is often understood that such roles are God-given. The most controversial passages of the Qur'ān have become a basis for the creation of such roles,

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[585] Ibid., p. 103.
[586] For further information on 'honor killings' and Muslim women See, Hossain, S., and Welchman, L., (eds.), *Honor: Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence Against Women* (London: Zed Books, 2005) and Mai, M., *In the Name of Honor* (London: Virago Press Limited, 2007).
[587] Ibid., p. 181.

Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter, and with what they may spend out of their possessions. And the righteous women are the truly devout ones, who guard the intimacy, which God has [ordained to be guarded]. And as for those women whose ill-will you have reason to fear, admonish them [first]; then leave them alone in bed, then beat them; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek to harm them. Behold, God is indeed most high, great![588]

'Care' could mean many things but in its most extreme understanding it is understood as the maintenance of women by men. This Qur'ānic passage explicitly gives an understanding that men have a superior power over women and are charged with maintaining them, to the extent that if they are to fault then the man has a right to admonish her. Muslim feminists have argued against this,

The key word in the first sentence of this verse is "qawwamun". This word has been translated variously as "protectors and maintainers (of women)", "in charge (of women)", "having pre-eminence (above women)", and "sovereigns or masters (over women)". Linguistically, the word "qawwamun" means breadwinners or "those who provide a means of support or livelihood." A point of logic that must be made here is that the first sentence is not a descriptive one stating that all men as a matter of fact are providing for women, since obviously there are at least some men who do not provide for women. What the sentence is stating, rather, is that men ought to have the capability to provide (since "ought" implies "can"). In other words, this statement, which almost all Muslim societies have taken to be an actual description of all men, is

588 Qur'ān 4:34.

in fact a normative statement pertaining to the Islamic concept of division of labor in an ideal family or community structure. The fact that men are "qawwamun" does not mean that women cannot or should not provide for themselves, but simply that in view of the heavy burden that most women shoulder in child-bearing and rearing, they should not have the additional obligation of providing the means of living at the same time.[589]

Although Hassan is arguing against the superiority of men over women she still believes that men should be the breadwinners. This is also asserted by Barlas, 'However, even though the Qur'ān charges the husband with being the breadwinner, it does not designate him head of household, especially as the term has been understood in Western feudal cultures.'[590] Such an understanding by Muslim feminists still seeks to negotiate the position of the Muslim man in a powerful way. However, they use the example of the prophet Muḥammad to highlight that he did not use his masculinity as a means to exert power over or beat his wives, 'The Qur'ān did not force even the wives of the Prophet to obey him nor did he force obedience on them; nor, indeed, did he deal with marital discord by abusing or beating them.'[591]

Muslim feminists have also argued against the idea that men are the maintainers of women based on their physical strength,

> We come to the idea that God has given the one more strength than the other. Most translations make it appear that the one who has more strength, excellence, or superiority is the man. However, the Qur'anic expression does not accord superiority

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[589] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 111.

[590] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 187.

[591] Ibid., p. 187.

to men. The expression literally means "some in relation to some", so that the statement could mean either that some men are superior to some others (men and/or women) and that some women are superior to some others (men and/or women). The interpretation which seems to me to be the most appropriate contextually is that some men are more blessed with the means to be better providers than are other men.[592]

In this commentary of the passage Hassan moves towards accepting different forms of masculinity but by using the term 'more blessed' for the providers she gives the impression that to be a provider is a far superior role than not providing at all. The role of providing and strength seems to be something that Muslim feminists accept as long as it does not allow men to become superior,

> They are protectors because of their physical strength and capacity for strenuous work. Moreover, it is necessary for the functioning of the family that there should be a head who settles things among the members of the family and ensures their compliance. It is for this reason that the wife is asked to obey her husband and she should not obey him if what he asks is against Allah's injunctions.[593]

Hassan divides the roles for men and women,

> What is outlined in the first part of this passage is a functional division of labor necessary for maintaining balance in every society. Men who do not have to fulfill the responsibility of child bearing are assigned the functions of being breadwinners.

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[592] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 111.

[593] El-Nimr, R., 'Women in Islamic Law' (ed.), Yamani, M *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 1996) p. 97.

Women are exempted from the responsibility of being breadwinners in order that they may fulfill their function as child bearers. The two functions are separate but complementary and neither is higher or lower than the other.[594]

Ghada Karmi rejected the understanding of the verse as superiority in general but as a superiority in financing the home at a certain time, 'Indeed, the verse in question occurs in the midst of several verses concerned with financial details. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to see it only as a part of an economic arrangement suited to the time when it was written.'[595]

This leads to the issue of domestic violence against women and the way in which Muslim feminists understand the Qur'ānic verse associated with it,

> There is no getting around this one, even though I have tried through different methods for two decades. I simply do not and cannot condone permission for a man to "scourge" or apply *any kind* of strike to a woman. ... This leads me to clarify how I have finally come to say "no" outright to the literal implementation of this passage. This also has implications in implementing the *hudud* (penal code) ordinances. This verse, and the literal implementation of *hudud*, both imply an ethical standard of human actions that are archaic and barbarian at this time in history. They are unjust in the ways that human beings have come to experience and understand justice, and hence unacceptable to universal notions of human dignity.[596]

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[594] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 112.

[595] Karmi, G., 'Women, Islam and Patriarchalism' (ed.), Yamani, M., *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 1996) p. 74.

[596] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 200.

Hassan finds a way to legitimize domestic violence,

> The three injunctions in the second part of the verse were given to the Islamic Ummah
> in order to meet a rather extraordinary possibility: a mass rebellion on the part of
> women against their role as child bearers, the function assigned to them by God. If all
> or most of the women in a Muslim society refused to bear children without just cause as
> a sign of organized defiance or revolt, this would mean the end of the Muslim ummah.
> This situation must, therefore, be dealt with decisively.[597]

Hassan understands childbearing as a religious duty and understands the quest for ultimate

submission to God being linked with the biological act of child bearing. In doing this, Hassan

continues the idealized constructions of Islamic masculinity and femininity,

> They (women) are taught to sacrifice or develop personal interests to the higher goal of
> family well being. Meanwhile men and sons are encouraged to develop ideas of
> manhood as unlimited empowerment. Therefore, sons are raised to fulfill the view of
> themselves as masters, providers, and protectors in the family. Such characteristics of
> manhood minimize the ideals of deference in women, women's services, to children,
> and even between each other but this deference is not equally emphasized in the
> development of manhood.[598]

The Qur'ān also uses ambiguous metaphors for women,

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[597] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 112.
[598] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 41.

Your wives are your tilth; go, then, unto your tilth as you may desire, but first provide something for your souls, and remain conscious of God, and know that you are destined to meet Him. And give glad tidings unto those who believe.[599]

The Arabic term used for tilth is *'harth'* which is generally understood by Muslim feminists as cultivation or land/soil. A literal understanding of this would give the Muslim man free reign to 'cultivate' women in whatever way they desire but there is an added injunction which compels the Muslim man to remain conscious of God. Hassan interprets this verse as follows,

> The likening of a wife to life-containing soil has a profound meaning but the average Muslim is not sensitive to the subtleties of the comparison or to the implications of the Qur'ān's reminder to the husband that he should act righteously. Since wives are described as a "tilth" and permission has been given to the husbands to approach them "when or how you will", the average Muslim man believes not only that husbands have the right to have sexual intercourse with their wives whenever they choose, but also the right to impregnate them at will in order that they might yield a harvest.[600]

Muslim feminists further argue that women always seem to be given a secondary position to men,

> The Qur'ānic regulations over the matters most important to women: marriage, divorce, child custody, unquestionably discriminate against women, when taken at face value. In essence, they permit men a sexual license completely forbidden to women:

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[599] Qur'ān 2:223.
[600] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher, J., *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 119.

the right to marry up to four wives, to have an unlimited number of concubines, and to divorce with extraordinary ease.[601]

Qur'ānic passages have been interpreted to support an Islamic masculinity that advocates men as maintainers of women and in turn the breadwinners. The dominant role of maintainer has been upheld through the gender roles that the Muslim man is exposed to during his early life at home and then expected to uphold in his own family. Even though the term 'maintenance' has been understood by some Muslim feminists to mean the division of financial income between men and women, there has been little challenge to the underlying foundation of men 'maintaining' women. Those who have challenged this, such as Wadud, through her rejection of men 'beating' their wives to conform to this maintenance, have found their views being described as un-Islamic.

3.0   The Muslim Woman

Muslim women have been a topic of interest for many in the past and present. There are many reasons for this but largely this interest is linked to the widespread understanding that the Muslim woman is oppressed. Muslim feminists present an image of femininity that is interconnected to Islamic masculinity. If gender is constructed through a series of interactions with the gendered other then Muslim masculinity, as presented by Muslim feminists, is a reaction to the way femininity is presented by Muslim feminists. It is then important to highlight the Muslim women in Islamic traditions and society.

It is often said that Islam gave women their rights many centuries ago but are women only to be understood from a 'rights' point of view? Can gender and its construction be evaluated in

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[601] Ibid., p. 75.

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such a manner? Looking at just one example of female infanticide in pre-Islamic culture we saw that there was a concentrated effort by the prophet to see that such actions be stopped and although they are now widely condemned in Islamic traditions, societies and cultures, has this practice been re-defined? Has the position of women really changed in comparison to men? In what way is this position linked to Islamic masculinity?

Hassan argued that the killing of baby girls may have stopped but they are still not regarded highly by parents,

> However, it needs to be added here that though Muslims do not kill their baby daughters, they do not, in general, treat them equally with boys. Generally speaking, the birth of a daughter is met with resignation and even sadness. A woman who only produces daughters is likely to be the target of harsh and abusive behavior and threatened with divorce. It will be interesting to see what change, if any, takes place in Muslim culture when the fact becomes widely known that it is not the mother but the father who determines the sex of the child![602]

Hassan speaks from a South Asian perspective in particular but identifies the fact the way in which Islamic traditions are not indicative of change until it is seen in the lives of Muslim women and men.

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[602] Ibid., p. 117.

3.1   Islamic Women's Dress: The Veil of Islamic Masculinity?

Muslim women's dress has been a central identifying feature of Islam.[603] But does the issue of the veil explain more about the Muslim woman or Islamic masculinity? The key Qur'ānic passage that is used to make statements about dress states;

> Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity: this will be most conducive to their purity – [and,] verily, God is aware of all that they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity, and not to display their charms [in public] beyond what may [decently] be apparent thereof; hence, let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms. And let them not display [more of] their charms to any but their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their womenfolk, or those whom they rightfully posses, or such male attendants as are beyond all sexual desire, or children that are as yet unaware of women's nakedness; and let them not swing their legs [in walking] so as to draw attention to their hidden charms.[604]

It is evident from the Qur'ānic passage that emphasis is placed on female dress and chastity more than on men's. It elaborates on women's 'charms' yet fails to talk about the 'charms' of men. However, Muslim feminists have read this passage as equal to both men and women,

> Even though, as this Ayah makes clear, the real veil is in the eyes/gaze, the Qur'ān is concerned also with the dress/body. In this context, it is important to note, first, that

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[603] Further information on veil see: El Guindi, F., *Veil – Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999) and Ask, K., and Tjomsland, M., *Women and Islamization* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1998).
[604] Qur'ān 24:30-31.

it requires both men and woman to dress modestly. ... Second, the Qur'ān describes modesty of dress rather sparingly as the covering of private parts. ... Third, that the function of the *khumar* (shawl) is to cover the bosom, not the face; this is evident not only from the nature of the garment itself, but also from the Ayah which, in so many words, refers to the bosom and to private parts.[605]

Yet Wadud challenges the use of the veil as some form of ethical scale of piety, 'If you think that the difference between heaven and hell is 45 inches of material, boy will you be surprised. This is my *hijāb* mantra.'[606] Wadud gives details on the variety of ways the veil identifies itself in the life of the Muslim woman,

> While the *hijāb* can give some semblance of a woman's affiliation with "Islam," it offers no guarantee of respect or protection. ... In reality, the *hijāb* of coercion and the *hijāb* of liberation look the same. The *hijāb* of deception and the *hijāb* of integrity look the same. You can no more tell the extent of a Muslim woman's sense of personal bodily integrity or piety from 45 inches of cloth than you can spot a fly on the wall at two thousand feet.[607]

Barlas locates the issue of the female veil directly to men,

> Conservatives read these *Ayat* as giving Muslim males the right to force women to don everything from the *hijāb* (a head veil that leaves the face uncovered) to the *burqa* (a head-to-toe shroud that hides even the feet; some models even mandate wearing gloves

[605] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 158.
[606] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 219.
[607] Ibid., p. 220.

so as to hide the hands). They justify such forms of veiling on the grounds that

women's bodies are pudendal, hence sexually corrupting to those who see them; it thus

is necessary to shield Muslim men from viewing women's bodies by concealing them.[608]

This verse in the Qur'ān is based on the assumption that women's bodies are sex objects that

need to be covered from men, 'if a man respected a woman as an equal human being and not as

an object as his sexual fantasies, then even a naked woman should be safe from male abuse.'[609]

Such notions have led to segregation of the sexes,

> Muslims, in general, believe that it is best to keep men and women in their separate,
>
> designated spaces, and that the intrusion of women into men's territory leads to
>
> disruption, if not the destruction, of the fundamental order of things. However, if it
>
> becomes necessary for women to intrude into men's spaces, they must make
>
> themselves faceless, or at least, as inconspicuous as possible. This is achieved through
>
> veiling, which is thus an extension of the idea of segregation of the sexes.[610]

The veil and segregation of women from male spaces become a means to locate the Muslim

man at the centre point of the social world,

> Women are considered not only outside of humanity but a threat to it as well. Muslim
>
> wariness of heterosexual involvement is embodied in sexual segregation and its
>
> corollaries: arranged marriage, the important role of the mother in the son's life, and
>
> the fragility of the marital bond (as revealed by the institutions of repudiation and

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[608] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 54.

[609] Ibid., p. 221.

[610] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 121.

polygamy). The entire Muslim social structure can be seen as an attack on, and a defense against, the disruptive power of female sexuality.[611]

Wadud, categorizes these roles as such,

I propose that the Qur'ān does not support a specific and stereotyped role for its characters, male or female. The roles of the women who have been referred to in the Qur'ān fall into one of three categories: 1. A role which represents the social, cultural, and historical context in which that individual woman lived – without compliment or critique from the text. 2. A role which fulfils a universally accepted (i.e. nurturing or caretaking) female function, to which exceptions can be made – and have been made even in the Qur'ān itself. Finally, 3. a role which fulfils a non-gender specific function, i.e. the role represents human endeavors on the earth and is cited in the Qur'ān to demonstrate this specific function and not the gender of the performer, who happens to be a woman.[612]

Barlas identified a method of interpreting the Qur'ān based on pre-conceived ideas,

Readers who interpret the significance of the women cited in the Qur'ān often come to the text with notions of appropriate functions for women. When these are supported on the surface of Qur'ānic portrayal, they do not look further at the examples. This has led to a great deal of oversimplifications and contradictions when the perspective of the individual exegete is superimposed on to the Qur'ān itself.[613]

[611] Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indiana: USA, 1987) p. 45.
[612] Wadud, A., *Qur'ān and Woman – Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 29.
[613] Ibid., p. 32.

Muslim feminists argue that the role of 'Muslim wife' is religiously taught to women to be obedient and subservient to husbands,

> Most *aḥadīth* (traditions attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad) dealing with the subject of married women describe a virtuous woman as one who pleases and obeys her husband at all times. Pleasing the husband can, in fact, become more important than pleasing God. Putting it differently, one can say that most Muslims believe that a woman cannot please God except through pleasing her husband.[614]

Hassan used the example of the Hindu practice to highlight this further,

> Muslims frequently criticize a religion such as Hinduism where the wife is required to worship the husband (*patipuja*) but in practice what is expected from most Muslim wives is not very different from *patipuja*. In India and Pakistan, for example, a Muslim woman learns almost as an article of faith that her husband is her *majazi khuda* (God in earthly form). This description, undoubtedly, constitutes "shirk" (idolatry, blasphemy).[615]

Bhutto found herself in the same predicament,

> It was in America, over milk and cookies at night in my dormitory, that we would discuss how we wanted more out of life than the traditional roles of wife and mother.

[614] Hassan. R., 'An Islamic Perspective' (ed.), Becher. J, *Women, Religion and Sexuality* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990) p. 115.
[615] Ibid., p. 115.

We believed that women should have the right to choose whether they want to live life as homemakers or seek careers.[616]

Bhutto highlights the way many Pakistani Muslim women have been conditioned to accept their role as 'homemakers' and the seeking of careers is for men to pursue. In seeking a way out of the home, the example that she aspired to was that of her Father's who was the Prime Minister of Pakistan. As a Pakistani man, her Father had adopted roles inside and outside of the family home and Bhutto firmly believed that her path was not in contradiction to Islam,

> And when the time came to pick up my father's mantle and legacy and lead the Pakistan Peoples Party, I, as his eldest *child* present in Pakistan, led the struggle for democracy. No one among my father's followers opposed this on the ground of gender. This was the gender equality in Islam under which I was brought up. It is the gender equality that has been passed on to my son and two daughters. And I know it to be the gender equality that is specifically provided for and endorsed by Islam.[617]

However, it must be acknowledged that Benazir Bhutto's experience was far from the accepted norm in Pakistani society, a claim she upheld by stating,

> In our male-dominated culture, boys had always been favored over girls and were not only more often given an education, but in extreme instances were given food first

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[616] Bhutto, B., *Reconciliation – Islam, Democracy, and the West* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2008) p. 270.
[617] Ibid., p. 39.

while the mother and daughters waited. In our family, however, there was no discrimination at all. If anything, I received the most attention.[618]

Bhutto's experience raises the question whether a successful Pakistani Muslim women is expected to re-model her femininity and female roles into 'masculine' ones,

> The voice of a woman must also include something about herself, particularly as a woman, and this must then be incorporated into what it means to be human in the world. If she only offers herself in the public role like a man, what is the advantage? A single model of normative Islamic leadership persists, whether in male or female form. This single model of what it means to be human has consequences within ambiguities of the lives of Muslims today. When the boundaries of identity are no longer so clear, we can benefit from new stories and new centres of attention actually located in the margins.[619]

The normative Islamic leadership to which Wadud is alluding could be defined, in the case of Bhutto, as that of her Father's 'iron mantle'. And so even though it was a breakthrough for a Muslim women to occupy the highest office in a Muslim state, she negotiated her position into that seat by locating herself in the sphere of Pakistani men. Wadud uses the example of the Queen of Sheba, Bilqis, from the Qur'ān to assert that to be female is not a disadvantage in leadership,

> The Qur'ān shows that her judgment was better than the norm, and that she independently demonstrated that better judgment. If her politics were feminine, then

[618] Bhutto, B., *Benazir Bhutto – Daughter of the East – An Autobiography* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2007) p. 32.
[619] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 182.

her faith was feminine, which, by implication would indicate that masculinity is a disadvantage. Her faith and her politics may be specific to females, but they both were better.[620]

Mir-Hosseini argued that gender is negotiated in Islamic societies,

> My own initial premise is that gender roles and relations, and women's rights, are not fixed, not given, not absolute. They are negotiated on changing cultural constructs, produced in response to lived realities, through debates that are now going on all over the Muslim world, through the voices of women and men who want either to retain or to change the present situation.[621]

Islamic traditions, societies and cultures have adopted and rejected women's veil for a variety of different reasons. Such negotiations and debates leads to the question whether the veil in Islamic traditions and society unveil more about Islamic masculinity? This is highlighted further in the next chapter on Mawdūdi. Muslim feminists have argued that Islamic traditions, societies and cultures have placed 'a veil' between men and women because of the threat of sexual distraction, especially for men from women. This has led to supporting specific roles for both men and women, especially that of an ideal Islamic masculinity.

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[620] Wadud, A., *Qur'ān and Woman – Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 42.

[621] Mir-Hosseini, Z., *Islam and Gender – The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999) p. 6.

3.2   Motherhood

Muslim feminists have identified motherhood as an act that expresses female uniqueness,

> When I submit my resume for jobs, grants, or creating short bios in other public roles,
> the twenty-plus pages is impressive to some, but if a short biographical sketch is
> composed I always request they include that I am a mother of five children as the most
> important achievement.[622]

Wadud explained why motherhood is not just a social act but also a divine one,

> In Arabic, "the word for womb (*rahim*) derives from the same root as the words mercy
> (*rahma*) and All-merciful (*rahman*)," which are attributes the Qur'ān scribes to God; all
> Surahs, barring one, begin by describing God as *Rahman* and *Rahim.* Etymologically,
> then, divine attributes and the womb are related and signify benevolence and
> compassion. ... By using the words *taqwā* and *rahma*, the Qur'ān not only brings
> mothers into the same sphere of symbolic signification as that reserved for God, but, in
> so doing, it also privileges them over fathers, to whom it never extends the concept of
> *taqwā.* Clearly, *taqwā* for God and for mothers cannot be of the same nature; however,
> the fact that the Qur'ān extends it only to mothers shows it privileges them in a way
> that it never privileges fathers. (The Qur'ān also gives mothers the same share in
> inheritance as fathers and, if the deceased has no son, double the father's share.)[623]

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[622] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 126.
[623] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 178.

Muslim feminists then argue that motherhood is a key characteristic that shapes femininity and cannot be reduced to a secondary position by men. It is also not just for women who procreate,

> The Qur'ān, however, does not define women in terms of their role as mothers since we cannot assume that all women will, in fact, become mothers. ('Aysha did not become a mother in spite of her status as the Prophet's wife, but that neither diminished her importance in his life nor her appeal as a role model for women.) Nor does the Qur'ān collapse the roles of wife and mother, as I argue below. Moreover, it protects the specificity of motherhood by locating it in the *womb*.[624]

Muslim feminists highlight the plight of courageous Muslim mothers in Islamic history such as Hagar, the wife of Abraham. As Hagar's son lay hungry in the desert it was Hagar who ran between the two hills of Safa and Marwa to feed her crying baby. This has become an integral part of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims undertake but Muslim feminists are unsure if the actions of this frantic mother are appreciated by men as much as they should be,

> The purpose of looking at the Hajar (Hagar) paradigm anew is to give precedent to the expectation of the "nurturing mother," who is also housekeeper, cook, laundry woman, educator, valet, driver, and ad-hoc medical assistant, and who must also contend competitively within the patriarchal public sector to provide protection and a means for living a life in dignity.[625]

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[624] Ibid.
[625] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 150.

Wadud is using the outside act of Hagar as a way of re-locating women from the confines of the home to the outside. However, even though the story is based outside in the desert, Wadud does not feel that this new rendering of Hagar's story will be accommodated in contemporary society: 'Islamic personal law is built upon a notion of family that does not include a woman (Hagar) thrown into the desert, forced to construct a healthy, happy life for her child and to fend for herself.'[626] But in the end Wadud still contemplates the position of men in the motherhood process,

> The childbearing responsibility is of grave importance: human existence depends upon it. This responsibility requires a great deal of physical strength, stamina, intelligence, and deep personal commitment. Yet, while this responsibility is so obvious and important, what is the responsibility of the male in this family and society at large? For simple balance and justice in creation, and to avoid oppression, his responsibility must be equally significant to the continuation of the human race. The Qur'ān establishes his responsibility as *qiwamah*: seeing to it that the woman is not burdened with additional responsibilities which jeopardize that primary demanding responsibility that only she can fulfill.[627]

4.0   Muslim Feminist Readings of the Qur'ān: Methodology, Rationale and Aim

Muslim feminists have battled against a form of Islamic masculinity that they feel has denied them the appropriate recognition of their status. Many Muslim feminists speak out against the men who oppress them and write about their experiences.[628] However, some Muslim feminists

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[626] Ibid., p. 144.
[627] Wadud, A., *Qur'ān and Woman – Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 73.
[628] For further autobiographies of Muslim females, see: Durrani, T., *My Feudal Lord* (Reading, UK: Corgi Publishers, 1995) and Farmaian, S. F., *Daughter of Persia* (Reading, UK: Corgi Publishers, 1993) and Karmi,

have sought to challenge perceptions of gender and sex as a way through a re-reading of the Qur'ān. What methodology and rationale do they use in approaching the Qur'ān? Muslim women challenge male-centric interpretation of Islamic traditions,

> In effect, the method Muslims sacralise as Islamic nullifies the distinction Muslim theology has always made between "divine speech and its earthly realization." This so-called Islamic method collapses the Qur'ān with its male-authored exegesis, displacing the Qur'ān's authority by authority of (conservative) male exegetes. In this way, it confuses God's Authority with the authority of interpreters of sacred knowledge, thus violating the cardinal tenets of God's absolute Sovereignty, or *Tawḥīd*.[629]

Muslim feminists have began a process of un-gendering Islamic obligations,

> Throughout the Holy Qur'ān, there is example after example of respect for women as leaders and acknowledgement of women as equals. Again, the first word of the Holy Book is "Read." It does not say, "Men Read"; it says, "Read." It is a command to all believers, not just to men. For in the religion of Islam in which I was brought up, there is only equality.[630]

Barlas hopes that such a method will help women establish their right to read the text through their eyes, 'I also read to uncover what I believe already is there in the Qur'ān; that is, I hold

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G., *In Search of Fatima – A Palestinian Story* (London: Verso Books, 2002) and Ali-Karamali, S., *The Muslim Next Door – The Qur'ān, the Media and that Veil Thing* (Ashland, Oregan: White Cloud Press, 2008).
[629] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 79.
[630] Bhutto, B., *Reconciliation – Islam, Democracy, and the West* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2008) p. 19.

that certain meanings are intrinsic to the text such that anyone can retrieve them if they employ the right method and ask the right questions.'[631]

The Muslim women's experience brings with it a unique method and form of questioning distinct from that of a man's,

> It is unavoidable because one always reads in and out from the present; it thus is impossible not to bring to one's reading sensibilities shaped by existing ideas, debates, concerns, and anxieties. Indeed, if we are to read before the text (recontexulise it for each new generation of Muslims), we *must* bring new insights to our reading.[632]

However, Muslim feminists also argue that their re-reading is not something new, 'My work remains traditional in its view of the Qur'ān as an egalitarian text, a view I share with some Muslim exegetes of the classical period and certainly with many Muslims today.'[633] Barlas believes that the Qur'ān must be appreciated as a text, 'like other texts, the Qur'ān also is open to variant readings since each Ayah can be interpreted differently. In fact, even the single phrase *bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* that occurs at the beginning of every Sura except one has been rendered in six different ways by exegetes.'[634] It is not only exegetical work which Muslim feminists focus on but also abrogation, 'in the aftermath of the Prophet's migration to Madina, Taha says, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah "began to distinguish between men and women," and it is in this period that the Qur'ān's "discriminatory verses" were revealed. Muslims should then strive to implement the Meccan Suras that jurists view as having been abrogated.'[635] They are

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[631] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 21.
[632] Ibid., p. 25.
[633] Ibid., p. 25.
[634] Ibid., p. 35.
[635] Ibid., p. 75.

also aware of the problematic nature of reading the Qur'ān from a philosophical or rational method,

> Conservative *ulama* opposed philosophy and the use of reason in religious enquiry on both epistemological and theological grounds. Even al-Ghazali, hardly a conservative, held that real knowledge comes only through unmediated religious experiences and intuition and not through rational or philosophical inquiry, and it was his way of thinking that won the day.[636]

Muslim feminists argue against the idea that there is one clear and pure interpretation of the Qur'ān,

> Whose perspective and definition are we to apply if we are to determine if these teachings are ethical and egalitarian – those of the Qur'ān itself or of (Muslim and Western) patriarchies, feminists, or some combination?'[637] Muslim feminists use their interpretative skills to bring forward a renewed legitimacy, 'More female-inclusive interpretations raise legitimacy of women's claims to authority within the intellectual tradition and bear upon the practical implementation of that tradition.[638]

The notion that the Qur'ān promotes and presents Islamic masculinities as its strength could further Barlas' method of individual interpretation for if the concept of an Islamic masculinity (or femininity) is unique to each individual Muslim, then the same method and rationale could be used in interpreting the Qur'ān. Such a method would support Shaikh's earlier argument on

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[636] Ibid., p. 80.
[637] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 169.
[638] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 6.

the praxis of tafsīr and offer a method where the religious text is of use to Muslim men and women in their uniqueness.

A variety of interpretations is then the means to promote the Qur'ān's egalitarianism and not reject it outright,

> This means that I do not question its ontological status as Divine Speech or the claim that God speaks, both of which Muslims hold to be true. I do, however, question the legitimacy of its patriarchal readings, and I do this on a basis of a distinction in Muslim theology between what God says and what we understand God to be saying.[639]

Barlas argued that opposing the normative patriarchal readings of the Qur'ān requires men and women to be diverse in their questions[640] yet not seek a 'dual-gendered' text with both male and female voices in it.[641] For Barlas the critique of the Qur'ān cannot be equated to the Qur'ān itself,

> In the end, of course, a reading of the Qur'ān is just a reading of the Qur'ān, no matter how good; it does not approximate the Qur'ān itself, which may be why the Qur'ān distinguishes between itself and its exegesis. Thus, it condemns those "who write The Book with their own hands, And then say: 'This is from God'" (Qur'ān 2:79)[642]

Barlas seeks a re-reading of the Qur'ān that will bridge the moral and the social realm,

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[639] Barlas, A., *Believing Women in Islam – Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004) p. 19.
[640] Ibid., p. 10.
[641] Ibid., p. 22.
[642] Ibid., p. 17.

Yet Muslims continue to read all three (hierarchy, inequality, and differentiation) into the Qur'ān, generally by differentiating between the moral and social realms. They concede that the Qur'ān treats women and men similarly, hence equally, in the moral realm (conceived as the realm of worship, or *Ibadah*), but they argue that the Qur'ān treats women and men differently, hence unequally, in the social realms by giving them different kinds of rights in marriage, divorce and so on.[643]

Narrow interpretations of the Qurān have upheld narrow understandings of Islamic Masculinity, which have then been read into existing social relationships, most importantly in the family, to support the notion of 'same but different'. The parity between social and moral realms that Barlas has highlighted would require a radical shift in gender relationships in society and most importantly a challenge to the 'family' and the family roles that have become the key and central feature of Islamic society and Islamic masculinity, including India and Pakistan.

5.0   Conclusion

Muslim feminists deal specifically with a heterosexual Islamic masculinity located deeply in the family structure. Their construction of Islamic masculinity comes largely from lived experiences, which have then been understood in light of Islamic traditions. Muslim feminists have argued that patriarchy has been a key force in Islamic societies from medieval times to the present. Men, as privileged citizens, in Islamic societies have had no reason to question and disempower their position. It is through this societal power that the Muslim man has also exerted their influence on the way that Islamic traditions have been understood.

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[643] Ibid., p. 148

Muslim feminists have challenged this by highlighting the notion that all human beings, men and women, have been created by God and they are intrinsic to the unicity of God, *Tawḥīd*. Wadud has argued for an 'engaged surrender' as opposed to 'submission' to God. However, if men and women are to be understood 'equally', bridging the moral and social realms together, then there is a necessity to understand and practice submission to God without an essential need for each other, which in turn would create a disempowered condition leading to a much more productive gender parity. It would also allow for Muslim men and women to have more flexibility as spiritual individuals in their own unique spiritual quest.

The family has been identified as a key location for patriarchy in Islamic societies and traditions. The prophet Muḥammad's example of many wives and a large family are used as an impetus to advocate the 'divine' nature of family. Muslim feminists have not used these examples to call for the dismissal of the 'family' as they have argued that the family can be whatever its members want it to be. The individual roles that the man and woman take in the family have supported Islamic masculinity as 'father', 'husband' and 'son'. The questions, which Muslim feminists raise from the margins toward patriarchal Islamic masculinity, correlate to the same questions that men and women outside of the 'family' structure ask too, e.g. those from lesbian Muslims. Muslim feminists have identified that Islamic masculinity has been strengthened with the notion that God is male (and addressed as 'He' in the Qur'ān) as were all prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān, which men have understood as a way to raise their position over women. This has been challenged by Muslim feminists using Qur'ānic passages that highlight the very nature of God being beyond human creation.

The Qur'ān contains passages that support the notion that men are the maintainers of women and are charged with reprimanding women with a beating if they disobey. Muslim feminists

are split on their interpretation of 'men are maintainers' as some believe that as women are charged with childbearing, men are charged with maintaining the family, i.e. financially. On the issue of 'beating' it has been a difficult task for Muslim feminists to dismiss the passage in question without being seen to reject the Qur'ān, as has been the case with Wadud. Muslim feminists have argued that women have for far too long been understood and identified through a comparison to Islamic masculinity. This has led to the roles that women adopt being shaped in relation to Islamic masculinity where women are expected to conform and obey. For this reason the role of 'motherhood' is one role which Muslim feminists use to highlight the uniqueness of femininity. As Wadud states,

> When women's stories are brought into the centre, they do not recast the centre story. There is no substantive change, since the marginality in which women live is still unreformed. This position of women's lives *in the margins* must be redeemed from where they continue to experience it. No mere performances in the centre will reconstruct status as legitimate for female agency. Instead, the whole of the community must enter the margins with women to affirm the place where women's lives are experienced.[644]

Muslim feminists have begun the process of re-reading the Qur'ān from their perspective in order to challenge Islamic masculinity as they believe that the Qur'ān as a text can be read in a variety of different ways and it is from within the Qur'ānic world that such readings gain legitimacy and hope for a more egalitarian reading and practice in Islamic traditions, societies and cultures.

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[644] Wadud, A., *Inside the Gender Jihad – Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) p. 180.

Chapter Six

Political Islamic Masculinity: Syed Abūl A'lā Mawdūdi (b. 1903 - d. 1979)

*He is the Sustainer of the
two farthest points of sunrise
(East and West).
Which then of your Sustainer's
powers can you disavow?*[645]

1.0   Introduction

Politics, as the fabric of any society, has also played a role in shaping Islamic societies. The prophet Muḥammad's role was in being a political leader as well a prophet of God and this in turn required him to interact with all the forces that supported and rejected his vocation. The message of Islam was then developed alongside a political landscape as religious thought and practice brings with it a message that its citizen's feel can help progress a society or harm it. The prophet Muḥammad's life was not separated from the political sphere and this is evident when he was invited to the city of Medina to take on a leading position of power and peace between the warring factions of Jewish tribes.[646] To what extent was his position a political success, or not, is a discussion in itself but beyond this political role was Muḥammad's, and all other prophets', role as prophets. The role of submission, which was divinely guided, gave them a distinct outlook. The way of the prophets', especially Muḥammad's, has become an aspiring force for many Muslims who aim to establish the 'ideal Islamic state' as they politicise the message of Islam, and the practices of Muḥammad, into rights and laws, a method that has been criticised by Islamic law experts.[647]

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[645] Qur'ān 55:17.
[646] Salahi, A., *Muḥammad – Man and Prophet* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2002) p. 223.
[647] An-Na'im, A. A,. *Toward an Islamic Reformation – Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

The development of political Islamism globally or its advantages or disadvantages is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is an essential question is whether political Islamism has played a part in shaping gender generally and an Islamic masculinity in particular, especially in the society and culture of India and Pakistan.[648] The focus of this chapter will be on one of the most pivotal figures in discussions relating to Islam in Pakistan, if not the world at large. Syed Abūl A'lā Mawdūdi was a Muslim politician and religious leader who grew up in pre-partition India and subsequently in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Mawdūdi was born on September 25th 1903 in Aurangabad, Hyderabad State, India.[649] Mawdūdi was known to come from a religious family, 'he was born in a respectable family and his ancestry, on the paternal side, is traced back to the Holy Prophet.'[650] The death of his father interrupted his academic education and this led him to self-study,

> By the early 1920s Abūl A'lā knew enough Arabic, Persian and English, beside his mother tongue, Urdu, to study subjects of his interest independently. Thus, most of what he learned was self-acquired, though for short spells at a time, he was able to receive systematic instruction or guidance from competent scholars. Thus, Mawdūdi's intellectual growth was largely a result of his own effort and the stimulation he received from his teachers.[651]

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[648] For further reading on masculinity and politics see: Messner, M., *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1997) and Dudink, S., Hagemann, K., and Tosh, J., (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War – Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[649] Aḥmad, K., and Ansari, Z. I., *Mawdūdī: an Introduction to his life and thought* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1979) p. 6.

[650] Ibid.

[651] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Mawdūdi began his career as a journalist for various Islamic publications that led him to establish a political party called the Jammāt Islāmi (Islamic party). Mawdūdi shaped the way Islamism would be rooted in Pakistan (and India) through his writing,

> By far the most dynamic and well-organized challenge modernist Islam has been facing in India, and especially in Pakistan, is that of the revivalist writings and preachings of Abu'l Ala Mawdūdi and his well-knit, monolithic, almost totalitarian religio-political organization, the Jammāt-I Islami.[652]

This chapter aims to explore the way in which Mawdūdi constructed Islamic masculinity (and subsequently femininity) in his writing and the extent to which such a gender construction was the effect of his political Islamist ideology or submission to God. It will be important to begin such a discussion with an investigation into the global political Islamist movement and the root of their cause. Subsequently this chapter will then focus on some key pieces of Mawdūdi's writing, such as his book *Purdah* (the veil) to further highlight the way in which Mawdūdi used Islamic theology to support his views on gender, sex and social relationships. Mawdūdi's book, *Purdah*, is centred on presenting his vision, using Islamic traditions, for an ideal Muslim woman but a closer examination of this text also reveals the way he presented his vision for an ideal Muslim man too, as will be discussed in this chapter.[653]

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[652] Aḥmed, A., *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 208.
[653] The English translation of the book will be used extensively but the original, in Urdu, was also consulted. I am grateful to Sajid Younas for helping me locate this. See: Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2007).

2.0   An Overview of Political Islamism and its Ideology

Political Islamism has developed in geographical locations throughout the world in a variety of

different ways. Each Islamic movement has brought with it its own set of values based on an

oversimplified principle(s) that all things are 'un-Islamic' and they need to be corrected back to

'Islamic' ideals. The political scientist, Richard Hrair Dekmijian, presented a framework to

understand the development of such movements in various historical periods in the Islamic

world. It was in each phase, which he calls the 'cyclical dynamic of crisis and resurgence', that

a revivalist response would be triggered,

> A movement back to Islamic roots led by charismatic individuals. Some of these leaders
>
> would assume the role of *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith), while others would seek to
>
> effect a radical sociopolitical transformation through militant messianic movements as
>
> *mahdi* (a saviour sent by God). In their ideological formulations and political actions,
>
> these leaders would legitimise themselves by invoking Qur'ān, the Prophet's traditions
>
> (*Sunnah*), and historical precedents reaching back to the early Islamic community.[654]

Dekmijian traced the historical period of these revivalist responses from the Ummayad rule

through to the 'contemporary crisis milieus' which he lists as 'Muslim brotherhood 1930s',

'Iran's Islamic revolution and Shi`ite resurgence' and 'Sunni resurgence (1970s – 1990s).[655]

Under each heading lie a number of individuals, all male, who lead this response. The crisis

which became the focus of these men are listed in a series of 'dialectical perspectives in Islamic

society', says Dekmijian.[656] These include,

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[654] Dekmijian, R. H., *Islamic in Revolution – Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995) p. 11.
[655] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[656] Ibid., p. 19.

Secularism vs. Islamism, Islamic modernism vs. Islamic conservatism, establishment

Islam vs. fundamentalist Islam, ruling elites vs Islamist militants, economic elites vs.

Islamic radicals, ethnic nationalism vs. Islamic unity, Ṣūfīsm vs. Islamism, traditional

Islam vs. fundamentalist Islam, religious revivalism vs political Islamism, gradualist

Islam vs. revolutionary Islam, Dar al-Islam vs. Dar al-Harb (territorial domain of Islam

vs. rest of the world).[657]

Dekmijian stated that the first conflict between secularism and Islamism is a 'central dialectic

in all Muslim societies'[658] and Islamists use history as a means to resolve these crisis, 'the

burden of history lies heavily on the Islamist ideologues as they strive to reconstruct the past in

the present crisis setting in order to shape the future.'[659] The Islamist ideology is based on

several components with the sole aim of a 'return to basics – to the puritanical foundations of

faith.'[660] Dekmijian highlighted some of the core understandings of Islamism, which he drew

from the teachings of Hassan al-Banna (b.1906 – d. 1949 – founder of the Muslim brotherhood in

Egypt),[661] Syed Qutb (b. 1906 – d. 1966 – understood to be a leading thinker in the Muslim

brotherhood movement with his many publications including a commentary on the Qur'ān),[662]

Mawdūdi, Sa`id Hawaa (b. 1935 – d. 1989 – a leading ideologue in Islamism in Syria),[663]

Muhammed Abd al-Salām Farrāj (b. 1954 – d. 1982 - the founder of an organisation known as

Jammāt al-Jihād (Society of Jihad) in Egypt said to be behind the assassination of President

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[657] Ibid., pp. 19-22.
[658] Ibid., p. 19.
[659] Ibid., p. 36.
[660] Ibid., p. 41.
[661] Further information on al-Banna see: Brynjar, L., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* (Reading: Garnet Publishers, 1998) and El Awaisi, A. A. M., *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. 1998).
[662] Further information on Qutb see: Qutb, S., *Milestones* (India: Islamic Book Service, 2006) and Bergesen, A. J., (ed.), *The Syed Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
[663] Further information on Hawwa see: Weismann, I., 'Sa'id Hawwa and Islamic Revivalism in Ba'thist Syria' in *Studia Islamica*, No. 85. (1997), pp. 131-154

Anwar Sedat in 1981),[664] Fathi Yakan (b. 1933 is the head of the Islamic action front in

Lebanon),[665] and Juhayman ibn Muḥammad ibn Sayf Utaybi (b. 1936 – d. 1980 – is renowned for

his takeover, based on Islamist ideologies, of the holy Mosque in Mecca because he felt that the

Saudi regime was corrupt and imitating the west.).[666]

Dekmijian defined the central tenets of Islamism through seven key points beginning with the

central concept of '*Din wa Dawlah*' believing that in 'Islam, unlike Christianity in the West, the

separation of the faith (*din*) and the state (*dawlah*) is inconceivable'. The second tenet is based

on 'rule (*hukm*)', which is solely based on the notion that the Qur'ān and Sunnah give the law,

and the state must enforce the law. This leads to a belief that Islam is the 'final truth' and 'final

revelation'; as the possessors of truth, the Muslims' primary missions in life is 'worshipping God

(*ibadah*) and propagating Islam (*da'wah*); consequently God stands with them'. The third tenet

is a 'return to the straight path, *Sirāt al-Mustaqim*' and this has developed a sixth pillar, *Jihād*

that is understood at times as a physical struggle to establish an Islamic order as a religious

duty. The fourth tenet is the belief that there is a universal *Ummah* and that the aim of every

'good Muslim should be the establishment of Allah's sovereignty over the whole of mankind'.

The fifth tenet is based on an understanding that Islam considers the life of man a spiritual and

material unity, which is understood as 'social justice' and is linked to 'moral behaviour'. The

sixth tenet is seeking a legitimate rulership based on Islamic law 'principles and precedents

reaching back to the Prophet and his four 'rightly guided' successors'. This would then lead to

the establishment of the *khilafah* system. The seventh tenet is the belief that 'the Islamic

ummah should be a puritanical society based on *salafiyyah* maxims', such maxims are usually

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[664] Further information on Farrāj and Islamism in Egypt see: Kepel, G., *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, (trans.) by Rothschild, J., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
[665] Further information on Yakan see: Elsässer, S., 'Between Ideology and Pragmatism: Fathī Yakan's Theory of Islamic Activism' in *Die Welt des Islams*, Volume 47, Numbers 3-4, (2007) pp. 376-402.
[666] Further information on Utaybi see: Trofimov, Y., *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam's Holiest Shrine* (London: Penguin, 2008).

understood as a strict 'emulation of the Prophet's message and exemplary life'. Islamists

believe that when this happens then the Islamic state has the God-given right to 'enforce what

is good and to prohibit what is objectionable.'[667]

From Dekmijian's definition the key point in Islamist thought and practice becomes clear that

their aim is to achieve the utopian ideal of 'Islamic', which they believe has been lost through

un-Islamic practices and thoughts. The many movements led by charismatic and influential

men that Dekmijian highlighted in various parts of the world show how widespread the

Islamist ideology is.[668] Such a mass movement is led by the vision of a united Islamic world

where all Muslims are led by such tenets. The implications of Islamist doctrine on gender

construction are evident in those parts of the Islamic world that have tried to reach for

achieving these tenets.

3.0   Mawdūdi and Muslim Male Leaders in India and Pakistan

Islam has been a controlling and guiding factor from the beginning in the creation of Pakistan.

However, not all the leaders during this time agreed on the role of Islam in the new republic. In

order to locate Islamist thoughts and ideals in the work of Mawdūdi one needs to seek the

alternative male voices that were emerging during this time too. If masculinity is shaped

through an interaction with all that surrounds it, then those surrounding Mawdūdi are

essential to be highlighted in order to understand Mawdūdi's Islamic masculinity. Pakistan

attained independence under the leadership of Muḥammad Ali Jinnah (b. 1876 – d. 1948) and he

was supported by the renowned poet and philosopher, Allama Sir Muḥammad Iqbal (b. 1877- d.

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[667] Dekmijian, R. H., *Islamic in Revolution – Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995) pp. 41-44.
[668] For further reading on Islamism see: Demant, P. R., *Islam Vs. Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2006) and Calvert, J., *Islamism: A Documentary and Reference Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007).

1938), with his religious credentials throughout the partition discussions and final independence of what was to become the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. However, it was not primarily Jinnah's or Iqbal's vision which was established,

> In order to make sense of the complex interaction between Islam and Pakistani politics, it is necessary to understand the conflicting Islamic ideological responses to the eighteenth-century decline of Muslim power in north India. The development of Islamic modernism owed much to the Aligarh movement of Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān (b. 1817— d. 1898). Islamic revivalism owes its roots to the writings of Shah Waliullah (b. 1703- d. 1762) although modern Islamist understanding was formulated by Syed Abūl Ala Mawdūdi (b. 1903- d. 1979).[669]

It is for this reason that an analysis of Iqbal and Jinnah will precede a discussion on Mawdūdi's work as an overview of the prevailing intellectual thoughts of Indian Muslims.

3.1   Allama Sir Muḥammad Iqbal (b. 1877- d. 1938)

Allama Sir Muḥammad Iqbal was a renowned poet, philosopher and academic in pre-partition India. Iqbal was born in Sialkot, India on 9th November 1877 or 1873 (dates vary) into a religious family. Iqbal studied for a degree in philosophy at Cambridge University and his PhD in Munich from 1905-1908 in philosophy.[670] He wrote his doctoral thesis on 'The Development of Metaphysics in Persia' in which he traced the metaphysical thoughts of Persians from Zoroasters to Baha'ullah and there is also a chapter within his thesis that deals with the controversy between 'idealism' (Ash'ari Philosophers) and 'realism' (Aristotelian Najm ad-Din al-Katibi).

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[669] Talbot, I., *Pakistan – A Modern History* (London: Hurst and Company, 1998) p. 27.
[670] Haq, Q. M., and Waley, M. I., *Allama Sir Muḥammad Iqbal – Poet-Philosopher of the East* (Scarborough: British Museum Publications, 1977) p. 9.

It was on his way to Europe that his teacher from Lahore, Sir Thomas Arnold, advised him to visit the mausoleums of Khwaja Nizamuddin, Amir Khusrau and Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib. Iqbal was greatly influenced by the poetry of Ghālib and it is said that when he visited the grave of Ghālib someone began to recite his poetry at which 'Iqbal sobbed bitterly and embraced Ghālib's grave'.[671] In his book 'Stray Reflections' Iqbal stated, 'I confess I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirzā Ghālib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. The first two led me into the 'inside' of things, the third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days.'[672]

Iqbal was influenced by western culture but was cautious about adopting its ways,

> As an eloquent writer and speaker, of academic distinction and equally at home with Urdu, Persian and English, he was well qualified to interpret the East to the West and vice versa.' Iqbal felt it was 'dangerous for western civilisations to appoint leaders who professed Christianity but acted like atheists' yet admired the British lifestyle and stated that the well-being of India depended upon good relations with Britain.[673]

Iqbal was then seen to be a good bridge between those who opposed the west wholeheartedly and those who held it dear to their hearts,

> The only standard by which Iqbal might be hung would be a universal one, one that not only did not exist but that, in Iqbal's view, could not emerge from either the reason

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[671] Vahid, S. A., *Iqbal – His Art & Thought* (Hyderabad: Government Central Press, 1944) p. 11.
[672] Haq, Q. M., and Waley, M. I., *Allama Sir Muḥammad Iqbal – Poet-Philosopher of the East* (Scarborough: British Museum Publications, 1977) p. 12.
[673] Ibid., p. 7.

("brain malady") of the West or the mysticism ("heart-malady") of the East. It could only have been the sort of standard that Iqbal himself eventually proposed, a standard of individual truths that turn out to converge.[674]

Iqbal welcomed the abolition of the caliphate saying that it had been a 'corrupt institution since the beginning of Umayyad rule in 661 AD' and further stated that he supported the Ataturk decree calling for Turks to dawn western clothing and write the language in roman script because he believed that Islam, as a society, had no commitment to any particular dress or language.[675] The fall of the caliphate was not seen as a fall in the strength of Islam as his thoughts were still reaching for a utopian ideal,

> Iqbal was immensely inspired by the republican polity of the Turks under Ata-Turk. His vision of a free Islamic world was composed of a group of independent republics ruled by their peoples through their elected representatives. As for the unity of the Ummah under one banner it could in, his opinion, only come when every Muslim people had solved its own problems through its own efforts.[676]

This is further evidence in one of Iqbal's poems,

> The poppy heard my song and tore her mantle;
> The morning breeze is still in search of a garden.
>
> Ill lodged in Ataturk or Reza Shah,
> The Soul of the East is still in search of a body.
>
> The thing I am may merit chastisement;
> Only – the world is still in search of a gibbet.[677]

[674] Lee, R. D., *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997) p. 59.
[675] Syed, A. H., 'Iqbal and Jinnah on Issues of Nationhood and Nationalism' (ed.), Naim, C. M., *'Iqbal, Jinnah and Pakistan – The Vision and the Reality'* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1984) p. 77.
[676] Mir, M. S., 'Religion and Politics in Pakistan' (ed.), Engineer, A. A., *Islam in Asia* (Lahore: Vanguard Publications, 1986) p. 157.
[677] Lee, R. D., *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997) pp. 58-59.

However, Iqbal also felt that Islamic law, as formulated by medieval jurists, needed massive reorientation and revision to be relevant to a Muslim community's needs.[678] This at least was a moderate bridge between the west and the east. Iqbal was not pleased with the narrow interpretations of Islam that Muslims were presenting; 'He (Iqbal) developed a strong opposition to the concept of narrow, geographical nationalisms, which he saw as a fundamental cause of political conflicts and disasters looming over Europe.'[679]

Ijtihād, creative independent reasoning, was another method in which Iqbal wanted Muslims to start redressing the ills of society, 'Iqbal therefore declared the closing of the door of Ijtihād 'pure fiction', suggested partly by the emergence of legal thought in Islam and partly by that intellectual laziness which, 'especially in the period of spiritual decay, turns great thinkers into idols.'[680] This was opposed by Mawdūdi who stated, 'Only those who had faith in the Shari'āh; had knowledge of the Qur'an, the prophetic traditions, and other sources of religious law; and were proficient in Arabic would practice Ijtihād.'[681] Iqbal's vision was something that greatly influenced the creation of Pakistan as he presented views between east and west,

> When Iqbal compared the living tradition of Islam with Islam of the Qurān and the
> Prophet, he found it wanting in daring, in valour, in imagination, and in heroism. That
> Muslims should have been drawn toward European ways demonstrated the debility of
> the living tradition. He saw clearly that imperialism had encroached not just upon
> territory but upon ways of being, and for that he blamed Muslims themselves as much

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[678] Ibid., p. 80.
[679] Haq, Q. M., and Waley, M. I., *Allama Sir Muḥammad Iqbal – Poet-Philosopher of the East* (Scarborough: British Museum Publications, 1977) p. 9.
[680] Irfani, S., 'The Progressive Islamic Movement' (ed.), Khān, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 42.
[681] Nasr, S. V. R., *Mawdūdi & The Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 107.

as Europeans. Muslims had become sheep, accepting not just economic and political

but psychological dependence.[682]

Iqbal's most famous poetic masterpieces are two interconnected poems known as *Shikwa* (The

Complaint, written 1909) and *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (The Answer to the Complaint, written 1913).[683]

Iqbal begins his 'complaint' by detailing the achievements of Muslims and questioned God as to

why His (God's) wrath was upon them,

> Before our time, a strange sight was the world You made:
> Some worshipped stone idols, others bowed to trees and prayers.
> Accustomed to believing what they saw, the peoples vision wasn't free,
> How then could anyone believe in a God he couldn't see?
> Do you know of anyone, Lord, who then took Your name? I ask
> It was the muscle in the Muslim's arms that did Your task.
>
> Here on this earth were settled the Seljuqs and the Turanians,
> The Chinese lived in China, in Iran lived the Sassanians
> The Greeks flourished in their allotted regions,
> In this very world lived the Jews and the Christians.
> But who did draw their swords in Your name and fight?
> When things had gone wrong, who put them right?
>
> Of all the brave warriors, there were none but only we.
> Who fought Your battles on land and often on the sea.
> Our calls to prayer rang out from the churches of European lands
> And floated across Africa's scorching desert sands.
> We ruled the world, but regal glories our eyes disdained.
> Under the shades of glittering sabres Your creed was proclaimed.[684]

Iqbal is lamenting the lost power of Muslims in not dissimilar fashion to the Islamist tenets for

a utopian Islam. In the context of Iqbal's India it may have been a means to herald the

sentiments of Indian Muslims against the power of not just colonial rule but also against the

Hindus, 'while lauding the achievements of Muslim warriors and the civilizing role of Islam, the

[682] Lee, R. D., *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997) p. 67.
[683] Iqbal, M., *Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa – Complaint and Answer – Iqbal's Dialogue with Allah* (trans.), Singh, K., (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[684] Ibid., p. 31-33.

poet also reveals a not-too-veiled contempt for non-Muslims, particularly Hindus.'[685] The way

in which Iqbal sought to unite Muslims is also evident in Iqbal's 'answer to the complaint',

> You are one people, you share in common your weal and woe.
> You have one faith, one creed and to one Prophet allegiance owe.
> You have one sacred Kaaba, one God and one holy book, the Koran.
> Was it so difficult to unite in one community every single Mussalman (Muslim)?
> It is factions at one place; divisions into castes at another.
> In these times are these the ways to progress and prosper?
>
> Who abandoned Our Chosen Messenger's code and its sanctions?
> Who made timeserving the measure of your actions?
> Whose eyes have been blinded by alien ways and civilisations?
> Who have turned their gaze away from their forefathers' traditions?
> Your hearts have no passion, your souls are of spirit bereft,
> Of Muḥammad's message nothing with you is left.[686]

Iqbal's vision of Islam was then confusing and ambiguous. Especially since he held strongly to

his affiliation with 'the west', Iqbal stated, 'most of my life has been spent in the study of

European philosophy, and that viewpoint has become my second nature. Consciously, or

unconsciously I study the realities and truths of Islam from the same point of view.'[687] Through

these poems it is evident that he believed that Muslims were in a sense 'suffering' because they

had lost sight of 'codes' and 'sanctions' that God had sent to human beings. Iqbal seemed to be

floundering between east and west in his poetry and thoughts.

3.2   Muḥammad Ali Jinnah (b. 1876 – d. 1948)

Muḥammad Ali Jinnah is understood to be the founder of what is current day Pakistan. Jinnah

studied law in London in 1892 and at the age of nineteen was called to the bar in England.

During his time in London he became interested in politics and returned back to India to

become a successful lawyer in his home country. Jinnah led the All India Muslim League's

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685 Ibid., p. 25.
686 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
687 Ibid., p. 8.

struggle for an independent state for Muslims. Jinnah wanted to establish a state that would be rooted in religious diversity. In his first address to the constituent assembly in Karachi, Jinnah offered freedom of religious worship and practice to all and stated that everyone was a citizen of the state of Pakistan. Jinnah mentioned his desire to see terms such as Hindus and Muslims to have little significance, not in the religious sense but in the political sense where everyone held their own belief but their national identity overrode such factors. This address was strongly criticised by the Islamists who felt that Jinnah was opting more favourably to those aspects that were against the very foundations of their idealised Islamic State.[688] Mawdūdi lambasted Jinnah's vision by saying,

> Not a single leader of the Muslim League from Jinnah himself to the rank and file has an Islamic mentality or Islamic habits of thought, or looks at political and social problems from an Islamic viewpoint... Their ignoble role is to safeguard the material interests of Indian Muslims by every possible manoeuvre or trickery.[689]

Some commentators have argued that such Islamic sentiments supported Jinnah, 'It is true that Jinnah's great role was a highly important contributor factor, but without intense religious fervour and zeal for an Islamic state on the part of the Muslim masses, Jinnah could not have achieved Pakistan.'[690] To this end Jinnah reassured a religious leader in the North-West frontier province that Pakistan would be lead by Islamic law, 'It is needless to emphasis that the constituent assembly, which would be predominantly Muslim in composition, would not be able to enact laws inconsistent with the *Shariat* (Islamic Code).'[691]

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[688] Ali, T., *Can Pakistan Survive?* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1983) p. 42.
[689] Ibid., p. 28.
[690] Sayeed, K. B., *Pakistan – The Formative Phase 1857-1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 11.
[691] Ibid., p. 33.

The views of Jinnah continually enraged the Islamists who were not pleased with Jinnah's vision for Pakistan but also the way he conducted his personal affairs. Jinnah married a girl twenty-four years his junior from an elite Parsi family in Bombay.[692] This marriage was not well received by the Parsi community or the Islamists who started a chant saying, 'For a *Kafir* (infidel) women he left Islam. Is he then a great leader or a great infidel?'[693] Jinnah's actions were deemed as alien to the environment that he called his own,

> Jinnah was 'westernised' and 'liberal' and overcame the taboos of inter cultural relations when he married a Parsi woman whose parents opposed this union. Jinnah remained secular even after independence of Pakistan by appointing Joginder Nath Mandal, a Hindu, to serve in Pakistan's first cabinet.[694]

Jinnah remained true to his word of inclusion of all citizens and stated in his inaugural speech that one may belong to any religion, caste or creed as this has had nothing to do with the business of the state.[695] Jinnah and Iqbal were said to have had a lot more in common with each other than the Islamists,

> The founding fathers of Pakistan, Iqbal and Jinnah were both liberal democrats aiming at reorganisation of the Islamic community in accordance with known principles of democracy, and to a certain extent wished to change the economic system on socialistic lines. In any case they envisaged the community of the Muslims as a community of free individuals, totally independent of the authoritarianism and diktat

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[692] Parsi is the name given to a Zoroastrian family that lives in India.
[693] Karandikar, M. A., *Islam in India's Transition to Modernity* (Bombay: Orient Longmans Ltd., 1968) p. 256.
[694] Khān, A. O., 'Political and Economic Aspects of Islamisation' (ed.), Khān, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 170.
[695] Rashid, A., 'Pakistan: The Ideological Dimension' (ed.), Khān, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 81.

of monarchs, feudal lords, priests, capitalists and imperialists. ... But soon after Jinnah's death two powerful groups of the elite in Pakistan started their bid for moulding the new state according to their own purposes: the theocratic *Ulama* and the bureaucracy.[696]

Jinnah and Iqbal were caught between two opposing factions,

> ...during Muslim rule, in the search for stability, there was a recurring oscillation between a virtually secular policy and assertion of Islam as the proper basis for the state and a means for ensuring loyalty of its Muslim citizens. By the twentieth century, therefore, two distinct trends in the Muslim movement existed, the one, modernist, the other, tradionalist. The first led by Jinnah and Muslim League, the second led by the majority of the Indian Muslim *ulama*.[697]

Mir stated that there were four opposing movements against the vision of Jinnah. Firstly, the Deobandi Jamiatul Ulama, who were a part of the Indian National Congress and worked against the Pakistan movement. Secondly, the Majlis Ahrar-i-Islam, which was strong in the Punjab and worked in Congress against the Muslim League. Thirdly, the Khaksar movement which was a military movement opposed to the concept of Pakistan to the extent that they were implicated with an assassination attempt on Jinnah. Lastly, the Jammāt-i-Islāmi which was founded in 1941, which was led by Mawdūdi who pushed for a theocratic state in Pakistan.[698] Although Jinnah and Iqbal had created a strong alliance between themselves, their views were

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[696] Mir, M. S., 'Religion and Politics in Pakistan' (ed.), Engineer, A. A., *Islam in Asia* (Lahore: Vanguard Publications, 1986) p. 158.

[697] Faruki, K. A., 'Pakistan: Islamic Government and Society' (ed.), Esposito, J. L., *Islam in Asia – Religion, Politics and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 54.

[698] Mir, M. S,. 'Religion and Politics in Pakistan' in Engineer, A. A., (ed.), *Islam in Asia* (Lahore: Vanguard Publications, 1986) pp. 158-159.

not entirely similar. Iqbal attempted to create a bridge between the Islamists to the right of the political spectrum and Jinnah's secular vision to the far left. It was this clash that began, and continues, the push and pull between the liberally democratic vision of Jinnah and the political Islamist ideology of the Islamists.

4.0   Mawdūdi and Jammāt Islami

Mawdūdi showed an interest in politics from an early age and was said to be a part of a 'Khilafat' movement, a secret society, and also a movement known as *Tahrik-I Hijrat* which is stated to be 'a movement in opposition to the British rule over India and urged the Muslims of that country to migrate *en masse* to Afghanistan.'[699] However, Mawdūdi did not remain in any of these organisations and isolated himself in his academic and journalistic endeavours. Mawdūdi's first book was titled 'al-Jihād fī al-Islām (Jihād in Islam).[700] It was after this publication that he began working on his commentary of the Qur'ān. It would seem apparent that Mawdūdi's thought and writing was driven by the political realities that Muslims found themselves in, 'he paid special attention to the questions arising out of the conflict between the Islamic and contemporary Western world views.'[701]

Mawdūdi founded the Jammāt Islāmi around 1940.[702] It became a political movement against the 'western' based ideals of Sir Syed Aḥmed Khān[703], Jinnah and Iqbal. Mawdūdi stated that,

> Not a single leader of the Muslim League from Jinnah himself to the rank and file has an
> Islamic mentality or Islamic habits of thought, or looks at political and social problems

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[699] Ibid., p. 7.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Ibid., p. 8.
[702] Ibid.
[703] See section on Sir Syed Aḥmed Khān in chapter three.

from an Islamic viewpoint... Their ignoble role is to safeguard the material interests of Indian Muslims by every possible manoeuvre or trickery.[704]

Such sentiments led to his imprisonment in spells totalling four years and eight months.[705] Imprisonment failed to see a change in Mawdūdi's view and he remained firm in his conviction that the only way forward was to establish an Islamic state, which led to him becoming even more outspoken on all things he deemed 'un-Islamic',

> In 1953, when he was sentenced to death by martial law authorities on the charge of writing a seditious pamphlet on the Qadiyāni problem, he resolutely turned down the opportunity to file a petition for mercy. With unshakeable faith that life and death lay solely in the hands of God, he told his son as well his colleagues: "if the time of my death has come, no one can keep me from it; and if it has not come, they cannot send me to the gallows even if they hang themselves upside down in trying to do so.[706]

Mawdūdi believed that sovereignty lay with God and was not willing to allow 'the people' to rule in an Islamic state,

> The very antithesis of secular Western democracy. The philosophical foundations of western democracy is the sovereignty of the people. Law making is their prerogative and legislation must correspond to the mood and temper of their opinion...Islam...altogether repudiates the philosophy of popular sovereignty and rears

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[704] Ali, T., *Can Pakistan Survive?* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1983) p. 28.
[705] Ahmad, K., and Ansari, Z. I., *Mawdūdī: an Introduction to his life and thought* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1979) p. 9.
[706] Ibid.

its polity on the foundations of the sovereignty of God and vice regency (Khilāfat) of man.[707]

The one thing, which strengthened Mawdūdi's argument, was his effective use of God in his arguments. This played an essential role in rousing the spiritual sentiments of every Muslim, regardless of education, to unite. This was similar to the way that Iqbal wrote his poetry as an address and response from God.

4.1   Mawdūdi's Islamic Political Framework

Mawdūdi's political framework is based on three key concepts, *Tawḥīd, Risāla*, and *Khilāfa*. *Tawḥīd* is understood by Mawdūdi to be the belief that 'God alone is the creator, sustainer and master of the universe and of all that exists in it – organic and inorganic'.[708] Mawdūdi argued that *Risāla* is 'the medium through which we receive the law of God' and related this to two things specifically, the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad's life as a way to base the requirements laid out in the Qur'ān, which culminates into the *Sharī'a* (law).[709] Through this political framework he envisaged an Islamic state,

> Secularism, nationalism and democracy are the roots of all calamities – therefore
> Mawdūdi dreams of a theocracy, or rather a theo-democracy where the Kingdom of
> God – the only legislator – is administered by the whole community of Muslims. A
> country that has a Muslim majority should accept the *sharia* as the law of the land.[710]

[707] Ibid p. 160.
[708] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Human Rights in Islam* (trans.), Ahmad, K., (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1993) p. 9.
[709] Ibid., p. 9.
[710] Schimmel, A., *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E. J. Brill Publications, 1980) p. 238.

At a time when Muslims felt oppressed by the ruling power and demanded their own state, such a political formula was both appealing to the oppressed politically and spiritually. Without any clarification on the complexities of Islamic law's origins and development, Mawdūdi often used Islamic law in its most monolithic understanding,

> It is a principle of Islamic law that *Iman* (belief) consists in adherence to a certain set of doctrines and anyone who accepts those doctrines becomes a *Mu'min* (believer). No one has the right to call such a man a disbeliever or drive him from the fold of the *Ummah* (one Muslim community, often understood to be global), unless there is clear proof that faith has been abandoned. This is a legal position. But in the eyes of the Lord, *Iman* is only valid when it entails complete surrender of one's will and freedom of choice to the will of Allah. It is a state of thought and action, coming from the heart, wherein man submits himself fully to Allah, renouncing all claim to his supremacy.[711]

For Mawdūdi, doctrine and belief are clearly defined on issues of ethics and morality,

> In other words, it is God and not man whose will is the primary source of Law in a Muslim society. When such a society comes into existence, the Book and the Messenger prescribe for it a code of life called the Shari`āh, and this society is bound to conform to it by virtue of the contract it has entered into. It is, therefore inconceivable that a real Muslim society can deliberately adopt any other system of life than that based on the Shari`āh. If it does so, its contract is *ipso facto* broken and it becomes 'un-Islamic'.[712]

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[711] Mawdūdi, A. A., *The Islamic Way of Life (Islām kā Niẓām Ḥayāt)* (trans. & ed.), Ahmad, K., and Murad, K., (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2001) pp. 13-14.
[712] Ibid., p. 16.

Mawdūdi stated that justice, courage and truthfulness have always found praise amongst human beings as opposed to 'falsehood, injustice, dishonesty and breach of trust'. Mawdūdi used this as a basis to quell any opposing Islamic ideologies and answered the question why such simple premises of society are still opposed by some. He gave three reasons. 'A) Through their failure to prescribe specific limits and roles for the various moral virtues and values, present-day moral structures cannot provide a balanced and coherent plan of social conduct. B) Differences also exist in respect of the sanction behind the moral law and in regard to the motives which impel a person to follow it. C) On deeper reflection we find that the grounds for these differences emerge from different peoples' conflicting views and concepts of the universe, the place of man in it, and of man's purpose on earth.'[713] This would fit with Dekmijian's statement that political Islamists seek to resolve current conflicts through historical precedent.

Mawdūdi understood Khalīfah as such,

> Every person in an Islamic society enjoys the rights and powers of the caliphate of God and in this respect all individuals are equal. No one can deprive anyone of his rights and powers. The agency for running the affairs of the state will be established in accordance with the will of these individuals, and the authority of the state will only be an extension of the powers of the individual delegated to it. Their opinion will be decisive in the formation of the Government, which will be run with their advice and in accordance with their wishes. Whoever gains their confidence will carry out the duties of the caliphate on their behalf; and when he loses this confidence he will have to relinquish his office. In this respect the political system in Islam is as perfect a

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[713] Ibid., pp. 21-23.

democracy as ever can be. What distinguishes Islamic democracy from Western democracy is that while the latter is based on the concept of popular sovereignty the former rests on the principle of popular *Khilāfat.* In Western democracy the people are sovereign, in Islam sovereignty is vested in God and the people are His caliphs or representatives.[714]

On the issue of democracy, Mawdūdi stated,

> Philosophically, democracy is a form of government in which the common people of a country are sovereign. Laws are made with their opinions and can be amended only with their opinion. Only that law can be implemented that they want, and the law which they do not want would be removed from the statutes.[715]

Mawdūdi believed that culture needed to be Islamised, 'Islamic culture is based on a covenant between God and his creature, man. Its norms are set for all times. They are valid for all humanity, irrespective of national frontiers, race, color, or language.'[716] Mawdūdi believed in a unified Islamic empire, beyond geographical nationalism, 'besides the ignorance of Kufr and Shirk, if there was an enemy of Islam it was the Satan of *watan* (nationhood)...if you pick up the books of *Ahadith* you would find how the Prophet fought against distinction based on blood, soil, colour, language and social status.'[717] Mawdūdi used religious rhetoric to conjure up support for political Islamism,

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[714] Mawdūdi, A. A., *The Islamic Way of Life (Islām kā Niẓām Ḥayāt)* (trans. & ed.), Ahmad, K., and Murad, K., (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2001) p. 31.

[715] Aḥmed, Z., 'Maudoodi's Islamic State' (ed.), Khān, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 99.

[716] Aḥmed, A., *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 208.

[717] Aḥmed, Z., 'Maudoodi's Islamic State' (ed.), Khān, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 109.

This huge crowd, which is called the Muslim nation, is such that 999 out of 1000 have got neither any knowledge of Islam, nor are they aware of the distinction between truth and falsehood. From the father to the son, and from the son to the grandson they have just been acquiring the name Muslim. Therefore they are neither Muslims, nor have they accepted the truth by recognizing it as truth, nor again rejected falsehood by recognizing it as falsehood.[718]

Mawdūdi advocated openly that his understanding and preaching of Islam would make people 'good' Muslims, 'until and unless the people are converted to the kind of Islam the Jammāt stands for, elections, according to its views, should be replaced by a process of selection in which such persons should wield power who are 'good' Muslims.'[719] For this reason, Mawdūdi was not willing to allow any opposition to his views,

Mawdūdi was not interested in the emergence of any independent intellectual poles within the Jammāt, nor was he willing to relinquish any of his religious authority by acknowledging the intellectual worth of those around him. ... Mawdūdi deliberately erased areas of compromise, dividing issues into right and wrong, Islamic and un-Islamic. By putting everything in black and white, he brought moral pressure to bear on his audience, manipulating the psychological impulse that is inherent in a consequential choice between such diametric opposites as truth and falsehood, salvation and perdition.[720]

Mawdūdi stated that Pakistan led by Jinnah was destined to be a pagan state,

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[718] Khān, A. O., 'Political and Economic Aspects of Islamisation' (ed.), Khān, M. A., *The Pakistan Experience – State and Religion* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985) p. 140.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Nasr, S. V. R., *Mawdūdi & The Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 130.

Pakistan as envisaged by the Muslim League and Jinnah would be a pagan state and its rulers would not be Islamic but Pharaohs and Nimrods. To call Pakistan an Islamic state would be as misleading as to call an institution of ignorance (presumably the Muslim University at Aligarh) a Muslim university, or a bank in the new state an Islamic bank while Islam forbids interest and therefore the very institution of banking, or to call its society modeled on paganism (presumably of the west) an Islamic society, or its forbidden creations in music, painting, and sculpture Islamic arts, or its 'atheism and heresy' and 'Islamic philosophy'.[721]

After the partition of India and Pakistan the Jammāt Islami was divided into Jammāt Islami Pakistan and Jammāt Islami India. Such was the greatness of Mawdūdi's appeal to Muslims that his message was spreading,

> That influence transcends the boundaries of parties and organisations, and even goes far beyond the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Mawdūdi has by now become very much like a father figure for Muslims all over the world. As a scholar and writer, he is the most widely read Muslim writer of our time. His books have been translated into most of the major languages of the world – Arabic, English, Turkish, Persian, Hindi, French, German, Swahili, Tamil, Bengali, etc. – and are now increasingly becoming available in many more Asian, African and European languages.[722]

Mawdūdi, as the leader of a political party and a recognised religious scholar, used his position to preach his religious message across the Muslim world, not just through his writing but also

[721] Aḥmed, A., *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 214.
[722] Ahmad, K., and Ansari, Z. I., *Mawdūdī: an Introduction to his life and thought* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1979) p. 10.

by his numerous international lectures and study tours in Cairo, Damascus, Amman, Makka, Medina, Jeddah, Kuwait, Rabat, Istanbul, London, New York, Toronto amongst others.[723] Mawdūdi was also one of the founding directors of the Islamic University in Medina, Saudi Arabia.[724] This shows the appeal of Mawdūdi's vision in a much wider context and the way that the core tenets of political Islamist ideology is easily adapted to different countries of the world.

4.2   Mawdūdi on Islamic Economics and Liberty

Mawdūdi used every possible way to propagate his vision of a strict political Islamism and understood that economics play a role in shaping thought and practice. Mawdūdi wanted to create an Islamic state that obeyed the Islamic leadership and its laws and so needed to make sure that wealth did not bring liberties that would overshadow the state's law. It was for this reason that Mawdūdi attacked capitalism and socialism in his writing by arguing that capitalism was created because of 'liberalism', 'the economic system based on the liberal theory of uncontrolled economy came to be known as Modern Capitalism.'[725] Mawdūdi argued that such modern capitalism leads to a rise in the 'right of personal property', 'right of unhampered struggle – the rights of the individuals to use their resources, individually or in groups in any field they like, the gains accruing thereby or the losses incurred were their own concern.', 'profits as a stimulus for work', 'competition', 'discrimination in the rights of the employee and the employer', 'confidence in the natural causes of progress' and 'non-intervention of the state'.[726] Mawdūdi argued that capitalism was too self-centred and further stated that this was also the case of socialism, as he believed it was, 'collectivism, a term coined

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[723] Ibid., p. 10.
[724] Ibid.
[725] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Capitalism, Socialism and Islam* (trans.), Khān, S. A., (Safat: Islamic Book Publishers, 1987) p. 12.
[726] Ibid., pp. 12-16.

as an antonym of "individualism" of the neo-capitalistic order'.[727] He stated that the new

'creed' of socialism became a 'novel idea of a few adventurers',

> But the craze of originality is one of the very interesting defects of the western mind,
> especially when such originality is utterly devoid of sense and its authors presents it in
> a thoroughly dashing style, trampling principles, and arranges his hypothesis
> scientifically enough to make it look like a "system".[728]

Mawdūdi argued against capitalism and socialism at length using the basis that the west's

promotion of such economic systems was flawed. It was in his concluding remarks that he

presented the 'puzzle' and the 'Islamic solution'.[729] Mawdūdi's ideal Islamic economic system

would be based on the fundamentals that importance is given to the 'individual' and not a

'party, nation or society' as none of these are 'accountable to God' but the individual.[730]

Mawdūdi stated that 'individuality and perfect development of personality is not possible

without freedom of thought and action.'[731] Even though Mawdūdi advocated an economic

system in which the individual was free, his understanding of 'accountable to God' was where it

leads back to his political Islamist ideology of what was Islamic and non-Islamic as he was

unwavering on any deviation to his understanding of God's law and the adherence of this law

by all Muslims, 'Industries and business adversely affecting morals and physical health of

masses should be banned. If any of these is considered essential from a certain point of view,

there must be due restrictions.'[732] Mawdūdi highlighted an example from the life of the

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[727] Ibid., p. 31.
[728] Ibid., pp. 34-35.
[729] Ibid., p. 68 and p. 70.
[730] Ibid., p. 70.
[731] Ibid., p. 71.
[732] Ibid., p. 78.

prophet Muḥammad that leads one to believe that the individuality, which he so earnestly promoted, must ultimately be controlled,

> He (the prophet) was apprised of the soaring prices of commodities and requested for their official control. He declined, saying, "I want to meet my Lord (God) in such a state that there is no complaint of injustice against me from a single soul". It does not mean that he left dearness to take care of itself and did nothing to remedy it. What he disapproved of was the official intervention in the market prices and disturb the whole complicated system. Leaving it alone, he devoted all his energies to the moral reform of the businessmen and by continuous preaching brought home to them the fact that voluntary rising of prices is a great sin. His preaching had the desired effect and price index came down to normal before long.[733]

Mawdūdi re-shaped the western models of economics by adding his notion of ultimate accountability lying with God.

5.0   Mawdūdi on Men and Women and the Laws of Nature

Mawdūdi acknowledged the power of sexual urges as natural for both men and women. In his chapter titled 'Laws of Nature', in his book *Purdah*, Mawdūdi outlined the problem with human beings,

> Man knows no restriction of time and clime and there is no discipline that may control him sexually. Man and woman have a perpetual appeal for each other. They have been endowed with a powerful urge for sexual love, with an unlimited capacity to attract

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[733] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari., (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 73.

and be attracted sexually. Their physical constitution, its proportions and shape, its complexion, even its contiguity and touch, have a strange spell for the opposite sex.[734]

Mawdūdi believed that there had to be control over gender and sex for the preservation of humanity,

> Not only are the internal motives in man for sex stimulation very powerful but the world around him also abounds in all sorts of sex stimulants for him. This urge for the stimulation of which nature herself has extensively arranged did not indeed stand in need of further stimulation by him. But if man also starts devising means of promoting it by use of his ingenuity, and adopts a way of life in which the sexual appetite goes on increasing and to satisfy it facilities are multiplied, it will surely transgress all limits. In such a case his animal side will soon dominate the human side of his nature, and his animal instinct[735] will eventually suppress both his humanity and civilisation.[736]

Mawdūdi understood sexual freedom amongst men and women as the main reason for the failure of civilisations, especially 'western' and that this was because they were violating the laws of nature. For this to be rectified, limitations were much needed for the growth of Islamic civilisations. He argued that human beings needed to be socially controlled, 'social life should be so organised that it becomes really difficult for a person to commit a crime, even though he

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[734] Ibid., p. 84.

[735] Mawdūdi's use of 'animal instinct' in terms of men was literal. He believed that men were given divine rule over women who were like animals in men's farms. Mawdūdi interpreted the Qur'ānic verse, "He has given you wives from among yourself to multiply you, and cattle male and female." (Qur'ān 42:11) and "Your wives are your farms." (Qurān 2:223) to mean, 'In the first verse, mention has been made of the pairs of man and animal together, and of the common object intended thereof, that is, the propagation of the species as a result of their sex relationship. In the second verse, man has been considered separately from the other animal species, and it has been indicated that the relation between the partners of a human pair is that of a cultivator and his farm. This is a biological fact and the most appropriate illustration from the biological viewpoint of a relationship between the man and the woman.' Ibid., p. 135.

[736] Ibid., p. 88.

be inclined to commit it.'[737] Mawdūdi was opposed to the development of artistic endeavours through sex and gender and advocated that 'sex stimulants' associated to art and aesthetics were harmful to social order,

> It is said that the factors which are being regarded as sex stimulants, and thus required to be eradicated from social life, are indeed the very soul of art and aesthetics. Their eradication, it is contended, will be tantamount to depriving human life of grace and beauty. Therefore, whatever reform is needed to improve man's social life and protect civilisation should be so carried out that fine arts and aesthetics are not harmed. We do concede that art and aesthetics are valuable things which must be protected and made to flourish, but social life and the collective well-being of man are even more valuable. It cannot be sacrificed to any art, any aesthetic taste.[738]

Mawdūdi's belief that arts and aesthetics needed to be removed from the life of Muslims is surprising given that it would have been difficult for him to evade his gaze from the creative and artistic endeavours of the Mughal Empire, the Taj Mahal being a perfect example of a passionate love. It could be argued that art, in its most illustrative understanding, was Mawdūdi's fear as it posed a serious challenge to his opinion on uniformity by Muslims.

5.1   The Politics of Gender in Mawdūdi's Thought

Mawdūdi believed that social relationships between men and women were the cornerstone of faith and society,

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[737] Ibid., p. 107.
[738] Ibid., p. 109.

The first and foremost problem of man's community life on whose fair and rational

solution depends his real advancement and well-being is the proper adjustment of the

mutual relationships between the husband and wife. For it is these relationships which

provide the real basis for man's social life and on their strength and stability depends

his future well being.[739]

In the section titled, 'Status of woman in different ages'[740], in his book *Purdah*, Mawdūdi drew on

the position of women during the Greek civilisation, which he said was 'overwhelmed by

egotism and sexual perversion',[741] and the Roman Empire, which he believed was,

'overwhelmed by animal passions'[742]. He then led the discussion to Europe with an overview of

the role of Christianity in 'curing the west of its moral ailments'[743] and how the Christian

church had lost sight of the 'divine code of life',

Every notion with passage of time was accepted as an article of faith and any

controversy about it even in thought is condemned as heresy. Therefore, every

convention that found its way into society attained the position of a commandment

and denial of it meant the denial of the Deity and religion itself. All the forms of

literature, philosophy, sociology, polity and economics adopted under feudal system

were included by the church as "Divine", and any attempt to change it became a crime

– nay – heresy.[744]

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[739] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari., (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 1.
[740] Ibid., pp. 4-17.
[741] Ibid., p. 5.
[742] Ibid., p. 8.
[743] Ibid., p. 9.
[744] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Capitalism, Socialism and Islam* (trans.), Khān, S. A., (Safat: Islamic Book Publishers, 1987) pp. 2-3.

Mawdūdi believed that there were three distinct features of 'western society', 1) equality between the male and the female, 2) economic independence of woman and 3) free intermingling of the sexes.[745]   The independent woman was a detriment to man, in Mawdūdi's view,

> Why should a woman who wins her own bread, supports herself economically and does not depend on anyone for security and maintenance, remain faithfully attached to one man only for satisfying her sexual desires? Why should she be prepared to subject herself to so many moral and legal curbs to shoulder the responsibilities of family life?[746]

It is through his opposition to the independent Muslim women that he empowers the domination of an idealised Islamic masculinity. Mawdūdi argued that such independence is directly linked to immorality in the 'west', 'hundreds of thousands of young women in ever Western country like to live unmarried lives, which they are bound to pass in immoral, promiscuous and sinful ways.'[747] Such immorality was due to the societal relationships of men and women, 'the free intermingling of the sexes has brought in its wake an ever-growing tendency towards showing off, nudeness and sex perversion.'[748] The west for Mawdūdi is understood in terms of promiscuity and sexual perversion, 'the nude pictures, sexual literature, love romances, nude ballroom dancing, sex-inciting films, all are means of intensifying the same fire which the wrong social system has kindled in every heart. To save their faces, they

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[745] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari., (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 12.
[746] Ibid., p. 13.
[747] Ibid., p. 14.
[748] Ibid., p. 14.

call it "art".'[749] Mawdūdi believed that sexual freedom is inextricably linked to moral

behaviour,

> Obviously, the people who are surrounded by sex stimulants on all sides, who have to
>
> face a new temptation and a new spur every moment, who are submerged in an
>
> emotionally wrought-up environment, and who perpetually remain in a feverish
>
> condition on account of nude pictures, cheap literature, exciting songs, emotionally
>
> erotic dances, romantic films, highly disturbing scenes of obscenity and ever-present
>
> changes of encountering members of the opposite sex, cannot possibly find that peace
>
> of mind and tranquillity of heart that is so essential for constructive and creative work.
>
> More than that, such an environment that prevails in the Western world today is not at
>
> all conducive to that calm and peaceful atmosphere which is essential for the full
>
> development of the mental and moral qualities of the coming generations. As soon as
>
> the young people attain maturity, animal passions lay complete hold of them with the
>
> result that the moral growth of their personalities is almost wholly impeded.[750]

Mawdūdi argued that where there was no religion, there was sin and prostitution,

> With the banishment of religion from life, the fear of committing sin was automatically
>
> destroyed. The fear of society is no more there because the society now does not
>
> regard a prostitute with disfavour but welcomes her. Lastly, there was the danger of
>
> illegitimate children; this has been guarded against by contraceptives. If these devices

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[749] Ibid., p. 15.
[750] Ibid.
Mawdūdi surely overlooked the explicit 'bathing scene' on the walls of the 8th Century Umayyad Qusayr (Palace) 'Amra, which was both a fortress with a garrison and a residence of the Umayyad Caliphs. See: Museum Without Frontiers (eds.), *Discover Islamic Art in the Mediterranean – A Book by Museum With No Frontiers* (London: Compass Press, 2007) p. 37.

fail, abortion may be resorted to. If abortion cannot be procured, the baby may be

quietly disposed of for ever.[751]

Mawdūdi further stated,

> Prostitution is rampant in hotels, cafes and dancing halls, where women sometimes are
>
> subjected to inhuman treatment. Once in 1912 a mayor of Eastern France had to
>
> intervene and rescue a girl who had been subjected to sexual gratification by forty-
>
> seven customers during the day, and there were others eagerly awaiting their turn in
>
> the queue.[752]

Mawdūdi used the most negative examples of sexual promiscuity to describe the actions of

French men and women,

> The French people's sexual indulgence has gradually resulted in the loss of their
>
> physical strength. Ever present emotional situations have broken down their power of
>
> resistance. Craze for sexual pleasures has left them with little or no forbearance, and
>
> the prevalence of venereal diseases has affected their national health fatally.[753]

However, although he used a French example specifically, Mawdūdi stated that this was also

indicative for many other western nations, especially the United States of America,

> Only for the sake of historical continuity we have dealt on the moral concepts of France
>
> and their consequences there, but France is not isolated in this matter. Indeed all the

[751] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari., (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 13.
[752] Ibid., p. 46.
[753] Ibid., p. 51.

countries that have adopted these concepts and the irrational, unnatural principles of community life are involved in a similar predicament. Take for instance the case of the United States of America where this social system has almost reached its zenith.[754]

In the case of the United States of America, Mawdūdi listed the following negative examples to highlight why he believed it was an un-Islamic ideal for gender and sexuality,

1) 'Sexual delinquency among American children – a physician of Baltimore has reported that within a year or so, more than a thousand cases of fornication with girls under 12 were tried in that city. This is then the first fruit of the social environment charged with sexual excitement and licentiousness.'[755]

2) 'Educational stage – children whose sexual feelings are awakened prematurely gain their first experiences while at elementary schools meant for boys or girls only or schools of co-education. In the first type of schools the abuse of homosexuality and masturbation is fast spreading.[756] For the feelings that are aroused in childhood and are incessantly stirred by incentives all around must crave for satisfaction. According to Dr. Hooker, many instances have come to notice in such schools, colleges, training schools for nurses and religious institutions, where members of the same sex have been found involved in homosexuality to the extent that they have lost all interest and desire for the opposite sex.'[757]

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[754] Ibid., p. 58.
[755] Ibid., pp. 58-59.
[756] Mawdūdi alluded to an understanding that homosexuality was not 'natural', he stated that, 'every member of a species feels itself inclined instinctively towards every member of the opposite sex.' Ibid., p. 136.
[757] Ibid., p. 59.

3) 'Prevalence of sexual promiscuity – women in America who have adopted prostitution as a career have been estimated at five Lacs (100,000 Pakistani Rupees).'[758]

4) 'Venereal Diseases – prevalence of sexual promiscuity has resulted in the spread of venereal diseases. According to an estimate about 90 per cent of the American population is afflicted with these diseases.'[759]

5) 'National suicide – self-indulgence, avoidance of matrimonial responsibilities, indifference to family life and instability of the marriage bond have combined to almost kill the natural mother love, spiritually the purest and highest of the female sentiments, the basis of not only civilisation but of the survival of human species itself.'[760]

These five points highlight the way that Mawdūdi used extreme Western sexual practice as a way of shaping his own Islamic ideals and defining an Islam vs. West divide through the understanding that in some way those in the west were inferior than Muslims. Mawdūdi feared the rise in Western influence on Muslims, 'Western ways of living, western etiquette, even western manners of moving about, were imitated and all-out efforts made to mould the Muslim society after the western patterns. Heresy, atheism and materialism were accepted as fashion.'[761] Mawdūdi believed that all things 'Islamic' were far removed from all things 'western' – the two could never be reconciled and Muslims needed to choose one or the other, 'now, any intelligent person can see how sadly mistaken are those people who, on the one hand, feel inclined to follow the Western civilisation and, on the other, cite Islamic principles of

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[758] Ibid., p. 61.
[759] Ibid., p. 63.
[760] Ibid., p. 67.
[761] Ibid., p. 19.

social life in support of their trends.'[762] Mawdūdi made it very clear to 'modern Muslims' what was expected of them,

> We want to present before the "modern" Muslims the injunctions of the Qur'ān and Hadith as against the doctrines and results of the Western way of life with a view to helping them to give up their hypocritical attitude towards life. This will enable them to choose one of the two alternatives with a clear heart. Either they will have to live in accordance with the Islamic injunctions if they want to remain Muslims, or they will have to discard Islam if they are prepared to face those disgraceful results towards which the western way of life will inevitably lead them.[763]

For those Muslims who followed the teachings of Mawdūdi the path was clear but for those who were not comfortable with his clear-cut definitions of gender and sex they had the choice of either being forced to consider themselves 'outside' the realms of Islam and lead a life through the liberty of the west, Jinnah could be categorised as such, or attempt a mixture of the two that almost often emerged as a crisis of identity in the individual, Iqbal could be categorised as such.

6.0   Mawdūdi on Family and Marriage: Pillars of an Islamic State

Mawdūdi married Mahmudah Begum in 1937. She was from a wealthy family that were hereditary Imams of the Delhi Mosque. Nasr stated,

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[762] Ibid., p. 23.
[763] Ibid., p. 25.

Mahumudah Begum was quite liberated and modern in her ways. Early on she rode a bicycle around Delhi and did not observe purdah (the veil). Ironically, Mawdūdi had complained of the absence of purdah, which he witnessed during the very trip in which he got married, as one of the reasons for dismay at Islam's future prospects. Mawdūdi clearly loved his strong willed, liberal, and independent-minded wife, however, and allowed her greater latitude than he did Muslims in general. The standards that prevailed in his household were very different from the standards he required of others, including Jama'at members.[764]

However, Mawdūdi did not use his wife as a leading example to Muslim women as the example was very different. For Mawdūdi the 'family' unit was the most powerful mechanism for upholding his political Islamist thought on gender and sex,

The Islamic injunctions about the family are very explicit. They assign to man the responsibility for earning and providing the necessities of life for his wife and children and for protecting them from all the vicissitudes of life. To the woman it assigns the duty of managing the household, training and bringing up children in the best possible way, and providing her husband and children with the greatest possible comfort and contentment.[765]

Mawdūdi's vision was one of absolutes, for him Islam presented clear ideas on all issues and he advocated marriage and family because of its tight parameters,

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[764] Nasr, S. V. R., *Mawdūdi & The Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 33.
[765] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Towards Understanding Islam* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1980) p. 108.

It is in the best interests of the survival growth of social life that indiscriminate indulgence in sexual liaisons should be absolutely prohibited in society. There should be left only one way of satisfying the sex desire, *viz.*, through marriage. To permit individuals to indulge in illicit relationships is tantamount to committing a crime against society; it is rather an attempt to annihilate society.[766]

Mawdūdi wrote extensively on issues relating to marriage as a means to preserve the 'family'. As highlighted in previous chapters of this thesis, the construction of family has played an essential role in policing and promoting very specific gender roles and no matter how egalitarian a man and woman may be before entering into a marriage their specific roles after marriage are not so easily challenged. In the case of Mawdūdi he defined the roles of men and women in a family and used the issue of morality and faith to confirm it,

The first object of the Islamic Marital Law is the preservation of morality. Islam denounces fornication as illegal. It urges both sexes of humanity to subject their relationship to a code of law which protects the morality of man against indecency and immodesty and guards civilisation against chaos. That is why the marriage tie has been termed "fortification" by the Qur'ān, "Hisn" is a fort in Arabic and "Ihsan" means fortification. A person who married gets fortified. In other words he builds a fort for himself. The women he married is called "the fortified one". Marriage has provided her with a fort built for the satisfaction of her sexual hunger and the protection of her morals.[767]

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[766] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 105.
[767] Mawdūdi, A. A., *The Laws of Marriage and Divorce in Islam* (trans.), Aḥmed, F., (Safat: Islamic Book Publishers, 2000) p. 6.

However, Mawdūdi politicised the construction of marriage with his anti-western sentiments too by highlighting his opposition to marriage between a Muslim and non-Muslim,

> Muslims, both men and women, are forbidden to have marital relations with non-Muslims who are not believers in the Scriptures. The simple reason is that their religion, their thinking, their civilisation, and culture and their way of life are so different from those of the Muslims that it is impossible for a true Muslim to develop soul-deep love and all-weather harmony in his relations with them. If despite differences, the two of them are tied together, by the marriage bond, the relationship will be only carnal.[768]

Mawdūdi's construction of marriage is more inclined towards law than love. In order to strengthen his argument against western notions of marriage he presented a dialogue between an American judge and 'the feelings of the average American girl' on the issue of marriage,

> We believe we have a natural right to a companionship and an intimacy which we instinctively crave; we have a knowledge of contraception which precludes the likelihood that unwanted babies will complicate the situation; we don't admit that such a course on our part imperils the safety of human society; and we believe that this effort to replace tradition with what we think is common sense will do good rather than harm.[769]

Mawdūdi used this American girl's statement to dismiss the west as immoral and also as a civilisation where women have no love or compassion for unborn children. Mawdūdi does

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[768] Ibid., p.11
[769] Mawdūdi, A, A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari., (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) pp. 65-66.

begin to show signs of expressing some humanity in western women by stating, 'one thing that can bring shameless women with such ideas round to marriage is the sentiment of love. But more often than not, this sentiment is only skin deep, the result of momentary attraction. As soon as desires have been satisfied, the man and wife are hardly left with any attraction for each other.'[770]

Mawdūdi used the construction of the family as a way of upholding the superiority of men over women,

> Among the principles of the law the first principle from which stem out many of the mandates, is that in marital life man is a degree above woman (Qur'ān 4:34 'Men are the maintainers of women'). It is out of place to discuss here why man has superiority over the women or why he has been made her maintainer (Qawwam also means guardian, protector, manager, supervisor). This discussion does not belong to law. It belongs to sociology. Sticking to the limits of the topic under discussion, it is enough to point out that for the smooth running of the household affairs, one of the partners has, in any case, to be the manager or the executive head. ... For the ruling function it has chosen the one who is naturally fit for the job.[771]

This was the bedrock of Islamic masculinity for Mawdūdi. Such a position in the family gave men specific duties to uphold in the family. The duties, according to Mawdūdi, were, 1) 'Dowry – the husband has to pay the wife a dowry. This is the price of the marital rights he has on her. The Qur'ānic verse quoted above (Qur'ān 4:34) makes it clear that though man deserves, by his nature, to be the Manager, yet in practice he is elevated to this role as a reward for the money

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[770] Ibid., p. 66.
[771] Mawdūdi, A. A., *The Laws of Marriage and Divorce in Islam* (trans.), Aḥmed, F., (Safat: Islamic Book Publishers, 2000) pp. 14-15.

he spends in the form of dowry.'[772] 2) 'Living expense – the second duty of the husband is to bear the living expenses of the wife. Islam has clearly demarcated the sphere of work for the husband and the wife. The women's duty is to stay at home and take care of the household chores. "Stay in your homes", is the Qur'ānic commandment for women. The man's duty is to work for a living and provide the necessities of life for the family. This is the second factor that elevates the husband a degree higher above the wife.'[773] 3) 'Abstention from cruelty – the third duty of man is not to use his superior position as a means of oppressing his wife.'[774] However, Mawdūdi advocated a 'stiff' approach to disobedient wives, 'In case the wife disobeys the husband, or does away with any of his rights, the man should first counsel her. If this fails to produce effect, he has the right to be reasonably stiff in his dealings with her. And if this too goes unheeded, he may give her light beating, so that she sees reason to obey him.'[775] Mawdūdi was also supportive of polygamy if it was a means to morality, 'the most important objective of the Islamic marital law is the preservation of morals and chastity. If a man is disgusted with one wife, he can marry another one, and thus save himself from evil ways and evil glances.'[776] In his commentary of the Qur'ānic passage relating to multiple wives[777], Mawdūdi stated his opinion once again from a political Islamist understanding,

> Some people who have been overwhelmed and overawed by the Christianised outlook
> of westerners have tried to prove that the real aim of the Qur'ān was to put an end to
> polygamy (which, in their opinion is intrinsically evil). Since it was widely practised at

[772] Ibid., p. 15.
[773] Ibid., p. 16.
[774] Ibid., p. 17.
[775] Ibid., p. 24.
[776] Ibid., p. 19.
[777] Qur'ān 4:4-6.

that time, however, Islam confined itself to placing restrictions on it. Such arguments only show the mental slavery to which these people have succumbed.[778]

Mawdūdi stated two key points in his view on family. Firstly, the husband has to be the chief administrator of the household in the same way that 'a school has a head master' and that the husband is there to keep the family 'disciplined'. Secondly, the head of the family has a responsibility and duty to do all the work outside the household. The wife has been freed from doing anything outside the home as Islam does not want to 'tax them doubly' by looking after the home and the outside work. Mawdūdi then goes on to say that this does not mean that women are not allowed to leave the house but only when 'necessary'. Mawdūdi stated that the 'law' had specified that the home is her 'special field of work'.[779] Mawdūdi believed that a man taking the superior role in society (and home) was a privilege for any woman and that this was something that they should appreciate and cherish as opposed to the way that women in the west were competing with men in all areas. However, what is questionable is the extent to which this privilege is in real terms an action without any choice.

Mawdūdi preached that Islamic civilisation would only survive through the strengthening of the family,

> All the machinery that is required to run the great factory of civilisation is produced in the small workshop of the family. As soon as boys and girls attain puberty, administrators of the workshop become anxious to pair them off as suitably as possible, so that their union may bring forth the best possible generation.[780]

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[778] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān* (trans. and ed.), Ansari, A. I., (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2005) pp. 7-8.
[779] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Towards Understanding Islam* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1980) p. 109.
[780] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah*, (trans.), Al-Ash`ari., (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 94.

It was for this reason that he opposed men and women from leading a single life,

> The individual cannot reserve the right to marry or refuse to marry according to his
>
> sweet will. A person who declines to marry without a good reason is disloyal to the
>
> community, its parasite and robber. ... Now after attaining adulthood he demands for
>
> himself personal freedom and liberty of action and wants to satisfy his personal desires
>
> only, without accepting the responsibility entailed by his acts, he is in fact being
>
> disloyal and deceitful to the community. ... If the community had sense it would
>
> regard this culprit, this black sheep of society as it regards thieves and robbers and
>
> forgers, and not as gentleman or a respectable lady.[781]

Family and married life were then an excellent means for Mawdūdi's argument for social

control and a central factor for constructing an Islamic 'gentleman' and 'lady'. A single man or

women were seen as deviants, who were too 'liberated',

> When, therefore, he is busy squandering his sexual energy aimlessly for temporary
>
> pleasure in a secret place, he is in fact sowing the seeds of anarchy and disruption in
>
> society, depriving it of its rights and harming it morally, materially and socially. In his
>
> selfishness he is striking at the root of all those social institutions by which he
>
> benefited as a member of society, but has refused to support their maintenance and
>
> survival.[782]

Mawdūdi's vision was then to have absolute conformity amongst men and women and he

utilised the existing patriarchal structure of family and marriage to support his views. The

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[781] Ibid., pp. 95-96.
[782] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

single Muslim man is then understood to be less of a man than the married and in order to become whole he must marry.

7.0   Mawdūdi's construction of Islamic Femininity and Masculinity

Mawdūdi used the Qur'ānic verse 'All things We made in pairs'[783] to base his ideas of Islamic masculinity and femininity based on dualism and pairs amongst human beings, 'all the parts of this great machine have been created in pairs, and all that one can see in this world is indeed the result of the mutual interaction of these pairs.'[784] Mawdūdi's construction of sex and gender is based on pro-creation and enforced his views by arguing that this was God's argument and not his, 'the principle according to which Allah has created this world and the way according to which He is running its great system cannot be unholy or vile.'[785] He then used the analogy of a factory as the world's social system,

> The existence of both the active and the passive partners is equally important for the purposes of the factory. Neither the 'activity' of the active partner is in any way exalted not the 'passivity' of the passive partner in any way debased. The excellence of an active partner is that he should possess the ability to act and also (possess) the other masculine qualities, so that he may effectively perform the active part of his duty in the sex-relation. In contrast to this, the excellence of a passive partner is that she possesses the feminine qualities to an extent that she may carry out the passive part of the sex-relation well. As a matter of fact, only a foolish, unskilled person can think of

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[783] Qur'ān 51:49.
[784] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 132.
[785] Ibid., p. 133.

removing even a minor part of an ordinary machine and employing it for a function for which it has not been actually designed.[786]

Mawdūdi made it explicit that there were specific and divine roles for men and women based on dominance and passiveness. Mawdūdi believed that men's superiority over women was indeed their submission to God, "activity' in itself is naturally superior to 'passivity' and femininity. This superiority is not due to any merit in masculinity against any demerit in femininity. It is rather due to the fact of possessing natural qualities of dominance, power and authority.'[787]

Mawdūdi understood the differences between men and women from a biological point of view too, 'it has been established by biological research that woman is different from man not only in her appearance and external physical organs but also in the protein molecules of tissue cells.'[788] To this end Mawdūdi listed nine points that render women sick when menstruating as a way of highlighting the deficiency of being a woman.[789] It was these biological disabilities that Mawdūdi presented as a basis to dismiss the sameness of men and women,

> A lady tram conductor, for instance, would issue wrong tickets and get confused while
> counting small change. A lady motor driver would drive slowly as if under strain, and
> become nervous at every turning. A lady typist would type wrongly, take a long time to
> type and omit words in spite of care and effort, and would press wrong keys
> inadvertently. A lady barrister's power of reasoning would be impaired and her
> presentation of a case would lack logic and the force of argument. A lady magistrate's

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[786] Ibid.
[787] Ibid., p. 134.
[788] Ibid., p. 114.
[789] Ibid.

comprehension and ability to take decisions would both be adversely affected. A female dentist would find it difficult to locate the required instruments. A female singer would lose the quality of her tone and voice; so much so that a phoneticist (phonetics specialist) specialist would easily detect the fault and its cause also. In short, a women's mental and nervous system becomes lethargic and disorderly during menstruation.[790]

Mawdūdi also argued that pregnancy was even more 'terrible' for women,

A pregnant woman cannot undertake any work of mental and physical exertion which she could easily undertake at other times. If a man is made to pass through the rigours of pregnancy, or for that matter a woman when she is not pregnant, he or she will be pronounced a sick person by all standards.[791]

Mawdūdi believed that the 'sickness of motherhood' continued after childbirth,

Then comes the period of suckling when she does not live for herself but for the trust that nature has placed in her care. The best of her body is turned into milk for the baby. Her share from the food that she takes is just that much as can keep her alive, the rest being diverted to the production and supply of milk.[792]

Mawdūdi made it very clear that he expected mothers to breastfeed their children,

[790] Ibid., p. 115.
[791] Ibid., p. 116.
[792] Ibid., p. 117.

A substitute found in the modern age for feeding at the breast is to feed the child artificially. But this is no solution, for there can be no real substitute for the food that nature has placed in the mother's breasts for the child. To deprive the child of this natural food is to be inhuman and callous. The specialists are agreed that for the proper development of the child there is no better food than the mother's own milk.[793]

Through these three biological activities of women Mawdūdi asserted that men and women have different functions, 'not only is it unfair to load woman with outdoor duties, but she cannot in fact be expected to perform them with manly vigour.'[794] Such deficiencies also distinguished the role of men and women for Mawdūdi,

> This explains why she has been endowed with tender feelings of love, sympathy, compassion, clemency, pity and sensitiveness in an unusual measure. And since in the sexual life man has been made active and woman passive, she has been endowed with those very qualities alone which help and prepare her for the passive role in life only. That is why she is tender and plastic instead of rough and rigid. That is why she is soft and pliable, submissive and impressionable, yielding and timid by nature. With these qualities she cannot be expected to function successfully in the spheres of life which demand firmness and authority, resistance and cold-temperedness and which require the exercise of unbiased, objective judgment and strong will power. To drag woman into these fields of activity, therefore, is to abuse her as well as the fields of activity themselves.[795]

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[793] Ibid.
[794] Ibid., p. 119.
[795] Ibid., p. 120.

In the above statement one sees the way in which Mawdūdi believed that an Islamic masculinity was stronger in all senses than the weaker women and Mawdūdi dismissed the probability for men and women to compete against each other in all activities, including intellectually, and felt that this was the reason why women were unsuccessful,

> The modern man wants the poor woman to compete with him in those fields where she is weaker by nature. This will inevitably keep the woman suppressed and generally inferior to man. Try however hard he may, it is impossible that geniuses favourably comparable to Aristotle, Ibn-i-Sina, Kant, Hegel, Khayyam, Shakespeare, Alexander, Napoleon, Salah-ud-Din, Nizam0ul-Mulk, Tusi and Bismarck will ever come forth from among women. Similarly, all men of the world together – however hard they try – cannot produce from among their sex even a most ordinary mother.[796]

Mawdūdi used the prophet Muḥammad's example as a way of exemplifying his notions of masculinity and femininity, a method mentioned by Muslim feminists in the previous chapter,

> For Muslims, prophecy and the prophetic traditions serve as ideals for men to follow, determining the place of Islam in their lives; for Mawdūdi, however, prophecy was also a historical paradigm, a model for leadership, and a guide to the ideal political order. The prophet of Islam was not only the ideal Muslim or hallowed subject of religious devotion, but the first and foremost Muslim political leader and, hence, a source of emulation in political matters.[797]

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[796] Ibid., p. 120.
[797] Nasr, S. V. R., *Mawdūdi & The Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 62.

Mawdūdi's assertion that men had to be stronger than women is also found in his statement that men were expected to take part in the physical Jihād found in his commentary of Qur'ān 4:97[798],

> The reference here is to those who remained engrossed in personal concerns at a time when Jihād had become a collective obligation (*farḍ al-kifāyah*). In the first case the person who fails to fight can only be a hypocrite, and God holds out no good promise for such a person unless there is good reason, for example, genuine disability.[799]

Mawdūdi also opposed female leadership in an Islamic state and believed that such an instatement was the reason why civilizations collapse,

> Some nations have given woman the position of governor over man. But no instance is found of a nation that raised its womanhood to such a status and then attained any high position on the ladder of progress and civilization. History does not present the record of any nation which made the woman the ruler of its affairs, and won honor and glory, or performed a work of distinction.[800]

In this way Mawdūdi reserved all leadership roles for men, 'good generals, good statesmen, and good administrators are as necessary as good mothers, good wives and good housekeepers. To ignore or discard any of these aspects is tantamount to harming and corrupting man's social

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[798] 'Behold, those whom the angels gather in death while they are still sinning against themselves, [the angels] will ask, "What was wrong with you?" They will answer; "We were too weak on earth." [The angels] will say; "Was, then, God's earth not wide enough for you to forsake the domain of evil? For such, then, the goal is hell – and how evil a journey's end!'
[799] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān* (trans. and ed.), Ansari, A. I., (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2005) p. 72.
[800] Mawdūdi, A. A,. *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 111.

life itself.'[801] The way in which Benazir Bhutto, the first Muslim prime minister of an Islamic

nation, fought against the religious leaders for her political power is then better understood in

view of Mawdūdi's opinion on female leadership.

Mawdūdi used sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad to support his view that women should

remain as the 'queen of the house' as earning a living for the family was the responsibility of

the husband, while the wives duty was to keep and run the house with his earnings,

> "The woman is the ruler over the house of her husband, and she is answerable for the
>
> conduct of her duties." (Al-Bukhari). She has been exempted from all outdoor religious
>
> obligations. ... The woman has not been allowed to go on a journey except in company
>
> with *mahram*.[802] In short, Islam has not approved that a woman should move out of her
>
> house without a genuine need. The most appropriate place for her, according to the
>
> Islamic law, is her home. ... A woman may have nobody to look after her, or she may
>
> have to go out for earning a living on account of the poverty, insufficient income,
>
> sickness, infirmity or such other handicaps afflicting the male protector of the
>
> family.[803]

The restriction for women outside the bounds of her home are indicative of political Islamist

ideology as was experienced by the family of Asra Nomani, mentioned in chapter five, when she

and her family went for pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia and wanted to go out without the

chaperone of a *mahram*. In the case of Saudi Arabia it became state law, in the case of Mawdūdi

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[801] Ibid., p. 121.

[802] Mawdūdi described the *mahram* as 'a women's father, brother, son or any other relative with whom she cannot enter into matrimony'. Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) p. 146.

[803] Ibid., pp. 145-147.

it was his imagined ideal Islamic state of Pakistam. In his *tafsīr* of Qur'an 4:34[804], Mawdūdi used a saying of the prophet Muḥammad as explanation,

> It is reported in a tradition from the prophet (peace be on him) that he said: "The best wife is she who, if you look at her, will please you; who, if you bid her to do something, will obey you; and who will safeguard herself and your property in your absence." This tradition contains the best explanation of the above verse.[805]

Mawdūdi made it explicitly clear that the Muslim women had to 'obey' her male attendants throughout her life, 'just as a married woman has to obey and be looked after by her husband, so an unmarried woman has to be obey and be looked after by the responsible men of her family. But this dependence of her on others does not in any way deprive her of her freedom of action and will.'[806]

8.0   Mawdūdi on the Veil

Mawdūdi held very strong opinions on the effectiveness of the veil in Islamic societies and argued his position from a point of 'modesty',

> Though modesty has been regarded as the most noble trait of feminine character, this has nowhere been kept in view in a rational and balanced way. No one has cared to

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[804] 'Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter, and with what they may spend out of their possessions. And the righteous women are the truly devout ones, who guard the intimacy, which God has [ordained to be guarded]. And as for those women whose ill-will you have reason to fear, admonish them [first]; then leave them alone in bed, then beat them; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek to harm them. Behold, God is indeed most high, great!'

[805] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān* (trans. and ed.) Ansari, A. I., (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2005) p. 36.

[806] Mawdūdi, A. A., *Purdah* (trans.), Al-Ash`ari, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2004) 149.

determine exactly how far and to what extent the female body needs to be covered. No attempt has been made to formulate principles for the preservation of modesty in the dress and social etiquette of the men and women. Nothing has been done to set rationally the bounds of nakedness for the human body, which may not be exposed between male and male, female and female, and male and female.[807]

Mawdūdi begins his discussion on the 'veil' clearly from an anti-western standpoint,

One finds a strange admixture of modesty and immodesty in the dress and way of life of different communities, expressing no rational propriety, no uniformity, no adherence to any principle. In the Eastern countries it did not go beyond certain crude forms, but in the West immodesty in the people's clothing habits and way of life has crossed all limits with the result that they have lost all sense of modesty.[808]

Mawdūdi understood the veil not just as women's dress but extended this as a physical barrier between the sexes in society and to an extent the isolation of women from men's space, 'women's sphere of activity should be segregated from that of man's. They should be entrusted with separate responsibilities in the social life according to their respective natures and mental and physical abilities.'[809] As mentioned in chapter three, even during Mughal times there was a custom of the physical segregation of the sexes, as was the case in Ghālib's household However, the segregation that Mawdūdi advocated was of a much stricter nature and clearly in reaction to the west, 'Hayā means shyness. As an Islamic term, Hayā implies that shyness which a wrongdoer feels before his own nature before his God. This shyness is the force which prevents

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[807] Ibid., p. 125.
[808] Ibid., p. 127.
[809] Ibid., p. 159.

man from indulging in indecency and obscenity.'[810] Mawdūdi also used the saying of the prophet Muḥammad, 'every religion has a morality, and the morality of Islam is *Hayā*.'[811] Based on Mawdūdi's understanding that all men and women were like animals he created much stricter commands for this segregation because he saw the prevalence of the following:

1) Hidden motives – in the eyes of law, adultery implies physical union only, but from a moral point of view every evil inclination towards a member of the opposite sex outside of marriage amounts to adultery. Thus, enjoying the beauty of the other woman with the eyes, relishing the sweetness of her voice with the ears, drawing pleasure of the tongue by conversing with her, and turning of the feet over and over again to visit her street, all are preliminaries of adultery, nay, adultery itself. Law cannot have jurisdiction over such an act, for it springs from the hidden motives of man. It can only be detected by his own conscience.[812]

2) The evil look is the worst culprit in this regard. ... The Holy Prophet says, "Son of Adam, your first (unintentional) look is pardonable. But beware that you do not cast the second look."[813]

3) Urge for display – the feminine urge for the display of beauty is another evil which is linked with the evil look. This urge is not always prominent; it is generally hidden in the depths of the heart.[814]

4) The voice is another agent of the evil spirit. There are countless mischief's, which are caused and spread by the voice. A man and a woman may apparently be absorbed in

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[810] Ibid., p. 161.
[811] Ibid., p. 162.
[812] Ibid., p. 163.
[813] Ibid.
[814] Ibid., p. 164.

innocent talk, but the hidden motive of the heart is at work; it is rendering the voice

more and more sweet, and the accent and the words more and more appealing.[815]

5) The sound – sometimes attention is attracted not by the word of mouth but by some

other device. Such devices also spring from the evil motive and Islam disapproves of

them all.[816]

6) The perfume also acts as a messenger between two evil spirits. This is the finest and

most subtle means of communication which may be trivial in the eyes of others but the

Islamic *Hayā* is too sensitive to let it slip undetected.[817]

7) Nudity – Islam has given such a correct and psychological interpretation of the sense of

modesty in respect of covering the shameful parts of man's body as has no parallel in

any civilization. For instance, the men and women of the most civilized nations in the

world today do not feel any hesitation to uncover any part of their bodies.[818]

In these seven points it is evident that Mawdūdi's aim was to highlight the reasons why the veil

is important – primarily for the prevention of sexual 'sin'. However the basis of Mawdūdi's

understanding of 'sin' was the 'west'. In Mawdūdi's preamble of his main sections of his book

on the veil he outlined in clear terms the 'ills' of western society and such ills are infused in his

preventative measures. This is also the case when he presented his views on the 'punishment

of fornication',

Islamic law differs radically from the western law. The western law does not hold

fornication by itself a crime; it becomes a crime only when it is committed forcibly, or

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[815] Ibid.
[816] Ibid., p. 165.
[817] Ibid.
[818] Ibid., p. 166.

with a married woman. ... Islamic law looks upon fornication by itself as a crime, and regards rape or the act of encroachment as additional crimes.[819]

Mawdūdi believed that anyone not adhering to his form of 'social system' should be punished and it is here that Mawdūdi expressed his view of lashings as a punishment for all forms of fornication, 'the western people abhor the infliction of a hundred lashes. This is not because they dislike the idea of physical torture. It is because their moral sense has not yet fully developed. At first they regarded fornication as something indecent; now they look upon it as fun, as a pastime, which amuses two persons for a little while.'[820]

In order to define the segregation of the sexes further Mawdūdi presented 'preventative measures' such as,

1)   'injunctions for clothing and covering nakedness'[821]

2)   'boundaries of *satar* for males – for the males...is the part of the body between the naval and the knee, and it has been enjoined that one should neither uncover this part before another person, nor should one look at this part of anybody else'[822]

3)   'boundaries of *satar* for females – they have been enjoined to cover their whole body except the face and the hands from all people, including father, brother and all male relatives, and excluding none but the husband.'[823]

4)   'regulations for entrance – male members are forbidden to enter the house without alerting the female members, so that they do not see them in a condition in which they should not normally be seen.'[824],

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[819] Ibid., pp. 168-169.
[820] Ibid., p. 169.
[821] Ibid., p. 171.
[822] Ibid., p. 173.
[823] Ibid.
[824] Ibid., p.175.

5) 'prohibition of touching or having privacy with women – a man, other than the husband, is neither allowed to have privacy with a woman, nor is he allowed to touch any part of the body, no matter how closely he is related to her.'[825]

In his final point Mawdūdi highlighted the distinction between *mahram* and non-*mahram* males' relationship with women, 'the Qur'ān and Hadith clearly point out the limits of freedom and intimacy of relationship that can be had with the *mahram* males only, but not with the non-*mahram* males in any case.'[826] Mawdūdi's argument for women to wear the veil was initially based on his reading of Islamic history, 'a person who considers carefully the words of the Qur'ānic verse, their well known and generally accepted meaning and the practice during the time of the holy prophet, cannot dare deny the fact that the Islamic law enjoins on the woman to hide her face from the other people, and this has been the practice of Muslim women ever since the time of the holy prophet himself.'[827] He further legitimizes history through his anti-west sentiments, 'Yes! This is the same "veil" which Europe loathes and detests and the very vision of which weighs heavily on the western conscience, and which is regarded as a mark of oppression, narrow mindedness and barbarism.'[828] And then commented, 'the person who understands the aims of the Islamic law and also has some common sense cannot fail to see that allowing women the freedom to move about with uncovered faces runs counter to the objectives held so dear by Islam.'[829] Mawdūdi believed that 'reformers' heavily influenced by the west were at fault in challenging the Muslim women's veil, 'therefore, when modestly dressed veiled women were dubbed "moving tents and shrouded funerals" these so-called reformers felt shamed into disgrace. Obviously, they could not put up with this disgrace and humiliation for a long time. They were, therefore, impelled to wash off this shameful blot from

[825] Ibid., pp. 176-177.
[826] Ibid., p.178.
[827] Ibid., p.194.
[828] Ibid., p. 195.
[829] Ibid., p. 197.

the face of their social life as soon as possible.'[830] Mawdūdi declared that his notion of 'social

system in Islam'[831] was the way of upholding Islamic modesty because the western models had

all failed. Mawdūdi interpreted passages of the Qur'ān[832] to state that a, 'sense of modesty is a

part of human nature. Man by nature wants to cover and conceal some parts of his body. This

urge has impelled him from the earliest times to adopt one or the other sort of dress.'[833]

9.0   Conclusion

Mawdūdi's vision of Islam was based on the political Islamist impulse to return back to an

'Islamic' utopia. His sentiments emerged in a region where British rule was coming to an end

and an emergence of a country to be known as Pakistan for Indian Muslims. Mawdūdi feared

that the power of the west would continue through the leadership of Muḥammad Ali Jinnah

and Muḥammad Iqbal, who he accused of being un-Islamic. In reaction to this Mawdūdi

established the Jam'āt Islami party, which he believed would be the bastion of Islam in Pakistan.

In order to strengthen the party's position Mawdūdi wrote a commentary of the Qur'ān and

numerous other publications highlighting the true Islamic position on matters.

Mawdūdi believed that God should control all aspects of a believer's life. He outlined strict

conformance to a narrow interpretation to Islamic law as the only way to be an obedient

Muslim. In this way Mawdūdi made effective use of God throughout his career as a way of

promoting his message, to argue against him was arguing against God, something that is not

uncommon amongst right-wing religious rhetoric. The basis of most arguments in the case of

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[830] Ibid., p. 22.
[831] Ibid., p. 132.
[832] 'O Children of Adam! We have sent down to you clothing in order to cover the shameful parts of your body and serve as protection and decoration; and the best of all garments is the garment of piety.' (Qur'ān 7:26).
[833] Ibid., p. 139.

Mawdūdi, and also common amongst other political Islamist movements, was his/their hatred of the west. It is evident from all of his publications that his arguments were most often led by stating the most negative examples of western society and then presenting his Islamic understanding that inevitably strengthened the dichotomy of Islam vs. the West. As stated by Mawdūdi,

> The biggest impediment in this regard is that the modern man has developed the disease of taking a jaundiced view of things. Especially the westernised people of the east have been attacked by a more dangerous form of this disease which I would call the "white jaundice".[834]

Mawdūdi argued that social relationships were tantamount to the creation of an Islamic society and the institution of marriage was at the core of this. He used extreme western examples of pornography, divorce, venereal diseases, and single men and women as a way of advocating that institution of marriage was divine. Through his insistence on family and marriage he outlined specific roles and duties that both men and women had to carry out. Mawdūdi preached that men were superior to women and should take on the duty of leading and feeding the family. Women were expected to remain within their homes as their biological deficiencies proved that they were lesser than men. This was again a result of a comparison with western social norms where there is no bar on men and women taking on roles and duties. Mawdūdi stated, 'whatever rights the woman has been granted in the west have been granted not for her own sake but as if she was a man. The woman is still inferior in the western eyes as she was in the past ages of ignorance. In the west a real genuine woman has yet to have respect as the queen of a home, the wife of a husband, the matron of children.'[835]

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[834] Ibid., p. 211.
[835] Ibid., p. 157.

Mawdūdi's thought supported the gender stereotype of women as coy and fragile and man as macho and strong. This is exemplified in his view that the physical Jihād was obligatory on men. It was then Mawdūdi's belief that a truly 'Islamic' piety for men was in their being superior and dominant to the truly 'Islamic' piety of women, which was in submission to men and God. There remain serious implications of Mawdūdi's political Islamist thought on such a construction of Islamic masculinity amongst diaspora communities in the west from a Pakistani background, such as in the UK. Although beyond the scope of this thesis[836], the concoction of a Islam vs. west divide and upholding of a hegemonic Islamic masculinity in political Islamist thought has the potential of creating catastrophic events. Some may argue that such events have already taken place, such as the bombing of the twin-towers in New York on September 11th 2001 or the London bombings on July 7th 2005.

Mawdūdi's views on the *Purdah* (the veil) were based on his belief that free mixing amongst men and women was something western and should not be emulated by Muslims. He advocated a complete segregation of the sexes and the necessity of Muslim women to wear the complete veil. Women's movement in society was severely restricted and she was expected to have a male chaperone, from her immediate family or husband only, if there was a necessity for her to leave the house. There was absolutely no reason for such measures to be relaxed in Mawdūdi's view, 'before we ever think of relaxing *Purdah*, we should have mustered enough strength to pluck out those eyes that stare at Muslim woman who has to come out of her house for some genuine piece of business.'[837]

If this thesis set out to present the various images of Islamic masculinities then Mawdūdi's image of Islamic masculinities must also be included within such a debate. However, through

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[836] See: Ansari, H., *The Infidel Within – Muslims in Britain Since 1800* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 2004) pp. 389-406.
[837] Ibid., p. 218.

an analysis of Mawdūdi's construction of Islamic masculinity one is left considering the question whether his opposition to being 'submissive' to a 'dominant' west drove Mawdūdi to his Islamic values? And in turn has the inclusion of politics in his Islamic thought re-located the power of obedience and submissiveness from God to a political battle between the east and west?

Chapter Seven

Concluding Remarks

This thesis set out to evaluate and analyze constructions of masculinities in Islamic traditions and Indian and Pakistani cultures and societies between the 18th – 21st century. This has been achieved through an exploration of the Qur'ān that reveals a celebration of masculinities that remain steadfast in their ultimate role of submission to God. The essence of the Qur'ānic message places no emphasis on uniform norms of gender, sexuality, masculinity or femininity as its message of strengthening piety and submission is not restricted by a specific 'form'. Belief in God as the overarching power has the potential to reduce the power dynamic between creation, namely men and women, and in turn create a more egalitarian society. However, the Qur'ān presents far from perfect lives of men and women as examples of piety and submission, as is illustrated through the stories of the prophets and it utilizes multiplicity and diversity in creation (human beings, angels, men, women, religions, nations, tribes) as a means of reflecting, realizing and upholding ethics and morality in light of God's power.

Masculinities studies highlight the way gender is constructed through a series of reflections with the 'other', including other men and women. Such a dynamic creates and constructs gender based on power with catastrophic consequences at times, such as killing and bloodshed. As God's ultimate power is essentially a personal spiritual experience, which cannot be idealized, there has been an effort to materialize this power into human relationships and the existing gender dynamic. The Qur'ān presents a number of problematic passages, such as wife

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[838] Qur'ān 4:1

beating and the promotion of multiple marriages for men, which further complicates understandings of piety and submission. What is important to appreciate is that the message of the Qur'ān was revealed in a patriarchal society and its divine messages have more often than not been understood to uphold patriarchy. Problematic passages of the Qur'ān, in terms of gender diversity, cannot be thrown away but must be appreciated in the context of its core message of submission to God through its ambiguous nature. The labeling of specific forms of gender, especially pro-creating, as divine has led to a widespread understanding that there is an Islamic masculinity and Islamic femininity and to challenge such genders would be tantamount to challenging God, even though a closer examination raises the question whether such gender constructions fall into the category of *Shirk* – associating anything with God's divinity. The example of the prophet Muḥammad's life is evidence of this as his, greatly debated, marriage to the very young Aisha has raised a number of critical questions relating to his example of masculinity for Muslim men.

The various examples presented from India and Pakistan between the 18th and 21st Century highlight the tension between traditions, society and culture. Mirza Ghālib provided an image of masculinity that was 'hedonistic' in its outlook but deeply obedient and submissive to God and his love for alcohol and courtesans deemed him as 'un-Islamic' because he failed to be led by the power of society or traditions. This led to a discussion on the extent to which one can speak of the liberatory powers of Ṣūfīsm, which has often been used to support non-traditional paths to God. However, what emerged through an evaluation of Ṣūfī thought and practice is that it also remains confined to the patriarchal and idealized notions of an Islamic masculinity. Antinomian Ṣūfīs, namely the Qalandars/Malangs, rejected such conformist understandings of Ṣūfīsm and sought a radical return back to submission to God. As God's brides, they challenged sex and social norms in India and Pakistan but at times negotiated their antinomian positions

in submission to patriarchal society, which they found difficult to dismiss for God. This was evident through the same-sex love relationship of Shah Husseyn and his Hindu lover, Madho Lal, who found it difficult to uphold their sexual preference and acts against the prevalent gender-infused ethics and morality that was led by heteronormativity and in turn upheld idealized Islamic masculinity. Muslim feminists challenge heterosexual, oppressive, demeaning Islamic masculinity that has been nurtured through the construction of the family structure yet have aimed to also negotiate this challenge into prevailing patriarchal structures, such as the family, without calling for its dismissal. Political Islamist movements led by charismatic men have sought to support idealized understandings of an Islamic masculinity and have done so by advocating the family structure as divine. Mawdūdi used politics to develop a theology based on an 'East' and 'West' power dichotomy that became more focused on empowering his construction of 'Islam' through an idealized Islamic state and in turn losing sight of the relevance and significance of diversity.

The codification of gender has also strengthened a limited understanding of Islamic masculinities through the establishment of Islamic law as it was also shaped in the deeply patriarchal culture of medieval Arabia. It would be a recommendation of this thesis to examine the extent to which this is true through a concentrated study of Islamic law derived from the Arab lands and masculinities studies. The work of Mawdūdi, including other political Islamist leaders and movements, and his (their) ambitions in making Pakistan (or the whole world) an Islamic state under his (their) understanding of Islamic law offers a glimpse into the potential of such a question, although this thesis focused more on the political connotation of Mawdūdi's work on constructions of political Islamist masculinity in particular. It would also be a recommendation of this thesis to focus research on the more liberal male voices of the study of Islam and examine the extent to which they provide an insight into Islamic masculinities in the

same vain as they explore and identify multiple understandings of Islam. Such a question emerged from the statement of Amina Wadud who boldly stated that the most liberal of male voices are often not willing to challenge the privileged position of the Muslim man.

An appreciation and exploration of Islamic masculinities has the potential of far reaching implications in terms of the study of Islam, the future of Islam and the lives of Muslims throughout the world. The study of Islam has often been restricted to monolithic understandings, interpretations and commentaries and often been defined through a patriarchal gaze without appreciating the significance of diversity. Most often this has been disguised using the powerful force of 'tradition', Islamic law or widespread acceptance by the mainstream Muslims under the rubric of a 'united Ummah' and hence a challenge to any of these is not only difficult but also at times dangerous. The future of Islam requires an appreciation of its past (and 'veiled' present) that is both colorful and accepting of diversity. This has been shown through the rich heritage of India and Pakistan that highlighted the vibrant tapestry of Muslim spiritual life, beyond Arabo-centric Islam. However, this rich heritage of spiritual paths has often been judged, from the forces mentioned above, as a 'right' or 'wrong' form of Islamic masculinity or femininity. Such narrow interpretations of submission to God have demoralized the lives of many Muslim men and women in the past and present as they have been forced to accept that their spiritual existence is in some way inferior. This has led many to label themselves as 'secular' or 'non-religious' Muslims by being bullied out of the religious sphere, as was the case of Ghālib. At a time when there is much debate about the necessity of a reformation in Islam, it may just be the case that one finds the buried treasures that reformers seek through unveiling and appreciating the rich diversity of Islamic traditions, societies and cultures.

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