

ISLAMIC AND WESTERN CONCEPTS OF HISTORY

By Professor Dr Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan

A.

While linking the concept of history with Islam, I recall one of the greatest events in human history and the most significant fact in the religion of Islam, namely the sending down by the Almighty Allah, the latest and the most complete guidance for humanity in the form of the miraculous Quran on Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, about 1443 years ago. Then I recall with deepest respect the sacred memory of the holy Prophet (s.m.), who initiated the grand social revolution of Islam on the basis of active and dynamic principles of holding firmly to good faith, good thinking and good work in the concrete and complex human situation of Makkah and Madinah and thereby inaugurated the historical process of Islam, wherein we still find the beaming light of hope and good guidance amidst today's frightfully confusing, dreadfully conflicting and hopelessly confounding situation of human life and in the midst of darkest and bleakest prospect of the future of mankind on our planet.

Turning to the wider world when we look at the shrinking universe in the face of the unprecedented advancement of human knowledge moving ahead with breath-taking speed along with ever-newer scientific inventions and discoveries and novel technological devices, we seem to find, near at hand, an unlimited prospect of comfort and happiness for mankind. Yet, no sooner we stretch our hands towards it, than we realise through hard experience that presently high-running population explosion, widespread clashes of human interests, conflicts of power, aggrandizement of economic resources by the few at the expense of the teeming millions, naked exploitation of man by man, and the resulting rampant fighting, killing, rape, murder, hi-jacking, robbery and theft prevailing everywhere in the world and, above all, the materialistic ideological clashes placing one group of men against another, people against people and nation against nation that throw us head-long into a most revolting circumstances and most insecure and calamitous situation around us.

Under such a highly prospective, yet so deeply apprehensive situation, it behoves us to ponder and contemplate as to what role Islamic history might play to elevate the morale of mankind and to rescue them from the down-right dispondency.

B.

We generally entertain many a misgiving about the nature and scope of Islamic history. Specially, in this Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent, we are prone to think of Islamic history as a branch of general history. Such a trend of thinking hardly does justice to Islamic history. In order to bring this home to the people at large of this subcontinent the epithet “culture” was added to the caption of “Islamic History” and this discipline was named “Islamic History & Culture”.

In the first place, Islamic history points to the socio-politico-religious trends of the Muslims all over the world for the last 1443 years or so; and in the wider perspective, it comprises the progress of the human society from the time of Father Adam, peace be on him, down to the advent of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; life and works of innumerable Messengers of Allah that intervened in between them; the nature and contents of their missions, and the type of guidance they imparted to the humanity; the *Khilafah* and the *Sultanat* and their administrations that thrived; the analysis of the culture and civilization from the earliest known period down to the present day—as providing the background and concrete perspective of Islamic History & Culture.

C.

Judging from such a standpoint, the subject-matter of Islamic history stands in the same stead with what we call “*Itihas*” in Bengali and “history” in English. Yet, the terminology of “*tarikh*” which is the proper designation of Islamic history, does not correspond exactly with the other two.

Philologically, the Bengali word “*Itihas*” when technically used for history is not applied in the literal sense of the meaning. Morphologically, it seems to stand for “*iti+has*”, which gives somewhat the meaning of “humour” and the term “*pari+has*” gives the meaning of “irony”.

But if it is derived from Sanskrit “*iti+ha+isa*”, as some *Pundits* would have us believe, it takes us on the threshold of two serious difficulties. Firstly, it was never used in Sanskrit for the meaning of history or anything akin to it; and secondly, if we accept it as a Bengali word, derived from the above Sanskrit roots, then its literal meaning “as it happen” give the flavour of story-telling.

Hence the safest course is to assume that it was a novel word discovered by the *Pundits* of Calcutta by the middle of the 19th century C.E. for the translation of the English word history; so that “*Itihas*” has no other meaning than history, not the literal, but in the technical sense.

Nevertheless, the culture of history was not quite unknown to the people of Bangladesh before the advent of the English in this country. Rather the culture of

history seems to pre-date herein far beyond the use of the word history by the Englishman in their own country. The word used for the culture of history herein from the beginning was “*tarikḥ*” with a Perso-Arabic orientation.

D.

It may be recalled that culture of “*tarikḥ*” has been an integral part of Islamic civilization and , as an echo of this, we use the term “*tarikḥ*” (Zvwil) in Bengali as well as in all other regional languages of this subcontinent to mean the date. This practice must have come into vogue through the influence of long-standing Muslim rule, in so far as the word “*tarikḥ*” originally stood in Arabic, and still stands, for “the date of an event”.

In comparison with this Perso-Arabic terminology of “*tarikḥ*”, the Graeco-Latin-English terminology of “history” stands for tales and stories, and also in their technical sense they yield a subtle and significant difference. As for “*tarikḥ*”, there are, as we know, a few significant dates in the life of every human being, such as those of birth, marriage, death etc. with chronological and systematic arrangement of such dates one’s life story is built up. Similarly by arranging the description of the advent, advancement or retrogression, childhood, youth, maturity, old age and death of a person, family, tribe, society, culture and civilization in a systematic and chronological order and examining the veracity of the events, their orientation, the idea or intention, one can write the life story of all, collectively or individually. Such a chronological and systematic account of a family, nation or civilization is known as “*tarikḥ*”.

As a matter of fact, since “*tarikḥ*” literally means a “date”, a systematic account of anything involves more than one date. Hence such an account used to be called “*tawarikḥ*” in plural. But on account of the difficulty in pronunciation, the singular “*tarikḥ*” came to be popularly used to mean it in the plural sense.

Therefore, in its last analysis, Perso-Arabic “*tarikḥ*” means a chronological and systematic description of events, and in this very literal sense, it is history. To the Muslim scholars “*Tarikḥ*” is not an Art, but a Science, an *ilm*; because it is based on a systematic methodology, critically checked and rechecked at every step.

In devising this science, the Muslims were inspired by their zeal for working out a truthful and factual description of the life and activities of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and to collect all his utterances, commands, directives, advices, messages, his practices at war and peace. The Muslim scholars left no stone unturned for accomplishing those tasks as exactly and truly as possible. Because to them, the life of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was a practical exemplification of the best and nicest ideal of a good human life—*uswatun ḥjasantun*, which if any one can actualise, to any extent, in one’s own life, that much of his life would also become ideal and virtuous.

Moreover, the behaviour of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was invariably bound up with actual living situation of human life and provided practical solution of all problems arising from the complexity of family, social and national life. Such practicability of the ideal form of life and the behavioural pattern of the Prophet's life as the warp and woof of good living on this earth, as also providing the best prospect for the future life in the next world is covetable.

As such, the birth of the "*tarikh*" out of the researching endeavour of the Muslims to gather, collect and compile the living, factual and true description of the sayings, doings and approvals of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was commensurate primarily with the compilation of the *Sunnah*, which was called *Ilm al- Hadith*, the Science of *Hadith* and besides, it also comprised the wider and more liberal endeavours of the Muslim scholars to gather, collect and compile all the information available about the wars and pacts of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, which were fought and enacted for the implementation of the ideals of Islam; in addition, the theoretical purpose of ascertaining the truth about the events that took place in this connection and also political and economic necessity of fixing up the status of those who participated in these events as well as the need of assessing the roles of different persons taking part therein, eventually led to the birth of the Science of *Tarikh*, firstly in the form of description of the holy Prophet's wars and expeditions called *Sirah* and *Maghazi*.

These researches were carried on in the best tradition of human knowledge, combining the critical methodology and technique of sifting Prophetic Tradition or *Hadith* with the lore and learning of the conquered peoples of the East and West. This newly devised critical methodology was called *Jarah* and *Ta'dil*, i.e., critically sifting reliable information, which was applied to ascertain the accuracy and the rational analysis of the factual narration of *Hadith* called *Riwayat* and the rational analysis of the points and facts called *Dirayat*. Later on these *Riwayat* and *Dirayat* were adopted by the modern Western scholars as the warp and woof of historical methodology under the caption of Internal Criticism and External Criticism of history. This historical methodology gave the West the first scientific basis for the learning of humanities.

E.

The critical pursuit of compiling *Sirah* and *Maghazi*, the biographical narration and the accounts of wars and expeditions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, necessitated for sifting *Hadith*, which gave birth to another auxiliary science of "biodata" of the narrators of the above accounts called *Asma ur-Rijal*, which prepared the ground for the birth of the science of Islamic History *par excellence*. In fact, *Tarikh* was gradually developed by the Muslim scholars by broadening the scope and range of the subject-matter of the biography of the holy Prophet in its accomplished form called *Sirat Rasul Allah* or *Siratun-Nabi* comprising progress and development of the Muslim community, the *Ummah* as a whole and then extending it from the Islamic history proper, and to the history of the entire

human race as well as the universal history composed by the classical Muslim scholars like Tabari.

Such an Islamic history and the universal history found well-formulated, abiding and durable pattern in the hands of al-Tabari during the 4th century *Hijri*/10th century C.E. which is well known as *Tarikh al-Tabari*. Latterly the pursuit of historical research reached its zenith amongst the Muslim scholars in the hand of Ibn Khaldun during the 14th century C.E. who gave it a peculiar combination of a scientific methodological dynamism and an empirical-cum-rationalistic philosophical orientation, who named his work, *Kitab al-Ibar* or the Book of Lessons, instead of calling it *Tarikh*, which has remained still unsurpassed in the field of history and in the intellectual arena of the medieval and modern civilization.

Considering from this wider perspective of the inner development of *Tarikh*, keeping pace with material progress and the intellectual needs of the ever-expanding Muslim community life throughout the world, Islamic history may be classified into two inter-related and inter-dependent yet self-sustaining parts; that is to say:

(a) The inner history of Islam comprising the birth, growth and development of the Muslim *Ummah* beginning with the *Hijrah* of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, along with the background of the contemporary social situation in which he was born and brought up, received the revelation of the holy Quran and struggled to propagate the truth of Islam till the time of *Hijrah*; then it proceeds through the *Hijrah*, which gave birth to the community life of the Muslims, organized by the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, into a Constitutional Society and State, which marked a turning point in the progress of Islam by putting into operation the inner and outer dynamics of a concrete historical process that kept on molding through centuries of active and continuous struggle to establish and spread the truth, which kept on molding and remolding the ideal pattern of the Muslim community life on the one hand, and never ceasing to influence and spin around its own orbit the broader historical process of the outer world that has been commemorated in the progress of the *Hijri* Calender, the back-bone of Islamic history *par excellence*, on the other.

(b) Besides this inner part of Islamic history, the Muslim scholars also meticulously worked out an outer part of history, which comprised the history of mankind from Father Adam down to the present day, which provided the background and human perspective to the inner history of Islam.

Thus, Islamic history deals with two continuous parallel current of history. The first part of it comprises the background and the perspective beginning with Father Adam down to the present day and the second part deals with the birth of the Muslim *Ummah* and comes down to the present day. In one word, Islamic history falls into two parts, one part dealing with the human civilization in general and the other part dealing with the Islamic civilization in particular.

In the above perspective, the subject-matter of Islamic history presents itself as “a search after the wonderful technique of the creation of the great Creator, Allah the Most High, and an understanding of the freedom-loving nature of man by means of observing the endless variety of created objects on the one hand, and the peculiar ways of human life, his socio-economic revolutions, his ethical and religious ideals, his creative arts and crafts, gradual evolution of his culture and civilization on the other.”

The fullness of the scope of Islamic History and Culture lies with the study and research under the context of such a broad and wider field of the history of mankind. We may briefly illustrate the point by recalling the observations of a 15th Christian/9th *Hijri* century Muslim scholar, namely al-Sakhabi, who classified the works of the Muslim historians into 40 groups or divisions and observed that any one historian cannot master more than two or three divisions out of them (*cf.* Rosenthal: *Muslim Historiography*, pp. 388-91). He held that the number of history books is uncountable and referring to a learned person, who had 1,000 volumes of history in his collection (p.388) and that, if all the histories are compiled together, it cannot be accomplished with less than 600 volumes (p.391). This clearly shows the wider nature of Islamic History and Culture and the vastness of the actual historical researches of the Muslim scholars.

Indeed, if you compare the historical researches of the Muslims with those of the Western historians of the time of al-Sakhabi (15th AC./*Hijri* century),⁹ it gives out a startling contrast. The large Oxford Dictionary (Vol .V) states that in the year 1485 Caxton wrote the history of the brave deeds of ancestors of the Western people for the first time (p.305). The term history was not in use in the English language before that.

Even to the present day, scholars are not decided as to the derivative root of the currently popular English term ‘history’. It is said that, it may have been derived from the French root of “*histoire*”, which stands for a tale, narrative story etc. A remote possibility is, however, that it was derived from the Greek root of “*histoire*” (*icropia*) which means learning or knowing by inquiry, an account of one’s inquiries, narrative, etc.

From whichever roots it may have been derived, in its actual use it is said to imply, “a relation of incidents in early use, either true or imaginary; latterly, only of those professedly true, a written narrative constituting a continuous methodical record, in order of time, of important public events, especially those connected with a particular country, people, individual etc.” (p.305)

In order to get to the heart of the Western concept of history, let us turn to the Greek tradition set by Herodotus and Thucydides of the 5th century B.C. They are credited with devising a new discipline of history basing on their own observation or on information received from others, which they called “*istoria*.” In Greek language “*istoria*” means “to learn through inquiry or investigation.” In course of time, this discipline came to be defined as, “the written methodological, systematic and

chronological accounts of important and significant events in the life of a person, country or nation.”

First, it was Herodotus who endeavored to write the history of the Greeks and the neighbouring peoples. But his contemporary Thucydides limited his subject-matter within the range of the Greeks alone. The former aimed at entertaining the readers and hence took little care to verify the truth of the information he gathered from various sources and presented to others in attractive language. The latter, on the other hand, aimed at deducing objective lessons from past events by which the future statesmen may be benefitted.

Long afterwards, Polybius drew up a plan, in the 2nd century B.C. to write a world history. He combined the Herodotian ideal of popular entertainment with Thucydides' pragmatism and put forward a cyclical theory of history and propounded that the same laws of growth and decay were obeyed by the States and Empires like as the natural organism followed and the organismic stages of youth, maturity, senility and death are also obtained in the form of spring, summer, fall and winter in nature that constitute the inescapable rhythm of life. In his view, every stage grew and perished in accordance with this rule from which only the gods were exempted (Grolier: *Encyclopaedia*, p. 242).

Thereafter, the historical learning in the West fell into decay till it was revived by the modern scholars following the example of the Muslim historians. One indisputable evidence of the Islamic influence on modern Western historical research is the famous “historical methodology”, which comprises *internal and external* criticism as its warp and woof. A close examination of the meaning, scope and principles of *internal and external* criticism makes it evident that these two component parts of history are nothing other than the principles of *Riwayat* and *Dirayat* of the science of *Hadith* criticism that together constitute the methodology of Islamic history or *tarikh*.

The principle of *Riwayat* is applied to examine the internal genuineness of the text of information and the principle of *Dirayat* is applied to examine the external genuineness of information, that is, trustworthiness, on the basis of external circumstances. In other words, the principle of *Riwayat* is applied to test the inner text of a document, and the principle of *Dirayat* is applied to test the external evidences for the confirmation of the same document as genuine, reasonable and true. The former establishes the truth of a document and the latter confirms the reasonableness of its content.

In fact, the modern methodology of history is an adoption in toto of these two primary principles of Islamic history, which originated in the field of Science of Hadith criticism.

However, compared to the methodology of Islamic history, the modern historical methodology exhibits a significant lag. For, in the arena of Hadith criticism, so also in

the *Tarikh* or Islamic history, the principles of *Riwayat* and *Dirayat* prepare the ground for the higher critical assessment by means of the further principles of *Jarah* and *Ta'dil*, which together means critically judging, first by assailing the result of *Riwayat* and *Dirayat*, then by synthesizing the analysed facts into datum or data. Then the data are used like the burnt bricks to build up the edifice of *Tarikh*.

Hence the Islamic history is made of the data and not by mere information or facts as such; and for the reason why it is more objective as well as uniform than the Western concept of history which being molded by information or facts, however thoroughly examined through the internal and external criticism, remains in a large measure like unburnt or sun-dried bricks, fluid and interpretative.

It goes, therefore, without saying that since the Western concept of historical methodology is made of the warp and woof of internal and external criticism; and since any information processed through this methodology gets recognized, at best, as a genuine or factual information, much less than verified data, it remains still as information *qua* information, comparatively fluid, interpretative and hence inevitably subjective in nature.

Thus, compared to the science of Islamic history: *Ilm al-Tarikh*, the Western history remains a halfway house; and hence is regarded as an Art and not as a Science. The wide gap in between the Art of Western History and the Science of Islamic History needs, therefore, be recognized both in respect of selecting the raw material as well as in articulating the concepts, ideas and information derived therefrom.

Moreover, as the classical Western history was a compendium of the braveries of the ancestors and narration of events and transmission of stories and information, so also, the modern Western history comprises narration of and/or information about the past events. It is informative and on account of the fluid nature of its informativeness, more often than not, reflects the personal inclinations or biasness of its writer in a large measure. As such it falls far short of the standard of *Tarikh*, which aspires at high objectivity based on verified data; so that, in the body of *Tarikh* we often come across layers of generally accepted course of history and flow of events, which non-Muslim scholars tend to mistake for repetition. This difference in between the *history* and *Tarikh* needs be properly grasped by the teachers of Islamic history and the students, before they would be able to derive adequate benefit out of it.

Secondly, the Greeks used to think of human being as a rational animal. They had no notion of the type of morality, that is, the judgment of good and evil, related to the concept of the Day of Last Judgment in the life hereafter. This was the characteristic of revealed religions and the Greeks had no share in it. They contemplated a philosophical type of Ethics emanating from *ethos*, which have had little relevance with the religious people of the East.

The Greeks, however, realised the significance of human mind, which was bound up with their concept of *animae* whose characteristic was thinking, reasoning, reflecting, apprehending, etc. and they took full advantage of it in promoting their advancement of learning and developing their culture and civilization. Yet, they fell short of grasping thereat significance of humanity which lay in Soul, *Ruh* or *Atma* which the Greeks pronounced as *Nous*; and hence they were not fully aware of the function of *Bibek*, *Zamir* or *conscience* in that special sense. They did not have a genuinely spelt word for it. Even the Latin word *conscience* is too weak to give it requisite vividness and force it deserves since it is grammatically derived from consciousness. Even so, the *conscience* was related to the mind that arose from the *animae* or animality in sharp contrast to the *Bibek* or *Zamir*, which arose, directly from the *Atma*, *Ruh* or *Soul*.

Although, it appears that in the 4th century B.C., the wise Socrates and his worthy successor Plato realised the relations of the truth and justice with inner voice or inner light and the *Nous*, yet this spiritual wisdom was lost in the medley of superstitious polytheism and paganism of the Greek people. In the 2nd century B.C., the great Greek sage, Polybius thought that the gods were exempted from the rule of Nature as we have quoted above.

Such a superstitious naturalistic philosophy lands man in the same kind of determinism and passive role as the natural objects are made subjected to and it turns man into a mere puppet and a plaything of Nature. For the misfortune of philosophy, the modern Western philosophers, groaning under the suppressive and repressive Christian dogmatism of the medieval times, revived with throbbing enthusiasm this classical Greek paganistic *Naturalism* in the name of *Renaissance* disentangling it from the Greek pantheon and then setting it up as *modernism* in the name of objectivity and realism.

On the other hand, the Muslims firmly believe that Allah alone is the Creator of the universe as well as its Sustainer, Preserver, Destroyer. He is the only Lord of the universe, is alone the object of worship and the sole judge of the good and evil, who will judge human actions on the Last Day of Judgment and reward the doers of good and punish the doers of evil. The universe moves and has its being at His behest in perfect conformity with the order set up by Him. It is the order and discipline set up by Him that we call Nature. Nature is not a reality in itself nor is it a fact or thing by its own right; but it is just the name of the order set up by the Creator Allah.

The Muslims also believe firmly that, as the plants and vegetables are not mere inanimate objects, so also human being is not mere animal. As to the plants and vegetables, Allah has given life to them in addition to their objectness or materiality; so also, to man He has bestowed a *Soul*, *Atma* or *Ruh* in addition to his animality or *animae*, mind or *pran*. Man's *animae* emerges from the chromosomes of male sperms and female egg, just as the *animae* of all other animals do emerge; but human soul comes from the breath of the Creator as He has breathed it from His own Soul into the primeval man, i.e., Father Adam (peace be on him), so also, as from the *animae* emanate desires, wishes and intentions, so also there emanated from the human soul,

Bibek or conscience, by dint of which human beings carry with them reason, freedom of will and responsibility for his action.

Owing to man's freedom and responsibility and his sense of discrimination between good and evil, arising from his soul and conscience, Allah will judge his actions on the Day of Judgment and award him reward or punish with permanent abode in the Heaven or in Hell Fire. Therefore, it is the moral duty of man to think of righteousness and to do what is right and good. The Muslims equate this morality with his humaneness and believe that it is this morality which bestows on him the status of humanity.

Thus, the Muslims do not believe man to be merely an animal or a rational animal; rather they regard man as an *Insan, Satva*, being a conscientious entity, a *Bibekban Satva*. They believe that the soul and conscience are the *differentia* of man that *distinguish* him from lower animals. Hence not mere intelligence or rationality as it is generally understood, but morality is the basis of human life.

In addition, the Muslims believe that (a) man's judgment of good and evil is the criterion of conscience or *Bibek, zamir*; (b) his freedom of will and (c) his potency or power to utilize all things in the universe by the knowledge and wisdom bestowed on him by Allah, in order to enable him to change the course of events on earth. The Muslims call this potency, the freedom or choice "*Ikhtiyar*" and believe that, it carries with it not only human rights but also human responsibility. Muslims believe that this potency and its concomitant rights and responsibility make man *Khalifah*, representative of Allah on earth.

By dint of this freedom, man stands head and shoulder above all other creatures of the universe and it makes him the best of all creation. Thus, mere Naturism or Mechanism does not point to the special trait of humanity. *Ikhtiyarism* or freedom of choice is the key to human philosophy.

The Muslim point of view of history may be gleaned through the comments of a fifteenth century (Christian Era) Muslim scholar Muhi al-Din Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Kafiyaji (1383-1474 C. E.). The topics of discussion of history, according to him, are such important events which are beneficial to humanity, attracts people towards good work and creates repulsion towards doing evil, becomes the source of entertainment, enthusiasm, advice, education and various other actions and reactions and which is noted down in precise, articulated and balanced writing in accordance with the chronology of time or in the form of good speech, and above all, which is composed with good intention, and so on.

Thus, in the eye of the Muslims, history is not an account of events, a story, a tale or an entertainment; rather it is the description of such a chain of events, which emits lessons for a good life. Its Quranic ideal is *i'tibari*, that is, lessonableness. But, far from the Greek ideal, it is not lessonable to the future statesmen alone, as Polybius

would have us believe; rather it is a comprehensive science, that is lessonable for all men of conscience and such as becomes helpful in building up humane character.

Over and above, it may also be noted that in the perspective of the holy Quran, history is meant to be more than a mere description of the tradition of the ancients, *asatir al-awwalin*, a true narration of events, *qasas al-haqq*. It has been stated in the *Surah al-An'am* (6:57): "Allah narrates the true events, *yaqussu' l-haqq*"; in *Surah al-Yusuf* (12:3) it is stated that Allah narrates the best of events, that is, true stories.

Enthused by these Quranic examples, the Muslim scholars took to the path of historical research and devoted their life in this field, so much so that, they uncovered all types of topics and fields of study which they could have imagined. Hundreds and thousands of volumes of historical works collected and preserved in the libraries at every nook and corner of the world give witness to their boundless endeavors in this field.

The above discussion must have made it clear that the aims and objects of the Islamic history and Western history are not quite the same. They widely differ in their intents, ideals, objectives and methodology even though we call both histories. The difference between them is, however, so subtle that it hardly comes to view to other than the experts in the subject. For this reason, even the Western Orientalists do feel that in order to enable one to understand Islamic history properly, at least, one major Muslim language, such as, Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Malay has to be learnt by the incumbent so as to acquaint oneself with some original sources and to derive lessons therefrom. Joining our own voice to such a mode of thinking, we may draw a number of conclusions.

Firstly, the study of Islamic History and Culture originated and developed through constant research in respect of the continuous forward movement of the Muslim community life of the *Ummah* throughout the world. Islamic History and Culture is thus a living history in the midst of an ever-changing environment and cannot be separated from constant study and research.

Secondly, since the end of the Second World War, about 70 Muslim countries have emerged as independent political States, which had been previously subjugated by the Western imperialist and colonial powers. Even though these Muslim States may be weak for the time being, their combined impact has not been negligible.

Thirdly, as the Muslims belong to a universal community of *Ummah*, they are comparatively free from communal psychology, which has a big role to play in establishing world peace in the present day strife torn social milieu of the world.

Fourthly, Islamic history as it has been moulded by the Muslim scholars, comes nearer to sociology rather than what presently goes by the name of history. This

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needs be realised both by the academicians and public leaders before they would be able to move the Muslim society and States to the road of progress.

Fifthly, the emergence of numerous Muslim States in the present-day world has created a new field of study in the arena of world politics, the history of which cannot be properly calculated and written down without continuous research, collection of data and news. This calls for mutual cooperation of Muslim States and Muslim scholars in exchanging ideas and materials, which can be done only through well-established Islamic Research Institutes .

Taking all these in view the history of Islam needs be re-written and the courses of studies be remolded so as to cope with the present requirements of the Muslim community all over the world.

SOURCE: Obtained directly from the author.