

Islamic Education- A Catalyst to Peaceful Human Co-existence in Central and South Asia

Prof. Mushtaq Ahmad Kaw
Head, Department of History
Maulana Azad National Urdu University
Hyderabad, india

As per scriptures, Islam is a monotheistic concept. It pronounces belief in “No God but God” and rejects all other manifestation of God. It also advocates peaceful human co-existence and multiculturalism through its scriptures, practices and traditional educational content.

The latter exhibiting a complementarity between real faith and humanistic values, reinforced with the advent of *Sufism*, association of *maktabs* and *madrassas* with tombs and shrines and the uploading of their educational content with ethico-moral code .

The devotees of shrines having stunning faith in the miraculous powers of the holy saints for attainment of spiritual and mundane ends, included people of all cults, creeds, communities, colures, tribes and shades, which eventually stimulated their cultural integration regardless of their religious belief in monotheism, polytheism, or pantheism.

Their experimental learnings constituted what an eminent US scholar, Frederick Starr, perceives as the “Golden Miraas” of Central Asia and its associated region. It was vindicated by the hagiological literature of medieval times.

It was and continues to be strongly patronized by the ruling elite, since it is indigenous and passive compared to the reactionary and revolutionary form of scriptural Islam; hence, pre-emptive of regime security, human brotherhood and cultural pluralism.

At the moment, the region has two dominant strands of Islam, the scriptural and traditional. The former is pursued by the Islamists under or above ground and the latter by the rural, cultural and economic elite.

Based on my theoretical and empirical studies, I have found most of the people gravitated to the traditional Islam for it accommodates their innate customs and traditions and is in accord with their traditional educational curriculum characterizing universal values of ethics, morality, multiculturalism, and human fraternity. No wonder, the region had no major type of inter or intra-communal, sectarian, tribal or regional clashes. Though stagnant, medieval life in Central and South Asia was thus contented, despotism notwithstanding.

Modern education has no doubt accelerated the pace of human progress. Such a progress, however, is perceived to be “disillusioned” by the post-modernists and cultural imperialists for being short-lived due to consumerism and ‘throat-cut’ competition among state and non-state actors for material and civilizational pursuits; hence, oriented to nuclear holocaust.

In my presentation, therefore, I intend:

- **Unfolding Central and South Asian 'golden heritage';**
- **Examining its relationship with basic Islam;**
- **Estimating peoples response to it;**
- **Analysing state policy vis-a-vis it; and**
- **Proposing to supplement the modern educational content with traditional Islamic values of ethics and morality.**