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## Role of Family in Socialistaion: Amin Ahsan Islahi's Views

\_\_\_\_\_ Abdul Rauf  
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Solitary human life is unthinkable on this earth. Human beings' inevitable collective life changed many forms during the course of history. The present social life is more complex than ancient times, which was simple in nature and easy to describe and analyse. However, the basic actor i.e. man and his inherited strengths and weaknesses remains unchanged. Man's inadequacies make him dependent on other fellow-beings and thus he sought after mechanism to get help and extend help to others in one form or another. With the passage of time institutions replaced individuals to help in fulfilling requirement of their fellow humans at personal level. Muslim scholars expressed themselves to >coup with the changing situation in the Muslim societies primarily affected by the extension of Western thoughts and practices during and after the colonial period.

Mawlana Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-97), an adroit religious scholar of Pakistan expressed his views on many issues ranging from day to day *fiqh* quarries to social, political and economic issues. His views need an academic investigation as he did not follow the footprints of the traditional ulama in spite of his own training in the same religious discipline. His divergence with the ulma is due to different approach to Holy Scriptures. His approach to understand Quran is direct and based on *nazm* (coherence) principle, primarily developed in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century by another Indian Muslim scholar, Hamiddudin Farahi (1863-1930).<sup>1</sup> Islahi, primarily a teacher and Quranic Scholar, who also spent sometime in Jama'at-i-Islami from 1941 to 1958, completed his *magnum opus*, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an* in 1980.<sup>2</sup> His role in the Jama'at was second only to Sayyed Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-79)<sup>3</sup> in its ideological foundation and training of the new entrants and old workers. However, Islahi

was well aware that Muslim wretchedness in the contemporary world is deep rooted and need an intellectual revolution instead of some short lived political gains. Like his teacher and mentor, Farahi, he also rated ulama and intelligentsia as the most important of agents of change in Muslim society. Islahi's approach to Quran also influenced his views regarding social life including the institution of family and men-women interaction which is focused in this paper.<sup>4</sup> In the following pages an effort has been made to bring to light Islahi's views in a descriptive regarding family, its functions and its role in socialisation. His views are compared with the contemporary Muslim thinking including Mufti Mohammad Shafi, Mawdudi, Modernists and Javid Ahmad Ghamidi.<sup>5</sup> In some places Islahi's view is analysed in the light of his own cherished *nazm* principle in the Quran.

### Family and its Structure

According to Islahi human beings had been inculcated with the knowledge of good and bad. They have been provided also with freedom of choice<sup>6</sup> and then provided with a reprovener in the shape of *nafsi-i-lawwama* (guard) for warning on wrong doings.<sup>7</sup> The existing of a reprovener proves that man is imperfect and need a constant guard. In the same manner he is also in need of assistance from external world to strengthen his natural faculties/potentials and suppress evil. It is the institution of family which provides him such a support.

In Islahi's socio-political thought, family occupies focal point. He considers it the basic unit which promotes social and political development in a society. Society not only flourishes the strength of man, it controls and takes care of human weaknesses. In Islahi's thoughts family is a multi-faceted institution performing the role of educating individuals in social, moral, political and economic fields. The establishment of family has divine sanction. The holy Qur'an elaborated the teachings regarding family in more detail than any other social and political institution.

The word family means man, his wife, his parents, and children. Husband and wife are the originator of family. Among Muslims, the relationship starts with *nikah* (marriage). According to Islahi, the bond of *nikah* is the firm contract of rights and duties between husband and wife. This bond brings

them together to live for the entire life and both get equal rights and are assigned equal duties.<sup>8</sup> The bond is termed as *mithaq-i-ghaliz* (solemn agreement) in the Qur'an. Islahi explained that it is not an ordinary bond but a very firm one. Each party has certain rights and duties and are required to abide by the convention and rules agreed between them during the time of *nikah*.

The contact between man and woman is natural. According to Islahi, God has created things including human beings in pairs in this universe. Reason for the creation in pairs, according to Islahi, is that one part complements and completes the other to form a whole. Man and woman, when they join in *nikah*, complete humanity.

Sexual desire and lust is pointed out by Islahi, as one of the characteristic of human beings<sup>9</sup> and it is possible that they can be detracted by this urge for fulfilling it through inappropriate means. Marriage bond is provided to solemnise the fulfilment of sexual desire in a most appropriate way. Institution of family becomes sacred as its establishment and maintenance is decreed by God. Islahi also considered family as a basic unit for social and political life. How should relationship between man and woman be established? Islahi elaborated his views in the light of Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the prophet.

### Order in Family

Islahi likens family to the institution of state. A state is required to be headed by a person, a family is also required to have a head. It can be husband or wife, but cannot be both. Islahi's assertion is in favour of man. In his view, man possesses those qualities which are required for the custodianship of family.<sup>10</sup> However, it does not mean that man is superior to woman in all walks of life. There are certain areas where women are ahead of men. For example, man cannot take care of the children as can a woman.<sup>11</sup> There is an inherent difference between man and woman. Man has an edge over woman in some physical aspects. Any step in the direction of equating both has proved futile. Islahi considers all such moves a war against God and human wisdom.<sup>12</sup> In the modern times most countries of the world equate women with men. Legal and constitutional equality does not mean that they become equal in all fields of life. A few

women who prove themselves equal to men in some fields, they have to lose many feminine traits of their personality. They have to lose their own female identity and finally absorbed in the man folk. Any move towards the equality of man and woman may culminate in a permanent clash between both. According to Islahi, if clash between inherited differences between sexes continues it will end up in the destruction of the social and universal system.<sup>13</sup> Islahi does not rule out any competition between man and woman. There is a vast field available to compete with each other. This field is not in the material world but it is the field of morality. In this field, a woman can supersede a man many times if she wishes. She can glorify herself more than a man through her noble deeds. The Qur'an states, 'And in no wise covet those things in which Allah hath bestowed his gifts more freely on some of you than on others: to men is allotted what they earn and to women what they earn: but ask Allah of His bounty: for Allah hath full knowledge of all things.'<sup>14</sup>

In family, man is required to provide sustenance to his wife and children. Woman is exempted from all economic struggles. Instead, she is expected to be obedient to her husband, the way citizens obey state authority. She is also required to be guardian of the private life of her husband. It is wife who knows all weakness and frailty of man and husband became vulnerable if his wife did not take care of him.<sup>15</sup>

What should be done if disorder is caused in family because of the actions of wife? According to Islahi, man can take the following measures to restore order at home. Woman should be persuaded through arguments and guidance and then through warning to mend her ways. If woman does not do adhere, then, >man should separate his bed from her and try to make her realise the negative consequences of her behaviour. If this does not work, man is then allowed to punish his wife physically. However, the physical punishment should not be severe in nature, but should be that of a teacher correcting students. Islahi pointed out that punishable disobedience is not an ordinary one. Physical punishment of wife is allowed when it challenges authority of the head of family. An anarchic situation is expected to appear in family, if it is not checked in time.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, disobedience does not mean an error, carelessness, or

negligence. It is also not the non-fulfilment of husband's taste or keeping aside his views and opinions by wife. Secondly, the punishment should not be severe. According to Javid Ahmad Ghamidi, the punishment should not leave a permanent imprint on the body.<sup>17</sup> If punishment works and behaviour of wife return to normal, then she should be pardoned and man should not be in search of a pretext to take revenge from her.<sup>18</sup>

Giving the right of custodianship to man does not mean that woman merges her personality in man's entity. According to Islahi, woman is not to be considered as personal property; rather she is an independent entity. The view of Islahi is important, as there exist some societies including Muslim societies which do not give due status to women and continue to exploit them in the name of religion. The issue got much attention after the emancipation of woman in the Western industrialised societies. Islahi considered woman a fully independent member of society and asked man to honour this independent status of woman.

### Family Disputes and its Resolution

In order to maintain the bond of marriage intact, Islam emphasises greatly on the reconciliation of husband and wife if there is a dispute between them. In such cases, formation of a reconciliatory committee is suggested. The committee should comprise two representatives: one from the husband's side and the other from the wife's side. Islahi recorded his own observation saying that such a measure saves many families from disintegration. If reconciliation becomes impossible then the spouses can separate from each other. In such cases, the imposition of family bond on such a couple is not recommended at the cost of anyone of the spouses. In case of separation, a method has been proposed, leaving room for reunification of the couple. After two pronouncements of man divorcing his wife, they can reunite on their own. After the third pronouncement they can reunite only if the woman marries another man and that man divorces her or dies. If a person violates the proposed method of divorce then certain punishment can be awarded to the violator.<sup>19</sup>

After separation, arises the most important issue of future of the children. In Islahi's views, upbringing of children by the parents is very important. He summarises the teachings on the

subject as enumerated in the Qur'an: The divorced woman is required to breast feed her infants for two years if father of the children wishes so. During this period man is required to pay for living expenses to his ex-wife according to his financial status, requirements of the woman and customs of the locality. There has to be consensus between the parties on the arrangement of living expenses. None of the parties is expected to exploit the vulnerabilities of the other due to children. If father of the children is dead then responsibilities will be performed by his successors. Both parties after agreement can decide about weaning of the child. After paying to mother, the child can be breast-fed by another woman as well.<sup>20</sup>

Another important issue after separation is the second marriage by any of the ex-spouses. The holy Qur'an clearly instructs that nobody should hinder the marriage of the ex-spouse. Islahi warns that whenever this instruction has been ignored (especially in Indo-Pakistan), it has led to emergence of other social and ethical evils. Some families consider second marriage as an insult and try to prevent women from doing so. In such situations, Islahi says, woman starts unlawful, secret sequel contacts. As doors of remarriage are closed for woman, she has no choice but to elope. It thus results in stigma and humiliation of her family.<sup>21</sup> In some cases it even generates enmity and inflicts heavy financial and human losses.

The method of separation is not simple, rather the most complicated one. According to Islahi, divorce should not be taken lightly. If somebody wishes to pronounce divorce, he should think a hundred times about the far-reaching consequences of such a decision.<sup>22</sup> The provision *talaq* (divorce) with *nikah* is not a part of the original scheme (a man and woman live together for the whole life) but it is the unavoidable treatment of an unwanted situation which does occur in social life.<sup>23</sup> Separation of husband and wife is the most undesired among lawful things before God.<sup>24</sup>

### Man and Woman interaction and *Pardah*

A family i.e. man, woman and their children cannot live in isolation. They have to contact people outside the family. How these contacts should be established keeping in view strengths and weaknesses of human beings? And how these relations can

support a man in becoming a moral being? What principles should they follow when they meet with each other? Islahi considers men and women equal in status, but he views different social roles for men and women. Differences in role are due to physical structure and capabilities of the two sexes. Duties of woman revolve around home and children. She has to pay more attention to her home and children. That is possible if she confines herself to be a housewife. Islahi points out that the main sphere of function of a woman is her home.<sup>25</sup> However, it does not mean that a woman cannot come out from her home and perform certain other activities. Islahi lays down the rules when men and women meet during the course of their activities in public, both should keep their eyes low while passing each other.

Keeping eyes low does not mean looking downwards to the earth all the times. It means modesty in look, free from any licentious gaze. The behaviour is better known as *ghad-i-basar* (aversion of one's glance). Some parts of women's attract men's sexual attention, Islam suggests measures that this should not happen. If these lust inviting encounters between men and women, other than spouses, are not checked, destruction of family life takes place and human society turns into a gathering of animals. Measures to prevent this are mentioned by Muslim scholars under the title *Pardah* (to veil one's self appropriately). Islahi also used this term to describe the manner of meeting of men and women in society.

Islahi's concept of *Pardah* is different from other traditional 'ulama. Islahi's views are based on the Qur'an while other 'ulama depended more on the traditions and practices of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in his family life as reported in the Hadith literature. Majority of the 'ulama, including Mawdudi, are very strict in the seclusion of both sexes. They allow woman to meet man only in unavoidable situations. Mawdudi is of the view that every kind of contact between man and woman is prohibited, unless there is a dire need e.g. a woman meeting medical treatment can be seen and checked by a male doctor.<sup>26</sup> In the same way, in time of emergency like fire and flood or drowning of woman in river etc man is allowed to touch a woman. A woman can also appear without veil before a judge.<sup>27</sup>

Islahi divides all places in a social life into two kinds; inside and outside home, and classifies the people in three categories

whom a woman can meet. This classification can be named as closest circle of relatives; a closer circle of relatives and friends; and outsiders and strangers. The closest circle includes closest relatives only e.g. husband, father, brother, father-in-law, nephews, stepbrothers, small children etc. A woman usually deals with this category inside her home. In such a situation, a woman is allowed to appear without any veil before these relatives. She is also not prohibited to display her beauty before them.<sup>28</sup> Restrictions on a woman in these conditions are very nominal. Furthermore, women of old age are exempted from *Pardah* inside and outside homes.<sup>29</sup>

Islahi's second category of people includes all those people set down in verses 31 and 61 of *sura* Al-Noor. These verses described the kind of *Pardah*, which Muslim women are required to observe strictly. It includes lower of gaze and guard of their modesty, not displaying their beauty and unnecessary ornaments and should not act to attract others to them.<sup>30</sup> There arose certain ambiguities in the time of the Holy Prophet regarding these restrictions, e.g. that the observance of *Pardah* will end all social contacts and dependants who did not come under the classifications of *mahram* (close relatives) will be left unattended. Another verse in the same *sura* was revealed to clear the confusion. It states that restriction does not mean end of all social relations. Close relatives and sincere friends not only can meet with each other but they can also break bread together.<sup>31</sup>

A question arises that can these people meet outside home? And what should be the manner of meeting of a woman in places which are neither home nor public? Ghamidi categorised all such places as 'protected places'. According to Ghamidi in all such places, there is no threat to woman's chastity. This may include educational institutions, hospitals, offices, factories and all places where men and women work. According to Ghamidi, in all these places women are exempted from certain other obligations as prescribed in those areas where women deals with men stranger to her.<sup>32</sup> If this view is recognised by the 'ulama, it would affect the social and political culture of the Muslim world immensely. This category is not mentioned in Mawdudi and Mufti Shafi's writings, though the Qur'an specifically used the words *sadiq-i-kum* (your friend).<sup>33</sup> Mawdudi divided men and women into *mahram*<sup>34</sup> and *non-mahram* which suggests that



friends are *non-mahram* that would mean that men and women who are only family friends can not come together on social occasions.

The third category comprises outsiders and strangers. Usually a woman meets such people in public. Most of the 'ulama recommend a complete *Pardah* outside home. The early Hanafites did not include the concealment of face and hands in *Pardah*, but latter 'ulama of this School also included face and hands in the *Pardah* because of moral decadence in society at that time. Most of the 'ulama including Mawdudi, Mufti Shafi and Islahi derived their views from the following verses 33: 32-33 and 33: 59 of the holy Qur'an. It is asserted that all Muslim women are instructed to remain at home and should not go out unless necessary. Mufti Shafi opined that the above verses conferred the command of *Pardah* on all Muslim women.<sup>35</sup> Mawdudi is also of the same opinion that *jalbab*<sup>36</sup> is necessary for a woman when she comes out of her home.<sup>37</sup> Both the 'ulama substantiated their views with the traditions of the Holy Prophet also. Islahi is also having the same opinion. He does not disagree with the traditional 'ulama on *jalbab*. He also pointed out that one should not misunderstand that this was a temporary solution to save Muslim woman from the mischievous people in Madina, or when the cause is not there this law does not apply. Islahi opined otherwise, he says all laws were revealed due to some causes which dose not mean that if the cause is lacking then the law will cease to function. Secondly no reasonable person can claim that today the circumstances are positively changed and thus there is no need of such restrictions on woman.<sup>38</sup>

The verses (33: 32-33) and 33: 53-55 of the holy Qur'an are clearly addressing the wives of the Holy Prophet. Islahi had also given the same opinion.<sup>39</sup> However he makes it relevant for all Muslim women and does not confine it to the wives of the Prophet. Islahi states that his view is based on the consensus of Muslims on the issue of *Pardah* outside home.<sup>40</sup> One could hardly understand Islahi on the adoption of this opinion. It is his cherished view that for understanding the Qur'an, the addressee should be kept in mind and the same has to be taken into account when one is deriving certain principles from the text of the holy Qur'an. He stresses on the coherence in the Qur'an, which plays a very important role in determining meanings and connotation

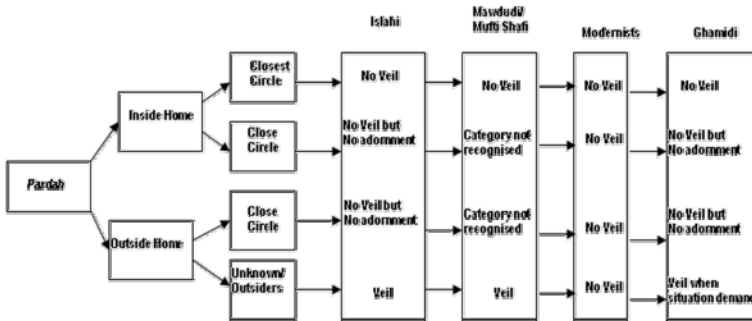
of words and sentences in a passage. The context of a verse in the Qur'an is also significant which supports the adoption of a particular view regarding the verse. Islahi accepts all these principles and adopts it in his commentary on the Qur'an. The reasons Islahi declared that the application of these verses of Al-Ahzab is not specific but general, is difficult to follow. In the beginning of his commentary on the *sura*, under the heading of 'Analysis of the *sura*', he specifically said that in the verses 28-35 wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) have been addressed and were instructed to confine in their homes . . . . However in explanation of these verses Islahi asserts that though in the verses (33: 30-33) the wives of the Holy Prophet have been addressed but in reality women of that period have been condemned and degraded due to their ill deeds'.<sup>41</sup> And the command is for all Muslim women to obey.

As stated earlier, Islahi adopts this view because most Muslim ulama have the same view. Usually, Islahi does not care for the entire Muslim 'ulama and people, if he himself reaches a different conclusion after applying Farahi's principles of hermeneutics. He, usually, does not accept an opinion on the basis of others' views e.g. the issue of *rajam*, on which he differs with majority of Muslim scholars.<sup>42</sup> His explanation for acceptance of such view on the basis of the moral degradation in Muslim society is understandable. His student Ghamidi differed with his teacher and opined that in the verses (33: 32-33 and 53-55) only the wives of the holy prophet have been addressed and therefore these instructions are specifically for them as there were certain other special instructions for the Holy Prophet.<sup>43</sup> In those days, the hypocrites of Madina were in search of a chance to defame the Holy Prophet and other Muslims through defamation of the wives of the Holy Prophet and other sincere Muslims. In order to protect dignity of the Prophet, the wives of the Prophet were instructed to remain in their homes.

Moreover, the wives were instructed to be available in their homes, as their special status and responsibilities required from them.<sup>44</sup> These responsibilities include observing Holy Prophet's inside home life and then acquaint the Muslims about it. In this regard, the services of Ayesha (ra) are remarkable. Because of the performance of duties by the wives, we are now able to know a lot about the family life of the Holy Prophet. In verse (33:59) the

wives of the Prophet and Muslim women were instructed to wear *jalbab* when they came out of their homes. According to Ghamidi, the words ‘that is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not molested’ of the verse shows that it was not a permanent command rather a provisional ruling which was adopted for the protection of Muslim women from the mischievous people.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, if Muslim women of this time face the same situation they can adopt the same ruling to protect and distinguish themselves from other women.<sup>46</sup> Ghamidi’s view if accepted will have enormous impacts on the entire *Pardah* system of the Muslims. The very environment and relationship among the people in a Muslim society will have to be redefined. It is interesting to mention here that Ghamidi does not even use the term *Pardah*. He described it as *adab-i-ikhtilat-i-mard-o-zan* (‘etiquette’ for the meeting of men and women) in a Muslim society. A comparison of Islahi’s views with other existing views in Pakistan is given in the shape of a chart (See Figure No 1).

Figure No 1  
Men-Women Contact



Islahi’s view regarding *Pardah* is not as strict as that of the traditional 'ulama and Mawdudi. He asserted that due to extremism in *pardah*, the collective lives of most of the families were affected badly and they failed to establish relationship based on affection and regulation.<sup>47</sup> He claims that the collective life based on freedom and chastity will come into being when relationship between men and women are regulated on the above mentioned principles.<sup>48</sup>

### Function of Family: Socialisation

The institution of family as proposed by Islahi has multifarious functions ranging from biological reproduction and preservation of cultural identity to socialisation of the new generation. Islahi considers family as a miniature state headed usually by an elderly male member. In this family structure each and every member has certain rights and duties. The structure of families can be nuclear or extended. It seems that Islahi's family concept is incomplete without the presence of parents (if alive) or a due place for them in the family. Parents in a family occupy a unique place in Islahi's thoughts. He concludes that after God, a person should be more indebted to his parents than any other individual. Among the parents, mother's position is superior to father. In the holy Qur'an it is stated that, 'And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal.'<sup>49</sup>

Islahi explains the reasons of mothers being given priority. Their sacrifices are greater than fathers during each stage of child rearing. They (women) bear the hardships at the time of birth and then render all kinds of sacrifices in the upbringing of children. A person may have some material consideration in extending his respect and regard to his father. There is a likelihood of being disinherited by fathers if sons ignore their fathers, but the same cannot be expected of a mother. Therefore, man is instructed to give much attention to his mother.<sup>50</sup> According to Islahi kind-heartedness towards parents is not something taught by religion alone. In fact, God has imbibed in human nature of kindness towards parents. This attitude later on was practised by the prophets and his companions. It has been recognised in all religions that after God, parents have the greatest rights over their children. Islahi further states that the first realisation of the right of any individual over another individual is the recognition of parents' rights.<sup>51</sup> Kindness towards parents is not enough, they need heartfelt affection and love.

According to Islahi, pure love and complete obedience towards parents is required from the children.<sup>52</sup> It is possible that

a person may commit mistakes in his dealing with parents, but if love and affection exists these unintentional mistakes can be forgiven and forgotten when one become conscious of the same. Islahi further states that after observing affection and love for parents a man should also constantly remind himself the blessings of parents which they showered upon him during his childhood. He should not forget his childhood when he was dependent for survival on his parents. Man should always request for God's blessings on his parents.<sup>53</sup>

A question arises about limit to kindness and obedience of parents in family. The limitation has been pointed out in verse 31:15 of the holy Qur`ān. It means that when father asks his children to associate deities with God, then the younger should not obey them. If there is a conflict between duties towards God and parents, the later should not be obeyed because they cannot overrule the directives of God. However, in such a situation children are not allowed to disown and deject their parents. They should treat them with tenderness and respect and all their needs should be fulfilled. All kind of support should be extended to them in time of necessity. Even if parents behave harshly, they should not be answered in the same tone.<sup>54</sup> Islahi pointed out that the actual time of trial for children came when parents reach old age. He said that before reaching to old age, parents only have rights. In the later age they become reliant upon their children. In such a situation, children should keep in minds their own childhood, when they were dependent upon these parents and who extended every kind of affection and support to them. Children should serve their parents to the utmost level. According to Islahi, God entrusted affection in men for their children and the same has been inculcated in children towards their parents. Children are required neither to relinquish their parents at any critical juncture (when they are physically unfit and become dependent upon their children for their needs) nor speak any word which disheartens them.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, serving to parents is akin to worshipping God in Islam.<sup>56</sup>

Islahi's stress on good behaviour towards parents not only contributes to the firm establishment of institution of family, it also gives a very human touch to a social issue (living conditions of old aged people) in a society. The issue of aged people has been solved in the modern times by establishing separate old age

homes. They are provided with every kind of facility and may not face any problem, but do all these material conveniences compensate for the absence of loving and caring children? The psychological support provided by children cannot be replaced by any other thing in human life. It is an irony that the issue of old age is treated with a mechanical approach. When these people were contributing to society materially, they were allowed in the society; when they lost their energy and vigour, they were discarded as wrecked parts of machines. In Islahi's view human relations become more important especially when a person becomes disabled or dependent upon others for his survival.

The presence of old people in a family is vital for preservation of customs and traditions in society. They are important for stability in a society. A sudden change may break up society and thus the upheavals would affect the whole social and political system. Though cultural lag in a society cannot be prevented, but if Islahi's view is adopted, it will remain to a minimum level and would not allow a horizontal disintegration in society.

As earlier stated, Islahi saw only a married life a natural way of living. He considered family and society as the only flourishing place for human faculties. Supporters of the solitary life sometime brought examples of great men such as the prophets who never married. Islahi discussed the issue of the non-marital status of Jesus and John the Baptist. These were only exceptional cases due to the extraordinary circumstances faced by these prophets. John the Baptist was most of the time either in prison or busy in inviting the Jews of Jerusalem to the right path. Jesus was also engaged in the task of rescuing the Jews from God's wrath. Jesus is stated in the Bible as, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of Man has no place to lay his head'.<sup>57</sup>

In another place Jesus said, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing'.<sup>58</sup> The bond of man and woman through *nikah* is most feasible and it remains as a basic unit for formation of society and state which constructs all civilisation and culture.<sup>59</sup> In this bond, man is given more

authority over woman due to the physical structure and qualities of man. However, Islahi does not rule out exception. He says there may be certain cases where a woman would have more ability to earn and take good care of family. But the rules which govern society can not be based on exceptions. Superiority of man over woman in affairs of home does not imply to put a crown over the head of man. Looking into the responsibilities attached with the authority remind us that though it is a crown but one of thorns. If man fails to fulfil his responsibilities, his failure can disgrace him not only in this world but in the hereafter also.<sup>60</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the husband-wife bond is birth of children. The natural attraction between man and woman is for continuation of the chain of humanity. After birth of children, man becomes responsible for the expenditure of children *inter alia* the mother. Islahi after declaring it as the first and foremost responsibility of man sets aside the impression that man is *Razzaq* (Giver of food) of children. Man should not think of only fathering the number of children whom he can support with his income.<sup>61</sup> Islahi opposed birth control on the basis of economic liabilities etc. It means that in a family, one should not adopt the methods of birth control for fear of starvation. Instead, man should struggle hard for increasing his earnings, and spend it with wisdom and justice. However, it does not mean that Islahi is totally against family planning. He suggested that health of the mother should be taken into account in the process of child bearing.<sup>62</sup> In family planning, consideration of proper education and training of the children is also very important. If it is difficult for a couple to provide good education and moral upbringing to more children; the number of births can be minimised. Ghamidi also stressed upon keeping the number of children considering several other aspects such as education other than fear of starvation.

Islahi stresses working to increase one's earning. However, he emphasises that income should come through *halal* (lawful) means. A wealthy family may demonstrate its wealth in this world, however if the income is *haram*, it will darken their distant future. Needs and desires of a family should not force a man to indulge in prohibited practices. Spending of family should be run on the basis of neither *buhkal* (miserliness) nor

*tabzir* (extravagance). Islahi says that if a man is not careful in spending on his family he can not take care of the rights of others.<sup>63</sup>

Primary function of family is upbringing of the younger generations. Family is the first and real place for educating and teaching mannerism and social norms to children. The imprints of this non-formal education institution can be observed in the later life of an individual. According to the Prophetic teaching a baby is born on his nature i.e. Muslim and it is the parents, who make him or her Christian, Jew or Zoroastrian. According to Islahi, it is very important and difficult that a baby is brought up on his nature and it flourishes and is nourished. In the beginning children merely imitate their parents. Later parents can guide them in socialisation and educate them in the moral values. According to Islahi, parents should be cognisant about the upbringing of their children and should focus on their socialisation. Islahi considers it not a mundane duty but a divine responsibility.

All basic teachings of religion, morality and etiquette should be communicated to them with love and affection in a way that the children do not consider it a burden. Even when children do not follow instructions, a father should not be very harsh to them. However, the parents themselves should strictly abide by what they believe and what they teach to their children. In any case there should not be contradiction in words and actions of parents. Parents themselves should become role model of practicing ethical values. According to Islahi, teaching with affection and love is more effective.<sup>64</sup> Parents should constantly remind their children about the purpose of this life i.e. trial life and the occurrence of the day of judgment. Islahi endorses the use of force on certain occasion in order to check the deviant tendencies in children.<sup>65</sup> According to Islahi, the presence of children in a family is not only blessing of God but is an occasion when God tests human beings.

Children are blessing and they bring great joy and happiness in the life of a couple, the same children can become a curse in the hereafter. If parents did not fulfill their responsibility then they would be losers till eternity comes as it is enunciated in verse 64: 14-14 of the holy Quran.



Man may have differences with his children. He may consider their demands unreasonable. The meeting of every demand of children may not be possible because of meagre resources. Some time children become hindrance in performance of duties honestly. Problems of parental life are more in number and harder to solve than those of solitary life. It becomes a test of strength of character and sense of responsibility. On the other hand, man can not quit these relations because without family, life is miserable and nearly impossible.

If man due to love for his children forgets the limitation of *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful) in earning his livelihood and ignores rights of other individuals, he is entrapped by his 'enemies' in the guise of beloved faces (children).<sup>66</sup> Islahi suggests a middle path not to fulfill the unreasonable and unlawful desires of wife and children. However, man should not be very harsh to them and must make every reasonable provision for them. If they behave irrationally, even then they should be forgiven and treated with favour as long as possible. A man should not take any stern step till he sees that both i.e. God and family couldn't be saved at the same time. Islahi stresses that man should be more vigilant at the time of love and hatred because both emotions can blind a person toward good and bad in his behaviour and actions.<sup>67</sup>

Islahi suggests a simple mechanism and method of socialisation for the younger generation. The mechanism is important, difficult but effective and less expensive. It is important because the institution of family, the primary unit of society, is carrying it out. Its effects are far reaching for the entire social system. It is difficult because each unit should be reformed and reorganised. Pakistani society has a reasonable family system, despite unstable political system. Family institution saved society from many disruptions. Family in Pakistan is performing many functions: it is responsible to take care of the children, to facilitate their education from primary to university level. Family ensures individual's protection and security in most cases, particularly in rural areas. In case of intrusion, the entire family members stand behind the victim. If a member is sick, the entire family bears the burden including financial expenses.

Institution of family provides some ready-made solutions to certain social, political and economic problems. The entire family, especially the mother, usually takes care of the sentimental and psychological problems of the young especially girls. Family plays an important role in controlling juveniles from deviating from the right course. In most cases, the selection of spouse of a person is responsibility of family, or the family helps him or her in the process of selection. Each and every individual has his or her own specified role in and outside the family. Man is responsible for the financial support, while woman is responsible to take care of all affairs inside home. When woman became older she plays more dominant role than man in a family.

The concept of old age home is unknown to Pakistanis as the elder people live with their families. Families can not imagine alienating their elders. Family usually takes every step to protect and provide happiness to its members. However, it does not mean that all is well in Pakistani society in respect of family. Industrialisation and urbanisation has affected human relations in Pakistan as it did in other industrialised nations. It will weaken the primordial ties and thus make individuals more independent. The growing influences of Western thoughts and practices especially after revolution in information technology and transformation of world into a global village greatly affected the traditional relations among people. The institution of family is less expensive and it does not require any separate allocation of the budget of poor country like Pakistan. The government is required to give special attention to the maintenance and stability of the family institution. For this purpose, the government is not required to formulate a separate 'family policy'. However, the government should take up a 'pro-family perspective' approach in all its policies.

The institution of family is natural and very effective in socialisation. Childhood is the impressionable period of life and its imprints are long lasting. Through informal means, a child can be very easily transformed into a good citizen. The sentimental attachment of parents with children and vice versa props the process of socialisation and this could not be substituted by any kindergarten and formal education at different level. Islahi's emphasis on the responsibilities of parents

regarding their children's indoctrination and socialisation decreases the role of other formal institutions. The target of producing good moral beings became the task of every parent and for that reason of every individual. Another aspect of Islahi's suggested method is the correctness of the adult population themselves. An immoral person cannot preach morality to his offspring. In order to socialise a child, Islahi makes it compulsory that father should present himself as a model which is not easy. Furthermore Islahi's concept of man as a moral being necessitates the upholding of moral values by each individual.

### Conclusion

Islahi's view regarding institution of family is more or less similar to other Muslim ulama except on one position i.e. *Pardah* within the circle of close relatives and friends. The difference is apparently slight but its application may have enormous impact upon the socio-political life of Muslims in Pakistan and elsewhere in the Muslim world. It will discredit the traditional ulama's stance of total seclusion of women from men in any social gathering except only in her relations with *muhram*. Islahi's stance on the issue may open new avenues for women participation in many sectors for the uplift of society. However it should not be at the expense of family destruction. Islahi gave much importance to parent-children harmonious relation in family and consider it the first, most important and less expensive step in socialisation of young generations. Upholding blood relations particularly parents should be then given prime importance by each individual in society. Affairs of family should then be run on the basis of division of work between wife and husband and should not be disturbed at any cost. A strong family system and relation is inevitable for happiness in this world and the life to come. It can be concluded that according to Islahi main function of family is to bring out men's potentials in a persuasive manner, educate an individual in moral values since childhood, to support him in time of need to adopt certain measures to curb deviant behaviour but primarily not through the use of force.

## Notes and References

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- 5 Ghamidi (b.1951) indebted his religious scholarship to Islahi but he is also having his own views sometime different from Islahi. For Ghamidi's view see his book, *Mizzan* (Lahore: Dar ul Ishraq, 2001); for comparison with Mawdudi see, Asif Iftikhar, '*Jihad* and the Establishment of Islamic Global Order: A Comparative

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- 6 91:7-8; 90:8-10; 5:29.
  7. Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 9, 6th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), p. 79
  - 8 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 2, 5th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), p. 271.
  - 9 Mawlana Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tazkiyah-i-Nafs* (Purification of the Soul), [Vol. I] (Faisalabad: Malak Sons Tajiran-i-Kutub, n.d.), p. 221
  - 10 For example, man is physical and mentally capable to protect the family and earn for the family more than a woman.
  - 11 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 2, p. 291.
  - 12 Ibid., p. 288.
  - 13 Ibid.
  - 14 4:32
  - 15 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 2, p. 292.
  - 16 Ibid. p. 293.
  - 17 Javid Ahmad Ghamidi, *Ishraq*, Jan 2002, p.22.
  - 18 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 2, p. 293.

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- 19 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 8, 6th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), pp. 440-41.
- 20 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 1, 5th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1993), p. 545.
- 21 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 2, pp. 544-45.
- 22 Ibid., p. 537.
- 23 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 1, p. 537.
- 24 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 8, 6th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), p. 436.
- 25 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 6, 6th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), p. 223.
- 26 Certain people especially in Afghanistan and in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan do not allow male doctors to examine their woman due to their concept of *Pardah* and do not care even the patient dies. (Field observation).
- 27 Mawlan Abu'l A'la Mawdudi, *Pardah* (Lahore: Islamic Publication Limited, 1972), p. 298.
- 28 Mawlana Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Qur'an mayn Pardah kay Ahkam* (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), p. 16.
- 29 Islahi, *Pardah kay Ahkam*, p. 18.
- 30 24:31
- 31 24:61
- 32 Response to a question conducted in 2007.
- 33 24: 61

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- 34 *Mahram* includes father, stepfather, brother, stepbrother, father-in-law, uncle (both maternal and paternal), son, nephew, and relatives in fosterling.
- 35 Mufti Muhammad Shafi, *Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an* (Karachi: Idarat-ul-Ma'arif, n.d.), p. 234.
- 36 *Jilbab*, plural *Jalabib*: an outer garment; a long gown covering the whole body, or a cloak covering the neck and bosom.
- 37 Abu'l A'la Mawdudi, *Tafhim-ul-Qur'an*, vol 4 (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Ta'mir-i-Insaniyat, 1974), pp. 129-30.
- 38 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 6, p. 270.
- 39 Islahi, *Pardah kay Ahkam*, p. 7.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 6, p. 222.
- 42 Islahi does not differentiate the adulterers between married and non-married. He upholds hundred lashes punishment for adulterers prescribed by the holy Qur'an. Other Muslims (majority) upholds the punishment of stoning to death for married and hundred strips for the non-married couple.
- 43 Javid Ahmad Ghamidi, "Mizan-Qanun-i-Mu'ashirat" *Ishraq*, October 2002, pp. 36-38.
- 44 Ghamidi, "Mizan-Qanun-i-Mu'ashirat", *Ishraq*, October 2002, pp. 35, 36.
- 45 Ibid., p. 35.
- 46 Ibid.

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- 47 Islahi, *Pardah kay Ahkam*, p. 24.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 31:14
- 50 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 7, 6th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1994), pp. 362-63.
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- 53 Ibid., p. 497.
- 54 Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tazkiyah-i-Nafs* (Purification of the Soul), Vol. II. 4th ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1998), p.150.
- 55 Ibid., p.150.
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- 57 Mathew, 8:20 cited by Islahi, *Tazkiyah-i-Nafs*, vol. 2, p.150.
- 58 Mathew, 23:37.
- 59 Islahi, *Tazkiyah-i-Nafs*, vol. 2, p.157.
- 60 Ibid., pp.159-60.
- 61 Ibid., pp.160-61.
- 62 Ibid., pp.161-62.



63 Ibid., pp.162-63.

64 Ibid., p.166.

65 Mawlana Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur*, vol. 36, (1991), p.4.

66 Islahi, *Tazkiyah-i-Nafs*, vol. 2, pp.168-69.

67 Ibid., pp.169-70.