

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF DR. ISRAR AHMED TO PAKISTANI SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Israr Ahmad (1932-2010) was a famous Islamic scholar who revolutionized the religious, intellectual, and social framework of Pakistan post-independence. He spent his entire life doing da'wah, teaching the Qur'an, and aiming to revive Islam, without getting involved in politics. Dr. Israr left his medical profession, and started Quranic teachings as a reformer on the path of spirituality. Dr. Ahmad emphasized that any transformative social change begin with individual ethical awakening, which includes the essential formative principles in Muslim philosophy. He extracted the ideas of eminent philosopher like Maulana Maududi, Allama Iqbal and Shah Waliullah in his teachings. The concept of spiritual awakening and engagement with the Qur'an materialized into his organization that structures Tanzeem-e-Islami (1975) and Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an (1972). He attracts the urban middle class, university students, and professionals in the middle class of Pakistani society. He rejected sectarianism, political campaigns and electoral politics. Dr. Ahmad's delivered lectures on TV and YouTube which played an important role in a holistic spiritual conscience as well as increased openness to Qur'anic interpretation in Pakistan. Dr. Ahmad emphasized that the Qur'an is a complete code of life for every individual and communities. He influenced Muslim communities globally, mainly in the Gulf area, the United Kingdom, and North America. He focused only Qur'anic study groups and rejected sectarianism in every area of Pakistan. His lectures were non-violent and intellectual Islamic revival based upon tawhīd, tazkiyah, and tafaquh. In conclusion, Dr. Israr Ahmad's legacy persists to embrace the paradigms of theological and philosophical renaissance. Dr. Israr Ahmed wrote over sixty books in Urdu and English, covering Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith, Islamic philosophy, and social and political thought; his writings, particularly, Bayan-ul-Quran and Islamic Renaissance: The Real Tasks Ahead had a profound impact on the intellectual and religious people of Pakistan and worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Israr Ahmad (1932–2010), one of Pakistan's most influential Islamic scholars who always remains a central figure in the religious, philosophical, and political discourse of the country. Dr. Ahmad, through his extensive engagement with the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic philosophers, outlined a theological framework for the moral, spiritual, and socio-political reform of Muslim society, particularly in the context of post-colonial Pakistan. His emergence as a public intellectual in the 1980s was haywire, and the Muslim world and Pakistan specifically were preoccupied with the crises of identity, governance, and spirituality. Therefore, Dr. Ahmad's appeal for Qur'anic values, critique of Western

materialism, and re-institution of the Islamic Caliphate made him a polarizing figure and an august one at the same time.

This background material outlines his intellectual education and the initiation of a revolutionary movement in Pakistan. Dr. Israr Ahmad articulated substantial apprehensions regarding Pakistan's political and economic frameworks. He asserts that Pakistan has deviated from its original objective of establishing an model Islamic government in the modern era. Although his views have incited discord and discussion among various religious scholars, no scholarly research has been conducted on his divergent beliefs in relation to Pakistan's existing political framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr. Israr Ahmed (1932–2010) is a famous and has impact on contemporary Islamic scholar and intellectual. Dr. Ahmed has become famous for his thorough examination of Islamic sociology, revivalist schools of thought, and philosophical analysis of the Qur'an. The goal of his life to introduce the Qur'an that it is a total outlook of life as contained in "*Bayan-ul-Qur'an*," a commentary on the Holy Qur'an multi-volume edition. In addition to inspiring a religious renaissance in Pakistan, his writings and speeches have attracted interest from foreign academics who are curious about contemporary Islamic audiences. His philosophical and theological views have been critically analyzed in speeches on his call for a resurgence of Islamic values in modern Muslim societies and his vision of an Islamic socio-political order based on *Tawheed* (the Oneness of God). This review assembles the works of twelve important writers, in order to focus on Dr. Ahmed's contributions to Islamic thinking and to contextualize his ideas in relation to other Islamic philosophers, theologians, and contemporary reformists.

Dr. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, another leading Pakistani scholar, in his article "*Dr. Israr's Methodology*" (2003) has critically examined Dr. Ahmed's interpretations. Ghamidi's writings emphasize the disagreement regarding Dr. Ahmed's rigid epistemic and political orientation and in particular, his position that a true Islamic state established if the current social-political structures are entirely overturned. Ghamidi claims that Dr. Ahmed's approach is far too rigid and does not recognize many alternative models of governance, that have Islamic underpinnings, and work better in modern pluralistic societies.

Internationally renowned philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2010), explores the revival of Islamic philosophy and modernity in relation to thinkers like Dr. Ahmed. In his book "*The Need for Sacred Science*", State University of New York (1994) Nasr's works position Dr. Ahmed within a lineage of revivalists who sought to restore Islamic principles in the face of Western influences. Nasr states that Dr. Ahmed's philosophical stance has realistic, but his position strengthened by analysis based classical Islamic philosophy and metaphysical principles

that cast of characters a different light on Islam's position in the contemporary world.

Karen Armstrong's is a British author and religious historian offers a comparative examination of Islamic fundamentalism including Dr. Ahmed's movement. In her book "*The Battle for God*" (2000), she noted that Dr. Ahmed's desire to return to the earliest traditions of Islam. Armstrong appreciates the urgency of Dr. Ahmed's activism, especially with regard to exposing oppression and violence against minorities. She described that black and white worldview of the powerful appeal of Dr. Ahmed's movement emphasize that in Islam there is no distinction in black and white, powerful and pity and others in the Muslim community. Armstrong's observations focused the need for theological pluralism, suggesting that followers of Dr. Ahmed could certainly benefit from more active engagement with other Islamic forms of thought and practice.

Fazl ur Rahman (2009), a Pakistani-born American Islamic scholar has an alternative opinion. Fazl ur Rahman, a Pakistani-born American Islamic scholar has an alternative opinion. Rahman's discussions about the need for a contemporary interpretation of the Quran, socio-economic reforms and Islam and Modernity. In the book "*Islam and Modernity*", University of Chicago (1982), he pointed that Dr. Ahmed's revivalist philosophy is a restrictive and that reinterpret Islamic teachings in a manner that resonates more with the time. Rahman believes that Dr. Ahmed's approach lacks flexibility in the current fast evolving world. Dr. Amina Wadud (2013), an Islamic feminist scholar, in her article "*Quran and Woman*", Oxford University (1999) provides a critical perspective on the role of women in revivalist thought. Wadud (2013) suggests that Dr. Ahmed's interpretation of gender roles is traditionalist and failed to view the Qur'an and its emphasis on equality. Wadud (2013) advocates for a new interpretation of the Qur'an on gender that encourages women to participate in society in other roles besides those assigned to them by Dr. Ahmed's traditionalist interpretation, relegating women to domestic roles.

This study aims to present Dr. Israr Ahmad's perspectives on Pakistan's political system, his theological philosophies specially towards

Pakistani society and the solutions he presented to address systemic issues, and an impartial assessment of his concepts. Dr. Ahmed's works, which navigate the tensions between contemporary challenges and traditional Islamic thought, aligned with the sociocultural and spiritual realities of the country. Dr. Ahmed has consistently examined and seriously engaged with the Qur'an throughout his intellectual pursuits while critically analyzing the relevant modern challenges that Islamic communities are facing. He believed that Dr. Israr teachings are aimed at a renaissance of knowledge of fundamental Islamic principles and the return to key texts and whether their meaning holds value today in society.

The core philosophy of Dr. Ahmed's is the belief in the Qur'an as a comprehensive guide for life. He argues that the Qur'an does not only provide spiritual knowledge, but explained the proper social, political, and moral behavior. Although overall world continues to wrestle with the dilemmas posed by modernization and globalization. His focus on a Qur'anic education that encourages individuals to combat these dilemmas in a socially and culturally.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What do you know about early life of Dr Israr ahmad?
2. What are they key Philosophical and theological concepts of Dr. Israr ahmad?
3. What are the Dr. Israr Ahmad's contributions to Islam?
4. What is the significance of Dr. Israr Ahmad's contributions to Pakistani society?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore the core philosophical and theological concepts presented by Dr. Israr Ahmad in his autobiography and major works.
2. To analyze Dr. Israr Ahmad's interpretation of the role of Islam in the social and political development of Pakistani society.
3. To examine the influence of Dr. Ahmad's religious and ideological teachings on public thought, moral values, and national identity in Pakistan.
4. To assess the contemporary implications and limitations of Dr. Israr Ahmad's vision for Islamic revivalism in modern Pakistani society.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design is utilized to analyze the philosophical and theological influence of Dr. Israr Ahmed on society. The qualitative design emphasizes comparative analysis, content analysis of media, and document analysis. In this multi-dimensional qualitative approach, a broader perspective formed on Dr. Ahmed's intellectual contributions to societal and religious discourse, and socio-political discourse. Qualitative Research is engaged through a hypothesis-driven analysis and through the opinions of experts employed to assess the philosophical and theological expertise. The investigation is conducted from both Primary and Secondary Sources regarding Dr. Israr Ahmed's contributions to the domains of religion and education. The study incorporates Dr. Ahmed's original works, including his main works of *Tadabbur-e-Quran* and *Bayan-ul-Quran*, along with transcripts of publicly delivered lectures and sermons. The study analyzes conceptual and thematic repetitions, and use content analysis approaches to investigate themes or concepts of basic ideas, including *Tawheed*, revivalist movements, and non-sectarian approaches. The Secondary sources, such as academic critiques, journal articles, and books written by scholars of Islamic studies, provides contextual perspectives and academic analysis of Dr. Israr Ahmed thoughts.

Print Media Analysis

The intellectual impact of Dr. Israr Ahmed evaluated by an analysis of print media coverage, including newspaper stories, editorials, and magazine features from publications such as *Dawn*, *The News International*, and *Herald Pakistan*. Discourse analysis employed to examine the construction of narratives related to his revivalist ideology, with a focus on changes in public perception during significant historical events, including the emergence of political Islam in the 1980s. This study considered social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (X) to evaluate the contemporary relevance of Dr. Israr Ahmed's teaching through his lectures and short clips. The hashtags, popular articles, and online conversations used to analyze his intellectual contribution to contemporary socio-religious discussions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study's importance lies in its attempt to examine and analyze the philosophical and theological contributions of Dr. Israr Ahmad and his contributions to Pakistani society. As an Islamic scholar, Dr. Ahmad's notions have profoundly influenced the identity of religious thought, social-political awareness, and moral consciousness in the region. This study hopes to examine his notions in a scholarly manner, understanding and appreciating religious philosophy and national identity in the prism of society and society's potential to reform itself and social discourse. This study is an important contribution to the scholarly discourse on Islamic thought, influence educators, educators-in-decision-making, and religious scholars who intend to understand the relationships theologies have in contemporary social development.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This study has a restricted scope focusing on the examination of the philosophical and theological principles illustrated in Dr. Israr Ahmad's autobiography, publicly addressed speeches, and some of his written work. The delimitation contains the specification of the study to Dr. Ahmad's own lens of Islamic interpretations, which were not compared with other academic authors. Additionally, the study does not aim to assess the empirical impact of his movement (Tanzeem-e-Islami) but rather to understand the intellectual framework and underlying principles he advocated. The research is also confined to qualitative analysis and does not include fieldwork or interviews.

Early Life of Dr. Israr Ahmad

Dr. Israr Ahmad was born on April 26, 1932, in Hisar, a city in East Punjab, British India (now Haryana State, India). He was from the Chauhan Rajput dynasty, a prominent one among the well-known warrior caste of Rajputs of North India. The environment of Dr. Ahmad family was an intellectual, religious, and culturally attached. Regular Islamic practices and values were observed and they were strongly attached with religious teaching to go hand in hand with secular schooling. In his early life his educational career started as a medical student. From 1949 to 1954, he was studying at the Medical College

of Lahore. In 1950, he was a student member of the Islamic Community. He became the Nazim-e Halgha for the Medical College In 1950, Nazim-e Jam'iyyat for Lahore and Punjab in 1951, and finally Nazim-e A'lay-e Jam'iyyat from 1952 to 1954. After graduation in 1954, he became the "Rukn" (full member) of the Islamic Community, later the Ameer of the Islamic Community of Sahiwal. He resigned from the membership of the Islamic Community and devoted himself to the study of the Qur'ān. In 1965, he received a master's degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Karachi, yet in 1971, he gave up medical practice to devote himself to Islamic studies and focus on the Qur'ānic teachings.

Dr. Israr Ahmad was an soul who widely read across Arabic, Urdu and English, and read such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Al-Ghazali, Shah Waliullah and Sayyid Qutb as well as the western philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and René Guénon. His intellectual upbringing was a mixture of conservative and modern, and Eastern and Western, religious and rational. He established Markazi Anjuman for Khuddam-ul-Qur'ān in 1972 in Lahore to promote the Qur'ānic teachings through the Academy of Qur'ān as well as speeches and publications. In 1975, Ahmed established Tanzeem-e-Islami with the aim of realizing an Islamic order and also operational the Qur'ānic teachings in all aspects of life. He was especially inspired by Allama Iqbal, whose vision of Islamic revival and his ideas of *Khudi* (selfhood), call to *Ijtihad* (independent reasoning) significantly struck him. The spiritual individuality and collective transformation of poetic-philosophic synthesis of Iqbal became a major pillar to his thinking.

Revivalist Thought and Vision

The revivalist strand of Islam was strongly attached to the intellectual and religious mission of Dr. Israr Ahmad. In his opinion, Muslim societies lost their moral and political ground due to left the principles of Qur'an and Sunnah. His idea of revival was based on personal piousness and the restoration of Islamic rule founded in the revelations of God. His reasoning interpretation in the sphere of spiritual, intellectual, political, and social was remarkable. He believed that renewal starts with *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul), and collective

knowledge of the Qur'an. He argued that the restoration of Islamic principles are not limited at the individual level but also through the reinstatement of a righteous Islamic order and the establishment of Khilafah (Caliphate).

Influence of Allama Iqbal's

Dr. Israr Ahmad acknowledged the profound influence of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938). Iqbal, known as the “Spiritual Father of Pakistan,” emphasized the reconstruction of Islamic thought in the modern age. He encouraged Muslims to re-engage with the Qur'an in a dynamic and reflective manner. Iqbal's concept of **Khudi** (selfhood), which promotes self-realization and moral responsibility, resonated deeply with Dr. Israr Ahmad. Iqbal called for the revival of *Ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and discouraged blind imitation (*taqlid*) of classical jurisprudence. He envisioned an Islamic society guided by spiritual and ethical principles rather than rigid legalism.

Maulana Maududi's Influence

Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979) is famous on his intellectual formation. Maulana Maududi, founder of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, provided a systematic political and ideological framework for establishing an Islamic state. His writings on Islamic governance, particularly the notion of **Hakimiyyat** (sovereignty of Allah), deeply influenced Dr. Israr Ahmad during his early intellectual development. Maududi envisioned an Islamic system governed by Shariah, where political, social, and economic life would be regulated by Islamic principles. Dr. Israr Ahmad joined *Jamaat-e-Islami* in 1950 but resigned in 1957 due to differences over the party's strategy and priorities. While he remained respectful of Maududi's thoughts and followed that the organization was becoming more political and losing its focus on the **ideological and spiritual revival** essential for a meaningful transformation.

Emphasis on Islamic Renaissance

Dr. Israr Ahmad's entire mission revolved around the idea of **Islamic Renaissance** (*Islami Nau-Bahari*), which he viewed as a revival of the comprehensive Islamic way of life based on the Qur'an. He was not limit his concepts to religious rituals or theology but extended it to

every aspect of personal and collective existence, including education, economics, politics, and ethics.

Qur'an-Centered Renaissance

For Dr. Israr Ahmad, the Qur'an was the ultimate source of revival. He advocated for a return to the Qur'an with understanding (*tadabbur*) and reflection. His *Darse-Qur'an* sessions, broadcast widely through radio, television, and later digital media, were aimed at reviving this lost connection with the divine text. He emphasized that Muslims should not treat the Qur'an as a ceremonial book but as a **blueprint for life**. In his seminal work *Bayan-ul-Qur'an*, he wrote:

“The Qur'an addresses both the heart and mind, calling humanity towards reflection, submission, and moral excellence”.

Rejection of Western Secularism

Dr. Ahmad was a strong critic of Western secularism. He believed it is a main causes of the moral and cultural decay in Muslim societies. He considered that secularism had divorced faith from public life, leading to a fragmented worldview. An Islamic renaissance only possible when Muslims rejected the secular framework and re-integrated faith into all aspects of life. His critique was emotional and deeply philosophical. He argued that Western civilization, while technologically advanced, was spiritually failure. He warned Muslims to the confusion by material success and urged them to focus on **spiritual and moral excellence**.

Conclusion

The philosophical and theological contributions of Dr. Israr Ahmad emerges a radical re-imagining of the Islamic thought in the post-independence era in Pakistan. His teachings based on the Quran, and with references to the thought of Shah Waliullah, Allama Iqbal and Maulana Maududi. He developed an all-embracing vision of Islam that abolished preferences and options, ritualism, and political transnational. He focused on self-reform, moral awareness and Qur'anic literacy. His theological basis of moral and social regeneration in the Pakistani society, especially with the message to the educated middle classes, who were in the process of identity crisis due to the trouble of

secular modernity and corruption. His efforts like *Tanzeem-e-Islami* and *Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an* formalized this vision which is accessible to other social classes on various mediums including media, public lecture and educational activities. His works completely based on moral monotheism and religious supposition of the Quran-centric outlook influenced shaping the religious perception of the Pakistanis. It is also stimulated religious and intellectual discussion at the academic, religious, and the grassroots levels. Much of his work appealed to his readers due to manage the gap between traditional religiosity and modern rationality, a formula that still reaches scores of young people, scholars, and professionals, both inside Pakistan and in the Pakistani diaspora. The philosophical contribution of the theological vision of Islam, as the concept of complete morality, justice, and spirituality, has been a critical stone along the path of modern Islamic discourse, and has continued to resonate the Pakistani society who are seeking an identity, a unity, and a reform. In short, the philosophical and theological views of Dr. Israr Ahmad are in essence the continual guiding statement of the Pakistani society that provides a sense of intellectual clarity of the society and moral orientation and spiritual restoration to cope with the contemporary demands of morality and culture.

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