

Ghamidī Nazriyāt kā Tahqīqī wa Tanqīdī Jāizah
(*Ghamidī's Thoughts: A Critical Appraisal*)

Dr. Muhammad Qasim

Reviewed by

Owais Manzoor Dar

Doctoral Candidate, Department of Islamic Studies

Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India

Email: owaismanzoor188@gmail.com

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Javed Ahmad Ghamidi (b. 1951), an influential contemporary Pakistani intellectual, is the founder and the current president of *Al-Mawrid Institute of Islāmic Sciences* (Lahore). He has written on diverse facets of Islām, its history and law; and some of his prominent works are *Mizān*, *Burhān* and *Al-Bayān* (Exegesis of Qur'ān). Besides making his own unique elucidation, Ghamidī's thought is mostly influenced by Maulānā Hamīd-ud-Dīn Farāhī (1863-1930) and Maulānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī (1904-1997). Having postulated a construal that is in contradiction with the 'conventional' thinking, he has received, consequently, a good number of critical responses, in the form of essays, booklets, and books (both locally and abroad).

One recent example of such rebuff of his position and ideology is the book under review, which allocates the critical analysis of Ghamidī's thoughts, written by Dr. Muhammad Qasim (a scholar-in-prison from J&K), the book is in Urdu language and is titled as "*Ghamidī Nazriyāt kā Tahqīqī wa Tanqīdī Jāizah*". The book begins with appreciation by Dr. Hafiz Mohammad Zubair—Pakistani critic of Ghāmidī's ideology and author of various books, including *Fikri Ghamidī Aik Tahqīqī wa Tajziyātī Mutalā'h*.

The first chapter, "The centrality of the belief of Prophethood in Islām" (pp. 84-151) discusses the significance of '*Risālat e Muḥammad*', wherein the author using primary and secondary sources—highlights the importance of Prophethood. Debunking Ghamidī's view of *Waḥdat e Adiyān* (unity of religions) the author considers it as a stride to disavowal of Prophethood. Further the author, invoking Islamic foundations, declares the believers of *Waḥdat e Adiyān* as *Kafir* (infidel).

The second chapter, "The rejecters of Prophethood are infidels" (pp. 152-185) in continuation with the previous one, provides a detailed exposition about the one who rejects Muhammad's prophethood asserting such a person a being is clear Infidel which is done by examine the four different kinds of rejection and its historical repudiation of prophethood. The author, here, mentions Ghamidī's view that no person "can be called *kafir* (infidel) after Prophet's death"; although Ghamidī declares Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani "as *Sufī* not *kafir* and boons a dissimilarity

between Qadiyanis and Lahories" (a sub-sect of Qadiyanis). Countering Ghamidī's view that "no person can be called *Kafir* after prophet's death", the author argues that many false prophets like *Musailmah kadhāb* were declared *Kafir* by the Prophet's noble companions after his demise.

The author then brings forth Ghamidī's one more contradiction regarding Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani that he was "a *Sufī*; we can't call him *Kafir*." In his *Burhān* (2015: p.181) Ghamidī treats Sufism as parallel religion/against Islām and does not consider the followers of Sufism on the right path. The author considers these as self-contradictory views. Further, Ghamidī's paradoxical differentiation between Qadiyanis and Lahories is debunked by the author by highlighting their dogmas, arguing that both the groups are sailing in the same boat.

The third chapter, "Islām came in order to overcome the Arab religions or..." (pp.186-222) deals with political Islām in which the author tries to abnegate some misapprehensions associated with it. The author considers Ghamidī's view that "Prophet was send only in order to overcome the Arab religions", i.e., the 'Tribal Prophet, is against the Qur'ānic inoculations that Islām is the religion that will "prevail over all religions even though idolaters hate (it)" (Q. 61: 9). The Apostle-ship of the Prophethood is endowed with the quality of timelessness: no other Apostle of God is to be raised now; His religion is everlasting; His teachings are immortal; and he gives references of the Qur'ānic verses in which Prophet is acknowledged as 'Uswah e *Hasanah* (Perfect model) and the *Khatamun Nabiyyēn* (seal of the Prophets).

On the importance of Hadith and its sciences the fourth chapter, "Prophetic traditions in Shari'ah" (pp.223-412) displays classical scholarly discourses approaching the traditions of Prophet and declares Ghamidī's position dissimilar from them in many fashions. Ghamidī does not subscribe to the view of *Ahl-i-Sunnah* who consider Ḥadith as a silent revelation, while as he claims that Ḥadith is not a revelation but only a witness and convincing argument. The author points out different approaches of Ghamidī regarding the sciences of Aḥadith and analyses his methodology of criticism. According to Ghamidī, "the sayings, action and the approvals of the Prophet Muhammad are mostly *Khbar al-Aḥad*, which are known as Ḥadith will never take us to certainty and will not add anything new in the fabric of religion" (*Mīzān*, 2002: 48). Thus he makes the sources of reception of religion a matter of mere rational or historical deliberation. The author considers Ghamidī's method as that of Mu'tazilites (*Manhaj-i-Mu'tazilah*) arguing that he shunned the method of pious predecessors and has produced an interpretation which was not prevalent during the blessed era of Islamic history.

During the blessed era *Khbar al Aḥad* was a permanent source of Islām. The author cites some significant examples of *Khbar al Wahid* like the change of direction of the *Qiblah* and Caliph *Uthman's* compilation of the Qur'ān. Thus for absolute belief in religious matters (*Dīn*) *Khbar* is the *Hujjat*. The author substantiates this argument

by invoking Qur'ānic verses like 9: 122 and 49: 6, and substantiates it further with the quotes of Imām Shafi, Imām Aḥmad and others to establish that *Khabar al-Wahid* becomes *Hujjat* when it is received from the reliable sources unlike the views of Ghamidī who altogether denies tenacity of such a tradition.

Chapter 5, "*Ḥadith se Qur'ān k Kisī Ḥukm kī Tahdīd yā Takhsīs ka Mas'alah*" provides a detailed analysis of '*Takhsīs al-Qur'an Bil-Ḥadith*' (i.e., Specification of the general Qur'ānic rulings by Prophetic Traditions). (pp. 413-421) Here the author demystifies Ghamidī's view—that "Apart from Qur'ān, neither any revelation, like *Wahī Khafī* or *Wahī Jalī*, nor the Prophet himself—upon whom the Qur'ān was revealed—can specify or change any ruling(s) of the Qur'ān. In Islām (*Dīn*), acceptance or rejection of any law can only be done in the light of the Qur'ānic verses" (*Mizān*, 2008: 65)—by providing the following examples from Qur'ān: Q. 2: 222; 4: 11, 34; and 5: 3, 38. He argues that this is predominantly the disavowal of Prophetic Traditions, because the reception and understanding of the Book of Allah is based on the Prophet's endorsement, saying and confirmation. We received this knowledge of *Dīn* through *Aḥadith*, which can both be final or vice versa. Ghamidī is himself not only particularizing but changing the rulings of the noble Qur'ān.

The sixth chapter, "Does the (Qur'ānic) verses on Hijab (veil) pertain to a specific time period?" (pp.422-450) focuses on the Women issues like Veil and Modesty. As per the author, two possessions of believers that evoke the maximum ire among non-believers are beard and the veil and Ghamidī's way out opposition to these things is to declare them outside the fold of Shari'ah. Ghamidī's argument that "there is not a single commandment in Sharia'h for a woman to hide her hair" is debunked by the author by providing referencing from verses, *Aḥadith* and *Athār*.

The last chapter, "Does companions misunderstood the Prophetic Traditions regarding beard" (pp.450-469) discusses the issue of beard. The author accuses Ghamidī of trying to systematically overwhelm all *Aḥadith* on the basis of his own analyses. As for the beard, Ghamidī has some points, but he has deterred from conventional scholarship. The author cited the four famous juristic school positions on issue to declare that shaving of beard as *ḥarām*. This is further substantiated by mentioning the views of scholars like; *Imām Ibn Taymiyyah*, *Ibn Qayyim*, *Ibn Muflīh*, *Ibn Abidēn* and *Shah Walīullah*. There are many *Aḥadith* which prove that beard is not only the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad but of all the Prophets of Allah.

Reservations apart, the book is an important contribution to the Islāmic discourses, as it challenges the narratives of Ghamidī not only through author's own analysis, but also by providing evidences from classical sources. An introductory descriptive, written in simple and easy to understand language, the book is a good read for anyone interested in understanding the different Islāmic narratives and interpretations.