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Discourse on the Significance of Rituals in Religious Socialization

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Abstract

The reformist movement initiated by the Waliullah family mainly focusing upon the prevailing rituals took a new turn in the last quarter of the twentieth century, when Sir Syed started his own movement against certain rituals under the banner of *Tahzib ul Akhlāq* (Mohammedan Social Reformer). Not only did the modernists, but also the traditional scholars joined his movement. The rationale for this article is the absence of any counter-narrative for this position in the religious discourse. Those who have worked upon this discourse have usually been focusing upon its permissibility, which has already been explained in *Usool i Fiqh* under the heading of *Urf* and *Adaat*. Right after the wave of secularization in the west, the crisis of spirituality and tradition forced sociologists to write about the functions of rituals and traditions in the formation of a healthy society. This article tries to evaluate the literature produced against the concept of rituals and re-establishes the importance of rituals and customs in an Islamic society by providing evidences from the texts of different schools of thought. Consequently, this article tries to establish a religious and sociological counter narrative for the significance of rituals and customs in an Islamic society.

Keywords: rituals, traditions, *Urf*, society, socialization, Islam

A Discourse on the Significance of Rituals in Religious Socialization

Imagine a situation where two random Pakistani teenagers (a *Shia* and a *Sunni*) engage in some religious debate, which of the two would seem more religiously informed, whose arguments would seem more logical, whose language would be more eloquent and who would dominate the debate at last? This was asked by one of our research mentors in an informal study circle. I answered what would seem

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more likely i.e., the *Shia* teenager. He asserted the answer, but ignited a spark of curiosity about this difference.

It is a fact that minority denominations and sects are more conscious about the preservation of their identity and strive hard for maintaining this stature. However, this argument cannot be applied to the *Shia* denomination because in societal setups where they are the majority denomination, such as in Iran, or where they aren't treated as a minority group, as in Pakistan, we experience similar situation where a random *Shia* is more likely to dominate a *Sunni* in a religious debate.¹ The reason behind this is the system of socialization and education in the *Shia* community which is majorly based on rituals, customs and traditions. The religiosity of *Sunni* masses mostly consists of only obligatory prayers, Friday congregation, obligatory fasting and *Tarawīh* prayers. A very little percentage is of those who rarely attend some occasional sermons or religious lectures. Out of *Sunnis*, only the masses associated to the *Barelvi* school of thought observe and participate in festivals such as *Milād* (12th *Rabi ul Awwal*), *Gyarhween Shareef* (11th of *Rabi ul Thani*), different *Urs* (death anniversaries of saints) and various nights of worship, and they organize sermons on those occasions too. While on one hand the frequency, as well as the importance of these occasions and festivals is diminishing gradually, on the other hand increasing missionary efforts of the *Tablighi Jamat* as well as growing modern literacy have increased the number of people converting to the *Deobandi* and *Salafi* schools of thought that either condemn or fail to stress upon the significance of these rituals.² Even if they don't switch schools of thought, the importance of these rituals diminishes for them. There are some other influencing factors behind this phenomenon as well which will be discussed later in this article.

The rituals in the *Shia* school of thought are relevant to every stage of a person's life and recurs on an annual cycle. Not only *Ashura* (10th *Muharram*) and *Ghadeer (Zilhajj)*, the birth and death anniversaries of every *Imām* and other members of *Ahl ul Bayt* and other events of joy and sorrow witness frequent *Majālis* (ritualistic sermons). In these *Majālis* the same lesson is repeatedly transferred to the masses by their ancestors. Moreover, the poetic expressions of

¹Mohammad Agus Yusoff, Athambawa Sarjoon, Nordin Hussin, Mohammad Ghazali Zainal Abidin and Azhar Ahmad, "Ethnicity, Minority and Groups Consciousness: An Examination of the Ethnic Group Formation of Sri Lankan Muslims through Conceptual Analysis," *Social Sciences* (Pakistan) 11, no. 7(2016): 1322-1330, DOI:10.3923/sscience.2016.1322.1330.

²Muhammad Moj, *The Deoband Madrassah Movement: Countercultural Trends and Tendencies* (Anthem Press, 2015), www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gxpdpv .

Noha, *Marsiyah* and *Manqabat* helps in internalizing the same ideological discourse through aesthetic means.³ Furthermore, the local and seasonal festivals like *Nowruz* are also adapted religiously.⁴ A child gets socialized through these events gets informed about his/her history and religion without any sanctioned means of formal education.⁵ Additionally, the eloquent rhetoric of *Majālis* and the poetic expressions of the *Noha*, *Marsiyah* and *Manqabat* improves the linguistic abilities of a Shia child. All these means of socialization are oral traditions and nearly none of the *Shias* read their original texts for this literacy and majority of them are not aware of the names of their major books other than *Nahj ul Balagha* and *Usool e Kafi*.⁶

In fact, this is not a negative characteristic, rather, those who read books are a petite minority and the majority forms their knowledge bank and their perceptions based on oral traditions.⁷ It is often thought that this indicates that the society is illiterate and backward, but it is a fact that the spread of modernity and its domination was also dependant on these means, although aesthetics and arts played an important role in it as well.⁸ The plethora of publications and the synonymy of abundance of books with abundance of knowledge is merely an illusion and a way to promote yet another capitalistic industry.

That's the misunderstanding based on which the critical orientalists objected on the Hadith that it didn't exist in scripted form rather transmitted orally. A supplementary debate must also be discussed here. The response by the contemporary Muslim *Kalam* theologians was to look for ancient scriptures of Hadith that could date back to the era of *Sahabah* (Companions of the Prophet

³David Pinault, *The Shiites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1993).

⁴Michael Stausberg, Yuhān Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* (John Wiley and Sons, 2015), ISBN 978-1-4443-3135-6.

⁵Hanna M. Nikkanen, and Heidi Westerlund, "More than Just Music: Reconsidering the Educational Value of Music in School Rituals," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 25, no. 2 (2017): 112–127.

⁶Louis Dupree, *Religious Non-Literacy in a Literate Culture: Afghanistan* (Princeton, New Jersey: University Press, 1980), 95–111.

⁷The Economic Times. "Book Readers are Always a Minority, Says Ruskin Bond." <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/book-readers-are-always-a-minority-says-ruskin-bond/articleshow/45991506.cms?from=mdr> (accessed September 1, 2019)

⁸Lynne Elliott, *The Renaissance in Europe* (Catharines, Ont.: Crabtree, 2009).

PBUH).⁹ What would it prove even if we find one or two scriptures of that era, when, in fact, our tradition of Hadith stands on oral transmission? Previously, the *Kalam* theologians wrote *Kalam* philosophy in the reaction of the objections raised against Islam. These days, they first accept the objection as a matter of fact and later either issue an apologetic stance on them or in extremely rare cases look for answers in our history to refute their objections. Although such rare examples are also enough to refute their objections on Hadīth's transmission on their logic, yet their rarity implies that the oral tradition by which Hadith has been transmitted is secure and reliable. And those who argue that the reason for the secure and safe transmission of Qur'ān is due to the scripted nature of it are also wrong. If the preservation of Qur'ān is analyzed carefully, it could be inferred easily that the real means of preservation is the *Hifz* (preservation in the memories of believers). Qur'ān has also highlighted this point in *Surah Al Ankaboot*: "Rather, the Qur'ān is distinct verses [preserved] within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge."¹⁰ That's the reason why a characteristic feature of this *Ummah* is told in one of the prophetic narrations: "Their holy book will be preserved in their breasts."¹¹ But regardless of these concerns, we look at their objections out of their time and space context. Such a response is common in our stance over the issues of freedom, gender equality, war, slavery, etc.¹² Nevertheless, the fact is that either it is *Khayr ul Quroon* (the best period as told by the Prophet (*PBUH*) himself which refers to his generation and the two subsequent generations), or the medieval era or any era after it, those who read are always rare.¹³

Modern experts of communication acknowledge the significance and lasting effects of informal oral communication.¹⁴ A simple example of this can be the communal gatherings of the religious organizations of our region. The gathering

⁹Hammām ibn Munabbih, and Muhammad Hamidullah, *Sahifah Hammam Ibn Munabbih: the Earliest Extant Work on the Hadith: Comprising as-Sahifah as-Sahihah of Abu-Hurairah*, (d. 58 H./677) Prepared for His Pupil Hammam Ibn Munabbih (d. 101 H./719), (Paris: islamique, 1961).

¹⁰Al-Qur'ān: al-Anakabūt 29:49.

¹¹Abu Nuaym, *Dalail un Nubuwwah*, Chapter iv, Hadith 31.

¹²Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

¹³John Kelsay, *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), ISBN 978-0-664-25302-8; William G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery* (London: Hurst and Company, 2006), ISBN 978-0-19-522151-0.

¹⁴M. V. Rodriques, *Perspectives of Communication and Communicative Competence* (New Delhi: Concept Pub., 2000), ISBN 978-81-7022-780-9.

of *Tablighi Jamaat* is no doubt most extensive despite the fact that no banners, advertisements, pamphlets are published and no media campaign is run for its promotion, rather only oral invitations are given and spread through the word of mouth.¹⁵

The prevailing form of oral tradition that is found in many of the modern religious organizations and institutes is deviant from the traditional form. In our history sermons were delivered for the masses which were called *Waa'z*, but today what is being delivered to the masses is called lecture. The conversion of sermons into lectures is being considered a serious problem in the Christian intellectual community too, but here we have been continuously modernizing the lectures with more and more multimedia props. Imam Jurjani, who is famous for his seminal work '*Kitab ul Tarifaat*' in which he has tried to fix definitions of various terminologies, defines '*Waa'z*' as a way of reminding some lesson by which the heart melts.¹⁶ In *Lisān ul Arab*, a similar definition of *Waa'z* is mentioned that it is a way of reminding a person a lesson in which by the reports of rewards and punishments the heart of that person softens. On the other hand, the Latin origins of the word lecture refer to the reading of a selected text. The basic difference in a lecture and *Waa'z* is that in lecture the purpose is the transference of some information to the recipients while in *Waa'z* the end is to bring a change in the overall condition of the audience. To awaken the magnificence of God in the heart, to revive the conscious omnipresence of Him and to incline the heart towards worship are the features of a *Waa'z*. It is relatively more influential and more lasting than lecture.

Returning to the topic of rituals, after establishing the significance of rituals in the *Shia* community, we can also observe its lasting effect in their lives. It is often observed that the rope of religion is burnt and a man becomes an atheist but the twists of sectarianism remains intact. Prominent poets Jon Elia and Josh Maleeh Abadi were proclaimed atheists, but in their works they remained inclined to *Shia* ideology.¹⁷ Another example from another perspective can be seen from the life of Abdul Majid Daryabadi who was a prominent scholar of previous century. In his autobiography, he has written an interesting phase of his life when he became an atheist following a period of skepticism. He used to declare himself a naturist in

¹⁵Thomas K. Gugler, "The New Religiosity of Tablighī Jamā'at and Da'wat-e Islāmī and the Transformation of Islam in Europe," *Anthropos* 105, no. 1, (2010): 121–136.

¹⁶Minot Judson Savage, *Social Problems* (Boston: G.H. Ellis, 1893), 11-12; al Jurjani, *Kitab ul Tareefat* (Lahore: Maktaba Rahmania), 186.

¹⁷Sayyid Ihtishām Husain, *Josh Malīhābādī: Insān Aur shā'ir* (Lakhna'ū: Uttar Pradesh Urdū Akādmī, 1983).

the section of religion whenever he filled a form. The only straw which caught him from drowning was the family rituals. These family rituals were intermingled with Islamic values. He acted on these rituals out of family and peer pressure for a long time until he got reverted to Islam after some deep readings.¹⁸

Just to add not every individual is such well-read or educated as him, but commitment with the religion is necessary for everyone, importantly in the age of modern media. Atheism is not preached on the media through rational arguments rather masses are played through emotions and instincts. In such a condition where majority of the population is uneducated (and those who are educated are only skilled in some specialized technical field), explaining religion to the masses through rational arguments is useless. Let alone the uneducated masses, even when a wave of skepticism and atheism was spread in the Aligarh University during its initial days, Professor Shibli Naumani initiated a *Mehfil e Milād* (A ritual of reciting religious poetry) to revive the religiosity in the students.¹⁹ Though Shibli was also against innovative rituals, yet he considered them necessary when needed.

Rituals and traditions were the most important and most influential agents of education and socialization at all times.²⁰ It was very rare that people went to scholars to get educated. Mostly, the knowledge bank was transferred generation after generation by informal socialization. Even in those cases where only a few students went to the learned men for education, the process was enriched with rituals and rites.²¹ For example, a few days back, my friend's dad cooked fish with an exceptional recipe. When I asked him to teach me the recipe, he humorously replied that you must then come to me with a new suit, a turban and a box of sweets, just like the ritualistic way to start an apprenticeship. Humour apart, in our tradition and our cultural and societal milieu, there had been defined norms of apprenticeship with a master which were supplemented with a lot of rituals.²²

Just as the modernization has tried to mechanize everything to enhance and boost the outcomes of everything, for example, industrialization, it has also mechanized and institutionalized the process of education to produce mass labor

¹⁸Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Aap Beeti [Autobiography]* (Karachi: Majlis Nashriyat e Islam, 1996).

¹⁹Syed Sulayman Nadvi, *Hayat-e-Shibli* (Azamgarh, India: Dar al-Musannifin, 1970).

²⁰Roy Abraham Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ISBN 978-0-521-29690-8.

²¹Ronald B. Begley, and Joseph W. Koterski, *Medieval Education* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

²²Kathleen Manning, *Rituals, Ceremonies, and Cultural Meaning in Higher Education* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2000), ISBN 978-0-89789-504-0.

for the industries and to propagate the modern ideology in the colonies.²³ Such a concept of institutionalized mass education has never existed in any civilization.²⁴ Before analyzing the consequences of this change that emerged from the West, we would mention another change that produced similar consequences; the protestant reformation. After the colonization of subcontinent, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the first person to diagnose the reason for the material development of the West at a civilizational level, and he was correct in his diagnosis.²⁵ The movement against ritualism started by him in his magazine “*Tehzeeb ul Akhlāq*” was joined by modernists as well as traditionalists. Sir Syed was better than other such reformers in the regard that he formed a hierarchy between different types of rituals. He writes:

“There is no doubt that the habits and customs prevailing among the nations have either been characterized by the climate of the country or by accidental reasons which have been occasionally emerging according to the requirement of civilization or been promoted by the imitation of other nations or have emerged due to evolution or devolution. So obviously these four causes are known to be prevalent in the origin of customs of every nation and in every country”.²⁶

Then, according to this hierarchy, he treats each type of ritual differently. For example:

“There is no doubt in the validity of those rituals which have emerged due to the climatic reasons of that country since these rituals are taught by nature itself on whose validity there is no doubt, however, the details about how they are acted upon are open to criticism. For example, we see that in Kashmir and in London, man needs fire to be warm due to cold winters, thus use of fire is a natural and valid custom in both the places. But there must be discussion on what method would be better to get benefit from this custom, either to make fireplaces in home and get warmth or to hang fires in clay pots by the necks due to which body gets burnt and blackens.”²⁷

²³Sarah Ellen Graham, *Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936-1953* (Routledge: 2015), ISBN 978-1-317-15592-8.

²⁴John Boli Francisco O. Ramirez, and John W. Meyer, “Explaining the Origins and Expansion of Mass Education,” *Comparative Education Review* 29, no. 2 (1985): 145–70, <https://doi.org/10.1086/446504> .

²⁵Mushirul Hasan, “Aligarh's ‘Notre Eminent Contemporain’: Assessing Syed Ahmad Khan's Reformist Agenda,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 33, no. 19 (1998): 1077–1081. www.jstor.org/stable/4406749 .

²⁶Sir Syed Ahmed, “Rasm o Riwāj,” In *Mazameen e Sir Syed*, edited by Aziz Uddin Akhtar, (Aligarh: Muslim Educational Press), 164. Chapter: Rasm o Riwaj.

²⁷Ibid.

After Sir Syed, most of the reformers who spoke against rituals didn't even care about this hierarchy. Not only this, some extremists started refuting even those rituals that were influenced by the geographical and social needs. They declared them *Shirk* (polytheism), *Bidat* (innovation in religion) and *Khurafāt* (useless customs). Although the arguments against them are self-evident, for such radicals a passage of Imam Ibn e Taymiyyah would be important to refer:

“All human conduct, either verbal or nonverbal, is categorized into two categories: First of them is *Ibadaat* (worship) by which the religion is concerned. The other is *Aadaat* (customs) which are concerned with this world. If we perform an inductive inference on the principles of *Shari'ah*, we get to know that *Ibadaat* which are declared obligatory or praiseworthy is not legitimized until we find evidence in the *Shari'ah* itself. As far as customs and rituals are concerned, these are the habits which people have innovated among themselves based on their needs of this world. The basic rule for them is permissibility. Thus, nothing would be forbidden from this category until we find evidence of negation by Allah about it.”²⁸

Few people present an emotional justification in opposition to rituals, saying that they would not indulge in activities that the companions of the Prophet *PBUH* never participated in. The reality is that rituals and customs are unwritten, unpublished and non-organized and are transmitted through generations. They get changed constantly due to environmental changes or due to interaction with cultures of other nations.²⁹ Some less extremist reformers do not criticize the rituals that are incorporated in daily habits and very much unrelated to religion and religious symbols, however, whenever they find a ritual or custom which has a religious symbol or any religious dimension, they start refuting it pronouncing it *Shirk* and *Bidat*.

It is a simple reality that whenever a ritual or custom originates or emerges in a religious society, it would necessarily contain some religious elements or at least they would contain a religious outlook.³⁰ Then, how can it be possible that we accept secular customs but criticize and refute customs with a religious outlook? The western countries liberated themselves from religious customs as soon as they got secularized. However, social scientists claim that a society cannot function

²⁸Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmua Fatawa*, Vol 29, 16-17. <https://www.hasbunallah.com.au/majmoo-al-fatawa-ibn-taymiyyah/>

²⁹Diana Kendall, *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials* (Boston MA: Cengage Learning, 2018), ISBN 0-495-59862-3.

³⁰Ian Hodder, *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

properly with solidarity, if it doesn't have religious rituals. That's the reason that sociologists such as August Comte and Emile Durkheim suggested the creation of a new religion called religion of humanity for such a secular society and to generate new festivals and rituals associated to it.³¹ Until recently, many voices have been rising from the atheist block highlighting the crisis which atheist lifestyle has resulted into. They lack a meaning of life and sense of community. Not only this, hollow relationships and fragmentations have been haunting the people without any religion. Addressing such issues, atheist writers such as Alain De Botton have been pointing out the need of religion in books such as 'Religion for Atheists: A Non-believer's Guide to the Uses of Religion.'³²

This is the reason why these modern festivals (such as New year, Independence Day, National days, Mother and Father's day, Black Friday, etc.) are more acceptable and even dominant in our society than the religious festivals. The group which tends to be most antagonistic of rituals and traditions must refer to the legal rulings issued by some prominent jurists of the school which they claim to adhere with. A few representative examples are being presented in this article as well.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Saleh al-Uthaymeen was asked, "There is a ritual related to the return of pilgrims from Mecca, which has spread widely in the villages," Sheikh interrupted, "Did it spread this year?" the person continues the question, "It happens almost every year, food is prepared for them, which they call with different names like "pilgrim's offering" or "pilgrimage happiness" or "pilgrimage salutation." Sometimes the meat used in cooking it is also the meat of the sacrifice (of *Eid ul Adha*), and sometimes the animal is slaughtered especially for this occasion. It contains a bit of overspending too, so, what is your legal opinion in the context of *Shari'ah* about it? And what do you say about its social significance?"

The *Shaykh* replied, "there is no harm in it; there is no harm in honoring the pilgrims on their arrival; because it is a contribution to their happiness, and it makes other people more inclined and enthusiastic to do Hajj. As far as overspending (squandering) is concerned, it is forbidden; it is forbidden in the *Shari'ah*, whether in the above-mentioned ceremony or elsewhere, Qur'an says:

³¹Auguste Comte, "System of Positive Polity, or Treatise on Sociology, Instituting the Religion of Humanity," *Journal of Mental Science* 21, no. 93 (1875): 99–102, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0368315x00000153> .

³²Alain De Botton, *Religion for Atheists: a Non-Believers Guide to the Uses of Religion* (London: Penguin, 2013), ISBN 978-0-307-90710-3.

“And do not squander; Allah does not like those who squander.”³³ In a similar verse, Allah says (interpretation of the meaning), “Truly, squanderers are the brothers of Satan.”³⁴ However, if the meal is made in the right amount, or a bit more than the need, depending on the number of attendees, it will not be a problem in a legal sense of *Shari‘ah*. When viewed socially, this ritual is only in the villages, and not in the cities, as we see many people returning from Hajj, but still no special feast is prepared for them. This, it is possible that this ritual may be present in small villages, and there is nothing wrong with it too. Villagers are generally generous, and none of them violates the rights of others in this regard.”³⁵ There are many aspects to ponder in this answer, such as these rituals promote good deeds and their value increases. Also, overspending is illegal in the same way as it is in other legal matters and that such practices increase the generosity which is among good qualities.

One such question was asked by *Shaykh* Mohammad Saleh al-*Monajjid*, whether it is an innovation to decorate the house when the pilgrims arrive, to hold a ceremony on their arrival, and to greet in specific words. In response, the *Shaykh* said that there is no reason for it to be forbidden, rather it is from the category of rituals and the basic legal ruling for rituals is actually permission. One who forbids it must bring evidence from *Shari‘ah* to forbid it. And that such decorations and ornaments do not imply overspending and that this process does not fall into the category of showing off.³⁶ The *Shaykh*, after complementing his answer with various evidence, says that ‘praise be to Allah’ there exists relaxations in this matter. A similar question was also asked to Sheikh Mohammed Saleh al-*Monajjid* that a special kind of food is prepared at the birth of a child in the area of the person who was asking the question. From that food, the mother eats before everyone else and then they feed all the guests from the same meal. Sheikh declared this process legitimate, too.³⁷

Even in our society, there are many rituals like these rituals for example, *Roza Kushai* (a ceremony held in *Ramazan* for a child who fasts for the first time), *Rasm e Bismillah* (a ceremony held when a child starts learning the Holy Qur’ān), *Khatm e Quran* (the ceremony held on the completion of reading of Holy Qur’ān), pre-wedding ceremonies of *Milād*, etc. These rituals are now rarely seen in some

³³Al-Qur’ān: Maida 5:141.

³⁴Al-Qur’ān: al-Isra 17:27.

³⁵Muhammad Bin Salih Al Uthaymeen, *Liqa’aat al Baab Al Maftooh* Chapter 154. Question Number 12.

³⁶<https://islamqa.info/ar/97879> (accessed September 1, 2019).

³⁷<https://islamqa.info/ar/135458> (accessed September 1, 2019).

households, and wherever they are practiced, they will be stopped very soon. Although these rituals are not mentioned in the religious texts, yet they act as means for attracting people to good deeds, putting the greatness of the important deeds and values in the hearts of people, that is, what Shaykh Al-Uthaymeen pointed out in his ruling.

That is why when Allama Yusuf Al Qarzawi was asked about the legal status of *Shari'ah* regarding *Milād* on one occasion, the *Shaykh* first stated that it was not mentioned in the texts and wasn't present in the early generations of the Muslim *Ummah*, and then emphasized that in the early periods the Messenger of God (*PBUH*) was present in their community metaphorically by the spread of his *Sunnah* (Habits of the Prophet) and a communal offering of all the modes of worship regularly, in such a situation, there was no need to commemorate a special day to celebrate the remembrance of the Prophet (*PBUH*). Today, while status of religion has fallen in society, the *Sunnahs* vanished from the society, and the remembrance and actualization of the love of the Prophet is being erased from the hearts of the people, it is very important that there must be a special day in which to celebrate a particular day in which the love and awareness about the Prophet (*PBUH*) must be spread among the masses and transferred to the next generation. Referring to his childhood days, Al Qarzawi says that we used to be very excited about the day of *Milād*, and we used to eagerly waiting for the arrival of the day, as we would wear new clothes and eat sweets on that day, and along with the opportunity to listen about the Prophet (*PBUH*). Allama Qarzawi says that today, while we comfortably celebrate the occasion of commemoration of our other leaders, we also celebrate days in remembrance of national events, hence it is more recommended that the commemoration of the Prophet *PBUH* must also be celebrated, while knowing that it hasn't been mentioned in the texts.³⁸

Similarly, famous scholar of Salafi school of thought, Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan Bhopali writes in his book '*Shamamatul Anbariyah min Mawlid i Khayril Bariyyah*,' "what harm is there, if we are not capable of commemorating the Prophet (*PBUH*) daily, in arranging a sitting weekly or monthly in which the life, attributes, teachings, birth and death of the Prophet (*PBUH*) is remembered or told in sermons. And we must not leave the month of *Rabi ul Awwal* in this regard."³⁹

³⁸<http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/religionandlife/2004/6/3/%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%8A> (accessed September 1, 2019)

³⁹Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, *Shamamatul Anbariyah min Mawlid I Khayril Bariyyah*,5.

In the same book, after refuting some innovations which have been innovated in the ceremony of *Milād* and are against *Shari'ah's* teaching, he asserts the validity of *Milād* itself, "One who does not feels contented by listening to the mention of the Prophet's (*PBUH*) birth and does not thank Allah on such a blessing is not a Muslim."⁴⁰ In the center of Islam, the two sacred mosques, these rituals prevailed until last century. Imam ul Hind, Shah Wali Ullah's biography '*al Qaul ul Jali*', it is narrated that he witnessed the rays of angels and blessings of Allah descending on to the ceremony of *Milād* in the Mosque of Mecca.⁴¹ All the scholars that were mentioned till now were not from those who are accused of ritualism and innovations, rather, they were among the explicit reformers.

Today, those who had refuted these rituals with the title of polytheism and innovation, are compelled to organize some religious gatherings in modern ways, in the form of lectures, conferences, workshops, Islamic picnics, Islamic cartoons, Islamic movies, etc. It should be borne in mind that rituals are born in a society and, as a result of years of experience, are automatically created without any deliberate actions of individuals.⁴² They cannot be artificially created by some individuals or institutions, or imported from another society. If imported, then the values of that society will start to affect here which is destructive.

At this point, an objection might be raised that the refutation of rituals and customs was being done for the purpose of reform and with good intentions. If the manifest is analyzed with precision and the factors behind it probed, then these reformatory movements can be well understood. Even in the West, the protestant movement started under the spirit of reform, and even today, the supporters of that movement call it reformation, but since the motivating factors behind it were the antagonism of tradition and liberalism, its consequences were very damaging. This can be illustrated with another example too, which, although irrelevant to the subject and somewhat controversial, is helpful in understanding such factors that are latent. If the unity of the different factions and sects of Islam is established by the Muslims and for a good cause and to get rid of diseases such as malice and grudge, then this unity is very praiseworthy. But nowadays, there are other factors behind the way in which different sects and factions are tolerant of one another. The reasons are growing liberal atmosphere, fear of terrorist backfire, pressure of the state, etc., due to which they are showing tolerance, otherwise the hearts are

⁴⁰Ibid., 12.

⁴¹Muhammad Ashiq Phullati, *Al Qaul ul Jali fi Zikr i Athaar il Wali*, trans., Hafiz Taqi Anwar Alwi (Lahore: Muslim Kitabvi, 1999), 162-163.

⁴²Catherine M. Bell, and Reza Aslan, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), ISBN 978-0-19-802706-5.

still full of grudge, rancor and malice for each other which manifests as soon as they get a chance.⁴³

This was an elegy for the rituals and traditions and the damage caused by their death. However, the façade of family life still exists which provides a lot of functioning like socialization and education through which social values and culture were transmitted in its relatively real essence. But, as a result of urbanization, family life was gradually eliminated.⁴⁴ By keeping men busy all day in the factories, women were forced to work side by side and keep the children in school all day long, they become tired when they return home so much so that they cannot even look at each other at home. And if they get a chance to sit together at home, then as Iqbal says in a verse of Urdu poetry, “the feeling of affability is crushed by technological gadgets.”

Even after the birth of a child, it is not possible for a woman to stay at home, so that the child gets socialized into the tradition of its mother through ballads and stories. Unfortunately, in a country like the United States, there is no concept of paid maternity leave.⁴⁵ Only in some countries, women are allowed to have a paid leave for 3 to 4 months. On one side is the pressure of modernization, which has become the enemy of our traditions, on the other we are driving axes on our feet. Josh Maleeh Abadi’s sonnet cries an elegy on this situation.

“How can a man give up his beloved tradition!
Is it a child’s play to leave the untold stories!
And to give up the ideology in the newborn’s dose!
And to give up the mother’s traits and customs of fathers!”⁴⁶

⁴³Mark Peffley, Marc L. Hutchison, and Michal Shamir, “The Impact of Persistent Terrorism on Political Tolerance: Israel, 1980 to 2011,” *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 4 (2015): 817–32, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055415000441> ; Pieter-Jan Dockx, “Good Governance, the Best Counter Narrative and Antidote to Radicalisation,” *South Asia @ LSE*, February 15, 2018, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2018/02/28/good-governance-the-best-counter-narrative-and-antidote-to-radicalisation/> .

⁴⁴M. S. Gore, *Urbanization and Family Change* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1990), ISBN 978-0-86132-262-6.

⁴⁵Melissa Etehad and Jeremy C. F. Lin, “The World Is Getting Better at Paid Maternity Leave. The U.S. Is Not,” *Washington Post*, August 13, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/08/13/the-world-is-getting-better-at-paid-maternity-leave-the-u-s-is-not/>. (accessed September 1, 2019).

⁴⁶Josh Malih Abadi, “*Marsiya*,” Rekhta, <https://www.rekhta.org/marsiya/husain-aur-inqilaab-josh-malihabadi-marsiya?lang=ur> (accessed September 1, 2019).

2. Discussion and Conclusion

To conclude, it can be inferred that rituals and customs have a very critical role in the socialization and early development of younger generations and in the survival of religiosity in the adult masses as well. They also play the role as an agent of informal educating agency in a society, where formal education is neither affordable nor systematized appropriately. The examples from the legal rulings of Saudi and Egyptian Scholars were quoted because those who adhere to anti-ritualistic ideologies, often tend to associate themselves with these scholars. Hence, it was necessary as a mode of internal critique to quote evidence from them. The article contains introspective analysis of the condition but is supplemented with appropriate evidences and references for the claims made. Further studies could conduct quantitative analysis of the quantifiable impacts (such as IQ, academic performance, level of religiosity, wellbeing, satisfaction with life etc.) of following the rituals in the masses as well as in the development of adolescents by conducting surveys and interviews. Moreover, anthropological research can trace out the origins of rituals and its dynamics from primitive cultures and the elementary forms of religions. Such studies would provide more insight in the evolution of rituals and their functioning.

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