ISLAM & PAKISTAN: THE WAY I UNDERSTAND

A MASTER THESIS

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Who I should love and who I should adore?
I’m kind of a child that whenever he
Desired to buy a simple toy
His father told him with no joy
Even if we sell ourselves
We can’t pay the price my boy
What is worth of our life
We possess two torn clothes
And a simple broken house
The wane is on its zenith

Who I should love and who I should adore?
I’m kind of a person that whenever he
Decided to put an end and break
Worldly traditions lame and fake
They declared him manic and mad
Then he was extradite from land
That paramour and lunatic like me
Is still astray and lost for thee
The wane is on its zenith

(A Poem by the Author)
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Chapter-1

1. Let Me Tell You

A faint smell of rosemary permeates the room; it is a soft and soothing smell. Weaving into it is another, not as sweet but an amiable one and a few more sniffs will reveal that it is the comforting smell of a sweating body after a long tiring walk. Small drops of sweat sit on a broad forehead of a male figure sitting on a bedstead, quiet except for an occasional deep and very prolonged breath that inhales decades of struggle and exhales uncountable moments of grief, tiredness and regret.

Dark hazel brown wide eyes are rooted on the ashen face; it is pinched with unspoken experiences. Through the window, the moon casts a pale blue tint across the room, a chair with a black jacket around its shoulders leans against the wall and on a wooden table rests a blue out of function lamp. A wardrobe, a double bed and a sofa sit rather clumsily across the room with a rare decoration rack in the middle. In a corner where the moon light does not reach, is a brown travelling suitcase that is damaged due to excessive load.

The man on the bedstead, wearing an old jeans soaked in his sweat and holding an Urdu poetry book titled “Zawal Apnay Urooj Par Hay”\(^1\) by M. Usman Shakir. His bare feet are neatly cross in front of him, with a lean hand he unwillingly and reluctantly, but carefully takes a note pad and a pen that lies neatly on the table. On the top corner of the page, he writes in capital

\(^1\)Zawal Apnay Urooj Par Hay (The Wane is on its Zenith) is a poetry book written by the author
letters ISLAM & PAKISTAN, he goes over it many times (as he does not want to write anything more about it) until the word is thick and dark. Then next to this word in less visible letters, he writes ‘The Way I Understand’.

A topic that has been following me since I was eight years old, a topic that I want to understand and share its importance with the readers. I want to explain what Islam means to me, how I understand it, how it is used and abused in our society to achieve personal gains. How it was used against me and my sisters to deny our basic rights and the rights such as right to education, freedom of speech and right of free will. I also want to make my readers aware that why this topic reminds me of my pain, my sufferings, unmet needs or wanted and unwanted sacrifices for family in the name of Islam. How religion is used to gain superiority and power over others.

1.1 My Childhood

I was born in a middle class family of six siblings. My childhood was very special, but this smooth sailing lasted for a short while and all my colors faded away when I lost my father in 1988. He had his first heart attack, but he survived and doctors suggested him a heart bypass. He did not want to do it because it was extremely expensive at that time (and the dilemma of countries like Pakistan is that they do not have a public healthcare program for such things), he knew that he might not survive, so he did not want to leave his children in debt, but the rest of the family insisted and we had to sell our restaurant, a shop and my mother’s jewelry to pay for his treatment. Even then, the money was not sufficient, so we borrowed money from some relatives.
The bypass was not successful and I lost my father at the age of eight, when I even did not know what the meaning of death is and what does it mean to lose a person who is the lone food provider of the family as my both older brothers were in high school and college. All of a sudden, I lost someone who used to take me around and play with me as soon as I would wake up in the morning. I had a very close relationship with my father, way more than my mother at that time, so I would wake up very early in the morning just to have fun with him. He used to teach me, take me to school, play with me and teach me how to use guns as in our culture it was a very common thing to teach the kids how to use and clean guns.

Losing him at this young age was very painful. I remember for a long time, I would automatically wake up at the time I used to wake up to play with my father. I was emotionally devastated, but I was unaware of other difficulties ahead until our family started encountering the lack of food at home. The time had come when we started skipping meals. We would normally eat twice a day and sometimes once a day. It was one of the toughest times of my life and I will never be able to forget it, but thanks to the simplicity of village life and growing some homemade vegetable that we were able to survive through this tough time.

The situation was getting worse day by day, so looking at it my brothers had to leave their studies and started working. The eldest one got a job in police force and the other started working as laborer on daily wages, but the salary they were earning was not enough to maintain a family of seven. Their combined per month salary was forty-five dollars. Due to lack of money, my mother would give me a few rupees and ask me secretly to buy the left over bread that people would sell it for cows and goats. I would pretend to buy it for our animals but
actually it would be for us. We would soak the old bread in water fry it with homemade butter and eat it.

My mother was forty-one when my father passed away, but she never thought about getting married again. She invested all her time in getting us united and telling us how important it is to get proper education. In a family where female education was not important at all my mother sent my sisters to school and they finished their high school. They could not pursue their education further because the *jirga*[^2] would not allow females of the village to leave the houses alone and continue their education.

The dilemma of our society is that people with authority use Islam as a shield and say that in Islam it is not allowed for women who reach the age of puberty to leave the houses alone and same happened to my sisters. They believe and assume that Islam has given them this right and that Islam does not allow females to go out alone. For me, it was an act of pure ignorance, but I was too young to stand against anyone, so I decided that I will change the course once I will have a say.

### 1.2 My Hurdles and Struggles

When I was young, I had the habit of not standing up for my rights (I often do it now as well), but the first time I stood up against the pseudo traditions and decision, was when after getting admission in college, I encouraged my sister to continue her studies after seven years’ gap. She was happy on the one hand, but on the other she did not want to be victimized by the village

[^2]: A council of village elders.
elders. After a bit of counseling and encouragement, she started distance learning program and later she managed to do graduation.

With the passage of time, our financial condition was getting better as my brother in police got promoted and started earning much better and the other brother was able to get training and got a good job in a private hospital. As soon as, I finished my high school studies, I moved to the city to live with my sister and her family. I was one of the privileged among my friends who got this opportunity and started going to a very good public college where I was able to fulfill the dream of attending literary gatherings with some prominent poets of the country. I published my poetry book in Urdu under the title of “Zawal Apnay Urooj Par Hay” (The Wane is on its Zenith) in the year 2001.

Although after leaving the village, I managed to succeed on some fronts, but on the others I was still struggling and now the hardest part was to confront my childhood heroes, people who were always there when I needed them, people who supported me in all ups and downs of life. These heroes were my mother, my brothers and my sisters. In the past, whenever I needed something or whenever I felt alone, I looked up to them and they were always there for me, but now the time has come that I felt myself all alone without anyone to look up to.

In 1996, I fell deeply in love with a girl called Kiran. She was a neighbor of my maternal aunt in the city of Abbottabad-KPK, Pakistan. There was no internet or cell phone at that time and it was rare to have a landline telephone, but if someone had landline telephone teenagers were not allowed to use it and especially a teenage girl would never be allowed to talk to a boy. So, we started writing letters to each other. Due to very strict cultural norms, it was very risky to
talk directly or exchange letter openly, we would put the letters in the text books and exchange them.

We were sixteen years old, but it seemed that we knew each other for ages and we were in love with each other for centuries, but my childhood heroes could not see that. They had lost their ears, hearts and feelings because they were unable to listen to my pleas. It was the time that I needed them the most, but they turned their backs in order to follow the traditions of the family. Once again, the shield for my family to protect their benefits, customs and traditions was Islam. That Islam does not allow this act of vulgarity to fall in love with each other and to have this wish to marry against the will of the elders. With a broken heart, I had to gather myself and also support my girlfriend who wanted to commit suicide.

A Plea...!

O tree, o tree!
Make me free!
From the sadness of this world
From the relations that we build
There’s nothing I want to see
O tree, o tree!
Make me free!
From the broken heart and dream
From the tears, cries and screams
I hope you hear my plea
O tree, o tree!
Make me free!
In the process of healing my wound
A treasure, I’ve finally found
Being grounded, being humble is the key
O tree, o tree!
Make me free!
I wanna make one last request
Do not want to give up my quest
Just take my soul with thee
O tree, o tree!
Make me free!

(A poem by the author)

It was one of those times of my life when I had started questioning our traditions with a louder voice. It was the time when I felt devastated and had no wish to live anymore, but I do not know how and why I gathered myself. For both of us it was difficult to believe that we could not be together. In our society, it is extremely difficult or almost impossible for young individuals to decide for themselves. It is the authority of elders to decide and if individuals decide to make their own decisions then the community makes their life very difficult as without a family you have no respect, so I convinced her to marry someone else in order to save the reputation of her family and my family. Being a man I was able to escape the society I was feeling suffocated in, but being a woman Kiran had no other choice then to stay in Pakistan and face the consequences.

I could have fled the city with her and married her against the will of my family, but because of the local traditions, it would have brought lots of bloodshed and bad name to the families and I was not that stone hearted to put so many lives in danger just because of my happiness. My friends say that this incident made me stronger and harder, but I think otherwise.
It made me more fragile and vulnerable; it brought the humanness and more sensitivity out of my heart. Nowadays, any sad news, any small incident or sometimes without any incident tears just roll down.

**Intersection**

Tears were rolling down my cheeks
I could not move,
I could not speak
All alone in the darkness
I was thinking what to do?
Should I go or should I stay?
I was at the intersection
And had lost my way

(A poem by the author)

I left Pakistan with a heart filled with agony, pain and deception. I decided not to go back to live in Pakistan ever again. I wish my struggles would have ended there, but the irony of fate followed me where ever I went and this time the issue was my own marriage. I became a deserter for years and did not visit Pakistan, but one day one of my niece who is just like my daughter said one thing “Sonu if you will not come back and marry here who will stand up for us and with us?” Keeping in mind how patriarchal societies and societies where religion is used as a tool to manipulate work, so I told myself that maybe I am the one who needs to stand up against this injustice.

---

3 Sonu is my nickname given by my nieces and nephews
After eight years, I went back to Pakistan in 2014 and got married to someone whose parents gave financial support to my family after the death of my father. I have become the scapegoat or trophy of the good deeds of others and to add to my miseries on the first night of the wedding, I found out that the girl was suffering from a disease called ‘ichthyosis vulgaris or fish scale disease’. In this disease, the dead cells of our body do not fall off and they start forming clusters, scales and rough patches on the skin. It often smells bad if you get intimately close to the person. Although, I knew that she has some skin issues, but I was told that it is just her hands and feet and rest of her body is absolutely fine. When I realized that it was not only her hands and feet, but the entire body I was shocked and saddened by the situation; it was one of the most painful nights of my life. I did not have any idea what to do, I could not touch her, I could not even stay closer to her and I left Pakistan immediately.

I am married but not married; I cannot divorce because it is a collective decision to marry or to divorce someone. It is believed that Islam gives parents the authority to decide for children even if they are adults. If I decide, no one accepts it and everyone is extremely happy as it is, except me. I see it and I feel it when I talk to them and they say it that it was one of the best decision because it brought our family even closer than before, but unfortunately they cannot see that this decision made me distant from my family. My brothers, sister, mother and other family members are busy in their lives and have never asked if I am fine with their decision or not because they know that I accepted their decision due to their pressure.

It has been always difficult for me to accept things as they are without getting to know properly and without questioning. My quest to find the answers to these questions was never the way it is now because when I was young I used to believe in so many things that I do not believe
now and later in the paper I will talk about it. The culture I grew up in uses the religion as a tool of manipulation and throughout my life I have had the same experience. My friends were beaten brutally because they did not want to study religion or they fell in love with someone or they wanted to go to swim in the lake near our village, but their parents did not want them to do so.

Although, my family does not agree with me until now, but I know one day they will understand that their decisions may looked good for that particular moment, but for a long run they were not in the best interests of their loved ones. They will understand that every individual has the right to live his/her life. Someone’s life is not a collective responsibility of a community, but God has given humans a free will and they are answerable for that. “And you will surely be questioned about what you used to do (Quran 16:93)”.

1.3 Emergence of My Thesis Topic

At a quarter to two, after meeting some friends when I entered my 12 square meter room that was full of emptiness. I had rented it a couple of days before, so the old furniture and winter smell made me realize that the room used to be locked for a long time. My presence and the smell of my personal belongings (containing my clothes and spices that always accompany me) that were spread all over the place have turned into a nice blend of some soothing perfume. As I was extremely tired, more mentally than physically, I cracked into the only chair in the room and realized that during last three weeks and half, I have not relaxed at all and I was in a constant conflict with my soul and body, my inner and outer world.

After getting ready for the bed, I struggled for sometime whether I should sleep or work on my thesis proposal as my semester had already started. First, I wanted to write about ‘Islam: A counter narrative of Islam’ and after talking to a friend, I changed my mind to write about
Islam & Pakistan: The way I understand’. Hustling through my struggles, confusions and conflicts, I came to a conclusion that my issue is not ‘a counter narrative of Islam’, but it is my own understanding of Islam and why it is different than the one of my family and the society I grew up in. My struggle is to see why things which are not a part of Islam are being related to it.

Even though, everyone was saying that the way I understand and the way I do things was un-Islamic, I was not convinced and I told myself, if this is Islam then I am not a Muslim, because God cannot be so inhuman. If, He is the Creator of the universe, then He can never take away the liberty from humans and deprive them from the basic needs. In the past, I sometime believed in what I was being told by my elders and teachers, but I was not satisfied. I had a firm belief that one day I will be able to find the answers to my questions.

I often talk to my mother about her past and she would tell me how she was not allowed to use bright colored clothes, use makeup, sing or dance at the weddings and visit friends and how she would do it hidden. And now when see same people repeating the history it makes me sad. I do not know why it is like that, why people forget things; I still remember my brother would tell me how he would escape from school just to watch movies in the cinema and when he grew up he would not allow me to do so and I had to do the same. My family thinks that movies and music are against the teachings of Islam and no Muslim should do that. While in my understanding Islam does not forbid us from watching movies or doing any work of art, but it forbids us from indulging into inhuman activities, misogynous behavior, tyranny and violation of rights.

My Journey…
I have been through ups and downs
I have been through life and death
I have felt the pain of love
I have felt no air, no breath
I had lost my faith and trust
I was victim of love and lust
I was shattered, scattered and grieved
I was rewarded and deceived
But I have learned to stand for me
I feel like a bird that’s free
I can see a hope, a ray
I have finally come a long way

(A poem by the author)
Chapter-2

2. My Problem, My Reason and the Methodology

This thesis is a research work that talks about the current religious practices, worldviews of different scholars on these practices and my personal understanding of these worldviews. It is considered that Islam came into existence with Prophet Muhammad and it is a religion that promotes authoritarianism, patriarchy and moralistic views (Armstrong 1994). This research is a quest to Islamic worldview through Quran and its scholars. It is also an attempt to understand the traditionalist and fundamentalist religious worldview and also analyzing the revival of original Islamic teachings. This thesis focuses on Muslim epistemology and its lack of adaptation in modern and post modern era.

Nowadays, words like traditionalist and fundamentalist may contain a negative connotation, but when I use them it means something that has the spirit and intention of originality. With ever changing circumstances, new situations and modernization, it is difficult for any institution, law and religion to have all the answers to the arising questions and Islam has always provided an option ofِ اَجْتِهَادِ ِِِِ*ijtihad*4. So the objective of this research is to dig deeper into the current interpretation of Islam and become the catalyst to initiate a debate that transforms the perception, perspective and worldview of Muslims.

______________________________

4 Independent reasoning or a process of deriving laws
Talking about the importance of this research, I would like to say that Islam is a religion that does not encourage the collectivism and makes every individual accountable for his/her decisions. It does not give a state, a government, a society or a family any power to keep check and balance on people’s religious viewpoint. Through this research, I would like to understand and present that how misinterpretation of traditionalist and fundamentalist worldview can lead to something completely different than the original message.

“The message of Islam is primarily addressed to an individual. It wants to reign on the hearts and minds of people. The directives it has given to the society are also addressed to individuals who are fulfilling their responsibilities as the rulers of Muslims. Hence, it is baseless to think that a state also has a religion and there is a need to Islamise it through an objective resolution and that it must be constitutionally bound to not make any law repugnant to the Quran (Ghamidi 2015, 148)”.

Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi took the guideline of his arguments from Quran where God says, “And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And if a heavily laden soul calls [another] to [carry some of] its load, nothing of it will be carried, even if he should be a close relative (Quran 35:18)”. In these verses of Quran one can easily see that God has made everyone an individual human being and each one of us is responsible for his or her deeds. On many other occasions God says that even if you make a mistake with a good intention the mistake will not count, but the intention will count. “And there is no blame upon you for that in which you have erred but [only for] what your hearts intended. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful (Quran 33:05)”.

This thesis will also look into the question that why Islam could not flourish into its full potential and why it was being misinterpreted or interpreted differently by a specific school of thought. It is very critical to examine the issue of authoritarianism, inflexibility and rigidity that why, when and where it got mixed with religion. It is also of my interest to understand why in
the current religious worldview having difference of opinion or raising question is not being welcomed. One of the most common issues of Pakistani youth is the collectivism of the society. We are often reminded by our families, communities or a majority of religious leaders that we are one ummah⁵ and we are a collective responsibility of each other and we represent our entire Muslim community, so if we do anything that is inappropriate in the eyes of my family or in the eyes of our community, it will bring a bad name to them. Simple things like getting married cannot be performed if the family or society does not approve that. According to an intercultural Finish site:

“Pakistan, with a very low score of 14, is considered a collectivistic society. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member ‘group’, be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group (Hofstede Insight 2018)”.

My main objection on the current narrative of Islam presented by Pakistani media or the way it is being practiced and presented by majority of Pakistani Muslim scholars is that it lacks the depth, logic, humanistic and relational approach. Around the globe in general and in Pakistan in particular it is considered that this notion of oppression or dehumanizing female gender is supported by Islam, but in fact this issue is more cultural than religious.

“Westerners usually associate the plight of Pakistani women with religious oppression, but the reality is far more complicated. A certain mentality is deeply ingrained in strictly patriarchal societies like Pakistan. Poor and uneducated women must struggle daily for basic rights, recognition, and respect. They must live in a culture that defines them by the male figures in their lives (Jamal 2012)”.

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⁵ The whole community of Muslims of the world
These cultural influences that are taking over the religious matter and confusing people can only be rectified through of *ijtihad*, because things that have been said and done fourteen-hundred years ago may not fit into this era, so it needs to be modified and adapted according to the needs. In his research “Theories of Culture” Roger M. Keesing talks about the evolutionary perspectives of a culture. In his opinion, human beings, their norms and traditions are designed to be open-ended and they are bound to be changed and modified (Keesing 1974).

“God has blessed man with knowledge and intellect [...] Man has not been created blind and deaf so that he requires divine guidance in every matter. The Almighty has revealed His *shari’ah* only in those affairs in which man’s knowledge and intellect need guidance. For this reason, the directives of the *shari’ah* are very limited. Thus *ijtihad* is essential. In it lies the secret to development. Life cannot continue without it. One of the significant reasons of the decadence of the Muslims is that in their national capacity they have become devoid of the ability of research in physical sciences and *ijtihad* in social sciences (Ghamidi 2015, 47).”

In my opinion, Pakistani society could not understand the difference between culture and religion. The misconception that religion and society are bound together and religion is not your personal choice, but it is a societal issue, has played a significant role in making the situation worse. “The state has no business deciding who is a Muslim and who is not. You cannot force people to respect your religion or your prophet at gun-point (Ghamidi 2017)”. I believe that depriving women, children and common people of their rights and labeling it as Islamic directive may have worked in the past, but now we live in a completely different world. A world, where people know about their right and they know how to raise their voice, so these days, it is hard to manipulate. “The situation which today has been created in the whole world for Islam and Muslims by certain extremist organizations is the evil consequence of the ideology taught in our
religious seminaries, and also propagated day and night by Islamic movements and religious political parties (Ghamidi 2015)

A huge number of Islamic teachings are based on made up stories. They have no historical or religious base, but they play a very important role in our society. There are so many books filled with these made up stories, but one book called (فضائل اعمال) Faza’il-e-Amaal written by Muhammad Zakariya Kandhlawi is very popular among the masses. It is a curriculum for Tablighi Jamaat (تبلیغی جماعت) the biggest Muslim missionary group working in and outside of Pakistan. “Say, My Lord has only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed - and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know (Quran 7:33)

“The book (Faza’il-e-Amaal) besides containing some authentic information also contains a number of weak, concocted, interpolated as well as fabricated ahadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad) ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad (Bagdadi 2012). Javed Ahmad Ghamidi also thinks that although their work is for the betterment of Muslims, but the way is not according to what God has mentioned in Quran. Instead of using Quran, they rely on invented stories and that is where the problem comes (Ghamidi 2010). This not only damages the reputation of religion, but also misguides the followers. In the first twenty-five years of my life I had a belief that a man and woman cannot shake hands, talk or study together and then I realized through research that Islam has not given any directives in this regard and it is just a culture issue. “There is no directive of the Shari’ah\(^6\) which explicitly prohibits a Muslim to shake hands

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\(^6\) Islamic laws based on the teaching of Quran and traditions of Prophet Muhammad
with a woman who is not his mahram\(^7\); therefore, it cannot be regarded as a Sunnah\(^8\) of the Prophet (Saleem 1999)”.

### 2.1 Research Question(s) and Research Intrigue

“People who wish to work in elicitive conflict transformation should be in a position to comprehend and sort through the conscious and unconscious components of their behavior (Dietrich, 2013: 71)”.

When I read this sentence of Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich, I realize that how our upbringing is deeply rooted in our behaviors. How important role it plays in our daily life and how crucial it is for us to observe, comprehend and reflect. It gets tougher and harder, when I see myself (sometimes) falling into the prey of the same patterns that I have experienced in the past. This feeling of being lost in the ‘giver’ and ‘receiver’ or ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ category made me think about a research and research question that thinks out of the box and does not follow a set pattern.

Why the current narrative of Islam has become a rigid religious entity in Pakistan and how Islam can give its followers other alternatives to approach life?

When I dig deeper into this question, I notice that there are some inbuilt layers, doubts and questions which I need to explore and understand. As I have struggled throughout my life with some set patterns of my family and the community I grew up in, I feel the need of diving into these questions in order to unfold and unearth some key aspects that might have been ignored in the past and that might help me and my readers to understand Islam. This question’s first part ‘Why the current narrative of Islam has become a rigid religious entity in Pakistan?’ is

\(^7\) An unmarriageable male or female with whom marriage or sexual intercourse is considered haram

\(^8\) Traditions of Prophet Muhammad
about the current, popular and mainstream narrative of Islam as a religion in Pakistan. Islam as religion is a very vast topic, so my focus is on the uses and practices of Islam in Pakistani politics and culture. This question will explore the mainstream understanding of Islam by its followers and its impact on their lives in Pakistan right from the movement of its independence until now. In my opinion, Islam is way more than just a simple religion which is believed to be started over fourteen hundred years ago by Prophet Muhammad, as I do not agree with that and I will explain in detail in chapter three.

The first part of the question talks about the perceptions where many think that Islam is just a religion that promotes and protect moralistic and patriarchal system. ‘Moral’ is a modern word that generally means a behavior that is being judged between right and wrong in the eyes of God and that is how Muslims preach as well, but in my personal understanding, it is a debate between being ethical and unethical. In moral understanding, telling a lie for a good cause is acceptable, but ethically it is not (Tännsjö 2002).

Being ethical is more to do with being true to you and to others while being moral is a play between right and wrong in the eyes of God. I would try to understand why Muslims could not go beyond standard moral understanding. According to Gerda Lerner, patriarchy took more than 2,500 years in its creation and it is a cultural phenomenon of human history (Lerner 1986). In this research, I will look into this point that Islam as a religion does not promote or advocate patriarchy or rigidity, but as it is a part of the same culture and its followers come from the same patriarchal society; they try to protect their values under the feathers of religion.

The second part ‘how Islam can give its followers other alternatives to approach life?’ will explore other alternatives to soften its approach towards life. Ijithad, going back to the
teachings of the original scripture, differentiating between state, culture and religion and their role at different levels, understanding that although these entities are interconnected, they complement each other, but they are not each others’ replacement or they do not have any hierarchal superiority or inferiority, so that one can decide how the other should look like. Another alternative is connecting back to energetic traditions of Islam through Sufism and using it to bring back the balance that is missing at the moment.

2.1 Literature Review

Love and literature have always been a very important part of my life. My love for love and literature is not because I can feel connected to someone or something emotionally, but it is absolutely based on appreciation, approbation and respect. In my opinion, love is a purest form of solidarity and resonance in every sphere of life, while literature is a way to indulge this ardour into words. As in the previous subchapter I have talked about the questions I would like to focus on and I have tried to draw the outline of my research and the topics I would like to touch upon. So here I would like to talk about the literature that I will use to support my viewpoint, the technicalities of methods and tools that I am going to use in order to dig deeper into the ocean of the problem statement guided by the research question(s).

My research topic is very personal, familial and societal with special focus on religious aspects and its influence on relational shifts and behavioral pattern, I will be using the literature written by Pakistani authors, international writers, Quran, Bible and other religious books. There might be a chance that I will not be able to get any direct answer to my questions or queries, so I will have to rely on the interpretation of the scholars I will interview that is why I am using Hermeneutics that is a theory and practice of interpretation (Paterson & Higgs et al 2005). The
first writer that I would like to mention here is Mr. Shahab Ahmed, a Pakistani-US Islamic scholar, who worked at Harvard University. His main book “What is Islam? (2016)” contains a very unique approach towards religion and its understanding. He thinks that religion and culture are two different entities. He is not in favor of politicizing Islam. His approach of considering religion, state and culture completely different entities has encouraged me to use him one of the main authors.

“I am seeking to say the word “Islam” in a manner that expresses the historical and human phenomenon that is Islam in its plenitude and complexity of meaning. [...] I am precisely not seeking to tell the reader what Islam is as a matter of Divine Command, and thus am not seeking to prescribe how Islam should be followed as the means to existential salvation. Rather, I seek to tell the reader what Islam has actually been as a matter of human fact in history, and thus am suggesting how Islam should be conceptualized as a means to a more meaningful understanding (Ahmed 2016, 05)”

I totally agree with him when he voices against the terms like Islamic culture or Islamic civilization because Islam is just a religion and the religions are free from cultural boundaries. I understand the fact that religion can influence a culture or vice versa, but using a specific term for such thing is unjust. While criticizing the use of word Islam or Islamic in his book, he writes that in an attempt to make Islam correspond to things like religion, culture or civilization; we have failed because Islam is above all these worldly constructions. He gives example of Morocco and Indonesia and says that except being Muslims they have nothing in common (Ahmed 2016, 301-302).

Another important point to consider his book was the use of Hermeneutic Circle calling it “Hermeneutical Engagement” (Ahmed 2016, 301) as a methodology of interpreting and understanding a text in a circle such as from a sentence to paragraph, from a paragraph to section, from a section to chapter and so on. “If we are meaningfully to conceptualize Islam we
must take into account the full range of components elements and trajectories and values of human and historical Islam (Ahmed 2016, 303”).

Combining religion and culture together or bringing them under one umbrella means negation of Quran’s teachings. “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another (Quran 49:13)”. Shahab Ahmed’s book “What is Islam?” encouraged me to look into religion from a personal perspective and it has strengthened my belief that religion should not be used to protect cultural norms. I share the same ideas and as he has done a thorough research on Islam through other books, he was my automatic choice for this thesis. He has written other books like “Ibn Taymiyya and his Times”, “Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam” and “Neither Paradise Not Hellfire”.

My objective is not looking for something ideal or perfect as perfection is a utopian concept, but to find a solution to integrate or transform the current religious concepts. So, it leads me to my second writer Francisco A. Muñoz, a Spanish historian, a university professor and researcher of peace. Although, he is famous for reconstructing the history of peace through the concept of culture of peace and looking at conflicts with different lenses, but his master piece that strengthens my idea of ‘nothing is perfect’ is “Imperfect Peace (2001)”. His idea of looking at things with different lenses motivated me to read his work and I found lots of similarities with what I had in my mind that is why I decided to take him on this journey. His work will accompany me in the notion of striving for the betterment, but not an idealistic end. His other important works are: “The Confluence of Culture in the Mediterranean”, “Towards a Pacific Mediterranean”, “Cosmovisions of Peace in the Mediterranean”, “History of Peace: Times, Actors and Spaces”, “Manual of Peace and Conflicts” and others.
One of my favorite Muslim author and scholar of all time is Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, people who know me a bit, know that Mr. Ghamidi is the one who encouraged me to develop critical thinking and to question already established beliefs, if they are in conflict with my understanding of Islam. Here, I will explain why I have chosen him one of the most important authors of my thesis. “Javed Ahmad Ghamidi’s interpretative approach is based on a highly developed hermeneutics, and aims at precision in the definition of many key concepts [...] his understanding of Islamic law has produced a vast literature that reevaluates many key concepts (Iftikhar 2004, 50)”.

In his book “Meezan” (The Balance), he talks about the lack of understanding of Arabic language that lead to lots of misconceptions in Islam and today’s Islam is mixed with the culture (Ghamidi 2014). “It is clear from a reading of Ghamidi's works that he makes a clear distinction between content of the Divine guidance and its understanding and interpretation [...] In Ghamidi's opinion, only "the content of religion" is immutable. The understanding of a jurist or an exegete is always open to analysis and critique (Iftikhar 2004, 51)”, but lack in this understanding is one of the reasons that slowly and gradually the real Islamic concept is drifting away from its core. There are so many examples and one of them is Jihad10. Whenever this word is used people take it as a holy war, but Quran clarifies it “And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself. Indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds (Quran 29:06)”.

Mr. Ghamidi reiterates his point of view in his another book “Burhan” (The Proof) that the concept of Jihad (in the meaning of the holy war) according to lots of Muslim scholars is the

10 To struggle or strive

My conflict with so called religious preachings starts when they set aside all logical and rational rules of balance and equality to satisfy human honor and domination. While talking about the same issues Allama Muhammad Iqbal another Muslim scholar, philosopher, poet and politician, who has completed his studies from Cambridge University and did his Ph.D. from Germany, says in his book “The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam (1934)” that religion cannot ignore the importance of rationalism and logic. So, it has to be questioned continuously (Iqbal 1934). Iqbal’s concept of \textit{ijtihad} is very transformative and different than many other traditional Muslim scholars and that is why it also attracts my attention because in my opinion, \textit{ijtihad} provides an opportunity to bring back the balance between religion, society and state. His other literary works include: “The Development of Metaphysics in Persia”, “Bang-e-Dara”, “Bal-e-Jibril”, “Armughan-e-Hijaz” and others.

\textit{Ijtihad} is a way of keeping check and balance. With ever changing situations, culture and circumstances change is inevitable and when change comes it brings the necessities of making new laws or modifying the old ones, but if it becomes static and authoritative it starts clashing with needs and deeds of people. Reza Aslan, an Iranian-US religious scholar, author and television host writes in his book “No god, but God (2005)”, “Religions become institutions when the myths and rituals that once shaped their sacred histories are transformed into authoritative models of orthodoxy (the correct interpretation of myths) and orthopraxy (the
correct interpretation of rituals), though one is often emphasized over the other (Aslan 2005). I will also use his book “God a Human History (2017)”. His other important books include: “How to Win a Cosmic War” and “Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth”. In my opinion, my community in particular and Pakistani society in general is suffering from the same dilemma. Reza Aslan’s critical approach towards irrational and blindly following of a religion; confusing religion and culture with each other are the appealing points for me. His tilt towards Sufism, energetic traditions of Islam, the concept of attaining peace through harmony and spirituality brings a diverse opinion into the light that is why; I thought that he will be a valuable addition to my research work.

Another writer who will be present in my thesis is Eqbal Ahmad, a Pakistani political scientist, author and globally known for his anti-war activism. He was very critical of political or religious leaders, who have used Islam to protect their vested interests. “It suggests a widespread psychological disposition to throw religion into politics as a reinforcement mechanism. Hence, in Pakistan Islam has been a refuge of troubled and weak leaders (Ahmad 2006, 30)”. I will use his collection of articles published under the title of “Reader – Writings on India, Pakistan and Kashmir and also his article “Terrorism: Theirs or Ours 2001”. In Pakistan, it is a common practice to use Islam as a cultural base or for political gains. It was there right from the independence movement, but it is continuously rising since 1960s. While talking about the same fragility and vulnerability of Pakistani society in the hands of its leaders, Ahmad writes about Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, "His career presents nevertheless a textbook case of Islam as a refuge of the weak and scoundrel regime. His first bow to 'Islamism' was declaring Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority (Ahmad 2006)”; in my personal capacity, I also think that it is a coward act to use religion for political motives and all these points have motivated me to use Ahmad’s work.
As my topic is the understanding of Islam through my own lenses and its presence in Pakistani society, so for a solid research my arguments have to be based on authentic resources and for a Muslim no source is more reliable and authentic than the Quran itself. I will be seeking the guidelines through Quran and I will use Quran as a principal source for my research. “Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward (Quran 17:09)”. I believe that Quran can guide me in a best possible way because whenever I had a question, I always looked up into Quran and I always had an answer. “We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims (Quran 16:89)”. 

“The spider starts the web with a few long strands hooked to strategically chosen locations and then it floats out across an open space, always linking in the center (Lederach 2005)”. This sentence of John Paul Lederach, a US professor of International Peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame, a Ph.D in Sociology and famous for his writings conflict resolution and mediation reminds me of the concept of *ijtihad* as both of them talk about strategic and intellectual expansions or independent reasoning in a vast playing field, but they are always connected and attached to the core. In the previous sentence the word ‘playing field’ does not mean a physical space, but it refers to a maneuvering area where some intellectual work can be done. “We need new eyes. We need eyes that peer into the hidden mysteries below the visible realities (Lederach 2011)”

As I am looking for new way of thinking and transforming the hearts and minds of people who use religion as a tool for their personal and political gains, so apart from “The Moral Imagination (2005)” by John Paul Lederach, I will also use his book “Poetic Unfolding of Human the Human Spirit (2011)” and his another book co-authored with Angela Jill Lederach “Blood and Bones (2010)”. His other written work includes “Preparing for Peace:

My personal transformation through transrational approach would not be possible without Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich that is why not mentioning his work will be leaving one part of my heart aside. His approach of bringing personal and societal balance starting from within and expanding it to the outer world inspired me right from the moment I started reading his work and since then I decided to use his work to understand myself and my surrounding. He is an Austrian peace researcher, a political scientist, a Ph.D and LLD holder from the University of Innsbruck. He is UNESCO Chairholder, director of MA program for Peace Studies at the University of Innsbruck-Austria and the founder of Innsbruck School of Peace Studies that hails the concept of Conflict Transformation.

When he talks about focusing on ‘I’ first and getting to know oneself in order to understand others and work with them “As seen from the perspective of the perceiving subject or potential peace worker, transrational peace research therefore first casts the gaze inwards [...] first explore and work on their own egoic aspects and deal with the death of the I (Dietrich 2012, 265)”, he reminds me of a Muslim sufi poet Bulleh Shah whose represents energetic philosophy of Islam “You have learnt so much and read a thousand books. Have you ever read your Self?
You have gone to mosque and temple. Have you ever visited your soul (Bulleh Shah 2012, 28)?”

Dr. Dietrich’s other prominent written works are: “Elicitive Conflict Mapping”, “Variationen über die Frieden”, “Elicitive Conflict Transformation and the Transrational Shift in Peace Politics”, “Interpretation of Peace in History and Culture”, “Farewell to the One Peace” and others.

So along with Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich’s lectures and articles, I will use his master piece of art “Interpretation of Peace in History and Culture (2012)”. Personal transformation that I have witnessed was mainly through the lectures of Norbert Koppensteiner and Josefina Echavarria and also through our personal interactions. As these interactions and these seminars were extremely fruitful for personal and academic career, I will also use these sources as references to express understanding of integration and interconnectedness “I am because you are (Dietrich 2017)”.

### 2.2 Other Important Authors

Apart from the books I have mentioned above, there are some other literature and writers that I will benefit from, so, I will briefly talk about them. The first name that I would like to mention here is of Edward Wadie Said, a Palestinian-US intellectual. His two books “Reflection on Exile and other Essays (Said 2000)” and “Covering Islam (Said 1981)” will accompany me in this voyage. The reason that I have chosen Edward Said that around 9/11 Pakistan was very isolated and under pressure. Through articles, he conveyed a message that only secular Pakistan is a long lasting solution for Pakistan’s problems and these arguments impressed me a lot as he rejects the idea of using religion for politics and decided to use his work for my thesis.
Another writer who believes that historical and cultural narratives can influence the societies and integrating personal experiences, needs and wounds with theoretical expertise is the way forward is called Naeem Inayatullah. A writer and associate professor by profession, his book “Autobiographical International Relations (2011)” will also be a part of my research process. Mr. Jeffrey Stout, a professor at Princeton University will also guide me through his book “Democracy and Tradition (2004)”. As extremist version of Islam and polarized society has a fair share of Cold War, so I will have a critical look at some of the authors like A. G. Noorani through his book “Islam, South Asia and the Cold War”, A. Z. Hilali through his book “US-Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion in Afghanistan”, Nadeem F. Paracha and Saeed Shafqat through their articles.

While talking about Pakistan and its involvement in ‘Cold War’, I would also like to dive into the history of Pakistan and for that I will explore two authors. First author is Burjor Avari, an Indian-British multicultural educationist and specialist on South Asian History at the Manchester Metropolitan University; his recent book “Islamic Civilization in South Asia (2013)” talks about the history of Muslims’ power and presence in the Indian subcontinent. The other author is Khursheed Kamal Aziz known as K.K. Aziz. He is a barrister and historian from Pakistan. To have some critical analysis, I have chosen his book “The Murder of History (1993)”. It is a critique of history textbooks used and taught in Pakistan.

2.3 Dissecting My Research Question(s)

In my opinion, research questions are the backbone of any research, because curiosity leads us to do wonders, to do new inventions, to understand ourselves and our surroundings better. While talking about the importance of curiosity and asking questions Pole and Lampard mention that curiosity is the driving force behind the conduct of any research (Pole and Lampard 2002). This curiosity generates questions and these questions take us to the journeys of unknown. “Questions are everywhere; all you have to do is observe and be curious” (Graziano and Raulin 2004, p.57).

First aim of my enquiry and exploration is to understand the deeper meaning of Islam, its background and its similarities with other religions because for me it is difficult to understand that human beings cannot develop common grounds through dialogues. I also want to see why my concept of religion, society and family is different than my own family, friends and community. Through my research, I want to develop a different understanding of Islam to show people that some of the things like being rigid, patriarchal or authoritarian are not a religious norm, it is cultural attribute. They are interrelated and interconnected, but they are not substitutes of each other.
To make it clear right from the start, I believe that Islam in its essence was not a religion that promotes or represents rigidity, patriarchy or authoritarianism, but with the passage of time when Islam became a global fact, these things got mixed from different cultures. “Islam is a world religion, and it also forms the basis of a world civilisation which was once very powerful. Due to its spread across the world Islamic civilisation is composed of a great variety of diverse local cultures (Tibi 2001, 01)”. For me Islam is not yet another monotheistic religion, but it is the only religion since the time immemorial and other religions are either the branches or the deviation of it. In the next chapter, I will try to explain my standing on the issue and what Islam means to me.

Keeping in view the current scenario of Pakistan, it is difficult to involve Pakistani youth in critical thinking on issues related to religion as sectarianism got fixed in the roots of young generation as they were born after the sectarian wave of General Zia, but by interviewing religious scholars, who are in favor of questioning the well established religious believes, I would like challenge aforementioned narrative. As I am also affected by the same teachings and upbringings, it will be very difficult not to be biased or partisan and lead the research in a neutral way. According to Hammersley, for the partisan researchers the basic concern is that there is a danger that their commitment to achieve political goals can override their commitment to the production of knowledge (Hammersley 1995).

2.4 My Approach and Research Method

A research method is a strategy of inquiry which includes research design and data collection (Myers & Avison 2002). As the title of my thesis highlights that it is about different understandings and interpretations of the sacred texts, religious laws, norms and mixing religion with culture that is why I have decided to use hermeneutics and hermeneutic strategies as a
theoretical base, but before going into the explanation of Hermeneutics I would like to say that I will use Hermeneutic in a systematic way, but more in a subjective way, so that I can interpret and understand the history of Islam and Pakistan. “Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation (Paterson & Higgs 2005)”. According to Oxford Dictionary, hermeneutics is field of study that deals theories or techniques of interpretations, especially religious scriptures (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 2002, 1231).

Richard Palmer takes it a step further when he says, “It is an historical encounter which calls forth personal experience of being here in the world. […] It tries to hold together two areas of understanding theory: the question of what is involved in the event of understanding a text, and the question of what understanding itself is, in its most foundational and ‘existential’ sense (Palmer 1969, 04)”. Keeping in mind all that I would say, the hermeneutics is a technique that is used to understand, interpret and explain a text. “Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation – we shall not forget that and we will return to it again and again (Abulad 2007)” and its earliest reference can be found in a dialogue of Plato (Abulad 2007). Some even say that it is there since the start of the creation.

“Theological hermeneutics began in the Garden of Eden, as any careful observer of the serpent, that subtle hermeneut of suspicion, will at once recognize. In the earliest recorded misinterpretation of a religious text […] now, whether or not the issues we call hermeneutical have really been around since creation, they have surely been with us for a very long time indeed – as long as human beings have appealed to oral or written texts for orientation and meaning in their lives (Green 2004, 1-2)”.

So, it is not a modern technique and it is being used for centuries and with the help of this approach, I will be able to understand how I have to interpret different sacred books, texts, political incidents, cultural events and traditions; then, I believe that I will be able to get to the background of my research problem because it is hard to get to the facts as everyone has his/her
own truth. While quoting Nietzsche, Garrett Green mentions “there are no facts, only interpretations (Green 2004, 1)”. It is a technique and methodology of interpretations. It helps to understand a text with significant depth and precision.

“Hermeneutics is concerned with the problems, methods and purpose of interpretations; therefore, it becomes a science of interpretation in itself. It helps to determine the true meaning of a text with accuracy. It includes several factors like history, culture, cultural diversities, language, distance of time between the author and the interpreter, the context etc. The hermeneutics is a science which helps in establishing the rules, principles and methodologies for the interpretation of religion and its Scripture, and also its relation to society (Spencer 1997, 157)”.

It is famous to be used in theological field of research, but in my opinion, it is as effective in non-theological field as it is in theological field because it is such a useful tool and it is hard to confine it in a limited scope of research. In my research, I will use it to understand and interpret religious scriptures, religious incidents, history and historical incidents, culture, traditions, society and social patterns. To achieve my desired results, my approach is to go through the texts related to topics I am interested in and then, interview some scholars from religious and social background. So, I can have a clear understanding of the past and present. I have a firm believe that this strategy will provide enough theoretical data, so that I can work with it. According to my understanding a qualitative research focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). After being prepared through aforementioned approach, I believe, I can dig deeper into my research topic.

As, I have been through different explanations, understandings and definitions of hermeneutics, I have realized that it is a vast technique or tool to be worked with. It gives the researcher various possibilities to look at one event differently. Every lens can provide different insights and different understandings of the same event. It explains that depending on the
circumstances, how topics like religion, culture, science and society are interconnected and how they can be different. It is not only a very authentic, specific and innovative tool to be used in professional fields, but it is also very versatile and flexible approach. At the end, I would like to quote Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams as they have divided the hermeneutics into four points:

“(1) What is it to understand a text and what are the conditions of its possibilities? (2) How are the cultural sciences distinct in their methods and forms from the natural sciences? (3) What are the conditions that make any sort of human understanding possible? (4) How can we resolve certain conceptual puzzles associated with concepts like understanding and meaning, and how might such a resolution helps us to understand the task of interpretation? (Eliade and Adams 1987, 281)”

2.5 Interviewing

After going through the first part of the research which is literature review and analyzing the collected data through the hermeneutics, I move on to the second part of the research which is interviewing. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale 1996). During my exploration to pick a suitable research method, I found out that the combination of ‘literature reviews’ and ‘interviews’ can give me what I am looking for. While quoting writers like Denzin, Spradley and others, Berg says, “Usually, interviewing is defined simply as a conversation with a purpose. Specifically, the purpose is to gather information (Berg 2001)”.

After going through different authors, their literary works and understanding there approach to the topic I am interested in; I would jump into a bit more subjectivity with the help of interviewing people because, in my opinion, direct interaction through qualitative interviews
is the best way to get some insights that what other people think about my topic. Instead of objectivity and quantitative interviewing, I have chosen to utilize subjectivity and qualitative interviewing because this method can give me an opportunity to get a better understanding in short time. I have already selected three personalities to interview and I will introduce them in detail in chapter six. I believe interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses (McNamara 1999).

Interviews are a very common and standard method that is being used in research these days. I have planned to take professional and structured interviews. As, I will conduct expert interviews the identity of the interviewees will be made public and the readers will be introduced to the interviewees through their formal introduction. I will prepare a set of standard questions that I will ask from all the participants. This way will help me at the time of analyzing and comparing different answers and see the interpretation of each and every individual. There will always be some follow up questions, if I felt the need of some clarification or further explanation. The interviews will not be one sided interrogation like affair, but rather it will be a conversational atmosphere where the interviewee feels comfortable and at ease (Given 2008). Although, my interviews will be formal and structured, but I do not want them to look like very systematic, robotic and scientific interviews because I believe that if I make it extra formal I might not get a true answer and that is speaking from heart.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan اجتهاد is not being practiced these days. In some cases when it is being practiced, the religious leaders use the same old books written hundreds of years back for inspiration. “The curricula of the madrasas are regulated by their respective boards, and
have not undergone any significant changes in their core content since inception in the 19th century (Ahmad 2009, 05). Majority of these scholars do not have any formal education, so their *fatwas*\(^{11}\) (an opinion of a Muslim scholar on an issue) do not match with the needs of today. “Their understanding of the modern world is limited because teaching of modern subjects, games, literature, art and extracurricular activities are always ignored in most of the *madrassas*\(^{12}\) (Iqbal & Raza 2015)”. I will have to focus on the essence and the meaning of the sacred text by conducting purposeful interviews of these selected scholars. A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level (Kvale 1996).

Along with impartiality, another thing that I would like to focus on is not being manipulative to get desired results. I have to be very empathetic and flexible. The interviews will be recorded and will remain in the archive that is why the participants will be informed beforehand so that if they do not want to share any personal thing, they can let me know. This way, I can gain more trust and it can result into more sincere answers (Given 2008). A benefit of recorded interview is not to worry about remembering what the person said or note taking and fully concentrate on the questions, follow up questions and interviewees. Another benefit of recording is that I will have the accurate data in hand once I convert the interview into transcripts. There is a chance that the interviewees give an answer that can put them in danger. So, it is important to be empathetic, flexible and open to them (Given 2008).

\(^{11}\) A ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority

\(^{12}\) A religious school
Every time that I will have an interview, I will send an introduction of myself, the thesis and an overview of the topics that will be discussed during the interview. The reason behind this is that they can mentally get ready about what they are going to face in the interview and also if they want to discuss with someone about being part of the interview or not they can do that in advance, but once the interview will start I will inform them once again that the interview is being recorded (Given 2008). As I grew up in Pakistan and I am affected by incidents around, my interviewees will be from Pakistan and Muslims, so that they can understand the topic in detail and understand where I am coming from.

To have an overview, my questions will vary from being very personal to cultural, socio-political and religious. To get to a personal level I would start with their bio-data and personal story. I will ask if they have ever gone through a situation where they have felt that they were being manipulated either by religion or culture. This will give a clear perspective of where do they stand in regards to my research topic. The second and the most important part of my questions is about their understanding of culture and religion and how different they are from each other and what influences do they have on our lives.

I will try to focus on the role of a family in a child’s life, its impact in the longer run and family’s rights religiously and culturally. My next focus would be on knowing how family influences their personal, social and professional life and behavior. I do not have any predetermined viewpoint who is right and who is wrong and I do not approach my research from this angle, but I would like to know from their point of view how do they perceive the collectivism of our society and the behavior of parents towards their children and also the role of religion in this entire scenario. I will also ask them what benefits do they see of being a collective society and what is not beneficial.
2.5.1 Prearrangements

I will make sure that device is working and sound system is functioning. The atmosphere in our surroundings is quiet and the interviewee is feeling comfortable. I will ask if the interviewee is fine with the settings or he/she wants to change anything. A friendly atmosphere is necessary for such conversational interviews, so I establish a friendly contact with the interviewee.

2.5.2 Interview

First Phase:

I start the interview by informing the interviewee that this interview is being conducted only for academic purpose and will not be used anywhere else except in this research on the topic of ‘Islam & Pakistan: The Way I Understand’. The interviewee will also be informed on tape that the interview is being recorded for the convenience of interviewer and interviewee, but he/she does not feel comfortable their name will be kept secret. The interview will last not more than an hour and if he/she is fine with it or has any question.

Second Phase:

-Would you like to introduce yourself and share your academic and professional background with us?

-Could you tell us about your family background, where did you grow up and how was the atmosphere in your surroundings, religious, moral or liberal?

-Have you ever felt frustrated because you wanted to do something as a child, adolescent or adult, but you could not because of the cultural or religious norms? How did you feel?

-Have you ever forced to do something in the name of culture or religion that you did not want to do it (influencing or pressurizing emotionally, mentally or physically) and it changed your life in either way negative or positive?

Third Phase:
-What is culture and what is religion for you? How do you differentiate between them?

-What role a family, religion and culture play in a child’s life? How much were you influenced by these three in your life?

-What do you think about collectivism of our society? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

-What is your opinion on family taking decisions for an individual without his/her consent or emotionally, mentally, physically influencing or pressurizing him/her?

-What Islam says about it and do you agree or disagree with it?

-What do you think of using Islam for political purposes as it has been used during Pakistan movement, during Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s time against Ahmadis/Qadianis, against Bhutto by Jamaat-e-Islami, Islamizing the constitution of Pakistan or using Islam by General Zia to remain in power?

-What is your take on Hudood Ordinance?

How do you see Pakistan being used as a strategic battle field during the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan by General Zia?

-What do you think about *ijtihad* and why do you think Pakistani religious leaders do not practice *ijtihad*?

-What is your opinion about Osama Bin Laden and General Zia, their brand of *Jihad* and the policy of intolerance?

-How do you see Pakistani society of nowadays and back in 1950s and 1960s? Have you observed or read any differences in being more tolerant, open and relational?

Concluding Remarks

-I would like to thank you for your time and effort

-This is the end of official interview.

### 2.6 Analyzing Data

As one of the research method that I am going to use in this research is qualitative interviews. This method provides new but different insights because they open a window of social opinion and give an opportunity to people to reflect upon various subjects in their own way (Folkestad 2008). Due to this reason, I have decided to interview people who are directly involved in the
system I was raised in, these people can understand what I am talking about. The key point here is that these people not only bring new insights and resonance, but they can contribute by providing favorable or contrary arguments (Yin 1994).

After collecting data through interviews the challenge comes when a researcher wants to analyze it. Analyzing data is always a very crucial step in a research. Sometimes, researcher has to interview large groups, so putting this data all together and analyzing it can be quite challenging. For the data analysis of this research paper, I want to use thematic analysis as it is considered one of the most appropriate and comprehensive when it comes to interpreting and understanding different interviews, explanations and observations.

“Thematic Analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretations. It provides a systematic element to data analysis. It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole content. This will confer accuracy and intricacy and enhance the research’s whole meaning. Qualitative research requires understanding and collecting diverse aspects and data (Alhojailan 2012, p.10)”.

Although, thematic analysis is a bit more complex than the framework data analysis, as it is more detailed. Thematic Analysis gives an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely (Marks & Yardley 2004). Once I have collected the data through interviews, I will have to process it according to Braun and Clarke’s model. Their theoretical positioning on this method says that it is a way of identifying, analyzing and reporting set pattern or themes within a specific data (Braun & Clarke 2006). This research method of analyzing data is very specific and detailed, that is why I decided to choose this method the others that I have considered before. This method also gives me the opportunity to look into the data collected during the interviews from two perspectives, data-driven perspective and consistency in the provided information.
Thematic data analysis is very to the point when it comes to research investigation, “rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 97). Another important factor about this method is the identification of themes or patterns in the collected data. Theme is something that contains the main idea of the data that can relate to the research question or inquiry and it also shows particular patterns in the information collected during the interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2006). One of the focuses of my research is also looking at the established patterns and beliefs in my family and community; see if they affect anyone and if they do, how? So I believe that this method will provide me some deep insights.

I would like give an outline of the content that my readers will come across in this thesis. In the first chapter, I have already provided my personal perspective, where I come from, how I have grown, what I have been through and how I relate to Islam. This chapter that is the second chapter will explain research topic, research question, ontology, epistemology and the method(s) used to understand the topic (this chapter). The literature that I will use during this research, the method that I will utilize to analyze and conclude the data collected through the literature review and interviews will also be discussed later in this chapter.

In third chapter, I will give a brief history and origin of Islam, main crux of a religion, my personal understanding of religion, Islam’s current narrative and the differences with my understanding or the understanding of some scholars around the globe. In the fourth chapter, I will also talk about Pakistan, its historical background, its political or cultural influences in religious understanding and the role of its background in the current Islamic worldview. In chapter five, I will explain my understanding of the philosophy of peace and conflict studies used in our MA program and its link to Islam. I have tried to critically explore the link between the
transrational philosophy that is taught at the School of Peace and Conflict Studies in Innsbruck-Austria and Islam.

It is important to have a look at the sources used in the current Islamic worldview and analyze epistemological and ontological values of these sources. In chapter six, I will present the data that I have collected through personal interviews about their personal experiences, about Islam, its historical background and their take on different issues. These interviews will provide the readers with an opportunity to understand in depth fundamentalist and traditionalist Islamic worldview and whether it complies with the actual narrative or not. These interviews will also explain the methods of religious interpretation and application. The seventh and the last chapter will conclude the thesis and share the information collected throughout the thesis.
Chapter-3

3. Islam: The Way I Understand

“Say, O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah. But if they turn away, then say, Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him] (Quran 3:64)”.

Life is incredible, think of the hope carried by a newborn baby; we all rejoice, yet we know the baby will go through challenges that will eventually help him/her to become a role model of their own and to discover who they really are. In my opinion, some things can scare us for life but we cannot quit living, even if we do want to quit there is too many loose ends to tie up and with grace some tie them up before giving in. So, in an effort to make these loose ends meet or at least to make them understand, I will try to explain in this chapter that what is Islam for me and from an oldest or universal religion how it has become just a rigid, authoritative, moralistic and patriarchal religion.

As I have mentioned earlier, I was born in a very religious Muslim family in 1980, the era when Islamization was flourishing under General Zia-ul-Haq’s dictatorship. It was the time when religious and regional intolerance was on its peak. Seed of extremism was already sown. Shia Sunni division was getting louder and louder while ‘crush India’s’ slogans and batches were a symbol of patriotism. “It is apparent to every keen eye that the greatest issue faced by Pakistan in current times is religious extremism. […] Hundreds of children, adults and old people have fallen prey to it (Ghamidi 2015, 64)”’. Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan and Pakistan had gained so much importance for the west as it had become a strategic planning field.
“Islamabad decided to become a party to the war at the behest of the West to achieve its own strategic goals - to expand its area of operation in Afghanistan to counter Indian influence. Haq promoted a hard-line Islamic ideology in his country and cracked down on liberal political groups and activists. He expected the West to turn a blind eye to grave human rights violations in Pakistan, as he believed he was doing a favor to the US by fighting its proxy war in Afghanistan (Shams 2016).”

Although, I have a completely different views about General Zia, but many right-wing supporters hail people like Zia-ul-Haq and Bin Laden as their heroes. “His supporters – mostly right-wing Pakistanis - hail him as ‘hero’ who had prevented a wider Soviet incursion in the South Asian region (Shams 2016)”. Islam played a very important role in my upbringing and forming my character, but it is also a fact that my quest to know more generates lots of questions in my mind and I do not sit aside until I get an answer, so, I did the same with my religion as well.

During my teen age, when I would see the misery of people, when I would see social, economical or religious injustice; I used to wonder that how come God has created such a strict and inhuman laws. I could not understand that why in our society men have all the powers and women are not given equal opportunities? Why people are beaten to death if they ask question about the existence of God or why questioning faith is a blasphemy? Why people are forced to marry in the name of Islam or women are covered from top to toe? In this chapter, first I would like to present the current narrative of Islam and then I will explain what Islam means to me and where I have differences with this narrative.

3.1 Arrival of Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent

“The term ‘Muslim’ is of Arabic origin, and it means a person who submits to the will of God. More specifically, this person is a member of a community (Ummah) of people who profess to believe, however nominally, in the credo of the religion of Islam, again an Arabic term meaning ‘submission’ or ‘peace’. This religion
was founded in Arabia in the early seventh century CE by a remarkable person, Muhammad (570–632 CE), who combined in him the qualities of a mystic, visionary, soldier, statesman and humanitarian (Avari 2013, 01)

Before the Arab invasion in Sindh in 711 CE, India consisted of various kingdoms and dynasties. Hindus and Buddhists were the dominant religion of the region. The empire of Guptas and Hindu-Buddhist kingdom were the two biggest states of the area. Arabs invaded the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in 711 CE and ruled for three hundred years (Avari 2013, 08-09). This was the time when Arab Muslims landed on the soil of the Indian Subcontinent as invaders. Sindh was ruled by Umayyad dynasty, Abbasids, Shia Ismaili sect and then local Sindhi Arabs respectively (Avari 2013, 09).

Later on around 1000 CE, Turkish-Afghan warlords and Central Asian Turkish slaves started the further invasions in the Indian Subcontinent. Mahmud Ghaznavi and his successors were the ones who attacked India on regular basis and conquered the areas which are currently a part of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In the twelfth century, Ghurids managed to invade Northern part of India. In 1206 CE, some of Ghaznavi and Ghurid leaders decided to continue the operation of invasion and it resulted into the formation of a very famous Delhi Sultanate from 1206-1526 CE (Avari 2013, 09).

The Mughal Empire that was started by Babur the Uzbek warlord from Afghanistan continued flourishing for a couple of centuries before its tragic end in the hands of British. After Mughal Empire, some Muslims and non-Muslim dynasties survived for a few decades; the struggle between France and Britain for colonial dominance ended with France getting defeated around 1750 CE, but British presence dominated the region in the form of East India Company and later the British forces took over completely. They remained there until 1947 (Avari 2013).
3.2 Current Narrative of Islam

Before going into the details that what do I think about religion, what does Islam mean to me and how I see the current narrative or established believes about Islam, I would like to talk about what is this current narrative says about Islam. The first thing that comes in my mind is the projection of Islam on mainstream media “Anyone learning about Islam from the headlines alone might think it was a faith powered by violence, inflexible laws, and sexism (Power 2015)”. If there is any incident of terrorism, sexual violence, racism, sexism or any other related issues and if the person who has committed the crime is from Muslim background, it will be immediately highlighted in the media. From Boko Haram in Nigeria and Taliban in Afghanistan to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are portrayed as believers of Islam and carriers of the legacy of Prophet Muhammad.

The topic of inequality, sexism and authoritarianism is also an important part of the debate. It is often said that Islam does not give equal rights to women and they are considered less important than men. “Most Muslim countries run on the premise that men have a God-given authority over women (Power 2015)”. It is a common practice in countries like Pakistan where men are considered to be the custodian of women or in Saudi Arabia where women were not allowed to drive or walk around in the clothes they feel comfortable with. Due to some cultural norms women have become a status of respect and honor for the families. If a women or man does anything that damages their cultural and societal honor then the result can be as extreme as killing someone for honor (Dawn 2018).

By now, it is very common to see Islam being used for political reasons. Although, it has happened everywhere in the world, but my focus is mainly on Pakistan. From Pakistan
movement and throwing out Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s government to jumping into Afghanistan’s internal matter and ending up catering freedom fighters like Osama Bin Laden was an attempt to use Islam for political reasons. Pakistan’s religiopolitical parties took lead “to capture power avowedly for the Islamization of Pakistan (Isani 2010, 02)”. Even before the partition, initially Pakistan movement was purely on political basis, but later on some religious forces were able to convince Mr. Jinnah that religion can play an important role in the creation of Pakistan, so it was decided to use Islam to gain popularity and achieve their political agenda. “Maududi and Allama Iqbal had a great affect on Jinnah and made him realize the potential of using the religious card in politics (Isani 2010, 12)”.

It is also believed that Islam promotes violence, sectarianism, radicalism and extremism. Its foundations are based on the principles that are inhumane or violate the basic rights like freedom of movement, freedom of speech and freedom of choice. “The Islamic State presents itself as the representative of authentic Islam as practiced by the early generations of Muslims - Salafism - and it draws on an especially strict brand of Salafism in particular, Wahhabism (Hassan 2016, 08)”. So, according to this ideology non-Muslims have only two options; accept Islam or get ready to be killed and Muslims also have only two options, to follow what the khalifa\(^\text{13}\) says or to get killed.

\(^{13}\) A premier leader of a Muslim community running according to the teachings of Islam
In general, Islam is considered to be a rigid entity in the West (Karim & Eid, 2012). We have seen in recent times that people who have written against Islam and especially against Prophet Muhammad they were targeted and many of them were even killed. These actions are being executed in the name of blasphemy. “The cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed, the prosecution of David Irving, the controversy surrounding the Abu Ghraib and Basra photos: each does present very different legal, ethical and historical issues. But at the heart of the debates and attendant violence of the last months are core questions: What are this right’s boundaries? (Callamard 2006, 02)”

These are the critical questions to ask, whether the disrespect according to a particular religious group should be punishable or not. It can be caricatures of Prophet Muhammad or talking about the Holocaust. It is not necessary what we see in the media is actually a fact or has some truth behind the news and also it can be a fact, the important thing is to verify it, before hundred percent believing in it. Later in the chapter, I will talk about my opinion on some core issues related to Islam and their understanding through the lenses of religion.

3.3 The Crux of Religion

Recitation and research of Quran shows that the crux of a religion lies in the worship of God and learning about the religious etiquettes. It does not tell us how to rule, how to force others to follow a particular path, how to do you daily activities or how to stop others of criticizing your God. Theses etiquettes include how to worship Him and how to avoid idolatry. According to Quran all living creatures were created to praise God Almighty. “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship ‘Me’ (Quran 51:56).”
On another occasion while explaining the purpose of the prophets and messengers of God Quran says, “We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut [Satan] (Quran 16:36)". According to Mr. Ghamidi along with praising God, religion’s other quality is to give directions and guide our inbuilt manners and ethics. The utmost objective of these ethics and manners is not to harm other and be truthful to your creator (Ghamidi 2017).

In Christianity and Judaism, it is also mentioned that God has created human beings to glorify Him. “But you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (Peter 02:09)”. While quoting Torah, Mr. Walter S. Wurtzburger in the book “Religion and Human Purpose - A Cross Disciplinary Approach”, also conveys almost the same message, when it says, “To be sure, the Jewish liturgy asserts that ‘God created everything for His glory (Wurtzburger 1987, 105)”.

A bit different than the aforementioned three religious scriptures, while talking about Hinduism, its historical background and philosophy Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru says that although it is hard to define the purpose of life, but “its essential spirit seems to be to live and let live (Nehru 1946, 75)”. He continues trying to explain what the purpose of Hinduism or religion per se is and he quotes Mahatma Gandhi by saying “If I were asked to define the Hindu creed, I should simply say: Search after truth through nonviolent means (Nehru 1946, 75)”.

Taking into consideration above mentioned spirit of a religion, I must say that prostrating, bowing, namaskar and praising can be a respectful way of showing and physically expressing gratitude and worshiping, but this is not the only way. Being a human, we live a complex life that is on one hand having a universe within ourselves and on the other hand we are
all connected to each other and to the external universe. It is not necessary to adopt any standardized way of showing gratitude, but any way that is done with sincerity, humility, authenticity and honesty can contain higher meanings. Religion is not there to teach socio-political etiquettes, morality or tell in bits that how a life should be lived, but it is to establish a connection to the Divine power and which manners can be used in order to establish a best possible connection. Prayer is a way to establish a connection with Allah with humility and servility (Ghamidi 2010).

3.4 My Understanding of Religion

In my opinion, religion is longing for inner peace and a set of rituals to attain inner peace. During a personal interview Professor Wolfgang Palaver said that “Every human being by nature is religious or spiritual” and when I asked that what is religion for him? He replied: “A deeper longing for fulfillment (Palaver 2018)”. It is there to establish a connection between human beings and their creator. I understand religion a way of life without any social or cultural pressure. It gives the followers liberty to use their free will and no one has any authority over others to punish them for not following religion in a certain way. “There shall be no compulsion in the religion (Quran 2:256)”.

In Pakistan, it is difficult to follow any concept of Islam that is not in agreement with already established schools of thoughts. The reason behind this attitude is that religious leaders have stopped doing *ijtihad*. Nowadays, Pakistani society is in need to clearly understand and clarify legitimate, socio-economical and religio-political issues of the modern world. The person who has inspired me and who is one of the biggest advocates of *ijtihad* is Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. As his principal source of reference is Quran, so here is what Quran, *hadith* (sayings of
Prophet Muhammad) and Mr. Ghamidi talk about *ijtihad*. When people came to Prophet David and Solomon regarding a dispute; although there was no clear law that who should be penalized, they decided the matter with their wisdom.

“And [mention] David and Solomon, when they judged concerning the field - when the sheep of a people overran it [at night], and We were witness to their judgment. And We gave understanding of the case to Solomon, and to each [of them] We gave judgment and knowledge (Quran 21:78-79”).

Mr. Ghamidi writes:

“The term *ijtihad* has originated from a Hadith [...] it is one of its sentences which has become a source of this all important term of Islamic jurisprudence. It is reported that when the Prophet (sws) sent forth Mu‘adh (rta) to Yemen as its governor, he asked him: "How will you decide matters?" He replied: "I will revert to the Book of God." The Prophet (sws) then asked: "If you do not find anything in the Book of God?" Mu‘adh replied: "I will look into the Sunnah of the Messenger of God." The Prophet (sws) next asked: "If you do not even find it there?" At this, Mu‘adh responded by saying: "آجتهد برأي و لا آلو جهدا" (I will form an opinion after expending full effort and will not leave any stone unturned” (Ghamidi 2015, 45)."

In different religious scriptures it is stated that religion is a divine entity and it is revealed to teach humans the ethics of life. These ethics are not to harm anyone, but to guide through life. During the course, humans use them to benefit from them and start mixing their personal agendas of right and wrong. Slowly, these manmade laws are considered and declared to be divine, but actually are a human product wrapped in the name of religion and religion has nothing to do with them. It is sad that people do not understand the difference between religion, state and culture, so there is often a chance that the difference between culture, state and religion gets blurred.

Although, three of them are interconnected and influence each other but they cannot be taken as alternatives of each other. This confusion’s end result is not that attractive. Different interpretations lead to different outcomes and some of them are extremely radical. “The monster
of extremism did not descend on us from the heavens; it is in fact the vile product of the religious thought that is taught in our religious seminaries under the topics of implementation of the *shari‘ah* and armed *Jihad* (Ghamidi, 2015, 64)”. Unfortunately, most of Muslims just talk about the armed *Jihad* that is “assigned the ‘Lesser Jihad’ (Ahmad 2006, 40)” and do not talk about the *Jihad* that is “Greater *Jihad* (Ahmad 2006, 40)”.

“The *Greater Jihad* was that which one undertook within the self and society - to conquer greed and malice, hates and anger, ego and hubris, above all to achieve piety, moral integrity, and spiritual perfection. The great sufis invested in the concept an even deeper meaning of striving to subjugate the Self (*Jihad bi nafsihi*) to the service of the creator and His creation (Ahmad 2006, 40)”.

According to my understanding Islam does not preach hatred, bloodshed or extremism, but it asks to focus on oneself and it talks about a constant transformation. It can be personal, spiritual, financial, physical or mental transformation. Whoever enters into it and understands its spirit, goes through different stages and each and every stage is a transformation in its own. Islam says that the greatest struggle is to work with you ego that is “I” according to Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich. It is easier to work with something external, but to understand outer world the first step is to understand your ego. Some people need an extreme labor and discipline to achieve this landmark.

“From the times of the prophet Mohammed it is documented that *Jihad* does not necessarily have to be equated with the force of weapons: “the best *Jihad* is the word of truth and right in front of an unjust ruler” the prophet declared. Haneef further defines a primary or greater, inner *Jihad* and a secondary, lesser or outer *Jihad*. The former is the struggle against one’s own inadequacies and deficiencies, against egoism and drives. The armed struggle for the spread of Islam, in contrast, is considered the lesser *Jihad* (Dietrich 2012, p.111)"
3.5 What is Islam?

Before going into a detailed discussion, I would like to mention that as I take universe as a whole, so mankind, religions and other things are part of that larger whole. I believe that in the beginning we were not created in bulk, but in singles or in pairs, so religion was one of these early creations. Although, every single creation of God has its individual identity, but it loses the importance, if it is put their somewhere in the space individually on its own; it needs other relational beings to get to its full potential. For me it does not make any sense to focus only on individuality and leave holistic approach aside that is why I believe that there was just only one religion in the beginning and later on it got divided as human beings were divided into different tribes and races.

Religion was not so different as well, so there was just only one religion in the beginning. We can debate on the names of the religion that existed or was created in the beginning, but I believe majority will agree with me on this point that there was just one religion. For me the name can be Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism or any other, but the objective of each and every religion remains the same. Up to date the oldest know religion is Hinduism (Nehru 1946). If we look deeper into the meaning, objective and crux of any religion it is very similar to each other, but in spirit it is the same. Evolution, development, progress and difference of opinion has brought diversity in this universe and these different races, tribes, nations and religions are part of this diversity.

Talking about the same diversity God says “and if Allah willed, He could have made them [of] one religion (Quran 42:08)”, but He did not made us same and did not made only one religion. He has given us will power, difference of opinion and free will to choose whatever is
beneficial for us. It is sad that we do not value these differences and do not see the beauty in this diversity. Now, I would like to dig deeper into the meaning, history and objectivity of religion. So, I will take the example of Islam as I identify more with it.

Islam (إسلام) means submission; this word is derived from an Arabic word ‘aslama or SLM’ which means (to submit, to surrender), so in short it means someone submits to God is called Muslim (Ahmed 2016, 05). There is a myth among Muslims that Islam means peace “Islam, literally meaning peace (Malik 2008, 15)”, but it actually is not. It is a common belief that “this religion was founded in Arabia in the early seventh century CE by a remarkable person, Muhammad (570–632 CE), who combined in him the qualities of a mystic, visionary, soldier, statesman and humanitarian (Avari 2013, 01)”, but I believe through the readings and understanding of the religion that Jews, Christians and Muhammadans (Followers of Islam after Prophet Muhammad) are different branches of the same religion (Ghamidi 2016).

“And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House [Abraham prayed]: “Our Lord! Accept this from us; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord! Make us Muslims and raise from our descendants a Muslim nation. Show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the accepting of repentance, the Merciful” (Quran 2:127-128). On another occasion in Quran God says: “[It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people” (Quran 22:78).

According to the hadith (Saying/Quote) of Prophet Muhammad, narrated by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal that over one hundred and twenty-four thousand Messengers of God were sent to the mankind. In the Bible only fifty-five were mentioned and in the Holy book of
Muslims ‘Quran’ only twenty-five Prophets were named (Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, hadith No. 21257). All these Prophets brought the details of our religion through the Holy books like: Vedas, Puranas, Bhagavad Gita, Zabur, Torah, Bible and Quran. These books and the Prophets taught us how to worship and follow the commandments of God, because in the start of civilization these details can only be known by the way of revelation. I believe the most important fundamentals that the Messengers brought from God are the same.

On the basis of these fundamentals, I would say that all the divine revelations to the Prophets have had the absolutely same objectives, which are: To affirm the Oneness and uniqueness of God; to protect the welfare of the humans and to oppose/out root the corruption, injustice and evil. Religion also should protect our faith, our existence, intellect, wealth and heritage. And anything that risks these five universal needs should be banned and forbidden. It encourages everyone at the top level of good deeds, law-abiding values and respectable customs. If we look into all religious scriptures and examine them carefully, we will be able to identify all these commonalities in them. It also shows that the origin of religion is the same, but we human have divided them into different entities. It makes me sad that if our origins are the same then why we do not live with our differences peacefully.

One of the most moderate scholars of Islam Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, while answering a question on Television says that God has just created one religion right from the start, but with the passage of time people started to have differences in their opinions. That is why God sent different prophets, whose duty was to remind people about God and their duties on earth. He says that no prophet has ever brought any different religion and he has never given any other name then Islam (Ghamidi 2018). This is why in my opinion, we can call it Islam, Abrahamic religions or we can give it a different name, but its objective is the same and Jews, Christians,
Vedantist (Hindus)\textsuperscript{14} and Muhammadans (Followers of Islam after Prophet Muhammad) are different branches of the same religion. In the beginning, it was the same, but with the passage of time it kept changing and got divided into different religions. “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists (Quran 3:67)”.

\textbf{3.6 My Differences in Understanding Islam}

When it comes to the differences in understanding Islam as compare to many other country-fellows the list is huge. In this subchapter, I would like to highlight some of the differences that I have and that I would like to create awareness among the masses. Although, each one of these issues needs much more attention than this and I can write a whole book only on the differences which I will write someday, but here I would put them forward and through debate and research would like to come to some sort of conclusion that can help me to go a step further in my other researches in the years to come.

Newly elected government of economically devastated and war against terrorism torn Pakistan in 2018 decided to form an economic advisory committee. It included 18 renowned economists of the world and gave them the task to guide the government on the issues related to economics and to improve them. Immediately after its formation, news started circulating on social media that one of its members Mr. Atif Rehman Mian is ‘Ahmadi/Qadiani\textsuperscript{15} from a

\textsuperscript{14} Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book “The Discovery of India”, writes that the word Hindu can be traced back in a Tantrik work in the eighth century A.C. where it means people living in a geographical land and not followers of a religion. The word is derived from Sindhu, just like Hindu, Hindustan (means India in Hindi language), Indus and India (Nehru 1946, 74-75)”.

\textsuperscript{15} A Muslim sect that considers itself Muslim, but Pakistani constitution says it is not
religious minority. This news hit Pakistan like a storm and many voices from all walks of life were raised in favor and against the decision.

“There are several million Ahmadis, who, despite their own identification as a Muslim sect, were officially declared a minority as a result of their own specific views on the finality of prophethood. Pakistan’s parliament had passed legislation declaring them a minority in 1974, and their leadership eventually sought shelter in London (Malik 2008, 17).”

The saddest part of the story is the legal system of Pakistan. Constitution of Pakistan on one side protects the rights of civilians and on the other side it takes away their rights.

“No citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of any such appointment on the ground of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth (Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Article 27:01, 15).”

Initially, the government of Pakistan that is considered to represent very educated, enlightened and moderate class of Pakistan responded to the discrimination and stated that it will not be dictated by any extremist school of thought, but after a couple of days it succumbed to the pressure. Although, government had good intentions behind that, but in the past Islam was used to legitimate the anarchies “in a Muslim society anarchy is created on the basis of religion (Ghamidi 2015, 148),” so it has become a norm of the society to use religion as a tool to deal with different issues. It has outflanked even the celebrities and intellectuals of the society. Just to show a glimpse of a polarized mindset that has been developed using education system, below are some recent tweets of a female pop singer Rabi Pirzada and a retired senior judge of Pakistan Supreme Court.
“Qadianis are apostates; if standing against them is extremism then I am extremist” (Translated by the author)

People who are appreciating the intelligence of ‘Mian Atif’, I would just say this for them that if Mian Atif had brain, he would not be a Qadiani (Translated by the author) and the person who like the tweet is a minister of National Assembly of Pakistan and a lawyer by profession.

I have been travelling around from last twelve years and during this period I have been through lots of ups and downs. Whenever I go back to Pakistan or I talk to my friends and family, I have realized that Islam has become a maneuvering tool. At a local level or national level people and
politicians use it and abuse it to protect their personal benefits. “In Pakistan Islam has been a refuge of troubled and weak leaders, as the country has suffered - increasingly over five decades (Ahmad 2006, 30)”. Can it be Quranic verse, Prophet Muhammad’s hadiths or founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s viewpoint; everything can be distorted and used the way someone wants to use it. “However, much his former detractors and new-found followers attempt to distort his views (Ahmad 2006, 30)”.

In Islam, it absolutely against Quranic laws and it is condemnable act to distort any information and use it for personal objectives. Checking the validity of any news that gets to us is our duty. “O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful (Quran 49:06)”. About distorting the facts Quran says, “if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted (Quran 4:135)”.

One of the contradictions in Pakistan’s constitution that I do not agree with is between article 27, 41 and 260. As I have mentioned earlier that article 27 of the constitution protects the rights of a common citizen and talks against any discrimination and I totally agree that a state is responsible to provide each and every citizen equal opportunities, but article 260 where it defines who is a Muslim and article 41 that says a non-Muslim cannot be a president of Pakistan takes away the rights of the citizens given by the constitution.

“A person shall not be qualified for election as President unless he is a Muslim (Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Article 41:02, 21)”. “Muslim” means a person who believes in the unity and oneness of Almighty Allah, in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last of the prophets, and does not believe in, or recognize as a prophet or religious reformer, any person who claimed or claims to be a prophet […] “non-Muslim” means a person who is not a Muslim and includes a person belonging to the
Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist [...] 'Ahmadis' or by any other name (Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Article 260:03A-B, 155-156)

Originally, when the current constitution of Pakistan was drafted and approved by the National Assembly this point of Ahmadis being a non-Muslim was not part of it, but later on in 1974 through the second constitutional amendment is was introduced. According to Nadeem Farooq Paracha a renowned Pakistani writer and journalist, in the general election of 1970 Ahmadis voted for Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. His falling popularity in the left-wing corridors of political sphere and some other political realities of that time pushed him towards the second amendment (Paracha 2013).

“If some Muslims of the world declare themselves as Muslims and, in fact, insist on this and adopt a belief or deed which is not approved by one or more scholars or the rest of the Muslims, then this deed or belief of theirs can be regarded as incorrect and even a deviation and departure from Islam, yet these people cannot be regarded as non-Muslims or disbelievers (kuffar) because these people adduce their views from the Qur'an and Hadith. For the ruling of God on such beliefs and deeds, we must wait for the Day of Judgement (Ghamidi 2015, 150).

In my opinion, religion is someone’s personal matter and any government, state or person has nothing to do with it. An individual shall be free to choose whatever he/she wills. “The message of Islam is primarily addressed to an individual (Ghamidi 2015, 148)”. A state shall be free from any concept of religion or spirituality as it is just an administrative unit that protects the rights of people. “They shall be provided with all the essential facilities [...] they will be governed with justice and fairness on the principles of amruhum shura baynahum (their system is based on their consultation). Their public wealth and assets shall be reserved for the collective needs (Ghamidi 2015, 142)”.

While talking about state and its responsibilities, if I do not talk about the conception or misconception of a joint Muslim state, which I do not agree with, then it would not be fair. As in
the recent times with the rise of terrorist organizations like Islamic State or Tehrik-e-Taliban the concept of Khilafat (Islamic State) has become a talk of the town. I do not think so that Islam has ever used this term as an ‘Islamic term’ or Quran has ever referred to Muslim to establish a Khilafat. From Islamic history we can examine that even immediately after the death of Prophet Muhammad; his companions formed two separate kingdoms and they remained in existence for centuries (Ghamidi 2015, 149). If no modern or traditional Muslim scholar regarded those kingdoms as un-Islamic then there is no reason to call the modern concept of nation state un-Islamic.

Unfortunately, “the Muslim states also argue that Islam is both a religion and scheme of law (Shah 2006, 02)”, but as it has been mentioned before, in my opinion, Islam’s message is for each and every individual and not groups or nation; it is also extremely important to mention that Islam is not a legal or social system and Quran is not a legal or scientific book. It is revealed to understand ourselves, our inner capacities and capabilities to connect within and with outer world and also to develop ethics and manners in order to live a life without harming others. People who think that Islam is a governing code of conduct or a way of life that covers each sphere of life and Quran is a scientific or banking book, they are mistaken.

“If at some place a Muslim government exists, it is generally asked to implement the shari'ah. This expression is misleading because it gives the impression that Islam has given the right to a government to forcibly implement all the directives of the shari'ah on people. The fact is that the Qur'an and Hadith do not give this authority to any government (Ghamidi 2015, 155)”.

Using the same concept that Mr. Ghamidi is referring to, many governments have used religion to achieve their objectives. One of its examples is cold war between the US and former Soviet Union. Although, in the next chapter I will talk more about cold war and its political
implications, but here I would like to mention that according to former secretary of state and presidential nominee of the US Mrs. Hilary Clinton the talibans were created to defeat and get rid of Soviet Union and it was a successful mission (Dawn 2009).

Continuing with the same line, another topic that emerges and concerns me is the issue of treating children in the religious schools called ‘madrassas’. They also use Islam as tool to protect their vested interest. These madrassas recruit children from poor background and treat them inhumanly. According to the annual report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflicts, covering the January-December 2017 period says, “In Pakistan, the United Nations continued to receive reports of the recruitment and use of children, including from madrasas, and allegations of the use of children by armed groups for suicide attacks (Firstpost 2018)”.

In the above mentioned act of brutality, parents also play a very important role. Although, parents decide things about the lives of children, but they do not ask or involve them in their
decision and Islam does not allow such things. Parents sometime forget that forcing children can make them distant and it also leave negative impact on children. It is a very common practice in Pakistan, can it be marital life, educational career or professional life, family’s pressure always plays a very crucial role. “In spite of the status that Islam confers upon parents, they do not have the right to force their children (Ghamidi 2010)”.

And if you are a woman then it gets even harder. “Controlling women’s sexuality to uphold antediluvian notions of family honour is a common motivation for forced marriages that end in violence, rape and even murder (Dawn 2018)” It is a pity that some people want to bring their personal patriarchal, authoritarian and male chauvinistic thoughts under the umbrella of Islam. It not only damages the reputation of a religion globally, but also creates doubts and resistance among the followers. Some Muslim scholar says that God has said in Quran that “men are in charge of women (Quran 4:34)”, but:

“They have taken Koranic verses out of context and read them literally, ignoring the fact that the Koran often uses symbolic language to portray deep truths. Another significantly important point to keep in view while interpreting these verses is the liberating thrust of the Koran: liberating human beings from tribalism, traditionalism, sexism, racism (Shah 2006, 45)”

These people tend to forget the historic fact that at the time Quran was revealed Arab society was indulged into the activities which were degrading women. It was revealed to bring the women back to mainstream and give them respect. While quoting Ahmad Hassan, a research writer Niaz A. Shah says, “The focus of the Koran is more on women than on men for much Koranic legislation is designed to ensure that women are treated with justice in the home and in society (Shah 2006, 45-46)”. He continues his arguments and regrets that “the male and conservative interpreters of the Koran ignore this fact (Shah 2006, 46)”.
I agree with Mr. Shah when he says that there are two reasons behind this male chauvinistic approach and making it a bigger national policy. Number one is the biased attitude of male scholars as well as of common men of the society who benefit from it. Because portraying this as an Islamic idea gives them the right to put women behind the walls and do household things. The other reason is that governments always try to adopt a popular stance to avoid public resistance as I have already mentioned before while talking about the case of an Ahmadi Muslim economist Mr. Atif Mian. Strong hold of politico-religious parties also plays an important role in making governments think twice before doing such things (Shah 2006, 46).

Another issue that disturbs me a lot in the current setting and the viewpoint of majority Pakistani Muslim scholars is the creation and misuse of blasphemous laws. The way this law has been made and implemented it has no roots in Islamic teaching or sources like Quran or Hadiths. According to Mr. Ghamidi the possible basis of this law, in the opinion of some scholars, are the two verses of Quran (Ghamidi 2015, 258) where God says that people who wage war against Allah or Prophet Muhammad they should be punished severely because for them there will a great disgrace in this world and a punishment in the hereafter, but if they repent just forgive them (Quran 5:33-34).

In my opinion, these verses refer to someone who has declared a war against Allah and his messenger and not developing a simple disagreement. If someone has a different opinion, does not agree with Allah or Prophet Muhammad, openly criticized them, ridicule them through cartoons, poetry or other ways or consider their acts or words against human rights; it can be his/her stance, but it is not a punishable act. It is not just or logical if a person who justifies his
actions or a person who might have done something wrong unknowingly can be punished by the law (Ghamidi 2015, 259).

It is also important to note that in the verses (5:33-34) Quran does not bind Muslim leaders to make it a law and give capital punishment. In Quran, capital punishment can be given only on two offences. One, if someone disrupts, disturbs and challenges the writ of the government in a way that it poses threat to the lives of people and property. Two, if someone kills another human being (Ghamidi 2015, 259). With the current laws of blasphemy and capital punishment, I do not think that all these points were taken into consideration. It is necessary that the “narratives related to punishment for blasphemy that are often cited also need to be understood correctly (Ghamidi 2015, 260)”.

“Muslims have historically evolved into various sects. The Sunnis account for an overwhelming majority, followed by Shias, who make up 10–15 percent of the total Muslim population. Despite common beliefs and practices with their Sunni co-religionists, Shias allocate the highest status to Ali, whereas Sunnis, despite a great respect for Muhammad’s son-in-law, still accord respect to his other companions. These two larger sects further include numerous denominations (Malik 2008, 15)”.

These two sects Shias and Sunnis have some serious conflict in between for centuries. Most of people whether Muslims or not, know about the issue and most of them believe that the rift between Shias and Sunnis is a religious one, but in my opinion it is purely based on political and personal animosity. In her book “After the Prophet: The Epic Story of Shia Sunni Split in Islam” Lesley Hazleton writes that during Prophet Muhammad’s illness the rift between Hazrat Ali (Shias) and Hazrat Aisha (Sunnis) started. She states that as the conflict between different family members surfaced the seed of division had been sown (Hazleton 2009).
Immediately, after Prophet Muhammad’s death and before his burial a meeting of tribal leaders and closed companions of Prophet Muhammad called *shura*\(^\text{16}\) was called to decide who will be the next leader of Muslims and who will get what and this made one of his companion and cousin Hazrat Ali very angry. There were two groups among the Muslims, one of people from Mecca and the other from Medina. When the tension mount between both groups, there was a suggestion to have two separate leader, but Prophet Muhammad’s close companions Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Omar insisted that they want one leader for the whole Muslim world (Hazleton 2009).

Although, in his life Prophet Muhammad wished that after him Hazrat Ali will be the best candidate for leadership, but *shura* thought that as Hazrat Ali is Prophet Muhammad’s cousin so to avoid the family hierarchy the leadership should go to someone else. Once the decision was made in favor of Hazrat Abu Bakr the fights erupted and later there was a famous battle between Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Aisha called ‘The Battle of the Camel’ (Hazleton 2009). From these incidents, one can see that there are no religious differences between Shias and Sunnis, but only political and personal likings and disliking were the cause of this rift. Later it was tailored to look like religious differences to achieve personal motives and nowadays in Pakistan both groups call each other non-Muslims and on this basis they kill each other. This is completely against the teachings of Quran, “hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided (Quran 3:103)”.

In 1979, a military dictator General Zia-u-Haq who is the master mind behind the

\[^{16}\text{A consultative council}\]
militancy, sectarianism and polarization in Pakistan (I will talk about him in detail in the next chapter) decided to introduce a law pertaining sexual offences labeled as ‘Hudood Ordinance\textsuperscript{17}’. 

\textit{Hudood} means limit or boundary and \textit{Hudood} laws were meant to limits of an acceptable behavior. In the light of these laws, any sexual act committed outside a legal marriage is considered a crime. According to this law even a rape victim will have to proof his/her innocence otherwise he/she will be punished. “This law was considered intrinsically misogynistic since its application resulted in women being convicted of adultery/fornication if they reported a case of rape (Dawn 2011)”.

“In addition to other problems created by these laws, their judicial application also made it easier to get away with crimes against women such as honour killings and general degradation and humiliation of women in society (Dawn 2011)”. I cannot say much about the intentions behind these laws although they represent a misogynistic mindset, but one thing I am pretty much sure is that these laws badly affected the integrity and freedom of Pakistani women. Everyone was handed in the license to kill a girl and name it as honor killing or rape victim survivors would not go to the court as they were bound to provide four pious men to prove their case. “If the accused confessed before the trial court or if there were four adult Muslim male witnesses who met an Islamic test of probity (Dawn 2011)”.

This dance of bloodshed got so much enrooted in the minds of some Pakistanis who were raised in that era that we can see the footprints even now and it will take quite some time to

\textsuperscript{17} Military ruler Zia-ul-Haq’s attempt to Islamize legal system by merging Pakistan Penal Code offences based on Common Law Jurisprudence and criminal procedure with Hudood Laws based on Hanafi jurisprudence.
vanish. “An 18-year-old girl was beheaded along with her 21-year-old boyfriend by her father and uncle in what the police are calling yet another incident of honour killing (Dawn 2018)”. Even some laws like women protection bill has been passed recently, but the incidents of brutal killings in the name of religion and honor have not reduced. Scores of people in Pakistan, an overwhelming majority of whom are women, are still being murdered by relatives for bringing 'shame' on their family, more than a year since new laws came into force aimed at stemming the menace of ‘honour killings’ (Dawn 2018)”. It shows that it easier for a ruler to pass a law like ‘Hudood Ordinance’ with a stroke of a pen, but it takes ages to wipe aftershocks of that law. “At least 280 such murders were recorded by the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan from October 2016 to June 2017 - a figure believed to be understated and incomplete (Dawn 2018)”.

The point here I want to make is that according to this ordinance, not only people could use this law to justify killing a women, but also if even ten or twenty women will witness a rape the accused will not get punished under this law. On top of that the rape survivor cannot testify as well. It is completely against Quran as it is mentioned in (24:6-10) that if someone accuses the other one he/she will have to present testimonies, but if it is not possible then his/her testimony will be accepted. On another occasion God says that if someone has done something wrong you can bring witnesses men and women to testify against him (Quran 2:282).

Continuing on the issue of women, I would like to mention another point that I do not agree upon and that is the concept of ‘dowry’ in our society. Although, it is mentioned in Quran “give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously; but if they give up willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease (Quran 04:04)”. In my opinion, it was
meant to be to show respect, love and affection, but the way it is being done it has become a business. Nowadays, men and women demand and negotiate dowry “Incidents of bargaining over dowry were not unheard of (Oldenburg 2002, viii)”. Once again an Islamic concept was taken and twisted into something completely different. Because of this, many men and women cannot get married.

The last point I would like to mention here is about the extremist Jihadi outfits around the globe on a row to declare war against different states. Islam does not allow any individual or a group of individuals against a state. God says that even if your leaders are not trustworthy, they are liars, wrongdoers or cheaters; it is the duty of the scholars to remind them that they will be judged on the final day. They will be responsible for their actions on the Day of Judgment, but if the state or its leaders do not follow Quran, no one has the right to declare a war against them (Ghamidi 2015, 158-159).

Groups like Tehrik-e-Taliban, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Mujahidin are nothing more just miscreants. Islam does not promote violence and does not allow anyone to force people or incite people against any other individual, group or state. Muslim scholars or other Muslims can tell people the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior or what Quran allows and what is does not, but what he/she cannot do is to force others to follow their agenda (Ghamidi 2015, 159).

While concluding this chapter, I would like to say that when I say Islam it means word of God in its purest form. A religion that was there since time immemorial and that will be there forever, that brings everyone together and that is there to serve God and humanity. When I say Muslim it means someone who believes in God Almighty, the Force, the Nature, the prophets of
God, the word of God and the creation of God. Someone who looks for common terms among others so that we can live a life in harmony but not in utopia, someone who submits his/her will to God in serving the Nature and the creation. In the next chapter, I will try to explore my identity as a modern human being of a nation state, my relation with the country of my birth, its history and my discomforts.

3.7 What is Ijtihad?

Throughout this paper, I have been talking about *ijtihad* and my readers will see that it is one of the most important terms in my thesis. So, I decided to explain *ijtihad* in order to understand it better. It is an Arabic word that means ‘to do an effort’. It is derived from a root word ‘*jahad*’ or ‘*jahada*’ that means ‘to struggle’. Another very famous Arabic word *Jihad* is also derived from the same root word. It is very important to note that the opposite of *ijtihad* is *taqlid* that means ‘to imitate’ which shows that *ijtihad* brings independent reasoning, individual understanding or interpretation of certain actions, behaviours or revelations. It brings forward a viewpoint that did not exist previously and it is not dependent on the traditional school of thought (Levensohn 2006).

“*Ijtihad* shall be done only in those matters in which the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are silent. It has no bearing on matters which are explicitly stated in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The reason for this is that the injunctions of Qur'an and *Sunnah* need deliberation and do not warrant *ijtihad*. Scholars can repeatedly revert to them, determine their purport and can also differ from previous authorities in their interpretation but they cannot alter or annul any directive of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* through their *ijtihad* (Ghamidi 2015, 45-46)”.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, it was a common practice to sort out day-to-day issues, but with the passage of time a certain school of thought was of an opinion that this practice can lead to flawed judgments and erred practices because independent reasoning can result into over-
confidence. Scholars from Abu Hassan Al-Ash‘ari school of thought initiated this discussion and one of the most important scholars Imam Ghazali took it to the next level where he debated the closure of the doors of *ijtihad* through his statement ‘the incoherence of the Philosophers’ (Levensohn 2006).

“Hence a consensus gradually establish itself to the effect that from that time onwards no one could be deemed to have the necessary qualifications for independent reasoning in religious law, and that all future activity would have to be confined to the explanation, application, and, at the most, interpretation of the doctrine as it had been laid down once and for all (Schacht 1979)”.

Due to this factor, Muslim scholars like Shah Waliyullah think that *ijtihad* was completely closed “I am convinced for various reasons that today the door of *ijtihad* is completely closed Jalbani 1967, 199)”, but in my opinion these scholars have missed the point that our nature, cultures, communities and societies are not static entities, they keep evolving, therefore, they encounter different issues and problems. For some, it is important to have theological or religious guidelines to take them through and *ijtihad* provides those guidelines. It is there to help people to find the solution to their problems. It is not a new concept; it is derived from a Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. It is not against Islam; to the contrary it is as important for our society as air and water are for our body (Ghamidi 2015, 46).

“It is reported that when the Prophet (sws) sent forth Mu’adh (rta) to Yemen as its governor, he asked him: "How will you decide matters?" He replied: "I will revert to the Book of God." The Prophet (sws) then asked: "If you do not find anything in the Book of God?" Mu'adh replied: "I will look into the Sunnah of the Messenger of God." The Prophet (sws) next asked: "If you do not even find it there?" At this, Mu'adh responded by saying: "أجتهد برأي و لا آلو جهدا" (I will form an opinion after expending full effort and will not leave any stone unturned (Ghamidi 2015, 45)).
Chapter-4

4. Pakistan: A Nation State and Islam

“In his Eid-ul-Azha Message to the Nation on October 24, 1947, Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared: “My message to you all is of hope, courage and confidence. Let us mobilize all our resources in a systematic and organized way and tackle the grave issues that confront us with grim determination and discipline worthy of a great nation.” More than a half-century has elapsed since Jinnah made this statement, yet the issues facing Pakistan are no less grave (Hussain 2009, 07).

4.1 Pakistan’s General and Political History

Although this modern day Pakistani nation is not that old as it got independence from the Great Britain on 14 August 1947, but its territorial areas and tribal histories have a very old civilization. So, Pakistan has both an ancient and a relatively modern identity. During the time when Pakistan was a part of the Indian subcontinent many conquerors including: Arabs, Mogul invaders and Alexander the Great came to India using Khyber Pass. “Pakistan may be a new name but Pakistanis comprise an ancient society whose ancestors lived in the historic Indus Valley and interacted with the conquerors, scholars, visitors, preachers, Sufis, and immigrants from western and central Asia (Malik 2008, xi)”.

In addition, many centuries ago a lot of Buddhist scholars also used the same route to pass through, that is why, today’s Pakistan has many famous Buddhist sites and historical places as a part of its history. Ancient Pakistan’s customs and traditions are commonly followed by the only one religion. There are other religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Parsis and Buddhism, but Islam is practiced by the majority of Pakistanis (Malik 2008). That is why, modern day Pakistan is home of many religions. “Evolution of the British rule from the mid-eighteenth century coincided with the Mughal decline and after the Rebellion of 1857, divergent
responses characterized south Asian Muslim interaction in a pluralistic subcontinent (Malik 2008, xii)”.

Immediately after the independence Pakistan suffered setbacks one after another. In 1948, the Premier leader and the founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah passed away which left newly founded Pakistan in a deep shock, but before even Pakistani nation could breathe, in 1951, its first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated. These incidents resulted into political, intellectual and ideological turmoil and it slowed down the political process of the country. After almost eight years, its first constitution was passed in 1956, but it did not last for long and political unrest in the country ended up with first military coup by General Ayub Khan in 1958 (CIDOB 2012).

In 1962, Pakistan received its second constitution, but after the failure in the second war with India in 1965, rigging the elections against Fatima Jinnah and maligning her, corruption charges and increasing pressure from the East Pakistan due to wrong policies forced General Ayub to resign. The first democratic election in 1970 gave a clear majority to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), but West Pakistan refused to accept it and it caused a serious polarization between East and West Pakistan. In March 1971, Sheikh Mujib declared Bangladesh an independent country which brought a nine month civil war that killed thousands of people (CIDOB 2012).

During this political unrest, India supported Bangladesh and Pakistan army got humiliating defeat. After the war, General Yahya Khan resigned from the presidency and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the former Foreign Minister of General Ayub, who had already assumed the power after the arrest of Sheikh Mujib on 26 March 1971, took the control as a President and the
first Chief Martial Law Administrator. On 10 April 1973, National Assembly of Pakistan approved another constitution which is still in place (CIDOB 2012). Two other Martial Laws in 1977 and 1999 by General Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervez Musharraf respectively cost Pakistan a lot of political instability and polarization.

“Pakistan was established as a Muslim state (Malik 2008, 01)”. It came into being to provide an Islamic way of life to the population, but Muhammad Ali Jinnah know as Quid-e-Azam (Great Leader), who was the leader of the political party ‘All India Muslim League’ that was behind the struggles of independence, has always mentioned that in Pakistan everyone will be treated equally (Malik 2008, 01-02). Majority being Muslims, Pakistani culture is predominantly based on the Islamic way of life. All other cultural values and aspects are inspired by Islam. Pakistani culture is famous for its hospitality, simplicity and grandeur, “It is Islam that continues to fashion the perceptions and lifestyles of Pakistanis, and it is equally reflected in official pronouncements on issues such as education, the legal system, and foreign policy (Malik 2008, 15)”.

Pakistani culture is a mixture of different ethnic groups such as: Punjabis, Pathans, Balochis, Potwaris, Kashmiris, Muhajirs (immigrants), Wakhis, Baltis and others. In Pakistan, Urdu is our national language, while English and Urdu are the official languages. More than sixteen regional or local languages are also being spoken by the people of Pakistan, but its unity lies in the nationalism and the religion of Islam. “Pakistan, like several other countries, is a pluralistic society, although Islam and Urdu are two of its main national characteristics (Malik 2008, 02)”.

“Pakistan is privileged to be the successor of a continuum of cultural and historical traditions all the way from its ancient Dravidian, Aryan, Hindu, Persian,
Greek, and Buddhist past to its 13-centuries-old Islamic heritage as bequeathed by the Arab, central Asian, and Indian influences (Malik 2008, 02)”.

If, I look at our history since the independence, politically in general and democratically in particular, Pakistan has been through a lot, as out of seventy years of its independence thirty-three years have gone under dictators and martial laws. It is sad that the nations which got independence after Pakistan are much more democratic, developed and economically stable. But in contrast to Pakistan’s very poor performance in the arena of economic stability and political transformation, we have made a significant progress in the transformation of our social and religious values over the years. Despite religious manipulation and radicalized conditions, from 1979 to 2010, it is back on track for a promising future ahead.

As I have mentioned above that this modern Pakistan’s roots can be found in the books of history long way before it existed on the world’s map. Pakistani society has been through a lot; from geographical changes to political, religious, spiritual and psychological transformation. It has understood itself through the beliefs of ancient Greek mythologies; it has been through the revision of religious and spiritual beliefs after the arrival of Arabs and it is still struggling to find a balance between fundamentalism, extremism, radicalism, liberalism and secularism. In my opinion, if we take a glance on the history, we will see that like many other nations it has faced so many challenges as a society and there are many more to come before it gets to be transformed.

One of its biggest challenges so far was the separation of East Pakistan that later named as Bangladesh. Without going much deeper into the nitty-gritty of the incident, I would like to highlight how Islamization, polarization of Islam and also manipulation of Islam was used to attract public sympathies and sentiment. I would also like to say that I do not agree with power
politics where ethnicity, religion, race, caste, social status or anything of sort is used both to divide and rule or to divide or rule. Same happened in the case of Pakistan, first at the time of division of Indian subcontinent and later when Pakistan was divided into two just to gain the authority. I totally disagree with West Pakistan’s stance and I believe that there was so much injustice going on to the people of East Pakistan.

“The West-dominated ruling class of early Pakistan never really tried to understand the Bengali point of view. From the inception of Pakistan, it developed a self-righteous state of mind which ignored the objective political realities of East Pakistan (Zaheer 1994, 16)”.

Higher ruling authorities and establishment, mainly from the West Pakistan not only tried to protect their vested interests, but also wanted to shift all the resources from East Pakistan to West Pakistan at any cost. Once again religious card was used against anyone who was against such injustice. “Any demand of East Pakistan which deviated from the dogma was regarded as a conspiracy and a threat to Islamic ideology (Zaheer 1994, 16)”. This kind of Islamization or polarization was there right from the start and even during the Pakistan movement which I will talk about in detail later in the chapter. Whenever there was an attempt to bring in something that would challenge some political ideologies Islam card was always there to be used.

“Suhrawardy pleaded for opening League membership to all communities to bring them into mainstream national politics. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar thought that, by this proposal, ‘our two friends (the other secularist was Mian Iftikharuddin, President, Punjab Muslim League) want to finish the League. I say if the League exists, Islam exists, Musalmans (Muslims) exist.’ He was supported by Liaquat Ali Khan, and Suhrawardy was outvoted (Zaheer 1994, 18)”.

So many factors play a role in making an issue a core problem and another dilemma of Muslims in general and Muslims of subcontinent in particular was idealizing a language. On one hand Arabic language being a Quranic language enjoys this status and then in Indian subcontinent Urdu became a symbol of Islam and Muslims. It created a lot resistance and resentment among
those whose mother tongue was not Urdu. In the first constitution of Pakistan Urdu was declared
the sole language of the country, but East Pakistani political parties did not accept it and when a
constitutional amendment was proposed, it was declined by then prime minister of Pakistan
Liaquat Ali Khan saying:

“Pakistan has been created by the demand of a hundred million Muslims in this
subcontinent and the language of a hundred million Muslims is Urdu. It is
necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can only be Urdu
and no other Language (Zaheer 1994, 21)”.

It did not end there:

“The protagonists of Urdu, however, proceeded with the task of Islamizing the
Bengali language with evangelical fervour. If it was not possible to replace it by
Urdu, the next desirable solution was to change its script from Devnagri to
Persian or Arabic. But the most grotesque suggestion was to make Arabic the
national language of Pakistan (Zaheer 1994, 24)”.

Another point was to declare Islam as state religion and saying that no non-Muslim can become a
head of state. It created a huge rift between the political parties from East Pakistan where many
of them were Hindus and were representing more than twenty five percent of the population. It
was an open violation of human rights and using religion as a tool to achieve political goals.
Although, later in 1956 through a constitutional amendment Bengali became a national language
of Pakistan along with Urdu, but the use of Islam in this issue had already created a mistrust
between East and West Pakistan that resulted in separation in 1971 (Zaheer 1994).

When I look at our regional society as a whole or in particular at Pakistani society,
religion plays a very important role in the life of people and that is why whoever came to this
land, if they used religion as a tool they were successful, but if they decided to challenge the
religion, it became difficult for them to survive. Although, Islam was brought to subcontinent by
the Arab conqueror Muhammad Bin Qasim in 712 AD; the spirituality of the local land can be
seen in the form of Sufis and Pir\textsuperscript{18} (Malik 2008, 16). It shows that how culture has dominated or influenced the religion in some parts. It is hard to keep them separate as it is common to see that people want to integrate their religious and personal life.

Towards the end of Mogul Rule on subcontinent, Muslim scholars especially from a very popular and influential seminary of Deoband\textsuperscript{19} were of an opinion that during the past centuries because of different socio-political and religious influences, especially because of Din-i-Ilahi\textsuperscript{20} movement of Mogul emperor Akbar Islam has lost lots of its core values. They decided to go back to their fundamentals and due to this reason Muslims were left behind in formal and modern education. After the loss of Muslim leadership in the revolt of 1857, during the British Rule; they felt the need of a revived approach that can handle the needs of modernity. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Allama Muhammad Iqbal were two main figures who encouraged Muslims of subcontinent to go back to schools and learn Western education. As always, this time as well bringing something new to Islam was not as easy, but it was successful (Malik 2008).

Later on during the Pakistan movement same Allama Muhammad Iqbal who was once considered very enlightened and moderate Muslim scholar and philosopher along with another enlightened scholar Maududi convinced Mr. Jinnah to use religion to gain political milestone. Same Maududi, who was not in favor of creating Pakistan (Isani 2010), later on not only decided to join Pakistan movement, but also became a very active member of the movement. “Maududi and Allama Iqbal had a great affect on Jinnah and made him realize the potential of using the

\textsuperscript{18} Spiritual leaders
\textsuperscript{19} Revivalist movement within Sunni or Hanafi sect of Islam
\textsuperscript{20} An artificial religion propounded by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1582 CE, intending to merge some of the elements of the religions of his empire,
religious card in politics. When the Muslim League started using religion in politics with great success and ended up scoring a remarkable victory in the elections of 1945-46 (Isani 2010, 12-13). This was one of the classic examples of using religion for political goals and its success encouraged Maududi to use Islam over and over again, so he did it against democratically elected governments as well.

Information like this and on other critical issues cannot be found in our textbooks. If you are lucky enough to get to the university and curious enough to get to know your history you might end up reading some books of independent writers, otherwise you will have to rely on what is being fed to you through the textbooks. According to personal view, it is not so different in other parts of the world. While writing a movie script about the genocide of Nama and Herero tribes of Namibia by Imperial German forces in 1904 that killed between 65,000 to 80,000 people; I asked about it from some German friends some of them even did not know that Namibia was a German colony and some who knew said that no one talks about it and we are just taught a selected part of history. So same is the case with Pakistan, either the information is mission or it is distorted in a way to protect vested interests (Aziz 1993).

In a country like Pakistan where majority of the population cannot get to the universities the only source of information are the textbooks. “They are the only source of information for millions of students whose education stops at or before the 12th class (Aziz 1993, 02).” So, preventing the masses from their basic right to information is not in the best interest of them. “Do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know (Quran 2:42).” While criticizing loyalists and political stooges Khursheed Kamal Aziz in his book ‘The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks used in Pakistan’ says that lots of facts were being
distorted and personalities were posed in a way as they were the only ones who created Pakistan (Aziz 1993).

Aziz is of the view that in the history textbooks and others, kids are taught hatred and discrimination based on falsehood. There are hundreds of examples, but one of his quotation I will use here as an example “The Muslims treated the non-Muslims very well [when they ruled the province]. Yet the non-Muslims nursed in their hearts an enmity against the Muslims. When the British invaded the area the non-Muslims sided with them and against the Muslims. So the British conquered the whole country (Aziz 1994, 12)”. It is again an act of inciting deep rooted violence, preaching hatred and intolerance in the name of Islam. Quran’s message is to love and respect others. Talking about people of other faiths Quran says:

“They are not [all] the same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating [in prayer]. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous (Quran 3:113-114)”.

4.2 Two Nation Theory and Its Later Effects

An ideology that is considered to be behind the creation of Pakistan was two nation theory (Saeed 2009, 06). This theory was actually to establish a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’; ‘us’ being Muslims and ‘them’ being all other non-Muslims living in Indian subcontinent. The colonial concept of divide and rule was implemented in this theory and it brought into the light. Bigotry was sown in the minds of general population that resulted into the concept that Muslims cannot live peacefully with non-Muslims within one country, but actually this divide was just to gain power over a certain group of people (Jalal 1995).
If we look at the leaders around the globe and the history of mankind, theocracy is not an alien idea. Not so long before the creation of Pakistan, in the Indian subcontinent Arabs and Moguls used the same idea and were glorified by the Muslim leaders. In his critique of Muslim invaders Mr. Aziz says that the leaders who were glorified by the leader of subcontinent were nothing more than simple invaders. Hindus and Sikhs do not consider them their heroes and before their arrivals there were no Muslims in the region, so who are we to claim that Muslim leaders have changed their lives and people were so inspired that they have adopted Muslim lifestyle. He further questions that if this is true then why Hindus do not eat beef (Aziz 1994).

After learning the art of theocracy from the past, Muslim leaders started applying it during the Pakistan movement. They decided to promote the idea of having an Islamic state combining with nationalistic approach. This nexus seemed a perfect blend and formula to come into power. “The architects of Pakistan embraced the idea of the nation-state without conceding space to territorial nationalism in their official ideology (Jalal 1995, 74)”. They made people believe that this Islamic cum national state will protect the rights of Muslims in the region and will also represent the whole Muslim world.

“Pakistan, with its artificially demarcated frontiers and desperate quest for an officially sanctioned Islamic identity, lends itself remarkably well to an examination of the nexus between power and bigotry in creative imaginings of national identity. Proclaiming itself an "Islamic state" created on the bedrock of a non-territorially defined Muslim nation (Jalal 1995, 74)". The idea of Muslim nation is not an Islamic idea. Nowhere in Quran or hadiths we can find this idea. “It is not a requirement of Islam or a directive of its Shariah that the nationhood of Muslims should be based on religion and hence all Muslims must become one nation (Ghamidi 2015, 164-165)”. Although, there is no such directives from Quran or hadiths, but people of that time and majority of Pakistanis are of an opinion that it was and is an Islamic cause. “In order to
validate a religious directive people have confined their arguments to the speeches of Quid (Muhammad Ali Jinnah), the poetry of Iqbal (Allama Muhammad Iqbal) and events of Pakistan movement (Ghamidi 2015, 165)”.

Current superiority complex, moralistic, authoritarian and rigid way of Muslim youth in our region is the fruit of the seeds that were sown back then. If we look into the rhetoric of all extremist groups, we realized that all of them have the same opinion. They think that all Muslims of the world are one nation, they are the chosen ones, they have the right to be in power and whoever comes in their way will be vanished. They openly criticize the formation of nation state and democracy. According to them, it is against Islamic ideology, but Quran has a completely difference stance on it that says that only people have the right to choose (Quran 42:38).

“Our youth who are lured into terrorist activities by being told that the existence of Arab, Iranian, Pakistani or Afghan is absolutely unlawful and that the basis of nationhood of Muslims is Islam and their system is khilafah; moreover, since this system can no way be enforced in the nation-states of modern times, hence such states should be obliterated from the face of the earth (Ghamidi 2015, 165)”.

4.3 Cold War, Islam and Pakistan

Setting aside the merits and demerits of using Islam and two nation theory in Pakistan movement, world had come to know that Islam had played a very important role in the partition of Indian subcontinent and creation of Pakistan. Even the secular leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah had to shift his stand to fit in the general expectation of the public and the establishment. As I have mentioned earlier, after the partition the idea of one nation one language resulted in a huge loss in 1971, but even then the establishment did not learn any lesson and it continued its adventures in the shape of General Zia-ul-Haq. The effects of Islamization that are omnipresent
in Pakistani society nowadays are the aftermath of General Zia’s eleven years of brutal dictatorship.

Support of military establishment, religious groups, right wing political forces, Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and the US aid made General Zia more powerful than ever before. Although, the US did not have any direct interest in South Asia, but it was helping Great Britain to keep an eye on Russia and was also in competition of power with the other global players in the region. “The British played the “Great Game” against Russia, trying to block czarist expansion through the northwest (Khyber Pass) into South Asia. The US strategic interests and perspective regarding South Asia, from the very beginning, were strongly influenced by the British who wanted the US to assume the role of a successor (Hilali 2005, 70)”.

Asia being a manpower hub is always a center of attraction for trade purposes and Pakistan’s potential to block possible Soviet expansion towards south through Afghanistan, having close borders with Central Asia on the northwest side and also before 1971, its proximity to Sino-Burmese border made Pakistan a unique and valuable strategic partner for the west (Hilali 2005). Before 1979 revolution in Iran, the US looked at Islam in a different way, but then realized Islam being a major religion of fifty seven countries of the world is a reality of the world that cannot be ignored (Mamdani 2004).

Dealing with warfare has never been easy, for the West and the US it was difficult to maintain their proxy wars and colonization with the public money; they used the opium cultivation to support them and on the other side, grabbing back to back defeats like in Vietnam and removal of two US-backed dictators in Nicaragua and Iran had put the US at the back foot. So, keeping in mind the Muslim history, they decided to mix religion and politics to achieve their
objectives. The US started supporting *Sarekat-i-Islam* against Sukano in Indonesia, the Society of Muslims brothers against Nasser in Egypt, General Zia and Jamaat-i-Islami against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan (Mamdani 2004).

Soviet invasion in Afghanistan presented to the West and especially to the US an opportunity to end ‘the Great Game’ or ‘the Cold War’. Before even Soviet Union landed the foots on ground in Afghanistan, CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and State department had already started negotiating with Afghan *mujahideen* in Pakistan. They made Afghanistan a Soviet Vietnam by using Talibans, Pakistan and Islamization as a driving force. CIA with the collaboration of ISI (Inter-Service Intelligence) provided mujahideen with weapons and recruited young Muslims around the globe to fight a ‘holy war’ in the name of Islam against Soviet Union (Mamdani 2004).

Strategically speaking, neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan had the capacity to revamp their entire *madrassa* education, recruit thousands of Jihadi fighters and publicize their actions into an act of pride. The needed the support from the US and the US never disappointed them until it is done. One of the examples is patronizing Sheikh Azzam, who founded Hamas and was also a teacher of Osama Bin Laden. He did not believe in negotiation, for him the only solution or the way forward was weapons and fighting until death; so, it coincided well with the objectives of CIA and ISI (Mamdani 2004, 126-127). In my opinion, the real extreme version of political Islamization got validation when Mr. Reagan invited leaders of Afghan *mujahideen* to the White House and said, “These gentlemen are the moral equivalents of America’s founding fathers (Mamdani 2004, 119)”. 
As I have mentioned in last chapter that the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on record accepted that the US was the one that created Talibans and used extremist ideology against Soviet Union and this policy backfired; Mr. Mamdani in his book “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the cold War and The Roots of Terror while talking about 9/11 terrorist attack says that the answer to this question that how did they do that lies in Afghan Jihad. CIA organized them, funded them, recruited them and taught them the radical version of brutal, authoritative, moral and patriarchal Islam. The US claimed to have created a group of Jihadists for liberation, but in fact they have created a group of terrorists who has nothing to do with Islam, but to fulfill their personal agendas (Mamdani 2004).

Upon concluding this subchapter, I would like to say that once again Islam was being used as a tool to motivate its followers for political purposes. When political leaders from different parts of the world realized that Islam can be used to achieve their objective, they manipulated it and used it against their opponents. Lack of education, understanding of Islam, lack of questioning and reasoning or blind trust of the followers helped the leaders to manipulate them. In the next portion of this chapter, I will highlight some flaws and weaknesses of Pakistani education system.

4.4 Education System of Pakistan

“I provide the reader with the major inaccuracies, distortions, exaggerations and slants to be found in each officially prepared and prescribed textbook and in a representative selection of private commercial publications which are in wide use as textbooks (Aziz 1993, 02)”. Education plays a very important role in the growth, intellectual maturity and deeper understanding of life. It is not necessary that someone will have to go to school or read books to get educated, but there are so many other means of doing that. We can witness this through the
lives of famous people around the globe like Prophet Muhammad, William Shakespeare, James Franklin and so on. Stephen R. Covey quotes Greek biographer Diogenes Laertius in his book “The Leader in Me” by saying “The foundation of every state is the education of its youth (Covey 2008, 134)”. It shows that the importance of education is not a modern phenomenon, but it is a fact that has been established over the centuries.

Education system in Pakistan is facing a few serious problems. To start with, it is running on a two parallel education systems. First, formal school system and second, madrassa system a system that is totally bases on religious education. Formal school system is further divided into two categories; English medium school system that is private school system where people pay monthly fee and majority of the subjects are taught in English. The other one is Urdu medium school system that is a public school system where government provides free education. In the upcoming research, I will try to explain the main points of Pakistan’s education system that contribute to the misunderstanding of Islam and its history.

“All the parallel education systems should be abolished or radically reformed. There should be no English or Urdu schools. Nor should there be two different types of schools one offering pure religious education, as in madrassas, and the other secular and purely mundane education, as in most private schools. All social sciences should be taught in the Urdu language; sciences proper and mathematics should be instructed in English; religious content, however, should be taught in Arabic (Ghamidi 2015, 82-83)”.

In Pakistan’s formal education system, irrespective of English medium or Urdu medium school system the content and its validity raise plenty of question marks. The syllabus provided by the government of Pakistan contains misconceptions, false historical facts, biased information and a discriminatory point of view to brainwash children (Aziz 1993). As we have discussed previously that a radical branch of Islam was introduced by CIA and ISI is now becoming a
serious threat. “It is no wonder that 76 percent of madrasa students and teachers questioned believe that “waging Jihad against America” is justified (Ahmad 2009, 02)”.

“While annotating each textbook, I listed the errors found in each volume, and in several cases also corrected them. But there are certain mistakes, both of fact and presentation, which occur so often that had I tried to rectify them on the spot I would have repeated myself ad nauseam to the boredom of my readers. Then there are other faults which are related to the interpretation of historical developments, and they require a longer treatment not just a change of date or name (Aziz 1993, 122)”.

Another factor that plays an important role in Pakistan’s education system is gender and regional imbalance. Quality of education provided in Islamabad, Lahore or Karachi is completely different than in the interior parts or farfetched areas of Pakistan. Although, the ratio of male and female population in Pakistan is almost the same, but the number of male students is way more than female. Mr. Aziz while referring to the educational books taught in our schools says that this content can teach our kids how to read and write, but it does not serve as a tool for critical thinking, attention to truth, precision, clarity, accuracy, validity and fidelity to facts. As they only contain plain lies, superficiality, misjudgments, self-deception and unnecessary glorification of people (Aziz 1993, 121).

This notion has developed intolerant behavior in the young generation of Pakistan. It is hard to indulge them in a meaningful conversation and they think that they are the only ones who know the truth. “The current education system in Pakistan is gradually distancing our nation from its cultural tradition. A short discussion with the members of the young generation makes one realize that it will not take more than a couple of decades before we will have lost our memory as a nation (Ghamidi 2015, 80)”. They think that they are the sole responsible for whole Muslim world (Ghamidi 2015).
Although for the government and private stakeholders, it is necessary and the same time a difficult task to reform the entire educational system of Pakistan, but in my opinion, working on formal education would be much easier than the madrassas. Roughly, there are fifteen thousand madrassas in Pakistan and in these madrassas, there are around 1.7 million students are enrolled. There are four main Muslim sects in Pakistan Deoband, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith and Shia. All of these sects have their own madrassas, their own syllabus and their own federation that is called wafaq (Ahmad 2009, 03), but it is so ironic that except this financial or political agenda they do not agree with each other at all.

“Against this relatively “benign sectarianism” involving Deobandis and Barelwis, there is also “fratricidal sectarianism” that (a) pits the Sunnis—that is, the Deobandis, Barelwis, Ahl-e-Hadith and all others in-between—against the Shias, and (b) both Sunnis and Shias against the Ahmadis. Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith especially have targeted the Shias for quite some time, demanding that the Shias be declared as non-Muslims on account of their “fundamental deviations” from “mainstream” Islam (Ahmad 2009, 12”).

Although, all these sects are against each other and have given lots of fatwas to declare the other mushrik (polytheist) or munkar (the denier or infidel), but whenever they see any danger that the government is questioning their existence, trying to overtake or trying to reform their system them become one. “Historically, there has not been much cooperation between these organizations representing rival schools of religious thought. In times of external threats, however, they have been quick to join hands and form a united front against any government attempt to introduce madrasa reforms or constrain their autonomy (Ahmad 2009, 04)”. In 1976, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and in 2001 dictator General Musharraf attempted to have some control over these madrassas, but they were not successful (Ahmad 2009).

One reason behind their refusal to cooperate to introduce a common syllabus and to register with the government was not losing the monopoly and not being answerable to anyone
else, but the most important reason in my opinion was to hide their income. These madrassas receive a lot of money in charities within Pakistan and from abroad, so registering with the government means declaring their source of income and informing the government which countries support them. Once government announced that they will neither touch their syllabus nor their source of income then some of them decided to register (Ahmad 2009).

“The plan was to provide facilities to 8,000 madrasas in terms of teachers’ salaries, textbooks, stationary, libraries and computers. Again, the federation of the madrasa organizations, Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris-e-Diniya, refused to oblige despite a series of meetings between its representatives and the officials of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Religious Affairs. The government announced several deadlines for the madrasas’ registration but the response from the madrasas was of continued defiance. It was only when the second ordinance was amended to remove the requirement of reporting the income and expenditure statements to the government that the madrasas agreed to register (Ahmad 2009, 04)”.

Even though the religious syllabus of these madrassas is extremely old, but the majority of the teachers and students think that it fulfills all the current needs. “The curricula of the madrasas are regulated by their respective boards, and have not undergone any significant changes in their core content since inception in the 19th century (Ahmad 2009, 05)”. The previous government was of an opinion that with the introduction of subjects like English and natural sciences will change the mindset of the students who graduate from there, but from my experience I would argue that studying English or other natural science does not guarantee a change in someone’s mindset or enlightenment (Ahmad 2009, 05).

For a significant change, there has to be a complete reform in the entire syllabus and to bring in new thoughts and new ideas. Otherwise, the extremist point of view will continue to surface not only against the outer world, but within the Muslim community as well and that is why there are so many conflicts going on among Muslim countries. We can see the examples
from Saudi Arabia-Yemen, Saudi Arabia-Iran, Iran-Iraq, Iraq-Kuwait, Iraq-Kurdistan, Saudi Arabia-Iran-Syria-Turkey, Pakistan-Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia-UAE-Qatar and many others. All this is because of the extreme and radical mindset that students develop during their education.

“Every group takes an extremist position against its rival and tries to prove how deviant that group is from the orthodox beliefs and practices of Islam. In several really extreme cases, some Deobandi ulama (Maulana Ghulam Ahmad of Madrasa Ta’lim-ul-Qur’an, Rawalpindi and Qazi Mazhar Hussain of Chakwal, for example) have gone as far as to declare the Barelwis as “mushrik” (those who associate other entities with God) or even “kafir” (infidel). The Barelwis, on their part, have also not hesitated in describing Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith as “Gustakh-e-Rasool” (the one who blasphemes against the Prophet). This kind of extremism, in the form of polemical writings, speeches, sermons and fatwas as well as conflicts has not been uncommon among the madrasa ulama (Ahmad 2009, 12).”

Although, Shia Sunni conflict is many centuries old, but it was very calm until recent years. Since, the Islamic revolution in Iran Saudi Arabia started a proxy war in and yet again Pakistan has become a strategic battle field. “In fact, in recent years, more people have died in Shia-Sunni violence in Pakistan than in any other political or religious conflicts (Ahmad 2009, 12).” Many madrassas are funded by Saudi Arabia and many scholars go to Saudi Arabia to learn their brand of Islam and implement it in Pakistan.

“It has become more intense and deadlier since the Islamic Revolution in Iran that led to the proxy war for religio-political influence in Pakistan between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Both the Saudis and Iranians have invested heavily in Pakistan to provide religio-moral and financial support to their respective sectarian allies (Ahmad 2009, 12)”. It is sad that Pakistan has not learned a lesson from Afghan Jihad which Mr. Ghamidi said that was not Jihad at all (Ghamidi 2015) and yet again Pakistan’s soil is being used in the name of Islam for political reason of other countries.
Because of lack of openness, acceptance and understanding the importance of freedom of speech or differences of opinion, it is very common to find people in these madrassas who are totally against western culture and liberal thoughts. I do not want to take away the negative role played by the west and especially by the US “madrasa students were never shown to be anti-American until the 1990s (Ahmad 2009, 08)”, but under no circumstances someone can stand up and say that these people are need to be killed. “76 percent of madrasa students and teachers questioned believe that “waging Jihad against America” is justified (Ahmad 2009, 02)” and it shows that the current batch of Muslim scholars in madrassas lack tolerance and do not believe in negotiations or talks, but like Osama bin Laden’s teacher Sheikh Azzam only believe in armed resistance.

“The madrasa curriculum has been described—and rightly so in our view—as literalist, legalistic, sectarian, conservative, and outdated (Ahmad 2009, 08)”. Talking about the similar topic Mr. Ghamidi says that in madrassas of Pakistan there are four things that every teacher teaches to his/her students; first, that if someone commits the crime of polytheism or apostasy anywhere in the world, it is our duty to kill that person; second, if someone is a non-Muslim he/she is meant to be subjugated, so we have to rule them; third, that all Muslims must have only one Muslim state and one Muslim rule called khilafat and fourth, the concept of nation state is illegitimate. He goes on and says that another crime that our madrassas commit is that the enroll students of five to six years old and teach them how to become a scholar without any broad base education which is against human rights. You cannot take a child who does not know anything and put him/her to become a doctor, engineer or scientist. First, you need to give him/her basic education and then he/she choose to pursue any field they want (Ghamidi 2015).

10 A state under a very religious Muslim leader who runs it according to the teachings of Islam and Shariah
The rigidity that I was talking about in the research question can easily be seen in madrassa education across Pakistan. It teaches and encourages the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’. It promotes the idea that ‘we’ are the right ones and ‘they’ are the wrong ones; so, we need to do something to make this world a better place with no sinners and infidels. “This sectarian extremism, to a large extent, can be justly attributed to madrasa education that tends to encourage and inculcate a sense of self-righteousness in one’s own group and an intolerance of the “other,” that, given some extraneous developments, can often lead to violence and bloodshed (Ahmad 2009, 12).” This rigidity and intolerance is so much enrooted in mindset of these students that for them killing someone is not a problem at all. Forty-one percent of madrassa students said that they agree with suicide bombings and it is not forbidden (Ahmad 2009, 13).

Keeping in mind the above mentioned problems of Pakistan’s education system in general and madrassa education in particular, I would like to say that Pakistan’s government needs to step up and try to transform the current system into more tolerant and open minded. A system that can speak truth that can listen truth and that can accept other truths with an open heart and mind. While concluding this chapter, I would repeat what Mr. Ghamidi has already mentioned above that it is fundamental to give a broad base education to the students before sending them for a professional qualification. It is obvious that Pakistan’s education system can play an important role for the next generation in becoming less rigid and more tolerant towards themselves and the others. It can lay a strong foundation to provide other alternatives to approach life and related issues. In the next chapter, I will discuss the concept of ‘Peace Families’, my understanding of these families and the transrational approach in Islam.
Chapter-5

5. Pakistan’s Cultural and Islam

I always wonder how crucial and complex role a culture plays in the growth and grooming of a child. The values I stand for or against are deeply rooted in the culture that I grew up in. I still remember my mother teaching us in Ramadan about the sacrifice and telling us about the miracle birth of Prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ, and the hope that comes with it. I felt sorry for the man who sacrificed himself, was nailed on the cross and the blood that dripped from his open wounds. Every year during the Ramadan, I would vow not to kick the dog and pluck the flowers or will listen to my Mom and will not go to the lake to swim against permission.

But, immediately after Ramadan comes the *eid* day (A religious day after Ramadan to celebrate the completion of the holy month), with its own wave of fresh hope, a hope for better future, more money, gifts and dreams, and I forget all those promises and wait for next year. I have grown up in the northern areas of Pakistan. Its political system, religious understanding and socio-cultural norms have played very important role in my life. Ideologically speaking, Pakistan was founded as an Islamic State. It came into being to provide an Islamic way of life to the population, but along the way due to the factors such as Islamization, it lost its path (Kazmi 2006). In this chapter, I will explain cultural and historical roots of Pakistani society and the impact these roots have on the lives of common people. I will also provide a glimpse of the realities that after the arrival of Islam what has changed and what has not changed at all in last thirteen hundred years.
5.1 Cultural and Historical Roots

The social advancement of a specific area depends on people who live in that geographical limit. Culture in the localities of Pakistan developed over a significant period of time and kept changing with the progression of time with an end goal and that was to make itself suitable for ever changing conditions. The foundations of these customs and social traditions have come into existence over a period of thousands of years. “Rough and rugged implements unearthed by the eroding current of the river Soan near Rawalpindi carry the saga of human toil and labour to the interglacial ages roughly estimated at 500,000 years before our time (The UNESCO Courier 1973). The area where someone lives also determines how the life style and behavior that person will posses. For example, the lifestyle of people who live in desert will be different than the ones living in plane areas.

Pakistan being a multi-social and multilingual nation exhibits a vivid picture. Numerous social parts of the area which make present day Pakistan are hundreds and thousands years old. For example, a large portion of the languages or dialects spoken in Pakistan are pre-Islamic and were developed way before the introduction of Islam in the region. Just like that other customs, traditions, marriages, burials, festivities, jirga system and other day to day ceremonies are pre-Islamic. There had been efforts to make them Islamic and in some parts of Pakistan this experiment was a bit successful, but by and large these traditions have not changed that much. So, the social foundations and the historical background of Pakistan links back to the Indus valley and Gandhara civilizations.

“Pakistan has been very fortunate in this respect. Admittedly, this land has been an important primeval stage for the grand and grim drama of man's first endeavour, his integral rise, his phenomenal fall and the great resilience which
kept the stream of human life in action in spite of all obstructions and intermittent lapses (The UNESCO Courier 1973)”.

As I have mentioned before, although this modern day Pakistani nation got independence from Great Britain on 14 August 1947, but its territorial areas and tribal histories have a very old civilization. So, Pakistan has both an ancient and a relatively modern identity. During the time when Pakistan was a part of the Indian Subcontinent many conquerors including: Arab warriors, Mughal invaders and Alexander the Great came to India using Khyber Pass. “The serene pool of this life was, however, rudely disturbed by the haughty and youthful Macedonian intruder in 326 B.C. But this conquest by Alexander proved a boon in disguise. The pagan Greeks soon found themselves subdued by the superior religious logic of the Buddhists and employed all their art and intelligence in creating a new Buddha with beautiful Greco-Roman features (The UNESCO Courier)”.

In addition, many centuries ago a lot of Buddhist scholars also used the same route to pass through, that is why, today’s Pakistan has many famous Buddhist sites and historical places as a part of its history. Pakistani side of Punjab region is also considered the home of the founder of Sikh religion (Malik 2008).

“Although separated by the lofty Himalayas and the Hindu Kush ranges from the neighbouring cities of central Asia, Taxila still formed part of one and the same Buddhistic civilization. The first city of Taxila or Bhir Mound as it is known, has preserved little to show any notable advancement in art and architecture (The UNESCO Courier 1973)”.

All the above mentioned historical facts are the sufficient verification that today’s Pakistan, its culture, customs and traditions are deeply rooted in the history and they are absolutely pre-Islamic. Before the arrival of Islam to the Indian Subcontinent, a considerable amount of advancement had already been made in the social development of Pakistan. Despite the fact that Islam is spread in all over Pakistan, yet its shade is somewhat not quite the same as it can be seen in the Arab world. Initially, in this region Islam was tilted towards Sufism, but later during the
Pakistan movement and after the independence the import of Wahabi brand of Islam was introduced to bring new culture and to restrict the Sufi influence in the region.

“It is now well-established that the use of Islam as an idiom of political mobilization during the last few decades of the British Raj served the largely instrumental purposes […] Muslim-majority regions of the subcontinent also decided to put in their lot with the cause of Muslim communalism. The resulting acquisition of a ‘moth-eaten’ Pakistan was hardly, as Ayesha Jalal famously suggested, the originally intended outcome, and the confused ideological character of the new state clearly reflected the inchoate interests that coalesced around its formation (Akhtar 2018, 95)”.

5.2 Traditions and Religious Practices

Before the arrival of Arabs to the Indian Subcontinent, people of this region were affected by various religions, customs and traditional frameworks. For instance, the North West Frontier Province that nowadays is called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was affected by Buddhism while in Balochistan Zoroastrianism was the a dominant religion. “The Zoroastrian religion developed from an ancient religion that was once shared by the ancestors of tribes that settled in Iran and northern India (Lopez et al 2017)”. In the same way, the vast majority of the population in the areas of Punjab and Sindh was affected by Hinduism. At the point when Islam went to these districts it got mixed with the other cultures.

If we look at the festivities and the gathering of Arabs and the population living in modern day Pakistan, we can see a huge difference at many levels. The get-togethers of relatives, friends and neighbors at the wedding ceremonies, burials, child birth and other important occasions are completely different. During the weddings, it is very common to see the use of music like tappay, mahiye, dohray, qawali, kaaфи, ghazal or nazm and folk dances like liddi, ghunmar, bhangra or dhamal are regular throughout the areas of Pakistan. The customs of
dowry, *mehndi*, *doli* and giving milk to the bride or bridegroom are also very common in Pakistan. Although, people have tried their level best to abolish these customs, traditions and rituals, but were not successful because as they have forgotten that as traditions are formed over the centuries, they take even longer time to fall.

5.2.1 Women’s Right a Cultural or Religious Issue

It is also a very common understanding that even before the arrivals of Arabs women of this region were very deprived. From the history and from current situation or statistics, one can clearly see that women rights are hardly present there. They are not given the chance to get education and grow further. Society has adopted an easier solution to deal with the rising voices and that is ‘honor killing’, but millions of them are being killed even before they were born. “The United Nations Children’s Fund states that systematic gender discrimination has resulted in up to 50 million girls and women ‘going missing’ from India’s population (Nath and Garg 2008).

So, this thing reflects everywhere; from socio-political life to economical stability because if you take out half of the population out of your economical practices, there is no way to bring the balance into it. “While cultural variables alone do not explain a country or region's development position, neither do economic transformations occur in a social vacuum. Rather, both internal and external social factors may exert a great deal of influence on how a state's economy and related institutions will develop, expand, and satisfy the needs of its people (Weiss 1991, 148)”. This patriarchy in Pakistani culture was present way before the current religion of the majority arrived in the Indian Subcontinent. So, it shows that religion and culture can affect each other, but they are two different entities.


5.3 Culture of Nationalism and Brotherhood

“Modern nationalism has many variants, but Pakistan is in unique company, being one of only two countries in which religious identity is the basis of membership in the political community. The myth of a monolithic Pakistani nation united by the bonds of Islam was totally exposed by the successful secession of more than half the population of the country in 1971. Yet, instead of acknowledging the glaring holes in the official nation-building project, the state and propertied classes proceeded to reassert Pakistan’s ‘Islamic’ essence ever more vigorously (Akhtar 2018, 94)”.

After the downfall of Mughal Empire and humiliating defeat in the hands of British Forces Muslims of India realized that if they kept fighting like their Mughals they will never succeed. So, they decided to use religion as a tool and bring together religious brotherhood and nationalism under one umbrella. It helped them during Pakistan movement, but it backfired after the partition. They did not learn the lesson and after 1971, it got accelerated especially in during General Zia’s Martial Law. As Aasim Akhtar quotes Zia by saying, “Pakistan is like Israel, an ideological state. Take out Judaism from Israel and it will collapse like a house of cards. Take Islam out of Pakistan and make it a secular state; it would collapse (Akhtar 2018, 94)”.

As I have mentioned before and in the upcoming chapters I will elaborate it a bit more that when this experiment of religio-political union worked and started showing its results, it became more and more useful with every passing day. Islamic brotherhood covered in the nationalism and nationalism under the cover of Islamic brotherhood became a norm of the society. Ambitious people had got a license to be popular among the leaders in the ranks. So, it encouraged more people to fall for it and the ones who were not convinced, they decided to go with the flow. “The Zia regime’s policy of ‘Islamization’ gained at least superficial acceptance ‘from below’ both because of fear of the coercive apparatus of the state and because ‘Islam’...
became an avenue for upward mobility in a society ravaged by inequality and injustice (Akhtar 2018, 95).

While concluding this chapter, I would like to say that although Muslim invaders from Arabia and Turkish region were able to conquer and rule the land, but they could not eliminate the core values, customs, traditions and rituals from the hearts of the people of this land. It is clearly evident to see the signs and modifications of the local rituals by the outsiders, but they could not bring an overall change. If religion and culture would be synonyms or collaterally connected, then Islam would require the newcomers not only to leave their religion, but also leave their culture. As it did not happen this way which means religion and culture have nothing to do each other. They can complement each other, but they are not bound together.
Chapter-6

6. Transrational Approach, Pakistani Society and Islam

“I wish to hold myself close to the actual messiness of ideas, processes and change and from such a place speculate about the nature of our work and the lessons learned (Lederach 2005x)”.

After spending years of my life in five different continents, I still wonder what this life is all about. Sometimes, I think that I fully understand it and the next incident tells me that it was nothing, but just my illusion. I still struggle to understand, is it beautiful, cruel, lively, chaotic, lyrical, hard, soothing, difficult, complex or simple? This complexity of life has always made me fall deep into it in order to understand it better and when I look back at my own life, I realize that it is a mixture of everything, ‘messiness’ and simplicity; beauty of life lies in this diversity.

In the previous chapters, I have told you my story, my background and I have discussed that what is my research topic and why. I have also tried to explain which literature I have used to support my research and what method I have used to come to any conclusion. In this chapter, I would like to explain some key terms, concepts and the philosophy of peace and conflict transformation followed by an overview of Innsbruck school of thought in MA Program in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation. I would like to explore the presence or absence of these concepts in Pakistani society and how it has been affecting the society in general.

Keeping in mind the Transrational peace philosophy learned at aforementioned MA program, it is important for me to make it clear for my readers what I am talking about. I would like to talk about my personal understanding of peacework and some of the main pillars of achieving peace in a society or a community. I would also try to establish how it is possible to
bring back the balance and peace in a religious society like Pakistan through transrational peace philosophy and will highlight how accession or omission of one core value or component of peace families can affect the entire society.

As my thesis talks about my sensitive relationship with my family and community; as religion is omnipresent in our society, so I am also affected by the excessive use of religion in our daily lives. Nowadays, in Pakistan it is inevitable to separate religion from society. In this chapter, I will highlight the existing idea of peace families in Islam that can be used to bring back the missing balance in Pakistani society and how the excess or absence of these ideas can affect people’s life. Here, I would like to mention that my aim is not to prove that Islam expands through all peace families and it contains all the ideology of peace families, but my aim is to highlight different components within the teachings of Islam that can help to stabilize Pakistani society. In my opinion, for a stable society it is important to have different aspects and core values of peace families, but if you focus on a couple of them and ignore others then the imbalance of the society starts.

Founding father of Innsbruck school of peace and conflict studies and UNESCO Chairholder Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich has brought into light a different concept of peace and conflict studies. Inspired by the other icons in peace and conflict research like John Paul Lederach, Kenneth Boulding, Nigel Young, Norbert Ropers, Johan Galtung and Hakan Wiberg (Dietrich 2012); Dr. Dietrich goes a step further and introduces the concept of “Peace Families” and “Many Peaces”.

“[…] the idea of the one (perpetual) peace in the one world, as it is put down in all key documents of modern world politics, is, at least, sheer intellectual violence vis-a-vis those who cannot share this idea, because it is just this: an idea, put in front of man in order to conceal that not even this one is equal. The world
therefore needs more than one peace for concrete societies and communities […] Let us look for our place and act in accordance with it! Let us talk about the many peaces (Dietrich & Sützl 1997)”.

Dr. Dietrich’s concept of peaces or plurality has brought up a very unique concept, so that we can understand the diversity and complexity of our society. If I look around and pay attention, I can see plurality of thoughts, opinions, truths, conflicts and peaces everywhere. For the readers who might not be familiar with these terminologies and concepts I would briefly introduce peace families and the idea of plurality.

**6.1 Interpretation of Peace through Peaces**

Being convinced by the arguments of Dr. Dietrich that “there could be more than one legitimate possibility for thinking and living peace” I wonder that how our ancestors kept living with the concept of solo peace as in my opinion this concept blocks the ways and closes the doors for the other possibilities and the idea of coexistence. “Perceptions founded on an Idealist and in consequence a singular, strong, and perpetual concept of peace would be violent within a communication system (Dietrich 2012, 2)”.

According to my personal understanding, before Dr. Dietrich’s research and this innovative concept, the idea of peace was very narrow and fixed while his approach has broadened the scope of this concept and has given a new life to it. I would say that his research has presented with a puff of some “fresh air” to the field of peace and conflict studies. The same “fresh air” that he has mentioned in his book as a meaning of the word peace in the language of Burkina Faso (Dietrich 2012, 2). In the awake of this “fresh air” Dr. Dietrich introduces five “peace families”. These families are scattered on wide range of space and time and they represent different school of thoughts in different eras. He names them Energetic Peaces, Moral
Peaces, Modern Peaces, Postmodern Peaces and Transrational Peaces (Dietrich 2012). He divides these peace families into core values or themes and says that these values or themes are the paramount of a peaceful society.

“Each circulates around a specific key value: energetic peace is all about harmony, the moral interpretation emphasizes justice, the modern understanding of peace calls for security, and the postmodern approach deals with the question of truth(s). Since none of these values appear isolated in social life, we tried to combine them in a holistic manner and identified the dynamic equilibrium of the four aspects as a larger concept of peace. We called this trans-rational, because it appreciates and applies the rationality of modern science while it transgresses its limits and holistically embraces all aspects of human nature for its interpretation of peace (Dietrich 2014, 48).

In the following sub-chapters, I would like to discuss the important points of different peace families and their core values which are necessary components for a peaceful society. No society if perfect and I am not searching for perfection, but I would like to point out the missing values of peace families from Pakistani society. According to the concept that Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich provides, it is important to acknowledge the existing elements in a society and work on the other, but do not negate or ignore any of them completely.

6.2 Peace through Harmony

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided (Quran 3:103)”.

The philosophy of peace tells us to look at the concept of duality in a different way. It explains that the duality like good/bad, black/white, man/woman and so on is nothing but a form of balancing each other. They are not opposite of each other, they are different and complement each other. While quoting David Diamond, Norbert Koppensteiner says that energetic philosophy can be explained in a few words “there is no ‘them’, there is only us (Koppensteiner
2018)” and in the same lines Bulleh Shah says “remove duality and do away with all disputes (2012, 36).

According to this concept, one part of duality is not used for demeaning the other, but they are there to harmonize each other. The dualism of yin-yang is there to unite and create the cosmic harmony (Dietrich 2012). It shares the understanding that humans are relational and need balance and this balance comes from the duality of life. “One says that something appears as good or bad in one’s own eyes, right now, in a certain context. Therefore there is nothing which can be good (right) as such or bad (wrong) as such (Dietrich 2012, 46)”.

Throughout the knowledge of energetic peaces two concepts are very prominent and can be found everywhere and they are harmony and balance. “Peace in this worldview can only be understood as that balance and harmony between heaven and earth as it is perceivable and producible by the human being (Dietrich 2012, 47). It does not strive for the idea of perfection of the world within and without, but it believes in ever changing state. According to energetic peaces anything that does not coincide with its concept of duality, creates imbalance. Everything that stands outside this harmony, whether physically, psychically, or mentally, within the individual or within the world in general, has to be perceived as a failure or disturbance of the balance between yin and yang (Dietrich 2012, 47)”.

The concept of All-One, all-in-One or all-comes-from-One can also be found in Islam. As Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich talks about the creation of yin and yang or the concept of duality of yin and yang Quran repeats the same, “[God] created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many (Quran 4:01)” and Rumi says “Why should I seek? I am the same as he. His essence speaks through me. I have been looking for myself (Rumi 1995,
Only if someone is connected energetically to the bigger whole, can feel the way Karen Armstrong explains, “By approaching the Koran in the right way, Muslims claim that they do experience a sense of transcendence, of an ultimate reality and power that lies behind the transient and fleeting phenomena of the mundane world. Reading the Koran is therefore a spiritual discipline (Armstrong 1994, 77)”.

Another energetic concept of no evolution is also exists in traditional Islamists, but according to our university facilitator Norbert Koppensteiner moral peace see the evolution differently (Koppensteiner 2018). It is very common to find these energetic concepts and traditions across all civilizations and religions, but it is a pity that some of us have forgotten our basics “energetic concepts of peace can be found everywhere across time and space. Some of them have long faded; others are still binding for many people on this earth (Dietrich 2012, 53)”.

Islam and Pakistani society is not far from that. Although, for centuries Sufism have rules our region, but lately we have forgotten this energetic and harmonious traditions of Sufism.

According to the energetic worldview, if we want to achieve peace in our life the best way is to let go thoughts, emotions, desires or things that hold us back to this materialistic world. Peace is not a static or objective phenomenon, but rather it is subjective and constantly changing. It develops from inside out. It can only be achieved if first it is inside ourselves and then gradually it moves to the outer world because in energetic worldview everything is interconnected and the starting point of everything is ‘self” (Dietrich 2012) and same thing Bulleh Shah states “You have reached into the skies, but you have failed to reach what is in your heart (2012, 27)”.
“The symbol for yin and yang is an ideal type representation of energetic peace. Everything is contained within everything. Peace implies the sublation of all dualities and a comprehensive harmony between heaven, the human being, and earth (Dietrich 2012, 16).”

6.3 Peace through Justice

This concept of achieving peace through justice also talks about the duality, but it looks at the duality with a complete different lens and this lens is the lens of good and bad or right and wrong. It teaches us that we are logical beings and logic can define what is right and what is wrong therefore the wrong ones should be eliminated. According to this concept God is the truth and this truth comes to earth through men and if we follow ‘the truth’, we are on the right side. Attaining peace through morality or justice reflects a constant struggle between good and evil and there is a promise of a better and peaceful future in the life hereafter (Dietrich 2012).

In moral peace the main understanding is that everything comes from an Organic Whole and because of this it generates immense fear. Human beings are sinners and this earth is an imperfect creature, so we are here to sacrifice our today for a better tomorrow and being just to each other. “The pious one, who travels the paths of wisdom, will achieve prosperity, progeny, power, health, and longevity. The idolaters, however, who have decided on evil, will be condemned at the Last Judgment and brought to an evil place, hell (Dietrich 2012, 76)” and contrary to that Bulleh Shah says that do not fight with any external force, but focus on your own actions “You are busy fighting Satan. Have you ever fought your ill intentions (2012, 27)?”
This way, achieving peace in the society through divine justice or morality promotes the culture of innocent and criminals, victims and perpetrators, good and evil or ‘us and them’ that places it completely opposite to what energetic peaces believe ‘no them, only us’. It takes the concept of wholeness or everything as a whole from energetic peaces, categorizes them and then put them into the labeled boxes of ‘we’ the good ones and ‘they’ the bad ones (Dietrich 2012) that is why ‘we’ deserve the ‘best’ and ‘they’ deserve the ‘worst’. It establishes the concept of justice, so the entire argument is to follow the right path that is the path of God and bring justice to our souls. Islam says, “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do (Quran 5:8)”.

Another important point here to be noted is that during the rise of patriarchal system and the fall of energetic or homeostasis balance system, masculinity started to be considered holy and pure while femininity became a symbol of shame, disrespect and embarrassment. According to Wolfgang Dietrich, it was a male attempt to control the importance of the dominated feminine principal. The feminine qualities like fertility, femininity, beauty, body which were respected during energetic times turned into something bad and shameful while male attributes were considered as good (Dietrich 2012). Although, I understand his point, but I do not agree with it and I think it is extremely generalization, if we put all the religion in the same category. In my opinion, it was not the religion that promoted such concepts, but it purely a social shift.

I can give hundreds of examples from Quran where it praises femininity, fertility and motherhood. “And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship (Quran 46:15)”, it shows that Islam have always regarded and respected feminine principle. “Whoever does righteousness,
whether male or female […] We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do (Quran 16:97)”.

In my opinion, somehow the way moral peace or peace through justice have been interpreted in Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich’s book “Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture (2012)”, it undermine the personal experiences of every individual and focus on the universal or collective responsibility. The way it is being interpreted, it negates the possibility of human potential and makes God the sole owner of black and white. It puts the entire blame on God and takes away the concept of free will, so keeping in mind some examples of Quran I do not agree with this claim.

As Quran mentions, “Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves (Quran 13:11)”. It shows that God is not the sole power and He gave free will to choose what to and what not to. People are not given hundred percent code of conduct and their liabilities otherwise it would be illogical from God’s part to give humans free will. Having said that I would like to mention that the moralistic attribute Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich has explained can be seen, observed and felt excessively in Pakistani society. Stereotypes, judgments and fear are omnipresent in the society.

“The eye of God symbolizes the moral understanding of peace that finally refers to a God standing outside of the world who is identified with the human traits of a loving and punishing father and is omnipotent and omniscient. He is the True,
Beautiful, Good. Whether human beings do justice to his peace is interpreted in the manifest world by an elite group of spiritual leaders (Dietrich 2012, 65).

6.4 Peace through Security

“Logic will get you from A to B
Imagination will take you everywhere (Albert Einstein)”

When the concept of peace through security was introduced, it brought a huge change in the society and all the previous human concepts were turned upside down. It replaced God with science, religion with institutions, faith with logic, churches/mosques/synagogue/temples with universities, priests with teachers and justice with security. Human being became a rational or mechanical being and the concept that we are the good ones and we can make this world even better came into function. The ideas of power, control and security are very dominant in this peace family. The center of power shifts from God to humans. This peace family is not necessarily related to modern times, but we can say that it is related to modern “mentality and state of mind” (Dietrich 2012, 161).

Although the concept of God exists somehow and somewhere, but it became a farfetched reality of human beings and on the other hand rationality, reason, science and intellect have taken over the stage to manage peace by themselves. Education System of Pakistan has forgotten the principle of reasoning and logic. Without reasoning and logic our education can only produce beggars of the line. “Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason (Quran 8:22)”. So, it shows that Islam encourages reasoning, logic and intellect. It resembles a lot with moral peaces in so many core traits, but its approach is what differs from the moral peace family. It also advocates an absolute singular, undoubtful, supreme
and future oriented concept, the only difference is that modern peaces do not look up to heavens, but it looks towards time in future (Dietrich 2012).

Another main point or concept that developed during these times was the idea of nation state. As modernity rely heavily on time and progress while nation state is connected to history which is also related to time and progress that is why the idea of having a nation state was supported. Current Pakistani society is a blend of morality and modernity. Although, morality is over the top, but modernity through the concept of security has occupied a major chunk of the society. On one hand people play with the morality, justice and religion and on the other hand modernity has deepened its roots in the society through future planning, progress, materialistic approaches and institutional structures.

Following the intellectual, rational, logical and scientific frame of mind, moral peaces take the moral dichotomy of duality of right and wrong that was based on moral/immoral grounds and turn it into the concept of logical/illogical or true and false that means the supremacy of rational mind. As in moral peaces we have seen that they denied individual and humanistic experience related to earth, body and mind. Modern peaces went to the other extreme where they denied the individual experiences related to anything beyond physical, divine, spiritual or transpersonal (Dietrich 2012).

“The perception of the world as clockwork or machine is characteristic of modernity. Modern concepts of peace correspondingly believe that peace can be produced through repairing broken social relations; that is, via conflict resolution. The basis for this is the belief in a reason that is presupposed to the visible world and provides the guiding principle of human action (Dietrich 2012, 116)”.
6.5 Peace through Truth (s)

Contrary to Moral and Modern Peaces which believed in God, faith, justice, science, logic and security, the main idea behind ‘Postmodern Peaces’ is to doubt or question using the lens of rationality. It encourages people to look for alternatives and have difference of opinion. Postmodernity introduced the idea of many truths, in other words contrary to duality it brought the concept of plurality. Previously, we have studied peace out of harmony, justice and security, while here we will talk about peace out of truth. As we have learned in the previous peace family that modernity’s strongest point was logic and concrete answers, but postmodernity took this logic and turned into something doubtful.

Postmodern Peaces represent a concept that peace is not a consensus, but it is how to deal with these differences. It deconstructs the idea of one truth or consensus and encourages living with the differences, but when it continues with the concept of structure with different names; its critics say that it is modernity with the lenses of postmodernity. They optimize the condition of a population, according to pre-given standards and statistical data (Koppensteiner 2018). If, I have a look at Pakistani society, I can easily say that it is harder to find reasoning, questioning and doubting the established believes. As Mr. Ghamidi has once mentioned that it is hard to find someone to have a debate.

According to Dr. Dietrich modernity is not a time or era, but mentality and postmodernity “does not mean the period which chronologically follows after modernity (2012, 161)”, but postmodernity is full of modernity “The postmodern mentality accompanies modernity everywhere [...] concepts like Enlightenment, reason, secularization, freedom, equality, justice [...] and many more and in always new formations (Dietrich 2012, 163)”. Postmodernity is a
result of the frustration after Second World War and an attempt to find an alternative, because people started doubting the modern promises of salvation without claiming to have a counter proposal (Koppensteiner 2018). In his lecture, Mr. Norbert Koppensteiner continues to argue that modernity is a constant searching for something from within and without (2018).

Reiterating Francisco A. Muñoz’s concept of imperfection and not running after something absolute and perfect, Mr. Koppensteiner says that Postmodern Peaces are the continuation of some unfinished modern concepts (2018). Whereas Muñoz explains, “it can also be understood etymologically as “unfinished”, “procedural” (Muñoz 2001, 241)” Through his writing “Imperfect Peace” Mr. Muñoz talks about the importance of understanding the concept of ‘imperfection’ and ‘incompleteness’. He says that by looking at it like this and taking it as “procedural” or ‘process oriented’ makes it easier to achieve than something ‘perfect’ (Muñoz 2001, 241”). From a personal experience, I would say that in the community I grew up in had a different concept of well being or being fine. If you ask someone how is he/she feeling the person would answer ‘I am fine’, but if you go in detail that person might have problems in bits and pieces. We can see the concept of imperfection there, overall everything is flowing, but it is not perfect.

These days, it is very much evident in Pakistani society that many want to convince others to live a life according to their ideas. If it would be under their control they would govern the entire world with one religion, one language and one government system. They do not see the beauty that lies in the diversity. In Quran, God precisely mentions that He created people having various faiths, language and colors “the diversity of your languages and your colors (Quran 30:22)”, races and nations “made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another (Quran 49:13)” and opinions, is something extremely acknowledgeable. “To each of you, We prescribed
a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good (Quran 5:48)”, but it is unfortunate that nowadays having different opinion in our society is pretty dangerous. It has resulted into extreme intolerance, lack of acceptance and understanding in the society.

“There are no facts, only interpretations; and this too is an interpretation (Gianni Vattimo quoted by Dietrich 2012, 161)”. According to Dr. Dietrich this symbol “was designed by the British artist Gerald Holtom in 1958 on the occasion of a protest march against the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston. The N stands for nuclear, the D for disarmament (2012, 161)”.

### 6.6 Peace through Trans-rationality

We have come to our last peace family that focuses on “Integration of Differentiation and also Differentiation and Integration (Koppensteiner 2018)”. Transrational Peaces’ philosophy thinks that experiencing peace is not only out of common harmony, but it also comes from personal harmony, structural justice, relational security and cultural truths (Koppensteiner 2018). “Transrational Peaces do not overcome other peace families; they are not the evolutionary breakthrough to a superior paradigm, but they are the continuous dynamic (Koppensteiner 2018)”.

According to Koppensteiner, it is “ancient wisdom, modern science (2018)”. There is no romanticism or idealism in Transrational Peaces, but it is holding plural understanding of peace, seeing and analyzing peaces in their concrete, contextualized surroundings and they also limit the reason. It encourages non-individualistic and relational approach in attaining peace
Transrational Peaces acknowledge the interpersonal, intrapersonal and transpersonal connection or capacity of human beings. In transrational peace family spirituality and rationality both have the same importance; it does not negate anyone of it, but it integrates them (Dietrich 2012, 266).

“Transpersonal concepts of peace put an end to all modern illusions about final certainties. They provide clarity about the oscillation of the peace’s ethics and aesthetics (Dietrich 2012, 268). The way I understand, Transrational Peaces are the unity of the opposites through the homeostasis balance. They bring together all the concepts of other peace families acknowledging their differences. They promote multidimensionality and non-duality. The universe outside equals to universe inside explains that every human has a universe inside and is connected to a universe outside simultaneously.

“Transrational peaces send the human being on a lifelong quest in search of the dynamic balance in which ethical moments may manifest as characteristic of aesthetic ones, and aesthetic moments as a topic of ethical ones. Harmony may be a function of security, security one of justice, justice one of truth, which in turn can only exist in harmony. All those figures are thus conditional upon each other (Dietrich 2012, 268).”

According to Dr. Dietrich this symbol “stands for the inner peace of the All-One. The multidimensional triangles within the circle symbolize the connection between the energetic and the rational”. The triangles represent different energies and “the unification of the two (triangles) results in the rational-energetic harmony of the All-One”. It is derived “from an ancient peace culture and represents the contemporary insights of transrational peace philosophy (Dietrich 2012, 210).”

Going through all these core values and themes of peace families, understanding them from a different prospective and comparing them with the evidence present in Pakistani society, I
realized that it is worth investing time in my research as it might give me the answers I am looking for. Keeping in mind the concepts presented through the books of Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich about the peace families, their divisions and the way they work, it would be unfair to put Islam only under the umbrella of Moral Peaces. For the sake of academic argument, I can understand that Islam fulfills all the criteria of Moral Peaces, but in order to bring back the balance of the society, it is important to highlight and utilize the other aspects of peace families that can also be found in Islam.

“The Islamic has been in most respects a pluralistic civilization marked with remarkable degrees of diversity and patterns of antagonism and collaboration. The cultural life of the traditional Muslim was formed by at least four sets of intellectual legacies. Theology was but one such legacy. The others were philosophy and science, aesthetics, and mysticism (Ahmad 2006, 41)”.

While I was reading ‘Transrational Peaces’, I realized that it is very similar to the concept of *ijtihad*. One of the saddest parts of our religious scholar community is staying away from practicing *ijtihad*. Our scholars are following the decisions which were made centuries ago; although, they have the permission, knowledge and authority to use it, but they do not utilize it. In *ijtihad*, we gather all the information available related to the matter ‘differentiate’ it, ‘integrate’ it and come up with an alternate opinion. This opinion can differ time to time, person to person and society to society. Islam appreciates the diversity and respects the difference of opinion. “The soil is in ferment, O friend Behold the diversity (Bulleh Shah 2012, 46).
Chapter-7

7. Expert Opinions on Islam and Its Interpretations

After reading through many books and the opinions of different experts in the form of literature, in this chapter, I will bring forth the opinion of three different experts who know Islam deep enough to give their expert opinion on different topics. During my thesis, I have tried to elaborate my personal opinion, expert opinion and the current narrative of Islam, so here I am going to ask some specific questions to know where they stand when it comes to their opinion regarding my topic and the questions that I have raised during the discussion in previous chapters. As, I have mentioned before that there are many interpretations of Quran and Islamic laws and not only the Quranic verses, but also these interpretation have been taken out of context, so my aim is to understand what is the need of the hour in order to bring people close to each other.

These three people that I have chosen to interview belong to different schools of thought, backgrounds and understanding of religion. Their ages vary from thirty years to sixty-seven years and I have deliberately chosen from different ages, gender and educational backgrounds to have diverse opinions on the same issue. Although, I have seen people do many interviews, but my focus is more on quality than quantity. The experience of these interviewees all together will add a great value to the outcome of this thesis. First of all in this chapter, I will present my three interviewees in detail for the readers to understand who are they and why I have chosen them for my thesis. Then, I will give an overview of my talk with them to have an idea what is coming next and after that I will bring forward the main points of the thesis to integrate them with the interviews whether agreeing or disagreeing with them. I would like to mention a couple of very
important point here that I have never met these people in person, the interviews are professional yet at personal level, they were done through Skype and recorded as an audio file. One interview was recorded in English and the other two in Urdu, so the translation of these two interviews is done by me.

7.1 Javed Ahmad Ghamidi

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi is a well known Pakistani Muslim scholar from Sahiwal, Punjab Pakistan. He was born in 1952 in a family that was tilted towards Sufism. Right from his childhood he studied Arabic and Persian languages. Most of his informal early education was influenced by Sufism as a tradition of his family and later on, he graduated in English Language and Literature from Lahore, Pakistan. During his youth years, he was a keen student of literature and philosophy, but personalities like Abul A’la Maududi, Imam Hamiduddin Farahi and especially Amin Ahsan Islahi inspired him a lot and this inspiration instilled love for religion in his heart and mind.

His utmost distinction is to rise above and question the radical thinking, Islamization and politicizing Islam. He challenged the status quo within the religion of Islam and political forces that use Islam for their political gains. Many people call him revivalist or modernist, but he considers himself a student of religion who sticks to the basics of religion and that is Quran, the life of Prophet Muhammad and *ijtihad*. He questions the interpretation of Quran or *Shariah* and points out the errors in many laws like *Hudood* ordinance, inheritance laws and witness laws. He has established an Islamic research center around the globe with the name of *Al-Mawrid* and he is the president of this organization.
He has written more than eight books on Islam and related issues. His broad minded approach towards religion and presenting religion as a doable thing and not something extremely difficult and far from reality made me a big fan of him. That is why I have chosen to interview him. I wanted to present a viewpoint that is different from the current narrative of Islam. He looks at Islam with totally open mind and something that is there to be questioned. He does not treat religion something untouchable, so his reasonable approach made me to choose him as my first interviewee.

7.1.1 Summary of the Interview

Mr. Ghamidi was born in a very spiritually religious family that was following a famous Sufi tradition called Qadria. His father was very soft spoken, open-minded, learned and a literature loving person who never imposed anything on his family that made Mr. Ghamidi to become a fond of philosophy, history, poetry and religion right from his childhood and he was introduced to big names from Sufi and religious traditions such as Rumi, Sheikh Attar and Maulana Hamid-ud-Din Farahi. He was encouraged by his father to study both religious and formal education at the same time, but later on they developed a disagreement on the approach of Sufism towards Islam. “I was always interested in studies, poetry, philosophy, history and things like that so he not only used to encourage me, but also until we did not have any huge disagreement on Sufism, he had lots of expectations towards me”.

He believes that religion does not compel anyone to do anything. In his opinion, children need to be taught, encouraged and guide with a logic and should not be forced in a particular direction. It is necessary for children to develop critical and analytical thinking otherwise they can become beggars of the line. He says that God has not permitted even his prophets to impose
anything or to compel anyone then who are we to do so. “God has not permitted this even to his Prophets, even they were asked to preach and deliver the message with politeness”. Our task is to preach and deliver our message with love and care. Everyone has the right to choose what he/she wants in career, marital life and regarding following other dreams of their lives.

Mr. Ghamidi totally disagrees with the way Pakistani children are raised and especially taught in *madrassas*. “These things are a product of last agricultural era; they do not have anything to do with religion”. He is of an opinion that corporal punishment and depriving young kids to obtain a broad based education ruins their personality. The way our *madrassas* brainwash them and provide them a very restricted atmosphere it is not healthy at all. It is not only against the Islamic teaching, but it is also against the international norms and we should abolish them as they have nothing to do with Islam. These traditions are the leftover of medieval culture and modern day children have a much better approach towards life, so this education system is absolutely against the basic rights of a child.

He thinks that in our society our cultural norms were being protected with the religious coating, but religion is a set of those commandments that God has sent to us through Quran, Prophets and other religious scriptures. It is universal and will be followed as it is. Anything apart from that is culture and cultures can be Arab, Non-Arab, Hindi and Western. They are a combination of our social, economical and political values that we learn from our families, societies and other surroundings where we grow up. He highlights the role of teachers in our culture and says that the most impactful influence comes from teachers and whatever we learn from teachers, we follow it as it was a commandment of God.
That is why we should pay attention what we teach our children and how we train them. A learning process should be based on logic and critical analysis. We should help them to develop an independent viewpoint and not narrow minded or viewless creatures because it can happen that in the beginning they accept things the way they are, but continuous suppression can cause a psychological reaction in them and it can create a hostile situation among the masses. “You will not see them growing and if later they will break these chains then they will break it with a psychological reaction and there is a danger of a bigger mess”. He reiterates that in order to produce great minds and people with a great vision, it is important to provide a broad based education. “If you will not develop analytical minds, you cannot produce people of high intellect”.

While answering a question regarding use of Islam for political gains, he stated that according to him and Islam itself “using religion for political purposes is a criminal offence”. A religion should be followed in an individual capacity, can it be a common man or a political leader; it is not a matter of collectivism nor it is a matter of forcing others through laws to follow the religion. “I am not even in favor of implementing it”. This is where we have gone wrong in Pakistan, right from Pakistan movement until now political parties have used it for their political gains and as a result we are living in a society where it has become difficult to engage others in a healthy debate. “You cannot have an open debate and the laws that have been made in the name of Islam, you cannot even criticize them”.

Mr. Ghamidi argues that it lamentable to see people deciding for each other faith that who is Muslim and who is not. It is not even domain of a state to decide because it is not Islamic. The only one who can decide about someone’s faith is God and when on the Day of Judgment He will do it, we do not know where He will put us. Mr. Ghamidi mentions that as a human
being of duty is to inform others and leave the rest on them. He says that for him even Christians and Jews are Muslims. “I even say it to Jews and Christians that you are Muslims, come and recognize the truth, leave these names and accept Islam as your original religion”.

According to him Islam the first and only religion and we humans have divided us into groups. “When people divide themselves they become Christians, Jews, Deobandis, Barelvis, Hanafis and Shafis, but we have only one name and that is Muslim. So, we need to preach this”. Quran preaches equality across the board and does not allow anyone make laws to discriminate others. Criticizing Hudood Ordinance, he termed these laws as medieval laws. “Medieval mentality was the basis of these laws”. Once again he stresses that medieval cultural norms were mixed with the religion to produce such type of laws and they should be abolished because they are misinterpretation and misunderstanding of divine laws. That is why it is important to keep reviewing these laws. It is a wrong approach that even humanistic interpretations of different laws are considered divine and are not being criticized or debated. “A door of criticism should remain open on humanistic approaches”.

He points out that as people before us did not get a direct revelation from God and has interpreted Quran according to their understanding similarly we have the right to interpret these divine laws according to our needs and time. “As our ancestors had a right to interpret it, we also have the same”. Mr. Ghamidi also links these interpretations, our madrassa system and using Islam as political tool with the existing extreme mentality of our nation. While answering a question regarding use of Islam and Pakistan during Soviet-Afghan war he says that whatever is happening in our region is the fruit of this decision. “This has made our nation suffer, country suffered, ummah suffered and Islam suffered. Pakistan should not have involved in it”.
He says that although Pakistan was used by international forces, but the responsibility of the mess lies on the political and religious leader of the nation. Their decision has resulted into a disastrous outcome for the youth of Pakistan. Mr. Ghamidi states that it is not permissible to get involved in the matters of other states because if we do so, others will do the same and then we have to face the music as we have been facing from last few decades. “You have seen that the results of this we have to face horribly in last thirty to thirty-five years in different ways”.

In his opinion, this involvement in others matters in the name of *Jihad* has neither Islamic basis nor any religious duty. “This concept has no foundation”. Although, Islam has given us the right to defend ourselves or to fight and it cannot be anything, but to fight against a oppressor. What Osama Bin Laden or General Zia did was a mere political game that damaged not only Afghan nation, but it also corrupted the mentality of Pakistani youth and damaged the reputation of entire Muslim world. An individual cannot decide wage a holy war against anyone, it is a sole discretion of a state, but even then there are terms and conditions. “*Jihad* is only state’s duty, state will decide and it is always against oppression”.

He says that all these things are the understanding and interpretation of the commandments give God through Quran or the Prophets, so these understanding and interpretations kept changing from time to time and people to people. The best way to do this is to engage in *ijtihad* and *ijtihad* is the way forward. “*Ijtihad* is just like air and water for a society”. What is happening now that our scholars have stopped doing *ijtihad* and practicing *Taqleed* (imitation) of the scholars of medieval ages. Some of the decisions which were taken at that time to avoid problems are still being practiced knowing that we are living in a completely different time.
Regarding the laws of punishments, he says that in the past especially in tribal era things were decided at a family or tribe level, but these days things have changed. We should keep in mind all the changes in our society and amend laws or make laws according to our needs. Nowadays, it is state that is responsible, so the state should be given the right to decide. “These issues are the responsibility of the governments and courts”. Our responsibility is to make laws, to discuss them, to support them and to highlight if there is any abuse being done in the name of laws.

In his concluding remarks he said that during his childhood or youth he had not experienced any such extreme situation. People were friendly, flexible and understandable when it comes to dealing with religious, political or social differences. That society was more open and acceptable than the one nowadays. “We used to have lots of gatherings and people used to discuss with each other on religious issues, show their concerns and to express their point of view”. These extremist thoughts were brought in later and are the result of our religious, political and educational system. This system injected intolerance in people’s mind that is why it is difficult to engage in a healthy debate nowadays and it is damaging our youth. “This extremism put people’s life in danger. The way people started treating each other, it is a product of modern era, means of these last thirty-five to forty years”.

7.1.2 My Analysis of the Interview

During my thesis, I have read many books and quoted a lot of authors, but the amount of authentic information with utmost conviction I have got in this interview of less than an hour, I have not got in many books. It was a very fruitful interview that left me with this understand that majority of the problems that people have witnessed in Pakistan are a matter of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Quran. I also realized that it is also a because of a confusion between
culture and religion. Somehow, people tend to or tried to mix culture and religion as both of them are very close to their heart.

Another very important thing, I have observed during our discussion that whenever I raised a question of using Islam for political gains Mr. Ghamidi either got very emotional, annoyed or uncomfortable which shows that he was not only telling us about the disapproval of Islam regarding this matter, but he himself is totally against it. His sad tone of voice while talking about the act of terrorism and extremism in the last thirty to forty years tells the story that how unethically and badly religion was used for political gains. I realized that the concept of *Jihad* that is being taught at schools and madrassas in Pakistan is totally distorted one. It is and it was a political and economical war fought for power politics and personal benefits. It has nothing to do with Islam except a distorted connection to disguise the masses.

I had the feeling that Mr. Ghamidi is overall disappointed with our systems, it can be political, social and educational system, but mainly he blames four types of people for the current scenario. First, he says that the parents are not letting their children to go ahead with their personal choices and parents want to impose their decisions on those children who are born in this computer age with access to every sort of information. Second, he mentions that teachers who are not less than parents and who should guide the students throughout their educational career as in our society teachers are extremely influential for a student and their teachings are taken so seriously that Mr. Ghamidi call it “like divine words”.

Third, he criticizes religious scholars for not being open-minded, not exploring other sources and being beggars of the line in following the old Islamic scholars who existed several centuries back. He seemed very disappointed while telling that why a religious scholar like us,
not a prophet, not a messenger, just a simple scholar was allowed to interpret Quran in his time, but we are not allowed or encouraged to do so and if someone tries to do so, he is being targeted. Four, he is extremely disappointed with the leaders of the nation that knowing that our problems were political, it can be the issue of Pakistan movement, conflict between Bhutto and Jamat-e-Islami, conflict between Bhutto and General Zia or jumping into the so called Afghan Jihad. All of these issues were politically motivated and Islam was used just as a tool to stir the confusion into the minds.

In my interview and while reading it again, I had the impression that Mr. Ghamidi wants to bring people of different believes under one umbrella and wants to create a peaceful atmosphere for the masses. Although, I also desire the same, but being a peace and conflict worker, I know that perfection is nothing, but a utopian concept. He shared the thought which is almost the same thing that I have argued in the third chapter that Islam is the first and the only divine religion of the world which was revealed to Prophet Adam and Eve as explained by Torah, Bible and Quran and all other religions are the deviations of Islam. As objective of my thesis is not finding out the history of any religion, so I will not go into the details, but it is an interesting point that we share and I would like to continue my research during my Ph.D.

Mr. Ghamidi’s focus on the need of ijtihad is also a take away point for me and for this thesis. In my understanding what I have got from this interview and also my personal observation says that as a culture cannot be static, it keeps changing and with the passage of time, so our laws cannot be static as well. They must adapt to the needs of people because if they do not then there will be a clash among two different entities. So, to keep the laws, rules and regulation up to date, it is important to keep doing ijtihad on new issues and keep discussing the ijtihad done in the previous time so those laws are also compatible with the new requirements.
Another point that I have observed that Islam discourages any sort of discrimination it can be against women, children, non-Muslim, a particular sect or a religious group. It is against the norms of religion and the human rights that a religion provides to common population of a society. Islam is not for a particular nation, tribe, group of people or race; it is for the whole humanity. It does not allow anyone to force other to implement its commandments. People are free to choose their life style. Our focus should not be on someone’s faith and our relationship with other should be based on humanity and not on social, political or religious faith. The way forward is to focus on the basics and avoid conflict with the time because time never stops for anyone and whoever has tried to fight with time has lost against it.

7.2 Bushra Ashraf

Bushra Ashraf is an Assistant Public Prosecutor in Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. She hails from Kashmir and was born in 1985 in a very traditional middle class family that belongs to Sunni sect. After her basic education from Abbottabad, she did Bachelors in Education, Bachelors in Law and Masters in Physical Chemistry. She was very much interested in corporate law and criminal law, so she decided to do LLM focusing on corporate sector. In her professional life she is specialized in criminal laws. Her background in science and law with special focus on Islamic and criminal jurisprudence and critical views on dubious laws made her an interesting choice for my thesis.

Her father was not highly educated, but he was in favor of education and his biggest dream was that his children get at least a master degree. He wanted to see them excelling in their respective fields and become economically independent. Although, there were some resistance among the extended family regarding educating female children, but Bushra’s father stood firm.
and defended his stance. She considers herself lucky to have a father who did not differentiate between a male or female child and provided equal opportunities for them. Nowadays, she is a successful lawyer and a well-known public prosecutor in Abbottabad. Her legal background and having the deep roots in the current scenario through public relations made me to choose her for this interview because not only she represents women community, but she also brings in a completely different understanding of laws and it can add extra value to my thesis.

### 7.2.1 Summary of the Interview

Bushra’s family background tells that although previously there was no formal education given in her family especially to female children as her mother was not educated at all and only one of her aunt had the opportunity to go to school, but finally they realized that the best way forward is through education. “He always had one dream that we all at least get education till Masters level”. She also pointed out that unlike so many other families around, her father did not discriminate daughters and gave same opportunities to male and female children. “You must have your own identity, not because you are male or female or you are my daughter or my son, but just because you are a human being then you have the responsibility to fulfill the aim of your education”.

While answering a question, she said that although she did not want to study science, but she was forced to because she was an intelligent student and she was not allowed to study religious education because according to the cliché of the society it is a very conservative field, so only poor or dull children are supposed to study religion. “Those children who are not wise enough or dull they are suppose to go to a madrassa”. Another cliché that irritated Bushra or left her heart broken was when she felt attracted towards a male class fellow, so after observing him
for a long time, she decided to propose her. She talked to her family, but according to a local tradition, a female member of the society cannot propose a man to marry. “So, at that time I first time felt like, oh due to culture I cannot propose him”. It shows that how frustrating some norms can be as Bushra expresses her frustration by saying:

“For very childhood we are taught little stories like Hazrat Khadija proposed Hazrat Muhammad (SW). From his dealings she understood that he is a person who can be a life partner, honest and such type of things. So, same way I also felt from his conduct that he is a person who can be, but when I came home and I did the same thing and I was told that these things are not our culture”.

From Bushra’s conversation with, I could feel that things are changing and it is much better in terms of formal education that many more girls can go for higher education, but still there is a long way to go. It is still a cliché that women are weak and naive. “You female and you girls and you women you always are trapped by male”. There are things that you can do being a female and there are things you cannot. At the end of the day local norms play a much higher role than a religion. Although, religion has permitted things, but the misinterpretation of certain verses are being twisted to protect cultural norms. “Now I know that there is a difference between a female, being a daughter and being a father”. People have seen the benefits of education so the ones who were once against it now are in favor. “My dad’s uncle is also very proudly introduce me to his male community that she is our child, we are proud”.

According to Bushra, sometimes, to prove that a woman is capable of a certain job she needs to do something that is not logical. While giving an example she told the story of her internship first she was refused to be allowed to work as the head of the law firm never allowed a woman to work for him, but when she persisted she was told that she will only be allowed to work if she will not cover her face and if she can work from six in the morning till ten in the evening. “Even then my father was the only person who gave duty with me and he gave me the
freedom”. Although, she accepted the challenge and she became the first female member of that law firm and for that her father supported her a lot, but on the other side it was suppressing a community which is already being suppressed for thousands of years in a patriarchal system.

Another important thing for me was that she understands that a general population in Pakistan does not separate or differentiate between religion and culture. This confusion is still going on that religion and culture are two different entities. “For me these two are very much different and I am clear about these things, but what I practically sight or experience in my life till now is that people around us they do not think culture and religion is different”. So, she thinks that as culture starts influencing a child’s life even before birth, it is easier and logical to adopt these concepts from the culture. One of these concepts is the collectivism and according to Bushra collectivism is a very good concept as it encourages us to work for our common good and welfare.

She takes this concept of collectivism too far and says that it is an Islamic and Quranic concept. So, our common goals make us responsible for everyone that is why we are not fully free. “Being a Muslim though individual as a Muslim I have a free life and I have a free choice, I have free expression, but I am not hundred percent free”. Then, she takes it one step further where she says that as Muslim means obeying someone which means not individual thinking, just following blindly. “If you obey someone, someone’s rule, someone’s principles or someone’s code of life, so if you are obeyer or you are obeying something, it simple means that you are not having your own thinking”.

In Bushra’s opinion, forcing someone to do something is not allowed in Islam, but she categorizes it into two, one is forcing an adult that is not permitted and the other one is forcing a
minor. She thinks that sometimes it is necessary to decide something on a minor’s behalf, but later in her interview while telling me a story about a girl who was not allowed to get higher education without using abaya, she used these words about the girl, “your parents are extremely cursed to have a daughter like that because they must have seen such a contradiction in their daughter that if she goes out like this how would she come back”. According to her and her family, she was not a good person and did not belong to a good family.

Answering a question regarding punishments, Bushra said that you do not need to be a scholar in order to decide whether it is Islamic or not. “Quran it is very much clear in a Quranic verses like for a female to slap her, it is forbidden, it is not allowed, it is strictly forbidden. It is totally cultural” and people confuse religion and culture “because the people does not understand the difference between culture and religion”. The same thing goes for using religion for political gains and further in the interview she says that making Hudood ordinance was not a good decision as there are other laws which are more logical and practical.

In her opinion, the concept of *ijtihad* is very beautiful that gives us the opportunity to emend, modify and change laws according to our needs and it should be practiced, but the concept of forced *Jihad* and intolerance against other is absolutely against Islam. She says that this current concept of Jihad given by our religious leaders does not match with the spirit of Islam. “I do not accept that Islam is intolerant and there is no true concept of *Jihad* which is given by mullah (religious leader). I do not think the interpretation of *Jihad* by mullahs is right one” and she criticizes the current system for that “because now we kids are not as much tolerant, we are more aggressive”. Bushra finishes her interview with these thoughts that previous generations did not have these problems because they were clearer in their concepts.
“There was no confusion like this generation has about its concepts, about its believes and about its practices”

7.2.2 My Analysis of the Interview

Interviewing Bushra was very interesting; I would say way more interesting than the other two interviewees because in the other two interviews I got a very scholarly perspective on different issues, but during Bushra’s interview I got a glimpse of our society and the generation I am aware of. Although, she was very different on so many issues, but she also shared lots of concepts that I already come across in my life and the concepts I do not agree with or I think a bit dangerous when it comes to interpret religion into our daily life. It was unexpected, but not surprising as she has studied from a Deobandi teacher just like me. Later in the discussion, I will bring forth those points.

Her family background is a very traditional and typical of Pakistan, but what really made her different or privileged is the concept of education, independence and providing equal opportunities to male and female children of her father. Around her, there were people who were not in favor of female education, but her father stood up against all odds and made her and her other sisters to get higher education which itself is an effort to be appreciated. Maybe, for some as it is every child’s right, it is nothing to be appreciated, but knowing the culture I grew up in is absolutely incredible to stand against the family and societal norms.

Although, she glorifies he father a lot and her father also did a lot for them, but while analyzing this interview I realized that there were so many things that he did were also influenced by the social norms and not compatible with what Islam says or teaches us. For example, the issue of forcing her to study science, criticizing her to like someone and asking to
propose her being a female or forbidding her to interact with Sufi preacher. It shows that coming out of the systematic cultural abuses of power is not that easy. It takes time, will and persistence to achieve that, so for my community it will take a long time until we get somewhere.

Bushra thinks that only family is not responsible for so many things, teachers are also fully responsible. Looking at this angle I totally agree with her and this is what Mr. Ghamidi had pointed out in his interview that teachers are just like parents so they will have to lead from the front as their teaching influence their students and in my opinion, teachers are the guides, spiritual and intellectual guides. It is not possible to deny the role that they play in a student’s life. This is a tradition since the time immemorial. Greek, Arab, Anglo-Saxon, Medieval, Modern or Post Modern traditions are a proof of this fact that teacher not only transfer their spiritual and intellectual knowledge to their students, but also encourage them to analyze it, criticize it and evolve the concept which is not the case in our society.

In my opinion, another point that is very valuable in this discussion is the issue of confusing culture with religion and vice versa. It is a very common practice in our society that people confuse social traditions with religious commandments. Again it is not only an error of a layman, but it is a mistake committed by our religious scholars who have used religion for their personal and political gains. When someone is raised in a society saying that a certain type of dress code, a certain style of meeting or greeting, a certain type of physical appearance or a certain type of language is Islamic or not and if that person does not verify it, of course he/she will think majority is authority and this is what has been happening in Pakistan. Whenever there is a religious issue the religious scholars call for resolving these issues on basis of majority opinion.
Bushra’s point that parents have the right to choose everything for a minor child is a little bit scary and I question what if parents are not educated at all and a child wants to opt computer science, engineering or art instead of medical studies. She also thinks that being a Muslim a person just has to obey and cannot decide anything on her/his own. If God has given humans a free will, mind, heart and conscious, it has a reason and purpose. If we were just to obey without any critical thinking, there was no need to give us all these qualities and abilities. In my opinion, it is almost the same mindset and cliché as Bushra’s law trainer had that a woman should not be allowed to work for him because women are not capable of this and after a while they get married and their destiny is to have kids and take care of their family.

One of the points in this interview that really shocked me was Bushra’s comment about another woman. The same Bushra who went against all the odds and became a professional lawyer, a public prosecutor, a very independent and confident working woman thinks that if a girl uses tight dress or behaves in a certain way is not a good person. Although, Bushra said that she likes collectivism that encourages collective good and is against the one that takes away someone’s rights or forces someone to decide something is pressure, but at the same time she forgot that what someone has to wear and what not is absolutely his or her choice. It is not our collective responsibility to tell someone what to wear and how to look like. In my opinion, she is not aware of this fact that what she is doing are the unconscious side effects of collectivism or she does not think about it and fall into the same social trap. I think, it is our aggressive attitude of intolerance that pushes us towards collective judgmental qualities and these social habits sometimes trap us so badly that we even forget we are getting into the same trap we are fighting against.
7.3 Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas is an Islamic researcher, who was born in 1988 and raised in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. He currently lives in Shah Alam, Malaysia. He was born in a very religious Deobandi family. Although his grandparents were very religious, but after getting modern education his father had progressive views about his children's upbringing and the values he wished to impart to them. Neither him nor his siblings were interested in choosing the path of religious education. In 1998-99 when he was a sixth grade student, he was introduced to Maulana Tariq Jameel of Tablighi Jamaat and he got inspired of him so much so that he decided to pursue religious education. When he told his father about the decision, his father suggested him to finish his basic twelve years of education and then do whatever he wants. According to him this talk with his father has changed his life as now he believes that the way our madrassas admit students aged eight to ten to make them Muslim scholars is an un-understandable practice.

After finishing his basic education, he did a degree in Islamic theology and also Masters in Language and Literature. He was a columnist for a prominent daily for Karachi. He has also been a lecturer of Islamic Jurisprudence and Quranic Studies at IIUI. He conducts workshops and webinars on Theology, Hermeneutics and Research in Hadith. His detailed study of Islam in context of classical and modern ideologies; especially Arabic, Urdu and English literature on Islamic jurisprudence, renaissance movements, history, philosophy, art and culture make him very unique among the young generation of Muslim scholars and an automatic choice for my thesis. He represents a young lot of the scholars coming out of Mr. Ghamidi’s research center, so I wanted to have a young Islamic scholar in my thesis as well who can shed the light on different issues.
7.3.1 Summary of the Interview

As Mr. Hassan was one of those lucky children who had the opportunity to choose what to study right from his childhood, he never felt that he was restricted from anything apart from seldom parental cautions and preventive measures which he thinks very positive and productive, but he has faced lots of issues from other people of our society. “The reaction was very tough on many occasions and I was tried to stop by the society and people I used to live with”. In our society, if a person decided to study religion, he is expected to have a specific dress code, physical appearance, code of conduct and etiquettes to follow, but Mr. Hassan said that as he was not convinced with idea, so he would break the rules wherever he could. “I accepted it under a cultural repression, but where I got a chance I tried to break it”. As a result, he had to face severe reaction of people in his surroundings.

Because he thinks that dress code, physical appearance, code of conduct and etiquettes are related to culture and they have nothing to do with religion. We learn these social behaviors from our family and surroundings, so they represent cultural norms and not religion while religion is purifying yourself and your surroundings. “Religion is the name of purification”. All three major religions say the same thing as all of them are in one way or the other a different version of Islam. “I would say these religions are different versions of Islam”. He says that a religion should not be accepted on the basis of being the oldest, but it should be accepted on the basis of logic.

“When I come to the world, for me everything is new, for me, it is also a new concept when someone says that Prophet Muhammad is a person. Who came to Arabia, he gave the Qur’an, and it is a new concept for me that what Bertrand Russell and Karl Marx have said something about life and ideology of life. So, in my opinion any concept that comes in front of you, it should be analyzed on merit regardless of being new or old. Whether it is something from Qur’an, Bible, Gita
or of a Western philosopher, we should look at it on the basis of its intellect and common sense and then decide on merit”.

According to Mr. Hassan when a child comes to this world, the first thing that influences his/her life is family and he thinks that family is just like an institution that provides a child with a structure to learn and develop. It is necessary for human child to have this opportunity in order to learn from it. “So the family is the first thing that affects children's life and if the family becomes weak, we see that if a divorce occurs, then children can suffer”, but the problem comes when instead of teaching them basic stuff when they are taught very heavy religious content; the content that they were supposed to learn as an adult. “In my opinion, the way religion is taught in our society, it does not suit with their age. There are many things that they should learn when they are old, but they are taught in their childhood”.

Looking at the current religious interpretation, this way of religious education produces an extreme mindset. “Thus, the religion leaves a negative effect on child's personality, when he grows up, becomes rebellion, carries a feeling of revenge that during my childhood he forced/punished me, now I will not accept even his valid request”. Mr. Hassan sees flaws in both madrassa education system and religious interpretation. He says that both are harmful on their own, but if they are brought together, they become even more dangerous. “In the current scenario, religious favors or extremism are related to our interpretation of religion. If it is given in childhood, its effect increases. It becomes part of the personality and then it becomes difficult to think over it”. He thinks that this education system lacks intellect, analytical approach and critical thinking.

Mr. Hassan is of an opinion that collectivism exists in every society by one way or the other because humans are emotionally attached to their environment, past, present and future.
They do not want to change the way they live and do not like external influences, but the best way forward is to spread education and produce intellectuals who can challenge the established norms of the society. “We should spread education, because when we spread education, the cults that affect the thoughts of humans, they initiate a process of change within the society and intellectuals of the society rise above and convince the people to change the established concepts”.

He gave the example of west and the institution of Pope and church that once it was the biggest example of collectivism, but once general population as a collective community realized that religion was being used for political gains “the same collective society uprooted the institution of pope” and he says that same has happened in the fields of science, history and religion, but as most of the time collectivism is used to suppress and sabotage the individual freedom of masses then it is absolutely against Islamic teaching, but he thinks that to run the matters of a family smoothly, parents and children have to adjust to the circumstances. The decisions should not be of a sort that they demolish the basis of a family. “The purpose of religion is to strengthen the family institution”.

While looking at Pakistani society and the use of religion on different spheres in the society Mr. Hassan says that it is against Islamic principles to use it for political purposes. It does not allow anyone to give certificates of who is Muslim and who is not. These arguments have no Islamic foundations. He declared that the groups who are waging wars against different governments in the name of Jihad for an Islamic government have no religious text that can support them because there is no such commandment that says a state should based on any specific concept or brother or sisterhood. Islam is not a static religion; it is not for a specific time,
nation, race or tribe. It is quiet on this subject, so there is not harm in living in any type of government system.

“These movements around the world are the result of the wrong interpretation of the basic religious text. The religion does not have any concern that what ideological basis of the state in which you live. It can be a nation state, it can be based on language, it can be based on the identity of a geographical region and it can be based on a collective identity of those who believe in one religion. The religion does not have any interest in it. If the religion had this concept, it would have told us that you have to create such a state, but the religion did not bound us”.

While talking about Hudood Ordinance and ijtihad, Mr. Hassan arguments that the problem is within the community of religious scholars of society because first was a result of a misinterpretation of the concept of religious laws and the second issue is the lack of intellectual, analytical and critical efforts. Our religious scholars of the past and present got involved in the governmental issues and left aside their main obligation. The majority started implementing their decisions and thoughts by force then organic and natural process of evolution that needs critical evaluation and reevaluation got weaker and it resulted into lack of intellectual quality in the field of religion.

This also caused an increase in extreme ideology and using Islam for political purposes. The concept of Jihad that was to fight against oppression was twisted in a way that it became a very confused, blurred and ambiguous topic. The concept that is purely based on truth and sincerity became a symbol of lies and deceptions during Afghan Jihad against Soviet Union which actually not a Jihad, but purely a political blunder and being used in the hands of the US. “You told the world that you did not fight this war, but in fact you were fighting and you were lying to the world. If you fight for Islam, you declare that you are fighting against the oppression,
or if someone is fighting against the oppression, we are supporting them”. So, its backlash was that this war not only destroyed Afghanistan, but it also destroyed Pakistani youth.

“He lied to the world and second thing that the wars are fought by the forces. In the present nation state, when we pay taxes from our hard earned money to make organized forces, so instead of fighting through these forces, you gave weapons in the hands of young children of our nation and what was the result? The result was that those young children who fought there had your self-made ideology of a holy war. A political war which actually was not against oppression, so the result this was that those people who fought there when they returned to this country, then they did the same bloodshed as they did there”.

Mr. Hassan concluded his interview by saying that one of the reasons behind the intolerant and extreme behavior of our generation is lack of leadership on our political landscape. Through military intervention establishment tried to tailor leadership and people who were not capable of being a national leader they took charge of national politics. “Whenever you produce leadership through an unnatural way, in the result of that those people come to the top of leadership who do not deserve it. So, with Pakistan it happened gradually and because of that Pakistan’s good leadership got eliminated and at the moment this issue has reached to its peak”. Second the unstable economical situation and third that religious scholars of the society have turned their back to their core responsibilities. “The intellectuals, scholars and teachers, who were supposed to guide the nation; in fact, these people have made their profession a business”.

7.3.2 My Analysis of the Interview

In this interview Mr. Hassan tries to balance between the society and religion. He considers family as a basic unit of a society and thinks that our learning starts at home because of that a family plays a role of an institution in a person’s life. He talks about strengthening this institution through understanding, flexibility and sacrifices if needed. Although, on one side he says that Islam does not allow anyone to force anything on others, but at the same time he says that the
best way forward is not to ruin everything and is to deal politely with others. So, in a way he accepts collectivism in some cases and rejects in the others.

In his opinion, culture and religion go hand in hand, but they are not synonyms and should not be takes as one. It is easier that people get confused with them, but they are two completely different entities. Religion is way broader term that does not have limits or boundaries and does not have set patterns while culture is bound to all these limitations. People who try to give religion some specific dress code, behavior or etiquettes are trying to limit its boundaries. Religion is there for self purification and establishes a relationship between human and God; it does not need forceful implementation by a state as it is an individual’s choice. He shares the opinion with me that in fact, there is one religion that is Islam which was revealed to Prophet Adam and Eve.

Mr. Hassan says that religion is above the boundaries of state or government. Its interest is way beyond these worldly things. It is a very technical, intellectual and spiritual topic that is why it is illogical to put a seven or eight year old child in a madrassa to become a scholar. Learning and teaching religion is a scholarly and intellectual job and a technical field, so just imagine if an eight year old child is admitted in a medical school to become a doctor. How the world will respond to that and what torture that child would go through. It is important for anyone to get a complete basic education and on a later stage decides if he/she wants to continue their religious studies or not. This way he/she will have sufficient self awareness to take a decision. Otherwise, continuing with the same education system will produce more extreme minds.
Religions objective is not to put restrictions on people or make people’s life difficult, but it is to facilitate human beings in their process. So, using it for political reasons, discriminating any gender, sect or group, fighting with others unjustly or sabotaging others freedom is nothing, but abuse of its domain. Same happened with laws that were made in the name of Islam; it can be Hudood Ordinance or declaring Ahmadis non-Muslim, they do not have any connection with Islam and it is just Islamizing constitution. It has not brought any good to Islam as religion, but it definitely distant people from Islam. Muslims and non-Muslims bother had a very bad impression of Islam as these laws are full of discrimination against women and also against a Muslim sect that has a different opinion than the majority Muslims. The strange thing for me is this that Pakistan is the only country Muslim country among fifty Muslim countries that has declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims.

After my interview with Mr. Hassan, I realized that among all three participants one thing was common that they thought that our current generation is not tolerant and in this intolerance comes from our education system and misinterpretation of Quran and Hadiths. There are many such quotations in our education systems where things are being misquoted and are against the spirit of Islam, but they are being used as they serve to produce a particular mindset. The best way forward is to educate young generation, but as Mr. Ghamidi has mentioned in his interview that it will take at least fifty years to bring a significant change in the current political, social and religious scenario.

7.4 Hifz-ur-Rahman

Mr. Hifz-ur-Rahman was born in 1975 in a family of six children. His parents were extremely religious and conservative as his father was a Deobandi religious scholar from a very
conservative background because of that he has spent his childhood in a very strict and rigid atmosphere. He has spent most of his life in Abbottabad-KPK, Pakistan. Right from his childhood, he wanted to follow the footsteps of his father and wanted to become a religious scholar. After completing his degree *Dars-e-Nizami* in religious education, he started leading the prayers and other religious sermons in the mosques. He has been serving in the mosques from last thirteen years.

He follows the *Deobandi* sect of Islam which is a sub-sect of Hanafi school of thought. Along with *Dars-e-Nizami* which is a six years course and is equivalent to a master degree, he has done a degree in Arabic Honors, *Tajveed-ul-Quran* and he has also memorized the whole Quran by heart. He also teaches Quran from last twenty years and thousands of his students are spread all over the world. He is a well-known scholar of his area. As he belongs to the same area where I grew up and know my family, so I thought he will be able to represent the viewpoint and mentality of the masses of my city.

**7.4.1 Summary of the Interview**

According to Mr. Hifz-ur-Rahman, he has spent his childhood in a very conservative atmosphere, but parents’ strict and rigid attitude is always for the betterment of children. Due to lack of maturity, they might not think the same, but when they grow up, they realize that their parents were not their enemies, so whatever they have done to them it is in the best of their interest. He thinks that being a human we are free to choose where to live and which religion to follow, but once we have decided to live in a certain place or follow a certain type of religion then these things bring some rules and regulations with them which we have to follow. We can live in any country and follow any religion there will always be some rules to follow. “If I have
chosen this religion then I have to follow the rules of that religion, so it should be done happily otherwise we should join some other religion”.

He thinks that religion is a way of life and it is sent by God through prophets, it is a divine entity while culture is a man made thing. It can have good qualities and bad qualities as well. In his opinion, religion and culture can have commonalities, but it is not necessary that they must be similar as they have nothing to do with each other, but along with family, religion and culture also play a very important role in a child’s life. If three of them are good, they will leave good impact on a child’s life, but if they are bad then the child will be influenced badly.

“Everything in this regard such as family, religion and culture can leave very positive and very negative impact on a child’s life.

Similarly, collectivism can also be good and bad. In his viewpoint, collectivism gives much more benefits than harms. Due to collectivism, people can get help from family, friends and society whenever they need, but if you do not like something or do not want to follow certain rules, regulations and customs then it is bad because you will have to do things that you do not want to do. “In Pakistan, it is really good and I agree with it. It has negative points and positive points, but in my opinion positives are more”.

He says that it is absolutely against law and religion to force someone against his/her will. While quoting a verse of Quran he says that “there is no compulsion in religion”, but lots of people misinterpret it. According to him, it does not mean that you can become and Muslim and then do whatever you want to do. If you are Muslim then you have to do what Islam says you to do, but you have a choice to become a Muslim or not and in this regard no one can force you to become a Muslim. He does not agree with the concept of using Islam for political reasons, but he
says that what Bhutto has done regarding declaring Qadianis as non-Muslims it was a good step because Qadianis are just using the name of Islam and bringing new things which are not according to the teachings of Islam.

While talking about Jamat-e-Islami and General Zia-ul-Haq, he said that they have used Islam for political gains which is not good, but if someone has tried to make the constitution of Pakistan an Islamic constitution, he did not do anything wrong because Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, so it was meant to be like that. “So as this country was in the name of Islam and with the slogan of Islam and if he has done this then there is nothing wrong in it. He has done the same thing as it was promised at the time of creation”.

Regarding Hudood Ordinance he claims that these are the divine laws sent by God and it is a wrong perception that they are meant to kill or paralyze people. People think that if someone accuses them, they will be killed or punished immediately, but it is not like that. These laws are there to help people. He thinks that they are very logical laws as for example if someone accuses the other of rape that person has to present at least four men as a witness and it is extremely difficult to produce four pious men that is why it is hard to misuse these laws as well. “Since these laws are being revealed by God, there so many strict clauses that it is difficult to meet them. It is difficult to abuse them”.

According to Mr. Hifz-ur-Rahman, it is difficult for a common man to understand international politics, but through print and electronic media whatever I have understood that a vast majority of people think that General Zia’s decision to become a part of Soviet-Afghan war was a bad one. Initially, it had given some financial benefits, but later on it turned to be a very bad decision because it resulted into the wave of terrorism and open use of arms in the society.
“For the time being he got some benefits, but for the long run country has gained less and lost more, in regards to the terrorism and in regards to the use of arms in the society”.

In his opinion, people underestimate that Pakistani religious scholar do not do *ijtihad*, but the reality is other way around. The only difference is that not everyone is allowed to do it. As, it happens in the other fields; a religious cannot operate a patient because it is not his domain. Similarly, *ijtihad* is a domain of a religious scholar. He gave example of loud speakers that initially as there were no loud speakers so no one used them, but when they were invented scholars did *ijtihad* that they should be allowed to use or not. “After *ijtihad* all these things have been decided that they are allowed, but this is for sure that *ijtihad* is not everyone’s jurisdiction”.

Regarding the concept of *Jihad* of Osama Bin Laden and General Zia, he says that it is a matter of someone’s intent and only God knows what is in someone’s heart, but apparently it looks that Osama Bin Laden has sacrificed his worldly luxuries for the sake of God, so his concept of *Jihad* is pure one. What masses say about General Zia’s concept is that he has used this concept only to remain in power. He concludes the interview by saying that our current society and generation lacks tolerance, education, mutual respect and relationality. The only thing that they have is being liberal and open minded. They want to do everything whatever comes in their mind without respecting anything. Neither religion, nor society or parents, they do not want to consider anyone, but the societies of 1950s and 1960s were more tolerant and relational. According to him, the reason behind this attitude is our selfishness.

**7.4.2 My Analysis of the Interview**

According to my personal perception, Mr. Hifz-ur-Rahman seemed very conservative in his approach towards different issues. As, he belonged to a very conservative family and was raised
in a very strict and conservative atmosphere; these reflections can be seen in his interview. In his viewpoint, children of this modern era have no maturity and understanding of their surroundings and even if the parents have no idea how this technological era works they should decide what a child, adolescent or young person should do and should not do. Apparently, he says things, but then he contradicts them in the same breath and later I will highlight this as well.

For example, he says that no one has a legal or religious right to decide for anyone and people are free to decide for themselves, but he also says that parents’ decision is always right and it is for the betterment of their children. He says that you are free to choose where you want to live and which religion you want to follow, but once you do that you are bound to follow them. In my opinion, it should not be like that, but if we see around the globe, we see the same pattern. In Muslim countries you are forced to follow a certain type of lifestyle or dress code and in some non-Muslim countries conservative mindset have placed a ban on women using veil.

So, both conservative sides force people to live under forced lifestyle and this is because Mr. Hifz-ur-Rahman thinks that religion is not only learning how to establish a connection with God, but it is a complete way of life. Here, in my opinion, he takes the domain of the society and gives it to the religion. He thinks that family, religion and society are three very important part of a person’s life and this collective approach is very beneficial for humans. For him collectivism can have some flaws, but all in all it is the best way of life. He does not see any harm if collectivism deprive people from their basic rights.

Although, he says that Islam should not be used for political gains, but at the same time he says that whatever Bhutto has done against Qadianis is right because Qadianis were disguising others as they were pretending to be Muslims and in fact they are not. He also praises
Osama Bin Laden for his concept of Jihad, as for him he has done it just for the sake of God, but on the other hand he condemns Jamat-e-Islami and General Zia for using Islam for their political gains and bringing terrorism and use of arms freely in the society. It is very interesting to see the shift and contradictions in his statements regarding different concepts. Same General Zia who has trained and placed Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan with the help of CIA is wrong, but the person who has fought their war is right.

Another contradiction or misunderstanding that I have observed is his take on Hudood Ordinance. On one side he says that it very strict law and people think that it is there to kill them or paralyze them and on the other hand he says it very flexible and gives benefit of the doubt to the accused. In my opinion, he misses the point where he does not consider that what if a man or woman was being raped in isolation and there is no witness at all. How will they prove that they were raped? From where will they bring four pious men to testify, if there not even one available and the most important thing that he ignores is the testimony of only one specific gender. This law does not accept the testimony of a female gender. If there are thirty female witnesses they will not be acknowledged only four pious me will be accepted to testify, not less than four.

Then, he calls these laws as divine laws which in my opinion also a contradiction. These laws were not sent by God, but they are the interpretation of some rules presented in Quran. These laws were the result of ijtihad done by some Muslim scholars centuries ago. He thinks that Muslim scholars in Pakistan are doing ijtihad, but in my opinion they are doing ijtihad on less important issues such as using or not using the loud speakers. It is important to use ijtihad to make people’s life easier, but in my opinion, it is more important to use ijtihad in cases where people’s life is at risk than for the sake of entertainment.
He believes that liberal and open minded approaches are not good as he ties them with selfishness, intolerance and lack of relationality among the masses of modern era. People are more into their personal benefits and fulfilling their dreams and do not care about other human beings. He thinks that these things are the causes of unrest and problems nowadays. He appreciates the older generation for not having all the bad qualities. Although, in my personal understanding and the people that I have interviewed before have also mentioned that according to their observations our older generations were way more open, liberal and flexible than the society we live in these days.

7.5 Synopsis of the Interviews

These interviews with four different experts have brought so many different insights into my topic and made the picture clearer than ever before. Although, the number is small, but the data that I have gathered from these four interviews is extremely valuable. I had already used Mr. Ghamidi’s books in my thesis, but talking to him directly made myself more confident and the information felt more authentic and close to my heart. Most of the ideas that I have gotten from these interviews, I had already found in different literatures, but their personal experiences are something that I would not get in the books and this is what made these interviews more important.

Another important point that was common among three interviewees was having an understandable, flexible and cooperative family that made their life easier than most of children in Pakistani society. It reflected in their personality as well because they are very confident and have excelled in their lives, but fourth interviewee Mr. Hifz-ur-Rahman belonged to a conservative family. Although, he did not say anything about his hard times as a child, he tried to
cover up by saying that he might not be happy in his childhood, but when he grew up he realized that it was for his betterment.

All of them had the opinion that family plays an important role in a child’s life that is why it is important for parents to pay closer attention to their children. They also shared the opinion that politics and culture should stay away from religion as both of them have a very limited domain while religion is way broader than them, but Hifz-ur-Rahman’s definition of religion overlapped the definition of culture and society which again confuses the idea of religion and culture being separate. In my opinion, it is a bit dangerous as it allows different religio-political leaders to use religion for their personal, political and social gains.

Islam is a beautiful religion which is very flexible, logical, comprehensive yet simple to follow, but when this same religion was given in the hands of our religious scholars they tried different experiments with it. Most of them attached it to the birth of Prophet Muhammad and forgot about the verses of Quran which refer to the other prophets that they were also part of the same religion. Some of them wanted to keep it as static as possible and do not want it to move it out of sixth century, some of them used it for their political motives and some of them have made it a source of earning their bread and butter. So they sold it in the wars, they sold it in the elections, they sold it in the madrassas, they sold it in the courts and they sold it in charities. They did everything with it instead of using it for its core purpose.
8. Conclusion

People do research for different reasons, some to explore their curiosity, some to obtain more knowledge of a particular subject, some to reflect upon their experiences, some to gain some more experiences and some to dig deeper into their heart and mind in order to understand themselves better. My motive to research the topic “Islam & Pakistan: The Way I Understand” was to understand myself, my confusion towards the established believes of mixing religion and culture all together, to understand the surrounds I grew up in and to understand the religion that played a very significant role in my brought up. In this chapter, I would like to present the outcome of this research, the topics that surprised me as either I have never paid attention towards them or I was not expecting them to come up during my research and the topics that I could not cover in this research as either they were too complex or they were not relevant now, but definitely will be subject of my Ph.D. Below, I will address the main topics one by one.

This thesis writing was a thought provoking, enriching and self healing process. My author’s perspective reflected that how disappointed I was from my family, society, education system and other factors of surroundings, but with the passage of time I started to have an idea that what was going on around me before and after my youth years. Although, I believe that all beings are ever changing and do not remain the same with each moment, but this thesis process has changed myself and my perception of my religion, society and surroundings. Now, I can say that I understand myself way better than before. During the writing process, I met myself, my
beliefs, my critical thinking and the questions that I dared not face in the past, so later in the chapter I will discuss it in details.

8.1 Résumé of the Investigation

Going back to where I had started, I would like to say that I started my thesis to inquire the reason behind the rigid approach of our society when it comes to religious issues, interpretations and realizations. I also wanted to explore that what are the ways forward to transform this rigid approach into something rational, flexible and understandable. During the course of the thesis, I have not only figured out the answer to religious rigidity in Pakistan, but also found out what were the causes and effects of socio-political rigidity in Pakistan and what their responses are. Authors from different religious, political, social and ethical backgrounds have provided me the opportunity to dig deeper and look beyond just religious issues of Pakistani society and pay attention to the socio-political history of the region.

In the rest of the chapter, I would like to present the results of my inquiry in the form of a summary. I will try to explain the findings of my research, guided by my research question and along the road of this guided journey what other aspects caught my attention. As my focus was on Islam and use of Islam in Pakistan, I would like to point out the issues which are there to be addressed and then will suggest a way forward. First of all, I would like to answer the research question and I would like to reflect upon the insights that I have gathered during my thesis process. Then, I will highlight the main topics that need to be addressed.

Why the current narrative of Islam has become a rigid religious entity in Pakistan and how Islam can give its followers other alternatives to approach life?
Religion is a very sensitive topic in Pakistan and Mr. Ghamidi has mentioned in the previous chapter, nowadays, it is extremely difficult to engage someone in a debate regarding Islam unless you accept to everything what he/she says and do not question. So, I started my quest to find the answer of this question that why Islam has become a rigid entity and why Pakistani society has become so intolerant and rigid by reading different author who have already touch upon these issues. Here, I will summarize my conclusion in a way that me and my readers can have something to hold on to.

8.1.1 Jihad

After reviewing the books of various authors and interviewing some scholars, I have come to a conclusion that *Jihad* is one the term that has been largely misinterpreted and misused mainly by Muslims. It was a term used for self purification, self determination, struggle against the egoistic approaches, struggle against the superiority complex, speaking the truth and one of them was to fight against oppression, but here we see the cosmic irony that Pakistani society has forgotten all other parts of *Jihad* and focused on just the last one and even that one not is a true spirit. The true spirit of Jihad is being truthful; being truthful to you and to others.

The term *Jihad* was not only misinterpreted by many of Muslim scholars, but they also gave a license to the political leaders to use it, the way they want, whenever they want and wherever they want. So, they used it bluntly in Pakistan movement which was the foundation of Pakistan and its ideology. That is why, nationalism is deep rooted in our society and it has become a part of so many people’s faith which is against Islamic teachings. They used it while throwing away each others’ governments and hang each other till death, they used it against different religious groups and they used it in Afghanistan against Soviet Union as the US proxy
war. The other parts of *Jihad* mentioned by Dr. Dietrich in third chapter were ignored and forgotten.

Pakistani scholars and religio-political leaders did not realize that as Quran has clearly mentioned that there shall be no compulsion in the religion. It is fine to have a different opinion and there is no religious or social obligation of waging *Jihad* against a religious group that differs in its opinion with the majority as it happened in the case of *Ahmadis*. Mr. Ghamidi has mentioned it categorically in the last chapter that anyone who calls him/herself a Muslim we do not have any right to call that person a non-Muslim. So, in my opinion, this was one of the key reasons to portray Islam as a very rigid religion which actually it is not.

**8.1.2 Education System**

While giving a reference to K.K. Aziz’s book “The Murder of History”, I have already mentioned that our rulers have paid writers to publish books that glorify Muslim leaders and their activities in a way that even if they were act of atrocities, they look like exceptional achievements. During this process they have vanished critical thinking and analytical approaches from our education system that resulted in a lack of tolerance among the last generation. This was the first harm done to our education system. Rightly said by Mr. Ghamidi and Mr. Hassan Ilyas, if you manipulate education system and play with the future of youth, it is difficult to produce intellectual minds.

The second thing that affected the most Pakistani generation or played an important role in portraying Islam as a rigid entity was *madrassa* education. In *madrassas*, students are enrolled at the age of seven to eight. Most of them are kept away from their families for months and as Mr. Ghamidi has mentioned before they are kept in a very strict environment with no entertainment available and receive severe corporal punishment. They education system is totally based on
studying religion where they learn a concept of *Jihad* which even does not exist in Islam, where they learn the Islamic way of government is *Khilafah* and not democracy, where they learn not to tolerate anything against Islam, where they learn that anyone who criticizes Islam or Prophet Muhammad must be killed, where they learn that only their worldview is the right one and no formal education is being taught in these *madrassas*. All these things leave them behind in the other fields which results into low self esteem, lack of self confidence, rebellion, intolerance and resentment against the society.

### 8.1.3 Ijtihad

As the scholars I have interviewed have expressed their opinion that the beauty of Islam lies in the practices of *ijtihad* and *ijtihad* is the life of a social system. It provides societies different solutions of those problems that a society faces with the passage of time. With personal, intellectual, technological, social, religious and economical growth people encounter different issues that need to be addressed and *ijtihad* is the system that can bring answers to the questions, but the problem is that somehow this process has not been as active in our society as it is supposed to be which resulted into frustration because people cannot do something that they want or doing something which is right, but thinking it is wrong.

For example listening to music, watching television, using make-up, male female interactions, female testimony, female’s right to inheritance and female’s right to divorce are some of the things which are not something illegal or against the spirit of Islam, but majority of the religious scholars still consider them against Islamic principles. Some who do think otherwise are very few and could not deliver the message to the masses. It is unfortunate that our scholars are unable to develop a consensus on these small, but basic human right issues. So, due to lack of
liberty and basic rights people have developed this attitude that even if something is wrong we should do it because it is need of the time and it has encouraged so many people to do things which are illegal. They think that there is no problem at all in doing something illegal.

8.1.4 Difference of Opinion

It is often seen, read and heard that with the current educational, religious and social system that people have developed an intolerant behavior and because of this they do not accept a different opinion than their own. We have seen it in the cases of Shias, Sunnis, Barelvis and Ahmadis; there are so many fatwas where religious scholar of one sect declares followers of the other sect as non-Muslims. At one point, all of them got together, came up with a definition of a Muslim and added it into the constitution of Pakistan to declare Ahmadis non-Muslims. It is a pity that all these sects do not sit together on other issues, but issues like declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims or blasphemy laws that give them popularity and political mileage bring them together; although, Islam is totally against these things. In the following sub-chapter, I will highlight that according to the concept of ‘Peace Families’, what is missing or what is in excess in Pakistani society and needs to be worked on.

8.1.5 Missing Pieces of Peaces

After going through the arguments established in the previous chapters and point of view expressed in the last chapter through the interviews of some prominent scholars of Pakistan, I can say that now I am starting to get an idea of what is really missing and what is in excess in Pakistani society. This picture gets clearer and clearer, if I use the lenses of ‘Peace Families’ as described by Wolfgang Dietrich in his book “Many Peaces”. As I have mentioned before that to legitimize their actions, different families, religious leaders, political leaders, religious scholars
and the society in general use religion and morality as a shield and the reason behind that is to protect their dominance and personal gains.

Their discourse is based on do’s and donts or right and wrong in order to gain moral strength. Whenever this grip of the society is threatened by the masses, the society through the families establishes its writ by putting fear in the minds of the masses; telling them about the history and future consequences as this is the most useful tool of a moral society because as Dr. Dietrich has already mentioned that modernity and morality rules through the fear of past, consequences of future and does not live in the present, but always look back or forward.

Along with legitimization of power through norms, the second most important point can be seen is fear. Fear to lose power, fear to lose moral strength, fear to surrender in front of liberal norms where every individual can decide for him/herself and leads an independent life. Our society and its members are fully aware of the strength of fear because we are fed with fear right from our childhood. Fear of parents, fear of teacher, fear of liberty and most importantly fear of God, so they know that it works efficiently. This way, it is easier to keep masses under control that is why the idea of nation state, security and patriotism is being advocated.

In the hustle bustle of power and fear Pakistani society at large has forgotten that human beings are not machines and we are a combination of mind, body and soul. For a healthy and conscious mind, we need a connection beyond physical, beyond materialistic, beyond rational and beyond personal. We need something transpersonal because we transform, we evolve and we become a part of larger cosmos because we are a larger cosmos and everyone has a cosmos within. We are connected to each other and we are one another, emotionally, spiritually and energetically.
On the right hand side and at the bottom, I have placed the elements which are partially present and it results into an imbalance in the society. For a healthy society, it is important to balance the out of proportion elements because all these families together can result into a stable, truthful and peaceful community. Pakistani society is circling between Moral and Modern concepts of Peace Families or in other words focusing too much on the element of justice and security, but has forgotten human base which is harmony and truth. Harmony or the balance cannot be achieved without being truthful. It is commonly seen in Pakistan that whether it is the state or religion, they continuously being untruthful to the masses and their policies were more for person, social or political gains and less for the general benefit.

Although, there is a strong Sufi and Spiritual tradition in Islam, but due to extreme religious stance of Deobandi and Wahabi scholars these traditions could not become a mainstream practices in Pakistan. They are considered as un-Islamic and against the teachings of Islam. If we look at the history, we can find many big names like Bulleh Shah, Hassan Ali Hajveri, Abdullah Shah Ghazi, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Baha-ud-Zakaria, Ghulam Farid Shakar Ganj and many other who have played a very important role in spreading the teachings of Islam across the Indian Subcontinent. Their efforts to being peace and harmony in the region cannot be forgotten.

They have not only helped Islam to spread across the region, but they were also behind the true understanding of Islam that is reconciliation, flexibility, acknowledging and respecting others faith. Islam does not encourage anarchy and calling bad names to others religion and it promotes non-violence. If we look at the efforts of these Sufis and Islamic saints we can come to know that they were not only receiving Muslims in their shrines, but non-Muslims were also free to come and join their gatherings which shows that their harmonious teachings were the reason
behind the peaceful society of that time, but since we have started to ignore that and focused more on Deobandi or Wahabi brand of Islam, we have not got many peaceful examples.

Postmodernity or truth is also missing from Pakistani society and the main reason is the dominance of morality because as I have mentioned earlier on in moral understanding that telling a lie for a good cause is acceptable, although ethically it does not do any good, but morality focuses too much on common good and long lasting effects in the future. As morality plays a hide and seek between good and bad or right and wrong, it ignores the importance of truthfulness and this is what is happening in Pakistan. I have mentioned it in the chapters three and four that religious and political leaders of Pakistan were not truthful to the general public and they have caused problems for the future generations.

Pakistan’s history books, textbooks and the books which are labeled as religious books are the clear examples of that. Fazail-e-Aamal which is considered as textbook for one of the biggest missionary group is full of such stories that have nothing to do with Islam and in fact they do not even exist, but they have the concept that if they are stopping people from doing wrong and bringing them back to do good not only for them as an individual, but for the common good by telling lies, it is fine and as a result people are getting immune to this concept that telling a lie is incorrect.

8.2 A Way Forward

In this last portion of my thesis, I would like to conclude in a way that it provides some process of transformation that at the end can benefit the masses especially affected segments of Pakistani society. My most important take away of this research paper is that keeping balance is an art and not everyone has a balanced life, but if we stick to the basics, there is no way that we cannot
achieve it. Here, I will mention the most important points that in my opinion can pave the way for a healthy future. According to my findings the most important sector that Pakistani government and society can think to work on is to invest in educating people. There should be only one system of education because having English medium, Urdu medium and religious education separately creates classes and divisions in the society.

*Madrassas* should be under the supervision of the government, for someone to get higher religious education it should be an obligation to complete twelve years of broad based basic education first. Another thing that education system should pay attention to is how to indulge into a healthy debate without accusing, threatening or harming others. There is nothing wrong in receiving some criticism and it is fine if someone has a different opinion because the beauty lies in diversity. If at the time of Prophet Muhammad, there was no punishment for blasphemy. So, in my opinion, there should not be any blasphemy law as we have seen in the past that it was used for political reason or to feed personal animosity.

Pakistan’s ministry of religious affairs, Pakistani government and general public should take notice of the syllabus taught by *Tablighi Jamaat* that contains so many made up stories without any connection to Islam, but are use with the concept that lies are fine as long as they provide a good end results. Children should be educated at school that religion and culture are two different entities, they should be treated separately and religion should never be used for personal, social or political reasons. Children should also be taught about the importance of personal, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Things like yoga, meditation and our old social traditions that kept people close to the nature for ages should be revived.
The constitution of Pakistan contains quite a number of laws which need to be revisited, emended or dissolved and Hudood Ordinance is one of them. Pakistan government needs to look at it and come up with a law that does not discriminate any gender and is logical in terms of implementation. The government should also revisit the articles 27, 41 and 260 of the constitution. There is a contradiction among these articles and as they are not based on equality; they violate human rights. Last but not least ijtihad as I have mentioned it before and also the scholars have shed some light on it that ijtihad is one of the most versatile law making opportunities that Islam has provided to its followers. So, the government should educate not only the masses, but also for a public committee that should deal with all the issues faced by the public and come up with solution while practicing ijtihad.

Through research, interviews and personal experiences, I have realized that children in our society are considered to be clueless of what is happening in their surroundings and are not given freedom of choice to decide something with their own logic for their own benefit. They are forced to follow the traditions or parents without any reason which at the end of the day is harmful for their personal growth and critical thinking. This way our society produces minds that can follow a guided path and it results in producing blind followers. If we look at the current scenario of Pakistan, this is what is happening. Young generation is being carried away by either political extremists or religious extremists and whatever they want them to do they are willing to do, whether it is looting someone or killing someone.

I personally would like to see our future generation having a freedom of choice, so that we can create great minds with great abilities to lead and reform the current religious, political and social structure. For that I would suggest an overall restructuring of our educational system and also involving parents as maximum as possible to create awareness about the rights of
children and to tell them that how forced decision destroy creative side of a child. It is nothing but an ignorant attitude to consider obedience or saying yes to everything a symbol of civilized and educated mind because saying yes to everything is not a natural behaviour and if someone keeps doing it for a long time he/she can develop stress and can result into rebellion or extreme thoughts.

I also believe that now it is the best time to explore alternative, unconventional and informal educational ways for Pakistani children. Generation and generation have learned through the same school system and as world is growing fast and encountering different challenges that is why it needs different ways of tackling these challenges. Different ways of education bring different understanding of life, it can foster diversity in the society and as a result our future generation will be open to accept the opinions which are different than their own.

This whole process of thesis writing served as a milestone in my entire academic career. As I have once said to the faculty of our master program that the personal growth of this program has way more weightage than the growth of my entire academic career. This thesis has opened me, unfolded me, deconstructed me and transformed me into a complete new person. It has created, vanished, deconstructed, constructed and transformed different pillars of my previous built opinions. It showed different ways of looking at things and it made me a grateful, expressive, joyful, critical, deconstructive, constructive and curious person. So, to keep my curiosity alive I would like to do one thing that I could not do in this thesis and that is to keep researching the history of Islam and the history of religion as a whole, what the main purposes of a religion are and how a religion can play a role in keeping peace and balance in the society.
“Commitment”

Far away, from a distance
A voice, a fainting voice
Sings a song of freedom
Asks me, stop and wait
So, let’s close this chapter
I don’t want to be late

(A Poem by the Author)
9. Bibliography


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Affidavit

I hereby declare that I have written the presented Master thesis/Masterarbeit by myself and independently and that I have used no other than the referenced sources and materials.

In addition, I declare that I have not previously submitted this Master thesis/Masterarbeit as examination paper in any form, either in Austria or abroad.

Innsbruck, November 06, 2018

Place, Date

Signature