

CHAPTER EIGHT

MUSLIM SCHOLARS

Meaning of a Muslim scholar

This is a Muslim specialist with great Islamic knowledge on community socio-economic, political, moral, spiritual and general well-being of the humanity.

HASSAN AL-BANNA

Birth and early life of Hassan Al-Banna

- His full name is Hassan Ahmed AbdulRahman Muhammed Al-Banna. He was born on 14th October 1906 in the village of Mahmoudiyah Alexandria, Egypt at a time when the British were colonizing the country.
- His father was a watch repairer, a renowned author of Islamic religious books and a local Imam of a mosque where Al-Banna received his first lesson in Islam.
- Al-Banna was raised in an Islamic environment and learnt religious teachings in the mosque at an early age before joining Western education. This good upbringing which he received from home, made him to detest the western type of life when he was in Cairo.
- He belongs to lower class family which moved to Cairo in 1924. At the age of 12, Al-Banna became involved in Sufi order, especially the Ismailiyyah orders.
- As a young adult, at the age of 13, he participated in a demonstration against the British.
- By the age of 14 years, Hassan Al-Banna had memorized the whole Qur'an.

Education Background of Hassan Al-Banna

Al-Banna received his first religious lessons at his father's mosque where his father was an Imam. He joined Primary school in his home village Mahmudiya at the age of twelve. He then received his secular education at Dar-Al-Ulum school in Cairo and graduated with a Diploma in Arabic and Islamic studies. While in secondary school, he organized committees and societies stressing Islamic principles and morals. Even as a student at Dar-Al-Ulum College of Teachers in Cairo, he used to attend lectures at the Al-Azhar University where he was exposed to Sufism. Al-Banna completed his studies in 1927.

His ideas on Sufism were because of the influence of an Islamic reformist, Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghan (1838-1897), a great personality of the 19th Century Islam. He was also influenced by the two adherent of Jamal Al- Din Al-Afghan, Muhammad Abdu (1847-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935).

Works and personal life of Sheikh Hassan Al-Banna

The following are works and personal life of sheikh Hassan Al-Banna:

- Al-Banna was a school teacher, teaching Arabic grammar at Ismailiya School.
- He was a good orator and had a mastery of Arabic language.
- He established the periodical “Al-Shihab Magazine” in which he put a methodology and his desire to overcome lack of knowledge by encouraging people to learn.
- Through the Ikhwan Muslimeen, he published a newspaper called “Al-Nadhir.”
- His other works are “Methodology of Hadith” and “the Islamic social system.
- He started preaching his ideas and within a short time, he had become very popular.
- Just like his father, he was also an Imam.
- He used to co-write the daily papers in Egypt which was called the Ikhwan Al-Muslimeen while at Damascus Al-Manar was being published.
- Al-Banna started the society of Ikhwan Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood) in March 1928. Since he made so many followers who urged him to form this Islamic society of Muslims.

Reasons (objectives) for the formation of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

The society of *Ikwan Muslimun* (Muslim Brotherhood) was formed for the following major guidelines:

1. Promoting education for all by establishing learning institutions such as schools, vocational training and other education centers.
2. Reviving and re-establishing Islamic traditions such as Sufism so as to fight against perverted western ideologies
3. To reform the political situation in the Arab world while imparting new ideas in order to create new governance based on Quran and Sunnah.
4. To establish recreational facilities where sporting events were conducted to promote physical fitness.

5. To improve and establish social institutions such as hospitals, mosques, clinics for the wellbeing of the society. In these centres the sick were given free medical services.
6. To improve the economy of the society by establishing centers to train trading skills to members of the society.
7. They opened centers where the orphans and aged people were cared for.

Views of Hassan Al-Banna on Islamic education`

The term views refer to the prospective sights or attitude of considering something. Therefore, here we will discuss on the opinions of Hassan Al-Bannah regarding the Islamic Education. He proposed that:

1. Islamic education is all comprehensive all-encompassing and holistic. It is all inclusive and does not leave out anything and therefore, it deals with all the aspects of human life.
2. Islamic education is for all people and nations.
3. It is for all times and ages. Hence, people should keep on seeking knowledge from cradle to grave.
4. It completes and addresses the detailed aspects of life.
5. Enable an individual to stay within the limits set by Allah (SWT).
6. The designation of religious instruction as a basic subject in all schools, in each according to its type, as well as in the universities.
7. Active instigation to memorize the Qur'an in all the free elementary schools; making this memorization mandatory for obtaining diplomas in the areas of religion and (Arabic) language; the stipulation that a portion of it be memorized in every school.
8. The promulgation of a firm educational policy which will advance and raise the level of education, and will supply it, in all its varieties, with common goals and purposes; which will bring the different cultures represented in the nation closer together, and will make the first stage of its process one dedicated to inculcating a virtuous, patriotic spirit and an unwavering moral code.
9. The cultivation of the Arabic language at every stage of instruction; the use of Arabic alone, as opposed to any foreign language, in the primary stages.

10. The cultivation of Islamic history, and of the national history and national culture, and the history of Islamic civilization.
11. The foundation of Islamic teaching is the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W)
12. Provides the practicability of implementing the guidance of the Quran.

Reforms advocated by Hassan Al-Banna to change the Society in Egypt

Reforms made by Hassan Al-Banna to change the Egyptian society, are similar to the social achievements made by him. The following are the social Achievements of Hassan Al-Banna:

- He advocated the conditioning of people to respect public morality and imposition of severe penalties for moral offences.
- He addressed the problems of women in accordance with Islamic teachings.
- He fought against gambling in all its forms - games, lotteries, and gambling clubs.
- He used to campaign against intoxication, to save the nation from its effects.
- Hassan spent his time educating the society on the Islamic code of dressing.
- Al-Banna spearheaded in the advocating for positive segregation of male and female students unless between the permitted degrees
- He offered piece of encouragement of marriage and procreation, by all possible means and give moral support to the family, and to solve the problems of marriage.
- He advocated the closure of morally undesirable ballrooms and dance halls, and the prohibition of dancing and such pastimes.

Contributions of Hassan Al-Banna to the growth and development of Islam in the 20th Century

The following are the significant contributions of Hassan Al-Banna to the growth and development of Islam in the 20th Century:

- a) He contribution to the development of Sufism by becoming a Sufi himself and kept teaching it
- b) He was constantly opposed to the Mutazilities and Shia beliefs as they were misleading.

- c) Al-Banna encouraged Muslims to follow the Islamic culture basing on Qur'an and Hadith
- d) He was a scholar of fiqh, philosophy, science and logic and was a professor of Islamic theology.
- e) People sought for his advice on matters of religion because of his vast knowledge.
- f) Through his views and reforms, he tried to change the bad conditions of the society through Islam.
- g) He strongly discouraged Muslims from imitating the west with its materialistic ideology which separates religion from the state.
- h) Al-Banna encouraged Muslims brotherhood and following of the Quran and hadith so as to establish an Islamic system of government.
- i) Al-Banna advocated for total rejections of the west and denounced Muslim intellectuals of the government for their dependence on the west.
- j) He advocated for reform and modernization through Islamic principles and values.
- k) Hassan Al-Banna emphasized on unity of Muslims.
- l) He Produced many publications on social, religious and political issues affecting Muslims e.g. a daily paper known as 'Ikhwan-ul-Muslimun' a booklet "what is our message?"
- m) He dedicated himself to being a counselor and teachers to adults and children to teach them the objectives of religion and sources of their wellbeing and happiness in life.
- n) He used the mass media to serve Islam and created awareness among Muslims.

Last Days and Assassination of Hassan Al-Banna

In 1948-1949, shortly after the society sent volunteers to fight against Israel in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the conflict between the monarchy and the society reached its climax. Concerned with the increasing assertiveness and popularity of the brotherhood, as well as with rumors that it was plotting a coup, Prime Minister Mahmoud An-Nukrashi Pasha disbanded it in December 1948. The organization's assets were impounded and scores of its members sent to jail. Following Pasha's assassination by a student member of the

Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Banna promptly released a statement condemning the assassination, stating that terror is not an acceptable way in Islam. On February 12, 1949 in Cairo, Al-Banna was at the Jamiyyah Al-Shubban Al-Muslimeen headquarters with his brother-in-law Abdul Karim Mansur to negotiate with Minister Zaki Ali Basha who represented the government side. Minister Zaki Ali Basha never arrived. By 5 p.m., Al-Banna and his brother-in-law decided to leave. As they stood waiting for a taxi, they were shot by two men. He eventually died from his wounds. In honor of his death in 1949, he was often referred to as "**As-Shaheed Imam Hassan Al-Banna**" (Martyr Imam Hassan Al-Banna).

SAYYID QUTB

Birth and Early life of Sayyid Qutb

He was born on 9th October 1906 in Egypt at Musha village of Asyut Province along the Upper Nile. He came from a family that had a deep religious foundation. He was a great writer and thinker of the 20th Century by his great works and ideologies. His brother, Muhammad Qutb was also one of the Muslim great writers in Islam who contributed a lot by authoring several books. In 1919, he dropped out of school because of the Egyptian revolution.

Education Background of Sayyid Qutb

1. He attended his Primary education from 1912 to 1918. He was out of school for two years because of the 1919 revolution.
2. In 1920, he travelled to Cairo to further education at the age of 14. He stayed at the house of his uncle Ahmed Hussein Uthman in a locality called Azzaytun.
3. He joined Abdul-Aziz Teachers' College in 1922 for three years after which he received his first teaching certificate. As a result of his outstanding result in that school he was admitted at secondary school in 1925.
4. In 1929, he joined Darul-Ulum College from where he graduated with a Bachelor of Literature degree in 1933. In this year, he was appointed a teacher by the ministry where his salary was 6 Egyptian Pounds, at the Daudiyyah School in Cairo. He remained there for two years.

Works and personal life

Sayyid Qutb lived for 59 years, 10 months and 20 days. He died after he has written 29 outstanding works, which were mainly novels, literary works, education, theory and poems. The major works are:

1. *Al-Taswir Al-Fanni fi'l-Qur'an* (Artistic Imagery in the Qur'an)
2. *Fi Dhilal Al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an)
3. He wrote a number of monthly journals on topical issues from the Qur'an.
4. *Mashahid Al-Qiyama fi'l-Qur'an* (Aspects of Resurrection in the Qur'an),
5. *Al-Salam Al-'Alami wa'l-Islam* (World Peace and Islam)
6. *Khasais Al-Tasawwur Al-Islami wa Muqawamatuhu* (The Characteristics and Values of Islamic Conduct)
7. *Dirasaat Islamiyya* (Islamic Studies) Study Questions and activity
8. *Hadha-Diyn* (The Religion of Islam)
9. *Al-Qisas addiyny lil-atfaal* (Religious stories for Children)
10. *Maarakatul Islam Warrasmaliyyah* (Islam vs Capitalism)
11. *Al-Mustaqbal Lihaadha-Diyn* (The future of this religion)
12. *Al-Islam wa Mushikilat Al-Hadhras* (Islam and problems of Modernism)
13. *Maalimun Fittariq* (Milestones)
14. Islam, the Misunderstood Religion

In 1933, he was appointed a school teacher by the Ministry and taught at Daudiya School in Cairo. In 1935, he was transferred to Dumiyat primary school but was transferred to a school called Bani Suweif. In 1935 he was transferred to Hawan primary school.

He taught in several other schools before being appointed by the Ministry of information as an Arabic editor in charge of Culture and Literature. He then moved to the Department of translation and statistics. In 1944, he resigned due to misunderstanding that he had with Najib Al-Hilali, the Minister for Information, despite intervention by Dr. Taha Hussein, the advisor in the Ministry of Education.

He was then appointed the Inspector in the Ministry of Education. He served for a short period before being transferred to the Ministry of Information.

Most of the time, he would find himself in conflict with the authorities due to his stand on Islam and anti-western ideologies. He therefore had to move to the USA for two years where he studied Education Organization at Colorado State College of Education (presently, University of Northern Colorado). After his return, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan Muslim) in 1953 and became its major spokesperson.

Achievements and contributions of Sayyid Qutb

The following are achievements and contributions of Sayyid Qutb in the spread of Islam:

1. He left several literary works that continue to influence Islamic revivalism in the society and provide a blue print for the brotherhood. For example, the World peace and Islam and Islamic Studies.
2. His teachings influenced his followers in the brotherhood and the Muslim youth.
3. He struggled to reform the community by promoting Islamic teachings through the Ikhwan Muslim.
4. He wrote a commentary of the Qur'an titled '*Fi Dhilal al Qur'an*.'
5. He enlightened the Muslim Umma on the true Islam and the need to uphold an Islamic code of conduct.
6. He denied the culture of materialism, violence and sexual pleasure.
7. He advocated for the rights of women including education.

Last Days and Assassination of Sayyid Qutb

After his return from Colorado State College of Education, Sayyid Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan Muslim) in 1953 and became its major spokesperson. His Islamic writings and activities led him into positions of leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood. He was arrested in 1954 after a crackdown on the Ikhwan Muslim and charged with conspiracy to overthrow President Jamal Abdunnasser. They interrogated him for three days in the armed forces prison, severely tortured him and jailed him for 15 years until 1964 when he was released on medical grounds.

While in jail, he wrote his commentary on the Qur'an called '*Fi Dhilal al Qur'an*.' In 1966, he was again arrested and charged for an attempted coup against President Nasser's government. He was sentenced to death by Muhammad Fuad Addajawy

together with two other members of the Ikhwan al Muslimeen. Appeals against his sentence were ignored and he was executed by hanging on Monday, 29th of August 1966, at the age of 59 years and 10 months. The execution was carried out, just one week after the ruling. Such execution was never heard of in history of the world for a death sentence to be carried out just a week after the sentence.

Objectives that each Islamic Society and Association should have

The following are objectives that each Society and Association of Muslims should adopt to achieve:

- Promoting unity and brotherhood among Muslims
- They should encourage peaceful co-existence among the people of the society
- They should instill the Islamic principles and practices among the Muslim youth and all people in general
- They should promote education among the Muslim students particularly and all public in general
- Educating each other on the observance of the act of worship
- Encouraging the Muslim youth to follow that teachings of the Quran and sunnah
- To participate in recreational activities like sporting to promote physical fitness
- Taking part in social services like visiting the children orphanages, home for the aged, hospitals among others