

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE OBSCURANTISM AND
PSUEDO-INTELLECTUALISM OF**

DR USAMA BIN SUHAIB HASAN

**WITH A LOOK AT HIS CO-OPERATION WITH THE ‘QUILLIAM
FOUNDATION’ AND**

**A STUDY OF HIS MODERNIST VIEWS REGARDING THE MUSLIM
WOMAN’S DRESS AND THE ISSUE OF APOSTASY**

May 2008 CE

Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our actions and from the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide and whoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allāh.

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**“O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as
Muslims (in submission to Him).”**

{*Āli-Imrān (3): 102*}

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**“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate
and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh through whom
you ask things from each other, and (respect) the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you,
an Observer.”**

{*an-Nisā* (4): 1}

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“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will amend for you your deeds and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.”

{*al-Abzāab* (33): 70-71}

To proceed:

Of late, Dr Usama bin Suhaib Hasan has expressed a number of views which indicate that he is of the modernist persuasion, along with uncritically mimicking Hamza Yusuf Hanson. He has asserted that a number of odd opinions are valid ranging from stating in a *BBC Hardtalk* interview in early September 2007 CE that Muslim women “only need to dress modestly” to bizarre views regarding apostasy. Recently, a letter penned by Dr Usama bin Suhaib Hasan came to our attention and a number of issues were noted within his letter (which was his own response to other critiques of his views) which caused concern to those who contribute to salafimanhaj.com.¹ A variety of observations regarding his statements made on TV related to issues of apostasy and the Muslim woman’s dress-code as highlighted in the Sharee’ah had initially been realised, however it was hoped that the clear error of these ideas would have been recognised, unfortunately this was not forthcoming. As a result of the persistence in these modernist ideas in order to pander to the prevailing non-Muslim zeitgeist in Britain we have decided to thoroughly present his main errors in order to demonstrate that he has fallen into many serious mistakes influenced by his adoption of the modernist school of thought. Some of the more hasty ones have even rushed to make *takfeer* of him yet we regard this as being somewhat rash and excessive at present and such a ruling can only be made by the well-grounded scholars of Ahl us-Sunnah in any case.²

¹ Refer to: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_Apostasy.pdf

² *Takfeer* of Dr Usama Hasan has been insinuated and promoted by the *takfeeree* ‘Islamic awakening’ forum which is moderated by none other than South London’s temper tantrum throwing Tooting teacher and trainer of *takfeeree* toddlers, “Abū Zubayr Saleem al-Azzāmī” – a *nisba* that he used to use himself but seems to have discarded of late! Herein, a plethora of *takfeeree* views are allowed due to *ikhwānī* notions of “free independent

USAMA HASAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE QUILLIAM FOUNDATION IN LONDON

Dr Usama Hasan has also caused controversy due to his close proximity to the likes of the Ed Husain³ and the *Quilliam Foundation*, indeed Usama Hasan was an “advisor” to the *Quilliam Foundation* and this was actually mentioned on the *Quilliam Foundation* website until they haphazardly removed all names of their advisors. As for the removal of the names of the advisors then the *Quilliam Foundation* claimed, in a rather polemical style:

The contribution of our advisors was vital in ensuring that we had an impactful start and we would like to thank all of our advisors for their immense support. In the meantime, we have decided to respect our advisors' wishes that they continue to advise us in private so as to save them the indignity of constant Islamist-Wahhabite harassment. We have therefore decided to no longer publicise their names. In coming months, we will continue to work with our advisors by drawing on their expertise as we build our units.⁴

So they claim that names have not been publicised due to fear of “**Islamist-Wahhabite harassment**” (whatever that means?!!) which is duplicitous as the reality is that most of the so-called “advisors” gave no allowance for their names to be placed on the controversial website. As for the rather simplistic assertion that there has been “Islamist-Wahhabite harassment” then this is a rather meagre copout and a clear indication of their evasive techniques when the *Quilliam Foundation* are critiqued, to merely label criticism as being “Islamist” or “Wahhabite” is not exactly a sophisticated method in answering criticisms of the *Quilliam Foundation* yet what are we to expect from Ed Husain?

Indeed, we have already seen that Ed Husain has already contradicted Quilliam Foundation’s own methodology by chickening out of debating a member of HT. This demonstrates that Ed Husain is incapable of engaging with those whom he claims that he was a part of. Surely if he has so much inside info on HT then he should welcome being able to expose them live on air, this is

Islamic thought”!? The *takfeer* of Dr Usama Hasan is not actually surprising from the forum as it has become nothing but a haven for intellectually bankrupt internet chameleons that hide behind fake names and pseudonyms while they get cheap thrills from pronouncing *takfeer* of all who they do not agree with, along with watching “*jihadi*” videos! Their hasty inclination toward *takfeer* however in some cases serves to justify the agenda of the likes of Dr Usama Hasan and the *Quilliam Foundation*. Yet it is evident that before such a ruling can be made his case should be presented to fully qualified scholars of the Sunnah who have knowledge of these matters.

³ Refer to: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_Eddie

⁴ See: <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/advisors.html>

precisely what the *Quilliam Foundation* manifesto itself claims to champion. So when the doors to dialogue with those who have incorrect understandings of Islam are opened up for Eddie Husain why does he refuse to enter them, yet boast to the whole (non-Muslim) world that he has strategies to counter their ideas?

This gets us to the point that many within the younger Muslim community in London have realised with this whole circus with Ed Husain, his claims are nothing short of the fables of a fantasist. An example of this is in his book *The Islamist* he claims that the murder of who he calls a “Christian Nigerian student” was due to HT and Islamism, when the reality of the situation, as it involved people known to the brothers at salafimanhaj.com, was that the murder was related to gang violence. Yet in Ed Husain’s bizarre world, he managed to construe that it was due to Islamism. Therefore, let’s not forget what the *Quilliam Foundation* claim to uphold in their manifesto entitled *Pulling Together to Defeat Terrorism*, they claim on p.3 to want to ‘reach out to extremists’ but if Ed Husain has already run a mile at the mere thought of speaking to a member of HT (hardly someone like Abu Hamza or Abdullah el-Faisal) then what about trying to engage with the Muslim youth? Indeed, Ed Husain has no credibility with Muslim youth he only speaks at events for non-Muslims - he has yet to hold an event for a majority Muslim audience which would include those grassroots elements that he and the *Quilliam Foundation* claim to want to reach out to. As a result, we would suggest reading the *Quilliam Foundation* Manifesto entitled *Pulling Together to Tackle Extremism* and compare it with these recent antics of Muhammad Mehabub ‘Ed’ Husain. Yet, Dr Usama Hasan has persisted in supporting Ed Husain and the *Quilliam Foundation* saying,

Ed Husain and Maajid Nawaz are not “enemies of Islam and Muslims,” as one brother alleged, another lie and slander. Even Ed’s critics admit that he does a good job of defending Islam and Muslims on the media. Listen to his debate online with the vicious ex-Muslim Ayaan Hirsi Ali, where he defends Islam against her ridiculous attacks.⁵ This debate was chaired by the neo-con Douglas Murray, attended by 200 people. Do you think Allah helped Ed, or not, to win that debate?

Ed Husain within his wining and dining session with “Ayaan Hirsi Ali”⁶ labelled the wearing of the *niqāb* as being a “**tyranny**”, describes the Companion Khālid bin al-Waleed (*radi Allāhu ‘anhu*) as being “**a vicious fighter**” in order to defame him and says that *Salah*, *Zakat* and *Sawm* are not

⁵ This is not true at all, Dr Usama Hasan must have hearing difficulties as well if he seriously thinks that Ed Husain in anyway defended Islām against “Ayaan Hirsi Ali”, on the contrary Ed Husain even says that the five pillars of Islām (particularly *Salah*, *Zakat* and fasting) do not have to be adhered to for a person to be Muslim! See below:

⁶ For more on her frolics refer to: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_HirsiAliFrance

important in being a Muslim and those who emphasis them are “Wahhabi literalists”!? So according to Ed Husain even basic adherence to the five pillars of Islām and the emphasis on this is extremism.⁷ Therefore, Allāh does not aid injustice, on the contrary,

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.”

{*an-Nisā* (4): 115}

Furthermore, is all of this the view and way of Shaykh ‘Abdullah bin Bayyah who they like to quote so much? We think not! To sit, laugh and joke with one of the most contemptible, perfidious and miserable apostate feminists of Europe to have ever set foot on the earth is not the way of Islamic scholars.

As for Usama Hasan’s recent participation with the *Quilliam Foundation* then many have seen this as nothing but a political stance in order to remain in line with the prevalent status quo in the UK at present. Therefore, the religio-political manoeuvring of Dr Usama Hasan has to be seen in light of the political zeitgeist within the UK vis-a-vis the increasingly difficult situation of the Muslims therein. Furthermore, some have also taken issue with him boldly claiming to have participated in the first Afghan jihad and using this as some sort of yardstick to silence anyone

⁷ Refer to: http://uk.youtube.com/results?search_query=Ed+Husain+Hirsi+Ali&search_type=&aq=f

In part two of the discussion he claims that the apostasy laws originate with Abū Bakr as-Siddeeq (*radī Allāhu ‘anhū*) and that Imam Sufyān ath-Thawrī (*rahimahullāh*) did not view that the apostate be killed, yet brings no evidence whatsoever and with neither citations nor source referencing. He also states in part five Ed Husain says why does the King of Saudi Arabia get “red-carpet treatment when he visits the UK”, insinuating that the likes of him should receive such treatment in his stead! Ed also states in part five, after 5 minutes and 41 seconds in regards to the girl who said to “Ayaan Hirsi Ali” when she was at school “if you don’t pray and fast you’re not a Muslim” – that “that’s a very literalist Wahhabist approach”!!!!? So denial of the five pillars of Islām is ok, Ed Husain then says **“so Islam is not asking you to pray, fast and give zakat, that’s just one approach”!!!!?** So what is this “other approach”?! Where on earth is he getting this from? Islam doesn’t ask people to pray, fast and give *zakat*?! The Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) stated in the well-known hadeeth narrated on the authority of Abū ‘AbdurRahmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (*radī Allāhu ‘anhū*), and reported by Bukhārī and Muslim:

بني الإسلام على خمس شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله وإقام الصلاة وإيتاء الزكاة وحج البيت وصوم رمضان .

“Islām is built upon five: bearing witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muhammad is his Messenger; performing Salah; giving zakat; fasting Ramadaan and making Hajj to the House.”

who merely disagrees with his approach, this is not adequate for one who claims to be an intellectual within Islamic thought.

THE OBSCURANTISM OF USAMA HASAN

HIS VIEW ON THE MUSLIM WOMAN'S DRESS-CODE

Dr Usama Hasan stated in his message that:

3) By the grace of Allah, I have ijaza in hadith via my grandfather rahimahullah, which is a rare and high ('aali) isnad, and via my father. I have ijaza in Qur'an (Hafs 'an 'Asim) from my paternal uncle, Suhail Hasan, younger brother of my father. I also have permission to recite in Warsh from Sheikh Ahmad Dahduh of MCHC mosque, and have led tarawih in Warsh twice, and in Hafs about twenty times. I don't publicise these things, since that is not the way of the people of knowledge, unless necessary, as it is obviously here, because people are making unfounded accusations.

Firstly, there are many brothers for example at *Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah/Brixton Mosque* who also have permission from Imām Ahmad Dahduh (and from others beside him) to recite in Warsh from when he was the Imām there in the 1990s and these brothers have also led *taraweeh* in *qira'at* Warsh 'an Nāfi', Qāloon 'an Nāfi', Hafs 'an 'Āsim and ad-Dūrī 'an Abī 'Amr! Yet this does not automatically make them scholars to be followed uncritically in odd opinions. Secondly, Dr Usama Hasan is hereby claiming that he is from the “people of knowledge” and thus doesn't have to “publicise”, actually similar in some ways to the remarks made by Abdullah El-Faisal.⁸ Yet even though one may have such an impressive array of knowledge of *tajweed* and *qira'āt*, this does not give license to become a false interpreter of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Dr Usama Hasan continues:

8) Please don't waste your time in backbiting and slander. Gain some real knowledge and engage in constant dhikr with your heart and tongue, study and recite the Qur'an constantly. A degree from Madinah or any other university in Islamic studies only qualifies a person to become a beginner, perhaps, in seeking knowledge. Don't let a little knowledge get to your head. I've been studying the Qur'an and Hadith, Tafsir, Arabic and Fiqh etc. with my father for over 30 years, alhamdulillah, and continue to do so. We all need to work together for the sake of Allah in this country.

As for “gaining some real knowledge” then Dr Usama Hasan maybe needs to take his own advice, and then he makes mockery of *Madeenah University* and its graduates, playing down its scholarship and academic level as being only a “beginner level”, yet later praises and quotes the scholars of *al-Azhar University*! As for “studying the Qur'an, hadeeth, tafseer, Arabic and fiqh” for over thirty years with his father then this mean absolutely nothing if the knowledge is

⁸ See pp.94-95: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_Deception.pdf

neither implemented nor understood with the correct methodological procedure (*manhaj*). Moreover, even his father Dr Suhaib Hasan, also has views which are to be totally rejected and thrown against the wall.

The obscurantism of Dr Usama Hasan is particularly evident with his modernist views on the Muslim woman's attire as outlined in the Sharee'ah. It is also surprising that Dr Usama Hasan, despite his claim of intellectualism, has in fact made so many intellectual inconsistencies and logical fallacies (which we will highlight) that it is quite astonishing. Let's go straight to Usama Hasan's own words, he states in his letter of response:

7) Ditto on the headscarf (khimar, not hijab, a much-misused term⁹) and niqab, etc. Whether you like it or not, millions of devout Muslim women¹⁰ who are pious, do their salat, siyam, charity and much else, follow what I call the "rational" view based on holistic maqasid that the Qur'an tells them to dress modestly. Eg the ayah mentioning the headscarf tells them to cover their bosoms, not their heads. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan popularised this view in pre-partition India, and it is followed by millions of devout, intelligent Muslims in Pakistan, where I lived for a year and saw it first hand. It is also followed by Javed Iqbal, son of Allama Iqbal,¹¹ who has the ajr insha'Allah of the establishment of Pakistan and Bangladesh and all the good that's come from it. This view is also that of Zaki Badawi and many other Azhari 'ulama, including I'm told Sh. Muhammad al-Ghazzali and Sh. Sha'rawi, although I have not been able to verify the last two. Whether you like it or not, you have to acknowledge it, especially when explaining it to a non-Muslim audience, as I was doing on BBC HardTalk, since they can easily see that many Muslim women don't wear a khimar or niqab. Again, it's a difference of ijihad. Even classically, there was a tiny minority of fuqaha who said that a woman's head was not 'awrah - this is mentioned by Ibn Bayyah and also occurs in the Tafsir of Ibn 'Ashur.¹² The point is again, it is not a wala' and bara' issue.

⁹ This is the first logical fallacy that Dr Usama Hasan uses, this is an equivocation whereby he tries to make out that there are differing intended meanings of the terms "khimaar" and "hijab" in order to make out that there is ambiguity in the matter and to gloss over the actual meaning of the terms.

¹⁰ This is the next logical fallacy that Dr Usama Hasan utilises, an *argumentum ad populum*, or *argumentum ad numerum*, i.e. a fallacy of trying to prove something by showing how many people agree with you even though this does not necessitate that your premise is correct.

¹¹ The third logical fallacy that Dr Usama Hasan makes recourse to is the *argumentum ad verecundiam*, which is the fallacy of demonstrating the truth of a proposition by citing someone who agrees even though the person may have no expertise in the area, like in the Sharee'ah for example, which is our topic here.

¹² See above!

La hawla wa la quwwata ila billāh! A veritable potpourri of duplicitous statements peppered with pseudo-intellectualism and topped off with obscurantism! Let's dissect this hotchpotch of bizarre statements, Usama Hasan states:

Whether you like it or not, millions of devout Muslim women who are pious, do their salat, siyam, charity and much else, follow what I call the “rational” view based on holistic maqasid that the Qur'an tells them to dress modestly.

This is precisely what we are seeing with Usama Hasan, a degree of intellectual duplicity. Because those teeming millions of Muslim woman are not following any notions of “rational maqāsīd” but are rather absolutely ignorant of the rulings, except for those whom Allāh has shown mercy to. For Usama Hasan to blatantly underplay any role of the ignorance that is widespread throughout the Muslim world and then claim to justify that ignorance as being an acquired “rational process” of choice is erroneous at the very least. Furthermore, as salafimanhaj.com has observed prior in regards to statements of Usama Hasan about “modesty”, that this is very vague and open to all sorts of interpretation. In a *BBC Hardtalk* interview in early September 2007 CE Usama Hasan stated:

“...not all authorities obligate the headscarf, especially modern authorities who say that you can dress modestly without wearing the headscarf. The Qur'anic teaching is to dress modestly and you have the traditional view which says that it is prescribed including the headscarf. Now that is the debate that we are having within the Muslim community and it does need to be widened...”

So here Dr Hasan says that it is a valid and authoritative Islamic opinion that the *hijāb* does not have to be worn and that the hair does not have to be covered. Hasan gives this view credence by saying that “modern authorities” hold this view, but neglects mention that those who hold this view bring meagre evidence and are not regarded as authoritative. Refer to the interview here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/hardtalk/6970298.stm>

The inaccuracy of the statement, from one who is held by many as being some sort of ‘intellectual’ is manifestly evident as modesty differs from place to place and from people to people, so one's person modesty is another's nakedness. So for example, ‘modesty’ could be understood by some as being to wear a mini skirt, tight figure-hugging tank-tops and high heels. For Usama Hasan to leave the matter so open like this without fully explaining is flawed to say the least, not to mention that it is a modernist interpretation which needs not to be mentioned.¹³

¹³ A couple of years back Usama Hasan supported Tariq Ramadan's call for there to be a ‘moratorium’ (or a suspension) on the *Hudood* punishments!? Other Muslim modernists such as Inayat Bungawala have also

Then Usama Hasan states:

Eg the ayah mentioning the headscarf tells them to cover their bosoms, not their heads.

Is he serious? This is probably the clearest example of the obscurantism of Usama Hasan, for the verses in the Qur'aan are not understood in this way whatsoever by even the common Muslim who knows that the head has to be covered. Indeed, the very common teeming millions of Muslim women that he alluded to earlier are exactly the ones who they even know that the head has to be covered. Whether they have the *imān* to practice that is another matter but they know that it has to be done and is what Islaam teaches. Furthermore, let's take a look at the injunctions in the Qur'ān regarding the Muslim woman's dress code, Allāh says,

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“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not to expose their adornment except that which is apparent and to draw their khimārs over their chests and not to expose their adornment (i.e. beauty) except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess

questioned the validity of the punishments for apostasy within Islaam. Muhammad Hashim Kamail's book *Freedom of Expression in Islam* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1997) is another book which water's down many of the rulings with regards to apostasy and refers to sources which can be questioned. For example, he refers to scholars who were from al-Andaloos (Andalusia) such as Abu'l-Waleed al-Baajee (d.474 AH/1081 CE) and Aboo Hayyaan al-Andaloosee (d. 756 AH/1355 CE) but some of their rulings were possible due to their context of living with large Christian and Jewish communities, but they cannot over rule the main ruling of the Prophet and Companions which is mentioned in the *hadeeth* that have been relayed by al-'Allaamah Rabee' in his critique of the '*fatwa*' of 'Ali Juma'. So we see that some people claim to be following 'traditional Islam' and the likes yet clearly reject, deny and water down certain rulings and then refer to obscure views when it suits the political climate of the West. See here for example: <http://apostasyandislam.blogspot.com/> where you will find that when it comes to the contemporary period the "scholars" who they refer to are questionable to say the least in terms of their understanding and implementation of Islaam, not to mention the fact that some of the not even Islamic scholars.

(i.e. servants) or those male servants who have no physical desire or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women...”

{*an-Noor* (24): 31}

This part of the verse:

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“...not to expose their adornment except that which is apparent...”

...is where there is a difference of opinion amongst Muslim scholars, as some scholars hold that the face is from that which is apparent and thus does not have to be covered. However, regarding the basis of covering the face then the verse can still apply because the verse states that Muslim women are,

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“...not to expose their adornment (i.e. beauty)...”

And there is no doubt that the face is something which is part of a women’s beauty, and hence the view that it should thus be covered. Yet it is not intended here to necessarily support that opinion but it has to be understood to be a valid opinion in fiqh. Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-’Uthaymeen (*rahimabullāh*) stated:

And there is no doubt for one who has common sense that from the means that lead toward guarding the private parts is the veiling of the face. This is since exposing it is a cause for drawing looks towards it, reflecting on its attractive features and finding pleasure in that.¹⁴ And consequently this leads to a man trying to communicate and get in touch with a woman.¹⁵

¹⁴ Indeed, even non-Muslim scientists and ‘sexologists’ have to admit that visual perception and facial attractiveness is one of the primary motivators and preludes to sexual relationships in humans especially males who are more stimulated by visual perception (also expressed in the idea of the male gaze), this is along with audition (how the opposite sex sounds) and olfaction (how the other smells). Scientists have noted that a sexually attractive visual appearance involves: a high degree of mirror symmetry between the left and right sides of the body, **particularly of the face**. Cunningham in his experiments (1986) regarding male response found that men were particularly attracted to women’s faces. The main determinants of female beauty involve assessing most of the face: hair, wide eyes, full lips, cheeks, teeth, forehead, dimples etc. men are stimulated by all of these characteristics. According to Devendra Singh in a piece of research she conducted for the *Journal of Sex Research* in February 2004 (entitled *Mating Strategies of Young Women: The Role of Physical Attractiveness*) she herself poses the question

The Imām continued:

Regarding the statement of Allāh,

أَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَصَلُّوا عَلَيْكُمْ

“...and to draw their khimārs over their chests...”

The khimār is that which a woman uses to cover and veil her head, such as a head cloth. So if she was commanded to place the khimār over her jayb (bosom), she was also commanded with covering the face, whether it is because wearing the khimār necessitates that or because it is understood from general reasoning. This is since if covering the neck and bosom are obligatory, then veiling the face is an obligation for all the more reason, since it is the source of beauty and enticement. Indeed, when people seek the beauty of a figure, they do not ask except concerning the face. If it is beautiful, they do not look

Why do males assign so much importance to attractiveness that when constrained (limited mating budget), they ignore personal attributes that appear to be critical for the viability of a long-term romantic relationship?

She also states, in a definitive proof that uncovered beautiful faces can lead to strong physical attraction and then to promiscuity:

Indeed, a meta-analysis of studies in attractiveness and behavior revealed that attractive females date more frequently, have more sexually permissive attitudes, engage in a greater variety of sexual activity, and have sexual intercourse at an earlier age than do unattractive females (Feingold, 1992). Some studies have also reported a positive relationship between physical attractiveness and number of sexual partners (Mikach & Bailey, 1999; Stelzer, Desmond, & Price, 1987; Wiederman & Hurst, 1998).

She then stated:

To explore this possibility, I examined some mate attraction tactics used by females differing in attractiveness. Data from young U.S. females show that compared to less-attractive females, attractive females report higher frequencies of using attractiveness enhancement tactics (e.g., wearing makeup), flirting with other males to make a date jealous, and acting possessively.

Also see:

1. Perrett, D. I., May, K. A., & Yoshikawa, S. (1994). 'Facial shape and judgments of female attractiveness' in *Nature* (journal), 368, 239-242 and
2. Johnston, V. S., & Franklin, M. (1993). 'Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?' In *Ethology and Sociobiology* (journal), 14, 183-199.
3. Cunningham, M. R. (1986). 'Measuring the physical in physical attractiveness: Quasi-experiments on the sociobiology of female facial beauty' in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 925-935.

¹⁵Aboo Maryam Ismaa'eel Alarcon (trans.), *Four Essays on the Obligation of Veiling* (New York: al-Ibaanah Publishing, 1426 AH/2006 CE), pp.28-29.

The *kuffaar* use the excuse that “**we are not perverts...**” (which in itself is a statement that is questionable for anyone from the west to even have the audacity to state!) “**...but we just want to get to know you better by seeing your face...**”, yet what business is it for a strange man to “get to know another woman better” if not to formulate designs in his sick *kuffaar* psyche, and the examples of this are daily, do they not contemplate?

towards anything else in the same manner as possessing importance. This is why when it is said such and such woman is beautiful, one doesn't understand from these words anything except the beauty of the face. So it is clear that the face is the place of beauty that is asked about and informed of. And if it is this way, then how can we come to understand that this religion, which is based upon wisdom, would obligate the covering of the neck and chest and then allow the exposure of the face?"¹⁶

With regards to other textual proofs for covering the face then there is the verse,

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“O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allaāh Forgiving and Merciful.”

{*al-Abzāb* (33): 59}

Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) said about this verse that “*Allaab commanded the believing women that when they come out of their homes for a necessity, they cover their faces from the top of their heads (downwards), with jilbaabs, and that they expose (only) one eye.*”¹⁷ Umm Salamah (*radi Allāhu 'anha*) said that when the above verse was revealed “*The Ansārī women came out of their homes, walking as if they had crows upon their heads due to the tranquility, and they were dressed in black garments.*”

We will now present the views of the classical and traditional commentators and jurists in regards to these verses and their interpretation, note that Dr Usama Hasan likes to remind us of how he is well-versed in the Qur'aan and its sciences. Abū 'Ubaydah as-Salmānī and others mentioned that:

The believing women used to cast their jilbaabs from (over) the top of their heads downward, to the point that nothing was visible except their eyes, for the purpose of seeing the road.

Ibn al-Jawzī (*rahimabullāh*) stated about the above verse:

It means that the women must cover their heads and faces so that they may be known as free women.¹⁸

Abū Bakr al-Jassaas al-Hanafī (*rahimabullāh*) said about the above verse that:

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ *Mukhtasar Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, vol.2, p.114

¹⁸ Ibid. p.80

In this ayah is evidence that a young woman is commanded with: 1) covering her face in front of male strangers, 2) remaining covered and 3) refraining from going out (without it) so that the people will not place any doubt upon her.¹⁹

At-Tabarī stated:

The strongest and most accurate view is that which says that the exemption refers to the face and the hands. Also included are kohl, rings, bracelets, and makeup. We say that this is the strongest and most accurate opinion because all scholars are unanimous that everyone who needs to pray must cover the 'awrah in his or her salah. A woman may reveal the face and the hands in her salah, while she must cover the rest of her body. What is not 'awrah is not haraam to be revealed.²⁰

Imām al-Alūsī (*rahimahullāh*) stated regarding the verse in Sūrah al-Ahzāb:

The apparent meaning of the word “alayhinna (over themselves)” is clearly to cover one’s body completely. Some have interpreted this ayah to mean the covering of the face and the head since in the Days of ignorance, the women usually left their faces uncovered.²¹

Jalāluddeen as-Suyūṭī (*rahimahullāh*) stated:

This is the ayah of hijaab which applies to all women. There is proof in it that covering the head and the head face is obligatory.²²

Al-Qurtubī (*rahimahullāh*) stated:

Since open displaying of oneself was the custom of the Arab women, i.e. they would expose their faces just as the slave-women did, this served as a means for a man to look at them and would increase the man’s desire for them. So Allaah ordered His Messenger to command the women to place their jilbābs over themselves whenever they want to go outside to fulfil a necessity. The word ‘jalābeeb’ is the plural of ‘jilbāb’ and it is a garment that is bigger than the khimār. Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas’ood have reported that it is a ridā (loose outer garment). It is also said that it means a veil. The correct view is that it is a garment that covers the entire body.²³

Al-Hādīfīh Ibn Katheer (*rahimahullāh*) noted:

Muhammad ibn Seereen said “I asked ‘Ubaydah as-Salmānī about Allāh’s statement

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“...to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments...”

¹⁹ *Ahkām ul-Qur’ān*, vol.3, pp.371-372

²⁰ From his *tafseer* of Sūrah an-Nūr ayāh 31, this is in Volume 18, pages 118-119 of *Jami Bayān Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*.

²¹ *Rūh ul-Ma’ānī*, vol.22, pp.88-89

²² *Al-Ikleel*, p.180

²³ *Al-Jāmi’ li-Ahkaam il-Qur’ān*, vol.14, pp.243-244

So he covered his face and his head (with a garment) and exposed his left eye.²⁴

Jalāluddeen al-Mahallī (*rabimabullāb*) highlighted;

It means that they should let some of it (*jilbāb*) fall over their faces...when they go out for their necessities,

ä

“...that is more suitable...”

...or more closer to the fact,

“...that they will be known...”

...as free women,

“...and not be abused.”

...by abuse against them, contrary to slave women, who do not cover their faces.²⁵

Jamaaluddeen al-Qāsimī (*rabimabullaaab*) commented;

This ayah refers to the free women in that their dress should be different from the dress of the slave women, by them wearing loose outer garments (*ardiyah*) and cloaks (*malāhif*) and by covering their heads and faces so that they can guard and protect their chastity and no one will look at them with desire.²⁶

Muhammad Ameen ash-Shanqeetī (*rabimabullāb*) said about the verse above from Soorah al-Ahzaab:

From the Qur’anic evidences that indicate that a woman must wear hijāb and cover her entire body, even her face, is Allāh’s saying

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“O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments.”

²⁴ *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, vol.6, no.470, also see English translation of *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers, 2002 CE), volume explaining Sūrah Ahzāb.

²⁵ *Qurrat ul-‘Aynayn ‘alaa Tafseer il-Jalaalayn*, p.560

²⁶ *Mahaasin ut-Ta’weel*, vol.13, pp.4908-4909

This is because several scholars have stated that the meaning of

أَنْزِلْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ خِطِّهِنَّ

“...to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments.”

...is that a woman must veil her whole face and not reveal anything from it except for one eye with which she can see. Among those who held this opinion were: Ibn Mas’ood, Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Ubaydah as-Salmānī and others. If it is said “The wording in the noble ayah does not necessitate the understanding that a woman must veil her face, linguistically and there is no text from the Book, Sunnah or ijma’ (consensus) that says that this is required. Furthermore, the sayings of some of the scholars of tafseer are that hold that it is required is contradicted by the sayings of other scholars who say that it is not required. So because of this, using this ayah as evidence for the obligation of veiling the face becomes nullified.” The response is: There is a clear implication in the noble ayah that what falls into the phrase,

أَنْزِلْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ خِطِّهِنَّ

“...to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments.”

...is the understanding that women must veil their faces by placing a jilbaab on themselves and letting it fall downward. This implication is found in His saying

أَقْرِبْنَ

“...tell your wives...”

There is no disagreement amongst the Muslims on the fact that Prophet’s wives were obligated to wear the hijāb and veil their faces. So Allāh’s mentioning of the Prophet’s wives and daughters, along with the believing women indicates that it is an obligation for all women to veil their faces by placing the jilbāb over themselves, as you have seen...

As for the one who says that there is a Qur’anic implication in Allāh’s saying

أَنْزِلْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ خِطِّهِنَّ

“...to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments.”

That indicates that covering the face does not enter into the understanding of this verse, and that this implication is found in His words:

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“...That is more suitable that they will be known...”

So the words,

“...that they will be known...”

...is proof that the women exposed their faces, since someone who veils her face cannot possibly be known (or recognized). Know that this statement is false and incorrect, and the futility of it is quite clear since the context of the words in the verse restrict that absolutely, since Allāh’s words,

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“...to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments.”

...clearly restrict that (i.e. uncovering the face)...²⁷

So with all of this, the ‘Straw-mans’ argument, and vain searching to deny this Islamic basis, or the claim that the wearing of *niqaab* is a ‘contemporary political fashion statement in order to be rebellious’- is all rubbish. Some uninformed Muslims (and hypocrites)²⁸ in the UK have even stated that the *niqaab* is only an ‘Arab cultural dress’ or an ‘Ottoman cultural mode of dress’ or a “desert storm protection” (!!) which has no basis in Islaam.

²⁷ *Adwā ul-Bayān fee Eedaah il-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān*, vol.6, p.586

²⁸ On another note it is worth noting how certain countries which have Muslim majorities have outlawed and made illegal the wearing of the *hijāb* within schools, colleges and universities. In one of these sell-out North African countries, whose leader in the 1980s drank on TV during Ramadān claiming that the economy was doing too well for fasting to be permitted, even had the nerve to say that the *hijāb* is “not from the cultural traditions of our country”!! Recently, in another country which has a Muslim majority, all references to covering have been removed from Islamic textbooks under the *bātil* pretext that the *hijāb* and the beard are ‘political symbols’, see: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/5413808.stm>

There is no doubt that these lands merely wish to pander to other *kuffār* states for recognition and are even willing to sell out their *deen* in order to do it. In Morocco they even removed from the Islamic studies textbooks the verse from Sūrah al-Ahzāb regarding the *jilbāb*.

As for the word “*khimār*” then despite Dr Usama Hasan’s positioning and manoeuvring the garment has always been understood by the classical and traditional scholars and jurists as being a garment that was already covering the head, not as something which was just to cover the chest without the head being covered, as Dr Usama Hasan tries to portray. Usama Hasan stated: “**Eg the ayah mentioning the headscarf tells them to cover their bosoms, not their heads**” and this is not true. The dictionary of classical Arabic, *Aqrab al-Mawarid*:

[The word *khimār* refers to] all such pieces of cloth which are used to cover the head. It is a piece of cloth which is used by a woman to cover her head.

Imām al-Albānī:

The word *khimār* linguistically means only a head covering. Whenever it is mentioned in general terms, this is what is intended.

Imām Abu Abdullah Qurtubī:

Women in those days used to cover their heads with the *khimār*, throwing its ends upon their backs. This left the neck and the upper part of the chest bare, along with the ears, in the manner of the Christians. Then Allah commanded them to cover those parts with the *khimar*.

Imām Ibn Katheer stated:

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“Draw their *khumur* to cover their bosoms...”

{*an-Nūr* (24): 31}

means that they should wear the *khimār* in such a way that they cover their chests so that they will be different from the women of the jahiliyyah who did not do that but would pass in front of men with their chests uncovered and with their necks, forelocks, hair and earrings uncovered.²⁹

Then Dr Usama Hasan states:

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan popularised this view in pre-partition India, and it is followed by millions of devout, intelligent Muslims in Pakistan, where I lived for a year and saw it first hand. It is also followed by Javed Iqbal, son of Allama Iqbal...

This is problematic to say the least, as Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Javid Iqbal are not really regarded as experts in Islamic law let alone as reference points for such important matters as the Muslim woman’s dress-code. As for Sayyid Ahmed Khan, then he was famed for remaining “loyal to the British crown” during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 CE and in fact, upon inspection of the biography of Sayyid Ahmed Khan, we find a number of aspects of his life that in fact Dr

²⁹ Refer to: http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2430&Itemid=79

Usama Hasan bears close semblance and thus Dr Usama Hasan may view himself as following in the same trend as Sayyid Ahmed Khan. So even though Sayyid Ahmed Khan was committed to the upliftment of Muslims, he also had a number of modernist and reformist ideals which included promoting loyalty to the British Empire among Indian Muslims. He also founded a Madrasah in Muradabad which was one the first to teach science and he also founded the *Scientific Society of Aligarh*, based on the *Royal Asiatic Society*, which was a unique scientific foundation of its heyday in India. He also published papers which promoted rationalist and liberal views of the Islamic texts yet due to the opposition he faced for his modernist ideas he stopped writing on religion and stuck to authoring works on education.³⁰ In any case, he presented many ideas which were more in line with *i'tizaaal* than the Qur'ān and Sunnah. As for Javid Iqbal then he is in no way an Islamic authority on such major matters, and just because his father may have been deemed as being an 'Allāmah this would not make the son a default Islamic authority, this is what Dr Usama Hasan seems to be hung up on. Furthermore, in some of his writings he boldly wrote about some of his escapades with “young British girls” and also viewed alcohol as being permitted (!?) hardly the best example to trumpet for the Muslims in the UK! As for Dr Usama Hasan's point that:

This view is also that of Zaki Badawi and many other Azhari 'ulama, including I'm told Sh. Muhammad al-Ghazzali and Sh. Sha'rawi, although I have not been able to verify the last two. Whether you like it or not, you have to acknowledge it, especially when explaining it to a non-Muslim audience, as I was doing on BBC HardTalk, since they can easily see that many Muslim women don't wear a khimar or niqab. Again, it's a difference of ijtiḥād. Even classically, there was a tiny minority of fuqaha who said that a woman's head was not 'awrah - this is mentioned by Ibn Bayyah and also occurs in the Tafsir of Ibn 'Ashur.³¹ The point is again, it is not a wala' and bara' issue.

Here Dr Usama Hasan is merely following that which is *shādh*, unique and rejected from anyone that agrees with his new-found liberal outlook. So it's not “**a difference of ijtiḥād**” as that is for when there is no *nass* (text)! Furthermore, the *tafseer* of Ibn 'Āshūr is not based on rulings and regulations, but rather is based on language of the Qur'ān in his commentary. So it is unclear why Dr Usama Hasan disregards the commentaries of Ibn Katheer, at-Tabarī, al-Qurtubī, ash-Shinqeetī and others and then opts to quote from Ibn 'Āshūr who mainly specialises in language.

³⁰ This would also be a good move for Dr Usama Hasan! We hope that he will also follow Sayyid Ahmed Khan in this just as he has followed Sayyid Ahmed Khan in most other matters! Refer to Ali Asghar Engineer, *Rational Approach to Islam* (Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2001), p.191

³¹ See above!

DR USAMA HASAN AND HIS VIEWS ON APOSTASY

Now getting to Dr Usama bin Suhaib Hasan's *Washington Post* article on apostasy, Dr Usama Hasan states (the questions that were posed to him are in capitals):

2. HOW DOES ISLAM DEFINE APOSTASY? IS IT PERMISSIBLE FOR A MUSLIM TO CONVERT TO ANOTHER FAITH? HOW CAN LAWS AGAINST APOSTASY AND BLASPHEMY BE RECONCILED WITH THE KORANIC INJUNCTION OF "NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION"?

Classically, apostasy referred to a Muslim adult renouncing their religion and/or converting to another, and carried the death penalty in most schools of Islamic Law, **although there was some debate as to whether this punishment was automatic and compulsory or left to the discretion of government.**³² A tiny minority of jurists even applied this penalty to apostasy amongst other religions, e.g. Jews converting to Christianity or vice-versa, although not to converts to Islam!

The incidence of apostasy was always negligible, partly because of the punishment but also because of the nature of the Islamic message. **The basic formula of Islam is, "There is no god but God"**³³: faith in this is enough to make a person Muslim and one actually has to renounce this belief to commit apostasy. The Prophet Muhammad confirmed the message of monotheism, Unity and submission to God brought by Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ and other Messengers of God, to whose stories lengthy sections of the Koran are devoted. The Koran teaches that Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets, the last of the Messengers of God, and it is a simple fact of history that no religious figure even remotely-comparable to Muhammad has appeared since his time. Muslims who understood their religion have always accepted the identical truths found in other religions and seen no reason to commit apostasy, since Islam affirms the brotherhood of all the Prophets of God.

³² This is not entirely correct as we have seen from al-'Allāmah Rabī's critique of the Mufti of Egypt 'Ali Juma. The *ikhtilāf* among the early 'Ulama was over the woman apostate and also on the way the punishment was to be meted out.

³³ This is not the correct translation of the 'basic' formula, as La ilaha il-Allāh is correctly translated as 'there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh'. Furthermore, Dr Usama Hasan oddly forgot to add "wa Muhammadur-Rasoolullāh"?!

The death penalty for apostasy is not from the Koran, but based on a teaching of Muhammad³⁴ where he said that executing a Muslim was only allowed for three crimes: (1) murder; (2) adultery when married and (3) “one who forsakes his religion and abandons the community.” The political ramifications of apostasy are clear in this Prophetic teaching; **in the past, your faith-community was also your political community**³⁵ – all Muslims had to pledge allegiance to the Caliph or to one of his representatives, for example. **Furthermore, to abandon Islam was to renounce the Muslim body-politic.** Thus, apostasy was akin to treason, especially since religious wars featured prominently in the ancient and medieval worlds. Even today, treason during war carries a possible death penalty under English law.

The predominant modern Muslim view no longer regards apostasy as a crime,³⁶ based on the above-mentioned interpretation of the Prophet’s teaching and upon the injunction, **“Let there be no compulsion in religion,” (Koran, 2:256) and affirms the freedom of religious belief.**³⁷ This is the view of many leading experts and authorities in Islamic law throughout the world.

Laws against blasphemy are tricky since the protection of values that are sacred to any society is important. For example, there are laws against Holocaust-denial in many European countries and political scientists who criticize democracy are treated as heretics in secular, liberal societies.³⁸ Finally, it should be noted that any laws against apostasy and blasphemy are almost-impossible to enforce fairly in modern, complex societies. **Islamic law, which has always been flexible and dynamic although based on core values, must adapt as usual to changing conditions.**

³⁴ Dr Usama Hasan has to be very careful in what he is saying here as it is as if he is denigrating the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) and relegating it. This in itself is one of the hallmarks of the modernist school of thought, via relegating the words of the beloved Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) it is to try and show that he was a just a man without revelation.

³⁵ Hasan says this as if it is not the case today, the reality is that allegiance and obedience still has to be made to Muslim leaders even though they may not be *Khulafā’*.

³⁶ Pay attention to this, Dr Usama Hasan has to explain himself here as he does not state whether it is a correct opinion or not, we will deal with this in our analysis later.

³⁷ We will assess this interpretation of the verse later.

³⁸ This is true, so what happened to “human rights of the individual” here then? For the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and we do not say that all of it is correct but as it is one of agreements that some people claim to champion and uphold we will refer to it to see the truthfulness of their self-righteous claim, says under Article 19: **“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”** We will mention more about their *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* later.

There are a number of aspects to append to all of this from Dr Usama Hasan:

1) Uncritical acceptance of the premise of the questions

Hasan was also asked in his interview: UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DOES ISLAM SANCTION THE USE OF VIOLENCE?

But some critical thinking has to be applied here and replace “**Islām**” with any other religion, ideology, country, political system etc in order to illustrate to the reader that Islam does not have a monopoly on the use of violence. Although the question itself may be innocent and merely inquisitive the point needs to be made why is it that Islām has to justify or elucidate upon its concept of violence whilst the main perpetrators of violence of today are not asked similar questions? Indeed, why the certain partisan elements make a fuss over the Muslims and the ‘human rights’ of the one who commits apostasy, then what about the ‘human rights’ of those millions of people (not a few insignificant apostates craving to be “Westernised”) around the world. There are people as we speak that are not getting their rights fulfilled and this apparently goes against the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which states in Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

So what’s happened to this then? Why should the Muslims be forced to pander to others when those others themselves to do not implement their own declarations which they sign to!? There are even manuals and detailed instruction books on how to conduct torture, many of which were not written by Muslims, especially those authored in the past. So why don’t people make a fuss over this?

In regards to the issue of “Islām using violence which is demonstrated in its apostasy laws” then the Bible also includes some interesting examples of retribution for “those who do not believe”:

“And the Lord said, “Go through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have you pity. Slay utterly the old and young, both maids and little children, and women.”
{Ezekiel 9: 5}

“And the Lord said unto Moses, “Avenge the children of the Midianites,” They warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they killed the males. And they took all of the women as captives, and their children, and took the spoil of their cattle, and took all of their flocks, and all of their goods. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles with fire. Moses said, “Have you kept all of the women alive? Now kill every male among the children, and kill every woman that has

known a man by lying with him, but keep all of the young girls for yourselves” {Numbers 31: 1}

“When you draw near to a city fight against it, offer terms of peace to it, and if its answer to you is peace and it opens to you, then all of the people that are found within it shall do forced labour for you and shall serve you. But if the city does not make peace with you, then you shall besiege it...you shall put all its males to the sword, but the women and the children, the cattle and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourselves; and you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies.” {Deuteronomy 20: 10-17}

Herein, the Bible, which some hold to be the words of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, orders the killing of women, children and livestock in a certain context and such is not found at all in the Qur’aan, the opposite in fact is found in the Qur’aan and the example of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*). Not to mention the suicide mission of Samson also being praised in the Bible. Now one may object and say “Yes, but that’s the Old Testament”, we can respond to this by saying: well not really, Paul of Tarsus approved of the death of idolaters, homosexuals and other sinners:

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Dr Usama Hasan was asked: **HOW CAN LAWS AGAINST APOSTASY AND BLASPHEMY BE RECONCILED WITH THE KORANIC INJUNCTION OF "NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION"?**

This is plainly a loaded question in that it assumes that there is a contradiction between the Islamic Laws pertaining to apostasy and blasphemy and the above Qur'anic verse hence requiring reconciliation. Reconciliation is only required in cases of contradiction - if the verse is understood correctly in accordance with the *tafseer* of the *Salaf* such claims of reconciliation would not need to be entertained. We mentioned beforehand some points regarding the issue of apostasy in Islaam which are very important in addressing those who object to it:

1. Within the West there are certain crimes which were/are punishable by execution such as piracy, high treason and for burning any of the Queen's ships and dockyards in the UK - all these were punishable by death in the UK up to the 1970s, even though capital punishment was abolished in the UK in 1965 CE. Furthermore, the crime of giving away secrets to other nations is also punishable by death in many Western countries up to this day. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Jewish American Communists, were executed for espionage in 1953 for passing nuclear weapons secrets to the Soviet Union.
2. The fact that someone would commit *open* apostasy in a country where the punishment for it is well known is like a political statement of rebellion. In Islām there is no separation between religion and state so rebellion against the religion is considered to be rebellion against the state. Moreover, it causes socio-political disruption within the Islamic society and can bring about danger, hence the punishment. But as for an apostate who keeps it to themselves and does not get involved in espionage, treachery or inciting people against Islām, then such an individual is not on the same level as one who gets involved in anti-Islamic propaganda and treason yet would probably be asked to leave. If this is found out then such an individual is taken to court and asked about their situation and given time to reflect, but there are no inquisition courts or the like. Moreover, the one who apostates and moves to another country then the Islamic state does not go out searching the whole world for that individual, and the same is for anyone who openly apostatized outside of the Muslim world, it is not for the Islamic state to send out

executioners, this is not from Islaam and never occurred in Islamic history.³⁹ As a result, the so-called *fatāwā* from the likes of al-Khomeini against certain apostates in the West were rejected as it based on an incorrect understanding of applying the Islamic *hadd* punishment for apostasy.

3. The child or insane person is not executed for apostasy because they are exempted and the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said; “The pen is lifted from three: the child until he matures, the sleeping person until he awakes and the mad person until he comes to his senses.” Reported by Abū Dāwūd and Imām al-Albānī (*rahimahullāh*) graded it *Sabeeh* in his checking of *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. The *hadeeth* is also reported by at-Tirmidhī in his *Sunan* and Imām Ahmad in *al-Musnad*.
4. As the saying goes “people in glass houses should not throw stones” and it is rather odd for people to object to this law yet say absolutely nothing about the thousands upon thousands that are killed via atom bombs being dropped on them, oppressed by occupying forces, raped, pillaged and the likes, so where is the ‘justice’ here then??

2) Implying that the Sunnah has lesser value than the Qur’ān

Dr Usama Hasan said; “**The death penalty for apostasy is not from the Koran, but based on a teaching of Muhammad**”.

Why would one make the separation between the orders of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) and those of Allāh? Is it not the case that what the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) ordered is no different to what Allāh Himself ordered?

“And whatever the Messenger has given you take; and what he has forbidden you refrain from.”

{*al-Hasbr* (59): 7}

³⁹ Refer to a concise explanation of this by Dr Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJmm-nfEow>

The fact that the penalty of apostasy is not mentioned explicitly in the Book of Allāh but instead in the authentic *hadeeth* does not necessitate a decrease in the value of the order – that is an idea that is propagated by Orientalist tradition.

3) Apologetic/Placating tone

Hasan's claim that: The **“predominant modern Muslim view no longer regards apostasy as a crime”** does not make it correct, since all views are weighed according to the Qur'an, Sunnah and understanding of the *Salaf*. Moreover, he does not state whether it is a correct opinion or not, even though it obviously is incorrect whether it is a **“predominant modern Muslim view”** or not. Indeed, could it be said that the belief that the Qur'aan is created was a “predominant Muslim view”? What about suicide bombing? Is it a “predominant modern Muslim view”? How about forced marriages? Is this a “predominant modern Muslim view”? Or visiting the graves of the dead? Is it a “predominant modern Muslim view”? All of these one could say, and some even do say, are “predominant modern Muslim views” and as a result have value. However, Islaam is not based on what the “predominant modern Muslim view” is but rather Islaam is based on what is in the Qu'aan, Sunnah and understandings of the *Salaf*, everything else we throw against the wall.

Hasan's interpretation of the verse **“Let there be no compulsion in religion”** is also incorrect. The verse means that there is no compulsion in terms of joining Islaam, so no one is compelled or forced to become a Muslim. When a person does become a Muslim then a person is obliged to stick to it as a serious, true and definite choice, and this is why Islaam is not interested in trying to gain as many converts as it can. In Islamic history, when the apostasy laws were implemented by the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) there were many of the Jewish tradition who were embracing it and then leaving it in order to shake the *īmān* of the Muslims and as a result this open apostasy and calling to it was punishable by execution. In the same way, recently in Egypt it has been suggested that some of the Christians are also playing and toying with Islām by doing this and receiving support from Zionists in this aswell.⁴⁰ The organisation *MEMRI* for example is quick to pick up on the issue of apostasy in Muslim countries such as Egypt for example and vainly spread the issue all around the globe.⁴¹

⁴⁰ There are some Christian Satellite channels such as *al-Hayat* and *Agaphy* which try to incite Muslims to react, see: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=6535>

⁴¹ As for the *'Middle-East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)'* then it is a non-profit organisation established by Colonel Yigal Carmon, a twenty-two-year veteran of military intelligence in Israel with the goal of exploring the Middle East “through the region's media.” *MEMRI* focuses on the following areas: Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Jordan,

4) Saying that Sharee'ah has to adapt to changing conditions

Dr Usama Hasan's notion that the *Sharee'ah* has to adapt implies that it is not perfected for *Bani Adam*, this is in complete opposition to the saying of Allaah,

أَ أ أ أ أ أ

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and approved for you Islām as a religion.”

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 3}

Furthermore, Hasan has to be clear here as to what he is insinuating, does he mean that rulings may change due to different issues that may arise over time? Which can be sanctioned as long as the *manhaj* of referring back to the primary Islamic sources of the Divine Legislation and Law do not change, or is he asserting that the *manhaj* of deriving rulings and regulations has to change to adapt to changing conditions? The modernist *manhaj* is usually based on science and Hasan, as an astronomer with a heavy scientific and rationalist influence, no doubt upholds this method when approaching the Islamic source texts, which even his own father doesn't hold! Moreover, this questioning of the *Sharee'ah* and its application is itself one of the hallmarks of the *Mu'tazili* modernist-rationalist school of thought.

Shaykh, Dr Muhammad Mūsā Nasr (*hafidhabullāb*), a contemporary Muslim scholar from Jordan who was one of the main students of Imām al-Albānī (*rabimabullāb*) and has memorised the whole Qur'ān along with other recitations and has various *ijāzahs*, stated with regards to the rationalist school of thought:

They attach themselves to the rational intellect as they judge everything according to the intellect even the unseen matters that do not usually agree with the rational intellect. They do not make the Divine Legislation as the judging criterion rather the intellect is the decisive factor over everything

Palestine, Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. Laila Lalami has highlighted that there are three general observations that can be made about *MEMRI*'s work. One is that it consistently picks the most violent, hateful rubbish it can find, translates it and distributes it in e-mail newsletters to media and members of Congress in Washington. The second is that *MEMRI* does not translate comparable articles published in Israel, although the country is not only a part of the Middle East but an active party to some of its most main conflicts, indeed if not the main conflict! For instance, when the right-wing Israeli politician Efi Eitam referred to Israel's Palestinian citizens as a “cancer,” *MEMRI* did not pick up this story. The third is that this organization is now the main source of media articles on the region of Islaam, a far greater and far more diverse whole than the individual countries it lists.

within the Divine Legislation and the religion. As a result, whatever agrees with their intellects they accept and whatever opposes their intellects they reject even if it is found within the Book of Allaah which does not have any *bātil* within it. Therefore, they utilise their intellects in order to attempt to refute the texts which, they claim, contradict the rational mind and intellect. **In reality, the texts contradict their own corrupted intellects not the healthy and sound intellects, such as the intellects which are free from doubts and desires and thus do not oppose the authentic transmitted texts. The ‘lords’ of this corrupt school of thought were influenced by the falsities of Western civilisation. Most of them are from those who took their knowledge from the West and studied at the hands of the Orientalists. Furthermore, they studied philosophy, ‘Ilm ul-Kalām, philosophical rhetoric and became satisfied with the opinions of the people of innovation such as the Mu’tazilah and others.**

They became bedazzled by that and were thus tested by what had arrived in Western societies, such as technological development and advancement. They began to strive for mutual understanding between Islaam and western heritage and culture, despite its contradictions and distance (from Islaam), like the distance between the east and the west. Thus, they call for the waiving of sound and firmly established principles and they also work in order to cut off from the Divinely Legislated texts or by denying or interpreting them with a false and corrupt interpretation. They have opened up a new shameful path for themselves to gather contradictions. They therefore judge and ridicule many of the texts according to their whims, desires and corrupted stagnant useless opinions to the pleasure of their Orientalist and westernised teachers and whosoever is similar to them. They do all of this out of ignorance and misguidance, to the extent that you will see that one from them will not know anything about the deen except its name, and will not know anything from the Qur’aan except its writing.⁴² They neither rectify their outer selves nor their inner selves from deviation, doubts and misguidance.

You will also see that they do not know the Divine Legislation of Allāh and do not adhere to the teachings of Allāh and do not view that *eemaan* is something that is firmly established in the heart without whatever is apparent with the limbs. This is the *madbhab* of the *Murji’ab* of old and of the present; it is the *madbhab* of the *Murji’ab* of the rationalists who understand the Divine Legislation far from the revelation of the Qur’aan and *Sunnah* and the path of the scholars from the Imāms and the firmly grounded scholars in every era and epoch. So this is school of the rationalists that rejects many of the Divinely Legislated texts using as a proof the idea that the texts oppose the intellect and the ‘current situation.’ For example, some of the rationalists are not convinced that a fly has in its wings a disease on one and a cure on the other and so that if it is dipped into a vessel they see this as being disgusting. But if a doctor verifies and affirms this one day the rationalists

⁴² But in Usama Hasan’s case he has actually memorised the whole Qur’ān!?

would applaud him and believe him. If a scholar from the *kuuffaar* scholars comes and verifies that this is really the case, that a fly has a disease on one of its wings and a cure on the other, they would praise him and prostrate to him and say: “Yes now we believe in the *hadeeth* of Abū Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu ‘anhu*) which is also found in one of the most authentic books after the Book of Allāh, that being Saheeh ul-Bukhārī.” With this similitude they also do not enumerate many *abadeeth* which they therefore attempt to refute through proposing the rational intellect as the ultimate definitive judge over the Divine Legislation of Allāh.

FROM THE MORE PROMINENT FEATURES OF THIS SCHOOL OF THOUGHT ARE:

1. Their increased efforts in attempting to refute the Prophetic *Sunnab* in total or partly and therefore the *deen* with them is according to their desires and their minds. They do not understand that the *deen* agrees with what has come in the Book of Allaah and the *Sunnab* of the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*), as they differentiate between the *Sunnab* and the Qur’ān, as the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “Let me not find one of you reclining on a couch when one of my commands comes to him from one of my commands and prohibitions and say: ‘Rather I have the Book of Allāh so whatever permissible I find within it I deem it permissible and whatever prohibited thing I find within it I deem it unlawful.’” However, I have been given the Qur’ān and something similar along with it.⁴³.....
2. Also from the features of this of thought is that its leaders make the rational intellect as the foundation of understanding the texts and make the textual evidences subject to the rational intellect. Therefore, if a text comes and agrees with the rational mind they accept it and if a text arrives, meaning from the Book of Allaah and the *Sunnab*, that opposes the rational mind they reject and discredit it.
3. Likewise they do not hold any importance to the correct *‘aqeedah*, and rather view it as an opposing ideology and thus they do not call to becoming firmly grounded in the *‘aqeedah* that the Prophets, *peace be upon them*, began with. As all of the Prophets came and said, **“O people worship Allāh, you have no deity other than Him”** {*al-Hūd (11): 50*} What is it with them that they oppose the Prophetic methodology?! This is the ruling that they establish upon their own selves.⁴⁴

So we conclude that, with respect, Dr Usama Hasan’s *hifdh* of Qur’ān, *ijāzāt* in *qira’āt* and qualification in neural network applications, computer science and astronomy do not make him an Islamic scholar and in no way give him the authority to reject classical and traditional

⁴³ Verified by Imām ash-Shāfi’ī in *ar-Risālah* (295) and Ahmad in *al-Musnad* (8/6) and Abū Dāwūd in *as-Sunan* (no.4605); Tirmidhī made it *hasan* in *al-Jāmi’* (2665); Ibn Mājah in the introduction to his *Sunan* (no. 13) and al-Hākīm authenticated it in *al-Mustadrak* (108, 109/1).

⁴⁴ From Dr Muhammad bin Mūsā Āl-Nasr, *al-‘Aql wa Manzilatuhu fī’l-Islām* (‘Ammān: Dār ul-Athaariyyah, 2005), p.85-96. See trans: <http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/rationalist.pdf>

scholarship in favour of a modern day re-hash which seeks to compromise with the British religio-political zeitgeist.