# Reclaiming Islam: Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi ud Din Qadri's Sufi Approach to Counter Political Violence

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**Abstract**

*This study examines implications of Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's Sufi approach to philanthropy as a counter-narrative to political violence often justified in the name of Islam. By employing a qualitative research methodology, this research has conducted a textual analysis of the book, The Hearken to the Call of Duty: The Philanthropic Approach of Sufi Masters in Islam, exploring major concepts connected to charity, selflessness and humanism in Sufism. The study has also provided the comparison of views of critics such as Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali who supported the idea that Islam is vulnerable to politicization and violence. This research with the help of case study method and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has about how narration of Sufi and Islamic principles is a feasible narrative as opposed to that of religious terrorism. It also reaffirms the role of Sufi philanthropy for representing the Islam as the religion of peace and to stress on the positive implication of violence free and humanitarian outlooks of the contemporary Islamic world. Therefore, this research advances the existing literature on the relationship between religion and politics and calls for a better appreciation of the part, which religious traditions play in resolving political vices such as exploitation and radicalism.*

**Keywords:** *Sufi Philanthropy, Political Violence, Islam and Humanitarianism, Religious Manipulation, Counter-Narratives in Islam, Sufi Saints, Charity in Islam, Non-Violence in Sufism*

## Introduction

Religion and politics emerged as being synonymous with violence in the recent global public sphere, especially where Islam is concerned. The use of religious emotions by the political figures is not uncommon; political operatives choose to twist Islamic precepts to make terroristic activities serve their purposes. According to Lewis (2018) political Islam, or Islamism has turned religion into a problem of politics, and it is characteristic by radicalism, violence, etc. As well Ali (2015), who brings the message of denunciation of religious practices and claim that violence is coded into certain types of Islam. However, these critiques fail to take note of the other positive spiritual and humanitarian aspects of Islam particularly the Sufis that entailed discipline of benevolence, compassion and extending assistance to the deprived.

Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri (2020), in his book *The Hearken to the Call of Duty: The Philanthropic Approach of Sufi Masters in Islam*, depicts Sufism as a strategy to take back the religion from being abused by politicians and radicals. This research emphasizes that by focusing on philanthropy and spirituality as credible ideas, Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri claimed that Sufi dervishes' teachings provide an antidote against political violence and fascism.

The aim of this research is to examine as to how Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's Sufi model offers non-violent and pragmatic solution to the destructive political obsession of extremism and terrorism in name of Islam. Through the application of Sufi Philanthropy and Spirituality lens, the study compares Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's work with scholars such as Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali whom view the religion as receptive to political control or per se violent. This study uses a method of textual analysis on the text, *The Hearken to the Call of Duty: The Philanthropic Approach of Sufi Masters in Islam* to explore how Sufi teachings can help Refute the use of religious violence and then using a comparative analysis to present Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's perspective in contrast to critics of political Islam.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been utilized as the theoretical framework through which the manner by which political actors use language and ideological power to construct religious violence and Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's counter discourse of spiritual Sufism is explicated. Fairclough (1992)'s CDA enables the researcher to analyse political and religious discursive practices in order to map out the relations of power in question and gain insight into how language creates discourses of violence or peace.

This research argues that while Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi ud Din Qadri is demonized inside and outside of Pakistan for promoting 'militancy', his discourse on Sufi humanitarianism rooted in charity and selflessness presents a counter narrative to the discourse about the relation between Islam and politics, specifically political violence. He has appeared to liberate Islam from the political strategy by using ideas of Sufi focusing on the proposition that the key values in restoration of spirituality and ethical concepts of the religion are peace and philanthropy as the true Islamic practices.

**Objectives**

1. To analyze how Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's portrayal of Sufi philanthropy provides a counter-narrative to the political misuse of Islam that promotes violence
2. To critically compare Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's Sufi-based approach to religious violence with the views of scholars like Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali

**Significance /Rationale**

The significance of this study is representative of the overall understanding of nonviolent Sufi philanthropy as the counter-response to the ever-increasing acts of political violence perpetrated in the name of Islam. At a time when Islam is portrayed as a violent religion both by the jihadists and the opponents of the latter, this study makes an important attempt to reclaim the Sufi perspective of humanitarianism, charity, and ethical behaviour as the genuine values of the religion. Identifying that Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri has contributed greatly to Islamic thought and writings, the study enters the debate that explains how political actors can be deprived of power over religious discourse. It provides an important viewpoint to those who hope to understand religious violence without the accompaniment of violence posed by politicization of religion in the modern world, especially Islamic.

Moreover, by comparing Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's Sufi approach to other critics such as Bernard Lewis or Ayaan Hirsi Ali the study can offer objective scholarly perspective, that will enable the reader to get further understanding of language and ideology role in constructing the image of Islam. This research will be useful to scholars, policy makers, religious leaders who practice the tenets of religious and ethical approach towards the dismantling of extremism and promotion of peace.

**Research Questions**

1. How does Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's representation of Sufi philanthropy offer an alternative narrative to the political exploitation of Islam associated with violence?
2. In what ways does Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's Sufi-based approach to addressing religious violence differ from the perspectives of scholars like Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who view Islam as vulnerable to political manipulation or inherently prone to violence?

**Research Gap**

The previous studies on the relationship between Islam and political violence largely concentrate on such critics as Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali who perceive a potential susceptibility of Islam to political manipulation, as well as its inherent violent characteristics.

These kinds of arguments are useful in some way, but they do not account for the diverse religious heritage within the context of Islam and Sufism in specific that disseminates compassion, nonviolence, and civility fully. However, there are very few detailed research studies, where the positive messages conveyed by Sufi teachings as presented by the scholars are comprehensively singled out and defined as potential counter- ideologies to the politicized interpretations of Islam.

This research gap underlines the need for a more comprehensive analysis of Sufi philanthropy and its capacity to take an active part in the struggle for representing the true nature of religious belief opposed to global religious intolerance. Thus, by investigating more specifically Qadri's output, this study intends to answer this gap and contribute to the debate on how Islamic ideas can be used to encourage non-violent thinking.

**Literature Review**

Sufism is the spiritual approach of Islamic mysticism as an interest in the closeness to God and gratitude to Him regardless of the distinction between different religions. In a similar vein, Khan (2024) documented this spiritual journey about the Sufi mysticism in the works of Dr. Hussain Qadri regarding the Sufi ideas to explore the works of the Sufi influence in his works through the use of certain motifs. In a historical and literary analysis of Sufi philosophy in his work, Khan traces the historical and literary evolution of Sufi philosophy, focusing on its transformative power within Qadri's work. Using the method of qualitative content analysis the study reveals the depth of spirituality disclosed in Qadri's artistic output, and emphasizes the intersection of literature and spirituality. This research contributes to the understanding of how Sufi concepts impact modern literary production, thereby extending a historical exploration of mysticism's role in art making.

Clarke, Jennings and Shaw (2007) explored the often-overlooked synergies where faith is not only viewed as something that is developed but faith features as a significant element in development, more specifically faith-based organisations which present an opportunity to mediate between civil society and the poor. It was posited that faith serves a central function in constructing the identities of marginalised communities as an analytic as well as an instrument through which to engage with their oppression. Conventionally, the dynamics of such mutual complementarities have not been well captured within the development studies or policy-making even in the Western context where the modernity is seen to be inimical with religion. But through faith actions the book draws awareness on the power of inter-religious coalition between elites and religious leaders, policy makers and funders to respond to poverty not only in word but also in deeds.

Esposito (2013) builds up his understanding of political Islam to provide an account on how political actors within modern Muslim states have sought to deploy religion to power purposes. His work on political Islam is very helpful in thinking about how political actors use religion to claim their authority. Referring to the roles of religious and political elites in Muslim societies, Esposito's work raises questions about the separation and interaction of religion in politics with the state but it does not explain how such clergymen as Qadri are trying to resolve the problem of religion and political violence.

In his critique of the current state of Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough (2017) made observations concerning the use of language in perpetuation of power relations especially through the use of religious language. CDA stands for Critical Discourse Analysis and is useful in analysing how political actors justify and sought to dominate religious discourse. However, there is a lack of such kind of study aimed at applying CDA to texts like *The Hearken to the Call of Duty: Philanthropic Approach of Sufi Masters in Islam*, where a scholar condemns the political misuse of religion and suggests the humanitarian vision of faith.

According to postcolonial theory developed by Said (1978) reveal how the colonial master used religion as an instrument of governance on the native. The so-called concept of Orientalism elaborated by Said is useful to visualize how colonial countries perceived other religions, especially Islamic one in a way that legitimized colonization. It is helpful to elaborate on what this framework is important for identifying how religion keeps on being instrumentalised in postcolonial settings with special reference to the Muslim world. Nevertheless, Said's work does not encompass a large extent on how contemporary intellectuals in these societies contest continued exploitation of religion, which is the focus of the current study on Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri.

In academic discourse, the mix of religion and politics, especially in relation to the exploitation of religion for political purpose has been well explored. Lewis (2018) emphasizes that that religion remains a powerful tool, one that has repeatedly been used by political actors to call for violence and, in societies where religious and political identity often overlap, to assert the dominance of the ruling party. Through his work, the author gives historical background for the use of religion as the means of control, which contributes to the understanding of modern tendencies of this process. However, there is lack of emphasis on how religious scholars resist these practices particularly from a language and postcolonial theory perspective.

## Research Methodology and Research Design

In this research, the researcher has used the qualitative research approach to investigate Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's views on Sufi charity and its ability to deal with political violence. The primary method of data collection has involved textual analysis of Qadri's book, *The Hearken to the Call of Duty: The Philanthropic Approach of Sufi Masters in Islam* with emphasis on highlighting general topics coverable under Sufi teachings of Charity, Selflessness and Humanitarianism. This has been accompanied by a comparison of Qadri's (2022) views with other critics: Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, which helps to fully elucidate how Qadri's approach differs from the notions usually associated with Islam and violence. In this regard, scholarly articles, religious scriptures, and historical writing have also been studied for reference and background of the study.

The current study has therefore employed a case-study approach, focusing on Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's works as the primary case and the phenomenon of Sufi philanthropy within the Islamic tradition in general. It has been used the following main points of discussion: The place of charity in the Islamic religion, The historical background of Sufis practices, The influence of these teachings on the present state of Muslim societies and denomination conflicts. Using CDA as the frame of analysis, the study has explored the manner in which ideas of violence or peace are created in language in regards to Islam. The idea behind this design is to promote reflection on how Sufi teachings might provide a realistic solution for Islam's liberation from politicization to reduce violence in its interpretation.

## Discussion and Analysis

In analyzing Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri's work, *The Hearken to the Call of Duty: The Philanthropic Approach of Sufi Masters in Islam*, he focuses on portraying the Sufi teachings as loving and charity inclined, and that they are firmly taught in service to humanity. Dr. Qadri's explanation of the effects of individual charitable contributions by Sufi saints provide an essential perspective to combating political instigated terrorism. However, Qadri categorically dispels misconception of Islam as promoting terrorism observing that the practice of the religion equals compassion and service prominent with Sufi saints.

**Sufi Philanthropy as a Counter-Narrative to Violence**

The Sufi philanthropy, according to Professor Dr. Hussain Mohiu d Din Qadri is to be a countermeasure against the origin of political terrorism. He argues that Sufi saints have, over the centuries, remained steadfast in their commitment to responding to the needs of others— be it as believers or governmental authorities. This sense of selflessness defines the preserve of Islamic teachings in contrast to the violent behaviours of political actors who stage Greenland Islamic religion for services (Qadri, 2020). When referring to historical personalities, for instance, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani and Shaykh Nizamuddin Auliya who dedicated the major part of their lives fighting for the poor and neglected and assisting them respectively, Qadri (2012) gives power to a concept of Islam being a religion of peace through serving others. But this message is rarely transmitted clearly due to the political sellers of religion intending to use it as a tool for leadership control. While the teachings encourage justice and the alleviation of suffering, this segment gets lost in media hashtags, mainly due to the conduct of a few individuals of colour.

This argument stands in contrast to the views of scholars such as Lewis (2003), who claimed that political Islam or Islamism changed the religion into a political philosophy with violent tendencies. Qadri, however, tries to present Islam's essence as spiritual and humane, and singles out Sufism as the way to establish unity, promote tolerance and avoid bloodshed. In his biographies of the Sufi saints (Ibrahim ibn Adham, Khawaja Zakariyya Multani, Shah Fakhruddin of Delhi, Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya and Bishr al-Hafi) Qadri shows that philanthropy and social welfare are not mere ethical values; rather, they are integral parts of Islamic piety that help foster spiritual harmony in society.

**Political Misuse of Islam and Qadri's Response**

In the light of the above arguments advanced by Ali (2015), rationally it was pointed by Qadri (2015) that religion is not at all guilty for violence; rather the tussle is in politics. Religion is political tools with different extremities using it to recruit people, and very often, Islamic principles are being misinterpreted to justify acts of terrorism. Nonetheless, Qadri refutes this argument with a focus on Sufism, which has always served as a brake on politically instrumentalizing. This is in line with Qadri's opinion where Sufi saints not only refused to recognise political power, but also in fact actively fought against the Islamization of political power. In other words, through a call to spirituality and ethics of Islam, Qadri really relocates the discourse from aggressive and politicised readings of Islam preached by the radicalists.

This comprehensive approach lays emphasis on the distinction between standard Islamic injunctions and radical misuse of religiosity. Thus, through Qadri's work, it can be stated context and discourse is central to the construction of the perceptions about Islam. Based on the CDA this research has found out that it is common for political actors to use religious discourse to justify acts of violence. However, Qadri's discourse is actually steeped in Sufism and the messages of peace, charity and a harmony of social relations are more accurately representative of the true spirit of Islam. This linguistic shift from violence to peace is crucial: it helps to reverse the trend and keep the storey of Islam out of the hands of the politicians because it educates the people and creates a favourable image of the religion. Nevertheless, such a change is inevitable for a more truthful language game.

**Humanitarianism and Spiritual Ethics in Islam**

Philanthropy is therefore closely depicted in the text as extending beyond social or politically orientated practise; in fact, philanthropy is depicted as spiritual practise in the Islamic sense of the word. This assertion is based on the Quran and the Hadith, the practises of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions. To Qadri, the legal and religious backdrop of Islamic charity is the foundation towards building a humanitarian society. He also reasons that Muslims should focus on the moral activities including assisting the indigent,

being kind to humanity and championing for justice; extremism in the name of Islam loses its appeal. Refuting any political tendency of the existence of political violence, Qadri (2020) describe philanthropy as a religious responsibility that contains a spiritual solution for the problem.

This viewpoint introduces a crucial aspect to the ongoing debate: it challenges the reification of the argument which props the idea that Islam could easily be furnished to foment political factions. Here, Sufi ethics draws the spiritual focus of the Islamic tradition in such a way that violence not only makes political sense to be avoided, it does not make religious sense to be engaged in either. However, this methodology takes the focus of the Islamic practise to both, the individual spiritual development, and social charitable activities which makes for a holistic understanding of the belief system. However, there can be arguments about that, therefore it really can be stated that these principles can contribute the discussion about Islam and many different interpretations of it.

## Comparison with Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Comparing Qadri's (2021) methodology with the views of Bernard Lewis and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, it is possible to identify a significant difference in the interpretation of concepts. Consequently, Lewis and Ali argue that due to the nature of Islam, and the political history of Muslim countries, Islam is prone to extremism and violence (Lewis, 2003, Ali, 2015). For example, Ali explains why Islam requires radical change to remove its violent aspect, and on the contrary, Lewis notes that citizens politicised aspects of the Islamic faith to commit acts of violence. Instead of offering a reformation of Islam as many would desire, Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohiu d Din Qadri calls for the wayward Muslim world to get back to basics and restore considerations that are noticeably missing from contemporary Islam – and so pervasively focused on – Sufi ideals of peace, love, and humanitarian service. While this perspective cannot be viewed as the same as the one presented by Lewis and Ali, it therefore provides another key with which one approach the intricate subject of Islam.

Scholars such as Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohiu d Din Qadri's therefore do not wish to rebuild Islam; instead, his goal is to discover the real worth of Islam to act upon not like those who only use it for political realignment. His focus on Sufi principles (which are generally ignored) contest the conventional idea that violence is inherent in the political domain of Islam. This point makes him force a picture of Islam, which is unquestionable humanitarian and non-violent. Nevertheless, this vision is driven by ethical imperatives that lie at the base of the religious spirituality of the religion. Some may argue it is overstatement, but it should be understood they are of such a significance to reorient the vision of Islam to its true identity.

## Conclusion

Through analysis (which is very insightful), one can see that there is a significant amount of work done by Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri that challenges the mainstream idea of Islam as a religion that calls for political violence. His focus on Sufi giving, moral and values, and compassion negate political misuse of religion in the contemporary world enormously. Explaining the non-violent and humanitarian aspects of Islam, Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri restores the religion to such individuals and political leaders as those who pervert its wholesome message.

In Dr, Qadri's approach, his method dramatically differs from the approach of Bernard Lewis or Ayaan Hirsi Ali, his interpretation of Sufi values proves that there is a way to address the problem of conflict and intolerance within the modern Islamic world – by promoting harmony, non-violence and tolerance. This is an important factor because it shows one way that is often not charted. Thus, despite the large number of barriers to a tolerant interpretation

of Islam and realising the principles of cultural and religious exchange between the Christian and Islamic worlds, a chance for changing the perception of the situation remains.

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