

**Importance of the Arabic Language****Muhammad Akram Chaudhary****Abdur Rehman Abid****Abstract**

This article highlights the significance of Arabic (Muslims religious language) and Urdu (Pakistanis national language) and discusses the neglected aspect of disseminating these two languages in Pakistan. It emphasizes the importance of contributing to the revival of Arabic language in Pakistan and all Muslim countries. It describes the challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah in forms of cultural invasions on Urdu and Arabic languages, the incorrect usage of Urdu words, and the reliance by Urdu and Arabic speaking people on English vocabulary in their daily conversations. A large number of words are common in Urdu and Arabic. If Arabic is given the status of second language in Pakistan, it will help a lot in development of Urdu. The article also addresses the challenges confronting Muslim Ummah with regard to Seerah literature (the biography of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.) and the Western invasions on its authenticity. It mentions several Western scholars who have questioned the historical facts of Seerah. It emphasizes on the Arabic-knowing Researchers to authenticate and defend the correct and real Seerah literature. Referring to the great treasure of knowledge of Tafseer, Hadees, Fiqh, Islamic History and Islamic Cultural Traditions available in these two languages, the article impresses upon the Arabic-knowing individuals in Pakistan to rise to the occasion and take benefit from this precious treasure. The article concludes with a motivational note for Arabic-knowing Experts to realize their responsibility of leading the entire Muslim Ummah towards an Islamic Cultural Revolution all over the world.

**Keywords:** Arabic, Urdu, Dissemination, Cultural Invasion, Western influence, Arabic-Urdu relationship, Seerah literature, Challenges, Authenticity, Motivation, Responsibility.

**Introduction**

Pakistan is our dearest country. It has given us freedom from colonialism. It made us free from British rule and also saved us from the oppression of both Hindu and Sikh communities. In turn, it genuinely demands from us to do something for it. Have you ever thought what contribution we have made towards our dear country? There are

hundreds of ways in which we can contribute. And some of us (though only a few) are doing whatever they can do (or they should do) for the betterment of this homeland. But there are many aspects in which we have made no contribution, although it was prime responsibility of every one of us to address these important aspects. One of these neglected aspects of

contributing towards our country is ‘Dissemination of Arabic Language in Pakistan’. Have we made any contribution in this regard? No - Not at all. This essay is an attempt for awakening the sleeping young generation and motivate them to stand up and play their role for revival of Arabic Language all over the country.

### **Protecting Urdu and Arabic from cultural invasions:**

We live in this era of intellectual progress where, beside other different kinds of challenges, we are confronting a big challenge of saving and protecting Arabic – our Religion’s Language - and also Urdu – our National Language. In this age, we are under drastic cultural invasions from every side, especially from the West. This is taking us towards a very dangerous point from where there will be no return. If we don’t open our eyes even now, it will be too late. These cultural invasions are not only harming Arabic (our Religious Language) and Urdu (our National Language), but these invaders are also trying their best to completely eliminate these two languages from our country. And they are getting success after success in these invasions because we are completely sleeping. Those who are at the helm of affairs in our country are quite unaware and unconscious of this danger. Teachers and students of Arabic and Urdu, no doubt have some idea about this critical situation. But they are not making any concerted effort for taking remedial measures. As for common people, they are

completely ignorant and have no concern with this subject.

### **Urdu:**

What to talk of Arabic! Here Urdu is a stranger in its own country. Look at Urdu news and other programs of TV and private channels, including Urdu newspaper-columns and magazines. We come across scores of situations daily where a word of Urdu is incorrectly spelled or wrongly pronounced, or is used in the wrong sense; or is wrongly displayed in the clips. Here are some examples:

Incorrect	Correct
اسلام علیکم - اسلام و علیکم السلام و علیکم! السلام و علیکم-	السلام علیکم
مَنْ وَ عَن	مِنْ وَ عَن
تانی	طعن
اَرسال	اِرسال
فخرِ ملتان	فخرِ ملتان

Most common of the above errors is

السلام علیکم:

اسلام is a Religion which means obedience.

و بُدعاء means peace, here used as a

means ‘and’. **عليكم** means ‘on you’. So out of 5 formats given above, only one **السلام عليكم** is correct. All other 4 formats are wrong. And worst of them is! **السلام عليكم!** (with sign of exclamation ! **(علامة التعجب)**), which means ‘Salam; and on you? Have you seen your face?’ I was Dean in a University. HoD of Urdu sent a letter to me which started with the words: “**السلام عليكم!**” I called him and asked him: Do you write Salam like this to your wife also? He replied: Yes. I said: OK. Then I have no further comments. All these errors (which are certainly NOT typo-errors) go un-noticed. Nobody bothers about them at all. Have you ever thought about the reasons for this great dilemma? The basic reason is that we fail to understand - and never believe - that Urdu is the child of Arabic or, to be more correct, Arabic is the mother of Urdu. This assertion is verified by the fact that when we speak Urdu we are using at least 60 percent of the words of the Arabic language or derivations of these Arabic words. Now if you separate a baby from his mother, what happens? This is what we have done with our Urdu.

In our daily routine when we speak Urdu, we use a lot of English words unconsciously. While speaking Urdu, when we don’t find a word in Urdu, we immediately rely on an English word, which is the language of the West. Why not to borrow a suitable word from some Eastern languages like Arabic,

Persian and Turkish? We always run towards English words because we have got education mostly from westernized teachers who feel proud of speaking English and follow western culture in their life. Why don’t we seek a substitute word in Arabic or any other Eastern language which is closer to our culture? And Arabic is the best choice for this, as it is the language of our Religion – the Treasure of Holy Quran and Hadith. There is no doubt in the fact that if we give Arabic the status of second language in our country, we shall be having a lot of advantages and benefits which automatically come along with this Sacred Language.

#### **Arabic:**

The problem which we have indicated above about Urdu being influenced by English is not limited to Urdu. The fact is that Arabic language is also confronting the same problem. In 1978, I was at **جامعة القرى** (Makkah University) as a student. We were in a restaurant. When we finished our food, one of my Saudi friend was asking his Saudi colleague:

**هل فنشت؟**

#### **(Have you finished?)**

Days later, I went with the same Saudi friend to another restaurant to have food. Saudis are famous for their hospitality. They don’t allow you to pay the bill in such a situation until you take an oath that you will pay the bill. I sensed the situation and said to my friend:

**حلفت باننى ادفع.**

**(I take an oath that I will pay the bill.)**

So he allowed me to pay the bill. Next time I again tried to pay the bill. But this time my Saudi friend didn't agree saying:

"لا- ندفع بالبائی". I couldn't understand him. I asked him: What is **بالبائی** He explained: "No. We pay turn **BY** turn".

This situation is not limited to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The whole Islamic World is facing this problem of Western invasions on Arabic.

### Challenges to Seerah

(سيرة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم):

Another serious issue being faced by the entire Muslim Ummah, especially in Pakistan, is that most of our Islamic Studies Teachers, even the Scholars having Degree of Masters or Ph.D. cannot read Holy Quran correctly. How will they be able to access Fundamental Sources (امحات الكتب) of Islam? Only Arabic-knowing students who have Masters or Ph.D. Degrees in Arabic can do this important task. After making serious invasions on authenticity of Hadith, the West has now started attacking on Seerah

(حرة الاسنى) also. Their target is that the entire Seerah Literature may be declared as doubtful and may be invalidated. For this purpose, the whole of the West is united and is actively working for achieving this goal. Although discussions on this topic have been going on for more than a century, but it has

become especially debated during the last two decades. We as Muslims are always ready to sacrifice our lives in the name of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). But unfortunately, we are completely unaware about what is being written about Seerah in the West. Here are some glimpses from Western literature written against Seerah:

#### 1. Herald Motzki

Harald Motzki (1948–2019) – a so-called Islamic scholar - was actually a German-trained orientalist. He received his doctorate in Islamic Studies in 1978 from the University of Bonn. He also served as a professor of Islamic Studies in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> Initially, he wrote on the transmission of Hadith and tried to prove that most of Ahadith are not authentic. He also claims that the sources on which the biography of Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is based are controversial and, therefore, are un-reliable. He focuses on the historical reliability of the source material of Seerah in order to prove that the entire Seerah events are not based on historical facts.<sup>2</sup> Motzki died on February 8, 2019.

#### 2. John Wansbrough

He was a Professor of Islamic Studies and also remained Chairman of School of Oriental and African Studies for 8 years from 1985 to 1992. He is the Founder of the Revisionist Movement.<sup>3</sup> They claim that each and every event discussed in books of Seerah needs to be re-visited and revised,

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harald\\_Motzki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harald_Motzki)

<sup>2</sup> Motzki Harald, 2000, *The Biography of Muhammad - The Issue of the Sources*.

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Wansbrough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wansbrough)

because these stories are not based on historical facts and are only superhuman (دو مالائی) imaginations.

### 3. Ibn Warraq

He was born in India in 1946. His family migrated to Pakistan in 1947. Initially, he was studying in a Madrasah. He wrote and spoke beautiful Arabic and English. Then his father decided to send him to a boarding school in England, which in his own words 'was partly to circumvent a grandmother's effort to push an exclusively religious education on his son at the local Madrasah'. After completing his graduation in Britain, he moved to Scotland for University education, where he studied philosophy and Arabic. Then he spent some time in France.<sup>4</sup> A Muslim with Asian color and Asian cultural background, when brought up and educated in Europe, sometimes forgets his Religion and starts thinking and speaking like Europeans. Such a person becomes *Favorite* and *Darling* of Europe. So Ibn Warraq started admiring Western Philosophy. He emerged as an anti-Muslim scholar and writer. As expected from such person, he rebelled against Islam. He wrote on topics such as "Why I am not Muslim." He declared Islam as a totalitarian regime. He is the founder of the Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society (ISIS). His ideas were highly appreciated by enemies of Islam in the West. Christopher

Hitchens described *Why I Am Not a Muslim* as his "favorite book on Islam". In 2000, Ibn-e-Warraq claimed that Muslims have contributed all good things to Muhammad in their blind faith in him and because of their extreme love for him, which he thinks is not reality. He also claims that most of the Seerah literature is based on imaginative stories, which cannot be proved from historical facts. While editing a book,<sup>5</sup> he argues that traditional Islamic accounts of its history and the origins of the Quran are fictitious and based on historical revisionism aimed at forging a religious Arab identity. His works are well-known in the West. The central idea of this works is: "*Search for Original Muhammad*".

In 2007, Douglas Murray described Ibn Warraq as:

*"The great Islamic scholar ... one of the great heroes of our time. Personally endangered, yet unremittingly vocal, Ibn Warraq leads a trend. .... Were Ibn Warraq to live in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, he would not be able to write. Or if he did, he would not be allowed to live."*<sup>6</sup>

These comments are enough to open our eyes.

### 4. Robert Spencer

Another such book has been written by an American Orientalist, Robert Spencer. Mere title of this book "*Did Muhammad exist?*" is enough to tell us that this book is a great challenge to the whole Muslim

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn\\_Warraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Warraq)

<sup>5</sup> Ibn-e-Warraq, 2000, *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad*. The book is an anthology

of 15 studies examining the origins of Islam and the Quran.

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn\\_Warraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Warraq)

Ummah. Challenging the authenticity of numerous Seerah events, Spencer also claims that the Muslims in their blind faith and love for Muhammad have attributed many good things, rather every good thing, to Muhammad; thus painting an imaginary Superhuman (دِي مَالَانِي) personality which is not a historical fact.<sup>7</sup>

#### How to authenticate Seerah Literature?

Authenticating Seerah Literature is a great challenge for Muslim Ummah. Unfortunately, the people who are expert in Physics, Chemistry or International Relations cannot meet this challenge. It is only Arabic-knowing experts who have access to the authentic sources of Seerah. And only they can re-pay this loan to Muslim Ummah by meeting this serious and dangerous challenge. It is only for the students of Arabic Language and Researchers that they can read these book and rebut the issues raised therein with strong logical arguments. No other person can do this. Arabic is not only a Language or a source of communication. It is actually Deen and also Culture (دِين و ثقافت) of all Muslims in the whole world. It is the source of Allah's last Message sent to entire humanity which will remain valid to be followed till the Day of Judgement. Only Arabic Scholars and Researchers are blessed to have direct access to properly understand this treasure (Quran, Hadith and Seerah)

without depending on 'poor' translations. It is time that Arabic-knowing people realize this dual responsibility which is on their shoulders and show to the world that they have played their role effectively by repaying the loan which they owe to the entire Muslim Ummah.

#### Is Arabic a difficult language?

In 1978, I visited Riyadh University (معهد تدريس اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها - Institute of Teaching Arabic to Non-Arabs). There I met an American. He told me that he was in Riyadh for the last 9 months to learn Arabic Language, and still he was in the process of learning and pronouncing Arabic Alphabets. Look! How lucky we are in Pakistan. Our National Language Urdu has almost the same Alphabets as Arabic. This means that 50% of our process of learning Arabic is already complete.

Arabic is not a stranger for Muslims in any part of the world. However, it is our hard luck that in Pakistan no serious efforts have been made for giving Arabic a status that it deserves. Many a time, policies and rules have been made but these were never implemented seriously. If a serious and devoted effort was made for dissemination of Arabic in our country, our Urdu would also have been corrected and developed automatically.

**Way Forward:** It is now the responsibility of every Arabic-knowing person in our country to play his role for development of

<sup>7</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_B.\\_Spencer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_B._Spencer)

Arabic Language. This can help a lot in bringing this country out of chaos and can lead us towards the way for progress and prosperity. No doubt, it is a difficult task, but the only thing we need is

#### DETERMINATION and FRENZY

(العزم و الحزنون). The following poem

نشيد<sup>8</sup> of Ibrahim Naji, which we have been listening since long in the sweet voice of Umm-e-Kalsoom<sup>8</sup>(ام كلثوم), can work as a great motivating force in this regard:

هل رأى الحب سكارى مثلنا؟

*Has love ever seen intoxicated people like us?*

كم بنينا من خيال حولنا؟

*How many fantasies have we built around us?*

ومشينا في طريق مقرر

*We walked on a moonlit path*

تتب الفرحة فيه قبلنا

*Where happiness prevailed even before us*

وضحكنا ضحك طفلين معاً

*We laughed like two kids laughing together*

وعدونا فسبقنا ظلنا

*We chased and we surpassed our own shadow*

“If FIRE is inside, one can even chase  
and surpass his own shadow.

You can achieve your goal only if you are  
CRAZY and FRENZY for it.”

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<sup>8</sup>[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k\\_OrMdKg524](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_OrMdKg524)