

Editorial: The Passing of Dr Ansari and the Future of “Islami Inqilab”

In the early 1990s, we established a study circle on Western civilisation under the supervision of Dr Javed Akbar Ansari. This circle was set up at the Jamaat-e-Islami’s research institute, the Islamic Research Academy. Its participants belonged to various Islamic parties and different schools of thought. Our first and abiding concern was that this scholarly activity should not give rise to any new party or organisation. All participants therefore remained within their own parties, and conveyed their ideas to the elders and workers of those very parties. We consciously avoided building any separate organisational structure. Whenever the idea of launching our own journal arose, it was rejected on the same ground: rather than set up something separate, we ought to turn to the Islamic periodicals that already existed.

Dr Ansari’s articles accordingly appeared in the daily *Jasarat* and its weekly edition, *Friday Special*. His English writings were published in newspapers such as *The News* and *Dawn*. These English pieces were mostly written at others’ request; left to himself, he preferred to write for Islamic journals and madrasah periodicals.

For several years he had been writing for *Al-Burhan*. Then a time came when *Al-Burhan* either stopped

printing his articles altogether, or published them so heavily cut and abridged that only a bare summary of the main points survived. Before publication, brother Amin Ashar used to send me those articles to read. I told him he should put the idea of starting a separate journal to Dr Ansari. To be honest, this was little more than an expression of internal frustration; I was convinced that, as always, he would reject the proposal for a publication of our own.

This time, however, contrary to expectation, Dr Ansari accepted the proposal, on one condition: I would have to take charge of editing the journal. Had I refused, the journal would never have appeared. I therefore had to accept the responsibility. During his lifetime, the journal was published under his direct supervision. Most of its articles were either by him or by his longstanding students. Every article was either reviewed by him before publication, or received his written comments afterwards.

Five issues appeared in his lifetime. The sixth issue had also been fully prepared during his lifetime, and he was familiar with all of its contents. The material he wrote for this journal is so extensive that it could not be published all at once. Several important pieces from that material are now included in this seventh issue, and there is enough of his written material to fill the next two or three issues as well.

This, in full, is the background of the journal that Dr Ansari entrusted to me. It is now my wish that, in his memory and to keep his scholarly legacy alive, this journal should, God willing, be continued. It is my prayer to Allah, and my pledge, that I will carry on this work until my last breath.

This is the seventh issue of *Islami Inqilab*. Across all seven issues, the work has pursued the same basic objectives that were set out in the editorial of the first issue.

These include, for instance: establishing the case for the Islamic state, the arguments in its favour, its nature, and why it is indispensable; the state's relationship with the capitalist system, and why it is needed in the present age. These themes have been presented both at a general level and discussed in the context of specific bodies of thought.

Scholarly rebuttals have also been written against the objections of all opponents of the Islamic state, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, revolutionary or non-revolutionary, sincere Muslims or otherwise. The need for and nature of the Islamic revolution, its true meaning, and its relationship with Islamic reform: articles on all of these have appeared continuously.

In addition, the journal has published general discussions of modernity, critical assessments of thinkers of modernity, the capitalist economic system,

the Islamic revolutionary economic system, the method of building a parallel state within the state, strategies for social organisation, the prospects and means for an Islamic revolution in Pakistan, and commentary on current affairs from an Islamic revolutionary standpoint. In particular, the country's political situation and the strategies of political parties have been assessed from this same angle.

These are the themes on which the journal has been publishing articles so far, and, God willing, this will continue in future issues as well.

The journal's publication serves two basic purposes:

1. Propagating Islamic thought and securing the cooperation of the ulama

The first purpose is to convey our basic thought, namely the critique of capitalism and Dr Javed Akbar Ansari's conception of the Islamic revolution, to various Islamic circles, particularly to the ulama and the students of madrasahs. This purpose has been achieved to some extent. However, there remains a pressing need for the ummah's reformers and leading ulama to write regularly for this journal. Further effort is still required on this front.

2. Preparing personnel and intellectual maturation

The second purpose is to provide intellectual training for suitable personnel, and to deepen the

scholarly grounding and breadth of vision of the associates connected with our circle. One notable success has been that five or six longstanding members of our study circle, who had also worked alongside Dr Ansari, have written regularly for this journal on a range of scholarly subjects.

What matters is that each has written in his own intellectual style and scholarly method. None of these writings can be called a mere imitation of Dr Ansari's thought. Having grasped his intellectual method in depth, these associates have offered fresh perspectives with their own scholarly independence.

The contribution of two individuals in particular deserves special mention.

Professor Yunus Qadri has written important articles on the critique of capitalism in both Urdu and English, and has produced several scholarly pieces on the subject of the Islamic financial system. The analysis he has undertaken of contemporary political, social and international affairs is, after Dr Ansari, perhaps the only work of its kind within our intellectual circle. Through this, he has developed a distinct and well-grounded analytical perspective. His substantial article in this issue's Urdu section, based on a critical analysis of Edward Fishman's ideas, reflects this same intellectual development.

Dr Zeeshan Arshad has written important articles in

English on serious scholarly subjects. His particular distinction is that he introduces new books published in the West on capitalism and other topics within our field, while also offering a critical and Islamic assessment of them. Through this, our readers gain guidance on emerging ideas in the West, particularly regarding modern technology, finance, capitalism and current affairs.

He has also begun another service in Urdu: rendering Dr Ansari’s writings and recorded lectures into simple, flowing prose. As part of this, work is under way to transcribe into written form, and publish in Urdu, the lectures based on Dr Ansari’s book *Durus-e-Sarmayadari* (Lessons on Capitalism), which will, God willing, also be presented in English in due course.

Both these individuals are carrying Dr Ansari’s thought forward, each in his own distinctive style. We have deliberately made no attempt to suppress this individual character, since our purpose is to allow different intellectual approaches to flourish within the bounds of this school of thought.

Our longstanding associate, Ghulam Jilani Khan, has continued to write on Sufism and spiritual guidance. His writings on the history of Islamic India, and on Islamic nationalism versus Hindutva nationalism, will, God willing, appear in future issues

as well. Amin Ashar has taken charge of the administrative work of publishing and printing *Islami Inqilab*. His articles on Jamaat-e-Islami, Islamic movements, and the idea of a state within a state have also appeared in previous issues.

Alongside consolidating the work done so far, we now have two goals. The first is to request those longstanding associates of our circle who have not yet written for this journal, or have written only rarely, to begin contributing regularly to future issues. These include, in particular, Kashif Ali, Muhammad Idrees, and, among the economists trained by Dr Ansari, Dr Muhammad Tahir.

The second goal, in which we have not yet met with adequate success, is to include in this journal the writings of reform-minded Muslims, particularly those ulama and students who are not opposed to the Islamic revolution. Earlier, articles by a few Bareilvi ulama were published, but both these individuals were already associated with our circle. Our aim now is to publish, in this journal, the writings of ulama from all reputable Islamic circles, and of the students from the madrasahs connected with them.