

Mystic Concepts of Peace and Tolerance: A Study of Orientalist Views on Lessons from the Life of Imam Hussain (A.S)

Ali Murad Lajwani, University of Sufism and Modern Sciences, Bhitshah, Sindh, Pakistan

Keywords	Abstract
Mysticism, Peace Concept, Tolerance, Orientalists, Imam Hussain (A.S).	<i>Mysticism concerns the harmony and practices of virtuous individuals, transcending differences in religion and caste. It emphasizes the teachings of Islam and love for humankind, nurturing the seeds of tolerance and patience. Eminent Muslim and Non-Muslim scholars discussed the meaningful concepts from the history of Islam. The broader perspectives from Imam Hussain's (A.S) mystic teachings are lessons embodying divine justice, equality, gentleness, and other exemplary practices. These are the lessons of mystical practice that foster patience and tolerance toward humanity. This profound teaching was transformed by Hussain (A.S) Ibn Hazrat Ali (A.S) to all people, religious and other differences. Current research examines the views and written works of orientalists regarding the valuable glory of Islamic history. The qualitative research method that employs a thematic analysis framework to extensively explore the speeches and written documents of various orientalists. An initial review of these documents revealed 25 themes. These themes were assigned numerical codes, and each underwent thorough reading and contextual verification. The 25 themes were then condensed to 14. A careful review of these themes was conducted based on their contextual relevance to the research subject. Finally, 5 core themes were selected for analysis. The discussion and results are presented accordingly.</i>

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental moral lessons of Islamic teachings serve to build peace, tolerance, and a sense of compromise. Such were the teachings and simple principles imparted by the last Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), to the entire Muslim community. He taught his followers to treat people well based on humanity alone, regardless of their religion. He taught us to face life's hardships with unwavering forbearance despite pain and suffering. Indeed, pain and suffering are trials that test a person's endurance, and facing hardships with courage offers a sublime experience.

Ignaz Goldziher, the famous Hungarian scholar, viewed the story of Karbala as narrated in the richly cultivated literature of Shia Muslims, in both poetry and prose. He considered it helpful for students to learn the author's sympathetic and insightful views to understand this profound history and its enduring relevance to humanity (Goldziher, 2021). This cultivated literature is so moving that people listen to it with great attention. In this way, the tragedy of Karbala is commemorated during the first month (Muharram) of the Islamic calendar (Goldziher, 2021).

To disseminate this profound lesson to the entire world, Imam Hussain (A.S) migrated from

The story of Karbla originally reflects the teachings of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). This stands as the experts on historical knowledge narrate the migration story of Imam Hussain (A.S) that started from Madina and ended at the Battle of Karbala. The universality of mystic concepts, truly reflected in the life of Imam Hussain (A.S), was a result of his nurturing by the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The enlightened history of Islam is rich with such incidents. For instance, a Jewish woman in Mecca made a habit of throwing garbage on the path where the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) walked. People in Mecca noticed this practice, but it continued. One day, she fell sick and could not perform her usual act. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), noticing her absence, inquired and learned of her illness. He then visited her. History records that she was so astonished by this act of moral character that she embraced Islam, reciting the Kalima, "There is no god but Allah" (Harpci, 2020).

Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, an Islamic scholar, stated in his message on the occasion of Ashura that the grief for Hussain (peace be upon him) is part of the faith of the Muslim Ummah and should not be confined to any one sect. Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S.) is a great man of peace, security, and love (Tahir-ul-Qadri, 2023). He taught the vital lesson never to compromise with cruelty; the positive ideals of Hussainism were born on the field of Karbala. He sacrificed his family to revive Islam. The great virtues of patience, perseverance, and sacrifice embodied by Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S.) benefit all of humanity today. He is respected by non-Muslims and Muslims alike because his actions brought pride to all of humanity.

The simplicity, piousness, and high moral values were reflected in the life of Imam Hussain (A.S). There were research articles, books, and other valid sources of such lessons. A great visionary leader, philosopher, and national poet of Pakistan, Dr. Muhammad Allama Iqbal, wrote that "Imam Hussain (A.S) awakened the sleeping Muslim nation, he watered the dry garden of freedom with his blood." His last travel journey that started from Madina towards the desert of Karbla was not an ordinary one for people. It was a deeper experience of searching for the divine and truth (Iqbal, 2006). A non-Muslim writer and historian has deeply thought about the life lessons of Imam Hussain (A.S). Dr. Ratha mentioned in her views that such good lessons were beyond the religious differences. These lessons work as guiding principles for people of different religions (Suhail, 2018). The prominent Indian political leader Mahatma Gandhi said, "I learned from Hussain how to achieve victory while being oppressed" (Malkani, 2025). Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated that the path of righteousness for all communities is the one Imam Hussain (A.S) guided people toward. Dr. Rajendra Prasad wrote, "The sacrifice of Imam Hussain (A.S) is not for the Shias only, nor for Muslims only, but it is a heritage for the entire human race" (Hawzah News Agency, 2016). Naidu, a scholar from the Hindu religion, said that it is not only an honor for the Muslim community but for other religions that such lessons were transformed from the teachings of Imam Hussain (A.S) (Sarojini, 2020).

There are many examples of fighting and war, but the story of Karbala is painful for all entire humanity. In the midnight of 9th Muharram, a day before the martyrdom, there was thirst under the scorching sands. A non-Muslim scholar, Dr. K. Sheldrake, wrote that Imam Hussain went to everyone and walked to his little company, not to glory, not to power or wealth, but to a supreme sacrifice, and every member bravely faced the greatest odds without flinching" (Rizvi, 2014).

The history of Persian literature narrates the tragedy of Karbala. It reflects that human sacrifice for a noble cause always remains at the topmost (Browne, 2013). The bold and brave people are tested during the war, and fight as the companions of Imam Hussain (A.S)

were tested during the fight in Karbala. They left a supreme example (Naqvi, 2012). The Scholar Thomas Carlyle viewed that Imam Hussain (A.S) was a great hero for all times and all religions across the world (Shomali, 2017). Another Scholar mentioned that during such a critical situation, children, women, and innocent people were with Imam Hussain (A.S). This is a reason that he fights for the righteous and the glory of Islam (Dickens, 2012). The expert on historical information Edward Gibbon also conveyed to the entire world that the tragic scene of Imam Hussain's death "will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader" (Choupani, 2025). The opinions of Antoine Bara presented a clear stance that "no battle in modern or past history has earned as much sympathy and admiration as the Battle of Karbala" (Rajpar, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Intolerance manifests as negative actions against those of different faiths or religions. It leads to hate speeches, misconduct, and violence. This intolerance stems from a lack of understanding of world religions, ranging from Muslim beliefs to other faiths. It is fueled by limited knowledge and stereotypical practices, including misinformation prevalent in closed-minded societies. The current research aims to promote interfaith dialogues by drawing on the enlightened lessons from Islamic history, viewed impartially by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars.

Research Objectives

- (1) To explore the mystic concepts that help reduce intolerance from society.
- (2) To study the specific knowledge gap and stereotype practice.
- (3) To evaluate scholarly views on Islamic lessons that promotes mysticism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mysticism is an experience of interfaith harmony and inclusiveness. It is not confined to any single religion or faith but covers the lessons of morality and virtue from all religions. The people whose mystic vision is high are known as "Sufi". Simply, a person can be from any religion, believing in coexistence. The mystic experiences were supportive for the entire humanity. The literature about mysticism was found both in prose and poetry. A poet of nature whose poetry is much more reflective of a connection of coexistence is William Wordsworth. The substance is to learn insight into nature and demonstrate love to creation (Spurgeon, 1913). Every human looks to seek a happy and satisfied life. A psychologist, Freud, discovered that our love and hate both feelings pertained to a class of people. Our feeling is positive towards our dears and nears, while it is not so kind with slaves and other disadvantaged segments of society, and that often very dangerous (Webel & Galtung, 2007). The model of society that has been based on moral and ethical lessons has always found a heaven on earth for the people. The social indicators of such a society were equity in gender, respect for women and children, and equal opportunities for the rich and poor classes. Continue social equilibrium and a constructive approach to carry forward the message of dignity and honor (Agius & Ambrosewicz, 2003). Sufism has been an aspect of the mystical dimension of religions. Annemarie Schimmel viewed its vitality of mysticism that narrates that humanity lies among good deeds. Sufism has narrated the concepts of human love and tolerance. Patience and tolerance create an ability to extend cooperation with a human being without differences (Schimmel, 2011). Wayne has viewed spirituality as power, a practical element of inclusiveness among the different communities. The primitive societies were tied through the organic social order. People were strongly connected through their heart and soul (Teasdale, 2010). Beyond any doubt, the quest for truth is seeking the divine love. The divine

love is a seed for cultivating consciousness to attain Allah's mercy. Understanding levels of self is an experience of awakened consciousness and a journey towards achieving psychological strength for personal life and transforming the same to others as a good lesson of humanity (Underhill, 2002). Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. The mysticism covers the entire dimensions of human life, including other religions. It helps to recognize the fundamental principle of extending mutual respect and cooperation. The state of spiritual experience cultivates a deeper meaning to brotherhood, acceptance, and fairness (Holm, 2009). Inclusiveness is achieved through socialization; the cultural spectrum enhances a sense of mutual respect despite different religions. Sometimes disagreements occur due to different ethnicities, but in the long term, sociability is a fundamental need. The journey towards peace and tolerance is always a social recognition to everyone, regardless of their religious identity. Social solidarity is often found in society where there is an open society. Most of the practices are genuinely based on merit; people seek equal opportunities despite the different castes and creeds (El Zein & Al Jarwan, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was a qualitative in design with a technique of thematic framework analysis used in the present research. The descriptive, transcriptions, phrases, and words consisting of formal speeches that were delivered on special occasions, TV show discussions, non-verbal information, i.e., books, news reports, and comments, as secondary data. The thematic analysis technique was applied to the qualitative data. In the first step, the data phrases and sentences were arranged into short paragraphs and sections. The general themes were reviewed to measure the relevance and accuracy of the research context. A set of qualitative data, including text, transcripts, views, talks, speeches, and opinions from various writers, was examined to identify themes with patterned and contextual meaning related to peace, tolerance, and the comprehensive message of humanity. It was rather helpful for examining the expert views, knowledge, experiences, and other responses. The researcher attempted to become familiar with the themes, having a broad context and not limited to the religious parameters. The reading material was chosen to further investigate on views of Muslim and Non-Muslim Scholars were kept as a source of good lessons for a historical chapter. The mystic topics that were related to tolerance and interfaith harmony were prioritized and focused on to analyze themes. Thematic Analysis was continued as refined by Braun and Clarke (2022). A flexible structure was implemented – familiarizing with themes, systematic coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes, refining and defining themes, and finally refining themes were brought for the analysis and report. Initially familiarized with 25 themes that were discovered with contextual meaning and referred to as the subject of research. Themes were reviewed using mind maps to create meaningful new knowledge for addressing the social issues. The themes were coded and brought in alphabetical order. The codes allowed for merging different ideas into smaller themes that were broader and shared a common pattern. The coded themes were reduced to 14 themes. The review was continued on logical grounds. The relevant themes underlying deep contextual meaning or patterns were grouped for a potential thematic meaning. The initial review helped represent a single, abstract concept, encompassing a theme to bring in a concrete name and meaning of each theme. Finally, 14 themes were reduced to 05 themes. Its thematic framework was developed in a diagram for further interpretation. The diagram is given below:

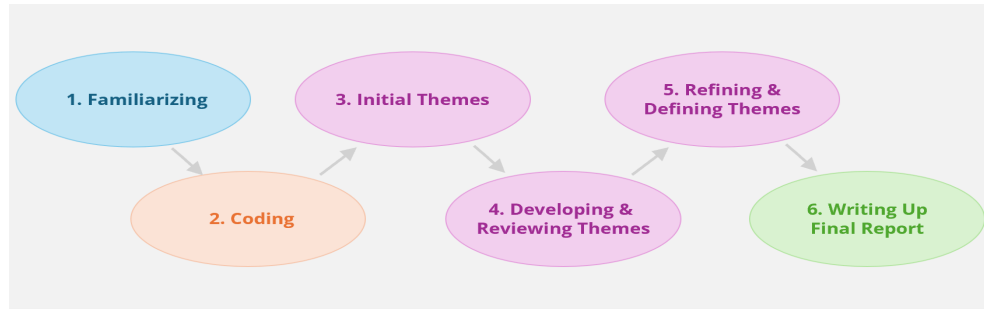


Figure 1: Thematic Framework Analysis (Source: The 6 Phases of Thematic Analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2022))

The discovered five themes were (i) forgiveness, (ii) courageousness, (iii) determination, (iv) humility, and (v) loyalty. The themes were placed in logical order, and the interpretation of each theme was carried out in an entirely unbiased way. The gathered themes were drawn from the history of Islamic as recorded by the Orientalists.

Research Ethics

The researcher demonstrated a careful attempt to process the data and record evidence for the accomplishment of the research task. The valid and reliable data were obtained and documented with references. Since the research was qualitative in design, the written and verbal views of Scholars were the origin for the research. Therefore, the researcher remained unbiased, and it was an honest effort to gather information as found through books and other sources. The academic text was brought to the final write-up. The step-by-step arguments section turned into a meaningful passage for the researcher and readers. The contextual meaning is presented as a set of techniques for interfaith and religious harmony. The mystic themes were connected to humanity, forgiveness, pardon, and merciful teachings left for the entire human being, not limited to Islam or Islamic values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The step of results and discussions was implemented to discover standard and thoughtful concepts from the organized research data. The mystic themes that were drawn from the historical views of orientalists were arranged in meaningful order to discuss as a formal step of research. Basic themes were screened through a thematic framework process. Each theme discovered from written history and narrations that were highlighted by the non-Muslim scholars about the life incidents of Imam Hussain (A.S). The same was drawn from the documented history of Islam. The orientalists have referred to each incident and described various life occurrences in their own way. They have contributed to the people in general to learn the morality, referring to the enlightened chapters from the history of Islam.

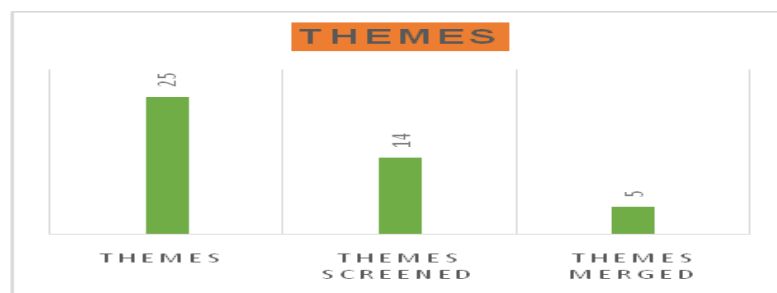


Figure 2: Themes from the Views of Orientalists
(Source: Documents and narrations written by Orientalists)

Interpretation

The diagram, as shown above, presents the pattern of themes that were merged and reduced. These themes were drawn from the opinions and views of Scholars from different religions. The well-noted records were investigated during the initial research work. The researcher was familiarized with 25 themes. These themes were coded with specific numbers and listed in alphabetical order. They coded with appropriate numbers and pertinent to meaning and reduced them into 14 themes on the grounds of similarity in meaning, reasoning, and logical arrangement. The themes were reviewed and defined with a careful manner, and selectively 05 themes were finalized for further interpretation – there were life stories reported as appropriate to each theme. All thematic exercises are linked to good lessons of human love and mutual respect. The human being practices unwritten rules that are themes for human respect and welfare. Detail is given about the virtues and lessons that reflect from the life of the son of the fourth Caliph, Hazrat Ali (A.S).

Theme 1- Forgiveness: Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, “Forgive is better than revenge”. The enlightened history of Islam has become a worthy chapter to learn about forgiveness. It is high time to refer to the chapters of forgiveness as a lesson of tolerance for bringing interfaith harmony. A soldier, namely Hurr, was famous as an enemy of Imam Hussain (A.S). Despite his cruelty, Imam Hussain (A.S) had forgiven him during the battle of Karbala. Imam Hussain (A.S) had learned the lesson of pardon and forgiveness from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). After the Conquest of Mecca, our Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) resided there for thirteen years. The time that was spent over there was much harder, so He suffered there, faced harsh circumstances, and tolerated much pain. They threw stones at him, and in response, he stated, “No any other has faced such a sore situation and aggravation as I did”. During those hard times, enemies of Islam had planned to kill the Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) because he was teaching them the concept of monotheism, and they were against believing in one God. Due to such crucial circumstances, he had left Mecca at night and asked his cousin Hazrat Ali (A.S) to sleep in his bed. Due to continuous agitations of enemies, the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) traveled a long distance to Medina and started His guidance to people. He preached there about Allah and good deeds, honesty, forgiveness, humbleness, and kindness to the poor and needy. But people disturbed Him there as well, and they waged twenty-six battles that were against the preaching of Islam. Even during the battle of Uhud, His uncle was killed, which caused grief for Him. History revealed the Holy Verse of the Quran there, and Hazrat Gabriel conveyed:

وَإِن عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّابِرِينَ

“And if you take a turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient” (16:126). The words of the Quran revealed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had pardoned the Quresh and said, “I will be patient”.

Theme 2- Courageousness: A leadership quality, courageousness is either an innate ability or sometimes acquired from a disciplined environment. One of the good lessons found in the Battlefield of Karbala is that thousands of soldiers had made a circle around the horse of Imam Hussain (A.S) at the last moment of sacrifice. He was thirsty but did not bow down and fought courageously. His lesson of courage is being taught and discussed among the Muslim and Non-Muslim communities to this day. He had learned the lesson of courageousness from His grandfather Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) – on the 10th Muharram day Ashura during the battle of Karbala, He lost many of His family members and companions including his brother Hazrat Abbas (A.S) who was the leader and taking the flag of Islam in his hands and his

beloved sons Hazrat Ali Akber (A.S) whose personality was resembling the personality of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and six months age Hazrat Ali Asghar (A.S). Despite such a tragedy, he never lost his control and remained courageous. He never regretted his actions, nor doubted the cause of sacrifice.

Theme 3- Determination: Determination is a standard quality of human beings that rewards success. One good lesson was revealed from the notes that Imam Hussain (A.S) demonstrated a strong determination to face hardships. He was a man of principles. He did not accept the safe escape from the battlefield but practiced determination by virtue and high moral character. His determination was preserved as a lesson that flourished from the views of Scholars from different religions. Imam Hussain (A.S) lived to preserve the true teachings of Islam. His unwavering commitment to courage, bravery, justice, and equality among people became famous all over the world. Despite the hardships and pain, he continued to bring the message of peace, tolerance, and social justice. He urged the people to stand against tyranny, oppression, and cruelty. Historians have quoted his last words widely for his companions to demonstrate courage and resilience. His vision was a greater picture of Islam as it was taught by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, historians from other religions have brought forth to appreciate the good lessons of the life of Imam Hussain (A.S). Despite the various challenges in modern times, no writer has viewed that the teaching of Imam Hussain (A.S) is limited to the Muslim community but gives a lesson of equality, brotherhood, and social justice to everyone beyond the religious differences.

Theme 4- Humility: The teachings of Islam vividly present good lessons of moral values and character building. The basic lesson that was demonstrated by Imam Hussain (A.S) was simplicity to everyone. He taught to be humble and lead a simple life. This lesson was learned by Imam Hussain (A.S) from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) during his childhood. The same lesson of humility was transformed for the people. Imam Hussain (A.S) was a kind he left behind a timeless, true message of sacrifice, standing against injustice, and defending the rights of the oppressed. His teachings are guiding principles for humanity toward the path of righteousness and empathy for others. Everyone reflects on his message to learn to strive and stand for embracing peace, tolerance, and harmony.

Theme 5 – Loyalty: There is a good lesson of loyalty for the entire human being from the Battle of Karbala. The historical notes witness that at midnight of 10th Muharram. The war of thirst had begun, while enemies not only waged war but also fought for water from “Nehre-e-Farat”. The river “Furat” was the only source of drinking water in such a hot, deserted area. Unfortunately, children, women, and companions remained thirsty till martyrdom. During such harsh circumstances, Imam Hussain (A.S) delivered a friendly speech on spiritual insight to his companions. He asked to escape from the war situation, if anyone wishes. They did not leave the battlefield, and their loyalty was proven to the son of Hazrat Ali (A.S). They all proved a good lesson of loyalty in the history of Islam. All the good teachings and good lessons that were left for humankind were reflected in the life of Imam Hussain (A.S). It was moral and virtue education in his family that was taught to him by the last Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). The example Hudaibiyah treaty was normally a settlement to avoid conflict, while building discussion that Allah always guides us. Due to such Loyalty, people had deeply loved Him and respected His teachings. They never turned back at all. Khalid Bin Walid (R.A) narrated the story that once he had taken some hair of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), he had cut it off them. He said I kept them in my turban. Since that time, I have never lost in the battle but have remained successful. He told the mystery of his victories and success. We all pray that Allah grants us the guidance to follow in the footsteps

of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his family members. Above all, the good lessons that were left to us by Imam Hussain (A.S).

CONCLUSION

The mystical teachings are needed for character-building and moral values. The conflicts are reported due to the misinterpretation of religious concepts. The mystic concepts that as conveyed from the family of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Particularly, Imam Hussain (A.S) is instrumental to learn brotherhood. These lessons are helpful to address the extremism and rigidity. The basic lesson demonstrated by Imam Hussain (A.S) is promoting tolerance, which is a basic fundamental social need for fostering a prosperous and peaceful society. It promotes social cohesion, mutual respect, and better equips people to work towards social responsibilities, and boosts economic development for the common folk. The insightful notions of the Scholars are helpful to understand the philosophy of religious harmony and tolerance. Imam Hussain (A.S) has been a leader for the entire international community to demonstrate tolerance and patience. The reading material about the life of Imam Hussain (A.S) is a source to learn human values and serve the people beyond the boundaries. The lessons enhance an innovative and open-minded society that perspectives a tolerant society with well-being and inclusiveness.

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Author's Contribution: The author completed the research manuscript on mysticism. In a genuine attempt the review of literature, the data collection, and data analysis. The categorization themes during data processing contributed to the theoretical development of the study and finalized the method of presentation of findings.

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