

Misrepresentation of Religious Tenet in Syed Waliullah's *Tree Without Roots [Lal Shalu]*: An Islamic Overview

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Abstract

Syed Waliullah is one of the most versatile Muslim novelists in Bangladesh. Social reformation, awakening people about religion and satire against corruption are his main themes. He also identifies the peripheral community in his writings. His *Tree Without Roots* originally *Lal Shalu* in Bangla is the most popular novel for its multilevel portrayal of the Bengali Muslim community. The paper aims at focusing on how Islam and its followers are portrayed wrongly in *Tree Without Roots* because the novelist through the activities of Majeed wants to divert the mass Muslims from the Qur'anic guidelines to man-made path for the worldly benefits. It concentrates on the controversial protagonist Abdul Majeed who grasps the rural people especially the simple and innocent like women for his greater projection of power and hunger. As a part of his prosperity, Majeed deeply feels inside himself that women can be the most flexible and reliable field for smooth cultivation and experimental adventure. This paper has also traced the sources of the power of Majeed—the protagonist, that he uses to manipulate the villagers and to claim his influential position in Mahabbatpur – a fictional village of Bangladesh which was the then East Pakistan. It has focused on the activities of the characters from an Islamic perspective. The paper believes that every Muslim should follow the instructions of Allah reviled in the Qur'an and the path shown in the Hadith by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Finally, the paper has found some ways the author has misrepresented Islam in his writing from a modernist perspective.

Keywords: *Hypocrisy, Islam, Misinterpretation, Periphery, Religious Tenet*

Introduction

Syed Waliullah is one of the most popular novelists in Bangla and *Tree Without Roots* was his own English translation/transcription of *Lal Shalu*. *Lal Shalu* [Red Cloths] was published in Bangla in 1948 (Zaman, 2017), only a year after Pakistan had come into being as a new state in 1947, claiming to be the homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Syed Waliullah has written two other novels, a number of short stories and plays, but his first novelistic appearance has remained the most acclaimed, and justly so. *Tree Without Roots* was published nineteen years later, in 1967; and, as even “those who have not read the original Bangla work will find out for themselves, this work is a great artistic achievement indeed” (Choudhury, 2017). The transcription comes twenty years after the original work. So, it is normally said that the social condition of Pakistan in 1948 and in 1967 was not the same. Because of political upheavals and economic suppression by the West Pakistani



rulers, the East Pakistani people's (now Bangladeshis) reaction and adaptability have changed a lot.

Majeed, the protagonist and sly imposter, who acts like a saviour of the helpless men and women around him, is himself a poor man and has been driven to fraudulence by the need for a livelihood; nevertheless, what he does is typical of what the ruling class has done and is still doing. Like Majeed, "the rulers are unproductive; they are parasitical; whatever they do—and being idlers and busybodies they do a lot—produces only misery for the people, and nothing else" (Choudhury, 2017). Majeed is hard-working; he is fearful to others but frightened within himself. He is nostalgic; he feels for his childhood home which he has left; he tries to strike roots in a land where he has never been before. "He has no sharer of his secrets, and is incapable of opening his heart to anyone" (Choudhury, 2017).

Majeed is a veritable colonialist and an active missionary, the two rolled into one. He plants fear into the hearts of the innocent peasants, makes them feel guilty for their neglect of the patron saint. "He becomes the ruler and seeks to transform the simple peasants, almost pagans in their life-style, into devout Muslims. In the process, he tries to drive out songs and laughter from their lives" (Choudhury, 2017). In an odd and somewhat ironical manner, this village represents Bangladesh in miniature, particularly in respect of poverty and fundamentalism, which in fact go hand in hand, one helping the other here as much as elsewhere. Waliullah's memorable observation, "There are more tupees than heads of cattle, more tupees than sheaves of rice," reminds us of "an abiding collaboration between poverty and religion" (Waliullah, 2017).

Unquestionably, *Tree Without Roots* depicts how some shrewd and hypocritical people make traps to engulf everything of the illiterate Muslims in the name of religion. But depicting the hypocrisy of Majeed, the protagonist, the author sometimes misrepresents some Islamic concepts and orders willingly or unwillingly in *Tree Without Roots*. Sometimes some self-contradictory issues make the situation more complex. The paper aims at focusing on how Islam and its followers are portrayed wrongly in *Tree Without Roots* because the novelist through the activities of Majeed wants to divert the mass Muslims from the Qur'anic guidelines to man-made path for the worldly benefits. It concentrates on the controversial protagonist Abdul Majeed who grasps the rural people especially the simple and innocent like women for his greater projection of power and hunger. As a part of his prosperity, Majeed deeply feels inside himself that women can be the most flexible and reliable field for smooth cultivation and experimental adventure. This paper has also traced the sources of the power of Majeed—the protagonist, that he uses to manipulate the villagers and to claim his influential position in Mahabbatpur – a fictional village of Bangladesh which was the then East Pakistan. It has focused on the activities of the characters from an Islamic perspective. The paper believes that every Muslim should follow the instructions of Allah revealed in the Qur'an and the path shown in the Hadith by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Method

The paper is qualitative method. The study has been conducted through a comprehensive analysis of the available resources and common beliefs of the local people about Islam. It has consulted both primary and secondary sources in developing the ideas. This study uses comparative studies by engaging with Islamic studies especially the Qur'an and the exegesis. The text, *Tree Without Roots* and the Holy Qur'an have been used as primary source of data.

Several other relevant e-books and web pages have been consulted as the secondary source and those have been analysed and presented through logical explanations.

Results and Discussion

Describing the ritual activities of the villagers, Syed Waliullah says, "Perhaps the reason there are so many white tupees in this part of the world is that the land cannot feed the men" (Waliullah, 2017). The statement clearly points out two dangerous contradictions. First, he claims that tupees, used as a symbol of religious performance, are responsible for their poverty, but Islam always lessons that everyone must depend on Allah's blessing for their livelihood. In the Qur'an, Allah says, "... so let them worship the Lord of this House, Who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear" (The Qur'an, "Quraish" 3-4, 2008). It makes it clearer and more positive, the connection of Allah's worthiness of being worshipped to favouring man by providing his basic necessities of life. Tackling starvation and furnishing the basic economic needs of man, in the shadow of peace and security, is explained by this verse. It is a sacred feature of man's relationship with Allah and a stimulus to worship and submit to His will. Moreover, Allah says, "And seek by means of what Allah has given you the future abode, and do not neglect your portion of this world, ..." (The Qur'an, "Al-Qasas" 77, 2008). Unfortunately, Syed Waliullah satirizes the religious symbol much saying, "There are more tupees than heads of cattle, more tupees than sheaves of rice" (Waliullah, 2017). Second, "the world is that the land cannot feed the men" is a Muslim concept because only Allah can provide food to all and land is mere a courier. He may have forgotten the announcement of Allah, "And I have created Jinns and human beings, only for this that they should worship Me" (The Qur'an, "Az-Zariyaat" 56, 2008).

Criticising Majeed, the author raises a question about the authority of Allah as he mentions, "One feels then that this must be the land of God! Look at some of the growing boys. Before even the trace of a beard appears, they have learned the whole of the Koran by heart and have become little hufza!" (Waliullah, 2017). But in the Qur'an, Allah orders, "Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds" (The Qur'an, "Fatiha" 1, 2008), and "...so that you might know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah encompasses all things in His knowledge" (The Qur'an, "At-Talaq" 12, 2008).

The Almighty says, "And We send down the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers." (The Qur'an, "Al-Israa" 82, 2008). Allah says, "Say, "It is, for those who believe, a guidance and cure" (The Qur'an, "Fussilat" 44, 2008). Shaykh Ibn Sa'adi deduced from this verse that the Qur'an contains a cure for all physical and spiritual diseases, and those of the heart, mind and soul" (Gusau, 2019).

About the Holy Qur'an Allah declares that:

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah. Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter. They are on (true guidance), from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper. As to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing. And on their eyes is a veil; great is the chastisement they (incur). (The Qur'an, "Al-Baqarah" 2-7, 2008)

Whereas the narrator opines that “But this bliss too is short-lived. They [the poor villagers] soon realize that the words of the ancient books [all the divine books] neither fill their stomachs nor create any permanent peace in their minds. Sitting on the cemented stairway that descends into the pond, they make their ablutions, remove their tupees and below cool air into them. But they feel no coolness” (Waliullah, 2017).

Depicting a Modern educated one who is “A clean-shaven man, he wore khaki shorts and shirt and carried a heavy rifle” (Waliullah, 2017), the author becomes surprised hearing Azan in deep jungles, and then “he was startled, not quite believing his ears” (Waliullah, 2017). Moreover, he satirizes the sound of Azan, comparing it with the roaring sound of a tiger. He opines that “in the distant hills a tiger roared. In this area wild elephants sometimes came down like an available, trampling and destroying everything in front of them. But five times a day the thin, sharp voice of the muezzin now rang out over the tall shal trees, calling all within hearing to bow down in prayer” (Waliullah, 2017).

Performing good deeds is the best way to make one's journey in the afterlife a simple one. It is narrated that the Prophet (pubh) said that “when a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (a continuous charity), a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him” (“What Will Happen After Death According to Islam”, n.d.)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) also says:

There are seven things that continue to benefit a servant while he is in his grave after his death: the one who taught knowledge, the one who dug out a canal [to allow water to reach the people], the one who dug a well, the one who planted a date palm tree, the one who built a masjid, the one who left the Mushaf as an inheritance [for it to be read by others] and the one who left behind a child who supplicates for him after his death (“Do the Dead Know What is Happening? ...”, 2021).

Rather, the Qur'an guides us to do something for those who are buried in graves, “O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (The Qur'an, “Al-Zumar” 53, 2008). The Prophet (pubh) taught his Companions to say (when visiting the graves), “Peace be upon you O people of this abode, O believers and Muslims. We will be joining you soon if Allah wills. We ask Allah for wellbeing for us and for you” (“Do the Dead Know What is Happening? ...”, 2021).

When Majeed enters in Mahabbatpur, he understands that the villagers have no knowledge about religion. So, he addresses a grave in such a way that people become silent and start believing him. He says:

yes, the saint has been living amongst you unknown and uncared for, a saint who is alive even in death, a saint who has regard for you and who protects you. And behold how you treat him. But he shows great mercy. For, if it were otherwise, would not your homes have turned to ashes for this unpardonable neglect? Would not your crops have been consumed in the fiercest drought, would not your children have died of pestilence? But his is a merciful spirit and his kindness knows no bounds. (Waliullah, 2017)

These statements are totally opposite of Islamic concept. The same statements have been found several times in the text; for example, somewhere the narrator says, “A *mazar*,

the abode of a saint who lived even after death" (Waliullah, 2017), "The *mazar* doesn't lie" (Waliullah, 2017).

About rumour Allah says, "Behold, you received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things which you had no knowledge of; and you thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah" (The Qur'an, "An-Nur" 15, 2008).

Therefore, one should verify any sort of information. As Allah says in the Qur'an, "Verily! Allâh commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He gives you! Truly, Allâh is Ever All Hearer, All Seer" (The Qur'an, "An-Nisaa" 58, 2008).

That everyone should think about what is being said, who is saying it and about whom is he saying it, before believing it. "O you who believe! If a Faasiq (evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done" (The Qur'an, "Al-Hujuraat" 6, 2008).

However, in *Tree Without Roots*, when Majeed introduces him saying that he has come the Garo Hills and,

They were generous and hospitable. They had plenty of food and much livestock. But they were not happy. For how can one be happy if one is shut off from the light of heaven? I remained among them to show them the path of God. I gave them happiness and they made me happy in return. Yes, I was quite happy there. But then,' he added, after letting his glance pass over the entire assembly, 'one night I dreamed a dream. (Waliullah, 2017).

No one feels the need to check the information. Rather, everyone becomes emotional and receives him cordially as a saint. Even the author has not hinted anywhere else that the villagers should have verified the authenticity of the information because Garo Hills are not far away from Mahabhatpur.

The villagers are introduced as Pagans "who worshipped multiple deities" ("Definition of PAGANISM", n.d.). So, "Paganism is not dogmatic. Pagans pursue their own vision of the Divine as a direct and personal experience" ("One Moment, Please...", n.d.). That is why, they may not have sufficient knowledge about Islam. So, they would not be interested in searching for Allah in their activities. The narrator says about them,

They understand the needs of their stomachs, all right, but nothing beyond that, they never even wonder where at all comes from- their food, their health and happiness. They cry out to God and pray to Him only when their land becomes parched with drought, or when their crops are washed away by the flood. At other times the name of the Almighty is hardly ever uttered. (Waliullah, 2017)

About music, Islam has given clear message to all in the Qur'an and the Hadith. Interestingly, when Majeed gives his sermon to the villagers about music, the author's tone is ridiculous and sarcastic, because "Those who laugh and sing in this world, forgetting God, may not laugh in the next. On the disbelievers is the wrath from Allah: theirs will be an awful doom. 'But God is merciful,' he added, his eyes filling with tears. 'Cry to Him, my brothers, and forget Him not.' (Waliullah, 2017).

In Islam, musical instruments and singing are haram with some exceptions. This prohibition is supported with evidence from the Qur'an and the Hadith. Al-Qasim (may Allah have mercy on him) says, "Singing is part of falsehood", and Al-Hasan (may Allah have mercy

on him) says, "if there is music involved in a dinner invitation (walimah), do not accept the invitation." ("Is Music Haram? - Islam Question & Answer", n.d.)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) says, "The view of the four Imams is that all kinds of musical instruments are haram." It is reported in Sahih al-Bukhari and elsewhere that the Prophet (pubh) said that "there would be among his ummah those who would allow zina, silk, alcohol and musical instruments, and he said that they would be transformed into monkeys and pigs" ("Is Music Haram? - Islam Question & Answer", n.d.)

Whereas, the Qur'an says, "And of mankind is he who purchases idle talks (i.e. music, singing) to mislead (men) from the path of Allaah..." (The Qur'an, "Luqman" 6, 2008). About the verse, Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allaah have mercy on him) says, "this aayah was revealed concerning singing and musical instruments", and Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) says, "The interpretation of the Sahaabah and Taabi'in, that 'idle talk' refers to singing, is sufficient" ("What Does Qur'an Say About Music", 2019).

Every activity of Mahabbatpur is centered round the *mazar* as the so-called "grave now surrounded by burning candles and incense sticks, gave every evidence of assuring him a sound future" (Waliullah, 2017), but regarding this Allah warns everyone in the Holy Qur'an saying "And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (others as partners) with Him" (The Qur'an, "Yusuf" 106, 2008).

About *purdah*, Islam has some specific guidelines that must be obeyed by everyone. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says, "O Consorts of the Prophet! Ye are not like any of the (other) women: if you do fear (Allah), be not too complacent of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech (that is) just" (The Qur'an, "Al-Ahzab" 32, 2008), and "stay quietly in your houses, and make not dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance; and establish regular Prayer, and give zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless" (The Qur'an, "Al-Ahzab" 33, 2008). Once when Rahima, first wife of Majeed, raises her voices and laughs loudly, Maheed suggests her, "In the courtyard, then, with a pleasant smile, he shook his head and said, 'You must not walk that way, Bibi'" (Waliullah, 2017).

Moreover, Majeed suggests Rahima to abide by the Islamic rules about *purdah*, the narrator goes into lustful description with the words, "Rahima stood in the yard with her wet *sari* clinging to her body, shaking out her long black hair. Majeed watched her with glittering eyes. He cleared his throat with a little cough and said, 'No, Bibi, you must not let yourself be seen like that out in the open, standing there, like a shameless creature'" (Waliullah, 2017), and then to Jamila, "Majeed waited a moment and then declared loudly, 'It is not proper for a Muslim woman to be heard laughing. No one is to laugh that way in my house again'" (Waliullah, 2017).

When Majeed talks with Kulsum, the author presents it as lustful work, but it is clearly prohibited in Islam to meet any woman whom one can marry. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says, "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do" (The Qur'an "An-Nuur" 30, 2008), and,

say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands' father, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male attendants free of sexual desires. Or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards. Allah in response that ye may be successful. (The Qur'an "An-Nuur" 31, 2008)

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah tells us to pray only to him. In "Surah Fatiha", we declare "Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek" (The Qur'an, "Fatiha" 5, 2008). But Majeed makes his followers "... to kiss his feet, if they could only get close enough to him. 'Kiss his big, fat, gouty feet,' Majeed muttered to himself in disgust" (Waliullah, 2017), and "'Neither must you insult the great and holy spirit who is ever amongst us. He is kind, but he is also powerful. Need I explain more?'" (Waliullah, 2017)

Pir "is a Persian word that literally means old person. It is a title that is given to a Sufi master and is sometimes referred to as Shaykh which is the Arabic word for old person" ("What is a Pir or a Shaykh?", n.d.).

About the concept of pir, there are lots of debates among scholars. The concept of pir is the updated version of Sufism. Some sufi believers misinterpret the verse of the Qur'an. As the Qur'an says, "O you who believe, obey Allah, the Messenger, and those in command among you. If you disagree about something, refer it back to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best thing to do and gives the best result" (The Qur'an, "An-Nisa" 59, 2008). They misinterpret "those in command among you" claiming that 'among you' means "pir".

However, in two other verses, Allah says, "[The believers are] those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong, making good things lawful for them and bad things forbidden for them, relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains that were around them. Those who believe in him, honor and help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him are successful" (The Qur'an, "Al-A`raf" 157, 2008). And "You should accept whatever the Messenger gives you and abandon whatever he tells you to abandon. Have taqwa of Allah..." (The Qur'an "Al-Hashr" 7, 2008). Therefore, according to the Qur'an, "there is no scope to follow anyone except Allah Himself and His Messenger (pubh)."

In *Tree Without Roots*, suddenly an old pir appears in Nawbpur, four miles away from Mahabbatpur. Undoubtedly, the novelist does not like that pir as well, but sometimes, he prioritizes him more than Majeed. The narrator shows his sympathy for the old pir. It is completely a violation of Islam.

Allah is always merciful. If he becomes cruel or angry, no one can survive on earth. But the author through the mouth of Majeed says, "I was thinking of something that made me feel sad. I was thinking that Allah is sometimes cruel. How much can one bear? What is the limit of man's endurance?" (Waliullah, 2017). Instead of being cruel, Allah some sometimes becomes dissatisfied. When and where he becomes dissatisfied is mentioned the Qur'an. Allah says, "Allah does not love the ungrateful sinners" (The Qur'an, "Al-Baqarah" 227,

2008) 'Allah does not love the transgressors' (The Qur'an, "Al-Baqarah" 190, 2008); and "verily Allah does not love the disbelievers" (The Qur'an, "Al-i-Imran" 32, 2008). Instead Allah's love is for: "verily Allah loves those who act aright. Allah Loves those who turn unto him in repentance (The Qur'an, "Al-Baqarah" 222, 2008); "Allah Loves those who keep themselves pure and clean" (The Qur'an, "Al-Baqarah" 222, 2008); "Allah Loves those who keep themselves conscious of Him" (The Qur'an, "Al-i-Imran" 146, 2008); "Allah Loves the doer of good" (The Qur'an, "Al-i-Imran" 134, 2008), "Allah Loves those who are patient" (The Qur'an, "Al-i-Imran" 146, 2008), and "Allah Loves those who rely on Allah" (The Qur'an, "Al-i-Imran" 159, 2008).

Majeed was powerless as he was a have-not at his birth place. To change his fate, he leaves for uncertainty and comes to Mahabbatpur, and then becomes the most powerful within a short time. His power is nothing but illiteracy of the villagers about religion and the Modern world, his little knowledge about the Qur'an, his majestic speaking power and Khaleque Bepary, land owner of the village. He fears Khaleque because if he betrays, Majeed cannot do anything. After the incidence of Ameena, first wife of Majeed, their relationship becomes cool and at the end, Khaleque challenges Majeed, because "Khaleque did not respond, and Majeed suddenly felt disturbed. For the first time in many years, he felt as though he were walking on the thin thread which every man is said to cross on the Day of Judgment to [prove his good faith before God" (Waliullah, 2017).

The power and concentration of the villagers are shifting Majeed to Khaleque as:

Nothing this, Majeed raised his hand and said, 'I know you want his advice. But, as you can see, he is dismayed as you are. Listen then to my words and go home. All of you now. Go! I will talk to him.' Then, remembering his major role, he hurriedly added, 'I will also pray for you, for all of you.'

Again a groan rose from the crowd but their eyes did not shift from Khaleque. After an appropriate silence to indicate that Majeed's words had been heard and appreciated, an old man addressed the landowner, 'what shall we do? We have come to you because we do not know where to go. (Waliullah, 2017)

Later Khaleque challenges Majeed as:

Khaleque's rage had not subsided yet. 'Kind to them?' he cried. 'Why?' What have they ever done for me except cheat me whenever they can?

'Go now,' shouted Majeed, greatly alarmed by his friend's behaviour. 'Go and pray. It is to God that you must look in times of distress, not to a man. Do you understand?' (Waliullah, 2017)

Majeed is a pretender and a liar. As a pretender, he faints when he does zikr with his followers at *mazar*. When he enters into Mahabbatpur, "[Kader and Taher] saw a stranger with a thin beard, standing in the middle of the road. His hands were raised, face turned up towards the sky, eyes closed. He was praying. Time passed but still he stood thus, oblivious of his surroundings and utterly motionless, as if the windless day had turned him into a statue" (Waliullah, 2017). About a deceiver the Qur'an says, "And do not argue on behalf of those who deceive themselves. Indeed, Allah loves not one who is a habitually sinful deceiver" (The Qur'an, "An-Nisaa" 107, 2008).

He tells lies frequently. There are a number of examples in the text. One evidence comes when he does zikr one day and notices that people may have lost their rhythm in zikr as they are following a woman who stands beside the bamboo fence. To handle the

situation, he lies and says, "That's the mad servant girl The one from my new wife's home.' He turned towards the tree, clapped his hands loudly and called out, 'Run away, crazy one, run away" (Waliullah, 2017). Regarding a liar the Qur'an declares, "And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah? Such will be brought before their Lord, and the witnesses will say, these are the ones who lied against their Lord! No doubt! The curse of Allah is on the zaalimoon (polytheists, wrong-doers, oppressors, etc.)" (The Qur'an, "Hud" 18, 2008). When Majeed lies, the author rebukes, but when the other does the same, the author is indifferent, and sometimes he appreciates. For example, while Dhala Mian tells one after another lies, the author has no reaction.

The novel starts with some significant observations about the villagers' struggle for survival. Depicting the condition of the villagers, the novelist says:

They know it, but there are too many of them, too many mouths to feed and not enough land ...There is neither peace nor contentment, but rather this stabbing restlessness. And they all dream of leaving their homes, clearing out before it is too late, going to places where they can at least have one meal a day ...They row, they fight, and they get themselves enchained in debt because of legal expenses incurred while squabbling over an inch of land they do not even own. (Waliullah, 2017)

But while Majeed establishes his territory with his dominance and control in Mahabbatpur centered by a *mazar*, (the term is coined from Arabic language and means "a place for visit" and usually refers to the tombs of Islamic saints or famous people), an old broken grave of a so-called unknown saint name Mudasser, the lifestyle of villagers improves rapidly.

Establishing the *mazar*, Majeed makes the villagers pray there and they start sharing their weal and woe to the *mazar*. But Islam says, "There is no power and no strength except from Allah, the most high, the most great, the most powerful. We bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah Alone, and we bear witness that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is His slave-servant and the seal of His Messengers" ("Why do some of the muslims go to *mazar*? Ummah Helpline", n.d.).

Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an, "O Prophet, say to them: Have you ever seen them with open eyes those whom you invoke instead of Allah? Show me what they have created in the earth? Or have they any share in the creation and control of the heavens? Bring me a Book revealed before this, or produce some remnant of knowledge in support of your beliefs if you are truthful" (The Qur'an, "Al-Ahkaf" 4-6, 2008). And,

who could be further astray than the one who invokes, instead of Allah, those who cannot answer him till the Day of Resurrection. Nay, they are even Unaware That They Are Being Invoked. And when all mankind shall be gathered together (on the Day of Qiyamah), they (the so called leaders and intercessors) will become enemies of those who invoked them and they will Disown Their Worship!!! (The Qur'an, "Al-Ahkaf" 4-6, 2008).

It is due to absolute ignorance and misguidance spread by some so-called scholars about the deen of Islam that lead some people to the graves of saints such as Ajmir. Islam has strictly forbidden the believers from worshiping, supplicating, prostrating anyone or anything other than Allah.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that Syed Waliullah has misrepresented Islam and Islamic orders that no one can avoid or violate, though his prime attempt is to criticise those who use religion as a shield for their personal benefits. Even Majeed and Khaleque have made an alliance to some extent only for their dominance over the peripheral. Undoubtedly, *Tree Without Roots* have been interpreted from different perspectives but this is the very first attempt to interpret it from an Islamic point of view that shows the misrepresentations of Islamic tenet in the novel.

The paper finally reaches at the decision that pseudo-religious activities are done by pseudo-saints or Pirs consciously and purposefully for gaining worldly pleasure, respect, value, wealth, controlling power and business opportunities. But the position of religion is higher than money, power, wealth and worldly pleasure. Religion is sacred from all kind guilt and blasphemy. It is considered as the touch stone of every religion and every faith. Pseudo-saints or Pirs have been using religion for their own purposes. They are using religious ideologies for their betterment. They are leading people to follow wrong path. For these pseudo-saints or Pirs like Majeed and their pseudo-religious activities, the real value of religion is decreasing. People are diverting from religious beliefs to pseudo-religious beliefs. People are devoted to performing pseudo-religion instead of religion and religion is covered under pseudo-religion. To protect the real value of religion, religious beliefs and ideologies, pseudo-persons' activities should be stopped. In addition, as in the 21th Century people can distinguish the good and evil with their religious knowledge, they themselves should prevent the hypocrisy of the so-called pirs or religious representatives. At the same time, preventing or removing the darkness about religion from a society, everyone had better have a vast knowledge about religious tenet.

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