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Editorial

This June 2025 issue of the IIUM   Journal of   Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) comprises various topics, particularly related to Islamic history and civilisation, as well as Islamic philosophy and political history.

The first article by Meryem Teke and Okan Doğan, **"Prostration (προσκυνέω) as a Definitive Sign of the Final Messenger in Jesus' Conversation with the Samaritan Woman (John 4:19-26)"** seeks to particularly demonstrate that Biblical word προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*) mentioned in the Johannine passage should be taken to mean "prostrate" instead of "worship". While many leading Bible scholars accepted the latter translation, the authors argued that it was inaccurate. Instead, the word "prostrate" is more precise, and this leads to the conclusion that Jesus' act of worship resembles that of ṣalāh (prayer) performed by Prophet Muḥammad, with the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman narrated in the Bible can also be found in the Qur'an (Surah al-Fath), thus provides the historical context needed.

Next, Ehsanul Mahbub's article, **"Religion, Nationalism, and Political Evolution: A Historical Analysis of Identity and Security in Bangladesh,"** explains the issue of nationalism and political identity in Bangladesh from 1971 onwards. The focus is on the tension between two seemingly similar yet different sentiments, namely, Bengali nationalism versus Bangladeshi nationalism, tracing back their origin and evolution from the colonial era to the contemporary period. While the former is described as secular, emphasising the linguistic and historical roots, the latter includes broader cultural identities with Islam or religion as the main element. The author asserted, it was due to this conflict that the country suffers from various crises in the realm of national identity, national unity, political stability, and national security.

The next article by Spahic Omer titled **"Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī: The Founder of Muslim Modern Reformist Thought,"** tackles the pan-Islamic reformist thought propounded by the renowned nineteenth-century Muslim thinker. Trying to assess the exhausted topic from a different perspective, the author scrutinises, among others, issues like al-Afghānī's response to Western challenges in terms of their biased views of Islam. The conclusion drawn from the discussion is that al-Afghānī's contributions to Islamic religious scholarship were immense, thus making him one of the pioneers of the modernist movements in the Muslim world.

Also refuting Western misrepresentations, **"Decolonising the History of Islam in the "Lands below the Wind": The Orientalist vis-à-vis Revisionist Theories"** by Syamsuddin Arif critically scrutinises Western or Orientalist narratives about the coming, spread, and influence of Islam in the Malay World. The author's effort to decolonise historical writing on the said topic is commendable since, as he has rightly argued, the long-established views of the West embedded in the existing literature have caused problems for the local population in understanding their history.

The next article, titled **"Mind, Morality, and Medicine: A Historical Inquiry into Mental Asylums in the Muslim World"** by Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah highlights the contributions of Islamic civilisation in mental health care. Having assessed Islamic philosophy and medical ethics pioneered by renowned scholars like al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī, and analysing the role of *bīmāristān* in major Islamic cities, the author maintained that the Muslims have pre-dated the Western world in the development of mental health care, exemplified in

their holistic approach during the early Islamic period and pre-colonial era. The work of Bzhar Othman Ahmed, Star Shekh Hassan, and Rebaz Dlawar Omar, **"The Economic Life of Scholars in Rawandz 1813 – 1916"** also sheds light on the Muslim legacy. It discusses the economic life of scholars in the city of Rawandz, Kurdistan, from 1813 to 1916, demonstrating how intellectual scholarship is revered by authorities or rulers in Islamic civilisation.

Next, **"Demystifying the Religionisation of Commercial Begging in Northern Nigeria: The Revival of Philanthropy among Muslims"** by Aliyu Alhaji Rabiu, Ibrahim Dahiru Idriss, and Sani Rabiu seeks to disassociate *ṣadaqah* from commercial street begging, which is a prevalent practice among the youth in Northern Nigeria. To eliminate the unsolicited practice, the authors promote philanthropy among Muslims through *waqf* and *zakāh*, and emphasise the need to empower the youth through education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training.

The book review by Makmor Tumin discusses the work of Ongaro, E. & Tantardini, M., *Religion and public administration: An introduction* (published in 2023 by Edward Elgar Publishing). The book explains how religion permeates public administration across different world traditions in Asia and Europe, either in terms of institutional structures or morality, despite its dismissal by various quarters. In his review, Makmor Tumin noted that while the work misses some relevant points, for instance, discussion on religion and plural society, and religion vis-à-vis gender roles, it deserves a wide readership as it promotes better governance in the current society.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all contributors and reviewers who were involved in this June issue. It is hoped that the valuable ideas and engaging works of the contributors or authors will enrich the existing knowledge and benefit readers and students of history and civilisation worldwide.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all members of the Editorial Board, our Editor Dr. Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri, and Associate Editors, namely Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alwi Alatas, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rabi'ah Aminudin, and Dr. Mohamad Firdaus Mansor Majdin, without whose efforts and dedication, the publication of this issue would not have become a reality. Thank you.

Fauziah Fathil
Editor-in-Chief
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Prostration (προσκυνέω) as a Definitive Sign of the Final Messenger in Jesus' Conversation with the Samaritan Woman (John 4:19-26)

Meryem Teke[1] and Okan Doğan[2]

Abstract: This paper endeavors to show that Jesus' words in John 4:19-26 are best understood and fulfilled by the *ṣalāh* (prayer) bestowed on Prophet Muḥammad and his followers. In the passage, Jesus explains to a Samaritan woman that the ritual act of prostration, e.g., Greek προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*), in the future will not be limited to certain sacred sites like Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim. Although the meaning of *proskyneō* in Greek is "to prostrate," all Bibles that the authors consulted have translated the word into English as "worship." When the word *proskyneō* is translated as "prostrate," it becomes clear that it refers to the communal prayer of prostration, similar to the *ṣalāh* (prayer) practiced by Muslims. Qur'an 48:29 mentions that the similitude of the Muslim prayer of *ṣalāh* is mentioned in the Torah. The verse reads: "You see them bowing and prostrating [in *ṣalāh*], seeking bounty from God and [His] pleasure. Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration. That is their description in the Torah." The focus of this paper is interpreting Jesus' words (John 4:19-24) in light of Qur'an 48:29. We feel that the paper decisively demonstrates that the *ṣalāh*'s communal prostration is an unmistakable fulfillment of biblical expectations as expressed in the prophetic words of Jesus.

Keywords: Jesus's conversation, John 4, *proskyneō*, prostration, Samaritan woman

Introduction: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

In the 4th chapter of the Gospel of John, we are told Jesus travels into Samaria, which was considered a foreign territory. We are told that Jews have traditionally seen the Samaritans as heretics. The Samaritans appear to have accepted the Torah as revelatory, but nothing else. No other book of the Bible was seen as revelatory. Rejecting the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem as the site of rituals, they set up a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. Whereas the Jews have several expected personages, such as the prophets Moses and Elijah, and royal and priestly Messiahs, the Samaritans only waited for the prophet like Moses mentioned in the Torah. This person was called Taheb. "They spoke not of a Davidic messiah, nor actually much of an 'anointed' (messianic) agent per se, but of the 'Taheb,' the 'restorer,' a prophet like Moses" (Keener, 2003, p. 619). He would be from the descendants of Joseph[3] and restore the teachings of Moses.

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[2] Okan Doğan is a senior Highschool student at Maarif School. He is a student of Meryem Teke in her Theology class.
[3] The Samaritan belief of the Taheb, the Prophet like Moses, being from the lineage of Joseph should be taken as a typological prophecy, that is, some essential characteristics of Joseph and his life are expected to be mirrored in the future as a type. Based on this, we say that Prophet Muhammad typologically represents Joseph. There is an Islamic precedent for this in the life of Muhammad. In his peaceful conquest of Mecca Muhammad compared himself to Joseph, and the pagan Arabs of Mecca to Joseph's brothers. Just as Joseph's brothers rejected and persecuted him but finally accepted that he was chosen by God as his prophet, Muhammad's "brothers," the Meccans, rejected and persecuted him but finally accepted him as God's prophet. And just as Joseph forgave them, Muhammad forgave his Meccan brothers. However, as a typology, we feel there is still more to the Taheb prophecy. For example, typologically, Joseph's brothers, representing all the religions that have preceded Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., will eventually put aside their resentment and

According to this position, the Samaritans neither believed in nor expected a future messianic figure. Although there were various messiahs in the Jewish conception, such as royal and priestly messiahs, it is generally claimed that Samaritans did not hold to the belief of any type of messiah, for they rejected the Davidic line and priesthood of the temple. These claims are surprising because the Samaritan woman says she is waiting for the Messiah: The woman said, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us" (John 4:25). This shows that the term "messiah" appears to have had different interpretations. For example, although she uses the term "messiah," she obviously does not intend a person from the lineage of David.

The meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman occurs at Jacob's well. The discussion revolves around living water alluding to faith, which permanently quenches one's thirst. We will not focus on this part of the conversation. Our focus will be after she perceives Jesus to be a prophet (v. 19). Toward the end of their conversation, convinced he is a prophet, the Samaritan woman asks Jesus which mountain—Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim—is the correct place to prostrate, e.g., προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*), which almost all Bible translations render "worship." To get a feel for the passage, it is instructive to briefly read it. Note the underlined words "worship" are translations of the word προσκυνέω.

> John 4:19-26.
>
> 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers <u>worshiped</u> on this mountain, and yet you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must <u>worship</u>." 21 Jesus said to her, "Believe Me, woman, that a time is coming when you will <u>worship</u> the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans <u>worship</u> what you do not know; we <u>worship</u> what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. 23 But a time is coming, and even now has arrived, when the true <u>worshipers</u> will <u>worship</u> the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His <u>worshipers</u>. 24 God is spirit, and those who <u>worship</u> Him must <u>worship</u> in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." 26 Jesus aid to her, "I am He, the One speaking to you." (NASB)

The passage read with the word "worship" does not even hint at the discussion being about "prostration." Thus, now one can argue that Jesus was discussing the spiritualisation of "worship," as we will shortly see. However, it will be evident that when the word is translated as "prostrate," the passage points to something substantially different. But first our methodology.

Methodology

This paper employs exegetical analysis using Greek and Hebrew lexicons. We will briefly look at the present leading Christian commentaries of the Johannine passage. Our analysis will show the inadequacy of understanding the passage when προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*) is translated as

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jealously and acknowledge that Islam, representing the youngest religion, is the final culmination of God's revelation. Recognising Islam as chosen by God, they will in the end embrace Islam as Joseph's brothers eventually embraced Joseph. When will this happen? When the brothers of Muhammad appear, as in the life of Joseph. Joseph's brothers acknowledge Joseph's superiority and ask forgiveness from him after Benjamin comes of age. Similarly, the other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity, convinced of Islam's veracity, will accept Islam and ask for forgiveness from the Muslims when the brothers of Muhammad appear. In a famous hadith, Prophet Muhammad says, "... I love to see my brothers." They (the hearers) said, "Aren't we your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "You are my companions, and our brothers are those who have, so far, not come into the world..." (Muslim 249a). So, in our interpretation, the brothers of Muhammad typologically represent Benjamin, the brother of Joseph. In Islam this may be considered a type of Tafsir al-Ishari.

"worship." Rather than "worship," the word "prostrate" (the literal meaning of προσκυνέω), will be used to explore how the meaning of the passage is affected. By translating προσκυνέω as "prostrate," we will see, that the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is best explained by a Qur'anic verse in Surah al-Fath and a saying of prophet Muhammad. Using content analysis, we will also provide inferential translations to some of the Greek words such as "spirit" and "truth" uttered by Jesus. Before concluding the paper, we will argue that the biblical expectation of "a house made without hands" is best explained with the ṭawāf of the Ka'bah.

Popular Christian Bible Commentators

In this section, we will cover the views on John 4:19-26 of a number of Christian Bible scholars. Besides teaching the Bible at prestigious Christian seminaries, they are the authors of popular commentaries on the Gospel of John.

Craig Keener

Regarded as a reliable resource in understanding John's content, Keener, in his commentary on the conversation between the Samaritan woman and Jesus, continually refers to the idea of "worship." He takes the word *proskyneō* in this passage, which is repeated more than seven times by Jesus, as "worship." Notwithstanding, citing numerous references from the Book of Revelation and admittingly stating "worship often included prostration (Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4; cf. 3:9; 19:10; 228)" (Keener, 2003, p. 616), he keeps using the generic term "worship." Although Keener literally writes, "John's 'worship in the Spirit' is a foretaste of the eschatological worship around God's throne depicted in Revelation" (Keener, 2003, p. 617), he never entertains the idea that "worship in the Spirit" entails "prostration to God." It is clear that the eschatological significance of "worship" around the throne of God in Revelation entails the physical act of "falling down and prostrating" to God. However, according to Keener, Jesus focused on revealing the worship in the Spirit, not in the flesh. "Ultimately, fleshly (i.e., merely human) worship... is to be rejected..." (Keener, 2003, p. 618). But one asks, "Couldn't Jesus be emphasising the performance in the Spirit of a physical ritual at a sacred site?" Keener does allude to this idea: "This is not to deny that some could emphasise both the Spirit and sacred geography..." (Keener, 2003, p. 617). But feels the thrust in Jesus' words is about worshipping in the Spirit: "Merely fleshly worship ... is inadequate" (Keener, 2003, p. 619).

Edward W. Klink III

Like Keener, Klink, in his *Exegetical commentary on the New Testament: John*, conveys the discussion between the Samaritan woman and Jesus to revolve around proper worship. It's quite surprising, but not once does he refer to the ritual of "prostration." Reading his commentary on 4:22 you anticipate he will delve into the Greek term "*proskyneō*" for he writes that Jesus reveals the nature and origin of true worship. "Focusing more directly on the topic of worship, Jesus gives definition to the nature and origin of true worship" (Kink, 2016, p. 243). But regrettably, he cannot escape looking at the conversation from a post-crucifixion perspective. He writes, "By restating the connection of worship to the "hour" (ὥρα), Jesus is making the cross the central component of worship" (Klink, 2016, p. 244). We even find the Trinitarian doctrine of the fourth century intrudes into the text. Referring to the implications of "worshipping the Father" spoken by Jesus in v. 23, he writes, "And the more the Father is made central, the more Jesus becomes central. Such are the unifying distinctions of the

Trinitarian God" (Klink, 2016, p. 244). This is clearly not the correct *sitz im leben* of the conversation. So, Klink's commentary does not touch upon the idea of prostration as an act of worship.

Donald A. Carson

The whole premise of Carson's commentary, i.e., *The Gospel according to John*, is about the nature of "worship." He does allude to a particular worship at Jerusalem: sacrifices. Referring to Solomon's Temple, he writes, "There sacrifice was divinely sanctioned…" (Carson, 1991, p. 222). He writes that sacrifices were also practiced by Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim. They believed that Abraham built an altar—a structure to sacrifice animals—on Shechem overlooking Mt. Gerizim. He notes that in time a temple was built there on which certain sacrifices and "other rites" were performed even after John Hyrcanus destroyed the temple: "[T]he Samaritans continued to perform their sacrifices and *other rites* (emphasis added) on this mountain" (Carson, 1991, p. 222). However, he does not identify what those "*other rites*" were. He never once considers to probe the Greek term *proskyneō* which is repeated seven times by Jesus (John 4:21-4). He discusses the historical background of the Samaritans and their commonalities and differences with the Jews. "Both Jews and Samaritans recognized that God had commanded their forefathers to 'seek the place the Lord your God [would] choose from among all [their] tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling' (Dt. 12:5)" (Carson, 1991, p. 222). But like other commentaries, he feels Jesus' focus was on freeing worship from sacred places. "But under the eschatological conditions of the dawning hour, the true worshippers cannot be identified by their attachment to a particular shrine, but by their worship of the Father in the spirit and truth" (Carson, 1991, p. 225). Although Carson mentions other rites practiced at Jerusalem, he never clarifies what these rites were. The driving force of his arguments is on spiritualising the "worship" performed at these two locations.

Herman N. Ridderbos

In his *The Gospel according to John: A theological commentary*, Ridderbos uses the word "worship" when commenting on the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Not once does he investigate the Greek term *proskyneō*. He starts by explaining the background of the Samaritans and their schism with the Jews. He notes that, even though it was adulterated with idolatry, they did worship Yahweh, as did the Jews at the temple of Jerusalem. "From of old the Samaritans had worshipped Yahweh alongside their idols (2 Kg. 17:26f, 32, 41)" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 161). Again, comparing the two rituals performed at the two temples, he says, "This is not to say that Jesus made no distinctions between the two existing places of worship. He describes the worship of Samaritans as based on ignorance of what they are doing" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 162). However, what forms did the worship take at both temples? He never broaches that question. He only mentions "sacrifices." "In distinction from the Jews who, according to Dt. 27:4 (Masoretic text), brought their sacrifices to Mount Ebal, the Samaritans, in their Pentateuch, gave this significance to Mount Gerizim, which was situated adjacent to Jacob's well…" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 161). The author is not interested in the patterns of worship at the temples. It's irrelevant because, in his words, "…in Christ the way to the Father is being opened in a totally new manner (14:6), the limits of the old pattern of worship are being broken through and the true worshipers are being brought together in a single fellowship" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 164).

Summary

We see two essential problems with the authors' approach to the Johannine passage. First, everywhere the word *proskyneō* is mentioned, it is translated as "worship," rather than "prostrate," i.e., a specific form of worship. This prevents the reader from thinking of a particular form of worship, avoiding any imagery of prostration. Second, the authors look at the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman through the lens of Trinitarian doctrine. This is a problem because the doctrine of the Trinity did not exist in the time of Jesus and developed after three centuries. This approach hinders understanding the meaning behind Jesus' words. Now, let's take a look at the Qur'an and a relevant saying of Muhammad.

The Similitude of Muslims in the Torah

One of the prophetic descriptions of the followers of Muhammad in the Torah appears to be the prostration of the Muslim community. Qur'an 48:29 informs its audience that the followers of Muhammad have been mentioned in the Torah. It provides a depiction of them, which appears to be communal prostration.

> **Qur'an 48:29** Thou canst see them bowing down [*rukka'an*], prostrating [*sujjadan*] themselves [in prayer], seeking favour with God and [His] goodly acceptance: their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration [*sīmāhum fī wujūhihim min athar al-sujūd*]. This is their parable in the Torah… (Muhammad Asad)

The Qur'an informs the reader that the frequent communal prostration to God of Muhammad and his followers is a fulfillment of a prophetic example revealed in the Torah. The reference that this is openly visible to the People of the Book suggests that this prayer was not confined to particular locations in houses of worship but rather performed outside wherever Muslims may be. This is confirmed by Prophet Muhammad. In a hadith mentioned in Bukhari, Prophet Muhammad explicitly singles out that the whole earth has been made a masjid (lit. a place of prostration) for him.

> **Bukhari 438** Narrated Jābir bin 'Abd Allah: Allah's Messenger said, "I have been given five things which were not given to any amongst the prophets before me…. The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) **a place for prostration [*masjidan*]** and a thing to perform *tayammum*. Therefore, my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due. …

In this hadith, Muhammad explicitly mentions that the earth has been made "a place of prostration" for him, and thus, for his followers. This may imply that the whole earth was not a place of prostration prior to the prophethood of Muhammad, and that prostration may have been restricted to certain localities, like temples and monasteries. However, with the coming of Muhammad, this requirement of prostration has been delocalised, e.g., it can and must be performed anywhere on earth at certain specific times.

Prostration in Ancient Israel

The Qur'an and Hadith indicate that prostration in the past was confined to certain locations prior to Muhammad's arrival. Do we have affirmation of this? The Bible says, "Exalt the LORD our God and worship (שָׁחָה) at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy" (Psalm 99:9).

The word for worship, שָׁחָה, in this verse is in Hithpael form and in the imperative mood, that is, God is commanding the Israelites to "prostrate" in Jerusalem. They are required to

perform this act, but in Jerusalem. However, strangely enough almost all Bible translators have rendered the word "worship." The exceptions are "bow yourself" (LSV, YLT) and "bow down" (NAB). But Harris et al. inform us that שָׁחָה in the form *hishtaḥăwâ* (which it is in Psalm 99:9) means "to prostrate": "The commonly occurring form *hishtaḥăwâ* "to prostrate oneself'" (Harris, 1997, p. 915). Rabbi Lockshin writes, "God-fearing Israelites prostrate themselves before the deity over a hundred times in the Bible" (Lockshin, 2024). He provides two verses to support his position.

> Then He said to Moses, "Come up to YHWH, with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, and *prostrate* yourself from afar." (Ex. 24:1)

> "Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, O YHWH, have given me." You shall leave it before YHWH your God, and *prostrate* yourself before YHWH your God. (De. 26:10)

In both verses, the word for "prostrate" (*hishtaḥăwâ*) is in the imperative. Bowen informs us that "Septuagint (LXX), a translation of the Hebrew Bible made by and for Greek-speaking Jews (and used by the New Testament writers), renders hištaḥăwâ with proskyneō almost uniformly. All these translators identified Israelite hištaḥăwâ with Greek proskynesis..." (Bowen, 2013, p. 65). Thus, the Gospel writers were also aware of the requirement of this specific act of worship, *prostration*, through the Greek Septuagint. This was a specific act of worship that God demanded of the Israelites. Lockshin quotes Uri Ehrlich, professor at Ben-Gurion University, "During the biblical period, prostration constituted the preeminent, most ritualized physical gesture in the sacrificial and prayer services.... During the Second Temple period as well, we find widespread evidence for the continued practice of prostration in prayer and in the Temple" (Lockshin, 2024). Blidstein, in his article "Prostration and Mosaics in Talmudic Law," analyses the Rabbinic tradition and observes that prostration was restricted to the Temple in Jerusalem.

> Our *baraita*[4] is, perhaps, a component of the rabbinic policy that distinguishes synagogue from Temple. Prostration, as a response to the presence of God, was restricted to the now ruined Temple. Indeed, it is not improbable that while the Temple stood Jews prostrated themselves in its courts only; and there alone was God so fully present that prostration was a normal response.... (Blidstein, 1974, p. 23)

So, it appears that the discussion between the Samaritan woman and Jesus revolved around this particular form of worship in Jerusalem and Mt. Gerizim: *prostration*.

Fulfillment of the Expectation of Prostration in the Coming of Muhammad

It is abundantly clear that the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman points to the universalisation of the prayer of prostration, which has come to pass with the coming of Muhammad. However, Andrew Smith, writing about the ritual worship of prostration in the New Testament, feels that although the Samaritan woman's question was about prostration, Jesus's focus was on distancing it from "physical location and physical posture."

> The discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4 is of distinct interest since it presents an instance of prostration as more devoted (or being more prescriptively defined in Jesus's prophecy of a coming time) to an internal motivation, unencumbered by physical location or (perhaps) by physical posture (John 4:23–24). (Smith, 2019, p. 577)

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[4] A *baraita* is an interpretation of Jewish tradition that is not included in the Mishnah.

Smith claims that what Jesus was stressing was the spiritualisation of prostration, which for him entailed doing away with the physical location and physical posture of prostration. He is not alone. Greeven asserts the same. He writes, "The conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in Jn 4:20-24 leaves an initial impression that προσκυνεῖν is used here in a wholly figurative sense, since Jesus speaks of προσκυνεῖν in spirit and in truth. But if prostrating oneself no longer plays any definite role, the reference in the statement and answer is to the place of worship" (Kittel & Friedrich, 1968, p. 764).

It is argued that the phrase "worship (prostrate) in the Spirit" (Jn. 4:24) uttered by Jesus entails this. But does it? Keener says that in the Book of Revelation the phrase points to the worship of the angels and elders around the throne of God. "John's 'worship in the Spirit is a foretaste of the eschatological worship around God's throne depicted in Revelation" (Keener, 2003, p. 617). What was the form of the worship around God's throne in Revelation? It is none other than prostration. Unfortunately, as in John 4:19-24, almost all English translations translate the Greek προσκυνέω in the passages of Revelation as "worship." Many passages in the Book of Revelation present prostration as the particular form of worship around God's throne: Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4. Looking at some of these passages is instructive. The word "prostrated" will be used in place of "worshiped."

> ...the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and *prostrated to* (worshipped) him who lives for ever and ever. (Rev. 4:10)

> All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and *prostrated to* (worshipped) God...

> And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and prostrated to (worshipped) God...

If Keener is correct, in that the "worship in the Spirit" mentioned by Jesus "is a foretaste of the eschatological worship around God's throne depicted in Revelation" (Keener, 2003, p. 617), then in place of removing the physical posture of prostration, we should expect it to become universalised. Rather than *spiritualising prostration* (whatever that means?), eschatological expectation would have been that this prayer would not be confined to elders and angels around the throne but would extend to include all of humanity. This idea is not so strange to rabbinic thinking. Keener notes a Jewish tradition that anticipates an expansion of the temple of Jerusalem. "According to some later traditions, in the world to come, Jerusalem would be the size of Eretz Israel, and Israel the size of the current world" (Keener, 2003, p. 614). We argue that this expectation has been realised in the coming of Muhammad, where the Ka'bah has become the Qibla—the direction to turn during the prayer of prostration—from everywhere on earth and beyond. Figuratively, this would signify the expansion of the walls of the Ka'bah to include the whole earth. When the Greek word προσκυνέω in John 4 is translated as "prostrate" rather than "worship," this will become clear.

> 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers *prostrated* on this mountain, and *yet* you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must *prostrate*." 21 Jesus said to her, "Believe Me, woman, that a time is coming when you will *prostrate* to the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You *Samaritans prostrate* to what you do not know; we *prostrate* to what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. 23 But a time is coming, and even now has arrived, when the true *prostrators* will *prostrate* to the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks *to be* His *prostrators*. 24 God is spirit, and those who *prostrate* to Him must *prostrate* in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." 26 Jesus said to her, "I am *He*, the One speaking to you."

Therefore, as the Qur'an and the hadith explicate, the communal practice of the prayer of prostration, called *ṣalāḥ*, instituted by Muhammad is the fulfillment of this expectation. Christians, unfortunately, cannot be the fulfillment of this expectation, for they sadly do not practice prostration anymore. Thus, Jesus cannot be the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Addressing Objections

This section will be brief. We will not provide an in-depth analysis in support of the arguments. We leave this to future researchers to perform.

First objection. The spiritualisation of the prostration is inferred by Jesus' statement that the Father seeks people to prostrate to him "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23). "The conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in Jn 4:20-24 leaves an initial impression that προσκυνεῖν is used here in a wholly figurative sense, since Jesus speaks of προσκυνεῖν in spirit and in truth. But if prostrating oneself no longer plays any definite role, the reference in the statement and answer is to the place of worship" (Kittel & Friedrich, 1968, p. 764). So, the phrase "in spirit and in truth" alludes to the spiritualisation of worship, which entails the elimination of physical worship or prostration.

Our response: Since it is believed that Jesus spoke Aramaic, we suggest the biblical Hebrew equivalents to the Greek words for "spirit" (πνεῦμα) and "truth" (αλήθεια) should be consulted, for Hebrew is a sister language of Aramaic. [Aramaic should be consulted as well in a future, more in-depth study.] When we look at the Hebrew equivalents of the Greek terms "spirit" and "truth" they are רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*) and אֱמֶת (*'ĕmet*). *Rûaḥ* (spirit) in Hebrew has many meanings and connotations.

Concerning רוּחַ (spirit), we feel that in John 4 the connotations of "spirit" include *spaciousness*, e.g., *it expands one's consciousness and comprehension*. It is also plausible that the word uttered by Jesus in this context may have been רָוַח (*rāwaḥ*) (be wide, spacious) (Harris, 1980, Vol. 2, p. 837). The words *rûaḥ* and *rāwaḥ*, besides sounding the same, are actually spelled the same in Hebrew: רוח. Without diacritical marks, the word could be pronounced *rûaḥ* or *rāwaḥ*. The counterpart in Arabic is رُوحٌ (*rūḥ*) and رَوْحٌ (*rauḥ*). And just like רוח, without diacritical marks, روح could very well be pronounced as *rûḥ* and *rauḥ*. In fact, Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes in his commentary to Qur'an 12:87 that some translators of the Qur'an have mistakenly read روح as *rûḥ*. "The word is *rauḥ*, not *rûḥ*, as some translators have mistakenly construed it. *Rauḥ* includes the idea of a Mercy that stills or calms our distracted state, and is particularly appropriate here in the mouth of Jacob."[5] In any case some Bible scholars believe that the word *rûaḥ* is derived from *rāwaḥ* (to be wide, spacious). For example, Harris et al. tell us that some biblical scholars derive *rûaḥ* "from *rāwaḥ*, 'to be spacious, be refreshed'" (Harris, 1980, Vol. 2, p. 836) as in I Sam 16:23 and Job 32:20. Besides signifying "being wide and spacious" Harris et al. inform us that *rāwaḥ* also signifies "relief" as in Ester 4:14. The NIV translates *rāwaḥ* in Ester 4:14 as "relief," but NASB translates the word as "liberation." Both meanings, relief and liberation, are appropriate for Jn. 4:19-24 and the practice of the prayer of prostration in Islam. For example, with the coming of Muhammad people have been *liberated* from the requirement of traveling to a certain location to prostrate to God which is a hardship. Before modern times, travel was quite dangerous. There were many bandits and robbers who would attack caravans. Jesus himself stresses this point in his famous story of the Good Samaritan. A certain Israelite man, traveling from Jerusalem to Jerico, was attacked by

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[5] "The Holy Qur'ans: Translation and Commentary." Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, (King Fahd Printing Complex), p. 659, footnote 1762. https://archive.org/details/quran-english-translation-and-commentary-by-yusuf-ali/page/658/mode/2up

robbers, who beat him, stripped him of his clothes, and left him half dead (Lk 25:27). The earth's
being made a place of prostration to Muhammad and his followers is clearly a relief to people
as some have chosen to translate the word in Ester 4:14. Worshippers can prostrate to God
wherever they may be.

The meaning "to be *spacious*" of the word *rāwaḥ* is also significant. Identifying God as
rāwaḥ (spacious) would refer to God's being الواسع (*al-wāsiʿ*), "to be spacious, signifying
generosity," that is, his mercy embraces all things, including all humans, irrespective of
ethnicity. In the past, God, being الواسع (Arabic) or *rāwaḥ* (Hebrew), gave each ethnic group
particular sharia with specific decrees that were easy for them to carry out. For example, it
would be quite easy for Aboriginals of Australia to travel to a site close to where they live, but it
would be incredibly difficult for them to travel to Jerusalem in order to prostrate to God. So,
God, in his generosity, decreed certain places of worship for the sharia of each ethnic group. As
a side note, we believe that the idea of multiple sharia given by God to different peoples is
expressed figuratively by Jesus as well when he says, "In My Father's house (*dīn*) are many
rooms (sharia);" (John 14:2). So, when the decree was given to the Israelites to travel to
Jerusalem to perform the prayer of prostration, the Israelites were a close-knit ethnic
community living cohesively together. However, as the Israelites moved further away from their
original tribal lands due to Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and deportations, and
unrighteousness increased in the land, it became quite difficult and dangerous to travel to
Jerusalem to perform this sacred duty. The same could be said of God's decrees that were given
to other ethnic groups throughout the world. Thus, Jesus reveals to the Samaritan woman, that
God, being *rāwaḥ*, and foreknowing that the world is moving to a pluralistic society, will bring
forth ease and relief to people to prostrate to him. Further, the simplicity of the *tayammum*—
ablution with soil in the absent of water—compared to regular *wuḍūʾ* (ablution) is another
aspect of this easiness introduced by Muhammad to the obligation of the prostration prayer.
The use of the earth to wipe the face and hands is considerably much easier than the
requirement of finding water in the desert to take ablution in order to perform the prayer of
prostration.

There is another dimension to *prostrating* in *rāwaḥ*. For example, when Jesus says
you must "prostrate in *rāwaḥ*," that is, "prostrate in spaciousness," he intends to say that
Samaritans and Israelites must prostrate with the same generosity and love God shows all
peoples, that is, embrace others as their brothers and sisters, rather than with an attitude of
ethnocentric bias and exclusivity. Biblical historians inform us that there was a lot of animosity
between Samaritans and Jews. Klink writes, "...it is worth noting that there was a high level of
hatred and distrust between the two people groups" (Klink, 2016, p. 235). He goes on to note,
"...by the first century there had been around two centuries of conflict and strife between the
groups, with both sides committing violent crimes against the other" (Klink, 2016, p. 235).
Thus, in John 4, Jesus is saying both groups will put aside their animosity. Keener's observation
alludes to this idea as well. He writes, "In its most dramatic divergence from traditional Jewish
expectations, however, this context speaks of a worship in the Spirit that ultimately transcends
ethnic allegiances just like the worship in Revelation (Rev. 5:9-14; 7:9-10)" (Keener, 2003, p.
617).[6] More than just transcending ethnic allegiances, it appears Jesus is speaking about
transcending ethnic sharia, that is, the universalisation of the sharia which has come to pass
with the coming of Muhammad.

Concerning the Greek word "ἀλήθεια" (truth) we feel the Hebrew counterpart is אֱמֶת
(*ʾĕmet*). [Aramaic should be consulted as well.] אֱמֶת is a derivative of אָמַן (*ʾāman*) meaning "to
confirm, support, uphold, to be established, be faithful, to be certain, i.e., to believe in" (Harris,

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[6] Keener's connecting the future *worship* spoken of by Jesus to transcending ethnic allegiance to the acts
of prostration in Revelation is spot on, but it is strange that he does not consider that the *worship* of the
angels and elders in Rev. 5:9-14 and 7:9-10 is *physical prostration*, e.g., προσκυνέω.

1980, Vol. 1, pp. 251-3). Scott tells us אֱמֶת means "*truth, faithfulness, verity*" (Harris, 1980, Vol. 1, pp. 252-3). He writes, "...it is frequently applied to God as a characteristic of his nature" (Harris, 1980, Vol. 1, p. 252). He goes on to state "[A]s a characteristic of God revealed to men, it therefore becomes the means by which men know and serve God as their savior (Josh 24:14; I Kgs 2:4; Ps 26:3; 86:11; Ps 91:4; Isa 38:3), and then as a characteristic to be found in those who have indeed come to God (Ex 18:21; Neh 7:2; Ps 15:2; Zech 8:16)" (Harris, 1980, Vol. 1, pp. 252-3). So, these "men of *ʼĕmet*" come to "know and serve" God by means of this attribute of God. We contend that there is no one better than the ṣaḥābah, the companions of the Prophet, who served Allah and his messenger with the spirit of *ʼĕmet*. Scott tells us that this word "is often coupled with another attribute of God related to our salvation 'mercy' or 'love' (*ḥesed*, Gen 24:27...)" (Harris, 1980, Vol. 1, p. 53). Although *ʼĕmet* has often been coupled with *ḥesed* (love) in the Hebrew Bible, it has been coupled with *rûaḥ* (spirit) in both John 4:23 and Jn. 4:24. Paired with the word *rûaḥ* (spirit), the expression inadvertently brings to mind "the Spirit of Truth" phrase in John 14:17; 15:26; and 16:13. We argue that the characteristic of *ʼĕmet* stressed by Jesus was embodied by no one to the degree embodied by Muhammad. He was called *al-Amīn* (אֱמֶת in Hebrew), "the truthful, trustworthy one," even before his prophethood. This is not a quality he acquired later in life. He was the *spirit of truthfulness* spoken of by Jesus in John 14:17; 15:26; and 16:13. We are not alone in seeing "the Spirit of Truth" as a prophecy of the coming of Muhammad. Ian Mevorach, a Christian theologian, in his paper titled "Did Jesus Predict Muhammad? A Biblical Portal Between Christianity and Islam" admits that "There is no better candidate than Muhammad, no one in fact that comes even close, in terms of fulfilling Jesus's promise of the *Spirit of Truth* (emphasis added) who would bring forth a new revelation from God" (Ian Mevorach, 2017).

Lastly, Christian commentaries seem to be united on the meaning of "spiritualization of worship (prostration)" that it entails the elimination of physical worship whatever form it may have taken in the Temple of Solomon. However, this does not follow. To elucidate this with an analogy: As the spiritualisation of charity in no way entails the elimination of physical charity, the spiritualisation of prostration in no way entails the elimination of physical prostration. Therefore, performing prostration "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4), rather than pointing to the elimination of the physical act of prostration, seems to indicate its liberation from its confinement to a particular location like Jerusalem.

Second objection. The prostration in spirit and in truth which the Father seeks cannot be Muhammad because Jesus told the Samaritan woman that he is the fulfillment of the one who will explain all this. When she asked him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

Our response: When we look at this section of Jesus and the Samaritan woman's conversation, there are some obscurities. For example, it is held that the Samaritans did not believe in any prophet other than Moses. However, she says, she sees Jesus as a prophet in v. 19. Again, many believe that the Samaritans did not believe in a Messiah figure. Ridderbos writes, "Just what kind of Messiah was this woman looking for? And in what respect did Jesus identify with her expectations. She refers to 'Messiah,' but the eschatological figure expected by the Samaritans was called Taheb, not Messiah" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 164). The fact is there is no universally agreed upon messianic expectation. Some believed in a savior[7] Messiah, others in a

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[7] There are many Messiahs/Christs mentioned in the Bible. Prophet Muhammad can easily be considered the greatest of the Davidic or Savior Messiahs for he is responsible for not only saving the Jewish people but made it possible for them to flourish. David J. Wasserstein (2012), professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University writes that Islam saved Jewry: "Islam saved Jewry. This is an unpopular, discomforting claim in the modern world. But it is a historical truth. The argument for it is double. First, in 570 CE, when the Prophet Mohammad was born, the Jews and Judaism were on the way to oblivion. And second, the coming of Islam saved them, providing a new context in which they not only survived,

priestly Messiah, and then others in a prophet Messiah. The Taheb of the Samaritans, it is believed, must have been the personage spoken of in Deut. 18:15, 18, that is, the prophet like Moses, for they did not accept any other book of the Bible other than the Pentateuch. "[O]ne will also in any case have to consider the Pentateuch held in honor by the Samaritans and the prophetic figure predicted there: "I will raise up … a prophet like you … I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him" (Dt. 18:18)" (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 165). In John 1:19-27 we discover the Temple position on eschatological expectations were three: Elijah, the Messiah, and the Prophet like Moses. Thus, it is likely that she was aware of the expectations of the Temple officials. Ridderbos informs us that there were scholars, like Bultmann, who supposed that she had actually used the word Taheb, instead of Messiah (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 164). Therefore, either way, whether she used the word Messiah or Taheb, in v. 25 she was most likely referring to the Prophet like Moses of Deut. 18:18. We feel replacing "Messiah" with "Taheb" can clarify the thrust of the discussion.

25 The woman said, "I know that Taheb (called Messiah [by the Jews]) is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us."

In the verse above "Messiah" is replaced with the word "Taheb." It is believed that Jesus said he was this person, e.g., Jesus answered, "I who speak to you am (*he*)" (Jn 4:26). However, this translation is problematic for a number of reasons. First, Jesus' response seems unnecessary and wordy. If Jesus meant himself, he would have just said, "I am (*he*)." One should note the masculine pronoun "he" is not in the Greek text. We feel the following understanding or translation fits the context of John better. We present our translation by modifying the Interlinear Bible translation. Note that Jesus' statement does not have the pronoun "he".

John 4:26: Interlinear Bible	John 26: Our Rendering
I am [He] the [One] speaking to you.	I am the [One] speaking to you [of him].

In the Interlineal Bible translation, the phrase "the [One] speaking to you" is awkward and wordy. For example, if you are a doctor and your name is Michael, and someone says that they are looking for Dr. Michael, you would not respond, "I am he the One who is speaking to you." You would just say," I'm he," or "I am Dr. Michael," but you would not say, "I am Dr. Michael the one speaking to you." Thus, the expression "the one speaking to you," as generally understood, is awkward and really serves no purpose. However, in our rendering, what the expression means is that one of Jesus' tasks was to speak and explain clearly the characteristics of the coming person who will explain all things. This dovetails with the Qur'an stating that one aspect of Jesus' mission was to reveal the characteristic of the messenger to come after him called Ahmad.

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but flourished, laying foundations for subsequent Jewish cultural prosperity - also in Christendom - through the medieval period into the modern world." The Messianic title "Son of David" can also refer to Muhammad *typologically*. The term "son of David" was created by some to mean one who establishes "Righteous Rule" like David. This would be termed *khalīfah* in Arabic. The Qur'an singles out David as being made a *khalīfah* on earth. "O David! We did indeed make thee a *vicegerent* (خليفة) on earth" (Qur'an 38:26). The only person to establish the khilāfah on earth like David was Prophet Muhammad. It was this *khilāfah*, established by Muhammad that saved the Jews as Wasserstein asserts. So, typologically Prophet Muhammad would be considered "the son of David," i.e., the son of the خليفة," that is, the one like David to establish the *khilāfah* on earth. There appears to have been a dilemma of how the Messiah (referring to one like Moses) was the "son" of David when he was not from his lineage. (See Matt 22:41-46; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44). The dilemma is explained away when the expression "son of David" is taken typologically. This is what Jesus in the Gospels was trying to explain to his audience, that the sonship of the Messiah like Moses to David is not to be taken biologically but typologically, that is, the one like David to establish the *khilāfah* on earth.

And remember when Jesus, son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel! I am truly Allah's messenger to you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving good news of a messenger after me whose name will be Aḥmad." (Qur'an 61:6)

This explains why Jesus is the only person in the Qur'an singled out as being *al-Masīḥ*. The word *masīḥ*, being active participle (*ism 'al-fāʻil*) points to Jesus as *the Anointer*, more than the Anoint*ed*. He was singled out with this characteristic because, although all prophets mentioned the coming of Muhammad, Jesus revealed detailed information about the coming of the final prophet to the degree that he even mentioned his name, i.e., Ahmad. Adnan Rashid et al. provide examples of scholars in support of the Greek word *parakletos* in John 16 as meaning "in excess of praise," which is the meaning of "Ahmad" (Rashid et al., 2024, pp. 300-6). For example, "Professor Gregory Nagy, a specialist in archaic Greek poetry, wrote that the active and mediopassive forms of the verb [kleo] are usually translated as 'praise' and 'be praised,'" and "Hesychius of Alexandria was a fifth- or sixth-century grammarian who compiled the richest surviving lexicon of Greek words. He also defined the noun for 'kleos' in terms of 'glory' and 'praise'" (Rashid et al., 2024, p. 305). Thus, with this unambiguous prophecy of the coming prophet, Jesus *anointed* his followers so they would be able to recognise and accept the coming of Muhammad. Jesus' explanation of "the Spirit of Truth" is another example of this anointing. And of course, the topic of this paper (Jn 4:19-26), that is, Jesus' clarification to the Samaritan woman and to his followers, the universalisation of prostration that will be accomplished with the coming of the Taheb, the messenger like Moses (Dt. 18:18) is a clear sign of Jesus' anointing his followers with indubitable prophecies of the coming of Muhammad.

Furthermore, the Samaritan woman uses a key term about this future personage. She says that he will ἀναγγελεῖ (proclaim) all things to us. The author of John's Gospel seems to stress this word as a characteristic trait of "the Spirit of Truth," for it is not used[8] anywhere else in the Gospel but in John 4:25 and 16:13, 14, 15. Also, the expressions "proclaim all things to us" (John 4:25) and "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13) are quite similar. Note the uncanny similarities between the Spirit of Truth and the Taheb expected by the Samaritan woman.

John 4:25 (personal rendering)	John 16:13 But when he, **the Spirit of Truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell (ἀναγγελεῖ) you what is yet to come.
The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah [**Taheb**], is coming" (who is called Messiah [by the Jews]). "When he comes, he will proclaim (ἀναγγελεῖ) all things to us."	John 16:14 He [The Spirit of Truth] will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare (ἀναγγελεῖ) it to you.
	John 16:15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare (ἀναγγελεῖ) it to you.

The affinity of the terminology of the expected Taheb of the Samaritan with that of the Spirit of Truth spoken of by Jesus in chapter 16 clearly demonstrates that the author of John was identifying the Samaritan Taheb with the "Spirit of Truth."

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[8] Someone may point out that this word has been used for the healed blind man in John 5:15. However, the manuscript evidence is not unanimous. There are ancient manuscripts that use a different word in place of ἀναγγελεῖ, the word ἀπαγγελεῖ. (See Nestle-Aland, footnote to John 5:15).

Supplemental: "House Built Without Hands"

There is an expectation in the Bible of a house or temple of God not built with hands to be established in the future. We believe this refers to none other than the Ka'bah, as we will explain below. This expectation is connected to, or is part of, the expectation of the universalisation of prostration spoken of in John 4:19-24. Jesus seems to have preached about this. However, his words have been distorted and misrepresented. In the Gospel of Mark, false witnesses testify that Jesus said that he would destroy the Temple of Solomon and build another "not made with hands."

> Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" (Mark 14:58)

The fact that the charge levied against Jesus was connected to "a house not made with hands" shows the seriousness of this idea.[9] However, how can a house be built without hands? This seems to have been a problem early on. Paul interprets the "house built without hands" as referring to "heavenly bodies." He writes,

> For we know that if the earthly *tent* we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this *tent* we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling - if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. (2 Co. 5:1-3)

The writer of Hebrews also refers to a tent built without hands in heaven. "But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation..." (Hebrews, 9:11). We believe the house in Heaven spoken of by Paul (2 Co. 5:1-3) and the writer of Hebrews (9:11) is *Bayt al-Ma'mūr* mentioned in the Qur'an 52:4. According to Islamic tradition, this is a masjid in heaven where angels prostrate toward it and make *ṭawāf* around it. However, Paul interprets it figuratively and says it is the heavenly bodies prepared for Christians in heaven. Rather than focusing on Paul's interpretation, what should be noted is Paul's mentioning certain characteristics connected with this "house not made with hands." They are:

1. a tent/building from God

2. a house not made with hands,

3. a house in heaven

4. a future expectation connected with this house

The "spiritualisation" that has occurred to the prayer of prostration in John 4:19-24 has happened to the expectation of "the house built without hands." The author of John has a vision where he mentions the temple of God in the New Jerusalem descending from heaven.

> If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the *temple of my God*; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that *comes down* from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (Rev. 3:12)

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[9] In John, Jesus does make a reference to the Temple being destroyed and rebuilt. However, there is no reference to "a house built with or without hands." "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'" (John 2:19).

One has to remember that the description of the *descending* city of God in the Book of Revelation is a vision. It should not be taken literally. The "new Jerusalem in which is the temple of God" descending from heaven would refer to a new center of worship that will be established by God on earth. This is the city of Mecca, Dār al-Salām, in which the Ka'bah resides. How is the Ka'bah, like *Bayt al-Ma'mur*, made without hands? The expression "built without hands" refers to ṭawāf of millions of people around the Ka'bah. *Ṭawāf* is the reenactment of Adam, and later, Abraham and Ishmael's building of the Ka'bah. Building of the Ka'bah entails laying stones on the ground in a straight line. When one side of the Ka'bah's wall is laid, a person would continue laying the stones perpendicular to the stones just laid down. As you continue doing this you go around and arrive to the point where you have started. Then you will lay the stones on the stones which you have already laid down. By doing this you begin to raise the walls of the Ka'bah. This is how the Ka'bah was initially built: laying the stones as you go around the walls. Thus, *ṭawāf* is the ritual reenactment of the building of the Ka'bah which was also later performed by Adam and Abraham after they physically built the Ka'bah. The rituals of Hajj and Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) are all reenactments. For example, the *saʿī* (running lightly) between Safa and Marwa is the reenactment of our mother Hajar's search for water. The *ramy al-jamarāt* (throwing stones) is the reenactment of Abraham's stoning of the devil. The standing *du'ā'* (pray) at Arafah is a reenactment of the standing *du'ā'* of Adam, etc. Thus, every pilgrim that goes to Hajj or Umrah participates in the building of the Ka'bah without hands as they make *ṭawāf*, that is, emulate Adam, Abraham, and Ishmael's building of the Ka'bah. Furthermore, the Kiswah (cover cloth) of the Ka'bah mirrors the reference to the temple in heaven being referenced as a Tabernacle, that is, a Tent (Hebrews 9:11).

The meaning of ṭawāf, i.e., building the house of God without hands

In ancient times, "house" meant dominion and rule. For example, Genghis Khan (House of Genghis) refers to the dominion and rule of Genghis. We are told that the word "Pharaoh" meant "great house." The Greek usage of house (*oikos*) in the following words shows the nuance of the word "house" in ancient times: "ecosystem" (house system), "economy" (house rule), and "ecology" (study of house). The words "ecology" and "ecosystem" show that the word "house" refers to the intricate interconnected relationships of elements in the natural environment. The word "domesticate" literally means to subject to house (rule). "Dome" means house in Latin. Thus, prostrating toward the House of God (*Baytullah*) means submitting to God's will and rule, which is the meaning of Islam, i.e., submission to God's will. Making tawaf around the house of God, that is, building the house of God without hands, means contributing to establishing God's will and rule, i.e., *dīn* and sharia, on earth in one's life. The Hajj ritual of sacrificing a domesticated animal strengthens this argument. Sacrificing a *domesticated* animal like a sheep during Hajj means you will not come under the rule and dominion of the social constructs of human societies, as this sheep has come under the rule of human beings. This is why wild animals are not sacrificed during Hajj, but only domesticated animals, for their natural *fitrah* has been altered by human beings. This act demonstrates that you are on the *fitrah* Allah has created you, not on the social constructs of human societies. Thus, by referring to the "house made without hands," Jesus appears to have referred to the coming abrogation of the Jerusalem *qiblah* (direction of prayer) with the *qiblah* of the Ka'bah, [10] the house not built

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[10] The book of Revelation portrays the angels and elders *around* (circled) the throne of God standing and prostrating. For example, "Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They *encircled* the throne and the living creatures and the elders. … The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped (prostrated)" (Rev. 5:11; 14, NIV). Obviously, this is uncannily similar to how Muslims worship at the Ka'bah. During Salah, Muslims exclaim in unison, "Amen," and shortly thereafter, prostrate to God. Thus, the depiction in Revelation of the angels and elders prostrating to God is mirrored by Muslim prostration at the Ka'bah more than the worship at Solomon's Temple, because worship at Solomon's Temple did not involve people encircling the temple. See also Rev. 5:11. The angels and other beings appear to be in a formal structure around the throne, for protocol in the presence of the King demanded formal behavior. Thus, there was no crowd around the throne. One cannot expect a crowd of people to prostrate due to the lack of required

with hands. This brought him into direct conflict with the Temple priests, and they rejected him. Something similar happened with Muhammad: the Jews of Medina had accepted Muhammad as a prophet of God until the *qiblah* was changed from the Temple of Jerusalem to the Ka'bah of Mecca.

Reassuring Christians

We recognise the difficulty for Christians to accept interpretations that seem to threaten their traditional understanding of the teachings of Jesus. We acknowledge that Christians may not be psychologically open to considering the universalisation of prostration practiced in Islam as the fulfillment spoken of by Jesus. Similar to us, Fachrizal Halim makes an observation about the difficulty for Jews to accept ecumenical readings of the Genesis story of Hagar and Sarah: "… rereading the biblical story of Sarah and Hagar through the lens of biblical criticism and ecumenical perspectives could pose a serious challenge to many Jews who view the story as foundational to their belief system" (Halim, 2024, p. 29). In both cases, Jews and Christians are encouraged to reread their scriptures in a way that is unfamiliar to them. To address the "serious challenge" of an interpretation which supports Islam and Muhammad, we invite Christians to consider the words of Ian Mevorach, a Christian theologian. In his article "Did Jesus Predict Muhammad?" in the *Huffington*. He acknowledges the psychological difficulty Christians face in accepting biblical interpretations in support of Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an.

> Jesus knew it would be difficult for us to accept his guidance from another source. But he did not want our fear of the apparent otherness of the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an to separate us from the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that is, the Word of God. (Mevorach, 2017)

Mevorach assures Christians that there is nothing to fear in accepting the Qur'an as revelation. "Based on the promises of Jesus, Christians can encounter the Qur'an without fear, knowing that it is a revelation which glorifies Jesus and, in a spiritual sense, is from him" (Mevorach, 2017).

Conclusion

The author of the Gospel of John preserves an incident of a conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman (John 4). Witnessing prophetic signs in Jesus' speech, the Samaritan woman asks him about προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*) as performed by both Jews and Samaritans in their respective holy places – Jerusalem and Mt. Gerizim. Although, the Greek term refers to "prostrating," Bible translations have chosen to render it as "worship." The Christian commentaries that we consulted have also understood the word as "worship." Thus, they argue that the thrust of Jesus' argument was about "spiritualising worship." For the commentators this entails "worship of God" in the future will be free of the physical constraints of bodily worship. We argued that a major reason for the Christian

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space to perform the prostration. People in the presence of a monarch would form rows in front of the king. However, revelation depicts the rows around the throne in heaven as concentric circles, not straight lines. This obviously resembles the form Muslims take around the Ka'bah when they are to perform the prayer of prostration. We feel this also indicates the fulfillment of an important aspect of Jesus' prayer, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10). God's will in heaven is that the angels, elders, and creatures all prostrate to him. We also see Jesus emphasise this in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, e.g., "…the true prostrators will prostrate to the Father in spirit and truth; for such people, the Father seeks to be His prostrators" (John 4:23). And in Islam, after the *shahādah*, God wills that all creatures prostrate to him. This is so important that it is the second pillar of Islam.

understanding of the passage, is due to translating the word προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*) into English as "worship." We also demonstrated that there is ample evidence in the Bible that shows prostration to God was confined to the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus, when προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*) in John 4 is translated into English as "prostrate," as it should be, the discussion clearly refers to the communal prostration prayer of *ṣalāḥ* practiced by Muslims as mentioned in Qur'an 48:29, not to the elimination of physical prostration referred to as "spiritualisation of worship."

We anticipated two Christian objections: first, the phrase "worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24) refers to detaching worship from sacred sites, and second, Jesus' indication that he was the fulfilment of this expectation. Our responses were, first, "worship in spirit and truth" is actually "prostrating in spirit and truth." This is best understood as referring to "the universalisation of prostration," that is, worshippers are freed from the constraints of prostration to God only at certain religious sites. This has been fulfilled with the coming of Muhammad where Muslims are required to perform the prayer of prostration, *ṣalāḥ*, daily from anywhere on earth. Second, we endeavoured to show understanding Jesus' statement in John 4:26 as "I am [He] the [One] speaking to you" is wordy and unnatural, i.e., it does not conform to natural speech in society. We argued that translating John 4:26 as "I am the [One] speaking to you [of him]" makes more sense. With this statement Jesus points to, not himself, but another who will fulfill the expectation of prostrating in spirit and truth.

In line with the expectation of prostration being universalised, we drew the reader's attention to another prophetic expectation, that of a house built without hands (Mark 14:58). We argued that the *ṭawāf*, encircling of the Ka'bah, is the fulfilment of this expectation, for *ṭawāf* is the reenactment of the building of the Ka'bah of Adam and Abraham. When all is said and done, we would like the reader to reconsider the words of Craig Keener about Jesus's statement of "worshipping God in the Spirit" - that it refers to prostrating to God as depicted in the Book of Revelation. "John's 'worship in the Spirit' is a foretaste of the *eschatological* (emphasis added) worship around God's throne depicted in Revelation" (Keener, 2003, p. 617). Since, in Revelation, the eschatological worship, that is, future "worship" of the angels and elders is explicitly *prostration* (*proskyneō*) to God, e.g., Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4, the eschatological fulfillment of this on earth would be universalisation of prostration to God on earth. This is what has happened with the coming of Muhammad, as mentioned in Qur'an 48:29 and the Hadith in Bukhari 438. We conclude our paper using the words of Ian Mevorach (2017) on Muhammad being the Spirit of Truth and the words of Jesus Christ: "There is no better candidate than Muhammad [and his *ummah*], no one in fact that comes even close, in terms of fulfilling Jesus's promise that '[T]he true *prostrators* will *prostrate* to the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His *prostrators*'" (John 4:23).

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Religion, Nationalism, and Political Evolution: A Historical Analysis of Identity and Security in Bangladesh

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Abstract: This study examines the contested evolution of nationalism and political identity in Bangladesh, focusing on the interplay of religion, politics, and security since 1971. The central issue revolves around tension between secular Bengali nationalism and Bangladeshi nationalism, complicating efforts to establish a cohesive national identity. Employing a historical and conceptual analysis, this study traces these ideological shifts from their colonial-era roots to their contemporary manifestations. The findings reveal that while secular Bengali nationalism sought cultural unity through linguistic and historical heritage, Bangladeshi nationalism introduced inclusivity by integrating broader cultural and religious identities. The study concludes that these ideological contestations have profound implications for Bangladesh's political stability, societal cohesion, and national security.

Keywords: Bangladesh, nationalism, religion, politics, national identity, security

Introduction

Bangladesh's identity has been a subject of significant debate and transformation since its independence in 1971 (Uddin, 2006). Emerging from the socio-political upheavals of colonial rule, the partition of India, and its eventual separation from Pakistan, Bangladesh was founded on the ideals of secular Bengali nationalism. Under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, this ideology sought to unite the nation through a shared linguistic and cultural heritage. However, political instability following Mujibur Rahman's assassination in 1975 marked a turning point, with competing nationalist ideologies reshaping the national discourse (Schendel, 2009).

Major-General Ziaur Rahman's introduction of Bangladeshi nationalism in 1977 offered a broader and more inclusive identity that integrated cultural and religious diversity (Jahan, 1980). This shift departed from the secular framework of Bengali nationalism, sparking debates that continue to shape Bangladesh's political and social landscape. These ideological contestations affect Bangladesh's political stability, societal cohesion, and broader discussions on managing diversity in postcolonial states.

This study builds on Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991) and Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism (Gellner, 2008) to explore the evolution of competing nationalist ideologies in Bangladesh. By examining the historical and political trajectories of secular Bengali nationalism and Bangladeshi nationalism, the research undertaken seeks to fill a critical gap in the literature by analysing how these ideologies influence national identity and security. Guided by the question of how competing nationalist

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ideologies have influenced the construction of identity and security in Bangladesh since 1971, this study provides insights into the challenges of nation-building in a multireligious, multi-ethnic society. Situated within local and global contexts, the findings offer valuable lessons for other postcolonial nations grappling with similar identity-based conflicts.

Methodology

Employing a historical and conceptual analysis, this study examines the evolution of nationalism and identity in Bangladesh from 1971 to the present, focusing on the competing ideologies of secular Bengali nationalism and Bangladeshi nationalism. The research draws on secondary sources, including historical documents, government records, political speeches, and academic literature, to analyse these frameworks' ideological foundations and societal impacts.

Grounded in Anderson's imagined communities, the study explores how cultural and linguistic symbols construct national identity (Anderson, 1991). At the same time, Gellner's theory of nationalism situates these identities within the context of modernity and political development (Gellner, 2008). Concepts from security studies, particularly the works of Barry Buzan (Buzan, 2007) and Michael Barnett (Barnett, 1999), further elucidate the influence of nationalist ideologies on societal cohesion and national stability. This integrated approach situates the analysis within Bangladesh's unique postcolonial trajectory, providing insights into the interplay of identity, nationalism, and security.

Literature Review

Different works of literature and narratives have made it challenging to identify the actual circumstances of relations between religious nationality, politics, and security in Bangladesh. The issue of nationality has been debated since Bangladesh gained independence. Khan (1985) stated that South Asia saw the rise of nation-states, which led to internal and regional conflicts. As a result, society became divided based on religion and regional nationality. Such conflict spread among Pakistani Muslims and Bengali Muslims, Islamists and secularists, Muslims and Hindus, and Bangladeshis and Indians. Hossain (2015) discussed the weaknesses of Bangladesh's national identity. Since the post-independence period, Bangladesh's political crisis and disunity have negatively affected the country's social pillars and national identity, leading to a national identity crisis. N. Absar (2014) produced a meaningful analysis of the historical trends of nationalism in Bangladesh and the conflict of secular Bengali nationalism with Islam and Muslim political and cultural dynamics in Bangladesh. Das et al. (2022) examined the evolution of Bangladesh's nationalism and identity, ranging from creole nationalism to Bangladeshi nationalism and national identity. Bangladeshi nationalism prioritises Islamic identity over their Bengali identity. Kabir (1987) identified the pattern of Bangladeshi nationalism, leading to a new religious-linguistic identity. The Pakistan movement influenced Bangladesh's nationalist development, transforming its identity, with religion and language becoming the primary focus for Bengali Muslims.

The existing literature on Bangladeshi national identity is limited, highlighting the need for further investigation. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive understanding of identity and nationalism in Bangladesh, thereby guiding policies and activities that promote societal unity and resilience.

The Formation of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a riverine country that is part of the largest delta in the world. It is located on the Bay of Bengal and in the lowest flow of the Ganges-Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers (Guhathakurta & Van Schendel, 2013). The area of Bangladesh is 147,570 square kilometres, and the total land length is 2400 square kilometres. India borders 92% of Bangladesh's western side, and Myanmar borders 8% of its eastern side. The coastal boundary of the Bay of Bengal in the south of the country is 483 kilometres (Kabir et al., 2018).

The rivers have had a tremendous impact on the formation of the land structure of the region and the people's livelihood and culture. As such, Bangladesh's people, rivers, and history have been tied in the same thread for thousands of years. However, it is precisely unknown when human settlement began in Bangladesh. Based on early records, Greek historians of Alexander's contemporaries mentioned a wealthy kingdom on the banks of the Ganges river called "Gangaridai." In the first century A.D., the Greek geographer Ptolemy described that the Gangaridai people lived in the Ganges estuary (Rashid, 2019). The exclusive clothes made here were exported globally, and the Ganges became an international river port during that time. In ancient times, Bengal was a distinct part of Bangladesh, and historians concur that Greek scholars used "Gangaridai" to describe the Bengal delta's Dravidians. The Dravidians arrived in the Indian subcontinent via Baluchistan from the Tigris and Euphrates riverbanks in West Asia about 5,000 years ago. They started living in the coastal areas and banks of India's largest rivers (Avari, 2007,). Moreover, the Dravidians set up permanent settlements on the Ganges riverbanks, where they built the Mohenjo-Daro and Harappan civilisations in this region (Pruthi, 2004).

In 1750 BC, the Aryans of the Kyrgyz region began migrating to the Sindhu and Punjab areas via Iran. The formidable Aryan nomads attacked the ancient tribal Dravidians and destroyed Mohenjo-Daro, Harappan, and Chanhudaro (Avari, 2007). They killed and imprisoned many locals, occupied Dravidian states, and established several independent Aryan states from Punjab to Benares in India. Although the Aryans were mighty in northern India, the conflict between them and the Dravidians of Bengal lasted for an extended period.

Over time, Bengal witnessed the migration of many ethnic groups and also experienced radical changes in its religious and sociocultural systems. From the Vedic rule of the Kushan, Persian, Mauryan, Gupta, Pala, and Sen empires to the Muslim empire and European colonial period, Bengal endured constant struggle and destruction-construction periods (Siddiq & Habib, 2017). However, during its 550 years of rule, the Muslims established a new civilisation in the region (A. A. Khan, 2011). Bengal epitomised religious coexistence and a prosperous region, and became an attractive place for traders and tourists from all over the world. In the 14th century, the Moroccan explorer Ibn Battuta visited Bengal, commenting on its abundance (Khondker, 2022). Another Dutch merchant, Van Lindolan, nicknamed Bengal as "the granary of the East" in the 16th century (Sengupta, 2008, p. 2). During the reign of the Pala and Sen kings, Bengal was known as Banga, and it spread only partly to the east and south. Among the Muslim Sultans of Bengal, Sultan Shams al-Dīn Ilyas Shah made an invaluable contribution to the development of Bengal—he somewhat extended the Bengal boundaries, which he named as Shahi Bangla (Lewis, 2011).

On June 23, 1757, the Muslim rule in Bengal ended with the fall of Nawab Mirza Muḥammad Sirāj al-Dawlah, and the British East India Company began colonising the Indian subcontinent. The British ruled the region, including Bengal, for almost 200 years, during which they applied the "divide and rule policy." As a result, Bengal radically changed its own Muslim culture, and Hindu-Muslim relations deteriorated drastically through the rise of extremist nationalism (Tharoor, 2016). Even though Bengal was a prosperous region, it became a poverty-stricken area. In 1905, the British divided Bengal into two separate provinces called

West Bengal and East Bengal, or "Bangabhanga." However, in 1911, the British government reunited the two Bengal provinces due to the violent movements of Hindu fundamentalism (Chatterji, 2002). Towards the end of the British rule in 1947, the Muslim and Hindu communities had spread extreme violence against each other, which prompted the British to form two separate states: one for the Muslims and the other for Hindus. Associated with West Pakistan despite its long geographical distance, East Bengal became East Pakistan due to its Muslim-majority population. Eventually, Bangladesh was created from East Pakistan following a nine-month freedom struggle in collaboration with the Indian Army (Sisson & Rose, 1990).

An Overview of Bengali Nationalism

Nationalism connotes a "uniform" that unites people under one roof. A nation can introduce itself as independent and distinct globally by holding this "uniform." Nationalism strongly identifies a political entity as a group of people defined in national terms, such as a nation (Smith, 2010). Bengali nationalism is the political manifestation of the ethno-national consciousness of Bengalis residing in Bengal's ethno-linguistic regions. Specifically, it refers to the unified identity of the human community living in Bangladesh and West Bengal of India, as well as people living in Tripura, Assam, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands who also speak Bengali (Van Schendel, 2023). The first Bengali nationalism movement arose in 1905 and revolved around issues related to the partition of Bengal.

After the end of the Muslim rule in this region, especially after the Battle of Palashi (or Battle of Plassey), the Muslim population became increasingly impoverished and insignificant due to the conspiratorial activities of the British East India Company. On the eve of the establishment of the British Raj in the second half of the 18th century, misery was inflicted upon the Muslim population when the ordinary middle class and the British administration brought about a series of administrative, economic, cultural, and political changes that unfairly gave rise to a new Hindu landowning class and professional aristocracy. The British administration's introduction of new laws and accompanying unbridled competition and corruption built up enormous wealth for the Hindu professionals (babu and gentry classes), while the Zamindar-Mahajan classes made Bengali Muslims and peasant-weavers even more impoverished and destitute.

In 1793, Lord Cornwallis introduced land revenue or taxation legislation in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, which he called the Permanent Settlement (Bhardwaj, 2011). As a result of the law's introduction, the Zamindars became the absolute owners of landed property in the colonial state. Apart from being proprietors of land, they acquired Zamindari taxes at a fixed rate in perpetuity. Although there were few Muslim Zamindars, the majority were Hindus. Most Muslim Zamindars were unable to collect high revenue at the end of the year. The rural peasants and landowners were also unable to pay more rent or revenue at the end of the year, so they were forced to pay by taking loans from the Zamindars at high interest rates. As a result, Muslim Zamindars lost their Zamindari status after the specified date of expiration according to the sunset law, while a new unitary Hindu Zamindari class emerged.

At the same time, the peasants were unable to recover their total debts, which took into account the exorbitant profit and principal. Consequently, the Zamindars took possession of all their property and, together with usury moneylenders, crippled the Muslims and rural peasants. This led to heightened anger and discontent within the peasant societies, and a series of peasant revolts took place in the 19th century (Rajat & Ray, 1975).

The partition of Bengal in 1905 is a crucial chapter in Bangladesh's history of nationhood and religion. Murshid Quli Khan was appointed as the Dewan of Bengal during the

reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1700. Although Dhaka was the capital of Bengal, in 1704, Murshid Quli Khan moved the capital to Murshidabad in West Bengal (Richards, 1981). During British rule, Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, and several other regions were formed as the Bengal Presidency, and the capital moved again from Murshidabad to Calcutta or Kolkata. Calcutta became the capital of the British administration in the province of Bengal and the whole of India. Business and industrial sectors, public and legal administration, and educational institutions were concentrated in Calcutta. Most of the people in East Bengal were Muslims, but they were less privileged than the Hindus. As a result, the Muslims of East Bengal were left behind in all aspects of life. In 1835, the Persian language was replaced by English as the official language of the British Government of India (Ahmed, 2019). Persian was the official language of the Mughal administration. Since educational institutions were centred in Calcutta and English became the lingua franca, the Muslims of East Bengal lagged behind in English education. Consequently, the Hindus became the most privileged locals and secured government jobs.

Industrial factories were built in Calcutta using raw materials from East Bengal. Even though jute production was mainly in East Bengal, there were no jute mills. Most of the jute mills were built on the banks of the Hooghly River in West Bengal. Although Chittagong has had a seaport since ancient times, no work was done to develop it during the British colonial period. Instead, the government and the business class completely neglected the Chittagong port, assuming that the profit of the capital's port, Calcutta, would decrease (Qasmi, 2023).

The Bengal Presidency consisted of Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, and other regions. According to the first census of India held in 1872, the population of the Bengal Presidency was "six crores seventy lakhs," or 67 million (Mannan, 2006, p. 221). The British could not smoothly rule the entire Bengal Presidency with this vast population. On October 16, 1905, the new East Bengal and Assam Province were formed with 15 districts of Assam and East Bengal by the British Viceroy Lord Curzon in India, and Dhaka was made the capital of the new province (Cronin, 1977). The newly formed area had a population of about 31 million, most of whom were Muslims. However, the British government's development was still centred on India's capital, Calcutta.

Therefore, the people of East Bengal were neglected and deliberately left out of mainstream developments. Since most people in this region were Muslims, they received fewer privileges than the Hindus. Therefore, the move to separate Bengal was advocated so that the people of East Bengal, especially the Muslims, would get the needed facilities. The disenfranchised majority Muslims in East Bengal saw the partition movement of Bengal as the first dawn of their destiny. On the contrary, the Calcutta-based caste-centric Hindu landlords, businesspeople, politicians, intellectuals, and journalists who supported the auxiliary power of the British gauged this movement as a severe blow to their sociopolitical foundations built over 150 years (Mannan, 2006).

The main driving force behind the anti-partition movement was the revival of Hinduism and Bengali nationalism. The Hindus dubbed the partition of Bengal as "Loss of limb of Bengali mother" (*Bongo matar onggo sed*), and their Hindu leaders, such as Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandrapal, Arvind Ghosh, and Ashwini Kumar Dutt, launched a counter militant protest movement. Within a brief period, the momentum of this movement increased and Bengali nationalism, known as the Swadeshi movement, arose forcefully (Sarkar et al., 1973). The struggle against the partition of Bengal turned violent at one point when the Hindu extremists appeared. Two armed Hindu organisations were formed called Yugantar in Calcutta and Anushilan in Dhaka. They started using bombs as weapons in the armed movement against the partition of Bengal in India. The Maharashtra leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak's Cow Protection movement (Goraksha Andolan) listed the Shivaji-initiated Ganapati festival in their programme and adopted the anti-Muslim anthem "Vande Mataram" as the national anthem of

the campaign (Bharati, 2019). Many nationalist writings were published during this period, and in 1906, Rabindranath Tagore wrote a poignant song titled "Amar Sonar Bangla" for the abolitionists, which became the national anthem of Bangladesh in 1972 (Capwell, 2017). On December 12, 1911, Emperor of India George V announced the partition of Bengal revoked at the Delhi Durbar due to strong Hindutva protests (Wynbrandt, 2009). Nevertheless, after the partition of Bengal in 1911, religious nationalist sentiments arose among the Hindu and Muslim communities. A spirit of Muslim nationalism appeared in place of the Bengali nationalist spirit among the Muslims of East Bengal.

Bangladeshi Nationalism

Bangladeshi nationalism is a political philosophy that glorifies and promotes Bangladeshi citizens as a distinct cultural and political country. It is based on the spiritual bonds of Bangladeshis living within the borders of Bangladesh. After the defeat of its ruler, Nawab Sirāj al-Dawlah, by British conspiracy in 1757, Bengal lost its independence, and Dhaka lost its glory. Nevertheless, on October 16, 1905, Dhaka regained its glory by being East Bengal and Assam province's capital through partitioning the Bengal Presidency. Still, the Hindus formed a widespread protest movement against the partition of Bengal. Their campaign resulted in a Muslim nationalist spirit emerging among the Muslims of Bengal. The All-India Muslim League was formed in Dhaka in December 1906 (Malik, 2012). In the 1930s, the poet-philosopher and modern Islamic scholar Allama Muhammad Iqbal proposed the idea of a separate, independent Muslim state in the Indian subcontinent, an idea that soon became popular among Indian and Muslim League leadership (Şahbaz, 2020).

In contrast to Bengali nationalism, 89% of the population of East Bengal were Bengali Muslims who participated in the establishment of Pakistan. Consequently, in 1947, India and Pakistan were formed as two separate countries based on religious nationality. British Viceroy, Lord Charles Hardinge, was forced to abolish the partition of Bengal in 1911 due to Hindu solid agitation. The abolition of the Bengal partition created a religious nationalistic spirit among both the Hindu and Muslim communities, leading to the creation of India and Pakistan at midnight on August 15, 1947. This ended British rule and incorporated the Muslim-majority East Bengal into Pakistan and the Hindu-majority West Bengal into India (Hasan, 2017).

However, the geographical distance, cultural contrast, and disparity between the rulers of East and West Pakistan led to the emergence of geographical nationalism, which combined Muslim nationalism and Bengali nationalism among the people of East Pakistan. Eventually, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was broken in 1971, and a new state called Bangladesh was founded based on geographical nationality (Zaheer, 1994). The same year, the newly independent Bangladesh introduced secular Bengali nationalism, to replace the majority Muslim population's Islamic nationalism, which was entirely against the ethnic and Islamic consciousness of the people of Bangladesh. The constitution collectively enshrined nationalism, secularism, democracy, and socialism as the governance principles (Hasan, 2017). Awami League added secularism to the constitution and banned all forms of Islamic politics in independent Bangladesh. In the name of Bengali nationalism, the Awami League government tried to erase symbols of Muslim history in the culture and politics of Bangladesh (Uddin & Nesa, 2020).

Ziaur Rahman became the President of Bangladesh on April 21, 1977. He introduced "Bangladeshi nationalism" to maintain Bangladesh's uniqueness. He amended the constitution to replace the principle of secularism with "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah" (Wohab, 2021, p. 21). The ideology of Bangladeshi nationalism also made a clear distinction between the

similar linguistic people in the Indian state of West Bengal and Bangladesh (Shehabuddin, 2016).

Crisis of National Identity Issues in Bangladesh

Since the liberation war, Bangladesh has become an independent sovereign country with its language and unique cultural heritage (Ahmed, 2004). After 50 years of independence, despite having all the features of a single nationalism, the entire nation is still "divided" on nationality and the debate of Bengali nationalism versus Bangladeshi nationalism. Unfortunately, the current political divide over the question of national identity has profoundly undermined the beliefs, culture, and communal harmony of the Muslim and Hindu communities that have developed over centuries (Hossain, 2015). India and Pakistan were founded in 1947 based on Hindu-Muslim religious nationalism. Subsequently, the nationality of people of all races, tribes, and languages in India was endorsed as Indian. Likewise, in Pakistan, the national identity of people of all religions, languages, and castes and tribes was sanctioned as Pakistani.

In 1971, East Pakistan became the state of Bangladesh, and Bengali nationalism entered a new trend of secular Bengali nationalism. In fact, all the pre-independence movements had revolved around Bengali nationalism. While there was no element of secular nationalism in any movement, the independence movement was conducted in alignment with the long-standing Bengali tradition of the region. Under the patronage of the Shah-i-Bangla Sultanate of Bengal, the emergence of Bengali identity as a nation based on Hindu-Muslim partnership and cooperation in the region and the development of the Bengali language ran parallel. In continuation, Bengali culture was perfected in the Mughal Empire, and the rule of the Nawabs of Bengal in the 18th century was a notable example of Hindu-Muslim unity.

The current national identity narrative in Bangladesh highlights the secularist tradition of "Bengali identity," whereas "Bangladeshi" emphasises Islam as the core element of identity. It must be noted that Bengali nationalism has no conflict with Islamic ideology (Islam & Islam, 2020). The expression of Bengali nationalism in Pakistan was first reflected in the manifesto of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League in 1949. This declaration and the subsequent 42-point manifesto of the East Pakistan Awami League and the 21-point manifesto of the United Front elections of 1954, both drafted by Abul Mansur Ahmad, did not reflect any conflict between Islamic ideology and Bengali identity (Islam & Islam, 2020).

In 1947, the Muslim majority of East Bengal joined Pakistan based on religious unity. However, in the language movement in 1952 and the independence movement in 1971, local nationalism prevailed over religious majoritarianism (Oldenburg, 1985). United by linguistic nationalism and regional nationalism, all the Hindus and Muslims of East Pakistan participated in the movement. Through the Armed Liberation War of 1971 against Pakistan, an entirely new nation and new state of Bangladesh was formed.

National identity cannot be developed based on language alone. Nationality comprises various elements, including religion, linguistic structure, caste and tribe, culture, history of independence, tradition, and geographical boundaries. In contrast, even though Arabic-speaking people occupying areas from the Arabian Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, and from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, are united by the Arabic language, each Arab country has a separate national identity (Suleiman, 2019). However, the chances for an absolute and complete national identity of the people of Bangladesh through Bengali nationalism is improbable. Apart from the Bengali population, there are 45 tribes and ethnic minority groups in Bangladesh (Guhathakurta, 2022). If the nationality of Bangladesh is Bengali, then the tribal citizens will be left out of the Bangladeshi identity. Outside of Bangladesh, many Bengalis live in various states of India, including West Bengal. The Bengalis of West Bengal are of Indian

nationality, though they share many similarities in language and manners with the Bangladeshi people.

In addition, Bengali, Chakma, Garo-Marma, Khasia, and other ethnic groups are known for their ethnic identity within Bangladesh. Nevertheless, as a nation-state, all the citizens of Bangladesh will be identified as Bangladeshi. This characteristic will mark the clear difference between the people of Bangladesh and other ethnic groups worldwide. Hence, the ongoing debate regarding the national identity of Bangladesh highlights the nation's complexities and challenges in forging a collective identity that accommodates its rich diversity and historical context.

Conclusion

This study has examined the evolution of nationalism and national identity in Bangladesh, focusing on the ideological contestations between secular Bengali nationalism and Bangladeshi nationalism. These competing frameworks have shaped the nation's political stability, societal cohesion, and ongoing identity crisis. The dual nationalisms underscore the challenges of unifying a multi-heritage, multireligious society within a cohesive national framework.

Bangladeshi nationalism presents a viable pathway to addressing these divisions by offering a distinct national identity that integrates Bangladesh's diverse heritage, encompassing language, culture, religion, and history. Reconciliation of these competing ideologies is critical to fostering long-term unity and stability. This requires a balanced political vision that respects secular principles while acknowledging the country's Islamic heritage. Inclusive national policies that embrace the population's diversity can further reinforce Bangladesh's identity and distinctiveness on the global stage.

Bangladesh's experience provides valuable lessons for other postcolonial nations navigating the complexities of identity and nationalism. By adopting a model of nationalism that reflects historical legacies, cultural diversity, and political aspirations, nations can strengthen social cohesion and ensure stability. The ongoing contestation over national identity in Bangladesh highlights the importance of inclusive and adaptive nationalism in addressing the challenges of multi-ethnic, multireligious nation-building.

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Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī: The Founder of Muslim Modern Reformist Thought

Spahic Omer[1]

Abstract: This article discusses the pan-Islamic reformist thought of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. The article's approach is three-thronged, focusing on the meaning of Islamic unity and its relationship with pan-Islamism as a Western rendition of the former; how al-Afghānī tried to take on Western challenges methodically and scientifically, and sometimes even in the West's own backyard; and how al-Afghānī's ground-breaking ideological responses to the West necessitated a modernisation of the vocabulary of Islamic religious scholarship. The article concludes that al-Afghānī was an eminent political activist and scholar, and was a trailblazing modernist reformer. His influence was enormous. He was one of the pioneers of modernist movements in Islam that proliferated after his death. His tactic was neither reckless imitation nor irresponsible denigration, with regard to anything within the sphere of either Western civilisation or Islamic tradition.

Keywords: Al-Afghānī, Islamic unity, modernist movement, pan-Islamism, reformist thought

Introduction

The latter part of the 19th and the early 20th centuries were most critical for Muslims. The Muslim *ummah* (community) and Islamic civilisation as a whole stood at a crossroads. Internally, the Muslim world was divided like never before, religious laxity and intellectual stupor prevailed, and concerning the permutations of the socio-political dynamics of the day, Muslims remained lethargic and directionless. Externally, the Western world was rising rapidly, and its economic and military might, coupled with aggressive colonialist and expansionist tendencies, prompted it to make the most of the declining world of Islam.

In short, while Muslims were on the defensive, desperately clinging to their cultural and civilisational survival, Westerners were on the offensive, sensing that the old world order was collapsing irreversibly and that a new one, with Western values and worldview in charge, was in the offing. Nobody doubted that Islam and Muslims were at the most critical juncture of their civilisational existence. With the Ottoman Empire, as the last imperial torchbearer of the caliphate institution, in shambles, Muslims faced bleak prospects. Hence, some drastic steps had to be taken and unconventional choices made. People were torn between being audacious and facing the challenges head-on, in the belief that the latest developments were just another setback, as well as a test, and that the Islamic faith and Muslim spiritual, ethical, and intellectual configurations had what it takes to overcome the challenges, and between being despondent and fatalistic, recoiling in horror from the tribulations and gazing into the abyss of a cultural and civilisational obscurity.

One of the leading Muslim voices of the second half of the 19th century was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897). In many ways he was an originator of Muslim reformist thought in

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modern times. He advocated that Muslims should take on Western challenges by means of the strength of Islamic unity—ideologised in the West as pan-Islamism—affirmative political actions, and a series of religious and educational reforms that will be faithful to the Islamic spirit and, at the same time, will be duly responsive to the exigencies of the contemporary era.

Afghānī's influence was enormous. His ideas served as precursors to more than a few branches of Muslim intellectualism in the 20th century. As a pioneer, some of his ideas were accomplished, while others were in their infancy. The latter was refined and taken to another level by his disciples and followers. Just like everything, Afghānī's reformist thought was subjected to the principles of evolution and progress, where sometimes the pure political gusto prevailed, and at other times the one relating to the religious and educational concerns did.

Afghānī was a Muslim political activist, scholar, and philosopher. He signified a microcosm of the Muslim affirmative engagement and dedication towards the end of the 19th century. This article delves into several aspects of his reformist interdisciplinary thought. The discussion is divided into the following sections: Pan-Islamism versus Islamic unity; the context of Afghānī's thought; Afghānī versus the West; modernising the vocabulary of Islamic religious scholarship; conclusion.

Pan-Islamism versus Islamic unity

Pan-Islamism was one of the most important concepts of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, both in Muslim and Western scholarships. At the same time, however, it was also a misunderstood and misapplied philosophy. The root cause of the problem was the fact that what pan-Islamism meant to Westerners was not what the notions of total as well as worldwide Islamic unity, brotherhood, and cooperation meant to Muslims, in particular to the architects and promoters of those notions.

To Westerners, pan-Islamism was a form of Islamic, chiefly political, activism that called for a Muslim union or federation against Western Christian powers. It was an idea and advocacy of a political union of Muslim peoples and their states in order to resist Western imperialism and colonisation. This denotation is sometimes extended to mean a desire and plan for a Muslim (re)conquest of the world, in which case pan-Islamism is often bracketed with such erroneous and illusory ideas as "Muslim extremism," "Muslim fundamentalism," and "Muslim militancy" (Lewis, 1968; Landau, 2016; Pears, 1917).

In short, pan-Islamism had a non-Muslim origin. It had nothing to do with Islam and the Muslim religious consciousness and political activism of the day. It was a Western socio-political construct intended to undermine and preempt the prospect of any global Muslim regeneration and alliance. Moreover, it was fostered that pan-Islamism was just another pan-ideology and pan-movement that stood in the way of the Western-style modernisation and democratisation of the world. The prefix "pan" and suffix "ism," which sandwich the word "Islam," were indicative of this. Pan-Islamism was conceived as a dangerous Muslim weapon to be employed against the West and its existential socio-political and economic interests, but in reality, it was a secret weapon in the hands of Westerners to be used for legitimising and furthering their colonisation and expansionism drives in the name of a new world order paradigm. As such, in the eyes of the West, pan-Islamism had to be confronted and neutralised by any means necessary.

To Muslims, on the other hand, "pan-Islamism" was an attempt to revive and implement some of the most critical precepts of Islam in its capacity as a comprehensive way of life, such as the unity and brotherhood of Muslims, plus solidarity and close cooperation between them. Doing so was a sign of being a good Muslim and living the true Islam, whereas

the opposite was a sign of serious religious laxity and incompetence with regard to the arduous society- and civilisation-building processes. Doing so, furthermore, established itself as an individual and collective responsibility, especially towards the end of the 19th and at the turn of the 20th centuries when the Muslim world and, with it, Islamic culture and civilisation at large were on the verge of collapse.

There was nothing pioneering nor uncommon in the entire cause and its campaigns, neither conceptually nor expediently. The only thing that was different were the local and global contexts, which, inevitably, called for correspondingly different approaches and methods. Hence, nobody felt inclined to christen the latest developments and certain Muslim leaders' responses to them trendily along the lines of some contemporary Western vogues. Rather, what was taking place was seen as calls for *waḥdah islāmiyyah* or *ittiḥād al-islāmiyy*, both of which meant "Islamic unity." Many other terms were in circulation, all of which were related, one way or another, to inclusive Muslim unity, harmony, camaraderie, loyalty, support, and cooperation.

Nor were those reformist initiatives modern in the sense that they were solely Western-inspired and were fundamentally innovative and demanded a departure from traditional ways and mainstream Islamic values. On the contrary, the initiatives emphatically called for endorsing and revitalising the legacies as well as the ways of the "ancestors" (*salaf*), which signify the purest ways and most exemplary legacies associated with the first three generations of Islam. Thus, the first Muslim "reformers" in contemporary times, such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad Abduh (d. 1905), and Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935), regarded themselves as the revivers and preservers of Islam as practiced by the pious predecessors, albeit by relevantising and making Islam fully operational in modern times, which in turn rendered those reformers *mujtahids* or authoritative and independent interpreters of Islam and its laws.

Put differently, those reformers, as a matter of fact, were *salafis* par excellence and were part of an authentic *salafi* movement. They were also advanced and avant-garde traditionalists, so to speak, belonging to the "forward-thinking" orthodox and mainstream Islam. It was because of this that Rashīd Riḍā explicitly proclaimed in his *tafsīr*, or commentary of the Qur'an (*al-Manār*) that he was following the path and direction of the *salaf*. He vowed that he will never deviate from that course: "In doing so (following the *salaf*), I will live and die—God willing" (Riḍā, n.d., p. 86). Both Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh—whose heir in many ways was Rashīd Riḍā—made similar proclamations to the effect that following the path of the earliest Muslims and walking in their footsteps, in terms of understanding and practicing the fundamentals of the Islamic message, was the most proper course of action ('Abduh, 1994; al-Afghānī, 2000a).

For that reason, whenever Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) thought of modernism and modernist movements of Islam, he traced them back to the ideas and movement of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1792), the founder of the Wahabi (often understood as a derogatory tag) movement and the symbol of Salafism. Muhammad Iqbal (2012) described the movement of Muḥammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb as "the first throb of life in modern Islam." He also said that Afghānī's groundbreaking modernism was probably inspired by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (Iqbal, 2012, p. 200).

Except that the path of the *salaf* needed a modern operational framework supported by modern-day means and procedures, and that is what all true reformers were intent on. In doing so—constantly striving for the truth and excellence—if they got it right, they earned two rewards, and if they got it wrong, they earned one reward, as could be gleaned from a tradition of Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him). However, the terms Salafism and Islamic modernism were subsequently muddled, politicised, and widely misused. It became hard to distinguish where the two converged, ran parallel with each other, or where they partly

or completely separated. It also became unclear who exactly belonged to which camp and why. For the identical motives, the methodological missteps and inferential blunders of some, either reformers or outright purists, were overstated and at times even vilified, while the achievements of others were amplified and unduly venerated. Certainly, substance was bartered for superficialities and consequence for inconsequence.

It was only later constructed and imputed to those persons that they were reformers and modernists after the fashion of Western modernism and reformation and that they were advocating the radical ideology of pan-Islamism. So much so that Nikki Keddie (1972), for instance, believed that Afghānī perceived himself as something of an Islamic Martin Luther (a seminal figure in Protestant and European Reformation) on account of him preaching a religious reform as a prerequisite for any material reform. Nikki Keddie even said that there was evidence of that, which, however, seems to have been a third party's deduction or interpretation rather than a factual attestation or a personal admission. Similarly, some alleged that Muḥammad 'Abduh was an admirer of the Protestant Reformation just because he was a staunch admirer and supporter of a reform of religious thought, freedom of conscience and thought, and free will, and was as staunchly against blind religious following and imitation. If the two patterns were to some extent identical externally, on the inside they were poles apart (Keddie, 1972).

The context of Afghānī's thought

It was obvious that the whole world in the 19th and the early 20th centuries stood at a crossroads. Politically, a new world order was in the offing. Ideologically, however, things were not as promising. According to Albert Schweitzer, while the ages of enlightenment and reason in the 17th and 18th centuries represented at once the incubator and apex of Western civilisation—whose positive impacts extended over the subsequent three or four generations—after that, around the middle of the 19th century, things started to go downhill. Then, in the course of the next few decades—about the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries—"without resistance, without complaint, civilization abdicated. Its ideas lagged behind, as though they were too exhausted to keep pace with it" (Schweitzer, 1955, p. 4).

Albert Schweitzer (1955, pp. 4-10) attributed the abdication of civilisation to "philosophy's renunciation of her duty" and to a state when "a real combination of ethical ideals with reality was no longer possible." Afterwards, the author went on to elaborate that the causes of the collapse of civilisation revolved around people's self-deception as to the real meaning and condition of "our civilization," the collapse of the worldview on which "our ideals were based," the crisis in spirituality and morals, the superficial character of modern philosophising (a crisis of intellectuality), the undeveloped condition of the modern man and his lack of humanity. These causes at the same time revealed a path to the restoration of civilisation and its potential hindrances.

Not many people were able to penetrate through the surface of Western civilisation and a myriad of its inconsequentialities into the crux of the matter. A very few possessed the insight and wisdom of Albert Schweitzer. Because of its deceptive glitter, on the one hand, and because of its aggressive proselytisation tendencies, whereby Western civilisation was projected as a global as well as ultimate saviour of the world, on the other, the truth about Western civilisation was even harder to come by in the non-Western parts of the world. The world of Islam was no exception. In it, the modern West and its civilisational-cum-westernisation crusades presented themselves as undeniable realities that needed to be faced head-on. They posed endless questions that required answers. However, such were the conditions of the non-Western world, sustained deliberately or otherwise, that pinpointing the cumulative bankrupt dimensions of

Western civilisation normally took a backseat to the prospect of dealing with the basic and existential problems at hand.

As far as the Muslim world was concerned, only a handful of people were able to rise to the challenge. If the West was a victim of its own success, the Muslim world was a victim of its protracted living in a fool's paradise. The former was shrouded in impudence and arrogance, the latter in ignorance and stupor. Saying that people lived in a utopian state of mind would be an understatement. Certainly, Afghānī was one of those very few. He was way ahead of the curve and was more advanced than what could be properly comprehended and fully appreciated during his time. Hence, Jacob Landau (2016) remarked that Afghānī may have become more famous after his death than in his time.

This explains why Afghānī was constantly on the move, perennially restless, and at times overly assertive in his viewpoints. He knew how little time, limited resources, and few allies he had at his disposal while trying to do his bit to overcome the gargantuan problems facing the Muslim ummah (community). Afghānī visited many Muslim and Western countries, residing in some of them for extended periods. He was a nomad, so to speak, with no permanent residence. His origins were unclear too, which to some was irrelevant owing to the extraordinary dynamism and productivity of his personal vita, which eclipsed the case of the former and rendered it immaterial. Nobody knew where he had come from exactly, just as nobody ever knew what his next move would be, by design or enforcedly. His arcane life was and remained a mystery.

In this manner, there was a sense of consistency in Afghānī's life story. His travels included Iran, Afghanistan, India, Turkey, Hijaz, Egypt, France, England, and Russia.

> Thanks to his intelligence, charismatic oratory, powers of persuasion, and writing ability, he earned many admirers, some of whom considered themselves his disciples and continued to spread his message. He seems to have been equally successful in conversing with small elitist groups and in haranguing large crowds in the manner of a populist leader. It was this very success that made Afghānī suspect to the ruling circles and he was exiled from - or persuaded to leave - Iran, Afghanistan, India and Egypt. (Landau, 2016, pp. 13-14)

At any rate, Afghānī was a pioneer of Muslim modern reformist thought, irrespective of how some people may be disposed to interpreting the concepts of "Muslim modernism" and "Muslim reformism." Undeniably, Afghānī was the first Muslim intellectual who launched ideological responses to the major aspects of the Western cultural and civilisational onslaughts. He did so methodically, scientifically, and sometimes in the West's own backyard. His approach was neither reckless imitation nor irresponsible denigration pertaining to anything within the universe of either Western civilisation or Islamic tradition. Nor was he susceptible to hasty and awkward reconciliation between the values and canons of Islam and those of the modern West. Rather, Afghānī's aim was the timelessness and universality of the truth of Islam. He was after it in all spheres of life, regardless of where such a quest might have taken him, both in intellectual and physical terms. Thus, no "stone" did he leave "unturned" in intellectual circles, and no geographical spot did appear far-flung in his going the distance.

Afghānī versus the West

Afghānī was the first to face ideological and intellectual battles with the Western cultural hegemony. He made the most of channels and facilities provided by the latter, such as the press, multilingualism, systems of government, and human rights, which included freedom of movement and freedom of thought. Together with Muḥammad 'Abduh, Afghānī founded the

newspaper *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* (the Most Trustworthy Handhold). As regards standard setting and benchmarking, the newspaper was the first of its kind in relation to the evolution of Islamic modernist and revolutionary thought. It was founded and printed in Paris and was distributed gratis all over the Muslim world.

Although it was in operation for only about seven months, from 13 March 1884 to October 1884, the newspaper generated tremendous interest, significantly impacting the Muslim religious and socio-political consciousness. It was a game-changer in Muslim journalism, connoting simultaneously the dawn of a new era. Its focus, in general, was three-pronged: promoting and campaigning for Islamic unity, resisting European colonialism and westernisation altogether, and encouraging a reformation of Islamic thought. A total of eighteen issues were published. The publication ceased after the newspaper had been banned in Egypt and India by the British colonisers and after the funds had dried up.

The title of the newspaper was given after the expression *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* (the Most Trustworthy Handhold) in two Qur'anic verses. In them, grasping *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* was made comparable to believing in Almighty Allah and rejecting false deities (al-Baqarah, 256), and submitting the whole self (being) to Allah and doing what is good (Luqman, 22). While in the first verse, the phrase *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* is followed by the words "which never breaks," in the second it is followed by a proclamation that "with Allah rests the end and decision of all affairs." When placed in the wider Qur'anic contexts and within its space-time, the newspaper's purpose and mission become readily apparent; as do the vision, purpose, and direction of the real-life struggle the newspaper epitomised.

Moreover, Afghānī composed the treatise "The Refutation of the Materialists," most probably in India in 1881. In it, he refuted all theoretical and practical aspects of materialism essentially as a system of thought and a system of life. He targeted many of that philosophy's ancient as well as contemporary manifestations, including Darwinism and its theory of evolution. The treatise is evidence that Afghānī was well-versed in Islamic and Western philosophy. His knowledge of the philosophy and development of science, by the same token, was commendable and up-to-date. The treatise was originally written in Persian. Muḥammad 'Abduh, aided by a follower of Afghānī, translated it into Arabic.

Afghānī also wrote some newspaper articles in French. His French was not of the acceptable scholarly standards; hence, while doing so, he should have been helped by others. Another possibility was that at first, he wrote his articles in Arabic, which were then translated into French. In a French police dossier on Afghānī, it was deposited that he was well educated, and although he had mastery of eight languages, he expressed himself in French with difficulty (Keddie, 1972).

When Ernest Renan (d. 1892), a French orientalist and scholar, gave a lecture at the Sorbonne on 29 March 1883, which was titled "Islam and Science," in it he denigrated Islam and its position towards science. The lecture was immediately published in a French newspaper. Afghānī, who was in Paris at the time, was stirred by the lecture/article and felt compelled to respond. His response was titled "Response (*radd*) to Renan" and was published in French in the same newspaper.

In passing, with regard to the content of Afghānī's "Response," people's understandings vary. Many failed to reconcile between Afghānī's overall disposition and his standard religious views, and some aspects of the "Response" which seem to have backed in some way Renan's unfair verdicts. However, according to Sayyid Hadi Khosroushahi, the editor and commentator of Afghānī's articles published in *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, the whole thing was a conspiracy against Afghānī. He was victimised by French and possibly some other European colonial authorities (al-Afghānī, 2000b).

In a nutshell, Ernest Renan greatly maligned Islam and its inherent proclivity for scientific inquiry and learning in general. Afghānī was incensed at the obvious affront and bias and wanted to reply and set the record straight. However, when published, Afghānī's response was not only docile and cordial but also supportive of most of Ernest Renan's standpoints.

Sayyid Hadi Khosroushahi believes that the published form of the letter was the product of a machination. He bases his conviction on the following points. Firstly, Afghānī wanted to answer and respond (*radd*) to the aired allegations. If he simply expressed his agreement with and support of the views of Ernest Renan, that would have defeated the purpose of an intended answer and response. Certainly, *radd* in Arabic, *reponse* in French, and response in English imply more than mere consensus and harmony. Secondly, Afghānī first composed and sent his response in Arabic, which was then translated into French. He had no control over the translation due to his modest French and due to the operating procedure adopted by the newspaper. However, soon thereafter the original Arabic version of the response went missing and was never recovered. Thirdly, why was not Afghānī allowed to respond to his distorted response in the same newspaper after he had found out that his earlier views were either mistranslated or clearly tampered with? Fourthly, why did Afghānī cut off all ties afterwards with the newspaper *Journal des Debats*, which had published his (in)famous response (*radd*), proceeding, instead, to collaborate with another French newspaper *L'Intransigeant*. Fifthly, some of the greatest Muslim minds of the era, such as Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, and Shakīb Arslān (d. 1946), approved of Afghānī's actions. They fully understood the designs of the French and other conspirators, which aimed at discrediting the thought and character of Afghānī, alongside the integrity of his revolutionary cause (al-Afghānī, 2000c).

The newspaper *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* was obviously achieving its goals. It was a truly international publication that did not reverberate just across the Muslim world but also in the West, whose stakes concerning the former were increasing every day. The newspaper caused especially political and liberal hawks in the West to sit up and take notice. In one of his *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* articles titled "English Newspapers and *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*," Afghānī elaborated on the antagonism of English newspapers towards the existential mission of *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* even before the commencement of its publication, based on what some French newspapers had published beforehand for the same tension-mongering reasons. Those English newspapers warned their government against taking lightly the threat of *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* to its imperialistic interests, specifically in India and Egypt (al-Afghānī, 2000d; al-Afghānī, 2000e).

Modernising the vocabulary of Islamic religious scholarship

One of the most remarkable intellectual contributions of Afghānī was his modernisation of the vocabulary and content of Islamic religious scholarship, which was subsequently perfected by his followers. As observed by Albert Hourani, the centre of Afghānī's attention was no longer Islam as a religion, but rather Islam as a civilisation. The aim of man's acts, in addition to serving God alone, had also become "the creation of human civilization flourishing in all its parts" (Hourani, 2013, p. 114) The idea of civilisation was one of the seminal ideas of 18th- and 19th-century Europe, and it was through Afghānī, above all, that it reached the Muslim world and started gaining currency in Muslim thought.

As a short digression, the first known use of the word "civilization" in French was in 1757 by Victor de Riquety Marquis de Mirabeau, a French economist, and the first use in English was in 1767 by Adam Ferguson, a Scottish philosopher and historian of the Scottish Enlightenment, in his influential book *The History of Civil Society*.

Definitely, it was Afghānī who was the first Muslim scholar to integrate the "civilisation" concept into the Arabic language as part of his modernist thought. In a number of his *al-ʿUrwah al-Wuthqā* articles, he employed such terms as "*tamaddun*," "*madaniyyah*," "*umam mutamaddinah*," "*ʿalam al-madaniyyah*," and "*niẓām al-madaniyyah*," which mean respectively "civilisation," "civilisation or urbanisation", "civilised societies," "the world of civilisation or urbanisation," and "the system of civilisation or urbanisation." These words and expressions were not in use as such in classical times. After Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā refined the new terminology and yet fashioned and added the word "*haḍārah*" to also mean "civilisation". Thenceforth, "*tamaddun*", "*haḍārah*"—plus Ibn Khaldun's concept of "*ʿumran*"—became standard expressions for "civilisation" in the modern Arabic language.

Following the institution of an Arabic Islamic magazine, *al-Manār* (*the Lighthouse*), in 1898—one year after Afghānī's demise—whose founder was Rashīd Riḍā and who was at the same time its editor until his death in 1935, the civilisational themes therein were ever more common. As early as in the first issue of the magazine, it was admitted that the problem of terminology in contemporary Muslim thought, while confronting the mounting challenges of the day, was substantial ("Iṣṭilāḥāt kuttab al-ʿaṣr," 1315H, pp. 14). Clarifying some such terms, therefore, was undertaken, and a recurring section in the magazine titled "Iṣṭilāḥāt kuttab al-ʿaṣr" (The vocabularies of the authors of the present time) was assigned for the purpose. Some terms were explained straightforwardly and others in the contexts of other issues. The concept of "*tamaddun*" (civilisation) was one of such terms. For example, once an essay titled "Al-Tamaddun" (1315H, pp. 61) was published autonomously, whereas at another time, as part of a larger article called "Al-Ḥarb" (1315H, pp. 156), a discussion on "*al-ḥarb wa al-tamaddun*" (War and Civilisation) was presented.

By the way, the first Muslim scholars to systematically articulate the concept of "civilization" and to coin the idiom "Islamic civilization" in the English language, within the framework of their progressive Muslim thought, were Indian scholars Syed Ameer Ali (d. 1928) and Salahuddin Khuda Bakhsh (d. 1931). The former did so in his books *A Short History of the Saracens* (1900) and *The Spirit of Islam* (1902), and the latter in his book *Contributions to the History of Islamic Civilization* (1905). Evidently, Afghānī preceded them with his invention in the Arabic language by about twenty years.

Finally, when on one occasion Afghānī was asked concerning the right way to achieve civilisation, he replied that it must be a religious movement. He then expounded that even Europe's trajectory from barbarism to civilisation could not be feasible without the religious movement initiated and disseminated by Martin Luther. However, some researchers like Albert Hourani (2013) and Nikki Keddie (1972) erroneously inferred from this that Afghānī's message was messianic, that he believed that Islam needed its own Martin Luther, and that perhaps Afghānī saw himself in that particular role.

Conclusion

Afghānī was the forerunner of Islamic modernist thought in the sense that has already been explained. His thought was tripartite: political, social, and religious, focusing on awakening the Muslim mind and arousing it against the insatiable Western colonial powers and the fraudulent and hopeless Muslim rulers. The key was unity, predicated on proper learning and visionary political action plans. Because of Afghānī's practical fascination with politics and political reforms, he alternated between different centres of the Muslim political reality, chief of which, expectedly, was Istanbul.

Afghānī's influence was enormous, becoming more apparent after his death than in his lifetime. That was perhaps due to the fact that he was often misunderstood and that certain aspects of his fundamental ideas needed time to crystallise and take effect. Nikki Keddie (1968) recapped Afghānī's impact in the style of employing Islam as an ideology to strengthen its position as a focus of identity and solidarity against the attacks of the Christian West, and to use it as a rallying point for the repulsion of Western conquerors. To young men with a traditional religious education, he also showed a way to adopt political and scientific ideas from the West without abandoning their religious identification or pride in their own traditions. Whatever later historians may conclude about his exact influence, his position as a precursor and early teacher of anti-imperialism, nationalism, solidarity against the West, and self-strengthening reform—all of which causes have grown and flourished since his lifetime—seems secure."

By the same token, according to Jacob Landau (2016), Afghānī's greatest merit was to have shown that, in his days at least, "pan-Islam and nationalism could be mutually complementary, and to politicize Islam within a pan-Islamic context or, otherwise said, to transform Islam into a political ideology." Both the Ottoman government and its opposition could distinguish a silver lining in Afghānī's thoughts. Afghānī himself did not really take the trouble to demarcate the two from each other. His was a compelling case; no side could fully embrace nor completely snub him.

Muḥammad 'Abduh was Afghānī's most prominent disciple and close collaborator in the newspaper *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*. Muḥammad 'Imārah believed that the newspaper was exclusively Afghānī's mouthpiece. He was the key factor in the publication. He was *mudīr* or director, and the newspaper was the mirror image of his personal beliefs and ideas. Muḥammad 'Abduh, on the other hand, was just the editor and an "assistant." He was invited to undertake the assignment, and were it not for his unenviable personal situation—he was exiled from his native Egypt by the British from 1882 to 1888—he might not have joined the newspaper project in a foreign country at all ('Imarah, 1993).

Afghānī was a leader in amalgamating the religion of Islam and politics in modern times and in calling for Islamisation and adoption of those aspects of Western civilisation that were indispensable for an Islamic revival. Blind following and soulless imitation of Western values, systems, and institutions were pernicious, as were the unreasonable interpretations of and the unrealistic implementation attempts towards Islam. Afghānī wanted Muslims to find solace in the fact that the supreme truth (whose repository is Islam alone), virtue, civilisation, and strength are essentially connected with each other. If pride and self-esteem were the problem, they should remember that neither the achievements of Christian nor the failure of Muslim countries were due to their religions. "The Christian peoples grew strong because the Church grew up within the walls of the Roman Empire and incorporated its pagan beliefs and virtues; the Muslim peoples grew weak because the truth of Islam was corrupted by successive waves of falsity. Christians are strong because they are not really Christian; Muslims are weak because they are not really Muslim" (Hourani, 2013).

Without denting the contributions and roles of other political, intellectual and religious figures—which in fact were complementary—Afghānī inspired a school of thought that produced sundry branches and systems, such as Muḥammad 'Abduh's purely educational and religious pan-Islamism and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī's pan-Islamic Arabic solidarity. Afghānī preceded the "age of labelling." However, what he did and how, in a way, speeded up its rise. Hence, seldom are scholarly studies undertaken today on the origins and philosophical backgrounds of such ideologies and movements—many of whose designations have rightly been questioned—as Salafism, Islamic modernism, political Islam, Islamism, Islamic awakening and Islamisation of knowledge, without reference to Afghānī and his direct or indirect influences.

Finally, Muhammad Iqbal (2012) regarded Afghānī as an eminent scholar and a groundbreaking modernist reformer. He was one of the pioneers of modernist movements in Islam. For instance, Muhammad Iqbal said about him:

> The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past. Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit in him was Shah Wali Allah of Delhi. The man, however, who fully realized the importance and immensity of the task, and whose deep insight into the inner meaning of the history of Muslim thought and life, combined with a broad vision engendered by his wide experience of men and manners, would have made him a living link between the past and the future, was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. If his indefatigable but divided energy could have devoted itself entirely to Islam as a system of human belief and conduct, the world of Islam, intellectually speaking, would have been on a much more solid ground today. (p. 78)

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Decolonising the History of Islam in the "Lands below the Wind": The Orientalist *vis-à-vis* Revisionist Theories

Syamsuddin Arif[1]

Abstract: A debated topic in the history of Southeast Asia revolves around the coming, spread, and influence of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago: whether Islam was brought to the region in the 13th century or earlier; whether it came from India or directly from Arabia; whether it was propagated by traders, by itinerant Sufis, or by missionaries; and whether conversion to Islam washed over traditional society but has left its basic way of life intact, or transformed the society and changed its underlying structure and worldview. This article seeks to "decolonise" the historical writing about the arrival and impact of Islam in the Malay world by critically assessing the positions and arguments of the European Orientalists and their opponents, often called "Revisionist" historians, who have presented new data and fresh interpretations in an effort to challenge the dominant view and separate fact from fiction, as well put the matter to rest.

Keywords: Islamic history, Islam in Southeast Asia, Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, orientalism, revisionist, decolonise

Introduction

In his 2011 book, *Historical Fact and Fiction*, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas submits the history of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago to close scrutiny.[2] He focuses on the important role that the Arab *sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet's family) from Arabia, India, and Persia had played in propagating Islam to the peoples in the "Lands below the Wind" right from the earliest periods to the 12th century onwards. This pioneering role has not been properly acknowledged, if not totally ignored and denied, by most historians. While he duly appraises the contributions of European scholars and affirms what is true in their writings, al-Attas sharply criticises the idea that Islam was spread by merchants via trade routes and points out to the errors and confusions that many scholars have succumbed to, insofar as they are too eager to fit historical data into their preconceived time frame. In opposition to the dominant paradigm that sees Islam as nothing more than "a thin layer resting on top of large and essentially intact societies," al-Attas argues that the spread of Islam in the Archipelago has brought about a profound change of ideas in the worldview and culture of its peoples. What

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[2] In his own words: "We must question the way they [i.e. Western Orientalists] arrive at their theories, their way of reasoning and analysis, their setting forth of premises and arrival at conclusions, their raising of problems and arrival at their solutions, their understanding of recondite matters of meaning, their raising of doubts and ambiguities and their insistence upon empirical facts" (Al-Attas, 2011, p. xi).

follows is an attempt to evaluate contending theories and to overcome biases and prejudices that are tacitly embedded in the prevalent historical narrative and may have clouded rational judgment.

Dating the Arrival

There is a great deal of obscurity and uncertainty about the earliest presence of Islam in the regions now known as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines. When did Islam reach this part of the world? Historians are still divided on the answer to this basic question. It is commonplace to suggest that Islam arrived in these regions in the 13th century CE, following the collapse of the 'Abbasid Dynasty after the Mongol invasion and sack of Baghdad in 1258 CE. The famous Dutch orientalist and colonial advisor Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (d. 1936), for example, writes that "*Toen de Mongolenvorst Hoelagoe in 1258 na Chr. Baghdad verwoestte, … was de Islam langzaam and begonnen, in de eilanden van den Oost-Indischen Archipel door te dringen*" [As the Mongolian prince Hulagu devastated Baghdad in 1258 AD, … Islam had gradually begun to penetrate the islands of the East Indian Archipelago] (Hurgronje, 1923, p. 361).[3] Those who share this opinion often refer to the inscription on Sultan al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's tombstone dated 696 AH (= 1296 CE). Others cite the travel account of Marco Polo who, on his journey to China by sea, had stopped in Sumatra sometime in 1292 and noted that the people of the kingdom of Ferlac (i.e. Perlak) had embraced Islam (Polo, 1866; Pelliot, 1959). Many have, on the basis of these data, argued that if Islam had been in place before the 13th century CE, why was there no written, concrete, or empirical evidence about it? The absence of evidence is evidence of absence, so goes the argument. It is therefore concluded that Islam could not have been present earlier than the 13th century.

But is there really no evidence for the earlier presence of Islam in the region? The answer would be affirmative had it not been for a tombstone found in Leran, Gresik, East Java, which bears the name of a certain Fāṭimah bint Maymūn bin Hibatillāh. The gravestone is dated 495 Hijri (=1102 CE), according to J. P. Moquette (1921), or 475 AH (=1082 CE), according to Paul Ravaisse (1925). This hard evidence, which certain scholars either missed or simply ignored, has allowed us to draw a rational conclusion that Islam must have gained a foothold in the Archipelago at least two centuries earlier than what Hurgronje had suggested. In other words, one can take the year 475 Hijri (=1082 CE) as the *terminus ante quem* for the arrival of Islam, especially on the island of Java—namely, it is the latest time Islam may have reached the region; it could be earlier, but it cannot possibly be later than the 11th century CE.

Another opinion—which we may call the 'revisionist' theory—maintains that Islam was introduced to the people of the Archipelago as early as the 7th century CE, namely since the time of the Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn ('Rightly Guided Caliphs') who reigned in the first century AH (*Anno Hegirae*). This is the view of contemporary Muslim scholars of Malaysia (i.e. S. M. N. al-Attas), the Philippines (C.A. Majul), and Indonesia (i.e. Hamka), which is attested by quite a number of historical data (Hasymy, 1993).[4] Indeed, a Chinese report of the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 CE) mentions that the Ta-Shih people (i.e. Arabs) aborted their plan to attack the kingdom of Ho Ling ruled by Queen Sima (674 CE). It is thus concluded that Muslim people from Arab

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[3] Hurgronje (1911) restated his opinion in a lecture delivered in Amsterdam: "*Niet de godsdienst van Mohammed, maar de tot rijpheid ontwikkelde Islam kan herwaarts zijn overgekomen. … de derde eeuw onstaan* [It was not the religion of Muhammad that came to this Archipelago, but the Islam that has developed to maturity. … three centuries later]."

[4] In a conference on the coming of Islam to Indonesia held in Medan on March 17-20, 1963/ Shawwal 21-24, 1382, which was attended by notable figures including the Indonesian army chief commander Gen. A. H. Nasution, Minister of Religious Affairs K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri, Minister of Information Prof. Dr. Roeslan Abdul Gani, Dr. H. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), Dr. Tudjimah, and many others, a conclusion was reached on the early date of the coming of Islam to Nusantara, namely the seventh century.

lands must have settled in the Archipelago—presumably Sumatra—as early as the first century Hijri (7th century CE) (Tjandrasasmita, 2000; Al-Attas, 2011; Groeneveldt, 1960).

Further corroboration is provided by Ibrahim Buchari, who refers to the date inscribed on the tombstone of a cleric named Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn in Barus, Tapanuli, northwest Sumatra, where it is written the year 48 AH which is equivalent to the year 670 CE (Azmi, 1993; Hill, 1963). It is interesting to note in this case that Barus was already known to the Arabs even before the time of the Prophet for its product called *kāfūr* in Arabic (i.e. camphor), which was used in ancient times as a common perfume ingredient and preservative substance. Some scholars, including the late Buya Hamka and S. M. Naquib al-Attas, believe that what is mentioned in the Qur'an 86: 5 as "*kāfūr*" is none other than the camphor from Barus. Consequently, they argue that Islam was introduced to the Archipelago since the first century Hijri. Al-Attas refers to the earliest indigenous source, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, which mentions a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad urging his Companions to spread Islam in a place called 'Samudra' (Al-Attas, 2011).

In addition, there is similar information coming from Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ṭālib ad-Dimasyqī (d. 1327 CE) known as Shaykh ar-Rabwah, the author of *Nukhbat al-Dahr fī 'Ajā'ib al-Barr wa al-Baḥr* ('Selected Chronicle on the Wonders of the Land and the Sea'), who says that Islam has entered the Archipelago through Champa (what is now Cambodia and Vietnam) since the time of the Caliph 'Uthmān, which is around 30 AH (651 CE). In Tibbetts' words: "The Muslim religion came there in the time of 'Uthman, and the 'Alids expelled by the Umaiyads and by al-Hajjaj, took refuge there, having crossed the Sea of Pitch" (Tibbetts, 1979, p. 63; Manguin, 1979, p. 257). According to al-Attas, it is probably related to the event mentioned in the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* that the Sharif of Mecca was ordered by the Caliph to send a mission to a "country below the wind" called Samudra (Al-Attas, 2011; Suryanegara, 2009).

Provenance

Disagreement also persists over the origin of those who first preached Islam in this part of the world. There are six notable 'theories', the **first** of which says that Islam was brought into the Archipelago by merchants from Gujarat, a province in southern India. Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, for example, holds that the early Muslims who spread their religion in Indonesia did not come directly from Arabia, but rather, according to him, from the Indian subcontinent: "*la religion du prophète arabe a été introduite dans l'Archipel par l'intermédiaire de l'Inde*" (Hurgronje, 1923, p. 106).[5] He points out as evidence some religious characteristics commonly observed among Muslims in Indonesia and their counterparts in India. Traditional folklore (*hikayat*) about the Prophet and his first followers in the local languages, for example, he says, are not only lacking historical values but also far from Islamic values, as these stories mostly originated from India. Moreover, certain rituals and festivals of Muslims in Indonesia show some similarities with those practiced by the Shiites on the coast of Malabar and Coromandel, even though Indonesian Muslims are generally Sunnīs and follow the Shafi'i school of law.

The aforementioned opinion, sometimes dubbed the 'Gujarat theory', was originally put forward for the first time by D. J. Pijnappel (1872), the first Malay language professor at Leiden University. Based on the story of a sailor by the name of Sulaymān in 851 CE and the

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[5] It was originally a professorial lecture titled *Arabie en Oost-Indië*, which he delivered at Leiden University in January 23, 1907 and published in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, vol. 29, no. 57 (1908), pp. 60-80. André Wink (1991, p. 85) writes in his book, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, Vol. 1: "Then, considering that the trade route went via Gujarat and Malabar, Snouck Hurgronje and others concluded a South-Indian origin."

travel accounts of Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūtah who visited Sumatra in the first half of the 14th century (1325-1353), it was concluded that the arrival of Islam must be through trade routes from the Persian Gulf to the west coast of India, then from Gujarat and Malabar to the Archipelago. This theory is defended by the French Orientalist J.P. Moquette (1913), according to whom the marble tombstones found in Samudra Pasai are likely to come from a factory in Cambay, Gujarat. Apart from C.S. Hurgronje, this opinion is held by the majority of historians, including H. J. Van den Bergh, H. Kroeskamp, Prijohutomo, I. P. Simandjoentak, Rosihan Anwar, and many others.[6] R. A. Kern (1938, p. 313), for instance, writes that "it was in Cambay where the co-religionists lived, to whom one turned for such matters, where the ties of trade with India led, and from where Muslim merchants brought Islam to the Archipelago."

Notwithstanding its popularity, the 'Gujarat theory' has been criticised by scholars for the factual errors it involves. G.E. Morrison, for example, argues that it is impossible for Islam in the 13th century to come to the Archipelago from the Indian province of Gujarat, considering the fact that Marco Polo described Cambay in 1293 as a Hindu city, and Gujarat did not fall into the Muslim hands until 1297. Morrison does not deny the existence of earlier Muslim settlements in southern India for centuries, albeit without political power, namely those who lived in Ceylon (Sarandīb or Sri Lanka), Malabar, and Coromandel before the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate in the early 14th century. Some of them are believed to be descendants of Arab Muslims from Iraq who fled to India towards the end of the 7th century CE in order to avoid Governor al-Hajjaj's cruelty. Furthermore, the 'Gujarat theory' does not tally with the fact that Gujarati Muslims were predominantly adherents of Ḥanafī rather than Shāfi'ī school of law, and Acehnese folklore was colored not so much by Hindi as by Tamil elements. So it is more

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[6] H. J. van den Bergh, H. Kroeskamp, Prijohutomo, and I. P. Simandjoentak (1954) state: "*Kita dapat mengambil kesimpulan, bahwa agama Islam jang masuk ke Indonesia itu sesungguhnja berasal dari Gudjarat*" [We can conclude that Islam came to Indonesia from Gujarat]; Abbas Hassan (1953) writes: "*Selain Malaka mendjadi kota dagang, jang mendjadi tempat berhimpunnja para saudagar, djuga disitu saudagar/mubaligh Islam dari Persia dan Gudjarat sangat giat melakukan penjiaran Islam*" [Apart from Malacca being a trading city, which was a gathering place for traders, it was also a place where Islamic traders/missionaries from Persia and Gujarat were very active in spreading Islam]; Zuber Usman (1963, p. 15) writes: "*Jang membawa agama Islam kesana ialah saudagar-saudagar dari Gudjarat, sebuah tempat disebelah selatan Bombay. Mereka datang berdagang kesini sambil mengembangkan agamanja*" [Those who introduced Islam there were merchants from Gudjarat, a location south of Bombay. They came here for commerce while expading their religion]; Muhammad Usman el Muhammady (Teungku) (1963) asserts that "*Islam datang ke Malaya tidak langsung dari pusatnja, tetapi dari Gudjarat, Persia, India dan Hadarmaut. Kedatangannja di Indonesia dan Malaya dengan perantaraan saudagar musafir. Bukan datang special atas initiatip zending jang teratur*" [Islam came to Malaya not directly from the center, but from Gujarat, Persia, India and Hadarmaut. Its arrival in Indonesia and Malaya was through traveler traders. It did not specially come based on a regular missionary initiative]; Theodor Müller-Krüger (1966, p. 16) writes: "*... terutama dari India Barat ialah Gudjarat, merekalah jang menjiarkan agama ini, ketika mereka dapat memasuki istana-istana*" [... especially from West India, namely Gudjarat, they are the ones who spread this religion, when they can enter the palaces]; Th. van den End (2007, p. 20) suggests that "*Pada abad ke-13, suatu agama lain lagi mulai memasuki Indonesia melalui jalur perdagangan. Enam ratus tahun sebelumnya Islam telah merebut Arabia, Mesir dan Persia. Pedagang-pedagang di wilayah itu memeluk agama yang baru itu dan membawanya ke pelabuhan-pelabuhan di India Barat, khususnya Cambay, di Gujarat. Islam mulai tersebar di sana sejak abad ke-9, dan berkuasa pada abad ke-13. Dari Gujarat, saudagar-saudagar yang beragama Islam mulai menyebarkan agama itu di Indonesia pula*" [In the 13th century, another religion began to enter Indonesia through trade routes. Six hundred years earlier, Islam had conquered Arabia, Egypt and Persia. Traders in the region embraced the new religion and brought it to ports in West India, especially Cambay, in Gujarat. Islam began to spread there from the 9th century, and came to power in the 13th century. From Gujarat, Muslim traders began to spread the religion in Indonesia as well]; Rosihan Anwar (2009, p. 98) views that "*Perdagangan laut yang mewujudkan kejayaan Majapahit akhirnya menghancurkan Majapahit. Sebab, saudagar-saudagar, para pelaut, dan orang-orang keramat dari Gujarat dan Persia membawa ke pelabuhan-pelabuhan di pantai Laut Jawa sebuah agama baru yang bersifat egaliter, yakni Islam*" [The sea trade that brought the glory of Majapahit eventually destroyed Majapahit. Because, traders, sailors, and sacred people from Gujarat and Persia brought to the ports on the coast of the Java Sea a new egalitarian religion, namely Islam].

appropriate to say, he concludes, that "the provenance of Malaysian [or Indonesian] Islam is in fact Southern India" (Morrison, 1951).

Morrison's conclusion leads us to the **second** theory according to which Islam came to the Archipelago from Bengal. This is the opinion of Syed Qadarullah Fatimi, who cites Tomé Pires' report, contemporaneous Chinese chronicle, and Sufi elements found in Indonesia and Malaysia as supporting evidence. Fatimi believes that the founder of the first kingdom in Aceh, namely Merah Silau, originated from Bengal. In his famous travelogue the Portuguese Tomé Pires writes that

> in the island of Çomotora [i.e. Sumatra] most of the kings are Moors [i.e. Muslims] and some are heathens. … Pase used to have heathen kings, and it must be a hundred and sixty years now since the said kings were worn out by the cunning of the merchant Moors … and the said Moors held the sea coast and they made a Moorish king of the Bengali caste, from that time until now the kings of Pase have always been Moors; except that up till now they have been unable to convert the people of the interior; yet in these kingdoms there are in the island of Sumatra, those on the sea coast are all Moors on the side of the Malacca Channel, and those who are not yet Moors are being made so every day, and no heathen among them is held in any esteem unless he is a merchant. (Cortesao, 1990, pp. 137 & 143)

This means that the kings in Sumatra at the time of his visit were already Muslim and that the kingdom of Samudra Pasai was originally ruled by pagans and only converted to Islam around 160 years earlier (i.e. around 1352 CE), after the arrival of Muslim traders ("the merchant Moors") who had long ruled the coastal area. It was they who later appointed a Muslim from Bengal as king in Pasai. Another clue is the habit of the Archipelago people wearing "sarong" cloth which is said to be the same as the habit of Bengali people. In conclusion, Fatimi maintains that "Bengal is the main provenance of Sumatran Islam, even though it does not at all exclude the possibility of strong influences from other parts of the Islamic world" (Fatimi, 1963, pp. 14-18, and 23).

Still, a **third** theory says that the spread of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago is due to the efforts of early Muslim missionaries from Arabia. Although it cannot be known for certain when the first Muslims from Arabia came to preach in the Archipelago, information about the centuries-long relationship between Southeast Asia and the Middle East since pre-Islamic times does not rule out the possibility of Islam being introduced in the region by preachers from Arabia. Chinese royal sources from the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 CE) recorded the first diplomatic visit from an Arab country called Ta Shih in 31 AH/651 CE, namely during the Caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (d. 35 H/656 M). The second mission, which was recorded as *Tan-mi-mo-ni* (the Chinese term for Amirul Mu'minin), arrived at T'ang's palace some four years later (Broomhall, 1910; Nakahara, 1984). It is therefore certain that the coastal areas along the islands of Sumatra had become their transit place since the first Islamic century. The diplomatic relations between the early Muslim caliphs and the Chinese emperors of the T'ang dynasty continued into the days of the Umayyads (660-749 CE). With the rise of Srivijaya kingdom in Sumatra, the Archipelago's waters were increasingly traversed by trading ships from Arabia and Persia on their voyage to China (Hourani, 1995). This opinion was also held by Sir John Crawfurd who wrote in 1820 that "The Indian islanders first received the religion of Mahomed from the orthodox land of Arabia … with minute exceptions not worth mentioning, the Indian islanders were followers of the doctrine of Shāfi'ī, the prevalent doctrine of Arabia, and particularly of the maritime portions of that country, from whence proceeded the first apostles of Islam to the Indian islands" (Crawfurd, 1820, pp. 259-260) The same conclusion was stated by Thomas W. Arnold (1913) in *The Preaching of Islam* and S.M.N. al-Attas in his *Historical Fact and Fiction*.

The Malay nomenclature *Negeri Bawah Angin* is a literal translation of the Persian *zīr-bād*, meaning "below the wind", i.e. *leeward* (Yule, 1903; Clifford & Swettenham, 1894, p. 63;

Azra, 1995, p. 183).   It is a navigation term used by seamen from the Persian Gulf to designate the countries east of India, presumably Bengal, Malacca, and Sumatra, in contradistinction to those countries "above the wind" to the west of India, which were probably Ceylon, the Maldives, Socotra, etc. According to Leonard Andaya, however, in the early Malay sources such as the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and the *Sulālat al-Salāṭīn*, the term "*bawah angin*" was used to refer to a region of mainly Muslim kingdoms stretching from Sumatra to Maluku, whereas the opposite term "*atas angin*" would mean those lands the west of Sumatra (Andaya, 2008). In any case, this term leads us to the **fourth** theory that Islam was brought into this region by people from Persia. Indeed, there are written records of the voyages of the Persians to India, and via the Archipelago, to China since pre-Islamic times (Hasan, 1928; Purbatjaraka, 1961). The Chinese chronicler Yuan-Tchao, in his *Tcheng-yuan-sin-ting-che-kiao-mou-lou*, which he wrote in the early 9th century, records that in 99 AH/717 CE there were about 35 ships from Persia arriving in Palembang (Ferrand, 1913; Azra, 1995).   Linguistic data seems to confirm what we may call the 'Persian theory' of Islam's provenance. There are many words in Malay that are derived from Persian, such as *bandar* (town), *shah* (king, chief), *tahta* (throne), *pasar* (market), *penjara* (jail), *gandum* (wheat), *kurma* (dates), *anggur* (grapes), and many more (Bausani, 1964; Beg, 1982). Aspects of Persian influence in the Malay life have also been pointed out by G.E. Morrison (1955).

The **fifth** theory argues from the fact that the Muslims in the Archipelago adhere to the Shāfiʿī school of law and suggests that Egypt could be the origin of early Muslim missionaries to the region. This conjecture was put forth by S. Keyzer, a professor of oriental law from the Netherlands, and was immediately rejected. As G. W. J. Drewes (1985) says, it seems that Keyzer did not know that almost all Arabs living in Indonesia came from Hadramaut (southern Yemen), where the Shafi'i school was a common school. Had he known that, surely he would name it as the origin of Islam which came to the Archipelago. Nevertheless, it would still be wrong, according to Drewes, because the migration of Arabs from Hadramaut to the Archipelago only took place long after Islam came to Indonesia.

Finally, the **sixth** theory asserts that Islam was spread in the Archipelago by Muslims from China. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the Chinese imperial record of the T'ang Dynasty states that there were Muslim communities both in Kanfu (Canton) and in Sumatra. This is in accordance with the narrative of I-Tsing, a famous Chinese cleric and wanderer who in 51 H/671 CE boarded a Muslim-owned ship from Canton and stopped at the port of the mouth of the river Bhoga or Sribhoga (Sribuza) in Palembang, the seat of the Srivijaya empire (I-Tsing, 1896; Groeneveldt, 1960).   Among those holding this 'China theory' is Slamet Muljana, a historian and philologist from the University of Indonesia, Jakarta. According to him, Islam in the Archipelago originated not only from India and the Middle East (i.e. Arabia and Persia), but also from the Chinese province of Yunnan, owing to the trade relations between Yunnan Muslims and the inhabitants of the Archipelago. Muljana also cites the legendary mission of the Chinese empire during the Ming Dynasty (around 1405 CE), which sent its fleet under the command of Admiral Cheng Ho or Zhèng Hé *alias* Ma Sanbao (H. Maḥmūd Shams al-Dīn, d.1433) with the intention of securing sea routes from China to India, Arabia, and Africa, apart from establishing diplomatic relations with local kingdoms.

Muljana constructed his story on the basis of unofficial historical sources such as the *Babad Tanah Jawi* and the *Serat Kanda* written in the 17th century during the Mataram period. Yet both the historicity and authenticity of these two books are questioned, as history is so interwoven with folktales that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, making the 'China theory' far from convincing. Muljana also refers to the *Preambule Prasaran*, a Chinese report from the Talang temple, some Portuguese sources, and a certain note from the Sam Po Kong Temple in Semarang. On the basis of these documents, Muljana tells us that Raden Rahmat (better known as Sunan Ampel) is a native of Yunan whose real name is Bong Swi Hoo, son of

Makhdum Ibrahim and grandson of Bong Tak Keng, the supreme ruler of Champa. Two years after his arrival in Java in 1445, Raden Rahmat is said to marry a Majapahit princess named Ni Gede Manila who was the daughter of Gan Eng Cu (also known as Tumenggung Wilawaktikta), a former Chinese commander in Manila who had been stationed in Tuban since 1423. From the marriage was born Bong Ang (later called Sunan Bonang).

Furthermore, in Muljana's story, Raden Patah, who founded the Islamic kingdom of Demak and bore the title Jembun Panembahan (as written in the *Serat Kanda* and *Babad Tanah Djawi*), was none other than Jin Bun, one of the famous legendary figures of overseas Chinese community. As for Raden Alit who became Prabu Brawijaya VII (king of Majapahit), he is said to marry a Chinese Muslim princess and had children who did not grow up in the royal palace, but were raised by the Chinese Muslim community in Palembang. So, according to Muljana, the Islamic kingdom of Demak was actually built by an authentic Chinese Muslim community and their descendants who settled in Semarang. Raden Patah, who became the first Sultan of Demak (1475-1518) with the title Senapati Jimbun Ngabdurrahman Panembahan Palembang Sayidin Panata Agama, studied with Sunan Ampel before establishing the Muslim community in Demak. Muljana also tells us that Sunan Kalijaga (Raden Said) was none other than Gan Si Cang, a Muslim leader of Chinese descent who led the construction of the Demak Mosque with carpenters from Semarang. While Sharīf Hidāyatullāh (Sunan Gunung Jati) was Toh Ah Bo, the son of Tung Ka Lo (Sultan Trenggono). The same is supposedly true with regard to Sunan Giri and Sunan Kudus whose real name Jafar Sidik [*sic!*] Muljana claims to be Ja Tik Su. So, of the nine famous saints of Java, six of them allegedly had an admixture of Chinese blood in their veins (Muljana, 2005).

Many scholars take issues with Muljana's outlandish claims. Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara, a historian from Padjadjaran University in Bandung, for example, finds Muljana's argument unsound. Just because some documents from a local Chinese temple mention the names of Muslim saints in Chinese dialect one cannot simply conclude that they are of Chinese descent. Indeed the Chinese people often modify foreign names of people and places to suit their pronunciation and orthography. "Why not take each and every name of historical actors and places mentioned in the Sam Po Kong Temple chronicle to be all Chinese? In the sense that none of them is indigenous," Mansur asks rhetorically. Muljana's account is analogous to the popular practice in Java when dealing with foreign names. For example, the Dutch J.P. Coen is called "Mur Jangkung" and Mulla Sadra becomes "Mullo Sodro", which in no way indicate that they are of Javanese descent. "Will we also conclude that Nahdlatul Ulama's founder, Hasjim Asj'ari, is an Arab only because his name sounds Arabic?" (Suryanegara, 2009, pp. 100-101).

Merchants or Scholars?

Historians also differ about the identity of those who spread Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. Were they merchants, full-time professional missionaries, itinerant Sufis, or just Muslim laymen? Most Orientalists and local historians believe that Islam was brought by traders. This conjecture is usually based on the travel notes of Marco Polo, who on his voyage from China in 1292 stopped on the island of Java Minor (i.e. Sumatra), where he said there were eight kingdoms, one of which was Ferlec (Peureulak or Perlak). He noted that "this kingdom is much frequented by the Saracen merchants that they have converted the natives to the Religion of Muhammad" (Yule, 1929, p. 23).

Although not totally impossible, this surmise is problematic in several respects. One may want to know, for example, if those early preachers were professional merchants or part-time traders. If they were true businessmen, how is it possible that they also had another concern besides profits, given the considerable risk they should face in navigating the seas?

More importantly, do they have the capacity to teach and explain the teachings of Islam in a clear, wise, and convincing manner? Questions such as these cast doubts about the 'traders thesis'. Marco Polo of course recorded what he saw at a glance in the port where commercial ships transited. But it can be ascertained that along with merchants, captains, and crew from helmsmen to cooks—all of whom can simply be referred to as sailors—there could be among the passengers some who were physicians or medical doctors, religious experts, and scholars such as Ibn Battuta, or even possibly goldsmiths and carpenters. This would especially be true if the majority of the crew and passengers were Muslims, so that there must be at least one person capable of leading the congregational prayer and giving a sermon on the ship during the voyage—a task that normal sailors and ordinary traders cannot perform. The same argument is put forward by historian Nehemiah Levtzion (1979, pp. 16-17): "Traders did open routes, exposed isolated societies to external cultural influences, and maintain communications. But it seems that traders were not themselves engaged in the propagation of Islam. They were accompanied or followed by Muslim divines, professional men of religion, who rendered religious services to the traders in the caravans or to the newly established commercial communities."

A second opinion says that the early preachers of Islam in the Archipelago were learned men or scholars who came from Arabia on board merchant ships. As Anthony H. Johns put it, "to say that Islam came with trade is to beg the question. It is not usual to think of sailors or merchants as bearers of a religion. If, however, we think of certain traders belonging to Sufi trade guilds, accredited by their Shaikhs, there seems to be a more plausible basis for the spread of Islam". Thus, according to Johns, it was the wandering Sufi masters who broadcast Islam throughout the known world at that time. While they chose to live as *darwīsh* or *faqīr*, those itinerant mystics were related to trade unions or artisans, according to their respective orders (*ṭuruq*, sing. *ṭarīqah*) such as al-Ḥaddād (blacksmith), al-Saqqāf (roofers), etc.[7] In addition to teaching the subjects of religion and Sufism to the natives, they are also believed to have supernatural knowledge and powers, and some of them even married the daughters of local aristocrats, thereby making the influence of Islam even stronger among the population (Johns, 1961, pp.10-23; Laffan, 2011). Despite its plausibility, Johns' opinion does not explain whether those early preachers arrived in the first Islamic century or several centuries later, because, as stated by Fatimi, the Sufi missionary movement only began to flourish in the second half of the 13th century or around the 1250s (Fatimi, 1963).

The third opinion, which is no less interesting, has been put forth by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in his recent book, *Historical Fact and Fiction*. According to him, the carrier of Islam to the Archipelago was a certain Shaykh Ismāʿīl who, by order of the Governor (Sharīf) of Mecca, around the 9th century CE sailed to Sumatra. On his voyage, Shaykh Ismail stopped at Mengiri, a city on the northwestern border of Bengal, where he met Sulṭān Muḥammad, who then joined with his son to sail to Sumatra to spread Islam by posing as *faqīr*. Sulṭān Muḥammad is believed to have founded the first Islamic empire in the Archipelago, the Semutra kingdom—from the word *semut* ('ants') and *raya* ('big'). According to al-Attas, it is a mistake to identify Merah Silau as Sulṭān al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, nor was he the first king of Samudra Pasai (2011, p. 17), because the inscription on the tombstone informs us that someone else had ruled Semutra-Pasai before him, namely Sulṭān al-Malik al-Kāmil, who died on Sunday, 7 Jumādā al-Ūlā 607 AH/1210 CE (Al-Attas, 2011, pp. 15-16). In his own words:

> From my interpretation of the way in which the first establishment of an Islamic kingdom in the Malay world as derived from the earliest of Malay sources, it becomes clear that in contradiction to the position taken by European and other like-minded historians, Islam was introduced at a very early date in a manner planned directly from its land of origin, and not from India or Persia. Its first king received his instruments of office and

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[7] Note that Anthony Johns here confuses the genealogical affiliation with professional association.

legitimation from the Sharif of Makkah as instructed by Caliph. It was nowhere reported in the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* that Indians or Persians were the missionaries that spread Islam in the Malay world. Moreover, the Islam that was brought and disseminated was the original 'Arab' Islam and not a 'transformed' Islam that had first to pass through the sieve of Indian and Persian (i.e. Shi'ite) culture and interpretation. I am not denying that there had been Indian and Persian influence involved in the process of Islamization in the Archipelago, especially in activities having to do with trade and literary and artistic creations. Traders and transmitters of literary and artistic creations were not missionaries of the religion. The initial missionaries were from the noble families (*ashraf*) among the Arabs, learned men of spiritual discernment, some of whom had come directly from Arabia, some from Persia, and some via India and Indo-China, and some looked and dressed like Indians and Persians, being easily mistaken for them; and the spread of Islam by these Arab missionaries in the Malay World was not a haphazard matter, a disorganized sporadic affair carried on by *merchants* and *traders* and *port authorities*, and even by *Sufi orders* conceived somewhat as *trade guilds*, whose role have been exaggerated. It was a gradual process, but it was planned and organized and executed in accordance with the timeliness of the situation. (Al-Attas, 2011, pp. 32)

Al-Attas' reasoning corresponds with the growing awareness among Western scholars of the crucial role of Sufis in the propagation of Islam in the Archipelago. Schrieke (1957), for example, pointed out that the Muslim scholars and preachers played an important part in the conversion of local princes. Wertheim (1956) added that indigenous tradition was not wrong in stating the saints or *walis* contributed largely to the dissemination of the new religion. What al-Attas emphasises is that the early Muslim preachers throughout the Archipelago, including the Philippines, were descendants of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib through the line of Muḥammad (d. 1156)—a descendant of Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā al-Muhājir (d. 961)—better known as Ṣāḥib Marbāṭ in Zofar, Oman, who was born in Tarim, Hadramaut, Yemen (Freitag & Clarence-Smith 1997; Feener, 2004). Although notable migration of Hadhramis to India and Nusantara did not take place until the 12th century onwards, the process of Islamisation had begun since the 9th or 10th century CE or even before. According to al-Attas, they came to the Archipelago with a conscious purpose to fulfill, namely to spread Islam, and they were learned men (*'ulamā'*).

Conversion Patterns

How did people in the Archipelago convert to Islam? It is difficult to answer this question since we have very little historical data and scanty evidence that are often mixed with myths and legends.[8] Indigenous sources such as the *Sejarah Melayu* provide an interesting case in point:

> The Prophet said to his Companions, "In the time to come there will arise a state the east called Samudra. When you hear of it, go there and convert the people to Islam, for many saints will arise in that country; but there is an ascetic (faqir) in Ma'abri [= Mengiri] whom you are to take with you." Some time after the pronouncement of the Prophet, the name of Samudra became known to all the people of Mecca. The Sharif of Mecca thereupon dispatched a vessel in which he had royal regalia loaded with instructions for it to call at Ma'abri. The captain's name was Shaikh Isma'il.

> So they set sail and called at Ma'abri and Shaikh Isma'il anchored in the roads. The king of that city was Sultan Muhammad, and he enquired whence their ship had come. The sailors informed him that they were from Mecca and were heading for Samudra. Now Sultan Muhammad was of the lineage of Abu Bakr. The sailors told him they were making the voyage on the instruction of the Prophet. When Sultan Muhammad heard it, he

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[8] For a good discussion, see Russell Jones (1979), where he considers the various stories of how rulers of Samudra Pasai, Melaka, Kedah, Patani, Majapahit, Banjar, Kutai, Gowa-Tallo', Wajo, and Ternate converted to Islam.

surrendered the government of Ma'abri to his eldest son, and he himself with his youngest son adopted the guise of an ascetic, leaving his palace and his kingdom and boarded the ship and told the sailors to bring him to Samudra. Everyone aboard was aware that this was the ascetic predicted by the Prophet; so they set sail with him on board.

After some time at sea they reached Fansur [= Barus] and all the inhabitants were converted to Islam. The following day the ascetic landed with his Qur'an which he desired the people of Barus to read, but no one was able; so he said to himself: "This is not the city intended by our Prophet Muhammad."

So Captain Isma'il sailed on. Some time later they reached Lamiri [= Acheh] and the people there also entered Islam, and again the ascetic landed with his Qur'an, but no one could read it, so he embarked again and sailed away; then they came to Haru [=Delhi] and they became Muslims and the ascetic landed with his Qur'an, but no one could read it; so he asked the town's people: "Where is this place Samudra?" They replied: "You've passed it". So he boarded again and set sail; and they chanced to make a landfall at Perlak and there too the people were converted to Islam; and their ship then headed for Samudra.

When they reached Samudra, the ascetic landed and met Merah Silu [or Silau] who was collecting shells on the sea shore. He asked him what the name of the place was and Merah Silu told him it was Samudra. Then he asked who was the chief of the place, and Merah Silu replied that he was. So the ascetic converted Merah Silu, who recited the creed (kalimah shahadat). After Merah Silu had been converted, he returned to his house and the ascetic to his ship.

That night while Merah Silu was asleep, he dreamt he was in the presence of the Prophet, who said to him: "Merah Silu, open your mouth!" So he opened his mouth and the Prophet spat into it; and he woke from his sleep and perceived that his body was fragrant like incense. The next morning the ascetic came ashore with his Qur'an and desired Merah Silu to read it; which Merah Silu did. And the ascetic said to Shaikh Isma'il, the captain of the ship: "This is the Samudra which the Prophet spoke of". Shaikh Isma'il had all the royal regalia which he had brought unloaded, and Merah Silu was installed as king with the title of al-Malik al-Salih. (Marrison, 1951, pp. 29-30)

Three plausible accounts have been proposed concerning the early mass conversion to Islam in the Archipelago. First, the local population willingly and gradually came to embrace Islam as a result of persuasion and long-established contact with the preachers, who managed to impress the native people they encountered with their virtuous conduct and spiritual appeal. In other words, the mass conversion to Islam was not accomplished by sword or military invasion, but rather by slow and peaceful penetration (*pénétration pacifique*) through effective persuasion and guidance. Second, large-scale conversion to Islam might have been propelled by the conversion of the ruling aristocrats. As usual in pre-modern societies, once a king, prince, or lord accepted a new religion, he would impose it on his subjects. Third, the spread of Islam was partly facilitated by the cross-racial marriages between the Muslim preachers, who were Arab, Indian, or Persian, with indigenous women. As Thomas W. Arnold (1913) rightly suggests, "settling in the centers of commerce, they intermarried with the people of the land, and these heathen wives and the slaves of their households thus formed the nucleus of a Muslim community which its members made every effort in their power to increase" (pp. 365-368). In addition to proselytisation in the sense of seeking new converts, marriage with members of the royal family or ruling aristocrats often served a double purpose of securing peace and building alliances.

In short, thanks to their relentless efforts since the 7th century, more and more people were converting to Islam. By the time Marco Polo visited Sumatra in 1292, the entire population in the kingdom of Perlak had embraced Islam (Polo, 1866). Although the stories surrounding the conversion of kings in the Archipelago are often doubtful and questionable, what is clear is that they all point to one thing: a change in religious identity is not always accompanied by

changes in social or political order. Anthony H. Johns (1961, p.15) says that the conversion to Islam might have also been due to the radiant charism and magical power of the preachers with Sufi backgrounds. "They master the magical arts, and have the ability to treat disease, are able to maintain continuity with past traditions, but also use the terms and elements of pre-Islamic local culture in the Islamic context," he adds.

Underlying Motives

A variety of reasons have been offered, over the past century or so, about the motives behind the propagation of Islam to all parts of the world, the conversion of indigenous peoples to the new religion, and the circumstances in which the conversion took place. One such reason is put forward by Van Leur, who first argued that the spread of Islam in the Archipelago was motivated by the economic and political interests of the Muslim preachers. As the kingdoms of Sriwijaya and Majapahit were approaching breakdown and could not protect their vast territories, Muslim merchants and missionaries seized upon the opportunity to take over and establish new kingdoms. They allegedly became supporters of rebelling or seceding provinces and later developed a mutually beneficial relationship in which one party offered material assistance and support, while the other provided freedom and protection to the other. Van Leur (1955) has palpably cast the early Muslim preachers in a negative light when he declared that

> the Islamization of Indonesia was a development determined step for step by political situations and political motives. At the end of the thirteenth century rulers of some newly-arisen coastal states in northern Sumatra (and later Malacca) adopted Islam and used it as a political instrument against Indian trade, against Siam and China, against Hindu regime on Java. Like the dynasty of Malacca, but for Javanese political motives, the aristocratic communities striving upwards accepted Islam out of opposition to the Hindu central authority. (pp. 112-113)

In Van Leur's opinion, the conflict between the aristocrats and the Majapahit rulers and their conflicting ambitions in Java paved the way for Islamisation which was used as a political tool to exercise influence and gather power.

However, not all Western historians share Van Leur's negative view. Those with missionary backgrounds cannot fail to notice the ubiquity of highly motivated individuals who believe that it is their duty to share the teachings of their faith with all other humans and so are willing to devote their lives to the mission. To quote Thomas Arnold, "it is such a zeal for the truth of their religion that has inspired the Muhammadans to carry with them the message of Islam to the people of every land into which they penetrate ... with a fervour and enthusiasm that imparted an almost invincible strength. Unaided also by the temporal power, Muslim missionaries have carried their faith into Central Africa, China and the East India Islands" (Arnold, 1913, pp. 1-2). Arnold mentions the verses of the Qur'an that tell people to preach, but he fails to note that the Qur'an also contains verses which encourage the faithful to emigrate and seek new opportunities in other countries where they may find a better life (*murāghaman kathīran wa sa'ah*/many safe havens and bountiful resources, al-Nisā' 4:100). This means that economic motives that are indeed permissible and may have inspired the Arab Muslims to foster commercial relations with foreign nations as well as to spread Islam among them. The anthropologist Frode F. Jacobsen has seen a combination of several external and internal factors as the cause of the arrival of the Arabs from Hadramaut to the Archipelago, namely the threat of foreign power, political pressure, poverty, as well as business opportunities and mission calls (Jacobsen, 2011). In short, the Islamisation process and motives are not quite as simple as Van Leur would have us believe.

Impact of Islamisation

Most Western scholars assert that the influence of Islam on the people of the Archipelago is neither profound nor significant. Particularly in the case of Indonesia, the widely held opinion is that the new faith is nothing but a thin layer applied over an ancient body of Hindu-Buddhist and animistic beliefs. Landon (1949, pp. 134-164), among others, famously says that Islam in this region is like "a veneer over the indigenous culture of the Archipelago people." In a similar vein, Winstedt (1951) claims that Islam in the Malay world still retains some Hindu elements. The most negative view is expressed by Van Leur (1960). According to him, although various foreign cultures and world religions have gained a foothold and cast influences in Indonesia, in general, these influences remain weak. Whether the foreign import is Hinduism, Islam, Western influence, or communism, these have only washed over traditional village society but have left its basic way of life intact.

All these claims have been refuted by Syed Hussein and Syed Naquib al-Attas. The former states that the impact of Islamisation on the Malay society and culture is quite considerable and that Islam's egalitarianism made conversion attractive to lower-class people who wished to escape the Hindu caste system (Al-Attas, 1963). According to Syed Naquib al-Attas, the arrival of Islam was no doubt a very important event in the history of the Archipelago because it had not only changed the religious landscape of Southeast Asia but also had a huge impact on the worldview of its people. Islam has caused a rise of rationalism and intellectualism in the society, turning it away from a crumbling world of mythology and superstitions to the world of reason and intelligence (Al-Attas, 1969). The coming of Islam has brought about many changes to their lifestyle and value orientations, including a change of personal names (e.g. from 'Joko' to 'Muhammad'), honorific titles (e.g. from 'Raja' to 'Sultan'), a shift from the indigenous time count system of five market days (*pancawara*) or six days (*sadwara*) to the Arabic-Islamic seven-day week, and the adoption of Islamic law (Shari'ah). One cannot disagree with Wertheim (1959, p. 204) when he writes that "the Islamic faith had, in many respects, a revolutionizing and modernizing effect on Indonesian and Malay society."

Concluding Remarks

While it would be irrational to deny any objective standard against which some historical accounts could be judged fair and others unfair, it is a fact that historical narratives, explanations, and interpretations are often informed and colored by the historians' own perceptions and preferences and often reflect, as they do, the authors' interests and vision of past events, so that unwanted parts could be omitted and things be made to appear better or worse than they really were. Indeed, there is a growing tendency among modern scholars to acknowledge that historians, like other human beings, are not immune to certain prejudices and implicit personal or cultural biases. As Richard T. Vann (2020) rightly pointed out, there are certain people who undertake to write histories "in the service of political agendas, sometimes for entirely understandable reasons," such as the Jews who are determined that nobody should forget the Holocaust and defenders of capitalism who will continue to remind us that the Soviet experiment turned out badly.

The coming of Islam, the means of its propagation, and its influence in the Archipelago, will continue to be a topic of debate that is historically and politically significant both now and in the future (Boland & Farjon, 1983). It will remain so because it concerns the identity and fate of the largest Muslim population in the world with rich natural resources. Western scholars who examine the history of the Archipelago Islam are generally more interested in and tend to highlight the traces of Hindu-Buddhist culture as being more important and far more glorious

than the Islamic elements and influence, which are so manifest and strongly felt in the language, culture, and thought of the people.

Contrary to the Orientalists' view, the revisionist historians see Islam as a positive determinant of social, political, and intellectual changes. The lack of consensus among scholars reflects the complexity of these issues rather than disagreement about the importance of Islam and its place in the 'Lands below the Wind'. One need only realise what David Lowenthal has rightly observed, that "the past is everywhere a battleground of rival attachments; competing groups struggle to validate present goals by appealing to continuity with or inheritance from, ancestral or other precursors" (Lowenthal, 1990, p. 308), and history is not simply a collection of records and reports, stories and narratives, but often represents the different interests, conflicting ideologies, or incompatible worldviews of its actors and authors.

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Mind, Morality, and Medicine: A Historical Inquiry into Mental Asylums in the Muslim World

Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah[1]

Abstract: This paper explores the historical development of mental health care in the Muslim world, spanning from the early Islamic period to colonial disruption and the postcolonial era. Drawing on Islamic philosophy, medical ethics, and institutional history, it highlights how mental illness was historically understood and treated through a holistic approach integrating body, mind, and spirit. The study examines the intellectual contributions of scholars such as al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī, and analyses the role of *bīmāristān*—charity-funded hospitals that provided compassionate psychiatric care. Through detailed case studies of key institutions in Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus, the paper uncovers the ethical, therapeutic, and architectural sophistication of Islamic mental healthcare. It further critiques the colonial marginalisation of these systems and argues for a decolonial framework that revives culturally rooted, integrative mental health models. Ultimately, this research challenges Eurocentric narratives and advocates for a more inclusive history of psychiatry that honours the intellectual and spiritual legacies of the Muslim world.

Keywords: Islamic medicine, mental health, *bīmāristān*, decolonial psychiatry, *waqf*, Sufism, spiritual healing

Introduction

The history of psychiatry has been Eurocentric and has far too often ignored the achievements and intricacies of non-Western societies. Traditional histories privileged the development of psychiatry in Enlightenment Europe and represented non-Western traditions through lack of progress or irrationality. Global hegemony has thus obscured superior systems of treatment in the remainder of the world—most importantly in the Muslim world, where mental illness had already been addressed through multidimensional, ethical, and systematised practices. The Muslim world has a rich and multifaceted history to share on the practice of mental health care, interweaving religious, philosophical, and medical discourses. It is one that undermines assumptions regarding pre-modern societies and opens out to a rich and rewarding path to explore the moralities, spiritualities, and communalities of madness. Accessing this legacy is not an exercise in historiography; it is an ethical imperative to decolonise what we know about psychiatric treatment and to restore dignity to systems of knowledge that are marginalised.

Methodologically, this essay is an interdisciplinary one and depends primarily on intellectual history and the history of institutions. Drawing on reading and examination of classical texts, records from hospitals, records on *waqf* and *madrasah* trusts, and colonial archives, this study relocates the Muslim world not simply as the passive recipient of psychiatric

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knowledge from Europe, but rather as an early leader in humane and systematic treatment of the insane.

The Intellectual Foundations of Mental Health in Islam

Islamic tradition has long recognised the complexity of the human mind with an integrated model of spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being. Anxiety, depression, despair, and inner conflict are repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith—these are feelings that are indicative of the human condition and are responded to in both spiritual and social ways. Qur'anic statements like "Indeed, with hardship comes ease" (Qur'an 94:6) and "So do not despair and do not grieve" (Qur'an 3:139), and prophetic sayings that emphasise patience (*ṣabr*), hope (*rajā'*), and dependence on God (*tawakkul*), are evidence of an early Islamic interest in well-being (Haque, 2004).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself demonstrated high emotional intelligence when his son Ibrahim passed away and he wept and stated, "The eye weeps, and the heart grieves, but we do not say except what pleases our Lord." It legitimised the expression of feelings in an atmosphere of spiritual trust (Syed et al., 2005). In the Islamic Golden Age, Abu Bakr al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and Al-Ghazālī were among the thinkers who created systematic models that explored the interaction and synergy among mental health, ethics, and spirituality. Their work continues to influence Islamic psychology and integrated models of care today.

Al-Rāzī rejected explanations based on the supernatural for madness in treatment and causation in psychiatric illness in favour of reason, morals, and practice based on evidence. Ethical conduct, control of one's passion, and the physician as an ethicist were championed by him (Dhanani, 1994). Sorrow, milieu, and bodily disturbances could be the cause of mental disturbance rather than possession by an evil spirit or vice (Gutas, 2001). His practice formed the background in clinical psychology in Islamic medicine.

Ibn Sīnā's *Canon of Medicine* possessed one of the most sophisticated psychiatric disorder classifications of the medieval period with descriptions of mania, melancholia, and obsessive-compulsive behavior (Nasr, 2006). His balance theory (*mizaj*) among bodily humors and spiritual capacities expanded on the Qur'anic view of human beings as integrated beings consisting of *jism* (body), *nafs* (soul), and *rūḥ* (spirit) (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2013). Ibn Sīnā also suggested music therapy, dietary adaptation, and thought reorientation as treatment—precursors to modern psychosomatic medicine (Haque, 2004).

Al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (*Revival of the religious sciences*) presents spiritual psychology based on Qur'anic and Sufi thought traditions. Al-Ghazālī outlined the growth of the self into three phases: *al-nafs al-ammārah* (self-commanding), *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* (self-blaming), and *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* (tranquil self) (Yusuf, 2012). Al-Ghazālī linked inner pain to heart ailments such as pride and envy and employed spiritual techniques such as *dhikr*, *muḥāsabah*, and companionship on the path to ethics to produce healing (Awaad & Ali, 2016).

Convergence of spiritual healing and science occurred when it was at its peak in the emergence of *bīmāristāns* (hospitals) in Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus. The hospitals provided wards to treat mental illness and provided music, therapy with light, talking therapy, and ethical treatment with the Islamic value of *raḥmah* (compassion) (Al-Dabbagh, 2012).

Muslim psychologists are going back to these traditions to develop culturally and spiritually suitable models of practice. The emphasis on ethics, community, and the sacred balance of body and soul offers an enduring holistic paradigm (Keshavarzi & Haque, 2013). The intellectual heritage of Islamic mental health rests on a holistic view of the human person.

Scholars like al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī offered an evocative multidisciplinary paradigm that came to terms with psychological distress with compassion, discernment, and ethical responsibility. Their legacy is an inspiration to contemporary attempts to balance faith, science, and the human spirit.

The Role of *bīmāristāns* in the Islamic Golden Age (8–14 centuries)

Bīmāristāns played an important role in the evolution of the concept of healthcare during the Islamic Golden Age (8th–14th centuries), which was an era marked by extensive progress in medicine, philosophy, sciences, and culture in the Islamic world covering the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain (al-Andalus). Their foundation represented an important milestone in the history of medical facilities and represented an amalgamation of scientific discoveries among various cultures like Greek, Roman, Persian, and Indian, and then Islamic achievements (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007).

Bīmāristāns pioneered the way in medical treatment and scientific advancement by providing novel treatment and integrated treatment centers. They integrated the practices of ancient Greek physicians, i.e., Hippocrates and Galen, with Islamic physicians like al-Rāzī (Rhazes) and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā). They had centers that facilitated the evolution and practice in the field of medicine with developments in diagnosis, surgery, ophthalmology, and pharmacology (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). Libraries and the translation movement facilitated the generation and production of extensive literature on medicine so that there could be exchange and distribution of knowledge and innovation (Gutas, 2001).

Among the distinguishing features of *bīmāristāns* was the emphasis on psychiatric well-being. Psychiatric conditions were treated routinely in specialist wards, and methods employed to deal with them were music therapy, dietary regulation, and therapy by talking. It reaffirmed Islamic beliefs in well-being being in equilibrium in the physical, psychic, and spiritual aspects (Bashshur, 2003). Treating psychiatric ailments as genuine health problems was pioneering work, making psychiatric treatment available (Al-Hadidi, 1999).

These Muslim hospitals offered treatment to people from all strata of society and all strata of economy. They were subsidised by trusts called *waqf* so that treatment became free (Mikhail, 2013). It made treatment accessible to the poor and the rich alike and showed the Islamic principle of universal welfare and charity (Mikhail, 2013). Furthermore, the application of public health practices with the use of quarantine in epidemics showed an enlightened approach to controlling the spread of disease (Bashshur, 2003).

Bīmāristāns were also centers of learning in which aspiring doctors could train by apprenticing under the guidance of qualified doctors. They were centers of learning for aspiring practitioners and centers carrying out medical research. Their function in education facilitated the transmission of medical knowledge around the Islamic world and to Europe (Saliba, 2007). Systematic education and curriculum planning in *bīmāristāns* were among the prime motives behind the professionalisation of medicine (Al-Roubaie, 2020).

Bīmāristāns were organised and featured modern-style medical facilities like wards dedicated to the segregation of disease, patient records and history kept separately, and specialised staff (physicians, nurses, and attendants). This level of systematisation made them among the leading healing centers in the world then (Gutas, 2001). Cleanliness and sanitation were given priority in these centers and found their way into better patient outcomes (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). The Islamic Golden Age (8th–14th centuries) witnessed an intense integration of medicine with welfare and philosophy on the public level, most clearly in the emergence of *bīmāristāns* (hospitals). Dedicated to healing and the delivery of medical

treatment to the diseased and afflicted individuals, these centers formed precursors to contemporary hospitals and psychiatric wards, where the mind and body both got equal treatment in the healing and recovery process. Creation of these centers became easy through the Islamic practice of *waqf*—charitable religious trusts—under which guaranteed long-term financing and access by the general public to these centers were ensured.

This essay examines the emergence of *bīmāristāns* in relation to psychiatric treatment. Based on an investigation into the intersection of the principles of *waqf*, practice in the healing arts, and spatial gendering, this project aims to shed illumination on the history and heritage surrounding *bīmāristāns* and the treatment of mental illness. It will examine the contributions made by major institutions such as the ʿAḍudī Hospital in Baghdad, the Manṣūrī Hospital in Cairo, and the Nūrī Hospital in Damascus.

The Role of *Waqf* in Funding Hospitals

Waqf stands in the centre and foundation of continuity and historical growth of the Islamic world in institutions such as *bīmāristāns* (hospitals). As stated in Islamic law, *waqf* is an act through which an individual donates some portion of his/her property or assets to some noble cause pertaining to society or religion on an everlasting basis (El-Azhary, 2007). *Waqf* is not just a religious obligation but an obligation by society and an instrument of welfare as well. The use of *waqf* to sustain *bīmāristāns* is an indication that its use is not just to sustain some noble cause or society on an everlasting basis but its uninterrupted continuity without state confiscation or *waqf* can be defined as the everlasting dedication of some assets or property to benefit society with the aim to generate lasting benefit to society (Hassan, 2013). Whether in the form of property, assets, or land, this property is left to some cause on trust and its income is applied to sustain the discussed cause.

The *bīmāristāns,* being precursors to modern hospitals, required significant and uninterrupted financial support to continue operations. Without organisation of modern-day health systems and the welfare state, *waqf* provided the financial support that allowed these institutions to continue operations for centuries.

The initial establishment of *bīmāristāns* with extensive wards to provide medical services, libraries, gardens, and administrative complexes was financed by the *waqf* endowments. The financial support from the endowment on a long-term basis allowed the maintenance and repair work on complexes of hospitals at regular intervals so that hospitals had the ability to function and be healing-friendly (Hassan, 2013).

One of the significant operational aspects of *bīmāristāns* was the provision of qualified and experienced medical staff in the form of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and attendants who required payment of salaries at regular intervals that were guaranteed by provision through the *waqf* endowments. The payment of salaries was specified in the agreement on the provision of *waqf*, and proceeds from the endowment were put to use to fulfil these financial commitments so that there would be no delay and qualified professionals would continue to be on duty (Siddiqi, 1986).

The costs of drugs, surgical tools and equipment, and other necessities were financed through the revenue generated by the income from the *waqf* properties. This allowed *bīmāristāns* to treat huge quantities of patients without any costs being incurred to them, one of the absolute essentials of these hospitals (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007).

The hospitals were not only treatment facilities but welfare nets of societies as well. The patients arrived with no resources to maintain themselves, mostly those who were too sick to

work. *Waqf* offered an opportunity to offer the patients food, shelter, and treatment at no cost to themselves. Some hospitals, such as al-Manṣūrī Hospital in Cairo, could offer thousands of daily treatments to the patients due to the immense revenue from the *waqf* to fund the high costs of providing this mass-level treatment (Al-Azmeh, 2001). As the operation grew and demand for the facility increased, the revenue from the *waqf* could then be used to expand the facility and construct new wards or use any new treatments. Special psychiatric wards, for example, were added to some *bīmāristāns*, such as the ‘Aḍudī Hospital in Baghdad, to make it an establishment to treat individuals with psychiatric illness. The nature of the *waqf* allowed hospitals to grow and adapt to needs evolving in the practice (Gutas, 2001).

Case Studies of Major *Bīmāristāns*

‘Aḍudī Hospital in Baghdad

The ‘Aḍudī Hospital, founded in the year 978 CE, is one of the greatest hospitals in medieval Islamic society. The Buyid leader Aḍud al-Dawlah commissioned the hospital with an immediate reputation that gave it an image of medicoscientific progress in healing physical and psychological diseases (Khalil, 2011). As an intellectual city and successful city-state, Baghdad provided fertile soil to build advanced centers like the ‘Aḍudī Hospital. The Buyid regime, with its passion for intellectual and cultural advancement, commissioned the ‘Aḍudī Hospital. The site of the hospital constituted an urban area in Baghdad so that individuals could access it conveniently. The setup of the hospital was not political in nature but by the interest of the Buyid leaders to promote knowledge and medicoscientific innovations on its soil (Al-Mahdawi, 2003). The hospital set itself above others in the region with its state-of-the-art facility. The facility had specialised wards by the category of disease or by disease, with the treatment of diseases of the mind being among its specialised treatment areas. The wards were well organised in boosting healing through systematic treatment (Nicolai, 2015). Spacious spaces with ample natural light and fresh air and access to garden spaces were among the healing spaces designed in the facility. The facility also had wards for infectious diseases, surgical operations, and treatment of diseases of the mind with specialised treatment given priority (Sabra, 2007).

The ‘Aḍudī Hospital employed some of the most distinguished doctors during this time period, the most notable being al-Rāzī (Rhazes), one of the leading intellectuals during his generation. His psychiatric work, pharmacology, and ethics are greatly valued (Mikhail, 2013). Al-Rāzī's psychiatric practice and contribution to the classification system of psychiatric illness and humoral imbalance served as the foundation for treatments in the hospital. Al-Rāzī, one of the leading practitioners in ‘Aḍudī, is responsible for establishing the humoral theory on psychiatry, whereby psychiatric illness resulted from imbalance in the humors in the human body (Gutas, 2001). The theory served as the foundation on which psychiatric illness in the hospital received treatment through medical intervention to correct this imbalance. Al-Rāzī's work on psychosomatic illness and his insistence on psychiatrically ill patients being treated humanely were revolutionary during this period (Nahas, 2004).

One of the most advanced aspects of ‘Aḍudī Hospital was its systematic patient treatment. The hospital utilised its system of maintaining patient records to enable doctors to monitor the patient's progress and history and providing them with ongoing and individualised treatment (Nicolai, 2015). Diagnosis and treatment of and patient response to every patient were all noted in an open-ended patient record that would inform subsequent treatments. The system of keeping these patient records preceded modern-day medical records. The hospital represented an exemplary model of specialised treatment, particularly in treating psychiatric illness. The hospital had specialised wards to deal with psychiatric illness and used a

combination of psychiatric and physical treatments on its patients. In addition to pharmacological treatment methods like the use of herbal drugs and the administration of tranquillising tonics, the hospital employed environmental therapy and the application of music to calm the patient down. They had dietary prescriptions as part of the overall system of care in which food seemed to impact the physical and mental condition (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007).

Al-Manṣūrī Hospital in Cairo

The 1284 CE al-Manṣūrī Hospital, founded by the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn in Cairo, is another focal point in medieval Islamic healing history. The hospital was acclaimed in that it introduced an unprecedented method to provide holistic treatment to all strata of society regardless of financial standing (Saliba, 2007). Al-Manṣūrī Hospital was founded to be an extension of the broader vision by Sultan Qalāwūn to promote public welfare and advance the practice of healing. It later grew to become one of the largest and most well-known hospitals in the Islamic world. Its founding was facilitated through *waqf* (charitable contributions), which kept it going (Al-Mahdawi, 2003). Al-Manṣūrī Hospital was an important organisation not only in Cairo but also one that served to set an exemplary model for hospitals throughout the Islamic world.

Al-Manṣūrī Hospital's capacity to cater to more than 4,000 people on a daily basis was an accomplishment, an indication of its effectiveness and size. What made this particular hospital unique was its commitment to universal access to health care. In contrast to medieval hospitals in most parts of the world, where treatment was accessible only to the affluent, al-Manṣūrī catered to all irrespective of class and catered to the poor in society (Bashshur, 2003). The wards in the hospital were separated from one another by specialised medical needs, like mental health, surgery, and ophthalmology. The wards of psychiatric patients had therapy facilities to aid in psychiatric patient healing. The wards were usually found in quiet and serene parts within the hospital with garden views and sunlight and thus an environment conducive to healing (Mikhail, 2013).

Al-Manṣūrī psychiatric wards were carefully designed to provide psychiatric patients with physical treatment and counseling support through guidance. Patients were mostly diagnosed using humoral theory and were given treatment with herbal drugs supplemented by dietary changes and counseling (Sabra, 2007). Environmental factors, from the structure of the hospital to healing gardens and nature trails by the seaside surrounding the city, were significant in the treatment practices (Khan, 2012). Al-Manṣūrī Hospital was the one to introduce treatment practices for psychiatric disorders. Not just through the application of the therapy provided by sound through its healing effect on the mind, doctors in the hospital employed herbal drugs, dietary changes, and exercise routines to prescribe to psychiatric patients. Such treatments were supplemented to an integrated psychosomatic treatment to address the aspects of mental illness, with the patient's physical and mental state being considered to be interrelated (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). The hospital acted as an education school too. Physicians, students, and trainee practitioners could be given education regarding modern practices in the practice of medicine that were founded on both Greek theory and Islamic medicine. The library in the hospital operated as an important education center with an extensive collection of books on medicine to study, many being authored by doctors such as Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and al-Rāzī (Mikhail, 2013).

Damascus Nūrī Hospital

The Nūrī Hospital, which Nūr al-Dīn Zangi established in the 12ᵗʰ century in the city of Damascus, is another exemplary facility in Islamic healthcare progress. It is best remembered for its provision of inpatient and outpatient care and its emphasis on the use of medical instruments and books in clinical practice (Al-Mahdawi, 2003). The Nūrī Hospital formed part of Nūr al-Dīn's larger effort to promote public health and education within his territories. The provision by the hospital of inpatient and outpatient care made it open to people from diverse backgrounds. The hospital had plenty of resources in the form of medical instruments and books and financial support in the form of *waqf* endowments that ensured the continuance of operations (Bashshur, 2003).

The Nūrī Hospital has been reported to have the capability to offer treatment to both inpatients and outpatients. Outpatient treatment created an opportunity through which individuals with minor conditions could receive treatment without being admitted to it, whereas major conditions were handled on an inpatient basis (Sabra, 2007). The complex gave the hospital the ability to admit scores of patients and perform numerous cases with ease. Another one among the most glaring features of Nūrī Hospital was the donation of medical appliances and books that made the hospital like an education and innovation hub for medicine. The hospital's library boasted an extremely extensive array of medical texts, and most of them were compulsory reading materials for learning physicians to practice and refine skills (Khan, 2012). Surgical equipment and diagnostic equipment allowed the doctors to perform and conduct numerous procedures with very high precision.

Just like in the case with other Islamic hospitals, Nūrī Hospital employed a holistic approach to patient care that integrated medical, spiritual, and psychological therapies. Mentally ill patients received specialised therapy in special wards where doctors employed an array of therapies, including herbal remedies, music therapy, and environmental therapy (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). Psychological therapy and talking therapy were also among the psychiatric treatmens offered by the hospital, with doctors taking extra care to ensure the emotional and moral welfare of the patients (Mikhail, 2013). Nūrī Hospital left more than just its influences on patient therapy; it left an impact on the practice of education in the medical world. The hospital was the center point in the education and practice of physicians, with physicians having to excel both in the practical practice of medicine and in the study aspects found in the classical texts. The integration of practical learning by doing and academic study singled out the hospital from many contemporary medical establishments (Bashshur, 2003).

The ʿAḍudī, al-Manṣūrī, and Nūrī hospitals were pioneering hospitals that made up an important part of the establishment of the practice of medicine, particularly in psychiatry and holistic healing. They integrated medical therapy, psychology, and spiritual healing into one form and manifested the Islamic ideal of health in a state of balance of the body, mind, and spirit. The use of the *waqf* endowments made these hospitals economically independent so that high-quality treatments could be provided to people regardless of station in society.

The hospitals were revolutionary in being devoted to specialised treatment, to the use of music and environmental therapy, and to making gendered spaces that were adaptive and adjusted to cultural needs and were still efficient in treatment. The focus on patient dignity, on the advancement of science and human treatment, gave these hospitals the foundation on which were built the medical institutions of today and following models for healthcare today worldwide.

Treatments for Mental Illness: A Holistic Approach

The Islamic bīmāristāns deployed an array of treatments to deal with mental illness that harmonised medicines and philosophical therapy and gave prime importance to the individual's general well-being—soul, body, and mind. Such an approach reflects an Islamic general concept of being healthy, encompassing physical, emotional, and spiritual equilibrium. Music served perfectly well in medieval Islamic therapy and particularly in curing illness of the mind. Both Ibn Sīnā and al-Rāzī realised its therapeutic power and thought that it could counterbalance the humors and pacify the soul. Music served to pacify restless patients with melancholic or maniacal depression according to the condition of the patient (Siddiqi, 1986). Al-Rāzī thought that some melodies or instruments would release diversified emotional reactions. Soft and euphonious melodies placated nervous patients and lively melodies energised depressed ones (Hassan, 2013). Music therapy allowed people to balance on an emotional level. Melodies and rhythms acted on the humors in the human system and allowed people to balance on an emotional level. Some thinkers suggested specific pieces to specific illnesses with attention to the power to mend through emotion and mind (Mikhail, 2013). *Naṣīḥah* or *mushāwarah* (advice or counseling) served to treat the mind in Islamic bīmāristāns. The therapy comprised conversation between the patient and the physician whereby the physician listened to issues and problems of an individual on an emotional level. The emphasis lay on enlightening individuals on illness and attuning to awareness on how to cope with it (Gutas, 2001). The emphasis with *naṣīḥah* lay on reason and moral advice. Physicians like Ibn Sīnā and al-Rāzī also provided philosophical and ethical counseling and encouraged the patient to rethink his/her problems and aided with practical solutions through Islamic ethical theory (Khalil, 2011). Rudimentary forms of cognitive-behavioral therapy were employed by some theorists in which the patient was encouraged to identify negative thought patterns and replace them with positive ones and this worked very effectively when treating depression and anxiety (Nahas, 2004).

Regimen through nutrition was the interest of Islamic practices and humoral balance was the focus. Physicians adapted regimens to the condition and physical state and temperament of the patient (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). Foods were considered to impact the humors and the mood of the body. Irritable patients were administered cucumbers and other foods that cool and warm foods like meat and spices to melancholic temperaments (Siddiqi, 1986). Periodic fasting was used to eliminate excess humors and maintain balance. Mentally ill patients are recommended to fast in moderation and calm the mind and the body (Hassan, 2013). Water treatments like hydrotherapy and medicated baths were used routinely in Islamic bīmāristāns owing to their healing qualities. Physical and psychiatric ailments were eased with hot and cold baths and perfumed herbs (Bashshur, 2003). Physical and psychosomatic calming qualities were given to herbal or oil-scented water. Hydrotherapy in particular was used to treat restless patients (Mikhail, 2013). Bathing played an important spiritual role and came in sympathy with purificatory rituals to wash the body with the aim of cleansing the soul in an effort to provide general healing (Nicolai, 2015).

The architectural design and physical environment of bīmāristāns were planned to promote a therapeutic atmosphere. The hospitals were typically constructed around calm gardens, fountains, and courtyards, which brought tranquility to the patients (Khan, 2012). The gardens enabled a chance to connect with nature, which was thought to have healing effects. Taking a walk around gardens or enjoying the quietness and peacefulness in the environment would soothe anxiety and calm mental exhaustion (Sabra, 2007). Psychiatric wards commonly featured isolated areas to think and recover from causes of distraction. The availability of quiet and pleasing environments manifested the strong influence of the environment on emotional and mental states (Al-Azmeh, 2001).

Theories of Care: The Humoral System and Spiritual Healing

Islamic medicine borrowed inspiration from Hippocrates and Galen and incorporated the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Physical and mental well-being depended on this theory, with illness being attributed to imbalances, including an upset mind (Mikhail, 2013). An imbalance in one of the humors would produce many physical diseases. Having too much blood would lead to mania and having too much yellow bile would make one irritable (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). Mental illness would be imagined to be a disturbance to the rational powers of the soul with imbalances in humour being demonstrated by symptoms like melancholy or worry. Treatments to rectify this imbalance were through dietary action, exercise, medication, and psychotherapy (Hassan, 2013).

Islamic tradition added a spiritual dimension to treating illness in the mind. Physicians like Ibn Sīnā and al-Rāzī considered the soul to be supreme in healing the mind, with emphasis on morality and reason. In addition to being just a physiological illness, mental illness could also be a spiritual illness and could be cured through moral advice, prayer, and contemplation (Nahas, 2004). Ibn Sīnā conceived reason to be supreme in resolving mental agitation. Intellectual work and intellectual contemplation were considered techniques by which the patient could be assisted to discontinue despair (Khalil, 2011). Islamic scholars gave significant importance to maintaining spiritual well-being through worshiping God and through praying to God. Psychological disarray could be an excess overflow of spiritual crisis and thus compelled the patient to practice activities like praying, fasting, and contemplation to be restored to sanity (Al-Mahdawi, 2003).

The Süleymaniye Complex: A Nexus of Medicine, Spirituality, and Ottoman Architecture

The Süleymaniye complex, erected in the 16th century under the rule of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, is an architectural representation of Ottoman prosperity and success in culture and architecture. The complex designed by renowned architect Mimar Sinan includes a great mosque, darüşşifa (hospital), school of medicine, and Sufi ritual spaces. Such an advanced integration of religious, school-like, and wellness facilities is an articulation of the Islamic Age's holistic concept of well-being and, more so, the provision of mental health care in those eras. The darüşşifa played an important role in the Ottoman Empire in the provision of holistic physical and mental illness treatment in keeping with its ethos. It is in these complexes that pioneering doctors like Şerafeddin Sabuncuoğlu made important contributions to the practice of procedures in medicine. As an early 15th-century surgery practitioner, Sabuncuoğlu is noted because his surgical handbook, *Kitab al-Masā'il* (Book of Questions), outlined several surgical procedures and provided the importance of an individual's knowledge regarding the anatomy of humans (Güven, 2008).

The practice by Sabuncuoğlu mirrored the model of holism in which the interconnection between the mind and the body was understood. His focus on observation and learning through experience guided generations to come (Güven, 2008). Although he did not directly associate with the Süleymaniye Complex, his innovations in surgical procedures and in knowledge of the practice of medicine were the foundation on which subsequent practices in Ottoman medical complexes operated. The combination of spiritual and medical therapy in the Süleymaniye Complex mirrors the concept on which provision of mental health rested during the Islamic Golden Age. Sufi masters and doctors worked together to administer treatment to the patient on an integrated level by acknowledging that mental illness could be the byproduct and product of physical and spiritual imbalance (Al-Suwaidan, 2009). Individuals presenting with concerns about the condition of the mind were treated with an array of interventions in

the darüşşifa consisting of pharmacological remedies. Herbs were used in correspondence with the patient's presenting symptoms with added support by humoral theory to connect physical health to emotional states (Al-Suwaidan, 2009). Dietary Therapy: Cues on food to correct the imbalance and to engage and clear the mind comprised the focal point in treatment (Nasr, 1996). Psychological Interventions: Talk therapy and empathic listening were central to intervention. Physicians and Sufi masters would engage the patient in conversations whereby emotions and concerns could be released (Nasr, 1996).

Furthermore, Sufi traditions played an important role in ensuring mental well-being. Having a Sufi lodge (*tekkesi*) on site ensured that group sessions of spiritual healing techniques, i.e., *dhikr* (practices of remembrance) and *samā'* (musical devotion), could be organised. They were designed to calm fears and provide an atmosphere of calm and belonging to the patients (Nasr, 1996). The model set by the Süleymaniye Complex in bringing together the healing traditions in the treatment of mental illness found an echo outside Istanbul with the establishment and spread of similar centers throughout the Islamic world. The principles that evolved in the complex—standards of compassion, sympathy, and group support—continue to be an important part of contemporary thought in the treatment of mental illness.

The architectural vision of Koca Sinan Pasha and the work of doctors like Sabuncuoğlu serve to highlight the advanced level of health comprehension characteristic of the Ottoman Empire. The integrated model of wellness—tackling the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit—attests to wise considerations in treating mental illness and the need for an integrated model that balances both the paradigms of the spiritual and the medical. The Süleymaniye Complex attests to the intellectual richness and heritage of the Ottoman Empire. Its union of architectural innovation and advancement with medicine and spiritual healing attests to an advanced comprehension of the complexities of human health issues. Integrated efforts on the part of physicians, Sufi leaders, and architects on the complex provide an exemplary model of holistic treatment with ongoing applicability to practice in the area of mental illness in the current day. As we progress into the future, the Süleymaniye Complex reminds us of the ever-present value of holistic treatment methods and practices in achieving health and wellness.

Sufism, Spiritual Healing, and the Social Perception of Madness

The concept of madness has developed and shifted through the ages and has been reflective of cultural beliefs, religious comprehension, and shared responses to madness. In Sufi mysticism within Islam, the intersection of spiritual and mental states is complicated and offers a specific framework through which to study the meanings of healing and madness. Sufi rituals in khanaqahs and shrine complexes to saints offer significant insight into the ways in which Islamic cultures explain and respond to madness and include beliefs in godly madness, communal support networks, and religious blessings (*barakah*).

Historically, madness has been culturally and temporally defined in diverse ways. Ancient cultures spiritually accounted for mental illness either through demonic possession or godly vengeance (Kleinman, 1988). Such explanations made way for an array of treatments ranging from exorcisms to communal care. Cultures vary when classifying madness and some Islamic societies embrace some behaviors as madness if connected with spiritual consciousness or with being divinely inspired (Coyle, 2005). Madness has been stigmatised and pathologised in Western societies (Foucault, 2006).

Khānqāhs are significant institutions in Sufi orders and serve to act as healing centers, learning centers, and centers for contemplation. The members are given shelter and belonging by the lodges and are intended to offer shelter to psychologically afflicted or socially

dispossessed persons (Schimmel, 1975). Khānqāhs' therapy is through ritual, chant (*dhikr*), and music (*samāʿ*), believed to induce intellectual illumination and liberation from negative emotions and spirituality (Hoffman, 2010). Saint shrines associated with the lives of Sufi saints are places to which pilgrims travel to obtain blessings and consolation. The shrine that contains the saint is believed to operate in ways such that intervention by the deity is provoked by the proximity of the saint and pilgrims are offered consolation by the psychologically afflicted and the socially dispossessed (Ernst, 2011). Pilgrimage to the shrine is one among several sources of consolation and solace and places the experiences of the individuals with issues into an overarching spiritual context.

The concepts of *junūn* (madness), *barakah* (spiritual blessing), and divine madness are related to Islamic culture and reflect a ubiquitous approach to describing states of mind. *Junūn* is traditionally accounted for spiritually and suggests that mad individuals are in an elevated spiritual awareness (Shah, 1972). The concept is on par with that of divine madness, whereby states of ecstasy are expressions of the presence or inspiration of God. Such states are sometimes allowed in Sufi cults because they make individuals closer to God (Knysh, 2012). *Barakah* or spiritual blessing could be transmitted in several ways, ranging from physical touch by the saint or among members who pray together. *Barakah* is reported to be therapeutic and comforts and changes distressed individuals (Lazarev, 1996). The convergence of *barakah* and mental health reveals that spiritual experiences are sources rich in emotional and psychological sustenance.

The lines separating sainthood and madness will probably be drawn so ambiguously in popular thought to provide alternative perceptions. In some contexts, the same set of characteristics that make one a saint—such behavior being unusual, extreme emotion, and ecstatic states—can be perceived to be evidence of madness (Bashir, 2009). That will provide an alternative type of insight into madness and insanity whereby some behaviors are sanctified instead of stigmatised. Popular discourses on Sufism in culture will idealise one who personifies these characteristics. Saints, mystics, and poets are depicted to be enlightened and mad simultaneously and the separation made and so finely tuned is that of spiritual ecstasy and psychosomatic pain (Safran, 2004). Such dualities are to blame for constructing madness in society to the extent that sympathy and dignity instead of fear and rejection could be negative consequences. The majority of the time, one who presented madness-type conditions would be able to secure refuge and acceptance in Sufi societies, through which episodes could be regarded as part of spiritual seeking.

Decline of Traditional Institutions

One of the significant consequences of colonialism was the collapse of traditional institutions, among them *bīmāristāns* and communal healing practices. Their institutions were dissolved by colonial powers and substituted with Western-type asylums with the main focus on medicalisation and containment. The transformation did not totally replace the holistic treatment given by traditional systems with spiritual and communal-related aspects and social intervention (Ahmed, 2019). As it is, most individuals with mental illness were left with inadequate treatment and thus left with treatment discontinuity that has persisted up to the postcolonial era. After colonialism, the newly formed psychiatric facilities were oftentimes not given the organisational structure, staff, and budgets to meet the needs of their populations. In most cases, the facilities were not well-equipped to deal with the complex interaction of the cultural, social, and psychosocial forces of psychiatric disease. The inability to maintain traditional facilities has resulted in ongoing levels of mental health care issues, adding to issues of treatment quality and access (Khan, 2021). Stigma is an ongoing hindrance to quality treatment in most societies that had colonial intervention. Historical associations among

psychiatric illness, colonisation, and institutions have continued to promote negative attitudes and beliefs, leading to discrimination and exclusion from society for those seeking to access treatment (White, 2020). The stigma commonly deters people from accessing psychiatric treatment, with a resultant unmet demand and increased marginalisation.

Additionally, there remains inadequate psychiatric infrastructure in the majority of countries. Most postcolonial countries inherited fragmented health structures and physically-rather than psychologically-focused health systems, with the effect being little resource allocation, training, and funding to provide mental health services (Miller, 2018). Lack of this structure has hindered the delivery of complete services in psychiatry and deprived numerous individuals of the services required to address needs in terms of mental well-being. Despite these limitations, efforts in some countries like Turkey, Malaysia, and Iran have attempted to merge Islamic principles with contemporary psychiatric practice. In Iran, to give an illustration, there has been an organised effort to incorporate traditional Islamic healing methods into contemporary psychiatric practice. The effort attests to the importance of spiritual and cultural dimensions in psychiatry and attempts to provide holistic treatment that resonates with the values and beliefs of the patient (Rahman, 2019).

Similarly, in Malaysia, there has been an effort to marry traditional Islamic healing with modern psychiatry by sensitising practitioners to culturally appropriate practice that recognises and respects Islamic values and provides an acceptable forum in which the patient is comfortable seeking services (Ali, 2020). In doing this, efforts are made to reduce stigmatisation and move towards greater access to psychiatric services. There has similarly been more momentum towards integrating Islamic knowledge into modern psychiatric practice in Turkey as well. More and more mental health practitioners are referring to the role spirituality plays in healing and the need to address the spiritual needs of the patient alongside the psychological needs (Omar, 2022). It is an integration of traditional and contemporary approaches to healing that reflects greater recognition of culturally appropriate treatment in an increasingly plural and diverse society.

The postcolonial psychiatric practice is defined by traditions and breaks. The disintegration of traditional institutions and the persistent stigma associated with illness presented tremendous problems to the delivery of adequate care. Yet efforts towards integrating Islamic thought and contemporary psychiatric practice in Iran, Malaysia, and Turkey offer promising prospects to surmount these difficulties. In bringing cultural and religious aspects into provision to complement that delivered by contemporary psychiatric practice, these efforts not only make provision more relevant to the lives of people but also offer a culture under which people feel accompanied through the healing process. Continued evolution of psychiatric practice in the postcolonial context reaffirms the importance of noting and valuing alternative cultural insights into seeking integrated and effective psychiatric provision.

The colonialist historical context engenders grave ethical concerns in contemporary mental health systems. Indigenous practice displacement and imposition of psychiatric models from the West far too frequently resulted in culturally callous and irresponsible treatment insensitive to the needs of culturally diverse clientele. Such disconnection threatens alienation and distrust on the part of consumers and among Muslim populations, whose beliefs regarding mental health are informed by cultural and religious concerns. On an ethical level, contemporary mental health systems need to be attuned to and correct the injustices perpetrated by colonialism. Not only should there be recognition of value regarding traditional healing systems but integration of these models into contemporary systems of treatment. Mental health professionals ought to work to provide treatment respectful to patient cultural and spiritual affirmation and produce therapeutic relationships leading to healing and empowerment.

Call for a Decolonial Approach to Psychiatry in Muslim Contexts

Against this backdrop of continuities and transformation processes, there is an imperative to develop a decolonial psychiatry within Muslim societies. A decolonial psychiatry would try to reverse the colonial legacies in contemporary mental health practice by bringing local knowledge, ethical praxis, and healing traditions to the fore. Such an intervention would demand the participation of traditional healers and mental health practitioners in the construction of an integrated model of mental health that includes spiritual, emotional, and communal spheres. Such an intervention would demand policy initiatives that would make it possible to create mental health systems able to engage with the specific needs of Muslim populations with the appropriate type of access to care that is both effective and culturally attuned.

Briefly, the future of Muslim mental health will demand an investment in the rich cultural and spiritual landscape on the terrain of mental health. In adopting the concept of the decolonial, the systems of mental health can begin to repair the wounds of colonialism and move directionally to an integrated and empathic system of mental health care mindful of the rich traditions and ideals on which these societies are founded.

Conclusion

The earlier history of provision in the Muslim world attests to the rich tradition of convergence on ethical, spiritual, and medical horizons that precedes and refutes dominant Euro-centric paradigms in psychiatry. From intellectual labors by thinkers like al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī to humanitarian practice by bīmāristāns under the auspices of *waqf* endowments, Muslim societies nurtured solutions to mental illness built on dignity and balance and communal treatment. Not only were these traditions treating the pain of the mind with kindness, but the soul and spirit were paramount in the healing model. colonial psychiatry centres replaced them with organisational schemes usually bereft of cultural relevance and ethical sensibility. The legacy of underfinancing, stigmatising, and detached systems of mental health continues to inform the provision of care in much of the Islamic world. Nevertheless, with resumed activity in Iran, Malaysia, and Turkey comes an impalpable renaissance—a desire to reconnect with Islamic mental health care's spiritual, communitarian, and philosophical foundations.

A Muslim decolonial psychiatry does not reject modern medicine but rather calls for its refiguration by local ethics, histories, and belief systems. In recognising and revivifying Islamic history's pluralistic and holistic healing traditions, the systems of mental health are presently able to promote more humane, more inclusive, and more culturally attuned models. In this way, we not only recover an oppressed intellectual heritage but also open the way to more just and spiritually more resonant futures in global provision of mental health.

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The Economic Life of Scholars in Rawandz 1813 - 1916

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Abstract: This study seeks to examine the economic conditions and livelihood of scholars living in the city of Rawandz from 1813 to 1916, focusing on their income. During this period, scholars' status remained intact, even enhanced, despite political changes. Since no previous study has covered this topic, this study delves into details of the economic life of scholars in Rawandz by using several untouched archives. Moreover, historical analysis, comparative methods, and scientific resources were applied in examining Ottoman documents as primary sources. The main finding of this study was that numerous Soran Emirate scholars engaged in agricultural and livestock farming instead of relying solely on their state salary. In addition, the scholars of Rawandz received a monthly salary from the Ottoman Empire, were awarded for publishing books or scientific works, and were often given seasonal food items.

Keywords: Soran Emirate, Ottoman Empire, Rawandz, salary, school

Introduction

At various times, the Kurdish people (or Kurds) have been interested in science and knowledge. As such, scholars were valued in the city of Rawandz under the Soran Emirate and later Ottoman Empire. Since they were educated and trained there to become Soran Emirate mufti (Islamic legal experts), the Emirate covered their finances. The stature of scholars also increased under the Soran Emirate until its collapse, after which the Ottoman Empire covered their expenses. When the Rushdiya School was founded in Rawandz, it provided scientific assistance to the city and became the principal source of income for several scholars from 1868 until World War I and the Caucasus campaign in 1916.

Existing sources and studies have failed to provide comprehensive information regarding the economic life of the scholars in Rawandz, as neither prior sources nor researchers have adequately studied this topic. Furthermore, accessibility to Ottoman archives for research purposes was severely restricted, despite the fact that these archives could offer precise and hitherto undisclosed information regarding the economic conditions of scholars in Rawandz.

This study aims to examine the economic conditions of scholars in Rawandz from 1813 to 1916 by answering the crucial question of what were their sources of livelihood in this period. The research undertaken here serves as the first of its kind to provide details on the economic situation and sources of livelihood of scholars in Rawandz from 1813 to 1916 based on Ottoman archives and documents, as well as critical sources on the history of Rawandz. In particular, the study examines two types of scholars: those who did not receive a salary from both the Soran Emirate and Ottoman Empire and, instead, relied on agricultural and livestock farming for their sustenance; and those who, in addition to receiving a state salary, consistently received awards

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and financial compensation for authoring books and scholarly articles. The period between 1813 and 1916 was selected as it is characterised by significant economic, scientific, and political transformations, thereby providing a huge perspective on the city's scientific and economic history.

Numerous sources have been referenced in this study's literature, the most important being Salih Mohammed Salih's book titled *Rwandz, the history and memory*. This source offers important information on the role and status of Rushdiya School in Rawandz, though it lacks details regarding the livelihood and salary of the school's teachers. Another significant source on this topic is a magazine article written by Mohammed Galaleyi titled "The situation of the scholars and sheikhs of the sect in Rawandz between 1857 and 1916 according to Ottoman documents" (2023), which provides important information on the scholars and their pursuit of science in Rawandz, though it only marginally addresses the salary of a select few scholars. Moreover, while Bzhar Othman Ahmed's journal article entitled "The Rushdiyye School in Rawandz and its most prominent problems 1868-1916" (2024) contributes significant material to this study, it provides little information on the salary of scholars at Rushdiya School in Rawandz, neglecting the intricacies of their lives and economic conditions in the city.

This paper consists of an introduction and four sections. The name and geography of Rawandz are discussed in the first section. The second section discusses the economic situation of the scholars of Rawandz at the end of the rule of the Soran Emirate, while the third section is devoted to the economic situation of the scholars after the collapse of the Soran Emirate. Lastly, in the fourth section, the teachers of Rushdiya School in Rawandz and their salary are discussed, followed by the conclusive results of this study.

Name and Geography of Rawandz

Rawandz is an important city in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, located in northern Erbil Province, near the border triangle between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. There are many different opinions about its name; some call it Rawandz, while others call it Ruandz. Some scholars believe that Rawandz consists of two words, "Rawand" and "Dz". The word "Dz" means "castle," which gives the meaning of "castle of the diaspora" when added to "Rawand" to become Rawandz (Mizory, 2006).

Other scholars have emphasised that the word "Rawandz" consists of the words "Rawan" or "Rahwan" and "Dz," which means a place of shelter, because this referred to the resting place of nomads during their travel. Another scholarly opinion suggests that the word "Dz" was added to "Ruandz" due to the audacious act of stealing sheep and cattle from nomads who were always armed and had numerous guard dogs for the animals (Omer, 2006).

Rawandz had a wide border under the Soran Emirate, and comprised six main tribes, namely the Balek, Surchi, Bradost, Khoshnaw, Sherwani, and Ako tribes. Located at a latitude of 37 degrees and longitude of 44 degrees, it is approximately 1005 meters above sea level. It also surrounds Mahabad to the east, Urmia and Shino to the northeast, and Erbil to the southeast, with the surrounding area characterised by high mountains, including Zozik, Hassan Beg, Bradost, and Bapshtian Hill (Omer, 2006).

The city of Rawandz is situated on the foothills of the Korak Mountains, nestled between two profound valleys: the eastern valley, known as Kharand, and the western valley, referred to as Khala Rash. The east of Rawandz shares land borders with Iran and Turkey, particularly in the northeast region near Lake Urmia and the cities of Shino and Mahabad, making Rawandz a significant strategic and commercial centre (Tariq Jambaz, 2006).

Under the Soran Emirate, the city of Rawandz and its vicinity constituted a commercial zone, featuring multiple fortifications used to safeguard routes, alongside several bridges utilised for the passage of commercial caravans, military personnel, and civilians. Following historical periods, various fortifications were constructed in the region for defence purposes, including Ruandz Fortress, Rayat Fortress, and Is Qala Fortress. Several bridges were also constructed, including Khalifan Bridge, Kawlokan Bridge, Old Darband Bridge, and Great Darbandi Bridge (Khorshid, 2023).

Economic Conditions of Scholars in Rawandz at the End of the Soran Emirate's Reign

In the past, although scholars were talented in various fields of science, they also had various sources of livelihood. While there were scholars who relied entirely on a state salary based on their type of employment, there were also those who received additional sources of income, such as material gifts from rulers and authorities. The following discussion expands on both these types of income.

Salary and Financial Remuneration

Under the rule of the Kurdish Mir (or Prince) Muhammad Pasha (1813–1838), Rawandz served as the capital of the Soran Emirate. During the final years of the Emirate's governance in Rawandz, numerous renowned Kurdish scholars and educators imparted knowledge to students, with Ibn Adam al-Balak[4] being the most distinguished among them. He served as a mufti of the Soran Emirate, instructing students in Islamic teachings as a scholar and teacher. He was later chosen as the son of the king (Kur Mir) by Muhammad Pasha, who subsequently constructed a mosque and a school in Qalatilokan, situated outside the borders of Rawandz and facing Mecca, which preserved the basis of its monuments until 1958 (Mizory, 2009).

This demonstrates that scholars held a prestigious status among the Kurdish emirs of the Soran Emirate and were granted a salary while being engaged by the emirs for certain positions and tasks in the Soran Emirate.

It is worth mentioning that the emirs and kings of Soran consistently encouraged education and scholars. They regularly provided financial support for educational services. Even in the past, scholars were always financially supported in this principality. For example, in addition to Muhammad Pasha, the princess of the Soran Emirate, Khanzad Khatun, founded a library and a madrasah under her own name in 1659. She brought scholars from other regions to Soran and provided them with a salary and other necessities (Qaradaghi, 1998).

Even on legal and religious matters, the opinions of scholars were considered, and religious inquiries were frequently directed to educators and scholars who were financially compensated for their accurate responses. Ibn Adam al-Balak recounted about a young man who delivered a letter from Istanbul regarding a question from Sultan Selim III (1761–1808),

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[4] His full name was Muhammad, son of Adam, son of Abdullah, but he was prominently known as Ibn Adam al-Balak. He was born in 1750 in the village of Roste in the Balakayety region. He was fluent in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages. In 1778, he went to Mahabad to learn Persian, then returned to Rawandz, where he became a mullah. In 1780, he was selected as a mufti and lecturer of Soran Emirate by Mustapha Oghiz Beg in Rawandz. He wrote more than 27 books in the fields of jurisprudence, linguistics, logic, philosophy, geometry, mathematics, and astronomy. Muhammad Pasha built a mosque for him in Qalatilokan, where he could teach and practice religion. Ibn Adam al-Balak died in 1844 AD (Hamakarim, 2006).

the son of Sultan Mustafa III (1717–1774). Despite his pupils asserting that no one could answer the question, Ibn Adam al-Balak provided a response, demonstrating his wisdom by elucidating on both the query and its suitable answer. Sultan Selim III had earlier dispatched a substantial amount of money, reportedly 2000 dinars, to individuals who possessed the correct answer. Such a substantial sum for that period indicates that scholars received financial compensation. The same question was also discussed among scholars in the Baban Emirate at that time, and anybody knowledgeable of the answer participated. Mir (Prince) Abdulrahman Pasha of Baban rewarded money and gifts to those with the correct response (Mizory, 2009).

This indicates that the Soran Emirate provided financial support to scholars in the form of salary and monetary awards, enabling them to contribute to education in the Emirate. They also often assumed the roles of mufti and decision maker for the Soran Emirate.

After the departure of Ibn Adam al-Balak from Rawandz, many other scholars resided and served in the city of Rawandz in different ways, the most notable of them being Mullah Khate.[5] During this period, Mullah Khate held the position of mufti in the Soran Emirate and taught in mosques, for which the Emirate provided a salary and sustenance, as it did with many other scholars (Mizory, 2009). Additional sources claim that he served as both a judge of the Emirate and an advisor to Muhammad Pasha, while a significant portion of the Emirate's gold reserves was entrusted to him. Since he oversaw the finances of the Emirate, he had sufficient financial resource and became rich without the need to seek other revenues (Salih, 2018). While a few sources offer additional details about Mullah Khate's salary, it is reported that, in addition to his salary, the Soran Emirate annually planted two bags of rice (about 500 kilograms), one bag of mash, and one bag of wheat from the Harir plain for him, along with crops from the Soran Emirate (Khaylani, 2024).

In Kurdistan, Kurdish emirs and rulers offered different forms of financial support to scholars who concurrently participated in village and state earnings for their remuneration. Despite the collapse of the Soran Emirate, scholars continued to receive a salary and remuneration from the succeeding Ottoman Empire, as evidenced by Ottoman documents detailing the salary of Mullah Khate. According to the documents, Mullah Khate's annual salary was 5250 kurus. Following his demise, his salary and assets were allocated to support education and scholars. Consequently, his salary was apportioned into three segments: one for his children, one for scholars and educational services, and one for students. It is worth mentioning that Mullah Khate's salary became a financial resource for his sons following his demise.[6]

From Mullah Khate's annual income of 5250 kurus, 1750 kurus were disbursed to his servant and his eldest son, Abdul Rahman Effendi, who was then a teacher in Rawandz and a pupil of his father (Mullah Khate). His income was funded by his father's finances, from which other amounts were allocated to a scholar in Rawandz and his other sons named Ahmed, Abdullah, Abdul Hakim,[7] Abubakr, Ibrahim, Mohammed Saeed, and Abdul Qadir Effendi (BOA. İMVL. 00443. 19699.001). The document explicitly states:

> Bihi (Bismillah), your Excellency, the case letter sent from the Wala committee to the
> Prime Minister for resolution pertains to the resident of Rawandz, Mohammed Khate. His

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[5] Mullah Khate, whose name was Mohammed Effendi or Mohammed Khate Effendi, was born in either 1772 or 1775 in the village of Khate. He studied various aspects of Islamic studies, with a special focus on philosophy. He travelled to Baghdad in the early 19th century to further his studies. He later became an imam in Baghdad and a follower of Salafism. Upon his return, he earned the respect of Muhammad Pasha, who then promoted him to the position of mufti in the Soran Emirate. Mullah Khate passed away in 1837 and was interred in Gardagird cemetery (Hamakarim, 2006).

[6] To see the original copy of the Ottoman document, see Figure 1.

[7] Abdul Hakim Effendi was the son of Mullah Khate. Abdul Hakim Mohammed was son of Mullah Ahmad, descendant of Abdul Rahman, son of Ismail, and son of Sulaiman. He was born in Rawandz, where he likely pursued studies in religion. His birth date is uncertain. Abdul Hakim Effendi was likely born around the era of the Great Pasha (1813–1838) (Braim, 2023).

death certificate is under review, while his annual income is also assessed to finalise his financial dossier, which currently holds 700 kurus increased in his account. Upon his promotion, one-third of his annual income from 5,250 kurus will be allocated to his eldest son, Abdul Rahman Effendi, while an additional one-third will be distributed equally among his other sons: Ahmad, Abdullah, Abdul Hakim, Abubakr, Ibrahim, Mohammed Saeed, and Abdul Qadir Effendi. Additionally, one of the scholars from Rawandz, belonging to the Farooqi family, named Pir Mohammad Effendi, merits assistance in his position, which does not impact Mullah Khati's annual stipend. Therefore, we will follow His Majesty the Sultan's orders in all actions. 29th of Rajab, 1277 Hijri. (BOA. İMVL. 00443. 19699.001)
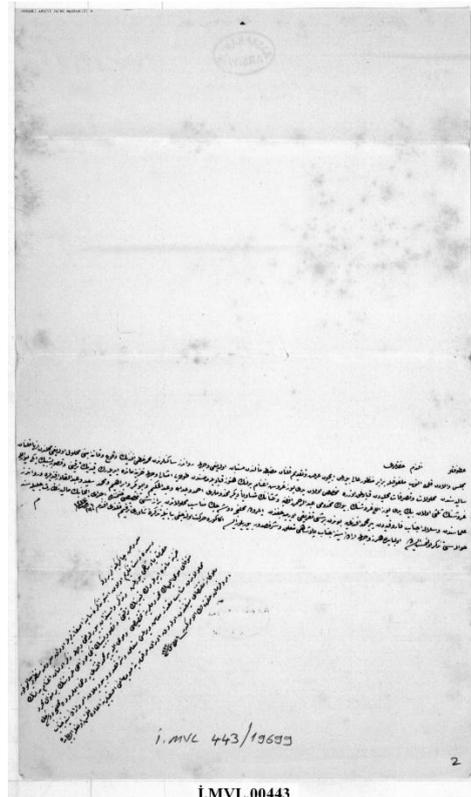

Figure 1. Text of an Ottoman document concerning the demise of Mullah Khate and the apportionment of his residual funds among his sons, along with the allotment, providing a salary to a scholar from Rawandz named Pir Mohammed Effendi.

The abovementioned text regarding Mullah Khate's salary indicates that, in addition to an annual income, his salary served as a financial foundation for his sons' livelihoods. Notably, in subsequent years, Mullah Khate's sons emerged as prominent scholars, particularly Abdul Hakim, who assumed the role of a teacher at Rushdiya School in Rawandz (BOA. MF. MKT. 00903. 00009. 001).

Another scholar named Mullah Yahya Mizuri,[8] who was influential in the Soran Emirate and subsequently in Rawandz, served as both a teacher in the community centre

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[8] Mullah Yahya Mazuri—whose full name was Mullah Yahya, son of Mullah Khalid Mazuri of Amedi—was born in the village of Balete in Mazuri Zheri (Lower). There are varying accounts on the year of his birth, with sources ascertaining that he was born in 1772, between 1740 and 1747, and even in 1737 or after. Upon completing his education in Islamic studies and advancing his knowledge, he ascended to the

(*hujra*) and mosque, and as a mufti in the Soran Emirate during Muhammad Pasha's reign (1813–1836). He received financial patronage from the Emir of Soran, who issued his counsel on various religious edicts (*fatwa*) for territorial expansions (Adil, 2020).

This shows that the Soran Emirate provided financial support to scholars, especially those who served scientific and religious advancements inside the city of Rawandz, and were employed and paid a salary by the Emirate.

Distribution of Zakat and Garments

In Muslim communities during this period, scientific facilities were frequently well funded, scholars received remuneration, and people often collected obligatory alms (zakat) from a village, town, or region for scholars. During the governance of the Soran Emirate and later the Ottoman Empire in Rawandz and other areas, certain scholars derived their livelihood from local zakat. Such scholars included Mullah Khdri Muderis Balakian, Haji Sheikh Mam Sofi's son, Haji Kak Rasul, Mullah Isa, Mullah Abdulqadir Piray Garare, Mullah Abdullah, Mullah Ali Warzai, Mullah Ismaili Choman, Haji Kak Ahmadi Nawprdani, Mullah Darwish Nawbargayi, Mullah Mohammed Kak Abdullah Sheikh Watman, Mullah Abdullah Mami Khalan, and Mullah Mohammed Mullah Adam. In addition, residents supplied clothing and other essentials, providing garments once or twice annually to ensure that the scholars of the region were appropriately attired (Khaylani, 2024).

This indicates that the residents of Rawandz and its vicinity gave importance to religious educators and scholars by supplying them with essential provisions in exchange for instructing their youngsters in knowledge and overseeing religious matters.

Agriculture

While salaries and donations from the Soran Emirate or the Ottoman Empire constituted a significant financial resource for several scholars who depended on them economically, there were scholars from Rawandz who did not rely on the state for income. Conversely, they depended on themselves and undertook work such as agricultural and livestock farming for their sustenance. For example, upon concluding his Islamic studies, Mullah Mahmood, son of Mullah Ali, son of Mullah Darwish, moved to the village of Nawbarga in Balak, where he established a small school. He acquired land in the village and sustained himself via agriculture (Mizory, 2009).

This indicates that there were scholars who were not dependent on salary from rulers. This was not merely the lifestyle of a few scholars, but rather a characteristic shared by several who also did not economically depend on state salary. One such prominent scholar was Sheikh Ahmad-i Gewre (the Great Sheikh Ahmed) of Badinan (d. 1856), who received his title from Mawlana Khalid Naqshbandi. He lived in the Kolaka village in Badinan, adjacent to Akre. Sheikh Ahmad and his family engaged in and subsisted on both shepherding and agriculture. Another scholar, identified as Pir Nabi,[9] was compelled to assist his mother following the

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position of mufti in the Soran Emirate during the rule of Muhammad Pasha of Rawandz, earning the title Abu Abdullah due to his son named Abdullah. He passed away on January 7, 1839 (Adil, 2020).

[9] Pir Nabi, also known as Sheikh Nabi Mawilian, was born in 1802 (1217 AH) in the village of Mawilian, located 20 kilometres east of Rawandz. He pursued Islamic education under Mullah Khate. Some assert that Pir Nabi originated from a village named Are, located in the Kani Rash area, while others believe he was from the village of Piran in the Mergasur district. However, he was indeed originally from the village of Are. He pursued Islamic studies and journeyed to several cities and regions of Kurdistan to acquire

demise of his father. After acquiring knowledge in various fields, he returned to the village of Mawilian, where established a small school and taught students, and also served as the imam for the villagers. Additionally, agricultural work became the primary source of his income and economic sustenance (Mizory, The prominent Families of Rawanduz, 2009).

This shows that the scholars of that time, in addition to their scientific work, had other means of income, such as agricultural and livestock farming, which were also important means of livelihood for the people in Kurdistan at the time, especially for villagers who lived outside of cities.

In conclusion, it is evident that scholars held a significant position in the Soran Emirate. The monarchs of this Emirate consistently allocated financial resources for them, facilitating the construction of schools and mosques. The scholars frequently functioned as mufti for the Emirate, while the monarchs compensated them for their expertise and interpretation of questions and other Islamic matters. Such compensation included numerous presents bestowed upon them. Nevertheless, there were also many scholars who depended on agriculture and animal rearing for their economic sustenance. In addition, the city of Rawandz and its residents held high regard for religious educators and scholars, and provided them with essentials, such as clothes and zakat, in exchange for teaching their children and managing their religious affairs.

The Economic Conditions of Scholars in Rawandz after the Collapse of the Soran Emirate

Subsequent to the collapse of the Soran Emirate, the Ottoman Empire assumed control over the administrative matters of Rawandz and its surrounding areas. Concurrently, the Ottomans brought many administrative organisations to the city. Therefore, most scholars in Rawandz and its surroundings were employed to teach. This section examines the economic life of scholars in Rawandz following the collapse of the Soran Emirate and takeover by the Ottoman Empire.

Remuneration

Many scholars remained in Rawandz after the fall of the Soran Emirate, one of them being Mullah Omar Effendi[10] from the Khaylani tribe, who lived in Rawandz and was a student of Mullah Khate (Salih, 2018).

It is worth mentioning that scholars in Rawandz were highly educated, so with the establishment of Rushdiya School in 1868, the most prominent scholars in the city were employed as teachers. While they continued to engage in religious work and teach Islamic sciences in mosques, these scholars also benefited from an official salary from the Ottoman

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knowledge. He was a pupil of Mullah Khate and Mullah Abubakr Sartkayi. He passed away in 1883 (1301 AH), following an extensive tenure of scientific service contribution (Mizory, 2009).

[10] Mullah Omer Effendi, who lived between 1798 and 1878, was a student of Mullah Khate and started studying at the age of nine in the schools of Rawandz. He first studied with Mullah Khate and later became a preacher for the residents of the area. He then continued his studies and was given the license to become a mullah (Mullah of Twelve Sciences) by Mullah Khate. He served the mosque in Rawandz for more than 50 years, and even taught in a school in Rawandz, with many students learning under him until he became blind at the age of 65. Nonetheless, he continued teaching and even performed the Hajj. Upon his death in 1878, he was buried in Rawandz (Salih, 2018).

Empire. One such scholar was Mullah Asaad,[11] son of Mullah Omer, who was born and raised in Rawandz to a renowned educated family. He served as a preacher in Rawandz and was also a teacher at Rushdiya School. Due to his expertise and the demand for instructors, he received a salary from the Ottoman Empire for his temporary role as an educator at Rushdiya School. Subsequently, he faced numerous problems with the Ottoman Empire (BOA. BEO.02955.21559.001).

The Ottoman Empire placed significant importance on the salary of scholars in Rawandz. This interest may stem from the Ottomans' desire to dominate the city, as it housed supporters of the Soran Emirate who remained during that period. Furthermore, they likely endeavoured to form a closer relationship with scholars, particularly those who exerted significant and immediate influence on society, as the residents tend to heed the counsel of scholars and religious leaders. This move can be attributed to the Ottoman Empire's efforts, similar to those in other towns under its dominion, to strengthen its administrative and scientific framework in the region, as subsequent scientific developments in that city have demonstrated. Ottoman documents detail the demise of Mullah Khate and the distribution of his assets and inheritance to his sons. In the margins of this document, it is also stated that Sultan Mahmud II (1839–1861) mandated a salary for Pir Mohammed Effendi, a local scholar who was living in Rawandz:

> Your faithful convey that, per the documentation provided by our subordinates, despite the remaining funds in the state treasury, His Majesty the Sultan has promptly commanded the execution of this task, and Mohammad Khate will receive a promotion. The sons of the deceased will receive 5250 kurus as compensation. His Majesty has also decreed the provision of a salary to Pir Mohammed Effendi. In Sha'ban of the year 1277 AH. (BOA. İMVL. 00443. 19699.001)

Additional Financial Support by Authoring Scientific Books

Scholars during this period received a salary and additional compensation for producing scholarly writings. One of them was Rasul Masti Effendi, who authored a book titled *Risālah fī tashrīḥ al-aflāk wa risālah fī ithbāt wājib al-wujūd* (*A treatise on the anatomy of the spheres and a treatise on proving the necessary existence*. An Ottoman document indicates that the Bab al-Ali (Sublime Porte) dispatched a letter to the Ministry of Education to reward Rasul Masti Effendi for authoring this book (BOA. MKT. MHM. 00163. 00075. 001).

Jarjis Effendi (Jarjis Sabri Effendi) was another educator in Rawandz belonging to the Naqshbandi sect (BOA. MKT. UM. 00280.00054.002; Bajgir, 2022) who received a salary from the Ottoman Empire, and contributed to the city's educational development (BOA. İ. MVL. 00335.14403.003). He was rewarded 5000 kurus by the Ottoman Empire on July 6, 1859, for writing a scientific and religious book titled *Letters* (BOA. İ. DH. 00437.28880.001).

Taha Effendi was another scholar who, in addition to receiving a salary of 350 kurus from the Ottoman Empire, was also financially sponsored by the administration when he visited another city or region in 1860. He was both a mufti and scholar in Rawandz (BOA. A. MKT.

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[11] Mullah Asaad, son of Mullah Omer, was born in 1850 in Rawandz. He went to school in 1858 and completed his primary education in a short period because of his intelligence. He then served as an imam and teacher in the Grant Mosque of Qalat in Rawandz for four years, and maintained a good relationship with Sheikh Hisamaddin Naqshbandi in Hawraman. During his active years, students from Arabian, Turkish, and Persian regions came to Rawandz to learn Islamic studies. In 1916, Mullah Asaad played a significant role in inciting people against the Russians and expelling them from the city. Later, he went to Balakayati and worked there as a teacher until 1923, when Sayyid Tahai Nahri became the governor. He brought him back to Rawandz and built a jurist's room for him, where he served as a religious teacher until his death (Salih, 2018).

NZD. 00315. 00061. 001). Although there is no detailed information about Taha Effendi's livelihood, it is clear that he moved to Istanbul in 1861, where he was paid a regular salary. Moreover, the initial 10 kurus he received for his additional expenses was later increased to 20 kurus (Gelaleyi, 2023).

This indicates that the scholars of Rawandz, besides receiving a salary, were also rewarded by the Ottoman Empire for authoring books and scholarly works, which evidently motivated them to engage in additional writing and scholarly publications. The Ottoman Empire also funded their daily travel expenses.

Sustenance by the Ottoman Empire

The Kurdish emirates and subsequent Ottoman Empire supplied sustenance to Sufi lodges (*takya*), educational institutions, and mosques to promote education. Even beyond religious and scientific places of work, scholars in Rawandz frequently received sustenance and other essentials, particularly seasonal local items. An Ottoman document shows that on July 9, 1859 (8 Dhul-Hijjah 1275), Jarjis Effendi requested wheat from the Ottoman treasury in Rawandz because during the tenure of Rasul Pasha, the former governor of Rawandz, such sustenance was discontinued (BOA. MVL. 00586. 00109. 001).

The Ottoman documents also indicate that Taha Effendi, in his correspondence, demanded 350 kurus as his salary and a sustenance of two bags of wheat and two bags of barley; this request was granted by the Ottoman administration (BOA. MVL. 00356. 00063. 001).

Thus, it is evident that in addition to a salary, scholars in Rawandz were also provided food, a common practice at that time. Food items such as wheat, barley, bulgur, rice, and beans were also given to individual scholars as well as scientific and religious centres.

Rushdiya School and its Teachers

In the second half of the 19th century, Rawandz underwent a notable scientific transformation with the founding of Rushdiya School, as verified in an archived Ottoman document marked August 29, 1868 (11 Jamad al-Akhr 1285 AH). This document shows that an order was issued confirming the completion of Rushdiya School in Rawandz, and the Ministry of Education was requested to deliver books and educational materials to the school (BOA. A. MKT. MHM. 00422. 00008. 001; Ahmed, 2024; gelaleyi, 2023). This school led to the employment of several scholars in Rawandz, whose employment details and salaries are expounded in the following sections.

Recruitment and Remuneration of Teachers in Rushdiya School

The foundation of Rushdiya School in Rawandz resulted in the recruitment of numerous teachers, commencing from its inception on November 20, 1868 (4 Sha'ban 1285 AH). Khatizadeh Ibrahim Effendi served as the school's inaugural teacher (BOA. A. MKT. MHM. 00427. 00010. 001; Ahmed, 2024). Despite the employment of multiple educators at Rushdiya School, it is important to acknowledge that it rarely exceeded two teachers, and oftentimes only had one teacher. Initially, upon its inception, the inaugural educator named Abdul Hakim Efendi was appointed as a second-class teacher (BOA. A. MKT. MHM. 00427. 00010. 001). For the first time, his employment file was sent to the Baghdad Provincial Education Department,

following which the Ottoman Ministry of Education was notified (BOA. A. MKT. MHM. 00423. 00087. 001).

While educators and scholars received a salary, they were also paid with agricultural produce, or food, for instructing students in educational institutions, and religious and scholarly centres. Officials, particularly teachers, were remunerated by the state, with salary tiers based on profession, as evidenced during the initial establishment of Rushdiya Schools across various cities and provinces in the Ottoman Empire. Numerous educators were hired, with their salary based on geographic region and academic qualifications (BOA. MF. MKT. 00098. 00007. 001). It is important to note that in the Ottoman education system, instructors were referred to as Mualim, and their salary was limited at a specific level (Bakr, 2015). In 1905, a scholar named Mohammad Tahir Effendi was appointed as an assistant teacher at the Rushdiya School in Rawandz, receiving a salary of 180 kurus (BOA. MF. İBT. 00168. 00094. 001).

In 1913, Mohammad Jamil Effendi was employed as a first-class teacher with a salary of 300 Kurus. On March 27, 1914, five months later, the Mosul Education Director submitted his appointment letter to the Ministry of Education in Istanbul (BOA. MF. İBT. 00493. 00052.001).

It is worth mentioning that the salary of teachers across Rushdiya Schools varied. Although teachers were employed in areas far from Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the first-class teachers were paid an amount of 800 kurus (BOA.MF. MKT. 00098. 00007). However, in Rushdiya School in Rawandz, the highest salary of a first-class teacher did not exceed 540 to 600 kurus (BOA. MF. İBT. 00129, 1320).

Therefore, it can be seen that there is a lack of salary equality among teachers at Rushdiya Schools across the Ottoman Empire. For instance, despite their identical academic qualification, teachers in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah received a higher salary than those in Rawandz (BOA. MF. MKT. 00914. 00008.001).

Academic Titles and Salary Tiers

Within the Ottoman education system, educators possessed academic titles that directly influenced their salary. Elevating a teacher's status from second class to first class required passing an examination. In 1896, Mohammed Arif Effendi, a teacher at the Rushdiya School in Rawandz and a member of the Khatizades family (descendants of Mullah Khate), undertook the examination. Consequently, he was employed as an educator at Rushdiya School in Rawandz (BOA. MF. MKT. 00360. 00013. 001). The highest wage for a first-class teacher in Rawandz was between 540 and 600 kurus, whereas in Istanbul, it was 800 kurus. Educators located in remote areas and smaller towns, they "should have received an higher compensation (BOA. MF. İBT. 00129. 00028. 001).

According to the evidence presented above, there was a significant variance in the salary of scholars in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the salary of scholars in Rushdiya School in Rawandz was not equivalent to those in other Rushdiya Schools across cities in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the difference in the academic titles of appointed scholars was another factor that contributed to the disparity in salary. This was notably true for those who were first hired as second-class teachers but were subsequently elevated to first-class teachers, which resulted in an increase in their salary.

Conclusion

This study has identified several findings on the economic conditions of scholars in the city of Rawandz in both the Soran Emirate and Ottoman Empire. Firstly, Rawandz served as a significant place of science and knowledge due to their prioritisation by the city's administration. This city hosted numerous renowned scholars under the Soran Emirate, and they imparted knowledge in mosques and educational institutions. They received a state salary and had no financial problems while working for the Emirate. In addition, the establishment of Rushdiya School in Rawandz was a significant scientific advancement for the city, resulting in the employment of several scholars who received a salary from the Ottoman Empire. This school can be seen as the inception of formal education in Rawandz.

Secondly, under the Soran Emirate, scholars did not depend exclusively on their state salary for sustenance. Rather, there were those who possessed their own livelihood and were more involved in agricultural and livestock farming. Thirdly, despite the employment of numerous teachers at Rushdiya School in Rawandz, the proficiency of Rawandz scholars (or Mullah) led to their appointment as educators by the state, and they received a salary from the Ottoman Empire.

The fourth finding was that, in addition to receiving a monthly salary from the Ottoman administration, the religious teachers and scholars of Rawandz were also rewarded for writing books or scientific works; most of the time, they were also given seasonal food items.

The fifth finding was that despite the parity of academic qualifications and academic titles, there was a significant disparity in the salary of teachers, particularly between those in large cities and those in smaller municipalities. The promotion of titles was used to advance their salary tier. The final finding of this study was that the residents and environs of Rawandz respected religious educators and scholars, and provided them with essentials such as zakat and clothing in exchange for teaching their children and managing religious affairs.

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Demystifying the Religionisation of Commercial Begging in Northern Nigeria: The Revival of Philanthropy among Muslims

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Abstract: This paper explores the concept of *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity) in Islam, emphasising its role in encouraging Muslims to fulfil their social responsibility by providing financial assistance to the poor and needy. *Ṣadaqah* not only benefits the recipients, but also offers spiritual rewards to the giver from Allah (SWT). Just as *zakāh* (obligatory almsgiving), *ṣadaqah* strengthens social bonds and reduces economic disparities. In Northern Nigeria, the practice of *ṣadaqah* has been intertwined with the phenomenon of commercial begging, particularly among young students of Islam (*Almajirai*). This study critically examines the misassociation of commercial street begging with *ṣadaqah*, presenting an authentic Islamic perspective to promote genuine philanthropy among Muslims. Utilising qualitative research methodology, the study analyses data to highlight the potential of *waqf* (religious endowments) and *zakāh* as sustainable solutions to societal needs. It advocates for empowering the youth through education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training to reduce begging and foster peace and prosperity in the region. By addressing these issues, this paper aims to bridge the gap between religious teachings and contemporary challenges, offering practical solutions rooted in Islamic principles.

Keywords: *Ṣadaqah*, philanthropy, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, religionisation, commercialisation, begging, Northern Nigeria

Introduction

Islamic teachings elevate charity as a noble pursuit, with *zakāh* serving as an obligatory form of charity aimed at ensuring the equitable distribution of wealth and resources among individuals of diverse economic backgrounds. *Zakāh* involves collecting a specified percentage from the affluent and distributing it to designated beneficiaries. As outlined in the Qur'an:

> *Al-Ṣadaqāt* (here it means *zakāh*) are only for the *fuqarā'* (very poor people), and *al-masākīn* (poor people) and those employed to collect (the funds); and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allah's cause (i.e. for *mujāhidūn*—those fighting in the holy wars), and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise. (Surah At-Tawbah: 60)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further emphasised this by instructing, "Inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay *zakāh* from their properties, and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor among them" (Sahih

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al-Bukhari, Book 24, Hadith 478). The practice of zakāh not only benefits recipients, but also purifies givers and their wealth from impurities. As stated in the Qur'an:

> Take ṣadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it, and invoke Allah for them. Verily! Your invocations are a source of security for them, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower. (Surah At-Tawbah: 103)

The primary aim of *zakāh* is to bridge the socioeconomic gap within society. Similarly, *ṣadaqah*, a voluntary form of charity, is highly recommended for Muslims as a rewarding act. Unlike *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah* has no minimum threshold (*niṣāb*), making it accessible to a broader range of Muslims. Each individual can contribute according to their means. As Allah (SWT) advises:

> Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship, ease. (Surah Al-Ṭalāq: 7)

Historically, Muslims have upheld a strong sense of brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah al-Islāmiyyah*) and solidarity, supporting one another and receiving aid from the public treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*). Consequently, the impoverished in Muslim communities were generally well cared for, and begging was discouraged. The Prophet encouraged labour-intensive endeavours over begging, advising individuals to seek dignified and noble means of subsistence. This approach fostered respect, love, and economic prosperity within Muslim societies.

Northern Nigeria holds some of the highest poverty rates in the country. According to the 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index, 63% of Nigerians live in poverty, with Muslim communities in the region being disproportionately affected due to various socioeconomic factors (Muhammad & Usman, 2024). This highlights the urgent need for holistic approaches to effectively address this complex issue (Shuaibu, 2024). With over 75 million people in Nigeria trapped in poverty, there is a pressing need for mechanisms, such as Islamic microfinance, to provide sustainable solutions (Salina et al., 2014). Poverty has increasingly permeated the socioeconomic landscape of Nigerian Muslim communities, leading to the commercialisation and religious misinterpretation of begging, particularly among the young students of Islam (*Almajirai*) and impoverished individuals. This practice is being wrongly legitimised with religious and commercial significance, necessitating a re-evaluation of the socio-religious narratives surrounding begging.

In response, this article aims to demystify the notion of legitimising begging and, instead, emphasise the revival of philanthropy as a socioeconomic and spiritual remedy to begging among Nigerian Muslims. It discusses the significance of *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah* in Islam, their role in promoting socioeconomic equity, and the historical aversion to begging in Muslim societies. It also highlights the rise of poverty and begging in Nigerian Muslim communities and challenges the erroneous religious and commercial associations with this practice. Instead, it advocates for a return to genuine philanthropy to address underlying issues and foster a more prosperous and compassionate Muslim society in Nigeria.

Literature Review

This section aims to explore and analyse existing scholarly works related to the phenomenon of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria. By examining relevant literature, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of the background and context

of the issue, laying the foundation for reviving philanthropy among Muslims in the region as a potential remedy.

Commercial begging, once a rare occurrence in Northern Nigeria, has become a prevalent socioeconomic challenge. This practice involves able-bodied individuals engaging in begging for monetary gain, blurring the lines between genuine charity and exploitative endeavours. The rise of this phenomenon has led to the religionisation of begging, where the act is attributed religious significance, further complicating the matter. As highlighted above, well-researched sources on Islamic mechanisms of poverty alleviation confirm that historical Islamic teachings and practices discouraged begging and emphasised on the importance of genuine philanthropy (Ahmed, 2004).

Understanding the roots of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria requires examining the socioeconomic context of the region. The literature emphasises the need to address these underlying issues to curb the prevalence of commercial begging and promote sustainable solutions. Some studies have pointed out how misconceptions about earning religious blessings and merit by giving alms to beggars may influence the behaviour of both givers and recipients. Understanding the religious perspectives of charity, including *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*, and the proper channels for their distribution are essential in debunking the misguided association between begging and religious virtue.

Furthermore, an examination of the literature reveals the impact of external factors, such as urbanisation and globalisation, on the dynamics of begging in the region. These factors have introduced new challenges and opportunities for beggars, affecting traditional support systems and societal perceptions of the practice. To address the religionisation of commercial begging and the remedy of reviving philanthropy among Muslims, previous research have emphasised the significance of education and awareness campaigns. Such interventions can play a crucial role in dispelling misconceptions, promoting proper channels for charitable giving, and encouraging alternative means of livelihood for those engaged in begging.

Researchers have advocated for a proper understanding of the roots of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria, considering the socioeconomic context of the region. They have discussed the impact of poverty, unemployment, and the breakdown of traditional support systems on the rise of begging as an alternative means of survival (Adebayo et al., 2014). Likewise, exploring the role of cultural and religious beliefs in perpetuating the practice of begging and addressing the religious perspectives on charity, including *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*, is crucial (Oluwole, 2016). Some studies have also concentrated on analysing the impact of urbanisation and globalisation on the dynamics of begging in Northern Nigeria (Okonkwo & Ikoro, 2018), which is another important aspect for consideration. To effectively address the challenges associated with the religionisation of commercial begging and to revive philanthropy among Muslims, there is a dire need to emphasise the significance of education and awareness campaigns (Yusuf, Ibrahim, & Hassan, 2019).

This literature review section provides an overview of existing research on the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria. It highlights the complex socioeconomic factors contributing to the rise of this phenomenon and sheds light on the cultural and religious influences shaping perceptions and behaviours related to begging. This review sets the stage for further empirical research and interventions aimed at curbing the practice of commercial begging and fostering a revival of genuine philanthropy among Muslims in the region and beyond.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria and its impact on philanthropy among Muslims. The data primarily comprised library resources, including scholarly articles, books, and reports, as well as the researchers' personal experiences and observations. Thematic analysis was conducted on the collected data to identify recurring themes related to the religionisation of begging as well as factors influencing philanthropic practices.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, the researchers engaged in prolonged observation of the activities and lifestyles of beggars over time, gaining a deeper contextual understanding of the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics at play. Ethical considerations were meticulously observed throughout the research process, ensuring respect for the dignity and privacy of all participants.

The study's findings are presented with detailed descriptions of themes and insights derived from the qualitative data analysis. These findings are contextualised within the broader socioeconomic and cultural landscape of Northern Nigeria. Additionally, the discussion incorporates relevant literature and Islamic principles to interpret the findings, thereby addressing the implications of promoting genuine philanthropy while tackling the challenges posed by the religionisation of begging among Muslims in the region.

Findings and Discussion

Commercial begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria has significant socio-religious implications for individuals, families, and society as a whole. This section presents the obtained research findings, aiming to demystify the religionisation of begging and explore the potential of Islamic philanthropy to address the root causes of this phenomenon. The findings focus on the adverse effects of commercial begging, the distortion of Islamic teachings related to charity and social welfare, and the impact on the dignity of the needy. Through a comprehensive discussion, the researchers highlight the significance of the results and the potential impact of reviving philanthropic practices among Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

Causes of Commercial Begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria

Commercial begging in Northern Nigeria is a multifaceted issue with various underlying causes stemming from socioeconomic, religious, and cultural factors. The region witnesses a significant number of individuals resorting to begging as a means of survival. This analysis delves into the possible causes of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria and how they contribute to the problem. These causes are presented as interconnected factors rather than in any order of preference.

Socioeconomic inequality. A leading driver of commercial begging is socioeconomic inequality. The region suffers from staggering high levels of poverty, unemployment, and income disparity, leaving many individuals with limited opportunities to secure a livelihood. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the poverty rate in Nigeria is estimated at 40%, with Northern Nigeria accounting for a significant proportion of people living in poverty. This indicates that a considerable segment of the population lacks access to basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and healthcare, compelling them to turn to begging to meet their daily needs.

Mismanagement of Islamic social welfare systems. Islamic social welfare systems, such as *zakāh*, *waqf* (endowments), and *ṣadaqah*, are intended to provide a safety net for the less fortunate. However, the mismanagement of these resources has contributed to the rise of commercial begging. In many instances, these funds are not effectively and equitably distributed, leaving those genuinely in need without adequate support (Ahmed, 2020). This creates a gap that commercial beggars exploit, leading to an increase in the number of beggars in the region.

Homelessness. The lack of affordable housing and displacement due to conflicts and natural disasters have rendered many people homeless (Yusuf, 2017). This makes it extremely challenging for them to access basic necessities, forcing them to resort to begging as a means of survival.

Disability. Many individuals with disabilities face discrimination in the job market and have limited access to education, making it challenging for them to earn a livelihood (Adedibu & Jelili, 2011). As a result, they are compelled into begging for survival.

Unemployment. High unemployment rate is a significant cause of commercial begging. The region struggles with a lack of job opportunities, particularly for young people (Gloria & Samuel, 2012). Many young people also lack the necessary skills and education to secure employment, leading to an increase in this demographic resorting to begging as a way to make ends meet.

Family rejection, neglect, or disownment. Many individuals who are rejected, neglected, or disowned by their families have nowhere else to turn and must resort to begging to survive (Makama et al.).

Rural-urban migration. The migration of individuals from rural areas to urban centres in search of better employment opportunities and living conditions has contributed to the rise of commercial begging (Oluwole, 2016). However, the lack of opportunities in these areas force many into begging as a last resort.

Orphanage. Many orphans lack access to education and basic needs, making it challenging for them to secure employment. This forces them into begging as a means of survival.

Old-age insecurity. Many elderly individuals do not have access to basic needs, such as healthcare and housing, and must resort to begging for survival (Yakubu, 2019).

Divorce. Divorce contributes to commercial begging, as many divorced women and their children lack financial support, making it challenging for them to access basic needs (Oluwole, 2016). This forces them into begging as a means of survival.

The prevalence of commercial begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria is a complex issue resulting from a combination of socioeconomic challenges and cultural factors. Poverty, unemployment, inadequate social welfare systems, homelessness, disability, and family dynamics are all intertwined causes that force individuals into begging for survival. Additionally, cultural norms and religious misinterpretations play a role in perpetuating the practice of commercial begging. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that involves improving access to quality education and economic opportunities, enhancing the distribution of social welfare systems, addressing cultural norms, and fostering a more nuanced understanding of Islamic teachings on charity and self-sufficiency. By tackling these underlying causes, Northern Nigeria can work towards reducing the prevalence of commercial begging and uplifting the livelihoods of its vulnerable population.

Effects of Commercial Begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria

Commercial and non-commercial begging have far-reaching adverse effects on individuals, families, and society in Northern Nigeria. Beggars and their families often endure harsh living conditions, including lack of shelter and food, exposure to extreme weather, verbal abuse, accidents, and harassment from fellow beggars, municipal officials, and police. Moreover, commercial begging leads to a lack of self-esteem, community disrespect, vulnerability to criminals and ritualists, discrimination, and stigma. Disguised beggars can perpetuate crimes in homes, markets, and communities, exacerbating safety and security challenges in the region. Child abuse is another concerning consequence, as adult beggars use children as guides, depriving them of education and parental upbringing, and leading them towards drug abuse and criminal activities.

The effects of commercial begging can be categorised into the following dimensions:

Economic. Commercial begging perpetuates poverty and dependence, hindering economic growth and deterring investors and tourists in urban areas (Fatai et al., 2020).

Social. The presence of beggars creates a sense of insecurity and distrust among residents, especially when children and vulnerable individuals are exploited for begging purposes (Hassan & Ibrahim, 2019).

Psychological. Children forced into begging experience low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety due to their harsh circumstances (Idris & Adeyemi, 2019).

Health. Beggars face unsanitary conditions, leading to the spread of diseases, while children are additionally exposed to physical and emotional abuse.

Education. Many children are unable to attend school, limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Yusuf, 2017).

Security. The presence of beggars can be exploited for criminal activities, making it challenging for law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order in urban areas (Ibrahim, 2019).

Addressing the effects of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria requires tackling its underlying causes. Widespread poverty and mismanagement of Islamic social welfare systems play a crucial role in driving individuals to beg for survival. By addressing socioeconomic inequality, improving access to education and employment opportunities, and ensuring proper distribution of social welfare funds, the region can work towards reducing the negative effects of commercial begging and improving the overall wellbeing of its people.

Demystification of the Religionisation of Commercial Begging

In Northern Nigeria, commercial begging has been intertwined with religious justification, using sacred texts to legitimise the practice.

> And in their properties there was the right of the beggar, and the *maḥrūm* (the poor who does not ask the others). (Surah al-Dhāriyāt: 19)

Many argue that the above Qur'anic verse and other sources support the act of begging, claiming it as a religious obligation. They stress the virtue of giving charity to the poor and

needy, implying that commercial beggars are fulfilling this religious duty. However, the true essence of Islam lies in maintaining the dignity of the needy and promoting self-sufficiency. The commercialisation of begging in Northern Nigeria has led to the distortion of Islamic teachings on charity and social welfare. Many beggars in the region use religion as a means to seek alms, leading to the "religionisation of begging." This practice contradicts Islamic teachings that emphasise the importance of earning a living through honest and dignified labour.

For instance, Prophet Muhammad emphasised:

> The upper hand is better than the lower hand. The upper hand is the one that gives, and the lower hand is the one that receives. (Sahih Bukhari, Book 24, Hadith 507)

The above Hadith encourages believers to work hard to earn a living and offer help to those genuinely in need, rather than becoming perpetual recipients of charity. Islam indeed recognises the right of the beggar in the wealth of the affluent, as stated in the Qur'an (Surah al-Dhāriyāt: 19). However, this refers to genuine cases of destitution and necessity, not those who turn begging into a profession. The Qur'an also urges believers not to repulse the beggar (Surah al-Ḍuḥā: 10), emphasising kindness and compassion. Nevertheless, this should not be exploited to justify a business venture based on begging. Islam promotes charity, but not at the cost of perpetuating a cycle of dependence and undignified livelihoods. Allah (SWT) states in the Qur'an:

> And those in whose wealth there is a known right. For the beggar who asks, and for the unlucky who has lost his property and wealth, (and his means of living has been straitened). (Surah al-Maʿārij: 24-25)

The above verse encourages Muslims to support those genuinely in need. It is a call to address the root causes of poverty and provide opportunities for dignified means of livelihood.

By addressing the root problems of poverty, unemployment, and social inequality, the religionisation of commercial begging can be thoroughly debunked. Islamic social welfare systems, such as *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*, are meant to help the poor and needy, but they must be properly administered to ensure the correct people receive aid. It is essential to educate the public about the proper practices of charity in Islam. Islam promotes compassion, but this virtue should not be used to support the begging industry. The focus must be on empowering those in need through education, job opportunities, and initiatives to combat poverty (Abdulrahman, 2020).

Muslims in Northern Nigeria can work together to eliminate or reduce the religionisation of commercial begging and improve the socioeconomic wellbeing of their communities by upholding the true teachings of Islam and tackling the causes of poverty.

Islamic Textual Proofs against Begging

Islam, through the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith, discourages and even condemns begging as a means of livelihood. Prophet Muhammad provided clear guidance on this matter, advising his followers to avoid begging and maintain their dignity and self-sufficiency. In a Hadith, he likened begging to scratching the flesh off one's face, emphasising the humiliation and degradation associated with it. He encouraged people to save their face by refraining from begging, except in cases of dire need or when asking from a ruler: "Whoever begs from people to increase his wealth, it is as if he is asking for live coals, so let him ask for a little or a lot" (Al-Nasāʾī, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 2601-2602).

The Qur'an also provides insights into the category of people deserving aid. Allah (SWT) describes the poor as those who are restricted in His cause and are unable to travel in search of a livelihood. These individuals are dignified since their needs may not be apparent to others, yet they do not go about begging:

> (Charity is) for *fuqarā'* (very poor people), who in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well. (Surah al-Baqarah: 273)

The above verse emphasises the importance of helping those who are genuinely in need without resorting to begging. In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad defined true poverty as when an individual lacks enough money to satisfy his needs, yet his condition is neither known to others so he may receive charity, nor does he beg from people:

> The poor person is not the one who goes around asking people and is given a morsel or two, or a date or two. The poor person is the one who does not find enough to satisfy him, but the people do not realise that he is needy, so they do not give him charity, and he does not stand up to beg from people. (Muslim, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 1039)

The consequences of engaging in begging are also highlighted in another saying of the Prophet, in which he warned that a person who continuously begs from others will come on the Day of Resurrection without any flesh on their face: "A person keeps on begging until he will come on the Day of Resurrection without any flesh on his face" (Bukhari, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 1405).

The Prophet also compared begging for the wealth of others to increase one's own possessions with asking for live coal, meaning that it is a harmful and dangerous pursuit: "It is better for one of you to take a rope and bring a bundle of wood on his back and sell it, rather than asking someone who may give him or not" (Bukhari, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 1410).

Islamic scholars have similarly elaborated on the prohibition of begging and the importance of seeking righteous means of livelihood. Based on the textual evidence above, it is clear that begging is strongly discouraged unless the person is in a state of extreme necessity and has no other means of survival. This also emphasises the importance of relying on Allah (SWT) and seeking lawful ways to earn a living. Begging is not befitting for Muslims who seek to maintain their dignity and honour. The emphasis should be on working diligently and seeking lawful means of income.

Islam discourages and disapproves of begging as a means of livelihood. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an emphasise the importance of self-sufficiency, maintaining dignity, and seeking lawful means to earn a living. The textual proofs and explanations from Islamic scholars reinforce the message that begging should only carried out in cases of extreme necessity and as a last resort, when all other options have been exhausted. By adhering to these principles, Muslims can uphold their self-respect and contribute to the betterment of their society.

Philanthropy in Islam: A Viable Solution to Begging

Islam recognises the importance of social welfare systems to maintain socioeconomic balance in society. To bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, Islam has institutionalised three essential concepts: *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*. These concepts, if properly implemented, have

the potential to ensure equitable circulation of wealth and alleviate the need for begging. In the modern financial industry, the conglomeration of these concepts is known as philanthropy.

Zakāh, one of the pillars of Islam, is a compulsory form of charity. Allah (SWT) has specified the categories of beneficiaries entitled to receive *zakāh* proceeds in the Qur'an:

Al-Ṣadaqāt (here it means *zakāh*) are only for the *fuqarā'* (very poor people), and *al-masākīn* (poor people) and those employed to collect (the funds) … (Surah At-Tawbah: 60)

The Qur'an and Hadith contain numerous textual proofs that encourage Muslims to engage in acts of charity, including *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*. Prophet Muhammad repeatedly emphasised the significance of giving charity and caring for the less fortunate:

Charity does not decrease wealth. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 12, Hadith 157)

Protect yourself from hell-fire even by giving a piece of date as charity. (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, Book 24, Hadith 531)

If Muslims in Northern Nigeria adhere to the teachings of Islam regarding philanthropy, the sight of beggars on the streets and the need for door-to-door begging could be greatly reduced. Islamic philanthropy has the potential to transform Muslim societies from economic woes to prosperity, fostering social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and security of life and property, all of which serve the important objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*).

Scholars and experts on Islamic philanthropy have emphasised the transformative impact of *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*. For instance, renowned Islamic scholars have highlighted that philanthropy in Islam is not merely about giving money, but also about sharing resources, time, and knowledge to empower the less fortunate. They stress the importance of combining traditional forms of charity with modern development initiatives to address poverty and societal challenges effectively. Moreover, Islamic scholars, such as Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, advocate for a comprehensive approach to philanthropy that includes investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. They believe that by utilising *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* to support long-term sustainable projects, Muslim societies can uplift marginalised communities and eliminate the need for begging.

In a nutshell, Islamic philanthropy—encompassing *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*—offers a viable solution to begging in Muslim societies, including in Northern Nigeria. By adhering to the principles and teachings of Islam, Muslims can create a society with equitable wealth distribution, empowered individuals, and reduced dependence on begging. Scholars and experts on Islamic philanthropy emphasise the transformative potential of these practices, urging the integration of traditional charity with modern development initiatives to address poverty and societal challenges effectively. Through Islamic philanthropy, Muslim communities can achieve the noble objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, fostering social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and security of life and property.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has demystified the notion of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria and highlighted the misalignment of this practice with the principles of Islam, which encourages genuine philanthropy through *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*. The study has underscored that while Islam promotes *ṣadaqah* and charitable giving, it neither endorses nor supports begging, especially on a commercial scale. Begging, except in extreme

situations, contradicts the principles of Islam, which encourage self-reliance and community support.

The social, economic, religious, moral, and security challenges posed by commercial begging underscore the urgent need to address the root causes of poverty and socioeconomic imbalances prevalent among Muslims in Northern Nigeria. This study has emphasised that Islam itself provides a solution through its embedded mechanisms of *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*, which can effectively equalise socioeconomic disparities and alleviate the need for individuals to resort to begging for sustenance.

As a recommendation, the revival of the spirit of Islamic philanthropy is crucial in addressing the prevalent issue of begging in the region. By strengthening the institutions of *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* and promoting a culture of genuine philanthropy, Muslims in Northern Nigeria can support one another and uplift those in need. Through such efforts, the lost past glory in social, economic, and political wellbeing can be reclaimed by the Muslim community.

Limitations and Further Research

While this paper has provided important insights into leveraging Islamic philanthropy to counteract commercial begging in Northern Nigeria, several limitations should be considered. Firstly, focusing on distinct groups within the region would result in a more detailed understanding of localised sociocultural dynamics. Conducting research on perceptions and attitudes towards *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* could also reveal the underlying beliefs that shape philanthropic engagement.

Longitudinal impact assessments are critical for analysing the long-term benefits of philanthropic programmes on poverty alleviation and hunger reduction. Diversifying participant demographics can ensure greater generalisability, while comparative studies across locations with different socioeconomic conditions can reveal adaptable effective practices. Investigating policy and institutional frameworks is essential for informed advocacy and policy recommendations that will ultimately lead to more equitable and prosperous societies.

Although this study has provided a solid foundation, addressing these limitations and conducting further research is crucial. By refining interventions based on a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Islamic philanthropy, collective effort towards a wealthier and more self-sufficient Northern Nigeria can be achieved. This research trajectory aligns with the overarching goal of fostering compassion, solidarity, and self-reliance within the region.

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Book Review

Ongaro, E. & Tantardini, M. (2023). *Religion and public administration: An introduction*. Edward Elgar Publishing. 262 pages. ISBN: 9781800888029

by Makmor Tumin[1]

Edoardo Ongaro (Professor of Public Management, The Open University, UK) and Michele Tantardini (Associate Professor of Public Administration, Penn State University, USA) mark a much-needed intervention in the study of public administration, where religion is often marginalised or approached with hesitation. This interdisciplinary volume offers a careful and insightful study on how religion manifests across state systems, institutional structures, and individual motivations—an inquiry highly relevant for Muslims who believe that governance is not only a worldly matter but also one tied to divine accountability.

Rather than portraying religion as a disruptive force, Ongaro and Tantardini regard it as deeply embedded within many administrative settings, particularly in pluralistic societies where the ideal of secular neutrality often diverges from reality. In Chapter 1, they present a multi-layered framework that allows for a nuanced analysis of religion—whether as a systemic influence, an organisational ethos, or a personal moral compass.

Chapter 2 examines global religious regimes with sensitivity and clarity, moving beyond binary distinctions between secular and theocratic states. They explore how religion undergirds legitimacy in diverse contexts such as France, India, and Iran. For Muslims, the section on Iran resonates with familiar ideas: religion is not merely an external belief system but one that lends legitimacy, shapes legal frameworks, and permeates the administrative culture. These discussions are commendable for their refusal to simplify complex arrangements.

The authors' treatment of Asian religious traditions in Chapter 3 is respectful and perceptive. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism are presented not as abstract systems but as active contributors to public service ethics. For instance, Confucian rituals are linked to hierarchical values in East Asian bureaucracies, while Buddhist compassion underpins policy practices centered on public welfare. The book refrains from romanticising these traditions, a methodological discipline that Muslims will appreciate, especially given the Islamic emphasis on balance and justice in evaluating others.

In Chapter 4, the authors compare Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They explain the Jewish covenantal tradition, the Christian ethic of vocation, and, most relevantly, the Islamic concept of trust and stewardship. These are not superficial observations; the authors genuinely engage with how Islamic principles motivate administrative accountability. Muslims will recognise in this analysis the deeply rooted ethos of being vicegerents on earth, tasked not only with efficient governance but with ethical and moral responsibility.

Chapter 5 explores religion as a personality system that shapes individual moral behavior. Drawing on thinkers like Victor Frankl (Austrian neurologist, founder of logotherapy)

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and Alasdair MacIntyre (Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame, USA), the authors argue that religious identity helps public administrators form moral narratives for their roles. Muslims will find echoes of this in the principle of intention—a concept that orients not just personal life but also public duty. Civil servants, when grounded in a moral tradition, are not merely performing tasks but carrying out a trust before God.

The book turns to organisational dynamics in Chapter 6, addressing how institutions navigate religious pluralism. From accommodating prayer breaks to handling dietary laws, the examples provided show how modern bureaucracies—like those in the U.S., Nigeria, and Malaysia—must manage religious diversity. For Muslim-majority societies, this chapter is particularly instructive. It reminds us that while Islamic governance has historically incorporated other faiths under formal systems, the modern state requires renewed creativity to uphold justice, inclusivity, and principled leadership.

Chapter 7 represents the philosophical core of the book. Here, the authors challenge the idea that legitimacy stems solely from procedure or rational-legal authority. Instead, they argue that moral narratives—many of them religious—undergird public trust. The Qur'an itself describes governance as a matter of promoting good and preventing wrong, suggesting that a purely technocratic vision of administration is insufficient. Referencing scholars like Charles Taylor (Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, McGill University, Canada) and Talal Asad (Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, City University of New York, USA), the book shows how secular language often borrows from religious ethics, reinforcing the idea that religion is not necessarily a relic but a reservoir of public meaning.

Chapter 8 outlines a thoughtful research agenda for future exploration. The authors call for more dialogue between public administration scholars and theologians to examine themes such as spiritual leadership, moral exhaustion, and faith-driven innovation. For Muslim researchers, this chapter is a call to action: to contribute to administrative theory not only through empirical data but also through Islamic intellectual traditions, ethical jurisprudence, and prophetic models of governance.

Despite the book's intellectual richness, three areas would benefit from further development. First, the book does not meaningfully engage with dominant administrative paradigms such as New Public Management (NPM), New Public Governance (NPG), or digital-era governance (DEG). A dialogue between these paradigms and religiously inspired ethical frameworks could have added valuable theoretical depth, particularly in relation to concepts like transparency, equity, and accountability within modern governance models.

Second, the intersection of religion and gender is underexplored. In many cultures, religious interpretations affect gender roles within both households and bureaucracies. Islamic discourse is no exception. While classical jurists discussed gender within governance, contemporary Muslim scholars—especially women—are pushing for re-readings rooted in the higher objectives of Islamic law. The absence of such perspectives misses an opportunity for a more rounded analysis.

Finally, the book argues for integrating religious values into public discourse but does not fully address the challenge of conflicting moral claims in multi-faith societies. Islam, as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad, often resolved such tensions through dialogical ethics and principled coexistence. A deeper exploration of how pluralist societies can navigate competing religious imperatives—perhaps through frameworks like coexistence jurisprudence—would enrich the discourse.

Despite these limitations, Religion and Public Administration is a pioneering text. Ongaro and Tantardini succeed in reintroducing religion into the conversation about governance—not as a private sentiment but as a public ethic. For Muslims committed to

excellence in both spiritual and civic life, this book is a reminder that public administration, when informed by faith, can become an act of worship, justice, and mercy. It deserves a wide readership among scholars, civil servants, and anyone interested in the ethical foundations of governance in an age of religious plurality.