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Al-Shajarah is a refereed international journal that publishes original scholarly articles in the area of Islamic thought, Islamic civilization, Islamic science, and Malay world issues. The journal is especially interested in studies that elaborate scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age, scholarly works that provide fresh and insightful Islamic responses to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world. *Al-Shajarah* will also consider articles written on various religions, schools of thought, ideologies and subjects that can contribute towards the formulation of an Islamic philosophy of science. Critical studies of translation of major works of major writers of the past and present. Original works on the subjects of Islamic architecture and art are welcomed. Book reviews and notes are also accepted.

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Editorial Notes

*Khaliq Ahmad*¹

This special issue of *Al-Shajarah* consists of papers presented at the international conference on **Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought & Civilisation** (ICRITC'24). The main objective of the conference was to engage with diverse ideas to *enrich Islamic discourse for global civilisational relevance*. The conference was organised by the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC-IIUM), with papers presented by both international and local experts. This issue includes selected titles extensively revised by those respective authors, which is the basis for publication.

The first article, '*Prospects of Reviving Islamic Civilisation Through Public Spaces: Muslim Civility at the 2022 FIFA World Cup*' explains how Qatar demonstrated Muslim civility through fostering intercultural encounters in well-designed public spaces, contributing to the broader process of Islamic revivalism. Qatar's emphasis on hospitality, inclusivity, and respect for guests highlighted key Islamic values such as compassion and mercy, adapted to a modern sports setting. The article paper explores how public spaces promote Muslim civility and contribute to the revival of Islamic civilisation, with a focus on the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The central question is, if, and how do public spaces, structured around Muslim civility, support the revival (*tajdīd*) of Islamic thought? Through the World Cup, Qatar created environments where diverse individuals engaged and shared experiences, fostering understanding across cultural, ethnic, class, and religious lines. These spaces go beyond mere consumption, serving as platforms for dialogue, interaction, and even civilisational exchange. Islamic public ethics – hospitality, compassion, and justice – were showcased in these cosmopolitan settings, demonstrating how such open, inclusive spaces are essential for Islamic revival. They allow Muslims to reinterpret traditional principles in addressing

¹ Khaliq Ahmad, Professor at ISTAC, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Guest Editor, Special Issue *Al-Shajarah*

contemporary issues like Islamophobia and secularism. By encouraging inter-civilisational encounters, these spaces hold the potential to showcase and make meaningful Islamic ethical principles in contemporary world by highlighting the significance of public spaces in this *long durée* revival process.

‘Modern Reforms in Islamic Thought with Reference to Science: A Study in the Context of the Indian Subcontinent’ is an interesting read that gives due importance to education within the traditional Islamic framework. This paper attempts deal with challenges within Muslim societies, specifically that of the Indian sub-continent where reform was much needed. It does not help at all that orientalist scholarship in Western academic literature has portrayed Islam as ignorant, backward, and anti-science. However, there has been a paradigm shift in this monolithic approach to the academic study of Islam due to the diligent initiatives of social reformers. The modern interpretation of Islam supports science and shows the face of Islam as being in harmony with Western practices and procedures. In the paper, the new representation of Islam and its relationship with other structures (social and political) is further categorised into ‘friends and foes’. The discussion by the authors indicates that both Islamist (also understood as ‘traditionalist’) and modernist perspectives address the same issue – the incompatibility between Islam and modern science – but propose opposing solutions. From the Islamist point of view, there is a complete rejection of modern science, with the need for its replacement by what is conceived as Islamic science. On the other hand, the modernists try to harmonise Islam and modern science by reinterpreting Islamic texts, believing that any contradiction comes from misinterpretation. Instead of accepting or rejecting either viewpoint, the paper concludes by proposing a selective approach that critically assesses the issue, endorsing the positive aspects of both while avoiding their negative sides.

The next paper compares ethical philosophies. The authors’ focus of discussion is comparative in nature which is captured in the title; *‘Islamic and Christian Work Ethics: An Analysis.’* Ethics and value systems in general have been a point to ponder for scholars across the centuries. However, most of this pondering has been done

within the context of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and its attendant contribution to Western societies. Due to being either misunderstood or not understood at all, the Islamic view of work ethics needs to be given consideration. Therefore, this article explores the notion of Islamic work ethics, and is compared to Christian work ethics. Findings revealed that contemporary notions of work ethics are specifically related to work only, and is not observed as related to other domains of life. However, Islamic work ethics go beyond this apparent divide, as work is also seen as *ibadah* or worship. The authors concluded that actions accepted as norms, and not contrary to Islamic rules, can be called ‘ethics’. Islamic work ethics encompass values like honesty, justice, and responsibility, and ought to be modelled by leaders and managers in the workplace for workers.

The fourth article entitled, ‘*The Concept of Al-Istikhlaf and its Significance in the Islamic Worldview: Reclaiming Man as Khalifah on Earth*’ examines the importance of the notion of *al-Istikhlaf* and its place in the Islamic worldview. One fundamental principle in Islamic philosophy of life is the role and purpose of man as the *khalifah* (vicegerent of God) on earth. In the Islamic worldview, *al-Istikhlaf* or vicegerency refers to the honorable responsibility and purpose that mankind willingly undertook. Being the *khalifah* on earth entails assuming responsibility for governing and overseeing the life of man and other creations of God. As vicegerent or *khalifah*, improving civilisation, and development on earth in accordance with God’s guidance and commands, remain the direct responsibility of the man who will be answerable to Him in the life hereafter.

This paper, therefore, seeks to elucidate the need to regain the notion of *al-istikhlaf* and employing it as a conceptual framework for the restoration and reconstruction of our vicegerent roles and responsibilities on earth. The paper uses textual analysis to examine various viewpoints and theories related to constructing the *al-Istikhlaf* narrative and re-introduction into daily life. The authors concluded that *al-Istikhlaf*, is an essential concept in Islam, and has the potential to be expanded into an all-encompassing framework for analysing the challenges and problems encountered by a man on earth. It seeks to revisit the all-encompassing nature and attributes of man as *khalifah* and not as a mere human animal. Hence the

article proposes the ongoing research on the *al-Istikhlaf* framework and its promotion among scholars and researchers. The framework of *al-Istikhlaf* helps us understand and articulate issues facing contemporary man in a more integrated and ethically driven way.

The following article entitled, '*Reimagining Islamic Discourse: Towards a Global Ethical Framework for Contemporary Leadership*' lays the importance of Islamic discourse in relation to many civilisations as an agenda for discussion and analysis. This study explores the necessity of enhancing Islamic dialogue to promote stronger connections and involvement with worldwide cultures. This research explores how ethical leadership in Islamic thinking might help create a more inclusive, compassionate, and morally grounded global society. There is also an analysis of the fundamental principles of ethical leadership in Islam by combining classical Islamic sources, modern scholarship, and real-world case studies. It stresses the significance of adapting Islamic ideas to modern contexts while maintaining their ethical core and universal nature. It promotes communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding among civilisations, while recognising the richness and diversity of human experiences and viewpoints. Authors urge academics, Muslim leaders, and communities to adopt ethical leadership as a fundamental aspect of Islamic discussions that could drive beneficial change. Scholars must engage in comprehensive study and facilitate the comprehension of ethical leadership paradigms in Islamic thinking, and its applicability to modern situations. This will help advance the collective goal of creating a fair, peaceful, and prosperous world, free from violence and hatred among the followers of the faiths. Leaders must exemplify honesty, justice, and compassion through their behaviours and decisions. Communities are essential for promoting ethical leadership and creating circumstances that support individuals in flourishing and making positive contributions to society.

'*The Artistic Composition of an Arabic Calligraphy in the Kiswah of the Holy Kaaba: A Descriptive and Analytical Study*' is an article that emphasises the value of artistic composition and Islamic calligraphy. The Kiswah of the *Kaaba* is one of the holiest and most precious fabrics on earth, as it covers the Sacred House of Allah

SWT, and carries sublime meaning. According to authors, it embodies Qur'anic verses, expressions of monotheism, and some of the most beautiful names of Almighty God, which adds to the honourable covering as it is. Throughout this article, what was presented is the noble splendour of Arabic calligraph. The study concluded that the design of Arabic calligraphy and linear formations embodied in the covering of the Holy Kaaba has creative and aesthetic aspects, and an element of spirituality that cannot be overlooked.

The article on Islamisation and integration touches upon the issue pertinent to Islamic universities today. The title of the paper, '*Reconciliation and Islamisation - A Roadmap for An Islamic Intellectual Revival*' discusses the effort to bring about a global Islamic Revivalism that has been a much sought after project for Muslim intellectuals worldwide. This paper studies the core principles that were instrumental in building the Islamic Intellectual Revolution (8th-18th Century CE). These core principles identified include the centrality of the Qur'ān in all intellectual discourse, a broad epistemological landscape, and the unity of the sacred and secular sciences. This paper explores how returning to the same, proven methodology can lead to an Islamic intellectual revival. The Qur'ān identifies eight valid epistemic sources apart from itself while declaring itself as the Furqan (Criterion) to judge their validity. These include the *Sunnah*, human intellect and analogy ('*Aql and Qiyas*'), *Ijma*' (consensus), *Basira* (intuition), the physical universe, history and certain knowledge from other civilisations.

The paper entitled, '*Techno-Jahiliyyah: Examining Transhumanism Through the Islamic Lens*' explores the philosophical underpinnings of transhumanism through the lens of the Islamic concept of *Jahiliyyah*. By examining the metanarratives of modernity that shape the transhumanist worldview, the author argues that transhumanism – far from being a purely rational and scientific movement – represents a form of '*techno-jahiliyyah*' that embodies the core tendencies of modernity. It is argued that Islamic thought has long critiqued such a situation. By applying the Qutbian framework of *Jahiliyyah*, the paper has revealed how transhumanism functions as a secular based approach in response to the crisis of

nihilism in the modern world. Nevertheless, an Islamic critique of transhumanism offered in this paper provides valuable insights for both Islamic scholarship and the broader discourse on human enhancement technologies. For Islamic thought, it demonstrates the continued relevance and applicability of concepts like *Jahiliyyah* to contemporary philosophical and technological movements. For the broader discourse on transhumanism, this Islamic perspective introduces a novel critique that goes beyond typical secular objections, highlighting the spiritual and existential dimensions often overlooked in debates focused solely on ethics or practicality.

After the so-called revolution during the seventies, the paper ‘70 Iranian Cinema and Islamic Revivalism (1970-1990): the *Entwined Tapestry*’ explores the connection between Iranian cinema and the Islamic Revival movement. The article investigates how the 1979 Iranian Revolution transformed the country’s cinematic landscape, shifting its focus from Western-influenced melodramas to Islam-inspired narratives. It examines how Iranian filmmakers skilfully utilised cinematic techniques to communicate religious values, concepts and ethos that promote contemplation. This paper showcases the complex relationship between religion, culture, and modernity in Iranian films, illustrating their distinct cultural value biased to their religious thoughts and deeper regional significance. It discusses the works of acclaimed filmmakers such as Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, and Bahram Beizai, whose works represent an equilibrium between innovation and religious devotion. By examining cinematic techniques such as symbolism, *mise-en-scène* and reflective editing, the study offers insights into how these directors contributed to the evolution of Iranian cinema during a period of significant cultural and ideological change. The study underscores the role of cinema in reflecting and shaping Iran's national identity and ideology, offering a nuanced perspective on the interplay between religion, politics, and artistic expression. These dynamics, according to authors of the article, sheds light on the regional as well as global resonance of Iranian cinema and its capacity to transcend national boundaries, reflecting broader themes of revivalism and cultural evolution.

Next, the study entitled ‘*Ibn Sina’s Contributions to*

Modernity: Integrating Medieval Philosophy, Neurophilosophy and Educational Reform in Islamic Thought and Civilisation explores the enduring legacy of Ibn Sīnā, a seminal figure in Islamic medieval philosophy, focusing on his theory of the soul and its implications for modern neurophilosophy, educational reform, and the renewal of Islamic thought and civilisation. By bridging the intellectual heritage of Ibn Sīnā with contemporary discussions in neurophilosophy, this paper highlights his contributions to understanding the nature of consciousness, perception, and the human mind. Furthermore, it examines how Ibn Sīnā's insights can inform modern educational practices, advocating for an integration of classical wisdom and scientific advancements within the curriculum of Islamic studies. This integration not only pays homage to the rich intellectual tradition of Islamic civilisation but also fosters a dialogue between the medieval and the modern, contributing to the ongoing process of renewal and reform in Islamic thought. By applying Ibn Sīnā's philosophical principles to contemporary challenges in education and society, Ibn Sīnā stands as a monumental figure in the annals of Islamic philosophy and medicine, is a conclusion drawn by the authors.

Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka) who is also known as *'Hamzah Fansuri of the modern era'* is an established name within the Nusantara (now framed as Southeast Asia) region due to his efforts in creating social change. The compelling article, *'Early Ideas on Reform and Renewal through Journalism in the Malay Archipelago: Hamka's Accounts in Ayahku (1950)'* dwells on Hamka's writings – especially his views on journalism and modernist reform in the Malay world. It significantly adds another angle to the understanding of Islamic reform and renewal and the role of media, particularly in Southeast Asia. The examination of Hamka's context and his father's influence adds depth to the paper, and situates this work within a significant historical framework. The literature review is extensive enough, providing an in-depth examination of the existing literature on Hamka, Islamic reform, and the role of the press in the Malay context. This situates the article well within contemporary scholarly debates on this issue of reform and renewal. The author maintains a formal and scholarly tone throughout; the

language is precise with the arguments well-articulated. It presents a compelling exploration of Hamka's contributions to modernist thought and journalism in the Malay world.

'Inter-Civilizational Issues and the Factors Affecting Interfaith Relationships: A Study of Muhammad Hamidullah's Contributions' discusses interesting issues related to the theme of civilisational encounters. This helps in matters for linking the past with the future. One's exposure to different civilisations will allow for him to have broader horizons, and to develop his personality further. Such a person who has had such exposure is Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, a scholar who is known for his contributions to inter and intra civilisational dialogue. This paper explores the factors influencing interfaith relationships with a specific focus on the contributions of the aforesaid thinker. In an era of globalisation, multicultural and multi-religious societies are increasingly common. Dr. Hamidullah, having spent a significant portion of his life interacting with followers of various religions, provides valuable insights into fostering inter-civilisational harmony. His scholarly work and personal interactions highlight how different faiths can coexist peacefully within the same society. This study investigates the factors that either promotes or hinder interfaith relationships and discusses the societal consequences of interfaith harmony. The research is framed around Dr. Hamidullah's experiences and contributions, particularly during his time in France, where he engaged with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. By examining his approach to interfaith dialogue and understanding, the paper aims to provide guidance on improving interfaith relations in contemporary society. This study employs a qualitative and narrative research methodology. It focuses on identifying and analysing the factors affecting interfaith harmony by interpreting the teachings and actions of Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah. The narrative approach is used to present real-life examples from his experiences, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in interfaith dialogues. The research is grounded in a detailed analysis of Dr. Hamidullah's scholarly contributions and personal interactions with people of different faiths, emphasising practical solutions to improve interfaith relationships in today's globalised world.

The paper entitled, '*Mastery-Humility Model: From Convergence to Integration*' deals with the perpetuation of dualism within the field of engineering, resulting in professional outputs not synced with personal life. The absence of a spiritual value system persists in the curriculum, which relies on pragmatism, positivism, constructivism, and relativism. This highlights the pressing need for the integration of spiritual values within such a field of study. This two-step process develops a convergent mastery-humility model using a sequential exploratory design approach. The construct validity, a key aspect of this research, achieved validating the model's reliability. Upon verifying the measurement model, SEM then confirmed the theoretical proposition that mastery and humility form the converging variable. The converging platform is at the state of Al-Adl, the correct position of knowledge is mastery where all things should be, and for man, the proper position is in the 'sujud' position, as 'Abd'. The Islamisation of Knowledge (IOK) takes place when any theoretical development, derivations of formulation, and application is based on the governing concept of Bil-Mizan (balance, equilibrium, justice) towards the state of Al-Adl and then Al-Khaliq. The next step involves this cognisance of meaning. The latter concerns the meaning of our existence with the humility of an Abd who must respect the truth. Hence, cognisance is required to seek the truth and differentiate between the Creator and the created. Thus, integration occurs at the same phase, though, in cognitive and affective domains. In conclusion, for this two-part process, the IOK is given a more defined form preceding the integration in the thought process, invigorating the spiritual dimension in the engineering curriculum for the sake of real education and knowledge development.

The final paper discusses about Fazlur Rahman, who is known as one of the Islamic reformist thinkers. He has strong opinion for an idea of *ijtihad* and has called for the gates of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to be opened again. On the point of reform within Islam, the idea of renewal espoused by Rahman should be deliberated on, and weighed on its own merits.

Overall, the articles captured in this special issue of *Al-Shajarah* dig deeper into the need for civilisational renewal,

especially from the Islamic paradigm. Readers will find a diverse range of ideas pertinent to the growth of the *Ummah*. It is hoped that this special issue will be a catalyst for further insightful discussions, which could potentially lead to policy implementation in the near future.

PROSPECTS OF REVIVING ISLAMIC CIVILISATION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES: MUSLIM CIVILITY AND AT THE 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP

*Emin Poljarevic*¹

Abstract

This essay explores how public spaces promote Muslim civility and contribute to the revival of Islamic civilisation, with a focus on the 2022 FIFA World Cup (WC22) in Qatar. The central question is, if, and how do public spaces, structured around Muslim civility, support the revival (tajdīd) of Islamic thought? Through the World Cup, Qatar created environments where diverse individuals engaged and shared experiences, fostering understanding across cultural, ethnic, class, and religious lines. These spaces go beyond mere consumption, serving as platforms for dialogue, interaction, and even civilisational exchange. Islamic public ethics—hospitality, compassion, and justice—were showcased in these cosmopolitan settings, demonstrating how such open, inclusive spaces are essential for Islamic revival. They allow Muslims to reinterpret traditional principles in addressing contemporary issues like Islamophobia and secularism. The World Cup exemplified not just a sporting event, but a microcosm of how Islamicate societies can navigate the intersection of modernity and tradition. By encouraging inter-civilisational encounters, these spaces hold the potential to showcase and make meaningful Islamic ethical principles in contemporary world by highlighting the significance of public spaces in this long durée revival process.

Keywords: Muslim Civility, Islamic Revival, Public Spaces, Inter-civilisational Dialogue.

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Introduction

This essay argues that part of the potential of the revival of Islamic civilisation in the 21st century can be found in the facilitation of vibrant cosmopolitan and open urban spaces organised around facets of Muslim civility. The case of Qatar and its hosting of the 2022 World Cup provides one possible lens through which civilisational revival can be observed. The observation is nevertheless limited to inter-civilisational dialogue and interaction that has taken place during this brief event. The goal here is to deepen our understanding of the revival and/or renewal, and in the process of deepening that understanding, increase our capacity to think and increase knowledge of our surroundings. The main assumption that underpins the analysis is that structural aspects of revival in relation to Islamic civilisation are worth thinking about.

In this process of deliberation, it is important to challenge the dominant frames of secularism which dictate qualitatively different set of ethical values and being in the world. This analysis of open public spaces in an Islamicate society that presumably allows humans to encounter one another with their differences and prejudices. In these micro-meetings there is a great potential for exchange and growth, not only on the individual level, but far wider than that. There are a number of loaded assertions here that needs brief unpacking.

Revival or renewal are here understood broadly as synonyms, even though the finer details can be discussed *ad infinitum*. Revival in the context of this essay refers to Muslims' historical efforts of simultaneously maintaining the continuity of Islamic tradition across generations, and innovation in tackling modern challenges. These efforts have historically been about alignment of the Islamic revelation and its moral and ethical principles with available means of communal organising and intellectual discourse in the face of large-scale challenges such as colonisation, globalisation, secularism etc..²

For instance, a number of notable figures and their intellectual

²Ali, Jan. A. "Modernity, Its Crisis and Islamic Revivalism", *Religions*, 14, no 1, (2023): <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010015>; Haj, Samira. *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. (Stanford University Press, 2009).

projects in the recent centuries can be mentioned as to demonstrate the variety of the revivalist efforts. I argue that the revivalist intellectual projects of scholars such as Shah Waliullah in India (d. 1762), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in Najd (d. 1792), Sultan Muhammad ibn Abd Allah in Morocco (d. 1790), Usman dan Fodio Sokoto Caliphate/Nigeria (d. 1817), Muhammad al-Sanusi in Cyrenaica/Libya (d. 1859), Muhammad Abduh in Egypt (d. 1905), Muhammad Iqbal in India (d. 1938), Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur in Tunisia (d. 1973), Muhammad Asad in Austria/Spain (d. 1992), Yusuf al-Qaradawi in Egypt/Qatar (d. 2022), Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in Malaysia (b. 1932) and many others demonstrate the elasticity and persistence of Islamic revivalist thought in colonial and post-colonial periods.

Revival in these and other countless examples is largely based on individual thinkers' creativity, their intellectual engagement, and the noteworthy capacity to offer intellectual solutions to a myriad of problems faced by Muslims in their respective societies. Their respective *ijtihad* methodologies were usually marked by a range of hermeneutical approaches to pivotal parts of Islamic tradition, in efforts to resolve tensions caused by colonial and postcolonial realities.³ Among them, we find a wide variety of interpretations of Qur'anic concepts such as mercy, compassion, commitment, the intellect etc. showcasing Muslim intellectualising and continuous scrutinisation and contextualisation of key ethical principles.

My understanding of revival presumes that these ideal-type ethical principles are collectively remembered and intellectually expressed in a wide variety of ways throughout time and space. This also implies that the revival of such principles is a continuous stream of collective Muslim (intellectual) consciousness expressed and applied in ways that are relevant to contemporary challenges, whenever those might be. This understanding of revival is almost exclusively based on intellectual endeavours and revivalist efforts.

³ Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. Hafez, M. H. "Explaining the origins of Islamic resurgence: Islamic revivalism in Egypt and Indonesia." *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1997): 295-324.

The lesser discussed aspect of revivalism is its structural or material component.

Structure here refers to the rules and material conditions that define how an activity is conducted.⁴ For example, in the context of Islamic revival, any interpretation of is related to the sociopolitical and economic conditions in the environment in which effort of interpretation occurs. This includes structural factors such as alternative governance systems, material circumstances, levels of individual and collective freedoms, and other socio-political constraints or opportunities within which scholars operate. These conditions impact scholarship, affecting not only scholars' access to resources and freedom of expression, but also shapes their perspectives and interpretations of the tradition.

An important assumption here is that various potentials of Islamic revival depend to great extent on the quality of Muslim intellectual work and scholarship (i.e., agents of revival). Moreover, potentials of revival depend on the way thinkers and intellectuals challenge their respective contexts and restraints dominating them. Agents of revival are therefore not passively accepting the conditions they are placed in; rather, they actively interpret and challenge these structures. The dynamic interplay between the structure and the system, is therefore mediated by the agency of the scholars, results in a continuous evolution of Islamic thought that resonates with both historical foundations and modern pressures.⁵ Agent refers to the individuals (i.e., Muslim thinkers) who act within these systems and are influenced by the rules. They use their intellectual capacity and creativity to offer new understandings of Islamic principles such as justice, compassion, equity etc. Scholars' reinterpretative acts in response to modern challenges are most often intellectual projects' potential for revival are seldom materialised.⁶ This is not to say that

⁴ See Elder-Vass, Dave. *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*, (Cambridge University Press, 2010); Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Translated by R. Nice, (Routledge, 1985).

⁵ Poljarevic, Emin. "The Political Theology of Malcolm X: Between Human Dignity and Returning the Gaze". *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, 96, no 1, (2020): 11-27.

⁶ Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*,

they are meaningless. Arguably, without a concrete revivalist thought and public engagement, potentials for growth and renewal are inconsistent and perhaps even impossible.

The main argument in this essay is that revival in Islamicate societies can emerge from, among other things, the right conditions on the ground – a revival from the bottom-up, as it were. The premise is that open public spaces facilitate interaction between various individuals and collectives who, in various ways, share experiences, worldviews, and opinions. This interaction increases the potential for greater understanding between people both directly and by extension within their respective cultural contexts. In addressing the main question, the essay discusses the potential for the resurgence of Islamic civilisation through intercultural, interreligious, and hence inter-civilisational interaction in public spaces organised around Muslim civility.

The assumption here is that civilisational revival can be encouraged through structural changes where agents (social actors, including intellectuals etc.) can interact in new ways and thus produce innovative ways to (re)solve contemporary challenges. For instance, a challenge of racism and Islamophobia can be addressed by creating physical public spaces that allow a wide variety of social actors to interact, meet, and encounter their differences. Obviously, all public spaces have a purpose, design, and social function – but regardless of a variety of those parameters, diverse groups of agents encountering others, unrelated and dissimilar agents from themselves have a potential to reduce racial and Islamophobic tensions through mere proximal closeness. This assumption is further explored and illustrated through two-part consideration of Qatar's role in hosting a major international event in 2022. The first part is contextualising Qatar in the light of the WC22. The second part offers an analysis of the prospects of Islamic revival in the light of Qatar's efforts to organize public spaces during the WC22.

(Princeton University Press, 2005); Abderrahmane, Taha. *Su'al al-Akhlaq: Musahama fi Al-Naqd al-Akhlaqi lil-Hadatha al-Gharbiyya* (Question of Ethics: A Contribution to the Ethical Critique of Western Modernity), 5th ed., (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi, 2013).

Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup™

The structural aspect of Islamic civilisational revival involves more than reinterpreting traditional teachings like mercy, generosity, and knowledge; it also considers how these ideas or concepts are framed by current socio-political and economic conditions. These conditions influence how Muslim scholars and laymen alike (e.g. the agents of civilisational revival) engage with, and articulate their own and others' interpretations of same events. Take for example, critiques of Qatar, their political system, labour policies, human rights record etc., expressed by European media outlets. A number of critical reports highlighted the idea of clash of Western secular values against the Islamic tradition and specifically a number of Qatar's policies.⁷

Nevertheless, Qatar's extravagant efforts to host the FIFA World Cup 2022 was at the same time an opportunity to showcase Islamic tradition globally, mirror this approach, aiming to navigate several challenges both internal and in regard to the perception from the West.⁸ It is clear that the country's leadership has structurally prepared for the event over a decade prior to it. A whole host of reforms have been introduced including labour rights legislation, abolishing exit permits for a million strong foreign labour force, introducing electronic wage payment systems, advancement in women's sports participation.⁹ The preparations can be interpreted as

⁷ Al-Malki, Amal M. "Public Policy and Identity", In *Policy-Making in a Transformative State: The Case of Qatar*, Edited by Tok, M. Evren, Lolwah RM Alkhater, and Leslie A. Pal. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 241-269; Henao, Luis A. "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam", AP News. December 18, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/religion-qatar-islam-doha-1fd7e9e6ac1b6f6bdca0b21ca271ab4>; Brannagan, Paul Michael, Danyel Reiche, and Lorraine Bedwell. "Mass Social Change and Identity Hybridization: The Case of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup", *Identities* 30, no. 6 (2023): 900-918.

⁸ Henao, "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam"; Papanikos, Gregory. T. "The Global Media Coverage of the 2022 Qatar World Football Cup", *Athens Journal of Sports* 10, no 2, (2023): 119-132.

⁹ Swart, Kamila & Hussain, Umer "FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar: Under the Gaze of Western Media", In Kobayashi, Koji, John Horne, Younghan Cho, and Jung Woo Lee, eds. *Sports Mega-Events in Asia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023): 199-222.

structural adjustments of socio-spatial environment in order to accommodate, host, and engage with a large number of national football teams and global audiences of spectators.

The dynamic of structural changes are not random sets of events but are crafted socio-politically to promote national and religious dimensions of Qatari influence, achievements and aspirations – sometimes described as soft power.¹⁰ The examination of the intricate interplay among geopolitical dynamics, cultural tensions, and competing narratives illuminates the complexities of civilisational revival.

The WC22, just like other similar sport mega-events, highlight the nexus between globalisation, sports economics, state control, and human rights, all of which converge in a set of synergies, all depending on the beholder's perspective and interest. One part of the argument in this essay is that the synergy of the WC22 resonates with the broader meaning of an "Islamic civilisational ethos".¹¹ This ethos is arguably embedded in Qatar's efforts to enable global human interaction through football in an open public space that is organised around a spectrum of traditional ethical values.¹² Understood in this way, the WC22 was not just a mere mega-sporting-event and spectacle of athleticism and geopolitical maneuvering. The tournament was at the same time a conduit for inter-civilisational meetings and an instance of showcasing Muslim civility through an Islamicate country's organisational and economic dexterity.¹³ For

¹⁰ Swart and Hussain, "FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar."

¹¹ See Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad N. *Islam and Secularism*, (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993).

¹² Sassen, Saskia. *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, (Princeton University Press, 2006); Elcombe, Tim, Harman, Alanna. & Hadman, Alun. "Looking back on the 2022 FIFA World Cup: A Tournament of Surprises and Controversy", *The Conversation*, December 18, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/looking-back-on-the-2022-fifa-world-cup-a-tournament-of-surprises-and-controversy-194493>; Næss, Hans E. "A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events: The Case of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™," *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 5, (2023). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2023.1142878>

¹³ Asrar, Shakeeb. "How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of Islam", *Interfaith America*, December 19, 2022. <https://www.interfaithamerica.org/world-cup-interfaith-understanding-islam/>.

instance, this mega-sporting-event offered an opportunity for an intercultural and inter-civilisational dialogue in which the country's soft power created an opportunity for the world to directly experience an Islamicate culture and some of its values and customs.¹⁴

In this context, 'public space' represents physical, permanent or temporarily accessible environments such as parks and gardens, public squares and plazas, sports complexes and playgrounds, and not least, cultural centres and museums, including marketplaces and street fairs. Such public spaces contain potential to both create and reshape collective experiences of people who participate. Ujang and colleagues argue:

“Attachment to people and activities in place should allow for an opportunity for interactive contact if the conditions of the spaces are flexible and adequate to be used for multiple functions. Good urban public spaces are required for the social and psychological health of modern society. Providing more spaces for people to interact may enhance the role of public open spaces in the city. The underlying principle is to consider place attachment as a catalyst for an inclusive city for all walks of life. Therefore, public spaces need to be planned and designed to support human–place interaction.”¹⁵

Their work highlights the importance of understanding the social meanings of public spaces in a diverse social context. Furthermore, their main argument is the open public spaces offer structures of social interaction among diverse groups, which might assist

¹⁴ Farzad, Kaveh A. “Building Bridges through Sport: Qatar's World Cup Vision”, Pacific Council on International Policy, March 10, 2017; Henao, “Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam”;; Naess, “A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events”; al-Tamimi, N., Amin, A., & Zarrinabadi, N., “Creating Nation Brand”; Lo, Alioune A. “Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022”, *Anadolu Akademi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 5, no. 1 (2023): 33-49.

¹⁵ Ujang, Norsidah, Marek Kozlowski, and Suhardi Maulan. “Linking place attachment and social interaction: towards meaningful public places.” *Journal of Place Management and Development* 11, no. 1 (2018): 115-129.

designing and managing urban places that promote social sustainability and resilience. This represents an empirically grounded case that points toward the broader argument made in this essay; open public spaces enable a positive social synergy in a diverse society.¹⁶

In the case of Qatar, its economic and organisational capacity including its soft power capabilities engaged during the run up to the WC22 used a wide range of open public spaces to involve a wide range of global audiences in meaningful interactions – revolving around people’s enthusiasm for football in an Islamicate majority society.¹⁷

It is important to highlight that not all of the observants of the WC22 focused on the positive synergies of open public spaces. One study shows that a number of critical media’s portrayal of Qatar, particularly in the European outlets, highlighted problematic aspects of Qatar’s bid and hosting of the WC22.¹⁸ It seems nevertheless that this so called “Western media” negative branding tactics galvanised support for Qatar among the populations in the Global South. For instance, Dubinsky points out that “these [negative branding] tactics, especially when emphasising western hypocrisy, orientalism, the historic atrocities of European colonialism, or pointing out incidents of Islamophobia through stereotypical depictions of Arabs as terrorists, have been proven effective to galvanise the global south behind Qatar”.¹⁹

Another study highlights that the WC22 as an important part of the Qatari monarchy’s broader strategy to declare its statehood and

¹⁶ Sassen, Territory, Authority, Rights; Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*, (Blackwell, 1991).

¹⁷ Al-Tamimi, Nawaf, Azzam Amin, and Nourollah Zarrinabadi. “Creating Nation Brand: The Model of Qatar.” In *Qatar’s Nation Branding and Soft Power: Exploring the Effects on National Identity and International Stance*. (Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023); Næss, “A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events”.

¹⁸ Dubinsky, Yoav. “Clashes of cultures at the FIFA World Cup: Reflections on soft power, nation building, and sportswashing in Qatar 2022.” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 20, no. 2 (2024): 218-231.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 223.

unique nationhood both regionally and globally.²⁰ Here Griffin convincingly suggests that Qatar manages to balance ‘Western criticism’ and its unique geopolitical and cultural position as a small Muslim majority country. Griffin calls this ‘hybridity’, wherein cultural and religious distinctions are also utilised as enablers of shared norms and values.²¹ This can be interpreted as Qatar’s showcasing their balancing act of preserving its traditional values, including perhaps an Arab notion of Muslim civility, and at the same time hosting a mega-sporting event with unprecedented influx of foreign guests from all corners of the globe. The balancing act is also one of civilisational encounters and discontents – all of which happen in a time and place. It is therefore important to ask, what is the potential of the interplay of public space and Muslim civility in one Islamicate society in the revival of Islamic civilisation? In order to address this multilayered question, we ought to suspend, at least temporarily, a number of important geopolitical and labour concerns, and focus on the role of public open space during WC22 and however small potential of the revival of Islamic civilisation.²² This preliminary analysis concentrates on two converging elements of revival; existence of tradition of Islamic revivalism and a modern case of the significance of physical spaces in facilitating a practice of civilisation revivalism. For the remainder of the analysis to make sense, it is crucial to clarify a host of interlinked concepts that will help us address the key question in this essay: What is the potential of the interplay of public space and Muslim civility in Islamicate societies in the revival (*tajdīd*) of Islamic civilisation?

²⁰ Griffin, Thomas R. “National Identity, Social Legacy and Qatar 2022: The Cultural Ramifications of FIFA’s First Arab World Cup”, In *Moments, Metaphors, Memories: Defining Events in the History of Soccer*, Kausik Bandyopadhyay, Souvik Naha (Eds.), (Routledge, 2012); Baabood, Abdullah, *Qatar’s Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations*. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), 2022.

²¹ Griffin, “National Identity, Social Legacy and Qatar 2022: The Cultural Ramifications of FIFA’s First Arab World Cup.”

²² Henao, “Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam;” Lo, “Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar’s FIFA World Cup 2022.”

Civilisations as revivable phenomena

In this essay, ‘civilisation’ signifies a complex and historically compounded human depository of ethical values characterised by a unique overarching identity; a high degree of cultural, social, and technological sophistication; and a shared set of worldviews. It represents a diverse assemblage of cultural meanings, encompassing various smaller communities unified by shared values, norms, and institutions. It is helpful to imagine civilisations as dynamic and perpetually evolving phenomena with a core set of principles that are manifested in shifting patterns of collective consciousnesses of people depending on a time and place. This definition is framed in a way that it resonates well with the meanings of Arabic terms *ḥadārah*, *madaniyyah*, and *‘umrān*. These terms point to notions of presence, collective consciousness, and even collective acts of submission and worship. This particular definition is to informed by others.

For instance, anthropologist Talal Asad understands civilisation as “a narrative that seeks to represent homogeneous space and linear time.” His perspective is particularly illuminating in the context of European attempts to assert dominance over the “other,” namely, those not sharing a “European (Christian) identity”.²³ Philosopher Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas offers an interesting perspective the context of Islamic civilisation: “It has its own distinct ontological, cosmological, and psychological interpretations of reality”.²⁴ Moreover, he presents it as a dynamic phenomenon that induces a ‘liberation’ process that frees humanity from “magical, mythological, animistic,” and secular controls over reason and language.²⁵ This perspective outlines some arguably unique features of Islamic civilisation, among them a set of ethical values and norms that distinct features of a *tawhidic*, i.e. logocentric worldview.²⁶ This

²³ Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. (Stanford University Press, 2003), 165-171.

²⁴ Nasr, Seyyed. H., *Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, (State University of New York Press: 1993), 17.

²⁵ Ibid, 44.

²⁶ Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*: 12, 45.

framing also underscores the evolving nature of civilisations – they are not static, homogeneous entities, but layered accumulations of cultural, scientific, religious, and identity-related meanings and interactions that evolve over time.²⁷

Another philosopher, Seyyed Hossein Nasr maintains that civilisation represents more than just a collection of organizational structures, identity narratives, economic structures, and political institutions. (CITATION) For him, civilisation is rightly an external manifestation of a people's collective, and presumably compounded, inner spiritual state, a sort of holistic vision of human life intertwined with spiritual experiences and an awareness of metaphysical meanings.²⁸

Looking at the world through their perspective, science is not separate from moral and ethical consciousness, and of being in the world. Science, according to Nasr, becomes a way of engaging with the Divine and its creation. This understanding of civilisation transcends material and temporal dimensions, for it incorporates the shared spiritual experiences of particular groups of people (e.g., a broader category of Muslims). Take the terms *hadārah*, *madaniyyah*, and *'umrān* again, and consider its semantic complexity. This richness aligns particularly well with Nasr's suggestion that Islamic civilisation, including others, are shaped by the collective metaphysical, moral, and ethical consciousness of populations in Islamicate contexts and beyond.

This amalgam of meanings suggests the importance of collective experiences and their spiritual orientation. Unsurprisingly, it resembles Nasr's assumption that contemporary civilisations are continuously shaped by their peoples' expressions of a collective consciousness. In this way, civilisations are actually expressions of historically sedimented and evolving interactions between different groups of people holding a range of analogous ideas, who at the same

²⁷ Smith, Jeremy. C. A. "Civilizational Analysis as a Mode of the Intercultural, Intercivilizational Encounters, the Intercultural and Contemporary Historical Sociology." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 45, no. 2 (2024): 310-325.

²⁸ Nasr, Seyyed. H. *Science and civilization in Islam*. (Kazi Publications, 2001). 141ff, 224ff.

time share elective affinities toward (sacred) truths.²⁹ Understood in this way, we can argue that civilisations are revivable. What is more, this connection allows us to explore a civilisation's moral and ethical development, which is shaped by accumulated cultural, scientific, religious, and identity-related meanings over time. Civilisation serves as an analytical tool for understanding broad patterns in human development, including moral and ethical dimensions. However, identifying shared values across large populations is challenging due to temporal and spatial variations. Despite these complexities, civilisation remains the most comprehensive level of cultural identity.³⁰

If we extend this argument to an even larger domain of civilisation, we can claim that numerous emanations, symbolisms, and manifestations of collective human ethical and moral experiences exist in spaces throughout time. A set of distinct civilisational features, including its intellectual and founding principles, are manifested through a range of intellectual, aesthetic, and other intersectional phenomena all premised on sets of ethical principles that are understood as civilisational guides.³¹ Such understanding allows us to coherently speak about Greek, Roman, Chinese, or West African civilisational legacies.

Civilisational (dis)Contents and Civility

One way of imagining civilisations is through the tensions between different civilisational units. Consider the Islamicate and Western (or post-Christian) internally diverse civilisations as imagined, and historical entities that have been at odds with each other since at least the 18th century. Consider also that processes of modernity have affected them in a profound and arguably irreversible way.³²

²⁹ Ibid, 66ff.

³⁰ Hodgson, Marshall. G. S. *Rethinking world history: Essays of Europe, Islam and world history.* (Cambridge University Press, 1993)

³¹ Abderrahmane Taha. *Tajdid al-Manhaj fi Taqwim al-Turath* [Reviving the Methodology of Assessing the Tradition]. (Beirut: Markaz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi, 1994).

³² Poljarevic, Emin. "Islamic tradition and meanings of modernity." *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, 3, no 1 (2015): 29–57.

Secularism is here understood as a distinct product of Western modernisation since the Enlightenment and the ideological hegemony of the post-World War II international order.³³ This order has reshaped understandings of religion and politics, including their ethical and moral dimensions.³⁴ Secularism as a process can be understood to involve the reorganisation of political and public spaces, where traditional religious beliefs and practices are systematically pushed out from the public sphere with intention to promote neutrality, reason, and rationality. This means that religion is managed by relegating religious people from any major role in the public space. Politics understood as a prominent public expression of morals and ethics, in such a secularism scenario is also “cleansed” from religious sentiments and its moral reasoning.³⁵

Subsequently, in a compellingly secularised public space (e.g., France), any public display of perceivably “religious” politics and its ethical principles breaches the secular modes of conduct, and as such, it is inadmissible, or rendered extreme and inappropriate.³⁶ In such secularised political and diplomatic contexts, religiously framed discourses are typically thoroughly reformulated and expressed through ideological and culturally framed narratives to make them palatable to broader audiences.³⁷ In short, universal human rights are universal only as much as its secular Euro-American proponents

³³ Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*.

³⁴ Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman. “The political authority of secularism in international relations.” *European Journal of International Relations* 10, no. 2 (2004): 235-262.

³⁵ Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Nasr, Seyed Hussein. *Islam in the modern world: Challenged by the West, threatened by fundamentalism: Keeping faith with tradition*. (HarperOne, 2010); Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

³⁶ Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Fernando, Mayanthi L. *The republic unsettled: Muslim French and the contradictions of secularism*. (Duke University Press, 2020); Scott, Joan Wallach. *The politics of the veil*. (Princeton University Press, 2007).

³⁷ Constantinou Costas M., and James Der Derian. “Sustaining global hope: sovereignty, power and the transformation of diplomacy.” In *Sustainable Diplomacies*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Dorsey, James M. “The 2022 World Cup: Qatar’s make-or-break moment.” *Modern Diplomacy*. 2022, October 20. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/10/20/the-2022-world-cup-qatars-make-or-break-moment/>.

are.³⁸ The Euro-American dominant framing of ethics and morals during the 20th century has had implications for the subjective experience of being in the world. In other words, secularist reasoning has had implications for human behaviour, emotions, identity formations, subjectivities and therefore formation of people's civility and perhaps even civilisational self-understanding.

One often overlooked component of civilisational content is civility. Civility is here linked to ideas and practices of social virtues.³⁹ These virtues are rooted in social agents' awareness of and regard for the public good and rules of engagement in social life. From this perspective, it is not surprising that civility is articulated in cooperation and mutual understanding between social groups. Civility as civilisational virtue manifested through a range of understandings of "common sense" that encourages open dialogue and understanding across different social and ideological groups, ensuring that ethical principles adapt to the evolving, diverse contexts of modern urban life. This approach can help mitigate conflicts and build harmonious, inclusive communities by reconciling the context-dependent ideals of civility with the deep-rooted moral traditions found in popular common sense. Shared understanding of what common sense means in a time and place depends upon the level of interpersonal exchange and communication – ubiquitous unspoken rules. We can reasonably assume that that if the levels of civility are highly valued in a society, the likelihood of interpersonal or social conflict is low.⁴⁰

Another expressed feature of civility in such a space can be described as cosmopolitanism. Here, this usually complex term denotes the value of (cultural, religious, ideological etc.) diversity in a place where people accept particular differences.⁴¹ In such places,

³⁸ See Casanova, Jose. *Public religions in the modern world*. (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Bilgrami, Akeel. *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

³⁹ See Forni, Pier Massimo. *Choosing civility: The twenty-five rules of considerate conduct*. (St. Martin's Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*.

⁴¹ See Aljunied, Khairudin. "Muslim cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia: Marketplaces as sites of interaction and integration. In Arif, Nasr M., and Abbas Panakkal (eds.), *Southeast Asian Islam: Integration and Indigenisation*. (Routledge,

civility is showcased. Civility in sustainable diverse social contexts becomes a sort of social glue expressed through tangible social ethics, a kind of public *adab* (ethical conduct) that allows individuals to engage in dialogue and exchange. In an ideal situation, it expresses interpersonal respect for diverse cultural identities based on the sentiments of recognition and acceptance of human diversity – a sort of common sense where collective agency is more or less in sync with the social structures that engulf it.⁴²

What does that all mean? Well, civility adopts a pivotal role in the context of revival of Islamicate ethical and moral ideals in the wake of hegemonising impulse of Euro-American secularism. When construed in this manner, revival of civility acts as a catalyst for cooperative endeavours and buttresses the values that underpin self-awareness and constructive engagement with the multitude of subjectivities in a time and place. Crucially, civility stimulates a socio-political milieu that is both conducive to and actively cultivates coexistence and communal understanding. Within the framework of inter-civilizational interactions, think of WC22, its role can be analogized to that of “diplomatic etiquette.” Civility functions as a vital instrument for negotiating cultural chasms, thereby encouraging shared understandings and reciprocal respect across cultures.⁴³ Civility in practice transcends mere politeness or decorum; it arguably acts as a sustainable normative force, one that shapes and is shaped by civilizational encounters.⁴⁴

Today, Islamicate societies – while adopting the frameworks of modern nation-states infused with elements of secularism – have maintained strong connections to traditional religious values. This situation is represented by significant social changes, (neo-)colonial impacts, economic and structural adaptations, environmental challenges and Euro-American political and cultural hegemony. It is worthwhile to note that the historical interaction between pre-modern

2024).

⁴² Elder-Vass, *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*; Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

⁴³ See Dorsey, “The 2022 World Cup: Qatar’s make-or-break moment.”

⁴⁴ Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*; Abderrahmane, *Su'al al-Akhlaq: Musahama fi Al-Naqd al-Akhlaqi lil-Hadatha al-Gharbiyya*.

Christian and Islamicate civilisations was indeed complicated. However, the study of cultural, scientific, and theological exchanges reveals factors that facilitated, not only antagonism and conflict, but also coexistence, tolerance, and broader material progress.

Premodern urban centres like Baghdad, Cairo, Cordoba, Granada, Jerusalem, Palermo, Samarkand, Zanzibar etc. became Islamicate cosmopolitan hubs that were dominated by Muslim civility which helped organise diverse open spaces such as courts, libraries, bazaars, madrasas, caravanserais, and hammams.⁴⁵ Urban centres represented therefore the epicentres of a creative surge and innovations through merging of disciplines and cultures. Historical records show that in these public spaces people interacted across different classes, intellectual traditions, ethnicities, and religions.⁴⁶ For instance, in the classical age, al-Andalus' political leaders promoted interfaith tolerance by aligning themselves with some Islamicate principles and enhancing political stability and legitimacy.⁴⁷ The principles related to tolerance allowed for the economic integration of diverse groups that, in turn, contributed to the cities' prosperity and cultural vitality – a sort of a delicate cycle of justice. Although far from total freedom from social tensions, this level of civility, cosmopolitanism, and coexistence was rarely found elsewhere at the time.⁴⁸ This blend of social and physical spaces accommodated and enabled both intellectual, material and even spiritual exchanges, enriching the cosmopolitan ethos of these societies.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*; Hodgson, *Rethinking world history: Essays of Europe, Islam and world history*; Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Ruggles, D. Fairchild. *Islamic gardens and landscapes*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Constable, Olivia Remie, and Damian Zurro, "Introduction." In Constable, Olivia Remie, and Damian Zurro (eds.) *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

⁴⁶ Al-Khalili, Jim. *The house of wisdom: How Arabic science saved ancient knowledge and gave us the Renaissance*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).

⁴⁷ Constable *et al*, "Introduction".

⁴⁸ Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 17.

⁴⁹ Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The ornament of the world: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians created a culture of tolerance in medieval Spain*. (Back Bay Books, 2009); Triano, Antonio V. "Madinat Al-Zahra: Transformation of a Caliphal City."

The intersections of ideas, talents, intentions, and craftsmanship in Islamicate cities created unexpected synergies due to structural opportunities such as freedom of access and underlying Muslim civility. This intersectionality enabled the generation of creative solutions to existing challenges. In other words, open and diverse urban environments nurtured intellectual curiosity, creativity, and innovation. These environments attracted scholars and fostered the critical renewal and revival of Islamic thought.⁵⁰ The convergence of social, political, economic, and spiritual factors in these cities provided unique opportunities for developing Muslim civility and collective consciousness, which have been historically robust and ongoing.⁵¹

In contemporary contexts, the challenges of Islamic civilisational revival are often intensified by the Euro-American push for secularism and secularisation in Islamicate countries. This push can marginalise, malign, and exclude Islamicate perspectives.⁵² Secularism, rooted in European experiences and partially adopted in parts of the Islamicate world, represents a cultural hegemony that may overlook the diverse moral and ethical experiences of different societies. Furthermore, when doctrines of secularism are combined with ethnonationalism—whether in Euro-American, Islamicate, or other civilisational contexts—it hinders intercultural communication and understanding, posing significant obstacles to inter-civilisational understanding and the prospects of revival and civility.

Potential for Revival

On the surface, one might assume that Qatar's hosting of the World Cup 2022 does not offer much insight into the revival of Islamic civilisation. However, by focusing on the interplay between public

In G. D. Anderson & M. Rosser-Owen (Eds.), *Revisiting al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Ruggles, 2008; Outram, 2013).

⁵⁰ See Kamrava, Mehran, ed. *Innovation in Islam: Traditions and contributions*. (University of California Press, 2011).

⁵¹ Makdisi George. "The rise of colleges: institutions of learning in Islam and the West." (Edinburgh University Press, 1981).; Constable *et al*, "Introduction".

⁵² Al-Attas *Islam and Secularism*.

space and Muslim civility, we can uncover valuable lessons for both theory and practice. Recent studies have highlighted that Qatar's political leadership has prioritised learning, cosmopolitanism, and civility within the state's discourse.⁵³

Doha, Qatar's capital, exemplifies a modern economic powerhouse that blends traditional cultural elements with wealth derived from vast natural resources, particularly natural gas. This wealth is strategically invested in infrastructure, transportation, media, education, culture, and sports.⁵⁴ These advancements occur within the framework of traditional monarchical rule, extensive natural resources, and both domestic and imported ingenuity. Coupled with the ruling elite's economic and diplomatic ambitions, Qatar has adjusted its physical and social environments to host one of the world's most celebrated sports events.⁵⁵ In doing so, Qatar has successfully integrated Muslim civility into urban environments, promoting a cosmopolitan Islamic and Arab ethos.⁵⁶

Qatar's efforts to host elite athletes from thirty-two countries and a large number of international fans have been described as transformative for the entire society.⁵⁷ A decade before the event in

⁵³ Griffin, "National Identity, Social Legacy and Qatar 2022: The Cultural Ramifications of FIFA's First Arab World Cup", 108; Dubinsky, "Clashes of cultures at the FIFA World Cup: Reflections on soft power, nation building, and sportswashing in Qatar 2022"; Carter, Paul. *Meeting place: The human encounter and the challenge of coexistence*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Lo "Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022;" Brannagan *et al*, "Mass social change and identity hybridization: the case of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup."

⁵⁴ Al-Kuwārī, 'Alī Khalīfa. "The visions and strategies of the GCC countries from the perspective of reforms: The case of Qatar." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2012): 86-106. Baabood, *Qatar's Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations*.

⁵⁵ (Constantinou and Der Derian "Sustaining global hope: sovereignty, power and the transformation of diplomacy"; Dorsey, "The 2022 World Cup: Qatar's make-or-break moment"; Brannagan *et al*, "Mass social change and identity hybridization: the case of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup"; Næss, "A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events".

⁵⁶ Henaou, "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam"; Lo, "Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022."

⁵⁷ Asrar, "How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of

November 2022, Qatar became a significant arena for inter-civilizational and intercultural interactions, influenced by and influencing global athletic competition.⁵⁸ While this essay cannot fully explore the complex matrix of political, economic, and social ambitions that have shaped Qatar as an Islamicate state, it is essential to note that Qatar's hosting of WC22 represents an Islamicate-rooted intercultural hub. This event showcased a glimpse of inter-civilizational understanding, offering opportunities for diverse people, primarily from Euro-American backgrounds, to experience Muslim civility in public spaces and learn from and engage with Islamicate society.⁵⁹

Despite these constructive efforts, mainstream European media's coverage was predominantly negative.⁶⁰ Various criticisms, some of which raised legitimate concerns, reinforced stereotypical and Islamophobic narratives.⁶¹ This bias missed the opportunity to highlight the World Cup's potential as a space for global dialogue and cultural exchange. While every sociocultural and political space is shaped by its historical and cultural context, it is essential to move beyond broad-brush critiques and engage with the specificities of the Qatari context. Again, if secularism is understood to be an historical product of a specific cultural, philosophical, and political formation that has its roots in European history, it differs from Islamicate experiences wherein spirituality, religious traditions, and ethical systems have evolved in a parallel, yet distinct, trajectory. These trajectories are what civilizations, in many respects, represent.

Consider the following: A range of official statements and projected images give an impression that many of the socio-cultural

Islam?.

⁵⁸ See Baabood, *Qatar's Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations*.

⁵⁹ Smith, "Civilizational Analysis as a Mode of the Intercultural, Intercivilizational Encounters, the Intercultural and Contemporary Historical Sociology".

⁶⁰ Abdulrahman al M. and Al Ansari, H. "World Cup in Qatar: Human Rights and Normalization." *Carnegie Endowment of International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/88890>, January 26.; Amnesty International, 2016. Human Rights Watch, 2021).

⁶¹ Dubinsky, "Clashes of cultures at the FIFA World Cup: Reflections on soft power, nation building, and sportswashing in Qatar 2022"; Swart and Hussein 2023

statement expressed and promoted by Qatari officials are often infused with an awareness of Islamic moral and spiritual messages.⁶² The Education city mosque, “Minaretein” has been designed by an architect couple Ali Mangera and Ada Yvars Bravo and it represents a fusion of modern and traditional architecture expressed as sacred art. The mosque is further embellished by calligraphy produced by the British Iraqi Arabic calligraphy artist, Taha Al-Hiti. The spatial dynamics of venues like Katara Cultural Village and Souq Waqif highlight how modern expressions of cultural heritage can create meaningful meeting places through displays of Muslim civility.⁶³ These spaces allow fans, players, and guest workers, including laborers, to engage with one another and with local communities, offering significant insights into the potential for coexistence and civility.⁶⁴ Such zones provide common areas where supporters from around the world can connect, fostering interactions that shape their religious and cultural experiences. For example, the prohibition of alcohol during the World Cup 2022 allowed people to meet in a state of sobriety and clear-headedness.⁶⁵ These examples demonstrate how everyday living and modes of coexistence embody and affect the lives of real people, illustrating how both imagined and real inter-civilisational differences manifest under the auspices of Muslim civility.

These spaces also allowed for the public expression of religiosity and faith without apparent restrictions, suggesting that Doha opened up a space that respects and embraces religious, cultural, and other differences. However, any historical or contemporary place is influenced by political power and its underlying intentions and sensibilities. The historical cities of Granada and Cordoba during the classical age, like modern Doha during the WC22, represent(ed) sites of cultural exchange, dialogue, and mutual respect among different religious and ethnic groups. They

⁶² See Al-Malki, “Public Policy and Identity”.

⁶³ Henao, “Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam”.

⁶⁴ See Asrar, “How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of Islam”.

⁶⁵ Church, Ben. “Soaking up the atmosphere at Qatar 2022: What it’s like at a ‘dry’ World Cup.” CNN. 2022, November 30. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/30/football/alcohol-world-cup-fans-qatar-2022-spt-intl/index.html>

also reveal the complexities and challenges of coexistence – issues of power, hierarchy, and exclusion were present, just as they are in Qatar, London, and Berlin.⁶⁶ Much like other capitalist environments across the globe, the notion of development employed by Qatar is merged with its historical, traditional, social and political structures. The underlying cultural and traditional sensibilities manifested in forms of Muslim civility demonstrate agency in everyday interactions, influenced by both religious teachings and local customs.

Arguably, in a number of historical and modern Islamicate examples, public spaces that have been organised around principles of Muslim civility enabled constructive encounters of diverse groups of people. Such encounters were not secular in nature and in many instances have produced tolerance and coexistence, including free thought, and creativity within debates.⁶⁷ It seems that Qatar's investment in global sport, culture, and education rests on a mixture of classical and modern ethical and material considerations that are organized around principles of Muslim civility.⁶⁸ Such investments have helped diversify its predominantly rentier economy and create global alliances but also solidifies its legitimacy both domestically and internationally.⁶⁹ Symbols of Islamic tradition and Arabic culture, combined with the aspirations of a nation-state, permeate many aspects of Qatar's forward momentum, articulated by its government, NGOs, and media outlets.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Mrahorović, Senad. "Spirituality and Sport: A Way towards Perfection." *Religions* 16 (2022): 18-144.

⁶⁷ Bulliet, Richard. W. *The case for Islamo-Christian civilization*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

⁶⁸ See Al-Malki, "Public Policy and Identity".

⁶⁹ See Asrar, "How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of Islam"; Muneer, Hana. "Combating misrepresentations; How Qatar focused on showcasing its Islamic culture during World Cup". Maktoob Media. <https://maktoobmedia.com/qatar-2022/combating-misrepresentations-how-qatar-foc-used-on-showcasing-islamic-culture-during-world-cup>; Henao, "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam".

⁷⁰ Kamrava, Mehran. *Qatar: Small state, big politics*. (Cornell University Press, 2015); Al-Malki, "Public Policy and Identity"; Knight, Sam. "At Qatar's World Cup, where politics and pleasure collide." *New Yorker*. 2022, December 12. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/12/12/at-qatars-world-cup-where-politi>

Conclusion

This essay has demonstrated how public spaces structured around Muslim civility not only fosters social interaction but also contributes to the intellectual revival (*tajdid*) of Islamic thought by enabling the reinterpretation of key Islamic principles in contemporary settings. In the context of Qatar's hosting of the World Cup 2022, we have been able to observe the intersection between public spaces and Muslim civility which have a potential to revitalise Islamic civilization. This obvious stretch of the analysis, acts like a conceptual scaffolding for the claim that developing open public spaces in Islamicate contexts organised around principles of Muslim civility fosters interaction, encounters, and the convergence of diverse ideas, worldviews, and perspectives.

This analysis also offers a potential to generate constructive and productive solutions to contemporary challenges from restructuring public spaces and organising them around the principles of civility and ethics. This essay highlights the potentiality of public spaces in Islamicate contexts to serve as platforms for reviving Islamic ethical principles of justice, compassion, equity etc., all of which are adapted to contemporary settings.

To be clear, this analysis is not an evaluation of civility's success or failure within Qatar's hosting of the World Cup 2022. Instead, the essay demonstrates how Qatar navigates the delicate balance between opening up for global dialogue and maintaining control over its traditional ethical and moral commitments, as well as its political and economic interests. While Qatar faces tensions between preserving its ethical commitments and responding to global pressures, its design of public spaces reflects a conscious attempt to maintain a balance that supports civility and ethics grounded in Islamic principles.

Inadvertently, such balancing acts and tensions have also revealed the potential for the revival of Islamic civilisation. As discussed earlier, impulse and drive for coexistence, applied ethics, and civility are not spontaneous or inherent, but are carefully crafted socio-political and cultural acts. Despite inherent difficulties and

cs-and-pleasure-collideGulf Times, 2023; The Peninsula, 2022).

tensions, historically, these efforts represent Islamicate attempts to create an inter-civilisational environment where civility and coexistence triumph over their opposites. Agents of change – political, economic, social, scientific, cultural, architectural, etc. – have strived to maintain the continuity of Islamic tradition while facilitating innovation in the face of modern challenges.

Qatar, for example, has attempted to align important Islamic ethical principles with open public spaces. These public showcases, through Quranic recitations, art, and cultural events, actively reflected Muslim civility by promoting values like hospitality and compassion, reinforcing the ethical underpinnings of Islamic revival, and perhaps even, the spiritual ethos of an iteration of Islamic civilisation.

The WC22 served as a brief yet significant social experiment, temporarily uniting diverse audiences, ideologies, cultures, and religions. Though imperfectly, it mirrored the spatial dynamics of pre-modern Islamicate cities by becoming a nexus for inter-civilizational dialogue, fostering understanding and coexistence between Islamicate and non-Islamicate countries. It provided a unique platform for inter-civilisational encounters, bridging cultural divides and fostering opportunities for coexistence and civility beyond reductionist and myopic ideological constructs like ethnonationalism, secularism, and Islamism.

Far from being merely an athletic spectacle, this event served as a microcosm of humanity's broader quest for understanding and connection. The infrastructure developed for the World Cup, including stadiums, fan zones, and training facilities, were social spaces carefully designed to reflect aspects of Islamic heritage and Arabic culture. These public spaces became arenas for complex social interactions, requiring high levels of civility for successful engagement. Shaped by global flows of capital, labour, and ideas, they served as modern-day arenas for inter-civilizational encounters, much like other cosmopolitan and vibrant places. The event highlighted the political economic nexus where globalisation, sport economics, state control, geopolitics, and human rights, all converged in a unique inter-civilisational synergy. This synergy has the potential

to shape shared experiences, cosmopolitan ideals, and civility beyond such global events.

By fostering intercultural encounters through well-designed public spaces, Qatar demonstrated how Muslim civility in such environments can contribute to the broader process of Islamic revival. Qatar's emphasis on hospitality, inclusivity, and respect for guests highlighted key Islamic values such as compassion and mercy, adapted to a modern sports setting. This image is in sharp contrast to the imperial impulses expressed by Euro-American and Zionist forces which are consolidated around the idea of domination and exploitation and shutting down venues for open dialogue.⁷¹ In the light of attempts of domination of neo-colonialism, Qatar's proactive stance in fostering intercultural dialogue and reducing tensions is even more noteworthy. This stance aligns rather well with the broader intellectual revivalist effort to reinterpret and apply Islamic principles to contemporary challenges, which adds to the civilisational revivalist puzzle. Overall, the WC22 exemplified how the interplay between public space and Muslim civility can contribute to the ongoing revival of Islamic civilisation by fostering intercultural understanding. This small effort demonstrated a range of ethical principles that had addressed at least some of the challenges of Islamophobia, ethnonationalism, moral relativism and other reductionist processes and phenomena.

It is important not to exaggerate the successes of the WC22. There are several noteworthy limitations of the above argument. The singular focus on Qatar and the World Cup 2022 restricts the generalisability of the analysis. While this essay illustrates how Qatar's approach fosters intercultural dialogue through showcasing Muslim civility in a modern sports context and through development of open public spaces, this case still represents an exception in the world of mega sport events. At the moment, the challenge here is to extrapolate these findings to other regions or events. Addressing these limitations would require a comparative analysis involving multiple cases across different contexts within the Islamicate world.

⁷¹ Thomas, Baylis. *The Dark Side of Zionism: The Quest for Security through Dominance*. (Lexington Books, 2011); Grandin, Greg. *The end of the myth: From the frontier to the border wall in the mind of America*. (Metropolitan Books, 2019)

MODERN REFORMS IN THE ISLAMIC THOUGHT WITH REFERENCE TO SCIENCE: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Zain Razzaqⁱ and Dr. Rab Nawazⁱⁱ

Abstract

Orientalist scholarship in Western academic literature has portrayed Islam as ignorant, backward, and anti-science. However, there has been a paradigm shift in this monolithic approach to the academic study of Islam. The modern interpretation of Islam supports science and shows the face of Islam as being in harmony with Western practices and procedures. The new representation of Islam has further been categorised into friends and foes. This paper consists of three sections, one of which is based on a study of some of the key reforms proposed by Muslim modernists regarding Islam and modern science. The second part aims to present the Islamist response to modern science, a group that is often presented as an opponent and foe of Islamic modernism. It also includes a comparison between Islamic modernist and Islamist approaches to highlight the differences in their methodology. The final section proposes a new methodology to address the issue of the incompatibility of Islam and modern science. The study employs an analytical research methodology with a qualitative approach. It prioritises primary sources but also uses secondary sources when needed. Books, research papers, and online resources are utilised to analyse differing viewpoints and approaches. Books, research papers, and online resources have been used to explore various methods adopted by Muslim scholars in the Indian subcontinent regarding the relationship between Islam and modern science.

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Modern Reforms: Paradigms Shift in the Studies on Islam and Modern Science

In the Indian subcontinent, *‘Ulamā* and their institutional continuity of *madrāsas* have long been significant in shaping and transmitting Islamic thought. However, their unprecedented importance has been affected by the advent of modern knowledge and ongoing changes – thus losing its centrality over time. The majority of the *‘Ulamā* have become conservative in response to losing their influence and have adopted a rejectionist attitude towards reform. On the other hand, a small group of scholars, influenced by modern science and education, sought to reconstruct Islamic thought. The fundamental problem in front of them was to show the harmony between Islam and modern science. This section consists of a careful evaluation of modern reforms in relation to modern science.

Reinterpretation of Islam: Sayyid Ahmad Khān

Sayyid Ahmad Khān (d. 1898) is the pioneer of modern reforms in Islamic thought in the Indian subcontinent. He belonged to a high Mughal family and experienced many spheres of power and influence, including serving as a judge for the British East India Company.¹ He had a profound impact on how the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent understood modernity and how they dealt with the challenges of modern science. Ahmad Khān observed the steady decline of Muslim influence in India and initiated Muslim reforms as the situation of the time demanded that some measure should be taken which would divert the attention of the Muslims to the demands of the time and the future.² Since the political and social

¹ For a detailed biography of Sayyid Ahmad Khān, see Altaf Hussain Hali, *Hayat-e-Javed* (Lahore: Urdu Academy Pakistan, 2020). See also Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800026519>.

² Syed Nazeer Niyazi, *Iqbal Kay Huzoor*, vol. 01 (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1981),

status of Muslims was dependent on their religion – as they are guided by Islam in worldly affairs – Ahmad Khān took it upon himself to engage in religious debates to reform their condition. This took place from 1857 onwards³

Modern science, according to Ahmad Khān, has revealed the reality of many secrets of the past. In this age, whoever claims something to be true, even if it is a religious truth, is not considered true unless he proves it to be true.⁴ He claimed that modern science has conclusively established the truth. Although this truth has only recently been discovered, it is perhaps the intention of God for it to be as such.⁵ Modern science does not merely possess a degree of doubt and conjecture, it is also based on the experience of facts in accordance with the law of cause and effect, on permanence and uniformity of events, different forms of induction, repeated observation, and observation by way of refined instruments.⁶

In most of his writings, Ahmad Khān repeatedly emphasized the reconciliation of Islam with modern science, as he considered both to be divine.⁷ Principally, there is no conflict between Islam and modern science because both are two different ways of expressing the same truth; Islam is the word of God while science is the work of God.⁸ Furthermore, he suggested that the word of God must be followed only to the extent that it is consistent with nature (work of God).⁹ For him, it is quite apparent that denying the work of God

<https://www.rekhta.org/ebooks/iqbal-ke-huzoor-volume-001-syed-nazeer-niyazi-ebooks?lang=ur>.

³ Altaf Hussain Hali, *Hayat-e-Javed* (Lahore: Urdu Academy Pakistan, 2020), 573.

⁴ Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maqalat-e-Sir Sayyid: Volume 03*, ed. Muhammad Ismaeel Panipati, vol. 03 (Lahore: *Majlis-e-Taraqqi-e-Adab*, 1984), 148.

⁵ Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), 165-68, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800026519>.

⁶ Khan, *Maqalat-e-Sir Sayyid: Volume 03*, 286-300.

⁷ See for example, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Aakhiri Mazameen (The Last Articles) (Lahore: Mansoor Press, 1897); and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Tahrir Fi Usool-Ul-Tafsir (Writings in Usool-Ul-Tafsir)* (New Delhi: Maktabah Jamia Limited, 1995).

⁸ Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Tahrir Fi Usool-Ul-Tafsir (Writings in Usool-Ul-Tafsir)* (New Delhi: Maktabah Jamia Limited, 1995), 50.

⁹ Mohammad Imteyaz, *Indo-Muslim Religious Thought in 19th Century: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and His Critics* (Aligarh Muslim University, 2008), 156.

is impossible. Consequently, to believe a contradiction between the two would lead to rejecting the word of God. The contradictions between Islam and science, according to Ahmad Khān, only occurred due to misinterpretation of the revealed text¹⁰ that can be resolved by reinterpreting the Qur'anic text.¹¹ Ahmad Khān was the first in modern India to realize the necessity for a new interpretation¹² as for him, the existing Islamic thought cannot meet modern challenges caused by science. However, the emergence of a new *'Ilm-ul-Kalām* is needed.¹³ The purpose of the new *'Ilm-ul-Kalām* is to show that religious truth is not incompatible with science. For Khan, this purpose can be fulfilled;

1. either by proving that what religion says is the truth and science and philosophy really agree with religion; and by refuting science and philosophy where they disagree with it.¹⁴
2. or by showing that the domain of religion is different from that of science and philosophy;¹⁵ and where religion speaks of things with which science deals with, its purpose in speaking of them is not the same as that of science, i.e. it does not aim at telling us what the nature of such object exactly is (like science). It only aims at the moral and religious conclusion.¹⁶

By employing the second method, Ahmad Khān addressed the question of whether the earth is stationary or in motion from the

¹⁰ Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*, 169.

¹¹ Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *Quran Aur Musalmano Kay Zinda Masail (Quran and the Real Problems of Muslims)* (Lahore: Ilm-o-Irfan Publishers, 1989), 222.

¹² Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1957), 262.

¹³ Imteyaz, "Indo-Muslim Religious Thought," 162.

¹⁴ Khan, *Tahrir Fi Usool-Ul-Tafsir (Writings in Usool-Ul-Tafsir)*, 31-62.

¹⁵ The former course is relatively complicated because, despite the resemblance in the problems of religion, science, and philosophy, it is full of apparent contradictions that require the extraordinary capability to resolve. See Muhammad Suheyl Umar, *Iqbal's Sermons: A New Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2018).

¹⁶ Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Aakhiri Mazameen (The Last Articles)* (Lahore: Mansoor Press, 1897), 84.

Qur'anic perspective. For him, the Qur'ān neither proves that the earth is stationary, nor does it prove that the earth is in motion. Similarly, it cannot be proved from the Qur'ān whether the sun is stationary or moving. The Qur'ān did not address these problems of astronomy because it believed that human knowledge would resolve them by itself as it progressed. The Qur'ān describes such scientific matters as people observe them. The real purpose of religion is to promote morality and not to raise questions that hinder the achievement of this aim.¹⁷ Similarly, in response to another question, Ahmad Khān asserted that the Qur'ān does not prove Geocentrism. People believe in the motion of the sun because they believe it is moving around the earth. The Prophet's duty was not to explain the actual reality of the phenomenon, nor was it deemed necessary for those people; instead, the purpose of mentioning the motion of the sun in this verse is to illustrate the omnipotence and majesty of God.¹⁸

Ahmad Khān's thought had several weaknesses that were frequently identified and criticised by both his contemporaries and later Muslim scholars. The major weakness is that in the case of the conflict between Islam and science, Ahmad Khān condemns and critiques the Islamic tradition only. Although he should have dealt with modern science in the same way, he embraced it uncritically. Many of his contemporaries, such as Sayyid Mehdī Alī and Alī Bakhsh Khān, heavily criticised Khan for prioritizing modern sciences over religion.¹⁹ By applying this principle in his *Tafsīr*, he rejected the hadiths and traditions related to physical ascension to be unreliable and contradictory to reason and the laws of nature. He rejected the miracle of physical ascension by preferring the laws of physics over Islamic tradition and interpreted it as a dream journey.²⁰

¹⁷ Khan, 84.

¹⁸ Khan, 82-83.

¹⁹ Inteyaz, "Indo-Muslim Religious Thought in 19th Century: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and His Critics.", 152-66.

²⁰ Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Tafsir-Ul-Quran with Usool-i-Tafsir* (Lahore: Dost Associates, 1995), 1075-1197.

Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts: Muhammad Iqbāl

Muhammad Iqbāl (d. 1938) is the most prominent Islamic poet and philosopher of India. He was born and brought up in a family that was a follower of Ahmad Khān. He was influenced by Ahmad Khān from the very beginning as the influence of the *Alāgarh* Movement was dominant at the time of Iqbāl's birth. He was a part of the process of reconstruction of Islamic thought in India which Ahmed Khān started.²¹ For Ahmad Khān, the new arrival situation was only a matter of changes in certain cultural conditions and social problems, while Iqbāl realized that instead of such superficial interpretations of the situation, we must go deeper and see whether Islam can accept Western civilisation in terms of its essence or not. For this, it is necessary to revise the concepts of life and universe, time and space, spirit, and matter, etc. which existed in the traditional religious culture, and they should be redefined in such a way that they can be able to absorb the progress of Western civilisation.²² Iqbāl claimed that the Islamic world is rapidly moving towards the West, which is changing the mindset of Muslims. In this situation, there is a need to save Muslims from chaos and confusion.²³ In this regard, it should be remembered that in the West, empirical sciences were shaped by the scientific ideas of Muslims during the Renaissance period. Therefore, according to Iqbāl, there is nothing wrong with Muslims being influenced by them because the intellectual side of the West is only a continuation of some of the most significant stages of Islamic culture. The only fear is that because of the stunning external side of Western culture, Muslims may fail to reach the true interior of this culture.²⁴ More importantly, to what extent can the consequences of Islamic cultural influence in

²¹ Sagheer Afraheem, 'Sir Sayyid-o-Allama Iqbal: Humahangi-e-Fikr-o-Amal', accessed 29 March 2023, <https://www.rekhta.org/articles/sir-sayyad-aur-allama-iqbal-hamahangi-e-fikr-o-amal-sagheer-afraheem-articles?sort=popularity-desc&lang=ur>.

²² Saleem Ahmed, 'Islam Aur Hind Islami Tehzeeb', *Neya Dour*, n.d., 257–65, <https://www.scribd.com/document/248637139/اقبال-اور-ہند-اسلامی-تہذیب-سليم-احمد>.

²³ Faruqi, *Quran Aur Musalmano Kay Zinda Masail (Quran and the Real Problems of Muslims)*, 66.

²⁴ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 6.

Europe support the reconstruction of modern religious thought, and how much can it help understand the meaning of Islam as a universal message to humanity? For this purpose, Iqbāl considers it necessary to reconcile religion with science.²⁵ Iqbāl is criticised for claiming Islamic teachings as the basis of scientific epistemology.²⁶

At *Alāgarh*, Iqbāl delivered six lectures on “the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam”, in which the biggest problem before him was to identify the principle of movement (*usūl al-harkah*) within the structure of Islam and Islamic civilisation keeping in view the specific situation that has arisen with the advent of Western civilisation. In these lectures, Iqbāl adopted the reconciliatory method proposed by Ahmad Khān, a tacit assumption of which is that the problem, method, solution, and aim of religion, and science are identical.²⁷ This reconstruction consists of reconciling Islam with knowledge (scientific and metaphysical) because both religion and knowledge are human values and cannot be retained side by side unless they are reconciled, while on the face of it, they seem to be in conflict.²⁸ He attempted to prove on the basis of the common elements of Western and Islamic civilisations that there is nothing in Islam and Islamic civilisation that is incompatible with the modern mind accustomed to the senses, which is concerned with the world of things and events. His lectures are an attempt to reconcile the mechanical principle of causality with free will, creation with evolution, life after death with human mortality, and the religious experience with sense perception as a source of knowledge. This conciliation attempt is an accusative response to those minds who consider recognition of the findings of empirical sciences to be a deviation from Islam and do not find room in Islam for the acceptance of these findings or recognize Islamic concepts as unscientific in comparison to the validity of these findings.²⁹ In his lectures, he adopted a conciliatory style in order to bring modern

²⁵ Faruqi, *Quran Aur Musalmano Kay Zinda Masail* (Quran and the Real Problems of Muslims), 222.

²⁶ Ansari, *Capitalist Values and Ideologies: An Islamic Approach*, 15.

²⁷ Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1.

²⁸ Faruqi, ‘A Critique of Iqbal’s Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam’, 4.

²⁹ Faruqi, *Quran Aur Musalmano Kay Zinda Masail* (Quran and the Real Problems of Muslims), 223.

civilisation closer to Islam.³⁰ The addressees of these lectures are mostly Muslims who are influenced by Western philosophy, and who wish to explain the philosophy of Islam in the language of modern philosophy, and if there are flaws in the classical thoughts, they should be resolved.³¹ Since Iqbāl himself was influenced by Western philosophy, he also studied Islam from the perspective of Western philosophy.³²

The fundamental weakness in Iqbāl's conciliatory attitude toward modern science is that he is in difficulty grasping the nature of the fundamental implications of Islam and science and the limits of their validity and has consequently ended up obliterating their fundamental distinctions.³³ So, when the distinctive aspects of the Qur'ān were overlooked and it was framed on the principles of man-made knowledge, it became a knowledge of exegesis, interpretation, causation, and analysis that failed to produce the desired results.³⁴

Domains of religion and science are separate: Burhān Ahmed Fārūqī

Burhān Ahmed Fārūqī (d. 1995) was born in *Amroha*. He received his higher education from *Aligarh* Muslim University and received special training in the subject of philosophy from Syed Zafarul Hasan (d. 1949).³⁵ Unlike Iqbāl, Fārūqī attempted to show that there is *no incompatibility* between modern science and religion by following the second course suggested by Ahmad Khān, according to which the scope of religion is different from that of modern science. Fārūqī's distinction is that instead of religion and science, he compiled his response in terms of "Divine Knowledge" and "Man-made

³⁰ Muhammad Suheyl Umar, *Khutabat-e-Iqbal: Naey Tanazur Main*, 3rd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2018), 172.

³¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *Iqbalnama: Majmooa Makatib-e-Iqbal*, vol. 01 (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1951), 210.

³² Iqbal, 46.

³³ Faruqi, '*A Critique of Iqbal's Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*', 43.

³⁴ Faruqi, *Minhaj-Ul-Quran (Methodology of the Quran)*, 9.

³⁵ For a detailed biography of Burhān Ahmed Fārūqī, visit <https://tanzeeloriwayat.com/dr-burhan-ahmed-farooqi/> (accessed 25, March, 2023)

Knowledge".³⁶ Man-made knowledge informs about the exact nature of a thing or idea, whereas revelation does not aim at what the nature of a thing is; it only aims at the moral conclusions - how man-made knowledge is to be reformed under the guidance of revelation.³⁷

The problems and purpose of the Qur'anic knowledge and Man-made knowledge which seem to be identical need to differentiate.³⁸ For him, the Qur'ān has knowledge that cannot be obtained through science. Consequently, considering religion as the source of science can cause the stagnation of scientific enhancement.³⁹ According to Farūqī, Qur'anic knowledge is the knowledge of the objectives and the plan that guarantees the attainment of these objectives. How to develop intellectual, moral, artistic, religious, and spiritual values in life is the key concern and purpose of the Qur'ān.⁴⁰ This knowledge is productive and can ultimately achieve the desired results. Man-made knowledge is the knowledge of the nature of things, which is different from that of Qur'anic knowledge.⁴¹ Seeking this knowledge in science instead of religion can lead to deprivation of religion.⁴² So, there are basically two types of knowledge, one which is given by the Qur'ān and the other which is acquired by human beings.⁴³ For example, the main problem of economics is the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, which is organized under the values and ideologies of each economic system while 'Qur'ān-based economics' deals with the problem that how to prioritize the attitude of helpfulness, selflessness, and empathy over acquisitiveness and

³⁶ The central point of Fārūqī's work is the Quranic concept of revolution and 'Minhāj-ul-Quran' is a key work in which the entire system of Fārūqī's concepts has come to the fore.

³⁷ Faruqi, 'A Critique of Iqbal's Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam', 40.

³⁸ Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *Minhaj-UI-Quran (Methodology of the Quran)* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986), 72.

³⁹ Faruqi, *Quran Aur Musalmano Kay Zinda Masail (Quran and the Real Problems of Muslims)*, 41.

⁴⁰ Faruqi, 103.

⁴¹ Faruqi, *Minhaj-UI-Quran (Methodology of the Quran)*, 9.

⁴² Faruqi, *Quran Aur Musalmano Kay Zinda Masail (Quran and the Real Problems of Muslims)*, 41.

⁴³ Faruqi, *Minhaj-UI-Quran (Methodology of the Quran)*, 74.

covetousness.⁴⁴ Similarly, sociology deals with the problem of what is society, and on what basis is a society formed. What are the reasons for the rise and fall of societies? whereas the problem of ‘Qur’ān-based sociology’ is how to reform social life and how to prioritize the attitude of fraternity over racism.⁴⁵ The problem of political science is what the state is, and on what basis the state is formed. What is its purpose and how it achieves that purpose? Lust for power gives rise to political antagonisms, in turn, the demand for rights becomes the driving force of action. The one who demands rights is regarded as an offender of lawlessness and the one from whom rights are demanded is a persecutor and oppressor and thus this conflict never ends. Qur’anic polity creates a social contract between the ruler and the subject by declaring the fulfilment of duty as the motive of action.⁴⁶

The separation between Islam and science is possible only at the level of empirical observation. However, due to the differing scientific approaches and varying ways of understanding knowledge in Islamic schools of thought, this separation often turns into conflict.⁴⁷ This is why many Muslims, as well as atheists, believe that religion and science cannot co-exist. For example, Richard Dawkins argues that one can either be a religious person or an evolutionist, but not both.⁴⁸ Similarly, Ansari claims that Islam and social sciences are diametrically opposed to each other. Islamic identity neither survived nor flourished within capitalism.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Faruqi, 80.

⁴⁵ Faruqi, 79.

⁴⁶ Faruqi, 81.

⁴⁷ Omar Qureshi, Afifi Al-Akiti, and Aasim Padela, ‘Islam and Science: Reorienting the Discourse’, in *Islam and Biomedicine*, ed. Afifi Al-Akiti and Aasim Padela (Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 245–54, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53801-9>.

⁴⁸ Shoaib Ahmed Malik, *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazali and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm*, *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazali and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm* (Taylor and Francis, 2021), 5, accessed doi:10.4324/9780429345753.

⁴⁹ Ansari, *Capitalist Values and Ideologies: An Islamic Approach*, 265.

Monotheistic Revolution of Islam and Modern Science: Wahīduddīn Khān

Wahīduddīn Khān (d. 2021) renowned Islamic scholar, spiritual mentor, and ambassador of peace, who presented Islam in a modern context to engage modern minds. He was born on 01 January 1925 in Badharia, a village near Azamgarh. In 1938, his uncle admitted him to *Madrassa-tul-Islāh* in *Sarāi Mīr*, near Azamgarh which laid the foundation for his religious base.⁵⁰ Just like Ahmad Khān, Wahīduddīn Khān advocated for a new interpretation of Islam and encouraged acceptance, rather than rejection, of the beneficial aspects of Western culture. In his writings, he attempted to reconcile religion with science, and he successfully proved that Islam is the only religion that conforms to the standards of modern science.⁵¹ He claimed that Islam is a monotheistic revolution that separated nature from its sacred foundation and opened the way for investigation, research, and discovery.⁵² Arab Muslims were the ones who initiated the modern scientific revolution, but the initial inspiration came from the new way of thinking that Islam had made possible.⁵³ As all the phenomena of nature were sacred, natural sciences had turned into a forbidden field. The root of all evil is a perception that something is sacred when it is not that is called Polytheism. For Wahīduddīn Khān, polytheism or superstition was not only a theological issue but was related to all human affairs which made nature sacred and vanished the idea of exploring it because what is sacred cannot be investigated.⁵⁴ Modern science is a by-product of the Islamic Revolution that has been cut off from its totality.⁵⁵ Therefore, if Islam is removed from human history, all civilisations and human

⁵⁰ For a detailed biography of Wahīduddīn Khān, visit his official website; <https://www.cpsglobal.org/life> (accessed 30, January, 2023)

⁵¹ Rafique Anjum Awan, *Revisiting Islam : The Reformist Thought of Wahiduddin Khan* (New Delhi: Adam Publisher & Distributors, 2018), 280-81.

⁵² Wahiduddin Khan, *Islam: Creator of the Modern Age* (New Delhi: Al-Risala Books, 1997), 7, <https://www.cpsglobal.org/books/islam-the-creator-of-the-modern-age>.

⁵³ Khan, 7.

⁵⁴ Khan, 7.

⁵⁵ Wahiduddin Khan, *Paighambar-i-Inqilab* (Lahore: Fiction House, 2013), 204, <https://cpsglobal.org/read-online-book/pyghmbr-anqlab-paighambar-e-inqilab>.

advancements will have to be erased along with it and after that, the world will return to the dark age that existed before the Islamic Revolution.⁵⁶ He claimed that innovative people in the past were also born who thought independently of their surroundings, but because the environment was not responsive, their individual thoughts were unable to develop. The Islamic revolution provided a favourable environment due to which numerous fields of knowledge flourished.⁵⁷

Islam made this revolutionary distinction between religious and physical knowledge for the first time. The source of religious knowledge is revelation which is preserved in the form of the Qur'ān. However, in the field of physical knowledge, complete freedom has been provided to conduct independent research.⁵⁸ For him, the subject of science is not the discovery of the Creator, but the material world, which in religious terms is called 'God's creation'. Since the Creator is not separate from His creation, it can be indirectly said that science is the study of God's creation. The facts that science discovered through its studies are all the manifestations of God's signs, which are called *Ayātullāh* in the Qur'ān. A scientist may deny the existence of God but cannot negate his sign which has been explored by modern scientific research.⁵⁹ Wahīduddīn Khān emphasized that when the God who created the universe has also revealed religion, then how can there be a contradiction between true religion i.e. Islam, and science?⁶⁰ For him, although the Qur'ān is far from being a book of science, modern scientific discoveries are highly beneficial for the proper understanding of the Qur'ān. For instance, the Qur'ān states: that God made from water every living thing.⁶¹ In the past, readers of the Qur'ān had a basic understanding of this concept. However, when present-day readers explore such verses in combination with the latest scientific discoveries, they gain

⁵⁶ Khan, 'Islam: Creator of the Modern Age', 160.

⁵⁷ Khan, 52.

⁵⁸ Khan, 36.

⁵⁹ Wahiduddin Khan, *Khuda Ki Daryافت* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2020), 147.

⁶⁰ Wahiduddin Khan, *Islam Aur Asr-e-Hazir* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2018), 111, <https://www.cpsglobal.org/books/islam-aur-asr-e-hazir>.

⁶¹ *Al-Anbiyā'*: 30

additional details. It enhances their belief in the authenticity of the Qur'ān.⁶²

Modern Science and Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Jāvēd Ahmad Ghāmidī

Jāvēd Ahmad Ghāmidī is a Pakistani Muslim theologian, Qur'ān scholar, Islamic modernist, exegete, and educationist. He was born on April 7, 1952, in a village called *Jīvan Shāh* in District *Sāhīwāl*, Punjab. In 1983, Ghāmidī decided to establish a foundation for learning and research by the name of Al-Mawrid. The vision behind its organization was to facilitate research in Islamic sciences and its dissemination and publication.⁶³ In TV programs and YouTube sessions, he often expresses his opinion on the relationship between Islam and science, for which he adapts the second principle proposed by Ahmad Khān. Like Fārūqī, Ghāmidī also believes that the description of scientific realities and historical events is not the real concern of the Qur'ān at all. The core concern of the Qur'ān is to inform mankind about the oneness of God, and about the Day of Judgment. He said that “sometimes the secondary comments in the Qur'ān serve to strengthen the concept of the Oneness of God and the Day of Judgment, providing additional reasoning for these fundamental beliefs”. Ghāmidī emphasized that if the factual realities stated in the Qur'ān appear to be consistent with the facts concluded by modern science, it will confirm the facts stated in the Qur'ān. However, regardless of such affirmations, the primary concern of the Qur'ān is moral. He also provided an example to illustrate this point. The chapter in the Qur'ān, *As-Sajdah* describes the story of the creation of man, it can be said that current scientific research conforms to a great extent to these details, although this was not the intention of the Qur'ān. Since it is the Word of God which cannot be untrue; many such Qur'anic truths have been verified by scientific research over time. So, the Qur'ān and modern science can be

⁶² Wahiduddin Khan, ‘The Scientific Exegesis of The Quran’, *Divine Revelations*, accessed 30 January 2024, <https://www.cpsglobal.org/articles/scientific-exegesis-quran>.

⁶³ For a detailed biography of Jāvēd Ahmad Ghāmidī, visit his official website <https://www.javedahmedghamidi.org/#!/about-ghamidi> (accessed 30, January, 2023)

compatible, but it is important to interpret the Qur'ān based on its own statements and not impose contemporary understandings, as modern knowledge is constantly evolving, and interpretations may need to be revised.⁶⁴

Ghāmidī emphasized that when studying the Qur'ān and commenting on its interpretation, it is important to show that your interpretation reflects the original author's intent. In this regard, to understand the correct meaning of the Quranic words;

1. The *Mufasssir* has to determine how the Arabs used the words during the time of *Jāhiliyyah* when the Qur'ān was revealed (popular usage of the words).⁶⁵
2. If the word has multiple meanings and implications, the next step is to determine what meaning has been specified by the construction of the sentence and to what extent the connotation has been limited and bound by the context and coherence.
3. The issue is not whether the image formed in the *Mufasssir's* mind by the meaning of the word is compatible or inconsistent with any modern science. A *Mufasssir* must focus solely on understanding God's intention.

These modernist reforms never gained general acceptance among traditional Muslim scholars because of the uncritical acceptance of modern scientific epistemology, and instead of being influenced by it, Muslim scholarship was attempting to preserve Islamic epistemology from its negative effects.⁶⁶ Muqtedar Khān highlights some of the reasons why modernists have failed to gain mass influence and reach. According to him, most of the modernists do not come from within traditional religious academies and are therefore not considered as legitimate as traditional scholars. Mostly,

⁶⁴ In a YouTube video titled “*Kya Zameen Sakin hai?*” Ghāmidī answered some important questions about Islam and science. For the full video visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmJpHFF50sg> (accessed 01, April, 2023)

⁶⁵ Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, *Islam: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Al Mawrid, 2014), https://issuu.com/webmaster_jag/docs/05_islam_-_a_comprehensive_introduc.

⁶⁶ Javed Akbar Ansari, ‘Social Sciences Aur Islami Inqilabi Jidojohad’, in *Monthly Sahil* (Karachi, 2001), 7–17.

they are academics and researchers whose language, theories, and methodologies may seem either unfamiliar or too complex for widespread understanding among the general population. Islamic modernists also failed to establish influential institutions and movements capable of significantly impacting the Muslim masses and effecting the desired change. Perhaps the most important reason why Islamic modernism does not have appeal is that their demands for reform in Islamic thought are often seen as a call to ‘change Islam itself’.⁶⁷ They do not know how much damage is being done to the Islamic identity by adopting this conciliatory attitude. Ansari asserted that proposed modern reforms lead to the subordination of Islamic individuality, epistemology, society, and political authority structures within the Western system.⁶⁸ Islam has a self-sufficient ability that does not need any new interpretation in line with modern science. Hassan Ilyās highlighted some other reasons why the reforms proposed by Ghāmidī failed to gain popularity, which are summarized as follows.

1. In these reforms, the scholarly tradition of Islam is criticised, spanning fourteen centuries.
2. The scholars with whom the advocates of these reforms associated themselves were also not part of this Islamic scholarly tradition.
3. They present religion in a distinctive manner that Muslim communities are not accustomed to.
4. Many modernists do not even look like the traditional scholars trusted by the Muslim community.⁶⁹

Islamist Response to Modern Science

Like Islamic modernists, Islamists also try to deal with the same problem of incompatibility between Islam and modern science. However, they take another extreme position on the issue. Sayyid

⁶⁷ Muqtedar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 59-60.

⁶⁸ Ansari, *Capitalist Values and Ideologies: An Islamic Approach*, 16.

⁶⁹ See the YouTube video titled “*Ghamidi sahab ki fiker aur ulama ky rawaay*”. For the full video visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_b5h0tRUZw&t=2s (accessed 29, April, 2024)

Abul A'la Mawdūdī (d. 1979) and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) are seminal figures who played a key role in developing Islamist ideology. They present Islam as a complete system of life. For Islamists, Islam possesses a self-sufficient ability that does not require any new interpretation to harmonize it with modern science.⁷⁰ They are highly antagonistic towards modernity and science. According to Mawdūdī, Islam has always been confronted with different forms of *jāhiliyyah* (ignorance) such as *jāhilyat-i-mushikāna*, and *jāhilyat-i-rāhibāna*.⁷¹ The modern *jāhiliyyah* dominated in the West is *jāhilyat-i-khālisah* (absolute ignorance). For Syed Qutb, *jāhiliyyah* is not a specific form of society or period of history but an essence. Although the external manifestation of *jāhiliyyah* may evolve with the condition of society and the change of time, the core value remains the same in all forms.⁷² Modern *jāhiliyyah* possesses more evil aspects in comparison to other *jāhiliyyah* because it consists of eye-catching material progress and scientific theories that do not believe in any reality beyond the senses.⁷³ Qutb claimed that Islam knows only two kinds of societies: the Islamic and the *jāhilī*.⁷⁴ *Jāhilī* society refers to any society that is not Islamic. An Islamic society can only be formed when everyone rejects the servitude of anyone except Allah and chooses to submit exclusively to Him, Who has no associates, and decides that they will organize their lifestyle on the basis of this submission.⁷⁵ The Islamic society, by its very nature, is considered the only civilized society, while *jāhilī* societies, in all their various forms, are regarded as savagery.⁷⁶ In contrast to Islamic society, a society is considered *jāhilī* if it does not commit itself to complete submission to Allah alone in its beliefs, ideals, worship practices, and

⁷⁰ Javed Akbar Ansari, *Rejecting Freedom and Progress: The Islamic Case against Capitalism* (Lahore: Kitab Mehal, 2016), 85.

⁷¹ Syed Abul 'Ala Mawdudi, *Tajdeed-o-Akhyā-e-Din* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2014), 12-21.

⁷² Sayyid Qutb, *Jahiliyyah-Ul-Qarn-Il-Ashreen (Ignorance of the 20th Century)* (Cairo: Dar-ul-Shuruq, 1992), 6.

⁷³ Qutb, *Jahiliyyah-Ul-Qarn-Il-Ashreen (Ignorance of the 20th Century)*, 10.

⁷⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones (Maalim Fil-Tareeq)* (England: Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers, 2006), 106.

⁷⁵ Qutb, 90-91.

⁷⁶ Qutb, 107.

legal codes. In this context, all the societies of today's world are considered *jāhili*.⁷⁷

Mawdūdī claimed that modern science has two aspects. One aspect contains empirical data acquired through observations and experiences of different ages about the universe and human beings, which is a global heritage. The second aspect consists of framing this data with respect to one's ideology or worldview.⁷⁸ He claimed that Islam has no enmity with scientific information, rather they are all beneficial.⁷⁹ The opposition is not between scientific information and Islam, but between the West (*jāhiliyyah*) and Islam, because the civilisation that the West has formed by compiling scientific data according to its own ideology is exactly opposed to Islam.⁸⁰ Modern sciences such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, economics, geography, history, physics, political science, zoology, etc., which developed and flourished in the West, are all *jāhili* sciences⁸¹ as they are taught without reference to God.⁸² The essential purpose of modern science is to legitimize and ensure the functionality and sustainability of the Western order (*jāhiliyyah*).⁸³ Mawdūdī emphasised that what is needed today is to frame all scientific data from the Islamic perspective,⁸⁴ which is known as the Islamisation of modern science. It is clear from the above discussion that for Islamists, Islam is the only source of truth and civilisation, while the West represents either ignorance⁸⁵ or savagery.⁸⁶ They entirely reject modern science and

⁷⁷ Qutb.

⁷⁸ Syed Abul 'Ala Mawdūdī, *Ilmi Tahqiqat Kyun Aur Kis Tarha? (Why and How Scientific Research?)* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba-e-Islami, 1984), 1.

⁷⁹ Syed Abul 'Ala Mawdūdī, *Tanqihat* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1983), 286.

⁸⁰ Mawdūdī, *Ilmi Tahqiqat Kyun Aur Kis Tarha? (Why and How Scientific Research?)*, 12; Mawdūdī, *Tanqihat*, 18.

⁸¹ Mawdūdī, *Ilmi Tahqiqat Kyun Aur Kis Tarha? (Why and How Scientific Research?)*, 13.

⁸² Syed Abul 'Ala Mawdūdī, *The Education (Taleemat)* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2009), 62.

⁸³ Javed Akbar Ansari, *Rejecting Freedom and Progress: The Islamic Case against Capitalism* (Lahore: Kitab Mehal, 2016), 65-66.

⁸⁴ Mawdūdī, *Ilmi Tahqiqat Kyun Aur Kis Tarha? (Why and How Scientific Research?)*, 17.

⁸⁵ Syed Abul 'Ala Mawdūdī, *A Short History Of The Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2009), <https://archive.org/download/TheRevivalist>

seek to replace it with Islamic science.⁸⁷

In contrast to a reconstruction of Islamic thought, the movement for the Islamisation of modern science in the subcontinent gained a lot of popularity. However, it faced academic criticism from two sides: one from Islamic scholars and the other from scientists. The scientific community did not support this because Islamic science has directed its investigations to problems outside the domain of science and so far, it has not discovered any previously unknown facts.⁸⁸ Some scientists believe that there is no such thing as Islamic science. Science is universal and cannot be localised as Islamic, Indian, or Christian science.⁸⁹ Similarly, some scholars argue that the Islamisation of modern science is impossible as it is merely instrumental for articulating the capitalist system and the life world and can serve no other purpose.⁹⁰

Comparison between Islamic Modernists and Islamists

- Both the Islamic modernist and Islamist approaches address the same problem but propose opposite solutions.
- There is a conflicting relationship between Islamic Modernists and Islamists. Islamic Modernists interpret Islamic teachings on the basis of scientific epistemology while Islamists do the opposite. They justify practices and procedures as the basis of *Sharīa 'h*.
- Both approaches also identify the distinct cause of the problem. For Islam modernists, the cause for the problem of incompatibility is Islamic traditional thought while for

MovementInIslamSyedAbulAalaMaududi/The%20Revivalist%20Movement%20in%20Islam%20-%20Syed%20Abul%20Aala%20Maududi_text.pdf.

⁸⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Maalim Fil-Tareeq) (England: Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers, 2006), 78-81.

⁸⁷ Mawdūdī , *Ilmi Tahqiqat Kyun Aur Kis Tarha? (Why and How Scientific Research?)*, 14.

⁸⁸ Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1991), 77.

⁸⁹ Abdus Salam, *Ideal and Realities: Selected Essays of Abdus Salam World Scientific*, ed. Choy Heng Lai and Azim Kidwai, 3rd ed. (World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 1989).

⁹⁰ Ansari, *Capitalist Values and Ideologies: An Islamic Approach*, 263.

Islamists the problem is with modern science that requires Islamisation.

- Both approaches have certain weaknesses that ultimately result in the subordination of Islam to modern science.⁹¹
- The Islamic modernists considered the global supremacy of the West as epistemic domination. In contrast, Islamists believe that Islam is the only source of truth and civilisation, and that the West represents either ignorance or savagery.
- Islamic modernists are very uncritical of modern science while the Islamists consider modern science to be an exclusive part of Western (*jāhili*) civilisation and reject it entirely.
- Islamic modernists consider science to be divine, they advocate a mutual harmony between Islam and science. In contrast, Islamists believe that Islam possesses a self-sufficient ability that does not require any new interpretation to harmonize it with modern science.

Our response to Modern Science

Islamists and modernists emerged in response to Western scientific practices and procedures, seeking to revive Islam either in the political⁹² or the epistemic domain.⁹³ In the scientific age, any attempt at Islamic revival is inadequate without responding to the Western challenges. Although both are relatively new to the field of Islamic thought, they have significantly influenced the Muslim way of thinking and discussing Islam.⁹⁴ Both groups hold opposite views on modern science—Islamists reject it entirely and try to Islamise it, while modernists seek accommodation with modern science. Our method of responding to modern science lies between these two extremes. Instead of gluing patches of Islam onto non-Islamic ideologies, as Islamists do, we must reflect on Islam independently.

⁹¹ Ansari, “Capitalist Values and Ideologies” 16.

⁹² Nazih N. M. Ayubi, ‘The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 4 (1980): 481–99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/163131>.

⁹³ Mohammad Nejatullah Siddiqi, ‘Islamisation of Knowledge: Reflections on Priorities’, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 28, no. 3 (2011): 15–34.

⁹⁴ Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, 49.

Islam also does not need to be adapted to modern times, as Islamic modernists suggest, because Islam has an inherent resilience to address modern requirements. Its eternal and permanent commands remain unaffected by the change in time. For those issues, which may be affected by changing times, Islam lays down rules and principles, which can be modified to show the right path.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Islamic tradition should not be uncritically accepted solely because it is our own heritage, nor should science be rejected simply because it originated and flourished in the West. In contrast, our methodology consists of a mixture of selective use of Islamic tradition as well as modern scientific procedures and practices with the direct guidance of the Islamic authoritative text. We must recognize the beneficial aspects of both modern science and Islamic tradition and avoid what is non-Islamic or against the Qur'ān and Sunnah. However, this is not an easy job, only those who have devoted their lives to the study of the Qur'ān and Sunnah and have a deep understanding of their true meanings are suitable for it.

Conclusion

The above discussion shows that both Islamic modernist and Islamist perspectives address the same issue—the incompatibility between Islam and modern science—but propose opposing solutions. Islamic modernists try to harmonize Islam and modern science by reinterpreting Islamic texts, believing that the contradiction comes from misinterpretation of the texts. On the other hand, Islamists completely reject modern science and seek to replace it with Islamic science. Instead of accepting or rejecting the Islamic tradition and modern science in their entirety, the paper concludes by proposing a selective approach that critically assesses the issue, endorsing the positive aspects of both while avoiding their negative sides. This selective approach has ample room to adjust to changing circumstances while maintaining a deep commitment to the essence and fundamental principles of Islam.

⁹⁵ Muhammad Taqi Usmani, *Our Socio-Economic Order* (Karachi: Idara-e-Islamiyat, 2001), 33.

	Modernist approach	Islamist approach	Our approach
Problem statement	Incompatibility between Islam and Modern Science	Incompatibility between Islam and Modern Science	Incompatibility between Islam and Modern Science
Problem Identification	Misinterpretation of Islamic Text	Absence of God from Modern Science.	Total acceptance or rejection of both Islamic Tradition and Modern Science.
Solution	Reinterpretation of Islamic text in line with modern science.	Reframing the Scientific data with respect to the Islamic perspective.	Selective use of both Islam tradition and modern science.

ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN WORK ETHICS: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

Various scholars have been inspired by ethics and value systems across the centuries. However, conversations on such topics – especially in academia – have been conducted from a Judeo-Christian perspective, without giving much attention to other systems of thought. Thus, we argue that the Islamic view of ethical consideration and work needs to be explored more. This article explores the notion of Islamic work ethics, and its dimensions in contrast to Christian work ethics. This study contributes towards removing any misconceptions of Islamic work ethics and to clearly understand the Islamic view of work ethics and its implementation. Findings revealed that the notion of work ethics, as generally understood, is specifically related to work only. However, work ethics in Islam is an essential constituent of a typical Muslim's life, which is part of the Islamic tradition. Islamic work ethics is not only related to work but is equally applicable in all fields of life, irrespective of religious beliefs.

Keywords: Islamic Work Ethics, Protestant work ethics, work values, Catholic work ethics

Introduction

Islamic work ethics (IWE) is a concept that is deeply and firmly rooted in the Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Work ethics appeared in contemporary literature after the Western

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Industrial Revolution and post-World War II. Islamic work ethics (IWE) received little recognition in literature until the early eighties when Muslim scholars started working on Islamic work ethics.⁴

Islam is a complete code of conduct, a system of belief and law governing material and spiritual conditions.⁵ Islam has no distinction between religious and secular aspects of life. There are detailed guidelines on how to conduct professional affairs and how to manage such matters. Work is considered a form of worship in Islam, and an obligatory activity for each Muslim. Work leads to satisfaction, self-respect, and happiness. It provides a feeling of fulfilment while providing for the less privileged who cannot participate at this level.⁶

The Prophet asserted four aspects of work.⁷ The Prophet declared work as worship, and stressed two essential facets of work: quality and qualification. The Prophet said, "God blesses a man who perfects his job/work and God loves a person who learns precisely how to perform his work and does it right". The third aspect of work is that the Prophet declared 'work as a social dimension' as it must be beneficial to others.⁸ Lastly, the Prophet described merchants as "the couriers of the horizons and God's trusted servants of the earth", for it is through trade and business that society reaches prosperity and a reasonable living standard. Honesty, integrity, fairness, and accountability are some of the teachings of Islam that pertain to work and work ethics.

⁴ Hussain, Sajjad, Khurram Shahzad, Khurram Khan, and Ifzal Ahmad. "Moderating role of Islamic work ethics and mediating role of organizational identification on leader-member exchange and citizenship behavior relationship: A test of moderated mediation model." *Journal of Islamic Business and Management* 8, no. 1 (2018).

⁵ Munna, Afzal Sayed. "Instructional leadership and role of module leaders." *International Journal of Educational Reform* 32, no. 1 (2023): 38-54.

⁶ ElKaleh, Eman, and Eugenie A. Samier. "The ethics of Islamic leadership: A cross-cultural approach for public administration." *Administrative Culture* 14, no. 2 (2013): 188-211.

⁷ Aldulaimi, Saeed Hameed. "Fundamental Islamic perspective of work ethics." *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 7, no. 1 (2016): 59-76.

⁸ Aldulaimi, Saeed Hameed. "Fundamental Islamic perspective of work ethics." *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 7, no. 1 (2016): 77

Therefore, this paper aims to thoroughly review the literature to determine the definition and dimensions of Islamic work ethics compared to Christian work ethics and the implications within.

Methodology

The methodology used for this study is qualitative, literature analysis. Literature collected from academic search engines (JSTOR, Elsevier, ProQuest, Academia and SAGE) are reviewed in detail to get a complete insight into the topic. For this purpose, the aforesaid literature was analysed at great length, and the interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān and Holy Bible was also consulted to understand the concepts with greater clarity.

Work In Islam

Work is central in Islam, an integral part of life and the centre of faith. The Qur'ān and *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) are intrinsic parts of ideological and cultural discussions in Muslim societies. Islam emphasises work. It has been mentioned in the Qur'ān in several places not to waste time. Through the Qur'ān, Muslims are made to ponder on the Creator, through the creation that He has created. It is the Muslim belief that they should use Allah's creation for their benefit by working. Allah says, "*And that there is not for a man except that [good] for which he strives*".⁹ Also, another verse in the Qur'ān states "*It is He who made the earth tame for you so walk among its slopes and eat of His provisions and to Him is the resurrection*".¹⁰ Similarly, in another verse, Allah says, "*To all are ranks according to their deeds*".¹¹

Work In Christianity

In the Bible, work is implicitly described as an activity to earn a living, "*There is profit in hard work, but mere talk leads to poverty*".¹² According to the Church and Gospel, a proverb should be

⁹ Qur'an, *Surat al-Najm* :39

¹⁰ Qur'an, *Surat al-Mulk* :15

¹¹ Qur'an, *Surat al An'am* :132

¹² Common English Bible *Proverbs*:23

understood as a general principle rather than a promise. Instead, it is a general principle formulated from the observation of wise believers with regards to God's divine perspective, e.g., "*All hard work brings a profit*"¹³.

The Bible

The Bible is the holy book of Christianity. It is worth mentioning that many versions of the Bible have been written and interpreted in different eras. However, three versions of the Bible are more popular and available worldwide: the New American Standard Bible, the King James Version, and the Common English Bible.

- i. **The New American Standard Bible** is a literal translation from the original texts, and it is well suited to study because of its accurate rendering of the source text. It follows the style of the King James Version but uses modern English for words that have fallen out of use or changed their meanings. It uses capital letters for pronouns relating to divinity, e.g., 'there He sat down with His disciples'.
- ii. **The King James Version** is the world's most widely known Bible translation, using early seventeenth-century English. Its powerful, majestic style has made it a literary classic, with many phrases and expressions embedded in the English language. Earlier generations were brought up with this translation and learnt many of its verses by heart.
- iii. **The Common English Bible (CEB)** is more than a revision or update of an existing translation. It is an ambitious new translation designed to read smoothly and naturally without compromising the accuracy of the Bible text.

Work in Bible

To know a theme regarding Christianity, we need to consult the Bible, the sacred book of Christians. Ethics and work have been described in the Bible. In the Bible, some verses describe the importance of work and sharing, which means cooperation and collaboration among workers. As described in the following verse, "I

¹³ Common English Bible *Proverbs:24*

have sent you to harvest what you did not work hard for; others work hard, and you will share in their hard work".¹⁴ It also mentions that the benefit of hard work is achieved through profit, while a person will suffer from poverty if he does not work. "There is profit in hard work, but mere talk leads to poverty".¹⁵ Work is considered reward-worthy as it gives profit in the form of earnings. Therefore, it is rightly said in the Bible that "If I continue to live in this world, I get results from my work."¹⁶ Work is a more respectable way of living than sitting idle or begging. By referring to history, it is said that it is much better to work and prefer working for even opponents or enemies than dying in hunger in the desert. As quoted in Exodus, "Didn't we tell you the same thing in Egypt? Leave us alone! Let us work for Egyptians than to die in the desert"¹⁷.

Therefore, in Christian/Western contexts, a mental or physical effort to achieve a purpose or produce a thing of value, often in exchange for financial compensation, is considered 'work'. It encompasses various activities, including employment, job responsibilities, and professional tasks. The Western work perspective can be influenced by cultural, economic, and social factors within a specific region or country.

Ethics /*Khulq* in Islam

In Islam, *Akhlaq* refers to ethics, morals, attitudes, behaviour, and habits. *Akhlaq* is derived from *Khulq*, which guides the human soul in its actions without thoughts or deliberations. Ethics are hidden provisions and blessings for those who wear them.¹⁸

Akhlaq Mahmūdah are good deeds, while the evil deeds are called *Akhlaq Madhmūma*. Three underlying concepts of belief are pillars of the concept of *Akhlaq*. That is Allah, the One and Only *Khāliq* (creator) of human beings, the heavens and earth. Allah is

¹⁴ Common English Bible *John* 4:38

¹⁵ Common English Bible *Proverbs* 14:22

¹⁶ Common English Bible *Philippians* 1:22

¹⁷ Common English Bible Exodus 14:12

¹⁸ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue*, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy (2013): 135-16.

aware of them and firmly believes in resurrection and the life hereafter.

Ethics In Christianity

Christianity, a religion sent by God, also has guidelines regarding human ethics. Before going into deeper details, it is worth mentioning that regarding commentary of the Bible, it is believed that the Bible should be understood by its wordings as its writing is straightforward. Interpreting scripture is personally discovering what God, through his human authors, intended the biblical text to mean. One assesses, synthesises, and applies God's inerrant Word through exegesis and theology.¹⁹ This may be the reason behind the availability of several versions of the Bible.²⁰

If we go through the Bible, we find enlightenment. For example, "those who look for good find favour, but those who seek evil-it will come to them".²¹, and "*Generous person will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed*".²² In these verses, man is advised and guided to be good and generous with others.

Ethics is not well defined in the Bible; instead, certain acts are forbidden for followers, and some moral values are advised. For example, Proverb states, "*Those who look for good find favour, but those who seek evil – it will come to them*"²³ and "*Generous people will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed*"²⁴. As mentioned earlier, the Bible is to be understood by what the words say. Therefore, it can be perceived that those who are kind and helpful towards others will be rewarded more because of their ethics. One important ethics explained in the Bible is to avoid all foul matters and evilness. James states, "*With humility, set aside all filths*

¹⁹ Garrett, Duane A., and Jason S. DeRouchie. *A modern grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. B&H Publishing Group, 2019.

²⁰ Common English Bible, You version, presented by *Bible gateway*

²¹ Common English Bible *Proverbs* 11:27

²² Common English Bible *Proverbs* 11:25

²³ Common English Bible *Proverbs* 11:27

²⁴ Common English Bible *Proverbs* 11:25

and the growth of wickedness".²⁵ Regarding general life, Christ taught peaceful values, such as building a good character, loving each other, helping the poor and needy, etc.²⁶

Ethics – Modern Concept

In the modern era, ethics is a person's moral principle.²⁷ Ethics is also considered a normative science and stands in contrast to art, technology, and religion. Some scholars define ethics as "the science of conduct". Ethics can also be defined as "something good or considered proper as per moral standards or code of conduct and opposite to something wrong as per code of ethics, law, and procedures."²⁸

Dimensions of Islamic Work Ethics

Islamic work ethics include the simple tasks that believers must perform as a religious obligation, or to meet religious demands. The Qur'ān and Sunnah, the traditions set by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are the primary sources for its implementation. One's faith towards Allah is the guiding light that directly instils noble virtues exhibited in one's social relations, cooperation, responsibility, creativity, efforts, and dedication. It is this concept of worship that assures the success of the Muslims' economic activity.²⁹

Islamic work ethics are deeply rooted in the noble Qur'ān, and Sunnah accentuates expectations rather than outcomes. Work is considered an encouragement to improve social affairs. In Islam,

²⁵ Common English Bible James 1:21

²⁶ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *The Prophet of Peace: Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad*. Penguin UK, 2009.

²⁷ Ahmad, Shukri, and Musa Yusuf Owoyemi. "The concept of Islamic work ethic: An analysis of some salient points in the prophetic tradition." *International journal of business and social science* 3, no. 20 (2012): 116-123.

²⁸ Rokhman, Wahibur, Harif Amali Rivai, and Abideen Adewale. "An examination of the mediating effect of Islamic work ethic on the relationships between transformational leadership and work outcomes." *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business* 13, no. 2 (2011): 125-142.

²⁹ Khadijah, A. S., N. Kamaluddin, and A. S. A. P. Salin. "Islamic work ethics (IWE) practice among employees of banking sectors." *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 23, no. 5 (2015): 924-931.

sluggishness is forbidden and unappreciated; instead, Islam inspires believers to work passionately and pursue lawful means of wealth.³⁰ The concept of Islamic work ethics was enacted to save Muslims from being involved in sinful activities such as corruption, and the exploitation of others.

The following are examples of the Qur'ānic verses and the *Sunnah* regarding IWE: Allah says: "*O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed)*".³¹

- a. Allah says: "Allah commands justice, the doing of good".³²
- b. Allah says: "Say, verily I am commanded to serve Allah with sincere devotion".³³
- c. Prophet (pbuh) has preached: "The honest, trustworthy merchant will be with the Prophets, Siddīqs and martyrs".³⁴

Islamic Work Ethics

The literature review thus far has revealed that work in Islam is a source of earnings and a dignified life. Work must be significantly advantageous and relevant to the community. The term IWE refers to a set of moral principles which distinguishes what is right from what is wrong in the Islamic context. In other words, the teaching of Islam emphasises that it is Islamic values that dominate the behaviour (work ethics) of an individual and not the other way around.

Islam emphasises the importance of ethical behaviour, honesty, respect, responsibility, hard work, and fairness in all aspects of life, including the workplace. In Islam, one must be truthful and transparent in all dealings with colleagues, clients, and customers. Honesty builds trust and strengthens the relationship, a mandatory component of success. Treating others with respect regardless of race, religion, position, background, or colour is a significant value

³⁰ Mehmood, Nasir, Muhammad Munir, and Noshaba Batool. "*Investigating the moderating role of Islamic work ethics on relationship between interpersonal justice and employee turnover intentions.*" (2020).

³¹ Qur'an, *Surat al-Tawbah* :119

³² Qur'an, *Surat al-Nahl* :90

³³ Qur'an, *Surat al-Zumar* :14

³⁴ Jami' al-Tirmidhi, *The Book on Business* 14, hadith 7, English translation vol.1.Book 12, Hadith 1209

that applies to the workplace. Similarly, justice and fairness are also emphasised in Islam regarding dealing with others in everyday life and business. It means all employees are equal, without discrimination or favouritism and are provided with fair benefits and compensation. Hard work, compassion, and responsibility are also critical values in the social system of Islam and apply not only to individuals but to the collective level as well. Collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork are as important as excellence and diligence. Muslims are advised to struggle for excellence, to work conscientiously, and to establish a healthy, positive, and fruitful work environment which will benefit everyone. Islam emphasises harmony to avoid disputes and conflicts and encourages cooperation and compassion with balanced responsibility.

Based on the previous discussion, eight dimensions of IWE can be easily identified from the literature, namely: (1) *advantage*, (2) *work obligation*, (3) *quality/improvement*, (4) *equality*, (5) *collectivity* (6) *competition*, and (7) *effort*.³⁵

Dimensions of Christian/Western Work Ethics

The concept of work in the Bible is like the meaning in which work is taken today. In the Bible, work is implicit and is meant to be physical work. The Christian / Western concept of work and work ethics in the Bible can be understood as follows. According to John, *"I have sent you to harvest what you did not work hard for; those worked hard, and you will share in their hard work"*.³⁶ Also, the followers are advised to work hard by telling them that *"there is profit in hard work, but mere talk leads to poverty"*.³⁷

In the passage of history, a division in Christianity resulted in two categories or groups within Christians. The orthodox Christians are called Catholics, and the second group are known as Protestants (coming from the act; to protest). Regarding work ethics in the West, two main concepts have prevailed for a long time: Catholic work

³⁵ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue, Kuala Lumpur: YAPEIM Management Academy* (2013): 135-16

³⁶ Common English Bible John 4:38

³⁷ Common English Bible Proverbs 14:23

ethics (CWE) and Protestant work ethics (PWE). These concepts are explained in the coming paragraphs.

A. Catholic Work Ethics

The first time the Catholic church paid some attention to work ethics was in 1891 when Pope Leo XIII emphasised the dignity of labour and the right to just wages in *Rerum Novarum*.³⁸ Later, in an encyclical, Pope Pius XI maintained and reasserted the principles of *Rerum Novarum* and introduced the idea of the subsidiary in economics and social matters. *Laborem Exercens*, published on 14th Sep 1981, emphasised work to earn daily bread for man, provisions of the basis of family life as a source of transformation of nature and contributing to the common good. In this encyclical, Pope John Paul II focused on the dignity of human work and workers' rights. He also suggested addressing issues like workplace conditions, justified wages and unions of workers and their roles.³⁹

The Catholic work ethic mainly emphasised honesty, responsibility, and diligence. Other principles explained in this encyclical were fair treatment of employees and respect for human dignity. Ethical decision-making is one of the critical aspects of Catholic work ethics.⁴⁰

B. Protestant Work Ethics (PWE)

The concept of Protestant ethics was devised to explain the historical causes of capitalism's development. Weber studied Protestants' work ethics in 1958 and assumed that the gathering and collecting wealth is morally justified according to these work ethics. Weber asserted that credit for such development goes to the Christians only. He claimed that the Christians should be credited for such development

³⁸ Pope Leo, X. I. I. I. "*Rerum Novarum: Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor.*" *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* (1891).

³⁹ Misner, Paul. "Catholic Labor and Catholic Action: The Italian Context of" *Quadragesimo Anno*." *The Catholic Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (2004): 650-674.

⁴⁰ Kelly, Joseph. "Vincent McNabb, Agrarian Utopia and The Theology of Work: An exploration of the theology of the Catholic Land Association in relation to the social encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Laborem Exercens*." *New blackfriars* 91, no. 1033 (2010): 286-303.

because none of the Eastern religions, even Islam, accelerated and boosted the economy; instead, only Christians contributed to wealth accumulation and economic progress. A vital attribute of the work is the value assigned to it by people.⁴¹ The work has dual benefits; firstly, it is a source of earnings, meaning getting rewards, and secondly, it is rewarding itself.⁴²

Hard work was confined only to faith and beliefs. However, mental, and physical hard work during the "Protestant Reformation" became vital to everyone in the community.⁴³ The 'Protestant Work Ethic' was primarily coined as a religious construct. However, later, it only remained confined to a general work ethic; thus, the term "Protestant work ethic" maintained the name and refers to the era in which it was coined. In a broader sense, this term now recognises and appreciates characteristics like fulfilling the duties, responsibilities, and obligations inflicted due to designation, the productive use of time, and overcoming worldly pleasures. The current concept of PWE is a determinant of work-related behaviour.⁴⁴

Simply put, PWE is characterised by an emphasis on work value. The Protestants' work ethic has seven aspects that guide a person to understand the vitality of work, the importance of free time, and morality. These aspects of PWE are the centrality of work, morality/ethics, wasted time, delay of gratification, leisure, hard work, and self-reliance. Adapting a high work ethic enables workers

⁴¹ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy* (2013): 135-16.

⁴² Zúñiga, Carolina, David Aguado, and Patricio Cabrera-Tenecela. "Values that work: Exploring the moderator role of protestant work ethics in the relationship between human resources practices and work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior." *Administrative Sciences* 12, no.1 (2022): 11.

⁴³ Candra, Wilson, Naelati Tubastuvi, Suryo Budi Santoso, and Eko Haryanto. "Analysis of the Islamic leadership, Islamic work ethics and intellectual intelligence on employee performance with Islamic organization culture as moderated variables." *Journal of Islamic Economic and Business Research* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1-14.

⁴⁴ Jakhongir, S. "Scientific Horizon in the Context of Social Crises 68 the Difference Between Educational Management and Educational Leadership and the Importance of Educational Responsibility." (2021): 68-88.

to do their jobs or face challenges easily.⁴⁵ The Protestant ethics cover a wide range of work and studies.⁴⁶

Comparative Critical Analysis of Islamic and Christian Work Ethics

There are many books in the world which are believed to be sacred. Other than the Qur'ān, we do not find any religious book that projects itself as the word of God. This kind of statement, appearing uniquely in the Qur'ān, gives a point of departure to the reader. He then studies it as an exceptional book rather than a standard one by humans.⁴⁷

However, the holy Bible talks about the word of God, but does not claim to be the word of God; instead, Christian scholars state that human authors of God wrote it. Interpreting scripture is the process of personally discovering what God – through his human authors – intended the biblical text to mean.⁴⁸

The Qur'ān is a book of guidance for its followers. It is also a book of warnings and admonitions.⁴⁹ There is guidance about every aspect of life in the Qur'ān, and believers are taught to lead their lives ethically and morally to be successful in this worldly life and the Hereafter. To reiterate, this paper intends to explore the dimensions of Islamic work ethics and to compare it with those found in the Christian faith. Therefore, in the coming paragraphs, each dimension will be compared critically in the light of two religions.

To understand work ethics within a religious framework, we must first come to terms with what 'religiosity' implies. Religiosity

⁴⁵ Sarmad, Muhammad, Rimsha Iqbal, Muhammad Anwar Ali, and Ayaz ul Haq. "Unlocking spirituality at workplace through islamic work ethics: Analyzing employees' performance in islamic banks." *Journal of Islamic Business and Management* 8, no. 2 (2018).

⁴⁶ Kirby, Benjamin. "Pentecostalism, economics, capitalism: putting the Protestant Ethic to work." *Religion* 49, no. 4 (2019): 571-591.

⁴⁷ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *The Prophet of Peace: Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad*. Penguin UK, 2009.

⁴⁸ DeRouchie, Jason S. "The Mystery Revealed: A Biblical Case for Christ-Centered Old Testament Interpretation." *Themelios* 44 (2019): 226-48.

⁴⁹ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *The Prophet of Peace: Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad*. Penguin UK, 2009.

or religiousness means intrinsic religious orientation, which guides the individual and equips him with an understanding of life. It also means the spirituality of an individual. Mukherjee defined religiousness as devotional religious behaviour in personal and social life. Therefore, people range broadly in faith and devotion.⁵⁰ This definition tells the standard of faith of an individual; however, the closeness of man to Allah in disposing faith concerning what Allah has inculcated in man also contributes to it. Therefore, a religious person behaves following human nature instilled by Allah, contrary to an irreligious individual who behaves otherwise. Salih Ibrahim al-Sani describes religiousness as the degree to which a person or a believer adheres to the beliefs and practical teachings of the faith.⁵¹

In the Bible, believers are advised to have faith in God. According to Romans, "Scripture says, all those who have faith in him will not be put to shame".⁵² It means that a person having faith in God will follow the commandments or instructions of religion, and thus, he will not face shame because religion is meant to improve the character of its followers. As stated in 2 Timothy, "*Every Scripture is inspired by God and is valid for teaching, showing mistakes, correcting, and training character*".⁵³ As far as religiousness is concerned, the Christian view of religiosity is in line with Islam. Both Islam and Christianity advise their followers to follow the religion in their daily lives and behave morally and ethically.

1. Work Obligation

In Islam, work is *indispensable*, so Allah has instructed believers to commit to their work rather than long for prosperity. Believers must determine their goals, which hard work can only achieve. It is stated in the Qur'ān, "*that there is not for man except that (good) for which*

⁵⁰ Mukherjee, Asha. "Religion as a separate area of study in India." In *Issues in Religion and Education*, pp. 83-103. Brill, 2015.

⁵¹ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "*Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach.*" *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy* (2013): 135-16.

⁵² Common English Bible Romans 10:11

⁵³ Common English Bible 2 Timothy 3:16

he strives".⁵⁴ The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) informed his ummah that work is a source of abolition of sins. According to Al-Bukhari "*No one eats better food than what he earns out of his work*".⁵⁵ Therefore, economic activities or work, being the highest form of worship, is not simply a source of sustaining a prosperous and healthy society but religious work as well.

Abdallāh ibn Mas'ūd reported God's Messenger as saying, "*Trying to earn a lawful livelihood is an obligatory duty in addition to the duties which are obligatory*".⁵⁶ The Prophet said, "*Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet of Allah, David, used to eat from the earnings of his manual labour.*"⁵⁷

Work is also given preference over laziness in Christianity and the Bible. The concept of work in the Bible is similar to the meaning in which work is taken today. Work is meant to be physical and demanding; sincerity, devotion, righteousness, trustworthiness, and collaboration are asserted in the Bible. It is stated in the Bible that "*there is profit in hard work, but mere laziness leads to poverty*".⁵⁸ In this verse, followers are advised to work hard as hard work bears a fruit. On the other hand, if someone does not work, they will become poor because of low earnings, so it is better to work and earn for the provision of life.

Similarly, in another verse, it says, "*If I continue to live in this world, I get results from my work*".⁵⁹ There is a reminder for work saying "*Didn't we tell you the same thing in Egypt? Leave us alone! Let us work for the Egyptians! It would have been better for us to work for the Egyptians than to die in the desert*".⁶⁰ Here working for Egyptians is preferred to dying in the desert helplessly. Therefore, as far as work obligation is concerned, the Bible is in line with the instructions of the Qur'ān.

⁵⁴ Qur'an, Surat *al-Najm* :39

⁵⁵ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Sahih Bukhari*. Peace Vision, 1986.

⁵⁶ *Mishkat al-Masabih* 2781, Book 11 Business Transactions, Hadith 23

⁵⁷ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Sahih Bukhari*. Peace Vision, 1986.

⁵⁸ Common English Bible Proverbs 14:23

⁵⁹ Common English Bible *Philippians* 1:22

⁶⁰ Common English Bible *Exodus* 14:12

2. Effort

Another important constituent of Islamic work ethics is effort. Effort is essential for serving oneself and the community. Islam highly regards effort because if the involvement is positive and fruitful, it will help reduce financial and social problems. It allows a person to earn a reasonable living. Being busy earning positively is suitable for one's own life. The fourth Caliph, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, said, "*Do not be one of those who hope for a better world without working for it*". Moreover, he also advised Muslims to excel in their work, saying, "*He who does not perfect his/her work will bring confusion to self*". Moreover, Allah says, "*And his effort is going to be seen. Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense*".⁶¹

No verse could be found in the Common English Bible regarding the exertion of effort in work. Instead, some verses explain the hard work of authors, saying, "*You remember, brothers and sisters, our efforts and hard work. We preached God's good news to you, while we worked night and day so we would not be a burden on any of you*".⁶² The word effort is used in the Bible to describe some previous work already done, such as in 2 Thessalonian, "*We did not eat anyone's food without paying for it. Instead, we worked night and day with effort and hard work so that we would not impose on you*".⁶³

However, in the chapter 'Preparing for Christ coming in judgement', 2 Peter, "*Therefore, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found by him in peace—pure and faultless*"⁶⁴ and "*This is why you must make every effort to add moral excellence to your faith; and to moral excellence, knowledge*".⁶⁵ In these verses, followers are advised to achieve excellence in knowledge and morals so that when Christ comes he finds them in a better situation.

⁶¹ Qur'an, *Surat al-Najm* :40-41

⁶² Common English Bible 1 *Thessalonians* 2:9

⁶³ Common English Bible 2 *Thessalonians* 2:9

⁶⁴ Common English Bible 2 *Peter* 3:14

⁶⁵ Common English Bible 2 *Peter* 1:5

3. Quality

The calibre or standard of a thing is called quality. It shows the features or characteristics of someone or something; in other words, quality is observed as a part of someone or something. The value of excellence at its best is also called quality. Quality standards vary from person to person because the perception of quality differs among different persons; that is why participants get different grades from different judges in a competition. Likewise, it applies to the workplace where training contributes to achieving and maximising quality. Islam does not lag in setting the basis for the quality of work as it is a complete code of conduct.⁶⁶ Beautiful work, justice, discipline, order, accuracy, and good planning are components of Islamic work, and performance constitutes quality. Allah commands believers to commit sincerely to their work or task through the Qur'ān. Therefore, Muslim professionals can use a practical problem-solving approach, good planning, and examination before undertaking a task if they follow and adhere to the Islamic teachings of *Itqān* (mastery). This enables them to deal with problems in a disciplined and orderly manner.

The word quality is used in the Bible but only to describe the standard of different things and materials such as stones (*At the king's command, they quarried huge stones of the finest quality in order to lay the temple's foundation with carefully cut stone*,⁶⁷ flour, (*Take unleavened bread, unleavened flatbread made with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil. Make them out of high-quality wheat flour and spices.*⁶⁸

However, regarding the ethic of quality, in Jeremiah, it is stated, "*Yet it was I who planted you, a precious vine of fine quality; how could you turn into a wild vine and become good for nothing?*"⁶⁹ This means that God made humans with good qualities, and how they turn themselves into bad ones. Similarly, followers are advised to be

⁶⁶ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy* (2013): 135-16

⁶⁷ Common English Bible 1 King 5:17

⁶⁸ Common English Bible Exodus 29:2

⁶⁹ Common English Bible Jeremiah 2:21

good quality humans, "*instead, make yourselves beautiful on the inside, in your hearts, with the enduring quality of a gentle, peaceful spirit. This type of beauty is very precious in God's eyes*".⁷⁰ Therefore, from this explanation, it can be concluded that in the Bible there are no clear instructions about the qualities of human beings or work to achieve quality in character in society.

4. Collectivity

The togetherness of individuals as one whole is called collectivity. Islam, being a collective religion, declares all Muslims as being part of the *Ummah*. Collectivity is deeply rooted in cooperation and collaboration in all aspects of life, and economic activities are no exception. Work or economic involvement is also a religious activity. Islam values cooperation and collaboration among workers because only through cooperation and collaboration among them can they instil harmony within an organisation or workplace.

In Islam, there is no separation between the sacred and the profane – or what is understood as ‘daily life’. Therefore, economic activities cannot be separated from what Allah said in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. Islam, therefore, emphasises implementing and following cooperation to improve job quality, particularly in times of conflict and issues. Islam does not ignore the welfare of workers or the accumulation of wealth by rich people. Abu Hurayra said, “Help the worker in his work. The one who works for Allah will not be disappointed,” i.e., the servant.⁷¹ Therefore, Islam inculcates these virtues in believers so that a problem or conflict can be resolved collaboratively, and the work streamlined. Regarding the collectivity, unfortunately, no verse could be found in the Coon English Bible, Christian Standard Bible, American Standard Bible, and King James Version of the Bible.

5. Equality

Equality can be defined as a general state of uniform behaviour or treatment that affects others by those who possess authority or

⁷⁰ Common English Bible 1 Peter 3:4

⁷¹ *Sahih al-Albani al-Adab al-Mufrad* Book 9, Hadith 191

position. It can also be defined as the state of being equal. Islam equals men and women in their fundamental human rights and are assigned duties and responsibilities according to their physical and mental capabilities. Equality in Islam means that men and women are equal in all the restrictions, prohibitions, and obligations despite differences in their natures. Whatever differentiates a person in the sight of Allah is the piety and righteousness of the person and observance of the Commands of Allah Almighty. Similarly, Islam declares that both genders are equal before Islamic law. All penalties, judgements, and legal sentences would be the same for all men and women without any distinction or discrimination on race, religion, or class.

All humans are equal in Islam regarding human values, yet they differ in terms of the work and the benefits drawn from work. Every individual gets rewarded based on the service offered to society and the community.⁷² A diligent worker and an inactive or sluggish person cannot have equal pay and finances. A crucial part of equality is justice, which involves balance. Justice means a person is paid or rewarded what he deserves, not depriving others of their rights. Therefore, at the workplace, all individuals have the right to be treated equally no matter whether they belong to which religion, social status, gender, or race.

Regarding equality, some differences are seen in the Bible. Firstly, age is differentiated. The age limit to work is 30 to 50, as stated in Numbers, "*those 30 to 50 years old who were eligible for work in the meeting tent*".⁷³ Secondly, standards of payment are established based on age and profession. Those who are seniors will be paid more, and those who talk for preaching religion. In verse 17 of chapter one of 1 Timothy, it is stated that "*elders who lead well should be paid double, especially those who work with public speaking and teaching*".⁷⁴ Equality and justice are the main

⁷² Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy* (2013): 135-16

⁷³ Common English Bible Numbers 4:39

⁷⁴ Common English Bible 1 Timothy 1:17

properties or features of a social system that cannot be found in the Bible.

In Islam, there is no preference for anyone on any base. In the last sermon of the Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH) clearly stated on *Hujjat al-Widā* that no one is preferred on anyone, white is not preferred over black, nor Arab is preferred over non-Arab. Preference would be given to a person based on his piety and fear of Allah. It seems clear that Christianity or the Bible does not favour equality and justice too. The researcher could not find these ethics of social life in the Bible.

6. Advantage

Advantage can be explained as something that makes someone more privileged and successful than others.⁷⁵ Islam emphasises that each business or work must benefit the Islamic ummah. Therefore, the most essential dimension of IWE is the work that benefits the Islamic *ummah*. Islam intends to establish a society wherein every single individual works and behaves responsibly and honestly and does not demand an unjust and undeserved extra share of something, ignoring other individuals.

Islam grants permission to its followers to own wealth and earnings with the condition that they do not interfere with or halt the freedom of work, earnings, and speech of someone else unless it is not against the greater good of society. Therefore, *Zakāh* is implemented to limit the gap between society's well-earned and deprived sections. To avoid an accumulation of wealth in a few and to help unprivileged and deprived people in society, every Muslim must pay a fixed proportion of *Zakāh*, from what is excessive to what is needed for the needy and poor. Thus, sharing extra wealth is an advantageous and powerful virtue to the Islamic *Ummah*.

Like Islam, Christianity also forbids taking advantage of other fellow beings, as stated in the chapter on payment of workers, "*Do not take advantage of poor or needy workers, whether they are fellow*

⁷⁵ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue*, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy (2013): 135-16

Israelites or immigrants who live in your land or your cities".⁷⁶ Like Islam, followers are advised to take care of each other and not take unnecessary advantage of others. No one should look out for their advantage, but they should look out for each other.⁷⁷ However, the merchants are described as cheaters because they tend to cheat the customers in business. In Hosea, it is stated, "He is a merchant; the means to cheat are in his hands; he loves to take advantage of others".⁷⁸ Therefore, in 1 Corinthians, followers are given the example of not taking advantage, "*This is the same thing that I do. I please everyone in everything I do. I do not look out for my advantage, but I look out for many people so that they can be saved*".⁷⁹

7. Competition

When organisations or individuals strive for the same objectives or limited goals, this phenomenon is called competition. It can be cooperative and adversarial because participants try hard to outperform others. The competition between Muslim individuals or groups of individuals or organisations must be fair and with good intentions at work and in the workplace.⁸⁰ The business is highly valued and appreciated when conducted ethically. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) not only altered the then-existing business culture but also emphasised the moral conduction of business so that it not only benefits here in this world but may also become helpful in salvation in life hereafter. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "*Religion is found in the way of dealing with other people*".⁸¹ An abusive environment and unethical behaviour cannot support any

⁷⁶ Common English Bible *Deuteronomy* 24:14

⁷⁷ Common English Bible 1 *Colossians* 10:24

⁷⁸ Common English Bible *Hosea* 12:7

⁷⁹ Common English Bible 1 *Colossians* 10:33

⁸⁰ Ibrahim, Azharsyah, and Nor Azzah Kamri. "Measuring the Islamic work ethics: An alternative approach." *Islamic Perspective on Management: Contemporary Issue, Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy* (2013): 135-16

⁸¹ Zin, Razali Mat. "Some Philosophical And Practical Principles Of Islamic Human Resource Management: Applications For Contemporary Organizations." *Asian journal of Management Sciences & education* 8, no. 1 (2019): 106-123.

business to flourish. Therefore, the Prophet said, "He who cheated us is not from us".⁸² Honesty and transparency are essential Islamic ethics, constituting fair and legitimate competition in the business environment.

In Christianity, competition is fairly allowed, as stated in 2 Timothy, "Also in the same way, athletes do not win unless they follow the rules".⁸³ Also, in 4 Maccabees, competition among followers is declared legal and divine,⁸⁴ saying the competition in which they were engaged was truly divine. In this ethics, the two under-discussed religions oppose each other because Islam emphasises moral conduction in every walk of life, including business. At the same time, Christianity goes the other way around.

Significance of Islamic Work Ethics

If any institution or organisation adopts and implements IWE, it can promote knowledge sharing and fortify Islamic values among its workforce.⁸⁵ It also impacts work performance.⁸⁶ and consequently helps improve the workforce's efficiency and the ethics of leaders.⁸⁷ The context and concept of IWE are broad and guide dedication, effort, diligence, patience, tolerance, ability, personal sacrifice, devotion, support to coworkers, liveness, character and status, and subordinates' trust.⁸⁸ Thus, ethics and moral values such as justice,

⁸² Collections of Forty » Forty Hadith of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi - الله ولي شاه أربعون - الدهلوي Hadith 12.

⁸³ Common English Bible 2 Timothy 2:5

⁸⁴ Common English Bible 4 Mathew 17:11

⁸⁵ Suryani, Suryani, Budi Sudrajat, Hendryadi Hendryadi, Amelia Oktrivina, Hafifuddin Hafifuddin, and Zulfikar Ali Buto. "Can Islamic work ethics encourage knowledge-sharing behaviors? The role of job embeddedness and organizational identification." *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 12, no. 8 (2021): 1181-1199.

⁸⁶ Benedicto, Helen R., and Merlita V. Caelian. "The influence of work ethics on job performance of government employees." *Philippine Social Science Journal* 4, no. 1 (2021): 71-82.

⁸⁷ Qasim, Muhammad, Tahir Hussain Rizvi, and Muhammad Irshad. "Impact of ethical leadership on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior: moderating role of islamic work ethics." *Journal of Management and Research* 7, no. 2 (2020): 166-193.

⁸⁸ Muhammad Qasim, Tahir Hussain Rizvi, and Muhammad Irshad. "Impact of

honesty, consultation, empathy, patience, and compassion are crucial components of leadership.⁸⁹ A study⁹⁰ also found a direct effect of IWE on psychological ownership, workers, efficiency, and organisational justice.

Implications of Islamic Work Ethics

For the Gospel, many versions and editions of the Bible are available; however, for the current study, only the Common English Bible is used because it is the most popular and common. The link is attached wherever the Bible is cited. The link to access the Common English Bible is in the end notes. Mohd. Kamal Hassan accredited Islamic Work Ethic as follows:

1. *Job obligation to seek the pleasure of Allah.*
2. *Trustworthiness being vicegerent of Allah.*
3. *A Muslim must perform his duty as a religious obligation and implement all ritual obligations. Motivational reward is not only linked with earthly reward but also awarded in the life hereafter.*
4. *Diligence and efficiency, as well as fairness in preserving public interest.*
5. *Employer-employee relationships are based on human value, which is beyond race, colour, language, and inheritance.*⁹¹

ethical leadership on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior: moderating role of Islamic work ethics." Journal of Management and Research 7, no. 2 (2020): 194.

⁸⁹ Elkaleh, Eman, and Eugenie A. Samier. "The ethics of Islamic leadership: A cross-cultural approach for public administration." *Administrative Culture* 14, no. 2 (2013): 188-211.

⁹⁰ Mohammad, Jihad, Farzana Quoquab, Fazli Idris, Mohammed Al-Jabari, Nazimah Hussin, and Raed Wishah. "The relationship between Islamic work ethic and workplace outcome: A partial least squares approach." *Personnel Review* 47, no. 7 (2018): 1286-1308.

⁹¹ Udin, Udin, Radian Dananjoyo, Mohsin Shaikh, and Densy Vio Linarta. "Islamic work ethics, affective commitment, and employee's performance in family business: Testing their relationships." *Sage Open* 12, no. 1 (2022): 21582440221085263.

Conclusion

After discussing the work done regarding Islamic work ethics, it can be safely concluded that actions accepted as norms, not contrary to Islamic rules, can be called 'Ethics'. Islamic work ethics include honesty, justice, and responsibility, and ought to be modelled by leaders and managers in the workplace for workers. Incorporation of these Islamic values into work ethics can contribute to the creation of a positive and ethical work environment, build strong relationships with colleagues and clients, and contribute to the success and growth of their organisations. Islam admits excellence as a virtue and encourages its adherents to excel in everything they do. The Prophet (pbuh) advised: "Allah loves that when anyone does a job, he does it perfectly".⁹² Islamic work ethics are so natural and woven in human psychology that can be employed anywhere, in any period of time and in any environment.

⁹² Ali, Ali Ahmed Ateeq, and Naser Habtoor. "Islamic work ethics and its impact on enhancing organizational commitment in Bahraini private educational universities." *International Journal of Intellectual Human Resource Management (IJHRM)* 3, no. 02 (2022): 33-42.

THE CONCEPT OF AL-ISTIKHLAF AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN RECLAIMING THE ATTRIBUTES OF MAN AS KHALIFAH ON EARTH

Hidayah Wan Ismail¹ and Abdelaziz Berghout²

Abstract

This paper examines the significance of the notion of al-Istikhlaf and its basic place in the Islamic worldview. One fundamental principle in the Islamic philosophy of life is the role and purpose of man as khalifah on earth. In the Islamic worldview, al-istikhlaf or vicegerency refers to the honorable responsibility and purpose that mankind willingly undertook. Being the khalifah on earth entails assuming responsibility for governing and overseeing the life of man within civilizations, and his development on earth in accordance with God's guidance and commands. This paper seeks to elucidate the imperative nature of regaining the notion of al-istikhlaf and employing it as a conceptual framework for the restoration and reconstruction of our vicegerent roles and responsibilities on earth. The paper uses textual analysis to examine various viewpoints and theories related to constructing the al-Istikhlaf narrative and re-introducing it prominently. The paper concluded that Al Istikhlaf, an essential concept in Islam, has the potential to be expanded into an all-encompassing framework for analysing the challenges and problems encountered by man. It seeks to revisit the all-encompassing nature and attributes of man as khalifah and not a mere human animal. This paper proposes the ongoing research on the al-Istikhlaf framework and the promoting it among scholars and researchers. The framework of Istikhlaf helps understand and articulate issues and problems facing contemporary man in a more integrated and ethically driven way.

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Keywords: *Al-istikhlaf* – *Khalifah* – Framework - Integrated Human being

I. Introduction

Al-istikhlaf fi al-Ard, also known as vicegerency on earth, is the fundamental purpose of humanity, inherent in its nature and existence³. The purpose of human existence is solely to fulfil the role of *khalifah*, which encompasses the worship of God, serving others, creating a harmonious life, constructing a well-rounded and responsible civilisation, promoting peace and justice globally, fostering cultural exchange and collaboration, and preparing for eternal life in the hereafter⁴.

Al-istikhlaf is a fundamental concept within the Islamic paradigm. This concept has been mentioned, among others, in Surah al-Baqarah verse 30 where Allah says: “*And remember when your Lord said to the angels, {I am going to place a (khalifah) successive ‘human’ authority on earth}. They asked Allah, {Will you place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify your praises and proclaim your Holiness?} Allah responded, {I know what you do not know}*” (Q2:30).

As the event which catalysed human existence, the positioning of man on earth as *khalifah* for the function of *al-istikhlaf* is therefore the most significant historical *fact*. This moment launched all human endeavours in establishing the civilising process on earth. Thus, it can be argued that all human civilisations and cultures are in fact just different expressions and manifestations of the *al-istikhlaf* on earth based on a plethora of human philosophies, worldviews, and frames of reference. This is in line with the finding of Dawud (2016) in her master’s thesis entitled *Mafhum Al-Istikhlaf fi Al-Qur’anul Karim* that

³ Lazhar, C. *Vicegerency in Islamic Thought and Scripture*, (2024) Routledge - Washington. New York.

⁴ Abu Fadl, M. *Agency, Rationality and Morality, A Quranic View of Man*, 2024 IIIT. Washington. London. See also Berghout, Abdel Aziz. “Towards an Islamic Framework for Worldview Studies : Preliminary Theorization” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 24, no 2 (2007) 22-43

the concept of *al-istikhlaf* is the Qur'ān's expression of human civilisation.⁵

This paper analyses the notion of *Istikhlaf*, highlighting the role, mission, objectives, and functions of man as *khalifah* on Earth. It underscores the essential function of the *khalifah* in executing the responsibilities of his *Istikhlaf* (vicegerency on earth), which encompasses, among other obligations, the worship of God, the building of a harmonious civilisation, and the propagation of God's universal message to humanity, from the inaugural Prophet to the final Prophet, who brought the final universal message of Islam. This paper reduces the discussions on *khilafah* and succession from a political and governance perspective, as it is not the focus. It underscores the fundamental function and purpose of man as *khalifah* on Earth, as ordained by Allah's command. The paper underlines that comprehending *Istikhlaf* as the mission of humanity on earth influences our perception of human beings and their fundamental attributes and dimensions, including spiritual, mental, intellectual, ethical, moral, physical, and social aspects.

Therefore, the primary question is: To what extent does the notion of *Istikhlaf* influence our comprehension of the *khalifah*, including his nature, dimensions, attributes, and functions on earth? The primary aim of the paper is to elucidate the fundamental attributes and dimensions of man when viewed through the lens of *Istikhlaf* on earth, rather than merely considering him as a human animal or material man. This paper's significance lies in succinctly revisiting both classical and contemporary discussions regarding the concept of *Istikhlaf* on earth, positioning it as a central concept of the Islamic worldview, and exploring its potential to reshape our understanding of man as *khalifah*, encompassing various dimensions and attributes.

This paper explores the notion of *al-Istikhlaf* and its fundamental importance in the Islamic perspective. Therefore, it provides insight into the selected classical and modern discussion on the notion and its significance in any analysis about humanity and society. The primary aim of the paper is to illustrate the significance of the notion of *al-Istikhlaf* as a fundamental principle of the Islamic

⁵ Dawud, Zinab Ahmed. (2006) - *Mafhum Al Istikhlaf Al-Qur'anul Karim*. Master's Thesis. IIUM Malaysia.

worldview, and to explore its potential as an Islamic framework for studying Islamic society and the challenges encountered by humans as vicegerents on earth.

Comprehending the place of *al-istikhlaf* in the framework and function of the Islamic worldview is crucial for the guidance of man, as *khalifah*, and human life. Not understanding the significance and role of man as *khalifah* on earth results in reducing humans to something lesser, a breaking down of parts, and the splitting between the spirit and the material. The consequences of such a split are evident in how the world operates today, whereby the secular takes precedence over the sacred. The *al-Istikhlaf* approach/framework creates a harmonious and balanced integration of various dimensions, including the worldly and non-worldly, the tangible and intangible, the personal and societal, scientific understanding and spiritual awareness, the observable and invisible, as well as the profane and the sacred. The *al-Istikhlaf* framework incorporates all the needs and aspirations of human beings as vicegerents who have four interrelated categories of relationships and connections: with God, with oneself, with other human beings, and with the cosmos and environment.

To attain the highest levels of *al-Istikhlaf* on earth, it is imperative to construct and satisfy these relationships in a harmonious and all-encompassing manner. The paper uses textual analysis and library research to explore the prevailing perspectives and patterns in the study of the concept of *al-Istikhlaf*, as well as the diverse contributions made by certain Muslim scholars.

The paper is structured into several sections: I- Introduction, II-Man as *Khalifah* on Earth: Glimpses on the Classical Discourse, III - The Concept of *Al-Istikhlaf* in the Contemporary Discourse: A Brief Exposé, IV - The Concept of *Al-Istikhlaf* as a Possible Framework for Understanding Man and Human Existence; and V - Conclusion.

II - Man as Khalifah on Earth: Glimpses on the Classical Discourse

Throughout the evolution of scholarship on *al-istikhlaf*, many views have emerged regarding who can be considered the *khalifah* or vicegerent. There are those who are of the view that it was only

Prophet Adam⁶, while others feel that it is Prophet Adam and all other prophets⁷. There are also those who think that it was just Prophet Adam and Prophet Daud because these two were explicitly declared so in the Qur'an.⁸ However, most of the literary scholarship seems to be based on the common understanding that the task of vicegerency is incumbent upon all of humanity.

The scholars who take the view that vicegerency is incumbent upon all of humanity can be further categorised into two groups; namely, those who feel that we are vicegerents in the sense that we are successors of the *jinn* who populated the earth before mankind⁹ or humans succeeding one another from generation to generation¹⁰, and those who are of the view that vicegerency applies to all human species. Among the notable scholars, Raghīb al Isfahani (d502/1108) was one such proponent of this latter view. In his Qur'anic exegesis, Al Isfahani had stated, "*It is the right of all people to be the vicegerent of God.*"¹¹ Clearer evidence of his stand to this effect can be seen in his book *Al Dharia ila Makarim al Sharia (The Book of Means to the Noble Qualities of the Sharia)* where he states;

"Human beings as such are like each other [...] and their honor lies in that they are integrally meant for the purpose which they are created for. [...]The function

⁶ Al Qurtubi, Muhammad Shams Al Din. *Al Jami' li ahkam al-Qur'an* (The Compiler of the Rulings of the Qur'an) ed Ahmad Al Barduni and Ibrahim Al Atafish. (1964) Cairo: Dar al Kutub al Misriyya. vol. 1, 263 and Abu Hayyan Al Bahr al Muhit fil *Tafsir*, vol 1, 227

⁷ Al Tabari. Muhammad Ibn Jarir. *Jami al Bayan an Ta'wil Ayi al Quran [The Comprehensive Exposition on the Interpretation of the Verses of the Quran]* ed Ahmad Muhammad Shakir. vol 1 451;-452 (Beirut: Muassasat al Risala 2000) Al Mawardi, *al Nukat wal Uyun*, vol 195, and Mahmud ibn Amr al Zamakshari, *al Kashaf an haqa'iq Ghawamid al Tanzil* (The Discoverer of Revealed Truths) Beirut: Dar al Kitab al Arabi. (1987) vol 1, p. 124.

⁸ Al Baghawi, *Sharh al Sunnah* (Explanation of the Sunnah) ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut (1983) Damascus: al Maktab al Islam, vol 1, 227

⁹ This narration by Ibn Abbas is said to have been based on Israilliyyat narrations and does not have a concrete basis in the Quran. However it is mentioned in Al Tabari's tafsir. *Jami al Bayan.. op.cit*

¹⁰ This was the view of Hasan Al Basri as cited by Al Tabari in *Jami al Bayan*. op cit

¹¹ Al Isfahani. *Tafsir Raghīb al Isfahani* (The Exegesis of Raghīb al Isfahani) ed. Adil ibn Ali al Shadi (2003). Riyadh: Dar al Watan. vol 2, 772.

that is related to the human being consists of three things (1) Building and populating the earth (imarat al ardh), [...] (2) worshipping God [...] and (3) deputising Him [...] this is reflected in the emulation of God to the highest degree of human ability.”¹²

Another scholar who subscribed to this view was Al Shatibi (d790/1388). For Al Shatibi, the human being is regarded as having fulfilled the mission assigned to him when he acts as a vicegerent of God and preserves the Divine Intent.¹³ Similarly, several other notable scholars also advocate this view. To Ibn Al Qayyim, for example, “*God Almighty entrusts the servant as a guardian in the preservation of all that he has been entrusted with.*”¹⁴ Similarly, to Ibn Khaldun, vicegerency is a life purpose for the human being which is in line with his *fitrah*¹⁵. However, while the concept of *Istikhlaf* served as the basis of Ibn Khaldun’s theory of civilisation, Lazhar (2023) argues that he did not regard it as an existential purpose, but rather as an existential fact (*fait accompli*).¹⁶ This can be gleaned from Ibn Khaldun’s statement “*the hands of Man are spread out over the realms of the world as a result of the istikhlaf that was given to him by god, all humans hands are spread, and this is hence a common fact.*”¹⁷

Throughout the millennium, the discourse on the concept of *istikhlaf* was also coloured by Sufi thought. Ibn Arabi, for instance, through his doctrine of *wahdatul wujud*, posited that the universe is a physical manifestation of God which was created for the sake of the vicegerent, in order that God can see Himself. According to Ibn Arabi, the only human beings who qualify as vicegerent are the gnostic Sufis

¹² Raghīb al-Isfahānī, Abu al-Qasīm al-Husayn ibn Muḥammad. *Kitāb Al-Dhārī’ah Ila Makarīm Al-Sharī’ah*. (The Book of Means towards the Noble Qualities of the Shariah) transl. Abu al-Yazīd Abu Zayd ‘Ajāmī. (2007) Cairo: Dar Al salam. pp 82-83.

¹³ Al Shatibi, Ibrahim ibn Musa. *Al Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shariah*. (Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law). Vol 3, p. 25.

¹⁴ Ibn Al Qayyim. *Madarij al Salikin*. (Ranks of The Divine Seekers) vol 2, p. 125-126.

¹⁵ Khaldun, Ibn. *Op cit.*, p. 477.

¹⁶ Lazhar, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁷ Khaldun, Ibn. *Op cit.*, p. 477.

who can see the manifestations of the Divine attributes in all the living beings.¹⁸ A more holistic articulation on the object of vicegerency can be found in Raghīb Al Isfahani's writing (d.502/1108) where he stated:

“It is the emulation of God Almighty, to the extent of the capacity of human beings in running affairs and implementing the virtues of the Sharia, which consist of wisdom, justice among people, insight, charity, and grace [...], while what is meant by running human affairs is twofold: one concerns the self, body and personal things, and the other relates to others like family and fellow countrymen. [...] Knowledge is a profession on one hand, worship on another and the pursuit of vicegerency of God Almighty on a nobler one because by entrusting the human being. God Almighty opens his heart to knowledge. This is an exclusive attribute of God Almighty and the store of the noblest treasures. He has ordered him to spend on everybody, the more he spends as required, whenever it is required and, in the manner, required, the higher his position near the Deputised becomes.”¹⁹

In his explanation of the concept of vicegerency, Raghīb Al-Isfahani tried to clarify the relationship between worship and vicegerency. To Al Isfahani, the vicegerent is the one who builds and populates the earth, performs worship, and embodies Islamic moral virtues. To Al Isfahani, worship is a fundamental obligation and is a matter of justice whilst performing virtues is supererogatory. If a person neglects the fundamental obligation, then his supererogatory acts are not accepted. This is in line with verse 77 of Surah 22 of the Qur'ān which says: “*Oh you who have faith, Bow down and prostrate yourself, and worship your Lord, and do good so you may be felicitous.*” On this point, Yusuf Al Qaradawi criticised Al Isfahani's

¹⁸ Masataka Takeshita. (1983) “The Theory of the Perfect Man in Ibn Arabi's *Fusus al Hikam*” *Orient* 19 Volume 19, p. 87-102.

¹⁹ Yassin, M. (2006). *The Path to Virtue: The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Raghīb Al-Isfahani*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC.

view, stating that these virtues are not a supererogation but rather also an obligation commanded by God. Referring also to the same verse (Q22:77), He says “*All of this is associated with acts of goodness in the same Qur’anic verse, and God has made success an outcome of all of this.*”²⁰

Even though the concept of *Istikhlaf* is a momentous and significant starting point in the history of mankind, the academic literature on the concept hardly reflects its importance and function as a cardinal pillar in the Islamic worldview and life.²¹ Much of the existing scholarship can be traced back to the classical scholars from the era of the Companions who deliberated extensively on who exactly qualifies to be considered a *khalifah*. Quoting the opinion of Ibn Abbas (d.668/687), Al-Tabari (d.310/922) was of the view that Adam was successor to the *jinn*, who inhabited the earth before him.²²

While Al-Tabari also quoted Ibn Mas’ud in this regard, subsequent scholars were of the view that this was likely the view of Al-Tabari himself, as we cannot glean this opinion from the initial narrations of neither Ibn Abbas nor Ibn Mas’ud. Al -Baghawi (d516/1122) later clarified this ambiguity by asserting that Al-Tabari’s view in this matter has only been reiterated by scholars who tend to report what al-Tabari said. He stated, “*It is said so, because others succeed him, but the correct meaning is that He is the Vicegerent of God on earth where he establishes His laws and implements His teachings.*”²³

While there have been some minor disagreements about what being a vicegerent means, (namely whether Man as the successor of God or Man as the successor of those succeeding him as human beings), generally, the idea of *Istikhlaf* is understood as ‘Man is God’s deputy on earth.’ A significant point of contention in the literature on

²⁰ Yusuf Al Qaradawi. (2017) *Ethics of Islam*. Doha: Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics, P. 260-62

²¹ Lazhar, C. *Op cit.*, p46.

²² Muhammad Ibni Jarir al Tabari, *Jami Al Bayan an Ta’wil Ayi al Qur’an* (The Comprehensive Exposition of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur’an) ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (2000). Beirut: Muassasat al Risala. pp 449-52.

²³ Al Husayn Al Baghawi, *Ma’alim Al Tanzil Fi Al Tafsir Al Qur’an* (Qur’anic Exegesis) ed. Abd Al Razzaq al Mahdi (1999) Beirut: Dar Ihya al turath Al Arabi. vol.1, 102.

the subject can be found in the discussions pertaining to the views of Ibn Taymiyya, who was believed to be against the idea of the human being as God's vicegerent. The contention arose because of his statement in his interpretation of the verse on vicegerency in al Baqarah , saying "...It was never intended that he is a vicegerent of God and that he is for God as the pupil of the eye..."²⁴. Some contemporary scholars have taken this view to mean that Ibn Taymiyya rejects the idea of Man's vicegerency on behalf of God altogether.²⁵ However, Lazhar (2023) argues that Ibn Taymiyya's view had been taken out of context. Instead, argues Lazhar, what Ibn Taymiyya was opposed to be the idea of pantheism and the doctrine of Incarnation which holds that God exists in every human being; not that man is the vicegerent of God in the sense that he represents God in establishing order on Earth²⁶. In his discussion of this point of contention, Lazhar held the view that Ibn Taymiyya was merely deconstructing the concept at the epistemological level without taking issue with it at a creedal or doctrinal level, which seems to be what these contemporary scholars have taken it to mean. Ibn Taymiyya, says Lazhar, was only opposed to the idea of the microcosm being considered a tangible representation of God on Earth.²⁷

Along the same vein of discontentment, there were also contemporary scholars who argued that the idea of vicegerency was never discussed among the *salafis* and was therefore a modern-day innovation. Abdallah Ibn Ibrahim Al Nasir stated, "...I did not find anybody who stated that the khilafah refers to vicegerency on behalf of God except among the latter day exegetes, such as Al Alusi (1854), al Tahir b Ashur (1973) and among the subsequent generations"²⁸ A

²⁴ Taqi al Din ibn Taymiyya. *Minhaj Al Sunna al- Nabawiyya fi Naqd Kalam al Shi a al Qadariyya [The Way of the Prophet's Sunnah: A Critique of the Theological Discourse of Al Qadariyya Shiites]*, ed. Muhammad Rashad Salim (Riyadh: Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1986), vol.1, 509-510

²⁵ S. Idris, Jaafar. "Is Man the Vicegerent of God?" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (1990) pp. 99-110.

²⁶ Lazhar, C. *Op cit.*, p48.

²⁷ Lazhar. C *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

²⁸ Al-Nasir, Abdallah ibn Ibrahim. (2005) "The Principle of Vicegerency in The Islamic Economy: A Study in The Light of the Qur'an." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 7. No 1. 145

contemporary scholar who echoed this view is Sheikh Abd Rahman Habannaka al-Maydani (2004) who argues that the idea of a *khilafah* was unknown to the Companions, and is a fallacy promoted by contemporary thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida.²⁹

Other scholars who agreed with Al-Maydani include Yusuf al Zayut³⁰ and Jaafar Sheikh Idris.³¹ However, in the larger scheme of things, this contrarian view represents a small fraction of the literature on the subject. For the most part, scholars in the Islamic heritage are in broad agreement that the ‘Vicegerent’ refers to the human being who is performing his duties on behalf of God.³²

III - Concept of Al-Istikhlaf in the Contemporary Discourse: A Brief Exposé

The discourse on the concept of *istikhlaf* in contemporary literature arose largely from the modern Islamic reformist movement in the context of the re-articulation of the Islamic worldview and implementation of Islamic knowledge in the contemporary context. This concern with the Islamic worldview, in turn, arose as a response to the rise of Western secularism and its fragmenting effects on Islamic sciences.³³ According to Lazhar, the main reason this whole discourse on the concept of *istikhlaf* arose was to serve as supporting arguments to resolve the issue of the incompatibility of Islamic sciences with the Western secular epistemology which has dominated the global way of thinking.³⁴ As a result, despite being a core component of the Islamic worldview, the concept of *Istikhlaf* was deliberated upon often superficially and hastily and almost always in

²⁹ Abdul Rahman Habanka al Maydani. (1991) *La Yasih an Yuqal al Insan Khalifa an Allah fil Ardhi fa Hiyya Maqula Batila* (Transl: The impropriety and the Invalidity of the Belief that Man is the Vicegerent of God on Earth.) Mecca: Maktabat Ihya al Thurah Al Islam. pp 36.

³⁰ Al Zayut, Yusuf. (2001) “The Extent of the Validity of the Statement that Man is the Vicegerent of God on Earth” *Majalat Jami’ Al Dimashq* XVII, no 2. pp 27.

³¹ Jaafar Sheikh Idris “Is Man the Vicegerent of God?” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1. no.1 (1990) 103

³² Lazhar, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

³³ Lazhar, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

³⁴ Al-Faruqi, Ismail. (1989) *Islamization of Knowledge*. Virginia USA: International Institute of Islamic Thought.

the context of comparison with other worldviews. Therefore, it has not received the thoroughness of study and prominence that it deserves in Islamic academic discourse.

In his work entitled '*The Position of the Human Being in the Universe According to Islam*' Dogan (2013) explored the position of the human being as compared to all other creation according to the Islamic perspective. Dogan discussed empirical, emotional, and rational sides of the human being and articulated how humans are designed to accord meaning to things and other beings in the universe and contribute to the maturation process of the universe with their talents, blessings, and faculties that they have been given.³⁵ This shows that the human being has a role to play in the cosmic order of the universe. Perhaps Mona Abou Fadl captures the essence of the role of the *khalifah* most succinctly when she describes him as "God's elected and crown of creation, who has been entrusted with a mission, qualified for its discharge, tested on the way and rewarded for the effort."³⁶

Many other aspects of vicegerency have also been explored. In *Vicegerency and Nature*³⁷ Murad (2016) looked at the Human being's task as the steward of nature and surmised that the fact that humanity is both a vicegerent and a steward of nature implies that there is a specific trifold relationship between God, humanity, and nature. In *Human Vicegerency and the Golden Rule: The Islamic Case against Seclusion*, (2019)³⁸ Ayman Reda wrote about how Islam is a practical morality that enjoins us to treat others as equals and prohibits exploitation of them in economic exchange.

While many notable contemporary scholars have touched on the subject, they generally have done so in broad strokes.³⁹ Such mentions on the concept of *istikhlaf* can be found in the works of scholars such as Muhammad Abduh (d.1905), Rashid Rida (d.1935), Sayyid Qutb

³⁵ Dogan, R (2013) "The Position of the Human Being in The Universe According to Islam." *Sociology and Anthropology*.1(3), 141-148

³⁶ Abou Fadl, M (2024) *Agency, Rationality and Morality: The Quranic View of Man*. International Institute of Islamic thought. London, Washington.

³⁷ Murad, M. M (2016) "Vicegerency and Nature". *Critical Muslim* 19,65-75

³⁸ Reda, A, (2019) "Human Vicegerency and the Golden Rule: The Islamic Case Against Exclusion." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 78(4) 895-922.

³⁹ Lazhar, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

(d.1966), Muhamad al Tahir Ibn ‘Ashur (d.1973) and Abu al A’la al-Mawdudi (d.1979), to name a few. The concept has also received attention from both Sunni reformists (Iqbal (d.1938), Said al-Nursi (d.1960)) Aisha Bint Al-Shati (d.1998) and Shi’ite scholars such as Ali Shariati (d.1977), and Murtada Mutahhari (1979).

Furthermore, the concept of *al-istikhlaf* received a lot of traction during the era of the Islamisation of Knowledge project which was proposed by Ismail Al-Faruqi (d. 1986), Abu Hamid Abu Sulayman (d. 2021), Mona Abu al Fadl (d. 2008) and Taha Jabir al-Ulwani (d. 2016). However, all these scholars merely highlighted the importance of the concept of *al-istikhlaf* without providing in depth examination of it as a Qur’anic framework that can be used to analyse and articulate key concepts in Islamic worldview nor any other action and activities of man as vicegerent on earth.

Among the important contemporary scholars on *al-istikhlaf* is Faruq Ahmad al-Dasuqi who wrote an extensive treatise on vicegerency entitled *al Khilafa’ Al Islamiyya*. In Al Dasuqi’s view, vicegerency embodies the human being’s servitude to God as well as his sovereignty on other creations at once. He states:

“In the realm of servitude, the human being interacts with both his Lord and with people. That is an interaction in which a person is subject to God and is humble before Him, while being equal with people. The Human being’s behaviour in relation to sovereignty, however, concerns his relationship with objects and living beings on Earth other than humans, and the nature of this behaviour is marked by control, domination, and sovereignty. The latter reflects the human beings’ efforts to assert his Vicegerency and establish his sovereignty over the Earth. The acts of servitude, on the other hand, consist of steering this vicegerency in a way that makes the human being appear a servant of God alone and who devotes this servitude exclusively to Him”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ahmad Dasuqi, Faruq. (2016) *Istikhlaḥ al-Insān fi’l-Arḍ*. Alexandria: Dār al-Da’wah, p. 85-110.

Thus, a human being's sovereignty over other creations is a function of vicegerency. However, for it to fully fulfil the requirements of vicegerency on behalf of God, this function must be framed in the context of servitude to God, otherwise it would be a polytheistic vicegerency or a 'vicegerency of other than God'.⁴¹ In his redefinition of the Islamic Worldview, Abdelaziz Berghout⁴² states that the Islamic Worldview is a vicegerent-al worldview which is "...derived from the Holy Qur'an and conforms to all teachings of Islam. It provides the necessary guidance for the Muslim to strive in his endeavour as a vicegerent of Allah. This vicegerent-al worldview requires the Muslim to excel in 1) spiritual, moral and ethical aspects, 2) material, civilisational and cultural aspects, 3) *da'awah*, *ta'aruf* and civilisational aspects 4) and 'ilm that is comprehensive knowledge and sciences." According to Berghout, the main purpose of the Islamic worldview can be summarised in one word, i.e. *istikhlaf* or vicegerency.⁴³ While this paints a rough sketch of a Qur'anic framework, it does not examine the relationship between the concept of vicegerency and the other key concepts in Islam, such as the attainment of *al-saadah*, for example.

A similar attempt has been made by Mona al Fadl who derived what she calls an Islamic 'frame of reference' based on four pillars consisting of *Tawheed*, *al-istikhlaf*, the *Ummah* and the *Shari'ah*. According to Abu Al Fadl, *tawheed* is the first pillar upon which all the other pillars are established. *Al-istikhlaf* forms the second pillar as it represents the purpose of creation and the standard of the Trust (*Amanah*). The third pillar is the *Ummah*, who form the receptacle of the *al-istikhlaf*, and the fourth pillar is the *Shari'ah*, which provides the method and means to achieve the mission of *al-istikhlaf*⁴⁴.

Whilst Abou al Fadl's frame of reference appears comprehensive, in essence, it remains unclear. To begin with, the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Abdel Aziz, Berghout. (2006) "Concept of Worldview Between Assumption and Truth (Observation on Selected Western and Muslim Views)" *Jurnal Usuluddin*, Num. 23-24, p. 117-138.

⁴³ Berghout. *Op. cit.*, p 138.

⁴⁴ Mona Abul-Fadl (1996) *Nahwa Minhajiyya li-l Taamul ma'a Masadir al Tanzir al Islami* (Toward a Methodology for Dealing with the Sources of Islamic Theorizing). Herndon, VA.: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, p. 39-40.

concept of *al-istikhlaf* is not ontologically linked to the other concepts in the Islamic worldview. There is also the lack of explanation for the criteria of the selection of those four pillars which form the said frame of reference. Another leading scholar on the subject, Abd Majid Al Najjar studied the concept of *al-istikhlaf* in “*The Vicegerency of Man, Between Revelation and Reason, A Critique of the Dialectic of the Text, Reason and Reality.*”⁴⁵ In this work Najjar discusses vicegerency as Man’s existential purpose with Revelation serving as the guidance; and reason/ human intellect serving as the means for Man to achieve this purpose. Najjar argues that it is crucial to specify the aim of humanity, as this anchors the understanding of the concept of existence and defines the source of the system containing the said human function. In essence, Najjar attempts to establish the methodology that can help reason to understand revelation and put it to practice. The gist of Najjar’s book is that the concept of vicegerency is a theological doctrinal frame which encompasses reason, revelation, and *ijtihad* to address reality. However, he too does not discuss the concept of *al-istikhlaf* as a comprehensive theory which integrates the key concepts of the Islamic worldview which he touches upon only briefly.

The first in depth examination of the concept of vicegerency as an existential concept linked with the function of man as vicegerent is found in the most recent literature on the subject, ‘*Vicegerency in Islamic Thought and Scripture*’ by Chauki Lazhar⁴⁶. In Lazhar’s work, (his PhD that was later published as a book), he explored the ontological roots of the concept and tried to link it to other Islamic concepts to form an all-encompassing theory of vicegerency. In what is perhaps the most comprehensive exposition on the concept of *al-istikhlaf* to date, Lazhar, in this book, established the contours of a Qur’anic theory of vicegerency as a human existential function. The human’s existential function, says Lazhar, sits comfortably in the cosmic order where worship, religion, revelation, and divine guidance are not human prerogatives but common to all elements constituting the universe. The human being’s unique task is to preserve the cosmic balance of the universe.

⁴⁵ Al-Najjar, A.H. Op cit.,

⁴⁶ Lazhar, C. Op. cit., p. 88.

According to Lazhar, while it is God who maintains the natural balance and measures of the universe, He has mandated the human being to act on his behalf to attain an equilibrium between his aspiration and his faculties, between himself and others in human society. By executing his functions as a *khalifah* of Allah, a human being can join and participate in the cosmic order. Lazhar claims that this is the broader purpose behind the specific function of the human being, who, through this exercise, will find “*an interim alternative for the satisfaction of his ontological infinite aspirations, which is only possible in the hereafter.*”⁴⁷ However, like An-Najjar before him, Lazhar comes close but stops short of linking the role of vicegerent to certain other key concepts in the Islamic worldview such as the attainment of *al-sa'adah*. This article argues that the *al-istikhlaf* framework is a comprehensive framework that can be used to examine such key concepts of the Islamic worldview under one harmonious frame. While there are many other scholars who discussed various aspects of *al-istikhlaf* in detail, the aforementioned point represents discussions that are relevant to the purpose of this article.

IV - The Concept of *Al-Istikhlaf* as a Possible Framework for Understanding Man and Human Existence

To evaluate the problems and obstacles faced by humanity, any Islamic framework must recognise and apply the epistemological idea that all our activities, efforts, and endeavours as human beings fall under the domain of our role as *khalifah*/vicegerents on earth. One's engagement in various activities and deeds, whether they pertain to the internal, external, spiritual, or material aspects of life, is carried out by virtue of being a *khalifah*.

Straying from this principle will certainly result in a reduction in our appreciation of the essence of our existence as *khalifahs*. There is a significant disparity between addressing the concerns and challenges of humanity from the perspective of an ordinary human being and that of a *khalifah*. The distinction reflects contrasting worldviews and perspectives on human existence and life. The act of differentiating has profound philosophical and epistemological

⁴⁷ Lazhar, C. *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

consequences when it comes to comprehending human beings and the nature of existence. The distinction lies in the contrast between the *al-istikhlaf* framework and the human being framework.

Illustration 1 depicts a perception of man as *khalifah* and not a mere human being.

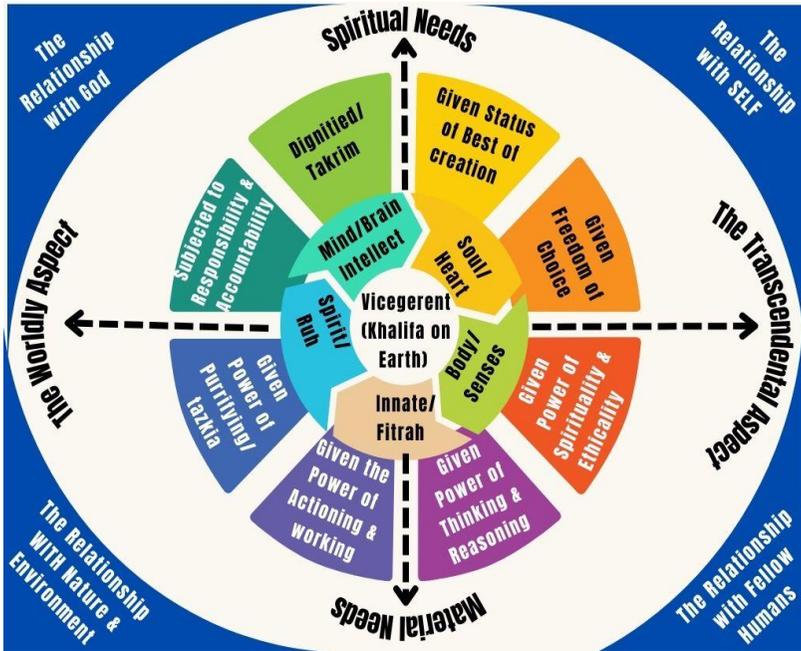


Illustration 1: Khalifah in the Quranic Worldview: The Istikhlaf Framework

Islam presents man as a unified *khalifah* who aspires to fulfil the task of *al-Istikhlaf* on earth. Based on the given illustration, the *khalifah* is composed of five primary dimensions: mind-intellect, soul-heart, body-senses, human nature (*fitrah*), and spirit (*Ruh*). The *khalifah* depicted in the third circle possesses numerous qualities and abilities, such as being the peak of creation, possessing dignity, having freedom of choice, being endowed with spiritual and ethical power, possessing the ability to reason and act, having the power of purification (*tazkiyah*), and being entrusted with trust (*Amanah*),

responsibility, and accountability. The illustration also depicts the *khalifah's* stewardship of two interconnected realms: the transcendental and the worldly. In addition, the *khalifah*, by virtue of his inherent character and vicegerency, has two domains of requirements: the spiritual and the material. The Quranic worldview emphasises the importance of the *khalifah's* four interrelated relationships. Without these links, our knowledge of the human being is destined to fail, leading to the collapse of both the individual and the collective. The four interrelated relationships are:

- *The relationship with God*, which establishes the feature of servanthood & God-conscious human being and sense of purpose and responsibility in life;

- *the relationship with oneself*, which fosters self-awareness and consciousness about one's own well-being and the reality of the human being, who is called upon to carry important responsibilities and duties as a vicegerent on earth;

- *the relationship with society and other fellow humans*, which shapes societal consciousness and collective well-being, resulting in balanced sustainable development and human association; and

- *the relationship with nature*, which reflects the extent to which man is connected to the environment and the bigger universe surrounding us.

Therefore, it is evident that the human being, acting as the *khalifah*, serves as both the focal point and initiator of civilisation, as well as its primary catalyst and overseer. As such, it is crucial to adequately equip and provide a suitable role for the human being within this process. If humans are reduced to their constituent parts, activities and policies developed would only focus on the limited role of a man, resulting in a civilisation model which is fragmented and reductionist, focusing on certain aspects of life and undermining others. To address this imbalance, the initial step is to fully restore the entirety of the human being as *khalifah*, encompassing all the attributes and dimensions outlined in the illustration.

In this framework, man is recognised as a *khalifah* and not just an ordinary human being. God has raised his position and status in the hierarchy of creation by appointing him as the vicegerent on earth. He is positioned in the world as a dignified being, possessing abundant

spiritual, intellectual, mental, psychological, ethical, cultural, social, economic, political, and physical capabilities and potential. The *khalifah* is expected to undertake various roles and responsibilities, including serving and worshipping God, constructing a well-rounded civilisation, safeguarding the environment, establishing a harmonious and desirable lifestyle, engaging in cultural and civilisational exchange, advocating for global justice, peace, stability, and security, and optimising worldly existence to achieve success and ultimate happiness (*al saadah*) in the hereafter.

From this viewpoint, attaining a state of great satisfaction and a fulfilling existence in this world depends on understanding oneself as a vicegerent, rather than simply as a human being, citizen, creature, or person. Therefore, the measure of achievement of mankind should centre on the significance and strife for equilibrium between the spiritual and material realms, the external and internal aspects, and the earthly and afterlife goals, principles, and circumstances. The state of balance between the spiritual and material dimensions, the outward and interior spheres, and the worldly and eternal objectives are all factors that must be considered.

The concept of *al-Istikhlaf* has clearly contributed to our re-imagining of the human being as a *khalifah*, encompassing all the above abilities and skills. The inception of Islamic existence can be traced back to the appointment of the first human being as the vicegerent on earth, entrusted with the responsibilities and functions of a *khalifah*. The *Al-Istikhlaf* framework facilitates the conceptualisation of the interconnectedness between individuals, society, and civilisation. It establishes a harmonious basis for comprehending the role of humans as *khalifah* and their ultimate purpose in both the present life and the hereafter. While it is a basic idea in Islam, the concept of *al-istikhlaf* can be expanded upon to create a comprehensive framework for analysing the issues and problems that individuals, societies, and civilisations encounter.

This paper proposes the deepening and promotion of the *al-Istikhlaf* framework as a valuable instrument for scholars and researchers to analyse and address the concerns and challenges faced by individuals and society in a comprehensive and morally guided manner.

V - Conclusion

This paper has presented a concise analysis of the significance of the notion of *al-Istikhlaf* (vicegerency) from the Islamic perspective and its role in comprehending the position and responsibilities of humans as *khalifah* on the planet. The essay illustrated the central position of this notion in understanding the Islamic view of God, humanity, existence, and the cosmos. *Al Istikhlaf* should be seen as a fundamental concept that serves as a connection between various other parts of existence. The *al-Istikhlaf* framework allows us to establish four distinct relationships: a relationship with God, a relationship with oneself, a relationship with other individuals, as well as a relationship with the surrounding universe.

The *Istikhlafic* perspective on human beings encompasses a comprehensive understanding of various aspects, such as the mind, soul, heart, body, *fitrah* (innate human nature), and *Ruh* (spirit). Within the *istikhlafic* framework, life is measured beyond the limitations of the *Dunya* (mundane life) and extends into the *Akhirah* (eternal and permanent hereafter). This paper provides a more detailed explanation of how human existence, viewed as a vicegerent of a higher authority, manages and satisfies both the spiritual and material requirements of individuals, society, and humanity as a whole. The epistemological implication of this is that the origins of human development and civilisation extend beyond material and worldly knowledge. They encompass unseen revealed knowledge that offers a comprehensive understanding of the human experience in both the transcendental and spiritual realms. This knowledge assists individuals in establishing proper relationships with God, the unseen world, and the surrounding universe. The notion of *Istikhlaf* is closely associated with various other concepts related to the role of man as a *khalifah* in the domains of God, man, life, and the universe. Therefore, any discourse on religion, humanity, civilisation, society, culture, knowledge, economy, spirituality, state, government, management, leadership, environment etc. should acknowledge the concept of man as the *khalifah* on earth, rather than merely a human being or creature.

Recognising the importance of the concept of *al-Istikhlaf* and mankind's role as *khalifah* on earth would expand our understanding and allow for the exploration of new knowledge, ideas, and

relationships that connect the material and spiritual aspects of our daily existence. This paper suggests conducting a thorough analysis of the notion of *al-Istikhlaf* and its role in constructing an Islamic framework or paradigm for comprehending man, society, and civilisation. A framework of this nature will facilitate the cultivation of Islamic integrated knowledge, education, and the orientation of individuals as vicegerents. Consequently, the introduction of novel *Istikhlafic* knowledge, ideas, and solutions can effectively tackle the difficulties and challenges encountered in several domains such as the economics, politics, environment, science, technology, family, society, economy, family, culture, and other relevant aspects of life.

REIMAGINING ISLAMIC DISCOURSE: TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP

Dr. Maqbool Hassan Gilani¹, Saima Ali² and Ghulam Mohyiddeen³

Abstract

In relation to current issues facing global civilisations, there is a crucial need to highlight the Islamic paradigm in dealing with such challenges. This study explores the necessity of encouraging Islamic dialogue to promote stronger connections and involvement with worldwide cultures. This research explores how ethical leadership in Islamic thinking might help create a more inclusive, compassionate, and morally grounded global society. This study examines the fundamental principles of ethical leadership in Islam by combining classical Islamic sources, modern scholarship, and real-world case studies. The text explores the various aspects of ethical leadership, including qualities like integrity, justice, compassion, and accountability, as taught in Islamic principles and demonstrated by individuals in history. It also examines how these principles might be used to tackle current concerns that global civilisations are dealing with, such as governance, social justice, environmental protection, and interfaith cooperation. This research uses an interdisciplinary approach combining theology, philosophy, and social sciences to enhance Islamic discourse and make it relevant to many cultural and ideological perspectives. It stresses the significance of adapting Islamic ideas to modern contexts while maintaining their ethical core and universal nature. It promotes communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding among civilisations, recognising the richness and diversity of human experiences and viewpoints. This research suggests that incorporating ethical leadership into Islamic teachings

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has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the shared goals of world civilisations. A collaborative effort is needed from researchers, leaders, and communities to participate in a transformational discussion that goes beyond limits, encourages empathy, and supports the common good. This will help advance the collective goal of creating a fair, peaceful, and prosperous world.

Keywords: Islamic discourse, Leadership, Modern world, Islamic leadership, Islamic management

1. Introduction

For its resolution, it is argued that the current issues in the world need to be addressed through the Islamic paradigm. Islam, as a prominent global religion, offers valuable guidance for understanding and dealing with the intricacies of our linked world. Enhancing Islamic discourse is essential for fostering mutual tolerance, collaboration, and peaceful coexistence in many civilisations.⁴ The Islamic discourse covers a broad spectrum of subjects, including theology, law, ethics, and government. It offers a structure for Muslims to understand their beliefs and participate in wider social matters. The diverse world we live in sees an intersection of many cultures, as well as faiths and beliefs. As such, there is a growing need for more discussions within the Islamic community to engage with such intersections. It is not just an intellectual endeavour but a practical effort to promote harmony and cooperation among different cultural and religious groups.⁵ This research seeks to investigate the importance of improving Islamic discussions by focusing on ethical leadership, and its possible positive impact on creating a more

⁴ A I Al-Harbi and N S Badawi, “Can Opinion Leaders through Instagram Influence Organic Food Purchase Behaviour in Saudi Arabia?,” *JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC MARKETING* 13, no. 6 (2022): 1312–33, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-08-2019-0171> WE - Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI).

⁵ Zohre Mohamadi Zenouzagh, “Syntactic Complexity in Individual, Collaborative and E-Collaborative EFL Writing: Mediating Role of Writing Modality, L1 and Sustained Development in Focus,” *Educational Technology Research and Development* 68, no. 6 (2020): 2939–70, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09818-w>.

inclusive, caring, and morally upright global society. Throughout Islamic history, ethical leadership has been highlighted for its virtues of honesty, fairness, compassion, and responsibility. It may provide guidance in solving modern difficulties.⁶

This project aims to clarify the ethical basis of Islamic leadership by examining classical Islamic texts and modern research. It also seeks to explore how these principles might be used to tackle urgent challenges affecting global societies. Our goal is to explore how Islamic ethics and leadership interact to provide insights on how Islamic teachings might connect with various cultural and ideological systems, promoting better understanding and collaboration amongst civilisations.⁷ The study starts by establishing the definition of ethical leadership and its significance in Islamic ideology. The text analyses the many aspects of ethical leadership by using both traditional Islamic literature and modern study. The following sections discuss how ethical leadership concepts may be applied to tackle different global concerns. We explore governance, political leadership, social justice, community development, environmental stewardship, sustainability, and interfaith harmony, and conversation. We seek to enhance current dialogue on the influence of religion on modern society by analysing ethical leadership in Islamic thinking. The study ends by highlighting the need of enhancing Islamic discourse for global involvement and suggesting directions for further research and action. We hope to motivate scholars, leaders, and communities to engage in a revolutionary discourse that crosses boundaries and promotes the common good by emphasising the ethical ideals found in Islamic teachings.

⁶ M A Adish, R A Gorgani, and K KiaKojouri, "A Qualitative Study of Organizational Excellence in Hospitals Affiliated with Medical Sciences Universities of Iran Br," *JOURNAL OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK* 12, no. 4 (2023): 909-929 WE-Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESC).

⁷ M Almansour, "Business Incubators and Entrepreneurial Training: Leveraging Technological Innovations and Digital Marketing," *IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT*, n.d., <https://doi.org/10.1109/TEM.2022.3180212>.

1.1 Ethical Leadership in Islamic Philosophy

Ethical leadership in Islamic thinking involves concepts and practices that direct persons in positions of responsibility to act with integrity, justice, and compassion. Ethical leadership focuses on moral behaviour and accountability towards others, in line with Islamic principles on human conduct and social relationships. Ethical leadership in Islam is crucial for creating fair and just communities grounded in moral values from Islamic teachings.⁸ Ethical leadership in Islam is genuinely helping others and promoting fairness and compassion, rather than just exercising authority. It entails making judgements that prioritise the community's well-being and comply to the ethical norms outlined in Islamic teachings. The Prophet Muhammad demonstrated ethical leadership by embodying honesty, humility, and a commitment to the well-being of all individuals in society, irrespective of their origins or social standing. His leadership approach focused on consultation, fairness, and mercy, establishing a standard for future leaders to follow.⁹

Basic principles in Islamic teachings are the foundation of ethical leadership in Islamic ideology. The principles are based on the Qur'an, the *Hadith*, and the teachings of Islamic scholars from various historical periods. The core premise is *tawhid*, which highlights the unity and interconnection of all creation under one God. This concept emphasises the need of treating others with dignity and respect, since all individuals are viewed as equal in the sight of God. Another fundamental element in Islamic ethics is *adl*, which refers to fairness. Islamic teachings stress the significance of upholding justice in all facet of life, including personal behaviour, governance, and social relationships. Justice is treating people equitably and without bias, respecting their rights, and meeting one's responsibilities towards them. The Qur'an stresses the significance of

⁸ Faiza Manzoor et al., "An Examination of Sustainable HRM Practices on Job Performance: An Application of Training as a Moderator," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 11, no. 8 (2019): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11082263>.

⁹ Abdul Waheed, Jianhua Yang, and Jon Webber, "Reinforcing Consumers' Impulsive Buying Tendencies through m-Devices and Emails in Pakistan," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management* 13, no. March (2018): 45–60, <https://doi.org/10.28945/3964>.

justice, urging believers to uphold it without being swayed by prejudice. It states, “*O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness*” (Qur'an 5:8).

Islamic teachings highlight the need of compassion (*rahma*) and mercy (*rahim*) as crucial attributes for ethical leadership. Compassion is demonstrating empathy and goodwill towards individuals, particularly those who are weak or in need. Mercy involves pardoning others, even when they have done wrong, and striving for reconciliation and comprehension (Qur'an 8:61, 9:128). The Prophet Muhammad demonstrated characteristics like compassion and kindness in his dealings with his companions, opponents, and all members of society, highlighting the significance of these qualities in ethical leadership. Sultan Salahuddin Ayyubi is another outstanding individual recognised for his gallantry, kindness, and compassion towards both Muslims and non-Muslims¹⁰. He commanded the Muslim soldiers in the Crusades, focusing on safeguarding Jerusalem and the welfare of its residents. Sultan Salahuddin demonstrated ethical leadership by focusing on the well-being of the people and maintaining ideals of justice and kindness in his interactions.

Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd enhanced Islamic thinking by highlighting the significance of ethical behaviour and moral integrity in leadership¹¹. Their works and teachings motivate generations of Muslims to pursue ethical leadership based on Islamic ideals. The ethical leaders throughout Islamic history can inspire and guide present-day leaders dealing with the complexity of the modern world. Their legacies exemplify the enduring ideals of honesty, fairness, compassion, and accountability that are fundamental to ethical leadership in Islamic ideology. Individuals can strive to become

¹⁰ Amin Maalouf (1984). *The crusades through Arab eyes* (J. L. Droubi, Trans.). Saqi Books. (Original work published 1983)

¹¹ Al-Ghazali, A. (2005). *The revival of the religious sciences* (N. R. S. Burckhardt, Trans.). Islamic Book Trust. (Original work published 1106). Ibn Rushd, A. (2000). *The distinguished jurist's primer* (I. K. P. N. A. M. Al-Sulayman, Trans.). Garnet Publishing. (Original work published c. 1184).

ethical leaders by studying and imitating their behaviour, maintaining high moral standards, and working to bring about constructive change in their communities and beyond.

2. Ethical Leadership's Various Aspects

2.1 Integrity and Honesty

Integrity and honesty are fundamental principles of ethical leadership, crucial for establishing trust and credibility with followers. In Islamic leadership, integrity is following moral principles and ideals consistently, especially when faced with challenges or temptations. Leaders must demonstrate sincerity and openness by ensuring that their words and actions are consistent with their ideas and commitments.¹² Integrity beyond mere adherence to laws or regulations; it demonstrates a deep dedication to ethical behaviour and moral excellence. Islamic teachings stress the significance of sincerity and honesty in every element of life, as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was recognised as *al-Amin*, the trustworthy. His steadfast dedication to truthfulness and moral principles gained him the trust and respect of both his allies and opponents, highlighting the importance of these qualities in ethical leadership. Leaders that exhibit integrity instil trust and allegiance in their followers, cultivating an environment of openness, responsibility, and moral conduct in their institutions or societies. They set a precedent by continually maintaining ethical standards and taking responsibility for their conduct. Individuals may establish a culture of trust and integrity by demonstrating honesty and integrity in their leadership style, which sets the groundwork for long-term growth and success.

¹² Muhammad Farooq et al., "Digital Empowerment: Freedom of Expression Beyond 5G and 6G Networks in Developing Countries," *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 43, no. 4 (2023): 569–84, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10448484>; Muhammad Farooq, Buzdar Hafsa Qadir, and Muhammad Saeed, "AI-Enhanced Social Sciences: A Systematic Literature Review and Bibliographic Analysis of Web of Science Published Research Papers," *Pakistan Journal of Society, Education and Language (PJSEL)* 10, no. December 2023 (2023): 1–2.

2.2 Equity and Impartiality

Islamic ethics prioritise justice and fairness, which are essential components of ethical leadership. Islamic teachings stress the significance of upholding justice in all facets of life, including personal behaviour, governance, and social relationships. Justice necessitates fair and unbiased treatment of people, protecting their rights and preventing any kind of oppression or discrimination. Islamic law offers a structure for enforcing justice in many situations, based on the concepts of equality, due process, and proportionality. Leaders are tasked with resolving conflicts impartially, enforcing the law, and protecting the rights of all individuals in society, regardless of their background or social status. The Qur'an commands believers to uphold justice unwaveringly, even if it means testifying against themselves, their parents, or relatives (Qur'an 4:135).

Ethical leaders aim to provide a setting where justice is upheld, judgements are based on merit and objective standards, rather than personal prejudice or favouritism. They support the rights of marginalised and oppressed individuals, striving to create a fair and equal society. By advocating for justice and fairness in their leadership style, individuals may help achieve societal harmony and unity, which are essential for lasting peace and prosperity.

2.3 Compassion and Empathy

Concern and empathy are crucial attributes of ethical leadership, based on Islamic teachings emphasising mercy and concern for others. Islamic ethics prioritise demonstrating compassion and empathy for all beings, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was known as a mercy to the worlds. Compassionate leadership involves comprehending the needs and worries of others, empathising with their challenges, and taking proactive measures to reduce their pain. Compassionate and empathetic leaders cultivate loyalty and dedication in their followers, promoting a feeling of belonging and camaraderie in their organisations or communities. They establish a loving and supporting atmosphere that values and respects individuals, enabling them to achieve their maximum potential. The Qur'an emphasises the global nature of compassion in Islamic teachings by stating, *“And we have*

not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds” (Qur'an 21:107).

Ethical leaders focus on the welfare of their followers, aiming to meet their physical, emotional, and spiritual requirements. They listen intently, provide support and encouragement, and show real care and concern for individuals they are guiding. By demonstrating compassion and empathy in their leadership style, individuals may establish a culture of teamwork, partnership, and mutual regard, creating the groundwork for long-lasting progress and achievement.

2.4 Accountability and Responsibility

Accountability and accountability are crucial components of ethical leadership, necessitating leaders to own ownership of their actions and decisions. Islamic leadership responsibility is being responsible to God and the community for the trust given in one's leadership position. It entails adhering to stringent ethical principles and being open about one's motives, deeds, and results. Islamic teachings stress the significance of accountability in governance and leadership, since leaders are given the responsibility for the wellbeing of their followers. The Qur'an emphasises the significance of meeting duties and honouring agreements by stating, *“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice”* (Qur'an 4:58).

Ethical leaders display accountability by taking responsibility for their judgements, admitting their errors, and working to correct any harm done. They welcome comments and constructive criticism, understanding that accountability is crucial for building trust and credibility within their organisations or communities. Leaders that uphold accountability foster a culture of integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct, which enhances the core of their leadership and secures the long-term viability of their initiatives.

3. Ethical Leadership Principles Application

3.1 Governance and Political Leadership

Ethical leadership principles have significant consequences for governance and political leadership in Islamic Civilisations and other

areas. In Islam, governance involves not only wielding authority but also providing service to the people with justice, fairness, and compassion. Islamic teachings stress the significance of consultation (*shura*) and consensus-building in decision-making, ensuring that all stakeholders' opinions are acknowledged and taken into account. Ethical leaders in government prioritise the public interest over personal gain or party objectives, focusing on the welfare and prosperity of the society as a whole. They enforce the law, safeguard minority rights, and advocate for openness and accountability in government organisations. The Prophet Muhammad exemplified ethical governance by setting high standards for leaders' honesty and moral behaviour. Applying ethical leadership concepts in governance may help promote stability, trust, and legitimacy in cultures today. Ethical leaders strive to establish inclusive political systems that uphold the rights and dignity of all people, irrespective of their origin or views. Individuals may enhance justice, peace, and prosperity in their communities and abroad by advocating for good governance and ethical leadership.

3.2 Community Development and Social Justice

Ethical leadership concepts are essential for dealing with social justice concerns and advancing community development. Islam emphasises social justice by mandating people and communities to protect the rights of the marginalised and weak. Ethical leaders promote justice, fairness, and inclusiveness in all social aspects, aiming to eradicate prejudice and oppression. Ethical leadership in social justice involves recognising structural inequalities and striving to eliminate them via collaborative efforts and lobbying. Leaders focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged individuals in society, working to provide possibilities for their empowerment and improvement. *Zakat* in Islam demonstrates the significance of transferring income and resources to combat poverty and inequality. Community development initiatives led by ethical leadership principles aim to create enduring and robust communities that flourish through collaboration, solidarity, and mutual assistance. Ethical leaders include community people in decision-making processes to ensure that development programmes meet their needs

and goals. Individuals may help create dynamic and inclusive communities by advocating for social justice and community development, allowing all members to thrive and succeed.

3.3 Environmental Conservation and Sustainability

Ethical leadership concepts are essential for tackling environmental concerns and advancing sustainability. According to Islam, environmental stewardship (*khilafah*) is a duty given to humanity by God, where individuals are expected to serve as guardians of the Earth and its resources. “*It is He who has made you successors (khalifah) upon the Earth*” (Qur'an, 35:39). Ethical leaders acknowledge the interdependence of all living organisms and strive to save the environment for future generations. Environmental stewardship leadership include raising awareness and educating about environmental concerns, lobbying for legislation that support conservation and sustainability, and forming partnerships to tackle global environmental challenges. Islamic teachings stress the significance of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in several aspects of life, such as consumerism and resource utilisation, along with the ethical treatment of animals and ecosystems.

Leaders that are ethical in environmental stewardship prioritise the long-term health and well-being of the earth above short-term advantages or interests. They support policies that encourage the use of renewable energy, sustainable farming practices, and preservation of natural environments. Encouraging ethical leadership in environmental stewardship helps individuals reduce the effects of climate change, protect biodiversity, and provide a sustainable future for all living beings on Earth.

3.4 Interfaith Harmony and Conversation

Ethical leadership principles are crucial for encouraging interfaith harmony and discussion, as well as for establishing mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration among individuals from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. The Qur'an in Islam highlights the significance of discourse (*mubalahah*) and peaceful cohabitation with individuals of different religions, acknowledging the variety of human views as an indication of God's wisdom and ingenuity.

Leading interfaith discourse requires fostering empathy, humility, and receptiveness to many ideas and experiences. Ethical leaders encourage productive discussions that aim to find mutual agreement and foster cooperation based on shared principles and objectives. They strive to create connections of comprehension and harmony, surmounting obstacles of unawareness and bias. Leaders who prioritise ethics in fostering interfaith harmony and discussion support policies and activities that advance religious freedom, tolerance, and respect for variety. They confront prejudices and misconceptions about many religion traditions, fostering a culture of acceptance and appreciation for religious diversity. Encouraging ethical leadership in interfaith harmony and dialogue may help create a peaceful, just, and inclusive society where people of all faiths can coexist together and with mutual respect.

Implementing Ethical Leadership Principles

4.1 Governance and Political Leadership

Ethical leadership principles in Islam play a major role in governance and political leadership, impacting not only Muslim communities but also extending beyond them. In Islamic teachings, it is highlighted that government should not only exercise power but also offer service to the people with justice, fairness and compassion. The Qur'an provides numerous verses emphasizing justice and compassion in governance. For example: *“Indeed, Allah commands you to uphold justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin”* (Qur'an, 16:90). *“And if you judge, judge between them with justice”* (Qur'an, 5:42). This concept is in line with the ethical leadership beliefs promoted by Eboo Patel, who emphasises the importance of connecting differences and promoting understanding among various faith groups.¹³ Islamic teachings emphasise the importance of seeking advice (*shura*) and achieving agreement in the process of making decisions. This democratic method ensures that the viewpoints of all parties involved are recognised and considered, demonstrating ethical leadership values of inclusiveness and fairness.

¹³ Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer* (New York: Beacon Press, 2016).

Charles Kimball's investigation into interfaith dialogue underscores the importance of these inclusive practices in managing varied environments.¹⁴

Ethical leaders in government prioritise the well-being of the public over personal gain or political biases. They work towards the welfare and prosperity of the whole community, reflecting the beliefs of Jonathan Sacks, who stresses the value of practical leadership abilities in advancing interfaith harmony.¹⁵ Furthermore, Esposito & Mogahed (2019) suggest that successful interfaith leadership involves surpassing differences and fostering mutual esteem.¹⁶ Ethical leaders uphold the law, protect minority rights, and promote transparency and accountability in government agencies. The basis of these principles can be found in the Islamic tradition, as shown by the Caliphs who obeyed the law, safeguarded the rights of minorities and welcomed public inspection. Karen Armstrong's research on combating religious prejudice offers perspectives on how leaders can tackle and reduce such biases.¹⁷

Robert P. Jones highlights the difficulties and tactics for leaders to address religious prejudice and encourage inclusive communities via interfaith cooperation.¹⁸ Ultimately, the ethical leadership principles rooted in Islamic teachings not only guide governance within Muslim communities but also resonate with the broader need for cooperation and mutual respect across diverse faiths. These frameworks offer valuable insights for leaders aiming to foster justice, compassion, and accountability in their governance practices, ensuring the well-being of all members of society.¹⁹

¹⁴ Charles Kimball, *The Future of Interfaith Dialogue: A Review of Current Trends and Opportunities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

¹⁵ Jonathan Sacks, ed., *Building Bridges: Fostering Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2020).

¹⁶ John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *The Art of Interfaith Leadership: Building Bridges in a Divided World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019).

¹⁷ Karen Armstrong, *Overcoming Religious Bias: Strategies for Effective Leadership* (New York: Random House, 2022).

¹⁸ Robert P. Jones, *Leadership and the Challenge of Interfaith Collaboration: Navigating Religious Bias and Building Inclusive Communities* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021).

¹⁹ Huda T. Khashab, *The Ethical Framework of Islamic Leadership* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Press, 2021).

4.2 Community Development and Social Justice

Ethical leadership concepts are essential for tackling social justice concerns and fostering community development. Islam emphasises social justice by mandating people and communities to protect the rights of the marginalised and weak. Ethical leaders promote justice, fairness, and inclusiveness in all social spheres, aiming to eradicate prejudice and oppression. Ethical leadership in social justice involves recognising structural inequalities and striving to eliminate them via collective action and advocacy. Leaders focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged individuals in society, working to provide possibilities for their empowerment and improvement. *Zakat* in Islam demonstrates the significance of transferring income and resources to combat poverty and inequality.²⁰

Community development initiatives led by ethical leadership principles aim to create sustainable and resilient communities that flourish through collaboration, solidarity, and mutual assistance. Ethical leaders include community people in decision-making processes to ensure that development programmes meet their needs and desires. Individuals may help create dynamic and inclusive communities by advocating for social justice and community development, allowing all members to thrive and succeed.

4.3 Environmental Conservation and Sustainability

Ethical leadership concepts are vital for tackling environmental issues and advancing sustainability. According to Islam, environmental stewardship, known as *khilafah*, is a duty given to humanity by God, which mandates individuals to serve as guardians of the Earth and its resources. Ethical leaders acknowledge the interdependence of all living organisms and strive to save the environment for future generations. Environmental stewardship leadership include raising awareness and educating about environmental concerns, advocating for conservation and sustainability laws and practices, and forming partnerships to tackle

²⁰ Yuen Yee Yen et al., “Sustainable Petrol Subsidy Program in Malaysia,” *Asian Development Policy Review* 12, no. 1 (2023): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.55493/5008.v12i1.4948>.

global environmental challenges. Islamic teachings stress the significance of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in several aspects of life, such as consumerism, resource utilisation, and the ethical treatment of animals and ecosystems.²¹ Ethical leaders in environmental stewardship prioritise the planet's long-term health and well-being over short-term advantages or interests. They support policies that encourage the use of renewable energy, sustainable farming practices, and the preservation of natural environments. Encouraging ethical leadership in environmental stewardship allows individuals to help reduce the effects of climate change, protect biodiversity, and provide a sustainable future for all living beings on Earth.

4.4 Promoting Unity and Communication Among Different Faiths

Ethical leadership principles are crucial for encouraging interfaith harmony and discussion, as well as creating mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration among individuals from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. The Qur'an in Islam stresses the significance of discourse (*mubahalah*) and peaceful cohabitation with individuals of different religions, acknowledging the variety of human views as an indication of God's wisdom and ingenuity. Leading interfaith discourse requires fostering empathy, humility, and receptiveness to many ideas and experiences. Ethical leaders encourage productive discussions that aim to find mutual agreement and foster cooperation based on shared principles and objectives. They strive to create connections of comprehension and harmony, surpassing obstacles of unawareness and bias.²²

Leaders who prioritise ethics in fostering interfaith harmony and discussion support policies and activities that advance religious freedom, tolerance, and respect for variety. They confront prejudices and misunderstandings about other faith traditions, fostering a culture

²¹ Muhammad Farooq et al., "Sustainable Waste Management Companies with Innovative Smart Solutions: A Systematic Review and Conceptual Model," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 14, no. 20 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142013146>.

²² Tariq Ramadan, *Islamic Political Theory: A Study of Governance in Islam* (London: Penguin Books, 2020).

of tolerance and respect for religious diversity.²³ Encouraging ethical leadership in interfaith harmony and communication will help create a more peaceful, fair, and inclusive society where members of all faiths can coexist together and with mutual respect.

4.5 Placing Islamic Concepts in Modern Contexts

It is crucial to apply Islamic precepts to current world circumstances. This entails understanding Islamic teachings in the context of contemporary problems and possibilities to ensure their pertinence and practicality in addressing current difficulties. To contextualise Islamic discourse effectively, one must have a detailed awareness of society dynamics, cultural norms, and technological innovations in order to connect with various audiences worldwide.²⁴ Ethical leaders are essential in interpreting Islamic ideas, connecting tradition with modernity, and upholding the fundamental values and teachings of Islam. Leaders may showcase the enduring significance of Islamic ideals and encourage positive transformation in their communities and beyond by tackling urgent concerns like poverty, injustice, and environmental damage.

4.6 Preservation of Ethical Core and Universality

It is crucial to place Islamic ideas in modern contexts while still maintaining their ethical core and universal nature. Islamic teachings include enduring concepts of justice, compassion, and mercy that surpass cultural and temporal limitations, serving as a moral guide

²³ S Obaid, S F Ahmad, and F Mumtaz, "Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Framework: An Analysis of Interrelated Effects of HRM Practice and Leadership Style on Organizational Outcomes," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ASIAN BUSINESS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT* 13, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJABIM.309105> WE - Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI); Hina Nawaz and Prof. Dr. Syed Abdul Siraj, "Coverage of Islam in the Western Press: Exploring Episodic and Thematic Frames," *Journal of Peace, Development & Communication* Volume 5, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.36968/jpdc-v05-i01-14>.

²⁴ Shwana Hassan Ali and Mustafa Sağsan, "The Moderating Effect of Ethical Leadership between Psychological Ownership of Knowledge and Knowledge Hiding: An Empirical Study on the Public Universities in Northern Iraq," *Revista Argentina de Clinica Psicologica* XXX, no. 2 (2021): 178–88, <https://doi.org/10.24205/03276716.2020.4017>.

for navigating the intricacies of the contemporary world. Ethical leaders aim to maintain universal ideals while adjusting their implementation to various cultural settings.

4.7 Utilising an Interdisciplinary Approach to Connect Religion, Philosophy, And Social Sciences

To enhance Islamic discourse for global involvement, an interdisciplinary approach is needed that connects theology, philosophy, and social sciences.²⁵ Leaders may provide a thorough grasp of Islamic teachings and their relevance to modern concerns by combining knowledge from several disciplines such as ethics, sociology, psychology, and economics. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive and detailed understanding of Islamic concepts, promoting more communication and cooperation among researchers and practitioners from other fields.²⁶ Ethical leaders promote interdisciplinary conversation by establishing environments for cooperation and interaction, uniting specialists from different professions to address common issues and devise creative solutions. Leaders may provide new insights on urgent world issues by connecting theology, philosophy, and social sciences, enhancing Islamic discussions, and promoting the development of knowledge in many fields of study.²⁷

²⁵ Muhammad Farooq et al., “Integrating AI in Sustainable Writing: An Empirical Investigation of the Technology Acceptance Model in Asian Social Sciences,” *Journal of Logistics, Informatics and Service Science* 11, no. 3 (2024): 324–38, <https://doi.org/10.33168/jliss.2024.0321>; Farooq et al., “Digital Empowerment: Freedom of Expression Beyond 5G and 6G Networks in Developing Countries”; Farooq, Hafsa Qadir, and Saeed, “AI-Enhanced Social Sciences: A Systematic Literature Review and Bibliographic Analysis of Web of Science Published Research Papers”; Yen et al., “Sustainable Petrol Subsidy Program in Malaysia.”

²⁶ C. C. Mok, L. Y. Ho, and C. H. To, “Annual Incidence and Standardized Incidence Ratio of Cerebrovascular Accidents in Patients with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus,” *Scandinavian Journal of Rheumatology* 38, no. 5 (2009): 362–68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/auar.12054>.

²⁷ Ayaz Ul Haq, “Major Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Banking and SMEs in Pakistan Major Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Banking and SMEs in Pakistan,” no. May (2018).

4.8 Fostering Communication, Cooperation, and Shared Comprehension Between Cultures

Facilitating conversation, cooperation, and shared comprehension amongst cultures is crucial for enhancing Islamic discourse and promoting international involvement. Ethical leaders act as advocates for peace and reconciliation by encouraging communication and collaboration among individuals from other cultures, faiths, and perspectives. Leaders may bridge cultural barriers, debunk prejudices, and create understanding and empathy by promoting courteous and productive discussions.

Ethical leaders support policies and activities that encourage intercultural conversation, diversity, and religious pluralism, fostering chances for individuals from all backgrounds to interact and gain knowledge from one other. They advocate for tolerance, respect, and acceptance of cultural and religious diversity, confronting prejudice and discrimination wherever it occurs. Leaders may help create a more inclusive, harmonious, and linked world by fostering conversation, collaboration, and mutual understanding among civilisations, allowing all people to live together peacefully and with dignity.

5. Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the need of enhancing Islamic discussions by focusing on ethical leadership. We started by outlining ethical leadership and its significance in Islamic ideology, highlighting its function in promoting trust, honesty, and empathy among societies. We explored the various aspects of ethical leadership, such as integrity, honesty, justice, fairness, compassion, empathy, accountability, and responsibility. We analysed these principles in the context of Islamic teachings and historical instances to show their importance in addressing the difficulties that world civilisations are currently confronting. Ethical leadership in Islamic discourse may be a transforming force, providing advice and inspiration to people, communities, and society globally.²⁸ By

²⁸ Neviana Stefanova Krasteva and Aleksey Potebnya, *The Role of Beliefs and Religion in Contemporary Marketing . Research of the Marketing Applicability of*

practicing ethical leadership, individuals may help create fair, equal, and empathetic communities based on Islamic ideals. Ethical leaders exemplify honesty, fairness, and compassion, motivating others to embrace these principles and strive for good change locally and globally.

We urge academics, leaders, and communities to adopt ethical leadership as a fundamental aspect of Islamic discussion and a driving force for beneficial change. Scholars must go through study and academic work to enhance our comprehension of ethical leadership in Islamic thinking and its applicability to modern situations. Leaders must exemplify honesty, justice, and compassion through their behaviours and decisions. Communities are essential for promoting ethical leadership and creating circumstances that support individuals in flourishing and making positive contributions to society.

We envision a future characterised by a fair, peaceful, and prosperous world, where an enhanced Islamic dialogue acts as a driver for beneficial transformation. We see a future where ethical leaders, influenced by Islamic beliefs, strive diligently to advance justice, compassion, and mutual respect among all individuals in society.²⁹ We imagine societies that welcome variety, appreciate differences, and encourage discussion and cooperation among individuals with various origins and opinions. By enhancing Islamic dialogue, we may establish connections of comprehension and collaboration, fostering a global environment where individuals can coexist harmoniously with respect and success. Ultimately, including ethical leadership into Islamic discussions allows us to achieve our common goal of creating a fair, empathetic, and all-encompassing global community. Let's dedicate ourselves to this noble effort, collaborating to realise the potential of Islam as a guiding, inspiring, and hopeful force for mankind.

the Swedish Lagom Concept in Bulgaria, 2018.

²⁹ Muhammad Zakaria and Muhammad Zakaria, "Telecom Branding in Pakistan: Network Coverage or Value Added Services," *Academic Journal of Research in Economics and Management*, no. 11543 (2008); Jaffar Abbas et al., "The Impact of Knowledge Sharing and Innovation on Sustainable Performance in Islamic Banks: A Mediation Analysis through a SEM Approach," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 11, no. 15 (July 26, 2019): 4049, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154049>.

THE ARTISTIC COMPOSITION OF ARABIC
CALLIGRAPHY IN THE *KISWAH* OF THE HOLY KAABA:
A DESCRIPTIVE AND ANALYTICAL STUDY

Duaa Alashari¹ and Abdelaziz Berghout²

Abstract

The Kaaba's Kiswah carries inherited aesthetics with an ancient historical and cultural character. The Kiswah of the Kaaba is one of the earth's holiest and most precious fabrics, as it covers the Sacred House of Allah and carries sublime sanctity meanings. It embodies Qur'anic verses, expressions of monotheism, and some of the most beautiful names of God, which have added to the honourable covering more solemnity, beauty, and Majesty. Therefore, this study aims to provide an accurate and detailed descriptive study of the totality of Arabic calligraphy and calligraphic formations in form and textual content during the reign of King Salman Al Saud. The study also aims to provide a complete analytical description of the written contents of the lines and calligraphic formations, the type of compositions, and the general structure of the compositions on all four sides of the Holy Kaaba. The approach followed in the study is the content analysis approach. The current study will be based on observation. The study found that the covering of the Holy Kaaba is based in its design on a group of Qur'anic verses selected by scholars. These lines were written intertwined within various calligraphic formations, woven in the clear Thuluth script, and combined with prominent letters to show the splendour of Arabic calligraphy and its aesthetics and the manifestation of the elements of Islamic securitization.

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Keywords: Artistic, Arabic calligraphy, *Kiswah* of Kabba, analytical study, Islamic art.

Introduction

The covering of the Kaaba has a long history throughout the ages and before the emergence of Islam, and it is considered one of the great Islamic rituals. For a long time, the manufacture of the Kiswah and its decoration has been associated with the names of the greatest calligraphers in the Islamic world, and they competed to obtain the honour of writing on it and creating everything that beautifies it because it is a masterpiece of Islamic art and because of its sanctification and greatness, as this work is an act of worship through which the servant approaches his mistress to earn a reward for it.³

The Kaaba dress, or Kiswah, is a textile piece made of pure black silk. Its manufacture currently goes through several stages, starting with the dyeing stage, in which the threads from Italy are dyed black, followed by the kiswah sewing stage, and then comes the hand embroidery stage, which is indispensable despite the availability of the latest machines. Modern sewing reached the stage of printing Quranic verses and Islamic decorations using the silk printing technique, which is then embroidered with silver threads coated with pure gold water, and then the sixteen pieces of the Kiswah are sewn using the largest sewing machine in the world.⁴

The Kiswah features diverse models and shapes of Qur'anic verses and calligraphic formations, written in a clear, symmetrical thuluth style in unique calligraphic structures. These formations are characterised by overlapping and interlacing, giving the cladding a beautiful and creative appearance and adding a touch of solemnity and prestige. The *kiswah* performs an aesthetic, reading, and spiritual function. In the aesthetic aspect, the Arabic letters combine to form a word, and the word performs a meaning through an artistic

³ Barakat, Muhammad Murad. *Arabic calligraphy is a philosophy of aesthetic rooting and artistic branching*. Horouf Arabiya magazine, Issue 12, issued by the Culture and Arts Symposium, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (2004).

⁴ Al-Thaqafi, Abu Marwan. *The Holy Kaaba*: Prepared from multiple sources. The First Travel Forum Book, The Travel Forum First Edition. (2007).

performance by the rules and principles of the Thuluth script. As for the reading aspect, it was evident in writing Qur'anic verses on the belt and door of the Kaaba, lamps, and lamps, and concerning the spiritual aspect, it was evident in circumambulating, worshipping, and praying at the Kaaba, which is founded on the principle of sincerity, because the Kaaba has a spiritual depth for worshipping God Almighty. About the manufacture of the *kiswah* is made by combining traditional methods related to the hand embroidery process, which is indispensable despite the availability of modern machines and techniques, as well as contemporary artistic methods by which writing is executed on the *kiswah* to embody an Islamic work in which the spirit, beauty and sanctity of calligraphy are evident. The Arab illuminates the honourable cladding.

Nassif Jassim defines calligraphic composition as “a formal organisation based on the literal or textual material that takes a specific geometric or non-geometric cover and is produced in the design of the design foundations for written composition and written construction, especially unity, balance and flexibility of the reading sequence according to the direction that has been determined and can also be relied upon in its creation.” Multiple methods, including symmetry, symmetry, or horizontal line extension”.⁵

The Kiswa is defined by Abd al-Qayyum Abd al-Rab al-Nabi saying, “It is what is used as clothing for covering and adornment, and it refers to covering something, that is, dressing it with clothes or covering it.”⁶ The Kaaba was the first house established for people on earth and the qibla of Muslims. It is located in the heart of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, the place of birth of our great sage Muhammad. May God bless him and grant him peace and the place where the revelation was sent down to him.

The researcher defines the Kaaba *kiswah* in this study as the apparent garment that covers the Holy Kaaba, woven from natural

⁵ Deli, Khudair and Farman, Adi. *The aesthetic theory of Arabic calligraphy in Islamic art*. Nabua Journal of Studies and Research, No. 12, University of Babylon, Race. (2015).

⁶ Al-Attar, Ahmed Abdel Ghafour. *The Kaaba and the Kiswa from four thousand years ago until today*. Hajj and Endowments Publications, second edition, Mecca. (1977).

silk dyed black and embroidered with Qur'anic writings and Islamic decorations painted with gold threads. This honourable *kiswah* indicates the splendour of mastery, the beauty and the spirituality of Arabic calligraphy and is draped over the walls and door of the Kaaba, honourable from all four directions.

Therefore, this study aims to carry out a comprehensive and integrated analytical description of Arabic calligraphy and the calligraphic formations and Islamic decorative units present in the *kiswah* to reveal the aesthetic, artistic plastic values, and spiritual dimension inherent in the dress of the Holy Kaaba.

Method

The researcher used the (phenomenological) content analysis approach because the results provided by this approach relate to the apparent form. This approach is based on objective description, and one of its primary goals is to study and analyse from the perspective of form. It is one of the methods of descriptive scientific research, which Pearson defined as “one of the methods.” Research is used to describe the apparent or explicit content objectively, systematically, and quantitatively. Samir Muhammad Hussein defined the concept of content analysis “as a research method used by the researcher in various research fields to describe the material to be analysed in terms of form and content”.⁷ Based on the above, the methodology followed by the researcher in terms of studying the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy and the calligraphic formations inherent in the dress of the Holy Kaaba, collecting information and then describing and analysing it is sufficient to reveal the values and aesthetic, spiritual, cultural and historical dimensions of the dress of the Holy Kaaba. The observation tool is one of the most important research tools the researcher uses to obtain information and facts related to the study case to be observed. Using this tool, the researcher determined what must be focused on, analysed, and recorded.

⁷ Abu Salman, Abdul Wahab Ibrahim. *Writing scientific research is a new formulation*. Tenth Edition, Al Rushd Library, Riyadh. (2012).

Results and Discussion

The goal of the research is to shed light on artistic and aesthetic component of the Arabic calligraphic formations found on the Holy Kaaba's covering using a modern descriptive and analytical language. The artistic quality of Arabic calligraphy can only be realized within a linguistic, textual context with a vague meaning that is up to interpretation in order to yield an aesthetically pleasing constitution. In line with an analytical vision, this reveals the formal symbols of Arabic calligraphy within the framework of different calligraphic formations and highlights the qualities and expressive potential of Arabic calligraphy art, which has significantly enhanced the beauty and spirituality of the Holy Kaaba's garment and added numerous artistic, aesthetic, spiritual, cultural and facets to this. Take the Holy dress as an instance. The process of description and prescription aids the researcher to understand the artistic elements of the Kaaba dress and contributes to the revelation of divine order the understanding of the intricate nexus functional and aspects of divine design. Through these series of steps, the researcher can effectively extrapolate content. The textual nature of the artistic work conveys the artistic experiential journey through the expression of inherent in the linear Arabic lines embodied in the dress of the Holy Kaaba.

The Thuluth script, a collection of Qur'anic verses and monotheistic ideals is unique in Arabic aesthetic standards. The slow and sober accumulation of divine revelation.⁸ Through the use of the Thuluth script in adorning the honourable *kiswah*,—its tangible value is made apparent because of demanding technical requirements and unparalleled calligraphic capabilities. In sum, the Thuluth script is the most appropriate script in calligraphy characterized by fluidity earning the moniker “the master of Arabic script.” On the other hand, it is touted as one of the most difficult Arabic scripts, due to its letters' accuracy and multiple turns to draw the letter (phrase seems problematic, consider revision). The letters of the Thuluth script possess consistency in drawing connected yet discrete letters. In respect to rotation, how do rotating letters mean to bestow softness

⁸Daoud, Abdul Reda Bahia. *The expressive dimension in Arabic calligraphy*. Horouf Arabiya Magazine, Issue 19. Published by the Culture and Science Symposium, Dubai. (2007).

and liveliness? Extensibility means the ability of letters to extend. Elegance is intended to give a sense of elegance when drawing letters. Erection means the form embodied by ascending letters such as Alif and Lām. The quantities and what is meant by them are that the alifah does not exceed the lammah. Proportion means that all letters are in the same proportion according to the proportions and rules of the Thuluth script.⁹

Analytical description of the artistic, calligraphic and decorative composition embodied in the covering of the Kaaba.

Title: Kiswa of the Holy Kaaba

Calligrapher: Mukhtar Alam

Date: 2015- 2024

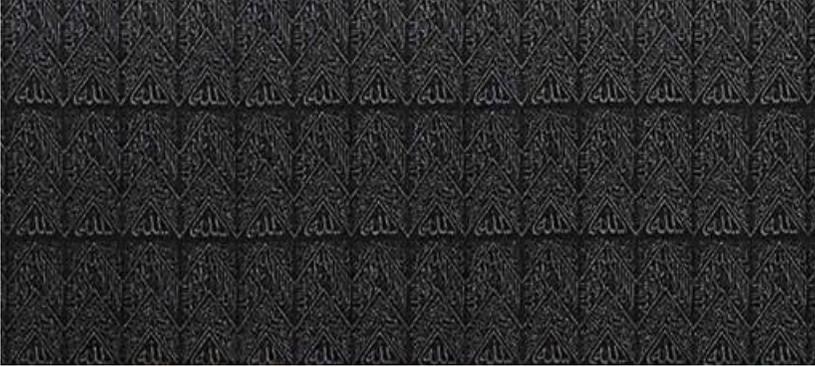
Location: The Grand Mosque, Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The covering of the Holy Kaaba carries inherited aesthetics of ancient historical cultural character. Its design is based on a group of Qur'anic verses selected by scholars. These lines were written overlappingly within various calligraphic formations, woven in the clear Thuluth script, and composed in prominent letters to show the splendour of Arabic calligraphy and its artistry, in addition to the manifestation of Islamic securitization. The covering of the Holy Kaaba is one of the holiest and most precious fabrics on the face of the earth, as it covers the Sacred House of God and carries sublime sanctity significance. It embodies Qur'anic verses, manifestations of monotheism, and some of the Most Beautiful Names of God, adding to the solemnity, beauty, majesty of divinity. This lies in the hidden contents of the sacred meanings. The Kaaba dress is a woven fabric of pure natural silk dyed black. The number of strengths of the fabric used is 47, while the thickness of the fabric is 1.37 mm. The Kiswa fabric is lined with white fabric made of durable natural cotton. On the plain Kiswa fabric are inscriptions woven with black threads to a lighter shade than natural black silk. These written inscriptions were woven using the jar card method and painted on them.

⁹ Ibid.

(لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله)، (سبحان الله وبحمده)، (سبحان الله العظيم)، (يا
حنان يا منان)، (ياالله)

These phrases were repeated on the curtain of the Kiswa in all four directions surrounding the Kaaba, and they were all designed in a wonderful geometric frame in the outlines of triangles superimposed on top of each other and repeated in a geometric rectangular character, as shown in Pattern No. (1)



Model No. 1: An illustrative image of the geometric linear formations in the curtain of the covering of the Holy Kaaba. <http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/>

The length of the kiswah cloth of the Kaaba is 14 meters, the width of its cloth on the side of the two corners is 10.78 metres, the width of the kiswah cloth on the Multazam ((الملتزم) side is 12.25 metres, the width of the kiswah cloth on the side of the Black Stone is 10.29 metres, and the width of the kiswah cloth on the side of Ibrahim Gate is approximately 12.74 metres. The total fabric of the Kiswah consists of 700 kilograms of pure natural silk imported from natural sources and dyed black, in addition to 100 kilograms of silver and 120 kilograms of gold-plated silver. In preparing the *kiswah*, the longest sewing machine in the world is deployed which reaches 16 metres and was made specifically for this purpose. It is responsible for matching all aspects of *the kiswah* and deploys laser beams to adjust the weight and straightness, place the materials, and fix the fabric with the lining. The golden belt surrounding the Kaaba is a

continuous rectangular piece with a ribbon character and several Qur'anic verses. It consists of 16 pieces, its length is 47 meters, and its width is 95 centimetres. It is installed at a height of 9 meters from the ground. The Qur'anic verses form the content of the belt. Which surrounds the Kaaba from the four sides, and the length of each piece is 240 centimetres, and its width is 95 centimetres. Qur'anic verses and Islamic decorative units were embroidered on these pieces using gold-plated silver threads, which amounted to approximately 10 thousand threads per meter.¹⁰ As for all the Qur'anic verses, monotheistic manifestations, and the beautiful names of God written on the current covering of the Kaaba, they were drawn in the clear, complex Thuluth script and are the works of the Saudi calligrapher Abd al-Rahim Amin Bukhari may God have mercy on him and forgive him previously. As for the present time, the Meccan calligrapher Mukhtar Alam has assumed the duties of covering the honourable Kaaba. They supervised and implemented the writing of Qur'anic verses, making calligraphic compositions, and making Islamic decorations.

The Qur'anic verses, monotheistic manifestations, and Islamic decorative units were embroidered in a way that their letters protrude 2 centimetres above the level of the surface of the fabric for all calligraphic compositions to give a majestic aesthetic appearance to the holy verses and Islamic decorative units. In addition, under the main belt that surrounds the Kaaba from the four sides, there are two rectangular pieces and three lamps, except on the side of Bab al-Multazam (the eastern side), where there is one large piece called the dedication piece, bringing the total number of pieces that are located under the main belt (7).

Rectangular pieces and (17) lamps. These lamps include the following inscription:

(الحمد لله رب العالمين)، (الله أكبر) يا حي يا قيوم، (يا رحمان يا رحيم)

Knowing that all of these calligraphic compositions were written in small, lamp-shaped, iconic forms surrounded by a decorative frame, in addition to the presence of four square-shaped samdādas below the

¹⁰Al-Daqen, Muhammad. *The covering of the Kaaba is the greatest throughout history*. Al-Gabalawi Press. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (1986).

main belt (which means the complete Surah Al-Ikhlās. *سورة الإخلاص*)
These *samdādas* are distributed on the corners of the Kaaba,
specifically below the main belt. As shown in Model No. (2).¹¹



Model No. 2 A detailed picture of the southern side (between the two corners) showing the inscriptional band (the main belt), the rectangular linear formation that is located under the main belt, and the three lamps represented in the iconic linear formation, along with a partial picture of the *Samadiyat* distributed on the corners of the Kaaba in the honorable covering of the Kaaba.

[http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah /](http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/)

The researcher describes that there has been some correspondence in the directorial body between *Qandil* (قنديل) (يا رحمان) and *Qandil* (يا قيوم) (الحمد لله). In the external decorative frame surrounding the composition and at the top of the composition, the *Alif* was decorated like the lantern motif, using the method of decorative interlacing. As for the lantern (الحمد لله) It was framed with two frames: the first frame was a thin, plain line devoid of decoration, while the second frame that

¹¹ Al-Mawjan, Muhammad Hussein. *The covering of the Holy Kaaba is majestic and beautiful*. Publisher: Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait Center for Islamic Arts at the Grand Mosque, Kuwait. (2012).

surrounded it was decorated. The spatial arrangement of the lanterns was horizontal, with all the lanterns placed on one line level. Qandil came ((يا رحمان)) First, then Qandil (الحمد لله). Finally, Qandil (يا قيوم) All lanterns have Arabic calligraphy embroidered in gold, as well as the decorative frame in an identical manner, while the lantern . (الحمد لله) It was different, as the first frame surrounding the composition was embroidered in silver, as shown in Model No.(3) .



Sample No. 3: An image of the iconic linear formations (lanterns) in the covering of the Kaaba, illustrating the textual and decorative content of the three lamps. <http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah>
The image was modified by the researcher

Regarding the outer frame of the lamp (الله أكبر), It is different from the external appearance of the three lamps in that it is devoid of a decorative frame because it is bordered by a plain frame and without the embodiment of any decorative elements. The date of manufacture was placed inside to distinguish it from similar lamps, knowing that the three lamps used the calligrapher's name, year and place of manufacture. At the same time, Qandil (الله أكبر) is different in that only the year of manufacture was used. The place and name of the calligrapher were not mentioned, as these five lamps are among the lamps that were created during the reign of King Salman bin Abdulaziz in the year 2016 and were written by the calligrapher of the covering of the Holy Kaaba, the distinguished professor Mukhtar Alam, and as shown in Model No. (4).



Sample No. 4. An image of an iconic calligraphy composition in the Kaaba covering, illustrating the textual content of the “Allahu Akbar” lamps <http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/>

As mentioned earlier, several new pieces were created in 2016 during the reign of King Salman bin Abdulaziz, including placing five gilded lamps arranged on the side adjacent to the Black Stone, specifically from the highest Corner of the Black Stone up to the flat of the bottom, and inside it was written (God is Great) and these The five lamps were installed on top of each other so that there were equal spaces between each lamp and the other in a coordinated manner. The aim of placing additional gilded lamps is to indicate the beginning and end of the circumambulation. He also introduced the placement of a gilded decorative band with lush Islamic motifs surrounding the black stone, measuring 100 centimetres, 129 centimetres high, and 15 centimetres thick. In addition to a gilded decorative belt in the shape of a rectangle extending along the side of the Kaaba above the Yemeni Corner, six meters long and 15 centimetres thick, to differentiate between the Yemeni Corner and the Black Stone, and also a gilded decorative band designed in a circular shape surrounding the Yemeni Corner, measuring 115 centimetres by 92 centimetres and 15 centimetres thick. Gilded rings were also installed to secure the cladding. The researcher notes that all of these new pieces are identical in terms of the external appearance of the decorative units represented by the Islamic securitization system, especially in the decorative strip surrounding the Black Stone and the Yemeni Corner, knowing that all of the new gilded ornaments were embroidered with prominent embroidery, as shown in Model (5).



Model No. 5 A detailed picture of a gilded decorative band surrounding the Black Stone, a decorative band extending along the side of the Kaaba above the Yemeni Corner, and also a decorative band surrounding the Yemeni Corner in the Kiswah of the Kaaba. <http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/>

Image modified by the researcher

In addition to the introduction of another gilded decorative strip surrounding the gutter of the Kaaba specifically, it is located at the bottom of the gutter, measuring 170 centimetres by 77 centimetres in a triangular geometric shape, as shown in Model No. (5). Based on what was previously mentioned, it is clear that the total number of gilded pieces contained in the Kiswah is 53 pieces. It is gilded, and it is worth noting that the calligrapher, Mukhtar Alam, is the one who makes the *kiswah* decorations and supervises their production.¹²

A complete analytical description of the content of the written contents of the lines and calligraphic formations, the type of compositions, and the general structure of the compositions present on all four sides of the Holy Kaaba.

First: The eastern side (which has the Kaaba Gate):

The full text of the script: the first piece:

[بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ: وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

¹² Ibid

مُصَلَّى [القطعة الثانية] وَعَوَّدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهَّرَا بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ
وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ [البقرة:125] [القطعة الثالثة] وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ
الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ [البقرة:127] [القطعة الرابعة
رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِن دُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ¹³ [البقرة:128]

The under the belt of the eastern side: the piece of dedication and manufacture “This kiswa was made in Mecca and presented to the Holy Kaaba by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, may God accept it from him.” In addition, several three lamps with the words “Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds” written inside them (58 cm God is Great (58cm x 72cm).

Type of composition: A long written strip with a rectangular shape, designed according to the three-line system known as the heavy composition system, and executed in the compound clear thuluth script. As for the calligraphic piece that is located below the belt, it is a rectangular geometric shape, and it was also designed according to the triple line system and executed in the complex Thuluth clear script, in addition to the iconic diagnostic system that represents the lantern shape, and the writing was executed in the complex clear thuluth script.

General Authority for Composition: The calligrapher adopted the bar format using the triple (heavy) line overlay system to accommodate the text's number of words. The calligraphy items were distributed in a sequential reading manner within the total area with a horizontal path, and the horizontal amount was made approximately the size of the font used, starting from right to left. The compositions were executed with gold-plated threads on a black background. The calligrapher invested the aesthetic qualities of the Thuluth letters and the inflectional and ornamental movements in the design process to build an interconnected textural unit. A decorative frame of Islamic floral decorative units surrounded the main written strip. These decorations linked the four rectangular strips within a frame—one bar. In addition to the written strip that is located under the main belt,

¹³ Quran Al-Baqarah:125-128

distributed horizontally to accommodate the entire area with a horizontal path. All of them were executed in the clear, complex Thuluth script and contained grammatical formations to fill the internal space between the structure of the written texts. They were embroidered with threads coated with gold water in relief on a black caliph. They were framed with a decorative frame of straight lines and Islamic floral decorations. They were all embroidered with golden threads and surrounded the Qur'anic texts with the flag. All these Qur'anic texts are dominated by overlaying, and interconnection.

The under the belt of the northern side: The Almighty said: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful [Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Most Merciful] [Al-Hijr: 49] God Almighty said [And when My servants ask you about Me, then indeed I am near. I answer the call of the supplicant when... Aan [Al-Baqarah:186]:

نَبِيٌّ عَبْدِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمِ [الحجر:49] قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى [وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي
فَأَنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ [البقرة:186]

next to three lanterns Books were distributed alternately, inside which were written Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds (58 cm The main one is a linear, geometric, square composition containing the entire Surah Al-Ikhlās (85 x.85)

Type of composition: Under the belt on the northern side, there are two inscription bands in a regular geometric rectangular shape written using the complex Thuluth Jalis script, in addition to the iconic diagnostic system represented in the form of a lamp written in different texts, all of which were executed in the complex Thuluth Jalis script.

The general structure of calligraphic compositions: The composition is a contour of two regular rectangles in the form of a bar with an overlapping plane using the compound clear thuluth script. The composition of the textual structure was designed utilizing line processing, and a balance was created between the sizes of the letters and the spaces. The spaces were filled with inflectional and ornamental movements in addition to the decorative frame, which surrounded the linear composition and gave the composition a

rectangular, geometric shape. The iconic figures next to the two rectangles were formulated as lamps, the letters of which were written using the Thuluth script in various texts. As for the compositions, O Ever-Living, O Ever-Living, and O Most-Merciful, O Most Merciful, the similarity is apparent in the directing idea of the composition's form, as the calligrapher used the letter Alif to connect the top of the composition to obtain In the shape of a geometric rhombus. In addition to the overall similarity in the decorative frame that framed these two compositions, as for the iconic composition that was represented in the form of a lamp similar to the two adjacent compositions, this third composition contained the phrase "Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds," and the composition was designed in a symmetrical form, and the right side matched the left. In addition, the word Majesty had a prominent position at the top of the calligraphic composition and was framed by a decorative frame embroidered with prominent embroidery, and all the calligraphic compositions were written in gold and embroidered in relief on a black background.

Third: The Western Side (adjacent to Bab Ibrahim):

The full text of the written tape: The first part: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful:

[وإذ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهَّرَ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ
وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ] [الحج:26] [وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ
يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ] [الحج:27] [لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ
مَعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَى مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا] [الحج:27] [وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ
الْفَقِيرَ ثُمَّ لِيُقْضَىٰ لَهُمْ أَقْبَرُ لَهُمْ وَأَلْيَوْمَافُوا نُذَوْرَهُمْ وَأَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ] [الحج:29]¹⁵

Type of installation: The overall composition of the belt is in the form of a rectangular band, with an overlapping plane of the heavy triple line system, and the writing is executed in the clear Thuluth complex script.

¹⁵ Quran; Al Haj: 26-29.

The General Authority for Calligraphy Compositions: The bar composition contains Qur'anic texts sequentially. The letters of the formations were written using the clear thuluth script with the superimposed system of the heavy triple line. The calligrapher treated the composition of the textual structure in line processing with a sequential reading sequence for the meaning of the text. The calligrapher relied on the overall text arrangement and its segmentation. The rectangular strip's overall shape is according to the Qur'anic text sequence.

The under the belt of the western side: God Almighty said, In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful [And give good news to the believers that for them from God is a great bounty] [Al-Ahzab: 47] And God Almighty said [And whoever does evil or wrongs himself, then seeks If one flees from God, he will find God Forgiving, Merciful. [An-Nisa:110]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ [وَيَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا] [الأحزاب: 47]
وَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى [وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا]
[النساء: 110]

Next to three lamps that were placed and inside them were written, Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds (58 cm The Four Kaaba There is a complete composition of Surah Al-Ikhlās, measuring (85cm x 85cm.

Type of composition: Under the main belt are two writing strip formations in a regular geometric rectangular shape. The writing was executed using the combined Thuluth Jalis script and the iconic diagnostic system, represented in the form of three lamps with different texts written inside them, all executed in the complex Thuluth Jalis script.

The general appearance of the linear compositions: The composition is a contour of two regular rectangles in the form of a strip with an overlapping plane using the clear, compound thuluth line, in addition to the decorative frame that surrounded the linear composition and gave the composition a rectangular, geometric shape. As for the iconic figures located next to the two rectangles, it was formulated in the form of lamps, and their letters were written

using the Thuluth script in various texts. As for the composition, O Living, O Sustainable, and O Most Merciful, O Most Merciful, the similarity is apparent in the directive idea of the composition, where the calligrapher used the letter Alif to connect the top of the composition to obtain a specific geometric shape, in addition to The overall similarity is in the decorative frame that framed these two compositions. As for the iconic composition, which was represented in the form of a lamp similar to the two neighbouring compositions, this composition contained the phrase “Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.” The composition was designed in a symmetrical form. The right side matched the left, in addition to The word “Allah” had a prominent position at the top of the calligraphic composition. The composition was framed by a decorative frame embroidered with prominent embroidery, and all the calligraphic compositions were written in gold and embroidered in relief on a black background.

Fourth: The Southern Side (between the two corners):

The full text of the written tape: The first part: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful:

﴿قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ [آل عمران: 95] [إِنَّ
 أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ] [آل عمران: 96] [فِيهِ آيَاتٌ
 بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا] [آل عمران: 97] [وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجُّ الْبَيْتِ
 مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ] [آل عمران: 97]¹⁶

Type of composition: The overall composition of the belt is in the form of a rectangular band with an overlapping plane of the heavy triple line system, and the writing was executed in the combined clear thuluth script.

The General Authority for Calligraphy Compositions: The strip composition contains Qur'anic texts in a reading sequence. The letters of the compositions were written using the clear Thuluth script with the overlapping system of the heavy triple line. The calligrapher treated the composition's textual structure in a line-by-line manner

¹⁶ Quran: Al Omran: 95-97.

with a sequential reading sequence for the meaning of the text. The calligrapher relied on the overall text arrangement. It is divided into the rectangular strip's overall shape according to the reading text's sequence.

Under the Belt of the Southern Side: God Almighty said, In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful [That is, and whoever honours the rituals of God, they are from the purity of hearts [[Al-Hajj: 32] God Almighty said, [And indeed, I am a Forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness, then You will be guided [Taha:82].

قال الله تعالى بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعِظْكُمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى
الْقُلُوبِ] [الحج:32] قال الله تعالى [وَإِنِّي لَعَفَّارٌ لِمَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى
17[طه:82]]

Besides Therefore, three lamps were placed inside which were written: Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds (58 cm Specifically, under the main belt, there is a square geometric composition containing the entire Surah Al-Ikhlās (85 x85).

Type of composition: Under the belt, there are two inscription bands in a regular geometric rectangular shape, written using the combined Thuluth Jalis script, in addition to the iconic diagnostic system, which is represented in the form of three lamps written in different scripts, all of which are executed in the complex Thuluth Jalis script.

The general structure of the calligraphic compositions is a contour of two regular rectangles in a strip. The calligrapher treated the structure of the linear compositions linearly and created a balance between the sizes of the letters and the spaces. The spaces were filled with inflectional and ornamental movements, in addition to the decorative frame surrounding the calligraphic composition, which gave the composition a rectangular shape. The shape. The iconic figures next to the two rectangles have been formulated as lamps, and their letters have been written using the Thuluth script in various texts. As for the compositions, O Living, O Subsisting, and O Most Merciful, O Most Merciful, the similarity is apparent in the directive

¹⁷ Quran: Al-Hajj: 32.17

idea of the composition's form, where the calligrapher invested the letter Alif to connect the top of the composition to obtain a geometric shape, in addition to the overall similarity in the decorative frame that framed these two compositions. As for the iconic composition, which was represented in the form of a lamp similar to the two neighbouring compositions, this composition contained the text "Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds," and it was The composition is in a symmetrical form, and the right side matches the left. Essentially, the word "God" had a prominent position at the top of the calligraphic composition and was framed with a decorative frame embroidered with prominent embroidery. All the compositions were written in gold and embroidered in relief on a black background.

Conclusion

Through what was previously presented, the study concluded that the design of Arabic calligraphy and linear formations embodied in the covering of the Holy Kaaba has creative and aesthetic aspects, in addition to the plastic components and artistic methods of the linear formations with which the covering of the Holy Kaaba was decorated with its multiple embroideries and patterns. It also became clear to the researcher that the Arabic letters, especially the Thuluth script letters that appear on the Kaaba dress, have a latent potential and ability to be formulated into calligraphic structures and formations of their independent entity, which made them used in the field of plastic art as aesthetic vocabulary. The study also concluded that the collection of Arabic calligraphy, the linear formations embodied in the honourable cladding, combined the functional, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects into a great artistic textile piece characterized by balance, unity, and artistry, as the method of treating the linear formations was done by organizing the elements in accordance with sound artistic foundations.

RECONCILIATION AND ISLAMISATION - A ROADMAP FOR AN ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL REVIVAL

Safiyah Sabreen Syeed¹ and Ahmad El-Muhammady²

Abstract

The Muslim world produced one of the greatest intellectual revolutions in history. Since the Colonial Period, the effort to bring about a global Islamic Revival has been a much sought after project for Muslim intellectuals worldwide. This paper studies the core principles that were instrumental in building the Islamic Intellectual Revolution (8th-18th Century CE). These core principles are identified as the centrality of the Qur'an in all intellectual discourse, a broad epistemological landscape and the unity of the sacred and secular sciences. This paper explores how returning to the same methodology can lead to an Islamic intellectual revival. The Qur'an identifies eight valid epistemic sources apart from itself while declaring itself as the Furqan (Criterion) to judge their validity. These include Sunnah, human intellect ('Aql and Qiyas), Ijma' (consensus), intuition (Basira), the physical universe, history, and certain knowledge from other civilisations. It is the duty of the scholars to work towards an integration of knowledge derived from these different sources and thus 'Islamise' them. This paper identifies the core reasons for the present intellectual crisis to as being rooted in an ignorance of the broad epistemological landscape of Islam.

The Qur'an anticipates how a better understanding of the self and the cosmos will lead to a validation of the truth of the Qur'an in the future (41:53). Contemporary scientific discourse has uncovered important perspectives related to these two domains, presenting a good opportunity for Muslim intellectuals to study them in the light of Islamic thought. It is argued that science today needs a new

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philosophical paradigm as breakthroughs in physics and cosmology have made the current mechanistic and deterministic philosophy of science obsolete. This paper discusses how a new Islamic philosophy of science that rests on the Kalām and Sufi view of the universe and consciousness is one of the best contenders for this change in paradigm. Developments in Quantum Physics, Fine Tuned Cosmology, and the Hard Problem of Consciousness are taken as case studies to propose solutions from Islamic thought to conundrums related to them. Thus, a practical guide to the Islamisation of the fields of cosmology, physics, biology, and neuropsychology is proposed and it is argued that this approach will inevitably revitalise Muslim thought, reconcile physical sciences with it and thus has the potential to bring about an intellectual revival in the Ummah.

Keywords: Islamic Epistemology, Intellectual Revival, Islamic Scientific Revolution, Quantum Physics, Consciousness, Fine Tuned Universe, Islamisation of Knowledge

Introduction

Between the 8th and the 18th centuries, the Muslim world witnessed one of the greatest scientific and technological revolutions in history.³ If Kuhnian terminology⁴ is used then the scientific developments that took place in the Islamic civilisation represented a major paradigm shift from the theoretical and deductive approach of the pre-Islamic civilisations which could be called the ‘normal science’ of that age to the inductive and experimental approach that became the revolutionary paradigm of the Islamic Scientific Revolution.⁵ Thus the term ‘Scientific Revolution’ applies to the

³ Khalili, Jim. *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance*, (The Penguin Press, 2011), 60. Hossein, Seyyed Nasr. *Science and Civilization in Islam*, (ABC International Group, 2001), 43.

⁴ Kuhn, Thomas, S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 50th ed., (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁵ Briffault, Robert. *The Making of Humanity*, (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd,

historical period during which the Islamic intellectual tradition was formalised and multiple sciences including religious, philosophical and physical sciences were developed across the Islamic civilisation. This period deserves to be termed the Islamic Scientific Revolution, just as the physical sciences developed during this period deserve to be called 'Islamic', because the underlying worldview and philosophy was 'Tawhidic'.⁶ This is true even when we take into consideration the various non-Muslim thinkers who participated in this tradition, since all the sciences were developed within a common intellectual milieu that was grounded on a 'Tawhidic' worldview and epistemology. This paper will discuss Islamic intellectual tradition, including the scientific developments within in.

Islam is essentially an intellectual tradition, and Muslims are a people of a book. The word 'Iqra' was the first revelation sent down to the Prophet (ﷺ) that initiated one of the world's largest intellectual traditions. The reason for the rise of the Islamic civilisation from the deserts of Arabia to becoming a global superpower can be attributed to the intellectual and scientific revolution that was heralded by the Prophet (ﷺ). Dr Fazlur Rahman Ansari explains:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) has two roles being the landmark in human history. He (ﷺ) came to close one era - the era of Prophetic revelation or divine spoon feeding. But in addition, he also came to inaugurate another era - the modern scientific era. This can be deduced from the Qur'an, Hadith, Muslim history, and the history of science.”⁷

Robert Briffault identifies the Islamic Scientific Revolution to be “truly scientific while all pre-Islamic science according to him were pre-scientific”.⁸ A formidable amount of literature dedicated to

1919), 185.

⁶ Bakar, Osman. *History and Philosophy of Islamic Science*, (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2000), 6.

⁷ Ansari, Muhammad Fazlur Rahman. “Prophet Muhammad ﷺ - Inaugurator of the Scientific Age” Lecture series, 10 min., 39 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWgJXAI_ww&t=30s

⁸ Briffault, Robert. *The Making of Humanity*, 190.

analysing the decline in the *ummah* has emerged since the last century. However, this term ‘decline’ is meaning-laden and layered. What does it mean for a civilisation to be in decline? Is it just related to the political and economic crisis in many Muslim nations? Clearly, we can see that there was a time when the Islamic civilisation was a global superpower, and the cities of the Muslim world were powerhouses of innovations, knowledge and culture.⁹ The Muslim world produced one of the best-known amalgamations of technological advancement with spiritual development. In contrast, we see the current western civilisation has invested in a global project of technological advancement at the expense of its religious and spiritual tradition. So clearly there is a socio-political decline within the *Ummah* which is also related to the economic impoverishment of the *Ummah* ever since the colonial period. Despite its rich resources, the *Ummah* as a collective entity across the globe has not functioned as a major socio-political player in global politics, nor does it have a significant place in international economics. Much of the *Ummah* is caught in debt traps to the IMF which further deteriorates its global standing. But these visible signs of weakness and crisis have deeper causes. The socio-political and economic crisis within the *Ummah* has a serious spiritual and intellectual crisis that underlies it. The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke about this when he said, “There will come a time when the nations will gather around you (to attack you) just like people gather around a table.” When a companion asked, “Will that be because of our small numbers at that time? He replied: No, you will be numerous at that time, but you will be like the scum that is carried down by a torrent, and Allah will remove your fear from the hearts of your enemies and will cast *wahn* into your hearts. Someone asked, “What is *wahn*? The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Love of the world and dislike of death.”¹⁰ This hadith indicates the weakening of faith and the subsequent spiritual decline in the *Ummah*. He (ﷺ) also pointed towards an intellectual decline in his ummah when he said, “Knowledge will be removed.”¹⁰

⁹ Sarton, George. *Introduction to the History of Science Vol 2*. (Carnegie Institution of Washington Press, 1931), 490.

¹⁰ Tirmidhi, 2652.

Because the hadith clearly mentions how the *Ummah* will have great numbers, it can be understood that the strength of the *Ummah* is not in its numbers or even the wealth of some of its oil rich nations. Instead, *its strength is in its spiritual outlook to life, its faith and its intellectual vision*. And this is something we can understand from early Islamic history. Islam started with a revelatory experience of one man i.e. the Prophet in an isolated cave in Arabia, prior to him impacting the hearts and minds of his close companions. Within a few years, less than fifty people in Mecca had accepted Islam and these were the people who later changed the entire landscape of the medieval world. At the time of the Prophet's declaration of his prophethood, only seventeen people were literate. When he (ﷺ) left this physical world, thousands of people had received education, and all the senior companions had become scholars.¹¹ So the Prophet (ﷺ) brought about a social, political, religious, spiritual, and most fundamentally intellectual awakening in the world. The scheme was as follows: First the Prophet (ﷺ) created an intellectual awakening among people, which quickly impacted their inner beings and created a spiritual awakening that oriented them to higher goals and aspirations. Subsequently these spiritually and intellectually awakened people were instrumental in creating a massive social change as they re-built their socio-economic and political systems founded on the values and principles obtained in the stages of their intellectual and spiritual upbringing.

Al Attas¹² and Faruqi¹³ also identify the root cause of the decline and malaise of the *Ummah* as being the 'intellectual crisis'. Understandably, the revival of the Muslim *Ummah* then is dependent on an *Ummah*-wide intellectual uprising. It should be noted that we have mentioned the intellectual crisis before the spiritual crisis as we discussed the intellectual awakening before the spiritual awakening in the context of the early Muslim community. This is because the

¹¹ Al Baladhuri, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. Francis Clark Murgotten. Vol. 2. (Columbia University Press, 1924).

¹² Al Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Islam and Secularism*. (IIUM Press, 1978), 171. Al Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*. (ISTAC, 1995).

¹³ Faruqi, Isma'il Raji and Abu Sulayman, Abdul Hameed. *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan*. (IIIT International Graphics, 1989), 2.

first recipient of knowledge and understanding in the human being is the intellect. It is only after a process of rationalisation that the process of spiritual awakening follows. In the case of the Prophet Ibrahim also we see that he first appealed to the intellect of his companions to turn away from idol worship and adopt the absolute monotheism of Prophet Ibrahim, their forefather. This was a very rational appeal which subsequently opened the doors for spirituality. The same is the case for crisis as well, that first the intellects are confounded with arguments and theoretical positions about the world and then these intellectual choices lead eventually to a spiritual crisis.

The factors that contribute to the crisis in the *Ummah* can also be categorised into external and internal. External factors include the incessant wars, sanctions, political instability, and economic deprivation that the *Ummah* suffers from. On the other hand, there are internal factors that contribute to the crisis in the *Ummah*, which relates to the aforementioned intellectual and spiritual crisis. These are foundational and the external factors depend largely on the internal factors. The purpose of this paper is to explicate these internal factors. We will present the example of the Prophetic community for this purpose. We will have to understand how the *Ummah* reached its zenith from the time of the first revelation to becoming a global superpower. It started with an intellectual awakening which led to a spiritual realisation, and it were these intellectually and spiritually awakened people who, within a few decades created a state that became a global superpower. So, this model needs to be revisited to cure the crisis at hand and create a revival in Islamic thought and civilisation.

Discussion

Characteristics of the Islamic Intellectual Age

Taking a broad survey of the medieval Islamic civilisation, we can identify the main characteristics of the Islamic intellectual age. We have broadly classified them as three:

Centrality of the Qur'ān in all Islamic Intellectual Discourse

Firstly, the Qur'ān influenced all intellectual discourse in the Islamic world including the diverse sciences produced during the medieval

era.¹⁴ Diverse sciences using different methodologies like the religious, rational, social and natural sciences were produced within the same intellectual milieu which was fundamentally Islamic or *Tawhidic*.¹⁵ An analysis of Islamic history proves that the Qur'ān was fundamental to the development of Islamic Science.¹⁶ But what are the ways in which the Qur'ān inspired the Islamic Scientific Revolution is open to debate. Many scholars have attempted to identify the multiple ways in which the Qur'ān influenced and engineered the Islamic Scientific Revolution. We will group these ways under four categories:

1. The *Qur'ān* provided the initial impetus towards the Islamic Scientific Revolution: One of the biggest impetuses to the development of the Islamic scientific tradition was the powerful call of the *Qur'ān* to study the cosmos. While both the Roman and Persian civilisations possessed great wealth and resources, we do not witness an international scientific revolution appearing during their time periods. It was only after the revelation of the *Qur'ān* that the Arabs and other non-Arab ethnicities developed a strong scientific bent of mind and consequently which led to the Islamic Scientific Revolution.
2. The Qur'ān imparted a *Tawhidic* philosophy of science within which a unified scientific tradition arose: Another name of the *Qur'an* is *Burhan*, which means demonstrable proof. This word was extensively used by Muslim philosophers and scientists in their arguments as they understood that both the scientific and philosophical quest should seek demonstrable proof. Science can only thrive within a tradition that prioritizes Epistemological Realism. Traditions that lean towards skepticism or ontological idealism can produce mysticism and philosophy, but not rigorous experimental science. The *Qur'ān* issued a powerful call when it declared that the cosmos has been created on

¹⁴ Sardar, Ziauddin. *Explorations in Islamic Science*. (Centre for Studies on Science, 1989), 11.

¹⁵ Iqbal, Muzaffar. *Islam and Science*. (Ashgate Publications, 2002), 6.

¹⁶ Sardar, Ziauddin. *How do you know?* (Pluto Press, 2006).

Truth (*Haqq*) and that the duty of the human being is to ponder, reflect and study the cosmos. This was an open call to develop a rigorous experimental, empirical and scientific tradition that would discover the attributes of God within and through the workings of nature.

3. The needs of the growing Muslim *Ummah* required the development of science: The growing frontiers of the Islamic Civilisation brought with it many opportunities for the development of different scientific disciplines. The calculation of the correct time for Asr prayer in places far away from the equator required the development of Mathematical Astronomy.¹⁷ The calculation of the *Qiblah* led to the development of Spherical Trigonometry.¹⁸ The need to calculate inheritance and zakat spearheaded the development of Algebra and Algorithms by Al Khwarizmi.¹⁹ Industrial and agricultural needs led to the development of irrigation innovations,²⁰ robotics and hydraulics.²¹ Defense and military needs led to the development of bifocals and a proto-telescope during Harun Rashid's time²² and rocket technology during Tipu Sultan's time.²³
4. The *Qur'an* provided a wide epistemological landscape which facilitated the import of knowledge from different cultures and subsequent development of new disciplines. The knowledge developed by non-Muslim cultures was studied, *analysed*, and commented on which led to the development

¹⁷ Saliba, George. *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. (MIT Press, 2007), 234.

¹⁸ King, David, A. *Astronomy in the Service of Islam* (Routledge, 1993).

¹⁹ Rashed, Roshdi, ed., *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*. Vol 2, (Routledge,1996), 349.

²⁰ Hill, Donald, *Islamic Science and Engineering*. (Edinburgh University Press, 1993).

²¹ Al Hassan, Ahmed, Y., *The different aspects of Islamic culture. Science and Technology in Islam: Technology and applied sciences*. (UNESCO publishing, 2001)

²² Al Baghdadi, Al Khatib. *Tarikh Madinat Al Salam*, Vol.1. (Dar ul-Maghrib il-Islami, 2002). Rafiabadi, Hamid Naseem, and Kak, Amin, A. *The Attitude of Islam towards Science and Philosophy*. (Sarup and Sons., 2023).

²³ Dalrymple, William, *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019)

of new fields. For example, Al Biruni was well-versed with Sanskrit and produced the most detailed survey of medieval Indian society, thus founding the field of anthropology and comparative religion. Muslims pioneered the study of hieroglyphics. Kamal ad Din Farisi and Qutb ad Din Shirazi, two influential students of Shihab ud Din Suhrawardi brought about a great revolution in Optics. They incorporated the Illuminationist Philosophy of their teacher which was inspired by Zoroastrian ideas into experimental physics.²⁴

Broad Epistemological Landscape

To understand how to revive Islamic thought and civilisation, it is imperative to appreciate earlier Islamic attitudes towards knowledge in general and science in particular. What are the sources of knowledge that the Qur'ān accepts as valid and how did early Muslims develop this Quranic Epistemology? We will be using the word source also to denote methodology, because a source of knowledge also determines the methodology that needs to be adopted to make that source of optimum use. So, the human intellect is a source, and the methodology related to this source is the rational and dialectical methodology. We have identified eight sources of knowledge that have been considered valid in varying degrees by the Qur'ān.

1. Firstly, the Qur'ān considers itself as the absolute truth and the ultimate source of knowledge to understand everything that happened in and beyond Time. The Qur'ān has also been called the *Furqan* or Criterion, meaning that because this is the Absolute Truth, it can serve as the judging criterion to verify all other sources and contents of knowledge.²⁵ Thus every other source of knowledge mentioned below will represent Relative Truths or sources of true knowledge that can be accepted only after a due process of verification and the Qur'ān serves as the ultimate criterion to judge which

²⁴ Bakar, Osman. "The Unity of Science and Spiritual Knowledge: The Islamic Experience", *Science and Spirit*. International Cultural Foundation. (1990): 87-101.

²⁵ Ansari, Muhammad Fazlur Rahman. *The Quranic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society Vol 1*, (The World Federation of Islamic Missions, 2012).

knowledge content derived from these below sources is valid or invalid.²⁶

2. Secondly the practice and sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) or the Sunnah has been declared a valid source of knowledge. This includes the *qawl* (sayings) or *ahadith* of the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as his *a'mal* (actions). Ahmed ibn Hanbal was asked about the hadith, "*Sunnah is the judge over the Qur'an*". He said, "*I have to say that the Sunnah explains the Qur'an and only the Qur'an can abrogate itself*".²⁷ We will include the *Hadith* as well as *Seerah* literature in this category.
3. The Intellect is taken as another source of true knowledge when it is illuminated by faith. Multiple *ayaat* of the Qur'an exhort believers as well as unbelievers to think rationally and logically. If the intellect didn't have the propensity to reach the truth, then the Qur'an wouldn't hold it responsible. An application of *Aql* is seen in *Qiyas* that is widely used as a methodology in *Fiqh*.
4. The Qur'an also considers the *Ijma* (consensus) of the Muslim community as a valid epistemic source.
5. The fifth source of valid knowledge accepted by the Qur'an is history. The historical process is presented by the Qur'an as being divinely directed as serving as a valid source of knowledge and admonition.
6. Nature or the physical world is another source of knowledge according to the Qur'an as Allah Most High emphasizes that the cosmos has been created with truth. This establishes how Islam accepts Epistemological and Scientific Realism, which are both indispensable for science.
7. Intuition is also accepted by the Qur'an as a valid source of knowledge. There are various words used for it like *Basira*, *Nazar*, *Noor* and *I'lm min LadunnAllah* (unmediated knowledge directly from Allah).
8. Lastly, the Qur'an also considers that other non-Islamic civilisations can arrive at truth in certain domains and can

²⁶ Hosein, Imran, N. *Methodology for Study of the Quran*. (INH Publishers, 2016),

²⁷ Al Baghdadi, Al Khatib. *Al Kifaya Fi Ma'rifa Usool I'lm Al Riwaya*. (Dar Al Huda, 2003).

produce beneficial knowledge. Both the Qur'ān and the Hadith allow Muslims from accepting knowledge from non-Islamic sources if it is in harmony with the Qur'ān. Thus, inspired by sayings like these a project of incorporation of suitable elements from different traditions (Greek, Persian, Indian, Chinese) into the Islamic intellectual tradition was done to enrich it and to produce new fields. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“Wisdom is the lost property of the Muslim. He takes it wherever he finds it and he is more worthy of it.”*²⁸

It should be noted that the rich and diverse Islamic intellectual tradition developed primarily because of the broad epistemological landscape. Because the Islamic civilisation accepted multiple sources of knowledge to be valid, thus it produced multitudes of new disciplines that were unknown and even unimaginable to earlier advanced civilisations. For example, the Greeks passionately segregated between the celestial and the terrestrial realms, considering the former to be perfect and the latter to be imperfect. This view determined their philosophy of science as they used the perfect arts like mathematics and geometry to study the heavenly bodies and limited physics to the imperfect terrestrial domain.²⁹ When the Muslims inherited the Greek tradition, they readily removed these impediments as they inherited the Quranic vision of the universality and uniformity of laws across the terrestrial and the celestial domains.³⁰

In the Islamic Civilisation anything and everything was not accepted as knowledge. The construction and formalization of this epistemological landscape required the pruning and severing of certain disciplines that were considered valid by earlier civilisations. Astrology and Alchemy, while being practiced during the Islamic Scientific Revolution, were subject to scathing criticism by scholars and eventually a project to segregate these pseudosciences from their

²⁸ Tirmidhi, 2687

²⁹ Nicholson, Ian., (ed.), *Stars and Planets*. (Star Fire, 2002), 45.

³⁰ Jamil, Rageb, F., “Copernicus and His Islamic Predecessors: Some Historical Remarks”. *Filozofski Vestnik* 25 (2). (2007): 125-42. <https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/filozofski-vestnik/article/view/3204>.

scientifically valid counterparts of Astronomy ³¹ and Chemistry ³² was undertaken by Muslim scientists.

We will construct a principle in this paper based on a realistic and objective view of Islamic history that the broader the epistemological landscape of a civilisation, the larger the scope of its thought and intellectual tradition. And conversely the smaller the epistemological landscape of a civilisation, the narrower the scope of its thought and intellectual tradition.

This paper discusses how the predicament of the *Ummah* is largely due to an intellectual crisis caused by the shrinking of the epistemological landscape that underlies it. The western civilisation being dominant is spearheading what could be understood as a global secularization project. In such a scenario the Muslim civilisation has either the option to completely adopt this model and sever its religious and spiritual foundations and emerge as another replica of the modern western secular civilisation. Another option is passive resistance to this secularization project. But without an indigenous rival project that resists this massive secularization drive coming from the west, this would just lead to non-engagement of Muslims with the present scientific developments. Non-engagement and passivity have been identified as the root cause of post-colonial Muslim intellectual decline. A third option that was developed by thinkers like Dr Muhammad Iqbal, Said Nursi, Zaki Kirmani, Syed Ahmed Khan, Jamaludin Afghani etc was of engagement with the scientific knowledge that was emerging from the West to bring about a suitable reconciliation with the positive elements of this technological, scientific, and the sociological zeitgeist with the values and vision of Islam.³³ At the same time rejection of those elements that clash with the ideals and vision of Islam is also important. Thus, in such a multifaceted project we would see the role of the Qur'ān as

³¹ Ayduz, Salim. "Astrology for the Ottomans," Muslim Heritage, 29 September 2004, <https://muslimheritage.com/astrology-for-the-ottomans>

³² Haq, Syed Nomanul. *Names, Natures, and Things: The Alchemist Jaabir ibn Hayyaan and his Kitaab al-Ahjaar (Book of Stones)*. (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 52.

³³ Bigliardi, Stephano. "Exploring the contemporary debate over Islam and Science in India: Portrait of the Aligarh School" in *Science and Religion: East and West*, ed. Y. Fehige (Routledge. 2016).

the *Furqan* (criterion for judgment) coming to the fore. The Qur'ān describes itself as an explanation of all things (*Tibyaanal Li kulli shay*). (16:89) Thus it surely can explain the mysteries of the cosmos to us.

No Sharp Distinction between the Secular and Sacred Sciences

Another major characteristic of the Islamic intellectual age was the lack of a sharp segregation and distinction between the secular and sacred sciences. This is in sharp contrast with how education is pursued in the world today. While the sciences were duly classified into different categories, but this classification or characterization did not serve to segregate them. There are three ways in which this integration of secular and sacred took place during the Islamic intellectual revolution. Firstly, both the secular as well as the sacred utilized the same methodology at times. It has been argued that the Inductive method was prodigiously used in the development of Fiqh as well as in physical sciences. Or the exercise of establishing demonstrable rational proof for an argument also known as *Burhan* was a term borrowed from the Qur'ān. Secondly, both the secular and sacred sciences were developed in a common intellectual landscape, thus there were many overlaps that we can find between scientific treatises and scripture. For example, Ibn al Haytham in his book on Astronomy, *Ma Qala fi Daw al Qamar*, while discussing the nature of the light of the moon, relies on the Quranic description of the moon's light being reflected from the sun. Then he provides scientific observational proofs to bolster his arguments.³⁴ The same attitude can be identified in Al Jahiz' biological treatise *Kitab al Hayawan* where the influence of the Quranic unified view of the cosmos can be starkly seen in his theories.³⁵

And lastly, both the secular and the sacred sciences shared the same goals for their development. Because the emphasis laid out by the Qur'ān and *Hadith* was on the pursuit of beneficial knowledge,

³⁴ Toomer, G. J., "Review of Ibn al-Haytham's Weg zur Physik, by Matthias Schramm," *Isis*, 55 no. 4 (1964): 463–465.

³⁵ Syeed, Safiyyah Sabreen. "Islamic and Western Methodological Approaches towards the Study of Life Sciences," *Revelation and Science* 12, no. 2 (2022): <https://doi.org/10.31436/revival.v12i2.335>

secular sciences also were appropriated to meet this requirement. The primary goals of both the secular and the sacred sciences were to benefit the Muslim populace, to facilitate a better understanding of the ‘signs’ of God in the world and the facilitation of religious obligations. And thus, we see that there was no sharp distinction or segregation between the two types of knowledge as it was recognised that the source of the Qur’ān as well as the physical world is God. So, the principle of *Tawhid* was instrumental in bringing about the harmonious integration of knowledge.³⁶

Identifying the Reasons for the Intellectual Crisis

There are multiple factors that scholars have identified as the primary causes of the decline of Islamic thought and civilisation. They can be broadly classified into two factors. One is the external factors. These include the incessant wars, sanctions, political instability and economic deprivation inflicted on the Muslim *Ummah* by more than two centuries of colonisation and Western hegemony. Since the colonial period the world has witnessed a unipolar world order with the emergence of the western civilisation as a global superpower and thus the clash with and the subordination of resource rich Muslim *Ummah* is part of its primary agenda. George Saliba notes that it was the discovery of the New World by Europe, its colonial conquest and the capitalisation of science that could be attributed to the decline of Islamic Science.³⁷ The term decline has a comparative connotation meaning when Europe embarked on a massive project of the colonisation of the entire globe, the production and capitalization of science was its indispensable tool. In contrast, the Muslim *Ummah* did not view science as a hegemonic tool.

There are other thinkers like Iqbal, Fazlur Rahman Ansari, Imran Hosein, and Israr Ahmed who identify the rise of the European hegemonic civilisation with the eschatological prophecies found in the scripture regarding the False Messiah (*Dajjal*) and the destructive forces of Gog and Magog.³⁸ Said Nursi also identified the modern

³⁶ Bakar, Osman. *History and Philosophy of Islamic Science*, 1985.

³⁷ Saliba, George. *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. (MIT Press, 2007).

³⁸ Hosein, Imran, N. *An Islamic view of Gog Magog*. (INH Publishers, 2016)

civilisation to be a manifestation of the False Messiah in its one-eyed blindness about the sacred.³⁹ It is crucial to observe that for the first time in history we witnessed the rise of a civilisation that was driven to colonise most of the planet's landmass and even occupy the water and air space along with usurping global resources. This has never happened in history where one ethnicity or civilisation establishes control over so much of the planet in such less time. Since the West's colonial project depended on the massive resources of the Muslim world, the entire Muslim world had to be brought under colonial occupation.

On the other hand, there are internal factors that contribute to the crisis in the *Ummah* which are the serious intellectual and spiritual crisis. These are foundational and the external factors have been able to wreak havoc largely due to the internal factors. In the Qur'ān, we are told that Allah doesn't change the conditions of a people before they change what is within themselves. So, there must be an internal awakening prior to an external awakening. This internal awakening is first intellectual and then spiritual. To understand the factors that led to the intellectual and spiritual crisis in the *Ummah* we must understand the subtle forms of colonization that followed territorial colonisation.

An important example of this subtle colonisation was the induction of the collective amnesia of the *Ummah* with regards to its indispensable contributions to making Modern Science. This was largely due to the colonial and European orientalist effort to obscure Muslim scientific legacy and most importantly the impact Islam had on the development of Islamic Science which later influenced Western science and philosophy. Many historians of science like Fuat Sezgin have noted that Western scientists excessively plagiarised Muslim scientific works in centres of exchange like Italy and Spain.⁴⁰ And it was this plagiarised knowledge that laid the foundations of the European Enlightenment and Scientific

³⁹ Nursi, Said. *Risala-i Nur Kulliyati I-II*. (Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1996)

⁴⁰ Sezgin, Fuat. *Science and Technology in Islam*. vol 1. (*Institut fur Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe*, 2010), <https://archive.org/details/history-of-science-and-technology-in-islam-fuat-sezgin>

Revolution. Colonial powers then utilised this technology to improve their weapons, and the Muslim lands were at the receiving end of their tyranny. Once the large regions and rich resources of the *Ummah* came under Western control, they embarked on a project of westernisation of the socio-economic, political and most importantly the educational system. This completely sealed the Muslim populations from their rich intellectual legacy.

The colonial period acted as an age of disruption that severed the Islamic civilisation from its ideological, intellectual, cultural, and most importantly epistemological roots. A clear example that illustrates this is the wide difference between the madrassa curriculum that existed in Muslim cities like Samarkand, Baghdad, etc. and the post-colonial madrassa curriculum. Historical evidence shows how madrassa students were instructed in anatomy, astronomy, mathematics, geometry during their years of Islamic training. Whereas post-colonisation Madrassa curricula were reduced to mere institutes of teaching medieval Islamic texts where memorisation and regurgitation were emphasised at the expense of critical reasoning and integration of knowledge.

Thus, we see that the westernisation of the socio-economic system led to a capitalistic and materialistic monoculture that pervades the globe today. This is the primary cause of the spiritual crisis in the *Ummah*. And the westernisation and secularisation of knowledge in general, leading to its compartmentalization into sacred and secular, is the root cause of the intellectual crisis in the *Ummah*.

Opportunities for an Islamic Intellectual Revival

Now after discussing in detail the characteristics of the Islamic Scientific Revolution and the factors that led to the decline and eventual intellectual crisis within the *Ummah* that continues till today, we want to delve into the great opportunities for an intellectual revival that confront us. The Qur'ān prepares us for a time when both the realms of existence - the cosmos as well as the human self will validate and verify the truth of the Qur'ān.

“We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it

(the Qur'ān) is the truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is a Witness over all things?" (41:53)

Thus, it is the task of the scholarly Muslim community to prepare for this universal revelation that will come from these two domains. This is an epistemic event or a collection of events, not an aesthetic event or collection of events. Meaning this will bring along a greater and deeper understanding and knowledge of three things: the universe, the human self and the truth of the Qur'ān. The fact that the Arabic phrase *'sanureehim'* is used which means 'soon We will show them', it clarifies that this revelation will be empirical and objective in nature. Thus, we can understand that these revelatory events will be in the form of scientific discoveries related to the cosmos and human self as it is science alone that investigates these subjects in an empirical and objective manner. This cannot fundamentally be a mystical or spiritual investigation into the universe as the word *'ra-aa'* in Arabic means physical vision, whereas *na-za-ra* or *ba-sa-ra* are sometimes used for intuitive or spiritual insight. Thus, the Qur'ān is alluding to a collection of events when humanity collectively (not individually) will 'see' or 'witness' the truth of the Qur'ān manifest in an empirical study of the cosmos and the human self. The use of the plural pronouns *'hum'* clarifies that this will be a collective and universal experience, not singular and individual. Again, this is very characteristic of scientific discoveries. Mystical and spiritual disclosures are individual, whereas empirical and objective disclosure is universal. The Qur'ān is alluding to the latter.

In summary, there will be certain paradigm shifting and revolutionary discoveries emerging from the domains of cosmology and consciousness studies that will converge with the Quranic view and thereby confirm the truth of the Qur'ān. And Muslim intellectuals thus should expect such events and work to identify and study them. We have outlined three candidates that may fit this description.

Quantum Physics and the Revival of Islamic Physics

In 1920, German Physicist Max Planck discovered that deep down at the elemental level of the universe the energy that is emitted is not in

continuous amounts but in discrete packets or quanta. This discovery was observational, and it led to the beginning of the Quantum Revolution. Later Heisenberg proved how there is a major constraint on how accurately we can measure the events at this fundamental level.⁴¹ Thus, nature allows us to know only one property at a time and shrouds the other property with uncertainty. So, if the momentum of a quantum particle was known with precision, its position would become uncertain and vice versa.⁴² This was called the Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. There were two great and unprecedented implications of this discovery. First, there was some inherent uncertainty and lack of knowledge about aspects of the universe and more importantly it was an act of observation that affects the universe at this fundamental level as to reveal one aspect and hide another. Another important development was the Double Slit Experiment that observationally and empirically proved how the universe at the atomic level when it is not observed is a collection of uncertain probabilities and the moment it is observed it takes definite values and properties.⁴³

Basil Altaei posits a viable reconciliation between these developments and the Islamic view of the cosmos. The Kalam tradition highlighted the indeterminacy of the universe to establish the will of Allah as the ultimate causal power at work. Quantum Physics has refuted determinism completely while presenting a probabilistic and indeterminate model of the universe. In such a universe the only thing that can be achieved is a set of probabilities.⁴⁴

Altaie mentions five themes that *Daqiq al Kalam* engages in that are remarkably compatible with Quantum Physics, i.e., Indeterminism of the world, temporality of the world, Atomism, continual recreation of the world and the integrity of space and time. In fact, according to him, *Daqiq al Kalam* presents the most adequate framework for the further advancement of Quantum Theory – as the latter has undoubtedly outgrown the mechanistic and deterministic

⁴¹ Heisenberg, Werner. *Physics and Philosophy*. (Harper Collins, 2007)

⁴² Polkinghorne, John. *Quantum Theory: A Very Short introduction*. (Oxford University Press, 2017)

⁴³ Bricmont, Jean. *Making sense of Quantum Mechanics*. (Springer, 2016)

⁴⁴ Altaei, Basil. *God, Nature and the Cause*. (Kalam Research and Media, 2016)

framework it and all modern Science was born in. Here we have *Daqiq al Kalam* having the potential to provide the philosophical framework for one of the most successful scientific theories that commands one third of the global economy. If it is proven that within this Islamic philosophical framework the theory can advance much greater than its western counterpart, this would have important implications for the economies of those nations that fund such a project.

Another important development in this field is the work of Mohamed Haj Yousef gives Ibn Arabi's cosmological model a mathematical formulation and then uses it to address the big unsolved problems of contemporary Physics like the interpretation of Quantum Physics, EPR paradox, low value of cosmological constant etc.⁴⁵ Ibn Arabi was known to develop the Recreation Theory of the universe which is originally attributed to the Mutakallimun. But for him it is the *Jawhar al Fard* that undergoes the creation-recreation at every creative moment. According to Yousef, this framework provides a viable model for the much sought after Quantum Gravity by quantizing time itself.⁴⁶ Every event that occurs in the universe is understood to be a result of the recreation of the entire universe at that particular quantum event. This harmoniously reconciles with Quantum Field theory that reduces the universe to nothing more than quantum fluctuations that create virtual particles from the quantum vacuum. The pursuit of these ideas is a milestone in the path to revive Islamic Physics, which is a very significant part of the Islamic Scientific tradition.

The Fine-Tuned Universe and a New Islamic Cosmology

Despite the fundamental indeterminacy and statistical nature of the universe, it has been scientifically proven that the laws, physical constants, and the initial conditions of the universe take up extremely precise values that if there would be even a tiny fraction of a change in anyone of them, the universe would cease to exist.⁴⁷ For example, if the expansion of the universe was just a little bit faster, no galaxies

⁴⁵ Yousef, Mohamed H. *Time and Cosmology*. (Routledge, 2008)

⁴⁶ Yousef, Mohamed H. *Single Monad Model*. (Ibn Arabi, 2016)

⁴⁷ Carr, Bernard., (ed.) *Universe or Multiverse?* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

would be formed and thus no life would exist. And if it was just a little bit slower, the universe would collapse on itself as gravity would dominate and would cease to exist.⁴⁸

Before it was accepted in the scientific community that whatever the initial conditions of the universe, given enough time and sheer chance eventually intelligent life forms like humans would evolve. But instead during the last fifty years one of the most startling discoveries has been made that the existence of intelligent life in this universe depends upon a complex and delicate balance of initial conditions given at the Big Bang itself.⁴⁹ In fact, it has been found that the universe has been incredibly fine-tuned for the existence of intelligent life from the very moment of its inception and this fine tuning is beyond comprehension in its preciseness. For the universe to produce life forms, the force of gravity and the weak force have to be fine-tuned to the precision of one part out of 10 to the power of 100. The cosmological constant that governs the accelerating expansion of the universe is fine tuned to one part out of 10 to the power of 120.⁵⁰

Penrose has estimated that the odds of the initial low entropy state of the early universe obtaining by chance alone is one chance out of 10 to the power of 10 to the power of 123.⁵¹ This number is almost incomprehensible and all this proves that the universe from the very beginning was created in such a delicate balance that it is impossible to come out of sheer chance and this delicate balance was directed towards the emergence of intelligent life eventually.

Now all these breakthroughs are nothing but an empirical confirmation of the Quranic view of the universe. The universe according to the Qur'ān has been held on an extremely delicate balance by God and were He to remove His providence it would cease to exist. Additionally, one of the teleological goals of the

⁴⁸ Carr, Bernard and Rees, Martin, J. "The Anthropic Principle and the Structure of the Physical World". *Nature*, 278 no. 605. (1979): <https://doi.org/10.1038/278605a0>

⁴⁹ Rees, Martin, J. *Just Six Numbers*. (Basic Books, 1983)

⁵⁰ Carter, Brandon, D. "The anthropic principle and its implications for biological evolution", *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences*. (310) 347–363. (1983) <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.1983.0096>,

⁵¹ Penrose, Roger. *Road to Reality*. (Jonathan Cape, 2004)

universe is the emergence of humanity. So, from a Quranic perspective this Fine Tuned universe is essentially a 'God-Held' universe according to the Qur'ān.

In order to avoid the mention of God, scientists attributed this delicate balance to the Multiverse hypothesis. Islam reserves for itself the leverage in such a perspective as well. The Quran begins by the mention of God as being the Lord of the worlds (*Aalameen*). The existence of an infinite number of universes does not reduce the value of the God-Held universe or Fine-Tuned universe argument because there is nothing that would prevent an infinitely powerful God from creating an infinite number of universes each with their own specific constants and laws. And Islam has always accepted the existence of multiple universes besides our own. In fact, Muslim theologians like Razi critique the Aristotelian static universe by insisting on the Islamic concept of the multiverse. Some contemporary philosophers have resurrected the Leibnizian argument of the 'Best of Possible worlds' in the context of the Fine-Tuned universe.⁵² However, it is well known that this principle of the universe being the 'best of the possible worlds' was originally created by Ghazzali.⁵³ These discussions provide ample opportunity for Muslim thinkers to revive these Islamic theories and present viable solutions to contemporary discussions adequately.

The Mystery of Consciousness and the Development of an Islamic Philosophy of Mind

It has been proven without a doubt that the universe is extremely fine-tuned and teleologically directed for the emergence of conscious life that would reflect on this mystery. But the big question is what is consciousness in the first place? And why is it so elusive? This is one of the many mysteries of contemporary science. Chalmers argues that it is perfectly conceivable to have a complex biological system that

⁵² Naumann, Thomas. "Do We Live in the Best of All Possible Worlds? The Fine-Tuning of the Constants of Nature", *Universe* no. 3: 60. (2017) <https://doi.org/10.3390/universe3030060>

⁵³ Kukkonen, Taneli. "Possible Worlds in the Tahafut al-Tahafut: Averroes on Plenitude and Possibility", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 38, 329 - 347. (2005); <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hph.2005.0055>

does not have a first-person inner experience. Why do we have this elusive phenomenon of an inner experience intimately attached to us for life? There is nothing in the biochemistry of neurons and synapses that tells us why this particular combination of biomolecules and not the others should evoke an inner experience? This is called the Hard Problem of Consciousness, and it is hard because it resists a reductionist and mechanistic explanation.⁵⁴ Iqbal observes that this field has never been a point of interest for Muslim scholarship in the past and the theologians were satisfied with accepting the soul as some finer substance that animates the body and leaves at the time of death. On the contrary the Quran resists this classical view of the soul as being some finer body. Instead, it advocates for the soul being act-like rather than body-like. Allah calls it “My command.” And this command undergoes a process of descent and ascent across the universe. The hard problem seems impossible when we insist that it is only the human brain that somehow creates this epiphenomenon of consciousness mysteriously, whereas the same combination of elements in varying capacities in a cat or a plant or a table somehow don't do that. But if consciousness is understood as *Ruh* or *Amr* that pervades the entire existence then that will provide an important head start to this issue.⁵⁵ An emerging theory called Integrated Information Theory (IIT) considers consciousness to belong to any system that exhibits integrated information and causal links within.⁵⁶ In such a view even a cell, plant and animal could potentially have rudimentary self-awareness. Thus, we can notice the various points of convergence of this theory with the unique panpsychism advocated by the Qur’ān.

In such a scheme it is not just that human consciousness is an emergent of universal evolution. Instead, the universe began with consciousness, is pervaded by consciousness and thus evolves consciousness. This view has strong parallels with the Quranic view of a conscious universe.

⁵⁴ Chalmers, David. *The Conscious Mind*. (Oxford University Press, 1996)

⁵⁵ Iqbal, Muhammad. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. (ABD Publishers, 2007), 58.

⁵⁶ Blackmore, Susan. *Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Results

Reconciliation, Islamisation, and Revival

The project of Islamisation of knowledge (IOK) – as proposed by Al Attas and Faruqi – and the project of Integration of knowledge as propounded by Bakar, are indispensable steps in the process of an Islamic intellectual revival. Integration of knowledge with Islamic thought is Islamisation.

Taking this discussion forward, we classify IOK in three types or pertaining to three intellectual tiers.

1. Islamisation of knowledge at the school level
2. Islamisation of knowledge at the university level
3. Islamisation of knowledge at the research level.

This paper has provided a scheme of IOK which functions in a top-down approach. Meaning we first start with an analysis of the frontiers of scientific research i.e., consciousness, Cosmology and Quantum Theory. Even AI and Biology can be included in this. And then the suitable elements are reconciled with the Islamic view and Islamic responses to these big unsolved mysteries are provided by a team of eligible Muslim thinkers educated in science, religion and philosophy. This Islamisation would then be made to trickle down to the next lower level which is the curriculum of higher education in the Ummah. And finally, from there it would descend to the school education level. The other approach is the bottom-up approach where IOK proceeds from the school curriculum level and then moves up to the higher education level and then finally to the research level. These developments should also lead to a reformation of the *Madrasa* curriculum.

This would be a forward process that would initiate by reconciliation, then move on to Islamisation and then finally revival. Another significant achievement of this project would be the revival of the Islamic philosophy of science that would present itself as a competent rival to the contemporary secular philosophy of science.

The aforementioned three mysteries of science prove that the mechanistic, deterministic and reductionist paradigm within which science has functioned for more than two hundred years has become

obsolete and incapable of even containing its breakthroughs. Science needs a new paradigm and what this paper posits is that Islamic philosophy of science that rests on the Kalām and Sufi view of the universe and consciousness is one of the best contenders for a contemporary philosophy of science. This would rival with the contemporary scientific paradigm by providing a much more viable philosophy of science instead of the contemporary philosophy of science by incorporating the indeterminate and probabilistic nature of the cosmos, its fine tuning, the fundamentality of consciousness to the cosmos, the unity of the two realms of life and non-life, the constant recreation of the cosmos etc.

Today the different fields within science function as autonomous and disparate disciplines like General Relativity is at odds with Quantum Physics and Psychology and Consciousness studies have nothing to do with Cosmology and Physics is reluctantly being used to understand Quantum effects in Biology. This compartmentalisation is the product of the general secular worldview that dictates the contemporary philosophy of science. This world view does not recognize any unifying factor between the living and the non-living world or the cosmos and consciousness. Whereas Islam does possess this unifying factor in the form of *Tawhid* that manifests at different levels. This Islamic philosophy of science because of its inherent unifying and integrative approach can provide the much sought after integration of all fields and theories, popularly known as the 'Theory of Everything' - a meta-paradigm within which multiple sciences function together. This project does not just have ethical and religious benefits for the *Ummah*. Rather, it has the potential to provide a technological and economic advantage to Muslim societies. For example, Quantum Computing has the potential to revolutionise a country's technological and economic infrastructure. But one major obstacle is the high cost and limited feasibility to produce and maintain quantum systems. However, rigorous research into Quantum Biology would help us learn how nature efficiently uses quantum effects for its operations. This could be bio-mimicked to produce optimal and affordable quantum computing systems. Because the Islamic worldview integrates the world of life and non-life within an umbrella term of *khalq*, it would

be convenient for Muslim scientists to apply Quantum Physics to all living systems and study how such mechanisms can be replicated to provide computational power. This is just one example, however, there are multiple examples that can be provided for the scope of the Islamisation and Integration of Knowledge that derives from the Quranic worldview. It should be noticed that this project of IOK is a collaborative project that must necessarily include the religious, philosophical, scientific, technological as well as corporate sectors of society for it to be effective.

Conclusion

The Muslim world produced one of the greatest intellectual revolutions in history between the 8th Century till the 18th Century. Part of this great intellectual tradition was the Islamic Scientific Revolution that marked the transition from the theoretical and deductive approach of the Greeks and Indians towards the experimental and inductive approach of Islamic Science. Many great innovations were made in this period that influenced modern science. However, since the Colonial Era, the Muslim *Ummah* has receded into a grave intellectual and spiritual crisis. This paper delved into the factors that cause this crisis. A thorough study of the Islamic intellectual age provides us with broad characteristics that led to the success of Islamic thought and civilisation. These were identified as the centrality of the Qur'ān in all intellectual discourse, the broad epistemological landscape in Islam and the absence of a sharp distinction between the secular and sacred. It can be understood that an intellectual revival in the *ummah* depends on an appreciation of these characteristics and making them an integral part of the curriculum and research areas within Muslim universities. A three-step process of reconciliation (between Islamic thought and suitable elements from contemporary sciences), Islamisation and finally revival was provided. The paper provided a top-down approach to this Islamisation that starts from the frontiers of scientific research in physics, cosmology and neuropsychology. The three big mysteries of science today namely interpretation of Quantum theory, fine-tuned universe or multiverse and finally the hard problem of consciousness were discussed and Islamic solutions to these

conundrums were provided. Inevitably, this project of IOK is a collaborative project that has the potential to revolutionise the intellectual, spiritual, social and economic landscape of the Muslim *Ummah*.

TECHNO-JAHILIYYAH: EXAMINING TRANSHUMANISM THROUGH THE ISLAMIC LENS

*Asif Adnan*¹

Abstract

This paper explores the philosophical underpinnings of Transhumanism through the lens of the Islamic concept of Jahiliyyah. By examining the metanarratives of modernity that shape the transhumanist worldview, particularly those of autonomy, progress, and techno-salvationism, the paper argues that Transhumanism represents a form of secular enchantment. The analysis posits that Transhumanism emerges as a reaction to the crisis of meaning and purpose in modernity. Transhumanism's secular enchantment arises from its attempt to address the nihilistic implications of modernity. Applying the Qutbian framework of Jahiliyyah, the paper posits that Transhumanism is a manifestation of techno-jahiliyyah—a state of existential ignorance marked by an unwavering faith in science and technology as the exclusive means of transcendence and salvation. In response, the paper presents an Islamic counternarrative that emphasizes divine guidance, the integration of faith and reason, and the role of humans as Khalifah on earth.

Keywords: Transhumanism, *Jahiliyyah*, Secular Enchantment, Modernity, Islamic worldview

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Introduction

Transhumanism is a social, cultural, and philosophical movement that believes the human species can and should transform itself using technology and science.² Core transhumanist themes and goals include—but are not limited to—the acceleration of human evolution through technological self-transformation, overcoming limitations of human biology and knowledge, radically enhancing human capabilities, and vastly extending human lifespans, preferably up to the point of *immortality*.³ Advocating the use of human technology and science to replace humanity itself, Transhumanism presents one of the most significant challenges to humanity posed by modernity.

The ultimate goal of Transhumanism is to transform the human condition, creating a new, superior genus called the *Posthuman*, which will be liberated from the limitations of human biology and possess “godlike” abilities.⁴ *Transhumanism* refers to the belief in this vision and the process of realizing it, while *posthuman* is the final goal transhumanists seek to achieve.⁵ The term *Transhuman* means “*transitional human*”⁶, the intermediate phase between the biological human and the anticipated technological *Posthuman*.⁷

The paper will begin by examining the grand narratives that shape Transhumanism's philosophical underpinnings and its worldview. Themes of autonomy, progress, and ‘technological

² Bostrom, Nick. Introduction--The Transhumanist FAQ: A general introduction. *Transhumanism and the Body: The World Religions Speak*, 1-17. (2014).

³ More, Max, and Vita-More, Natasha, eds. *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*. John Wiley & Sons. (2013); Bostrom, Nick. “Letter from Utopia.” *Studies in Ethics, Law, and Technology* 2, no. 1. (2008).

⁴ Bostrom, Nick. Human genetic enhancements: A transhumanist perspective. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 4(37), 493-506. (2003).

⁵ Ranisch, Robert, and Sorgner, Stefan Lorenz. Introducing Post-and Transhumanism. In Ranisch, Robert & Sorgner, Stefan Lorenz (Eds.), *Post-and Transhumanism: An Introduction* (pp. 7-27). Peter Lang. (2014).

⁶ Esfandiary, F. M., and FM-2030. *Are You a Transhuman? Monitoring and Stimulating Your Personal Rate of Growth in a Rapidly Changing World*. Warner. (1989).

⁷ Elliott, Carl. “HUMANITY 2.0.” *Wilson Quarterly*, 27(4), 13-20. (2003).

salvationism⁷ figure prominently and repeatedly in Transhumanist discourse and thus will be the focus of this examination. After which, focusing on the tendency of modernity to create its own forms of secular enchantments, the paper will argue that Transhumanism represents a form of *secular enchantment* of the world.

Shifting gears, the paper will then apply the concept of *Jahiliyyah*, as articulated by thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Qutb, to Transhumanism. Using the Qutbian framework, the paper will posit that Transhumanism is a form of *techno-jahiliyyah*. It is a state of existential ignorance and detachment from divine guidance, marked by an unwavering obsession with science and technology as the exclusive source of transcendence and salvation.

This Islamic perspective, rooted in the principles of *Tawhid* (unity of God) and the balance between the material and spiritual realms, offers a compelling alternative to the *techno-jahiliyyah* of Transhumanism.

By engaging in this critical analysis, the paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding Transhumanism and its implications for humanity's future. It highlights the significance of the Islamic perspective in situating and reframing secular narratives and advocating for a more holistic and ethically grounded approach to technological advancement.

Background on Transhumanism

The history of Transhumanism is an interwoven thread comprised of various literary, philosophical, technological and religious elements. Many transhumanists try to create an idealized historical narrative of the movement and its concepts by referencing a multitude of thinkers across history. Such narratives often tend to project contemporary ideas onto the past and, as such, risk creating skewed and potentially misleading perspectives on history⁸. Therefore, it is necessary to critically examine the standard narratives of the history of Transhumanism.

⁸ MacFarlane, J. M. *Transhumanism as a New Social Movement: The Techno-Centred Imagination*. Springer Nature. (2020).

According to Transhumanists, their philosophical genealogy begins with Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers such as Francis Bacon, Pico della Mirandola, Marquis de Condorcet, Benjamin Franklin, and Denis Diderot.⁹ However, these assertions have a tendency to be detached from the relevant context and can be seen as self-serving.¹⁰ While these figures undoubtedly contributed to developing ideas that would later inform transhumanist thought, it is often a stretch to claim that they envisioned anything akin to modern Transhumanism. Apart from some broad similarities, it is highly debatable whether the ideas of such thinkers can be accurately characterized as being *transhumanistic* or even *proto-transhumanist*. Nonetheless, the philosophical basis on which Transhumanism builds its vision is undoubtedly that of the Enlightenment.¹¹

The idea of technologically enhancing or fundamentally altering human nature has deep roots in Western cultural imagination. The myth of Prometheus, who gave fire to humans and was punished by the gods for this transgression, can be seen as an early exploration of the consequences of human technological empowerment. Similarly, Mary Shelley's 1818 novel 'Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus' grappled with the ethical implications of creating or enhancing life through scientific means. These cultural touchstones foreshadow many of the themes that would later emerge in transhumanist thought, particularly the promise and peril of technological human enhancement.

The Proto-Transhumanists

Before delving into the proto-transhumanist thinkers, it's worth examining the etymological roots of the term 'transhumanism' itself. Etymologically, the very first use of the term transhumanism is traced back to Dante Alighieri (d. 1321), the famous Italian poet and philosopher. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante uses the word

⁹ Bostrom, Nick. "A History of Transhumanist Thought." *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 14, no. 1, 1-25. (2005).

¹⁰ Levin, Susan B. *Posthuman bliss?: The failed promise of transhumanism*. Oxford University Press. (2020).

¹¹ Hughes, James. "Contradictions from the Enlightenment Roots of Transhumanism." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 35, no. 6, 622-40. (2010).

‘*transumanare*’ to mean surpassing the human condition. Dante’s use of the word was spiritual and explicitly religious in nature. In 1939, T.S. Eliot employed the term ‘*transhumanized*’ in his play “The Cocktail Party”, denoting illumination.¹² While these early uses of the term were largely spiritual or literary, the ideas that would form the foundation of transhumanism began to take shape in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Proto-transhumanist thought can be reasonably traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, specifically to the ideas of the Russian Orthodox ascetic Nikolai Fedorov (d. 1903) and the subsequent Russian Cosmists.¹³ Fedorov advocated for the resurrection of the dead through scientific means, and argued that humans could direct their evolution to overcome death. His ideas, deeply rooted in religious and spiritual thinking, influenced Russian Cosmists such as Vladimir Vernadsky (d. 1945). A geochemist and mineralogist by training, Vernadsky formulated the idea that the earth's surface might be seen as a *biosphere* that gradually becomes more and saturated with life and influenced by human intelligence. Subsequently, another stratum of life evolves from the biosphere, governed and permeated by the human mind.¹⁴

In the 1920s, two distinct currents of proto-transhumanist thought emerged. One current was represented by the French palaeontologist and Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin (d. 1953). After attending one of Vernadsky's lectures, De Chardin adopted his ideas and coined the term ‘*noosphere*’ to describe the subsequent stratum that evolved from the biosphere.¹⁵ He also proposed the concept of a

¹² More, Max. “The Philosophy of Transhumanism.” In *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, edited by Max More and Natasha Vita-More, 3-17. Wiley-Blackwell. (2013).

¹³ Manzocco, Riccardo. *Transhumanism: Engineering the Human Condition*. Suiza: Springer. (2019); Clay, Karen. “Transhumanism and the Orthodox Christian Tradition.” In *Beyond Humanism: Trans-and Posthumanism Jenseits des Humanismus: Trans-und Posthumanismus/Building Better Humans*, 157-180. (2011).

¹⁴ Young, Gareth M. *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers*. Oxford University Press. (2012).

¹⁵ Fuchs-Kittowski, Klaus, and Peter Krüger. “The Noosphere Vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Vladimir I. Vernadsky in the Perspective of Information

global network linking human minds, leading to an intelligence explosion.¹⁶ Concurrently, British intellectuals such as Julian Huxley, J.B.S. Haldane, and J.D. Bernal articulated a secular vision of human evolution and hypothesized about the emergence of a new form man in the near future.¹⁷

Huxley, a close friend of Teilhard de Chardin, is credited with the first use of the term ‘*transhumanism*’ in 1927. However, as Peter Harrison and Joseph Wolyniak (2015) have shown, this is factually incorrect. W. D. Lighthall (d. 1954), a Canadian Christian author and philosopher, used the term ‘*Paul’s transhumanism*’, citing biblical reference, in an article published in 1940. The article centred on the theme of “cosmic evolution”, and sought to delineate a progressive metaphysical philosophy that connects the evolution of the cosmos, living organisms, and human culture.¹⁸ ¹⁹ Previous use of the French term ‘*transhumanisme*’ is found in a lecture by French engineer Jean Coutrot (d. 1941) in 1939.²⁰ Interestingly, both Lighthall and Coutrot seem to have been influenced by the thought of Teilhard de Chardin. This also holds for Huxley, a close friend of Teilhard.²¹

It is crucial to consider the restrictions Teilhard de Chardin faced while discussing his possible influence on his contemporaries. The Jesuit order prohibited Teilhard from publishing many of his most significant works. As a result, his works on religion, science, and evolution and how they interconnect in creating his vision for the

and of World-Wide Communication.” *World Futures: Journal of General Evolution* 50, no. 1-4, 757-784. (1997).

¹⁶ Steinhart, Eric. “Teilhard de Chardin and Transhumanism.” *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 20, no. 1, 1-22. (2008).

¹⁷ Tirosh-Samuels, Hava. “Science and the Betterment of Humanity: Three British Prophets of Transhumanism.” In *Building Better Humans? Refocusing the Debate on Transhumanism*, edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuels and K. L. Mossman, 55-82. Peter Lang. (2012).

¹⁸ Harrison, Peter, and John Wolyniak. “The History of ‘Transhumanism’.” *Notes & Queries* 62, no. 3. (2015).

¹⁹ Lighthall, W. D. *The Law of Cosmic Evolutionary Adaptation: An Interpretation of Recent Thought*. Royal Society of Canada. (1940).

²⁰ Dard, Olivier, and Antoine Moatti. “The History of Transhumanism (Cont.)” *Notes and Queries* 64, no. 1, 167-170. (2017).

²¹ Sorkhabi, Ramin. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Sir Julian Huxley: A Tale of Two Friends*. American Teilhard Association. (2019).

future of mankind were released posthumously. It is possible that Teilhard articulated transhumanist themes and used the term in lectures, discussions, and personal correspondences well before they appeared in print following his death. Nonetheless, in the 1950s, Huxley's secular humanist version of Transhumanism began to dominate the discourse, expunging the religious and spiritual elements present in the work of Fedorov, Vernadsky, and Teilhard de Chardin, essentially painting over the religious roots of proto-transhumanist thought.²²

It's important to note that transhumanism is not a departure from modernity, but rather an intensification of its core principles. Transhumanism takes the Enlightenment ideals of progress, rationality, and human improvement *to their logical extreme*, applying them not just to society, but to the human body and mind itself.

The Transhumanist Movement

The contemporary transhumanist movement came to the fore during the 1960's. The movement was sparked by the publication of two books by the American academic Robert Ettinger (d. 2011). In his books "The Prospect of Immortality" and "Man into Superman", Ettinger promoted the idea of immortality through *cryonics*.²³ Cryonics refers to freezing or "*cryopreserving*" human remains in the hope of future resurrection through technological means.

While initially a fringe concept, cryonics has gained some traction in recent years, with several wealthy individuals reportedly agreeing to have their bodies preserved after death in specialized facilities. Several prominent individuals have opted for cryonics, giving the movement wider visibility. Ted Williams, the Hall of Fame baseball player, was cryopreserved at Alcor Life Extension Foundation following his death in 2002. Robert Ettinger, the founder of the cryonics movement, was also preserved after his death in 2011. Additionally, futurist and Google executive Ray Kurzweil has

²² Manzocco, *Transhumanism*

²³ Ettinger, Robert CW, and Jean Rostand. *The prospect of immortality*. Sidgwick and Jackson. (1965); Ettinger, Robert. "Man into Superman, New York: St." Martin's. (1972).

expressed interest in undergoing the process, although he has not yet been preserved. These examples highlight the growing interest in cryonics among influential figures.²⁴

Around the same time, academic and intellectual Fereidoun M. Esfandiary (d. 2000) put forward futurist ideas and attempted to create a ‘third-way’ option distinct from conventional left and right-wing politics.²⁵

In the 1980s, self-proclaimed transhumanist activists coalesced around the ideas of futurist figures such as Esfandiary and Ettinger and began to hold meetings periodically. The University of California, Los Angeles, became a hub for these pioneering transhumanist activists and thinkers.²⁶ Another key figure in the transhumanist milieu during this period was Natasha Vita-More, an avant-garde artist and designer.²⁷

The concepts of intelligent machines and nanotechnology, developed by computer scientist Hans Moravec and engineer Eric Drexler, respectively, profoundly influenced the nascent transhumanist movement. Their books detailing these concepts became reference points for transhumanist activists and progressed their technoscientific vision significantly.²⁸

The 1990s saw the founding of the Extropy Institute by philosopher Max More, which aimed to develop Transhumanism as an alternative to the impasse between the modern nihilist condition and traditional religion. With the emergence of the internet, transhumanists utilized digital tools such as forums and mailing lists

²⁴ “Defying Death and Time: How the Rich are Freezing Themselves in Hopes of Waking Up Hundreds of Years Later,” *BusinessToday*, July 11, 2024, <https://www.businesstoday.in> (accessed October 20, 2024).

²⁵ See in particular, Esfandiary, Fereidoun M. “Optimism one: the emerging radicalism.” (1970); and Esfandiary, Fereidoun M., and FM-2030. *Are you a transhuman? Monitoring and stimulating your personal rate of growth in a rapidly changing world*. Warner. (1989).

²⁶ Manzocco, *Transhumanism*

²⁷ Adorno, F. P., and F. P. Adorno. *The Transhumanist Movement*, 13-40. Springer International Publishing. (2021).

²⁸ Drexler, Eric. *Engines of Creation: The Coming Era of Nanotechnology*. Anchor. (1987); Moravec, Hans. *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*. Harvard University Press. (1988); Manzocco, *Transhumanism*.

to coalesce and finally emerge as a collective social movement.²⁹ In 1998, philosophers Nick Bostrom and David Pearce founded the World Transhumanist Association (WTA), which aimed to legitimize Transhumanism as an academic field. Futurist and inventor Ray Kurzweil's vision has profoundly influenced the transhumanist movement since the late 90s, through his idea of the technological Singularity.³⁰ Other notable figures in this transhumanist movement include biogerontologist Aubrey de Grey, whose work focuses on scientifically achieving immortality; sociologist and bioethicist James Hughes; and philosopher Anders Sandberg.³¹

Since the late 2000s, Transhumanism has gained increasing influence in Silicon Valley. Some of the world's wealthiest and most powerful men, such as Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Larry Page, Larry Ellison, Peter Thiel, and Elon Musk, have either supported or invested heavily in research areas closely linked with Transhumanism.³² The support of tech billionaires has helped to transform Transhumanism from a fringe movement of eccentrics to a recurring theme in popular culture and mainstream debates.

As a social, cultural, and philosophical phenomenon, Transhumanism is becoming increasingly influential due to recent advances in science and technology. Today, transhumanist themes are found in films, media, video games, performance arts, and literature. Widely successful books such as *Homo Deus* by the Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari have brought Transhumanism into mainstream focus.³³

There is considerable scientific research focused on many

²⁹ Tirosh-Samuels, Hava. "Engaging Transhumanism." In *H+/-: Transhumanism and Its Critics*, edited by G. R. Hansell and William Grassie, 19-54. Metanexus Institute. (2011).

³⁰ MacFarlane, J. M. *Transhumanism as a New Social Movement: The Techno-Centred Imagination*. Springer Nature. (2020).

³¹ Manzocco, *Transhumanism: Engineering the Human Condition*; Krüger, Olaf. "The Singularity Is Near! Visions of Artificial Intelligence in Posthumanism and Transhumanism." (2021).

³² Tirosh-Samuels, Hava. "In Pursuit of Perfection: The Misguided Transhumanist Vision." *Theology and Science* 16, no. 2, 200-222. (2018); Metzinger, Thomas. "Silicon Valley Is Selling an Ancient Dream of Immortality." *Financial Times*. (2017).

³³ Harari, Y.N. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. Random House. (2016).

transhumanist concepts. Gene editing technologies like CRISPR make it theoretically possible to alter human DNA and induce generational change.³⁴ Even more concerning is the US military's growing interest, investment, and research into so-called “*human enhancement technologies*,” which incorporate many transhumanist ideas.³⁵ The transhumanist movement today possesses a potent mix of ideology, economic power, social capital, and technological momentum.

Core Ideas and Aims

As a movement, Transhumanism is a collective of loosely connected ideas focused on using science and technology to radically enhance human longevity, capacity and well-being. This constellation of ideas is united under the overarching vision of merging humans with technology and taking control of the next step of human evolution.³⁶ The transhumanist movement seeks a ‘*technological makeover*’ of human nature.³⁷ Transhumanism proposes and promotes the possibility of human-directed evolution, a shift from Darwinian evolution to ‘*designer evolution*’.³⁸ This vision of human-directed evolution, while leveraging modern technology, echoes ancient aspirations seen in myths like that of Prometheus, who sought to elevate humanity through the gift of fire and knowledge.

³⁴ Ranisch, Robert. “When CRISPR Meets Fantasy: Transhumanism and the Military in the Age of Gene Editing.” In *Transhumanism: The Proper Guide to a Posthuman Condition or a Dangerous Idea?*, 111-120. (2021).

³⁵ Coenen, Chris. “Transcending Natural Limitations: The Military–Industrial Complex and the Transhumanist Temptation.” In *Transhumanism: The Proper Guide to a Posthuman Condition or a Dangerous Idea?*, 97-110. (2021); Harrison Dinniss, Heather A., and J. K. Kleffner. “Soldier 2.0: Military Human Enhancement and International Law.” In *Dehumanization of Warfare: Legal Implications of New Weapon Technologies*, 163-205. (2018).

³⁶ More, On Becoming Posthuman, (p. 38-41); Bostrom, Introduction---*The Transhumanist FAQ*; Bostrom, Nick. “Transhumanist Values.” *Journal of Philosophical Research* 30 (Supplement), 3-14. (2005).

³⁷ Walker, Mark. “Ship of Fools: Why Transhumanism Is the Best Bet to Prevent the Extinction of Civilization.” In *Transhumanism and Its Critics*, edited by G. R. Hansell and William Grassie, 94-111. Metanexus Institute. (2011).

³⁸ Young, Steve. “Review of *Designer Evolution: A Transhumanist Manifesto*.” *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 15, 92. (2006).

The movement aims to achieve *morphological freedom*, giving every individual the right to change or augment their body as they see fit.³⁹ Some Transhumanists propose the idea of mind uploading, which involves uploading a scan of the human brain to a computer or cloud, which can then be downloaded into a host, resulting in *digital immortality*. Others propagate ‘cyborgization’, using brain-computer interfaces to enhance human abilities and turn people into biotechnological beings. There is also the idea of ‘*designer babies*’, genetically engineering children to add or remove specific traits.⁴⁰ Another oft-evoked concept is that of the *Singularity*, the much-anticipated creation of superhuman artificial intelligence, which in time would become conscious and autonomous, thus marking an irreversible turning point in evolution.⁴¹ Transhumanists also hold that the logical next step in evolution is for humans to create or transform themselves into the “posthuman” species.⁴² Transhumanists believe that the use and convergence of biotechnology, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, genomics, and other fields will turn these visions into reality.⁴³

Transhumanism presents a particular vision for the future, which is becoming increasingly influential. Understandably, these notions have sparked numerous debates and drawn criticism from both secular and religious commentators. Regardless of one’s endorsement or opposition to Transhumanism It is imperative to critically examine the assumptions and premises that underlie the transhumanist vision and their implications for mankind in general.

³⁹ More, Max. “Technological Self-Transformation: Expanding Personal Extropy.” *Extropy* 4, no. 2, 15-24. (1993); Sandberg, Anders. “Morphological Freedom -- Why We Not Just Want It, But Need It.” In *Transhumanist Reader*, 56-64. (2001).

⁴⁰ Bostrom, Human Genetic Enhancement, (p. 493-506); Bostrom, Introduction---The Transhumanist FAQ

⁴¹ Kurzweil, Ray. *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. Viking. (2005).

⁴² More, On Becoming Posthuman, (p. 38-41).

⁴³ Tirosch-Samuels, Hava. “Engaging Transhumanism.” In *H+/-: Transhumanism and Its Critics*, 19-54. Metanexus Institute. (2011).

Metanarratives of Transhumanism

Transhumanism is a totalizing vision. Transhumanists consider their positions regarding history, human nature, and the future of mankind as context-independent truths.⁴⁴ These underlying assumptions and beliefs shape and legitimize the transhumanist vision of the future. Thus, to critically examine the transhumanist worldview, it is essential to delve into the metanarratives and philosophical foundations that form its basis.

In 1979, the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard defined postmodernism as “*incredulity towards metanarratives*”. In doing so, he not only provided one of the most widely used definitions of postmodernism but also introduced the concept and framework of *metanarratives*. According to Lyotard, meta-narratives are grand visions or stories about the world that function as legitimizing tools for various social practices, political systems, and forms of knowledge.⁴⁵ Metanarratives shape our view regarding what was, what is, and what is to come. They influence, inform, and, in many cases, provide the scaffolding for our ontological, epistemological, anthropological and ethical commitments. Metanarratives are integral to the paradigms that guide and shape our understanding and explanation of the world.⁴⁶ The idea of absolute autonomy, the concept of perpetual progress and belief in the ability of science to answer all questions and provide all solutions- are all prominent metanarratives of modernity, according to Lyotard.

Applying the postmodern approach, as outlined by Lyotard, to Transhumanism is particularly beneficial, as the movement's core beliefs and aspirations are deeply rooted in the metanarratives of modernity. This section explores how the metanarratives of autonomy, progress, and techno-salvationism come together to shape the transhumanist worldview.

⁴⁴ Levin, *Posthuman bliss?*

⁴⁵ Lyotard, Jean-François. “The postmodern condition.” *The postmodern turn: new perspectives on modern theory.* (1994).

⁴⁶ Rorty, Richard. “Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity.” In *Habermas and Modernity*, 161-175. (1985).

The Metanarrative of Autonomy in Transhumanism

The metanarrative of autonomy plays a significant role in shaping the transhumanist vision. The individual, his freedom and sovereignty are central to the vision of Transhumanism. Transhumanists hold that every individual has the autonomy to define their own nature, identity, opportunities, and life path. (CITATION) Human beings possess absolute autonomy over their existence and possess the capacity to mould their own destiny. The individual is sovereign, and his sovereignty is most precious.

This position is rooted in the idea of the autonomous self and self-ownership stemming from Enlightenment thinking.⁴⁷ Building on this anthropocentric concept of sovereignty, Transhumanists introduce the notion of *morphological freedom*. They argue that humans have the right to change their bodies according to their desires and values.⁴⁸

The Promethean View of Man in Transhumanism

Transhumanism adopts a *Promethean* view of man which emerged during the Renaissance. According to thinkers such as Nasr (1987), this perspective places man at the centre of the universe, making him the measure of all things and the locus of all meaning.⁴⁹ It casts man in a hubristic, almost mythical struggle to overcome limits and boundaries like the Greek titan Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans. Since the Renaissance, the myth of Prometheus has constituted a narrative, an idealized version and vision of emancipation, grandeur, and power, the idea according to which human beings do not tolerate anyone above themselves, and that human self-awareness is the supreme divinity. French

⁴⁷ Sandberg, Anders. "Morphological Freedom -- Why We Not Just Want It, But Need It." In *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, edited by Max More and Natasha Vita-More, 56-64. Wiley-Blackwell. (2013).

⁴⁸ More, Max. "The Philosophy of Transhumanism." In *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, edited by Max More and Natasha Vita-More, 3-17. Wiley-Blackwell. (2013).

⁴⁹ Naşr, Ḥusain. *Traditional Islam in the modern world*. KPI, (1987).

philosopher and theologian Remi Brague denote this view as ‘*exclusive humanism*’.⁵⁰

The Promethean view sees man as the master of his fate. By turning away from heaven, the Promethean man sets his focus firmly on to the world. He is bound to earth, but he is also its master. He becomes “free” from heaven, free from any and all authority. Man, above all, autonomy par excellence, becomes his prime ideal.

Dominion Over Nature

This perspective is closely intertwined with the desire for dominion and mastery over nature through science and technology, a central goal of modern science. This position was famously articulated by Francis Bacon (d. 1626), who is considered one of the fathers of modern science.^{51 52} Bacon argued that the goal of science was to “*extend the power and dominion of the human race over the universe*”.⁵³

The Promethean man considers nature to be his dominion, and science and technology are his most important tools of control. With the scientific revolution, man seeks total dominion over the earth on his own terms, without reference to the will of Heaven.⁵⁴ Nature and the universe become objects that are to be conquered and exploited. Man no longer sees himself as a part of nature; rather, he sees himself as an agent who can impose his will on nature from the outside. Instead of a vision of harmonious coexistence or benevolent stewardship, the Promethean man seeks mastery over the universe.⁵⁵

This shift regarding how man views his role in the universe, in

⁵⁰ Gaitán, Luis. “Heaven on Earth: The Mind Uploading Project as Secular Eschatology.” *Theology and Science* 17, no. 3, 403-416. (2019).

⁵¹ Gouldner, Alvin W. “Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology.” *Social Problems* 9, no. 3, 199-213. (1962).

⁵² Jonas, Hans. *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*. University of Chicago Press. (1984).

⁵³ Bacon, Francis. *The New Organon*, edited by Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne. Cambridge University Press. (2000). (Original work published 1620).

⁵⁴ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Religion and the Order of Nature*. Oxford University Press. (1996).

⁵⁵ Keeler, A. P. *Rethinking Islam & the West: A New Narrative for the Age of Crises*. Equilibra Press. (2019).

turn, influences how he interacts with the world around him. It also shapes how man views knowledge as a tool to exert power.⁵⁶ This Promethean turn begins during the Renaissance and continues to develop further through the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. Transhumanism takes the Promethean view and the concept of dominion over nature to its logical conclusion by applying it to human nature, human body and the human condition.⁵⁷ The Promethean view culminates in morphological freedom.

Transhumanism, thus, is a particular manifestation of the distinctively modern project of overcoming the constraints of the human body and mind through technoscience,⁵⁸ which in turn can be seen as an extension of the Enlightenment belief in perpetual progress and human perfectibility.⁵⁹

The Metanarrative of Progress in Transhumanism

The metanarrative of progress that comes out of Enlightenment rationalism is extremely prominent in modernity. It holds that history follows a particular trajectory, which is continuous and brings gradual improvement. The improvement in question is material as well as moral, spiritual and social. This particular narrative originated in Europe around the eighteenth century and subsequently became a fundamental aspect of modern Western culture.⁶⁰

In a way, the overarching metanarrative of progress serves as the foundation of the modern Western worldview. It provides a conception of history where the West figures as the pinnacle of human civilization, the highest point in a long history of cumulative improvements.⁶¹ Many observers and critics have noted the mythical nature of this view of history and the metanarrative of progress.⁶²

⁵⁶ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *The Need for a Sacred Science*. Routledge. (2005).

⁵⁷ Deneen, Patrick J. *Why Liberalism Failed*. Yale University Press. (2019).

⁵⁸ Fuller, Steve. *Humanity 2.0: What It Means to Be Human Past, Present and Future*. Springer. (2011).

⁵⁹ Sorgner, Stefan Lorenz. *On Transhumanism*. Penn State Press. (2020).

⁶⁰ Burgess, Yvonne. *The Myth of Progress*. Wild Goose Publications. (1996).

⁶¹ Shepard, William. "The Myth of Progress in the Writings of Sayyid Qutb." *Religion* 27, no. 3, 255-266. (1997).

⁶² Pollard, Sidney. *The Idea of Progress: History and Society*. (1968); Wessels, Tom. *The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future*. University Press of

Belief in this narrative or myth of progress is typical of many modern political ideologies bent on creating utopias.⁶³

Science and technology form an integral part of the metanarrative of progress, as it is precisely through the aid of science and technology that the process of development and growth will continue steadily and perpetually into the future. Technoscience thus is the primary agent of progress.⁶⁴ Enlightenment thinkers believed that through science and reason, man and society could progress and gradually become perfect.⁶⁵ Transhumanism accepts this position and characteristically takes it to its limits, applying it to the human body. Transhumanism calls for using science and technology “*to overcome... our basic biological limits*”⁶⁶ and to progress toward becoming Posthuman.⁶⁷

Upgrading Humans: The Imperative of Progress

Transhumanism views the human form as ‘half-baked’ and ‘defective’, a ‘work in progress’ worthy of derision, something that should be altered and enhanced, preferably to the point of immortality.⁶⁸ Mankind, in its current form, is not fit for the future. Moreover, our current prosocial and political approaches are inadequate and fundamentally lack the capacity to address the challenges that await mankind.⁶⁹ This is because there is a

New England. (2013); Burdett, Michael S. *Eschatology and the Technological Future*. Routledge. (2014).

⁶³ Shepard, William. “The Myth of Progress in the Writings of Sayyid Qutb.” *Religion* 27, no. 3, 255-266. (1997); Gray, John. *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. (2007).

⁶⁴ Marx, Leo. “The Idea of ‘Technology’ and Postmodern Pessimism.” In *Technology, Pessimism, and Postmodernism*, 11-28. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. (1994).

⁶⁵ Passmore, John. *The Perfectibility of Man*. Duckworth. (1970).

⁶⁶ Bostrom, Human Genetic Enhancements, (p. 493-506).

⁶⁷ More, The Philosophy of Transhumanism.

⁶⁸ Bostrom, Transhumanist Values, (p. 3-14); Tirosh-Samuels, Hava. “Utopianism and Eschatology: Judaism Engages Transhumanism.” In *Religion and Transhumanism: The Unknown Future of Human Enhancement*, edited by C. Mercer and T. J. Trothen, 161-180. Praeger. (2015).

⁶⁹ Persson, Ingmar, and Julian Savulescu. *Unfit for the Future: The Need for Moral Enhancement*. Oxford University Press. (2012).

‘mismatch’ between the primitive conditions in which our moral and social impulses developed and the situation and problems we face today.⁷⁰

Our biological and cognitive limitations not only prevent humanity's inevitable path of progress but also cause the immense suffering we see in the world today.⁷¹ Therefore, humans need to be technologically upgraded to deal with future challenges. And the only path to human flourishing is technoscientific control over human nature and condition, or so goes the Transhumanist narrative.⁷² In this regard the transhumanist worldview exhibits a distinctive social Darwinist bent, sharing key features and direct connections with the eugenics movement of the 19th and 20th centuries.⁷³ Both share the same aim, to manipulate evolution and improve humans, and agree on the method, science, and technology. In addition, they also have similarly mechanistic views regarding human beings and society.⁷⁴

Transhumanists often couch their visions in the language of evolution, using terms such as ‘*evolutionary next step*’ and ‘*evolutionary vision*’ to articulate their arguments. For example, in 1970, FM Esfandiary, one of the most prominent early transhumanists, argued that the defeat of death represents the next evolutionary step.⁷⁵ This language is not merely predictive but also prescriptive, suggesting that starting from where Darwinian evolution has brought us, we must use science and technology to direct our future development.

In Transhumanism, evolution – or, more appropriately, Darwinism – is linked with the metanarrative of progress and

⁷⁰ Persson, Ingmar, and Julian Savulescu. “Getting Moral Enhancement Right: The Desirability of Moral Bioenhancement.” *Bioethics* 27, no. 3, 124-131. (2013).

⁷¹ Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near*.

⁷² Bostrom, *Transhumanist Values*, (p. 3-14).

⁷³ Bashford, Alison. “Epilogue: Where Did Eugenics Go?” In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, edited by Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, 539-558. Oxford University Press. (2010).

⁷⁴ Koch, T. “Enhancing Who? Enhancing What? Ethics, Bioethics, and Transhumanism.” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 35, no. 6, 685-699. (2010); Sorgner, Stefan Lorenz. “Nietzsche, the Overhuman, and Transhumanism.” *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 20, no. 1, 29-42. (2009).

⁷⁵ Esfandiary, F. M. *Optimism One: The Emerging Radicalism*. W. W. Norton & Company. (1970).

provides the teleology driving the worldview. Transhumanism can be seen as a technoscientific utopia built upon the belief in progress and the imperative to transcend human limitations through technological means.

The Metanarrative of Techno-Salvationism in Transhumanism

The third driving metanarrative in Transhumanism is that of techno-salvationism – the belief that technology holds the solution to every problem and human limitation. That every social, economic, and environmental issue can be addressed by applying advanced technologies. This mindset extends the general mentality of techno-solutionism and progressivism that characterizes modernity.⁷⁶ This way of thinking is typical of intellectuals, philosophers, idealists, and even the general populace. The public today views science and technology as having a greater potential impact than other factors in solving future problems.⁷⁷

Characteristically, Transhumanists take this notion and pushes it further. The transhumanist vision imbues technology with salvific meaning. That is to say that transhumanists do not view technoscience merely as a tool but as the vehicle of salvation. The transhumanist movement is genuinely convinced that science and technology can deliver us from all problems, past and present, be they poverty, war, disease, or climate catastrophe. This conviction is not unique to transhumanism, but rather an amplification of modernist beliefs in scientific and technological progress. Where modernity promised societal improvement through scientific advancement, transhumanism extends this promise to the transformation of human nature itself. It represents not a break from modernist ideals, but their ultimate realization and extension.

Transhumanists posit that in the future, science and technology will provide solutions to these puzzles and allow humans to transcend

⁷⁶ Noble, David F. *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*. Penguin Books. (1999); Morozov, Evgeny. *To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism*. PublicAffairs. (2013).

⁷⁷ Parker, Kim, Morin, Rich, & Horowitz, Juliana Menasce. *Looking to the Future, Public Sees an America in Decline on Many Fronts*. Pew Research Center, 21. (2019).

these obstacles and limitations. The use and convergence of biotechnology, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, genomics and other fields will solve the problem of scarcity and create a state of radical abundance.⁷⁸

Moreover, the transhumanist vision sees old age, disease, and mortality not as inevitable and ontological processes inseparable from the human condition, but as technical problems that can be solved through technoscience given enough time.⁷⁹ According to this vision, at some point in the future, science and technology will allow humans to first radically prolong human lives and then defeat death or even achieve digital immortality. This techno-salvationist narrative's ultimate peak is the technological Singularity, where the Posthuman emerges, and transcendence is achieved.⁸⁰

Due to these tendencies the transhumanist belief in the power of science has rightly been compared to religious belief and faith in the miraculous.⁸¹ While transhumanist ideas may indeed lead to some significant technological advancements and potential benefits, it is crucial to critically examine their underlying assumptions and potential consequences. This analysis doesn't aim to dismiss the possibility of progress, but rather to highlight how, beneath its rationalistic surface, transhumanism functions as a utopian vision dressed in the garb of technoscience. The age of political ideologies has ended. It is no longer imagined that political ideologies can create ideal societies and solve all problems. However, the belief in progress and yearning for utopia has not vanished; they have simply migrated from political ideology and action to science and technology. There is, however, one crucial difference. Previous utopians envisioned the full attainment of their ideal, but

⁷⁸ Diamandis, Peter H., & Kotler, Steven. *Abundance: The Future is Better than You Think*. Free Press. (2012).

⁷⁹ de Grey, Aubrey. *Ending Aging: The Rejuvenation Breakthroughs That Could Reverse Human Aging in Our Lifetime*. St. Martin's Press. (2007).

⁸⁰ More, On Becoming Posthuman, (38-41); Bostrom, *The Transhumanist FAQ*; Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near*.

⁸¹ Hauskeller, Michael. *Better Humans? Understanding the Enhancement Project*. Routledge. (2013); Agar, Nicholas. *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement*. MIT Press. (2010).

transhumanists foresee no end point in their techno-progressive vision. Instead, they anticipate and want ceaseless augmentation.⁸²

The Transhumanist Worldview

Transhumanism's vision of humanity's future is rooted in a particular set of worldview assumptions regarding man and his place in the universe. According to Belgian philosopher Gilbert Hottois, Transhumanism contains distinct ontological, epistemological, ethical, and anthropological positions.⁸³ Others have described Transhumanism as an onto-theology geared towards attaining a transcendent or higher level of existence by altering the course of evolution through technology.⁸⁴

As we have seen, the transhumanist worldview is shaped by metanarratives of autonomy, progress and belief in the omnipotence of technoscience. These grand narratives delineate the philosophical landscape on which Transhumanism's ontological, epistemological, anthropological, and teleological commitments take root.

Transhumanism subscribes to a materialistic and reductive ontology.⁸⁵ For Transhumanism, existence is limited to the terrestrial and the temporal. This life must be extended as much as possible because this is the only life there is. As a worldview, it is *dunya-centric*. It sacralizes the physical, temporal world or the *dunya* as the highest, if not the only, reality, rejecting the unseen world (*al-ghayb*) and the afterlife.

Epistemologically, Transhumanism dogmatically subscribes to scientism and reductive rationalism, accepting sense perception and human rationality as the only valid sources of knowledge.⁸⁶ Science and technology thus become the oracle to all questions, the solution to all problems, and the arbiter of all things.

⁸² Bostrom, *The Transhumanist FAQ*

⁸³ Hottois, G. "Is transhumanism a humanism?" *Revista de Derecho y Genoma Humano= Law and the Human Genome Review* 42, 15–24. (2015).

⁸⁴ Bishop, Jeffrey P. "Transhumanism, Metaphysics, and the Posthuman God." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 35(6), 700-720. (2010).

⁸⁵ Hook, Christopher C. "The Techno Sapiens Are Coming." *Christianity Today*, 48(1), 36-41. (2004).

⁸⁶ Hauskeller, Michael. *Mythologies of Transhumanism*. Palgrave Macmillan. (2016); Levin, *Posthuman bliss?*

Within this framework, human beings are reduced to mere biological machines devoid of any spiritual essence.⁸⁷ In his current form, man is considered unsuitable for the future and must be enhanced into the Posthuman through technology. Transhumanism exhibits a quantified, ‘dataist’ conception of the self.⁸⁸ It denies the existence of the human soul and reduces the human being to the mind, the mind to the brain, and the brain to data. Consciousness and cognition are reduced and explained away as merely emergent informational phenomena.⁸⁹ Because of this view, transhumanists believe it is possible to recreate consciousness in a cloud. Transcendence must be achieved *here and now*.

This view raises a profound question: if consciousness can be recreated digitally, and human beings are reduced to data, would the resulting entity still be considered human? It can be argued that the full realization of transhumanist ideas could potentially lead to the end of humanity as we understand it, replacing humans with posthuman entities that are fundamentally different from biological humans.

These goals are based on a radical denial of the afterlife or *Ākhirah*. The Transhumanist vision, motivation and rationalizations are fruits of its radical *dunya-centrism*, which itself is shaped by metanarratives of modernity.

Transhumanism as Secular Enchantment

It's important to clarify that our use of '*enchantment*' extends beyond traditional religious connotations. Contemporary scholarship, as exemplified by Jenkins (2000), During (2004), Saler (2006), and Landy (2009), has broadened the concept to include secular forms of wonder, awe, and meaning-making. This expanded understanding allows us to analyze phenomena like transhumanism as forms of secular enchantment, despite their non-religious nature. While this

⁸⁷ Bouzenita, Anke Iman. “The Most Dangerous Idea? Islamic Deliberations on Transhumanism.” *Darulfunun Ilahiyat*, 29(2), 201-228. (2018).

⁸⁸ Al-Kassimi, Khalid. “A Postmodern (Singularity) Future with a Post-Human Godless Algorithm: Trans-Humanism, Artificial Intelligence, and Dataism.” *Religions*, 14(8), 1049. (2023).

⁸⁹ Levin, *Posthuman bliss?*

interpretation differs from enchantment's use in religious studies, it offers valuable insights into how movements like transhumanism function in contemporary society.

In 1917, Max Weber famously asserted that the modern era is defined by the processes of rationalization and intellectualization and, most importantly, by the loss of enchantment in the world.⁹⁰ Disenchantment in the Weberian sense is the gradual retreat or vanishing of the sense of mystery and the marvellous from nature and human life. Modernity has made everything knowable, measurable, quantifiable and manipulable through rational governance and science. As a result, the universe becomes anthropocentric and impersonal.⁹¹ This view has been taken up and repeated many times throughout the twentieth century.

However, with the rise of postmodernism in the 1970s and 1980s – and increasingly in the present century – this perspective has come under growing scrutiny. While not rejecting Weber's thesis outright, many have offered revisions to established perspectives regarding the simple dichotomy of enchantment versus disenchantment in modernity.⁹² As a result, a more nuanced view of modernity has taken hold. Instead of viewing modernity solely as a force of disenchantment, many now see it as an uneasy mix of opposing themes and forces. It is crucial to note that these new forms of enchantment differ from pre-modern religiosity, aligning more with contemporary Western cultural contexts.

This constellation of views holds that in modern societies,

⁹⁰ Weber, Max. "Science as a Vocation." In H. H. Gerth & C. W. Mills (Eds. & Trans.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (pp. 129-156). Oxford University Press. (1946);

⁹¹ Shils, Edward. "Max Weber and the World since 1920." In W. J. Mommsen & J. Osterhammel (Eds.), *Max Weber and His Contemporaries* (pp. 547-573). Allen & Unwin. (1987); Schroeder, Ralph. "Disenchantment and Its Discontents: Weberian Perspectives on Science and Technology." *The Sociological Review*, 43(2), 227-250. (1995); Jenkins, Richard. "Disenchantment, Enchantment, and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium." *Max Weber Studies*, 11-32. (2000).

⁹² Jenkins, *Disenchantment*; Durning, Simon. *Modern Enchantments: The Cultural Power of Secular Magic*. Harvard University Press. (2004). Saler, Michael. "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review." *The American Historical Review*, 111(3), 692-716. (2006); Landy, Joshua. *The Varieties of Modern Enchantment*. (2009).

whenever religion or ‘*magic*’ retreats from a domain, alternative secular methods of re-enchantment arise to take their place.⁹³ Thus, modernity gives rise to strong opposing movements of re-enchantment and re-sacralization,⁹⁴ which aim to fill the spiritual void caused by secular modernity. Hence, the gradual disenchantment in the world is consistently accompanied by gradual re-enchantment. These “new enchantments,” or “re-enchantments,” are secular, i.e., expressed through distinctively modern concepts and narratives. They are in harmony with, and sometimes reliant on, aspects of modernity typically seen as rationalizing forces.⁹⁵ These new enchantments might be better described as forms of ‘solid techno-materialism’ or ‘techno-materialization of human presence’, reflecting their grounding in technological and material realities while still serving enchanting functions.

Processes long seen as rational and logical can themselves become vehicles of re-enchantment or can become re-enchanted from within.⁹⁶ Contemporary science, once believed to be the leading cause of removing enchantment, is now acknowledged as a potent creator of wonders.⁹⁷ For instance, studies in quantum physics, with their counterintuitive findings about the nature of reality, exemplify how modern science can create new forms of wonder and enchantment.⁹⁸

⁹³ Bennett, Jane. *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton University Press. (2001).

⁹⁴ Saler, Michael. “Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review.” *The American Historical Review*, 111(3), 692-716. (2006).

⁹⁵ Landy, Joshua, & Saler, Michael (Eds.). *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*. Stanford University Press. (2009).

⁹⁶ Jenkins, Disenchantment, Enchantment, and Re-Enchantment.

⁹⁷ Nightingale, Andrea. “Broken Knowledge.” In *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*, 15-37.

⁹⁸ Quantum physics challenges classical ideas about reality, revealing strange behaviors at the subatomic level. Werner Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle shows that it’s impossible to know both the position and momentum of a particle with precision. Niels Bohr’s Complementarity Principle further reveals that particles can act as both waves and particles, depending on how they are observed. Erwin Schrödinger’s famous cat experiment illustrates quantum superposition, where particles exist in multiple states until observed. Quantum entanglement, famously called “spooky action at a distance” by Albert Einstein, suggests that particles can

This section will argue that Transhumanism represents a form of secular enchantment of the world.

The Enchantments of Technoscience

Having established the concept of re-enchantment in modernity, we can now examine how Transhumanism qualifies as a form of this phenomenon. A growing body of scholarship suggests that Transhumanism can be understood as a form of secular enchantment or *technological re-enchantment* of the world within the context of secular modernity.

Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno famously argued that the Enlightenment was as dependent on the *mythical* as the traditions it had opposed. While the Enlightenment claimed to be rational and rely on reason, the events of the twentieth century, in particular the world wars and the highly bureaucratic and hyper-rational projects of Nazism and Communism, proved that its reliance on science, technology and rationality morphed into irrationality; their dialectical opposite.⁹⁹ This analysis can be reasonably extended to liberalism and capitalism as well.

Following this line of reasoning Transhumanism can be seen as another instance of the rational forces of science and technology in modernity transforming into their dialectical opposites and devolving into the fantastical and the utopic. Science, the force of disenchantment in transhumanism *transforms into the force of re-enchantment*.

Philosopher Charles Taylor argues that disenchantment in modernity results from being buffered or shielded from the “*mysterious external world*.”¹⁰⁰ However, it can be argued that by seeking to link man with AI, machines, and the digital realm, Transhumanism aims to remove this buffer.¹⁰¹ While this

affect one another instantly, even across great distances. For accessible explanations of these fundamental concepts of quantum mechanics see, Gribbin, John. *In search of Schrodinger's cat: Quantum physics and reality*. Bantam, 2011.

⁹⁹ Adorno, Theodor W., & Horkheimer, Max. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Vol. 15). Verso. (1997).

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, Charles. “A secular age.” Harvard UP. (2007).

¹⁰¹ Antosca, Alex R. “Technological Re-Enchantment: Transhumanism,

interpretation extends Taylor's concept beyond its original religious context, it provides a useful framework to understand how transhumanism might alter our relationship with reality and create new forms of meaning and wonder. If the Transhumanist vision is realized, the individual's relationship with reality would be fundamentally altered, potentially leading to a new form of technological enchantment, albeit one that is digital and material rather than traditionally spiritual. As a consequence of the Transhumanist vision, the social imaginary undergoes a re-enchantment, albeit technological and secular in nature. Thus, Transhumanism results in technological re-enchantment of the world.

Transhumanism can also be seen as a form of magical thinking. According to philosopher Don Ihde, people's lifeworld and experiences shape their fantasies, which, in modernity, take on technological and scientific forms.¹⁰² And Transhumanism views technoscience as 'magic' that can deliver its fantasies. Transhumanists approach technology and science in a manner akin to how ancient peoples approached magic potions, amulets, and alchemy. Others, like philosopher Eric Steinhart, have described Transhumanism as a type of techno-theurgy. Theurgy, of course, was a late magical practice prevalent during the Roman Empire. The goal of theurgy was to transform human bodies in a way that would allow them to attain divine qualities. Much of the same pattern of thinking appears in Transhumanism. Transhumanism, thus can be seen as a modern iteration of age-old fantasies and desires, with technoscience providing the magical solution.¹⁰³

The presence of the '*fantastical*' in Transhumanism and its utopian impulses have been well noted by critics, such as philosopher Michael Hauskeller and futurist Roberto Paura. Hauskeller (2012) views the goal of creating the Posthuman as a "wish-fulfilment fantasy," while Paura (2016) considers Transhumanism to be a new utopia based on techno-optimism, emerging from a distinct social

Techno-Religion, and Post-Secular Transcendence." (2019).

¹⁰² Ihde, Don. *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth*. Indiana University Press. (1990); Ihde, Don. "Of Which Human Are We Post." In *H+/-: Transhumanism and Its Critics*, 136-146. Philadelphia: Metanexus Institute. (2011).

¹⁰³ Steinhart, Eric. "Theurgy and transhumanism." *Revista Archaic*: e02905. (2020).

imaginary.¹⁰⁴ Levin (2020), goes further and describes transhumanists' notion of humanity's self-transformation into divinity via science and technology as 'pure fantasy'.¹⁰⁵ While these critiques highlight the fantastical elements of transhumanism, they also underscore its function as a meaning-making system in a secular context.

These arguments support the view that Transhumanism can be understood as a form of secular meaning-making or technological re-enchantment of the world, in line with the broader concept of enchantment discussed earlier. Transhumanism has created a futuristic vision of infinite promise, wonder and marvel based on technoscientific imagination. It has simultaneously infused the world with a sense of order and purpose and has provided a teleology of human existence. In Transhumanism the primary aim of humanity becomes ensuring the continuity of intelligence by developing the Posthuman, transferring the mind into digital form, and spreading superintelligence throughout the universe. In this vision, the fundamental objective of human existence has become inseparable from technoscientific imagination.

It's important to note that while this analysis frames transhumanism as a form of secular enchantment, it does not negate the potential technological advancements or societal changes that transhumanist ideas might bring about. The purpose of this framing is not to argue for or against transhumanism, but to understand its function in contemporary society as a meaning-making system and a response to the disenchantment of modernity.

Transhumanism as Ersatz Religion

In this section, we examine transhumanism through the lens of functional definitions of religion, an approach well-established in academic literature pertaining to transhumanism. This perspective, drawing on the work of scholars such as Emile Durkheim, Robert

¹⁰⁴ Hauskeller, Michael. "Reinventing Cockaigne: Utopian themes in transhumanist thought." *The Hastings Center Report* 42, no. 2: 39. (2012); Paura, Roberto. "Singularity believers and the new utopia of transhumanism." *Im@ go. A Journal of the Social Imaginary* 7: 23-35. (2016).

¹⁰⁵ Levin, *Posthuman bliss?*

Bellah, Talcott Parsons and others, has been applied to transhumanism by notable researchers including Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (2012), Robert Geraci (2014), and Michael Burdett (2015).¹⁰⁶ These definitions focus on the social and psychological functions that belief systems serve, rather than specific theological content. From this perspective, as previous scholars have demonstrated, we can analyze how transhumanism fulfils similar roles to traditional religions in providing meaning, purpose, and a vision of transcendence, albeit through secular means. This approach allows us to situate our analysis within a rich body of existing scholarship on the quasi-religious aspects of transhumanism.

As a worldview, Transhumanism exhibits many religious dimensions. This fact has been identified and acknowledged by previous scholarship. According to Taylor (2007), one of the primary functions of religions is to provide answers to existential questions and address the spiritual yearnings of humans. In Transhumanism, we see the creation of surrogate secular narratives that fulfil these same functions.¹⁰⁷ In the previous sub-section, we discussed how the transhumanist reliance on science and technology functions in ways analogous to religious faith, providing a sense of certainty and hope for the future. Furthermore, critics such as Burdett (2014) have argued that the manner in which Transhumanism believes in the myth of progress is religious in nature and can be seen as a debased version of Christian eschatology.¹⁰⁸ While acknowledging that transhumanism is not a traditional religion, these comparisons highlight how it functions as a meaning-making system in a secular context, fulfilling roles traditionally associated with religious belief systems.

Transhumanism expresses deep religious themes in

¹⁰⁶ For a functionalist perspective on religion, see Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995); Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011) and “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96, no. 1 (1967): 1–21; Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York: Free Press, 1951) and *Essays in Sociological Theory* (New York: Free Press, 1949).

¹⁰⁷ Tirosh-Samuelson, Hava. “Transhumanism as a secularist faith.” *Zygon*®, 47(4), 710-734. (2012).

¹⁰⁸ Burdett, *The Religion of Technology*.

technoscientific verbiage. As we have already discussed, it provides an overarching framework with its own ontology, epistemology, anthropology and teleology. A fantastical, quasi-eschatological vision of the future and promises transcendence and even divinity are provided in Transhumanism. In Transhumanism the longing for transcendence takes on religious dimensions, although the method of attaining transcendence differs.¹⁰⁹ All of which bears a striking resemblance to religious narratives.¹¹⁰

It has incorporated utopian, eschatological, and apocalyptic themes like those found in Judaism and later in Christianity.¹¹¹ In particular, the concept of technological Singularity is strikingly similar to the Christian idea of rapture. The sense of expectation regarding the Singularity resembles the approach of millenarian and apocalyptic movements. In addition, Transhumanism has its own charismatic leaders and Gurus. Interestingly, transhumanism shares notable similarities with modern technoscientific religions like Scientology and UFO cults like Raelianism.¹¹² Like Transhumanism, these movements also market exclusive paths of Enlightenment and have technoscientific narratives of purpose, apocalypse, and transcendence. Therefore, in several significant ways, Transhumanism functions as a surrogate religion.¹¹³

The Roots of Transhumanism's Secular Enchantment

Having established Transhumanism's quasi-religious characteristics and its similarities to technoscientific cults, it is essential to examine

¹⁰⁹ Hopkins, Patrick D. "Transcending the animal: How transhumanism and religion are and are not alike." *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, 14(2), 13-28. (2005).

¹¹⁰ Schussler, Agnes E. "Transhumanism as a new techno-religion and personal development: In the framework of a future technological spirituality." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 18(53), 92-106. (2019).

¹¹¹ Tirosch-Samuelson, Hava. "Utopianism and eschatology: Judaism engages transhumanism." In *Religion and Transhumanism*, 161-180. Praeger. (2015).

¹¹² Bainbridge, William S., and Rodney Stark. "Scientology: To be perfectly clear." *Sociological Analysis*, 41(2), 128-136. (1980); Bigliardi, Stefano. "New religious movements and science: Rael's progressive patronizing parasitism." *Zygon*®, 50(1), 64-83. (2015).

¹¹³ Geraci, Robert M. *Apocalyptic AI: Visions of heaven in robotics, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality*. Oxford University Press. (2012).

how the movement's underlying philosophical commitments lead it to a secular enchantment of the world.

In 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche articulated the crisis of Nihilism in the West. He argued that as the influence of Christianity fades and the promise of heaven and the afterlife disappears, the West will be plunged into Nihilism.¹¹⁴ All higher values will become meaningless, all morals will be empty rhetoric, and all objective parameters will vanish, everything becoming interpretation. The rise of Transhumanism can be seen as a manifestation of this crisis as well as an attempt to counteract its existential implications.

This connection between transhumanism and the crisis of nihilism is not merely an academic interpretation, but is explicitly acknowledged within the transhumanist movement itself. Notably, in the early 1990s, Max More, one of the first and most prominent philosophical proponents of modern transhumanism, set out to develop the movement as an alternative to the dichotomy between religious worldviews and modern nihilism. In his 1990 article 'Transhumanism: Towards a Futurist Philosophy,' published in *Extropy*, More explicitly states:

“...the alternative to religion is not a despairing nihilism, nor sterile scientism, but a transhumanism”¹¹⁵

More's version of transhumanism emphasizes the values of indefinite expansion and self-transformation through technology, positioning it as a secular meaning-fostering system that can function as an alternative to religion and fill the immense gap created by modern nihilism. This deliberate positioning of transhumanism as a response to the nihilistic crisis further supports our argument about the movement's roots in and reaction to the existential challenges posed by modernity.

The main driving forces behind Transhumanism are its *dunya-centrism* and denial of the afterlife. The material world is at the ontological centre of the transhumanist worldview, which

¹¹⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The gay science: With a prelude in rhymes and an appendix of songs*. Vintage. (2010).

¹¹⁵ More, Max. “Transhumanism: Towards a futurist philosophy.” *Extropy* 6, no. 6 (1990): 11.

inevitably leads to its sacralization. If the world is all there is, it becomes almost imperative to create a promise and vision of transcendence centred on that world to escape the immense pull of Nihilism. As existence is limited to this world and this world only, transcendence has to come here and through material means.

Epistemologically, Transhumanism is strongly influenced by scientism. As we have already discussed, transhumanists believe in science's exclusive access to and authority over the truth.¹¹⁶ Thus, when seeking to attain transcendence and to create the Posthuman Transhumanism turns to science and technology. The secular humanist worldview defined humanity on the basis of its ability to use reason while being free from faith. From this position, Transhumanism moves reduces human cognition to information patterns and operations, which can be made into mere data.¹¹⁷

These ontological and epistemological commitments inevitably lead to one of two positions: nihilism or secular enchantment. Transhumanists, unwilling to accept the implications of the crisis foreseen by Nietzsche, choose the latter path, seeking to build their own god or even to become one themselves. Thus, Transhumanism can be seen as an attempt to create new meanings, promises, and values in a world saturated with the aftershocks of Nihilism. Transhumanism tries to solve the puzzle of Nihilism by returning to its Enlightenment roots and taking its metanarratives of autonomy, progress, and techno-solutionism to their absolute limits.

This impulse is found in many transhumanists works, both implicitly and explicitly. Prominent transhumanist philosopher Max More specifically states that it was the crisis of Nihilism that, in part, motivated him to develop his vision of Transhumanism. More argues that the end of religion has plunged humanity into a desperate nihilism and that Transhumanism represents an alternative to both religious and nihilistic visions of reality. He emphasizes the need to replace religion with a meaning-fostering system and offers his brand of Transhumanism as the solution.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Habermas, Jürgen. *The future of human nature*. Polity Press. (2003).

¹¹⁷ Levin, *Posthuman bliss?*

¹¹⁸ More, Max. "Technological self-transformation: Expanding personal extropy." *Extropy*, 4(2), 15-24. (1993).

Transhumanism thus emerges as a new and nominally secular meaning-fostering system, delivering a patchwork worldview.¹¹⁹ By presenting an all-encompassing narrative of transcendence exclusively built upon seemingly rational and scientific premises Transhumanism attempts to fulfil an innate human need for meaning and purpose, in a manner suitable for people with an atheistic bent.¹²⁰

¹²¹ The *dunya-centrism*, scientism, and hyper-rationalism of the transhumanist worldview, coupled with its rejection of divine revelation and metaphysical knowledge, leads it inevitably to construct a narrative of secular enchantment.

At the beginning of the last century, modern man was captivated by secular ideologies such as Communism, Liberalism, Humanism, and Nazism, as well as aspects of modern civilization. Transhumanism emerges at a stage in modernity where political utopias have given way to technoscientific ones, offering a compelling narrative of transcendence and meaning through technological mastery and the pursuit of the Posthuman. By providing a worldview that promises salvation through science and technology, Transhumanism functions as a powerful form of secular enchantment, captivating the minds and imaginations of those seeking meaning and purpose in an increasingly disenchanted world.

Jahiliyyah and Techno-Jahiliyyah

The preceding analysis of Transhumanism as a form of secular enchantment reveals its emergence as a response to the crisis of modernity and its role in filling the resultant spiritual void through secular modes and strategies of enchantment. This sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the phenomenon of Transhumanism from an Islamic perspective.

This section will delve deeper and apply the Islamic philosophical lens of *Jahiliyyah* to Transhumanism. This framing, developed by 20th -century thinkers Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) and

¹¹⁹ MacFarlane, Alan. *Transhumanism as a New Social Movement: The Techno-Centred Imagination*. Springer Nature. (2020).

¹²⁰ Walach, Harald. *Secular spirituality*. Springer International Publishing AG. (2014).

¹²¹ Levin, *Posthuman bliss?*

Muhammad Qutb (d. 1994), provides a unique vantage point to explain the emergence of such a movement in modernity, and articulate a counternarrative from an Islamic worldview. This analysis will reveal how the specific features and aspirations of the transhumanist movement embody the characteristics of *Jahiliyyah*, and how the phenomenon itself can be seen as “*techno-jahiliyyah*.”

Jahiliyyah as a Critique of Modernity

The Arabic term *jahiliyyah*, meaning ignorance with a connotation of barbarism, is traditionally used to denote the period and state of affairs in pre-Islamic Arabia. However, Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Qutb revived and expanded this concept to develop a scathing critique of modernity.¹²² The Qutb brothers developed this concept over several decades, spanning several works. However, the most succinct articulation of their concept of *Jahiliyyah* is found in Sayyid Qutb’s *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones), first published in 1964, and in Muhammad Qutb’s *Jahiliyyah al-Qarn al-Ishrin* (The 20th Century *Jahiliyyah*), published in 1965.

In these works, they argue that *Jahiliyyah* is not merely a specific historical period but a recurring condition in human history and societies characterized by existential and spiritual ignorance. It is a condition characterized by the rejection of divine guidance that impacts several aspects of life.¹²³ It damages man’s relationship with God, thus affecting his relationships with other creations, including other humans, nature, and the universe.

According to the Qutbian perspective, any civilization cut off from divine guidance qualifies as existing in a state of *Jahiliyyah*. Certain common features are found in all manifestations of *Jahiliyyah*.¹²⁴ Among these features is the rejection of *Iman*, or faith in Allah. This rejection leads to deviation from the straight path (*as-sirat al mustaqeem*) and worship of Allah. According to the Qutb

¹²² Khatab, Sayed. “Hakimiyyah and jahiliyyah in the thought of Sayyid Qutb.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38(3), 145-170. (2002).

¹²³ Qutb, Sayyid. *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq. (1964); Khatab, Sayed. *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*. Routledge. (2006); Choueiri, Youssef M. *Islamic fundamentalism*. Pinter Publishers. (1990).

¹²⁴ Khatab, Hakimiyyah and jahiliyyah in the thought of Sayyid Qutb.

brothers, worship is not limited to periodic rites and rituals, but it means to accept, follow, and implement the laws revealed by Allah in every aspect of life.¹²⁵ This concept of *Jahiliyyah*, rooted in a specific understanding of religion as divine guidance for all aspects of life, provides a framework for critiquing modern secular societies.

Another defining feature of all forms of *Jahiliyyah* is to follow the whims, desires, ideas, speculations, and conjectures of mortal men, instead of following divine guidance. This rejection of the divine leads jahili societies to the devotion and following of *Tawaagheet* (plural of *taghut*), false gods or objects of worship besides Allah.¹²⁶

The Qutb brothers contend that modernity, with its emphasis on secularism, individualism, and the primacy of human reason, represents a new form of *Jahiliyyah*.¹²⁷ This new *jahiliyya* is devoid of justice, solidarity, unity, or harmony and is rampant with immorality. It creates regimes of knowledge that legitimize the sacralization of the world or the worship of false temporal gods. Governed by oppressive dictators that prioritize man-made laws and cut off from divine guidance, modern societies have plunged into a spiral of moral relativism, which has led to the progressive breaking down of values and social structures.¹²⁸ The only way to overcome this new *Jahiliyyah* is through a return to the divine guidance provided by Islam. This requires rejecting the secularist worldview and reasserting the primacy of divine revelation in all aspects of life.¹²⁹

By framing *Jahiliyyah* as a recurring condition in human history, the Qutb brothers have provided a potent and insightful Islamic lens for analyzing and critiquing modernity. This framing serves as a valuable starting point for an Islamic analysis of

¹²⁵ Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*.

¹²⁶ Qutb, Sayyid. *Jāhiliyya al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn*. Dār al-Shurūq. (1993). (Original work published 1965).

¹²⁷ Shepard, William E. "Sayyid Qutb's doctrine of jāhiliyya." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35(4), 521-545. (2003).

¹²⁸ Qutb, *Jāhiliyya al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn*.

¹²⁹ Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*; Haddad, Yvonne Y. "The Qur'anic justification for an Islamic revolution: The view of Sayyid Qutb." *The Middle East Journal*, 37(1), 14-29. (1983); Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb*.

contemporary issues and challenges, including the rise of Transhumanism.

Transhumanism as Techno-Jahiliyyah

Let us now examine whether Transhumanism can be seen as *Jahiliyyah* or a particular technoscientific manifestation of *Jahiliyyah* as outlined in the Qutbian framework. Two possible lines of argument may be utilized to address this. The first is to investigate how the Qutb brothers characterize modernity as *Jahiliyyah* and determine whether these characteristics are present in Transhumanism. The second approach is to demonstrate that, when viewed through the Qutbian lens, the secular enchantment and quasi-religious dimensions of Transhumanism render it a false religion.

As we have already seen, modernity is characterized as *Jahiliyyah* in the Qutbian framework. Sayyid and Muhammad Qutb hold that modernity's rejection of divine revelation, its materialistic ontology, and the creation of secular utopias built upon the myth of progress leads to a profound existential crisis.¹³⁰ According to them, certain distinctive characteristics are emblematic of this new *Jahiliyyah*. One such quality is the extreme veneration for technology and science because of the growth and material development they bring. According to Muhammad Qutb, this fascination with technoscience leads modern societies into a form of intoxication. In this intoxication, they position humanity as a rival or challenger to the authority of Allah.¹³¹ This is the Promethean impulse of modernity articulated through an Islamic lens. In Transhumanism, we see an intense form of Promethean hubris. The transhumanist vision not only wants to challenge God but also wants to create man into God by technologically upgrading human nature.¹³²

Another distinctive characteristic of modernity is the creation

¹³⁰ Qutb, *Jāhiliyya al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn*.

¹³¹ Qutb, *Jāhiliyya al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn*; Bursey, S. *Finding Muhammad Qutb: Praising Ghosts Online, a Different Qutbian Legacy and Islamic Revivalism in the Gulf*. (2017).

¹³² Hughes, James. *Citizen Cyborg: Why Democratic Societies Must Respond to the Redesigned Human of the Future*. Westview Press. (2004).

of ideologies, which function as regimes of knowledge, legitimizing the creation of false religions and deities. Modern societies, and more appropriately, modern states, limit religion and embrace ideologies such as liberalism, secularism, humanism, and nationalism, which take people away from the obedience of Allah, enchant the material world, and are built upon nothing but human speculation.¹³³ Transhumanism perpetuates this *jahili* impulse of rejecting God's sovereignty and relying on man-made systems of meaning and purpose.¹³⁴ It is a worldview or an “-ism” built upon metanarratives of modernity with the purpose of providing transcendence through exclusively secular, i.e., technoscientific means. Furthermore, transhumanism's elevation of human desires and aspirations to a quasi-divine status epitomizes the *jahili* trait of arrogant anthropocentrism, which is characteristic of modernity or the new *Jahiliyyah*.

Transhumanism embodies various distinctive characteristics of new *jahiliyyah* or modernity—forms of extreme scientism, arrogant anthropocentrism, and technological hubris—and weaves them into a technoscientific narrative of transcendence. Transhumanism, as an intensification of modernity's core principles, embodies these characteristics of *Jahiliyyah* in a technologically-focused form.

Moving on to the second line of argument, it can be reasonably posited that, viewed through the Qutbian perspective, the technological re-enchantment of the world created by Transhumanism and its quasi-religious nature renders it a uniquely modern false religion. As discussed in the previous section on secular enchantment, the movement exhibits many religious dimensions and functions as an ersatz religion. The promises of Transhumanism closely mirror religious themes and motifs.

Such aspects of Transhumanism make it a particularly striking manifestation of modernity's tendency to create false idols and ideologies that lead people astray from the straight path (*as-sirat al mustaqeem*). Transhumanism marks a migration of the holies, characteristic of modernity, where devotion and the sense of sacred are transferred from religious to secular objects and projects.

¹³³ Qutb, *Jāhilīya al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn*.

¹³⁴ Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*.

Through a Qutbian lens, Transhumanism can thus be seen as a technological manifestation of the new *Jahiliyyah*, or *Techno-Jahiliyyah*. It is emblematic of the modern *Jahiliyyah* in two significant ways. First, it signifies a profound existential ignorance caused by the rejection of *Iman* and revelation. The conditions conducive to the emergence of Transhumanism were set by the absence of meaning and purpose or the disenchantment created by modernity. Second, Transhumanism sought to fill this void created by modernity by re-enchanting the material world through exclusively secular and rational means and narratives, particularly through faith in the ability of science and technology.

Thus, through the Qutbian framework of *Jahiliyyah*, Transhumanism emerges as *techno-jahiliyyah*, a technoscientific manifestation of modernity's core impulses and *jahili* tendencies. The Qutbian critique provides a powerful tool for challenging the movement's assumptions and asserting the primacy of Islamic values and principles in guiding human affairs.

Conclusion

This research has shown that the transhumanist worldview is a reaction to modernity's crisis of meaning and purpose. Deeply rooted in the metanarratives of modernity, it functions as a form of secular enchantment manifesting through the technoscientific imaginary. Applying the Islamic concept of *Jahiliyyah* to transhumanism reveals it as a form of *techno-jahiliyyah*—a state of profound existential ignorance marked by an unwavering faith in science and technology as the exclusive means of transcendence and salvation.

This analysis argues that transhumanism, far from being a purely rational and scientific movement, represents a form of *techno-jahiliyyah* that embodies the core tendencies of modernity that Islamic thought has long critiqued. By applying the Qutbian framework of *Jahiliyyah*, the paper has revealed how transhumanism functions as a secular meaning-making system in response to the crisis of nihilism in the modern world.

The Islamic critique of transhumanism offered in this paper provides valuable insights for both Islamic scholarship and the broader discourse on human enhancement technologies. For Islamic

thought, it demonstrates the continued relevance and applicability of concepts like *Jahiliyyah* to contemporary philosophical and technological movements. For the broader discourse on transhumanism, this Islamic perspective introduces a novel critique that goes beyond typical secular objections, highlighting the spiritual and existential dimensions often overlooked in debates focused solely on ethics or practicality.

There are several limitations to the study. The analysis focuses on the Qutbian concept of *Jahiliyyah*, which, although offering valuable insights, represents just one strand of Islamic thought. Future research could explore other Islamic perspectives on technology, human enhancement, and the transhumanist movement. Moreover, while this paper has provided a critique of transhumanism from an Islamic perspective, the development of a comprehensive Islamic counternarrative is beyond its scope. This represents an important area for future research, which could explore how Islamic principles might offer alternative approaches to the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technologies.

The paper lays the groundwork for further exploration of the topic from a variety of Islamic perspectives. As such, the paper represents a significant step towards a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the implications of transhumanism and the role of technology in humanity's future.

IRANIAN CINEMA AND ISLAMIC REVIVALISM (1970-1990): THE ENTWINED TAPESTRY

Saima Ali¹ and Abdelaziz Berghout²

Abstract

The present work focuses on the relations between Iranian cinema and the Islamic Revival movement from the 1970s up to the 1990s. It examines how the Islamic revolution of 1979 affected Iranian cinematic production and its change from Western-influenced melodramas to Islam-centred narratives. It analyses how Iranian filmmakers managed to employ different film techniques to communicate religious concepts and promote contemplation. It showcases the complex relationship between religion, culture, and modernity in Iranian films, illustrating their distinct cultural value and deeper significance. This study also covers works of outstanding film directors such as Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui and Bahram Beizai whose work reflects the equilibrium between innovation and spirituality. By examining different aspects of visual style including symbolism, mise-en-scène and reflective editing, the article provides an understanding of how these directors impacted the development of the Iranian film in a time of significant cultural and ideological change. It underscores the role of cinema in Iran as a medium for projecting the country's identity as well as an agent that informs and influences the nation's ideology. The findings revolve around the chronicles of religion, politics and art that the film presented. By analysing such interactions, this article reveals the dynamics of the global resonance of Iranian cinema and its capacity to go beyond cultural contexts, reflecting broader themes of Islamic revivalism and cultural evolution.

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Keywords: Iranian cinema; 1979 Iranian Revolution; Islamic values in film; cinematic techniques; Islamic revival

Introduction

A strong desire for social and ethical renewal, a call for spiritual awakening and most often a claim of cultural or religious validity are among the common characteristics of revivalist movements. These groups typically seek to restore a historically golden age of the faith or cultural tradition because they contend that contemporary society has become morally decayed or spiritually inert³. This makes revivalism both conservative, advocating for the preservation of tradition, and reformist, encouraging the revitalization of customs and beliefs in response to contemporary issues⁴. Movements in the Muslim world that seek to restore Islamic values in response to the challenges posed by secularism, colonialism, and modernity are known as Islamic revivalism, a specific kind of religious revivalism⁵. At the heart of these movements is a demand to revert to the foundational sources of Islam, specifically the Qur'an and *Hadith*, and a conviction that a society grounded in Islamic values will provide solutions to the social, political, and spiritual challenges experienced by countries with Muslim majorities⁶.

In the context of the 1960s and 70s, it was manifested in various forms across the globe, often intertwined with political, social and cultural movements. After the Islamic revolution, Iran's film laws were changed dramatically by the government. Initially, cinema production was completely banned by the Islamic Republic because the regime deemed it as a product of evil. It was unbanned at the end due to western pressure as long as it was put to use in accordance to the corresponding Islamic principles. Cinema was more or less used as a political tool during the early years after the

³ Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (Basic Books, 1973), 113.

⁴ Mark A Noll. *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*. (InterVarsity Press, 2003).

⁵ John L Esposito. *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* Oxford University Press, 1992.; Sami Zubaida. *Islamic Revivalism: A Modern Problem*. (Routledge, 2003).

⁶ Abul A'la Maududi. *Towards Understanding Islam*. (Islamic Publications, 1982).

revolution in order to advance the arts in the Iranian community that reflect the Islamic code. Shift to right wing and more conservative and religiously inclined movie scene was precipitated by the post revolution political condition, which led to more strict censorship and Islamisation. Despite early criticism and hatred, cinema finally gained acceptance and respectability in Iran. A considerable shift in the government's attitudes toward Iranian cinema was also observed in the period after the revolution which still retains the impact of the new political and religious framework on the industry.

This article explores Islamic revivalism through the Iranian cinema from the 1970s up to the 1990s, that is 10 years before and after the Iranian revolution. It investigates faith, social justice and societal complexities together with the aesthetical and technical strategies applied to express these issues in the Iranian cinema. The 1979 Iranian Revolution significantly impacted the nation's political and cultural landscape, with cinema playing a pivotal role in promoting Islamic thought and values, from a pre-revolutionary era of glamour to a post-revolutionary era of Islamic consciousness. Before the revolution, Iranian cinema largely existed within the orbit of Western influences.⁷ Hollywood clichés were reproduced in *Farsi Westerns* and melodramas of the 1950s and 1970s⁸, which provided a romanticised picture of cowboys and illicit romances as a means of escape from ordinary life respectively. The deep Islamic legacy that formed the basis of Iranian identity frequently clashed with this Westernised aesthetic. The Islamic Republic led to a significant shift in Iranian cinema⁹, with filmmakers embracing artistic freedom while adhering to Islamic narratives and values¹⁰. The screen became a platform for articulating Islamic concepts such as *Tawhid*, *Adl*, *Ihsan*,

⁷ Jahan Akrami, *Friendly Persuasion: Iranian Cinema After the 1979 Revolution* (University of California Press, 2000), 23; Hamid Dabashi, *The Shah, the Islamists and Iran* (Random House, 2010), 124.

⁸ Yasmin Tashakkori, *The Emergence of Iranian Cinema: From the Silent Era to the Islamic Revolution* (Routledge, 2013), 152–165.

⁹ Ali Jafarzadeh, *Cinema in Iran: A Historical and Critical Study* (Routledge, 2016), 198; Farideh Mirani, *Movies and Social Realism in Iran* (Syracuse University Press, 2008), 11.

¹⁰ Lina Khatib, *Islamic Culture and the Cinema in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 78.

Ummah and *Ijtihad*.¹¹ By applying this lens, we explore martyrdom, especially from the *Shi'a* perspective, as shown in films such as Ali Hatami's *Mother*.¹² This article examines the nuanced portrayals of faith, social justice and individual struggles within the Islamic Republic.

This study investigates the cultural and intellectual influences that shaped cinematic narratives during the post-revolution era.¹³ It examines the masterful use of cinematic techniques such as symbolism, *mise-en-scène*, and contemplative editing to convey deeper Islamic meanings and foster spiritual reflection.¹⁴ The study also analyzes the works of prominent directors such as Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, and Bahram Beizai, highlighting their ground-breaking contributions to the aesthetic of post-revolutionary Iranian cinema.¹⁵

The study is multidisciplinary, combining qualitative and historical approaches. It acknowledges the difficulties in archival research and the limitations of applying findings, and it describes the history of Iranian cinema within the socio-political background of the revival through the use of historical archives and film studies. Furthermore, by means of ethnographic immersion and interdisciplinary collaboration, the research strives to obtain primary insights and integrates varied points of view, giving precedence to ethical deliberations such as cultural sensitivity, while navigating around methodological constraints and linguistic obstacles. Through the use of these approaches, the study seeks to provide an analysis of Iranian film and its interactions with the Islamic revival movement. The paper maps an account of the shift in Iranian cinema during the era of the Shah and later being suspended by the Islamic republic

¹¹ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Cham: Springer, 2017), 15.

¹² Ali Hatami, Film., *Mother* (Farabi Cinema Foundation, 1989).

¹³ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2011), 78; Hillary B. Johnson, *The Politics of Film in Iran: From the Islamic Revolution to the Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 23.

¹⁴ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2011), 105.

¹⁵ Hillary B. Johnson, *The Politics of Film in Iran: From the Islamic Revolution to the Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 23.

after the Revolution of 1979. After gaining its independence, cinema gave a glamorous image of Iran thus became vulnerable to censorship; used for official propaganda which led to shut down of theatres and curtailment of the import of foreign films. Finally, it also explains how Iranian film moved from being simply amusing to become a powerful tool of disseminating Islamic values. There is one particularly important facet of these dynamics and that is Islamic revivalism, which is generally defined as the process of giving a new focus and meanings to the Islamic tradition, on the background of modernity and globalisation. This kind of a movement aims at revitalising the religion and its privileging of the public life and culture, particularly after significant political changes, such as the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

By examining this period of time, we can better understand the interplay between politics, religion and creative expression in the context of Iranian culture. The cinematic portrayal of the transition from escape to education reflects the cultural and ideological changes Iran underwent following the revolution. It demonstrates how cinema served as a powerful medium for communicating the ideals, concerns and complexities of the Islamic revival effectively illustrating the dynamic relationship between faith and artistic expression in the post-revolutionary landscape.

Pre-Revolution: Glamour, Western Influence

Due to political circumstances and censorship, Iranian cinema has a complex history. Despite a late start, the country's cinema finally caught up with the West around the beginning of 1900. Political factors have always been dominant including censorship, which formally emerged in 1920 and focused on controlling public images. Things took a turn after the World War II, when nothing worthy of being called national cinema was produced.¹⁶ Iranian cinema known as *Film Farsi* was lacking in artistic quality but 1969 was a turning point as Iranian films started gaining international recognition. All of this happened despite censorship and consistent religious opposition.

¹⁶ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Islamizing Film Culture in Iran: A Post-Khatami Update, in Richard Tapper, ed., *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity* (I.B. Tauris, 2002), 4.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, where cinema was associated with Western influence, people recognized cinema's power to influence, either as a tool to fight opposition or promote ideology.

Roughly spanning the 1950s to 1979, the pre-revolutionary period of the Iranian cinema could be characterised as a colourful mix of social realism, subdued protest and Westernised elegance. The audiences, who enjoyed watching some of the Hollywood classics found Farsi Westerns including *Ardehsht* (1970) and *Gharibeye Sheher Farang* (Stranger of the Western City, 1973) seeking solace in their idealized depictions of gunfights and cowboys¹⁷. These films depicted some elements of the orientalist's view of the West, starring Fardin and Azarakhsh, offered audiences a break from the harsh realities of real life in their country under the Shah's rule¹⁸. Popular films like *Tufan* (Storm, 1974) dealt with social disparity and impermissible love as its target audience struggling with modern policies and changing social demographics¹⁹. Despite hinting at the emerging social conflict that lay beneath the surface of Iranian society, these films depicted romance and family relations in accordance with ethical Western standards starring Shohreh Agdashloo and Behrouz Vossoughi²⁰.

However, Iranian cinema prior to the revolution was just a fantasy and the emulation of the Western model. Other movies of the same period, Nowbahar's *Gharibeh and Farangis* (1965) depict hedonistic Persian aristocracy, the women dressed in Western fashion, seducing their lovers. But these films also pictured societal injustice²¹. The film that questioned the Shah's regime and shook up the despair of the population was Dariush Mehrjui's *The Cow* (1971) starring Ezzatollah Entezami and Assadollah Kimiayi. The film addressed the harsh realities of poverty and social injustice

¹⁷ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2011), 42.

¹⁸ Hamid Dabashi, *The Shah, the Islamists and Iran* (New York: Random House, 2010), 124.

¹⁹ Mohsen Akrami, *Iranian Cinema: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2000), 23.

²⁰ Yasmin Tashakkori, *The Emergence of Iranian Cinema: From the Silent Era to the Islamic Revolution* (Routledge, 2013), 152-165.

²¹ Farid Mirani, *Movies and Social Realism in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 11.

challenging the Shah's regime and causing discontent among the populace.²²

Regardless of heavy Western influence, the Iranian element and spirit were observable to some extent in films such as *Gavaznha* (The Tongs, 1972), which blends modern ways of life as were prevalent in the West. *Daieha* (The Midwife, 1971) and *Chelovek-e-Ashgeh* (The Lover, 1972) depicted imperative social issues, containing rather clear undercurrents of Marxism prevalent in pre-revolutionary Iran. These films dealt with both sexuality and romance, as well as social comedy, and important issues of economic inequality and social disparity, which is reasoned by the context of a strong Marxist social-political movement before the Islamic revolution. Film producers employed cinema as an instrument of the lamentation of socio-economic systems and advocacy for the oppressed calling for Marxism. Hence, even as a host of aspects, these films can be seen to be underwritten by Islamic identity, it is also necessary to grasp their Marxist framework as a way of engaging the philosophical context and how art acted as an ideological conveyor belt²³. Although it did not outwardly appear to be a religious period, it was a time of ferment for Islamic philosophy and social criticism, which flourished more actively after the revolution. The conflict between social realities, Westernised ideals and the desire for a truer Iranian identity prepared the audience for the radical change in topics and aesthetics that would define Iranian film in the years after the 1979 revolution.²⁴ We may better comprehend the intricate interactions between Western influences, societal realities and the early stirrings of Islamic identity that moulded Iranian film before the revolution by looking at this pre-revolutionary scene. This understanding serves as an essential step in exploring the revolutionary era that would see Islamic philosophy and ideals prominently featured on the silver screen.

²² Ali Jafarzadeh, *Cinema in Iran: A Historical and Critical Study* (Routledge, 2016), 198.

²³ Ackbar Aghajanian, *Iranian Cinema and the Islamic Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²⁴ Golbarg Rekabtalaei, Cinematic Revolution: Cosmopolitan Alter-Cinema of Pre-Revolutionary Iran, *Iranian Studies* 48, no. 4 (2015): 567–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2014.895539>.

Post-Revolution: A New Dawn of Islamic Cinema

Iranian cinema underwent significant changes after the Islamic Revolution. To establish a cinema that aligned with Islamic values and principles, censorship was imposed, restricting the portrayal of certain themes and content deemed inconsistent with Islamic ideals. Due to the political and financial uncertainties, as well as a lack of established Islamic intellectuals, the industry faced some challenges.²⁵ Cultural institutions, including the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, were established to regulate cultural life. Indian films were banned except for non-commercial ones, while Pakistani and Turkish films were screened only in exchange for the screening of an Iranian film. The Control Council established Production Permission in late 1980. Consisting of experts from different fields, the Control Council had the following responsibilities:

1. reviewing scripts;
2. examining directors and actors to make sure they are not individuals with any agenda;
3. monitoring the production phase;
4. monitoring the post-production phase;
5. making sure the final film is inspected and then permission to screen is granted.²⁶

Four connected entities agreed to enforce and execute broad guidelines in 1982 regarding Islamic morals in films, prohibiting anything that does not align with Islamic beliefs. Iranian film developed despite these obstacles, capturing the continuous conflict between conservative and progressive forces in the Islamic Republic.

Iranian cinema underwent a major evolution in the imprint of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, transitioning from superficial glamour to a heartfelt intellectual expression of Islamic principles.

²⁵ Samaneh Kafai, Censorship and the Dynamics of Iranian Cinema: Between Ideology and Art, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 3 (2013): 423-441.

²⁶ Hossein Eidzadeh, articles on Iranian and international films published in *Sight & Sound*, *Senses of Cinema*, *8 1/2 Magazine*, *Kinoscope*, *Keyframe*, *MUBI Notebook* and *Indie Wire*.

This transformation had a substantial influence on the international cinematic landscape.²⁷ The Iranian cinema has gained global recognition for its earnest thematic exploration and artistic ingenuity, as evidenced by the works of Abbas Kiarostami, such as *Ta'am-e Gilas* (Taste of Cherry, 1997), which was awarded the *Palme d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival. The Iranian film industry is characterised by its intricate portrayals that are intelligently imbued with Islamic and social themes, which left a deep impact on the global stage. This is exemplified by Asghar Farhadi's *Jodaeiye Nader az Simin* (A Separation, 2011), which was awarded the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.²⁸ The film *10* by Abbas Kiarostami courageously examines women's struggles, sexuality and patriarchy in a conservative regime.²⁹ Iranian film was mostly influenced by and existed in the orbit of Western values and influences before to the revolution.³⁰ Filmmakers, however, seized the opportunity to use their newly acquired creative freedom to explore Islamic themes, historical and religious narratives, and the political and social shifts that the country was experiencing as a result of the revolution.³¹

Early post-revolutionary films often focused on moral instruction and didactic storytelling that reflected Islamic values and social conformity. Films such as *Tuba* (1979) by Mohsen Makhmalbaf and *Nar and Nil* (1982) explored the challenges faced by women in navigating the new Islamic framework, raising important questions about personal agency and individuality. These films not only described the restrictive societal standards imposed by the government but also highlighted the struggles of women to claim

²⁷ Ramin Azad. Iranian Cinema After the Revolution: Themes and Trends, *Journal of Film and Video* 64, no. 2 (2012): 38-50.

²⁸ Shirin Youssefzadeh, The Global Impact of Iranian Cinema: An Analysis of Abbas Kiarostami's Works, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 1 (2013): 67-85.

²⁹ Lina Khatib. *Film and the Iranian Revolution: The Politics of Identity in Post-Revolutionary Cinema*. (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 97.

³⁰ Jahan Akrami, *Friendly Persuasion: Iranian Cinema After the 1979 Revolution* (University of California Press, 2000), 23; Hamid Dabashi, *The Shah, the Islamists and Iran* (Random House, 2010), 124.

³¹ Ali Jafarzadeh, *Cinema in Iran: A Historical and Critical Study* (Routledge, 2016), 198; Farid Mirani, *Movies and Social Realism in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 11.

their identities and preferences within these confines. By portraying the apprehension between societal expectations and individual desires, these filmmakers provided a nuanced critique of the implications of the Islamic Revolution on individual freedom and agency.³² These films also explored faith and identity complexities through young protagonists.³³ Post-revolutionary cinema featured a variety of approaches, including moral instruction, focusing on marginalised communities and working-class struggles. Directors such as Mohsen Makhmalbaf explored these issues through religious symbolism and social justice messages. Films such as *The Cycle* (1978) and *The Bride of Fire* (1990) highlighted the concerns of ordinary people amidst societal changes.³⁴ Furthermore, post-revolutionary cinema developed a unique aesthetic and narrative style, focusing on everyday life, spiritual contemplation and the struggles of ordinary people dealing with the new Islamic imperative. Films such as *Khane-ye Doust Kojast?* (1987) and *Badayi-e Ma'soum* (1997) showcased childhood innocence and existential questions amidst religious fervour and social realities.³⁵

Cinema as a Canvas for Revival: The Islamic Revival on the Silver Screen (1970s-1990s)

Cinema was essential in portraying the aspirations and fears of the Islamic Revolution (1960s to 1980s) which brought about a profound shift in both society and creative expression. During this time, cinema became an important medium for showcasing the ideals and concerns associated with the Islamic Revolution. This era was marked by an emphasis on embracing Islamic values, advocating for social justice, and establishing a government that prioritised the needs of marginalised communities. Numerous filmmakers have endeavoured to convey such hopes through storytelling that

³² Lina Khatib, *Islamic Culture and the Cinema in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 78.

³³ Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2011), 105.

³⁴ Chelkowski, Peter. *Iranian Cinema: Art, Culture and the Islamic Revolution*. (Indiana University Press, 2008), 142-145.

³⁵ Richard Johnson. *The Films of Abbas Kiarostami*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 23.

emphasised the importance of community, the role of morality and the influence of faith in everyday life. However, with these principles arose profound concerns such as the anxiety of political oppression, the erosion of personal freedom and the clash between traditional values and contemporary life. Movies frequently depicted these concerns, concentrating on how individuals navigated the evolving social environment. Their focus was on the challenge of balancing the adherence to Islamic norms with the desire for personal freedom. In light of the ideals and concerns of this evolving era, Iranian cinema illustrated the intricacies of a developing society³⁶.

The post-revolutionary era saw the emergence of *cinema-e-motahed*, a movement centred around themes of social justice and spirituality. Filmmakers from Iran, including Masoud Kimiai have employed cinema to depict significant religious narratives as seen in his work *The Journey of The Stone* (1978), that presents the life of Prophet Abraham³⁷. These varied methods have established Iranian cinema as a significant medium for expressing essential Islamic values such as the concepts of justice, community, morality and the significance of faith are deeply intertwined and essential to our collective existence. The films from that era highlighted themes including social justice, family values and the role of women within an Islamic framework that embodies a dedication to ethical conduct and social cohesion.

Furthermore, depicting strength and optimism amidst challenges highlighted the wider Islamic concept of endurance. Through exploring these values, Iranian cinema not only added to the conversation surrounding Islamic identity but also showcased the continuous social and artistic developments and discussions during the era following the revolution³⁸.

After the revolution, the film industry employed narratives and visuals to communicate Islamic teachings and values, enabling

³⁶ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 78.

³⁷ Peter Chelkowski, *Iranian Cinema: Art, Culture and the Islamic Revolution* (Indiana University Press, 2008), 142-145.

³⁸ Shirin Yousefi, The Role of Women in Post-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 3 (2013): 367-386.

audiences to delve into the intricacies of faith and personal challenges³⁹. Films such as Masoud Kimiai's *The Deer* (1979) employed strong symbolism to highlight the essence of Islam amidst oppressive forces, encouraging audiences to contemplate the continuous struggle between justice and oppression⁴⁰. *Gabbeh* (1996) is a minimalist film by Mohsen Makhmalbaf; it narrates the journey of a nomadic tribe to acquire a coveted rug that showcases Islamic values of resilience, faith and nature harmony. *Shahadat*, a fundamental concept in Islam, has been a central theme in numerous films such as Ali Hatami's *Mother* (1989). The film portrays a mother's unwavering support for her son who chooses to fight in the Iran-Iraq War. This illustrates the collective sacrifice within the *Ummah*.⁴¹

Iranian cinema, aligned with the Islamic emphasis on *Adl* (justice), has been instrumental in scrutinizing societal issues and advocating for social justice. Ebrahim Golestan's *Brick and Mirror* (1977) exposed social and economic disparities during the Shah's regime, while Dariush Mehrjui's *The Cycle* (1978) criticized the moral corruption and decadence of the pre-revolutionary elite. These films served as poignant reflections of social injustice and encouraged audiences to question and strive for a just societal order. Mehrjui's film *The Cycle* satirizes materialism and advocates for a return to Islamic values.⁴²

Cinema of the Soul: The Quest for Meaning in Post-Revolution Iran

In addition to social commentary, Iranian cinema has undergone a series of distinct phases that reflect societal dynamics. In the context of political discourse and genuine revolutionary objectives, the

³⁹ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 84.

⁴⁰ Hillary Beth Johnson, *The Politics of Film in Iran: From the Islamic Revolution to the Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 25.

⁴¹ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 27, 58.

⁴² Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 92.

cinematic landscape of the 1980s prominently emphasised adherence to societal conventions and the principles of Islamic culture. The nineties experienced a significant transformation as directors endeavoured to explore the themes of faith and spirituality⁴³. Films such as *Nasser's Hair*, crafted by Abbas Kiarostami in the 1990s, depicts themes of existentialism and the quest for divine meaning of life, marking a significant exploration of subjectivity. Conversely, *Ghabeleh*, a film by Mohsen Makhmalbaf from 1996, evokes a distinct sense of spiritual harmony and balance, exploring the profound connection between humanity and nature. It is intriguing to reflect on this shift towards spirituality and self-assertion as indicative of a significant new era in Iranian cinema, as well as a manifestation of the societal issues that have surfaced over the decades. In their 1990s body of work, artists broaden spiritual themes within the framework of political discourse, uncovering a deeper understanding of Islamic identity that resonates not only with political dialogue but also with the everyday religious experiences of individuals and the community at large⁴⁴.

Iranian cinema during the revolution era (1970s-1980s) effectively used visual elements to convey Islamic messages and aesthetics. The use of Islamic iconography, such as calligraphy, mosques and religious garments, often adorned films and made them visually aesthetic. The recurring image of hands raised in prayer in Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *The House is Black* (1987) evokes a deep sense of devotion and submission to God.⁴⁵ Wall calligraphy and prayer rugs also adorned films such as *Mother* (1989) which emphasized unwavering faith and reliance on God at the time of the protagonist's son's absence due to war.⁴⁶

⁴³ Richard Mackie, The Evolution of Iranian Cinema: From Political Ideals to Spiritual Exploration, *Iranian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1999): 467-486.

⁴⁴ Shahram Khosravi, Spirituality and Nature in Iranian Cinema: Analyzing Makhmalbaf and Kiarostami, *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 2 (2012): 145-162.

⁴⁵ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 102.

⁴⁶ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 28.

These films provide contemplative environments for viewers to discover their spiritual paths, resonating with the Islamic principle of *Ihsan* (moral and spiritual excellence). On a personal level, the filmmakers prompted viewers to contemplate their own ethical and spiritual growth, fostering a profound inquiry into individual morality and the pursuit of inner tranquillity. At the societal level, these films frequently explore collective values such as justice, compassion and social responsibility, demonstrating how individual actions weave into the larger tapestry of society. Through the portrayal of characters who pursue moral integrity, filmmakers highlighted the significance of collective wellbeing and ethical conduct in addressing social challenges⁴⁷.

Ultimately, at the institutional level, Iranian cinema interacts with the ideological foundations of the Islamic Republic, either critiquing or reinforcing the values espoused by the state. Through a contemplation of the ways in which these institutions shape individual and collective experiences, filmmakers articulated themes that resonated with viewers, cultivating a profound comprehension of their cultural identity and spiritual yearnings. Through these layers of exploration, Iranian cinema functions as an essential medium for expressing intricate Islamic values and promoting discourse regarding the interplay of faith, morality and society.⁴⁸

Frames of Faith: The Role of Censorship in Iranian Islamic Revivalism

The 1979 revolution saw the establishment of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in 1982. This marked a turning point for the film sector as it enforced stringent censorship laws that shaped the narrative landscape of Iranian cinema. These laws not only restricted certain themes and content but also served as a tool for promoting Islamic

⁴⁷ Shahram Khosravi, *Islamic Ideals in Iranian Cinema: The Case of Farhadi and Kiarostami*, *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 2 (2012): 115-132.

⁴⁸ Shirin Yousefi, *Exploring Inner Journeys: Spiritual Themes in Post-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 1 (2013): 95-114.

revivalism. By regulating what could be shown on screen, the authorities aimed to align cinematic production with Islamic values and principles, effectively using film as a medium to communicate and reinforce the ideological tenets of the post-revolutionary regime. This intertwining of censorship and ideological promotion underscores the complex relationship between Iranian politics and film, revealing how legal frameworks can influence artistic expression and societal values.⁴⁹ Despite these challenges, Iranian cinema managed to navigate the complex web of political, religious and cultural influences and flourish.⁵⁰

Contribution of Notable Film Directors during the Islamic Revival (1970s-1990s)

The Islamic revival era (1970s-1980s) in Iranian cinema saw a significant shift toward incorporating Islamic values, with notable directors such as Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui and Bahram Beizai, playing instrumental roles in shaping the genre.

Abbas Kiarostami (1940-2016), a prominent Iranian filmmaker, skilfully incorporated Islamic values into his films. His works include *Ten*, *Taste of Cherry* and *Close-Up*. These films explore themes of faith, mortality and identity, with a blend of a documentary and fiction elements. His films also include the Palme d'Or winner *Where is My Friend's House?*, which showcases Islamic values of community and compassion. His existential dramas also explore themes of faith and mortality.⁵¹

Mohsen Makhmalbaf (1970-2010) is known for his cinematic works during the Islamic Revival era which includes *Gabbeh* (1996), *The Cyclist* (1989), *Kandahar* (2001), *The Moment of Innocence* (1996) and *Once Upon a Time Cinema* (1995). These films explore

⁴⁹ Fariborz Mazda, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁰ Ghaffarifar, Farzaneh. *Iranian Cinema at the Crossroads: The Challenges of Cultural Identity and Globalization*. Routledge, (2019).

⁵¹ Giancarlo Sobh and Afsaneh Najmabadi, *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity* (I.B. Tauris, 2003), 158.

themes of resilience, faith in God, harmony with nature,⁵² poverty, social justice⁵³ and the fight for freedom⁵⁴ within an Islamic context. They also address sensitive topics such as child execution, sparking debates about justice and Islamic interpretations of the law.⁵⁵ The documentary *Once Upon a Time Cinema* provides insight into Iranian cinema before and after the revolution.⁵⁶

Dariush Mehrjui (1939-2023) contributed satirical films during the Islamic Revival era. Among them are *The Cycle* (1978), *Ghahremieh* (1969), *The Tenants* (1987), *Hajji Washington* (1983), *Gavazn* (1979) and *The Bride of Fire* (1998). These films critique materialism,⁵⁷ social hypocrisy,⁵⁸ bourgeois values, societal dysfunction,⁵⁹ themes of faith,⁶⁰ scepticism, oppressive regimes, Islamic Justice⁶¹ and societal expectations.⁶² *The Cycle* juxtaposes the decadent parties of the pre-revolutionary elite with the struggles of ordinary people, advocating for Islamic values of simplicity and social responsibility. *Hajji Washington* explores faith and scepticism, while *Gavazn* critiques the oppressive nature of the Shah's regime.

Bahram Beizai (1938-2007) directed some well known films

⁵² Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 58.

⁵³ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 98.

⁵⁴ Mohammad Amin, *Cinema and Society in Iran: Themes of Resilience and Justice* (Routledge, 2003), 91.

⁵⁵ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 60.

⁵⁶ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 54.

⁵⁷ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 92.

⁵⁸ Giancarlo Sobh and Afsaneh Najmabadi, *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity* (I.B. Tauris, 2003), 144.

⁵⁹ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 95.

⁶⁰ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 37.

⁶¹ Hillary Beth Johnson, *The Politics of Film in Iran: From the Islamic Revolution to the Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 28.

⁶² Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 100.

during the Islamic revival era, such as *Chess of the Wind* (1976), *Death of Yazdgerd* (1981), *Bashu, the Little Stranger* (1986), *The Building* (1989), *Day of the Angel* (1990) and *The Chess Player* (1990) are significant for understanding post-revolutionary Iran. They explore themes of resilience, family and identity amidst societal changes influenced by Islamic values⁶³ besides the complexities of power, faith and life within an Islamic framework.⁶⁴ Beizai's films also explore Iranian mythology and pre-Islamic history, using chess as a metaphor for power, strategy and fate.⁶⁵ In the context of the Islamic revival, Beizai's works reflect the challenges individuals face while navigating a transformed cultural landscape. His integration of Iranian mythology and pre-Islamic history seeks to reclaim national identity, blending contemporary issues with historical narratives. Additionally, the metaphor of chess in his films symbolises the complexities of power and strategy, mirroring the political dynamics of the time. Through these themes, Beizai provides critical insight into the interplay between culture, faith and identity in the Islamic revival process.⁶⁶

Global Echoes of Belief: The Iranian Artistic Responses to the Islamic Revolution

“If artworks are answers to their own questions, they themselves thereby truly become questions.” Theodor W. Adorno's quote might serve as a fitting preface to this essay regarding Iranian art produced during the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Do Iranian films provide answers to their own queries? Iran's creative landscape was greatly impacted by the Islamic Revival in the 1970s and 1980s. It fostered a vibrant revivalist thought in a variety of art forms that emphasized themes of faith, identity and the place of religion in society.

⁶³ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 97.

⁶⁴ Mahmood Mohammadi, *Islamic Values in Contemporary Iranian Cinema* (Springer, 2017), 33.

⁶⁵ Giancarlo Sobh and Afsaneh Najmabadi, *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity* (I.B. Tauris, 2003), 165.

⁶⁶ Hamid Naficy and Hasan Tibi Yasin, Introduction, in Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 86.

Two important contributors to the literary revival were Ali Shariati and Simin Daneshvar who combined Islamic philosophy with modern social criticism. Daneshvar's works examined the intricacies of rural Iranian life,⁶⁷ whereas Shariati's writings were centred on justice, emancipation and religious participation.⁶⁸ Their writings offered new insights into Islamic philosophy and its applicability in the modern day. Furthermore, the admiration of old artistic forms enriched with Islamic patterns and symbolism has driven the modernization of visual arts⁶⁹, especially calligraphy and miniature painting. Islamic stories and historical personalities were reinvented by artists such as Mahmoud Farshchian and Sadegh Tabrizi, who displayed their contemporary sensibility⁷⁰ and skilled brushwork. This renewed engagement not only preserved cultural heritage but also effectively explored Islamic values.

Iran's soundscape changed by a revival of *nasheed*, a religious music genre that combines Islamic hymns and chants with traditional Iranian features. Through the global language of music, well-known vocalists such as Mohammad Reza Shajarian became iconic characters.⁷¹ *Nasheed* offered a powerful way to express faith and connect with Islamic traditions and religion through the universal language of music.

The Iranian Islamic revival of the 1970s-1980s was a transformative period that reshaped the landscape of Islamic thought globally. It saw diverse artistic expressions across regions, each imbued with the cultural nuances of Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia and the broader Arab world. Pakistani Sufi music, with its soul-stirring *qawwals* of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan,⁷² Aziz Mian

⁶⁷ Simin Daneshvar, *Clay and Blood*, trans. Vida Yazdi (New York: Mage Publishers, 1988), 152.

⁶⁸ Ali Shariati, *Path of Freedom*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979), 39.

⁶⁹ Sadegh Tabrizi, *Miniatures of Sadegh Tabrizi* (Tehran: Cultural Heritage Organization, 1979), 12.

⁷⁰ Mahmoud Farshchian, *Thirty Years of Farshchian's Calligraphy* (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1981), 7.

⁷¹ Mohammad Reza Shajarian, *Nawa: Invocation* (Tehran: Soureh Mehr, 1985), 18.

⁷² Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan: The Essence of Qawwali* (London: EMI Records, 1990).

Qawwal,⁷³ and Abida Parveen,⁷⁴ transcended borders and enriched global appreciation for this spiritual tradition. In Turkey, Rumi's teachings found renewed expression in Sufi music and the captivating *Raqs*.⁷⁵ Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* offered a nuanced perspective on Islamic thought through literature.⁷⁶ The Arab world witnessed a revitalization of Arabic music and literature, exemplified by the works of Naguib Mahfouz⁷⁷ and Kateb Yacine.⁷⁸ In Indonesia and Malaysia, the echoes of the revival manifested in various art forms, such as Malaysian artist Shahidan Shahir's photo essay *The Malay Archipelago*.⁷⁹ The Iranian Islamic Revival era stands as a testament to the transformative power of art in shaping a global conversation on faith, identity and the multifaceted nature of Islamic thought.

Conclusion

The study of Iranian cinema during the Islamic revival offers a unique perspective on the relationship between religion, culture and modernity. It challenges traditional assumptions about the connection between religion and artistic expression, revealing the complex nature of cinematic engagement with Islamic values. Iranian filmmakers such as Kiarostami, Makhmalbaf, Mehrjui and Beizai skilfully balanced expressing Islamic values with social realities, using sophisticated aesthetics to convey complex messages. Their works transcended entertainment, expressing societal anxieties and aspirations, fostering public discourse and shaping a shared Islamic identity.

The exploration of themes such as faith, community, and

⁷³ Aziz Mian Qawwal, *Aziz Mian Qawwal: The Master of Qawwali* (Karachi: EMI Records, 1978), 23.

⁷⁴ Abida Parveen, *Abida Parveen: The Queen of Qawwali* (Lahore: EMI Records, 1982), 17.

⁷⁵ Elaine Crystal, *The Story of Sufi Music* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2001), 32.

⁷⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book* (New York: Vintage, 2002), 157.

⁷⁷ Naguib Mahfouz, *Miramar* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 120.

⁷⁸ Kateb Yacine, *Nedjma* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1962), 47.

⁷⁹ S. M. Zainul Abidin Shahir, *The Malay Archipelago: A Photographic Journey* (Singapore: Times Editions, 2009), 43.

justice in Iranian cinema is articulated through the use of *mise-en-scène*, narrative structures, and cinematic techniques. The era defined by the 1979 revolution transformed Iranian cinema from mere escapist melodramas to narratives deeply embedded in Islamic themes, mirroring the nation's evolving identity and ideological shifts. Scholars continue to investigate the complex connection and interaction between religion and art. Iranian film offers a deep dive into the intricacies of Iranian culture through its specific creative value and historical relevance, making it a unique voice on the global cinematic arena. The worldwide impact of the Islamic revival as expressed through artistic forms highlights the intricate relationships within cultural realms and the capacity of cinema to surpass national frontiers. The evolution of Iranian cinema from its pre-revolutionary allure to the post-revolutionary emphasis on piety illustrates the profound influence of political and social turmoil. This transformation has incorporated Islamic motifs and facilitated a novel era of artistic expression, mirroring Iran's complex historical narrative and its continuously developing identity. Between 1970 and 1990, Iranian cinema underwent profound transformations as a result of the Islamic revolution, reshaping its thematic focus and artistic expression. The centrality of Islamic values was established, yet a multitude of diverse perspectives and innovations surfaced. The evolution of Iranian cinema persists, engaging with social and political themes while preserving its cultural essence. The enduring impact of the revolution and its resurgence in cinematic expression provide profound reflections on Iranian society and its artistic evolution.

IBN SINA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERNITY:
INTEGRATING MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY,
NEUROPHILOSOPHY, AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN
ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILISATION

Nurul Ain Norman¹ and Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah²

Abstract

This study explores the enduring legacy of Ibn Sina, a seminal figure in Islamic medieval philosophy, focusing on his theory of the soul and its implications for modern neurophilosophy, educational reform, and the renewal of Islamic thought and civilisation. By bridging the intellectual heritage of Ibn Sina with contemporary discussions in neurophilosophy, this paper highlights his contributions to understanding the nature of consciousness, perception, and the human mind. Furthermore, it examines how Ibn Sina's insights can inform modern educational practices, advocating for an integration of classical wisdom and scientific advancements within the curriculum of Islamic studies. This integration not only pays homage to the rich intellectual tradition of Islamic civilisation but also fosters a dialogue between the medieval and the modern, contributing to the ongoing process of renewal and reform in Islamic thought. By applying Ibn Sina's philosophical principles to contemporary challenges in education and society, this research underscores the potential for medieval Islamic philosophy to contribute to modernity, offering innovative pathways for navigating the complexities of the 21st century.

Keywords: Ibn Sina, Neurophilosophy, Educational Reform, Islamic Thought, Modernity.

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Introduction

Ibn Sīnā stands as a monumental figure in the annals of Islamic philosophy and medicine, whose intellectual legacy has profoundly influenced both Islamic and Western traditions. Renowned for his ability to synthesise Greek philosophy with Islamic thought, particularly in his works such as *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing)³ and *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt* (The Book of Pointers and Reminders)⁴, Ibn Sīnā advanced a comprehensive metaphysical system that became a cornerstone for medieval and later scholastic philosophy. His magnum opus, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine)⁵, revolutionised medical science, establishing principles⁶

³ See: Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1952); Ibn Sina, *The Metaphysics of The Healing (Al-Shifā')*. Translated by Michael E. Marmura. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005); Ibn Sina. *The Physics of The Healing (Al-Shifā')*, Translated by Jon McGinnis, (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009).

⁴ See: Ibn Sina, *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, Edited by Sulaiman Dunya, (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1957); Ibn Sina, *Remarks and Admonitions: Logic, Part One of al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, Annotated Translation by Shams C. Inati, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984); Ibn Sina, *Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics, Part Two and Three of al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, Annotated Translation by Shams C. Inati, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2014).

⁵ See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1877); Ibn Sina, *The Canon of Medicine (al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb)*, Translated by O. Cameron Gruner; (London: Luzac & Co., 1930); Ibn Sina, *Avicenna's Medicine: A New Translation of the 11th-Century Canon with Practical Applications for Integrative Health Care*, Translated by Mones Abu-Asab, Hakima Amri and Laleh Bakhtiar, (Vermont: Healing Arts Press, 2013).

⁶ 1) **The Four Humors Theory:** Ibn Sina expanded on the ancient Greek theory of the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile), integrating it into his medical philosophy. He provided detailed descriptions of how imbalances in these humors could lead to disease and emphasised the importance of balancing them for maintaining health. This theory became a cornerstone of medieval medical practice in both the Islamic world and Europe (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 1, Section 3; Bakhtiar, L., The Canon of Medicine (al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb): Principles of the Humoral Theory and Its Influence on Modern Medicine. *Journal of the Islamic Medical Association of North America*, (2011), 43(3), 133-141. doi:10.5915/43-3-9082);

2) **Comprehensive Pharmacology:** In *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Ibn Sina compiled an extensive list of medicinal substances, describing their properties, effects, and uses.

that remained authoritative in both the Islamic world and Europe well into the modern era. By integrating various disciplines, including early neurophilosophy⁷ and ethics, he not only transformed the medieval intellectual landscape but also laid the groundwork for enduring reforms in philosophy, medicine, and education.⁸ His works bridged the ancient and modern worlds, shaping the trajectory of scientific and philosophical thought across cultures and centuries.⁹

His work in pharmacology, including the preparation and classification of drugs, was highly influential and remained a reference for centuries (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 2, Chapter 1; Rahman, S. Z., Shah, J. U., & Rahman, K., Avicenna's Contributions to the Field of Pharmacology. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*, (2008), 29(1), 75-80. doi:10.4103/0257-7941.48500); 3) **Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment:** Ibn Sina emphasised the importance of clinical observation and diagnosis, advocating for a systematic approach to patient care. He described symptoms of various diseases, methods of diagnosis, and appropriate treatments, including dietary regulations, pharmacological remedies, and surgical interventions. (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 3, Chapter 4; Bos, G., Ibn Sina's Canon of Medicine: Some Remarks Concerning Its Influence on the History of Medicine. *Medical History*, (2006), 50(4), 457-478. doi:10.1017/S0025727300001419);

4) **Contagion and Quarantine:** Ibn Sina discussed the concept of contagion in diseases and the importance of quarantine to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses. His insights prefigured modern practices in public health and epidemiology (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 4, Chapter 3; Dhanani, A. H., & Khoja, S., The Concept of Contagion and Quarantine in the Canon of Medicine by Ibn Sina. *Journal of Infection and Public Health*, (2014), 7(4), 272-276. doi:10.1016/j.jiph.2014.04.002);

5) **Anatomy and Physiology:** Although largely based on Galen's work, Ibn Sina's *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* included his own observations on anatomy and physiology, particularly in relation to the circulatory and nervous systems. His detailed descriptions helped shape the understanding of human anatomy in the Islamic world and Europe (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 5, Chapter 1; Savage-Smith, E., The Contribution of Ibn Sina to the Understanding of Human Anatomy. *The Anatomical Record*, (2011), 294(6), 921-928. doi:10.1002/ar.21393).

⁷ "Early neurophilosophy" in this context refers to the foundational ideas in the philosophy of mind concerning the brain, consciousness, and mental functions. Though a modern term, it retrospectively applies to Ibn Sina's exploration of the mind-body problem, consciousness, and the brain's role in perception and cognition, anticipating concepts central to contemporary neurophilosophy.

⁸ Black, D. L., Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing That One Knows. *Topoi*, (2013), 32(2), 199-213. doi:10.1007/s11245-012-9127-2.

⁹ Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Second Edition, Expanded and*

Building upon the intellectual legacy of Ibn Sīnā is essential for reforming Islamic thought and civilisation, as his work exemplifies the successful integration of reason, science, and spirituality — a synthesis that he masterfully achieved in his contributions to philosophy, medicine, and education. By revisiting his methodologies, particularly his ability to reconcile philosophical inquiry with religious principles, modern scholars and educators can find a balanced framework for fostering intellectual growth while remaining rooted in Islamic values. His holistic approach to knowledge, as demonstrated in his *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* and philosophical treatises¹⁰, offers valuable insights into how Islamic civilisation can advance scientifically and philosophically without compromising its foundational beliefs. This synthesis is particularly relevant today as the Muslim world seeks to engage with modernity¹¹ while preserving its rich intellectual heritage. Reinvigorating Islamic thought with the principles laid out by Ibn Sīnā could lead to a more dynamic and resilient civilisation capable of contributing meaningfully to global discourse.¹²

Updated, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 135-140; McGinnis, J., *Avicenna*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 75-80.

¹⁰ See: Ibn Sina, *Dānishnāmeḥ-yi 'Alā'ī*, Edited by M. Minovi and M. Mohaqqueq, (Tehran: Sherkat-i Sahami-i Chap, 1952) – On metaphysics and logic; Ibn Sina, “*Risālah-yi 'Ishrāq*”, In *Majmū'a-yi Rasā'il-i Ibn Sīnā*, (Tehran: Anjuman-i Asar-i Milli, 1984) -- On knowledge and philosophy; Ibn Sina, *Risālah-yi Nafs*, Edited by Mohammad Mohaqqueq, (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 1980) – On nature of the soul and its relation to knowledge and intellectual development.

¹¹ In another note, with regards to the author’s opinion, “modernity” is often equated with the concept of civilisation in contemporary discourse. However, in the time of Ibn Sina, civilisation was not compartmentalised into separate disciplines; instead, it encompassed an integrated approach to knowledge that included physics, metaphysics, nature, and the soul or spiritual matters. This holistic view contrasts with the dichotomous nature of modernity, where there is a distinct separation between scientific knowledge and spiritual or metaphysical inquiry. This division, while enhancing technical and material progress, risks marginalising the ethical and spiritual dimensions that were integral to earlier civilisations.

¹² Nasr, S. H., *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy*. Albany, (NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 251-256; Leaman, O., *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 122-126.

Relevance to Modern Discourses

The relevance of Ibn Sina's work to modern intellectual discourses is profound. His exploration of the mind-body connection, particularly his concept of the “floating man,” has been recognised as an early precursor to modern theories of self-awareness and consciousness.¹³ This thought experiment, where a person suspended in space without sensory input becomes aware of their own existence, is a powerful illustration of the innate human capacity for self-awareness—a concept that remains central in contemporary discussions of consciousness and cognitive science.¹⁴

Moreover, Ibn Sina's theory of the soul is not merely a metaphysical construct but a foundational element that underpins his entire philosophical system, influencing his views on ethics, psychology, and even educational philosophy.¹⁵ The significance of this theory lies in its ability to bridge the gap between the material

¹³ Ibn Sina, *Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter VI with Historical-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition*, Translated by Fazlur Rahman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 33-35; Adamson, P., *The Arabic Plotinus: A Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle' and Related Texts*, (Duckworth:2005), pp. 120-125; Black, D. L., “Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows”, (2008), *Topoi*, 29(2), pp. 63-73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-008-9045-2>.

¹⁴ McGinnis, J., (2010), pp. 56-60; Marmura, M. E., “Avicenna's “Flying Man” in Context”, *Monist*, (69(3): 2005), pp. 383-395. doi:10.5840/monist19696322; Hasse, D. N., *Avicenna's 'De Anima' in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160-1300*, (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 2000), pp. 45-50. See: Damasio, A. R., *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, (New York: Harcourt Brace:1999); Metzinger, T., *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 2003); Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D., *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*. (London: Routledge, 2008); Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E., *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 1991); Tononi, G., An Information Integration Theory of Consciousness. *BMC Neuroscience*, (2004), 5(1),42, doi:10.1186/1471-2202-5-42 – On cognitive science that discuss concepts related to self-awareness and consciousness, which can complement the discussion of Ibn Sina's “floating man” thought experiment.

¹⁵ Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, (Leiden: Brill. 2001), pp. 45-50; McGinnis, J. (2010), pp. 75-80.

and immaterial, offering a holistic understanding of human existence that integrates both body and soul.¹⁶ In the modern context, Ibn Sina's insights into the nature of consciousness and self-awareness provide a valuable framework for addressing contemporary issues in neurophilosophy¹⁷ and cognitive science. His emphasis on the soul's capacity for intellectual and spiritual growth underscores the importance of nurturing both the rational and moral faculties in education, advocating for a comprehensive approach that prepares individuals not just for technical proficiency but for a life of ethical conduct and intellectual rigor.¹⁸ This makes Ibn Sina's theory of the soul a critical touchstone for ongoing discussions in both philosophy

¹⁶ Nasr, S. H. (2006), pp. 98-102; Adamson, P. (2005), pp. 120-125.

¹⁷ See: Azadpur, M., *Analytic Philosophy and Avicenna: Knowing the Unknown*, (New York: Routledge, 2020), ISBN: 9781032048680. – On epistemology and contemporary analytic philosophy; Black, D. L., “Varieties of Consciousness in Classical Arabic Thought: Avicenna, Averroes, and the Mutakallimūn”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, (2023), pp. 1-22. doi: 10.1080/09608788.2023.2201615. – On Ibn Sina's forms of consciousness and the philosophy of mind; Al-Kindi, Ahmad, “Ibn Sina wa al-Nazariyya al-Nafsiyya: Bayna al-Falsafa wa al-'Ulūm al-Mu'āshira” [Ibn Sina and the Psychological Theory: Between Philosophy and Contemporary Sciences], *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Islamiyya* [Journal of Islamic Studies], (2020), 12(3); Al-Hussein, Fatima, “Ta'ammulāt fī Falsafat al-Nafs 'inda Ibn Sina wa Ta'thūrahā 'alā al-Fikr al-Falsafī al-Ḥadīth” [Reflections on the Philosophy of the Soul in Avicenna and Its Impact on Modern Philosophical Thought], *Majallat al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya* [Journal of Islamic Philosophy], (2019), (8(1); Rohani, Seyed Ali, “Tahlil Maḥmūmī-yi Nafs wa Agāhī dar Āthār-i Ibn Sina: Rūykard-i Falsafī-Ravānshinakhtī” [Conceptual Analysis of the Soul and Consciousness in the Works of Avicenna: A Philosophical-Psychological Approach]. *Faslname-yi Falsafeh-yi Islāmī* [Islamic Philosophy Quarterly], (2018)14(2); Mansoori, Reza, “Barrasi-yi Ta'thīr-i Āmūzash-hā-yi Ibn Sina bar Mabāhith-i Falsafī-'Ilmī-yi Nawīn” [Examining the Impact of Avicenna's Teachings on Modern Philosophical-Scientific Discussions]. *Nashriyeh-yi Hikmat wa Falsafeh* [Journal of Wisdom and Philosophy], (2020),10(3).

¹⁸ Nasr, S. H., (2006), 98-102; Black, D. L., “Varieties of Consciousness in Classical Arabic Thought: Avicenna, Averroes, and the Mutakallimūn”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*. (Forthcoming); Norman, N.A., “Ibn Sina's Theory of the Soul: A Taxonomy of Islamic Education.” *Islamic Civilisational Renewal (ICR) Journal*, (2021), 12(2), 275-289. <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v12i2.867>.

and education, offering timeless insights that continue to resonate with and inform modern thought.¹⁹

Ibn Sina's educational philosophy, which emphasised the systematic acquisition of knowledge and the integration of rational inquiry with religious understanding, provides a valuable framework for modern educational reform. His approach to education, which balanced the sciences with metaphysical inquiry, is particularly relevant in today's context, where there is a growing recognition of the need to integrate classical wisdom with scientific advancements in curricula.²⁰ By applying Ibn Sina's insights to contemporary educational practices, there is potential to foster a more holistic and integrated approach to learning that respects both tradition and innovation.²¹

The Dialogue Between Medieval and Modern Thought

The engagement between medieval Islamic thought and modern intellectual traditions is not merely a retrospective exercise; it is an essential endeavour for the renewal of Islamic civilisation in the 21st century. Ibn Sina's work exemplifies this bridge, showing that medieval Islamic philosophy can offer valuable insights into contemporary issues. His emphasis on the compatibility of reason and faith, alongside his systematic approach to knowledge, serves as

¹⁹ Wisnovsky, Robert, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*. Ithaca, (NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.45-50; Leaman, Oliver, *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009),122-126. (See: Norman, N.A., Ruhullah, M.E., "Exploring the Ethical Dimensions of Fiqh: The Role of the Soul in Achieving Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah", *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation* (2014), 26(2), 123-145 – On Ibn Sina's ideas on the soul with contemporary Islamic jurisprudence and ethics.)

²⁰ Gutas, D., (2001), pp. 45-52.

²¹ Norman, N.A., (2021), 275-289; Saihu, Made, Supriyadi, A., Darwis, H., and Hariyadi, M., "Study of Ibn Sina's Educational Thought and Its Contextualization in the Contemporary Era." *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*. (2024), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1431986> ; Embong, Rahimah, "Educational Views of Ibnu Sina." *al-Irsyad: Journal of Islamic and Contemporary Issues*, (2017), 2(1), 45-56, <https://al-irsyad.uis.edu.my/index.php/alirsyad/article/view/23>. Muslim Heritage (n.d.), "Ibn Sina on Education", *Muslim Heritage*, <https://www.muslimheritage.com/article/ibn-sina-on-education>.

a model for addressing the complexities of modern life through the lens of Islamic tradition.²²

Ibn Sina's philosophy, rooted in a synthesis of Aristotelian logic²³ and Islamic philosophy²⁴, demonstrates how ancient wisdom can inform modern debates in ethics, education, and governance. This philosophical synthesis is not only historically significant but also offers a robust framework for addressing the moral and intellectual challenges of the present. Scholars like Seyyed Hossein Nasr have argued that revisiting Ibn Sina's philosophical principles is crucial for addressing contemporary challenges, particularly in fields like education, where the integration of rational inquiry and spiritual understanding is increasingly recognised as essential.²⁵

In his work *Islamic Life and Thought*, Nasr explores how Islamic intellectual traditions, including those of Ibn Sina, provide essential insights into maintaining a balance between reason and spirituality. He emphasises that Ibn Sina's approach to integrating science, philosophy, and theology remains relevant for contemporary educational systems that often struggle to reconcile technical expertise with ethical and spiritual dimensions.²⁶ Moreover, in *The Need for a Sacred Science*, Nasr highlights the enduring significance of Ibn Sina's metaphysical framework, which supports the development of a worldview that acknowledges both the material and

²² In his work *Kitāb al-Najāt*, Ibn Sina provides a systematic outline of the sciences, beginning with logic and proceeding through natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics. He illustrates how each discipline builds upon the previous ones, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the world that integrates empirical and rational knowledge. In the same work, as well as in his *al-Shifā'*, he provides concrete illustrations of how his philosophical writings emphasise the compatibility of reason and faith, as well as his systematic approach to organising and acquiring knowledge. These principles continue to serve as a model for addressing the complexities of modern life through the lens of Islamic tradition.

²³ Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*. (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Wisnovsky, R., *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*. Ithaca, (NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

²⁴ Nasr, S. H., *Islamic Life and Thought*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981).

²⁵ Nasr, S.H., (2006), pp.98-102.

²⁶ Nasr, S. H., (1981).

the spiritual aspects of existence.²⁷ This perspective is particularly relevant in modern governance and ethics, where there is a need for a holistic approach that addresses not only the physical well-being but also the moral and spiritual needs of individuals and communities.

In the context of modernity, engaging with Ibn Sina's work allows scholars and educators to draw from the rich intellectual heritage of Islamic civilisation while responding to the demands of the present. This engagement is not a mere academic exercise but a vital process for the ongoing renewal and reform of Islamic thought. By integrating the insights of medieval Islamic philosophers like Ibn Sina into contemporary discourse, we honour their legacy and contribute to a dynamic and resilient civilisation capable of meaningful contributions to global discourse.

Ibn Sina's Theory of the Soul

Foundations of Ibn Sina's Philosophical Thought

Ibn Sina's philosophy, particularly his theory of the soul, is grounded in a synthesis of Islamic theological principles and the philosophical traditions of the Greeks, notably Aristotle and Plato. This synthesis is evident in his major works, *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing)²⁸ and *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine)²⁹, where he elaborates on the nature of the soul, its faculties, and its connection to the body. Ibn Sina posited that the soul is a substance, distinct from the body, yet intimately connected to it, which allows for the operation of faculties such as perception, imagination, and intellect.³⁰

In his metaphysical framework, Ibn Sina categorised the soul into three primary levels: the vegetative soul, the animal soul, and the rational soul, with the latter being unique to humans. This tripartite division reflects his Aristotelian influences, but Ibn Sina further

²⁷ Nasr, S.H., *The Need for a Sacred Science*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 88-94.

²⁸ Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing), (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Āmmah li-Qusūr al-Thaqāfah, 1968), pp. 335-350.

²⁹ Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine), (Beirut: Alaalami Library, 1999), pp. 55-70.

³⁰ Gutas, D., (2001), pp. 45-52.

developed these ideas within an Islamic context, emphasising the soul's immortality and its journey towards intellectual and spiritual perfection.³¹ Arif notes that Ibn Sina innovated upon Aristotle by placing greater emphasis on the role of intuition (*hads*) as a source of immediate knowledge.³² Unlike Aristotle, who focused primarily on deductive reasoning, Ibn Sina believed that intuition allowed for the direct grasping of universal truths without the intermediary of logical reasoning, thereby expanding the epistemological tools available in his philosophical system.

The Soul and Consciousness

Ibn Sina's theory of the soul extends into a profound analysis of consciousness, particularly through his famous 'floating man' thought experiment. In this thought experiment, Ibn Sina imagines a person suspended in the air, deprived of all sensory input, yet still aware of their own existence.³³ This scenario illustrates the concept of self-awareness independent of the body, suggesting that consciousness is a fundamental property of the soul itself, rather than a mere byproduct of physical processes.³⁴ This early exploration of

³¹ McGinnis, J., (2010); Sabra, A. I., "Avicenna on the Origin of the Human Soul." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, (1980), 18(1), pp. 11-19; Gohlman, W. E. , *The Life of Ibn Sina: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*. Albany, (NY: State University of New York Press, 1974); Nasr, S.H. (2006); (See also: Al-Akiti, M.A., "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of *Falsafa*: Al-Ghazali's *Madnun*, *Tahafut*, and *Maqasid*, with Particular Attention to Their *Falsafi* Content." In *Avicenna and His Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy*, Edited by Y. Tzvi Langermann, (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2008), 69-127 – On Ibn Sina's integration of Greek influences with Islamic thought particularly in his evolving concepts of the soul and intuition).

³² Arif, Syamsuddin, "Intuition and Its Role in Ibn Sina's Epistemology", *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)*, (2021), 26(2), 123-145.

³³ Ibn Sina. *Kitāb al-Nafs*, In *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriya, 1960), pp. 349-350.

³⁴ Nasr, S.H., (2006), pp. 159-175; Gutas, D., (2006), pp. 45-67; Adamson, P., *The Arabic Plotinus: A Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle' and Related Texts*, (London: Duckworth, 2005), pp. 120-135; Ashtiani, Jalal al-Din, *Sharḥ-i Muḥaṣṣal-i Asrār wa Mā Yanbaghī an Yu'lam fī Ḥāl al-Rūḥ* [A Commentary on the Mysteries and What Should Be Known About the Soul]. (Tehran: Intisharat-i

consciousness aligns closely with contemporary discussions in neurophilosophy, where the nature and origins of consciousness remain central debates.

Ibn Sina's work on consciousness also delves into the relationship between the soul and the intellect. He argued that the human intellect has the potential to comprehend universal truths, a process that involves the soul's ascension from sensory knowledge to intellectual understanding.³⁵ This ascent mirrors the Neoplatonic influence in his thought, particularly the idea that the soul can attain a higher state of being through the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. In this context, Ibn Sina's theory of the soul not only addresses the nature of consciousness but also its development and perfection through intellectual and spiritual growth.

Comparative Analysis with Modern Neurophilosophy

Ibn Sina's insights into the nature of the soul and consciousness have striking parallels with modern neurophilosophical discussions. His notion of the soul as an immaterial substance that is capable of self-awareness resonates with contemporary debates on the mind-body problem³⁶, particularly the question of how consciousness

Bunyard-i Farhang-i Iran, 1988).

³⁵ In *Kitāb al-Nafs*, Ibn Sina discusses the faculties of the soul, particularly focusing on the rational soul's ability to ascend from mere sensory experiences to the intellectual grasp of universal truths (See: Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 270-275). This process is central to his epistemology, where he diverges from Aristotle's more empirical approach. While Aristotle emphasised the importance of sensory data as the foundation of all knowledge, Ibn Sina advanced this idea by incorporating a more spiritual dimension, positing that the intellect can directly apprehend metaphysical truths, a capability he attributes to the Active Intellect. This idea also contrasts with Al-Farabi's interpretation, who placed more emphasis on logical deduction rather than the intuitive grasp of universals that Ibn Sina emphasises.

³⁶ In *Kitāb al-Nafs*, which is part of *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing), Ibn Sina describes the soul as an immaterial, self-aware entity that is distinct from the body. He posits that the soul's self-awareness is not dependent on physical processes, suggesting that consciousness is an inherent property of the soul itself. This idea anticipates later philosophical discussions on the mind-body problem, where the relationship between mental states (such as consciousness) and physical states (such as brain activity) remains a central debate (Ibn Sina (1968), 260-265).

While philosophers like Descartes later developed dualist perspectives,

arises from or interacts with physical processes in the brain.³⁷ Modern neurophilosophy often grapples with these issues, exploring the implications of neuroscientific findings for our understanding of the mind and consciousness.

Furthermore, Ibn Sina's concept of the rational soul, which he believed could attain knowledge of universals and abstract truths, parallels modern discussions about the nature of intellectual cognition and its relationship to physical brain states.³⁸ Smith further elucidates this connection by exploring how classical philosophical ideas, particularly those of Ibn Sina, have influenced contemporary neuroscience. Smith argues that Ibn Sina's notion of the rational soul offers a foundational perspective that aligns with current understanding in neurophilosophy, particularly regarding the processes through which abstract reasoning and universal knowledge are cognitively realised and linked to neurological functions.³⁹

While modern neurophilosophy often approaches these questions from a materialist perspective, Ibn Sina's framework provides a nuanced counterpoint. Although he acknowledges a distinction between the immaterial soul and the physical body, he also emphasises their interdependence, arguing that cognition and consciousness arise from the unity of these elements rather than from their strict separation.⁴⁰ By comparing Ibn Sina's theories with

distinguishing between mind and body as fundamentally different substances, Ibn Sina's approach integrates the concept of a self-aware, immaterial soul within a broader metaphysical framework. His work provides an early exploration of the idea that mental phenomena cannot be entirely reduced to physical processes, a concept that continues to be relevant in contemporary philosophy of mind (Black, D. L., "Avicenna and the Problem of Dualism: An Examination of the Mind-Body Distinction." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, (2013), 51(1): 37-60; Zamboni, C., "Ibn Sina and Descartes on the Nature of the Soul", *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, (2011), 7(2): 45-58).

³⁷ Adamson, P., (2005), pp. 120-135.

³⁸ McGinnis, J., (2010), pp. 80-85; Smith, R. J., "The Influence of Classical Philosophies on Modern Neuroscience: Revisiting Avicenna's Rational Soul", *Journal of Neurophilosophy*, (2020), 17(2), pp. 145-162; Brown, C.L., Patel, A., "Mind and Brain: Historical Perspectives and Modern Understandings", *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, (2019) 31(7), pp.899-911.

³⁹ Smith, "The Influence of Classical Philosophies", pp. 145-162.

⁴⁰ McGinnis, J., (2010), pp. 78-90; Gutas, D. (2001), pp. 45-67. Ibn Sina's

contemporary neurophilosophical approaches, scholars can gain deeper insights into the enduring questions about the mind, consciousness, and the nature of human knowledge.

In addition, Ibn Sina's emphasis on *hads* (intuition) as a means of direct knowledge acquisition⁴¹ offers an early model of non-deductive reasoning that resonates with modern explorations of intuitive cognition⁴². His concept of the *Active Intellect* as a guiding principle in intellectual cognition⁴³ predates and informs contemporary discussions on how the brain processes abstract reasoning and universal truths⁴⁴. This integration of philosophical reasoning with early cognitive theories showcases how Ibn Sina's thought remains relevant and provides valuable perspectives in ongoing neurophilosophical debates.⁴⁵

philosophy integrates elements of dualism and unity, where the soul is viewed as an immaterial, self-aware substance that exists independently of the body. However, unlike Cartesian dualism, which posits a strict separation between mind and body, Ibn Sina's theory maintains that the soul and body function together in a unified manner. The soul's faculties, particularly the rational soul, operate through the body's organs but are not reducible to physical processes. This concept aligns more closely with the hylomorphic tradition of Aristotle, where the soul is the form of the body, giving it life and guiding its actions, rather than being an entirely separate substance (See: Norman, N.A., *Islamic Philosophy for Soul Development in Early Childhood: A Model Based on Ibn Sina Theory of Soul*. (PhD diss., Universiti Malaya, 2020).

⁴¹ Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 260-265; Gutas, D., (2001), 45-67.

⁴² Churchland, P. S., *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind-Brain*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 110-135; Damasio, A., *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. (New York: Harcourt, 1999), pp. 200-225. (Churchland and Damasio do not directly discuss Ibn Sina or concepts like *hads* (intuition) in the same way that Ibn Sina does. Their work focuses on modern neurophilosophy and cognitive neuroscience, however, the parallels can be drawn in how they discuss the brain's capacity for understanding complex, abstract concepts, and non-deductive reasoning, which can resonate with Ibn Sina's ideas.)

⁴³ Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 320-335; Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt* (The Book of Pointers and Reminders), (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1957).

⁴⁴ Torey, Zoltan. *The Crucible of Consciousness: An Integrated Theory of Mind and Brain*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 70-85; Churchland, *Neurophilosophy*, 110-135.

⁴⁵ See: Torey (1999), for a modern exploration of consciousness as an emergent property of the brain, and Northoff (2014), which discusses the intersection of

Educational Reform Inspired by Ibn Sina

Rationale for Integrating Neurophilosophy with Educational Reform

In exploring Ibn Sina's educational philosophy, it becomes essential to consider the foundational elements of his approach, particularly his insights into the nature of the soul, intellect, and consciousness. Understanding these elements is crucial not only for their historical significance but also for their practical application in modern educational settings.⁴⁶ By integrating neurophilosophy, which investigates the connections between brain processes, consciousness, and intellectual functions, we can gain deeper insights into how education can be tailored to nurture both the cognitive and moral development of individuals.

Neurophilosophy offers contemporary perspectives on how the brain processes abstract reasoning and universal truths—key areas that Ibn Sina also emphasised through his concept of the *Active Intellect*. However, while neurophilosophy primarily focuses on the

philosophy and neuroscience. While neither work specifically addresses Ibn Sina, their analyses offer valuable insights that can be aligned with his perspectives on the soul and cognition (Torey, *The Crucible of Consciousness*, 70-85 ; Northoff, Georg, "Philosophy of the Brain: The Brain Problem." *Philosophy Compass* 9, (2014) no. 1: 45-60).

⁴⁶ See: Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), which emphasises the importance of foundational principles in shaping educational practices. For a similar approach within Islamic educational philosophy, see: al-Nahlawi, Abdurrahman, *Usul al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah wa Asalibiha* (Foundations of Islamic Education and Its Methods) (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1996). Additionally, al-Alwani's, Taha Jabir, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995) discusses the integration of foundational elements in educational reform. Barrow, R. and Woods, R., *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), further outline the need to consider foundational elements such as views on knowledge, the learner, and the purpose of education. For a broader philosophical context, consider Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970), and Iqbal, Mohammad, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1930).

brain and where cognitive functions are situated⁴⁷, Ibn Sina's philosophy presents a more nuanced view. He posits that the soul operates through two forms of intellect: one that functions with the body, facilitating basic cognitive processes, known as the *Material* or *Potential Intellect*, and another, the *Acquired Intellect*, which, while interacting with the body, elevates the soul toward the divine. This higher intellect progresses through various stages, with the *Active Intellect* being the highest phase, serving as an intermediary that connects the human intellect with the divine, ultimately guiding the soul towards intellectual and spiritual perfection.⁴⁸ By bridging these classical ideas with modern neuroscience, we can develop educational methods that align with the natural workings of the mind, fostering intellectual growth that is both scientifically informed and philosophically grounded. This integration underscores the relevance of Ibn Sina's holistic approach, demonstrating that a deep understanding of cognitive processes is vital for designing educational systems that nurture well-rounded, ethically sound individuals.

Ibn Sina's Educational Philosophy and Integration with Modern Education

Ibn Sina's approach to education was holistic, integrating rational inquiry with religious understanding. He believed that education should nurture both the intellectual and moral faculties of individuals, preparing them for a life of ethical conduct and intellectual rigor.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Neurophilosophy is an interdisciplinary field that primarily focuses on understanding the relationship between the brain and cognitive functions. It seeks to bridge neuroscience with philosophical questions about the mind, consciousness, and cognition. This field addresses how cognitive processes, such as reasoning, perception, and decision-making, are rooted in brain activity, exploring topics like the mind-body problem, consciousness, and the nature of mental states. (See: Churchland, P.S., (1986); Churchland, Paul M., *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Kim, Jaegwon, *Philosophy of Mind*. Boulder, (CO: Westview Press, 2006).

⁴⁸ Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 320-335; McGinnis, J., (2010), 85-100; Gutas, D., (2001), pp. 67-89.

⁴⁹ Ibn Sina, (1960); Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Najāt* (The Book of Salvation), (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Sa'ada, 1938); Ibn Sina, *Danishnama-i 'Alā'ī* (The Book of

His educational philosophy was deeply rooted in the Islamic tradition but also incorporated elements from Greek philosophy, particularly in the sciences and logic. In his works, particularly *Kitab al-Shifa*, he emphasised the importance of a broad curriculum that included not only the sciences but also metaphysics, ethics, and medicine.

Ibn Sina proposed that education should begin with the basics of language and logic, progressing towards more complex subjects such as mathematics, natural sciences, and metaphysics. His pedagogical methods were designed to cultivate critical thinking and independent reasoning, encouraging students to explore the natural world and understand the underlying principles of existence. He also advocated for the study of ethics and the development of virtuous character, which he believed were essential components of a well-rounded education.⁵⁰ Moreover, his emphasis on intuition (*hads*) as a source of knowledge provides a unique perspective on how to approach learning in a way that incorporates both rational and intuitive understanding.⁵¹

The relevance of Ibn Sina's educational philosophy to modern educational reform lies in its emphasis on the integration of classical wisdom with contemporary knowledge. In today's context, there is a growing recognition of the need to balance scientific advancements with ethical and philosophical inquiry, creating a more holistic approach to education. Ibn Sina's model provides a framework for this integration, demonstrating how classical Islamic scholarship can be harmonised with modern educational practices.⁵²

Knowledge for 'Alā al-Dawla), (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1952).

⁵⁰ For discussions on these educational principles, see: Ibn Sina's *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, particularly in the sections on logic, mathematics, metaphysics, and ethics. Further elaboration on these ideas can be found in *Kitāb al-Najāt*, where Ibn Sina stresses the importance of a solid foundation in logic and language before advancing to higher sciences, as well as the significance of moral education. His Persian work, *Danishnama-i 'Alā'* also provides a summary of his educational philosophy, advocating for a curriculum that fosters independent reasoning, critical thinking, and the cultivation of virtuous character.

⁵¹ Arif, S., (2021).

⁵² For a discussion on the integration of classical Islamic philosophy with modern educational practices, see: al-Attas, S.M.N.A., "*The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*" (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999). On the

Curriculum Development in Islamic Studies

Ibn Sina's ideas are particularly relevant for curriculum development in Islamic studies, where there is often a tension between traditional religious education and the demands of modern scientific inquiry.⁵³ By drawing on Ibn Sina's educational philosophy, curriculum designers can create programmes that respect the rich intellectual traditions of Islamic scholarship while also addressing contemporary educational needs.⁵⁴ This involves integrating classical texts and teachings with modern subjects such as science, technology, and ethics, ensuring that students are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Practical applications of Ibn Sina's philosophy in curriculum development might include the incorporation of courses on logic, ethics, and natural sciences alongside traditional religious studies.⁵⁵ Additionally, his emphasis on the development of critical thinking and independent reasoning skills can inform teaching methods that encourage students to engage with both classical and contemporary sources critically. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also fosters a deeper understanding of the interconnections between different fields of knowledge.⁵⁶

development of educational models inspired by Ibn Sina's theory of the soul, refer to: Norman, N.A., (2020) and (2021). For further reading on the concept of Islamisation in education and its alignment with the educational philosophies of scholars like Ibn Sina, see: Wan Daud, W.M.N., *"The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization"* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998). Also, see Hashim, Rosnani, work on the practical application of Islamic educational philosophy at IIUM in *"Islamization of Education: The Case of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)"* (*American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 14, no. 2 (1997): 79-98) and her exploration of educational dualism in *"Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵³ Hashim, Rosnani, (1996).

⁵⁴ al-Attas, S.M.N.A., (1999).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ See: Hashim, Rosnani, *Doing Philosophy for Wisdom in Islamic Education*, (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2022); Hashim, Rosnani, *Towards an Islamic Curriculum: Principles and Issues* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2023); □ Hashim, Rosnani. *"Philosophical Inquiry in Islamic Education: The Hikmah Pedagogy."*

Renewal of Islamic Thought and Civilisation

Ibn Sina's Influence on Islamic Civilisation

Ibn Sina's contributions extend beyond philosophy and medicine; his work has profoundly influenced the development of Islamic thought and civilisation. His integration of Greek philosophy with Islamic principles created a foundation for a rationalist tradition in Islamic scholarship, which emphasised the compatibility of reason and faith. This intellectual framework contributed to the flourishing of the Islamic Golden Age, where scholars engaged deeply with both religious and secular sciences.⁵⁷ Ibn Sina's works, particularly his metaphysical explorations, became central to the curriculum in Islamic educational institutions, influencing subsequent scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd.⁵⁸

(Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia Press, 2000); Hashim, Rosnani, "The Role of Philosophical Inquiry in Developing Critical Thinking Skills." *International Journal of Education* 8, no. 2 (2012): pp. 45-58; Hashim, Rosnani, "Hikmah Pedagogy and Critical Thinking: Challenges and Prospects in the 21st Century." *Contemporary Islamic Education* 17, no. 1 (2023): 65-82 – On effective strategies for curriculum development that align with classical Islamic educational philosophies while addressing contemporary educational needs.

⁵⁷ Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, pp. 45-67.

⁵⁸ Although Al-Ghazali critiqued Ibn Sina's philosophy, particularly in his work *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), where he challenged the compatibility of certain philosophical ideas with Islamic theology, Ibn Sina's influence was nonetheless profound. Al-Ghazali's critiques were part of a broader intellectual engagement rather than a wholesale rejection, and they spurred further development in Islamic thought. For instance, Al-Ghazali accepted aspects of Ibn Sina's logic and ethics, integrating them into his own works.

On the other hand, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) emerged as a staunch defender of Ibn Sina's philosophical approach, particularly in his *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), where he argued for the reconciliation of philosophy and Islamic theology. Ibn Rushd supported Ibn Sina's rationalist tradition, asserting that reason and faith could coexist harmoniously and that philosophical inquiry was essential for understanding divine truths.

In my opinion, the debates between these scholars reflect the vibrant intellectual climate of the Islamic Golden Age, where rigorous discussions were the norm, particularly in the realms of theology and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). During this period, Islamic scholars engaged deeply with both rational and religious sciences, and the critique of philosophical ideas was often motivated by a desire to reconcile new

His influence is evident in the establishment of *madrasas*, where his works were studied alongside the Qur'an and Hadith. These institutions became centres of learning, promoting a comprehensive education that included theology, philosophy, science, and medicine.⁵⁹ Ibn Sina's emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and understanding the natural world as a means to comprehend divine wisdom resonated deeply within Islamic educational practices, fostering a culture of intellectual inquiry that persisted for centuries.⁶⁰

Applying Ibn Sina's Principles to Contemporary Challenges

Ibn Sina's philosophical principles offer innovative pathways for addressing contemporary challenges in education, ethics, and social governance. His holistic approach to knowledge, which encompasses both the empirical and the metaphysical, can guide the development of educational curricula that prepare students to navigate the complexities of modern life while staying rooted in Islamic values. Furthermore, his views on the soul and consciousness provide a framework for engaging with modern neurophilosophical debates, particularly those concerning the nature of self and identity in an increasingly secular world.

In the realm of social governance, Ibn Sina's ideas on the ethical responsibilities of rulers and the importance of justice and wisdom in leadership can inform contemporary discussions on governance in Muslim-majority countries. His emphasis on the integration of ethical principles into governance resonates with the works of scholars who highlight the need for moral integrity and wisdom in leadership roles. For example, Al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-Muluk* (Counsel for Kings) emphasises the ethical duties of rulers,

knowledge with established religious principles. I believe that, Ibn Sina, through his works, sought to revive the use of reason in understanding both the physical world and metaphysical concepts, challenging the prevailing trend of limiting rational inquiry in favour of purely theological or jurisprudential interpretations.

⁵⁹ Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*; Makdisi, G., *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981).

⁶⁰ Nasr, S.H., 2006; Gutas, D., 2001.

while Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* explores the role of justice as the foundation of leadership.⁶¹ These works, alongside Ibn Sina's contributions, offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the moral obligations of those in power and the necessity of wisdom in decision-making, offering a timeless blueprint for moral leadership that transcends historical and cultural boundaries. For example, his insistence on the integration of ethical principles with practical governance could be applied to current efforts to combat corruption and ensure justice in public administration. Furthermore, his advocacy for wisdom (*hikmah*) in decision-making is particularly relevant today, where leaders are increasingly called upon to balance the demands of economic progress with the ethical and social well-being of their communities.⁶²

Moreover, Ibn Sina's approach to integrating empirical knowledge with ethical and spiritual wisdom can be applied to contemporary challenges in public health and environmental stewardship. In today's globalised world, where issues such as climate change, pandemics, and resource management demand coordinated and ethical responses, Ibn Sina's principles can offer valuable insights. His emphasis on the interconnectedness of all aspects of existence—physical, spiritual, and intellectual—suggests that modern challenges cannot be adequately addressed through purely technical solutions but require a holistic approach that considers the ethical implications of actions and policies. This perspective aligns with the growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical responsibility in global governance, advocating for a model of

⁶¹ Al-Ghazali, *Nasihah al-Muluk* (Counsel for Kings), Edited by Jalaluddin Humayi, (Tehran: Amir Kabir Press, 1964); Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Translated by Franz Rosenthal, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁶² This approach is echoed in the *Madani* concept introduced by Malaysia's Prime Minister Dato' Sri Anwar Ibrahim, which emphasises governance that integrates moral and ethical considerations with economic development. Scholars like Seyyed Hossein Nasr have also emphasised the importance of integrating ethical wisdom in governance, arguing that true leadership requires balancing material progress with spiritual and moral responsibilities (See: Nasr, S.H., (2006); Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia, "Membangun Malaysia MADANI - Amanat YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim," January 19, 2023, <https://www.pmo.gov.my>).

development that respects both the natural environment and the moral duties we owe to future generations. As Bakar emphasises in *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage*, the Islamic tradition provides a framework for understanding the profound ethical and spiritual responsibilities humans have towards the environment, which can guide contemporary environmental policies.⁶³ Furthermore, the inclusion of SDG 18 — *Spiritual and Moral Development* — proposed by Abdelaziz Berghout and Khaliq Ahmad, underscores the need for a spiritual and ethical dimension in sustainable development goals, ensuring that development is not just economically and environmentally sustainable but also spiritually and morally sound.⁶⁴ By drawing on Ibn Sina's wisdom, contemporary leaders and policymakers can develop strategies that not only address immediate needs but also promote long-term well-being and justice for all.

The Role of Ibn Sina's Legacy in the 21st Century

The Continuing Relevance of Ibn Sina

Ibn Sina's intellectual legacy continues to resonate in the 21st century, particularly in the fields of philosophy, medicine, and education. His comprehensive approach to knowledge, which integrates empirical investigation with metaphysical inquiry, offers a valuable model for contemporary scholars who seek to balance scientific advancements with ethical considerations.⁶⁵ In a world increasingly dominated by technology and materialism, Ibn Sina's emphasis on the spiritual and ethical dimensions of human existence serves as a crucial reminder of the need to maintain a holistic approach to knowledge and life.

⁶³ Bakar, Osman, *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage*, (Kuala Lumpur: Center for Civilisational Dialogue, University of Malaya, 2022); Norman, N.A., "Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage". *ICR Journal*, (2022), 13 (2), pp. 163-65, <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v13i2.929>.

⁶⁴ Berghout, Abdelaziz, Ahmad, Khaliq, *SDG 18: Spiritual and Moral Development in Sustainable Development Goals: Relevance, Importance, and Implementation*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC-IIUM Publication, 2023).

⁶⁵ Pormann, P.E., Savage-Smith, E., *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Gutas, D., (2001).

In the realm of medicine, Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine* remains a foundational text, influencing medical practice and education in both the East and West. His methods of observation, experimentation, and logical reasoning have been integrated into modern medical curricula, demonstrating the timelessness of his contributions. Moreover, his holistic view of health, which considers the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of individuals⁶⁶, aligns with contemporary trends in integrative and holistic medicine, making his work increasingly relevant in today's healthcare practices.

Innovative Pathways for the Future

Building on Ibn Sina's legacy, there are numerous opportunities for innovation in both educational and intellectual pursuits. One key area is the integration of his philosophical principles into modern educational systems, particularly in Islamic institutions. By developing curricula that draw on his approach to knowledge—one that values intuition alongside empirical evidence—educators can foster a more balanced and comprehensive learning environment.⁶⁷

Another area for innovation is in the application of Ibn Sina's ethical and philosophical insights to contemporary challenges in bioethics, environmental ethics, and social justice. His emphasis on the moral responsibilities of individuals, particularly those in leadership positions, can inform current debates on ethical governance and sustainable development. By revisiting and adapting Ibn Sina's teachings, modern scholars and practitioners can develop new frameworks that address the complexities of today's global challenges.⁶⁸

The Potential for Islamic Philosophy to Contribute to Modernity

Ibn Sina's work provides a strong foundation for Islamic philosophy to engage meaningfully with modernity. His rationalist approach,

⁶⁶ Ibn Sina, *Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitab al-Najat, Book II, Chapter VI with Historico-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition*, Translated by Laleh Bakhtiar, (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1980).

⁶⁷ Norman, N.A., (2021); Gutas, D., (2001).

⁶⁸ Nasr, S.H., (2006); Bakar, Osman, (2022).

coupled with his deep commitment to ethical and spiritual values, offers a model for how Islamic philosophy can contribute to contemporary discourses in philosophy, science, and ethics.⁶⁹ By embracing the intellectual rigor and moral clarity of Ibn Sina's philosophy, modern Islamic scholars can play a pivotal role in shaping global conversations about the nature of knowledge, the purpose of education, and the role of ethics in public life.

This potential is particularly evident in the growing field of Islamic bioethics, where Ibn Sina's integration of medical knowledge with ethical principles provides a valuable resource for addressing complex moral issues in medicine.⁷⁰ Similarly, his insights into the nature of the soul and consciousness offer a unique perspective in the ongoing debates about artificial intelligence, consciousness, and the ethics of emerging technologies.⁷¹ Recent scholarly discussions have highlighted the importance of philosophical frameworks in addressing the ethical implications of AI, emphasising how these technologies should align with human values and moral reasoning.⁷²

Conclusion

This study has explored the enduring legacy of Ibn Sina and its relevance to modern intellectual and educational contexts. By analysing his contributions to medieval philosophy, neurophilosophy, and educational reform, we have demonstrated how his work continues to inform and enrich contemporary discussions. Ibn Sina's innovative approach to knowledge —integrating reason, faith, and intuition — offers valuable insights that remain applicable in addressing modern challenges in various fields, from education to ethics. Looking forward, Ibn Sina's contributions have the potential to shape future developments in both Islamic and global contexts. His emphasis on the ethical dimensions of knowledge and leadership provides a model for responsible governance and moral education.

⁶⁹ Gutas, D., (2001); Nasr, S.H., (2006).

⁷⁰ Pormann, P.E., Savage-Smith, E., (2007).

⁷¹ Adamson, P., (2005); McGinnis, J., (2010).

⁷² Simon, J., Rieder, G., & Branford, J., "The Philosophy and Ethics of AI: Conceptual, Empirical, and Technological Investigations into Values." *DISO* 3, no. 10 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44206-024-00094-2>.

As the world grapples with complex issues such as technological advancements, environmental sustainability, and social justice, Ibn Sina's philosophy offers a timeless blueprint for navigating these challenges with wisdom and integrity. While this study has highlighted several key aspects of Ibn Sina's legacy, there is still much to explore. Future research could delve deeper into the application of his principles in specific contemporary contexts, such as the role of Islamic philosophy in modern science or the integration of his educational methods in global curricula. Moreover, comparative studies between Ibn Sina's work and other philosophical traditions could further illuminate the universality and relevance of his ideas in today's interconnected world.

EARLY IDEAS ON REFORM AND RENEWAL THROUGH
JOURNALISM IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO:
HAMKA'S ACCOUNTS IN *AYAHKU* (1950)

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Abstract

*Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), referred to as the 'Hamzah Fansuri of the modern era,' writes about his ulama and scholar father, Haji Rasul's contribution to modernist thinking in Sumatra. This is encapsulated in Hamka's book *Ayahku (My Father)*, first published in 1950. Hamka (1908-81), an essayist, journalist, public historian, scholar, novelist, writer and ulama, was prolific in his writings. Hamka's writing activity had closely followed his participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1927. This is when we see Hamka being closely involved in a principal medium for the spread of modernist ideas, namely periodicals, which were expanding rapidly the spread of the printing presses. His writings and narratives represent a 'key factor' in modernist reformism. Hamka's works are certainly pertinent to the study of Malay society. He left us with an abundance of sources on the dynamics of culture and change in the Malay peninsula and in Sumatra, especially within the Ranah Minangkabau (Minangkabau heartland). In *Ayahku*, first published on 1st January 1950, Hamka wrote that writing about his father is similar to writing on the development of Islam in Minangkabau - difficult, complex, and contradictory, reflecting a society fundamentally rooted in the encounter between "pembangunan agamanya dan kekerasan adatnya" (advancement of religion and the orthodoxy of its customs). This paper delves on Chapter six titled "Semangat Pembaharuan Islam dan Mengalirnya ke Indonesia" (The Spirit of Islamic Renewal and its Penetration into Indonesia) of *Ayahku*. Many have narrated on al-Imam, and its origins. This paper focuses on Hamka's views, his observations and experience on the role of the press and journalism in the contexts of*

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reform and renewal. It peculiarly illustrates the spirit and dynamics of al-Imam in the Minangkabau heartland. The significance is Hamka's engaging perspective on journalism as an instrument of reform and renewal in the Malay world is seen through the role of his father. Hamka attributes the Paris-based magazine titled al-Urwatul Wutsqa (1884) as producing the climate of "kesedaran" (awareness) among Muslims. According to Hamka, the magazine was the outcome of the engagement between Syeikh Muhammad Abduh, with Sayid Jamaludin (Al-Afghani). Both travelled to Paris due to unfavourable intellectual and political conditions in the Middle East. al-Urwatul Wutsqa contained anti-colonial narratives, instigating "kebangkitan Islam" (resurgence). To Hamka, the magazine's significance, which later inspired the al-Azhar-based al-Manar, which later influenced al-Imam and al-Munir in the Malay Archipelago, as based on the combination between the power of Muhammad Abduh's words and the depth of Jamaluddin al-Afghani's philosophy. In Ayahku, we find the critical role of the press in the circulation of modernity to the Malays.

Keywords: al-Afghani's philosophy, al-Urwatul Wutsqa, kebangkitan Islam, Hamka

Introduction

This paper is a facet of the intellectual history of Malay journalism. It articulates the context of early beginnings of Malay periodical journalism through Hamka's views on the reform press in the Malay Archipelago. It captures an early idea on journalism and periodicals in Malay society at the end of the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th century. In *Ayahku*², first published in 1950, Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), writes about his ulama and scholar father, Haji Rasul's contribution to modernist thinking in Sumatra. This paper resonates Hamka as being closely involved in a principal medium for the spread of modernist ideas, namely periodicals, which were expanding rapidly through the spread of the

² Hamka 2015

printing presses. His writings and narratives represent a 'key factor' in modernist reformism. Hamka's works are certainly pertinent to the study of Malay society.

The writings form a significant contribution to the intellectual history of Malay society. In that sense, Hamka left us with a body of works on the study of Malay attitudes, behaviours, and sentiments in engaging with modernity and colonialism. Apart from the writings of Abdullah Abdul Kadir, or Munsyi Abdullah (1796-1854) and Jose Rizal (1861-1896), the works of Hamka lend to us an alternative source in developing an autonomous tradition for the study of Malay society in the Malay Archipelago, especially the dynamics of culture and change in Malaysia and Sumatera.

If 'Sociology' as a field of study was the progeny of the crisis in modern Europe, as articulated through the likes of Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, and Marx – Hamka was one of the Muslim thinkers in the modern period who saw such a crisis in the Muslim/Malay world. He cast a long shadow on the history of Islamic reform. He created an endogenous sociological tradition (not in the academic sense) that can help us problematise, conceptualise, and theorise Malay society fairly over the last 200 years.

There is one other significant contribution out of this which had earlier escaped our attention, i.e. the use of history as a tool for change and reform. Hamka writes history, and is widely read in the Malay World. Chapter six of Khairudin Aljunied's book *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (2018) (Aljunied 2018) titled 'History as a Tool of Reform', notes that Hamka's corpus includes themes such as the global history of Islam, great Muslim personalities and the history of spiritual movements in Indonesia. These themes were reprinted several times. Significantly, Hamka's works have now become a source for professional historians in the Malay world, said to have vastly exceeded the influence of academic works, and are acknowledged as a source of reference for both the public and scholars. Hence, Hamka sought to make history accessible to the general public. Hamka is conscious of personal experiences and the collective memories of others. He fuses them with his historical narratives. He is intimate with his subjects. Hamka knows history and what it can do to society. He believes and practises it in

his consciousness to reconstruct the minds of ordinary Malay-Muslims across both sides of the Straits of Melaka. Hamka's writing brings forth the legacy of cosmopolitanism embedded in the varying Malay traditions.³

My reading of '*Ayahku*' is framed within the said context. In the biography, Hamka criticises his father's stance on Islam, in the wake of Minangkabau history and its *adat perpatih* (matrilineal custom). '*Ayahku*' suggests Hamka's use of history as an instrument of change and the larger cosmopolitan reform. This paper delves on Chapter six titled '*Semangat Pembaharuan Islam dan Mengalirnya ke Indonesia*' (The Spirit of Islamic Renewal and its Penetration into Indonesia) of '*Ayahku*', focussing on Hamka's views, his observations and experience on the role of the press and journalism in the contexts of reform and renewal.

Hamka (1908-81)

Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah has been referred to as the 'Hamzah Fansuri of the modern era.'⁴ Hamka was born in the ranah Minangkabau in what is now West Sumatra facing the shores of Danau Maninjau (Lake Maninjau), one of the two significant lakes in the Minangkabau region. He was the son of Haji Rasyul, one of the key figures in introducing modernist ideas to the Minangkabaus. Haji Rasul's contribution to modernist thinking in Sumatra is well encapsulated in Hamka's '*Ayahku*'.

Hamka was an essayist, journalist, public historian, scholar, novelist, writer, and ulama. He was prolific in his writings. At the age of twenty, he published his first novel in Minangkabau. The following year, he published a series of books on Islamic subjects, covering such issues as the role of omens in religion, traditional custom and Islam, and a range of other matters. According to Riddel Hamka's writing activity had closely followed his participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1927 and during the pilgrimage and in the years which followed he served as a correspondent for several daily and weekly publications, writing on a

³ Aljunied 2018

⁴ Hamka, *Tasauf Moderen*. 1990

variety of Islamic subjects. This is when we see Hamka being closely involved in a principal medium for the spread of neo-modernist ideas, namely periodicals, which were expanding rapidly through the spread of the printing presses (2001: 217).⁵

Riddell pertinently notes that his most famous role was as editor and writer for journals. This was when Hamka served as editor for the periodical '*Pedoman Masyarakat*' from 1936 until the period of the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. Much of his expository writing for the periodical was later published in book form as '*1001 Soal-Soal Hidup*' in 1961. In his book, he addresses such issues as the relationship between children and parents, attitudes to prostitution, friendship, etc. These resonate his concerns in applying Islam to modern life, which Riddle identifies as "*a key factor in modernist reformism*" (p. 217)

Hamka also wrote a number of popular novels. His novels were to be acclaimed as significant contributions to the development of modern Indonesian literature. The same works led to controversy because some Islamic scholars claimed that it was inconsistent for a leading Islamic figure like Hamka to engage in the writing of popular novels.

This was in spite of the fact that these novels generally centred upon strongly Islamic themes. In this way, Hamka furthered the long tradition of Malay Islamic scholars using narrative as a device in theological exposition.⁶

Hamka expanded his influence beyond the Minangkabau region throughout the Malay Archipelago. In 1924, he had gone to central Java, where he had closely observed the emergence of various Islamic movements. He began to have close contacts with the Muhammadiyah. The organization was established in response to the modernist ideas coming to the Malay Archipelago – principally Malaya, Sumatra and Java, from Cairo and the Hejaz. Hamka studied with the leading Islamic nationalist of the period, Tjokroaminoto.

⁵ Hamka, *Tasauf Moderen*. 1990

⁶ Riddell 2001

In the early 1930s, he moved to Makassar, where he taught until 1935, before returning to Sumatra.

During the Japanese occupation he continued to write, and produced a large number of essays on various fields of Islam. These include theology, philosophy, history, and Sufism. Hamka also wrote many essays and books on Islamic mysticism. These include '*Tasawuf Perkembangan dan Pemurniaannya*' (The Development and Perfecting of Mysticism) and '*Tasawuf Modern*' (Modern Mysticism). Riddel describes Hamka's mystical inclinations coloured much of his approach to Islamic teaching.

However, his was not the voice of Sufism which dominated the Malay Islamic stage during the 16th to the 19th centuries. Rather, his was the voice of modernizing Sufism, and in his '*Tasawuf Modern*' (1939), he parried the anti-Sufi statements of modernists by advocating a type of Sufism shorn of its perceived un-Islamic practices but still maintaining a solid mystical core (Riddel, 218).

Thus, Hamka was seen as a moderate, widely respected among the various schools of Islamic teachings and thought in post-colonial Indonesia. His works are certainly pertinent in the study of Malay society. He left us with an abundance of sources on the dynamics of culture and change in the Malay peninsula and in Sumatra, especially within the *Ranah* Minangkabau (Minangkabau heartland).

In *Ayahku*, first published on 1st January 1950, Hamka wrote about his father, Syekh Abdul Karim Amirullah (or dr. H.A.K. Amrullah), an ulama and scholar. Hamka acknowledges that writing about his father is similar to writing on the development of Islam in Minangkabau – difficult, complex, and contradictory, reflecting a society fundamentally rooted in the encounter between '*pembangunan agamanya dan kekerasan adatnya*' (advancement of religion and the orthodoxy of its customs).

The Genesis of the *Semangat* (the spirit) in Exile

In Chapter six titled '*Semangat Pembaharuan Islam dan Mengalirnya ke Indonesia*' (The Spirit of Islamic Renewal and its

Penetration into Indonesia), Hamka discusses on the role of the press and journalism. The chapter provides useful insights into the dynamics and origins of the periodical '*al-Imam*' (1906-08). The figure most associated with '*al-Imam*' was Syed Shaikh al-Hady. Notwithstanding that '*al-Imam*' has been the most studied Malay periodical before World War II, what would be new is engaging in Hamka's perspective on journalism relating to reform and renewal in the Malay-Minangkabau narrative.⁷

It began with the magazine '*Al-Urwatul Wutsa*', published in Paris in 1884. According to Hamka, the magazine was the outcome of the engagement between Syeikh Muhammad Abduh, who was exiled in Beirut for three years, with Sayid Jamaludin (Al-Afghani). Both travelled to Paris due to unfavourable intellectual and political conditions in the Middle East. The publication of the magazine was to create '*kesedaran*' (awareness) among Muslims of their '*harga diri*' (self-worth), and to remind them of the dangers threatening Islam if Muslims continue to be forgetful.

'*Al-Urwatul Wutsqa*' lasted through 18 issues. In less than a year it ceased production. Hamka explains that this was not because of the lack of support. The magazine was much welcomed and well received throughout the Muslim world. Seeing its anti-colonial narrative, the magazine was banned from being circulated in English colonies. Its writings and commentaries were much awaited – such as those on calls for '*kebangkitan Islam*' (resurgence of Islam), '*membenteras jumud*' (hindering narrow-mindedness) and '*merangsang untuk berfikir*' (catalyst for thinking). Hamka sees the combination between the power of Muhammad Abduh's words and the depth of Jamaluddin's philosophy.

'*Al-Urwatul Wutsqa*' brought about the spirit of reform and renewal, which to Hamka, was accepted by every soul that yearns for independence. The periodical was to be feared by "*musuh Islam*" (the enemies of Islam). It was widely circulated in India, Iran, and the Malay Archipelago. It was also read in Mekah and Madinah. Hamka says that whenever he re-read the magazine that saw its

⁷ Roff. 1967.

demise some eight decades back, he was reminded of the ‘semangat’ (spirit) regurgitated in its message.

‘*Al-Urwatul Wutsqa*’ also attracted another figure in Islamic reform and renewal. This was the ulama Sayyid Muhammad Rashid Ridha. He appeared at the time when Syeikh Jamaluddin died in 1896 in Istanbul, and Muhammad Abduh who was exiled in Paris. Muhammad Abduh was given a pardon by the Khadewi Abbas Helmi, the ruler of Egypt. He then returned to Egypt in 1896. The year after Rashid Rida moved to Cairo with the intention of starting a newspaper under the leadership of Abduh. Hence ‘*Al-Manar*’ appeared in 1898 in Cairo.

‘*Al-Manar*’ was the continuation of ‘*Al-Urwatul Wutsqa*’ in Islamic reform and renewal. It carried Abduh’s Quranic interpretation. According to Hamka, ‘*al-Manar*’ was circulated throughout the Muslim world. Seen as the ‘*Kaum Muda*’ (Young Faction), the ‘*al-Manar*’ ideology was in opposition to the conservative ulama. ‘*Al-Manar*’ was staunchly critical of the stagnation and regression facing the *Ummah*. ‘*Al-Manar*’ was also seen as the voice of Muhammad Abduh. Seeing the threat posed by ‘*al-Manar*’, Khadewi threw his support behind the conservative ulama and used them to spread slander and hatred against Abduh and Ridha. Both were ridiculed and slandered by the conservative ulama and the establishment in Egypt.

Despite challenges and obstacles, and incidence of burning the newspaper, ‘*al-Manar*’ survived until 1937. It ended with the death of Rashid Rida himself.

From *Al-Manar* to *Al-Imam*

The first name mentioned by Hamka in relation to ‘*al-Imam*’ was the Singapore-based Arab philanthropist by the name of Syeikh Muhammad bin Salim Alkalili (also described as Syed Mohamad Salim al-Khalali) He was earlier influenced by the organization ‘*Jami at Khair*’ in Java; and this in turn was induced by the journalism of the reformist periodicals ‘*Al-Urwatul Wutsqa*’ and ‘*Al-Manar*’, published respectively in Paris and Cairo. ‘*Al-Imam*’ (1906-08) was conceived partly under those conditions.

A close friend of Alkalili was the Minangkabau Cairo-trained

ulama Syeikh Muhammad Taher bin Muhammad Jalaluddin Al-Azhari (variably described in related sources as Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Sheikh Tahir Jalauddin al-Azhari). Together, they produced the monthly magazine '*al-Imam*'. Its maiden issue appeared in July of 1906, led by Alkalili who was said to be the publisher and financier. The monthly's second issue published in August, was edited by Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin (Sheikh Tahir is the father of Kuala Kangsar-born Tun Hamdan, the sixth Yang di Pertua Negeri Pulau Pinang (1989-2001), and former vice chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia).

'*Al-Imam*' has correspondents in various parts of the Malay Archipelago. The periodical was not localized within where it was published. '*Al-Imam*' was regional, cosmopolitan in outlook. According to Hamka, the second issue stated clearly that they were led by Sayid Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Syahab in Betawi (Jakarta), and Haji Abdul Karim bin Tuanku Kisai in Danau, Sumatera. In the biography of his father, '*Ayahku*', Hamka's accounts on '*al-Imam*' mainly highlighted on questions and queries on religious practice and rituals by Malays. One question was on *riba* (interest), which was raised in its 11th issue.

In Hamka's view, the dominant figure in '*al-imam*' was Sheikh Taher Jalaluddin. He was very much a follower of Muhammad Abduh and had been subscribing to '*al-Manar*' until the journal ceased publication in 1936. Syeikh Taher was said to be travelling back and forth to Mekah and Egypt. He was a close friend of Sayid Muhammad Rashid Ridha. In his absence, he would delegate his editorial to his student, Haji Abbas Taha. At certain times, '*al-Imam*'s Leader and commentaries were penned by Sayyid Syeikh al-Hadi, and assisted by Sayyid Muhamad bin Agil. It would be instructive to recall that in the discourse on '*al-Imam*' encountered, al-Hadi was the dominant figure. Some have argued that the representation of al-Hadi in driving '*al-Imam*' was that he was a more brilliant writer compared to Syeikh Taher.⁸

In its June 1908 issue, '*Al-Imam*' firmly expressed that "*Al-Imam* is the fierce enemy of all innovation and superstition

⁸ Roff. 1967.

(*karut-karut*), blind following and custom introduced in religion” (“*Al-Imam* adalah musuh yang amat bengis bagi sekalaian bid’ah dan khurafat [karut-karut] dan ikutan-ikutan dan adat yang dimasukkan orang pada agama”).

Hamka in revealing Syeikh Muhammad Al-Kalali as ‘*al-Imam*’s financier, also acknowledges Sayid Muhammad bin Agil and Sayid Syeikh al-Hadi as responsible for facilitating a capital of 20,000 ringgit. But ‘*al-Imam*’ subsequently suffered from competition. The expressive and radical nature of ‘*al-Imam*’ spurred a new excitement in journalism among the Malay-Muslims in Singapura and in other parts of the Peninsula. ‘*Al-Imam*’ had to contend with competition. According to Hamka, the magazine ceased publication in 1909 (to be exact 1908). Hence that ended of the beginning of a series of periodicals on reform and Islam that were to thrive through the decades before World War II.

To Hamka, the end of ‘*al-Imam*’ spelt the disruption in the voice of reform and renewal. He expresses concerns on the continuing vibrancy of debates in the reform press in the ‘*Alam Minangkabau sendiri*’ (Minangkabau world) as well as in other areas under colonial conditions (referring to the English and the Dutch).

But the demise of ‘*al-Imam*’ saw the emergence of ‘*al-Munir*’ in Padang. The periodical, published between 1911 and 1915 was the outcome of initiatives by Syeikh Taher and Syeikh Ahmad Khatib in Mekah. ‘*Al-Munir*’ was supported by some well-known Minangkabau *ulamas*, namely Syeikh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syeikh Muhammad Thaib bin Haji Umar Batu Sangkar, Hamka’s father Haji Abdul Karim bin Syeikh Muhamad Amrullah Danau and Haji Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad at Padang Panjang.

Haji Abdullah was a skilful writer who conceived ‘*al-Munir*’ as the continuation of ‘*al-Imam*’. From Padang Panjang on the Minangkabau highlands on the road to Bukittinggi where he lived, he moved to the coastal town of Padang, now the capital of West Sumatra. There he published the first issue of ‘*al-Munir*’. This was on 1 April 1911. Hamka lists the staff of ‘*al-Munir*’ as comprising Haji Abdullah himself as director and Haji Marah Muhammad bin Abdulhamid. The others are Haji Sutan Jamaluddin Abu Bakar, editorially assisted by Haji Abdul Karim Amrulah Danau,

Muhammad Dahlan Sultan Lemak Tuah, Haji Muhammad Thaib Umar Batu Sangkar, and Sultan Muhammad Salim Hoofdjaksa.

In its first issue, '*al-Munir*' explained that the name means torch, or that brings light of enlightenment. '*Al-Munir*' also brings the meaning of leading and advancing the children of Malays and Islam towards the religion. The name also means peace and prosperity among men toward life and loyalty toward the ruler. '*Al-Munir*' described itself as the light leading to certainty of knowledge toward truth and reality.

The maiden issue carried the slogan '*Usaha Orang Alam Minangkabau*' (The Enterprise of the people of Minangkabau). '*Al-Munir*' was seen a portent vehicle that has '*menggoncangkan fikiran yang selama ini tertidur*' (jolt thinking that has so far been in slumber). Hamka considers Haji Abdullah Ahmad as the first '*Jurnal Islam*' (Islamic journalist) in Sumatra who was willing to introduce new vocabularies and meanings in not being influence by the Bahasa Melayu translation from Arabic, according to '*kita-kitab lama karangan Arsyad Banjar atau yang lain*' (religious books authored by Arsyad Banjar or by others). Hamka commended the prose of Haji Abdullah which was '*enak dibaca kerana bahasanya yang bersih*' (nice to read because the language is clean). But in religion, Hamka says Haji Abdullah was not as learned as his father, Haji Abdul Karim.

When '*Al-Munir*' ended, its organizers had already formed Percetakan '*Al-Munir*' (Al-Munir printing). The printing press was then used to publish books, especially the works of Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah with the titles '*Aiqazun Nijam*', '*Usul Fikah*' and others. The men behind the periodical had not given up. In 1916, due to popular sentiments, with the hope of reviving '*al-Munir*' Haji Abdul Karim visited Malaya, and Java the year after. The support however was not forthcoming.

The attempt to revive a periodical also under the same name '*Al-Munir*' happened after the formation of the Sumatera Thawalib society in Padang Panjang in 1918. That name was joined by the name '*Al-Manar*' to be '*Almunirul Manar*'. under the leadership of Zainuddin Labai Leyunusi, with Tahrir bin Abdulhamid Hakim Tuanku Mudo as editor assisted by A.R. Sultan Mansur, H. Datuk

Hakim Tuankuthers. The magazine managed to survive for four years, through 1922.

Hamka's Father in *al-Munir*

The aura and influence of Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah could not be contained in remote and isolated Maninjau. He then was invited to Padang to continue his larger struggle. This was upon the insistence of his companions and students. When Hamka's father moved to Padang, some of his students followed suit, fearing separation from their teacher. Among them was Abdulhamid Hakim, who was later known as Angku Mudo, and A.R. Sutan Mansur, who later was married to H. Abdul Karim's daughter, Fathimah.

According to Hamka, beside resuming his teaching activities, his father led the editorial of '*Al-Munir*', especially in managing the column on questions and answers on Islam, a popular genre then that has 'shaken the world of thinking among Muslims at that time' (*menggoncangkan alam fikiran Islam pada masa itu*). '*Al-Munir*' was circulated widely throughout Sumatera, Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Malaya. The periodical was consumed amongst the intelligentsia throughout the Archipelago. Together with '*Al-Munir*' pioneer Haji Abdullah Ahmad in Padang, – and apart from writing and editing the periodical – they were also active in teaching and *dakwah*.

The task of organising the question-and-answer column in '*al-Munir*' was Haji Abdul Karim and H.M. Thaib Sungayang. Some of the issues raised were on the expression of *niat* (intention) before prayers; holding a *kenduri* (feast) at the house of the deceased, *meratap* (lamenting) over person who has died, and the practice of the counting the days as is in the words of Hamka '*mentiga hari, mengempat hari, menuju hari, mengempat puluh hari and meneratus hari*' (third day, fourth day, seventh day, fortieth day and one hundredth days). His father replied that the practice be abolished.

Another issue is on *talqin* (literally to teach or explain a point to the deceased). We would see this practice immediately after a burial at the site of the grave. Haji Abdul Karim through the '*al-Munir*' column urged the practice be stopped. He said it was better to whisper to the ears of the person about to leave this world

the *syahadah*, *La ilaha illal Lah* (There is no God but God). It seems that the people in what is now West Sumatra were much concerned with problems of dressing and attire. In the 1920s, Padang was stormed with debates on being similar in appearance to the non-Muslim (Hamka phrases it as "...*apa yang menyerupai orang kafir*"). The educated younger generation, advocated and defended the use of the *samping*, described by Hamka as '*kain sarung diluar seluar panjang dilipatkan sebagai tanda orang Islam*' (a piece of cloth folded around long pants as a sign of a Muslim). According to Hamka, even when travelling by train, not wearing a *samping* was deemed as a foreigner, and be charged the same price as a European or Chinese.

The larger concerns asked by '*al-Munir*'s readers was on *tasyabbuh* (mimicking or resembling). To this, Haji Abdul Karim opined that *tasyabbuh* referred to using or putting religious signs, such as the Christian cross. The issue of attire and fashion, such as the use of caps and other headgears, did not come under *tasyabbuh*. Haji Abdul Karim was also of the view that *hisab* (calculations) was preferred to *rukayah* (observing the moon for Ramadan). '*Al-Munir*' would also raise issues on the permissibility of erecting tombstones, blind following, and celebrating the birthday of the Prophet, the Maulid. According to Hamka, opinions on Islam, erstwhile feared and tabooed were spewed, '*tersembur*' as Hamka describes it, from the mouths of the editors of '*al-Munir*'. The editors were accused of blasphemy, not conforming to any jurisprudential school (*mazhab*) within the *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jemaah*. They were labelled as *Mu'tazilah*, *Wahabi*, *Khawarij*, also as *zindiq* (generally heretics and extreme religious infidelity to Islam).

Apart from '*al-Munir*', a similar periodical was '*Al-Akhbar*', led by a young skillful writer by the name of Zainuddin Labai. Hamka reveals that the peak of debates and polemics on Islam occurred between 1914 and 1918. '*Al-Munir*' had many followers, a large number comprised students of renowned ulama Syeikh Ahmad Khatib. Under him was Syeikh Ibrahim Musa Parabek, Syekh Abbas and his relative Syeikh Mustafa at Padang Panjang. There was also Syeikh Rasyid Maninjau. On the other side was Syeikh Khatjib

Ali Padang, Syeikh Saad Munka, and Syeikh Bayang. The latter was slighted because their *tariqat* was interrupted.

It was the conflict between the ‘*Kaum Muda*’ (Young Faction) and ‘*Kaum Tua*’ (Old Faction). The sentiments opposing ‘*al-Munir*’ led to the publication of ‘*Suluh Melayu*’, to defend conventional thinking and to allay accusations against Islam and its rituals. Hamka did not describe further on ‘*Suluh Melayu*’ in ‘*Ayahku*’. It must be remembered that ‘*al-Munir*’ was not localised to Padang, or to Padang Panjang and Bukittinggi in the Minangkabau heartland. It was circulated and read throughout most of the Archipelago. The legacy of ‘*al-Munir*’, and similar ‘*Kaum Muda*’ periodicals published in Singapura and Pulau Pinang during the first half of the last century, are still felt to this day.

Concluding Remarks

The discourse on Islamic history mainly falls short of the Malay Archipelago. Significantly in this context, he sought “to reform the self-identity of Malay-Muslims into a feeling of belonging to a millennium-old civilisation”. Hamka’s work is part of a wave of writing “new Muslim histories” in the wake of the emergence of new nation states, post-World War 2 in the empowerment from colonialism. In ‘*Ayahku*’, we find Hamka as a public historian in his biographical approach in instructing his readers on Minangkabau society, placing the reform press and Malay journalism in that context

In the Malay Archipelago, the earlier introduction of the printing press, the publication of periodicals and newspapers in the dynamics of Malay journalism beginning the middle 1800s, and the mass production of books some decades later in the century ushered the writing of Muslims histories. Hamka portrays the challenge to the colonial order and modernity; at the same time illustrating the journalism as purveyors of social change and renewal. Hamka writes in the vernacular language and exposed his readers to immediate challenges, locating it between the past and the future. He challenges the dominant historiography and discourse, in that Malay-Islamic thought is not peripheral to the larger story of the spread of Islam in world history.

INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL ISSUES AND THE FACTORS AFFECTING INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS: A STUDY OF MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani¹, Ahmad Khaliq² and Abdul Waheed³

Abstracts

Interesting issues related to cross civilizations matters for linking the past with future. It becomes more significant when East meets the West. Contrast in civilizations and one's exposure to this develops a different personality and Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah is one of them who is known for such intellectual contributions that has made an impact on the inter and intra civilisational issues. This paper explores the factors influencing interfaith relationships with a specific focus on the contributions of Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah. In an era of globalisation, multicultural and multi-religious societies are increasingly common. Dr. Hamidullah, having spent a significant portion of his life interacting with followers of various religions, provides valuable insights into fostering inter-civilisational harmony. His scholarly work and personal interactions highlight how different faiths can coexist peacefully within the same society. This study investigates the factors that enhance or hinder interfaith relationships and discusses the societal consequences of interfaith harmony. The research is framed around Dr. Hamidullah's experiences and contributions, particularly during his time in France, where he engaged with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. By examining his approach to interfaith dialogue and understanding, the paper aims to provide guidance on improving interfaith relations in contemporary society. This study employs a qualitative and narrative research methodology. It focuses

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on identifying and analysing the factors affecting interfaith harmony by interpreting the teachings and actions of Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah. The narrative approach is used to present real-life examples from his experiences, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in interfaith dialogues. The research is grounded in a detailed analysis of Dr. Hamidullah's scholarly contributions and personal interactions with people of different faiths, emphasising practical solutions to improve interfaith relationships in today's globalised world

Keywords: Civilisational issues, Interfaith relationships, Muhammad Hamidullah, Global village, Multiculturalism

1. Introduction

Attention needs to be given to issues that relate to civilisational encounters, especially when it refers to an assumed clash between the West and the East. One's exposure to the contrast in civilisations allows him to develop into a more holistic individual, perhaps even refining a different persona altogether. Dr. Mohammad Hamidullah is one such intellectual who has matured into a holistic individual. He was born and raised in the Indian subcontinent, and completed his earlier education in Hyderabad. He was then exposed extensively to the West, especially in France. There, he pursued his mission to convey the message of Islam to the local intellectuals. He did encounter challenges in his approach but benefited tremendously from Western values, including the freedom of speech and choices – liberties he did not enjoy in the East. In fact – based on the aforesaid experience – he visited the United Nations with a mission to demand such freedoms to be implemented in his princely state of Nizam (in) Hyderabad, India. However, and much to his irritation, the government of India betrayed him. Such freedoms were not accorded. Hamidullah's disappointment became the catalyst for his statelessness, deciding upon himself to spend his days in France alone. He kept busy with his mission of conducting free inquiry, while propagating the message of Islam to Western civilization.

The objective of this paper is to study Mohammad Hamidullah and his approach to contemporary Islamic thought, with reference to interfaith relationships between the East and the West. Islam is generally perceived as representing the Eastern civilisation. However, it is argued that Islam has an extensive appeal to Western civilization for its appreciation of knowledge, and the search for truth. The relationship between both civilisations – and any other for that matter – hinges on place and time. It is with this understanding that we proceed with a glimpse of the evolution and civilisational changes throughout centuries.

The paper attempts to explore Dr. Mohammad Hamidullah's approach to the work of da'wah, emphasising Islamic civilisation based on the revealed knowledge's educational objective and role in strengthening the Islamic faith, especially among converts, if rightfully said, the reverts to same faiths embodied in Christianity and Judaism etc; as the majority of them constituted today's Western civilization. He explored the moral fibres that develop these monotheistic religions. He offers a nuanced approach to the Qur'anic verses that address the *Ahl al-Kitab*—a term used within Islam to refer to Jews and Christians. His writings on coexistence celebrate the diversity within the human family. He posited that the common Abrahamic heritage of Muslims, Christians, and Jews lays a solid foundation for dialogue and cooperation. Since he spent most of his life in Paris and was in contact with the Orientalists, he adopted the same research style to respond to the Orientalists, which received great acclaim.

The primary objectives of this research involve a comprehensive investigation into his contributions, scrutinising his educational initiatives and innovative teaching methods, and evaluating their effectiveness in deepening Islam's understanding among diverse audiences. His works and speeches have been translated in Eastern and Western languages to bridge the gaps between the understandings of East and West.

Dr. Hamidullah's lifelong struggle refers to the impactful contributions to Islamic scholarship by discovering, editing, and translating rare manuscripts in *Hadīth*, *Sirah*, *Fiqh*, Islamic history, and medicine for the Western audience. The study employs a

qualitative method with a focus on content analysis. This study further centres on fundamental beliefs, concepts, and principles and unveils his insights' core framework. At its heart lies the cornerstone of monotheism, *Tawhīd*, a concept that transcends theoretical discourse to shape his perspectives on interfaith relationships emerging due the gaps that existed between Western and Eastern civilisations, societal cohesion, and spiritual enhancement to make a morally upright society of both the Eastern and Western civilisations. The study also examines his invaluable contributions to Islamic thought, focusing on interfaith relationships. It underscores the relevance and importance of Islamic thought and interfaith relationships. His legacy challenges people to continue the critical work of interfaith dialogue between the civilizations. Dr. Hamidullah did not believe in the so called our modern-day issues of 'Clash of Civilizations' rather was the staunch supporter of "Alliance of Civilizations" based upon mutual understanding and cooperation, recognising that it is through collective efforts that one can build a world characterised by peace, tolerance, and mutual respect.

Interfaith dialogue initiatives must be strengthened and expanded. Such dialogues are instrumental in breaking down barriers of misunderstanding and mistrust. They provide a platform for people of different faiths to come together, share their beliefs and values, and learn from one another. By focusing on commonalities, such as the shared values of compassion, justice, and peace, these dialogues can pave the way for more harmonious interfaith relationships. Moreover, Muslim scholars and leaders have a vital role to play. They must be proactive in denouncing any form of extremism and violence in the name of Islam and in promoting a narrative that is inclusive and respectful of all faiths. They can also collaborate with leaders of other religions to create a united front against intolerance and bigotry.⁴

Additionally, there is a need for policy interventions at both the national and international levels. Governments and international bodies should work towards creating policies and frameworks that

⁴ Kayaoglu, Turan. "Explaining interfaith dialogue in the Muslim world." *Politics and Religion*, 8, no. 2 (2015): 236-262.

protect religious minorities, promote religious freedom, and encourage interfaith cooperation.

2. Literature Review

There is no consistent research work on comparative religions in Muhammad Hamidullah's research. However, he has expressed his views on comparative religions in several books. For example, some discussions are found in the sermons of Bahawalpur, the political life of the Prophet (PBUH), the introduction of Islam, translations of the Qur'ān, etc. In the same way, those who discussed the biography of Hamidullah did not focus on the aspect of comparative religion. Living in the Western civilisation and familiarity with several languages led to studying comparative religions for Hamidullah. If Hamidullah's writings are scrutinised, it is found that he has provided very valuable and rare information regarding the study of religion.

Many Islamic Scholars and eminent *Sirah* writers elaborated their views in favour of Muhammad Hamidullah regarding his contribution to Islamic thought and interfaith relationships. For example, Rehan Qasmi says;

“After the Second World War, the importance of international law was strongly realised in the United Nations. So, along with the establishment of the United Nations, a manifesto was prepared, and laws were formulated to establish mutual relations and resolve another future conflict of global scale. Muhammad Hamidullah has shed light on the domestic and international laws of Islam, relations with non-Muslim governments and the rights and issues of national minorities, and the methods of peace and war and relations with non-Muslim nations have also been discussed as East and West love civilisations based upon peace and harmony. Muhammad Hamidullah's books include the letters of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his answers, decrees, agreements, *Da'wa-e-Islami*, the appointment of workers, donations of land, trusts, wills, and documents of the *Khilafat-e-Rashidah*, etc. Similarly, he has done excellent research on topics like independence, powers, diplomacy, war, mutiny, robbery, treatment of prisoners of war and enemies, and Muslim women in the army”. According to Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, “Muhammad Hamidullah can be called the founder of the

international law of Islam in the modern era without any fear or danger.⁵

Muhammad Ghazali expresses his view about Hamidullah's works and personality with utmost respect and reverence.⁶

Abdul Waheed has gone over Muhammad Hamidullah from the perspective of how he happened to train preachers of Islam through his academic contributions regarding Islam and its practical applications.⁷ The article explains Muhammad Hamidullah's efforts in doing *Da'wah* around non-Muslims. Hamidullah, who lived in Hindustan, was suggested by his uncle to migrate towards Europe to preach Islam while the Muslim world was highly under the influence of the British Raj. He started in France as a preacher with a broader vision of spreading the message of Islam globally to the world and taught the Qur'an to people who were unaware and unrelated to it.

Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi wrote about Islamic Shariah and the questions posed by minorities in his research. He talks about the fact that throughout history, it has been recorded that Muslim states are fair and better at dealing with minorities than non-Muslim countries.⁸ The study suggests that non-Muslims should apply Islam laws for minorities as Muslims do not seem to face easy circumstances being minorities in other countries.

Husayn Haykal (1956) has mentioned the different covenants signed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to justify the importance of interfaith relationships. He started with a discussion about Orientalists and their faith and answered the questions of the followers of Western Orientalists. His analysis sketches a history of the life of Muhammad (PBUH) even before his Nabuwat. Furthermore, the circumstances after Nabuwat have also been discussed in detail.

⁵ Rehan Akhtar Qasmi, "Dr. Hamidullah and International law" *Lahore: Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, (2018): 89- 97.

⁶ Muhammad al-Ghazali, "Muhammad Hamidullah (1908-2002)". *Islamic Studies* 2, (2003): 183-187.

⁷ Abdul Waheed "Muhammad Hamidullah and his efforts In Grooming of Preachers: A Descriptive Analytical Study, *Majallah-e-Talim o Tahqiq* 4, no. 1 (2002): 9.

⁸ Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, "Islamic Shari'ah and the Question of Minorities". *Policy Perspectives* 6, no. 1(2009): 63-77.

Edgar Kerntz assumes that history is still young as a “rational attempt as analysis” and as a methodical understanding of the past. Several studies have supported that the Prophet (pbuh) maintained interfaith relationships with non-Muslim communities. This is because the historical Muhammad (pbuh) quest is possible and inevitable to achieve some significant objectives.⁹

Furthermore, John Andrew declares the interfaith relationship as one of the hottest buzzwords of this era. In his latest study, he justifies a Muslim perspective on Islam and religious freedom. He says,

Islam is a system of belief that is entirely a devotional, ethical, spiritual and legal worldview. Despite this, religious freedom is everybody's right.¹⁰

A qualitative study by Stephan B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeny presents an outlook on the Hebrew Bible in Judaism, the Old Testament in Christianity and the Hebrew Bible in Islam. This research work consists of six parts. In the fourth section, the author describes the historiography of the former and the latter Prophets, identifying the connection between interfaith relations. The study's key finding is that the Qur'ān justifies the authority and authenticity of the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity.¹¹

The literature review of the related articles and books clarifies that the research gap for the given topic is present in the existing researchers. No researcher has talked about “Muhammad Hamidullah's Contribution to Islamic Thought with Special Reference to Interfaith Relationships” before.

3. Method and Scope of the Study

The present work is qualitative in nature. As qualitative research, the approach refers to broad categories of research methodologies, including the descriptive research approach in general, and content

⁹ Edgar Kerntz, *The Historical Critical Method*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, (1977): 34

¹⁰ John Andrew Morrow, *The Islamic Interfaith Initiative*, (Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2021) : 16

¹¹ Stephan B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeny, *The Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, (Cambridge University Press, 2016): 408.

and textual analysis in particular. This approach aims to ascertain the views of Muhammad Hamidullah regarding inter-civilisational issues, Islamic thought, and interfaith relationships. The study is based on the original texts and renders the translation of relevant passages into English. The originality of the research has been maintained by the authors of the paper by direct textual analysis.

4. Objectives of Study

The study focuses on achieving mainly the following three objectives.

1. To explore inter-civilisational issues and the factors affecting interfaith relationships.
2. To study Muhammad Hamidullah's contributions of inter-civilizational issues and the factors affecting interfaith relationships.
3. To evaluate and emulate the methodology of Muhammad Hamidullah in approaching interfaith relationships.

5. Globalization and Communication Technology

In the contemporary landscape shaped by globalization and rapid advancements in communication technology, the dynamics of interfaith relationships have undergone significant transformation. This interconnected era, marked by the integration of diverse cultures and economies facilitated by modern information systems, has brought individuals from various faith backgrounds closer, fostering an environment conducive to interreligious dialogue and exchange. The enhanced accessibility and visibility of different religious beliefs have paved the way for unprecedented levels of dialogue and exchange. Globalization, characterized by interconnected global markets and cultures, has played a crucial role in reducing societal insularity¹². This exposure to a broad spectrum of beliefs and value systems potentially leads to greater acceptance and appreciation of religious diversity. However, it also poses significant challenges, as communities may perceive their traditional beliefs as being

¹² Bhambra, Manmit, Austin Tiffany, and James Walters. *“Interfaith beyond the pandemic: from London communities to global identities.”* (2021),45.

threatened by foreign influences, leading to increased tension and conflict¹³. Thus, the impact of globalization on interfaith relationships is two-pronged: it creates opportunities for collaboration and learning between different faiths, yet also harbor's the potential for resistance and discord.

The rise of communication technology, especially social media, has revolutionized the landscape of religious discourse. These platforms have become modern forums for the exchange of ideas and beliefs, including those related to faith. The rapid and wide dissemination of information through these platforms has enabled stories of interfaith solidarity and inspirational messages to reach global audiences almost instantaneously¹⁴

However, the influence of social media is not entirely positive. Its extensive reach and anonymity can be exploited to spread hate speech and extremist views, often leading to the entrenchment of prejudices and, in extreme cases, incidents of violence. In addressing these challenges, fostering a responsible approach to the use of communication technologies, particularly social media, is essential. Educational initiatives focusing on digital literacy and critical thinking are vital for enabling users to discern credible information from propaganda. Furthermore, interfaith leaders and organizations play an instrumental role in effectively utilizing these platforms. Their engagement in constructive dialogue, sharing accurate information about their faiths, and counteracting false narratives with truth and compassion are pivotal in harnessing the power of social media for positive change¹⁵.

In this context, the contributions of Muhammad Hamidullah are particularly relevant. Dr. Hamidullah, a distinguished Islamic scholar, emphasized the importance of understanding and respecting different religious traditions. His work underscores the significance

¹³ Marshall, Katherine, and Marisa Bronwyn van Saanen. *Development and faith: where mind, heart, and soul work together*. World Bank Publications, 2007, 23

¹⁴ Tehranian, Majid, and B. Jeannie Lum, eds. *Globalization & identity: cultural diversity, religion, and citizenship*. Vol. 10. Transaction Publishers, 2006, 56.

¹⁵ Kholil, Syukur, Yusnadi Yusnadi, and Ibrahim Sihombing. "Interfaith Figures Communication Model in Building Religious Harmony in North Labuhanbatu Regency." *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)* 3, no. 4 (2020),2568-2574.

of interfaith dialogue in promoting peace and mutual understanding. Muhammad Hamidullah's approach to interfaith relationships, grounded in deep scholarly knowledge and profound respect for all faiths, serves as a valuable model in today's interconnected world¹⁶. The spread of hate speech and religiously motivated vitriol online calls for concerted efforts from both social media companies and regulatory bodies. Social media platforms must vigilantly monitor content, enforce community standards, and respond promptly to misuse. Regulations that protect freedom of expression while preventing hate speech are necessary to maintain online spaces that are open yet respectful¹⁷.

Regulatory bodies have a significant role in establishing guidelines and policies for responsible social media use. Laws and regulations should protect individuals from online harassment and hate speech while respecting free speech rights. This balance requires a nuanced understanding of online discourse and the broader impact of digital communication on society¹⁸. The transformation brought about by globalization and communication technology in the realm of interfaith relationships is profound. These developments offer immense potential to enhance understanding and cooperation among different faiths but also present substantial challenges that must be addressed. Promoting responsible social media usage, enhancing digital literacy, and establishing effective regulatory frameworks are crucial steps toward ensuring that these technological advancements serve as catalysts for interfaith harmony, rather than as vectors for discord¹⁹.

In essence, the contemporary interfaith landscape represents a complex interplay of globalized cultural exchanges and digital interactions. Effectively managing this landscape requires a

¹⁶ Banaji, Shakuntala, and Ramnath Bhat. *Social media and hate*. Taylor & Francis, 2022,33.

¹⁷ Kessler, Edward. "Social media and the movement of ideas." *European Judaism* 46, no.1 (2013): 26-35.

¹⁸ Pollich, Ivy, Mrs Adah Sawayn, and Mr Jeramy Leuschke IV. "*ACTS OF FAITH: THE STORY OF AN AMERICAN MUSLIM, IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF A GENERATION.*" (2007): 56.

¹⁹Tufekci, Zeynep. "Algorithmic harms beyond Facebook and Google: Emergent challenges of computational agency." *Colo. Tech. LJ* 13 (2015): 203.

collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including religious leaders, educators, policymakers, and technology companies. Through such collective efforts, the potential of globalization and communication technology to bridge religious divides and foster a more harmonious world can be fully realized²⁰. This task requires not only technological expertise but also a deep understanding of the cultural and religious sensitivities that shape our world, a perspective profoundly embodied in the work of Muhammad Hamidullah Khan. By navigating these challenges thoughtfully and proactively, societies can harness the power of these global forces to create a more inclusive and respectful world, where diverse faiths coexist in harmony and mutual respect.

The dynamics of interfaith relationships are profoundly shaped by the intricate interplay of social and cultural factors. These factors create a backdrop that either nurtures or impedes the development of harmonious relations between different religious groups. Societies that value multiculturalism and diversity often foster environments conducive to interfaith cooperation, promoting mutual respect and understanding among diverse religious groups. This is in stark contrast to settings where monolithic cultural narratives predominate, which can pose significant challenges to the establishment of meaningful interfaith dialogue²¹. Globally, the deep entwinement of cultural traditions with religious practices often blurs the lines between cultural and religious identities. This confluence can either facilitate rich dialogue, offering opportunities for deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse religious traditions, or lead to misunderstandings and conflicts when cultural norms are misinterpreted or practiced in ways that foster exclusivity or superiority. Cultures emphasizing values such as honor, hospitality, and respect can lay a robust foundation for positive interfaith relationships. However, cultural norms that promote exclusivity can

²⁰ Mercier, Charles. "Young People, Globalization and Interfaith Advocacy: A Case Study of the InterFaith Tour (2012–2020)." *Social Sciences and Missions* 36, no. 1-2 (2023): 90-122.

²¹ Kalin, Ibrahim. "*Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism*." *Islamophobia: The challenge of pluralism in the 21st century* (2011): 3-20.

be detrimental to the development of harmonious interfaith relations²².

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping societies that value interfaith understanding and cooperation. Implementing educational reforms that include curricula emphasising tolerance, respect for diversity, and an accurate representation of various religious teachings is critical for building a more inclusive society. Such educational initiatives are essential in breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, thus fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding across different faiths²³. Furthermore, community events celebrating cultural diversity, like festivals, art exhibits, and collaborative community service projects involving participants from different faith backgrounds, can effectively counteract divisiveness and promote interfaith harmony²⁴.

Interfaith dialogues, roundtable discussions, and seminars provide invaluable platforms for individuals from diverse religious backgrounds to share their beliefs, traditions, and experiences. These forums are crucial in addressing misconceptions, exploring common ethical and moral grounds that unite different faiths, and fostering a transformation of attitudes and a deeper understanding of ‘the other’²⁵. In this regard, the contributions of Muhammad Hamidullah, are particularly noteworthy. Muhammad Hamidullah’s work, emphasizing mutual respect and understanding among different faiths, underscores the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. His approach to interfaith relationships, grounded in respect for all religious traditions, is highly relevant within diverse societies today. Muhammad Hamidullah’s scholarship offers guidance for communities to engage constructively and empathetically across religious divides²⁶.

²² Sachedina, Abdulaziz. *The Islamic roots of democratic pluralism*. Oxford University Press, 2001, 56

²³ Abdul Azim Islahi, “The legacy of Muhammad Hamidullah in Islamic economics.” (2017): 1-21.

²⁴ Banks, James A. “An introduction to multicultural education.” University of Washington (2008).

²⁵ Kwok, Pui-lan. *Globalization, gender, and peacebuilding: the future of interfaith dialogue*. Paulist Press, 2012, 56.

²⁶ Zia-Ul-Haq, Muhammad. “*Religious diversity: an Islamic perspective*.” Islamic

The media also plays a significant role in shaping societal attitudes towards different faiths. Responsible journalism and fair representation of religious groups can either promote understanding and tolerance, or perpetuate stereotypes and biases. Accurate and balanced media portrayal of religious groups and interfaith interactions can influence public perception and attitudes positively, contributing to societal harmony. Religious leaders and institutions have a vital role in promoting interfaith harmony. Their engagement in dialogues, participation in joint community service projects, and public stance against intolerance and significant, they are not insurmountable. The teachings and legacy of scholars like Muhammad Hamidullah provide a valuable guide in navigating these challenges. By embracing the principles of tolerance, respect, and cooperation, and by implementing strategic educational, dialogical, and policy initiatives, the Muslim *Ummah* can move towards a more-harmonious and inclusive future in interfaith relations. Bigotry can influence not only their immediate communities but also broader societal acceptance and respect for different religious beliefs and practices²⁷.

Additionally, the impact of globalisation and technological advancements on the social and cultural dynamics of interfaith relationships is profound. Increased connectivity and the exchange of ideas, facilitated by these developments, can either strengthen interfaith understanding or exacerbate tensions. Societies must utilise these tools positively, promoting narratives that encourage respect, tolerance, and empathy among diverse religious groups²⁸. In conclusion, the social and cultural factors that shape interfaith relationships are complex and multifaceted. By fostering environments that value diversity, encouraging educational initiatives focused on tolerance and mutual respect, and providing platforms for dialogue and exchange, societies can create more inclusive and

Studies (2010): 493-519.

²⁷ Samaie, Mahmoud, and Bahareh Malmir. "US news media portrayal of Islam and Muslims: a corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49, no. 14 (2017): 1351-1366.

²⁸ Andrew, Divinah. "The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Religious Practices and Cultural Values: A Case Study of Kenya." *International Journal of Culture and Religious Studies* 4,no.2 (2023):1-12

harmonious spaces. The teachings and approaches of scholars like Muhammad Hamidullah, responsible media representation, and the proactive role of religious leaders are instrumental in this endeavor. Through collective efforts, it is possible to build societies where diverse faiths not only coexist peacefully, but also enrich each other, leading to a more tolerant and empathetic world. In these societies, different religious communities can learn from each other, celebrating both their unique characteristics and their shared human values, thus fostering a deeper sense of unity and understanding.

6. Impact of Government Policies and Legislation

In the intricate landscape of global politics – often intertwining with religious undercurrents – government policies, and legislation emerge as pivotal factors in nurturing interfaith understanding. These legal frameworks serve as foundational instruments for bridging divides and fostering peaceful coexistence among diverse faith communities. Recognising and safeguarding the rights of religious minorities through legislation lays the groundwork for constructive dialogue and cooperation, echoing the emphasis placed on legal frameworks by Muhammad Hamidullah in ensuring peaceful religious coexistence²⁹.

However, the significance of inclusive legal frameworks extends beyond mere acknowledgment; it involves celebrating diversity as a fundamental national strength. This perspective aligns harmoniously with Muhammad Hamidullah’s historical findings on Islamic governance, where diversity was embraced and integrated into the societal fabric, enriching the tapestry of societies³⁰. Such legal frameworks actively encourage the establishment of institutions and programs that support interfaith initiatives, fostering an environment where diversity is not just accepted but is also seen as a source of enrichment and strength.

At the core of promoting interfaith interactions is the legislation guaranteeing freedom of religion, often deemed as the

²⁹ Finke, Roger. “*Presidential address origins and consequences of religious freedoms: A global overview.*” *Sociology of religion* 74, no. 3 (2013): 297-313.

³⁰ Bielefeldt, Heiner, and Michael Wiener. *Religious freedom under scrutiny.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019, 45.

cornerstone for peaceful coexistence among faith communities³¹. Muhammad Hamidullah's extensive research into early Islamic law resonates with the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in the creation of harmonious societies. These laws serve as a legal safeguard, ensuring individuals and communities the freedom to practice their faith without fear of discrimination or persecution. However, it is imperative to recognise that the mere existence of such laws is insufficient; active enforcement is a pivotal requirement to protect the rights of all citizens, a principle consistently underscored in Muhammad Hamidullah's scholarly works³². Advocacy for inclusive policies at various levels is essential for promoting interfaith tolerance and legal equality. Advocates employ a range of strategies, including lobbying and media engagement, to influence policy-making, resonating with Muhammad Hamidullah's views on the active role scholars and community leaders should play in shaping societal norms and policies. These advocacy efforts are geared towards creating a legal environment where interfaith dialogue is not merely permitted but is actively encouraged and supported³³.

The responsibility of states in creating an environment conducive to religious freedom and coexistence cannot be overemphasised. This entails ensuring that minority voices are not only heard but actively included in policy-making processes, a perspective that mirrors Muhammad Hamidullah's findings regarding the inclusivity of historical Islamic governance³⁴. Implementing anti-discrimination laws effectively is pivotal in preventing the marginalisation of religious communities, aligning with Muhammad Hamidullah's emphasis on justice and equality in Islamic teachings³⁵.

³¹ Admirand, Peter. "Dialogue in the Face of a Gun? Interfaith Dialogue and Limiting Mass Atrocities." *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 99, no. 3 (2016): 267-290.

³² Abdul Azim Islahi, "The genesis of Islamic economics: revisited." *Islamic Economic Studies* 130, no. 2223 (2015): 1-28.

³³ Soper, J. Christopher, and Joel S. Fetzer. *Religion and nationalism in global perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 45.

³⁴ Robinson, Robert V. "The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century." (2014): 844-846.

³⁵ Abdul Azim Islahi, "The legacy of Muhammad Hamidullah in Islamic

In the context of globalisation, the interconnectedness and rapid exchange of information can either enrich or challenge interfaith dialogue. Muhammad Hamidullah's scholarly endeavors, which traversed borders and cultures, exemplify the positive potential of this interconnectedness in enhancing understanding across faiths. Nevertheless, this phenomenon necessitates a mindful approach to mitigate potential divisiveness and conflict, in line with Muhammad Hamidullah's holistic understanding of societal dynamics³⁶.

Social and cultural dynamics wield significant influence over interfaith relationships. These dynamics, shaped by historical contexts and societal norms, can positively enhance interfaith understanding when leveraged constructively. Cultural events celebrating religious diversity and educational programs promoting respect for different faith traditions contribute to more inclusive societies. This aligns with Muhammad Hamidullah's work on the historical interactions between different religious communities in Islamic civilisations.³⁷ On the flip side, negative social and cultural influences can hinder interfaith relations. Transformative efforts to reshape societal attitudes, promote tolerance, and foster mutual understanding become imperative in overcoming these challenges. This transformation involves not only policy changes but also grassroots initiatives that encourage interaction and dialogue between different religious communities, reflecting Muhammad Hamidullah's belief in the power of personal interactions and community engagement in fostering mutual understanding³⁸. The international stage also plays a crucial role in fostering interfaith understanding. International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) increasingly recognise their role in advancing interfaith understanding through education and diplomacy. These entities often

economics." (2017): 1-21.

³⁶ Ramadan, Tariq. *Western Muslims and the future of Islam*. Oxford University Press, 2003, 65.

³⁷ Martinez, Laura V., Stella Ting-Toomey, and Tenzin Dorjee. "Identity management and relational culture in interfaith marital communication in a United States context: A qualitative study." *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 45, no. 6 (2016): 503-525.

³⁸ Hamidullah, Madinah F. *Managing the next generation of public workers: A public solutions handbook*. Routledge, 2015, 40.

spearhead interfaith dialogues and educational programs, echoing Muhammad Hamidullah's perspective on the importance of collaborative efforts and international cooperation in promoting peace and understanding³⁹. Apart from formal education and diplomatic initiatives, informal educational efforts such as interfaith dialogues and cultural exchange programs are instrumental in fostering understanding⁴⁰. These initiatives provide safe spaces for individuals from different faith backgrounds to interact, learn from each other, and dispel misconceptions. This aligns closely with Muhammad Hamidullah's emphasis on dialogue and personal encounters as catalysts for building bridges between different faiths⁴¹. The impact of media and technology in shaping public perceptions about different religions and their followers should not be underestimated. Responsible media coverage that highlights positive examples of interfaith cooperation and understanding can have a powerful impact on public attitudes. This perspective aligns with Muhammad Hamidullah's views on the role of media in shaping societal narratives. Similarly, social media and online platforms offer new avenues for interfaith education and dialogue, reaching a broader audience and facilitating connections across geographical boundaries⁴².

7. Social and Cultural Factors

The dynamics of interfaith relationships are profoundly shaped by the intricate interplay between social and cultural factors. These factors create a backdrop that either nurtures or impedes the development of harmonious relations between different religious groups. Societies that value multiculturalism and diversity often foster environments conducive to interfaith cooperation, promoting mutual respect and

³⁹ Muzaffar, Saeher AF. "Practicable ideals? A proposal for revitalizing the rights of forced migrants in Islam." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 14, no. 3 (2001): 250-275

⁴⁰ Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Muslim conduct of state*. The Other Press, 2011, 65.

⁴¹ Peters, Francis E. "The quest of the historical Muhammad." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 3 (1991): 291-315.

⁴² Greenberg, Karen J. "Counter-radicalization via the internet." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 668, no. 1 (2016): 165-179

understanding among diverse religious groups. This is in stark contrast to settings where monolithic cultural narratives predominate, which can pose significant challenges to the establishment of meaningful interfaith dialogue⁴⁹². Globally, the deep intertwining of cultural traditions with religious practices often blurs the lines between cultural and religious identities. This confluence can either facilitate rich dialogue, offering opportunities for deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse religious traditions, or lead to misunderstandings and conflicts when cultural norms are misinterpreted or practiced in ways that foster exclusivity or superiority. Cultures emphasising values such as honor, hospitality, and respect can lay a robust foundation for positive interfaith relationships. On the contrary, cultural norms that promote exclusivity can be detrimental to the development of harmonious interfaith relations.⁴³

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping societies that value interfaith understanding and cooperation. Implementing educational reforms which include curricula emphasising tolerance, respect for diversity, and an accurate representation of various religious teachings is critical for building a more inclusive society. Such educational initiatives are essential in breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, thus fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding across different faiths. Furthermore, community events celebrating cultural diversity, like festivals, art exhibits, and collaborative community service projects involving participants from different faith backgrounds, can effectively counteract divisiveness and promote interfaith harmony.

Often intertwined with religious undercurrents, the intricate landscape of global politics sees government policies and legislation emerge as pivotal factors in nurturing interfaith understanding. These legal frameworks serve as foundational instruments for bridging divides and fostering peaceful coexistence among diverse faith communities. Recognising and safeguarding the rights of religious minorities through legislation lays the groundwork for constructive dialogue and cooperation, echoing the emphasis placed on legal

⁴³ Sachedina, Abdulaziz. *The Islamic roots of democratic pluralism*. Oxford University Press, 2001, 56.

frameworks by Muhammad Hamidullah in ensuring peaceful religious coexistence⁴⁴. However, the significance of inclusive legal frameworks extends beyond mere acknowledgment; it involves celebrating diversity as a fundamental national strength. This perspective aligns harmoniously with Hamidullah's historical findings on Islamic governance, where diversity was embraced and integrated into the societal fabric, enriching the tapestry of societies⁴⁵. Such legal frameworks actively encourage the establishment of institutions and programs that support interfaith initiatives, fostering an environment where diversity is not just accepted but is also seen as a source of enrichment and strength. At the core of promoting interfaith interactions is the legislation guaranteeing freedom of religion, often deemed as the cornerstone for peaceful coexistence among faith communities⁴⁶. Muhammad Hamidullah's extensive research into early Islamic law resonates with the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in the creation of harmonious societies. These laws serve as a legal safeguard, ensuring individuals and communities the freedom to practice their faith without fear of discrimination or persecution. However, it is imperative to recognize that the mere existence of such laws is insufficient; active enforcement is a pivotal requirement to protect the rights of all citizens, a principle consistently underscored in Muhammad Hamidullah's scholarly works⁴⁷.

Advocacy for inclusive policies at various levels is essential for promoting interfaith tolerance and legal equality. Advocates employ a range of strategies, including lobbying and media engagement, to influence policymaking, resonating with Muhammad Hamidullah's views on the active role scholars and community

⁴⁴ Finke, Roger. "Presidential address origins and consequences of religious freedoms: A global overview." *Sociology of religion* 74, no. 3 (2013): 297-313.

⁴⁵ Bielefeldt, Heiner, and Michael Wiener. *Religious freedom under scrutiny*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Admirand, Peter. "Dialogue in the Face of a Gun? Interfaith Dialogue and Limiting Mass Atrocities." *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 99, no. 3 (2016): 267-290.

⁴⁷ Soper, J. Christopher, and Joel S. Fetzer. *Religion and nationalism in global perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 45

leaders should play in shaping societal norms and policies. These advocacy efforts are geared towards creating a legal environment where interfaith dialogue is not merely permitted but is actively encouraged and supported⁴⁸.

The responsibility of states in creating an environment conducive to religious freedom and coexistence cannot be overemphasized. This entails ensuring that minority voices are not only heard but actively included in policy-making processes, a perspective that mirrors Muhammad Hamidullah's findings regarding the inclusivity of historical Islamic governance⁴⁹. Implementing anti-discrimination laws effectively is pivotal in preventing the marginalization of religious communities, aligning with Muhammad Hamidullah's emphasis on justice and equality in Islamic teachings⁵⁰. In the context of globalization, the interconnectedness and rapid exchange of information can either enrich or challenge interfaith dialogue. Muhammad Hamidullah's scholarly endeavors, which traversed borders and cultures, exemplify the positive potential of this interconnectedness in enhancing understanding across faiths. Nevertheless, this phenomenon necessitates a mindful approach to mitigate potential divisiveness and conflict, in line with Muhammad Hamidullah's holistic understanding of societal dynamics⁵¹.

Social and cultural dynamics wield significant influence over interfaith relationships. These dynamics, shaped by historical contexts and societal norms, can positively enhance interfaith understanding when leveraged constructively. Cultural events celebrating religious diversity and educational programs promoting respect for different faith traditions contribute to more inclusive societies. This aligns with Muhammad Hamidullah's work on the historical interactions between different religious communities in

⁴⁸ Robinson, Robert V. "The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century." (2014): 844-846.

⁴⁹ Islahi, Abdul Azim. "The legacy of Muhammad Hamidullah in Islamic economics." (2017):1-21.

⁵⁰ Ramadan, Tariq. *Western Muslims and the future of Islam*. Oxford University Press, 2003, p.65

⁵¹ Martinez, Laura V., Stella Ting-Toomey, and Tenzin Dorjee. "Identity management and relational culture in interfaith marital communication in a United States context: A

Islamic civilisations. On the flip side, negative social and cultural influences can hinder interfaith relations. Transformative efforts to reshape societal attitudes, promote tolerance, and foster mutual understanding become imperative in overcoming these challenges. This transformation involves not only policy changes but also grassroots initiatives that encourage interaction and dialogue between different religious communities, reflecting Muhammad Hamidullah's belief in the power of personal interactions and community engagement in fostering mutual understanding⁵².

The international stage also plays a crucial role in fostering interfaith understanding. International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) increasingly recognize their role in advancing interfaith understanding through education and diplomacy. These entities often spearhead interfaith dialogues and educational programs, echoing Muhammad Hamidullah's perspective on the importance of collaborative efforts and international cooperation in promoting peace and understanding⁵³. Apart from formal education and diplomatic initiatives, informal educational efforts such as interfaith dialogues and cultural exchange programs are instrumental in fostering understanding⁵¹¹. These initiatives provide safe spaces for individuals from different faith backgrounds to interact, learn from each other, and dispel misconceptions. This aligns closely with Muhammad Hamidullah's emphasis on dialogue and personal encounters as catalysts for building bridges between different faith⁵⁴. The impact of media and technology in shaping public perceptions about different religions and their followers should not be underestimated. Responsible media coverage that highlights positive examples of interfaith cooperation and understanding can have a powerful impact on public attitudes. This perspective aligns with Muhammad Hamidullah's views on the role of media in shaping societal narratives. Similarly, social media and online platforms offer

⁵² Hamidullah, Madinah F. *Managing the next generation of public workers: A public solutions handbook*. Routledge, 2015, 40.

⁵³ Muzaffar, Saheer AF. "Practicable ideals? A proposal for revitalizing the rights of forced migrants in Islam." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 14, no. 3 (2001): 250-275.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Muslim conduct of state*. The Other Press, 2011, p. 65

new avenues for interfaith education, and dialogue, reaching a broader audience and facilitating connections across geographical boundaries⁵⁵.

Additionally, the impact of globalisation and technological advancements on the social and cultural dynamics of interfaith relationships is profound. Increased connectivity and the exchange of ideas, facilitated by these developments, can either strengthen interfaith understanding or exacerbate tensions. Societies must utilize these tools positively, promoting narratives that encourage respect, tolerance, and empathy among diverse religious groups⁵⁶. In conclusion, the social and cultural factors that shape interfaith relationships are complex and multifaceted. By fostering environments that value diversity, encouraging educational initiatives focused on tolerance and mutual respect, and providing platforms for dialogue and exchange, societies can create more inclusive and harmonious spaces. The teachings and approaches of scholars like Muhammad Hamidullah Khan, responsible media representation, and the proactive role of religious leaders are instrumental in this endeavor. Through collective efforts, it is possible to build societies where diverse faiths not only coexist peacefully but also enrich each other, leading to a more tolerant and empathetic world. In these societies, different religious communities can learn from each other, celebrating both their unique characteristics and their shared human values, thus fostering a deeper sense of unity and understanding. The Israel-Palestine conflict, a significant and enduring issue in modern geopolitics, presents a profound study of the intricate interplay between geopolitical factors and interfaith dynamics. Originating in the early 20th century, the roots of this conflict are deeply embedded in the historical, social, and territorial claims of Jewish and Arab populations, both deeply connected through religious and cultural ties to the land. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was a pivotal moment in

⁵⁵ Greenberg, Karen J. “*Counter-radicalization via the internet.*” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 668, no. 1 (2016): 165-179.

⁵⁶ Andrew, Divinah. “The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Religious Practices and Cultural Values: A Case Study of Kenya.” *International Journal of Culture and Religious Studies* 4, no. 2 (2023): 1-12.

this history, signaling British support for a “*national home for the Jewish people*” in Palestine⁵⁷

This declaration, coupled with the subsequent British Mandate, intensified Jewish immigration and set the stage for escalating tensions with the Arab population. The partition plan of the United Nations in 1948, which led to the establishment of the State of Israel, further ignited a series of Arab-Israeli wars, reshaping the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East and altering the socio-cultural narratives of the involved communities. The resulting displacement and refugee crises, particularly among Palestinians, have had enduring impacts on the region's demography and politics, fueling ongoing instability and disputes⁵⁸

From a religious perspective, the land at the center of the Israel-Palestine conflict holds immense significance for both Jews and Muslims. For Jews, it is the biblical Land of Israel, an integral part of their identity and faith. For Muslims, particularly Palestinians, the land is not only ancestral but also includes key religious sites, such as the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam. This religious dimension adds complexity to the conflict, as it intertwines political aspirations with deeply rooted spiritual beliefs, transforming it from a territorial dispute into a profound spiritual and cultural struggle⁵⁹.

The impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict extends well beyond its immediate region, resonating deeply within the Muslim *Ummah*. It has become a symbol of the broader challenges faced by Muslims in asserting their rights and dignity on the international stage. The plight of Palestinian Muslims has elicited strong reactions across the Muslim world, influencing perceptions toward other faith communities and shaping the narrative of Muslim identity in the context of global politics. This dynamic has significant implications

⁵⁷ Cottrell-Boyce, Aidan. “British-Israelists and the ‘State of Israeli’ in the Twentieth Century.” *Journal of Religious History* 44, no. 3 (2020): 295-318.

⁵⁸ Abu-Nimer, Mohammed, Amal Khoury, and Emily Welty. *Unity in diversity: Interfaith dialogue in the Middle East*. US Institute of Peace Press, 2007, p. 45

⁵⁹ Sezenler, Olcay. “Religion in international relations and interfaith dialogue.” Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2010, p. 65.

for interfaith relations and the Muslim community's interactions with international actors⁶⁰.

Media portrayal and political rhetoric are critical in shaping public perception and discourse around the Israel-Palestine conflict. The media often reflects and amplifies existing biases, impacting public opinion and international policy. Politicians and leaders, through their statements and policies, play a crucial role in either exacerbating tensions or fostering understanding. Their portrayal of the conflict and its participants can significantly influence public sentiment, thereby impacting policy decisions at both national and international levels⁴⁴¹. The international community's approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict is characterized by a range of policies, reflecting a complex interplay of geopolitical interests, historical relationships, and domestic political considerations. Major global powers, such as the United States, European nations, and regional players like Iran and Saudi Arabia, exert significant influence over the dynamics of the conflict. These countries' policies often mirror broader geopolitical objectives and alignments, complicating the pursuit of a peaceful resolution⁶¹.

In this context, the research of Dr. Hamidullah Khan offers insightful and critical perspectives on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Muhammad Hamidullah's work emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach in addressing the conflict, considering both its historical roots and contemporary geopolitical realities. He underscores the necessity of understanding the nuanced interplay between geopolitical strategies and religious narratives. His studies highlight how historical grievances and current geopolitical maneuvers intersect, influencing not only the direct participants in the conflict but also the broader international community⁶².

⁶⁰ Haiduc-Dale, Noah. "Rejecting Sectarianism: Palestinian Christians' Role in Muslim-Christian Relations." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 26, no. 1 (2015): 75-88.

⁶¹ Zhang, Juyan. "Putting Interfaith Dialogue on the Public Diplomacy Radar: Goals, Power, Strategies, and the Influence of Worldviews." *CrossCurrents* 72, no. 3 (2022): 216-246.

⁶² Smith, Jenna M. "No Matter Where You're From, We're Glad You're Our Neighbor: Enacting Justice Initiatives and Community Formation in Faith-Based Organizations." (2022): 87.

Muhammad Hamidullah's research particularly focuses on the role of external actors in the conflict and their impact on the peace process. He analyzes how interventions by major powers often reflect their strategic interests rather than a genuine commitment to resolving the conflict. Khan advocates for a more empathetic and informed engagement from the international community, emphasizing the need for actions that consider the historical injustices and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians. Moreover, Dr. Khan delves into the psychological and social impacts of the conflict on both communities. He explores how the prolonged nature of the conflict has entrenched narratives of victimhood and aggression, complicating efforts toward reconciliation and peace. His work suggests that addressing these deeply ingrained perceptions is crucial for any lasting resolution.

In conclusion, the Israel-Palestine conflict exemplifies the challenges of navigating disputes deeply rooted in historical, territorial, and religious narratives. Dr. Hamidullah Khan's contributions provide a valuable framework for understanding the complexities of this conflict. His emphasis on a balanced, informed approach highlights the need for careful consideration of historical contexts and current geopolitical realities in conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue. The conflict's global resonance, especially within the Muslim Ummah, and its impact on international interfaith relations underscore the importance of nuanced and informed engagement by all parties involved in seeking a feeling of lasting peace and understanding. This conflict, therefore, serves as a critical case study in understanding the intersections of geopolitics and interfaith dynamics, demanding attention and sensitivity from all stakeholders.

8. Muhammad Hamidullah's Approach to Inter-Civilisational Dialogue

Muhammad Hamidullah significantly influenced the understanding of interfaith relationships within Islamic thought. His focus on the *Ahl al-Kitab*, a term referring to Jews and Christians, reflects his deep commitment to religious diversity and fostering understanding and respect among different faith communities. Hamidullah

recognised Islam's unique status accorded to the People of the Book, stemming from their monotheistic beliefs and adherence to divine scriptures.⁶³ He frequently referred to Qur'anic verses that acknowledged the divine origins of the Torah and the Bible, and advocated for respectful and harmonious relationships with their followers (Qur'ān 29:46). Hamidullah believed that the common scriptural roots shared by these Abrahamic faiths provide a foundation for building positive and constructive interactions, promoting a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.⁶⁴

In thoroughly examining the theological underpinnings of the concept of *Ahl al-Kitab*, Hamidullah highlighted the shared monotheistic roots and moral and ethical teachings common to these faiths. He posited that these shared values should be the basis for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect rather than sources of conflict or contention. Recognising these shared values, according to Hamidullah, "is pivotal in creating an environment where followers of different faiths can coexist harmoniously, respecting each other's beliefs and practices".⁶⁵

Hamidullah addressed the inherent challenges and complexities of interfaith relationships. He acknowledged the theological differences between Islam and the People of the Book but maintained that these differences need not hinder positive interactions and mutual respect. Advocating for an approach grounded in knowledge, dialogue, and empathy, Hamidullah encouraged Muslims to engage in meaningful conversations with Jews and Christians. This, he believed, would help clarify misconceptions and foster understanding.⁶⁶ Hamidullah's perspective on the *Ahl al-Kitab* also emphasised the importance of justice and equity, echoing Qur'anic injunctions that call for just and fair treatment of all people, irrespective of their religious affiliations (Qur'ān 4:135). He argued that upholding justice is an essential

⁶³ Ismail, *The People of the Book in the Qur'ān*, 301-325.

⁶⁴ Bhat, *Life and Works of Muhammad Hamidullah: An Overview*, 57-68.

⁶⁵ Muhammad al-Ghazali, "Muhammad Hamidullah (1908-2002)," *Islamic Studies* (2003): 183-187.

⁶⁶ Muhammad Hamidullah, "Administration of Justice under the early Caliphate: (Instructions of Caliph'Umar to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari) (17 H)," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 19,no.1 (1971): 1.

Islamic value that must be observed in all interactions, including dialogue with the People of the Book. This commitment to justice, he believed, is crucial for creating a just and harmonious society.⁶⁷

Examining the practical aspects of these interactions, Hamidullah delved into the historical examples the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) set in his dealings with Jews and Christians. He focused on various treaties, pacts, and agreements the Prophet (PBUH) forged with different religious communities. These historical instances showcased Islam's capacity for diplomacy, coexistence, and mutual respect.⁶⁸ Such examples give contemporary Muslim communities insights into engaging respectfully and justly with People of the Book, thereby fostering peace.⁶⁹

Muhammad Hamidullah's approach to interfaith relationships, particularly regarding the *Ahl al-Kitab*, reflects a profound appreciation for religious diversity and an in-depth understanding of the shared monotheistic roots of Muslims, Jews, and Christians. His scholarly work is a rich repository of knowledge and insights for fostering harmonious coexistence based on mutual respect, justice, and a commitment to dialogue. His contributions to this field are invaluable, providing a foundational framework for positive and constructive interfaith relationships. Hamidullah's emphasis on recognising shared values, addressing challenges with empathy and understanding, and upholding justice in all interactions continues to be highly relevant. This approach serves as a valuable resource for anyone seeking to focus on the complexities of interfaith relationships in a manner that aligns with Islamic principles and values.⁷⁰

Hamidullah's work highlights the historical context of interfaith relations and offers practical guidance for contemporary

⁶⁷ Jamal Badawi, *Muslim/non-Muslim relations: An integrative approach*, 23.

⁶⁸ Mitwally Ibrahim, Muhammad Said. "Interfaith dialogue a muslim legal perspective on its validity, concept and practices," *Insights* (20724586) 3, no. 1 (2010): 11-32.

⁶⁹ Siddiqui, Ataullah. "Pope Francis, Islam, and Dialogue," *Pope Francis and Interreligious Dialogue: Religious Thinkers Engage with Recent Papal Initiatives* (2018): 169-182.

⁷⁰ Imtiyaz Yusuf, *Managing Religious and Ethnic Diversity for Peace and Harmony*, 129-140.

engagement. His call for dialogue and understanding resonates strongly in today's world, where interfaith interactions are increasingly common and necessary.⁷¹ Hamidullah's teachings help bridge the gaps between religious communities, fostering an environment where diverse faiths can coexist harmoniously by promoting an approach that values knowledge, empathy, and mutual respect. His interpretation of Qur'anic teachings regarding the *Ahl al-Kitab* serves as a reminder of the potential for common ground and shared values among different religious traditions. It underscores the importance of focusing on similarities rather than differences, promoting a narrative of inclusivity and respect. This perspective is particularly relevant in addressing contemporary issues such as religious intolerance and sectarianism. By embracing Hamidullah's approach, individuals and communities can work towards a more inclusive and respectful interfaith dialogue, contributing to a more peaceful and understanding world.⁷²

Moreover, Hamidullah's emphasis on justice and equity in interfaith relationships is critical to his teachings. He posits that justice is a fundamental Islamic value and a universal principle that should guide all human interactions. This focus on justice transcends religious boundaries, offering a universal framework for interfaith engagement that is ethical and respectful.⁷³ In summary, Muhammad Hamidullah's approach to interfaith relationships, particularly his views on the *Ahl al-Kitab*, offers a comprehensive and insightful framework for understanding and navigating the complexities of interfaith dialogue. His work, grounded in a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and a commitment to religious diversity, provides valuable guidance for contemporary efforts to foster mutual respect and understanding among different faith communities. Hamidullah's legacy in this field inspires and informs scholars, religious leaders, and laypersons alike, underscoring the importance of knowledge, empathy, and justice in building harmonious interfaith relationships.

⁷¹ Ismail, *The People of the Book in the Qur'ān*, 301-325.

⁷² Abdullah, "Hijrat-e-Habāsha," 1-15.

⁷³ Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Islamic Theology of Religious Pluralism: Building Islam-Buddhism Understanding," *Pluralism in Islamic Contexts-Ethics, Politics and Modern Challenges* (2021): 129-140.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the intricate tapestry of interfaith relations is significantly woven by the threads of government policies and legislation, a concept underscored by the insightful findings of Muhammad Hamidullah. His research emphasises the pivotal role of legal frameworks and justice in nurturing harmonious societies, shedding light on the importance of advocacy, enforcement, and state responsibilities in creating an environment conducive to the flourishing of interfaith understanding. The canvas of interfaith dynamics is further painted by the brushstrokes of globalisation, social dynamics, and cultural factors. This interplay introduces both positive and negative implications, shaping the landscape of relationships between different religious communities. It is within this complex framework that the imperative of international organisations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and grassroots initiatives becomes apparent, all of which play crucial roles in fostering interfaith understanding. This echoes Hamidullah's belief in the significance of collaborative efforts to bridge gaps and build bridges across diverse religious landscapes. As the global stage continues to grapple with the intricacies of interfaith complexities, it is essential to draw upon the wealth of insights provided by Muhammad Hamidullah's scholarly contributions. His work serves as a compass in navigating the multifaceted challenges inherent in fostering positive interfaith relations and advancing towards a world where understanding among diverse faiths is a shared goal. Government policies and legislation stand as formidable pillars in shaping the contours of interfaith relations. By incorporating Hamidullah's findings, societies can better appreciate the profound impact that legal frameworks and justice systems have on fostering harmony. Advocacy, a potent tool for change, gains prominence in this context, as it becomes integral to the process of creating an environment that facilitates mutual understanding among religious communities. The enforcement of laws and the fulfillment of state responsibilities are equally vital components, contributing to the establishment of a foundation where interfaith dialogue can not only take root, but also thrive. In this intricate dance of perspectives, the influence of globalisation, social dynamics, and cultural factors

becomes apparent. These factors, while presenting challenges, also offer opportunities for enriching interfaith relationships. The positive and negative implications of this interplay underscore the need for nuanced approaches and comprehensive strategies. Here, the role of international organisations, NGOs, and grassroots initiatives cannot be overstated. Their collective efforts contribute to the cultivation of an atmosphere where diversity is celebrated, and the richness of varied religious traditions is acknowledged and respected. Muhammad Hamidullah's advocacy for collaborative efforts finds resonance in the concerted actions of these entities. By working together, they exemplify the potential for positive change in fostering interfaith understanding. As they engage with communities on a global scale, they embody the spirit of shared responsibility in addressing the challenges posed by diverse belief systems. The impact of media and technology in shaping interfaith perceptions and relations adds another layer to this intricate tapestry. Channels for disseminating information and narratives play a pivotal role in influencing societal discourse. Hamidullah's acknowledgment of the media's role aligns with the contemporary reality where these platforms serve as powerful instruments for shaping public opinion. As we navigate the evolving landscape of interfaith dynamics, an awareness of the media's influence becomes imperative, emphasizing the need for responsible and inclusive storytelling that promotes understanding rather than perpetuating stereotypes. In conclusion, Muhammad Hamidullah's scholarly contributions provide a valuable guide in navigating the complexities of interfaith relations. Government policies, international collaboration, grassroots initiatives, and media engagement collectively shape the narrative of religious coexistence. By drawing on Hamidullah's insights, societies can aspire to cultivate environments where interfaith understanding is not merely a goal but a shared and celebrated real.

From the research study of Muhammad Hamidullah's academic work in inter-civilisational relations, we conclude that:

- Muhammad Hamidullah's early life and education formed the basis of his academic journey, which has various cultural and intellectual motivations. His professional achievements testify to his dedication to Islamic scholarship and interfaith dialogue,

which significantly refreshed Islamic literature. His approach to religious studies highlighted the balance between similarities and differences between Islamic teachings and other faiths.

- Muhammad Hamidullah's tolerant behavior towards the People of the Book highlighted Islam's recognition and respect for Jews and Christians.
- He highlighted the Quranic concept of '*Rahmah*' (Mercy) as a fundamental principle for interfaith relations and in light of this the inter-human values of Islam such as peace, justice and compassion he explains that they apply to all humanity without discrimination. In his opinion these universal values provide a powerful antidote to hatred and division in human society.
- In his opinion inter-faith harmony is necessary to achieve world peace and security, he emphasized not only the need for mutual understanding, tolerance, compassion and respect between people of different religions, but his academic contribution to interfaith relations has had a profound impact on promoting understanding and harmony among diverse religious communities. His scholarly legacy therefore serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of interfaith harmony.
- On the one hand, his work has provided valuable insight into interfaith interactions regarding the Madinan period of the Prophet Muhammad's life and early Islamic expansion and has innovated important academic fields such as Islamic jurisprudence, while on the other hand, his scholarship shows the way to deal with contemporary challenges like extremism and Islamophobia on an academic level.
- His scholarship promotes an understanding of Islam in pluralistic societies that offers guidance for advancing interfaith relations in the present day.
- His academic work encourages scholars promoting interfaith understanding as well as policy makers to move in the right direction, so notable organizations influenced by his work include The World Muslim Congress, The Islamic Society of North America and The Interfaith Dialogue Association etc.

MASTERY-HUMILITY MODEL: FROM CONVERGENCE TO INTEGRATION

Ruslan B. Hassan¹

Abstract

The perpetuation of dualism has permeated the field of engineering education, resulting in professional outputs not synchronised with personal life. The absence of a spiritual value system persists in the curriculum, which relies on pragmatism, positivism, constructivism, and relativism. This highlights the pressing need for the integration of spiritual values. This two-step process develops a convergent mastery-humility model using a sequential exploratory design approach. The construct validity, a key aspect of this research, achieved CFI .963 ≥ .95, TLI .956 > .90 and RMSEA .068 < .08, validating the model's reliability. Upon verifying the measurement model, SEM then confirmed the theoretical proposition that mastery and humility form the converging variable. The converging platform is at the state of Al-Adl, the correct position of knowledge is mastery where all things should be, and for man, the proper position is in the 'sujud' position, as 'Abd'. The Islamisation of Knowledge (IOK) takes place when any theoretical development, derivations of formulation, and application is based on the governing concept of Bil-Mizan (balance, equilibrium, justice) towards the state of Al-Adl and then Al-Khaliq. The next step involves this cognisance of meaning. The latter concerns the meaning of our existence with the humility of an Abd who must respect the truth. Hence, cognisance is required to seek the truth and differentiate between the Creator and the created. Thus, integration occurs at the same phase, though, in cognitive and affective domains. In conclusion, for this two-part process, the IOK is given a more defined form preceding the integration in the thought process, invigorating the spiritual dimension in the engineering curriculum.

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Keywords: Convergence, Affective, Cognitive, Justice, Meaning

Introduction

Generally, in Engineering, one is a novice when he is new to his job or knows little. As an engineer in training, supervising engineers assess his ability to apply what he has learned as a student and upon becoming a Professional Engineer. He becomes competent when performing to basic standards based on the Code of Practice and becomes ‘experienced’ when he can vary his performance based on unique situations. Mastery is comprehending and practising the full extent of one’s craftsmanship. One achieves mastery when he can invent new and better ways to do a job. In other words, he can optimise his design by being efficient.

Humility is not the same as low self-worth or no confidence. Nor is humility wallowing in self-pity. Humility is a sign of strength of character, uprightness and exceedingly empowering. It is respecting the truth and realising the difference between the created and the Creator, resulting in one’s *Ubudiah* position. Humility is a sign of strength and virtue and incredibly empowering. It is a reflection of spiritual, mental, and emotional maturity. Some of the righteous predecessors (*salaf as-salih*), like Ibn Rajab (1335- 1393), said:²

“Accepting the truth from whoever brings it is one with humility. Whoever accepts the truth from anyone, whether young or old, whether he loves them or not, is humble.”

When a certain level of mastery is achieved, and the expertise attained by no means makes one arrogant and think highly of oneself only at others’ expense. This ‘*takabbur*’ (arrogant) behaviour may lead to more significant harm and deviate from the right path. Thus, the necessity of the ‘*Tawhidic*’ principle in the engineering curriculum and the ‘*Mizan*’ emanating from it. One must realise the

² Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research (YIIR). Finding truth in the age of fake news information literary in Islam.” Accessed September 15, 2024, <https://yaqeeninstitute.org.my/read/paper>

various forms of divine intervention in one's professional and personal life. Therefore, he needs to balance his egoistic trait with humility. He needs to be mindful of his role as His vicegerent, and his '*akhlaq*' (disposition) should demonstrate the practical implications of his faith. Moral or *Akhlaq* is an essential aspect of Islam, and this could be tacitly understood through the Prophet's mission, which is itself to perfect morality and mannerism.

Islamic Science

Scientific facts with no direct bearing on morality and religion are frequently used in engineering. If closely observed, the facts depend on specific theories and concepts and are realised only when built into a coherent whole. Thus, a fact is like a brick of a building. By putting all the bricks together then, a structure is formed. Therefore, the brick or fact is encapsulated within a framework or pattern scheme that can relate to the truth. This relates to the religious truth, which is concerned with the general conception of reality as a manifestation of Allah (*swt*). The facts with their conceptions developed within the Islamic scientific conceptual scheme cannot yield any disparity between science and religion.

Statement of Problem

Scholars differ on the steps to be applied in the Islamisation of Knowledge (IOK), suggesting different approaches and methodologies. Many Muslim scholars have accepted the rationale for the Islamisation of Science. However, there has yet to be an agreed-upon method for how the actual Islamisation of Science occurs today. Although the 'integration of knowledge' was the mainstay of the approach at the 1977 Mecca Conference, it remains unclear how it is to be done.

The 'Vienna Circle' (1925-1936) influenced many branches of formal and empirical sciences extending beyond philosophy, such as arithmetic, physics, geometry, biology and psychology, and the social sciences. They formulated what is known as 'the scientific conception of the world', which is characterised by two features: empiricism and positivism.

Empiricism is an epistemological view that holds that true

knowledge comes only from sensory experience. Positivism is a philosophical school that holds that all genuine knowledge is derived from reason and logic from sensory experience. Other ways of knowing, such as intuition, introspection, or religious faith, are considered meaningless. It is marked by applying a particular method, logical analysis, as practised in modern symbolic logic.

Modern science is steadfast in believing that all the happenings in the universe exist or are created by causes and natural laws: a self-contained universe. There is no place for God. On the other hand, some believe that since everything is already under Allah SWT's will—after all, He is 'al-Rabb'—there is no need to Islamise engineering anymore. These seemingly contrasting views have resulted in ignorance of the role of spirituality in engineering.

Engineering is defined as utilising the forces of nature for the good of humankind. The forces are expressed in mathematical forms and the sciences, particularly physics. Mathematics is the crystallisation of logic, whereas physics is logic applied to the real world. Thus, although engineering is the application of the principles of science termed technologies, it is still value-laden. Logic is to be guided by divine revelation.

Empirical and rational faculties alone cannot ascertain divine knowledge. This error has to be corrected. If the facts of science are developed within the Islamic domain and concepts, it cannot produce a disconnect between religion and science. There should be a link between the two. The unity of spiritual knowledge and scientific occurs when each of the particular sciences is 'organically' related to the supreme knowledge of *Al-Tawhīd*.³ Henceforth, the IOK task is to converge spirituality and engineering via science. It requires an equivalent or almost equivalent to the convergence of authentic spirituality with the 'sacred science of the cosmos rooted in its sacred reality' as *Nasr*^{4,5} has suggested.

³ Bakar, Osman. *Tawhīd and Science: Essays on the history and philosophy of Islamic Science*, Arah Publications: Second Edition.2008.

⁴ Nasr, S.H. *Spirituality and Science: Convergent or Divergent*, Chp.15, the Essential Sophea, 2006 www.worldwisdom/public/library/default.aspx

⁵ Nasr, S. H. *Cosmology* (ed.) *Science and Technology in Islam: Part 1*, UNESCO Publishing, 2001.

Research Objectives

In the early days, specifically from the 7th. Century AD to early 19th. Century AD, concepts of initially foreign origin were always integrated into the unitarian perspective (*Tawhid*) of the *Al-Qur'an*. They are thoroughly Islamic, which is the most profound meaning of the term, in that they depict a universe originated by the Almighty. They are integrated and interrelated in a hierarchic structure reflecting His oneness. Thus, this study aims to develop a new model based on the doctrine of *Tawhid* and *Bil-Mizan* emanating from it to be ingrained in the attributes of mastery and humility of the graduates.

The following objectives are the aims of the study: ⁶

1. To establish mastery beyond competency as the outcome of the engineering curriculum to fulfil the role of *Khalifah*' (Vicegerent).
2. To establish '*Tawadhuk*' (Humility) as the characteristic of '*akhlak*' (ethics) in the Islamic ethical dimension of '*Ubudiyah*' (Servitude)
3. To develop a convergent position between mastery with humility governed by '*Bil-Mizan*' ('balance'), which emanates from '*Tawhid*' (Oneness of Allah, (*swt*)). The research questions then focus on mastery and humility.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

1. What is mastery in engineering, and does it differ from competency in the attributes of engineering graduates?
2. What is humility in the Islamic ethical dimension?
3. How can the governing theory be generated to enable the convergence of mastery and humility in the achieved learning outcomes?

The first component of the study, mastery, is established to be beyond competency such that with this attribute, the graduates can

⁶ Hassan, R. Developing a convergent mastery-humility model for the Tawhidic-based Engineering Curriculum, Doctoral dissertation, IIUM, 2021.

assume the role of *Khalifah* (vicegerent). This involves the cognitive domains. The second component, humility (*Tawadhuk*), falls under the affective domain. The third component deals with constructing the alignment of the present pedagogy for the convergence of mastery and humility in the attributes of engineering graduates.

Significance of the Study

With this *'ilm*', it is fervently hoped that a 'real-world' engineer can be moulded, with mastery of the engineering field together with personal humility, modelled after Rasulullah (pbuh), a man-of-action par excellence whose entire life illustrates clearly the idea of an efficient application of the principle of *Tawhid* to the society.

Theoretical Background and Model Development

Guidance for Engineering

It is a misconception that Allah SWT left us without guidance and left matters of science only to scientists. The noble *Qur'ān* relies on general 'pointers' to address issues related to specialised philosophical or subtle spiritual realities or engineering because the primary function of the *Qur'ān* is the comprehensive discussion of practical matters related to Guidance and the Straight Path. He says: "...We haven't neglected anything in the Book...". (*Qur'ān, Al-An'am:38*) and in the same Surah, another verse says, "... not even a single leaf that falls without His knowledge" (*Qur'ān: 21:59*).

Those trained minds who are mindful of the spiritual dimension will be able to identify God-Self Disclosures (GSDs) and make connections necessary for the benefit of all. In this paper, the reference for balance and stability is the moon-earth-sun configuration in other words, Allah SWT guides us in any engineering pursuits by understanding this physical cosmology.

Theoric-Metaphysics

There is the theological-metaphysical significance of the celestial bodies' orbital motions, particularly the Sun, Earth and the Moon.

“Allah set up the heavens with no visible pillars; then He established Himself above the Throne and made subject the moon and sun, each running (its course) for a specified term. He arranges [each] matter; He details the signs that you may, of the meeting with your Lord, be certain” (*Qur’ān, ar-Ra’d: 2*)

Three points of significance are mentioned:

- a) Allah SWT controls the orbital motion of moon-earth-sun and other celestial bodies. If there is more than one creator, chaos will prevail.
- b) The solar system is designed with precision by none other than the planner-designer-creator (*Al-Khaliq*), the Wise (*Al-Hakim*) and the All-Powerful (*Al-Qadir*).
- c) The orbit starts at a point and returns to the same point repeatedly. This confirms that our return to Him is steadfast and sure.

Celestial mechanics applies principles of physics (classical mechanics) to objects’ motion in outer space. The stability of the motion is established by the condition of the gravitational and centrifugal forces (*Bil-Mizan*). Divine laws govern them. Most modern science and its philosophy see the order and regularity of nature’s phenomena as evidence that the cosmos does not need God to function (clockwork universe).⁷ The opposite is true in Islam since this regularity is a sign of His wisdom and Will ruling over the universe and as proof of His existence, (*Qur’ān, Ar- Ra’d: 2*).

Bil-Mizan: Polysemous word

In the Exegesis of the Qur’an: *Ar-Rahman: 7-9*, Hussein⁸ explained the polysemous nature of ‘*Bil-Mizan*’.


 لَا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ
 
 وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

⁷ Dolnick, Edwards. *The Clockwork Universe: Isaac Newton, the Royal Society, and the Birth of the Modern World*, Harper Collins, 2011.

⁸ Hussein, A.R. *Schools of Qur’anic exegesis: Genesis and development*. Routledge, pp.173-174, 2010

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿١﴾

This verse can be translated as: ‘He has lifted the sky, and measure is set. Do not exceed the balance and measure accurately’ Hussein said, “The noun, *Al-Mizan*, is repeated three times without the co-referential pronoun in the second and third *ayahs*”.

A co-referential pronoun cannot replace the expression to get: ‘*al-sama’a rafa’aha wawada’a Al-Mizan alla tatghaw fihi wala tukhsiruhu* [And the sky He hath uplifted; and He hath set the measure, That ye exceed not the measure by it ... and ... do not make it deficient] where there are the co-referential pronouns –hi(it) and –hu (it) attached to *fihi* and *tukhsiruhu* in the second and third *ayahs*, respectively, and which refer to the same noun, *Al-Mizan*. Although this alternative stylistic structure is grammatically sound, it distorts the meaning of the original *ayahs Qur’an, Ar-Rahman: 7-9*. The major reasons for the repetition of the noun *Al-Mizan* and the non-occurrence of co-preferentiality are attributed to the following semantic factors:

- Those three *ayahs* have been revealed at different times and not as a unit during one circumstance of revelation
- The expression (*Al-Mizan*) is a polysemous word that has three different meanings:
 - a. In Q55:7, it means ‘*I’tidal Al-insan* [the straight erection of man’s body], that is ‘*bunyat Al-insan*’ (the physical shape of the human being]
 - b. Q55:8 means, ‘*Al-hukum bil-’adl*’ (to judge (rule) with justice) and
 - c. In Q55:9, it means that. ‘*Al-wazn*’ (the balance) is the tool used for weighing.

Apart from three verses, there are 17 other verses where *Bil-Mizan* is mentioned.

Table 1. Qur’anic verses with ‘*Mizan*’

1) <i>Al-An’am</i> [6]:152	10) <i>Al-Mu’minin</i> [23]: 102
2,3) <i>Al-A’raf</i> [7]: 8	11) <i>Al-Mu’minin</i> [23] : 103
4) <i>Al-A’raf</i> [7]: 85	12) <i>Asy-Syu’ara</i> ’[26]:182
5) <i>Hud</i> [10]: 84	13) <i>Ash-Shura</i> [42] :17
6) <i>Al-Hijr</i> [15]: 19	14) <i>Al-Hadid</i> [57]: 25
7) <i>Al-Isra</i> ’[17]: 35	15) <i>Al-Muthafifin</i> [83]:3
8) <i>Al-Kahfi</i> [18]: 105	16) <i>Al-Qari’ah</i> [101] : 6
9) <i>Al-Anbiya</i> ’[21]: 47	17) <i>Al-Qari’ah</i> [101] : 8

Criterion of Truth

The meaning of balance goes much beyond the physical measure of goods. *Mizan* refers to the criterion of truth and falsehood and the aspect of justice. There is sometimes a thin line between justice and injustice. “Allah is the One who has sent down the Book with truth, and the Balance as well.” (*Qur’ān*, 42:17).

Mizan indicates the golden balance in all spheres of life, highlighting the importance of rationale. The Almighty runs the earth and the entire universe with a perfect balance in every sphere of vast expanse. The whole system of the practical life of human beings is established with justice, elucidated throughout the *Qur’ān*. Justice is the culmination of all virtues.⁹ While dealing with people in various life processes, we must nurture our conscience with Allah’s thoughts and the Day of Judgment. His entire life system would be constructed on justice or within the limits of justice, demonstrating the right balance (*Mizan*) of principles, morals, and dealings after the Message of Monotheism (*Tawhīd*), sending Prophets aimed to establish a system that offers individual and collective justice within every community. This system has to start from an individual in society.

***Bil-Mizan*: Balance, Sustainability and Justice**

In engineering, a fundamental concept when forces are dealt with is the idea of equilibrium or balance. Generally, several forces can act

⁹ Al-Atas, S.M.N. Islam and Secularism. (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM), 1978.

on an object at the same instance of time. A force has magnitude and direction. Two forces are equal when they have the same magnitude and direction. The net force is the vector sum of all the forces acting on a body. If the net force equals zero, it is deemed in equilibrium. In the case of zero net force acting on an object in equilibrium, the object continues to move at a constant speed (zero acceleration), from Newton's first law of motion. The forces acting on a body are in equilibrium when the body is at rest or moving at a constant velocity. In practical terms, it means that for forces in equilibrium, the sum of the components of the forces in any direction must be zero.

(a) Mathematical Balance of Forces

A balance occurs when the centrifugal force balances gravity at an appropriate speed. The speed is 30 km/second when the Earth orbits around the Sun.¹⁰ If it is slowed down for some reason, the centrifugal force (which depends on the square of the velocity) will decrease. Gravity, however, maintains its strength, not falling inwards to the Sun, although as it moves inwards, gravity gets more substantial because of Allah's law of conservation of angular momentum.

The angular momentum of a moving object, L in a circular orbit is $L = mvr$.

This is conserved, so $v = \frac{L}{mr}$, i.e. v is inversely proportional to r .

Now

centrifugal force is $F_c = \frac{mv^2}{r}$ (page 155)¹¹

¹⁰ Pogge.R. An Introduction to Solar System Astronomy, Retrieved Sept 23, 2020, <http://astronomy.ohio-state.edu/>

¹¹ Young, H.D. and Freedman, R.A. University Physics with Modern Physics. 13th. Edition, Addison-Wesley, 2012

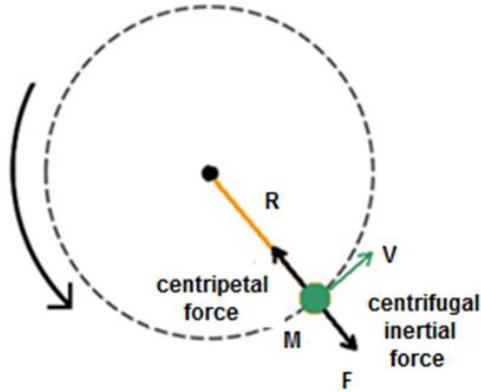


Figure 1: Balance of Forces

It is proportional to $\frac{v^2}{r}$. Substituting for $v^2 = \frac{L^2}{m^2r^2}$,

it becomes ($F_c = \frac{mL^2}{m^2r^3}$) so F_c is proportional $\frac{1}{r^3}$.

Then, the centrifugal force is proportional to the inverse cube of the radius.

The gravitational force ($F_g = G \frac{m_1m_2}{r^2}$) so F_g is proportional to $\frac{1}{r^2}$.

Thus, gravitational force is proportional to the inverse square of the radius.

Gravity increases as an object with a given angular momentum moves inwards, but the centrifugal force increases quickly. Thus, it can be deduced that gravity will once again balance the centrifugal force at some point. So, orbits are stable; although disturbed, they will get into balance.¹²

¹²MSO. Orbits, Mount Stromlo Observatory. Australian National University, Retrieved Sept. 24 2020 at <http://www.mso.anu.edu.au/~pfrancis/roleplay/MysteryPlanet/Orbits/2018>.

(b) Duly-Balanced (Sustainability)

Sustainability is achieved when a balance exists between the people (society), the economy and the environment. Sustainable development is carried out by meeting the needs of the present society without losing track of the needs of the future generation.¹³ Society decides the objective for development and sets ethical and value frameworks. The economy is structured to meet goals and values set by society. The environment sets the limit. Societal sustainability involves informed citizenry, stakeholder participation, justice, equity, and consumer choices, as well as providing opportunities for valuable and productive lives. Allah has set all things in due balance. “And the earth We have spread out; set thereon mountains firm and immovable, and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance” (Qur’an: *Hijr*: 19).

(c) *Bil-Mizan* as Principle of Justice (*‘Adl*)

The third meaning of *Mizan* is justice. Essentially, this is an extension of the first two meanings. It goes beyond mathematical balance and sustainability. Justice (*‘Adl*) means to place all things in their correct positions.¹⁴ Justice is a condition of things being in their proper places.

As remarked by Sir Hamilton Gibb (1895-1971), justice is a principle of order and wholeness, putting all things properly in their sense of purposes in a divinely governing system. Another scholar, Fakhr *Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī*, defined justice as “when all the powers of the soul are put in their proper places or exist in a state of moderation, far from either excess or deficiency, the man then will achieve justice which ultimately leads to virtuous acts and happiness”.¹⁵

According to Al-Attas, justice is to place all things in their correct positions in our minds. Knowing where things are in their proper positions means keeping them in due balance. In other words,

¹³ Bruntland, G. Our Common Future. United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). Oxford University Press, 1987.

¹⁴ Al-Attas, S.M.N. On Justice and The Nature of Man: A Commentary on Surah al-Nisa and Surah al-Mu’minun. Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM, 2015.

¹⁵ Riswanto, A.M. Fakhr Al-din Al-Razi on justice, unpublished M. Phil. Thesis, UTM. 2016

to keep things duly balanced is to achieve justice. One who subscribes to this stance will have the ‘*Adab*’. *Adab* is a reflection of wisdom acting in conformity with wisdom. Wisdom tells us about the proper places for everything in our minds. Conditions where everything is in its proper place are justice.

One of the names of Allah, ‘*adl*’, means “utterly just”¹⁶. One will be rewarded or punished based on his ‘*Amal*’ (deeds). The word ‘*adl*’ was initially meant to convey the idea of making two things equal. ‘Equity’ or ‘justice’ emanates from the concept of equal distribution, and as a result, ‘*Adl*’ came to denote ‘Justice’. ‘Equity’ is to be the ‘exact standard neither less nor more’ and to keep everything in its proper place. He said, ‘The doctrine of the Divine Names contained in the Qur’ān in itself the basis of all Islamic cosmology, and it is enough to study in-depth the significance of the meaning of the Divine Names to understand not only the relation of the cosmos to Allah SWT but the very structure of the universe as so many interplays of the theophanies and reflections of the Divine Names and Qualities.’

The theophanies are the visible manifestations of Allah SWT to humans. Accordingly, for the reasons explained subsequently, the two names of Allah’s 99 names that will be adapted in developing the governing model will be Al-Khaliq (the Creator) and Al-‘Adl (Utterly Just).

Methodology

Exploratory Sequential Design

This mixed-method research is a two-phase design that includes collecting and analysing the qualitative data in the first phase.

First phase

This work follows the Straussian school of thought in the academics’ semi-structured interview. Among its differences from Glaser’s are that the interview starts with having a general idea of where to begin, forcing the theory with structured questions, and structuring the data

¹⁶Hai, R. 99 Names of Allah meaning. Retrieved Sept. 24, 2020, at <https://www.prayer.net.pk/99-names-of-Allah-meaning/>, 2020.

to reveal the theory. The research continues until no new evidence could inform or underpin the development of the emerging theory's theoretical points, the theoretical saturation point. Once saturation is reached, the theory is grounded in the data.^{17,18}

Since the grounded theory approach was adopted, the primary field interview was conducted by interviewing thirty academics with the ranks of Professors. Participant Number 30 reached the theoretical saturation point. The pilot and main interview period lasted almost a year, from April 9 to March 2, 2020. It was intermittently conducted to fit within the respondents' busy schedules.

Second Phase

Quantitative data were collected from these initial exploratory results, namely the mastery and humility theory. The data analysed in the second stage is to determine the convergence of mastery and humility. During the first phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to generate two qualitative data types: interviewer field notes and interview transcripts. Thematic analytic procedures of NVivo¹⁹ are used to identify several dimensions from the qualitative data set.

After creating the instrument from the qualitative findings, the second phase, quantitative research, follows using SPSS Amos.²⁰ As depicted in Figure 2 below, the design begins with qualitative data collection and analysis to explore a phenomenon (the first two boxes of the diagram). An instrument is developed at the interface (note the 'develop an instrument' oval in Figure 2). This instrument is used to collect the quantitative data in the second phase (the following two boxes in the diagram), and the conclusion can be drawn from what can be deduced from the two phases.

In this work, the mastery indicator is accomplished in the Integrated Design Project (IDP) for several reasons in all accredited

¹⁷ Charmaz, K. Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis, 2nd. Ed., SAGE, 2014.

¹⁸ Urquhart, C. Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide, 2013.

¹⁹ QSR International Pty Ltd, NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis, Version 12, 2020.

²⁰ Arbuckle, J.L. Amos (Version 23.0) [Computer Program]. Chicago, IL: IBM SPSS, 2014

engineering programmes. Integrated Design Project Course/Capstone Design Project indicates the disciplines’ competency.²¹ Both universities (X and Y) offer Integrated Design Projects (IDP) in the Final Year (Semesters 7 and 8). It is the very essence of enabling and culminating courses. Enabling Courses (EC) are the courses that help develop and nurture the intended outcomes at the course level and build up the body of knowledge for that particular engineering field. Culminating Courses (CC) are the highest-level courses demonstrating the flow of knowledge through the semesters accumulated.

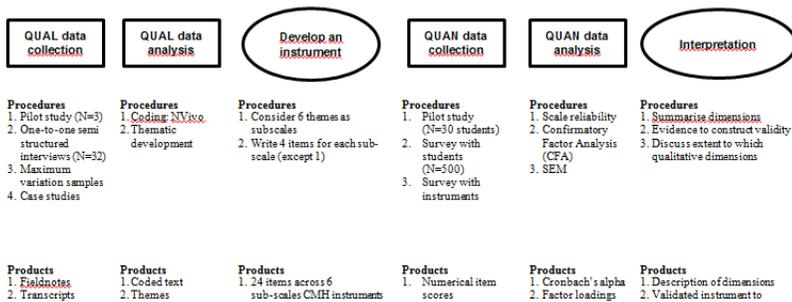


Figure 2: Sequential Exploratory Design²²

Convergent Mastery-Humility Model Development

The proposed Convergent Mastery and Humility Model (CMH) is derived from the governing concept of *Bil-Mizan* emanating from *Tawhid*. The doctrine of *Tawhid* will be the principle for the proposed model. The *Tawhid* category of *Tawhid Al-Asma Wa-Sifaat*, or the unity of Allah’s name and attribute, is considered here. The names of Allah, *Al-Khaliq*, and *Al-Adl* are chosen due to their significance in the convergence of mastery and humility. The latter, *Al-Adl*, dictates the correct positions of all things,

²¹ Engineering Accreditation Council. Engineering programme accreditation standard. Retrieved August 1, 2020, from <http://www.eac.org.my/web/document/pdf>.

²² Creswell, J.W, and Plano Clark, V. Designing and conducting mixed-methods research. (2nd. Edition), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011.

and *Al-Khaliq* causes the unity of *Ummah*, nature and man. Emanating from *Tawhid* is *Bil-Mizan*, the governing concept for balance, thus assuring stability and, therefore, *Al-Adl*.

The steps and procedure for developing the Convergent Mastery-Humility model are as follows:

1. Adoption of *Tawhid* as the governing principle in Science and Engineering.
2. Selection of Allah's names, *Al-Khaliq* (Creator) and *Al-'Adl* (Utterly Just), for enabling and culminating courses in an engineering curriculum.
3. Both names are utilised optimally in the Integrated or Capstone Design Project course.
4. Evaluate the Mastery scale as *Khalifah* (Vicegerent) and adopt the sustainable design approach.
5. Assess the Humility scale as *Ubuddiyyah* (Servitude) and ethics as *Akhlaq* (disposition)
6. Using the Straussian Grounded theory (GT) approach, the theory on the Convergent mastery-humility model emerged upon reaching the theoretical saturation point after the constant comparative analysis involving concurrent data collection, generation and analysis at every interview stage.
7. A secondary source, namely document analysis, will further help in exploring the data for the emergent theory and later forming the constructs
8. A measurement model is obtained Using Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA).
9. The latent variables, mastery and humility, will be validated by the Structural Equation Model (SEM) in the survey done with the larger population (students).
10. With the 'best fit' model from SEM, data analysis from the interviews and document analysis, the theory is then truly grounded in the data

Results and Findings

The research approach is a sequential exploratory design, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, the 'QUAL-quant' approach. Data were collected by semi-structured interviews using

Discussion

This work seeks to fill the void in the engineering curriculum concerning the spiritual dimension in the science and ethics presently modelled after the West's worldview. It also aims to halt the perpetuation of dualism and secularism. Islamic Science and *Akhlaq* replace the secularised science and ethics, respectively governed by the Doctrine of *Tawhid*, which is reorganised intellectually utilising the *Bil-Mizan* concept.

The Islamic science adopted is the scientific enquiry merging with the strength of philosophical wisdom. It uses metaphysical instead of epistemological or Bucaillism. The metaphysical view of science considers every scientific activity operating within a metaphysics framework whose principles are derived from the Divine revelation's immutable teachings. The *Bil-Mizan* concept emanating from *Tawhid* uses the verses of the noble Qur'an extensively to transcend from physical to metaphysical. The polysemous word Bil-Mizan means equilibrium, duly balance and justice.

Validity and Reliability:

The quality of study in qualitative research is indicated by validity rather than reliability. Validity in qualitative research refers to 'the honesty, depth, richness, and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher'.²³ The researcher carefully sieved the respondents' views to remove subjectivity and biases. The respondents' views must be theirs alone. Various data were collected to minimise such an effect, and so as not to appear biased, the respective respondents checked the findings. After each session, the discussion summary was read to them for approval.

The questionnaire responses were analysed based on reliability, confirmatory factors for validation, and correlational hypothesis testing to establish construct validity. The data obtained from the survey instrument were assessed by Cronbach's alpha for its validity and acceptability. A point of interface occurred by

²³ Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. Research methods in education, (5th. ed.). London: Routledge, 2000.

connecting the instrument (CMH) developed in the initial qualitative phase to the quantitative phase. The Alignment and the Convergent M-H were analysed from these two phases. Then, the emergent theory was validated, underpinning a monotheistic (*Tawhīdic*) Engineering Curriculum.

Humility

It is argueably that studying engineering can boost one's self-confidence. However, if left unchecked, such confidence can turn into arrogance. Humility will balance this trait. It is a small part of *Akhlaq* (disposition). He needs to balance this egoistic trait with humility and be mindful of his role as His vicegerent. His *Akhlaq* should demonstrate the practical implications of his faith.

True humility is knowing the full extent of their worth before Allah SWT's Majestic Forbearing. They then make this fully realised potential an embedded, essential part of their nature. Whosoever has done this is humble and at ease in their relations with others; those who have realised their nothingness before the Almighty are balanced in their religious lives and their synergy with people. They obey the decrees of religion, submit to the revealed truths of faith, and accept its method of addressing or relating to human reason. They are convinced of the truth in the *Qur'ān* and the legitimate Traditions of the Prophet.... "Only the ones with knowledge fear Allah, the most among His servants. Indeed, Allah is Majestic in Might and Forgiving" (*Qur'ān*, Fathir: 28).

Significance of the Findings

The work here is that the emergent theory on convergence comes from considering the phenomenon of mastery and humility coming together and meets at the premise of *Al-'Adl* (justice). As defined earlier, justice is to place all things in their correct positions. Justice is a condition of things being in their proper places. At this 'point', to be at the correct position, the balance *Bil- Mizan* is achieved and thus stable. It can be a physical balance, such as the equilibrium of forces, or a duly balance, such as the case of sustainability. Allah SWT causes it as *Al-Khaliq* to stay stable. Man's correct position is in his '*sujud*' (prostration) state of condition. This physical position

of submission is accompanied by the complete submission of all in the name of Allah SWT (*Ubudiyyah*). Thus, convergence occurs when Allah SWT exerts Himself as *Al-'Adl* and *Al-Khalik*. It is depicted in Figure 4 below.

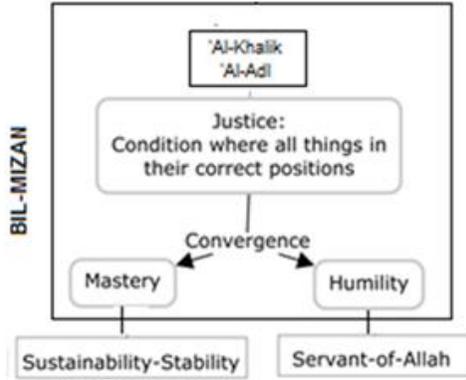


Figure 4: Convergence Mastery-Humility Model

Is Meaning Cognised?

The meaning is related to being an *Abd*, one with humility. This is explicitly expressed as

“...and I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me.” (51:56)

This is the real meaning guiding the purpose of our being on this earth. Having humility means realising one is in the *Ubudiyyah* capacity, which is the meaning of our existence.

As explained above, the affective (humility) and cognitive (mastery) domains meet at the state of *'Al-'Adl*. Thereby elevating one of the 99 names of Allah SWT. It was stated that a humble person will respect the truth wherever it comes from. Searching for the truth means looking at patterns of the Almighty's creations, which requires cognitive capacity and means. To acquire mastery over and above competency, for instance, necessitates cognisance of the various signs in nature, that is, the ability to analyse, rationalise, and bring to a logical conclusion on His creation, that is, perfection, as emphasised in Verses 3 and 4 of *Al-Mulk*.

In the state of *Al-'Adl*, all things are in their correct positions. The proper condition for stability is balance or equilibrium, whichever is appropriate and requires cognitive capacity. The correct position of man is in the *sujud* position, *Ubudiyyah*. The submission is physical, and the man's submission is total. This meeting point of convergence may lead to integration since the meaning is cognised.

Therefore, at this stage, integration can take place between cognitive and affective constituents since they are operating in the same phase, not between matter and non-matter. In other words, convergence makes integration possible. It is a two-step process rather than an abrupt integration or an add-on between acquired and revealed knowledge.

Conclusion

The inquiry was driven by three research questions using the Sequential Mixed-Methods Exploratory Design and steered by the Straussian grounded theory approach involving qualitative and quantitative surveys. Respondents include staff and students of two local universities. Two novelties are proposed in this study: (a) Theoretical development of *Bil-Mizan*, emanating from *Tawhid*, as the governing concept in the equilibrium of forces in engineering and the duly balance in sustainability concerning moon-earth-sun configuration and (b) Developing the Convergent Mastery-Humility model based on this theoretical proposition.

Based on the theory, mastery and humility are initially coupled, uncoupled, and then allowed to converge at a meeting point. The convergent mastery-humility model (CMH) is established following the dictation of Allah SWT as '*Al-'Adl*' (justice), the condition when all things are in the correct position, in other words, the balanced setting as in physical and duly balanced are in their proper position. The correct position of man and Society is the *sujud* (prostration) posture for the former and '*amal makruf nahi mungkar*' (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil) for the latter. The model is calibrated with looped confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and verified by causal Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This CMH model can be used in the rubric as the measurement model of both the affective (to measure humility) and cognitive (to measure

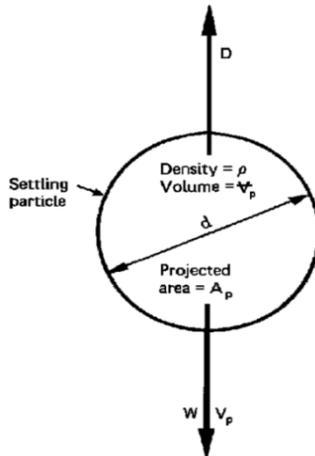
Mastery) domains in the engineering curriculum underpinned by the *Tawhīdic* (monotheistic) doctrine.

Recommendation

Hopefully, this model can be used and propagated to put a brake on the perpetuation of dualism and secularisation in all engineering curricula. It is also believed that this work can invigorate the Islamisation of Knowledge effort and be comprehended by the present and future engineers to translate into actions for the Ummah to regain its lost grounds. The findings, in no small measures, will guide the teaching of the subject matters to extend beyond the Creator-Created (*Al-Khaliq*) domain to *Al-'Adl*, which opens doors for endless possibilities as illustrated by the deliberation on the flocculent settling phenomenon (dynamic condition) and bar reinforcement detailing (static condition) (Appendix).

Appendix

(a) Dynamic condition (sum of forces $\neq 0$): Colloid settling in quiescent Condition



Forces Acting on a Settling Particle (Colloid)

The submerged Weight of the particle

$$W = (\rho - \rho_l)gV_s$$

The Drag Force, acting opposite to the relative motion of the particle,

$$D = C_D\rho_l A_p \frac{v^2}{2}$$

where, ρ = density of particle, ρ_l = density of liquid,
 V = volume of the particle

v = velocity, A_p = cross-sectional area of the particle and
 C_D = Newton Drag coefficient

The particle will decelerate until at some point where there is a balance of forces, (Al-'Adl), $\Sigma F = 0$

When acceleration = 0, the settling velocity will be constant, and Allah the *Al-Khalik* (Creator) will dictate it.

Equating $D = W$

$$C_D\rho_l A_p \frac{v^2}{2} = (\rho - \rho_l)gV_s$$

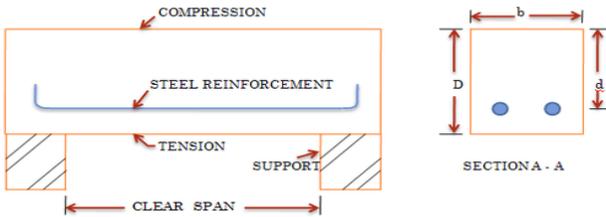
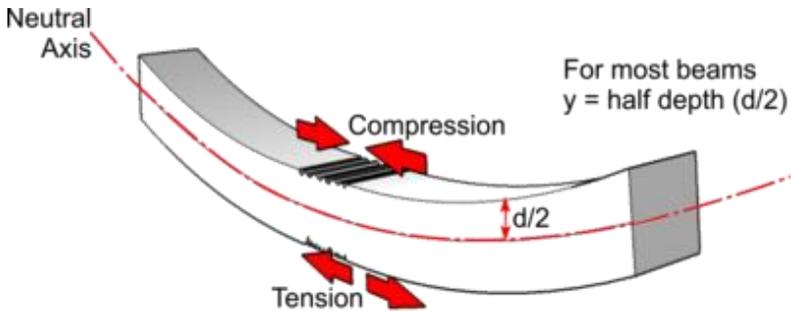
Rearranging and substituting it can be shown in quiescent

condition. ($R_e < 1$), that this constant velocity is $v = g \frac{(\rho - \rho_l)}{18\mu} d^2$.

It was determined by George Gabriel Stokes (1819-1903).

The equation can be used to design settling tanks of several configurations and in soil mechanics to determine the size of particles in the Jar/Column Settling test.

(b) Static conditions (sum of forces = 0): Bar reinforcement



Reinforcement in the simply supported beam
(Proper placement for equilibrium)

فَأَيْنَمَا تُولُوْا فَسَمَّ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَّاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

“...Wherever you turn, you are always in the presence of God. For Allah is all-pervading, all-knowing.”
(Al-Baqarah 2:115)

THE DISCOURSE OF RENEWAL:
ASSESSING FAZLUR RAHMAN'S HERMENEUTICS
AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

*Arief S. Arman*¹

Abstract

Central to any thriving society are questions of ethics and law, and how (and if) these questions are met with appropriate responses. Such thoughts will necessarily lead to a deliberation of whether ethics and law are divinely ordained, or if we, as human beings with the capacity to think and to conceptualise, are its sole creators. Fazlur Rahman, an Islamic reformist thinker, has called for the gates of ijtihād (independent reasoning) to be opened again. The context for this opening is a response to the rigidity of interpretations made by jurists (both traditional and contemporary, primarily of the Sunni orthodoxy²; deemed to represent the 'original' Islam), on matters of Shari'a; generally believed to be Divine Law. The purposes of this chapter are varied. We do not intend to agree nor disagree with Rahman's interpretative propositions, but to (i) provide a brief context of his argument for reform as well as the theological underpinnings which guide it. Next, and in order to develop a preliminary understanding of Rahman's hermeneutics, (ii) we shall engage with his 'Double-Movement Theory', as well as its possible advantages and pitfalls. A brief comparison with Hans-Georg

¹ Graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Email: 705243@soas.ac.uk. This writer disagrees with Rahman's claim that the Prophet Muhammad's Ascension (*mi'rāj*) was based on superstition and was merely a spiritual ascent. To reiterate, the purpose of this paper is to highlight Rahman's hermeneutical claims without necessarily agreeing with his opinions on other matters of faith.

² Rahman believed that the formation of Sunni orthodoxy in tandem with the appearance of 'dynastic rule' (beginning with the Umayyads), had the most deleterious impact on the development of Islam. (See: Abdullah Saeed, 'Fazlur Rahman: A Framework for Interpreting the Ethico-Legal content of the Qur'ān' in *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'ān*, Ed. Taji-Farouki, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 41.)

Gadamer's phenomenologically influenced hermeneutics is made here. It is our belief that Rahman did not mind if one agrees with him or not; for what is of utmost importance is a 'rediscovery' of Islam and its inherent beauty and order, which is definitely not a perpetuation of intellectual sterility.

Keywords: Fazlur Rahman, hermeneutics, Islam, *ijtihad*, Islamic reform, Pakistan, Qur'ān, Sacred Law

Introduction

We begin with a brief context of the time in which Fazlur Rahman³ as writing, which was the mid-20th century. He was engaging in various ideas – both Islamic and Western – against the backdrop of a perceived decline within Muslim polities. This decline, as it were, had a negative impact on various facets of life, such as economics, education, politics, and social relations. According to Rahman, the revival of modern Islamic societies requires far more than merely adopting various Islamic institutions and attitudes, but to embrace Western institutions and current praxis.⁴ In the 1960s, Rahman was part of General Ayyub Khan's modernising project in Pakistan; a nation founded as a 'homeland for Muslims' (after Partition), but torn between a 'traditionalist' Islam of the laity and a 'modernist' Islam espoused by the intellectual and secular elite of the country.⁵ He also opines that the cause of such deterioration took root in the intellectual legacy of Islam. To put it differently, the present-day issues that Muslims face stem directly from the tradition which has developed

³ The Pakistani-American thinker, Fazlur Rahman (1919 – 1988) was one of the most daring and original minds to the discussion on the reform of Islamic thought in the twentieth century. He attended Punjab University in Lahore, and obtained a Bachelors and Masters degrees in Arabic. He then went on to Oxford, where he wrote his dissertation on Ibn Sina's (Avicenna) philosophy. Though his primary interest in his early academic career was Islamic philosophy, Rahman was widely read in Islamic law and history, as well as ethics, tafsir and hadith. (See: Abdullah Saeed,(2004), p.41.)

⁴ Basit S. Kosul, 'Fazlur Rahman's 'Islam and Modernity' Revisited' (1994) in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 p. 404.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

due to the understanding of the faith by Muslims themselves, rather than Islam itself.⁶ Moreover, Rahman believes that reform in Islam is not necessarily predicated as a response to modernity, but has always been an internal pursuit within Muslim societies.⁷ To add, he argues that the aforesaid decline comes from a literal understanding – and its consequent implementation – of the Qur'ān by literalists, who are assumed to be stuck within the rigidity of law, as opposed to appealing to the higher precepts of an ethical-moral order to be found in the Qur'ān.

“The Qur'ān regards the conduct of man, individually and collectively, in private and in public, as being under divine command”⁸. This statement is one that holds weight, since it will inevitably have an impact on Muslims and non-Muslims alike (by way of agreement or opposition, either knowingly or otherwise), in making sense of the world around them, and beyond; metaphysically. From here, we are led to the juncture of justiciable and non-justiciable actions. Rahman argues that in many Muslim polities, the *Sharī'a* has been implemented in purely human terms, but its assumed legitimacy has been falsely attributed to divine sanction. What happens then is a narrow conception of Sacred Law (which also constricts divine grace), and creates an environment of intellectual sterility within the aforesaid polities, and the *Ummah* at large.⁹ Rahman goes on to contend that:

“... in the overall structure of human conduct, the primary valuation is religiomoral (sic) and, although of course humanly administered justice plays a basic role

⁶ Ibrahim Özdemir, ‘The Concept of Islamic Tradition in Fazlur Rahman’s Thought’ in *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 1992, Vol. 9 No.22, p. 244. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v9i2.2558>

⁷ Fazlur Rahman, ‘The Impact of Modernity on Islam’ in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 5 No. 2 (June 1966), pp. 113-114.

⁸ Fazlur Rahman, ‘Law and Ethics in Islam’ in *Ethics in Islam: Ninth Giorgia Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference*, Ed. Hovanissian. (Undena Publication, 1985), p. 3.

⁹ According to Rahman, central to this conundrum is the emphasis on *taqlid* (blind imitation) of scholars by the laity. (See: Saeed (2004:40).

in ordering society, it is definitely secondary to the real value-order, which is the moral order.”¹⁰

This moral order can be comprehended as the intimate relationship a believer has with God, and how it is manifested in conduct within the private and public domains. There is an appreciation of the Mu'tazilite stance (to be discussed further), whereby the individual, by his/her own accord, is able to discern between good and evil, as well as truth from falsity. This is done independently from revelation, but the conclusions derived are strengthened by it. The argument here is that once moral rectitude is established and maintained, the overbearing application of a very human interpretation of the *Sharī'a* by way of *fiqh* (through jurists) can ideally be minimised. One of the scathing remarks made by Rahman on the point of an overbearing application of *Sharī'a* is that the '*ulamā*' class played a pivotal role in the process of favouring political expediency over upholding Islamic principles.¹¹ According to the Pakistani-born academic, the '*ulamā*' class failed to articulate a comprehensive Islamic *Weltanschauung* which caused Islamic principles to be vulnerable to the whims of power politics.¹² Furthermore, such an environment led to intellectual sterility and the displacement of genuine scholarship based on original thought, which was replaced by an increase in extensive commentaries, and commentaries upon commentaries.¹³

At the core of Rahman's argument is that the Qur'ān has a *moral ethos which is prior to any legalistic formulation* derived from the various verses within it.¹⁴ There is no denying the fact that there are many different interpretations of Islam's sacred text, which comes from multitudes of scholars from different generations. Furthermore – and within the current social milieu – the multiplicity

¹⁰ Fazlur Rahman, 'Law and Ethics in Islam', (1985), pp. 3-4.

¹¹ Basit S. Kosul, 'Fazlur Rahman's', (1994), p. 406.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The Holy Qur'ān repeatedly calls upon human beings to think and reason, applying words such as *nazar* (observe), *tafakkur* (think), and *tadabbur* (reflect). The faith of a believer is thus a reflection of such concepts. (See: Nurul Ain Norman, 'Ibn Sina's Theory of the Soul: A Taxonomy of Islamic Education' in *Islam and Civilisational Renewal*, (IAIS Malaysia, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 2), pp. 275-289.)

of interpretations is not only necessary, but essential for the 'revitalisation' of Islam and the contemporary relevance of the Qur'ān. The assertion here is that objective morality can be attained by way of the intellect. Reason, or specifically *ijtihād*, is applied to extract the values and ideals within the Qur'ān, whereby the reader 'deciphers' the message and the necessity of its contingent implementation in his/her life.¹⁵ Rahman, a revivalist¹⁶ in his own regard, calls for the reading of the Qur'ān against the background of its revelation (contextual), which is hardly a 'black and white' approach.¹⁷ For Rahman, such Manichean binaries have proven to be a barrier in recognising the full worth of diversity within Islam. In order to ensure the dynamism of the divine text, interpretation in a systematic, holistic, and contextualist manner (as per his Double-Movement Theory) becomes imperative. Holding other things constant, the multiplicity of perspectives attained from here is indicative of the Qur'ān's 'readability' and its relevance which cuts across space and time. However, Rahman argues that there is an urgent need to do away with piecemeal readings of the text in order to derive jurisprudential rulings, as is often the case.¹⁸ He persisted to retrieve the moral élan of the Qur'ān in order to formulate a Qur'ān-centred ethics.¹⁹ Piecemeal readings and atomistic

¹⁵ It is perhaps of interest to note that philosophers from Plato onwards have consistently criticised the suggestion that moral obligations are created by God's commands. "The commands of a legitimate human ruler do not create obligations; if such a ruler tells you to do X, this makes it obligatory for you to do whatever the ruler tells you (within the sphere in which X lies). The same applies to God. He can make it obligatory for us to do Y by so commanding only because there is first a general obligation for us to obey him (sic)." (Mackie, 2013:114,115). (See: J.L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and Against the Existence of God*, (2013), Chapter "Moral Arguments for the Existence of God.")

¹⁶ It is crucial to note however, that the terms 'revival' and 'fundamentalist' can be misleading, since both are in reference to the trends in religion. (See: Fred Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East* (2000), "This Islamic current involves not a revival of religious belief, but an assertion of the belief of the relevance" (p. 132).)

¹⁷ Abdullah Saeed, 'Fazlur Rahman: A Framework for Interpreting the Ethico-Legal content of the Qur'ān' in *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'ān*, Ed. Taji-Farouki, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 61.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 43.

¹⁹ Ibid.

interpretations run counter to such a formulation, undermining the ethical foundations that the Qur'ān inspires human beings to aim for, and it is in this striving that character and resolve are built, emboldening the faith and conviction of, and in God. Rahman argues for a 'rediscovery' of Islam in that "the Qur'ān's message must be understood as a unity and not as so many isolated commands and injunctions."²⁰ In order for this understanding to take place, "one must start with the theology of ethics of the Qur'ān and only then approach the realm of law."²¹

Theological Underpinnings

Now, there is no doubt that theological underpinnings play a crucial role in how one interprets the Qur'ān. Before proceeding any further, it is crucial to note that the status of the Qur'ān as the verbatim words of God has become an irrefutable belief among Muslims. Almost all (if not all) schools and theological streams within Islam are in agreement that the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) before its message was disseminated to the locality and beyond.²² From here and across time, cleavages begin to appear between those who believe and insist that the Qur'ān is uncreated, and those who believe and insist that the Qur'ān was created. This was the main difference between the Mu'tazila and their opponents, the Ash'arites, who are of the belief that right and wrong originate from "the divine imperative rather than rational propositions, and that 'good' and 'bad' (sic) are known through Revelation rather than through Reason."²³ The scholars who believe in the eternity – and thus uncreatedness – of the Qur'ān, uphold the position by relating it to the manifestation of the 'God speaking attribute' (*kalām*) which is in coexistence with His essence (*dhāt*). On the contrary, the scholars

²⁰ Fazlur Rahman, 'Law and Ethics in Islam' in *Ethics in Islam: Ninth Giorgia Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference*, Ed. Hovanissian. (Undena Publication, 1985), p. 11.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Safrudin Ediwibowo, 'The Debates of the Createdness of the Qur'ān and its Impact to the Methodology of Qur'ānic Interpretation' in *Ulumuna*, 19(2), pp. 353-388. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v19i2.357>

²³ Fazlur Rahman, 'Law and Ethics in Islam', (1985), pp.13-14.

who believe in the createdness of the Qur'ān hold on to the notion that the text is a phenomenal being (*makhlūq*) as it is composed of letters and sounds, which are arranged alternately.²⁴ The 'uncreatedness doctrine of the Qur'ān can be traced to the *wasiyat* of Abū Hanīfah, written around 210 AH/825 AD^{xv}. In his *Wasiyat*, Abū Hanīfah explains that the Qur'ān is the Word of God and is eternal, although the letters (*huruf*) to write in in form, is created. On the other hand, there were reputable Muslim theologians who took up the position of the createdness of the Qur'ān, or that it is *makhlūq*. Among them were al-Ja'd ibn Dirham and al-Jahm ibn Safwan, whose ideas later formed the primary doctrine of Mu'tazilite theology (most of the arguments from this school focused on 'the why' the Qur'ān had to be created, and 'not the how'). This became the official stance of the Abbasid state of Al-Ma'mun.²⁵

Can an interpretation be fully independent from the reader and his/her conditions? Is there a way in which biases and presuppositions can be removed before engaging with a specific text? These are the fundamental questions that Rahman engages in. In interpretation, the function of language cannot be overlooked.²⁶ It is difficult to deny the significance of the Arabic language in trying to 'understand' Islam and all that it holds. In his compelling text, *Beings and Their Attributes: The Teaching of the Basrian School of Mu'tazila in the Classical Period*, Richard Frank opines that "it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Arabic language and of the Koran (sic) within Islamic culture and especially in its earlier periods. In no culture, perhaps has speech and the eloquent use of language been so praised and admired"²⁷. Therein lies the issue of translation (which necessarily brings about the

²⁴ Safrudin Ediwibowo, 'The Debates of the Createdness of the Qur'ān and its Impact to the Methodology of Qur'ānic Interpretation' in *Ulumuna*, 19(2), p. 355. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v19i2.357>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 357.

²⁷ E. Sumaryono, *Filsafat Hermeneutik Sebuah Metode Filsafat*, (Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1993), p. 38. "... Misalnya berkaitan erat dengan bahasa. Manusia untuk mengerti atau membuat interpretasi harus lewat bahasa, tidak mungkin kita berbuat apapun tanpa menggunakan bahasa. Hermeneutik adalah cara baru untuk 'bergaul' dengan bahasa." (Bahasa Indonesia).

tremendous difficulty in interpretation), and if accurate meaning can be transferred to a different tongue altogether.

Rahman’s Double-Movement Theory and his Reading of Gadamer

There are other Muslim reformists who talk about the centrality of reason within religion (in general). Among them was Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), who – in his magnum opus, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* – mentions; “... religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science.”²⁸ Indeed, such a claim necessarily includes Islam as a faith system, and highlights the embodied (empirical, tangible) cannot be removed from the transcendental. Since religion (most, if not all) engages in the questions of life after death, there will always be scrutiny from those who are embedded within scientism. There is no doubt that the separation of faith from science, and vice versa, has led to disastrous consequences in the world today. However, its elaboration is not within the scope of this paper. On the notion of being embedded creatures, Iqbal points out; “thought and intuition are organically related and that thought must necessarily simulate finitude and inconclusiveness because of its alliance with serial time.”²⁹ By the very fact that we are within time, it is necessary for us to interpret its seemingly apparent passage – and within the Muslim context – realise that time itself is a gift from the Creator. To add to the value of reason within religious deliberations, we focus our attention towards the statement of another towering figure in Muslim scholarship, Ismā’il Fārūqī, that “the *Ummah* is not a *gemeinschaft*, but a *gesellschaft*, not a community-by-nature, but a community-by-decision; a ‘society’”.³⁰ It is irrefutable that such a decision to be part of a community, stems from the application of reason.

²⁸ Richard Frank, *Beings and Their Attributes: The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu’tazila in the Classical Period*, (State University of New York Press, 1978), p. 9.

²⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Stanford University Press, 2013), p.2.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 4

On the point of time and how we relate to it, Rahman raises the point that values have practical impact, and “this impact transcends the historicity of time and place in which they may be articulated.”³¹ At the core of Rahman’s criticism of traditional jurists is that they were too focused on developing a highly structured legal system. For him, the fluidity that stems from the broader socio-moral élan which the Qur’ān holds, is left behind and neglected in such a system.³² He suggests an approach to the Qur’ān which does away with any commentators or intermediaries. This leads us to the question, ‘What is Hermeneutics?’. To put it simply, ‘Hermeneutics’ is a method of understanding and interpreting ancient text, such as scripture.³³ The term comes the Greek word, *ἑρμηνεύω* (*hermeneuein*), which gives us the definition ‘to interpret’.

We now move to Rahman’s ‘Double-Movement Theory, which functions on two levels; ‘the ideal’ and ‘the contingent’.³⁴ His approach is methodological, moving from the normative application of a certain text to a certain situation. Rahman summarises his theory as follows;

“In building any genuine and viable Islamic set of laws and institutions, there has to be a two-fold movement. First one must move from the concrete case treatments of the Qur’ān – taking the necessary and relevant social conditions of that time into account – to the general principles upon which the entire teaching converges. Second, from this general level there must be a movement back to specific legislation, taking into

³¹ Ismā’il Fārūqī, *Al Tawhīd: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, (The International Institute of Islamic Thought; IIIT, 1992), pg. 116.

³² Norman K. Swazo, ‘Islamic Intellectualism: Rahman, Gadamer, and the Hermeneutics of the Qur’ān’ in *American Journal of Islamic Sciences*, (2011.Vol. 28, No. 4, IIIT), p. 3.

³³ Abdullah Saeed, ‘Fazlur Rahman: A Framework for Interpreting the Ethico-Legal content of the Qur’ān’ in *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur’ān*, Ed. Taji-Farouki, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 44.

³⁴ E. Sumaryono, *Filsafat Hermeneutik sebuah Metode Filsafat*, (Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1993), p. 38.

account the necessary and relevant conditions now obtaining.”³⁵

In other words;

- I. The first movement then, consists of understanding the meaning of the Qur’ān as a whole (the moral élan intrinsic to it) as well as in terms of the specific tenets that constitute responses to specific situations.
- II. The second movement is to generalise moral-social objectives that can be ‘distilled’ from specific texts in light of the socio-historical background and often stated *rationes legis*.
- III. The third movement is a going back to the Qur’ān and thus realising its ethical moral ethos, which takes precedence over the rigidity of law.

The simple illustration below shows the movement between context to text and back to the context again. In the interpretation of the Qur’ān, the context of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*; occasions of revelation) is given due consideration before moving to the present moment of interpretation, so as to derive a potential solution to any problem at hand.

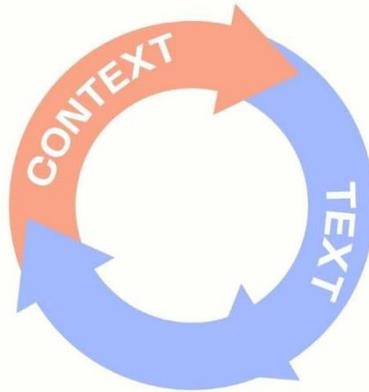


Figure 1.0: Dynamic Flow of Qur’ānic Interpretation: From Context to Text and Back

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 49-50.

For Hans-Georg Gadamer, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl has to be deliberated on, that is the 'protentional' and 'retentional' aspects of experience – the assertion that every experience has implicit horizons of meaning of what comes prior, and after, a given experience.³⁶ In Gadamer's approach, the subjectivist understanding of the reader (interpreter) has to be considered. Only if there is a pre-understanding (bias or preconceived notions, but not understood pejoratively), one is able to dialogue with the text. There is no *tabula rasa* here. Gadamer highlights the assumption that the reader has his/her own horizon and the text itself has its own horizon. In order to understand a specific text and its injunctions, the reader must try as best to limit his/her horizon, so as to give priority to the horizon of the text.³⁷ This is what Gadamer relates to as the 'fusion of horizons', as a core aspect of all human thought and clarification of meaning. The point to be grasped here, is that we have to move away from the subject-object dichotomy that is taken as a given in modern epistemology, and its resultant ontology.³⁸

The primary difference between Rahman and Gadamer is that for the former, the approach to interpreting the Qur'ān is one that is objective, in that human beings are endowed with a predisposition towards ethical conduct; hence it is a latency that has to be activated by one's own volition. Here, Rahman accepts the notion of values which represents an ideal objectivity, follows its own trajectory of lawfulness.³⁹ On the contrary, Gadamer's starting point is not one that necessarily recognises an ethical starting point or a latency within the mind towards such interpretations. This is our understanding of Rahman's objectivity in interpretation. In this instance, *religiomoral* values cannot be merely discovered; they have their status historically according to epistemological boundaries of

³⁶ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago University Press, 1982), p. 20.

³⁷ Norman K. Swazo, 'Islamic Intellectualism: Rahman, Gadamer, and the Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān' in *American Journal of Islamic Sciences*, (2011, Vol. 28, No. 4, IIIT).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ "What Husserl means... is that we cannot conceive subjectivity as the opposite of objectivity, because this concept of subjectivity would itself be conceived in objective terms." (Norman K. Swazo, 'Islamic Intellectualism', (2011), p. 5).

practical reason wherein *apodictic* certainty is given the status of an impossibility.⁴⁰ We do have to keep in mind that Rahman attends to the Qur'ān with a preconceived question, that is of how to obtain a new ethics from it. Another significant factor seems to be at play here. It appears to be the case that different hermeneutical approaches depend on different theological starting points. For Rahman, revealed texts point at God's "otherwise hidden will-to-be-done."⁴¹

In contemplating revelation, believers learn about the kind of life that the Almighty directs them to lead. On the other hand, Gadamer's starting point squares well with the biblical concept of revelation that points at our given reality. There is truth-claim to be followed up in the world, which gives impetus to the reader's own experience (horizon), as mentioned prior. From this perspective, events prove to be God's self-revelation.⁴² As such, the distinction between both thinkers can be distilled to a theological difference. Rahman's view is directed from the text to the proposed author (due to the fact that this is where revelation comes from), "whereas a Gadamerian, non-psychologist view is directed from the text to the world."

Arguments Against?

For the Malaysian Sufi-metaphysician⁴³, Syed Naquib Al-Attas⁴⁴, an incessant questioning of things intuited by the senses – that which can be touched, seen heard, smelled, and tasted – is a testament of how much human beings have fallen from true apperception, and of

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Felix Körner, *Revisionist Koran Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkish University Theology: Rethinking Islam*, Chapter 2: Adil Çiftçi: The Koran as Ethical Order. (Würzburg Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005), p. 121.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Al-Attas prefers this term over the title of 'Muslim Philosopher'.

⁴⁴ Born on the 5th of September 1931, Al-Attas pioneered the concept of the 'Islamisation of knowledge'. His almae matres include McGill University (MA), and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (PhD). His notable works include *Islam and Secularism*, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, and *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin* (in Malay).

pure knowledge.⁴⁵ Such a situation rests on the fact that “man has a dual nature, he is both body and soul, he is at once physical being and spirit. God taught him the names (*al-asmāʿ*) of everything. By the names, we ‘infer’ that it means the knowledge (*al-ʿilm*) of everything (*al-ashyaʿ*).”⁴⁶ What this means is that we are privy to almost everything around us, and that such awareness was (and is) only made possible due to God’s mercy and grace. In this temporal life then, we are merely grasping at concepts that are murky representations of true understanding, originating from a time before this one we currently find ourselves in. As such, these representations are also observed in how we try to interpret law from the Qurʾān, and to apply it in varying contexts and circumstances. Al-Attas talks about the value of upholding the primordial covenant between God and Man;

“In virtue of the truth that man knows God in His absolute unity as his Lord, such knowledge and the reality of the situation that necessarily follows from it, has bound man in a covenant (*al-mīthāq*, *al-ʿahd*) determining his purpose and attitude... with respect to his self in his relation to God.”⁴⁷

The moral rectitude alluded to earlier is one that ought to be sincere (*ikhhlās*), and embedded within the self as a form of submission to God. In human affairs, a believer has to keep in mind that the creation is a reflection of the Creator, and any transgression acted out on other human beings (as well as the natural world) will inevitably stain one’s relationship with Him. Perhaps of significance, but not often talked about is the role of *adab* in the life of a believer. *Adab* can be understood – but is not limited to – proper conduct, manners, order, and the good relationship one has with the world around him/her.⁴⁸ An argument can be made here that the moral impetus of

⁴⁵ Understood here as a receiving from God that is removed from any sort of comment, judgement, or opinion.

A form of unparalleled comprehension of what was intended to be comprehended.

⁴⁶ Syed Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, (ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1995), p. 143.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.144.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

being a Muslim can be upheld, and without the need or requirement of a rigid implementation of *Shari'a* by way of the rulers of the day (sincerity plays its part, sans coercion). Here, it is interesting to point out that even though Al-Attas and Rahman differ in their approach, their goal is arguably the same.

For Al-Attas, there is no call for the alteration of *ahkām* (rulings), or of the *maqāsid* (goals or objectives of the Sacred Law), while for Rahman, there is a need to change the rulings of the *Shari'a* (which stems from his hermeneutics of the Qur'ān). The 'bigger picture' as it were, is an honest realisation of the purposes of Sacred Law, whereby "man's purpose is... to know and to serve God (*'ibādah*) and his duty is obedience (*tā'ah*) to God, which conforms with his essential nature created for him by God."⁴⁹

The discussion on interpretation thus far relates to the fact of life's impermanence. From the Heideggerian perspective that Being itself is interpretation, it can be extricated here that there will always be a gap between observation and true understanding.⁵⁰ The latter is the domain of God alone, and any attempt of reaching it in a transient world will only be met with frustration and the further need of interpretation, *ad infinitum*. Given Rahman's earlier apprehensions towards Sunni orthodoxy, it would be interesting to take into consideration a Shi'i perspective on the hermeneutics of the Qur'ān. One of the great scholars from the aforesaid perspective is the eminent Allāmah Sayyid Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who mentions:

"What has been rightly called *ta'wil*, or hermeneutic interpretation, of the Holy Qur'ān, is not simply concerned with the denotation of words. Rather, it is concerned with certain truths and realities that transcend the comprehension of the common run of men..."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger's Being-Onto-Death. "As ways in which man behaves, sciences have a manner of Being which this entity – man himself – possesses. This entity we denote by the term 'Dasein'. Authentic Being only happens when Dasein confronts its own temporality by... perpetually (and without escape), on a journey towards its own demise. See Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Trans. J. Macquarie & E. Robinson, 1962).

⁵¹ Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Shi'ite Islam* (Trans. Seyyed Hossein

He goes on to say;

“The whole of the Qur’ān possesses the sense of ta’wil, of esoteric meaning which cannot be comprehended by human thought alone. Only the prophets and the pure among the saints of God who are free from the dross of human imperfection can contemplate these meanings while living on the present plane of existence. On the Day of Resurrection, the ta’wil of the Qur’ān will be revealed to everyone.”⁵²

On the above statement, we see that human thought alone is not sufficient in coming to terms with the verses of the noble Qur’ān. From Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s perspective, there are individuals who are endowed by the Almighty to understand Qur’ānic verses without recourse to reason, that is of grasping its meaning intuitively. This could potentially be a counter to what Rahman has suggested thus far.

An obvious limitation to Rahman’s ideas is that there seems to be a chasm between the individual (moral agent) to the collective, vice versa. If the individual realises his/her moral purpose and potential through the guidance of Islam, it does not necessarily follow that other individuals are able to (either willingly or otherwise), realise their moral purpose and potential (for varied reasons). Moreover, Rahman’s stance can be read as one that places emphasis on individual accountability, but does not provide a clear picture of how it can be translated to the collective or society at large. Perhaps, this is where he leads us to think, whereby one must remember that the lack of a ‘clear picture’ adds to the obligation that we have in making it clearer, for both the self and for others. From here, the claim that reason does not require revelation, requires further examination. We would do well to remember that any moralistic arguments have always stemmed from a religious starting-point.⁵³

Nasr), (Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 2010), p. 70.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See: Husam al Mallak, “Ibn al-‘Arabi and the (Postmodern) Philosophical Heritage of Nietzsche,” lecture presented at the 34th Symposium of the Muhyiddin

If the interpretation of the Qur’ān does not require any sort of intermediary on a societal level, what then is the role of traditional scholars with regards to the sacred text? Not only that, but is Rahman against social hierarchy in all its forms? It is perhaps a point of concern for traditionalists, that Rahman’s approach seems to mirror extensive re-interpretations of sacred texts within the Jewish and Christian tradition. Scholars like Oliver Leaman believe that contemporary Islam is going through a phase reminiscent of a ‘medieval gloom’, “such that a proper understanding of the Islamic sources requires an enlightenment similar to that represented by the Spinoza critique.”⁵⁴

Conclusion and Moving Forward

On Rahman’s strong emphasis on the need for *ijtihād* today, we would do well to remember an incident that took place during the lifetime of the blessed Prophet (SAW). An authentic *hadīth* narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim tells us that the Prophet (SAW) had appointed Mu ā’dh ibn Jabal to be the arbiter amongst the people of Yemen, after the Yemenis had made a request for peace to be established between peoples.⁵⁵ Upon being questioned about the source of his legal opinions, Mu ā’dh ibn Jabal informed the Prophet (SAW) that the Qur’ān was (and would be) his primary source. If an explicit answer cannot be attained therein, he would refer to the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW), and that failing, *he would take recourse to his own ijtihād*. To this, the Prophet (SAW) approved the hierarchy of sources brought forward, stating; “What the messenger of the Messenger of Allah has spoken has pleased the Messenger of Allah.”⁵⁶

Ibn ‘Arabi Society, SOAS, London, May 2017. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_7oGUYenI8.

⁵⁴ Norman K. Swazo, ‘Islamic Intellectualism: Rahman, Gadamer, and the Hermeneutics of the Qur’ān’ in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (2011, Vol. 28, No. 4), p. 2.

⁵⁵ Basit S. Kosul, ‘Fazlur Rahman’s ‘Islam and Modernity’ Revisited’ (1994) in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 p. 410.

⁵⁶ Quoted by Mohammad Hashim Kamali in *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cambridge, England: The Islamic Text Society, 1991), pp. 218-219

Admittedly, many scholars have written extensively on Fazlur Rahman and his works. As such, our discussion has been one of an introductory nature. With regards to the conversation on the createdness/uncreatedness of the Qur'ān, and its implications, the differences of opinion and strong stances adopted by both proponents and opponents are indicative of human imperfection. Such a situation should not leave one to be in a consigned or defeated state, rather, it provides a clear picture that perfection only belongs to the Almighty. With this in mind, Fazlur Rahman's concerted effort ought to be celebrated rather than eschewed, as he opens up the conversation on the significance of human thought, and the herculean task of directing those thoughts for the sake of upholding the *Dīn*. Among the key points that can be extracted from the Pakistani-born thinker is the need for the establishment of Godconsciousness; *taqwa*. The essential aim of Islam's sacred text is to create pristine conscience and to ensure that moral energy is dispensed accordingly, and in the right direction. To reiterate, Rahman argues that Muslims should not treat the Qur'ān as merely a legal manual (or in some cases, a scientific textbook). He also reminds us that the Qur'ān often provided explicit reasons for its legal and/or quasi-legal pronouncements. If these reasons were/are not manifest, it could be arrived at by studying the context to which those pronouncements were made. For the sake of brevity, we did not touch on the practical application of Rahman's hermeneutics (which include topics like polygamy and divorce laws, among others), which could be an undertaking in a different time. On the point of reform within Islam, the idea of renewal espoused by Rahman should be deliberated on, and weighed on its own merits. Perhaps it is indeed time for the gates of *ijtihād* to be opened again, insofar as reason is sincerely directed towards the Almighty.

ICRITC-24 REVIEW

*Khaliq Ahmad**

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Reviewer: Prof. Khaliq Ahmad, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), IIUM

It is now almost inevitable that an agenda to identify the relevance of the thoughts of past scholars to the present-day circumstances facing the ummah is to be set that must look critically of the 'Methodology and Measures' for progress of the ummah in OIC and beyond. This is in its efforts to avoid any labelling of Islamophobic mindset to be in haled by the present-day media. Islamic studies, and civilisational discourse in our higher learning institutions especially for Muslims and others alike be planned, to give a chance to the idea of alliance of civilizations to prosper rather being dragged into otherwise an alien agenda of clash of civilizations, to be established. Thus, an International Conference on Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilization-*Enriching Islamic Discourse for Global Civilizational Relevance*, was organised to offer audience problems and solutions to create incredible ideas which may have positive impacts during the conference. International Conference on Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ICRITC24)-*Enriching Islamic Discourse for Global Civilizational Relevance*, therefore was a reality and was well organised. Papers in English, Bhasa Malayu and Arabic languages were presented and discussed. The themes covered during two days event mainly but not limited to were:

- Intellectual Renewal and Ethical Philosophy;
- Science, Technology, and Environment;
- Educational Reform and Islamic Thought;
- Radicalisation, Social Integration, and Gender Issues;
- Islamic Revivalism, Intellectual Renewal and Societal Change;
- Education, Knowledge Integration and Interdisciplinary Approaches;
- Islamic Thought and Society: Integration, Renewal, and Ethical Engagement;
- Intellectual Renewal, Ethical Philosophy and Regional Studies; and
- Islamic Arts, Cultural Diversity and Civilisational Dialogue.

This conference proceeding is therefore a compilation of such ideas and thoughts based on the papers presented during the International Conference on the Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ICRITC-24). The conference was organised by the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC-IIUM). The theme “Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilisation: *Enriching Islamic Discourse for Global Civilisational Relevance*” is not new but rather a continuous process. The event took place from April 23-24, 2024, in response to the challenges of this century that the Ummah is facing such challenges that are complex and involve values and morality, which have unfortunately taken a backseat.

There are high expectations from institutions of higher learning, such as ISTAC and similar institutions elsewhere, to evolve to serve the needs of the time and take the initiative in revivalism. There is a need for intellectual discourse to find resolutions and provide alternative solutions that are ever-present in the religion of peace (Islam) for mankind. Humanity stands at a crossroads, where "might is right" has often taken precedence over the rule of law. Malaysia has scripted the vision of Madani as the foundational vision and policy framework for building a socially cohesive, inclusive, and economically developed nation in post-normal times. These initiatives aim to fortify cross and inter-institutional cooperation to eliminate poverty, secure food security, and reduce inflation.

Additionally, there is a need for a humane approach to educational philosophy to raise awareness and learning about environmental issues, alternative sources of energy, advanced agricultural techniques, and modern scientific learning that promotes a holistic, balanced, humane, and compassionate approach to sustainable societal development for peaceful co-existence. All these efforts must be grounded in human civility with spirituality as a pre-condition for socio-economic-political and scientific rigor in our endeavours.

We prayed to Allah (swt) day and night that this conference, organised by ISTAC was in a timely manner, addresses the above challenges and rises to the occasion for the sake of revivalism and renewal of modern-day civilisational challenges. As the organising committee of ICRITC-24, ISTAC welcomed all distinguished delegates and speakers to ISTAC-IIUM for this event. This pioneering conference, entitled the “International Conference on Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ICRITC'24),” was held from the 23rd to 24th of April 2024 at ISTAC-splendid building to celebrate the 40th year of IIUM’s journey to academic excellence along with an exhibition of AlHamra, arranged by Embassy of Spain in Malaysia.

All prospective authors were cordially invited to submit original and unpublished works for presentation and eventual publications in this ‘Proceedings’ consists upon three languages (English, Bhasa Malayu and Arabic) were included in publication in the conference proceedings. All submissions underwent peer review before so an acceptance decision were to be made. The submitted papers addressed various issues related to the main theme, from civilisational and socio-cultural perspectives. Some submissions also explored issues related to the sub-themes mentioned above and displayed on the conference website. Unlisted but related sub-topics that were found interesting were also accepted by the organising committee.

Numerous ideas were shared by experienced academics and senior colleagues in their keynotes. The keynote speakers ranged from local luminaries such as YBhg. Prof. Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar, Chair Holder of the Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and currently Rector of IIUM, who contributed extensively on the

Civilisational and Renewal Studies at ISTAC-IIUM, and Prof. Emeritus Datuk Dr. Azizan Baharuddin, Director of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue, Universiti Malaya, to international experts such as Prof. Dr. Jasser Auda, Distinguished Visiting Scholar at ISTAC-IIUM and President of Maqasid Institute Global Centre, and Prof. Dr. Hamidullah Marazi, Professor at the University of Kashmir and Visiting Research Fellow at ISTAC-IIUM. They covered a wide range of topics including Current Narratives for Islamic Studies Curriculum: The Case for Sustainability Leadership, Civilisational Renewal: The Essential Things to be Achieved, Integrating Sharia Law and Ethics into Modern Law: Enhancing Pluralism and Democracy, and The Renewal of Education and Islamic Traditions of Knowledge. Most of the deliberations were under these important themes covered during the two-day event; Philosophical Traditions and Modern Ethics in Islamic Thought and Civilisation; Islam, Science, and Sustainability; Ethics, Dialogue, and Sustainability in the Renewal of Islamic Thought; Integrating Tradition and Innovation: Pathways to Revitalising Islamic Education; Diverse Trajectories in Islamic Renewal: Law, Media, Art, and Regional Reflections; Foundations, Community Reform, and Women's Roles in the Dynamics of Islamic Thought and Societal Renewal; Pathways to Renewal in Education, Social Responsibility, and Spiritual Well-being; and Gender, Radicalism, and Social Change: Islamic Perspectives on Contemporary Challenges as these were basically themes proposed by the organiser of ICRITC-24. These themes culminated in the conference resolutions, recommendations, and solutions, and we hoped everyone (delegates from local, regional and international) enjoyed the ideas presented during ICRITC-24 and find the papers enriching.

All the papers presented by local and international delegates under the above eight categories were reviewed by experts. The presenters incorporated the feedback offered during discussions, which were further refined by the authors and have now become part of SCOPUS, WoS and ERA journals. We hope these contributions had enriched the literature on the renewal and reform of Islamic thought and civilisation. The editors of this proceedings and on behalf of the organising committee from ISTAC, declared to be

thankful for any feedback, should you have any, to help us in organising future events in Malaysia or elsewhere. They humbly said thank you for participation and keen interest in the events organised by ISTAC, for which the committee was ever grateful to all the attendees.

The statement by the YB Senator Dr. Zulkifli Bin Hasan, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs Malaysia as below:

“International Conference on Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ICRITC’24) is timely. As we embark on this significant gathering, we are driven by a shared commitment to advancing the discourse on Islamic thought and civilisation in the contemporary world.”

He further mentioned as follows;

“ICRITC’24 comes at a pivotal moment in history, where the Muslim Ummah is confronted with multifaceted challenges spanning global politics, environmental sustainability, economic governance, and societal development. Our collective objective in this conference is to delve into these pressing issues and to seek solutions rooted in the rich tradition of Islamic civilisational perspectives”

The statement by the Datuk Abdelaziz Berghout, Dean, ISTAC, IIUM explained the event as follows;

“The conference seeks to advance the principles of sustainability, care, compassion, respect, innovation, prosperity, and trust, as outlined in the Madani Civilisational framework. It emphasises the importance of engaging with other civilisations, cultures, and individuals, from an inclusive civilisational Islamic perspective.”

He further explained the event and said;

“This conference extended invitations to renowned scholars and researchers to engage in discussions

regarding the pressing challenges confronting the Islamic world and the global community, with a specific emphasis on exploring Islam and its solutions from a civilisational standpoint. The conference will emphasise the global perspective of Islam, the ethical principles of Islamic culture, and the all-encompassing character of Islamic thought. ISTAC suggested the conference as a first step towards participating in more extensive intellectual pursuits and conventions with the goal of rejuvenating and changing Islamic thought and civilisation to have active roles in the present and future.”

In the conclusion I would like to emphasize the need of the time for renewal and reform of an Islamic Thought as a way forward. Civilizations do follow the life cycle as we are born, grow, mature, contribute further development, and finally decline stage comes. Civilizations also have initially such stages to follow such as ‘*Spirituality, Rationalisation, Decline, and Pre-and Post-decline*’ stages. Islamic civilization had a history of the above process and now we have to arrest such a decline by provoking thoughts and necessary reforms before it is too late. We are not pessimistic rather full of optimism that revival and renaissance is forthcoming. The papers were invited and intellectual inputs were sought after which these had to be compiled in this proceeding of ICRITC-24 to carry on the legacy and continuity of the intellectual debates.

Towards the end of the conference and concluding session, the following resolutions were unanimously passed, as mentioned below:

- A. To explore emergence of thought for ‘Revivalism and Renaissance’ of Muslim societies as propounded by our contemporary thinkers, we resolve to continue organising future conferences on the themes relevant to the idea of ‘Renewal and Reform of the Islamic Thought and Civilization’
- B. Addressing the challenges of disrupted complexity, contradictions and chaos faced at personal and societal levels by monitoring and enabling institutions in addressing these challenges facing the whole of *Ummah*, we therefore resolve with the inputs from the Muslim intellectuals and thought

- leaders for brighter future of Muslims’ educational philosophy/thoughts to raise awareness by teaching and learning about environmental issues, alternative sources of energy, advanced agricultural techniques for food security and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that promotes holistic, balanced, humane and compassionate approach to sustainable societal development.
- C. Fostering collaboration among institutions to take turn, we hereby resolve to organize seminars, conferences, intellectual discourse, collaborative research, exchange of scholars and students to pursue higher education through research leading to the training and award of graduate and doctorate degrees in area of ‘inter-civilizational research’ in Muslim countries for the development of new knowledge by promotion of interdisciplinary research, from various departments to be encouraged.
 - D. Considering our conversations on *Islah* and *Tajdid*, we recommend and resolve a more thorough engagement with the topics of renewal and reform. Building on the strength of ISTAC (IIUM)’s library where we have extensive collection of Fazlur Rahman’s works, we suggest funding for students to engage with this collection and we try to facilitate the process in terms of funding for these students, and to organize more academic seminars on *Islah* and *Tajdid* in general and Fazlur Rahman in particular, and finally;
 - E. Create a start-ups fund and micro-funding for specific practical and theoretical research of Islamic and Muslim scholars’ great ideas. This can begin to sponsor/reward ISTAC postgraduate students who successfully published in notable journals, for example RM 500/- per publication. The pool of publications can then be marketed to attract potential donor who look towards *sadaqah/waqaf*/tax relief even zakat to support the cause of the research.

This “Proceedings of the International Conference on the Renewal and Reform of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ICRITC’24)” is interesting reading for graduate students of civilizational

studies, working in field and social workers and civilian NGOs, Executives, intellectuals, and government and policy makers. The main audience for the book is university students taken civilizational studies and Islamic studies courses specialising revivalism courses. However, the editors have compiled this collection of papers in way which, we hope, would also benefit senior academics and practitioners from the wide range of industries due to practical example of former reformers and revivalist biographies added in the three different languages.

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	
ء	ب	پ	پ	ز	ز	ز	ز	گ	—	g	g	g
ب	ب	ب	ب	ژ	—	—	ř	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	پ	پ	پ	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m	m
ت	ت	ت	ت	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ث	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	ه	h	h	h ¹	h ¹
ث	th	th	th	ص	ş	ş	ş	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḏ	ḏ	ž	ی	y	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah	—	—	-a ²
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al ³	—	—	—
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘	—	—	—	—	—
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğh	—	—	—	—	—
ڈ	—	—	d	ف	f	f	f	—	—	—	—	—
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	q	—	—	—	—	—
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	—	—	—	—	—

¹ – when not final

² – at in construct state

³ – (article) al - or l-

VOWELS

	Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	iy (final form i)	iy (final form i)
	و	uww (final form ū) uvv (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	ا	u	u or ū
	ا	i	o or ö
	ا	i	i

URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. جھ jh گھ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

AL-SHAJARAH

Special Issue 2024

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