Islamic Perspective

Number 3

2010

Aims & Scope

The Journal of Islamic Perspective is a peer reviewed publication of the Center for Humanities and Sociological Studies, affiliated to the London Academy of Iranian Studies (LIAS) and aims to create a dialogue between intellectuals, thinkers and writers from the Islamic World and academics, intellectuals, thinkers and writers from other parts of the Globe. Issues in the context of Culture, Islamic Thoughts & Civilizations, and other relevant areas of social sciences, humanities and cultural studies are of interest and we hope to create a global platform to deepen and develop these issues in the frame of a Critical Perspective. Our motto is *homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto.* Contributions to *Islamic Perspective* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the Center for Humanities and Sociological Studies. The mailing address of the journal is:

Dr. S. J. Miri, Islamic Perspective Center for Sociological Studies, 121 Royal Langford, 2 Greville Road, London NW6 5HT, UK, Tel: (+44) 020 7692 2491, Fax: (+44) 020 7209 4727, Email: islamicperspective@iranianstudies.org

Manuscript Submission

Submissions of *articles*, *book reviews* and other correspondence should be sent to: Seyed Javad Miri at seyedjavad@hotmail.com.

Contents

Interview

Articles

Book Reviews

Interview

Interview on Rationalization and Modernities

Note

Dr. Seyed Javad Miri from The Center for Humanities and Sociological Studies (IPCHS) and Dr. Warren S. Goldstein from Harvard University conducted the following interview with George Ritzer from the University of Maryland in the United States. Ritzer, born in 1940 in New York, is Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is one of the leading Weberian sociologists in the United States and is widely known in the scholarly community for his distinctive contributions to the study of consumption, globalization, metatheory, and modern and postmodern social theory. Ritzer's *The McDonaldization of Society* (first published in 1993 and currently in its fifth edition) catapulted him to academic stardom, being among the most popular monographs ever penned by a sociologist. A realist in the Weberian tradition, Ritzer has expanded and developed his highly critical analysis of contemporary social life in the aptly titled *The Globalization of Nothing* (first published in 2004 and now in its second edition). Other celebrated works include: *Sociology: A Multiple Paradigm Science* (1975); *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (1983); *Frontiers of Social Theory: The New Syntheses* (1990); *Classical Sociological Theory* (1996); *The McDonaldization Thesis: Explorations and Extensions* (1998); *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption* (1999); and *Sociological Theory* (2008).

Questions on Rationality and Modernities

To what extent does global cultural rationalization apply to non-Western societies- particularly countries like Iran?

George Ritzer: I've never been to Iran, but it seems clear that it has to a large degree shut the door to much that has its origins in West (and as Weber showed, rationalization had its origins there). Of course, they have not been able to close themselves off completely and there are also certainly vestiges of Western rationalization that were in place before the Islamic Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Furthermore, there are indigenous forms of rationalization (as Weber showed in the cases of India, China, and so on).

More generally, there is great variation among non-Western countries with some heavily influenced by global rationalization and others showing as little, or maybe even less, such rationalization. If we take McDonald's as the paradigm of global rationalization (with its roots in the West), it is in roughly 120 countries in the world; about 60% of all countries in the world. Of course, McDonald's, or similar institutions, can be isolated islands of rationalization in seas of relative non-rationality.

Have you readjusted your position to take into consideration multiple modernities, i.e. that rationality take different forms in different societies?

George Ritzer: There is no need to adjust my position. I never argued that the world was rationalized, or in my terms McDonaldized, to the same (high degree). I did argue that it was a process that was spreading globally- and that certainly came to be the case. But the degree to which any given society is McDonaldized varies greatly. That is clear, for example, in the title of the following essay I co-authored with Seth Ovadia: "The Process of McDonaldization is Not Uniform, nor Are Its Settings, Consumers, or the Consumption of Its Goods and Services" in Mark Gottdiener, ed., New Forms of Consumption: Consumers, Cultures and Commodification. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000: 33-49.

How is sociological theory dominated by an Occidental perspective?

George Ritzer: There is no question that sociological theory is dominated by the Occident, especially that which is written in English or translated into English. Those who write well in English, or who attract the attention of skilled English translators, have a huge advantage in global theory. Furthermore, many Occidental works are translated into many other languages. For example, my theory textbooks have been widely translated and thus define sociological theory in many societies. Most in the Occident do not read languages outside its orbit and are therefore largely ignorant of theory being developed elsewhere.

How can it be modified to have a more global, multicultural vision?

George Ritzer: Those in the Occident need to make a greater effort to familiarize themselves with theory developed elsewhere and spearhead efforts to have such work translated. Those outside the Occident need to do a better job of translating their work into English. Furthermore, it needs to be high-quality English since much of the success of theory depends on how well it is articulated.

Has the documentary "Supersize Me" forced you to rethink the McDonaldization thesis, i.e. that rationalization is irrational?

George Ritzer: It hasn't. A key theme of The McDonaldization of Society, the subject of a whole chapter, is the irrationality of rationality. In many ways, it is the most important argument in the book. There has always been a discussion there of the unhealthy aspects of McDonaldized food as one of the irrationalities. While "Supersize Me" was important in opening some peoples' eyes to the adverse health effects of such food, it was really such a biased effort (who would ever suggest that anyone eat nothing but McDonald's food for a month?) that it actually made me sympathize with McDonald's.

Articles

Islam and Barbie:

The Commodification of Hijabi Dolls

Faegheh Shirazi

Department of Middle Eastern Studies
The University of Texas at Austin
U.S.A

Abstract

This study examines the issue of the commodification of Islam, specifically in the context of toys and more precisely, in the context of what is marketed and sold as "Islamic" or "Muslim" dolls. In this particular study, I refer to this emerging phenomenon as "hijabi" dolls. One of my objectives is to question the validity of associating a religion with a toy; in this case, a doll. Can the costuming of a child's plaything equate imbuing this object with a reverent quality? New entrepreneurs and their strategic marketing techniques are challenging the monopoly of Barbie, the American cultural icon. By intentionally appealing to concerned Islamic consumers—comparing and contrasting Barbie's morality, look, and accoutrements with the more conservative "Hijabi" dolls—these entrepreneurs are transforming an innocent, fanciful plaything into a powerful symbol for religious correctness and piety. In doing so, they are turning profits and engaging in opportunistic exploitation. The dolls, after all, are simply symbols fueling a necessary debate about the significance and implications of religious commodification.

Keywords

Commodification, Islamic dolls, Muslim dolls, Hijabi dolls, Barbie doll.

Introduction

Commodification suggests turning an idea, value, item, work of art, belief, etc. into a commodity for the purpose of profit. Differences in cultural and religious values exert a considerable influence on the process of commodification. To what extent do these values impact the way in which advertising and marketing decisions are made? How significant is Islam's influence on the development and promotion of products, from beach balls to baby dolls, socks to bathing suits?

Specifically, I am interested in the packaging and marketing of dolls dressed in the *hijab* (veil) and marketed as "Islamic Dolls" or "Muslim Dolls." Furthermore, this paper explores media and marketing strategies through which a new meaning for doll has

emerged, transforming an innocent, fanciful plaything into a powerful symbol for religious correctness and piety. Do these dolls contribute to the possibility of a more harmonious world community—or do they fuel xenophobia on the Muslim side while promoting Islamophobia in the West?

In analyzing the societal impact of America's famous cultural icon, Barbie, on the psyche of Muslim culture, one cannot help but notice that Muslims are criticizing her for subverting female piety, decency and morality. This emerging phenomenon, categorizing Barbie as depraved and degenerate, has created a burgeoning demand for the morally acceptable *hijabi* doll. My research has led to criteria contrasting the unacceptably "indecent and immoral" aspects of the Barbie doll with the suitably "decent and moral" *hijabi* dolls. These criteria include anatomy, clothing, accessories, material goods (accoutrements), and companions. In exploring the topic of *hijabi* dolls, I discovered the following body shapes: A) mature B) pre-teen/young teen and C) baby-doll (sexually neutral). I arrived at these anatomical categories by analyzing the ways in which the manufacturers themselves advertise body shape specifications.

Muslim religious authorities are not the only ones leveling criticism concerning Barbie's questionable influence on young girls. A large body of Western feminist writings point to Barbie's impossibly attainable physique that young girls can never hope to achieve. In this sense, "Barbie stands as a visible symbol for self surveillance" (Meneley: 219, 2007) Ironically it is Barbie's unattainable figure that underpins clever marketing strategies and, at the same time, causes real concern from specialists in fields of medicine and psychology. According to Kelly D. Brownell and Melissa A. Napolitano:

> Using hip measurements as a constant, calculations were made to determine the changes necessary for a young, healthy adult woman and man to attain the same body proportions as Barbie and Ken dolls, respectively. Among the changes necessary were for the female to increase 24 in. in height, 5 in. in the chest, and 3.2 in. in neck length, while decreasing 6 in. in the waist, and for the male to increase 20 in. in height, 11 in. in the chest, and 7.9 in. in neck circumference. Like adults, children are exposed to highly unrealistic ideals for shape and weight.
>
> (Brownell, and Napolitano, 1995)

Researchers Kevin I. Norton, Timothy S. Olds, Scott Olive and Stephen Dank, in their study of Ken and Barbie's body shapes, revealed that probability for an adult female to achieve Barbie's physique: less than 1 in 100,000 women. Ken's body type is slightly more realistic, but still falls into the ratio of about 1 in 50 men. (Norton, Olds, Olive, Dank, 1996)

Islam: the New Buzzword in Media, Politics, and Marketing

Since 9/11, the American public has been increasingly interested in, and frequently baffled by, the politics, culture, and religious precepts of Islam. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the world's Muslim population approximated 1.5 billion in 2005; Muslims represent about 22% of the world's population. From Sufis in Turkey to the Shiites in Iran to the Sunni sects of Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Nigeria, each Islamic religious group is steeped in traditions borrowed from their own unique ancestral legacy. In short, Muslims do not all think, act, and believe in the same way. What is significant for the American public's understanding and exigent in terms of promoting tolerance is this: all Muslims do not fit into a neat compartment.

Prejudice against Islam and Muslims has become increasingly prevalent in American mainstream culture, politics, and media. In this atmosphere, particularly in the United States, it is not always easy to be a Muslim—since one hazards becoming the target of unpleasant events or being the subject of ridicule. It is alarming to notice how even those individuals who consider themselves free from prejudice have absorbed anti-Arab and anti-Muslim attitudes. For example, Gotteschalk and Greenberg state that in regard to Muslim women, "[Western] cartoonists almost never symbolize Islam or Muslim with images of women. When females do appear, they are almost always depicted as veiled and oppressed." (Gottschalk and Greenberg: 5, 2008)

During the late 1970s, and especially in the era of the 1990s, the world saw a resurgence or revitalization of fundamentalist activities among all the world's major religions. Islamic resurgence has held implications for Muslim individuals struggling with the notion of "Islamically" correct behaviors. This includes the purchase of *halal* (religiously sanctioned) items. Sometimes this notion of *halal* extends beyond food and dietary products to include items such as leather goods made from the hides of "acceptable" animals, such as the cow, lamb or goat—provided, of course, that the animal has been slain in the Islamic manner, or *zibeh*. This type of religious attitude has contributed to the popularity of material goods or services offered to Muslim consumers labeled as "Islamically correct".

Indeed, the marketing and sales of Islamic consumer goods appears to be on the rise. In Yemen, "Islamic" socks (manufactured in China) are sold in a package showing a young veiled Muslim woman, although Islam requires no such specific type of sock to be worn. Furthermore, this particular sock is marketed to women only. Hence, one notes the concept of promoting products under the name of Islam as a clever, emerging strategy.[1] Anne Meneley (Meneley, 2007) suggests that this marketing strategy is part of an Islamist effort, the "intensification of veiling" effort, to redefine public spheres for men and women. Meneley has studied Chador Barbie*,* a local Yemeni-manufactured doll for foreign tourists. The Yemeni Chador Barbie is "... a local imitation of this famous global commodity ..." (Meneley: 216, 2007) reflecting the Western concept of an oppressed woman, a stereotype of the veiled Muslim woman. In this way, negative images of Muslim women, as understood by the West, are "commodified" to turn a profit and to pass consumer items off as authentic souvenirs from Yemen. Clearly, some Muslim Yemeni businesspersons seem to have mastered the concept of strategic marketing, albeit based on a misrepresentation of the Yemeni cultural dynamic.

Hijab and *Hijabi* Dolls: The Power of Marketing and Media

Today's technology allows entrepreneurs and manufacturers to reach consumers in ways that were not possible a decade ago. It is no secret that children are considered a lucrative target market, especially when it comes to toys. Indeed, toys play an important role in children's lives; they foster learning and enliven young imaginations. One could argue that toys and games are important aspects of a child's normal and healthy developmental process. There is no doubt that children use toys to shape their own identities and to learn about the world around them. While a toy is a play object in a child's hand, the same toy may be a valuable commodity when viewed from a marketing perspective, with potential for enormous profits.

Opportunistic business practices, fueled by information technology, have created a new demand for "Islamic" consumer goods where no demand or need previously existed. The Internet especially has emerged as fertile ground for implementing marketing

strategies proven effective time and again by the West. It is an ideal and convenient shopping environment in which to disseminate marketing lingo that perhaps devout Muslim consumers love to hear.

At the same time, an interest has been developing recently (in the increasingly global market) regarding the importance of religious principles relative to making marketing decisions (Rossauw 1994, Gould 1995).[2] According to research studies, religious affiliation plays a significant role in attitude formation and consumer decision-making (Rossauw 1994, Gould 1995). As a result, new toy enterprises, such as *hijabi* (veiled) dolls, have taken over large marketing segments in Muslim countries and elsewhere. I argue that, despite approval of *hijabi* dolls under the watchful eyes of ayatollahs and muftis, the authority behind the Islamic veiled doll is not piety or purification (in accordance with the Islamic notion of *halal*) but rather a combination of consumer vulnerability and aggressive marketing strategies.

In other words, one must perceive the Islamic commodification of *hijabi* dolls not as a religious ideological trend but rather as a clever marketing strategy that utilizes and exploits religion. I propose that the creation of "Islamic dolls" represents a potentially profitable and hitherto untapped powerful dynamic between economics and Islam.

According to a 2003 CBS news article "Saudi's Bust Barbie's 'Dangers,'"[3] the government of Saudi Arabia banned Barbie toys from Saudi Arabian markets, citing religious reasons for their decision. The report stated that the religious police of Saudi Arabia declared Barbie dolls to be a threat to Muslim morality, based on the doll's indecency. The statement read: "Jewish Barbie dolls with their revealing clothes and shameful postures, accessories, and tools are a symbol of decadence in the perverted West." One notes that the Saudi newspaper deliberately labeled Barbie a 'Jewish Barbie', exploiting conservative religious sentiments. In this way the Saudi media labeled the doll as *haram* or impure. Saudi newspapers succeeded in making a Jew out of Barbie, playing on the long religious history of aggression between Arabs/Muslims and Israel.

In March 2008 Fu'aad Mekheimar, professor of Islamic Studies at Al-A-Azhar University in Cairo, described Barbie is "purely American." According to Mekheimar,

> [Barbie] promotes an un-Islamic way of dressing, and rather encourages materialism and brushes aside spiritual values. Thus, [Barbie] negatively affects female Muslim children who are supposed to be brought [up] wearing hijab and guarding their chastity.[4]

From this perspective, Barbie is viewed as an immoral and unfit plaything for a Muslim girl—a moral pronouncement supported by the highest authority in the Sunni world (Al-A-Azhar University). Taking full advantage of this pronouncement and with the blessing of religious authorities, savvy Egyptian entrepreneurs introduced Laila in 1999:

> In contrast to the decidedly post-pubescent Barbie, Laila is to be a girl somewhere between 10 and 12 years in age, with big black eyes, long lashes, pink cheeks, full lips and wavy black hair.
> Instead of bras and bikini panties … she will wear children's underwear. In her Western-style clothing, Laila will show more skin than the chador-draped Sara. But by Barbie's standards, she will be an emblem of modesty.
> This will be a doll with decent clothes and a brother, not a boyfriend," said Dr. Abla Ibrahiem, an official at the Cairo-based Arab League who … headed the drive to develop one of the new dolls.
> (Jehl, 1999)

As of this 2008 writing, it is impossible to find Laila listed for sale on any Internet site. Perhaps she had a short life due to intense competition. Could it be that the Laila doll strayed too far in looks from the original Barbie?

Marketing strategies targeting culturally sensitive consumers in the Middle East and Muslims around the globe effectively contrast Islamically approved products with those products encouraging Western "materialism" and "lax spiritual values". For example, in the 2007 edition of *Market News Report of The Middle East* (Special Edition on the Toy Fair held in Dubai), one finds a section promoting new toys with an eye to Muslim cultural awareness. Simba Toys USA, Inc. is one of the American toy companies realizing huge market potential in the Middle East. One of its new popular products is the Jamila doll.

> ...[Jamila] comes dark-haired with thick eyebrows, brown eyes and a range of clothing that suits cultures and traditions from Turkey to Bangladesh and even Indonesia. Starting off as a single but truly Arabic doll, Jamila was launched in 2006 wearing a traditional black Abaya. Accompanied by her two best female friends and her soon-to-be husband Jamil, she truly hit the market.[5]
>
> (Toy Fair Middle East: 12, 2007)

Jamila, the *hijabi* (veiled) doll, is supposed to be "un-Barbie" like. This implies that she is less concerned with fashion, make-up, and the money-oriented aspects of American culture. Surprisingly, the report describes Jamila in the following way:

> ...nothing keeps Jamila from being named a true beauty. Girls are invited to dream themselves away and to discover Jamila's beautiful world by sharing her diverse accessories befitting the social status of a real princess (shoes, jewelry, make up set and mobile phone). More adequate accessories are soon to come: a Mercedes-Benz SLK with freewheel, a Riding Set with assorted single items such as a neatly dressed Jamila doll, a horse, a Jeep, horse trailer, stable and lots of other accessories.[6]
>
> (Toy Fair Middle East: 12, 2007)

One wonders which part of Jamila's 'beautiful world' is less materialistic or less fashion conscious than Barbie's. In its newsletter, the Simba Company promises that the best may be yet to come, as new items will be added to this 'partial' list of Jamila's accessories.

Unlike Jamila, manufactured openly by an American company, the origin of another *hijabi* doll named Leen hides in obscurity. Leen, a girl's name in the Netherlands, happens to be a Barbie lookalike with Caucasian features. Even though I spent an inordinate amount of time trying to find detailed information about the manufacturer and its location, this information has been carefully veiled. The Website Kinan Toys)[7] that markets Leen seems to have purposefully hidden this information. Because of the doll's striking resemblance to Mattel's Barbie, I'm assuming that this is an intentional strategy. Leen is a talking doll that can recite the opening chapter of the Qu`ran (*al-Fatiha*) and is costumed, according to the website's advertising, in "Chador, Prayer Dress, or Long Coat." Despite all this, because the doll's name (Leen) has no connection with either Semitic or Arabic origins, might she be considered an infidel, or *haram*?

A group of Leen dolls in various colorful "Islamic" dress

A Leen doll in its original packaging
Note the Arabic (with the wording of Islamia) on the top of the
package.

The unveiled Leen;
Note Leen's tight clothing, make up, exposed legs, blonde
hair and blue eyes.

Salma, a doll from Indonesia, is the next *hijabi* doll in this study. Like Barbie, she enjoys a sexually mature body type. As a matter of fact, Salma *is* Barbie, merely re-dressed in flowing Arab style robes, *jilbab*, and headscarves. The headline for the article introducing Salma reads "Meet Salma, the 'Muslim Barbie' doll." (Dhoundial, 2007) Ms. Sukmawati Suryaman, an Indonesian female engineer, came up with the idea of a Barbie 'make-over' while observing her niece at play. Ms. Suryaman claims that she was concerned that her niece would lose connection to the Indonesian culture. In an Aha! moment, she placed a large order of Barbie dolls from China, hired two seamstresses to sew culturally acceptable costumes, and soon Salma the *hijabi* doll was born:

> The wardrobe [for Salma] ranges from traditional costumes, casual clothes and white prayer dresses but all of them come with matching headscarves. Salma is set to be exported to neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Brunei by next year.[8]

For Salma, she selected the Arabian *jilbab* as a primary wardrobe piece. If teaching her niece about Indonesian culture was her main motivation, one wonders why Ms. Suryaman did not opt entirely for traditional Indonesian dress. Also, she could easily have given the doll an Indonesian name instead of Salma, which is distinctly Arabic. Finally, it seems culturally insensitive to package a blond-haired, blue-eyed, and fair-skinned doll targeting young Indonesian girls—a doll that more closely resembles a girl from Scandanavia. However, seeing a niche in the marketplace that caters to the religiously pious consumer, Ms. Suryaman shrewdly seized on a lucrative business opportunity. On average, the Salma doll sells for $9 US dollars.

Salma Doll

Salam dolls-the tailor of Salma "Islamic" clothes is present in background

I suspect that Ms. Suryaman is one of a cadre of new entrepreneurs who understand that, from a psychological standpoint, conservative Muslim consumers may feel comfortably justified in purchasing a *hijabi* doll for their daughters. Skillfully crafted marketing language and well-designed packaging can make Muslim parents view their expenditures on *hijabi* dolls as well worth the cost. After all, parents are the real consumers of these dolls. When they watch their daughters open the Fulla doll[9] packaging, for example, parents may be gratified to see other products included, such as miniature prayer beads and prayer mats, as well as tiny Qur`an replicas. Furthermore, if their children "want to dress like their [Islamic Fulla] dolls, [they] can buy a matching, girl-size prayer rug and cotton scarf set, all in pink." (Zoepf, 2005)

Fulla Doll is wearing a black Abaya, appropriate for outdoor activities.

Fulla is, engaged in salat (praying) and sold with stylish red boots,
is particularly appreciated by pious Muslim parents.
(Photographed by: Christopher Rose Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
University of Texas at Austin)

Fulla Doll, marketed with prayer beads and prayer rug,
is the moral version of the immoral Barbie.
(Photographed by: Christopher Rose Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
University of Texas at Austin)

Fulla doll in her elegant outdoor veil
Note her pink outfits and pink high heel shoes

***Fatwas* Against Barbie: Paving the Way for *Hijabi* Dolls**

Before delving into the issue of religious permissibility with respect to having or playing with a Barbie Doll, I would like to put forward a well known *hadith* (saying attributed to the life and sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) regarding `Aisha, the youngest wife of the Prophet who joined his household at the tender age of six. According to the Sahih Al Bukhari, narrated by Ibn Hajar:

> Narrated 'Aisha: I used to play with the dolls in the presence of the Prophet, and my girl friends also used to play with me. When Allah's Apostle used to enter [the room where we were playing] they [my girlfriends] used to hide themselves, but the Prophet would call them to join and play with me.
>
> (Fateh-al-Bari page 143, Vol.13)

This *hadith* was presumably spoken by `Aisha as she recalled her childhood. It is important and relevant to cite this authentic *hadith* in order to substantiate the notion that playing with dolls, in and of itself, is not considered a sinful act in Islam. Islamic websites speak to the issue of playing with dolls in a variety of ways. One website staff member addresses the issue in the following way:

> Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed on the prohibition of making statues if it is intended for the purpose of worshipping or revering them. If this is the case, the sin of making statues involves the sculptor, the buyer, the worshipper and deifiers. Many religious scholars also agree that statues made to be used as children toys, such as dolls, and stuffed animals are not prohibited.[10]

1n 2006 an Egyptian newspaper published a *fatwa* (religious decree) regarding the issue of young girls playing with Barbie dolls. The language is replicated here:

> Question: "Is it permissible or not to play with a Barbie doll?"
> Answer: "No [it is not permissible] because these dolls display the attractive parts of a woman's body and that is sinful."

One cannot help but wonder if the same ruling also applies to *hijabi* dolls like Fulla. Although Fulla is not anatomically identical to Barbie, she does have a sexually maturing body. Otherwise, she would not need to be veiled (according to *Shari`a*, at age 9 young Muslim girls are religiously obligated to begin veiling) (Joseph and Najmabadi: 57, 2003). Perhaps since Fulla wears a *hijab*, she is immune from the *fatwa*. But how one can be assured that Fulla's clothes will not be removed during the child's play? After all, most children do dress, undress, and re-dress their dolls. If so, what would be a fair ruling? Should one assume that the *fatwa* applies only to Barbie, and not Fulla?

A Kuwaiti imam also imposed a *fatwa* on Barbie dolls as unfit products for children. Similarly, fears of a Barbie invasion echo from other Muslim nations. For example, the Iranian government denounced Barbie dolls as having lax moral values, exposing too much skin, and imposing foreign values on young Iranian girls. Masoumeh Rahimi, a toy seller in Iran, expressed the following opinion about Barbie: "I think every Barbie doll is more harmful than an American missile" (BBC News, 2002) In a recent discussion on the importation of foreign toys, Ghorban Ali Dori Najafabadi, a top prosecutor for the Islamic Republic of Iran, called for restrictions on the import of Western toys. Najafabadi

believes that these imported toys have a destructive effect on the country's youth (BBC News, 2008). His ban on Western toys to Iran includes Barbie dolls, Batman, Spiderman, and Harry Potter.

In 2002 the Islamic Republic of Iran went one step further. Under the watchful eye of a government agency called the Iranian Toys-Controlled Council, alternatives to Barbie and Ken were developed. Introduced as Sara and Dara, the dolls (manufactured in China) represent various ethnic backgrounds and are dressed in different regional folk costumes.[11] They even have their own Website (www.daraandsara.com). Unlike other *hijabi* dolls—conceived, created, and packaged under the auspices of Islam—Sara and Dara are not marketed as Islamic or Muslim dolls; rather they were developed and are marketed with the sole purpose of countering Western cultural influence.

I agree that Barbie dolls may exercise a powerful influence on children, on the basis of theoretical principles set forth by textile and clothing researcher Penny Storm:

> When we identify with someone [in this case, the doll], we like her and want to be more like her. We will therefore imitate her … This is the process of socialization. It is the way we learn value, congruent with our societies; socially acceptable behavior patterns, including dress; social norms; cultural customs and traditions; and roles and their associated behaviors serves as a role model for young girls' identity formation.
>
> (Storm: 279-280, 1987)

Sara, the national doll of Iran, in Iranian Kurdish folk costume,
dressed in accordance with the cultural norm, which also meets
the standards of hijab dress code. (Author's personal collection)

However, I am not convinced that *fatwas* issued against Barbie' indecency or propaganda
warning that Muslim youngsters will succumb to Barbie's immoral lifestyle are entirely
based on devoutness and religious belief. Rather, more subtle variables lie hidden behind
the *hijabi* phenomenon, variables that seem clearly linked to economics. By playing on
religious sentiment and by using Islam as a marketing buzzword, individuals are realizing
enormous profits inherent in the "Muslim" doll market.

It should be interesting to follow the evolution of the *hijabi* dolls' fierce market
competition. Indeed, how quickly will newcomers displace first generation dolls like
Razanne, Fulla, Jamila, Laila, Leen, Sara and Dara? Who can predict the various and
unique ways Muslim dolls will compete for prominence? Perhaps the dolls' *hijabs* will
become distinctly and elaborately different, reflecting customs and individual styles
particular to specific Muslim regions. Future trends are challenging to predict, given the
marketing ingenuity and remarkable resourcefulness of entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

A toy is an object used in play. What continues to draw my attention is the emerging for-
profit practice of linking toys to a specific religion; that is, sanctioning a toy as
religiously correct. I do not ever remembering seeing toys such as a Christian building

block or a Jewish beach ball. How then is it possible that Islam has become a buzzword for the commodification of numerous toys, household goods, and a variety of services? I am amazed to find websites claiming to be "Islamic", such as muslimahshop.co.uk, simplyIslam.com, or onlineislamicstore.com. On each of these sites Muslim dolls are sold along with generic toys. Once again, I have to ask the question: What makes a doll Islamic?

Today a doll can be referred to as "Muslim" or "Islamic" simply by dressing her (or him) in a certain style of clothing. In a larger sense, a Muslim is anything that has been created by Allah since all living things, including human beings and their vast natural surroundings, are subject to His will. Thus plants, animals, indeed all of Nature may be considered Muslim, as a result of having been created by His hand. But a doll is not a creation of Allah. Rather, it is a creation of His creation (mankind); thus, logically speaking, how can a doll made of plastic be considered "Muslim?"

Although the Islamicization of commodities such as *hijabi* dolls supports marketing efforts and drives sales, ironically many of these items are neither manufactured in Muslim countries, owned by companies with Muslim CEOs, or controlled by Muslim boards of directors (the Fulla doll is an exception). Another ironic aspect is that although Islamic religious authorities point to Barbie as blasphemous, she continues to serve as the "model" or standard against which newly arrived Islamic dolls are measured. Even when viewed in a negative light, then, Barbie stands as the prototype for all the variations that follow. One may even say that Barbie's offensive, profane image has served to promote and publicize her product name across the globe—a public relations coup that not even Mattel the manufacturer of the Barbie Doll could have dreamed possible.

It is my hope that by calling attention to the commodification of Islam in general — and to moral issues that have been handily attached to dolls, specifically—additional discussion will ensue. Perhaps readers will consider and debate the following questions: Does the acceptance of Western consumer symbols imply the acceptance of Western values? In what ways have Barbie dolls fueled xenophobia in the Muslim world? In what ways do *hijabi* dolls promote Islamophobia in the West? Do *hijabi* dolls support the renegotiation of identity? Will the European ban on wearing the *niqab* (face veil) and the *hijab* affect the sale and marketing of *hijabi* dolls? In what ways do *hijabi* dolls fulfill psychological needs of conservative Muslim parents? Is it possible to assume that children who are separated by the games they play, or the dolls their parents buy, will also be divided as adults?

In raising these questions, I hope to move this subject from light academic discourse towards sober dialogue and, in doing so, provoke thoughtful consideration of the real issues at hand. By comparing and contrasting cultural messages and moral attitudes surrounding *hijabi* and Barbie dolls, my intention is to open new doors of meaningful cross-cultural dialogue. The dolls, after all, are simply symbols fueling a necessary debate about the significance and implications of religious commodification.

Notes

[1] I have noted the same trend of commodification in academic and professional journals. For example see: Journal of Muslim Mental Health. The journal claims as one of its objectives: "… the Journal of Muslim Mental Health intends to identify the mental health care needs of Muslims." Such statements may raise suspicions that the mental health of a Muslim is different from the mental health of a non-Muslim.

[2] Gillian Rice and Mohammaed Al-Mossawi. "The Implications of Islam for Advertising Messages: The Middle Eastern Context."*Journal of Euromarketing*, Vol. 11(3), 2002

[3] http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/09/10/world/main572564.shtml

[4] http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2002-03/06/ article33.shtml , Retrieved on August 30, 2008.

[5] *Edition Middle East, Market News, Baby and Toy.* 2007. www.toyfairdubai.com. P.12.

[6] Ibid.

[7] http://www.kinantoys.com/english/?page=show_det&prod_id=248

[8] "Muslim   Barbie   doll   unveiled." http://itn.co.uk/news/01ac0e9e5bb12f1c30ba0cc3e0eb98e1.html published: October 10, 2007. Accessed: September 29, 2008.

[9] According to Wikipedia, "The concept of [the Fulla doll] evolved around 1999, and she hit stores in late 2003. [Beyond the Middles East] Fulla is also sold in China, Brazil, North Africa, Egypt and Indonesia, while a few are sold in the United States. Although there had been many other dolls in the past that were created with a hijab, such as Razanne and Moroccan Barbie, none of them had ever been as popular as Fulla." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulla_(doll)

[10] http://74.125.45.104/search?q=cache:TcY7EzklLoIJ:www.hiwar-fanni.de/papers/fatwa_at_islamonline_ Accessed: September 29, 2008

[11] The regional costumes include Balooch, Mazandaran, Abyaneh, Sanandaj Kord, West Azarbayejan, Khoozestan, Tehran, Torbate Jam, Torkaman, Ghilan, and Bakhtiari Lor.

Bibliography

Brownell, Kelly D. and Melissa A. Napolitano (1995) *Distorting reality for children: Body size proportions of Barbie and Ken dolls Disorders.* Vol. 18. pp. 295-298.

Dhoundia, Shreya. (Wed, Oct. 10, 2007). "Meet Salma, the Muslim Barbie doll." http://www.ibnlive.com/news/meet-salma-the-muslim-barbie-doll/50287-3.html.   Retrieved: September 1, 2008.

Gottschalk Peter, and Greenberg Gabriel. (2008). *Islamophobia, Making Muslim the Enemy.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

"Iran Calls for Ban on Barbie Doll." http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7371771.stm Retrieved: August 31, 2008.

"Iran Launches Muslim Dolls To Substitute Barbie." (2002). *IslamOnline.net.* http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2002-03/06/article33.shtml Retrieved: August 30, 2008.

"Iran Calls for Ban on Barbie Doll." http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7371771.stm Accessed on August 31, 2008

Jehl, Douglas.(June 2, 1999). "It's Barbie vs. Laila and Sara in Mideast Culture War." The *NewYorkTimes..*

http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9404E7DB1030F931A35755C0A96F958260 Retrieved: October 15, 2008

Joseph, Suad and Najmabadi, Afsaneh. (2003). *Encyclopedia of women & Islamic cultures.* Leiden: Brill Publications.

Morris, Kalliny, and Hausman, Angela. (2007) "The Impact of Cultural and Religious Values on Consumer's Adoption of Innovation." *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, Volume. 11, Number 1.

"Muslim dolls tackle 'wanton' Barbie." BBC News. Tuesday, 5 March, 2002

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1856558.stm Accessed on August 30, 2008

"Saudi's Bust Barbie's 'Dangers." (2003). *CBS News Online.*

http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/09/10/world/main572564.shtml   Retrieved: August   30,
2007.

Meneley Anne (2007). "Fashions and Fundamentalisms in Fin-de-Siècle Yemen: Chador Barbie
and Islamic Socks." *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 22, Issue 2, pp. 214-243.

Middle East Toy Fair Online. Market Information. www.toyfairdubai.com. Retrieved: August 30,
2008.

Norton , Kevin I., Olds, Timothy S., Olive, Scott, and Dank, Stephen (Feb. 1996).   "Ken and
Barbie at life size." *Sex Roles.* Vol. 34, No. 3-4. pp. 287-294.

Rice, Gillian, and Al-Mossawi, Mohammaed. "The Implications of Islam for Advertising
Messages: The Middle Eastern Context." *Journal of Euromarketing.* Vol. 11(3), 2002.

"Salma, a New Doll Brand Name?" October 11, 2007.

http://www.namedevelopment.com/blog/archives/2007/10/salma_a_new_dol.html.   Retrieved:
September 1, 2008.

Storm, Penny (1987). *Functions of Dress: Tool of Culture and the Individual*. New Jersey:
Prentiss Hall, pp. 279-280

"Meet Dara and Sara, Iran's Answer to Ken and Barbie." IslamBank.Community.
http://tyo.ca/islambank.community/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=6
69 Retrieved: August 30, 2008.

The Challenge of Postmetaphysical Thinking and The Nature of Religious Thought

Kenneth G. MacKendrick

Department of Religion
University of Manitoba
USA

Abstract

Jürgen Habermas's postmetaphysical approach to social and political development does not anticipate an unambiguous role for religion in the public sphere. While Habermas uses the insights of a communication-theoretic to respond criticize metaphysical claims, the relation between postmetaphysical thinking and religious thought and practice has yet to be clarified in a satisfactory manner. To make matters more complicated, misapprehension about the nature of religious thought is leading to increasingly muscular recommendations regarding the role of religion in the public sphere, with no small or insignificant implication for the relation between the claims of culture and political claims. As is argued here, this lack of clarity is the result of an overgenerous reading of religion as inspiring and an overly critical reading of theology as an exclusively religious activity. Using insights articulated by Donald Wiebe, I argue that many of the criticisms of Habermas's position, especially those articulated by Maeve Cooke, can be alleviated if we understand theology as a branch of science rather than as a form of religious thought. This position invites theology to be held to academic standards that do not substantially depart from the standards in other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In this view, I argue theology is best understood as "talk about religion" whereas mythopoeic thought can be identified with "religious talk."

In contrast to reactionary efforts seeking to dismantle the primacy of discursive reason to conserve or restore the authority of religious notions of revelation, Jürgen Habermas has developed a postmetaphysical, intersubjective approach to social and political development that does not anticipate an unambiguous role for religion in the public sphere. While Habermas uses the insights of a communication-theoretic to respond to and often criticize metaphysical and theological claims, the relation between postmetaphysical thinking and religious thought and practice, as many of his critics

suggest, has yet to be clarified in a satisfactory manner. To make matters more complicated, misapprehension about the nature of religious thought and practice is leading to increasingly muscular recommendations regarding the role of religion in the public sphere, with no small or insignificant implication for the relation between the claims of culture and political claims. As is argued here, this lack of clarity is the result of an overgenerous reading of religion as inspiring and an overly critical reading of theology as an exclusively religious activity.

Using insights developed by Habermas regarding the nature of symbol formation as well as insights articulated by Donald Wiebe, I argue that many of the criticisms of Habermas's position, especially those articulated by Maeve Cooke, can be alleviated if we understand theology as a branch of science rather than as a form of religious thought. While such a position may seem contradictory, once we conceive theology to be comparable with other academic disciplines the incompatibility between the mythopoeic elements of religious thought and the inquiries of scientific thinking can be theorized in a more consistent fashion. Furthermore, such a comparison invites theology to be held to academic standards that do not substantially depart from the standards in other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In this view, theology is best understood as "talk about religion" whereas mythopoeic thought can be identified with "religious talk."[1]

Without rejecting Habermas's social evolutionary scheme, I argue that religion is better approached as a heuristic category referring to the tensions and contradictions between mythic thought and modern theology than as a correlate to metaphysical thinking, insofar as metaphysical thought excludes mythological interpretation.[2] Since Habermas's understanding of religion is based on a social evolutionary model, wherein religion is approached as a mediating stage between mythic and modern worldviews, my study aims to take advantage of Habermas's insights about symbol formation without getting mired in the history of ideas or a dubious historical understanding of the evolution of world religions.[3]

The first part of my essay outlines Habermas's understanding of postmetaphysical thinking and is followed by a second section providing an interpretation of his writings on rationality, mythic thought, and the linguistification of the sacred, aiming to make his eclectic theory of religion more explicit. The third section examines Maeve Cooke's critique of Habermas's attempt to salvage and secularize the semantic content of religion. Within this section I acknowledge the correctness of several aspects of Cooke's position and then draw on the work of Donald Wiebe, whose theorization of theology and the nature of mythopoeic thought can be used to provide a helpful rejoinder.

Postmetaphysical Thinking

Postmetaphysical thinking emerges out of the insoluble problems encountered by metaphysical thought: skepticism regarding its totalizing claims, the intrusion of historical consciousness, the shift in paradigms from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of language, and the reversal of the classical precedence of theory over practice (Habermas 1992, p. 33-34). Out of these contradictions postmetaphysical thinking arises, referring to our self-conscious awareness that linguistic meaning and validity are constituted communicatively. In opposition to models of consciousness assuming the priority of Ideas, Habermas argues that self-consciousness "is not a phenomenon inherent in the subject but one that is communicatively generated" (177). As such, it is characterized as participating in a new stage of communication, one emerging from processes of socialization and intersubjective recognition. The learning processes

involved in the shift from conventional to postconventional forms of thinking simultaneously bring about a profound shift in the epistemic self-relation (*Selbstbeziehung*) and practical relation-to-self (*Selbstverhältnis*).[4] This is why postmetaphysical thinking demarcates a transformation and revaluation of relations, enjoining us to see the world with new eyes. Postmetaphysical thinking is characterized by an appreciation for a procedural understanding of rationality, the sole means for the resolution of theoretical problems for a community of inquirers and moral and practical problems for the community of citizens (35). Procedures of argumentation, and not religious revelation or aristocratic entitlement, now constitute the justifiable manner in which criticizable validity claims concerning the rightness of social norms and scientific truth can be impartially adjudicated (6).

Habermas's understanding of rationality is based on a theory of communication action, juxtaposed with the repressed sociality of reason in instrumentalist approaches to rationality. In contrast to the reduction of reason to technique, Habermas observes that when actors pursue the aim of coordinating their actions consensually and without reservation, with the help of the illocutionary binding and bonding effects of speech acts, can we speak of action in a communicative sense (Habermas 1998b, p. 128, 139, 220-27). Communicatively achieved agreement can be said to have a rational basis when and only when the process of understanding meets the conditions of rationally motivated assent to the content of an utterance (120). Actors interested in guiding their behavior in terms of mutually recognized norms, in order to be distinguished from coercion or manipulation, must take up in actual discursive practice the principles of egalitarian reciprocity and universal moral respect (Benhabib 1992, p. 29). The stringency required for these conditions suggests that the anticipated ideal, the participation in discourses free from violence, has an incontrovertible role to play as the normative yardstick for the critique of coercive powers at work in any community of good will.[5] Without the realization of these moral principles underlying communicative action, the as the practical requirements of the impartial adjudication of moral, political, and scientific claims, discourses cannot rise above the suspicion of being unduly coerced. Nevertheless, communicative action is also the site of the reproduction of the lifeworld, and thus a commonplace and relatively unproblematic occurrence.

While the more unconditional criteria regarding the actualization of these ideals may seem unrealistic, they serve to provide a normative grounding for Habermas's critical theory. In particular, the critique of distortions in communication, including ideological prejudice, abuses of power, social pathologies, and deformations of the lifeworld. As Habermas puts it: "Communicative rationality provides a standard for evaluating systematically distorted forms of communication and of life that result when the potential for reason that became available with the transition to modernity is selectively utilized" (Habermas 1992, p. 50). One of the central points of Habermas's analysis of communication is to show that this critical function is neither arbitrary nor imposed using an external standard; rather, with the transition from linguistic analysis to a formal pragmatics Habermas argues that one can detect the peculiar presence of strong idealizations that are part of the pragmatic presuppositions of consensus formation, argumentation (46).

The theoretical architecture of Habermas's position was worked out in conjunction with Karl-Otto Apel in the 1970s (Apel 1980, p. 225-300; Habermas 1979, p. 1-68). As shown in their pragmatic analyses, idealizations are present in speech acts as unavoidable pragmatic assumptions in discourse. This gives validity claims an unconditional character while at the same time anticipating and supposing the counterfactual realization of communication free from distortion, an "ideal communication community." While these

idealizations are counterfactual, the validity claims raised by a speaker cast a transcendental projection anticipating a wider range of references than present in the immediate context. In other words, we counterfactually assume the redemption of the claim as a possible and contingent outcome of an actual discourse even when this may not be foreseeable or likely. Such idealizing assumptions project a utopian imagining allowing us to detect deviations as well as envision our capacities to "settle all conflicts without violence" (Habermas 1992, p. 47; 1996, p. 323; see also 2003b, p. 83-130).

Given that such idealizations are only instantiated in communicative practices, it follows that it is an illusion to think that conscious life is able to reach enlightenment about itself by way of the self-privileging of the context of individual contemplation, one of the characteristic hallmarks of the philosophy of consciousness. The legacy of metaphysical thought inherited by this model preserves an elitist and isolationist character by purging itself "of all traces of its earthly origin" through the enshrining of particular attitudes and practices at the expense of the establishment of interpersonal relations. As Habermas observes, the promise of contact with the extra-ordinary is typically proffered through the "renunciation of the natural attitude toward the world" and the devaluing of the social relation (Habermas 1992, p. 32-33). However, isolated or cloistered reflection lacks the stability that can only be provided by widespread intersubjective recognition and thus trades the more assured grounding made possible within larger and more inclusive communicative communities for the ambiguities of implacable self-doubt and uncertainty.[6]

Making matters more difficult for the religious thinker or metaphysician, under the rubric of postmetaphysical thinking the philosophy of consciousness, containing the final refuge of metaphysics, undergoes dramatic conversion into linguistic analysis as subjective knowledge concerning objects is recast in terms of competing representations of states of affairs, the intersubjective paradigm (Habermas 1992, p. 11-13, 21-23).[7] While metaphysical thinking is not abandoned by Habermas, its faculty is indeed pressed for credibility in that its self-privileging character becomes all the more apparent and all the more illegitimate.

In contrast to the caricature of Habermas's position as advocating the suppression of plurality, postmetaphysical thinking vividly realizes that "the intersubjectivity of linguistically achieved understanding is by nature porous, and linguistically attained consensus does not eradicate from the accord the differences in speaker perspectives but rather presupposes them as ineliminable" (Habermas 1992, p. 48; 2008, p. 21). As shown in his essay "Individuation through Socialization" (1992), autonomy and individuation go hand in hand. Thus, recognition depends on the recognition of a claim to uniqueness and irreplaceability and yet simultaneously embodies the idealizing supposition of a universalistic form of life (186). This pluralizing aspect of postmetaphysical thinking rightfully permits Habermas to point to the unity of reason and the diversity of its voices within a cosmopolitan order and an inclusive and inclusively minded global morality (Habermas 2008, p. 22, 47).

I have not enumerated all of the various aspects of Habermas's conception of postmetaphysical thinking, only drawn attention to several of its most salient characteristics: the rise of a procedural understanding of rationality, the anticipatory-utopian dimension of communicative action, the decentering of the philosophy of consciousness, the deflation of the extra-ordinary, and the simultaneity of unity and difference.[8] The next section provides an outline of Habermas's theory of religion, including his understanding of myth as well as the nature of religious thought.

Habermas's Theory of Religion: Between Mythology and Modernism

Habermas's understanding of religion is an eclectic blend of theoretical writings extending across several disciplines: philosophical theology, sociology of religion, cultural anthropology, and comparative religion. In his writings in the 1980s religion occupies a mediating role between myth and modernity. Given the high level of abstraction through which Habermas articulates his theoretical concerns, the selective nature of his sources, recent developments in biotechnology and the rise of fundamentalism, it should not be surprising that he has found it prudent to rethink how best to theorize anew the relation of religious thought to cultural and political processes. Nevertheless, while his later writings reflect his earlier orientation, defining religion as a kind of switching station, they also encompass a more programmatic appraisal regarding the proper role religion is to assume in the public sphere.

To be sure, Habermas's conception of religion has always occupied a dialectical position in his critical social theory. It is decided not mythological in orientation yet it also falls short of postmetaphysical thinking. Religious thinking is most strongly identified with the monotheistic traditions (Judaism and Christianity, with a more inclusive reference to Islam in recent writings) but it is also suggested than Buddhism has achieved an equivalent level of abstraction.[9] Less precisely but more frequently Habermas indicates that all of the "great world religions" embody a cognitive advance out of a mythological era. This usually accompanied by a reference to Karl Jasper's understanding of the "Axial Age."[10]

While religion is viewed as a qualitative advance out of mythic forms of thinking, it is simultaneously a transformer, the crucible of imagistic preserve and concept-formation. Habermas suggests that religion is analogous to art. Whereas art strikes a graphic equilibrium between images and concepts, religion is tipped either toward the mythological or the metaphysical (see Habermas 2001, p. 1-29; 2006b, p. 53-70). Furthermore, religion is defined more often than not in ethical terms, viewed as expressing a tension between the spellbinding power of ritual interaction and the illocutionary power of norm guided communicative action (Habermas 1987, p. 77ff). The ethical dimension of religious language, valued because of its normative and disruptive power (Habermas 2008, p. 234), also has within itself the opaque other of reason (143). Because of this, Habermas holds that as long as the boundary between faith and reason is porous both reason and religion succumb to irrational effusion (243). This danger is why he prizes Kant's philosophy of religion as a warning against religious philosophy (247).

Each of these moments mentioned above speak to a particular aspect of Habermas's work and should be approached keeping in mind the integrity of disciplinary distinctions and the fluidity of Habermas's interdisciplinary proposals – one cannot reduce his understanding of religion to any one part nor treat all aspects simultaneously. Given the overall social evolutionary nature of Habermas's understanding of religion, this section begins with a generic introduction followed by an outline of his understanding of myth before moving through the developments that culminate in postmetaphysical thinking and the post-secular society.

Only sporadically discussed in his writings from the 1960s and 70s, religious and mythic worldviews were addressed directly in the two volumes of *The Theory of Communication Action* (1984, 1987). It is evident, however, that Habermas was not at this point interested in religion as such. Habermas's discussion of myth and religion were necessary stepping-stones toward the elucidation of the concept of rationality and the genesis of individuation and socialization through increasingly differentiated forms of symbolically mediated interaction (Habermas 1984, p. 43-74; 1987, p. 43-111). Since the

late 1980s Habermas has removed religion from the margins of his work in order to rethink its role within contemporary life through what is coming to be called the post-secular society.

In terms of the reception of his work in English, Habermas's most sustained theoretical engagement with a theological community took place in 1988 at a conference held at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, the proceedings published as *Habermas, Modernity, and Public Theology* (2002).[11] Not long afterward, Habermas took up the theme of religion and religious symbolism in several of his essays in a collection entitled *The Liberating Power of Symbols*. In addition, the essay "Faith and Knowledge" (Habermas 2003a, p. 101-115), the interview "Fundamentalism and Terror" (Habermas 2006a), p. 3-25), and his contribution to the dialogue with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, published as *The Dialectics of Secularization* (rpt Habermas 2008. p. 101-113), can be added to the growing list of relevant works. *Between Naturalism and Religion* is Habermas's most sustained and engaged contribution to date. Also of note is Eduardo Mendieta's anthology *Religion and Rationality* (2002a), a volume of essays translated into English bringing many of Habermas's essays on religion and theology together in a single binding. Looking ahead, Habermas has also been writing and speaking about secularization and a post-secular society for the past few years, including lectures given in Iran and Turkey as well as a lecture series in October 2008 at Yale University (Castle Lectures).

In the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action*, in a discussion of the relation between reason and knowledge, Habermas argues that in "archaic societies myths fulfill the unifying function of worldviews in an exemplary way – they permeate life-practice" (Habermas 1984, p. 44). The immediacy of images and powers for the mythic thinker prevents them from making distinctions held to be axiomatic by modern thinkers. Habermas observes, the "savage mind" is systematically impeded from being able to separate an objectivating attitude to a world of existing affairs from a conformist or nonconformist attitude to a world of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations (49). This does not confer straightforward irrationality to the mythic worldview. Rather, Habermas argues that the rationality of worldviews cannot be measured "in terms of logical and semantic properties but in terms of the formal-pragmatic basic concepts they place at the disposal of individuals for interpreting their world" (45). In this sense the appellation "rational" (designating a performative attitude toward validity claims) is inappropriate insofar as distinct knowledge domains (truth, rightness) have not been established. At the same time, this does not deny the propriety of the designation in a more holistic sense. Habermas's view allows a society governed by myth to be rational on its own terms although irrational when compared to a modern society.

Habermas outlines the characteristics of mythic thinking as follows: a concretistic and analogical thought process, confusion between nature and culture, a deficient differentiation between language and world, and a confusion between internal connections of meaning and external connections of objects (45-49). He notes "mythical interpretation of the world and magical control of the world can intermesh smoothly because internal and external relations are still conceptually integrated" (49-50). This point is clarified in later essays on Ernst Cassirer's understanding of symbols, where Habermas approvingly observes that the genesis of symbol formation moves in two directions simultaneously: a "spellbinding tendency toward the formal congealing of isolated impressions into a symbolic image" and a complementary yet contradictory "concept-forming tendency toward generalization and differentiation" (Habermas 2006b, p. 63). In the case of mythic thinking, the crystallization of sensory impressions into images is predominant.

In broad strokes, the mythic perspective expresses an insufficient differentiation among attitudes to the objective, social, and subjective worlds as well as a lack of reflexivity that can rightfully be identified as "closed" in contrast to the more reflective and differentiated "open" worldview of moderns (Habermas 1984, p. 52). While such worldviews possess an "intensely poetic quality in everyday life and thought, and a vivid enjoyment of the passing moment" (65) they can also be characterized as sociocentric and studied through an objectivating perspective.[12] As such, the mythological worldview is fated to be transformed from within by learning processes and contradictory experiences that decenter its undifferentiated qualities. Habermas concludes his discussion of mythic worldviews drawing on the work of Jean Piaget as a means of conceptualizing development that extends to worldviews as a whole (68ff).

Turning to the history of religions, Habermas observes a tremendous innovation when mythic forms of thought turn "against its own principle of imagistic condensation" in the form of iconoclastic monotheistic religion. This marks the first step toward propositional meaning and is symptomatic of progressive decontextualization and objectification (Habermas 2006b, p. 63). This step away from myth presents us with the peculiar character of religion. On the one hand religion is rooted in mythic origins. Habermas writes, for example, the "major religions can never entirely liberate themselves from their mythic origins; otherwise they would destroy their distinctive symbolic form and forfeit their sacred character" (63). This point reinforces Habermas's earlier claim that surely the limits of a critical or public theology culminate in the refusal of the religious adherent or the theologian to translate the whole of religious experience into secular discourses, noting that the "syndrome of revelation faith, held together in ritualized praxis" forms a barrier to complete translation: "For religious discourse would lose their identity if they were to open themselves up to a type of interpretation which no loner allows the religious experiences to be valid *as* religious" (Habermas 2002b, p. 234). On the other hand, religion is conceived as a crucible: the very location that congealed images are liberated from a petrified form and freed into increasingly propositional forms. This tension, mirroring the insights of Lévy-Bruhl, is why Habermas is able to write "we live simultaneously in different, co-original symbolic worlds" (63).

The "collective" break with mythological forms of thought is illustrated by Habermas in two domains. The first domain is located in the fields of cultural anthropology and sociology, pertaining to the reconstruction of the rise of a new form of communication (from gestures to symbols) and the transition from ritual to normatively regulated action. The second domain concerns the historical development of these events within the philosophy of ideas. Whereas the former is discussed in relation to the writings of George Herbert Mead, Emile Durkheim, and Ernst Cassirer, the latter is illustrated with specific examples taken from the trajectories of western philosophical thought. Habermas identifies ancient Greece as the birthplace of scientific thought, albeit oriented toward metaphysics and ontology, and claims an analogous break within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, not in terms of science but in terms of ethical cosmology (Habermas 1984, p. 1; Habermas 2001, p. 78-89). The destructive potential of such breaks is evident in Habermas's claim that a cultural modernism must cling to its own historical self-understanding. Without doing so the advance may be perceived as destruction without compensation, citing the rise of fundamentalism within modernity as an example of this (Habermas 2002a, p. 152-153; 156-157).

When speaking of religion Habermas oscillates between a social evolutionary conception, where lower stages of decontextualization are sublimated by higher stages, and a scaled dichotomous conception, where mythic and modern modes of thought are co-original and simultaneous, with religious thought closer to mythology on the one side

and religious thought closer to modernity on the other. This flexibility seems to allow Habermas to take advantage of two different outlooks at once. When Habermas speaks of the return of myth he invokes the dangers and limitations of premodernism. If religion appears to have broken out of its spellbinding origin, it is (paternalistically?) encouraged rather than condemned. For example, Habermas discusses religion that moves in the direction of myth in "Fundamentalism and Terror." Here Habermas argues that "fanaticism" can be understood in terms of the "repression of cognitive dissonances" that become necessary when "the epistemological innocence of an all-encompassing worldview has long since been lost and a return to the exclusively of pre-modern outlooks is advocated under the cognitive conditions of scientific knowledge and religious pluralism" (Habermas 2006a, p. 11; see also 2003a, p. 104). This comment further qualifies his view that fundamentalist viewpoints that react to modernity by breaking off communication participate in a regressive "cognitive self-limitation." Once a regression to premodern ways of thinking has occurred, what is required is a "transition to a different stage of moral consciousness" that cannot be accomplished without the triggering of learning processes intimately connected with the criticizable nature of validity claims raised in everyday communicative practices (Habermas 2001, p. 43; 1998b, p. 192). Religious fundamentalism thus lies closer to myth despite being an "exclusively modern phenomenon" (Habermas 2003a, p. 102). As an addendum, I could also add Habermas's discussion of Cassirer, who perceived in the political practice of the Nazis an "ominous fusion of myth and technology." Habermas adds

> Political myths return because they are hybrid phenomena. They draw on the exotic substance of a stratum of mythical images which is anchored in the symbolic constitution of human existence itself. The haunting of these satyr songs can only be dispelled by an enlightenment which is conscious of the dialectical nature of symbolization. Enlightenment must be able to acknowledge its own roots in the first phobic stirrings of the civilizing process.
>
> (Habermas 2001, p. 25-26)

On the more conceptual side of things, we find addresses and collegial discussions with friends and colleagues. In the essay "Metaphysics after Kant," an essay written in honor of Dieter Henrich, Habermas remarks that it is possible to speak of metaphysical and religious questions in a synonymous manner (Habermas 1992, p. 15). Here he notes that metaphysical and religious systems of thought are typical of "a culture's accomplishments of reaching self-understanding joined together in interpretive systems that preserve a structure homologous to the lifeworld's entire structure of horizons" (17). Although this means that religious thought is by and large undifferentiated, expressing a "totalizing unity of mythological narratives, religious doctrines, and metaphysical explanations," Habermas states plainly that he does not "feel the slightest impulse to hinder" the pursuit of interpretations that take up the relevance and importance of a possible religious dimension in human life (17, 25). However, if modern thought is defined by its differentiations between the spheres of art, politics and morality, and science, then religious thought expresses the fusion of all three. Any orientation toward the religious seems to pay "the price of falling short of a level of differentiation and justification that has already been reached, i.e., at the price of surrendering its own plausibility" (17). At the edge of the religious field, we find the transformative work of translators, such as Kant, "the first great example – after metaphysics – of a secularizing, but at the same time salvaging, deconstruction of religious truths" (Habermas 2003a, p. 110; 2008, p. 209-247). Such tasks, however, exceed the interest of the theologian or

metaphysician who aims to preserve the unique and irreplaceable quality of their religious claims (see Habermas 2002b).

In the twilight hours of religious thought, the challenge of postmetaphysical thinking can be summarized as follows:

> In modern societies, religious teachings must accustom themselves to the unavoidable competition with other forms of faith and claims to truth. They no longer move in a self-contained universe governed, so to speak, by their own absolute truth. Every religious teaching today encounters the pluralism of different forms of religious truth, as well as the skepticism of secular scientific knowledge which owes its social authority to its declared fallibility and a learning process based on unceasing revision. Religious dogmatics and the consciousness of believers must harmonize the illocutionary meaning of religious speech, the affirmation of the truth of a religious statement, with both facts. Each religious confession must adopt a relationship with the competing messages of other religions no less than with the objections of science and a secularized, semi-learned common sense.
>
> (Habermas 2002a, p. 150)

Habermas argues religious faith must become reflexive or it will oscillate ceaselessly between instability and disorientation. Religious adherents unable to engage with secular forms of knowledge or converse with competing cultural and religious traditions will no doubt experience the incumbent ambiguities of detraditionalization as fatalistic forms differentiation (Habermas 1992, p. 195; 2008, p. 261). When experienced in this way religious and cultural traditions end up facing severe forms of rupture and discontinuity, the alleviation of which can only be imagined through sustained and engaged learning processes.[13]

Salvaging and Secularizing the Semantic Contents of Religion

Maeve Cooke (2006) observes that if Habermas's earlier view of religion appears to take a more dismissive attitude, this begins to change in the late 1980s, gravitating toward a more cautiously receptive position. Habermas himself has indicated two factors for his reconsideration of religion in a more sustained way: recent developments in biotechnology that threaten to create conditions for the complete instrumentalization of human nature and, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Other factors may include the persistence of religion and the rise of global fundamentalisms, the working out in more detail of an undertheorized understanding of symbols and world disclosure, reflexive awareness about the fragility of lifeworlds, and an ever widening sensitivity to political inclusions and exclusions. Cooke's essay "Salvaging and Secularizing the Semantic Contents of Religion" is a critical rejoinder to his recent writings on the relation between postmetaphysical philosophy and religion. After summarizing her critique I propose a revision of Habermas's understanding of religion in a way that is complementary to her proposals yet builds on the existing strength of Habermas's communicative-theoretic.

In her essay, Cooke makes two critical points. First, she notes that Habermas's aim to salvage the semantic contents of religious traditions encumbers both religious adherents and secularists with the task of translating religious language into secular language for the purposes of legislation and formal decision making. This task, however, appears to impair the autonomy of metaphysically inclined citizens.[14] To rectify this impairment,

she suggests a distinction between epistemologically authoritarian and non-authoritarian religious outlooks is necessary. Second, the salvage operation itself is not unproblematic in that it may not be possible to tap into the semantic power of religious traditions without relying on metaphysical assumptions. This is problematic for reasons internal to Habermas's understanding of the relation between validity claims and religious experience (Cooke 2006, p. 187).

Regarding the first conclusion: Cooke notes that Habermas consistently rules out the possibility that the truth of religious validity claims can be assessed.

> [Habermas] endeavors to accommodate public discussion of religious validity claims within his existing conceptual apparatus by way of a distinction between validity clams, whose cognitive contents are open to critical *assessment* and validity claims, with whose cognitive contents postmetaphysical thinking must critically *engage*. This – implicit – distinction is evident, to begin with, in his restriction of public discussion of religious truth claims to *informal* processes of democratic deliberation. (193)

As can be seen, Habermas wants to retain the inspiring and energizing elements of religious experience without having to accept it as *religious* experience.[15] Religious validity claims, so it would seem, form a special class of validity claims that require translation rather than adjudication. To explain, at times Habermas notes that religious validity claims are analogous to aesthetic validity claims. Like aesthetic validity claims, religious validity claims have a world-disclosing power with the potential to transform how we see aspects of everyday life. However, given the inevitable particularity of art and aesthetic criticism, since the lifeworld cannot be thematized as a whole, it is difficult to see how it is possible to do justice to both the universality of religious validity claims and their (particular) world-disclosing power. A similar incongruence emerges if we situate religious validity claims in relation to ethical (non-universal) and moral (universal) validity claims (191-92). It is difficult to disagree with Cooke's assessment. Habermas's understanding of religious claims and his call for a project of translation seems to create a peculiar paradox leading one to the conclusion that "religious validity claims destabilize the very distinction between universal and non-universal claims" (192). Cooke's objection is ground in the empirical observation that many religious adherents frame their religious claims in universalist terms, thus contracting Habermas's contention that for believers the good enjoys primacy over the right (Habermas 2008, p. 263). Perhaps this is the case, but it is only possible to make this claim this by overriding the declared position of the religious adherent.

Continuing her overview of Habermas, she notes that the thematization of "religious validity claims" is to take place in the "weak publics" of civil society, spheres of opinion-formation, but not in the sphere of democratic legislation and decisions making (e.g. the parliament, judiciary). With regard to the legislature, judiciary, and executive branch, a publicly accessible and secular language must be taken up. It follows then that if religious validity claims are to have an impact on public life, the claims must be translated into non-religious language. Habermas argues that the inspiring elements of religion may be salvaged for use within secular discourse and that this task can be done only on the basis of translation: "Semantic contents count as cognitive if they can be translated into discourse in which only 'public' reasons count" (Cooke 2006, 195).[16] Given Habermas's discounting of the possible validity of religious claims, Cooke argues his position is "biased in favor of non-believers" (postmetaphysically inclined citizens). While lauding

the attempt to "maintain a unity between religious identity and political identity" she remains skeptical about how Habermas claims to do this.[17]

Due to the asymmetry between Habermas's theorization of religious and non-religious validity claims, Cooke contends that metaphysically inclined citizens will experience their autonomy as arbitrarily curtailed. This can be remedied, she argues, by making a distinction between "religious beliefs that are epistemologically authoritarian and those that are not" (199). This distinction is based on how we might best understand the claims to truth of religious teachings. Cooke's distinction rests on the criteria of critical challenge. Authoritarian religious claims are unshakeable, immune to critical challenge. Truth that is simply supported by religious experience is, however, fallible and subject to revision as well as critical scrutiny. The former is authoritarian; the latter is not (199). Cooke argues that this consideration relieves the impairment created by the asymmetry without having to uncritically accept religious experience as such.[18]

What strikes me most immediately about this paradox is what seems to be an unnecessary inflation of the ordinary. Presumably a "religious validity claim," like any other validity claim, can readily be situated and analytically identified within Habermas's tripartite distinction between the three spheres of validity: the objective world (truth), the social world (rightness), and the subjective world (truthfulness). While Habermas rejects any consideration of religious claims in the realm of truth, this does not hold equally for claims of rightness. The contrary quality of religious claims is that they appear to muddy the distinction between aesthetics, ethics, morality, particularity and universality. This is only the case if we treat religious validity claims as extra-ordinary.

In my mind, the only reason a *religious* validity claim could be singled out as destabilizing the distinction between universal and non-universal validity claims pertaining to the realm of norms, is if the claim itself *illicitly* crosses the borders between these spheres; or, if it is inadvertently taken seriously even though it fundamentally lacks an illocutionary dimension. In is important to recall that the crossing of these borders occurs primarily in mythic forms of thought, totalizing worldviews possessed by a syndrome of validity, an undifferentiated form of social interaction caught in the crucible of congealed image and concept-formation. Likewise, it is important to make strong distinctions between ritual or ritualizing forms of interaction and communicative forms. With these two caveats in mind, a "religious validity claim" does not present us with great difficulties. The "religious" part of the phrase indicates that we are not dealing with an unreserved and communicative use of language. A criticizable validity claim is defined by its differentiated and context transcending qualities. Religious thought, however, can be adequately understood as simultaneously participating in cognitive and affective modalities, otherwise the designation "religious" makes little sense. I think it is justifiable to use the heuristic term "religious" to describe incomplete communicative utterances, utterances participating in the domain of ritual. Ritual forms of interaction are defined by their inherent ambiguity (Leach 1976). Upon contestation or examination of the supposed claim, either the religious adherent will break off communication or "complete" the utterance only by recreating it in the form of a criticizable validity claim.

Let us take the example of Christian belief. The statement A "I believe in Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior" can be read in a number of ways. From the first person perspective it could emphasize an individual orientation and be viewed as making a claim to truthfulness, e.g. as A[1] "I really do believe this." From a third person perspective, the sentence could be reformulated without (apparent) loss of meaning as A[2] "She believes in Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior." In a more expansive sense we could derive a series of claims related to this position that would not be foreign to most branches of the Christian

tradition: B "Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior" (truth claim) and C "You ought to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior" (normative claim).

While it may indeed seem that such variations on a validity claim are simply logical explications of its meaning in relation to the Christian milieu, a more contextual understanding of the nature of "belief" shows that A^1, A^2, B, and C are in fact inappropriate and distorting translations of the original expression because A cannot properly be construed as a validity claim. Despite the verbal appearance of propositional content, expressions of Christian belief are ritualistic, fusions of mythic and discursive thought, simultaneously non-illocutionary and non-propositional. To be sure, a religious adherent may switch out of a confession mode by adopting a more scientific attitude, to address, for example, the issue of the existence of God. But, the orientation toward testimony and declaration should be seen as independent from the attitude of the critical observer, even if both are simultaneously present. It is this ritualizing aspect of language that Habermas's pragmatic theory of meaning has left undeveloped.[19]

Today we can observe that in the ordinary use of the word "belief" there is a predominant idea that it is a theological claim or, at least, a statement concerning personal trust and the placement of ones sentiments. As Malcolm Ruel has shown, belief is a particular modality of thought, a nodal point of a particular kind of religious praxis. In the essay "Christians as Believers" Ruel selects four phases of Christian history each with their own particular understanding of belief: belief as initiation ritual (baptism), belief as the public acceptance of Christological teachings as handed down by ecclesiastical authorities (belief as ritual confession), belief as a form of spirit-possession (belief as a gift of Holy Spirit), and the more contemporary usage, the diffusion of belief and the declaration of the obsolescence of the concept, such as Robert Bellah's "beyond belief," a position suggesting that we are all believers.[20] Without working through his argument systematically, it should be apparent that "belief" in the first three examples has a distinct ritualized form and significance. From this we can readily see that belief is not central to all religions in the same way that it is central in Christianity (Ruel 1997, p. 57). The implications of this insight require a substantial revision of how "religious validity claims" are understood. If one takes "belief" as a paradigmatic "religious validity claim" it becomes apparent, if we understand belief to be a ritual, that it is in fact not a validity claim at all, but a religious practice that takes a verbal form – what could be understood as an incomplete form of communication.

As a conclusion I submit that most "religious claims" have been misunderstood in this vein. What has been perceived as propositional, "I believe in God" (translated only by means of obfuscation as a propositional claim that "God exists") is a verbal instance of mythopoeic thought / practice.[21] If one accepts this view then the phrase "religious validity claim" is a contradiction in terms. Religious practices can be defined by their non-propositional character. This is why it is not advisable to use the term religion indiscriminately; the behavior in question must be worthy of the designation. I am suggesting that religious behavior is best and most consistently understood as possessing an undifferentiated quality because, as Habermas notes, the uniqueness of religious praxis is found in its non-trivial participation in a mythic interpretation of the world. It is a better theoretical practice to use the term "religious" to refer to the syndrome of validity that accompanies mythopoeic thought, even when it takes a hybrid form, such as "religious philosophy." Habermas's comments about theology being bound by religious praxis must be read in this light, although I do not think this is the final word.

To be sure, given my previous comments, I am supportive of Cooke's hesitancy regarding Habermas's use of the term "believer" and "non-believer" to refer to religious adherents. She opts for the term "metaphysically inclined" which I think is fair, but it is

also necessary to distinguish between those metaphysically inclined in a scientific or propositional manner (philosophers of religion) and those metaphysically inclined an a mythopoeic manner (religious philosophers). For this we must take up an important distinction found in the work of Donald Wiebe.

In *The Irony of Theology and the Nature of Religious Thought*, Wiebe supports the Lévy-Bruhlian thesis that there exists within one mind two mutually exclusive ways of thinking: mythopoeic and scientific, modern. Whereas the former is largely symbolic and undifferentiated in nature, the latter is propositional and criticizable. It is highly advantageous to introduce this thesis here because Wiebe's conclusions are almost identical to Habermas's in terms of this distinction in modalities of thought.[22] Where Wiebe goes further, however, is in his careful analysis of the qualitative difference between theology and religious thought.

Wiebe, following Ernst Gellner, characterizes mythopoeic thought as follows: the use of idiosyncratic norms that is both cognitive and moral at the same time, an "enchanted" conflation of roles in the individual (undifferentiated understanding of functions), the diffused and persuasive quality of the entrenched clauses of the intellectual constitution (unquestionable or untouchable sacred claims), and the indistinct conflation of truth and social obligation (Wiebe 1991, p. 82-83). As is evident, Wiebe's understanding of mythopoeic thought is quite similar Habermas's understanding as outlined in *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Scientific thought, on the other hand, is characterized by creativity, critical examination, and experimentation. Theories are "open to criticism" and implicitly call for revision on the basis of new observations, empirical evidence, or contradiction. In other words, theory is subject to falsification, and can be understood as a procedure of "conjectures and refutations" (104-105).

An example of mythopoeic thought at work can be discerned within fundamentalist language and politics in the United States. Susan Friend Harding, in her study of Jerry Falwell, observes and documents a peculiar trait of Protestant fundamentalism that is exemplary of mythopoeic thought. She observes that Falwell, one of the architects of the Religious Right, has a persistent tendency of thought to "backdate" and reinvent his personal narratives. For example, despite Falwell's open and known support of racial segregation into the late 1960s, he tells us that he ceased to be a racist in 1963. While it may appear that Falwell is simply falsifying his own history in order to protect himself from the charge of racism or of failing to hear the voices of the civil rights movement, Harding detects a more subtle mechanism at work.

> Falwell's speech is not like secular speech. He inhabits a world generated by Bible-based stories and, as a 'man of God,' his speech partakes of the generative quality of the bible itself. He incessantly frames is life, if only lightly, in biblical terms, and his faithful followers read him as they read the Bible – not as already true, but as always coming true.
>
> (Harding 2000, p. 27)

Which is to say, Falwell remembers his life not as it is, but as he wants it to be, as lived Biblically. It is as if in thinking about the past differently, the past truly changes. This kind of thinking has all of the characteristics of mythopoeic thought as outlined by Habermas and Wiebe – and there is no refuting the fact that Falwell and the rise of fundamentalism in the United States is a situated within a thoroughly modern society utilizing modern means of communication, differentiated political tactics, sophisticated marketing strategies, and diverse means of small group mobilization. The two modalities of thought are simultaneous.

The congruence between Habermas and Wiebe here is no accident. Both are relying on near identical sources for their analysis and have arrived, despite their widely disparate interests and theoretical backgrounds, at a near consensus concerning the dichotomous nature of human thought. The critical point that Wiebe makes is his contention that there are two kinds of thinking that can be discerned within the field of theology: academic theology (theology) and mythopoeic theology ("theology"). For Wiebe, these two kinds of theology stem from two mutually exclusive forms of thought. Making this point explicit affirms my contention that the idea of a "religious validity claim" is a contradiction in terms. In this sense we ought not to distinguish between "light" and "heavy" metaphysical baggage, but between discourses about metaphysics or theology (talk about religion) and mythopoeic practice (religious talk).

Wiebe convincingly shows that we can make a legitimate distinction between academic theology, as a scientific project, and religious thought, as a mythopoeic activity with the reservation that "theology" is a hybrid discourse that should be categorized as mythopoeic in nature because of its compromising qualities. To be sure, most religious adherents readily admit that their religious concerns are beyond the pale of scientific or philosophical endeavors. Academic theology, in this view, is a discipline that has as its aim a scientific explanation and account of the activity of the divine or divinities without reference or fidelity to creeds, obligations, or communal identities. The definitive difference has to do with the criticizability of the claim with regard to its truth (or, I would add, rightness). In Habermasian terms, this is also the distinction between a validity claim and a symbolic gesture.

With Wiebe's distinction in mind, it becomes unnecessary to make a distinction between "authoritarian" and "non-authoritarian" forms of religious epistemology, although this distinction may be worth retaining for different reasons. As long as we can distinguish between ritual performance and discursive forms of argumentation, the question of validity concerning the activity of deities or norms that have a metaphysical grounding can be treated just as would any other validity claim. Nevertheless, what we should not fail to notice is that theological claims, by which I mean scientific claims about the activity of the deities, seem to be highly contested. So much so that the possibility of the discipline itself is in question.[23]

The advantage of the position outlined above is that the onus of justification is placed where it belongs, the individual(s) raising the claim and the reasons they could potentially proffer in debate with others in support of its validity and acceptance. While Habermas's position exerts a generous nature, stating that secular citizens have a obligation to assist in the translation work of religious claims, it places an unfair burden on secular citizens who have to engage in discursive clarifications of their own claims that have nothing to do with religion (a difficult enough task as it is) and, apparently, becomes scholars and experts in the discourses, rituals, and symbolic forms of exchange of countless religious traditions which – often enough, are oriented by and large by mythopoeic perspectives to which modern or scientific forms of thought are incongruent.

With regard to Cooke's first reservation, I agree. As formulated by Habermas there is a deep-seated problem with the treatment of "religious validity claims." While Cooke's solution has been to propose a differentiation between authoritarian and non-authoritarian religious epistemologies, I think an equally judicious route can be discerned by focusing on the distinction between mythopoeic and modern thought. This has the advantage of already being built into Habermas's understanding of symbol formation and is at the heart of his theory of rationality and his understanding of individuation and socialization. It also has the advantage of being testable, in the sense that the distinction between mythopoeic thought and scientific thought can be made evident through careful

observation and analysis. Another advantage is that making use of this insight restores cognitive symmetry between metaphysically inclined citizens and postmetaphysically inclined citizens. Where an asymmetry does appear concerns citizens who are dogmatically ritualistic in orientation, persistently refusing communicative means of problem solving in favor of the ecstasies of ritual. This, however, is a separate issue.

Confusion about the nature of religious thought appears to be endemic throughout Habermas's work, despite the fact that he's working with an adequate understanding of communication and symbolic formation. The problem, as I see it, comes from his reliance on the philosophy of religion, itself more often than not a hybrid "theology," and the speculative articulation of the genealogy of the evolution of world religions as leaning more toward ethical cosmology than theological science. This tendency toward the favoring of the ethical in the major world religious traditions is the result of a serious misattribution and misunderstanding of the history of religions since religion participates in, according to Habermas's own self-understanding, a set of undifferentiated practices and perspectives. The syndrome of validity that Habermas speaks of pertains to the fusion of claims to truth and rightness, the collapse of internal and external worlds. Understood in this way the advances made by religion in terms of ethical cosmology cannot be understood apart from this very undifferentiated perspective: religious worldviews are "ethical" and "scientific" simultaneously, without differentiation.[24]

Due to a selective understanding of the history of religions, Habermas sees the task of translation as requisite only in the broad field of rightness, with religious contributions in the domain of truth to be discarded. The reason is obvious, Habermas clearly sees no possible contribution from religion in the domain of truth and he rejects out of hand the possibility of accepting religious experience as religious, thus eliminating the cornerstone of a theological science. However, once a distinction is made between academic theology, which could be viewed as having distinct and analytically separate contributions to the spheres of truth and rightness, and "theology," this asymmetrical and historically dubious reading of the history of world religions as predominantly ethical becomes innocuous.

The second issue for Cooke is Habermas's salvage operation. How does one translate mythopoeic thought into discourse, preserving the inspiring content of myth without the temptations of a return to ritual or the hybridization of illocutionary aims? If my conclusions above are correct, the entire project of translation is a red herring. Two things are important here. First, the recognition that mythopoeic forms of thought are relatively common and in every respect quite ordinary and co-exist with modern or scientific forms of thought. Second, what is necessary is not the translation of the semantic concepts of religious language into an equally inspiring secular language, but a theoretical recognition and renewed appreciation of the learning processes already undergone, wherein imagistic forms of thought have already come to be freed from a stasis in congealed forms and dialecticized by means of concept formation. In other words, it is not that postmetaphysical thinking must look outside of itself for alternative sources of meaning, but must simply recollect its own constitution as postmetaphysical.[25] Disenchantment is not disillusionment. To encourage a reconsideration of the role of religion in the political sphere in order to make room for a undivided political identity underestimates the incompatibility between mythopoeic and modern thought and the constitutive vitality of postmetaphysical thinking.

The issue is not that postmetaphysically inclined citizens need a boost of imagination, but that postmetaphysical thinkers are vulnerable to the illusion that differentiated forms of thought are superior to undifferentiated forms. This cognitive error is only possible if one holds that the two forms of thought are compatible. The symptoms of this error are

detectable in the modernist fetishizing of the pleasures of ritual action (ritualism) or in the complete renunciation of the ecstasies of living ritualistically (asceticism and the privileging of pure contemplation). In the recognition of the difference between mythopoeic thought and postmetaphysical thought it is important that one is not depreciated. If Wiebe is correct, the two modalities of thought are incompatible and incommensurate. Both ritualism and a philosophy that privileges the realm of pure contemplation abnegate and deny the simultaneous presence of two tracks within a single mind, the mythopoeic and the conceptual. Thus, the energies of mythopoeic thinking do not pose a conceptual problem for the philosophy of science, discourse ethics, or a theory of deliberative democracy. The conflict between of these two modes of thought presents us with a lived social problem – which is precisely what critical theory in the spirit of the Frankfurt School is designed to address: the regressive transformation of reason into unreason.

If it is possible to theoretically explain the dichotomy, it becomes necessary to reassess how the lifeworld is rejuvenated by the simultaneous (and contradictory) presence of two fundamentally exclusive orientations in one mind: one toward the mythic, narrative, and imagistic, and the other toward the discursive. As I have suggested, there is no translation between these two forms of thought, only creation or recreation, both of which are transformations of the imagistic into the discursive. The impoverishment of the lifeworld that Habermas is worried about is alleviated when we consider the extraordinary rich non-discursive media available to us on an everyday basis: religious rituals, music, television, and so on. These media are meaning-giving systems. It is not so much a problem of translation, the "salvaging of religion" that is the issue, but the societal balance between two modalities of thought as well as self-critical reflection on the balance with sensitivity to distortions or pathological ruptures.[26]

Cooke has critically noted that Habermas's "critical engagement with the contents of religion is intended to produce images, intuitions, and insights that enrich the purely secular vocabulary of postmetaphysical thinking: it is not intended to cast light on the validity of religious truth claims" (Cooke 2006, p. 195). This is an accurate assessment of Habermas's aims and I do not wish to diminish the importance of efforts of translation. I would argue, however, that such efforts must be understood as creative, in the sense that they engage non-propositional content by infusing it with communicative significance. This is not, strictly speaking, an effort of translation and certainly this activity is not limited to religion. The content of any mythopoeic form can enrich the secular vocabulary of postmetaphysical thinking, indeed how could it not. Furthermore, if we understand "religious truth claims" to be the claims of an academic theology (talk about religion) and not the religious practices of believers (religious talk), then the apparent asymmetry between the metaphysically inclined and the postmetaphyiscally inclined is alleviated, both in terms of scientific inquiry but also in terms of moral and political contributions. Theological claims about the activity of the deities can be scientific insofar as they are open to critical evaluation and not bound by religious doctrine or communal sanction or approval. There is no reason to assume that claims about divinities cannot be formulated in a criticizable way.

Conclusion

Following Cooke, we can observe that Habermas's aim to be more inclusive of religious adherents in the political realm is laudable. However, that a postmetaphysical philosophy should "seek to salvage the semantic contents of religious traditions in order to supply the

evocative images, exemplary figures, and inspirational narratives it needs for its social and political projects" (187) seems to express a confusion between engaged learning processes, constituted by the work of symbol formation, and the requirements of communicative action, which can only ever be based on successful accomplishments in the realm of cognitive development. The fact that poetry is inspiring does not mean that non-poetic utterances require poetry in order to sustain their vitality. A theory of communicative rationality needs to be satisfied with the fact that ritual, however invigorating, participates in a different modality of thought than communication action. The limits of disenchantment are both nearer and farther than one might think. Closer, because despite our modern identities we still live in our dreams. Further, because we have yet to reach or even conceive of a point where learning could come to an end.

Notes

[1] It needs to be made clear that while there is good reason to agree with Donald Wiebe's reading of theology as a scientific discipline, insofar as it commits itself to a scientific and disciplined study of the activities of divinities, it does not follow that such a project is without problems. It is only acknowledged here that there are good reasons to reject the suggestion that theology must be viewed as synonymous with religious practice.

[2] On the importance of using religion as a category of classification, see Smith (1982) and McCutcheon (2003). For an overview of the theory of social evolution, see Habermas (1979) and Owen (2002).

[3] Although I cannot discuss the further here, a touchstone essay dealing with the topic is found in the work of Robert Bellah (1964). For an abbreviated understanding of the axial age, see Jaspers (1948). In brief, the "Axial Age" refers to an evolutionary stage in history when humankind made a cognitive leap, spanning the chasm between mythic and religious thought. The leap occurs in two domains: science and ethics. Habermas argues that the major world religious traditions achieved this advance in ethics and we can detect the apex of religion in theology, as the self-reflection of faith (Habermas 2008, p. 143). Another cognitive leap is made when religious thought exceeds itself in the form of postmetaphysical thinking (Habermas 1992; Habermas 2008, p. 1-7).

[4] Self-relation refers to a transition from one mode of communication to another, from prelinguistic to linguistic. Relation-to-self refers to the emergence of a new mechanism of behavioral control, from reactive instinctual impulses to thoughtful symbolically mediated interaction (Habermas 1992, p. 177-182).

[5] I do not mean to suggest that "good will" is a requirement of communicative action. Rather, that we can designate only those situations as communicative wherein participants are oriented by the aim of coordinating their action consensually. I use the phrase "good will" to signify participants who unreservedly pursue illocutionary aims.

[6] I am drawn to remark that this instability is what gives the philosophy of consciousness its paranoid and often destructive character. Most metaphysical forms of thought are inevitably concerned with purges and purifications. The stability sought through acts of purification (e.g. the relinquishing of context, history, and relations with others) expresses a cognitive error. Stability is only possible in relation with others, not their exclusion. This insight in many ways coincides with the magisterial study of anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, and homophobia by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *The Anatomy of Prejudices* (1996). For a discussion in relation to political theory, see Habermas (1998a).

[7] Habermas defines metaphysics as "the science of the universal, immutable, and necessary" (Habermas 1992, p. 13). Three aspects of metaphysical thought include: identity thinking, the doctrine of Ideas, and the strong concept of theory (29-34).

[8] This phrase "anticipatory-utopian" is indebted to Benhabib 1986, p. 226.

[9] In his most generous formulation, Habermas remarks that the concepts of morality and ethical life cannot be salvaged without the philosophical appropriation of some substance from any one of the "great world religions" (Habermas 1992, p. 15). This rather imprecise comment leaves much to be desired, as it would seem to exclude new religious movements as well as hypostatize plurality within existing traditions. For further commentary on the problems of theorizing "world religions" in such a grand manner, see Tomoko Masuzawa (2005).

[10] For example, see Habermas 1992, p. 120 and scattered remarks throughout *Between Naturalism and Religion* (2008). See also his essays "Karl Jaspers: The Figures of Truth" (1983) and "The Conflict of Beliefs: Karl Jaspers on the Clash of Cultures" (2001).

[11] With contributions from Don S. Browning, Fred Dallmayr, Charles Davis, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Matthew Lamb, Helmut Peukert, Gary M. Simpson, David Tracy, Robert Wuthnow, and Jürgen Habermas. Habermas's essay, "Transcendence from Within, Transcendence in this World" is one of his most widely anthologized and important essays dealing with theology and religious thought. I should note, however, that Habermas has always endeavored to include and engage religious thinkers in dialogue, from his dissertation on Schelling to his essays on Gershom Scholem and Johann Baptist Metz (see the essays collected in Habermas 1983 and 2001). See also, for example, the essays by Dorothee Sölle, Johann Baptist Metz, and Jürgen Moltmann in the anthology edited by Habermas (1985).

[12] Since mythic thought is imagistic, resting on congealed and ritualistic forms of social interaction, it can only be studied objectivistically. This is in contrast to "open" worldviews which, in terms of their meaning systems, require a participant perspective.

[13] For an excellent example of this kind of rupture, see Daryush Shayegan (1997). To be sure, ruptures within and across cultures must not be understood in monolithic terms. To speak of any religious tradition or culture is to speak of diversity and contestation (Benhabib 2002). In this sense the destructive potential of modernization does not fall upon all sectors of society equally. In many instances it is the most advantaged members of a society that experience modernization as uncompensated loss. For example, with the rise of egalitarian politics many men experience a fundamental threat to their hegemony. For studies concerning masculine resentment and anxiety, see Jean Hardisty (1999) and the anthology on gender and fundamentalism edited by Hawley (1994).

[14] Although I agree with her critique, my proposal regarding the reconsideration of theology following Wiebe avoids this conclusion. If theology is treated as a scientific or philosophical discourse then the task of translation falls upon the theologian as a matter of course. From this perspective the autonomy of metaphysically inclined citizens is not at all jeopardized.

[15] While I cannot discuss the issue here, I think it wise to distinguish between competing conceptions of religious experience. Religious experience can be understood as an experience of self-transcendence or as an encounter with the supernatural. If we adopt the former view, then there is no reason to discount religious experience as religious. The crucial distinction concerns whether experience is explained exclusively in naturalist terms or with a more reductionist reference to the supernatural realm and its agencies. Hans Joas (2008) adopts the view that religion is best understood as self-transcendence and provides, in my view, an excellent starting point for further inquires in this direction, although this might leave the religious sphere unusually large. Similar viewpoints, addressing religious experience in its symbolic dimensions, can be found in Douglas (2006) and Eder (1996).

[16] This is in striking contrast to a popular misconception about Habermas's understanding of religion. Habermas does not see any possible contribution to either ethical or scientific thought in terms of the substantive claims of religious traditions. His theory of religion concerns only the possibility of rejuvenating *semantic* contributions. For a discussion related to this misconception, see the blog by Thomas Gregerson (2009) entitled "A Misquote about Habermas and Christianity" (updated)." <http://www.habermasforum.dk/>.

[17] As discussed below, this issue appears differently if we characterize the split as the result of cognitive learning processes issuing from the recognition of pluralism than if we understand the split to be the result of two mutually exclusive ways of thinking. If the latter is the case, the sought after unity between religious identity and political identity is neither possible nor desirable.

[18] It is important to stress that "authoritarian" religious perspectives draw their energies and powers of differentiation from affective contexts, where non-traditional forms of gender difference, pluralism and so on may be experienced as, for example, anomalous (Douglas 2002), dreadful (Alford 1997), disgusting (Miller 1997), or monstrous (Beal 2002). Contemporary fundamentalist religious movements, as modern social movements, implicitly recognize pluralism but maneuver away from this recognition in a reactionary manner by producing and framing contexts that trigger responses from areas of experience possessed by syndromes of validity: e.g. framing moral or political issues as issues of purification, honor and shame, or orderly vs. disorderly (for cursory remarks in this direction, see MacKendrick 2009).

[19] I would suggest that Catherine Bell's work provides an excellent starting point for retheorizing ritual in relation to Habermas's communications-theoretic (Bell 1992, 1997).

[20] In additional to the essay by Ruel (1997) see Malory Nye's essay "Belief" (2004) and Johannes C. Wolfart, "If I were a Lutheran, What Would I do?" (2003).

[21] I think this explains why Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion* (2007), is so frustrated by the responses he gets from the religious adherents he speaks with. Dawkins is under the impression that religion is bad science, and that theologians are simply illogical or irrational. What he has not recognized is that religious belief is not necessarily bad science. Religious belief is a ritual performance. When he is arguing with believers about the existence of God, Dawkins is under the impression that he is winning a scientific argument. Ironically, the believer simply aims to pronounce the gospel message and testify to their belief. The believer is engaging in religious ritual: confession, testimony, witness. If viewed in this way the exchanges between Dawkins and religious adherents becomes almost comical. It is as if the scientist Dawkins is arguing with an actor in mid-performance who refuses to break with their role and script.

[22] It must be emphasized that the similarities between Wiebe's position and Habermas's pertain to the domain of truth, the sciences. As far as I can tell, Wiebe views ethical considerations as predominantly mythopoetic in nature. While I accept his position on the nature of the sciences, especially his distinction between religious thought (as mythopoetic) and theology (as an academic discipline) I do not agree that questions concerning rightness are left simply to hybrid forms of discourse and myth. In principle the resolution of normative claims could be treated as analogous to scientific claims (for example, Habermas 1990).

[23] In this sense, theology is a discipline that seems to have fallen on hard times in the wake of its own failure to produce results that have any kind of widespread cognitive legitimacy.

[24] For an explanation as to why philosophers of religion, such as Kant and Hegel, interpreted religion primarily in ethical terms see Kippenberg (2002). For a study of the ideological interest that aims to preserve this distortion for its own privilege, see McCutcheon (2003) and Wiebe (2000).

[25] This may require a further developing an understanding of the relation between memory, learning processes, and postmetaphysical thinking.

[26] The tension between the symbolic and discursive has been made in numerous ways by several of Habermas's colleagues. For example, see Hans Joas's distinction between values and the justification of norms (2000), Klaus Eder's theorization of the symbolic and food taboos as shaping our capacity for communication (1996), Axel Honneth's study of the grammar of social movements (1996), Seyla Benhabib's emphasis on gender and context (1992), and Albrecht Wellmer's writings on aesthetics (1991).

Bibliography

Alford, C. Fred. 1997. What Evil Means to Us. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Apel, Karl-Otto. 1980. Towards a Transformation of Philosophy. Trans. Glyn Adley and David Frisby. London: Routledge.

Beal, Timothy K. 2002. Religion and Its Monsters. New York: Routledge.

Bell, Catherine. 1992. Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bell, Catherine. 1997. Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bellah, Robert N. 1964. "Religious Evolution." American Sociological Review 29, no. 3: 358-374.

Bellah, Robert N. 1970. Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World. New York: Harper & Row.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1986. Critique, Norm, and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory. New York: Columbia University Press.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1992. Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics. New York: Routledge.

Benhabib, Seyla. 2002. The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Browning, Don and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza. 2002. Habermas, Modernity, and Public Theology. New York: Crossroads.

Cooke, Maeve. 2006. "Salvaging and Secularizing the Semantic Contents of Religion: The Limitations of Habermas's Postmetaphysical Approach." International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 60: 187-207.

Dawkins, Richard. 2007. The God Delusion. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Douglas, Mary. 1996. Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology. New York: Routledge.

Douglas, Mary. 2002. Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo. New York: Routledge.

Douglas, Mary. 2006. Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology. 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge.

Eder, Klaus. 1996. The Social Construction of Nature: A Sociology of Ecological Enlightenment. Trans. Mark Ritter. London: Sage Publications.

Gregerson, Thomas. 2009. "A Misquote about Habermas and Christianity (updated)." <http://www.habermasforum.dk/>.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1979. Communication and the Evolution of Society. Trans. Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1983. Philosophical-Political Profiles. Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1984. The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One. Trans. Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, Jürgen, ed. 1985. Observations on 'The Spiritual Situation of the Age.'" Trans. Andrew Buchwalter. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1987. The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two. Trans. Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1990. Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action. Trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1992. Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays. Trans. William Mark Hohengarten. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1996. Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy. Trans. William Rehg. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1998a. The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory. Ed. and trans. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1998b. On the Pragmatics of Communication. Ed. Maeve Cooke. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2001. The Liberating Power of Symbols: Philosophical Essays. Trans. Peter Dews. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2002a. Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity. Ed. Eduardo Mendieta. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2002b. "Transcendence from Within, Transcendence in this World." Browning and Schüssler Fiorenza 2002, p. 226-250.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2003a. The Future of Human Nature. London: Polity.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2003b. Truth and Justification. Trans. Barbara Fultner. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2006a. The Divided West. Ed. and trans. Ciaran Cronin. London: Polity.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2006b. Time of Transitions. Ed. and trans. Ciaran Cronin and Max Pensky. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2008. Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays. Trans. Ciaran Cronin. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Harding, Susan Friend. 2000. The Book of Jerry Falwell. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hardisty, Jean. 1999. Mobilizing Resentment: Conservative Resurgence from the John Birch Society to the Promise Keepers. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hawley, John Stratton, ed. 1994. Fundamentalism and Gender. New York: Oxford University Press.

Honneth, Axel. 1996. The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts. Trans. Joel Anderson. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Jaspers, Karl. 1948. "The Axial Age of Human History: A base for the Unity of Mankind." Commentary 6: 430-435.

Joas, Hans. 2000. The Genesis of Values. Trans. Gregory Moore. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Joas, Hans. 2008. Do We Need Religion? On the Experience of Self-Transcendence. Trans. Alex Skinner. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Kippenberg, Hans G. 2002. Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age. Trans. Barbara Harshaw. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Leach, Edmund. 1976. Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MacKendrick, Kenneth G. 2009. "Evil in World Religions at the University of Manitoba (2002-2008): An Introduction and Provocation." Golem: Journal of Religion and Monsters 3, no. 1: 37-55. <www.golem.org>.

Masuzawa, Tomoko. 2005. The Invention of World Religions. Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McCutcheon, Russell T. 2003. Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia. New York: Oxford University Press.

McCutcheon, Russell T. 1993. The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric. New York: Routledge.

Miller, William Ian. 1997. The Anatomy of Disgust. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Nye, Malory. 2004. Religion: The Basic, 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge.

Owen, David S. 2002. Between History and Reason: Habermas and the Idea of Progress. Albany: SUNY.

Ruel, Malcolm. 1997. "Christians as Believers." Belief, Ritual, and the Securing of Life: Essays on a Bantu Religion. New York: E. J. Brill. p. 36-59.

Shayegan, Daryush. 1997. Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West. Trans. John Howe. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Smith, Jonathan Z. 1982. Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wellmer, Albrecht. 1991. The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism. Trans. David Midgley. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Wiebe, Donald. 1991. The Irony of Theology and the Nature of Religious Thought. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Wiebe, Donald. 2000. The Politics of Religious Studies. New York: Palgave Macmillan.

Wolfart, Johannes C. 2003. "If I were a Lutheran, What Would I do?" Religious Studies and Theology 22, no. 2: 41-54.

Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. The Anatomy of Prejudices. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Secularization
and The Iranian Revolution

Warren S. Goldstein

Center for Critical Research on Religion
Harvard University
USA

Abstract

In the history of revolutions, the Iranian revolution is an anomaly. Rather than leading to a process of secularization, it resulted in the opposite: the establishment of a theocracy. The Iranian Revolution was a reaction to and against the process of secularization. It was not a modern revolution but a postmodern one, which paradoxically attempted to bring about a return to tradition. An examination of the process of secularization in Iran reveals that it is not a linear process but a dialectical one of secular and religious movements and counter movements.

Keywords

Introduction

In the history of revolutions, the Iranian revolution is an anomaly. Rather than continuing a process of secularization, it resulted in the opposite: the establishment of a theocracy (Arjomand 1988:3; Parsa 1989:2). The Iranian Revolution was not a modern revolution, since one of its primary aims was to reverse the process of secularization that is associated with modernity, but a postmodern one, which paradoxically attempted to bring about a return to tradition. In the words of Michel Foucault, it was "the first postmodern revolution" (quoted in Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994:51). While it rid Iran of a monarchy and resulted in a republic, it did not result in a separation of church and state but rather in a process of dedifferentiation, which brought the state under the control of the clerics (the Islamic Republic).

In the field of sociology, historical sociologists working on the topic of revolutions have carried out most of the existing research on the Iranian Revolution. Sociologists of religion have paid very little attention to it. This is surprising since one of the longest running debates within the subfield is over secularization. The Iranian Revolution is the single most important event in the late 20th century concerning the fate of the process of

secularization. An analysis of it from this perspective will help shed much needed light in the debate over secularization.

Secularization is a multi-dimensional concept of which there are many definitions (Dobbelaere 1981). While Larry Shiner (1967) identified six different definitions and José Casanova (1994) narrowed it to three, I will limit myself to two different aspects of secularization, which while perhaps not covering all the dimensions of it, lie at its core: differentiation and religious rationalization (Tschannen 1991:404-405). The first definition comes from Emile Durkheim and the second from Max Weber. By differentiation, I mean the separation of the religious from other spheres or subsystems (or the separation of church and state). By religious rationalization is meant the transition from the sacred to the profane, from the otherworld to this world, from the religious to the secular.

I have argued elsewhere that secularization is not a linear process but rather a dialectical one marked by secular and religious movement and countermovement (Goldstein 2009a; 2009b). This dialectical process of religious rationalization described by Max Weber is one driven by the charisma of the prophets and the routinization (or institutionalization) of it through the interpretation of the priests, by opposing types of rationality (value and purposive). Weber saw charisma as being revolutionary and not interested in rational economic activity. Economic necessity is one of the causes behind the routinization of charisma.

There are three patterns, in which secularization occurs, that I have described in my other articles: the linear, the dialectical, and the paradoxical. If secularization has occurred or is still occurring in Iran, it has not been in a linear manner. In this article, I will examine the events leading up to and following the Iranian revolution to see whether it conforms to the dialectical or the postmodern paradoxical patterns.

Tradition and Modernization

In order to discuss the question of the secularization of Iranian society, we need to establish a baseline. Janet Afary in her book *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran* (2009) provide us with one. Since many of the Sharia laws in Iran govern sexual and gender relations, we can observe the patterns of secularization based on changes in these relations.

Sharia laws, in the premodern era, contained a variety of beliefs and practices, especially concerning women. In traditional Islamic society in Iran, women were required to veil. When they went outside, they wore a *chador*, which covered the entire body. This practice was stricter among urban middle and upper class women. In addition to this, there was the legal practice of polygamy; men could have up to four wives. The only ones who could afford this were the elites. Not only were marriages arranged, but girls could be married at age 9. The virgin bride was idealized. When the girl was not a virgin, some of them resorted to "hymen repair" to feign such an appearance. In general, women were considered to be unclean and impure. There was the practice of temporary marriage (for a set amount of time and money) which was legally sanctioned and practiced mostly by the bazaari and the *Ulama*. While some see temporary marriage as a form of prostitution, Mullahs have defended it "as an institution sanctioned by the prophet" (Mottahedeh 2000:182). Husbands could initiate divorce without their wife's consent but not the other way around. Custody of the children went to the father. Husbands had the right to engage in "honor killings"- to kill their wife if they found them committing adultery (Keddie 2006:31-33; Afary 2009:21, 23, 26, 29, 33, 40-41, 44, 51, 60, 154).

Although Islam prohibits homosexuality, in premodern Iranian society it was tolerated if it was done discreetly and involved an older man and adolescent boy. Even though sodomy was considered an abomination, falling in love with a youth was acceptable. The prevalence of a homoerotic culture was the consequence of a society with arranged marriages and *chador*s, the later which hid a woman's sexuality (Afary 2009:79, 81, 117-118; 162-163).

The preservers of religious tradition in Iranian society were the old middle classes composed of the *Ulama* (clerics, religious scholars, and jurists) and the bazaaris (merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans). These two groups are interwoven with each other. Each major city has a bazaar, which is centrally located. It is not only an economic center but also a center of the traditional religious community. Religious endowments (based on landed property) gave the *Ulama* autonomy from the state. The *Madresehs*, which provide an education in Islamic religious law, have seen themselves as the defenders of orthodoxy (Arjomand 1988:78-79; Parsa 1989:91-93; Moaddel 1993: 105-106, 131; Mottahedeh 2000:91; Keddie 2006:3, 16, 19, 28-29).

During the 19th century, Iran was opened up to the West resulting in the modernization of the economic and educational spheres. A few elite reformers pushed modernization. In the late 1800s, some reformers thought it was necessary to separate religion from the state because it impeded the process of modernization (Kian Thiébaut 1998:27-30, 36-47). Politically, modernization came to the fore with the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911 and institutionalized under the Pahlavi regime. Traditional religious sectors of Iranian society saw westernization and modernization as a threat to their style of life. The reform movement during this time aimed its attacks against the traditional sexual and gender relations of the Qajar dynasty. The conservatives opposed many of these reforms. Nevertheless, they used modern institutions such as newspapers and a parliamentary government to oppose them (Afari 2009:111-112, 118). The economic and cultural penetration of the West dialectically gave rise to a reaction on the part of the *Ulama* and bazaaris against it (Amineh and Eisenstadt 2007:132).

The Tobacco Rebellion and the Constitutional Revolution

The first major resistance to Western imperialism took place with the demonstrations against the tobacco concession in 1891. These demonstrations turned violent forcing the government to cancel the concession. This encouraged those seeking reform and served as a prelude to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. While the bazaaris played a major role in the Tobacco rebellion, the *Ulama* were divided over whether to support it (Parsa 1989:91-92; Moaddel 1993:111, 133; Kian Thiébaut 1998:47-49; Keddie 2006:61).

The constitutional revolution of 1905-1911 was a period of political and cultural modernization (including secularization). It limited the power of the Qajar monarchy and established Iran's first constitution and parliament (Moaddel 1993:36-37, 61; Kian-Thiéebaut 1998:52; Wright 2001:11). The revolution was made up of a coalition of secular intellectuals, radical clerics, theology students, bazaaris, artisans, guilds, and urban women. The coalition split along secular-religious lines over issues such as freedom of speech, the press, and assembly; whether non-Muslims should have the same rights; secularization of the judiciary; the expansion of secular education; women's rights (education and enfranchisement); and land reform. There were splits between not only the bazaari and the *Ulama* but within the *Ulama* itself over whether to support the constitution. The clerics were afraid that a parliamentary government would diminish

their own power (Moaddel 1993:37; Kian-Thiéebaut 1998:52-53; Afari 2009:125-126,131; Arjomand 1988:49, 52-53). The reforms of the Constitutional Revolution triggered a traditionalist counterrevolution against it, which began in 1908 and which embraced an "emergent ideology of Islamic traditionalism" (Arjomand 1988:48). The Constitutional Revolution came to an abrupt end in 1912 with Russian and British military intervention. While the changes in gender relations became more perceptible in elite circles, traditional gender relations continued among the *Ulama* and the bazaari (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:60; Afari 2009:141). After the end of the Constitutional Revolution, many clerics retreated from politics. This signified the triumph of secularism (Chehabi 1991:70).

Reza Shah

In 1925, colonel Reza Khan seized power and became Shah of Iran inaugurating the Pahlavi dynasty. The British, the bazaari, and the Ulama supported him. Although the clerics initially backed him, his policies of modernization and forced secularization undermined their authority and caused them to withdraw their support. Traditional classes were opposed to modernization because it meant secularization (Arjomand 1988:81; Moaddel 1993: 60, 137; Kian Thiébaut 1998:111).

Reza Shah embarked upon a program of Western modernization, which resulted in rapid change. He continued many of the reforms proposed during the constitutional revolution while undermining the constitution itself. Reformers who opposed his absolute rule were eliminated (Parsa 1989:37; Moaddel 1993:39; Kian-Thiébault 1998:7, 63; Wright 2001:44). Attempting to claim that his authority predated Islam, Reza Shah replaced the Islamic lunar calendar with an Iranian solar calendar in 1924 (Arjomand 1988:68; Afary 2009:145).

Reza Shah reformed the national educational system by secularizing it. He removed education from the control of the *Ulama* in an effort to help modernize the country. The expansion of secular education led to a growth in the new middle classes (Moaddel 1993:137; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:47, 68-69, 72-73; Wright 2001:45).

Reza Shah's forced secularization contributed to two cultures in Iran. There was the growth of an educated new middle class, which together with the upper classes became increasingly modernized, westernized, and secularized. The new middle classes are composed of two groups: salaried employees in both the public and private sectors and the liberal professions. The peasants and the old middle class (which was composed of the bazaari and the *Ulama*) retained a traditional religious style of life. The new middle classes had higher levels of education and income than the old middle classes (Kian-Thiébault 1998:7; Keddie 2006:102; Afari 2009:10, 145-146).

The Pahlavi regime engaged in "secularization from above" (Afary 2009:284). Reza Shah reduced the power of the clergy. He diminished the autonomy of the *Ulama* by bringing religious endowments under government control. He attempted to make Mullahs more like a regular clergy (Moaddel 1993:137; Mottahedeh 2000:236; Afary 2009: 143).

One of the most significant changes that occurred under Reza Shah was the effort to modernize and westernize gender relations. Women were allowed to matriculate in Teheran University. Even though unveiled women were already becoming common among the new middle classes in the cities, between 1936 and 1941, women were forced to unveil and encouraged to wear Western clothing. The strongest opposition to forced unveiling came from the bazaaris and the *Ulama*. Many traditional women felt that not wearing a veil in public was like being naked. Consequently, they did not go outside. In

1928, the state forced the removal of clerical garb from men including turbans. Iranian men were required to wear modern (Western) style clothing (Arjomand 1988:82; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:75-76; Keddie 2006:99-100; Afary 2009:13, 142-143, 156-157).

Reza Shah also secularized the judiciary. The government established a secular law school in 1923 (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:68). One of the laws passed required that documents must be "registered by official state notaries." This deprived "religious courts of one of their most lucrative functions" (Arojamand 1988:66). Clerics who wished to perform such a function needed to remove their religious garb. Sharia courts run by clerics were replaced with secular courts. Judges were required to be lawyers in all areas except for family law, which was left to the clerics. Honor killings, however, were still permitted (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:76; Afary 2009:153-154).

When Reza Shah's wife went to the holy city of Qom, she was criticized for not wearing the veil strictly enough. In response, Reza Shah came and beat several theology students with a stick. He further antagonized the clerics by licensing liquor stores in Qom. When religious demonstrators in Qom protested against the secularization policies of the Shah in July 1935, soldiers killed over 100 of them with machine guns (Arjomand 1988:82; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:82; Mottahedeh 2000:60; Afary 2009:155).

Iran was mostly an agrarian society. In the 1930s, the country became increasingly industrialized (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:84). The development, however, was uneven (Abrahamian cited in Moaddel 1993:6-7). While the Shah attempted to modernize Iran economically and culturally, he repressed Iran from developing politically. Reza Shah was seen as illegitimate by most of the population because he modernized in an autocratic manner. Although *ressentiment* built up during his regime, it was not until after it ended, that these groups openly began to organize (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:88, 90-91).

Mohammed Reza Pahlavi

Reza Shah was forced to abdicate to his 22-year-old son Mohammed Reza Pahlavi because of the Soviet and British invasions in 1941. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was the last king to sit on the Peacock Throne (Parsa 1989:37-38; Wright 2001:29; Afary 2009:174). Under the early years of his regime, democratic politics returned to Iran. There was the growth of secular politics parties including the nationalist National Front and the communist Tudeh Party. During this time, Iran's clerical establishment abstained from politics (Chehabi 1991:70; Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994:53).

After World War II, urban women once again start wearing *chadors* (Keddie 2006:120). The *chador* became "a class and cultural marker" defining one's economic position and "attitude toward modernity" (Afary 2009:188). In 1947, religious extremists attacked unveiled women and threw acid in their faces (Moaddel 1993:139).

Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq continued the process of modernization in Iran, including nationalization, democratization, and secularization. Initially, both the old and new middle classes supported his National Front (Moaddel 1993:62; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:98). Mossadeq became as a "nationalist hero" because he stood up to the West (Ebadi 2006:4). He went against the interests of the seven sisters by nationalizing the British owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The West responded with an oil embargo and a *coup d'etat*. Mossadeq not only wanted to nationalize oil but also to reduce the power of the Shah. Mossadeq was secular in his orientation; he wanted institutions to be secular and did not want the clerics involved in state affairs. Under him, women were given the right to vote. The weakness of Mossadeq's National Front was due to splits between secular and religious factions and with the Tudeh Party. The 1953 coup against Mossadeq by the

C.I.A. and MI6 enabled the U.S. and Brittain to retain their interests in Iranian oil. The Shah, the military, and the Ayatollahs supported the coup. After the coup, Western oil companies owned the rights to the Iranian oil while the Shah received 50% of the profits. The coup against Iran's first democratically elected leader caused the Iranian people to have long lasting resentment against the U.S. and Great Brittain. The majority of Iranians became anti-Western and anti-Shah. The West lost its legitimacy by overthrowing a democratic elected secular leader. The coup brought about the end of secular democratic politics in Iran (Arjomand 1988:72; Abrahamian 1993:105; Moaddel 1993:44-45; Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994:55; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:98-99, 101-105, 122, 212; Ebadi 2006:13, 21; Keddie 2006: 67, 128, 130,132-133, 135; Afary 2009:193-196).

After the coup, the Shah repressed both the National Front and the Tudeh party. The government arrested and executive many members of the Tudeh party. In 1957, the Shah set up SAVAK with the assistance of the C.I.A. and Mossad. SAVAK was known for its brutal repression of the opposition (including torture and murder) (Parsa 1989:136; Moaddel 1993:54; Kian Thiébaut 1998:124; Keddie 2006:134; Afary 2009:202).

The repression of all secular democratic organizations and institutions by the Shah (including the National Front and the Tudeh parties) caused the opposition to galvanize around Islamism, which was opposed to the secularization and westernization of the Shah. Religious institutions (mosques and *madresehs*), which were financially independent from the state, became the centers of dissent. This shift marked a "desecularization" of politics in Iran (Parsa 1989:2, 59; Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994:55; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:131; Keddie 2006:320; Afari 2009:237). "Antigovernment forces mobilized through the mosque not because of ideological consensus, but because government repression left no other option" (Parsa 1989:303). Mosques were linked together through "the mosque network" which was the staging ground for the revolution (Kurzman 2004:38). The failure of Mossadeq's national-liberalism gave way to the rise of Shiite revolutionary discourse. After several decades of secularization, it became "the dominant ideology" around which the opposition coalesced. It was articulated by thinkers such as Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati (Moaddel 1993:24, 50, 129-130, 144, 162). Shariati's version of Islam was more rationalized and secularized than that of Khomeini (Mirepassi-Ashtiani 1994:76).

In 1963, the Shah embarked upon a series of reforms known as the White Revolution (as opposed to the red), which he put to a national referendum. These reforms including the enfranchisement of women and land reform (the later adversely affected religious endowments and thus weakened the autonomy of the clergy). The government reduced credit to the bazaaris causing many of them to go into bankruptcy. In protest, they refused to pay their taxes. Conflict between the Shah and the bazaaris escalated. The White Revolution triggered a traditionalist conservative reaction against it. Ayotallah Ruhollah Khomeini emerged as the most prominent leader of the opposition. The Shah engaged in rapid modernization and westernization. Islamism was a protest and resistance against it (Arjomand 1988:72-73, 86; Kimmel 1989:502; Parsa 1989:48, 50, 98, 100, 194; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:127; Keddie 2006:164-165, 189; Afary 2009:203-204).

In the early 1960s, Khomeini's position was still traditionalist and anti-modern. He opposed to the enfranchisement and unveiling of women (Arjomand 1988:85; Abrahamian 1993:10; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:129; Wright 2001:151; Afary 2009:204-205). He said, "'the unveiling of women has caused the ruin of female honor, the destruction of the family, and untold corruption and prostitution.'" (Khomeini quoted in Afary 2009:192). On June 3, 1963, Ayotallah Khomeini delivered his historic sermon at the *Fayziya* madreseh in Qom. Two days later, he was arrested triggering demonstrations, which turned into riots. While being held under house arrest (for nine months), he

challenged the authority of the Shah by opposing granting immunity to American military advisors. As a result, he was exiled to Turkey in 1964 and Najaf, Iraq in 1965. In 1978, due to the unrest in Iran, he was expelled from Iraq and went into his final exile in Neauphle-le-Château, France outside of Paris (Dabashi 1989:512; Chehabi 1991:72; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:127-128; Keddie 2006:147-148; Mottahedeh 2000:245).

While in Najaf, Khomeini's position shifted. He moved away from being a traditionalist by integrating leftist thought with "Shi'i religious traditions." While he railed against the Marxists, he was indirectly influenced by them though the thought of Shariati and the Mojahedin. Unlike Marx, he did not see religion as an opium but rather understood the tradition of the prophets as fighting against the rich and the powerful. Khomeini was not simply a fundamentalist seeking to return to tradition, but was pragmatic in his positions embracing many aspects of modernity (Abrahamian 1993:2, 11-17, 23, 27, 33, 47; Afary and Anderson 2005:76; Amineh and Eisenstadt 2007:134; Afary 2009:205, 262). While in exile, Khomeini developed his Shi'ite revolutionary discourse by writing letters and issuing *Fatwas* (edicts). As the Shah was celebrating the 2500th anniversary of the monarchy with excessive waste and extravagance, Khomeini issued *Wilaya-i Faqih* ('Mandate of the Jurist') which argued that "in the absence of the twelfth imam," political authority fell upon the clerics. He used the money raised through religious contributions to fund the "mosque network" which became the locus of the opposition (Dabashi 1989:512-513, 533; Chehabi 1991: 72, 74; Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994:68).

The land reform of the White Revolution drove villagers off their land and into the cities (Kimmel 1989:499). "Urbanization outpaced industrialization, producing sprawling slums, shantytowns, and squatters settlements" (Abrahamian 1993:69). Rural migrants experienced culture shock upon their arrival in the cities, parts of which were becoming westernized and modernized (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:143). "Over-rapid rural-urban migrations, increased income disparities, socioeconomic problems, and *anomie*" led "people to back to traditional moorings and to associate Westernization with suffering and dictatorship" (Keddie 2006:188). The process of urbanization with its byproduct of alienation contributed to the resurgence of religion in the longing for community. Rural migrants gravitated toward the traditional institutions of the bazaar and the mosque in which they found community. With the expanding urban populations, there was a tremendous growth of religious institutions in the cities, and hence of the "mosque network." The mullahs expanded their base by politicizing these recent migrants (Arjomand 1988:96; Parsa 1989:4; Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994:77; Mottahedeh 2000:349; Afary 2009:201).

Under the Shah, the Family Protection Acts of 1967 and 1975 were passed. These laws equaled the playing field in marriage. Husbands were required to go to court to get a divorce. Women were able to initiate a divorce on their own. The first wife's permission was required for the husband to marry a second wife. The courts rather than automatically granting custody to the father made decisions upon it. The government raised the legal age of marriage to 18 years old. Women's rights became associated with the Shah and with the West (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:194; Wright 2001:156; Keddie 2006:167).

The growth of mass media and the proliferation of sexual images in it triggered a conservative religious backlash against Western sexual morality, feminism, and gay rights (Afary 2009:198). There was a deep schism between what was portrayed in mass culture and traditional sexuality. This created anxiety among traditional parts of Iranian society (Afary 2009:221).

The failure of both the National Front and the Tudeh Party led to the formation of two guerilla groups among the urban middle class youth in the 1960s: the Marxist Fedayeen and the Mojahedin (the later which mixed Islam and Marxism). The base of the Mojahedin was the traditional middle classes (the bazaari and the *Ulama*) and the lower classes, while that of that of the Fedayeen was the new middle classes. Although there were differences between the two organizations, they formed a united front in 1978. Neither of these organizations gained enough popular support to lead a mass revolutionary movement. Reasons for this were their Marxist rhetoric and their use of violence. Non-violence based on Islamic ideas like those of the *Ulama* had much broader appeal (Parsa 1989:180; Keddie 2006:168-169, 180, 185, 221, 233, 219; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:169, 172, 178, 180,186-187).

The Shah favored the growth of large industry and finance, which were dependent on the state and international capital, while having policies, which hurt the bazaari. The conflict between the Shah and the bazaari was between large state supported/international capital and small business. Modernization led to the growth of the new middle class and the working class. Iran's increasing dependence upon oil exports made it vulnerable to the international economic crises of the 1970s. To combat inflation, the government imposed price controls, which hurt the bazaari. The bazaaris protested and the government attempted to repress them through fines and imprisonment (Parsa 1989:103, 121; Moaddel 1993:68-69, 97, 99, 118, 121).

The bazaari were increasingly influenced by Shiite revolutionary discourse and supported Khomeini. They mobilized through the mosques. Like the mosque network, the bazaaris were economically independent. Since they constituted a very large part of the economy, their ability to strike had a huge impact on it. The bazaaris provided financing to other parts of the movement. Despite modernization, they refused to participate in Western consumer culture. The alliance between the mosque and the bazaar gained the support of the poor (Moaddel 1993:99, 239; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:143; Keddie 2006:226).

Beginning in the 1960s, there was a tremendous growth of the new middle class, which became radicalized in their opposition to the Shah. While the Shah modernized Iran economically and culturally, he failed to modernize it politically (i.e. to democratize) (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:131, 134, 140-141). Opposition to the regime came from lawyers, judges, journalists, writers, intellectuals, academics, and students. The universities were one of the bases of the opposition movement. In the 1960s, universities became dominated by leftists. As part of the modernization policies of the Shah, he financed the growth of universities, which paradoxically fed the opposition against him (Kian-Thiébaut 1998: 149-169, 190, 192). The modernization policies of the Shah led to his own demise.

While parts of Iranian society became westernized and modernized, others did not. Teheran became divided between wealthy westernized neighborhoods in the north, slums in the south, and traditional middle class neighborhoods in the center. The women in the north of Teheran adopted a western and modern style of life while those in traditional middle class neighborhoods wore black veils, were housewives, and stayed at home. Poor women in the south, while traditional, had more independence (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:127, 145-146). Women from traditional lower and middle class households found freedom in the Islamist movement (Kurzman 2004:151).

The Iranian Revolution of 1979

The Iranian revolution of 1979 was a class-based revolution led by the *Ulama* and supported by the old middle, new middle, and lower urban classes. Opposition to the regime created an alliance between leftists and conservative Islamists. They were united in their opposition to western economic and cultural imperialism. Two groups contended for ideological power: the *Ulama* and the new middle class intellectuals. Those who were religiously oriented overshadowed the participation of the more secular new middle class in the revolution. Secular intellectuals ended up supporting the Shi'ite revolutionary movement because of their common opposition to the Shah. With the death of Ali Shariati in 1977, Khomeini emerged as the ideological leader of the opposition. The secular opposition allowed the religious opposition led by Khomeini to take the lead. In the Iranian Revolution, the *Ulama* were the vanguard (Arjomand 1988:194; Parsa 1989:224; Abrahamian 1993:27; Moaddel 1993:158; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:211; Kurzman 2004:136; Afary and Anderson 2005:59-63; Keddie 2006:230; Afary 2009: 234, 249).

Beginning in the 1960s, there was an increase in religiosity in Iran. Recent migrants, the urban poor, and even the new middle class embraced the Islamic revival. Women who opposed the Shah wore the *hijab* as a symbol of protest against western modernity. There was also a return to the *chador* (Parsa 1989:8; Keddie 2006:218; Afary 2009:211; Kurzman 2004:68, 152).

The clerics tapped into the "traditional religious sentiment" of the people in their opposition to the regime (Parsa 1989:8). Khomeini and the Islamists opposed Western decadence, which they called "Westoxication." They were disturbed by the open display of sexuality (personally and in mass culture). Like Western feminists, they saw this as an objectification of women. They demanded censorship in culture. They also opposed drinking and gambling. During the revolution, demonstrators burned down movie theaters and liquor stores. Khomeini spoke out against imperialism and dictatorship. He attacked the economic penetration of the United Stated and Israel in Iran. He was a believer in the Jewish international conspiracy theory (Parsa 1989: 207-208, 216-217, 231, 308; Dabashi 1989; Abrahamian 1993:123-125; Kurzman 2004:58; Keddie 2006:223). For Khomeini, the twin aims of the revolution were 1) "the establishment of an Islamic theocracy" and 2) the eradication of "Western culture influence" (Arjomand 1988:138). Khomeini combined radical Islam with modern demands. His appropriation of the language of the left caused the Tudeh Party to call him "the Red Mullah" (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:209-210).

Twelver Shi'ism is the official religion of Iran. Shi'ites consider Ali, Muhammed's cousin and son-in-law to be the rightful successor to the prophet. Hussein, son of Ali, who claimed the hereditary right of succession to the prophet, was defeated at the Battle of Karbala by Yazid's army. The first eleven Imams were assassinated and the twelfth went into occultation in 874 CE and thus became known as the Hidden Imam. Because the founders of Shi'ism gave their lives in fighting for what they believed, Shiites honor martyrdom (Afary and Anderson 2005:40-41).

The death of Khomeini son's in 1977, assumed to be by SAVAK, made him into a martyr (Keddie 2006:25). The revolutionary movement used the Shi'a 40 day morning period to their political advantage. Each person killed during a demonstration became a martyr. Forty days later, there would be another demonstration to honor them. This resulted in more deaths and hence more martyrs. The cycle not only continued but escalated (Kurzman 2004:50, 53-54; Afary and Anderson 2005:64-65). During the events leading up to the revolution, the government used hooligans to burn and loot the shops of the bazaaris and to attack demonstrators (Parsa 1989:118,151).

During the fall of 1977, the working classes entered the protest movement. After the Black Friday massacre on September 8, 1978, there was a shift in tactics with an

increasing amount of strikes. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 came about after five months of general strike. Strikes by oil workers were central in crippling the economy. The leadership of the strike committees of the oil workers was composed of 35% Marxists (Parsa 1989:157, 160; Kurzman 2004:77-78; Keddie 2006:228-229, 232).

In the late 1970s, the Shah's regime experienced an acute legitimation crisis (Chehabi 1991:74). In 1977, the Shah became ill with cancer. This contributed to his inability to rule. Although the Shah's military remained intact during the events leading up to the revolution, he did not use it (Arjomand 1988:120-121; Kurzman 2004:107; Keddie 2006:215).

While Khomeini was in Paris, his speeches took on a democratic nationalist tone. He promised that the Islamic Republic would guarantee political freedom. He changed his position on the participation of women in the political process. To gain their support, he ended up backing their right to vote and to hold government office. While in exile, Khomeini used cassette tapes to spread his message (Parsa 1989:217; Kian-Thiébaut 1998:147-148; Mottahedeh 2000:351; Keddie 2006:233-234; Afary 2009:239;). Khomeini "was the only political or religious leader who refused any compromise with the Shah and who consistently called for the regime's overthrow" (Parsa 1989:114). At the same time, he refused to authorize armed struggle (Kurzman 2004:156).

Khomeini returned out of exile landing in Tehran airport on February 1, 1979. Like Lenin, his writings during his exile laid the groundwork for the revolution and he came out of exile in time for its execution. His adoption of the title of Imam contained an implicit reference to the messianic return of the 12th Imam- the Mahdi (the Messiah) (Arjomand 1988:101; Wright 2001:xix; Mottahedeh 2000:102). This further enhanced his aura of charisma. The revolution promised to bring about a "restoration of the Golden Age: the reign of Prophet Mohammed and of the first Shi'ite Imam, 'Ali" (Arjomand 1988:103). The Iranian Revolution was a transition from a secular state to a theocratic one; it reversed the process of secularization bringing about a "sacralization of the political order" (Arjomand 1988:181; Bakash cited in Kimmel 1989:508).

The Islamic Republican Party was founded by Khomeini and some younger clerics: Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Ali Khameni (among others) immediately after the revolution. For Khomeini, the purpose of the Islamic revolution was not simply to overthrow the Shah and to free Iran from Western imperialism, but to reverse several decades of secularization. The I.R.P. controlled Assembly of Experts superimposed *Valyat-e- faqih* and engaged in a policy of dedifferentiation (Chehabi 1991:75-76; Moaddel 1993:202, 206, 257).

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, "was not a wholesale return to the past" (Afary 2009:265). While it was a return to religious traditionalism, the Islamic Republic adopted many modern (and western) elements of the nation-state including a president, a parliament, and national elections in which both men and women are enfranchised (Wright 2001:8). In the words of Rafsanjani (quoted in Abrahamian 1993:15), "where in Islamic history do you find Parliament, President, Prime Minister, and Cabinet of Ministers?" The Islamic Republic continued the health and literacy programs of the Shah. But at the same time, it attempted to return to the sexual and gender relations of the past including polygamy, temporary marriage, and the repression of homosexuality (Afary 2009:265). While the Supreme Leader had power over and above the state, he was separated from it and its daily affairs. The clerics maintained control over the secular state through the Revolutionary Guard, the Basij, the Revolutionary Courts, and the Council of Guardians. The Council of Guardians removes candidates it does not like from the ballot (Wright 2001:15-16; Ebadi 2006:105).

Like many revolutions, the Iranian revolution was made possible by a coalition of different groups and like many revolutions, after it was over, the coalition fell apart with one group seizing power. In the words of a Greek communist, "first we have the revolution, then we fight for who gets control." In this case, it was a group of radical clerics led by Khomeini. The majority of people, including some moderate clerics, supported a secular constitution. Both religious and secular opposition groups were opposed to the autocratic tendencies of the new elite (Nafasi 2003:92). The revolution was initially based on a red-black coalition. The Tudeh party and the Feda'iyan supported the revolutionary government until it turned on them in 1983. After the Islamic Republican Party of Khomeini seized power, the leftists took up a bombing campaign against it. The regime retaliated by suppressing the left. All political opposition was eliminated including the National Front, the Tudeh Party, the Feda'iyan and the Mojahedin. Even moderate clerics were purged (Arjomand 1988:138, 154; Mottahedeh 2000:382; Kurzman 2004:33, 147; Keddie 2006:254; Afary 2009:262). Like under the Shah (with SAVAK), opponents to the regime were sent to Evin Prison, raped, tortured, and executed (Nafisi 2003; Ebadi 2006).

Support for the new regime came from the old middle classes (the bazaari and the *Ulama*). The bazaari benefited from the expulsion of international (western) capital after the revolution. The revolution did not attack property rights. It was a revolution of small business (the middle class) against transnational and state supported capital. The Iranian Revolution was not a "bourgeois revolution" but rather a "petit bourgeois revolution" (Moaddel 1993:225; Abrahamian 1993:59; Keddie 2006:255; Afary 2009:267).

The Iran-Iraq war, which began in September 1980, gave Khomeini the excuse to implement his Islamism. He used the Pasdaran and Basij to crush his internal moderate, nationalist, and leftist opposition (Afary 2009:265-266). The Basij martyred themselves by becoming human mine sweepers (running into the minefields to clear them). They were promised that they would be rewarded in heaven for being martyrs. The United States made money by selling weapons to both sides in the Iran-Iraq War including Saddam Hussein who used Sarin and nerve gas on the Iranians and the Kurds (Ebadi 2006:61, 76, 92).

The Revolutionary Guard, created after the revolution, became a strong force in Iranian politics. The new regime cracked down upon leftists in the universities and organized labor. Thousands of liberals and leftists were executed (Parsa 1989: 252-253, 266-267, 272, 291). Many state and educational employees were fired from their jobs. The military was purged and attempted coup plots within it against Khomeini were foiled (Keddie 2006:2009; Arjomand 1988:142-144,164).

Whereas Khomeini had initially banned the clergy from running for public office, in 1981, he reversed this ban. Khamenei was elected president and the clerics tightened their control (Wright 2001:16-17). After the revolution, radical Shiite Islam was transformed from an "ideology of protest" into "a state ideology." Borrowing from Mao, the I.R.P. launched Iran on a "Cultural Revolution" in April 1980, which lasted until 1983 (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:226, 236; Moaddel 1993:212). It was driven by an "Islamic fundamentalist ideology" in which there was an attempt to eliminate all traces of Western cultural influence. What was western was considered decadent- part of an imperialist plot (Nafisi 2003:25). This is the period which Azar Nafisi describes in her memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

Reminiscent of Robespierre and Lenin, after the bombing of the IRP headquarters in the summer of 1981, a reign of terror began (Moaddel 1993:200, 216). The Iranian Revolution had a contradictory relation to the revolutionary tradition. It was anti-

Enlightenment and anti-Communist while it borrowed from Jacobin and Bolshevik ideology and tactics (Amineh and Eisenstadt 2007:149, 152).

The Islamic Civil Code instituted after the 1979 revolution contain many elements of Sharia law. Shiite law was modified and administered through the state. Reversing the policies of Reza Shah, the judiciary was desecularized and brought under the control of the clergy. The regime removed women from the bench. Penalties such as flogging, amputation, stoning to death and crucifixion were reintroduced for adultery, homosexuality, and other sexual offenses. Sodomy was punishable by death. One of the forms of punishment was removal of the same organ that the offender has damaged. Revolutionary courts and a morality police were established which enforced rules these rules (Arjomand 1988:143-144,149,170, 184-185; Moaddel 1993:263; Nafisi 2003:167; Keddie 2006:257; Afary 2009:269, 277).

Under the new laws, women did not have the same rights as men. They were considered to be worth one half of men The Family Protection Law was repealed. Polygamy, temporary marriage, child marriage (age 9 for females) was allowed. Women lost their rights in child custody and divorce. The legal system again permitted honor killings. Adultery on the part of a woman was punishable by stoning. The government closed day care centers. Abortion was banned. Women were required to veil. Those who wore their veil too loosely, had strands of hair showing, wore makeup or nail polish were subject to 74 lashes or one year in prison. Women were forced out of the workplace and back into the home. The authorities prohibited women from participating in spectator sports. Men and women were segregated in public places including educational institutions (Keddie 2006:292; Wright 2001:138, 156; Afary 2009:13, 270, 278-280). In the words of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi (2006:51): "The laws… turned the clock back fourteen hundred years" to the 7th century. However, even after the revolution, Iran did not have a "wholesale return to the sexual and gender mores of the early twentieth century" (Afary 2009). Parents did not marry off their daughters at age 9 and women were still allowed to have an education. Paradoxically, the Islamist regime was both anti-modern and modern.

At the time of the revolution, the universities were controlled by secularists and leftists. During the Cultural Revolution, the regime shut them down for three years and purged them. The national educational system was desecularized and brought under clerical control. There was an Islamization of the universities, in both curriculum and personnel. Professors were dismissed and students were expelled. Men and women sat in separate sections of the classroom (Moaddel 1993:213; Wright 2001:149; Nafisi 2003:146-150). Paradoxically, due to this more comfortable atmosphere for girls from traditional families, the number of women attending universities has increased. Today in Iran 65% of university students and 43% of workers are women (Ebadi 2006:106-107, 210).

During the Cultural Revolution, there was a repression of the arts and culture. The government censored books, art, film, radio, television, and film that were considered Un-Islamic. Western style clothes (including miniskirts, bikinis, and ties) were banned. The government prohibited the use of sexuality in advertising. Women were required to wear modest Islamic attire. Liquor was prohibited- even wine from Shiraz. Gambling was prohibited (Parsa 1989:285; Wright 2001:80-81, 99, 135, 226, 239, 242). In the Islamic Republic, wearing makeup paradoxically became an act cultural resistance against the regime (Afary 2009:332).

Despite Khomeini's anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist rhetoric prior to the revolution, after it he issued a Fatwa ordering that Christians and Jews in Iran, who were "people of the book" be treated well. Each of the major religious minorities was given a seat in

Parliament. The government permitted Jews to drink wine (Abrahamian 1993:123-125; Wright 2001:207-209).

In the mid 1980s, the regime eased many of the restrictions of the Cultural Revolution (Wright 2001:19; Nafisi 2003:176). Whereas during the period between 1979 and 1982 Khomeini used radical rhetoric to mobilize the masses, beginning in 1983 he toned it down and instead focused on institutionalizing the revolution as the Islamic Republic of the propertied middle classes. The Thermidorian reaction had begun (Abrahamian 1993:133).

The regime went though several phases in its suppression of the opposition. In the 1980s, it engaged in mass executions. Wanting to improve its public image, in the 1990s it either tortured in ways that left no physical marks or executed its opponents extra judicially (Ebadi 2006:130-132, 134-135, 141). The regime has found out that in the age of the Internet, it impossible to blackout communications without shutting down the economy itself (Ebadi 2006:194).

With the death of the charismatic leader, there is the problem of the succession. After Khomeini died on June 3, 1989, like the conclave of cardinals, the Assembly of Experts named Khamenei as the Supreme Leader. Rafsanjani, who was a pragmatist, became President. He revived the stock exchange, privatized over 500 companies that had been nationalized, created free trade zones, and eased restrictions on foreign investment. Rafsanjani and Khamenei blamed religious radicals for economic stagnation. They purged them from the government and replaced them with moderate western educated technocrats. Charisma was becoming routinized (Weber 1978:246, 253, 1121; Chehabi 1991:77; Abrahamian 1993:134-135, 138-139; Wright 2001:21; Keddie 2006:264). The new elites, while still coming from the old middle classes are increasingly educated. Due to the need for educated professionals, the regime has allowed those who are secular, including women, to practice (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:237-238, 244). By the late 1990s, the regime had become corrupted: "a new rich and revolutionary elite had emerged from among the populist radicals of 1979" (Ebadi 2006:145).

In post revolutionary Iran, two cultures have emerged. The first is a traditional culture of the old middle classes (the *Ulama* and the bazaaris) and the urban poor. The second is a modernized/westernized culture of the new middle classes (educated professionals). There has been an alliance of those who are modern (whether religious or secular) against those who are traditionalist and conservative. The new conflict is between traditionalists/conservatives and reformers (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:239, 252, 254; Wright 2001:111, 296; Keddie 2006:291). In the field of culture, the "dominant trend" was driven by "secular forces" (Nafisi 2003:276). As a reaction to living under a theocratic state, Iranian society has become more secular (Moaddel 2008; Afary 2009:286).

After the Cultural Revolution, the government eased many of the regressive laws involving sex and gender relations. Women elected to the Iranian parliament, the Majlis (beginning with the 4th), have pushed for more rights (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:250). Since 1992, women have been able to practice law. Sharin Ebadi (2006:110, 190-191) has argued for the rights of her clients based on a more flexible interpretation of Islamic law. The government reinstated parts of the family protection law, such as maternity leave. Women have also gained more rights including being able to initiate a divorce if the husband takes on a second wife. Women are allowed an abortion up to the fourth month if it threatened the life of the mother. To control population growth, in 1989 the government promoted family planning including contraceptives and vasectomies. Despite the lowering of the marriageable age for girls to 9 after the revolution, from 1976 to 2007, the average age of first marriage for girls went from 19.7 to 24 years of age (Abrahamian 1993:140; Wright 2001:162, 168; Afary 2009:31, 309, 312-313, 360, 371).

Since the revolution, there has been the emergence of Islamic feminism, like that advocated by Sharin Ebadi (2006). It argues for women's rights within the context of Islam. Azar Nafisi (2003:262), however, has argued that trying to reconcile women's rights with Islam is a contradiction.

The process of modernization has continued in the Islamic Republic in the spheres of education, healthcare, urbanization, and family relations. Under the new regime, there has been a rise literacy rates and an increase in the enrollment of women in higher education. The birthrate and infant mortality rates have declined (Keddie 2006:286, 288, 317; Afary 2009:324).

One consequence of the Cultural Revolution (to relieve boredom), is an increase in drug addiction. In 2005, Iran had the highest rate of illicit drug use in the world (Keddie 2006:289; Wright 2001:286; Afary 2009:265).

The cultural repression of the Cultural Revolution has softened. There is greater tolerance concerning alcohol, dress, and sexual relations. Young people have resisted the restrictions on sexual relations (Wright 2001:275; Keddie 2006:291).

During Rafsanjani's second term, this was a conservative backlash. Conservatives attempted to ban VCRs, satellite dishes, and Barbie dolls. There was a violent repression against Iran's new independent press (Wright 2001:24, 89,108-109).

Reformers vs. Conservatives

In 1997, Mohammed Khatami, a reformer, was elected president. Khatami's election was a rejection of Rafsanjani's designated successor. One of the reasons behind his victory was the female vote (Wright 2001:63, 137). While Rafsanjani pursued economic reforms, Khatami pursued cultural reforms like easing censorship and greater rights for women. The government raised the age of marriage for women to 13. Some of the reforms that Khatami wanted to make were freedom of speech and press (against censorship), the right to privacy (from surveillance), the right to a trial, the right to a lawyer, innocent until proven guilty, a ban on torture, universal housing, free education and health care. Under Khatami, there was a cultural flourishing including the production of secular films and a growth in reformist newspapers and magazines. Khatami was popular among the new middle classes, women, students, and minorities. He did not support a "Western-style secular democracy" but rather an Islamic democracy although he did not clarify what that meant (Wright 2001:117-132, 262, 265-268, 298; Keddie 2006:269, 270, 281;Afary 2009:328-329).

In response to the reform movement, which emerged under Khatami, there was a conservative backlash. The conservatives threw their support to Ayotollah Khamenei. The police and legal system, which were under Khamenei's control, shut down over 100 newspapers. Raids on Tehran University, led to the student revolts of 1999. In 2003, there was a second round of student revolts. Both were suppressed with riot police and vigilantes (thugs) (Wright 2001:27; Ebadi 2006:149-150, 194; Keddie 2006: 263, 270; Afary 2009:330).

The ruling elites represent an alliance between the commercial bazaar bourgeoisie and conservative clerics. They have gained the support from the lower classes through state support of the Basij with the expropriated properties of the Shah. The conservatives have used the Basij to suppress the reformers (Keddie 2006:273, 275; Afary 2009:302).

The election of Mahmud Ahmadinejad in June 2005 returned control to the conservatives and hard-liners (Keddie 2006:323). Ahmadinejad was a former member of the Pasadran. Much of his support came from the Basij, millions of who are on the

payroll of the state (Afary 2009:330-331). While a gay subculture was able to reemerge covertly in the Islamic Republic, Ahmadinejad has used the Basij to crack down upon it (Afary 2009:287, 358-359).

Beginning in the mid 1990s, there has been increasing hostility toward clerics. Many clerics, like followers of the late Ayotallah Montazeri, have supported the reform movement (Keddie 2006:310-311; Wright 2001:53, 292-293).

The reform movement is composed of religious nationalists, secularists, former regime loyalists and intellectuals (Ebadi 2006:155). Parts of the reform movement understand itself in the religious context of reformation. For them, it is not a rejection of religion but rather the rationalization of it. It is a movement in the direction of religious rationalization and hence of secularization. "Secular ideas are probably stronger in Iran than anywhere else in the Muslim world" (Keddie 2006:316). The reform movement has experienced "the limitation of Islamic reform under the theocratic regime" (Ebadi 2006:192). Some secular reformers point out that Sharia laws are still in effect and the reforms have not gone far enough (Keddie 2006:296).

The reform movement, which has reemerged since the questionable loss of Mousavi to Ahmadinejad, is the latest development in ongoing conflict between conservatives and reformers. The movement has gained the support of leaders of the revolution, Ayatollahs and past presidents including Rafsanjani, Khatami and Montazeri. Islamic revolutionaries of the past have become today's reformers. The regime, which is now controlled by the Revolutionary Guard, has used the Basij to suppress the demonstrations. The reform movement is not only about religious reform within the context of Islam but also about political reform- removing the state from the control of the Supreme Leader. The reform movement is the carrier of the process of secularization in the sense of differentiation and religious rationalization.

Conclusion

So how do we make sense of the Iranian Revolution in light of the theory of secularization? Does the Iranian Revolution disprove the theory of secularization?

The Pahlavi Shahs modernized Iran economically and culturally but did not modernize it politically. Their forced secularization from above only had the support of the new middle classes; it alienated the old middle classes (the *Ulama* and the bazaari). The suppression of both communists and nationalists left the Islamists as the only viable political alternative.

Despite Khomeini's anti-Marxism, he synthesized Islamic and leftist discourse. The I.R.P. anxiously conjured up "spirits from the past" borrowing tactics from secular revolutionary predecessors including the implementation of a Reign of Terror and a Cultural Revolution (Marx 1996:33). The Islamic Republic modernized economically and politically but culturally it was a return to tradition. It attempted to do something new by returning to something old.

While the Islamic Republic attempted to establish a theocracy, it was superimposed over a republican form of government. Unlike the Catholic Church, Shi'ism didn't have a unified hierarchical structure. In order to create a theocracy, Khomeini had to modify Shi'ism and attempt to reverse several decades of secularization (Chehabi 1991:87).

Amineh and Eisenstadt (2007:156-157) argue that the Iranian Revolution gives support to the idea of multiple modernities- that modernization can be uncoupled from Westernization- that a country can modernize without westernizing (i.e. secularizing or democratizing). Secularization as differentiation need not lead to the decline in religion;

it can allow for more religious freedom. Multiple modernities is an excuse for authoritarian rule. The permanence of the established order in Iran is questionable; like other authoritarian modernities, it may be a temporary state of affairs.

Kian-Thiébaut (1998:10) sees "the failure of secularism in Iran" as temporary. The rule of political Islam after the revolution has given rise to a secularization process. Secularization is a countermovement against the theocratic regime (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:254; Moaddel 2008). In contrast to the process of secularization, which took place under the Shah, the secularization, which is occurring in the Islamic Republic, is not coming from above, but is more organic. The institutionalization of religion has weakened its authority by exposing its rule to criticism (Kian-Thiébaut 1998:257). Through survey research, Kazemipur and Rezaei (2003:356) discover that while desecularization has taken place on an institutional level (dedifferentiation), as a reaction against this secularization has taken place on an individual level. Using survey research from 2000 and 2005, Mansoor Moaddel (2008) finds that a process of secularization is occurring in Iran, which he speculates is in response to the Islamic Republic. What we see in Iran is that forced secularization dialectically led to a religious countermovement against it. Dedifferentiation has in turn sparked a new secular movement for religious rationalization and differentiation.

Even if one were correct in the argument that the Iranian Revolution disproves the theory of secularization, there remains the question of what happens when the process of secularization is reversed? What are the potential consequences of dedifferentiation and the establishment of a theocracy? This should give those who pronounce the death of secularization and celebrate religious revival (Rodney Stark and R. Stephen Warner) something to think about. Granted that secular revolutions were the first to invent terrors. Some would argue that the ideologies around which they coalesced are also religions, albeit secular ones. Religious movements can be progressive and emancipatory but like secular movements, they can lead to the opposite. In contrast with secular revolutions like the French and the Russian, the relationship of the Islamic Republic with modernity is not as clear. Like the French and Russian Revolutions, the Iranian Revolution has freed Iran from a monarchy and like the Russian Revolution, it has freed itself from Western imperialism. Like its predecessors, it has replaced one form of despotism with another. It has instituted a type of control that one finds in authoritarian states- if not in totalitarian ones. The grab for power during the Iranian Cultural Revolution resembled *Gleichschaltung*. While the revolution was perhaps a step forward politically (at least from a monarchy), culturally it was a step backward (in its interpretation of Islam).

Michel Foucault, who is considered by postmodernists to be one of their own, embraced the Iranian Revolution as it was unfolding. This is because he saw Islamism as a rejection of modernity. Foucault became embarrassed of this position after the regime began executing homosexuals (Afary and Anderson 2005). Since the revolution, many Iranian intellectuals have been attracted to postmodernism (Matin-Asgari 2004). The Iranian Revolution causes us to question notions of historical progress. When one understands modernity as involving a process of secularization- in the sense of differentiation and religious rationalization- what we see in the revolution is a countermovement in the direction of desecularization and dedifferentiation. Secularization from above and from the new middle classes occurred in Iran prior to the revolution. It was one of the triggering factors that precipitated the revolution. The Iranian Revolution was not only an overthrow of a monarchy and the liberation from western imperialism; it was a reaction to and against the process of secularization. There is growing secularity among the younger generations as a reaction to growing up under the cultural repression of a theocracy. Since the Iranian Revolution did not lead to the

process of secularization but rather to dedifferentiation, it was not a modern revolution, but paradoxically a postmodern one. What appears to the postmodernist as a paradox, the historical materialist sees as a contradiction, which is the solution to the problem of paradox. The Iranian Revolution did not solve contradictions between tradition and modernity but rather exacerbated them. Consequently, the political and cultural conflict between the conservatives and the reformers is still unfolding. Secularization, in the case of the Iranian Revolution, has not been a linear process but a dialectical one of secular and religious movements and countermovements.

Bibliography

Abrahamian, Ervand. 1993. *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Afary, Janet. 2009. *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Afary, Janet and Kevin B. Anderson. 2005. *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Amineh, M.P. and S.N. Eisenstadt. 2007. "The Iranian Revolution: The Multiple Contexts of the Iranian Revolution." *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 6:129-157.

Arojomand, Said Amir. 1988. *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Casanova, José. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chehabi, H.E. 2009. "Religion and Politics in Iran: How Theocratic is the Islamic Republic? *Daedalus* 120(3): 69-91.

Dabashi, Hamid. 1989. "By What Authority? The Formation of Khomeini's Revolutionary Discourse, 1964-1977." *Social Compass* 36(4):511-538.

Dobbelaere, Karel. 1981. "Secularization: A Multi-Dimensional Concept." *Current Sociology* 29:1-213.

Ebadi, Shirin. 2006. *Iran Awakening: One Woman's Journey to Reclaim her Life and Country*. New York: Random House.

Goldstein, Warren S. 2009a. "Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm." *Sociology of Religion* 70(2): 157-178.

_____. 2009b. "Patterns of Secularization and Religious Rationalization." *Implicit Religion* 12(2) 135-165.

Kazemipur, Abdolmohammad and Ali Rezaei. 2003. "Religious Life Under Theocracy: The Case of Iran." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42(3):347-361.

Keddie, Nikki R. 2006. *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. Updated Edition. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Kian-Thiébaut, Azadeh. 1998. *Secularization of Iran Doomed Failure? The New Middle Class the Making of Modern Iran*. Paris: Peeters.

Kimmel, Michael. 1989. "'New Prophets' and 'Old Ideals': Charisma and Tradition in the Iranian Revolution." *Social Compass* 36(4):493-510.

Kurzman, Charles. 2004. *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Marx, Karl. 1996. *Later Political Writings*, edited by Terrell Carver. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Matin-Asgari, Afshin. 2004. "Iranian Postmodernity: The Rhetoric of Irrationality?" *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 13(1):113-123.

Moaddel, Mansoor. 2008. "The Iranian Revolution and Its Nemesis: The Rise of Liberal Values Among Iranians." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 29(1):126-136.

_____.1993. *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994. "The Crisis of Secular Politics and the Rise of Political Islam in Iran." *Social Text*. 38:51-84.

Mottahedeh, Roy. 2000. *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.

Nafisi, Azar. 2003. *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*. New York: Random House.

Parsa, Misagh. 1989. *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Shiner, Larry. 1967. The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 6: 207-20.

Tschannen, Oliver. 1991. The Secularization Paradigm: A Systematization. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30:395-415.

Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wright, Robin. 2001. *The Last Great Revolution: Turmoil and Transformation in Iran*. New York: Vintage Books.

If Tomorrow Never Comes;
Reflections on The Last Day
on Earth

What will you give
When death knocks at your door?
The fullness of my life—
The sweet wine of autumn days and summer nights,
My little hoard gleaned through the years,
And hours rich with living.
These will be my gift.
When death knocks at my door.
(Tagore)

John Herlihy

Petroleum Institute
UAE

Abstract

Based on the Islamic saying that says we should live in this world as if we will live here forever and live for the next world as if we will meet it tomorrow, this article explores the true meaning of living the Islamic life through the remembrance of the symbolic image of death in the Islamic perspective. Especially during this modern era, we have come to fear the inevitability of death with a living dread, and we do everything in our power to forget its reality, by living in and for this world as if were will live here forever and by focusing on satisfying only our material desires without any thought to the day of accounting and the afterlife. The article points out that a heightened consciousness of death as a constant companion actually strengthens the heart and raises the consciousness to a new level of experience, forcing us to appreciate all of life's moments as a gift from God, to be lived to the fullest and to be treasured as an experience beyond compare. Another well known saying among the *hadith* literature on the subject of death reads cryptically as follows: "Die before you die." In this expression, the Prophet encouraged the faithful to bring the consciousness of death into the life experience, once again as an eternal remembrance of what truly matters and what is truly real. Those who die before their death will have accustomed themselves to the presentiment of an alternative reality that will greet them as they pass across the absolute barrier between this and the next world. As such, we should live every day of our lives as if it will be our last.

Keywords

Death, Sleep, Life, Tradition, Spirituality, Remembrance

The remembrance of death lies woven within the warp and weft of the grand tapestry of nature. For some people, death is an unwanted intruder into the wonder and miracle of life; but for others, it can serve as a talisman of the unknown that lies beyond the silence of the grave. Beginning with the mystery of human birth and the first cry of the infant soul, death stalks our waking moments with its promise of temporality and return; the shadow of death bears the reflection of the night stalker who demands a gift in return for the miracle of life. When we lie down to sleep, we are entering the "little death" which is the way some spiritual traditions refer to the human need for nocturnal slumber.[1]

Similarly, the act of awakening from sleep resembles a kind of resurrection from the little death as we open our eyes once again to the beauty of this world and the conscious reality of our lives. The night itself whispers into the ear of the fading day with its premonition of death, recalling the telling verses of the Indian poet Tagore who wrote: "The night kissed the fading day with a whisper. "I am death your mother, from me you will get new birth." It is not surprising, then, that we casually refer to the darkness of midnight as "the dead of the night". The question is: what is the purpose of this remembrance that has the power to strike terror into the hearts of the innocent and guilty alike, and why is it built into the tapestry of our lives as a reminder of life's temporality and as a signpost of eternal life. Rumi, the great Persian poet likens death to "our wedding with eternity." Hopefully, our lives are more than events passing by in rapid succession, like clouds of different shapes and textures bursting with readiness to dissipate, the story of our lives being pulled out of us like the sounds of a church bell disappearing into the dark heart of the night.

The Islamic traditions make various references to the importance of death as a symbolic remembrance of certain truths, turning a day in one's life into a day of faith and promise. Partly, the periodic remembrance of one's mortality provides a way of heightening human consciousness to the realities of the moment, and partly as a way of giving definition and shape to the taste of the everyday experience with the absoluteness of the present moment and the forevermore of its enduring quality. The Prophet himself set the example and encouraged his followers to visit the graves of their loved ones in commemoration of the presence of their eternal souls, but also as a remembrance of the true nature of the reality that lies, not in this world but in the world to come, the "world to come" being none other than a verbal symbol to represent another, a higher dimension of experience that encompassed the total awareness of the Supreme and Universal Reality of which he was the messenger and we the earthly representatives (*khalifat Allah*).

Another well known saying among the *hadith* literature on the subject of death reads cryptically as follows: "Die before you die." In this expression, the Prophet encouraged the faithful to bring the consciousness of death into the life experience, once again as an eternal remembrance of what truly matters and what is truly real. Those who die before their death will have accustomed themselves to the presentiment of an alternative reality that will greet them in passing across the absolute border of this and the next world. The advent of an approaching death will not be the subject of perennial dread, clouding the life experience with its morbid quality and the impending finality to life beyond which lies the nothingness of the empty grave.

Mulla Sadra writes: "The soul is the 'junction of the two seas' (18: 59) of corporeal and spiritual things."[2] In other words, the soul stands between the existential condition of the world and the supra-natural condition of the Spirit. As such, it can serve as a medium of light or a medium of darkness. It lies halfway between heaven and earth, between

angel and devil, between good and evil. It acts as an intermediary between the luminous, immaterial spirit and the dark, dense matter of the body. "Spirit and body—light and clay—have no common measure. The spirit is one, luminous, subtle, high, and invisible, while the body is many, dark, dense, low, and visible. But the soul is both one and many, luminous and dark, subtle and dense, high and low, invisible and visible."[3]

Direct knowledge of God and a clear unobstructed vision of the Sublime were never meant to be a part of the existential reality of this world. On the contrary, as human beings, we live a split existence, as if a powerful sword has cut through the center of our being to create two halves of the one self. One side is inherently luminous as a direct manifestation of the Spirit of God. The other side is characterized by darkness, ignorance and the habitude of physical and sensate experience. The remembrance of a primordial life when the two halves of mankind were one is but a distant memory as well as an aspiration, promise and motivation in the soul's journey of return to God. A terrible divide runs down through the middle of our beings and through it run all the conceivable manifestations of evil and dispersion that could possibly suit the designs of the devil, driving them forward with his whip through the existential chasm that lies within *Homo sapiens*. That is why the remembrance of death plays such an important role in the life experience and why the "little death" of sleep gives such a poignant reminder in the loss of daily consciousness through the experience of an alternative dimension of reality when the dream becomes the reality and the existential reality the dream.

In addition, the remembrance of death in life and its true meaning and significance lies embedded within the very signs and rhythms of nature. The human body lives and dies and lives again in a process of regeneration of cells that is on-going and relentless, giving rise to a completely new cellular body every seven years through the constant regeneration of new cells that make up that body, a testament if there ever was one, of the birth-life-death-birth cycle that lies within the very fabric of existence for everyone to behold. Similarly, the seasonal changes that take place from spring to summer to autumn to winter pour forth their perennial message of death and resurrection within the birth-death-regeneration cycle that all humans experience firsthand every year of our lives. Would that we take note of the inner message of these seasonal changes in addition to the beauty and symmetry that each of the seasons contain. If sleep is the little death for humans by way of prelude to the greater passage of death that will take place when we lie down to die in preparation for the transit into a different realm of experience, then the passage of the seasons and their hidden messages betoken the greater and more universal rhythms of nature that are at our disposal to observe that lead toward a more universal awakening to death's true meaning.

***

When we wake up in the morning, we are awakening to the illusion that we will live in this world forever, rather than awakening to the realization that the coming day is one more gift in the treasure chest of the Supreme Being, Who lovingly bestows this gift upon the aspiring soul as it fulfills its vocation and mission on earth. It will not come as a surprise that most of us think that our lives belong just to us and no one else, amounting to our own personal gift given to us by only God knows who that we take unto our own as a personal right. Other people matter of course and we live with family, friends, colleagues and the greater community with consideration and commitment; but we think our thoughts drawn from the deep well of our own personal consciousness; we come out of ourselves to smile and act politely to people at moments that we choose and think appropriate; we act as perfectly as we can within the context of our own wishes and

dreams, while all the while thinking that this will go on forever.

When we lie down to sleep, we become nocturnal spirits outside of space and time in search of familiar ground within the dreams and nightmares of the unconscious world. When we wake up in the morning, the soul sheds its passage through the night and falls back down to earth as it races to arrive back within the body before the dawn by following the tracery of an invisible thread that connects the astral spirit with the body. We go to sleep and wake up in the morning in seasonal rhythms of hope and certainty that belie the shadowy, mysterious, and unknown quality that inhabits every created thing like the sound of the sea in a seashell. Once awake, we whisper a prayer of thanksgiving that we don't have to be a ghost to take ownership and belong to ourselves. During our waking hours, we want to preserve this feeling of immortality that life will go on forever during the daytime, when everyone is awake.

To counterbalance this perennial misconception of the human mind to what is real and what is illusive, the Prophet also characterized this illusion of living forever on earth by emphasizing the temporary quality of this world and the true value of the next world with the following *hadith*: "We live for this world as if you will live here forever; but we should live for the next world as it we will meet it tomorrow." From the earthly point of view, which is the ego perspective, we humans have all the time in the world to take root, gather, and accumulate the things of "this world" (*al-dunya*) that will make us happy. From the spiritual perspective, however, from the point of view of the human soul, the immediate moment contains within its envelope life's true reality. For the human mind, the future in this world is an illusion pretending to be a reality; for the human soul, the true future lies in the consciousness of the present moment as potentially the last moment on earth, whence the veil separating us from the Unseen (*al-ghaib*) will be lifted and the poignancy of the role of death becomes manifest as a luminescent knowing akin to the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel that will reveal the unknown and unseen reality for what it truly is. The saying of the Prophet encourages the Muslims to prepare for the arrival of the Great Unknown and a willing acceptance for whatever God places at any moment within a given destiny. Anything beyond the present moment must be considered a divine gift and a blessing from God waiting to happen. This attitude resolves for the Muslims life's basic enigma and intensifies for them the truth of their existence as a passage from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowing, from weakness and limitation to the human perfection that the soul is destined for, at any moment in time, provided that moment is touched by the remembrance of death serving us as a kind of magic wand that will provide a passageway to eternity.

Veils and illusions are the antipode s of human wisdom, in which veils protect and illusions obscure the truth. Veils hide and protect the truth from the unfaithful and the pretentious among us. God has created a veil, for example, between matter and spirit or between the seen and the unseen world. There is no self-evident link between them, and they cannot be reconciled without lifting the veil in some way to reveal the other side of reality. The veil is a pragmatic fact of a spiritual existentialism. A veil protects the unseen world from the profane world, just as the mysteries are withheld from the uninitiated and the wicked. If a person had unearned access to the visions of the spiritual world, he/she would not be human as such, just as angels, who are themselves 'unseen', do not partake of human options, and if they did would not be considered angelic. Without these veils, the challenge to transcend the limitations of the physical world would be missing from the human condition. Also, humans are not psychically or spiritually ready for such immediate and synthetic experience. The shock to their mind and mentality would be far too great. God has created certain veils, so that people can express themselves in their own way, according to their own genuine needs.

Traditional man responded to the unseen world *as if* he could see it. The unseen world of spirituality became a more immediate experience for him, a trick of mind if you will in the psychic sense, which led to the opening of the 'eye of the heart'. In compensation for man's uninhibited faith and systematic worship, God gradually opened the eye of the traditional man's heart, which is actually the unveiling of the mysteries of the unseen. This was one of the first Islamic sayings (*hadith*) of the Prophet that I became aware of when I first became Muslim. Conceptually, I found it an interesting challenge and the counterpoint to the tendency of the modern mentality to live in this world as if we will live here forever. This modern-day adage has great meaning for people, a practical phrase that virtually drives them forward and provides the fundamental motivation to their every thought, word and action. The desire for pre-eminence, the love of wealth, the impulse to control our destiny, the illusion of free will, the myth of an earthly progress or a purely human happiness all contribute to the fantasy that the world is enduring and that we will endure with it, when in fact we pass the world by and the world takes no notice of us except to take us back within its embrace in the awesome finality of death. What then of the incisive concept of living as if a Supreme Being truly existed, amounting to a grand universal conditional with the power to transform the earthly experience into a life of profound consequence as an eternal reality?

The key to human spirituality and the means to live life in the face of the true Reality lies with the simple conditional "as if". The Muslims are encouraged to worship Allah "as if" they could actually see the Supreme Being, and they are exhorted to "live for the next world as if you will meet it tomorrow." This is the greatest of all conditionals, the most sublime of all "as ifs", this being an invitation to open the inner eye of the heart to witness the deepest aspect of ourselves. The more people realize that God can and does see them, the more intensely and the more sincerely they can feel, if not actually see, God with the inward eye of the heart, which is the eye of perception and understanding. The more they live each moment and every day in the light of the eternal passing, the more they will be able to face each moment of the day with the wisdom of the ages.

In spite of the self-assured confidence of the scientific approach to unproven truths, mankind is still confronted with a mystery that is reflected in everything from the stars in the night sky to the unanswered question that lies at the center of his being. People of all ages, and especially this modern era, both want and need meaning, a meaning whose clarity and certitude perennially escapes their grasp. In spite of the emphasis placed today on the sheer physicality of this world, the force of the spirit resides strongly enough within man and nature to belie the purely secular and anti-spiritual attitudes predominant in our time. In spite of the fact that people today live in this world as if they will live here forever, the absolute quality of death continues to remind people of their mortality and the temporality of this world. Finally, in spite of the fact that people devote their lives to improving their physical and mental well-being, they systematically ignore "the one thing needful"; namely, the purification of the inner self and the perfection of soul that would ultimately bring the serenity, happiness, and peace of mind and heart that people the world over innerly yearn for.

A word should be mentioned in these reflections on life and death about the rarefied world of childhood realities. While children notoriously revel in childlike illusions in which giants live at the end of bean stalks and wolves pose as grandmothers, and while they can play to their hearts content with pebbles and shells as if these things contained the secrets of the universe, and while it can safely be said that they have no awareness of death and what it could possibly mean to them or anyone else, they also display an amazing ability to live in the present moment without falling prey to all the illusions that grownups usually rely on as the props of a complicated, uncertain and insecure life, a life

in which they dread the coming of the "final hour". Children laugh and cry and feel offended and sad; but not for long and they rarely hold grudges. Their natural love for those close to them centers them back to what is meaningful and real. They are newly fallen down from the radiation of eternity and their faces have all the aspects of the eternal written upon them through their innocent, fresh, and open features as yet untouched by time. The young child is spontaneous, carefree and truthful, spontaneous in that young children live completely in the moment, carefree in that they are not burdened by the excess baggage that experience has burdened adults, and truthful in that they show in their face the true reflection of their inner condition and not some false front with which to greet the world. A child's face is not yet molded by experience of living in "this world", and they are not ruled by its pretensions and illusions; it is a face that still lies outside of time.

A Zen master once remarked that if you sip the sea only once, you will know the taste of all the oceans of the world. Indeed, what if in living the moments of my day and every day of my life until death sounds its toll as though sipping the nectar of the eternal moment brought down into the consciousness of this world through the remembrance of death, then I am able to walk through the soul of my days in the shadow of that mysterious presence that beckons from beyond the grave. In walking through the days of my life, I end up walking through the soul of the present moment as a foretaste and presentiment of the world to come.

<center>***</center>

When we awaken each morning at the first light of dawn, we arise to the light of consciousness that glows within our psyche like the beacon of a lighthouse illuminating our immediate world. We drag ourselves out of bed from the stupor of nocturnal slumber, like climbing a rope from some deep well toward the light of morning. In getting out of bed and wiping the kernels of sleep from our eyes, we are rousing ourselves from a death-like slumber whose shadowy world of dreams exude a timeless quality within the dream state that hints of the spaciousness and grandeur of eternity. We try to take these dreams into the day with us because they give rise to a presentiment of other dimensions and worlds until we awaken once again to this world and our dreams fall back like broken promises into the realm of forgetfulness. Then, we place our two feet firmly on the bedroom carpet, in an effort to secure once more our footing in this world, as we remember who we are and what needs to be done.

The beauty of sleep lies in its mysterious awakening. Having escaped once again from the "little death" of sleep, the soul comes back from the land of death and dreams with a sense of renewal and purpose. Shedding its passage through the night like the skin of a snake and leaving in its wake the fears, hopes, and wishes embedded within the netherworld of our unconscious selves, the soul races back toward the dawn, falling down through eternity into the universe of time and into the space of the human body to begin a new day. Is this just another day to be lived in fear and trembling amid the rubble of our modern life with all its worries and insecurities, or is this a day of miracle and wonder, when a faint presence shrouded in mystery follows me around like a guardian angel, a white moth hovering protectively over my right shoulder, watching, witnessing, recording my thoughts and actions as it flutters through time's arrow searching for the moment that will transcend life's limits with the remembrance of death and awakening?

Upon awakening, our nocturnal dreams disappear like incense dispersing into the air, leaving behind a fragrance of other dimensions and worlds that demand our consciousness and respect. We awaken to life and the world; but something of the other

side of reality lingers in our memory, like the other side of the moon with its dark face forever veiled from human view. In spite of what we may think, death is not an event that we experience in life, even if we await its arrival with a dread that runs like a river through our veins. It is an idea that never takes place and an event that is never truly experienced. The ultimate message of sleep is that we wake up; the true miracle of death is that we don't die.

Over the years since I first became Muslim in 1974, I have developed the habit, upon waking up in the morning, of immediately raising my hands in cupped supplication and whisper to my heart the invocation of the four beloved words *la ilaha illa 'Llah* as my greeting to the wonder of the new day. It helps me ground myself and remember on a daily basis what I set out to proclaim when I first accepted the testimony of faith, in the Religion of Islam called the *Shahadah*, the witnessing. The well-known Islamic credo represents the summative statement of the entire religion in a single, sacred formula that arises like calligraphic mist from the meadows of eternity as the revelatory words of the truth. It is the one thing worth knowing and therefore the one thing worth remembering when all else is either forgotten or lost. The *Shahadah* is the first set of words that are whispered into the ear of the new born baby, and at the time of death, the *Shahadah* is recited by family members on beaded *sebhas* (a kind of rosary) and whispered into the ear of the dying soul. What better way to begin the day, than by reciting this sacred formula that represents the very pinnacle and summative point of all Islamic spirituality. The holy words may fall off the tongue and pass through the mind, to land finally within the grotto of the heart, thus setting the stage for what in principle could be one's last day on earth.

My invocation and act of faith in the one God (*al-Ahad*) is uttered as though for the first time, with all the fervor of a fresh awakening and with all the passionate fire of a first love, and it is uttered as though for the last time, with all the heat of a burning ember and all of the evanescence of incense rising toward heaven. As I rouse myself from slumber and remember the "one thing needful"; I am obeying an instinct that is more wondrous than life and older than time, more magnificent than the sea and more luminous than the sun, giving rise to a sense of freedom and happiness that provides the true coloration of my day. Through the alchemy of the words embodied within the *Shahadah*, the day becomes a progressive series of firsts and lasts that will punctuate the events of the day with their innocent and absolute quality, the minutes and hours of the day made sacred by virtue of this timeless remembrance. Through the moment by moment remembrance of the Reality of the one Supreme Being, life takes on a sacred quality and becomes a continuum of time that is set between seemingly two eternities, as it were, the eternity before we were born and the eternity we will return to when we die. Like ripples in a lake, the Shahadah makes itself felt within each moment of the day through the force of the revelatory words.

The sacred formula of the *Shahadah* contains the summary and synthesis of all that the Muslims needs to know in order to express the totality of their being and fulfil their destiny. As such, the Islamic *credo* has been called "the formless form", formless because it embraces and symbolizes in a simple phrase the full range of the entire metacosmic universe and formal because through four simple words – *no god but God*, and three simple ideas -- no, yes, and God, it explains definitively and with certainty the inexpressible by identifying for man the Origin, Source, Center and End through the principle of unity and the truth of the one God.

Because the *Shahadah* contains the Origin, Source, Center and End within itself, it has therefore the power to bring the believer back to the center of his own being through the power of this centralizing formula. Through the sacred and revealed sound/words

themselves, Muslims can establish the vibration and rhythm within their being whose holy cord will reflect back out into the world as a human spirituality most profound. Through knowledge of the doctrine contained within the *Shahadah*, they can live out the knowledge of God in life as the fullest expression of their truest self. Through identification with the *Shahadah*, the aspiring soul can become simple, clear, profound and transcendent, like the *Shahadah* itself. With the sacred formula on the tongue and the Name of God in the heart, they can begin to lift the veil that separates them from the unseen world (*al-ghaib*), and they can cut through the deception, ignorance, and unreality of this world with the sacred formula of the one God.

If we could but see the flaming sword of the *Shahadah* cut across the heavens like a bolt of lightning as it reaches down to touch the heart of the earth and every living being that lives upon its surface with its penetrating light. As with some magic wand sparkling with fairy dust, the great testimony of faith falls off the lips and sinks into the hearts of the faithful as a great revelation of the Real and the True. It might have been as if the Great Painter of the Universe had dipped his brush into the vast ocean of the universe, flush with galaxies and star dust, to draw the calligraphic etching of the sacred words of the Divinity with the phosphorescent glow of galaxies and star dust as ink for the Divine Pen to be written into the essence of every created thing as the spirit of a living truth. The treasure has been found and the lost secret has been uncovered that has the power to revolutionize the way we understand human nature as well as the nature of the universe.

It is perhaps in the evening of the day and the sundown years of life that one's thoughts may turn to the lateness of the hour, time's arrow spent and time's chariot having run its course, with the sands of the hourglass quickly running dry through the isthmus of relentless time. It is perfectly natural that as one ages, one's thoughts naturally gravitate toward one's approaching death and what it means to die. In some cases, people are given a forewarning in that they find out they have acquired a fatal illness and can no longer avoid setting their house in order and preparing themselves for the inevitability of passing from this "world of the senses" to some other dimension of experience. But why should this ritual foretaste of death and dying only be for those who have developed a terminal illness or who have been condemned to death for some serious wrong-doing? The remembrance of death is not just for those who are dying. In turning every day of one's life into the last day on earth, a person is able to turn every moment into a moment of heightened consciousness and awakening. Past and future are no longer the bookends of a life, overwhelming the present moment with their longings and regrets. It is the present moment that matters with its distinctive flavor of eternity, while death's absolute quality sets us on the edge and at the limit of what is truly possible; creating a horizon of the mind that is forever expanding. "The past is never dead," wrote William Faulkner. "It's not even past."

The image of the hour glass and its flowing sands convey an impression of temporality and finitude whose bold message forces upon us an immediate and compelling truth. The ultimate meaning of the imagery of the descending sands is absolute, and therefore conveys something of the absolute that lies behind the image in death. Time is passing at first without a care in the world in a slow and ponderous descent of the sands. The flow of time seems fixed within the solid mass of the sand, forever plentiful and present; while the future is there in the background as a positive promise of latent hope and expectation. Then all too soon and all too unexpectedly, the sands of the hour glass appear to be rushing through the isthmus of our lives with alarming speed. Possibly we hear a shudder or a whisper, like the fluttering wings of moths, the motif of some memory of regret or unfulfilled expectation appears before our eyes, and we suddenly realize that time is like a river that actually flows through our being, leaving us

awash in its relative, impermanent, yet relentlessly forward-moving, terminal quality. Like the river that never forgets the ocean that is its final abode, we are on a journey to what should seem like home; but that in this day and age actually has the look and feel of some alien, strange land. "God is at home," writes Meister Eckhart, "we are in the far country."

Contemporary people still do not realize what is happening to the life of their time, but they do seem to realize that the road is getting shorter, the sands of the hour glass are getting thinner, and time is passing more swiftly. People are beginning to feel the pulse of time relentlessly beating out the measure of their lives. The road and its journey are rushing by and the sands of the hour glass are flowing through the isthmus of time with frightening alacrity. The days are growing shorter and the fellow travellers of our time still don't know the object of the search implicit in life or their final destination. The symbol of the road and the hour glass are fundamentally linked on the plane of the Absolute and the Eternal; but they can come down to earth every day of our lives with the consciousness of life through the remembrance of death, mortality, and temporal passing from this world into the realm of universal consciousness.

***

In addition to affirming the testimony of faith in one God as the first conscious thought of the day, the Religion of Islam establishes a rhythm of remembrance throughout the course of a person's routine by assigning the ceremony of prayer at certain key moments of the day. The first of these moments takes place after "first light" emerges at the horizon well before the actual sunrise. After making a clear intention to pray, the Muslims perform the ritual ablution, which is an inner as well as an outer purification. They then throw down their prayer carpet or walk to the mosque, in order to take their stand for a few minutes on the symbolic terrain of sacred ground, at the disposition of the Divine. Through the prayer, as a matter of principle, Muslims turn their mind, heart, and soul inward in order to communicate on an intimate level with God. Each performance of the ritual of prayer reminds the Muslims of God, while the rhythm of the prayer aids in maintaining this God remembrance throughout the day. Thus it is that the spiritual benefits of the prayer last throughout the entire day, particularly because the prayer is repeated four more times before the end of day. Prayer is not only a communication with the Divine, but a state of mind that awakens a spiritual consciousness fully responsive not only to the call of the prayer, but that the faithful take with them when they leave their prayer carpet and must meet the demands of life.

The Islamic prayer ritual occupies only minutes, but highlights key moments in the rhythm of the day and night, including sunrise, sunset, midday, mid-afternoon, and the moment of total darkness that marks the fifth and final prayer. Prayer is actually a kind of wake-up call to the totality of the human system, in which the body, the mind, the psyche and the soul of a person steps out of time, as in a kind of death to the boundaries of this world, and takes part in a sacred ceremony five times a day that has been revealed by the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Mohamed. The Muslims can lay aside their cares for a few moments and interrupt the flow of daily events with this holy encounter with God. Through the action of the prayer, they can actually transcend the horizontal, earthly understanding of existence through a vertical perception that cuts across the horizontal plane and elevates the mind and heart to a higher level of spiritual consciousness. They can become "vertical man" once again and this means not just the human animal standing upright, but also the human *alif*[4], pointing heavenwards.

"What action is dearest to Allah?" one of the companions of the Prophet asked him.

"Prayer at its proper time," he replied.

If the *Shahadah* signifies knowledge and discernment, then prayer signifies experience and union. The sacred formula, as God's gift to man through a divine descent, conveys a theoretical knowledge of the Reality and a practical means of discernment between the Real and the unreal. Prayer, as the human response to God and a means for the human ascent, translates the celestial knowledge into an existential experience of the Divine. To resolve to pray is to turn to God in one's heart; to assume a prayerful attitude is to enter into the Presence in order to reunite oneself with the Divinity; to actually recite the prayer is to communicate the human aspiration to the Divine Listener, the One Who Hears and Answers Prayer (*al-mujib*), which is one of the ninety-nine names of God. Thus God, man, the meeting and the eternal moment become a part of the human as well as the celestial reality, while the world and all that it contains including our wealth, possessions, achievement, and fame, even life itself, assume an air of unreality, like a passing cloud or a feather in the wind. "What is the world if not the out-flowing of forms, and what is life if not a bowl which seemingly is emptied between one night and another and containing all the emptiness that the moment of death signifies? And what is prayer, if not the sole stable point—a point of peace and of light—in this dream universe, and the straight gate leading to all that the world and life have sought in vain?"[5]

Prayer is the pause in life's progression within this world, a moment that shatters earthly time in order to recreate the broken pieces of the time continuum within the totality of the eternal moment. The experience of the prayer with its message of the one Reality permits the human being to escape from the implicit limitations of the earthly context and sphere. As a formalized and spiritualized mode of action, prayer permits the faithful to depart, however briefly, from the world of thought and action into the world of high consciousness and spirituality that reflect the workings of the inward self. Through prayer, we as modern and contemporary individuals can still integrate ourselves with the Divinity through patterns of consciousness and remembrance, a consciousness that is the inheritance of our primordial nature and a remembrance that returns our consciousness to God in mind, heart, and soul. Through consciousness and remembrance, prayer becomes a medium through which the existing moment can be made present, a moment in which faithful believers everywhere can take leave of themselves and shed the density of the earthly persona in tribute to the death of the illusion of this world and its implicit impermanence.

Finally, in concluding the sacred pre-dawn rituals that commence with the act of awakening, many Muslims sit cross-legged in the quietude of pre-dawn just before actual sunrise and open the Holy Quran in preparation for this final act of worship before attending to the usual routine duties of the day, including feeding the body with appropriate nourishment and fulfilling one's duties during the workday as a service to the community and the commonweal. There is no greater preparation to meet the rigors of the day, no more fitting ritual to set the mind and heart at ease with the unfolding of one's destiny, and no more suitable activity to set the coloration and mood of one's day than the sublime act of recitation of the sacred words, phrases and verses of the Holy Quran. In opening the book and viewing the elegant symmetry and fluid rhythms of the Arabic script, sitting on the page like restless moths awaiting flight, the eyes can draw contentment from the sacred symbolic imagery of the letters and words that are none other than the words of Allah in the Islamic worldview.

As sacred sound, the letters, syllables, words, and verses of the revelation call forth the inner voice of the self, the voice of the prophet, the voice of the archangel, and the Voice of the Supreme Being[6] who has chosen to reveal a knowledge of Himself and speak in words of the knowledge of Creation and Origins, thus recalling the primordial being within each of us through the power of sound. When a Muslims recite the verses, he hears his own voice reciting the words first of all in the here and now. Then as a kind of echo beyond the voice of the individual lies the voice of the Prophet Mohamed, upon him blessings and peace. Through the voice of the Prophet passed the divine revelation of God to humanity, whereby he became the instrument and intermediary through whom the world of the Spirit was able to enter and influence the spirit of the world. Beyond the voice of the individual self and the voice of the Prophet lies the voice of the Archangel Gabriel who as intermediary of the Divinity delivered the verses to the Prophet. Finally, all these voices are earthly echoes of the Voice of God Who communicates through these revelatory words to the soul of every human being a profound sense of wonderment for the numinous and the other-worldly. Through words, the Divine Being is able to pluck the violin strings of a person's inner being to sound a cord of the timeless Reality whose echo reverberates throughout the human entity in all its physical, mental, psychic and spiritual aspects.

The sounds of these primordial, revelatory words of God encourage a feeling of proximity to the Divine Presence, and once spoken aloud or whispered inwardly, they reverberate deeply within the cave of the heart and take root in the ground of the soul. Muslims who read the sacred verses over and over on a daily basis can experience within their minds and hearts a pulsating ripple of energy that is based on sacred auditory rhythms embedded within the letters and words of the text itself. The words of the Quran create an inner harmony that in the eloquent words of S. H. Nasr produces "an echo in the minds and world of the men who read it, and returns them to a state in which they participate in its paradisal joy and beauty. Herein lies its alchemical effect."[7]

Quranic recitation also determines the very framework of Islamic spiritual life. Muslims draw on the language of the Quran to give a spiritual frame to their hopes, fears, sorrows, regrets, and aspirations. They use the Quran as a means of withdrawing for a few moments during the course of the day, whether it be in the early morning when the birds sing their own sacred verses, or after the sunset prayer when the calm of dusk merges into the stillness of night. The holy recitation relieves the mind, the psyche, and the soul of the reciter from the gravitational pull of this world with its implicit imbalance, disharmony and lack of peace. When Muslims arises in the morning at the call to prayer, they have available the sacred book that contains all they need to know; they therefore, possess the means to realize that knowledge in their daily lives. Small wonder then that devout Muslims turn to the Holy Quran for sustenance and strength on a daily basis throughout the course of their lives, a turning that pre-empts doubt and despair and leads them back to the center and source of their existence within the Divine Being.

At the dawn prayer (*salat al-fajr*), the shadowy rays of the saffron moon flow across the window sill. In the pre-dawn darkness, the night sky shines forth the light of ancient star dust with its message of eternity within time and infinity within space, before disappearing with the coming of the dawn. There is a hint of incense and musk in the air whose assault on the senses captures a feeling of sacredness that becomes a moving force within the mind and heart. Heavenly scents accompany the two angels who descend to witness the Quranic recitations that occur every morning across the crescent of the Islamic world. Having performed the ritual ablution and prayer, Muslims in various corners of the globe sit cross-legged on a prayer carpet and reach for the Noble Quran, the Illuminated Book, a document that is "on a tablet well-preserved in heaven", as well

as a printed book held in hand. They kiss it out of profound respect, place it on forehead and heart, and then commence to recite verses from the Holy Book. *Alif, Lam, Mim*, they chant sonorously the Arabic letters that commence the Quran's second chapter: "This is the Book, of which there is no doubt, and guidance for those who fear God" (2: 1).

In reading the text and reciting the verses, you become a part of it and it becomes a part of you. In participating in the sound, the memorized texture and hand-scripted formation of the letters and words, the text then touches you with its energy and power. You and the text are one and the same for those moments that you take up the book in hand, recite the sacred verses, or copy them down and fill a blank page with their extravagant beauty. The largeness of the revelation, which encompasses all mystery that is to be resolved and all knowledge worth knowing, allows you to come to an understanding of yourself that would not otherwise be accessible in our daily existence. In a strange sense, the knowledge itself is secondary: Knowledge goes nowhere if it is not realized and internalized within your being as wisdom that shines out through behavior and good works. The experience of worship is so haunting and so elevating, indeed so entrancing an experience that it makes you cry sometimes in spite of your sensible, rational and modern mentality and in spite of the hard shell that surrounds the viewfinder that filters the perceptions of our minds and shapes our conscious world. There is an archaic affinity to the experience that is so strange and beautiful it also makes you feel afraid of being unable to live up to the moment once it passes by, having revealed by hints and starts secrets and depths to the inner self that contain promise but no clear outcome. When you take leave of the Book, just as when you take leave of your prayer carpet and re-enter the contingencies of daily life, you take the experience with you because it has become a part of your being by virtue of the participation in the sacred discipline.

In this way, and over the course of over thirty years as a Muslim, I have attempted to come to terms with the beloved, the holy, the noble Quran. Have I succeeded or failed? It is not for me to speculate on such matters, and who can measure such things in any event. It is enough to know that I have grown to love the Quran as I have grown to love the Prophet Mohamed who delivered it to humanity and can no longer conceive of living without it any more than I can conceive of living without the pulse of my heart or the ground of my soul. When I sit down after the dawn prayer, I read and recite the verses with familiarity and ease, to the extent that coming to the Book and reciting its verses feels like coming home. When I close the book and walk away from a session, I feel refreshed and complete, like having visited some far distant country whose vistas put things in perspective and whose language gives voice to knowledge of the stars.

***

Once again, we referred earlier in this article to death as the night stalker; but perhaps this is a misnomer, misleading us into thinking that death only happens at night when we are unaware of its arrival. For most people, the perfect death, such as it is, happens during the time we are asleep, when we have already half drifted away into a land of seeming unreality and dreams. If we suddenly wake up in a dream that becomes the reality of another dimension, then we have escaped the long goodbye of a death that is characterized by suffering and pain leading toward an unexpected and certain end.

However, what if we have come to terms with death to the extent that we realize that death is virtually embedded within the fabric of life and that the symbols and signs within nature give humanity ample opportunity for people to read their hidden messages regarding the true nature of death? If we want to know what happens when we die, all we

need to do is turn toward nature to read the messages of death written within the life process. Consider birth, winter, and sleep; consider the winter solstice and the Big Bang, consider the hibernation of bears and the migration of birds; consider the breath of the body and the beating of the heart: All report of a death-like transparency within the life process that serves as a window into its true nature. Autumn leaves fall, flowers die, and grass turns brown. The last dew drop falls from the blade of grass and shatters the image of the moon that lies contained within its bubble. These are hints, suggestions, a mysterious echo, an ancient whisper of what may happen when we die. Moments die in order to give birth to another moment; but eternity is contained within the primordial dot of the eternal present, deathless, aware, living, and eternal, just like God.

As we noted earlier with the progression of the seasons, life itself has a progression of its own akin to the message of the phases of the moon with its waxing into fullness and waning into the death of the blackest night when the side of the moon we never see is ablaze in glorious light. Life's progression as it moves from infancy to childhood to youth to maturity and finally old age sends forth a message that is clear as every new day, a message that no one can escape forever unless they wish to deny a reality that stares humanity in the face. While it is true that it is difficult, to say the least, to understand fully what death means; we can at least acclimate ourselves to the inevitability of its pending reality, whether it be tomorrow or many years to come. As such, through the remembrance of death and its observation in nature, we can get into the habit of dying so that when our season arrives, it will not come as a complete shock and we will be ready to welcome this not-so-unexpected intruder into our lives as the natural progression into the light of a new world. As pilgrims in search of our true abode, we do not want to become too complacent as we follow the progression of our lives within this world.

If sleep leads to resurrection from slumber and re-initiation back into the life of "this world", and if death is not dying, but an instantaneous process of transition from one dimension to another, separated by a breath or a heat beat, then what is there to fear? We witness and experience the process of death and resurrection throughout the day, the night, the seasons, and the years. We watch ourselves grow up and then grow old within seasons of our own life and the phases of our own inner moon. The poets speak of winter as a hibernation of the soul before the universal spring of its future awakening. We observe the death of the moon every month as prelude to the new moon, we witness the end point of the summer and winter solstice when the sun's orbit reaches its outermost limit and literally dies for one brief moment before turning back from the brink of eternity and making its homeward journey of return, bringing with it the warmth of spring and summer.

The image of death and its hidden message is built into every moment of our lives, and it lies sequestered within the very process of aspiration of the breath and the beating of the heart. What could be more poignant or meaningful that to witness and experience the forces of death and life within the very heart of the life process as a process of cessation and return. The heart beats with the regularity of a pendulum; but between every flourish of the beat and its resounding pulse throughout the corporeal system lies a pause, a temporary halt, a death if you will, that disappears with the resonance of every fresh heartbeat. The body breathes with the regularity of a metronome; but when we take a big breath and then expel the air from our bodies, there is a brief second, a void, a silence, a death that dies its own natural death with the new intake of fresh breath. The expansion and contraction of the breath and the heart as the symbolic essence of the life force have featured highly in traditional literature for millennia. In their mythology, the Hindus refer to the universe as an organic and rhythmically moving cosmos.[8] The principal characteristic of the Tao is the cyclic nature of its ceaseless motion and change.

"Returning is the motion of the Tao", says Lao Tzu in one of the chapters (40) of his *The Way of Life*, and "Going far means returning" in another (25). Everything in nature, in both the physical and the human worlds, displays a cyclic pattern of expansion and contraction and birth and death, including the act of breathing, the changing of the seasons, and the movement of time.

Within the Islamic tradition, the concept of expansion and contraction focuses on the symbolism of the breath which is none other than the symbol incarnate of the spirit (*ruh*) of God. *When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My Spirit* (15: 29). Both animate and inanimate creations "breathe" insofar as they contain the life force and spirit of the Divinity Who identifies Himself in the revelation as the *al-Bast* and the *al-Qabdh*, or the Expander and the Contractor of the universe. Thus, the human being expands and contracts every moment of life through respiration and the beating of the heart. The universe itself reflects these sacred rhythms through the expansion and ultimate contraction of the great cosmic realms, thus making the cosmos itself a breathing organism and a living reality.

When God created Adam and Eve, He endowed them with the rhythmic pulse of the heart and breathed into them the enlivening breath of His Spirit, the expansion and contraction of the pulse and breath together with their implicit rhythm and harmony being the outward manifestation of an inner reality. Through the respiration of the breath and the pulse of the heart, the human being becomes a living being. What the breath does for the expansion and contraction of the Spirit, the heart does for the awareness of the Presence by providing the medium and the ambiance in which the Divinity may enter and take up residence. In addition to providing the vital life energy, what in the Hindu tradition is called *prana*, the breath establishes the rhythm of human respiration in which the expansion and contraction of the human breast reflect the great process of expansion and contraction that takes places on a cosmic scale within the universe and mirrors directly the two names of God, namely, the Expander (*al-Basit*) and the Contractor (*al-Qabidh*), symbolizing the cosmic principles of fullness and scarcity, growth and constriction, increase and decrease that manifests in every aspect of the manifested world and that epitomize the fundamental helplessness that lies at the root of existence without the abiding "Breath of the Compassionate".

The association of the breath to the heart coincides on a symbolic level with the relation of the breast (*sudr*) to the heart. The heart is encased within the breast of mankind and like the heart; the breast also conveys a symbolic meaning far beyond its purely physical reality. *Is one whose breast God has expanded for surrender (islam), so that he has received enlightenment from God [no better than one hard-hearted]* (39: 22)? Knowledge belongs to the fullness of the heart, but human surrender to the reality of the one God belongs to the expansion of the breast. If the human heart is expressive of knowledge and love, then the human breast is the expression of an expansiveness that rises and subsides with the breath on the physical plane and expands and contracts with the fear and hope of man on the inner plane. *Haven't We expanded thy breast and removed a burden from you* (94: 1-2) the Qur'an asks? The expansion of the breast opens the human breast/heart for the descent of spiritual insight. When Moses was sent to the court of Pharaoh, his first cry was: *Expand for me my breast* (20: 25).

Finally, the seasons themselves bespeak of a progression and forward movement from birth to life to maturity, death and rebirth, a process we have become so familiar with that we have lost its symbolic significance. Spring bursts forth with all the innocence and spontaneity of a new born child in the infancy of the seasons. Grass comes back to life and turns green, the trees re-grow their accoutrements and dress themselves in living green as the soothing color of profusion and life. Summer represents full bloom

and fruition as the world of summer comes alive with its blossoms, insects, and undulating waves of heat. If the groundhog announces spring's arrival and the piping of the frog permeates the evenings of spring time with its throaty song, then the every present grasshopper fills the air with its incessant grating of legs, creating a sound that calls forth vivid memories of summer's heat and indolence.

In autumn, what animal symbolizes better the feeling of transience and regret than the plaintive voice of the cricket and its never-say-die song. Autumn commences a transition toward the death of winter with its cornucopia of shades and colors. The living green of summer's poignant vitality begins to turn color and wither, but not without this grand autumnal display of color in various shades of red, gold, and brown. A single drive through the New England countryside can attest to the beauty of the dying season as a multitude of colorful leaves float gracefully to the ground like ballet dancers bowing to the sublimity of the music.

Within winter's message lies a two-edged sword. There is no doubt the implicit message of death lies embedded with the folds of winter's chill fabric. Robert Frost, the American poet, speaks eloquently if indirectly, of winter's ominous message when he writes: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep; but I have promises to keep; and miles to go before I sleep." Obviously, death lies forever hidden in the background; but life goes on. Nature bows down to the forces of the season and enters a period of hibernation that seems to endure forever, until one day, lo and behold, the sun begins to move higher in its trajectory above the horizon seeking the full meridian of the summer solstice, the shadows become shorter, the land begins to thaw, the sharp cracking of the ice sounds like a bullet as it announces the death of winter whose symbolic message to humanity actually presages the death of death and the resurrection of life. The triumph of winter is not that it represents the harbinger of death, just as the true message of death is that we do not die. Death's triumph lies in its message of awakening.

<div align="center">***</div>

In today's culture, we try to kill death; we do this by "living for this world as if we will live here forever". We grin in the face of reality like children who have no knowledge of death and haven't a care in the world except to enjoy its blessings. The trees, flowers, grass, and birds, who fly around and about chirping their ancient melodies, are sweet and fresh; but they are hardly permanent. To the modern individual steeped in the life of this world and what it has to offer, the culture of death and its perennial remembrance becomes merely a source of morbidity and fear and loss; it is to be avoided at all cost, even at the expense of losing ourselves in the illusions of this world. Nature itself sends us this message with every breath and beat of the heart. If we believe that "this world" is everything, then there is no doubt that the loss of this world will lead only to catastrophe, panic, and ultimately oblivion.

Is this what we wish to live with, an illusion of the eternal present that bears no relation to reality? Isn't there something to be said for the more realistic understanding that one could go at any minute, and that we need to be ready to go "when death knocks on your door"? When we lie down to sleep, we have every expectation of waking up in the morning, but why not acknowledge for one brief moment before we sleep the one ancient truth that pagan primitives lived with every day of their lives, that we may not wake up. The well known children's prayer that dates from the 18th century captures better than anything, the simple and innocent aspiration of soul that should lie within us all as a treasure in the storehouse of knowledge.

> Now I lay me down to sleep
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep
> If I should die before I wake
> I pray the Lord my soul to take.

In a sense, you could say that we live with death every day of our lives, even if we don't always remember this fact. We survive a thousand deaths every day as our old thoughts, old cells, old emotions and even our old identities fade away at the end of each day. We awaken not only to a new day, but to a new person. We store up little treasures that have been important to us during the course of our lives, like faded flowers within the pages of life's book; but truth to tell, there is very little of the past that we remember with any clarify. The reasons for our passion and our anger will have faded with the passing of time like morning mist. Our emotions of love and hatred and envy and fear will have disappeared with the wind. We can no longer remember the essence of what we once deemed important, and the reasons for our deepest thoughts and impressions bear no lasting imprint. Similarly, with regard to the future, there are small things that we look forward to, a visit to a friend, a new job, a new day. It is as if they have their existence and joy primarily in their expectation rather than in their fulfillment. They are to take place, they will happen and this is almost enough and they need not happen at all. These small replicas of desire and anticipation are what we call the rest of our lives. However, if the rest of my life doesn't happen, I would have already lived it through the joy of expectation.

When I prepare for bed and lay myself down to sleep, I remember the events of my day, sometimes with satisfaction and sometimes with regret. The soul has absorbed what the mind and heart has created through one's thoughts and actions. It is a time to set aside our petty worries and fears and remember, however briefly and before sleep, our ancient loyalties and origins. Before long, the day will edge toward midnight when the clock strikes twelve and the day breathes its final sigh. If I should die before I awake, then I give myself to God in sweet anticipation with all the trust of a child, because in death lies resurrection of the soul, just as in sleep lies awakening of the body. If by God's blessing, I awaken in the morning with the coming of the new day, to witness once again the blue sky and listen to the singing of birds in proclamation of Nature's innocence, I will thank the Divinity in which I believe for the blessing of another day. What remains is one more morning, afternoon and evening, spread out before me waiting to be lived.

Death raises questions that no one seems qualified, or even inclined, to answer. What if we knew the day, if not the hour, of our death? Does the experience of death lie within the final breath and last heartbeat, or is death merely an idea that has no true basis in reality? What lies beyond death's door and beyond the abyss of oblivion? Is there life after death? And finally, as our opening epigraph boldly asks: What will we have to offer when death knocks at our door?

As for knowledge of the hour, it is not written within the fabric of our lives to know when we will die. Even in serious terminal cases when doctors make predictions of a certain death, there is still a lingering incertitude that precludes an absolute knowledge of our dying moment as well as the undying hope that what may be taken away could also be mercifully given back. The Bible says that we know neither the day nor the hour, while the Quran specifically states that we do not know the place or the country in which we will die. It is not within the prerogative of the human condition to choose the day or hour of our birth or death. To be equipped with the fore knowledge required to make such a decision lies far beyond the ability of the human mentality to fathom or effectively deal with.

An interesting short story by the crafted writer Edith Wharton dealt with this very issue in a most interesting manner. She recounts the story of a man in the fullness of life, a successful Wall Street banker from the 1920s, who was told by his doctors that he had a fatal illness with only a few months to live. When he left the doctor's office into the bright light of day, he closed his eyes and tried to grope his way through the encroaching darkness that lies within. Needless to say, the sights and sounds of the world were suddenly meaningless, closed off to him in his new terminal world. She describes him going home and closing himself off into a darkened room, "cowered in his armchair in absolute blackness till he could come to some sort of terms with this new reality – for him henceforth the sole reality. For what did anything matter now except that he was doomed – was dying?"[9]

He reflects that had he known how truly close the grave was, so real, so all inclusive, and infinitely more important than all the trivia that he had thrown away with the years of his life, he would have behaved quite differently indeed. He reflects upon those he could have helped and who later died in their own right, in poverty, in misery, in confusion and despair. How he wished he could reform the way of the world by writing death out of the equation. Instead, "Death was always there, was there now, at the door, in the room, at his elbow . . . *his* Death, his own private and particular end-of-everything. *Now*! He snatched his hands away from his face. They were wet." From now on, he would have to live in a solitary, self-contained world, living with the knowledge that no one else could appreciate. He would not die once, but he was doomed to die a thousand deaths, while the whole world went about the business of living, oblivious to his suffering and disinterested in his death sentence.

Eventually, he finds the courage to go for a second opinion, only to learn that a mistake had been made and that he was in perfect health with no need to worry about a needless and impending death. His new-found beating heart, ready to burst with happiness and freedom, expanded beyond reckoning by this immense inrush of returning life. He felt as though an honor or some official rank had suddenly been thrust upon him, realizing finally just how much he had completely disassociated himself from the whole business of living. He thinks: "It was as if life were a growth which the surgeon's knife had already extirpated, leaving him, disembodied, on the pale verge of nonentity. All the while that he had kept saying to himself: 'In a few weeks more I shall be dead,' had he not really known that he was dead already?"[10]

The question of a fore-knowledge of death is an interesting question that is answered in a far different manner within the spiritual perspective of Islam and the other religions. In this perspective, a person lives with a kind of knowing omniscience that death can come at any moment and that the gift of life is a treasure to be savored as well as a blessing from God, the Creator and Sustainer of all life. The remembrance of death is less a remembrance of a fact and an event since death itself is but a momentary pause in the transition from one state of being to another. No, the remembrance of death and the injunction to "Die before you die" is not a "living death" when faced with the fact of our mortality; but rather a celebration of life whose heightened awareness of the true reality gives perspective and meaning to everything we think and do. Every breath and every beat of the heart celebrates the living God; we live in His shadow; we are a reflection of His divine qualities and attributes.

The Quran, as revelation sent to convey the essential knowledge from the Divine to the human, states clearly what will happened at the time of death and warns against the coming Hour and the final Day, which in Islam is identified through various names, including the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyama*), the Day of Reckoning (*yawn al-hisab*), and the Day of Religion (*yawn al-din*). Angels are widely accepted in Islam as

Allah's intermediaries; the Prophet himself received the revelation through the mediation of the Archangel Gabriel, who also showed the Prophet how to pray. One reference is made to the Angel of Death who will accompany the dying soul during the transition phase from one state and condition to another. "The Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls: then shall ye be brought back to your Lord." (32:11). In addition, the Quran makes reference to two angels who are present at the moment of death, one to move the soul in the appointed direction and the other to serve as witness of everything that the soul has accomplished. "And there will come forth every soul: with each will be an (angel) to drive, and an (angel) to bear witness." (50:21) It is interesting in this context that the very next verse mentions the lifting of the veil that separates humanity in "this world" from the Unseen Reality (*al-ghaib*)."(It will be said:) 'Thou wast heedless of this; now have We removed thy veil, and sharp is thy sight this Day!'"

We may spend a lifetime attempting to avoid the Grand Intruder who follows us like a hooded thief throughout our lives; but the fact remains that, if we trusted our natural inclinations and spiritual instincts, we would be less worried about the shadowy specter of death following close upon our heels. What is life but a series of moments that are surrounded by a past and a future that has no true reality and makes no lasting impression. After all, the future may never happen, at least to us in this world; while the past is not even past, to quote Faulkner once again. In fact, the Quran advises us that "on the Day that they see the (punishment) promised them, (it will be) as if they had not tarried more than an hour in a single day (46:35. In another context, the Quran makes reference to those who ask about the Hour: When will it happen? The answer: "(It will be) as if they had tarried but a single evening, or (at most till) the following morn!" (79:46) Above all, we need not speculate too much about death and when it will happen, except to ask "What will make thee realize that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?" (42:17). It is enough to remember death's reality as a living reminder of the true reality, rather than that we merely "wait for the Hour, that it should come on them of a sudden?" (47:18).

What will be my gift when death knocks on my door? It is an interesting question that calls for a worthy answer. There is no doubt that we strive for happiness and success, fame and fortune during the course of a lifetime; but these are vain and personal aspirations that will not meet the moment of death with the dignity that death requires. More suitable would be such gifts as the innocence of childhood and the nobility of old age, the effort of good work and the fulfillment of one's vocation, the charity of a smile and the faithfulness of a promise well kept, the passage of time respected and never wasted, the loyalty of friendship and the intensity of love. Placed within a box where nothing is amiss and everything is in its rightful place, may my life be wrapped in the ribbons of honesty and truthfulness when death knocks on my door, as a gift of gratitude to God and as the ultimate surrender (*islam*) to the one, true Reality.

Notes

[1] The French make reference to *le petite mort* as a reference to a short period after sexual orgasm when people have been known to fall into a state of unconsciousness following the intensity of the experience.

[2] Mulla Sadra, *The Wisdom of the Throne*, trans. J. W. Morris, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 148.

[3] William C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994, p. 71.

[4] The first letter of the Arabic alphabet, drawn as a single vertical line.

[5] Schuon, *Essential Writings*, p. 444.

[6] According to a *hadith qudsi*, which is a saying of the Prophet that quotes the direct speech of the Divine Being, a regular reciter of the Quran is he "who reads the Quran is as if he were talking to Me and I were talking to Him."

[7] *Ibid*., p. 77.

[8] In the *Bhagavad Gita* (9.7-8), the god Krishna describes this rhythmic play of creation in the following words:

At the end of the night of time all things return to my nature;

when the new day of time begins I bring them again into light.

Thus through my nature I bring forth all creation

and this rolls around in the circles of time.

[9] Edith Wharton, *The Reckoning* (London: Orion Publishing, 1999), p. 179.

[10] *Ibid,* p. 187.

Feminist Research for Social Change

Ayeesha Zawahir

Mother Teresa University
India

Abstract

Research literally means to investigate, to study, to explore, to examine, to seek the facts and answers to questions and solutions to problems. It is a purposive investigation. If this exploration can help to transform society, it would be the best that is possible by a research. Research would then become a contributing factor for social change which is vital if a nation has to develop. This paper would focus on feminist research. Feminist research is primarily a research by woman, on and with women. It would stress the necessity of feminist research to uplift the 'other sex'. It would highlight the importance of women researchers reflecting on women's experiences thereby to raise women's consciousness. Feminist research is directed towards that of a social change "that values as against devaluation of women's labour, recognizes as against women's discrimination, gets equality as against injustice to women". This paves the way for action research wherein women become recipients rather than objects of research. By feminist research the women researchers not only help to change the lives of other women for the better but they themselves also get empowered in the process. The paper will also outline the "interactive methodology" adopted in feminist research. The benefits of combining the qualitative and quantitative research will be made obvious. A synopsis of a research done on 'Muslim Women Jamaat' will be presented in the paper to illustrate how social research can benefit the other halves to better their lives.

Keywords

Feminism, Women's labour, Interactive methodology, Muslim women, Society

Introduction

People have different reasons for conducting research. Some have to undertake a project as part of academic work. Some have to conduct a study as part of employment. Others might be fascinated by something they have observed and want to find more. Research literally means to investigate, to study, to explore, to examine, to seek the facts and answers to questions and solutions to problems. It is a purposive investigation. If this

exploration can lead to transformation of society, it would be the best that is possible by a research.

Today women constitute one half of the humanity. Still women lurk in fear and danger. They have not reached the full circle in improvement. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said, "The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities." Right from the ancient days the humanity is male dominated and man regards woman not as an autonomous being but as a relative being. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not 'he' with reference to 'her'. He is the subject and she is the other – the object. Throughout history we find that women have always been subordinated to men. Women gained only when men were willing to grant. They have taken nothing, they have only received. Only in the 18th century some genuinely democratic men began to view that women like men are human beings. But even today in the 21st century majority of men consider emancipation of women as a threat to their morality and interests. And hence we find in our own country the 33% reservation for women in parliament is unable to be established. All these happenings pose the following questions: How did it all this begin? What made women succumb to such things? When can women expect to be treated in par with men? Where can one find a solution to this discrimination? What are women doing to gain their rights? Which is the best way? What are the barriers on the path? Why the delay? A critical and careful inquiry or examination of facts in order to ascertain the truth and seek a solution is indispensable. To uplift women to their true status, research in women's issues is essential. Research by women on women is all the more better as they are more intimately connected with the feminine world to create a better world for the women of tomorrow.

Social Research

Social research is "*a systematic method of exploring, analyzing and conceptualizing human life in order to extend, correct or verify knowledge of human behavior and social life.*" Social research "*seeks to find explanations to unexplained social phenomena to clarify the doubtful, and correct the misconceived facts of social life.*" Before the advent of sociology and application of the scientific method to social research, human inquiry was mostly based on personal experiences, and received wisdom in the form of tradition and authority. Such approaches often led to errors such as inaccurate observations, overgeneralization, selective observations, subjectivity and lack of logic. But today Social research is based on logic and empirical observations. Charles C. Ragin writes in his 'Constructing Social Research' book that "*Social research involved the interaction between ideas and evidence. Ideas help social researchers make sense of evidence, and researchers use evidence to extend, revise and test ideas*". Social research thus attempts to create or validate theories through data collection and data analysis, and its goal is exploration, description, explanation and solution finding.

Feminist Research

Today women are in the move. They are becoming aware. In the earlier days the struggle was for the democratic rights of women. It included the right to education and employment; the right to property; the right to vote; the right to enter parliament; the right to birth control; the right to divorce, etc. They were fighting for a legal reform, for a legally equal position in society; the struggles were, essentially, outside the home and the family. Today women have gone beyond mere legal forms to end discrimination; they

are working towards the emancipation of women. Therefore women's struggle now includes fight against women's subordination to the male within the home; against their exploitation by the family; against their continuing low status at work, in society and in the culture and religion of the country; against their double burden in production and reproduction. They are not only working for the achievement of women's quality, dignity and freedom of choice but also for a just and equitable society for both women and men. Consequently possible research areas are extensive.

Research by educated women on women issues enable women to go beyond the old complaints regarding equal pay, glass ceilings or the objectification of females towards an empowering vision for women in the Third World that includes greater autonomy and decision making. Women could drastically alter the social arrangements in the direction of equality, justice and human fulfillment, by their research studies so that the brutal realities of the present could give way to vastly increased material security, social harmony and self-realization. Women's research can highlight what should be the proper relation between the grassroots and leaders, the implications of the means used for the end that is desired, the connection between the personal and political, nature and culture or the material and the spiritual. And as result it would bring to the forefront the strategic and practical gender needs. On the whole women stand a better chance of moving from understanding their world to changing it and that is what women researchers aim at.

Feminist research is primarily a research by women, on and with women as it explains how individual and collective women's lives are constrained by the action of men. Women researchers reflect on women's experiences thereby to raise women's consciousness. Feminist research in turn will make feminist activity possible. Feminist research is directed towards that of a social change "*that values as against devaluation of women's labour, recognizes as against women's discrimination, gets equality as against injustice to women*". This paves the way for action research wherein women become recipients rather than objects of research. By feminist research the women researchers not only help to change the lives of other women for the better but they themselves also get empowered in the process.

Research for Social Change

While early scholars saw the function of higher education as pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, today researchers see it as going beyond that to include applying such knowledge in order to enhance, directly or indirectly, the material well-being, happiness and comfort of mankind. The utilitarian perception of the mission of higher education, the need for strengthening higher education and research capabilities of the developing world, how to bridge the gap between the natural and social scientists, and the freedom and responsibility in the conduct of research are some of the issues which are currently being discussed. As we march in the 21st century, the main challenge to mankind seems to be how to sustain the immense contributions of research to the well-being of mankind without jeopardising the future of man.

Bulk of traditional research is done to benefit militaries, corporations, or academic careers, and not with much of public interest. Recently, academics have discovered – or rediscovered – a mission of community service that revolves around doing research for social change. And in this researchers prefer participatory research as it brings in action oriented results. Community-based participatory research is a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. Community-based participatory research begins with a

research topic of importance to the community, has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve the society. This renewed focus is due to many converging factors, including our increased understanding of the complex issues that affect human society, the importance of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and the need to translate the findings of basic, interventional, and applied research into changes in practice and policy.

Case Study - Research on Muslim Women Jamaat

A study on the Muslim Women Jamaat in Pudukottai, India was conducted in 2007. Muslim Women Jamaat is a committee or a council of Muslim female members to redress the problems of Muslim women.

Muslim Women of India

Muslim Women Survey commissioned by the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, states that the disadvantage of Muslim women is threefold in dimension: "Muslim women in India are disadvantaged thrice over: as members of a minority community, as women, and as poor women." These categories reinforce one another, but neither one sums up the entire story. Muslim women constitute the least understood minority in India – they are a "minority within a minority." Hence they are doubly disadvantaged. Adding on to this disadvantage is the institution of purdah which makes them an "invisible" minority. In a recent report published by the National Commission for Women, the position of Muslim women especially in the realm of economic and educational backwardness has been highlighted and that the lack of awareness of their rights under Islam adds to their misery.

Muslim women in India share a number of challenges with their sisters from other religions. Additionally Indian Muslim women carry the burden added by incorrect or outdated interpretations of Islamic Law (or Shariah). Indian Muslim women's organizations and activists face multiple challenges:

- Ensuring that the rights of women under the Qur'an and Shariah are progressively interpreted

- Ensuring that these rights are protected

- Creating awareness among Muslim women of these rights so that they do not continue to be legally, socially and economically oppressed in a male-dominated society in the name of religion.

Need of the Study

Muslim Women Jamaat was established in February 2004 at Pudukkottai district in Tamilnadu, India. Muslim Women Jamaat is a new concept in Islam. It has created positive and negative reactions world over. A study would enable to understand the concept of Muslim Women Jamaat, provide an evaluation of the concept and allow an estimate of its functioning. It would facilitate its promotion if found viable and acceptable. In the process, the study would also throw light on the status of Muslim Women.

Aim of the Study

Aim of the study was to find out the characteristics and functioning of the Muslim Women Jamaat, its impact on the Muslim women society and the possibility of it becoming a reality wherever there was concentration of Muslim population.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the causes that led to the formation of Muslim Women Jamaat.

2. To examine the nature and characteristics of Muslim Women Jamaat.

3. To explore the functioning of Muslim Women Jamaat.

4. To study the extent of Muslim Women Jamaat's positive effect on the society.

5. To know the response of the members of the Muslim Women Jamaat and non-members of the Muslim Women Jamaat to the formation of the Muslim Women Jamaat.

6. To determine Muslim Women Jamaat's impact on the Muslim community.

7. To look at the option of Muslim Women Jamaat becoming a reality everywhere.

Research Approach

The study on Muslim Women Jamaat was both a fact-finding as well as an evaluating study. Hence an appropriate methodology for the study of Muslim Women Jamaat was considered to be a happy mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data was collected through observation of the core committee meeting, interviewing 10 of the core committee members and questioning 120 members and 120 non-members of the Muslim Women Jamaat.

Findings on observing the core committee meeting it was found:

- The core committee meeting of Muslim Women Jamaat at Pudukkottai had strength of 40 members.

- The core committee meeting is held once in a month.

- Muslim Women Jamaat organizes a state level conference once in a year.

- The core committee discusses the work schedule for the following month.

- Reporting on the previous cases attended to and follow up of results are done.

- New cases are presented by members.

- Affected Muslim women also present their case directly.

- Members participate enthusiastically in the discussions.

- All cases attended to are recorded, filed and stored.

- Social organizations come to observe the functioning of the Muslim Women Jamaat.

On interviewing some of the core committee members it was found:

- Most of the core committee members of the Muslim Women Jamaat are illiterates.

- Most of them are affected women who had benefited by the actions taken by the Muslim Women Jamaat.

- Muslim Women Jamaat runs a home for affected women till they stabilize their lives and a home for girl children to provide shelter, educate and empower them.

- Muslim Women Jamaat enables affected women to become economically independent by giving them vocational training, arranging loans or finding a job and equipping them to face challenges.

- There is no age limit restriction to become a member of the Muslim Women Jamaat

- Muslim Women Jamaat has spread its wings in the southern districts of Tamilnadu and is functioning effectively.

- The main aim of the Muslim Women Jamaat is to empower Muslim women by making them aware of their rights, make them get what is their due and providing the necessary support for affected women.

- Most of the cases dealt by the Muslim Women Jamaat are dowry harassment, family problem and cheating.

- Formation of the Muslim Women Jamaat was the result of negligence of the male dominated Pallivasal Jamaat to address the problems of the Muslim women in a proper manner.

- Muslim Women Jamaat brings out a Tamil booklet giving vent to the feeling of the affected Muslim women and to make Muslim women aware of their rights.

- Muslim Women Jamaat had organized a token one day fasting at Madurai on 11.08.2004 to draw the attention of the governments to the needs of Muslim women.

- Muslim Women Jamaat provides training and discussions over Islamic tenets and matters of importance to Muslim women.

- Muslim Women Jamaat organizes seminars and workshops to empower Muslim women.

- The women involved in the federation are subjected to many threats and character assassination by the patriarchal society.

On analyzing the questionnaire for members and non-members of the Jamaat it was found:

- In the total sample group 57% of the respondents were of the opinion that the progress of the Muslim Women Jamaat was good.

- 94% of the respondents were of the opinion that women can play a decision making role to get justice established.

- 90% of the respondents were of the opinion that it is possible to establish the Muslim Women Jamaat wherever there was concentration of Muslim community.

- 90% of the respondents expressed that Muslim Women Jamaat is necessary to empower Muslim women.

Conclusion

Muslim Women Jamaat is initiated by the victims of the male dominated Jamaat. Muslim Women Jamaat is taking up cases of victimised women whose problems were not properly addressed by the local jamaat. It plays vital role in finding a way for the victimised women to sustain their life socially and economically. It is trying to draw the attention of the Muslim community and the government to the needs of Muslim women. Muslim Women Jamaat is working to create awareness among Muslim women about their rights.

Suggestions

- Efforts to improve the status of Muslim women had to be given a serious consideration.

- Interpretation of Quranic teachings had to be done from women's perspective which had been hitherto absent.

- Forums to address issues of Muslim women must be developed.

- Muslim community must labour to make its female members aware of their rights.

- Muslim community must find effective steps to check the erring Pallivasal jamaats.

- Pallivasal jamaats should give proper representation to women members of the society.

- Democratic methods should be followed in electing the members of the Muslim Pallivasal jamaats.

- The mosques should function as a common place for congregational prayers for both men and women.

- Administration of the community affairs by the Pallivasal jamaats should be done in a fair and just manner irrespective of the class and gender.

- Government should take drastic steps to put down the dowry harassment problem.

- Muslim women's educational status is very low. Facilities to get educated and incentives to encourage educating girl children must be given priority by the society and the state.

- Muslim women's labour force participation is minimal. Government should adopt policies to increase their economic participation.

Conclusion

This research is a feminist research for social change as it is a research by a woman on women and with women. The research has thrown light on the hitherto hidden facts and made clear the steps to be adopted to provide justice to victimized Muslim women. If the suggestions are implemented it would result in Muslim women living in peace and harmony in the society relishing their rights.

If we are to find long-term and sustainable solutions to the challenges identified in this millennium, including both women development and women emancipation, clearly we must empower the world's women — one half of its population — to contribute their knowledge and insights to the process. Using the space provided by the world

community, women have made considerable progress, in the last decade, in making their experiences and perspectives heard and their contributions visible. We must now ensure that the new aid architecture is shaped in a way that will expand that space at the country and regional levels. Women's experiences, perspectives and contributions must continue to play a key role in efforts to increase equality among all peoples, to build a global commitment to human development, human rights and human security as an alternative to war and violence.

The challenge to women in India today is to be sensitive to the uniqueness of Indian situation and to respond to this uniqueness by forging new ways. It is what Indian women researchers should opt for. Then it will ultimately lead to the empowerment of Indian women individually and collectively. The consequence of this cumulative effort will be national development.

Bibliography

Dr. Gokilavani S., *Women's Studies: Principles, Concepts and Methodologies*, Alagappa University, India, 1999.

Dr. Krishnaswami O.R., *Methodology of Research in Social Sciences*, Himalaya Publishing House, India, 1997.

Kothari C.R., *Research Methodology Methods & Techniques*, New Age International (P) Limited Publishers, India, 2006.

Loraine Blaxter, Christia Hughes, Malcom Tight, *How to Research*, Open University Press, USA, 2002.

Maitrayee Chaudhuri, *Feminism in India*, Kali for Women & Women Unlimited, India, 2004

Sheila Rowbioham, *Women in Movement,* Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc., London, 1992.

Yasodha Shanmugasundaram, *Women's Studies, Theory and Method*, Mother Teresa Women's University Press, India, 2000.

Abu Ali Miskawayh: Contribution to Arabic Historiography

Badruddin Bhat

Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies
Islamic College of Science and Commerce
India

Abstract

The present article deals with the contribution of the 10th ⁻11th century Iranian historian-philosopher Abu Ali Miskawayh to Arabic historiography. At the very outset a brief introduction to his historical work *Tajarib al-Umam* wa *al-Tajarib al-Himam* has been given out and its facsimile edition from Leiden has also been introduced. The information about its fragments available at various places of the world has also been given. Miskawayh's use of rational thinking in the field of Arabic historiography has been highlighted. The unnatural and legendary elements found in the earlier historical works were altogether rejected by Miskawayh as an "idle talk" which could serve no purpose for the society. The rational interpretation of words like "shayateen, ifrits and jinns" put forward by Miskawayh has also been elaborated in the article. It has been argued that the credit of recording the contemporary history without fear or favor in the days of absolutism goes to Miskawayh. He has exposed the wrong doings and evil designs of his contemporary politicians and rulers like al-Muhallabi, Muizzuddawlah, Bakhtiyar, Aduddawlah etc. The havoc made by the Byzantines on Muslim lands and people has been recorded by Miskawayh without showing any partisan feeling. Nevertheless, Miskawayh's *Tajarib* suffered from certain flaws also. It has been shown that Miskawayh has not recorded the accounts of Arab Kingdom to our satisfaction. He has not touched also the happenings in the Egypt, Africa, and Spain etc which made his history a disproportionate account of the events. His eye witness sources generally are the pro- Buwayhids. The article shows that in spite of these drawbacks and wear points. Miskawayh's contribution to Arabic historiography is very unique and prominent. At the end of the article, the opinion of the leading orientalists like Margoliouth, Leone Caetani and Grunebaum have been presented to show the importance and contribution of Miskawayh to Arabic historiography. These opine that the *Tajarib* is distinctively the work of a constructive mind governed by a high conception of what should be the aim and duty of the historians and throughout Miskawayh shows a great advance over his predecessors and contemporaries among Arab historians.

Keywords

Historiography, Iranian historian, Miskawayh, aim and duty of historians, Arabic historiography

The Buwayhid period can boast of a special distinction in the Muslim history so far as the development of various sciences and literature is concerned. The amirs and viziers were not only the patrons of knowledge and learning but were themselves glittering stars of the literary galaxy.

Abu Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad Yaqub Miskawayh (d. 421 A.H) was one of the dazzling stars of this galaxy. Inspite of his busy life in various courts, he contributed tremendously to various branches of science, knowledge and literature. He wrote books on history, philosophy, ethics, medicine, politics, metaphysics and poetry. Jurji Zaydan has remarked that Miskawayh was among those geniuses who are seldom born in any nation.[1] According to al-Khwansari, Miskawayh was among the leading scholar-philosophers of high stature.[2]

In the present article, we will confine ourselves to the study of his contribution to Arabic historiography.

Tajarib al - Umam

Miskawayh contributed *Tajarib al- Umam wa al- Ta'aqib al- Himam* to Arabic historiography. This is a general history of pre-Islamic Persia and Islam upto 369 A.H. He started his work from the Deluge and ended it with the events of 369 A.H. He wrote it when he was in the service of 'Adud-al-Dawlah. The information of al-Qifti and 'Abd Allah al- Na'mah does not appear correct that Miskawayh wrote it upto the death of 'Adud al- Dawlah, which occurred in 372 A.H.[3] George Sarton has also committed the same error.[4]

The Trustees of Gibb Memorial Fund, Leiden with the preface of Leone Caetani published the facsimile edition of volumes 1, 5 and 6 in 1909,1913 and 1917 respectively. In 1914 and 1915, vols 5 and 6 were made available by Amedroz in printed form from Egypt which were reprinted from Baghdad. Margoliouth translated these volumes under the title of, *The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate* and published them from Oxford in 1921. Volumes 2, 3 and 4 are still unpublished. One of its parts has been printed as a supplement to a history of an anonymous author called *Al- Uyun wa-al-Hadayiq fi Akhbar al Haqayiq*. The matter supplemented from the *Tajarib* is from the year 198 A.H. to 251 A.H.The following disconnected portions of the *Tajarib* were also known to exist in different places in the manuscript form;

1. A.H. 36-37 (Battle of the Camel to the death of Mukhtar) Escurial, No 1704.
2. A.H 196 – 251, Amsterdam, Cate-de-Jung, 101 edited by M.J de Goeje, Fragm Hist Arabs, Vol II.
3. A.H. 249 – 315, Paris, Bibl.Nat Arabi 5838 (Schefar A21)
4. A.H. 304 – 365, Bodleian Marsh 357 – Cat Uri I, No 804.[5]

Some years back we heard that the full text of the *Tajarib al- Umam* has been published from Iran. However, so far we have not been able to come across any volume of it.

Purpose of Historiography

While going through the pages of history written by Miskawayh, we notice that he can claim to be the first Muslim philosopher who wrote a general history. He studied history from a philosophical point of view, analyzing the events and drawing conclusions after a thorough critical examination of the surface currents and under-currents of the happenings. Miskawayh appears to be the first Muslim historian, who discussed the purpose of history writing and chose the historical events accordingly. He dropped the material which he regarded as an idle talk; and which, he thought, could serve no purpose other than make the reader fall asleep.[6]

He writes in the beginning of the history: "I read about the kings, nations and books of history, I saw certain events which can be repeated in future and experience can be gained from them. For instance, the rise and fall of the empires and nations, the activities of the reformers of the nations and those who carelessly led the nation to its downfall". Here Miskawayh 'argues that history has a purpose and guides like a teacher because a teacher can point out to such persons as followed the right course of action and rose in consequence while the careless persons proved to be of no good to themselves and to their nations. Those people who read history with a view to get some lessons from the past history can benefit from it.[7]

Miskawayh's Critical Approach

Before Miskawayh, no doubt, such events as could teach us lessons were recorded in history, but those were mixed up or confused with some legends and irrelevant details or information and thus could not stir, the mind of the readers to the extent of creating fruitful results in a purposeful manner; that is why he deleted altogether the description of the miracles of the prophets. Comparing his *Tajarib* with other histories, we see that the histories are full of the supernatural events. But in the opinion of Miskawayh, the description of the miracles serves no useful purpose for the *true* reform of the masses.[8] It was because of this that Miskawayh entitled his historical work as *Tajarib al-Umam*-the experiences of the nations. In his opinion, amirs, viziers, generals and administrators who want to frame their policies in the light of historical experiences could make the best use of his account.[9]

In the previous histories, it was written that some Iranian kings overpowered the devils (Jinns) and extracted hard labour from these awful creatures. But Miskawayh did not believe in these legends and rejected them. He interpreted the events in a purely rationalistic way. About the first known Iranian king Ushhanj (Hoshing) he writes that he banished the scoundrels of his country by his statesmanship and the people who could be of some use, employed them and named them as satins, "aqarib" and "ifrits.[10] Similarly, about Jamshid, he observes that it was he, who arrested scoundrels and banished Satins (Shayatin) or hooligans and assigned them the toughest jobs like crushing of the stones, constructing the houses and working in the mines. Because of these steps the hooligans feared him too much.[11]

About Dahhak, the Persian historians recorded that he had two snakes over his shoulders, which would eat the brains of the people as their diet. Al-Tabari also has cited these things. Although, Miskawayh abridged al-Tabari's history, he totally rejected this view about Dahhak and declared that Dahhak was the cruelest

man and wanted to crush the people through every possible way. He had two glands on his shoulders and would keep them in movement and would tell the people that they were snakes, so that people would be frightened and that the story of two snakes was simply a myth.[12] All such rational approach is a feather in the cap of Miskawayh which no other historian probably had before him.

Sources

Another distinctive feature of Miskawayh's history is that he obtained information of the events from the court officials, secretaries, clerks, viziers and others. Because, he thought that these people knew better about the government secrets and concealed realities. Therefore, he wrote the contemporary part of his history, after thorough testing. The use of this particular source made his work totally a political history. To collect material from officials, government documents and secretaries, was a unique peculiarity which perhaps no other historian before Miskawayh came to possess.

It had been the general phenomenon of historians before Miskawayh that they did not write freely and frankly about their own period. They avoided the details lest any calamity from the high ups should befall them, ruining their chances of a peaceful and prosperous life. We can take the example of al-Tabari, who avoided giving details of the political activities of his times. He could not dare to write freely and critically about the Caliphs or other political figures of his times. But Miskawayh is the foremost historian who wrote very boldly and comprehensively about his own times. He went to the extent of criticizing the deeds of some of the powerful personalities and their families. Although, he served the Buwayhid courts, he never hesitated to criticize them boldly and fearlessly. Thus, we see that in applying the critical method of *Naqd al- Tarikhi*, in historiography he excelled all the preceding Muslim historians.

Miskawayh criticized Mu'izz al-Dawlah to be ferocious, irascible and foul-mouthed constantly reviling his viziers and most dignified courtiers and trumping up charges against them.[13] He has criticized him again for issuing 'Iqta' to the military officials, which was the cause of the failure of the sound economy of the country, corruption and degeneration of the people.[14] He unveiled the corruption and dishonesty of Mu'izz al-Dawlah when in 339 A.H. He wanted to appoint someone as his vizier. Many people tried for the post and one man called Abu 'Ali al Tabari among them offered 300,000 Dinars to Mu'izz al-Dawlah which he took and assured the man of his appointment. But the next day Muizzal Dawlah dropped him and appointed al-Muhallabi.[15]

Similarly he criticized Bakhtiyar for his inefficiency, carelessness and other disqualifications. Miskawayh points out that Bakhtiyar used to spend his time in sport, amusement and in the society of buffoons, singers and women.[16] He alienated himself from the army by spending his time in constant amusement and intoxication. He was compelled to rely on worthless individuals whom he had elevated. His whole system had got rotten from top to bottom. He had no control over his tongue and was unable to help his own secrets even where his life and throne were involved.[17]

Miskawayh was so impartial as an historian that he did not even conceal the oppressions of his benefactor al-Muhallabi. He recorded detailed account of al-Muhallabi's brutal endeavors to extort money from different people for

constructing Mu'izz al-Dawlah's palace.[18]

Miskawayh served 'Adud al-Dawlah and was very close to him and participated in some expeditions also.He praised Adud al-Dawlah in the prologue of the *Tajarib*. But he was so bold that he did not hesitate in describing his designs to grab the country from Bakhtiyar.[19] Likewise, there can be found other descriptions in his work related to the contemporary times which an historian of those days could hardly dare to expose.

Miskawayh's boldness in criticizing the powerful men of the times while writing contemporary history elevated his position in the eyes of modem scholars. The Orientalists have offered him due praise. His courage to write history fearlessly during the days of absolutism of rulers raises him to a high rank and he stands out as an eminent historian of his time.

Among other merits of Miskawayh as a good historian, is his impartiality and sound judgment. Whenever he found any good quality in the governing class or in any person who brought about peace and prosperity to the society,he recorded his appreciation thereof. About Mu'izz al-Dawlah, whom he criticized vehemently, he commends his efforts to provide irrigational facilities in the agricultural areas which, as a whole, brought prosperity to Baghdad.[20] Similarly he admired al-Muhallabi for some of his good traits. 'Adud al-Dawlah was appreciated for the measures he took for the reconstruction of Baghdad.His liberality and patronage which he extended to the scholars, engineers, muadhins, jurists, exegetes, theologians, poets, physicians and mathematicians has been highlighted.[21]

Religious bias sometimes comes in way of recording impartial judgments in the case of persons belonging to other faiths. Historians too have themselves got involved in such prejudices and they could hardly raise themselves above sectarianism. History is full of such imbalances. In Miskawayh's times Byzantines worked havoc with the Muslims massacring thousands of them, looting people, raping Muslim women and capturing landed property. Miskawayh has recorded all these events without being irritated by the attitude of the invaders. In the whole account of this wonderful writer one cannot find anything except one paragraph in which he asserts that he is a Muslim. He has bravely accepted the shortcomings and defects of the Muslims. This quality places him among the best historians of the world.

Tajarib: A Regional History

Nevertheless, Miskawayh's historical work suffered from certain flaws as well. In order to determine his real position as an historian, it is necessary to make a mention of them. In this connection it is remarkable to note that the *Tajarib al-Umam* contains "disproportionate Persian account. Pre-Islamic Arab history attracted his attention so far as it related to Persia. A considerable number of battle days were neglected by him. The accounts of Arab Kingdom have not been recorded satisfactorily. While describing contemporary events, his main interest lay in the Buwayhids, who virtually ruled the whole of the territory directly under the Abbasids."

Thus, Miskawayh only recorded events generally bearing a regional character. What was happening in Egypt, Africa and the Umayyad Spain is nowhere found in the *Tajarib*. He did not give any favorable or detailed account

of the Hamdanids. He criticized Sayf al-Dawlah, who was the sole Muslim ruler to face and fight the Byzantine invadors. The same Sayf al-Dawlah has been immortalized by al-Mutanabbi.

Miskawayh took no care to describe the prophets and their mission. Obviously, the role of the prophets cannot be underestimated in human history. The lives of the prophets were not miraculous from top to toe. They exemplified the best way of life for the human beings. The greatest among the prophets-Muhammad (SAW) founded a state and he for all practical purposes ·had the capability to deal with the misguided and the ignored. He possessed both the political insight and administrative caliber. The details of his life can no doubt serve as a model for all to take inspiration and guidance for their lives. How can we think that his life was nothing but a set of miracles which he performed with Divine help? The government based on Islamic principles has universally been appreciated as the most just government to be obeyed and adopted. One fails to ascertain the reason as to why Miskawayh did not pay full attention towards Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Instead, he found time and energy to quote the sermons of the Persian kings at length. He could have taken up or traced several subjects from the *Sirah* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his successors for the benefit of all.

Again, so far as his eye witness sources were concerned, they were all pro-Buwayhids. For more impartial description of the events some anti-Buwayhid or non-Buwayhid witnesses should have been approached by him. All the witnesses on whom Miskawayh depended could not tell all that would go against the Buwayhids. One of his eye-witnesses is Abu'l-Fadl b.al-Amid. For him Miskawayh devoted eight pages, arguing that he was an unparalleled man, who possessed admirable qualities. He took every word uttered by Abu'l-Fadl to be correct even if it went against his methods of historiography. He included the dream of Rukn al-Dawlah about his victory in his history because it was narrated by Ibn al-Amid.[22]

Regardless of the weak points in the work of Miskawayh, his position as a good historian cannot be under-estimated. He was the first historian who tried to establish the elements of rational thinking in developing historiography and excluding the legendary aspects from it. This was an extraordinary contribution on his part which most of his predecessors, contemporaries as well as successors lacked.

Another important point to be noted is that Miskawayh's history is the only important source on the Buwayhid period. No other historian has collected so much of information about the period as he has done. Historians who succeeded Miskawayh have made him the main source for the period. Going through the histories *of* Ibn al-Athir and Ibn Khaldun this assumption can very easily be ascertained.

Tajarib and The Orientalists

Commenting on the *Tajarib al-Umam* Prof. Margoliouth observes: "Although this chronicle is marked by some gross examples of carelessness, it is on the whole one of the most instructive in the Arabic language. For a considerable portion of it the author writes about persons whom he knew intimately and institutions with which he was himself familiar".[23]

Von Grunebaum writes: "Historians before him had remained satisfied with accepting them (i.e. political events) at their face value and did not bother about their economic social and cultural significance. Miskawayh, who analyses competently the long- range effect of political actions, stands almost alone.[24] "His superiority as historian to Tabari, remaks Prof. Margolioth," is marked.[25] His *Tajarib al-Umam* displays interpretative subtlety and enlists an advance in the skill of presentation. His insight into human life is profound.[26] His power of character - drawing is remarkable, each of the host of characters who come upon the stage is easily distinguishable and the most important, of whom the number is very considerable are exceedingly life like. His appreciation of vizier Abu'l fadl Ibn al-Amid is unsurpassable and rarely equaled in Arabic historiography for its maturity of personal and political judgement.[27]

He considers history as a practical discipline with a purely utilitarian purpose as was characteristic of the Persians. He uses history as a source of practical ethics[28] and shows that whenever governments and nations have deflected from the path of wisdom and laws of morality, they have inevitably suffered decline and deterioration. Ethics thus is the essence of history. His interpretation of history is thoroughly moral.[29]

"Miskawayh has left us a work", observes Prince Leone Caetani "conceived on a plan that is akin in method to the principles followed by Western and more modern historians. Miskawayh decided that his history should be composed as an organic structure and that throughout it certain fundamental ideas serving to bind the whole together should, as it where, become the creative element in the work. There is a personal element in its pages that is wanting in other historical compositions of this period. It is distinctively the work of a constructive mind governed by a high conception of what should be the aim and duty of the historian and throughout Miskawayh shows a very great advance over his predecessors and contemporaries among Arab historians".[30]

Notes

[1] *Tarikh Adab al-Lughat al-Arabiyyah*, Dar al-Hilal, Cairo,1931, vol. 2, p. 317

[2] *Rawdat al Jannat,* Isfahan,1367 A.H, p.70

[3] *Tarikh al-Hukama,* Liepzig,1903, p.332 .*Falasifah al-Shiah*,Beirut,1930, p.127

[4] Introduction to History of Science, Washington, 1953, vol.1. p. 687

[5] *Tajarib al-Umam*, Facsimile edition, Gibb Memorial Series, Leiden, 1909.vol. 1, preface.

[6] *Tajarib*, vol. 1, p. 4

[7] Ibid, p. 2

[8] Ibid, pp. 5-6

[9] Ibid, pp. 4-5

[10] Ibid, p. 18

[11] Ibid, p. 9

[12] Ibid, pp. 11-12

[13] Ibid, vol. 5, p. 146

[14] Ibid pp. 96-99,Eng. Tr., The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate by D.S. Margoliouth,Oxford 1921,vol. 5,pp. 101-104

[15] Ibid, p.124, tr. p. 128

[16] Ibid, p.234,tr. pp. 248-49

[17] Ibid, p. 235 tr. pp. 250-262,278

[18] Ibid, pp.185-188,tr. pp. 200-204

[19] Ibid, pp.332-33,341-353, tr. pp. 370-84

[20] Ibid, p.165, tr. p.177

[21] Ibid, pp. 404-408, tr. pp. 443-47

[22] Ibid, p.142

[23] Preface to The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate.

[24] Grunebaum,Von,Medieval Islam,Chicago, 1953, p. 284.

[25] Preface to The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate, vol. 5, p. V

[26] Grunebaum, op. cit

[27] Preface to the Eclipse p. VII

[28] Richter,G,Medieval Arab Historiography tr. and ed. by M.S.Khan in quarterly Islamic Culture,Hyderabad (India) vol. XXIV No. 2,April 1960,p. 147

[29] Ansari,M.Abdul Haq,The Ethical Philosophy of Miskawayh,Aligarh,1964,p. 24.

[30] *Tajarib al-Umam,*Gibb Series,1909,Vol.I,pp. XI-XII

Problems with The Avicennian Concept of God's Knowledge

Rachel Woodlock

Monash University
Australia

Abstract

Ibn Sīnā (d.1037), adapting the Aristotelian emanationist framework to Islamic theology, argued that God possesses knowledge of corporeal particulars in a universal fashion. This has been understood either that God's causal knowledge of creation is not impacted by temporal change (because this would constitute change in his being, and God is unchanging by definition), or that God knows universal characteristics of creation but not the particularity of contingent beings. Both of these interpretations carry problems if viewed from a Qur'anic standpoint, which al-Ghazali (d.1111) highlighted in his criticisms of philosophy. This paper contributes the criticism that the Avicennian framework in regard to God's knowledge of particulars leads either to total predestination or denies the Qur'anic notion of God's interactive mercy.

Keywords

Introduction

In the eleventh century CE, Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d.1111) wrote his famous treatise *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (The incoherence of the philosophers) in order to refute various ideas that had gained currency in the Muslim philosophical world. One subject of his attack was the Avicennian notion that God's perception of the material world is limited to universal comprehension, rather than his possessing knowledge of corporeal particulars (al-Ghazālī, 1997, pp. 128–146).

This article asks: if God's knowledge is limited universal knowledge rather than of the particulars of corporeal existence, as Abū 'Alī Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna d.1037) concluded, what are the implications for how we understand God's interaction in the world and his relationship with individual human beings? Furthermore, what is the impact of this view on the concept of divine justice? In particular, this study looks at objections raised by al-Ghazālī, and criticises the Avicennian notion as being inconsistent with Qur'anic statements about the mercy of God and His ability to bestow mercy on individuals *despite*

(not because of) their actions' natural consequences.

After presenting a Qur'anic paradigm of God's knowledge and activity in the world, concentrating on his justice and mercy, the rest of this article will address Ibn Sīnā's philosophical construction of God and his knowledge, as well as some of al-Ghazālī's criticisms of Ibn Sīnā's beliefs. It will also discuss how the theory affects conception of God's relationship with the individual human being and resulting effect on how divine justice and mercy are understood. Lack of space, however, does not permit a full elucidation of the "argument" between Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī and the reader is encouraged to refer to Michael Marmura's translation of *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (al-Ghazālī, 1997).

Qur'anic Paradigm

This section presents an overview of some relevant Qur'anic concepts, before commencing a discussion of the problems arising from Ibn Sīnā's approach to God's knowledge. It is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate in any great detail on Islamic theology in regard to creation *ex nihilo*; God's activity in the world; the primacy of mercy over wrath and the coming of the day of judgement: themes on which Ibn Sīnā's philosophy touches. Briefly, however, the Qur'an describes God actively creating the heavens and the earth (and everything between them). Furthermore, it describes the purpose of human existence as being to worship God and live life according to his will, so that on the day of judgement a person may seek the mercy of God, his forgiveness and allowance of return to him.[1]

In Qur'anic eschatology, the primary stress is on individual accountability. God plays an active role on the day of judgement and forgiveness comes only through his unlimited mercy (Rahman, 1999). Moreover, it is through cognition of final accountability that a person becomes aware of the importance of living according to God's will delineated through religious law as the Qur'an says: "verily, God is always aware of what you do" (Qur'an, 4:94).

God and His Knowledge

In contrast to the medieval theologians' strict interpretation of the Qur'an teaching creation *ex nihilo*,[2] Ibn Sīnā adapted the Aristotelian framework of emanation in a complex ontological hierarchy (Belo, 2006).[3] His propositions began with proving that God is a necessary being; that he is one; that he is without cause and that his attributes are part of his essential being (Arberry, 1951, pp. 25–33).

Resting on the principle that from one only one can proceed, God–the necessary existent who is completely transcendent–emanates the first intellect by a process of divine intellection. To overcome a strictly linear hierarchy, and explain how multiplicity is achieved, Ibn Sīnā then has the first intellect emanating three beings by three acts of contemplation. The second intellect is emanated by reflecting on the necessary existent as necessary; the soul of the first heaven is emanated by reflecting on its own essence being necessary through dependence on the necessary existent; and the body of the first heaven is emanated through reflecting on its own essence as a possible being (Nasr, 1976, pp. 28–30). This process continues until the emanation of the tenth intellect, called the "giver of forms" or the "active intellect". At this point not enough energy exists to continue the chain and emanation "explodes, as it were, into the multitude of human beings, while from its dimension of shadow proceeds sublunary matter" (Corbin, 1993, pp. 171–172).

Heath observes that as Ibn Sīnā's notion of God is utterly transcendent, he becomes *"deus absconditus*–removed from creation" (Heath, 1992, pp. 37–38). The idea that God "sets off" the world and then lets it run without acting or interfering in it is a more deistic understanding of God than occurs in the Qur'anic Weltanschauung. In Ibn Sīnā's philosophy the souls of humans constitute the refracted active intellect, and it is the tenth emanation (not God the necessary existent) that interacts with corporeal creation.

From the propositions that God is the necessary existent who is free from any type of change (as change in God implies deficiency); that God as knowledge, being known and knowing are one and the same; and that God has knowledge of other than himself (as the absence of knowledge occurs when there is some material obstruction, of which God is necessarily free),[4] Ibn Sīnā argues that God possesses knowledge of all things by a single knowledge "which changes not according to the change in the thing known" (Arberry, 1951, p. 35). This is what is meant by God's knowledge of particulars known in a universal fashion.

Bello (1989, p. 120) describes two main interpretations of Ibn Sīnā's theory on God's knowledge. The first, as understood by some medieval commentators including Ibn Rushd (d.1198), is that God knows the particulars of the world of generation and corruption, but in a timeless, universal manner. That is, knowledge does not come to him with the passing of time that is ascertained by the physical senses, as he has causal knowledge of everything that exists. The second interpretation, favoured by Bello, is that according to Ibn Sīnā God does not know particulars in the corporeal world but only the "universal characteristics of these particulars" (Bello, 1989, p. 121). Both interpretations give rise to different philosophical problems. The first one infers total predestination, ruling out choice and free will. This is because if God has causal knowledge of an event happening, there is no possible way for the event not to happen. For example, Ibn Sīnā says:

> The objects of knowledge are a consequence of His Knowledge; His Knowledge is not a consequence of the things known, that it should change as they change; for His Knowledge of things is the reason for their having being.

Furthermore, if it is accepted that God knows all particulars but not in a temporal manner, it leaves God in ignorance of one type of knowledge which human beings themselves possess. Al-Ghazālī found the idea that God could lack something that humans possess repugnant (1997, pp. 132–133), but God can possess only those attributes it befits his nature to possess, i.e. we experience death and temporal existence, which God does not. Ibn Sīnā might argue that God's lack of temporal knowledge obtained via the senses is similar to God's inability to sin via the attribute of human fallibility. Nevertheless, al-Ghazālī chose to direct his attention to the second interpretation–that God only knows the particulars of the world of generation and corruption in a universal manner–and this is also the interpretation that is discussed below.

God and the Individual

The main consequence springing from Ibn Sīnā's theory regarding the knowledge of God being limited to a universalistic comprehension, is that it removes a level of relationship between God and the individual–that in which he is cognisant of every moment of a person's life, or even that the specific personality exists. Al-Ghazālī objected to this vehemently and wrote:

This is a principle … through which [the philosophers, or more specifically Ibn Sīnā]

uprooted religious laws in their entirety, since it entails that if Zayd, for example, obeys or disobeys God, God would not know what of his states has newly come about, because He does not know Zayd specifically. … Indeed it follows necessarily that one would have to say that when Muhammad, God's prayers and peace be upon him, challenged (the heathen) with his prophethood, (God) did not know then that he made the challenge (al-Ghazālī, 1997, pp. 139–140).

As mentioned previously, in Ibn Sīnā's ontological hierarchy it is the tenth emanation or the active intellect that interacts with humanity. It is from this giver of forms that our souls emanate and it is the source of our knowledge and intellectual aspirations. God, the necessary being, is merely a placebo to human beings. Rather than him being the one who responds "to the call of him who calls, whenever he calls unto me" as the Qur'an promises (Qur'an, 2:186), or the guiding force behind the Prophet's mission, God is completely unaware of the momentary reality of any individual, and cannot answer specific prayers and petitions.

Divine Justice and Mercy

Perhaps the more disturbing consequence of Ibn Sīnā's theory is that his concept of the deity is unable to personally reward or punish a person for their good deeds and sins. Al-Ghazālī objects to the implication of the obliteration of the two pillars upon which religious law rests: reward and punishment.

Furthermore, it contradicts Ibn Sīnā's philosophy to posit that an eternal God who does not know the particulars of day-to-day temporal existence might, at some point in the future, become fully cognizant of the same. To accord this transcendent God an active role in the future day of judgement implies a change in his essence from unknowing to knowing which is precisely what Ibn Sīnā wished to deny.

It is possible to argue that punishment and reward necessarily result from sins and good deeds, or as Ibn Sīnā puts it:

The ancient philosophers held that "reward" is the supervening of a certain pleasure in the soul according to the degree to which it achieves perfection, while "punishment" is the supervening of a certain pain in the soul according to the degree to which it remains imperfect (Arberry, 1951, p. 39).

In this scenario, the natural consequence of a good deed is attaining a measure of closeness to God and the natural consequence of a bad deed is moving away from him. Thus, God's justice is not violated as this causal nexus could have been established as a fundamental part of emanation. What it does negate, however, is the role of God's interactive mercy in the universe.

One of the most frequent Qur'anic themes is that of God's bountiful mercy and compassion, which he constantly pours out to creation. Human beings are continually admonished to repent of their sins and ask forgiveness, for God is "much-forgiving" (Qur'an, 5:74; 24:5; 4:152). Part of the Qur'anic concept of God's mercy is that he will bestow it on penitent believers not because they deserve it, or as a natural outcome of their good deeds, but because he may choose to do so, *despite* their sins. The Qur'an says: "but with all this, God will turn in his mercy unto whom he wills: for God is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace" (Qur'an, 9:27). Consequently, Ibn Sīnā's description of God as ignorant of the particulars of the world of generation and corruption would deny him the ability to benevolently act in creation, or pour his undeserved mercy on human beings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is possible to argue that Ibn Sīnā's proposition that God knows creation only in a universal, timeless manner shifts theology from being God-centred, to human-centred. Punishment and reward become necessary consequences of human action, rather than God's mercy being a gift the deity chooses to bestow as he wills. The individual no longer relates to God as the all-hearing, the all-knowing, but as a deistic "force" unwittingly sustaining the universe through narcissistic contemplation. Perhaps al-Ghazālī was a little too enthusiastic in implicating Ibn Sīnā in the destruction of religious law, and hence moral order: after all many an atheist has argued they do good simply because they choose it. Nevertheless it is difficult to recognise the traditional Qur'anic deity, who sees all and knows all, in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy.

Notes

[1] See, for example, Qur'an 21:16-17; 51:56; 5:51; 40:7-9; and 11:4.

[2] Qur'an 2:116-17; 16:40; and 36:81-82.

[3] There are many features of Ibn Sīnā's complex scheme of emanation and depiction of God that due to lack of space cannot be addressed. These include his threefold ontological division into necessary, possible and impossible being; the eternality of the universe; proof that God is the necessary existent, all other beings being dependent on him; the four causes of being; and the unification of God's attributes (that his essence is, for example, knowledge, being known and knowing all at once). (Afnan, 1958, pp. 116,126–130; Arberry, 1951, pp. 26,32–33; Fakhry, 1970, pp. 173–175).

[4] Al-Ghazālī criticises this argument by pointing out that Ibn Sīnā has not shown that it is corporeality alone that is an impediment to knowledge; thus one cannot prove that God knows other than himself by Ibn Sīnā's argument (al-Ghazālī, 1997, pp. 129–130).

Bibliography

Afnan, S. M. (1958). *Avicenna: His life and works*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Arberry, A. J. (1951). *Avicenna on theology* (Reprint ed.). Westport, CT: Hyperion Press.

Bello, I. A. (1989). *The medieval Islamic controversy between philosophy and orthodoxy:* Ijmā' *and* ta'wīl *in the conflict between Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Belo, C. (2006). Averroes on God's knowledge of particulars. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 17*(2), 177–199.

Corbin, H. (1993). *History of Islamic philosophy* (L. Sherrard & P. Sherrard, Trans.). London: Kegan Paul International.

Fakhry, M. (1970). *A history of Islamic philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press.

al-Ghazālī, A. H. (1997). *The incoherence of the philosophers: A parallel English-Arabic text* (M. E. Marmura, Trans.). Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press.

Heath, P. (1992). *Allegory and philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sînâ): With a translation of the Book of the Prophet Muhammad's ascent to heaven*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nasr, S. H. (1976). *Three Muslim sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī* (Reprint of 1969 ed. published by Harvard University Press ed.). Delmar, NY: Caravan Books.

Rahman, F. (1999). *Major themes of the Qur'ān* (2nd ed.). Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.

Iranian Studies at Concordia University: A Unique Program in Canada

Umberto Cicchetti

Concordia University
Canada

Abstract

The discipline of Iranian studies has a long history, from Sassanian times, when the Persians themselves showed interest in recovering the ancient languages of their civilization, to the multifaceted Western interest in Iran in 18th and 19th-century Europe. In Canada, however, Iranian studies has been exclusively a sub-discipline, placed in other categories of research such as Islam or Middle East Studies, even though most scholars agree that the scope of Iranian civilization is much broader than Islam and logically requires a separate program. In this article, we briefly trace the history of Iranian studies. We then discuss the role and influence of two key elements in the formation of "Iranian study awareness" in Canadian academia: the socio-economic situation of post- WWII Canada and the formation of the Canadian Iranian Diaspora following the Iranian 1979 revolution and ensuing Iran-Iraq war. These developments shed light on the context in which the Religion Department of Concordia University in Montréal, Canada established the first independent Iranian study program in Canada. We will discuss the background of scholars participating in the program, its interdisciplinary approach to Iranian studies embracing religion, literature, linguistics, sociology and anthropology, art and architecture, and the main challenges that the Iranian study program faces. One of these challenges is establishing lasting ties with academic institutions in Iran to match existing relations with Diaspora communities.

Most scholars agree that the scope of Iranian civilization is much broader than Islam and logically requires a separate and independent program of study. In Canada, Iranian studies have been exclusively a sub-discipline, placed in other categories of research such as Islam or Middle East Studies. First, in this article we briefly trace the history of Iranian studies in Canada. We then discuss the role and influence of two key elements in the

formation of "Iranian study awareness" in Canadian academia: the socio-economic situation of post- WWII Canada and the formation of the Canadian Iranian Diaspora following the Iranian 1979 revolution and ensuing Iran-Iraq war. These developments shed light on the context in which the Religion Department of Concordia University in Montreal, Canada established the first independent Iranian studies program in Canada. We will discuss the background of scholars participating in the program, its interdisciplinary approach to Iranian studies embracing religion, literature, linguistics, sociology and anthropology, art and architecture, and the main challenges that the Iranian studies program faces.

Interest in Iranian studies dates at least back at least to the Sasanian era (3rd to 7th centuries C.E). Already in this time, we see a lively interest in the roots of Iranian languages in the *Farhang-i Oim* as well as prolonged efforts aimed at the complex task of devising the Avestan alphabet.[1]

Early European interest in Iran was similarly philological. As early as 1312, the Church Council of Vienna sponsored the translation of the Bible into Persian, an enterprise which necessitated a thorough understating of the language, though the result seems to have been of dubious quality.[2] Persian language remained the chief topic of research related to Iran, with this interest persisting well into the 20th century with famous figures such as William Jones with his pioneering grammar of Persian language (actually used in the West up until the 1950's!) and Anquetil's translation in French of parts of the *Zend Avesta*, to mention just two examples. These early concerns were part of a grand project to produce a global understanding of early Indo-European history, to which Iran was thought to be central.

Although the dominant Orientalist narrative presents interest in the Iranian culture, past and language as unidirectional, we are now slowly uncovering and acknowledging the valuable contributions of Iranians to the writing of these early "Orientalists". Iranians appear to have been as much interested in knowing and studying their own culture in historical and critical perspective as the Orientalists, if not more so. This is arguably still true today. One has only to consider the work of the great scholar Mohammad Tavakoli-Tarqhi and his success in raising awareness of the contributions of Iranians themselves to Iranian to realize this fact. Building on Edward Said's *Orientalism,* Professor Tavakoli-Targhi has succeeded in offering an alternative, more dynamic view of the development of Western disciplines in general, including Iranian studies.[3]

The compelling European curiosity for language, fuelled by the whole grand Indo-European theory, was a locus point from which Iranian studies spread. A second factor playing a seminal role in the shaping of Iranian studies was the division, consciously made by Iranians themselves, into pre- and post-Islamic eras: ancient, mythical Iran with a focus on the old royal dynasties, ancient languages, epigraphy, art, and Zoroastrianism religion on the one hand and an Islamic period focused on Islam, mysticism and "Persian literature" (chiefly poetry). These topics became separate categories of research in numerous European universities, and the divisions between them persist to a large extent today.

The history of Iranian studies in North America, and more specifically in Canada is rooted in economic and political influences as well as exposure to the international scene following the Second World War[4]. This was a time of opening to the world throughout the North American continent and also of transference of knowledge and personnel from Europe to the new world. Many scholars immigrated to Canada and became active professors at Canadian Universities, bringing traditional European scholarship into a dynamic new culture whose economy was booming. The subsequent history of Iranian studies as well as other disciplines in this area of the world shows the blending of old-

style Orientalism with new ideas and influences, and finally a transformation, described below.

The two main Islamic institutes of Canada, The McGill Institute for Islamic Studies and the Islamic of Toronto, are both university products of these North American and Canadian socio-political conditions. Both these institutions (the first founded by the distinguished Canadian comparative religionist and observer of modern Islam, Wilfred Cantwell Smith) were aimed primarily at Islam, in both a religious and culture sense. Iranian studies was not established as a distinct field of study but rather integrated as a sub-discipline within the greater category of Islam, despite the fact that scholars recognize Iranian civilization as being much broader than Islam or the Islamic period. Orientalist patterns, in other words were reproduced, as if there were a natural and inevitable division between ancient Indo-European civilization and Iran under Islamic rule. The continuity of Iranian civilization was lost in this division. The pattern was repeated in numerous academic institutions in the United States, where Iranian studies have had a faint presence till today, when we still find only two active but small programs.

A second factor with enormous impact on the field of Iranian studies was the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 followed by the invasion of Iranian territory by Iraq and the ensuing eight years war. In this period, several Iranians left their *watan* and immigrated to Canada. Before this watershed year, the population of Canadians of Iranian origin was not significant. Statistics Canada records the first Iranian immigration as taking place as early as 1901 and 1902, and by 1980, there were still only five thousand souls. By the mid-90's however, the population had increased to more than sixty thousand - an astonishing increase. Currently, Iranians rank as the fifth largest group of immigrants to Canada, with major centres in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal. More importantly, Iranians are the second most educated group of immigrants, after Germans. The overwhelming majority of Iranian immigrants join the professional ranks of engineers, doctors, lawyers and dentists, and there are also good numbers of prominent entrepreneurs and businessmen. To give just two examples, the Khoramshahi family owns the Future Shop firm, one of the largest and most successful electronic retail outlet in Canada, while the Ghirmizians (of Iranian Armenian background) built the West Edmonton Mall, by far the biggest shopping mall in Canada[5]. The Canadian Iranian community is not only expanding, prosperous, and thriving, but educated and aware, a population one would expect to cultivate a more than passing interest for their homeland.

The Iranian Diaspora created by the wave of immigration following the events of 1979 and subsequent arrivals have contributed not only to   stimulating, but actually shaping the growing interest in Iranian culture, religion and history. This influence was not, however, immediate and not channeled in a systematized, organized manner. Initially, popular interest in the Iranian community in Persian culture did not meet with much of a response at the university level. One scholar who studied at McGill University and the University of Toronto in the late 1970s and early 1980's recalls an approach to Iran and Persian language focused on classical texts and mediaeval religion, "as if we were being trained to work in the East India Company." In 2008, Iranian studies are (perhaps justly, since the focus in these places is on Islam) still a sub-discipline in both Canadian departments; although an initiative has recently been proposed by the University of Toronto that looks at Iran in wider perspective.

The atmosphere in Canada, however, may be more favourable in some ways that in the United States of America, where study and scholarship has been subject to the vicissitudes of politics. A few years ago, one observer remarked regarding the state of Persian language at the university level: "Since the severance of diplomatic relation

between Iran and the U.S. in 1979, academic enrolments in Persian in American University have decreased significantly. There is also a significant change in the objectives of students who enroll".[6] There is also reportedly less U.S. government funding for Persian studies in the sense of culture and history, but increased opportunity to obtain funds for studies that might be related to strategic purposes.

A potential bright spot for Iranian studies and especially Iranian studies in the wide sense is the presence of Iranian populations. As suggested above, the influence of this population has not thus far been planned or channeled in a deliberate way, and students interested in the field still have to enter through other disciplines such as Middle Eastern Studies, Islamic studies, or anthropology. Finding a stimulating environment where ideas on Iran are exchanged is difficult. Increased enrollment in the universities of persons of Iranian background, however, along with an increased emphasis in North American universities on accommodating student needs and highlighting the presence of ethnic communities (so-called "ethnic studies") opens the way for creation of Iranian studies programs proper. Funding is also an important factor here. The two active centers mentioned above for Iranian studies in the United States (one at the University of Maryland, the other at Irvine in the University of California system) conceive of Iranian studies broadly because this reflects the vision of both the scholars involved - several of whom are themselves of Iranian background - and Iranian funders. Iranian studies has been influenced or virtually created by the presence and efforts of Iranians themselves. The field is in the process of coming full circle from its European, Orientalist origins.

The recently-instituted Iranian studies program at Concordia University[7] - the first of its kind in Canada - shows this influence clearly. The program represents a joint initiative of Iranicist Dr. Richard Foltz (PhD Harvard) and religionist Dr. Lynda Clarke (PhD McGill), but it is also predicated on Canada's and Montréal's large and extremely active Iranian community and ever-increasing interest in Iranian studies among students of both Iranian and non-Iranian background. The program is also aimed at a broad and interdisciplinary understanding of Iranian civilization as one entity with different manifestations, from pre-Islamic times through to the modern period and in various aspects ranging from language and art to the social sciences. The wide scope of Iran-related research and teaching at Concordia reflects the extraordinary broad impact of Iranian civilization on the world's diverse cultures, from the Balkans to China and India, over a span of some thousand years[8]. The potential for an interdisciplinary program had always existed at the university, with different scholars pursuing their own separate interests in various departments. It remained for Professor Foltz, who was recruited by Concordia University and the Department of Religion in 2005 partly with the aim of strengthening Iranian studies to bring the various players together, co-ordinate efforts and develop a strategic plan. It should be understood that while the initiative for the program came from the Department of Religion, it is not actually housed there and the sole or chief focus is not religion. Rather, Iranian studies are one of the university's several interdisciplinary programs, similar to the Irish studies initiative described below. Scholars presently affiliated with Iranian studies at Concordia include Dr. L. Clarke, a religionist who has contributed studies of Twelver Shiism; Dr. Richard Foltz, a cultural historian specialized in Iran; Dr. Homa Hoodfar, an anthropologist who has worked not only in Iran but Egypt and is especially interested, along with Dr. Clarke, in gender issues; Dr. Peter Rist, specialist in Concordia's well-known school of film on Third-World and Iranian cinema; Dr. Rosemarie Mountain, a musicologist with a strong interest in Persian classical music, Dr. James Devine, a specialist in Gulf politics; and, in the Department of Linguistics, Dr. Mark Hale, expert in Old Iranian Languages, and Dr. Annette Tefeteller, scholar of Indo-European linguistics. Dr. Foltz is especially

noteworthy in the context of the program as his works epitomizes the broad approach to and appreciation of Iranian civilization the program hopes to foster. Among Professor Foltz's numerous publications we may mention *Religions of the Silk Road*[9] and *Spirituality in the Land of the Noble*[10], both books highlighting Iranian contributions to world culture. *Religions of the Silk Road* and *Spirituality in the Land of the Noble* have been translated in numerous languages, including Persian under the titles of *Dinha-ye jadeh-ye abrisham* and *Guzar-e dinha az iranzamin*. The French version of *Spirituality*, *L'Iran, creuset de religions : de la préhistoire à la République islamique*[11] is the first volume of a new publication series, *Collection études iraniennes,* associated with Concordia Iranian studies from Laval University Press. Other volumes under consideration include ancient Iranian religions and mythology.

Iranian studies at Concordia began some years ago with graduate studies, first based in and then branching out from the Department of Religion. Subjects currently undertaken by students include (to mention only a few diverse examples) mysticism in contemporary Iranian film, Shiite thought, commentary on the Masnavi, and legal reform. An undergraduate Minor is offered for the first time in the 2008-2009 academic year. The Minor will eventually mature into a major; the aim is to offer a broad, multidisciplinary undergraduate education in the field that will prepare students for more specialized graduate studies parallel to undergraduate programs already commonly offered in Western universities in Southern Asia Studies, German studies, Judaic studies and Middle Eastern studies in general. Courses presently offered in this the first year embrace the areas of religion, anthropology, and history; for instance Zoroastrianism, Shiism, Middle Eastern Youth Culture (with an emphasis on Iran) and pre-Islamic history, including interaction with the Greek states.

Of course, like any other new venture, the Iranian study program faces numerous challenges which need to be worked out in cooperation with other academic institutions and the support of communities. Here, I wish to highlight some of these concerns. First, there is the issue of Persian language. Persian language is obviously of capital importance. The university has in the past offered limited courses in classical Persian and Persian texts and continues to teach certain ancient languages - most recently, Soghdian. But this capacity needs to be expanded, preferably with a full-time, tenured position in Persian language and literature. This would also allow the program to reach a wider audience through a course in Persian literature in translation, something that is already done in recently established, parallel programs in Arabic and Chinese. A second challenge involves the type of student the program hopes to attract, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students of Iranian descents very often form a large proportion of the students interested in Iranian studies, and this is presently also the case at Concordia. The program now needs to appeal to non-Iranian students; Iranian civilization is, after all, a world culture, and even more so with the settlement of Iranians and flourishing of Iranian communities in Western nations.

Establishing new academic positions is a prime goal and challenge. In tune with the interdisciplinary nature of the program, the intention is to establish a permanent, tenure-track position in Art and in early modern Iranian history. As Canadian universities turn increasingly to sources of private funding, these positions are most likely to be supported by funds solicited from foundations and individuals interested in Iranian culture, on the model of other university programs receiving support from ethnic and religious communities. As an example, the Canadian Irish Studies program at Concordia University (which began, like Iranian Studies, as a Minor and will shortly take the form of a separate centre) was supported in its gradual and steady growth by various sectors of the Irish community. Canada is a multi-cultural country and a country of immigrants, and

new communities have habitually raised awareness of their culture, both among their own youth and the populations at large, through the universities.

Another very significant challenge for Iranian studies is to provide an extended experience and exposure to Persian language and Iranian culture in Iran itself. Though not absolutely necessary, this is surely preferable, and the program has a stated preference for study overseas over an exclusively classroom experience. Without contact with Iran itself (Iran here being defined widely as including all presently Persian-speaking territories), students and faculty risk falling into old-style, Orientalist methods and points of view. Concordia University has been notably successful in sending students to Iran for this purpose; in the last few years, four students at the MA and PhD level have traveled to Iran to improve their language and knowledge in general, and there are more to come. There remains, however, a need to establish a sustained language immersion program in partnership with Iranian institutions. Exchange must be systematized in order to support a larger number of students and provide an experience of consistent quality.

One obstacle to the goal of providing on-site experience for graduate and advanced undergraduate students is cost. Many students inquire about the possibility of spending a few months in Iran in order to sharpen their language skills, but very often they draw back when compelled to assume high costs related to overseas studies. This problem has been mitigated somewhat by an initiative of the Québec government known (in French) as "Mobilité" and aimed at encouraging international study through modest but nevertheless significant funding of students at all levels in Québec institutions. All students so far who have traveled for study to Iran have benefited either from this program or other scholarships. Nevertheless, cooperation is needed and funding through scholarships should be increased. One possible model is that of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, an organization that encourages links between India and Canada, including study abroad.

An exchange, of course, should be two-way. In the first few months of its existence, Iranian studies has managed to sponsor at least one lecture involving a distinguished scholar (a sociologist) from Iran and appointed an Iranian scholar, expert in religious studies, as research associate. In each case, however, political problems had to be overcome. The first visitor was able to travel to Canada only because of family already in the country; the second has not, as of this writing, given a visa, even though he was approved for Research Associate status. This vexing problem has been publicized and formally protested against by one of the program's research associates, and the directors intend to take all measures possible to ensure that scholarship is not harmed by political restrictions.

There have also been problems with travel in the other direction, that is from Canada to Iran. Nevertheless, two Concordia professors involved in Iranian studies have recently participated in conferences and lectured overseas: Professor Rist of Film Studies with his attendance at the Fajr film festival and Professor Foltz of Religion with academic and well-received public lectures on the subjects of Iranian civilization and religion and ecology.

In regard to establishing a strong and sustainable network with Iranian institutions, in the last few years, a number of Iranian universities have initiated joint programs with international academic counterparts. These programs have been quite successful and popular with Iranians. However, most have involved science and technological programs (with a few aimed at the teaching of English as a second language, and Concordia, in an effort separate from Iranian studies, is involved in exploring such a link). A similar model could be used to establish a bilateral program where students from Iran would spend some times at Concordia and vice-versa.

Another long-term project is a joint journal or other joint publication, to be issued in both Persian and English, which would showcase Iranian scholarship to Western audiences. The aim is to counter a marked tendency towards academic isolation, where much valuable work in the field of Iranian studies, whether originally written in Persian or English, does not reach the other audience. Creation of a web of relationships through joint publication will help to raise awareness of each others' academic works, endeavors, and goals.

In conclusion, the challenges and goals of the Iranian studies program at Concordia University can better be assessed and understood in the wider socio-historical context underlying its development in North America and more particularly in Canada. The multidisciplinary approach promoted by Concordia university as well as its large community of academics interested in various aspects of Iranian culture make it a unique environment where Persian culture can be explored in new, creative and exciting ways. Building lasting and enduring relationships with Iranian communities and institutions is a priority for the success of the program.

Notes

[1] Windfuhr, Gernot L., "Notes in the Motivations in the Study of Persian" in Marashi, Mehdi (Ed.). *Persian Studies in North America, Studies in Honor of Mohammad Ali Jazayery*, Maryland: Iranbooks Inc., 1994, p.2.

[2] Ibid, p.5.

[3] Tavakoli-Targhi, Mohamad. *Refashionning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001.

[4] Mitchell, Colin Paul. *The Development of Iranian Studies in Canada*, from www.sharemation.com/parsik, 2003, p.3

[5] All statistical information on the Canadian Iranian community was taken from Mitchell, Colin Paul, op.cit., p.6-7.

[6] Spooner, Brian. "Are we teaching Persian?or farsi?or Dari? Or tokiji?" in Marashi, Mehdi (Ed.), op.cit., p.185.

[7] See http://religion.concordia.ca/iranianstudies/home.htm

[8] See introduction of Frye, Richard N. *Greater Iran, a 20th Century Odyssey*, California: Mazda Publishers Inc., 2005.

[9] Foltz, Richard. *Religions of the Silk Road: overland trade and cultural exchange from antiquity to the fifteenth century*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

[10] Foltz, Richard. *Spirituality in the land of the noble: how Iran shaped the world's religions*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2004.

[11] Foltz, Richard. *L'Iran, creuset de religions : de la préhistoire à la République islamique*, Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007.

Bibliography

Elwell-Sutton, L.P. *A Guide to Iranian Area Study*, Michigan: J.W. Edwards Publisher, 1952.

Frye, Richard N. *Greater Iran, a 20th Century Odyssey*, California: Mazda Publishers Inc., 2005.

Foltz, Richard. *L'Iran, creuset de religions : de la préhistoire à la République islamique*, Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007.

Foltz, Richard. *Religions of the Silk Road: overland trade and cultural exchange from antiquity to the fifteenth century*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Foltz, Richard. *Spirituality in the land of the noble: how Iran shaped the world's religions*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2004.

Mitchell, Colin Paul. *The Development of Iranian Studies in Canada*, from www.sharemation.com/parsik, 2003.

Spooner, Brian. "Are we teaching Persian?or farsi?or Dari? Or tokiji?" in Marashi, Mehdi (Ed.). *Persian Studies in North America, Studies in Honor of Mohammad Ali Jazayery*, Maryland: Iranbooks Inc., 1994.

Tavakoli-Targhi, Mohamad. *Refashionning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001.

Windfuhr, Gernot L., "Notes in the Motivations in the Study of Persian" in Marashi, Mehdi (Ed.). *Persian Studies in North America, Studies in Honor of Mohammad Ali Jazayery*, Maryland: Iranbooks Inc., 1994.

Muslim Projects to Halt Climate Change in Indonesia[1]

He Who created the seven heavens one above another: No want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of (Allah) Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again: seest thou any flaw? (Q. Sura Al Mulk [30]: 3)

Fachruddin M. Mangunjaya

Staff Conservation and Religion Initiative
Conservation International
Indonesia

Iwan Wijayanto

Director of Partnership
Conservation International
Indonesia

Jatna Supriatna

Regional Vice President
Conservation International
Indonesia

Harfiyah Haleem

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science (IFEES)
UK

Fazlun Khalid

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science (IFEES)
UK

Abstract

This paper reviews some Muslim activities in Indonesia in response to environmental and climate change. As a nation, Indonesia gives religion a strategic role in order to respect ethical and moral values. This gives Islam, as the major religion, a correspondingly greater opportunity to take part in this democratic nation. The clerics (ulama) play an important role due to the numbers of their followers and thus have a major voice. Therefore, environmental agencies including NGOs and governmental agencies (Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forestry) work in close co-operation with Islamic

institutions such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in order to popularize the environmental movement. With the existence of the religious-based organizations, secular organizations like Conservation International (CI) can synergize conservation action programs through the network in order to reach the "grass roots" more effectively. Cooperation is also being developed with Islamic-based educational institutions such as Islamic universities, Pesantren (Islamic Boarding Schools) and, at the local level, activities are carried out together with the Imams and Khatibs who are based in remote villages. As climate change, challenges the country, several actions have been taken to address the climate challenge such as declaring Islamic legal opinions (fatwa), and reforestation by planting trees.

Keywords

Climate change, Environmental movement, Nahdlatul ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Pesantren (Islamic boarding school), NGOs, Government of Indonesia

1. Background: Indonesia and environmental problems

On December 26, 2004, the world was shocked by the huge catastrophe caused by the tsunami in Aceh, Nangroe Aceh Darussalam. More than 200 thousand people were swept away by the huge waves that not only impacted Aceh, but also reached Southern Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. The most devastation occurred in Indonesia, due to its location as an archipelago. The disaster now seemed to awaken Indonesia, to the possibility of other disasters, including global climate change that is forecast to submerge some islands. Indonesia is located in South East Asia, and is known as an archipelago consisting of around seventeen thousand islands with major islands such as Sumatra, Java & Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, the Moluccas, Lesser Sunda Islands and West Papua. In total it has 80,000 km of coastline, the longest of any country in the world.

As an archipelago with a population of more than 238 million in 2007, this country constitutes the largest Muslim population in the world. . On the other hand this country has rich biological diversity –particularly tropical species-- and is included as one of the Megadiversity countries.[2]

Structurally the environmental issues in Indonesia are administratively held by two ministries: Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Ministry of Forestry (MoF). Besides collaborating with other ministries, they also have partnerships in other activities conducted by the civil society (Non Governmental Organizations-NGOs) and activists, which are sometimes supported by foreign grants or global environmental funding. Currently in Indonesia, some corporations have begun to give intensive support to NGO activities through the scheme of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

In the context of global climate change, there are two challenging issues in Indonesia. The first is deforestation and land degradation, including forest fires, legal and illegal logging and land clearing for agricultural purposes. The second is the geographical condition of the states which are vulnerably threatened by the impact of global warming such as el Niño and la Niña.[3]

In terms of forest degradation, this forest is the wealthiest hub of biological diversity in the tropics, but ironically, it has gradually diminished due to the policy of the government and economic needs of the nation. According to the Ministry of Forestry in their latest report (2007), from satellite data gathered in 2003, the protected forest area was specified as 22.10 million ha (25.7%) conservation forest as 14.37 million ha

(16.7%) and production forest as 49.50 million ha (57.6 %) from a total of 85.96 million ha forest cover areas in Indonesia. This set of figures was calculated by consensus or forest function, and did not include Central Kalimantan or Riau, though it did include rivers.

In another set of figures, not including rivers, Indonesia's total land area was given as 187.9 million ha. The total forested land was 93.92 million hectares of which 44.77 million ha (47.7 %) was primary forest, 45.15 million ha (48.1 %) secondary forest and the rest (4.6%) was plantation forest, Even this larger total is far less than forest cover in the 1950s which totaled 152 million ha and then went down to 119 million ha in 1985, within the last 35 years alone, an area equal to 2.4 times that of Java and Bali Island combined has been lost. The rate of forest loss 2000-2005 was given in the MOF report as 1.08 million ha per year.

Indonesia's forest degradation problem becomes one of global concern. The forest loss seems to run counter to efforts to address climate change and global mitigation and adaptation to climate issues. About 30-35% green house gases are caused by forest degradation and forest fires. Indonesia's emission of green house gases, through fires and deforestation, is the third largest after the United States and China.[4]

Furthermore, Indonesia as a developing country vitally needs economic development which is fundamentally based on the natural resources including the forest (e.g. frequently from natural forest) and mining resources such as: gold, oils, nickel, gas and coal, which are commonly found in the forested areas. Land and forest use frequently causes a dilemma: forest cutting automatically influences the balance of the existing local environment in each region, and often has a negative impact, being followed by heavy floods, landslides, loss of fertile land and clean water crises.

On the other hand, the development problem also has significant impacts to the environment due to lack of monitoring and management of the industries as a consequence of development. In Jakarta alone, the MoE frequently found industries that do not meet the environmental standards on waste management etc.[5] Hard work must be implemented by the industries in order to meet the standards imposed by the Ministry of Environment together with civil society. Furthermore, the civil society is expected to continue to be involved in the conservation and environmental movement. Nowadays there are around 600 environmental and conservation NGOs with several focuses starting from conservation, coastal area: protection of coral reefs, climate change, to waste management in urban societies such as Jakarta and Surabaya.[6]

2. The Impact of the Climate Crisis in Indonesia

Climate change is a threat faced not only by the western states but also the Muslim world. In Indonesia, awareness has increased due to the degradation of local and regional environments. The Indonesia as an archipelago is in a vulnerable position with regard to environmental and natural disasters. Geologically, it's on the area of the 'Pacific ring of fire' which stretches from the north of Sumatra to the Pacific Islands. They are shifting 12 cm annually. The country is frequently shaken by tectonic or volcanic earthquakes due to the dynamic shift of the tectonic plate, which also influences volcanic activity.[7] These phenomena are pushing the policy makers to raise the community's awareness of the disasters that could occur.

Indonesian people have already suffered from climate crisis, and totally understand the extreme climate phenomena such as La Niña (that cause heavy rain fall) and its opposite of El Niño (that causes long periods of dry season) which has caused drought

and failed harvests. El-Niño occurred in 1982/1983 and 1997/98 which caused the failed harvest—because rice production was delayed and so failed—also forest fires mostly in Kalimantan and Sumatra. The policy makers have been made aware that these two climate phenomena have a large capacity to shake the nation's economic stability, food harvest liability and in the end cause uncertain conditions. As noted by Irawan (2002) the trend of these two observable facts of environment seems to be increasing. Based on the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) values during the 1876-2000 period, the frequency of El Niño tended to increase from once in every 8 years during the 1876-1976 period to once in every 4 years during 1977-2000. The El Niño events with the highest intensity were recorded in 1982 and 1997 with the annual average SOI values were 21.4 and -18.1 respectively[8]. Therefore the frequency of floods and drought in Indonesia is increasing, and the adaptation to and mitigation of global climate change is vital.

The other crucial climate impact that might be a bigger challenge to this country is the rise of global sea level rise caused by melting glaciers and ice caps into the ocean and thermal expansion of ocean water. As the temperature of the water rises, the difference in density will allow the water to spread. Current evidence of global warming includes the widespread retreat of glaciers on the five continents. Rise in temperature will accelerate the rate of sea-level rise. This could make flooding more severe especially during heavy rainfall.

IPCC published its assessment in February 2007 and noted that the sea level had risen by an average of 0.18 cm annually and was predicted to rise by up to 0.31 cm over the next decade.[9] An archipelagic country such as Indonesia with over seventeen thousands of islands and islets, is threatened by this impact. Susandi (2007) projected the increase of the average sea level in Jakarta Bay as high as 0.57 cm/ year. Using baseline data from 1925, the trend of the average sea level is projected to have a linear increase until 2050. The same study predicted the average depth of inundated area to vary between 0.28 to 4.17 meters in the year of 2053. The effect of sea level rise coupled with that of land surface decline will have tremendous effects on Jakarta. The study concluded that the decline of land surface contributed more to the alluvium in Jakarta Bay that the average trend of land surface decline in Jakarta and was as high as 0.8 cm/ year.[10]

A study conducted by Susandi et al (2008), indicated that in 2010 the sea level would increase by 0.40 m then consequently 7,408 km coastal areas in Indonesia would be inundated, if the level rose to 0.56m (2050) then 30,120 km area would be inundated in 2100, if the sea level rose to 1.10 m, around 90,260km2[11] would be inundated. This means that all coastlines in Indonesia will be submerged, and an area as large as five times of Kuwait state would be inundated.

The evidence for these situations is quickly mounting up, starting last May, 2007, in some areas in Jakarta, with the impact of the extreme phenomena of tidal waves that were unexpected in Jakarta and caused sea level to reached some coastal villages.

The Meteorology and Geophysics Institute (BMG) states that the phenomenon was an abnormal situation and a first time occurrence in some affected areas. Around the same month, similar tidal waves also occurred in a number of spots in Indonesian seas – the Southern Beach of Nusa Tenggara, Bali, Java, the cape western coast of Sumatra from Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam the West Sumatra. [12] The Meteorologists predicted that this is a wave phenomenon was caused by eastern *monsoon* oscillation that interacted and collided with the seas and spread along the beach. Another explanation said that the tidal waves happened because of atmospheric tides, e.g. the wave movement that was influenced by the gravitation power of the moon and the sun.

A study was also conducted by Susandi et al (2008) for the Banjarmasin City (Southern Kalimantan). This is a province that relies on river streams and also the

floating market. The sea level projected of Banjarmasin was assessed for the years 2010, 2050 and 2100. According to the projection, the water will reach to 0.37 m for 2010, 0.48 m in 2050, and 0.934 fro the year 2100. Some sub-districts (*kecamatan*) will be affected by the sea level increase, among others *Kecamatan* Banjarmasin Tengah, Banjarmasin Utara, Banjarmasin Barat, and Banjarmasin Selatan.[13]

3. Response to Climate Change

In December 2007, Indonesia hosted COP -13, the United Nation Framework for Climate Change (UNFCC) in Bali. The hosting of the conference has attracted national and international concern about the impact of global warming and climate change. The forum has assembled over 10 thousand people for the conference: government officials, local communities, NGOs and stakeholders including the religious leaders showed their concern in the parallel events to create statements in addressing climate problems. In response to the climate problem in Indonesia, one of the Islamic leaders from Indonesia Dr Din Syamsuddin stated in the forum:

> Indonesian religious and traditional leaders are aware that at no other time has the science of climate change been more robust than today. At no other time, too, have the impacts of climate change become more apparent and deadly, particularly for developing countries including Indonesia. Climate change is already damaging the ecosystem and endangering the lives and livelihood of millions of people. It affects the whole planet and threatens human beings living in all countries on all continents.[14]

Actions in response to global warming in Indonesia have been going on since the 1990s; ever since Indonesia's government formally ratified the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as UU No 6 /1994 and further all stakeholders –including many NGOs--have started campaigns to address global climate change. The climate challenge has become a substantial issue due to the environmental disasters that were triggered by climate distress. Subsequently the government has also become an active administration by participating with other states and ratifying the Kyoto Protocol as a national law in 2004 (UU No 17/2004).

Actually, the concerns of religious leaders in Indonesia are the starting point for the people's concern. As a nation, Indonesia puts religion in a strategic role in order to respect ethical and moral values. Islam, as the major religion, possesses a correspondingly greater opportunity to take part in the democratic world. Religious figures play an important role due to the numbers of their followers and thus have a major voice. Therefore, environmental agencies including NGOs and governmental agencies (Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forestry) work in close co-operation with Islamic institutions such as NU and Muhammadiyah in order to popularize the environmental movement.

Such religious community organizations play an important role in providing guidelines for their communities in order to perform economic, civic, and public related activities relating to, for instance, global warming issues along with other environmental and conservation activities.

Mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU in Indonesia also serve as a positive base for environmental organizations – for instance CI, WWF and Walhi – to form partnerships. With the existence of the religious-based organizations, secular organizations like Conservation International can synergize their awareness and

conservation action programs through their network in order to further reach the "grass roots". Besides that, cooperation is also developed with religious-based educational institutions and universities like Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, UIN Walisongo, Semarang, the Islamic College for Advance Studies (ICAS) and several *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding Schools) all over Indonesia. At the local level, activities are carried out together with the *Imams* and *Khatibs* who are based in remote villages. They are briefed on environmental conservation, current issues on global warming, and the obligation to maintain the ecosystem in balance for our future generations.

As for climate change, religious leaders – especially Muslim – have given positive responses and support the work programs of these environmental institutions; for instance Conservation International conducted *Fiqh Lingkungan*, May 2004; and International Colloquium *Fiqh Lingkungan*, June 2007 attended by Muslim environmental experts and religious figures in Indonesia[15]-[16]. In the implementation, religious figures' *fatwas* (advice/instructions) on the environment have also been issued as a form of guideline in response to environmental changes including climate change. A detailed description of this kind of activity is explained under the following sub-section: **Muslim Projects for Climate Change** below**.**

4. Muslim Projects for Climate Change

In order to get an overview of Muslim efforts in Indonesia in response to climate change and global warming, I have divided this section into two categories. First, national efforts in Indonesia – the government's policies to provide clear guidelines for the nation to address climate change. Second, efforts by the community – either collectively or individually – both religious-based and non-religious, but working together or in partnership to address climate change. These two items cannot be separated since they rely on each other, thus national efforts overall can be seen as a gathered effort of Indonesian people with a Muslim majority.

4.1. National Efforts in Indonesia

Nationally, Indonesia has participated in several global projects and is involved in the best practice project to implement the Kyoto Protocol in accordance with the global commitment. For example the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) a scheme in the Kyoto Protocol of international targets to reduce global emission has been implemented through several efforts. According to the World Bank (2007) Indonesia has at least 235 MtCO2e (metric tonnes of CO2 equivalent) of emission reduction potential that can be developed as CDM projects, ranging from reduction of gas flaring in large oil and gas facilities, to development of geothermal and other clean and renewable energy sources, to production of biogas from agriculture and animal waste.[17]

However, at present only 11 projects have received approval from the Designated National Authority (DNA) of CDM. Of these, eight have been registered by the Executive Board of CDM with a potential to produce 13 MtCO2e. From the registered projects, most are renewable and waste management projects. Compared with the potential, this is not significant.[18] The latest according to MoE, Indonesia has received 16 CDM projects registered in the executive board[19]. In this case, Indonesia's CDM progress is rather slow compared to other countries, such as China, India, or even Malaysia. Up to

now, all 154 Indian registered projects generate 145,565,410 tCO2e of emissions reduction which are more than 10 times Indonesia's number.[20]

A further effort has been designated at the level of policy makers. Growing concern about global warming has brought the local policy to be more proactive in protecting their natural forest. The Government of Aceh for example has declared a 'logging moratorium', as a commitment to stop all the logging activities since June, 6 2007. Land use and deforestation control is a potential factor in reducing the greenhouse gases, as it is currently estimated that 20% of CO_2 released is caused by the land use and land use change and forestry (LULUCF). Hence the natural forest area is a key factor in stabilizing emissions with their function as a carbon sink. The magnitude of deforestation in Indonesia would be, in accordance to the latest forest degradation figure in 2000-2005, 1.8 2 M/ ha per year. Thus the greenhouse gases potentially being released would equal 93.6-280.7 million tons of carbon per year. [21]

Even though the climate response in addressing the climate issue is still at the preliminary phase, at least the importance of adaptation to climate change has already been acknowledged in the country's Mid-Term National Development Plan. Prior to the Conference of Parties (COP) 13 last year, a draft of the National Strategy on Adaptation was completed. The draft contains a compilation of research activities, identification of adaptation issues that need to be revised and expanded with implementation experience of UNFCCC methodology.

At the national level actions in response to global warming are on the national agenda. According to the Ministry of Environment (*Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup*), the terms of actions were mentioned in the Mid Term National Development Plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional - PRJM*) 2004-2009. In November 2007, the MoE published the National Action Plan, endorsed by the President of Republic of Indonesia, which included the Long Term National Action Plan for Climate Change (2005-2025). The outlined action for climate change is as follows:

4.1.1. Mitigation

Mitigation: efforts to decrease the flow of global green house gas emissions so that the concentration in the atmosphere is at a tolerable level. Even though Indonesia is not obliged to reduce its green house gas emissions, the condition of this country as very vulnerable to climate change makes it crucial to be involved, especially in the energy sector and in land use and land use change and forest (LULUCF).

4.1.1.1 Energy Sector

Indonesia currently is a net importing country and in 2008 resigned as an OPEC member. This was done since Indonesia's oil production was not sufficient and the oil wells – especially crude oil – are no longer productive enough to supply domestic energy demands, let alone export.

Based on the year 2003 data, Indonesia's energy composition consists of 54.4% natural oil, 26.5% natural gas, 14.1% coal, 3.4% HEPP, 1.4% earth heat and 0.2% renewable energy. During that year, CO_2 emissions reached 258.67 million tonnes.[22] In its action plan, the Indonesian government has determined a mixed energy target of 20% oil, 33% coal, 30% natural gas, 5% biofuel, 5% earth heat, 5% renewable energy and 2% liquefied coal. If emission reduction is not carried out, CO_2 emission from the energy sector in Indonesia could reach 1,200 million tonnes in 2025.

The President has issued a decree (PEMPRES 5 - 2006) that determined the above targets through energy diversification programs, energy conservation and clean technology implementation (such as Carbon Capture and Storage-CCS).[23]

4.1.1.2 LULUCF Sector

The forest area potential as carbon sinks in Indonesia continues to decrease due to land use and forest function changes. According to the Ministry of Environment, the forest area that has been converted to other uses and land use change and forest (LULUCF) amounts to 53.9 million hectares. This potential resulted in the loss of $2,1GtCO_2e$ carbon absorption per year in 2005. The stock forest in conservation areas, protected forest and production forest, both primary and logged areas, or areas that have been degraded amounts to 115 Gton CO_2e.[24]

The rapid land conversion in Indonesia is caused by various complex factors that are not easy to resolve. Land and forest usage change in a very large country – such as Indonesia – is a massive challenge. Forest fires, illegal land sabotage, illegal logging are several of the many causes.

Thus priorities are written into the action plan for the medium term: resolving illegal logging, forest and land rehabilitation, forestry sector restructuring including HTI/Industrial plants forest and Community Forest development acceleration, empowering communities around the forest, forest area determination with clear status etc.[25]

The Ministry of Forestry targeted 36.31 million hectares for land rehabilitation in three periods up to 2025. This amount was calculated based on the 53.9 million hectares of degraded forests.[26]

A new initiative to maintain existing natural forest is also being carried out; through the REDD (Reduction Emission for Deforestation and Degradation) incentive scheme: the Ministry of Forestry, along with the stakeholders in Indonesia, is currently preparing a REDD scheme and implementation guidelines for the near future.

4.1.1.3 Marine and Fishery Sectors

The marine sector is an important factor in Indonesia since 2/3 of the country is water. Thus, marine activities and fisheries can be analogized as a body with its internal organs i.e. Indonesia's land. Coastal ecosystem, plants and sea biota (including coral reefs, *padang lamun* mangrove and open sea). All these have the ability to act as a carbon sink. Therefore maintaining Indonesia's marine sustainability and coastal ecosystems is an important part of global mitigation efforts to address climate change.

The total amount of carbon absorbed by the marine and coastal ecosystem in Indonesia each year is estimated around 245.6 million tonnes of CO_2.[27] Because of this, the Indonesian government has put efforts into conserving marine and coastal ecosystems in order to protect them from forest clearing and unfriendly harvesting. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries in 2003 gave his commitment to protect Indonesia's Marine Protected Area (MPA) to 10 million hectares marine conservation areas in 2010. Currently Indonesia's marine conservation area is around 8.3 million hectares. This area will be increased to 20 million hectares in 2020 [28]. Mangrove ecosystem plantation has been conducted in various areas by involving the community both collectively (e.g. through NGOs) and individually. In addition to this, reef rehabilitation efforts are

currently being carried out by the community in cooperation with NGOs specializing in the coastal areas.

4.1.2 Adaptation

Adaptation is the effort to provide responses in order to reduce climate change impact on life. When climate change becomes a phenomenon that cannot be prevented, adaptation becomes the most effective means. Guidelines on adaptation are not as clear as mitigation which has clear actions and efforts, e.g. reducing emission through CDM and the Kyoto Protocol schemes. Adaptation is a phase that has not been carried out by many parties. Despite this, the government has tried to mainstream each program both at the national and local level to run in parallel with adaptation efforts addressing climate change.[29] Thus development efforts in several sectors must refer to global warming issues and include adaptation efforts. Based on the Action Plan for Climate Change developed by the MoE, several adaptation measures that have been carried out are: Water Resources Sector, Agriculture, Marine, Seashores and Fisheries, Infrastructure, Health, Forestry and Biodiversity.

4.1.2.1. Water Resources Sector

Indonesia has declared the *Gerakan Nasional Kemitraan Penyelamatan Air* (GN-KPA) / National Action for Partnerships to Save Water on 28 April 2005. This act basically guides six strategic components:

- Spatial planning, physical construction, land issues and population

- Forest and land rehabilitation along with water resources conservation

- Water destruction level control

- Water quality management and water pollution management

- Water use control and water demand management

- Fair, efficient and sustainable water resource utilization[30]

An example at the action level, implemented for adaptation, is the water resources management by the Public Works Agency (*Dinas Pekerjaan Umum*) by cooperation with GTZ to overcome land water supply issues. This Project aims to reevaluate potential areas for rice production in the agricultural sector. Besides that, on the national level it serves to review the *Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah* (RTRW)/Area Spatial Planning. With the new spatial plan, there is a new law/UU that arranges adaptation to climate change. At the Project level, a Project in Nusa Tenggara Timur on water problem solutions have been carried out since this area is most vulnerable to water supply shortages in the dry Season due to low ground water stock and low rainfall. The approach is integrated with low- carbon emission, which is hoped to be an example for simultaneous adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

Cooperation has also been conducted with KLH and GTZ to review the vulnerability assessment in NTB by determining a location for a climate village pilot project. This activity is conducted in order to ensure safe energy, and low carbon emissions. It is hoped that this example will increase awareness of climate change.
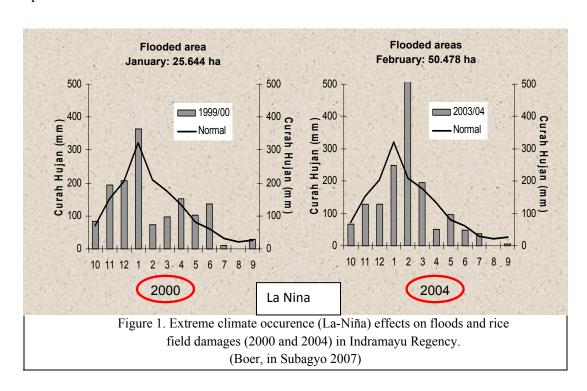
4.1.2.2. Agriculture and Health

Climate change often becomes the cause of harvest failure in Indonesia. The failure is often caused by two extreme climate conditions resulting in drought and floods. During the period 1981-1990, harvest failure caused a loss of 100,000 tonnes in each regency[31], meanwhile during the period 1991-2000, the loss increased to 300,000 tonnes in each regency.[32]

As an example, the Indramayu regency which is considered as the rice warehouse in West Java's agriculture area, experienced a loss of 25,644 ha (2000) and 50,000 ha in 2004 caused by extreme rainfall during January and February caused by La Niña. Meanwhile El Niño in 1997 caused drought, 47,995 ha rice fields and in 2003 there were 7,896 ha that did not receive adequate water and experienced drought.[33]

To address this issue, research is continuously conducted by the Department of Agriculture in order to obtain seeds that are able to adapt to climate change; for instance the search to obtain plant and rice seeds able to survive in a high salinity area. To overcome land and water crises caused by sea water intrusion, research for low-emission fertilizers is also being conducted.

In the health sector, the government has responded by providing an action plan along with activities such as health briefings for community on the impacts of climate change such as dengue fever, malaria, and other tropical diseases along with research on several diseases that might arise due to the impact of climate change. Civil society institutions such as PMI (Indonesian Red Cross) have designed climate change programs into their work objective by conducting herbal treatment for viruses predicted to develop when the temperature rises.

Figure 1. Extreme climate occurence (La-Niña) effects on floods and rice field damages (2000 and 2004) in Indramayu Regency.
(Boer, in Subagyo 2007)

4.2. Grass Roots and NGO Efforts

With regards to activities involving the Muslim community in Indonesia to address climate change, it must be acknowledged that even though they exist, they are not significant. The climate change program and Islam have not become the grass roots and national Indonesian NGO mainstream. But in several aspects, environmental awareness (in general) for the Muslim community have begun by involving the communities' Islamic leaders (*Ulama*) and scholars to review Islam's teaching on environmental

conservation. The Ulama and scholars network in Indonesia have begun to pay more attention to this issue in line with the concern of Muslims who want to live their daily life according to Islam. One of the reasons is that the mainstream and solutions to environmental problem usually have a foreign approach that is usually hard for Muslims to accept. With the efforts of the Muslim scholars and activists, slowly the Muslim grass roots activists are beginning to be moved and the middle class Muslims are also beginning to realize the importance of maintaining and conserving the environment.

On the practical level, many Muslims individually conduct environmental activities – even though not focused on climate change – professing that their motivation was based on their religious beliefs.[34] Besides this, several years ago several *pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) received the Kalpataru[35] environmental pioneer award for their creation of environmental conservation project and direct wisdom in maintaining the environment.

4.2.1. Conservation Education trough Islamic Ethics

Islamic environmental ethics in Indonesia were introduced by Fazlun Khalid in 2002 through a workshop using Al-Qur'an, Creation and Conservation approach. This material is the training to trainers (ToT) material that was first conducted in Sungai Penuh Jambi, Sumatera and *Pondok Pesantren* Al Washilah Garut.[36] In 2006, Fazlun introduced a similar event in cooperation with Conservation International Indonesia, by conducting a workshop on Islam and Natural Resource Conservation in Mandailing Natal. Then WWF, Conservation International Indonesia and Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES) carried out another workshop, in the same year and using the same method, with ulama and Islamic figures in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam.[37]

In 2004, INFORM facilitated a meeting of *Ulama* to develop environmental *Fiqh*, involving 33 *pesantren ulama* and several environmental activists to compile Islamic wisdom on environmental and nature conservation. The *Fiqh al Bi'ah* report, became the initial document that assisted several activities connecting Islam and environmental understanding. This report has been distributed around 5000 copies all around Indonesia and can also be downloaded at Conservation International Indonesia's website and has become the reference for *pesantren*s and environmental activists who have direct contact with the Islamic community in their work. Several *pesantren* have adopted it and have started to teach *fiqh al bi'ah* and included it in their curriculum, for instance *Pondok Pesantren* Darul Ulum Lido, Bogor.[38]

Awareness activities using Islamic and environmental ethics in Indonesia became more complete with the *Fiqh al Biah* document along with books published on Islam and the Environment. Several universities have seen the Islam and Environment phenomenon as an important subject. For the first time in Indonesia, *Kajian Islam dan Lingkungan* (Islamic and Environmental studies) have been established by Universitas Islam Walisongo Semarang, in 1995. The university then developed undergraduate and postgraduate programs on Islam and Environmental studies more comprehensively. Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ) followed their example by establishing a postgraduate program on Islam and Environment in 2007, and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta is planning to open a postgraduate program on Islam and Ecology.

4.2.2. Tree Planting

Tree planting actions in several areas in Indonesia have been done by the government; the trees were planted voluntarily by the community, the majority pioneered by the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). Adaptation projects through tree planting driven by *pesantren* were conducted in several areas, such as Ma'had Al- Zaytun, that have planted teak and other trees amounting more than 300,000 on a 1200 ha area. *Pondok pesantren* Al Wasilah in Garut rehabilitated 35,000 ha of critical land through 112 groups in several villages driven by the *Pesantren* Al Wasilah Head KH Ahmad Thonthowi Musaddad.[39]

Another example is *Tuan Guru:* Hasanain Juwaini, one of the *ulama* who inititated the "*Menggagas Fiqh Lingkungan* (Fiqh al Biah)" forum "greened" 30 hectares of the *pesantren* Al Haramain area in Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) with various plants. Besides that, he also implemented environmental *da'wah*, provided free seed for the community and pioneered land rehabilitation in NTB. In 2005, several *pesantren* around the Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park in Sukabumi, Cianjur and Bogor were involved in the tree planting action with Conservation International Indonesia, planting several native plants including several plants with economic values that have potential to boost the *pesantren*'s economy.[40] The tree planting activities with *pesantren* still continue up to now in cooperation with other partners. Basically *pesantren* are potential partners to conduct real environmental actions since these schools are very close to the society and surrounding community.

4.2.5 Environmental *Fatwas*

Environmental *Fatwa*s are becoming one of the most important "icons" to involve Muslims in environmental conservation in Indonesia. The *ulama* in the *Majlis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesia Council of Ulama—MUI) issue *fatwas* according to the questions and needs of the community in order to provide explanations according to Islam's shari'a applied in daily life. In response to illegal logging, forest fires and illegal mining, on 13 December 2006 or 22 Zulqaidah 1427 Hijriah, Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Wilayah IV Kalimantan provided a response by issuing two *fatwas* on: Illegal logging and illegal mining, and the burning of forests and smoke-clouds.

The *Head of Ijtima' Komisi-Komisi Fatwa MUI Wilayah IV Kalimantan* (Fatwa commission for Indonesian Council of Ulama regional IV, Kalimantan, which includes Central, South, East and West Kalimantan) in Banjarmasin, Prof Drs HM Asywadie Syukur LC stated that MUI felt it important to issue a *fatwa* on illegal logging and illegal mining, as a guideline for the community.[41]

There is no research yet on the impacts of the two *fatwas*, but when I visited central Kalimantan during the 2007 dry season, I found a different atmosphere there: unusually, there are not as much haze and forest fires as the previous years. At the same time, the Central Kalimantan government has tightened the fire control which succeeded in reducing up to 91% of hot spots: compared with 2006 when there were 42,100 hot spots, in 2007 there were only 3,700 hot spots left. Even though there are no clear indications that the decrease in hot spots were caused by *fatwa*, it was clear that the public awareness increased with the *fatwa* phenomenon; which in this case was able to support the policy makers in taking firm action to overcome environmental problems including forest fires.

In line with the above, the government is becoming stronger due to the support from the *ulama* in eliminating illegal logging and illegal mining rimes, since besides breaking the law, religion also condemn it according to the *fatwa* issued by *Majelis Ulama Indonesia.*

4.2.6 Eco-Pesantren Program

Eco *Pesantren* is an effort to raise environmental awareness starting from Islamic schools. This program was initiated by the MoE with the assistance of NGO partners and the *pesantren* world itself. The reason for MoE to work with *pesantren* is because of the potential power held by these Islamic schools. There are 17,000 *pesantren* in Indonesia, which have very strong roots in the community. Besides that, there are 10 *Pondok Pesantren* who received the *kalpataru* - the highest environmental award in Indonesia – for their initiative in pioneering environmental conservation. Usually *pesantren* can support themselves without government aid. The objectives of the eco *pesantren* are, among others:

- Raising awareness that Islam's teaching is the guideline for environmentally friendly behaviour

- Implementing Islam's teaching in daily activities

- Empowering *pesantren* communities to improve the environmental quality based on *al-Qur'an* and *al Sunnah*

- Increasing activities that have value added from economical, social and ecological aspects

- Making the *pondok pesantren* into environmentally conscious learning centres for the *pesantren* community and surrounding community

- Socializing environmental materials in the *pondok Pesantren*s' activities

- Developing *pondok pesantren* areas that are good, clean and healthy.[42]

This eco *pesantren* program is still in the initial phase, but managed to encourage Islamic educational institutions to care more about the environment, especially climate change and global warming issues. A lot of *pesantren* have taken their own initiatives for environmental conservation, which should be passed on to other *pesantren* in order to raise awareness about climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Eco *Pesantren* media serve as long term socialization efforts to involve Muslims at the grass root levels in caring about the environment. Several examples of *pesantren* that care about the environment are: *pesantren* Nurul Iman in Bogor, which has become a pioneer in waste management; *Yayasan Pondok Pesantren* SPMAA at Desa Turi, Lamongan, East Java, with their biogas.

Notes:

[1] Paper presented in the Workshop: Islam and Climate Change: Towards a Seven Year Action Plan, Kuwait, 29-31 October 2008, Kuwait City.

[2] Mittermeier, R., Robles Gil & C. G. Mittermeier. (Eds.) 1997, Megadiversity: Earth's Biologically Wealthiest Nations. Cemex. New Mexico.

[3] El Nino and La Nina are two terminologies of oceanic-atmospheric climate phenomena: the El Nino is a climate cycle that brings long dry months that may cause forest fires and food disasters and la Nina is a wet cycle that bring a lot of rain and causes floods and land slide disasters.

[4] Agus P. Sari (ed). Indonesia and Climate Change: Current Status and Policies (Washington DC: Pelangi Energi Abadi Citra Environ for the World Bank and DFID, 2007)

[5] KORAN TEMPO, September 9, 2008. Dua Perusahaan Diberi Label Hitam. p. A7. The MOE has developed an environmental standards for waste management etc. This scheme has been running for about 15 years but still about 30 industries in Tangerang and Banten do not meet the official standard for their waste management.

[6] M.Indrawan, R. B Primack, J. Supriatna (2007). Biologi Konservasi (Revised Edition). (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia) p 553.

[7] J.Sopahelwakan. 2003. Dari Ilmu Kebumian Ke Ilmu Sistem Kebumian: Peranan H2O dan CO2 dalam siklus proses bumi dan evaluasi Kepulauan Indonesia. Pidato Pengukuhan Ahli Peneliti Utama Bidang Geologi Umum. LIPI Jakarta 21 Agustus 2003.

[8] Irawan, B. 2000. Stabilization of Upland Agriculture under El Nino Induced Climate Risk: In Assessment and Mitigation Measures in Indonesia. CG PRT Centre Working Paper No. 62, 78pp.

[9] IPCC 2007. Climate Change 2007. Syntesis Report: Summary for Policy Makers. p 2

[10] Sari, Working Paper on Indonesia and Climate Change: Current Status and Policies p 66.

[11] Susandi, A., Y. Firdaus & I. Herlianti. Impact of Climate Change on Indonesian Sea Level Rise with Referente to It's Socioeconomic Impact. EEPSEA Climate Change Conference, Bali. 2008.

[12] Tempo Interaktif, Gelombang Pasang Landa Pantai Utara dan Selatan Senin, 14 Mei 2007 | 20:10 WIB ; also see Serambi Indonesi. Gelombang Pasang, Warga Panik. Senin 09 Mei 2007.

[13] Susandi, A,. I. Herlianti, M.Tamamadin., Dampak Perubahan Iklim Terhadap Ketinggian Muka Laut Di Wilayah Banjarmasin. Program Studi Meteorologi - Institut Teknologi Bandung. 2008. Available online, Accessed 8 September 2008.

[14] Statement by Muslim Leader during Parallel Event entitled: Religion and Conservation: Opportunities for Working Together to Avoid Deforestation and Address Climate Change, UNFCCC-COP 13. BALI, 11 DESEMBER 2007

[15] Muhammad,A.S.,H.Muhammad.,R.Mabrur.,A.S.Abbas.,A.Firman.,F.M.Mangunjaya.,K.IB. Pasha.,M.Andriana.(Eds). 2004 Fiqih Lingkungan (Fiqh al-Biah). Jakarta: INFORM.

[16] Khalid, F & F. Mangunjaya, (eds.). 2007. Proceeding Colloquium Islamic Fiqh on the Environment. Wisma Syahida 21-22 June 2007. KLH, IFEES, Conservation International-Indonesia & WWF Indonesia, Jakarta.

[17] Sari, A.P.Working Paper on Indonesia and Climate Change: Current Status and Policies p 105

[18] Sari, A.P.Working Paper on Indonesia and Climate Change: Current Status and Policies p 106.

[19] Interviews with Agus Gunawan, staff MoE and see the website. www.klh.go.id

[20] Sari, A.P Working Paper on Indonesia and Climate Change: Current Status and Policies p 106

[21] Rett Buthler. Carbon finance could mean billions for Indonesia mongabay.com, November 5, 2006 http://news.mongabay.com/2006/1105-indonesia.html Accessed December 8,2006

[22] MoE. 2007. Rencana Aksi Nasional untuk Menghadapi Perubahan Iklim (National Action Plan for Climate Change,) p39

[23] MoE 2007. Rencana Aksi…p40

[24] MoE 2007. Rencana Aksi…p 51

[25] MoE.2007. Rencana Aksi …p 53

[26] MoE.2007. Rencana Aksi … p 54

[27] MoE.2007. Rencana Aksi …p 60

[28] MoE.2007. Rencana Aksi …p 62

[29] Interview with Agus Gunawan, Kasub Bidang Adaptasi Perubahan Iklim KLH 17 September 2008

[30] MoE.2007. Rencana Aksi …p 65

[31] Regency means an official administrative structure under a provinces; one province could be five or more regencies which then administratively formed a province.

[32] Boer & Las, 2003. in MoE.2007. Rencana Aksi …p 67

[33] Boer, 2002. in K. Subagyo. Dampak Perubahan Iklim terhadap pertanian, PP Presentation. Seminar Sehari "Keanekaragaman Hayati di Tengah Perubahan Iklim- Tantangan Masa Depan Indonesia" Hotel Grand Kemang, Jakarta, 28 Juni 2007

[34] I found some Muslim environmentalists or activists who were pioneering the environmental movement were called by their own heart, one of the reason was, because Islam teach them doing a good thing is Islam kind of worship to Allah, such as Ustadz Nasruddin Anshori of Pesantren Iman Giri, Yogjakarta or Tuan Guru (Syaykh) Hasanain Juwaini of Al Harmain Islamic Boarding School, of Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB)

[35] Kalpataru is a national award for environment from the Ministry of Indonesia for whom has a significant contribution to the environment at the local and national level.

[36] Fazlun M. Khalid. Applying Islamic Environmental Ethics. In Richard C. Foltz (ed) Environmentalism in the Muslim World. (New York: Nova Science Publisher,2005) p. 87.

[37] Mangunjaya, F. Membangun Kesadaran Lingkungan dan Konservasi Melalui Ajaran Islam in Fachruddin Mangunjaya, H. Heryanto, R. Gholami (Eds): Menanam Sebelum Kiamat (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia 2007)

[38] Ahmad Yani, 2007. Penerapan Pelajaran Fiqh al Biah di Dunia Pesantren (Pengalaman Pesantren Modern Daarul 'Uluum Lido) in Fazlun Khalid , & F. Mangunjaya, (Eds). Proceeding Colloquium Islamic Fiqh on the Environment. Wisma Syahida 21-22 June 2007. KLH, IFEES, Conservation International-Indonesia & WWF Indonesia, Jakarta.

[39] Kafil Yamin, Nyala Kecil 'Revolusi Hijau' dari Tungku Al Wasilah in Fachruddin Mangunjaya, H. Heryanto, R. Gholami (Eds): Menanam Sebelum Kiamat (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia 2007) p 240-255.

[40] Conservation International Indonesia. Islamic Boarding Schools and Conservation. (Jakarta: Final Report CI Indonesia, 2005). 24 pp

[41] Ilegal Loging dan Mining, Haram! MUI juga Keluarkan Fatwa Pembakaran Lahan dan Wajib Belajar. Radar Banjarmasin, Jumat, 5 Januari 2007.

[42] http://www.menlh.go.id/ecopesantren/#tujuan, 23 September 2008.

The Environmental Crisis
and Global Violence:
A Matter of Misplaced Values

Richard Foltz

Concordia University
Canada

Abstract

The most pervasive and dangerous form of global violence today is violence against the Earth's life-support systems. Environmental degradation is directly linked to other forms of violence such as war, poverty, and oppression. In the environmentally-fragile and overpopulated Middle East, these linkages are all the more pronounced, though they are often obscured by political and other factors.The environmental crisis has arisen due to a crisis in values. All over the world, traditional value systems which taught respect for natural resources have been overwhelmed by the values of the Religion of the Market, in which all things are reduced to mere commodities for sale. As the major source of values in the world today, the Religion of the Market is the primary agent of global violence against humans and against the Earth in general. In the Middle East, where most people identify as Muslims, Islam can serve as a counterbalance to the Religion of the Market, but for this to happen Islamic teachings on the environment need to be better articulated and more broadly disseminated than has been the case to date.

As the Iranian philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr observed half a century ago, long before most people realized the extent of damage human activities were doing to the Earth's life-support systems, the environmental crisis is fundamentally a crisis in values. In other words, we have been behaving in ways which show a marked lack of awareness and appreciation for the very ecosystems which make our own survival possible, indicating that we do not value them as we should. In fact we are, as Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich describes it, vigorously sawing off the very branch we are sitting on, thinking only of

how much we can sell it for as firewood. *Yekī bar sar-e shākh bon mīborīd, Khodāvand-e bostān nazar kard va dīd.*

Indeed, we have made buying, selling and consuming into values unto themselves, into ends rather than means, and we have allowed every last thing in our universe, even love itself and some would say religion as well, to be reduced to mere commodities to be thrown at the mercy of the Market. Day in and day out we hear ourselves referred to as "consumers," which has become our primary identity, and we accept this without protest. We allow decisions to be made on no other basis than the maximizing of profits for those fortunate or ambitious enough to control something they can profit from, even though the benefit rarely if ever reaches most of us, and even though the costs of these decisions are passed onto those least able to bear them. What kind of value system allows us to make such choices?

The primary source of values in any society is religion, and this is inescapable. Even atheists cannot live outside the framework of their culture in which they have been immersed since birth. (This is why Marxism is sometimes referred to as a Judeo-Christian heresy, since its starting point was the mindset and worldview of Christian Europe.) Most people are not atheists, but they often find ways of interpreting their received religious values in ways which can seem to support whatever agenda they happen to be pursuing. In such cases values can appear to have been greatly distorted when compared to earlier interpretations. Sadly, one result of such distortions is often violence.

The most pervasive and dangerous form of global violence today is violence against the Earth's life-support systems, what we typically refer to as the environment. Environmental degradation is directly linked to other forms of violence such as war, poverty, and oppression, though these linkages are often obscured by political and other factors, and sometimes deliberately so. To paraphrase Paul Ehrlich again, those who understand our dependence on ecosystems realize that the environmental crisis is the shaky stage on which all other human dramas are being played out—if the stage crumbles, none of the rest will matter. To cite another image used by environmentalists, the various human struggles we see around the world today are like fighting over possession of deck chairs on the Titanic. Yet we persist in treating the environmental crisis as merely one issue among many, rather than as the central issue that it is. How can we deceive ourselves so? We seem capable only of perceiving threats assaulting us head-on, failing to notice the far greater threat right under our feet. Perhaps, distracted by the need to dodge punches aimed at our faces and bodies, we are unable to see the fault lines we're standing on which are beginning to crack.

We worry a lot about bombs, but we should be a lot more worried about water. Water is so vital to life that even the richest of the rich cannot live without it. We will die from lack of water before we will die from lack of anything else. If our Palestinian and Lebanese brothers and sisters have been living in mortal danger from military incursions into their lands, a far greater danger is posed by the siphoning off of groundwater from the West Bank to fill Israeli swimming pools.

Here in Iran, where the threat of a US invasion continues to loom, the natural water cycle which used to be respected by the ancient *qanat* system and Islamic law has been broken in modern times by the ongoing application of water management policies and techniques imported from the US, where ironically many of these same policies and techniques are now being abandoned as unsustainable. Even in my home country of Canada, which possesses the largest freshwater reserves on the planet, repeated droughts in the Western provinces suggest that something is not right with the way we are doing business. What then can we say about Sudan, Niger, or Rajasthan? Worldwide, a third of the total human population lives in daily deprivation of access to that most vital of all

resources, water. What greater violence can there be than inflicting the unbearable, and ultimately fatal torture of unabated thirst?

Of course we have also commodified the soil, and now, with sellable pollution permits, the air we breathe as well. Wherever there is commodification we can see the same result: a commodity is valued only to the extent that people are willing and able to pay for it. Economists today speak quite openly and unashamedly about the need for people to be willing to pay for clean air. Within the current value system, air, water and soil pollution are actually good things, because cleaning them up and treating the illnesses they cause are activities that boost the GNP, that obscene measurement which sees all forms of economic activity as being positive, failing to differentiate between healthy versus unhealthy activities, just as it fails to take note of who actually benefits or who suffers as a result of these economic transactions.

Again, the question must be asked, what value system has allowed, even encouraged us to make these choices? Where are our traditional value systems in all this? Have the religions of the world nothing to say? Unfortunately it would seem that most people today have failed to note the emergence of a new, global Religion of the Market which has superseded all other value systems by winning more converts in a shorter period of time than any religion in history. Its success has been assured through the unchallenged ability of transnational corporations to arrogate unto themselves virtually all of the world's power and wealth, with the connivance of increasingly subservient national governments. The fact that a large proportion of these corporations and their leaders are based in the US should not mislead us into imagining that the US itself is the dominant power today, for Americans and even the American government have become hostages to corporate power which has no fixed home and no loyalties. Power and wealth today are mostly in the hands of a transnational elite that is truly global; whatever country they may actually live in, today's decision-makers share the interests of their own international class and not with the people of any nation. Whatever cultural affiliation they may pretend to claim, in fact the Religion of the Market is their only true ideology.

How then has the Religion of the Market achieved such success at the popular level? This has been done through a massive global propaganda campaign funded by these same corporate powers and their government lackeys, and spread through the missionary apparatus of highly-paid advertising agencies and public-relations firms making false promises of benefits for all. The priests of this new global religion are the so-called neo-classical economists of the Chicago school, whose mumbo-jumbo formulas nobody understands but whom we all trust to instruct us in the proper ritual behavior so as to appease our Market God. Our places of worship are the shopping centres, where we carry out our ritual obligations to consume as much as we possibly can in the hope and belief that this will bring us some kind of unspecified salvation. We are told that the juggernaut of economic globalization is unstoppable, inevitable, and that it will benefit everyone, but also that we must accept these claims *on faith alone*. In fact the evidence is clear that the Religion of the Market works against the interests of the vast majority of people on this earth, but anyone who attempts to point this out is massively shouted down as a heretic.

The Gospel of Globalization succeeds in winning converts not because it is true but simply because it is louder than any other voice in the world today, its megaphones provided by a global media almost entirely in the hands of its corporate champions. The supposed universal validity of this new religion is demonstrated by the fact that it has been embraced by people from all over the planet, Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist, as well as by so-called "secular humanists." Like the universal faith systems of the past, the Religion of the Market succeeds by claiming to be either compatible with or superior to people's existing faith systems. Thus, alongside those abject materialists who

claim to have abandoned religion altogether we also have Christians who believe that if Jesus were alive today he'd drive an SUV and Muslims who believe that ostentatious wealth is a sign of Allah's special favor, Hindus who live as if Lakshmi were the only one of their 33 million deities that mattered, and Buddhists spending millions building high-rise nirvanas out of glass and steel.

And yet, because not everyone on Earth has agreed to join this new faith, the Religion of the Market imposes itself all too often through violence, whether in the form of riot squads breaking up peaceful demonstrations in the West or endless military occupations meant to ensure an entire country gets put of for sale to foreign investors. For the most part the victims of this violence are simply dismissed, using appropriately military terminology, as "collateral damage." You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs, and anyway, the subtext reads, mostly such people are infidels who don't believe in the Market God. What is rarely acknowledged or admitted is that sooner or later, this violence threatens all of us, faithful and unfaithful alike: the Religion of the Market, the religion of boundless consumption, is a mother who eats her babies.

Given the righteous and uncompromising fervor through which the Religion of the Market is propagated by its supporters, is it any surprise that resistance to this hegemonic faith system often articulates itself in religious terms? Islamic jihad is but one form of expression, conjuring Muslims' life-or-death struggles of centuries past: in India we have the Chipko "tree-hugging" movement, rich in Hindu imagery and vocabulary, and in Thailand Buddhist monks are performing ordination ceremonies on trees to protect them from being treated as mere commodities. In sub-Saharan Africa the Earthkeeping churches blend a liberation theology-tinged Christian message with ancient animist reverence for nature.

But one wonders whether in most cases the resistors have really understood the true nature of their enemy. It is not a question of resisting modernity, technology, globalization, or "progress" as such, for all of these terms have a range of possible meanings and applications. I think what people are resisting is really the imposition of an alien faith system which they intuitively sense sees them only as offerings to be sacrificed at the altar of the wealthy and powerful. Mostly I suspect this awareness is subconscious at best, and perhaps that is why global resistance to the Religion of the Market is floundering. People cannot effectively fight an enemy without first accurately identifying who, what or where that enemy is.

In Middle Eastern cultures the most significant factor informing received value systems is Islam. Thus, for Muslims who do not accept the imposition of the Religion of the Market as a substitute for their traditional value system, a reaffirmation of Islamic values is the often most natural form of resistance. But a resistance to the Religion of the Market which hopes to be informed by Islam cannot expect to find a ready-made response in the experiences of the Muslim past. Islamic values and experiences must be interpreted in light of the present challenge, and to date few Muslims have had sufficient understanding either of the Religion of the Market or of the global environmental crisis to enable them to do this.

Among those who have, we have already cited Hossein Nasr who has argued since the 1950s that Islamic science and technology never lost sight of the sacredness of Creation as occurred in the West. More recently we have seen interpretations such as those found in the book *Islam and Ecology* which we edited in 2003, particularly the environmentally-focused Qur'anic exegesis of Prof. Ibrahim Ozdemir, and the economic critiques of Fazlun Khalid and Prof. Yasin Dutton which link un-Islamic banking practices with unsustainable development. The past decade has seen a flourishing throughout the Muslim world of environmental organizations which seek to apply an

Islamic understanding of environmental ethics, and many of these organizations have emerged right here in Iran.

Yet for the most part, it must be admitted that for most of the world's Muslims today, as for people everywhere, environmental concerns are not seen as central. At best, they may be included within a litany of other problems and injustices many of which are accorded equal or greater weight. This is a misperception and a mistake. Our very survival as a species is in jeopardy. At best, it is virtually certain that our children and grandchildren will inherit from us an impoverished and diminished planet, due to our own arrogant refusal to respect and abide by the laws of nature. At worst, they may inherit nothing at all.

In repeatedly choosing to value the interests of the immediate present over those of the future and the interests of rich elites over those of the vast majority who are poor, we are faithfully following the logic and dictates of the Religion of the Market, but we are also violating natural constraints laid down since the time the Earth was created, and our children will pay the penalty for our criminal negligence. Whether Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, or secularist, we have whether wittingly or not allowed ourselves to live and act as members of a faith which believes only in consuming as much as we can as fast as we can (what economists call "efficiency") without regard for the consequences to others or to ourselves.

In a world where human numbers and human desires seem to be increasing without restraint, the finite resources of our common earthly home seem destined for the hands of those who remain bent on taking all they can, whether by persuasion or by force. The ultimate source of violence, and of environmental degradation as well, is greed. The Religion of the Market, which has made greed into a virtue, is thus a religion of violence. If we recognize this fact, and oppose the spread of this religion of death, we may yet find the way (or the way back) to a value system in which natural limits are recognized and resources are distributed equitably, and where those who would use violence to take more than their share are condemned as outcasts instead of being celebrated as heroes.

Bibliography

Abdel Haleem, Harfiyah, ed., *Islam and the Environment* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1998).

Afrasiabi, Kaveh L, "The Environmental Movement in Iran: Perspectives from Above and Below," *Middle East Journal* 57/3 (2003): 432-448.

_____, "Towards an Islamic Ecotheology," *Hamdard Islamicus* 18/1 (1995): 33-49. Reprinted in *Worldviews, Religion and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, ed. Richard C. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson, 2002), pp. 366-375.

Agwan, A.R., "Toward an Ecological Consciousness," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 10/2 (1993): 238-248.

_____, *The Environmental Concern of Islam* (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 1992).

Ahmad, Akhtaruddin, *Islam and the Environmental Crisis* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1997).

Ahmad, Ali, "Islam and Environmental Law," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor and Jeffrey Kaplan (New York: Continuum, 2005).

_____, "Islam and Nature in Nigeria," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor and Jeffrey Kaplan (New York: Continuum, 2005).

_____, *A Cosmopolitan Orientation of International Environmental Law: An Islamic Law Genre* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001).

_____, "Islamic Water Law as an Antidote for Maintaining Water Quality," *University of Denver Water Law Review* (Summer 1999): 170-188.

_____, "Islam and Modern Transformation of Environmental Thoughts," *American Muslim Quarterly* 2/1 (1998): 129-136.

Ahmad, Ali and Carl Bruch, "Maintaining Mizan: Protecting Biodiversity of Muslim Communities in Africa," *Environmental Law Reporter* 32/1 (2001): 20-37.

Ajmal, Mohammed, "Islam and Ecological Problems," in *Quest for New Science*, ed. Rais Ahmed and S. Naseem Ahmed (Aligarh: Centre for Studies on Science, 1984), pp. 215-220.

Akbar, Khalid Farooq, "Environmental Crisis and Religion: The Islamic View," *Islamic Thought and Scientific Creativity* 3/1 (1992): 23-29.

Ammar, Nawal H., "Islam and Eco-Justice," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor and Jeffrey Kaplan (New York: Continuum, 2005).

_____, "Islam and Deep Ecology," in *Deep Ecology and World Religions: New Essays on Sacred Ground*, ed. David Landis Barnhill and Roger S. Gottlieb (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 193-211.

_____, "An Islamic Response to the Manifest Ecological Crisis: Issues of Justice," in *Visions of a New Earth: Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*, ed. Harold Coward and Daniel C. Maguire (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 131-146. Reprinted in *Worldviews, Religion and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, ed. Richard C. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson, 2002), pp. 376-385.

_____, "Islam and the Environment: A Legalistic and Textual View," in *Population, Consumption, and the Environment: Religious and Secular* Responses, ed. Harold Coward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 123-136.

Ansari, M. I., "Islamic Perspective on Sustainable Development," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 11 (1995): 394-402.

Asmal, Abdul Cader and Mohammed Asmal, "An Islamic Perspective," in *Consumption, Population and Sustainability: Perspectives from Science and Religion*, ed. Audrey Chapman, Rodney Peterson, and Barbara Smith-Moran (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000), pp. 157-165.

Ba Kader, Abou Bakr Ahmed, Abdul Latif Tawfik El Shirazy Al Sabagh, Mohamed Al Sayyed Al Glenid, and Mawil Y. Izzi Deen, *Islamic Principles for the Conservation of the Natural Environment*, Gland, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1983. 2nd edition online: <http://www.islamset.com/env/contenv.html>.

Bakhashab, Omar A., "Islamic Law and the Environment: Some Basic Principles," *Arab Law Quarterly* (1982): 287-298.

Ba Ubaid, Ali Yeslam, "Environment, ethics and design: An inquiry into the ethical underpinnings of Muslim environmentalism and its environmental design implications (Saudi Arabia)," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999).

Beaudin, Michel, "Cette idole qui nous gouverne. Le néolibéralisme comme 'religion' et comme théologie' sacrificielle." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 24/4: 395-413.

Canan, Ibrahim, *Environmental Ethics in the Light of the Hadiths* (Istanbul: New Asia Press, 1995). (In Turkish.)

_____, "Environment in Islam," *Yeni Türkiye* 5 (July-August, 1995): 27-38.

Chittick, William, "God Surrounds All Things: An Islamic Perspective on the Environment," *The World and I* 1/6 (June 1986): 671-678.

Clarke, Lynda, "The Universe Alive: Nature in the Philosophy of Jalal al-Din Rumi," in Thomas Robinson and Laura Westra, eds., *Thinking About the Environment: Our Debt to the Medieval Past* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 2002).

Cox, Harvey, "The Market as God: Living in the New Dispensation." *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1999): 18-23.

Damad, Mostafa Mohaghegh, *A Discourse on Nature and Environment from an Islamic Perspective* (Tehran: Department of the Environment, 2001).

Denny, Frederick M., " Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust Inviting Balanced Stewardship," *Earth Ethics* 10/1 (1998).

Dutton, Yasin, "Islam and the Environment: A Framework for Inquiry," *Faiths and the Environment: conference papers* (*Faith in Dialogue*, no. 1) (London: Centre for Inter-Faith Dialogue, 1996), 46-70. Reprinted in *Islam and the Environment*, ed. Harfiyah Abdel Haleem (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1998), pp. 56-74.

_____, "Natural Resources in Islam," in *Islam and Ecology*, ed. Fazlun Khalid and Joanne O'Brien (New York: Cassell, 1992), pp. 51-67.

Eaton, Charles Le Gai, "Islam and the Environment," *Islamica: The Journal of the London School of Economics and Political Science* 1/2 (1993): 18-21.

Erdur, Oguz, "Reappropriating the 'Green': Islamist Environmentalism," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 17 (fall 1997): 151-66.

Faruqui, Naser I., Asit K. Biswas and Murad J. Bino, eds., *Water Management in Islam*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2001.

Foltz, Richard C., "The Religion of the Market: Reflections on a Decade of Discussion," *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 11/2 (2007): 135-154.

_____, "Islam and Ecology," in Lindsay Jones, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, second edition, New York: Macmillan, 2005, v. 4, pp. 2651-4.

_____, "Islam and Environmentalism in Iran," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor and Jeffrey Kaplan (New York: Continuum, 2005).

_____, "Water—in Islam," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor and Jeffrey Kaplan (New York: Continuum, 2005).

_____, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?: World History, Environmental History, and How Historians Can Help Save the Planet," *The History Teacher* 37/1 (2003): 9-28.

_____, "Iran's Water Crisis: Cultural, Political and Ethical Dimensions," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 15/4 (2002).

_____, "Islamic Environmentalism in Theory and Practice," in *Worldviews, Religion and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, ed. Richard C. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson, 2002), pp. 358-365.

_____, "Environmental Initiatives in Contemporary Iran," *Central Asian Survey* 20/2 (2001): 155-165.

_____, "Nasr, Seyyed Hossein," *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change* (London: Wiley, 2001), v. 5, p. 412.

_____, "Is There an Islamic Environmentalism?" *Environmental Ethics* 22/1 (2000): 63-72.

Foltz, Richard C., ed., *Environmentalism in the Muslim World* (New York: Nova Science, 2005).

_____, "*Worldviews, Religion and the Environment: A Global Anthology* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson, 2002).

Foltz, Richard C., Frederick M. Denny, and Azizan Baharuddin, eds., *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Forward, Martin, and Mohamed Alam, "Islam," in *Attitudes to Nature*, ed. Jean Holm and John Bowker (London: Pinter, 1994), pp. 79-100.

Frank, Thomas, *One Market Under God*. New York: Anchor, 2001.

Ganai, Gh. Nabi, "Nature Conservation in Islam," *Islam and the Modern Age* 26/4 (1995): 280-292.

Gürsel, D, *Çevresizsiniz* (You Are Environmentless) (Istanbul: Insan Yayincilik, 1989). (In Turkish).

Haenni, Patrick, *L'islam du marché: L'autre revolution conservatrice* (Paris: Seuil, 2005).

Hamed, Safei El-Deen, "Seeing the Environment Through Islamic Eyes: Application of Shariah to Natural Resources Planning and Management," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 6/2 (1993): 145-64.

_____, "Paradise on Earth: Historical Gardens of the Arid Middle East," *Arid Lands Newsletter* 36/2 (1995): 5-10.

_____, *Landscape Planning for the Arid Middle East: An Approach to Setting Environmental Objectives* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

Haq, S. Nomanul, "Islam," in *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Dale Jamieson (London: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 111-129.

_____, "Islam and Ecology: Toward Retrieval and Reconstruction," *Daedalus* 130/4 (2001): 141-178.

Hopkins, Nicholas S., et al., *People and Pollution: Cultural Constructions and Social Action in Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2001).

Husaini, S. Waqar Ahmad, *Islamic Environmental Systems Engineering* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

Ibrahim, F., *Ecological Imbalances in the Republic of Sudan* (Bayreuth: Druckhaus Bayreuth Verlagsgesellschaft, 1984).

Idris, Jafar Sheikh, "Is Man the Viceregent of God?" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (1990): 99-110.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)-Pakistan, *The Pakistan National Conservation Strategy* (Karachi: IUCN, 1992).

Izzi Dien, Mawil Y., *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2000).

_____, "Islam and the Environment: theory and practice," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 18/1 (1997): 47-58.

_____, "Islamic Ethics and the Environment," in *Islam and Ecology*, ed. Fazlun Khalid and Joanne O'Brien (New York: Cassell, 1992), pp. 25-35.

_____, "Islamic Environmental Ethics, Law, and Society," in *Ethics of Environment and Development: Global Challenge and International Response*, ed. J. Ronald Engel and Joan Gibb Engel (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), pp. 189-198.

_____, "Environmental Protection and Islam," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts, King Abdul Aziz University* 5 (1985): 35-43.

Jabbra, Joseph G. and Nancy W. Jabbra, eds., *Challenging Environmental Issues: Middle Eastern Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

Joma, Hesam A. "The Earth as a Mosque," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Philadelphia, PA:.University of Pennsylvania, 1991).

Khalid, Fazlun, "Islam and the Environment," *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change* (London: Wiley, 2001), v. 5, pp. 332-339.

_____, *Qur'an: Creation and Conservation*, Birmingham (UK): IFEES, 1999.

_____, "Guardians of the Natural Order," *Our Planet* 8/2 (August 1996): 8-12.

_____, "The Disconnected People," in *Islam and Ecology*, ed. Fazlun Khalid and Joanne O'Brien (New York: Cassell, 1992), 99-110. Reprinted in *Worldviews, Religion and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, ed. Richard C. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson, 2002), pp. 385-391.

Khalid, Fazlun, and Joanne O'Brien, eds., *Islam and Ecology* (New York: Cassell, 1992).

Kula, Erhun, "Islam and Environmental Conservation," *Environmental Conservation* 28/1 (2001): 2-9.

Lau, Martin, "Islam and Judicial Activism: Public Address Litigation under Environmental Protection in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," in *Human Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection*, ed. Alan E. Boyle and Michael R. Anderson (New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 285-302.

Loy, David, "The Religion of the Market," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65/2 (1997): 275-290. Reprinted in *Visions of a New Earth: Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*, 15-27. Ed. by Harold Coward and Daniel Maguire (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000). Also reprinted in *Worldviews, Religion and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, 66-74. Ed. by Richard C. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003).

Majmu'e-ye maqalat-e avalin hamayesh-e eslam va mohit-e zist (Papers from the first conference on Islam and the Environment) (Tehran: Department of Environmental Protection, 1378/1999). (In Persian.)

Masri, Al-Hafiz, "Islam and Ecology," in *Islam and Ecology*, ed. Fazlun Khalid and Joanne O'Brien (New York: Cassell, 1992), pp. 1-23.

Morewedge, Parvez, "Islamic Ecology: The De-Alienation of Persons from Nature," in Thomas Robinson and Laura Westra, eds., *Thinking About the Environment: Our Debt to the Medieval Past* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 2002).

Nasif, Abdullah Omar, "The Muslim Declaration of Nature," *Environmental Policy and Law* 17/1 (1987): 47.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Kazi Publishers, 1997 [1967]).

_____, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

_____, "Islam and the Environmental Crisis," in *Spirit and Nature*, ed. Steven C. Rockefeller and John C. Elder (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 83-108.

_____, "The Ecological Problem in Light of Sufism: The Conquest of Nature and the Teachings of Eastern Science," in *Sufi Essays*, 2nd ed. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 152-63.

_____, "Islam and the Environmental Crisis," *The Islamic Quarterly* 34/4 (1991): 217-34

_____, "Islam and the Environmental Crisis," *MAAS Journal of Islamic Science* 6/2 (1990): 31-51.

_____, "The Meaning of Nature in Various Intellectual Perspectives in Islam," *The Islamic Quarterly* 9/1-2 (1965): 25-29.

Nelson, Robert, 2001. *Economics as Religion*. University Park, PA: Penn State Press.

Özdemir, Ibrahim, *The Ethical Dimension of Human Attitude[s] Toward Nature* (Ankara: Ministry of Environment, 1997).

_____, *Cevre ve Din* (Environment and Religion) (Ankara: Ministry of Environment, 1997). (In Turkish.)

Özdemir, Ibrahim and Münir Yükselmis, *Çevre Sorunları ve Islam* (*Environmental Problems and Islam*) (Ankara, 1995). (In Turkish.)

al-Qaradhawi, Yusuf, *Raʻait al-bīʻah fī sharīʻat al-islām* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1421/2001). (In Arabic.)

Rahman, M.K., "Environmental Awareness in Islam," *MAAS Journal of Islamic Science* 2 (1980): 99-105.

Sabarini, Rashid Al-Hamd and Muhammad Saʻid, *Al-bīʼat wa mushkilātuha* (The Environment and its Problems), 3rd ed. (Kuwait: Al-majlis al-watani lil-thaqafah wa al-funun wa al-adab, 1986). (In Arabic.)

Sardar, Ziauddin, "Towards an Islamic Theory of the Environment," in *Islamic Futures: A Shape of Ideas to Come* (London: Mansell, 1985), pp. 224-237.

Sardar, Ziauddin, ed., *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and the Environment in Islam* (London: Mansell, 1989).

_____, *Touch of Midas: Scientific Values and the Environment in Islam and the West* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Shirazi, Muhammad Husayni, *Al-fiqh al-bīʼat* (Beirut: Muʼassasat al-waʻī al-islāmī, 1420/2000). (In Arabic.)

Stackhouse, Max, Ed., 2000-. *God and Globalization*. 4 vols. Harrisburg: Trinity International.

Tardif, Nelson, 2003. *Au nom du marché: Regards sur une dimension méconnue du liberalisme économique: sa violence sacrificielle*. Montréal: MNH.

Twitchell, James B., 1999. *Lead Us Into Temptation: The Triumph of American Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Religionsgeschichte and Sadrian Paradigm; Consecrative Power and Discriminative Ability

Seyed Javad Miri

Visiting Professor at Sharif University
Department of Philosophy of Science
Iran

Abstract

In this article we have been trying to lay out the contours of a new research terrain by drawing the attentions of students of social sciences and cultural studies towards a new paradigm represented by Seyyed Musa Sadr (better known as Imam Musa Sadr) in regard to the study of religion and religious reality. Within the disciplinary paradigms we have grown accustomed to believe that there is no phenomenon rightly considered as 'religious' and therefore we need to conceptualize the religious discourse in terms of its interconnections with other domains of reality such as economic, political, ideological, psychological, sociological, historical and so on and so forth. In other words, the application of reductive approach has been the only game in the town and to think otherwise has been considered unscientific and romantic by disciplinary scholars. Here we have attempted to go beyond these modes of conceptualizations based on a novel reading of Sadr in reference to what we have come to term as Sadrian Paradigm.

Keywords

Introduction

To argue that Sadr is a religionshistoriker[1] could be considered very farfetched but to contend that it is possible to extract concepts from his sociological system[2] which are of significance in term of **religionsgeschichte** would not be fundamentally off the mark. To unearth this aspect of Sadr we need primarily to explore the modernist system of Religionswissenschaften and extrapolate it with what Sadr stands for. To accomplish this task we try to give a brief account of the state of art and then move towards a classification of fundamental positions within the contemporary context of history of religion as a discipline[3] and afterwards locate the Sadrian position within these diverse

perspectives and finally analyze what we think are of analytical significance within the Sadrian paradigm in terms of history of religion as part of social theory.

Religionshistoria as Swedes call it or the discipline of History of Religions is a scientific discipline[4] which explores religion from a historical perspective. Customarily it is conducted through comparative studies of various religions as the researchers tend to believe in a *specific religious phenomenon* common to all humanity which is conditioned by various indices of sociological/geographical/historical nature. The discipline has been influenced by various different theories which are not necessarily of theological or history of religions-discipline origin. For instance one can mention Structuralism and Marxism which have had deep impact upon the discipline through its institutional life. Several thinkers and researchers have had great influence over the discipline's development and one could mention the following examples:

1. Gorges Dumézil, researched on Indo-European

2. Mircea Eliade, worked on mythologies

3. Michel Foucault, known as a postmodernist

4. Karl Marx

5. Claude Lévi-Strauss, structuralist and mythologist

6. Victor Turner, researcher *les rites de passage*

As I studied history of religions in Scandinavia it would be proper to depart from the Scandinavian position on the discipline rather than generalizing on Western position on the issue. In Scandinavia, for instance, the discipline 'Religionshistoria' has been traditionally concerned about non-Christian religions and distinguished from another academic subject which is primarily focused upon history of Christianity i.e. Kristendomenshistoria.

Science of Religion

Science of religion or as it is known in Sweden, i.e. **Religionsvetenskap** is a term for the scientific study[5] of religions, their backgrounds and developments. In Sweden, it occurs that the concept of theology of historical reasons is used instead of **science of religion**, and both of these terms are often considered by theologians and other religious thinkers as synonyms. The science of religion or **Religionsvetenskap** is characterized however of an irreligious attitude to the religion, unlike the traditional theological approaches which have incorporated denominational dogmatic worldviews within their parameters.

History of Disciplinary Approaches of Religions

Conventionally theological study in academia has been undertaken primarily by people who intended to become priests, and the education was largely tailored to this purpose. But when secularization seriously got the upper hand during 19th century, and theology as a scientific field of study was seriously questioned, in Sweden, for instance, due to efforts of Ingemar Hedenius, became the more important for theology to demonstrate its academic justification. As a consequence of this came the concept of "theology" within the Scandinavian academic world partially to be replaced by "science of religion" or as it is expressed in Swedish by **Religionsvetenskap**. Thus, the term has today two main connotations in Swedish, Norwegian and Danish (not mentioning the cases of Island and

Finland); the first meaning could be described as a theological reflection on religion in any particular religious tradition such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and so on and so forth; and the second conception is deeply related to the parameters of Modernism which is based on positivistic approaches to the religious phenomena and eloquently expressed in German by the term **Religionswissenschaften**. As far as Scandinavia is concerned when one uses the term theology today it is synonymous with science of religion or what in Swedish it is called **Religionsvetenskap**.

In other parts of the world, one could still find a clear distinction between these two terms. In Scandinavia in academia the term 'Christian Teaching' came to be replaced by studies of religions during 60s and early 70s and this shift was not only of nominal significance but of an epistemological importance which signaled a paradigm shift in metatheoretical sense. But apart from these distinctions and seemingly unimportant differences one should pause and ask whether there are fundamental distinctions between academic theology and science of religion. In my understanding it seems there are no great differences between these two disciplines as both fall under the imperatives of disciplinary thinking which share all paraphernalia of modernism in terms of naturalism, positivism, evolutionism, empiricism and the distinction of reason and intellect by neglecting the hierarchy of knowledge.

Religionsgeschichte and Religionswissenschaften

If the differences between theology and academic studies of religion are of no great significance then the question could be extended to include other fields of studies of religion, i.e. history of religion and science of religion. In other words, the question is whether the differences between them are of essential significance or of nominal importance. The views are very diverse as points of departures are not all of similar concerns. There are some who approach the question based on epistemological concerns and others think of ontological dimensions or even some who think of sociological aspects in terms of the subject of analysis. However within the broader context of **Geistwissenschaften** it seems there is a general agreement that the differences between the disciplines of History of Religion and Science of Religion seem to be practically meager and irrelevant to be mentioned or even taken into epistemological considerations or ontological deliberations and metatheoretical forethoughts. Thus there is an argument that the discipline of history of religion examines the religions as historical science 'in the depth', while the discipline of science of religion approaches the problematique 'in the width' by confronting the multiplicities of the question and comparing the diversities of religious phenomena. That is to argue the methodologies of both approaches differ on various points. Fundamental is to be said here that the DHR makes the bases available for a systematic science of religion or Religionswissenschaften. There is a close connection between the two fields which makes the relation, unlike other disciplines such as sociology of religion or psychology of religion, imperative for those who are interested in depth and width of religious phenomena. But despite all the methodological differences one fact is undeniable and that is the disciplinary paradigm which all these fields of science share in depth and width.

Historiographical Narratives in Religionsgeschichte

Within academia or what is termed as mainstream social sciences which coincidentally are the only institutionalized forms of 'doing science' there is only one story to be told

and that is of evolutionary narrative but this saga is not the only approach to Religionsgeschichte in metatheoretical sense. Hence the accounts which we shall give here are not based on empirical descriptions in reference to institutionalized forms of historiography. On the contrary, it is based on the possibilities of doing religionsgeschichte which are not confined to evolutionary accounts of the discipline of history of religion. Of course it should be emphasized that another name for disciplinary approach is modernism and the accounts which we wish to present here are not confined to modernist narratives alone and more importantly it should be stated that Sadrian position does not fall within the parameters of Modernism or any of its alliances such as evolutionism, empiricism, positivism, naturalism, logical positivism and so on and so forth.

For the sake of argument we can argue that there are three kinds of historiographical narratives in religionsgeschichte:

1. **Evolutionary Narrative** where there is no interaction or dialog between Reason and Revelation or where permanent dimensions of being have been eschewed by overemphasizing the importance of contingent aspects of Leben. This version culminates in what is called today as Modernism.

2. **Traditionalistic Narrative** where there is no dialog between Reason and Revelation or where contingent dimensions of being have been denied by excluding all factors of importance in reshaping the contours of Leben and solely arguing for the authenticity of permanence over against the contingency. This version culminates in what is called today as Fundamentalism.

3. **Primordial Narrative** where there is a systematic dialog between Reason and Revelation or where contingent dimensions of life has been married with the permanent aspects of existence and human world (and whatever that is related to this Welt) is interpreted under the grand umbrella of primary and secondary principles.

Sadr's theory on History of Religions falls within the parameters of the last school which does not lead to either kind of secularism which is represented by Fundamentalism or Modernism. Now we need to expand Sadrian approach by highlighting the two central concepts which are of towering importance in religionsgeschichte discourses as we wish to argue that his narrative seems not to follow the patterns of secularism or fundamentalism as both are synonymous when approached from primordial point of departure as both reduces life into an epiphenomenon. But the question is how the concepts of **'Consecrative Power'** and **'Discriminative Ability'** are used by Sadr and more importantly how could they be employed by students of history of religions in their respective fields of research?

Consecrative Power and Discriminative Ability

There are some historians who argue that religion has been a destructive force in the history of civilizations and a source of concern whenever it has taken any significant role in the human society. This group seems to argue that as soon as religion takes a managerial role in any sense the human society is driven to the brink of war, conflict and destruction. For corroborating this claim they cite many quotes and quote many cites and introspectively read the prehistory of modernity in terms of the role of religion, which led to civil wars in Europe and the curtailing position of religion within modern societies which led to peace in Europe. Of course this approach to religion tends to forget the role

of religion in anti-colonial movements outside Europe which seems not to follow the modernist narrative but even excluding this historical fact it seems this endarkening role assigned to religion and enlightening role given to reason are, say the least, flawed and unfounded. The primary reason is that it seems whatever cannot be explained rationally or whatever felt by an individual personally or collectively could be termed as religion or of religious significance. In other words, for mathematics one needs to have a mathematical ground but for religion it seems the proponents of secularism don't assume any intellectual foundations which should not be only emotionally valid but intelligibly verifiable. Because in the modernist readings fields such as Magic, Superstition, Horoscope, Belief, Fortunetelling and UFO-ism all share common grounds with Religion and even synonymous. But this is to lose sight of the inherent dimensions of religion which enables us to distinguish between superstition and faith or isms and religion.

This enabling aspect is where Sadr has focused upon in relation to science and religion by arguing that whatever goes under the name of religion or religiosity is not of religious nature as there are indices which could demonstrate the parameters of sacred. In other words, it is accurate to assume that the gates of Heaven are as wide as the ocean of infinity but this is not to argue that there is no intelligibility or order in place and instead total chaos reigns supreme. This is an issue which distinguishes the disciplinary episteme from primordial school in terms of conceptualizing religion and religiosity as in the former whatever is not demonstrable empirically or explainable rationally is deemed 'religious' and a matter of 'faith', while in the latter the ladder of being is not confined to empirics or/and rationality. To put it differently, Sadr approaches the history of religion in an intelligible fashion by arguing that religion proposes a system of analytics, i.e. concepts which are of analytical significance and behind these analytics there are *modes of beings* (Sadr, 1383. p 153) which open up avenues of realities that could be internalized by human beings in creating world-shaking modes in civilizational scopes. Unlike the modernist narratives Sadr argues that there is a tendency in the human history to create superstitiously modes of beings or social networks which attempt to numb the rational ability of human self under various guises. Opposite to the 'received wisdom' of Enlightenment which is based on the belief that it is religion that creates superstitious contexts by consecrating exploitative acts of suppression or idiotic acts of ignorance, Sadr argues that

> Religion descaralizes superstitiously woven sacrality and hence enabling the inquiring mind of human self to unearth the essence of reality which is, in fact, the *act of God*.

> (1383. p 152)

This argument would become more comprehensible when we put the Sadrian assumption in its historical context which is aimed to engage with competing discourses represented by Modernism which are aimed to inculcate in the minds of modern man the notions of superiority of scientific reasonability and antagonism between science and religion. Sadr seems to suggest that science is only one aspect of human intelligible life and as such is indebted to religion in the sense that human reason needed to be emancipated first and foremost before being able to cast its gaze upon the world beyond, beneath and within as there is a illusory dimension within the context of self that could culminate to the heights of a cult and in so doing obstruct the course of unfolding of human realization both individually and collectively. In other words, Sadr attempts to suggest that religion puts at the disposal of human self an ability that is of Consecrative and Discriminative nature. This is to argue that the project of revelation is not finished in the history of humanity as revelatory nature of religion is part and parcel of being and becoming a Full Man and this

entails consequently a very different narrative in terms of religiosity which in modernist reading is reduced to a total idiotically haphazard accident that takes any colour without any systematicity.

The general approach in social theory has been to demarcate the realms of sacred and secular by vigilantly guard the domains of profane based on the assumption that these twain shall never meet except in the moment of exceptionality within the imagination of schizophrenic self. This sentiment is very eloquently formulated by Thomas Szasz who states

> If you talk to God, you are praying. If God talks to you, you have schizophrenia.
>
> (1973. p 113)

In a schizophrenic society this may be a very interesting tool to harness our madness but when it is understood as an analytical tool in denying the relevance of revelation in its primordial sense and its continuing importance in existential sense then we feel our path departs from that of Szasz as revelation in its primordial sense contains tools of discrimination and consecration. One may argue that history of religions does not lend itself to such a reading where religion could put at the disposal of human mind the Consecrative Power and Discriminative Ability. To this critique one could answer by contending that in which reading of historiography of religion we have attempted to decipher the codes of religious sensibility as this is a matter of metatheoretical significance which normal scientists of religionsgeschichte do not pay attention. To my mind there is not yet any academic study based on Sadrian reading of history of religions and what I have done here is just a proposal to carry out researches based on these conceptual tools which may assist us to go beyond scientism inherent in religionsgeschichte and endarkening role assigned to religion as in Sadr's view religion

> … designs the destination and by employing our human faculties assists us to navigate through the sea of unknown towards the *ultimate destination*.
>
> (Sadr, 1383. pp 153-159)

But this attitude requires willingness to learn consciously and this seems in our culture of madness be badly in high demand and rare supply as we have buried the child (the innocence dimensions of being) within us by aggressively denying maturity that leads to wisdom and mixing that up with adultness in legal terms which coincidentally is tantamount to ability to fabricate lies (the denial of life's dimensions). This is being beautifully detected by Thomas S. Szasz where he holds that

> Every act of conscious learning requires the willingness to suffer an injury to one's self-esteem. That is why young children, before they are aware of their own self-importance, learn so easily; and why older persons, especially if vain or important, cannot learn at all.

Notes

[1] The term is of Swedish origin which means expert in history of religions.

[2] Elsewhere I have argued that Sadr is a social theorist and he, along with many other thinkers such as Shariati, Muttahari, Beheshti, Seyyed Baqer Sadr, al-Attas and Chamran, belongs to Primordial School of Social Theory which has not been mentioned in classical and contemporary sociological textbooks. In other words, I consider Sadr as one of the most distinguished thinker who employed and applied the wits of sociological imagination in the widest sense of both 'social' and 'imagination' in the traditions of Suhrevardi and Ibn Khaldun.

There are few people who have paid attention to these thinkers in terms of Sociological Theory and almost none have worked upon their discourses in terms of a specific school within sociological traditions in the sense Ritzer has done for other schools within social theory. Ritzer has done a great service to sociology but at the same time a great disservice to sociological canon due to his obliviousness to three great sociological traditions which I have called ;Primordial School of Social Theory', 'Perennial School of Social Theory' and 'Existential School of Social Theory'. These he has not mentioned and nobody else has even bothered to ponder upon. Of course we should mention the work by Tiryakian where he looks at existential trends within sociology but this is a totally different issue than presenting a school within sociological tradition.

[3] It should be mentioned that we distinguish between 'disciplinary' and 'undisciplinary' approaches within social theory and think that Sadr's position does not fall within the parameters of disciplinary approaches. However here we use the term discipline not in its epistemological sense but in terms of a field of study which has a particular subject in mind without any ontological commitment to empiricism or positivism and logical positivism which are the landmarks of disciplinary thinking in a metatheoretical sense, i.e. Naturalism versus Transcendentalism.

[4] This is to say it is committed to the principles of Naturalism (in ontological sense), Positivism (in epistemological sense) and Empiricism (in methodological sense).

[5] By scientific study we mean the commitment to separation of principles from contracts, permanence from contingency, revelation from reason, and tradition from modernity or God from Man.

Bibliography

Sadr, S. M. *Nay ve Nay*. Published by Research Institute of Imam Musa Sadr, Tehran, Iran, 1383.

Szasz, T. *The Second Sin*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973.

One Anonimous Group; the Pomacs in Bulgarian Political Life after The Collapse of Totalitarian Regime

Margarita Karamihova

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Bulgaria

Abstract

Bulgarian Muslims are not presented in contemporary Bulgarian political life with their own recognizable face and with their own voice. In this article are presented the main factors which have had caused the political anonymity of this considerable group. Combining historical and ethnological approaches author follows variety of processes ongoing during 20th and first decade of 21st centuries which influence separated small local Muslim groups developing shifting identity.

At this stage we can suppose that the necessity of political representation of the large group of Bulgarian Muslims, consisting of many sub-groups which do not share an established common interest will find its speakers and representatives in the circles of different political actors or will be held "under cover".

Keywords

Islam, Minority, Identity, Policies, Assimilation.

The initial aim of this article was to describe the participation of Bulgarians Muslims (widely known as "Pomaks") in contemporary political life. But during the study the analysis of data available had shown that this is an empty position: Bulgarian Muslims are not presented in political life with their own recognizable face and with their own voice. In this article are presented the main factors which have had caused the political anonymity of Bulgarian Muslims. Although their number is disputable they construct a considerable part of Muslims in Bulgaria. The different (shifting) identities of the different Pomak small groups are depicted as well in the results of official censuses of the population of Bulgaria. The precautious final scores of census 1992 identify as Pomaks 65 000 persons. Their number at 2001 can be stated about 83 000 persons (1.2% of total population) (Marushiakova, E. & Popov 2002). The sizable emigration flow from Pomak villages to the USA and Western European countries emerging at the end of 20th century

which is not mentioned by official statistics makes those data more uncertain. Thus we have to give up quantitative methods and to work mostly with qualitative methods at the local level because the large group of Bulgarian Muslims rests "invisible" for official statistics (Daynov 2002, p. 25).

Brief presentation of Pomaks in Bulgaria

In terms of ethnicity the Muslims in Bulgaria are Turks, Bulgarians and Gypsies[1]. The Pomaks are specific part of Muslim population. It is difficult to define briefly the group of Bulgarian Muslims. I agree that they form a group which speaks local dialects of Bulgarian language, which members remember and still partly practice the traditional (pre-industrial) Bulgarian cultural model and which religion is Islam. This group was formed in the times of Ottoman domination (14th-19th centuries). A multidimensional and dynamic complex of factors set the course of conversion into Islam of persons or/and groups of people at different times in this about 500 years period. Because of long lasting official policies of assimilation of this large group held by Bulgarian nation-state (created after the Liberation in 1878) Bulgarian Muslims were under researched until the collapse of totalitarian regime (1989). The researches on their groups had boomed at early 90ies. Historians, ethnologists, sociologists, social anthropologists etc. had started to study different aspects of Pomak's history, culture and the influences of different official policies on their groups (Todorova 1997; Gruev 2003; Marushiakova and Popov 2002; Konstantinov 1992, 1997; Karamihova 2000, 2008; Büchenschütz 2000; Karagiannis etc.). Almost synchronically had started boom in researches on Pomaks in Greece (par example: Michail 2003) and in FYROM (Limanoski 1984). Different academic and political traditions are shaping different approaches to this large group divided by political borders in the start of 20th century.

The Russian-Ottoman war (1877-1878) caused mass migration of Muslims, Bulgarians included, to the land which rested at Ottoman Empire. In newly constructed Bulgarian nation state the territories where rested considerable populations of Bulgarian Muslims were placed in the border mountain of Rhodopes and a small group of Pomak villages still exists at the Northern slope of the Balkan (the region of Teteven). During the Balkan wars (1912-1913) Bulgarian officials had started policies of "Christianization" of Pomaks in the Rhodopes. The strong resistance to forced baptism and changing "Muslim" names into "Bulgarian" ones led the officials to stop this action. The policies of forced assimilation will follow at late 30ies, early 60ies and 70ies. At the end of last assimilatory campaign which was reported to finish about late 1974, totalitarian regime declared that the "Pomak question" was solved forever (Marushiakova, E. & Popov 2002), but it still has controlled Bulgarian Muslims' communities to assure definitive eradication of all practices defined as "Pomak by origin".

At 1984 the population of Bulgarian Turks was target of forced assimilation following the model of Pomak "renaming". Tensions cumulated in Muslim population had resulted in mass exile of Turks in the summer of 1989 (on policies of assimilation see: Grouev 2003, Karamihova 2000; Marushiakova and Popov 2002; Stoyanov 1998; Todorova 1997). It is important to be mentioned that all assimilatory actions were held in full information dim. People from other regions belonging to Bulgarian majority never received any information on tensions in Muslim regions.

The final tracing out the border line between Third Bulgarian Kingdom (1878-1944) and Greece after the First World War separated Pomak population in the Rhodopes. After establishment of communist regime (1944-1989) Bulgaria and Greece entered two

opposing systems: Soviet Block and NATO. Bulgarian political tradition treats minority groups as a Fifth column. This was the reason small groups of Bulgarian Muslims to be moved from Rhodopes to Central or Northern Bulgaria starting from late 40ies (Grouev 2003). As a result at 50ies and 70ies small clusters of "Pomak" villages were formed in predominantly mountainous areas of regions Veliko Tarnovo, Russe, Razgrad. In the flow of urbanization several Pomak families decided to migrate to the big cities or to settle at more developed villages in Central Bulgaria. Parts of those volunteer migrations were directed toward villages populated by Bulgarian Turks aiming to escape pressures of assimilatory policies in Pomak villages until 1984. A rapid process of volunteer assimilation could be observed in those cases especially in the second generation. It was going through mixed marriages with Turks. This "Turkification" was one of the reasons for totalitarian regime to escalate restrictive policies directed toward Pomak people as a group.

Thus the large group of Pomaks lives surrounded by different in terms of ethnicity and/or religion local populations. This creates strong sense of isolation. We have to count that this, predominantly rural population[2] inhabits for centuries mountain regions which determinates relatively limited communications within the group and outside it. It is important to mention that due to mountainous landscape the economical exchange of small nets of villages was established with different groups of surrounding territory especially in pre-industrial era. Those circumstances premised significant differences in local dialects, traditional costumes, some rituals and patterns of behavior.

At early 90ies we could register last slight traces in the culture (believes and customs) showing that the Pomaks from the Middle Rhodopes were belonging in the past to some of Heterodox Sufi orders. We have no exact data to prove if they were followers of Bektashia, Nakshibendia or Bobaya orders (Karamihova 2008). The long lasting process of sunification of Islam after abolishment of Janissary corps (1826 by Sultan Mahmud II), the policies of modern Turkish nation state and the aggressive atheist propaganda during the totalitarian period in Bulgaria succeeded to "erase" heterodox believes and practices. But still we can state that belonging to different Muslim traditions contributes to more considerable differentiation and separation of Pomak small groups. Those differences partly decrease because of long lasting educational and administrative interventions of modern Bulgarian nation state in course of modernization, industrialization and globalization during 20th century, but they can be recognized even nowadays. That is why any generalization of terms "Bulgarian Muslims" or "Pomaks" demands precise study at micro- (person, nuclear family) and mezo- (local community) levels.

Local competitions for access to power and control in a long term (as well as in nowadays) define differences of groups' boundaries and challenges. Thus in the region of Eastern Rhodopes Pomak people are surrounded by Bulgarian Turks. The need to distinguish themselves leads them to identify silently with broader Bulgarian nation or to stress just on groups' Muslim heritage. As a result of long lasting systematic efforts to integrate and assimilate Pomaks from the region of Middle Rhodopes, most of them prefer to develop and perform openly Bulgarian identity. At most places in the Western Rhodopes, Bulgarian Muslims prefer to identify themselves as Turks. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in local history marked by violent policies (Karamihova). In the region of Teteven, Veliko Tarnovo, Razgrad and Rousse they prefer to identify themselves as "Pomaks". Of course any generalization on this issue is incorrect. In almost each particular village, in each particular clan and even between generations in the families the group strategy varies and can be completely different.

The question of Pomak identity is painful. Shaping Bulgarian nation state identity at late 19th century the mass propaganda launched the idea that those people betrayed their

ancestor's religion, converted to Islam, but kept their mother tongue. This was to show the opposite example of Gagauzi, a group inhabiting small number[3] of villages at the Northern Black sea coast which "gave" the mother tongue (they speak a dialect of Turkish) but kept "the religion of ancestors". To escape from this "Pomak complex" a different concept for their origin emerged and still emerges in the groups. They vary from the idea that they have pre-Ottoman Muslim roots to the idea that they were Turks but because of assimilatory policies they were forced to abandon their Turkish mother tongue. Since early 80ies in the Middle Rhodopes I am registering the empowerment of another mythology. People there prefer to shift to one or another "source of nation Pride" – especially to the heritage of Ancient Trace[4] which leads them again to the nation as whole. This case is very interesting example of successful propaganda based on "Invented traditions" (Hobsbaum). That's why I will give it more place to explain: In the efforts to strengthen national identity and to oppose the "Enemy Greece" at early 70ies the daughter of Party Lieder Todor Zhivkov, Lyudmila Zhivkova, entering in power as a Minister of Culture started to promote the idea that Bulgarian nation inherited the treasure of traditions and culture not only by the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians but of Ancient Thrace as well. Well sponsored Institute of Thracology was established as a part of Bulgarian academy of Sciences (1972) and the exposition "Thracian Gold" started to travel around the world. Main point of propaganda was to launch the idea that Thracian culture precedes Ancient Greek's culture and the main part of most impressive European heritage as the cults of Orpheus and Dionysius originated from Thracian culture, born in the Rhodopes[5]. Simultaneously, in the course of last action for assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims their impressive musical folklore from the Middle Rhodopes was declared and popularized as "The purest Bulgarian", tacitly changing the Muslim names with "Bulgarian" ones in the songs. Valya Balkanska, Bulgarian Muslim singer from bordering small village of Arda became one of the most recognizable faces of "Rhodopean song". A tape with her amazing song "Izlel ye Dellju Hajdutin" entered in Voyager 1 spacecrafts Golden Record as a peaceful message from the Earth to the Universe (launched 5 September 1977). The song tells the story of Bulgarian Christian rebel who warns local authorities not to allow his aunts to convert to Islam. In her numerous interviews and her biographical book Valya Balkanska launches the idea, that she and her Pomak fellows are direct descendants of Orpheus, that's why they are gifted with amazing voices. Being Orpheus' descendants means that Bulgarian Muslims are inseparable part of Bulgarian nation since ancient times. But let's turn to political events.

Chronology of early political changes (1989-1990 г.)

At its session at 10.11.1989, the Plenum of Central Committee of Bulgarian Communist Party (BSP), decided to eject from the power the general secretary of the party – Todor Zhivkov. The scholars and journalists are still confused on how to define this event. Their definitions vary from "internal party coup" to "democratic revolution". However this event had marked the start of the period which is known as "democratization of Bulgarian society" or "Transition"[6]. If we try to define the most prominent events at 1989 until that moment we have to use the label "rebirth process". That's how the propaganda had entitled the aggressive assimilatory policies directed toward Turkish population and Muslims as whole. Starting from the spring of 1989 the escalating disturbances of Turks had turned into local conflicts. A huge wave of refugees manipulated by totalitarian regime was directed to Bulgarian-Turkish border (Karamihova 2000, Marushiakova, E. & Popov 2002, Stoyanov 1998)[7]. At its last months the government had mobilized each and

every resource (institutions, mass media etc.) aiming to keep control. The exhausted by long lasting economical, social and ideological crisis nation had to blame the obvious enemy and perpetrator – the Turks. The propaganda continuously was repeating the story about "ungrateful children" of Mother Bulgaria who were highly educated, privileged and nurtured and who had leaved her at the moment of crisis. No body even had mentioned the groups of Bulgarian Muslims and Gypsies who were object of brutal assimilatory actions at early 60ies and 70ies.

The assimilatory policies consisted of all known range of operations, stated by O'Leary (O'Leary, 1993: 1-40): hegemony and total control by majority, displacement in the territory of the country and forced emigration, attempts for integration on supra-ethnic level (brotherhood of working class) forced assimilation. Bulgarian Muslims were object of all those actions several times but witnessing the brutal assimilation of the Turks in Bulgaria they finally had lost any hope to restore their right to explore their own, specific cultural and religious identity. The changes at 10.11.1989 brought new expectations. The party lieder Todor Zhivkov had concentrated enormous power since early 60ies. It is typical for underdeveloped totalitarian societies to promote dictator's image of absolute authority, favorite "Father of the Nation" and finally – the only suspect when a crisis occurs or political situation had changed. It is a characteristic feature of collective thinking in totalitarian societies to identify the lieder with the power: no dictator – no dictatorship. His withdrawal from the power in the times of changes all over former Soviet block was accepted as a sign that crucial change of the society is possible. Keeping this in mind it is not wonder that the first who gave a standing ovations to the changes were the Muslims in Bulgaria – Turks, Bulgarians and Romany people. They were expecting that eradicating the "evil" dictator will remedy their situation. The Muslims had expected that the first steps of the new regime will be to stop assimilatory policies, to restore the rights to have back their Muslim names, to perform their culture and to open again the mosques. That is exactly what has happened before at any change of regimes. At 11.11.1989 still nothing was said to encourage those expectations.

The first rally in support of democratization process of newly emerging democratic movements from the country was organized at 18.11.1989 at the Central Square in Sofia in front of cathedral devoted to St. Alexander Nevskiy – a symbol of the liberation of Bulgaria by Russian troops (1878). An initiative Committee was organized to announce the meeting and to preside it. Thousands of people gathered in the chilly day there. Hedge of police was to stop the people from the country to join the rally. Roumen Vodenicharov, member of recently formed Independent Society for Human Rights, standing at the stairs of cathedral declared that he will insist the Muslim names to be restored. The crowd hissed his speech.

The second rally at 10th of December was organized by 19 independent associations and movements. This meeting was devoted to 41 anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by General Assembly of the United Nations at 1948). Zhelyu Zhelev, philosopher and dissident, future President of Bulgaria, was warmly applauded when he invoked a roundtable to be organized together – the still governing BSP and newly emerging democratic opposition. He announced main demands: to be organized a national roundtable; ethnic crisis to be solved (this time no body has blamed the orator); to be abolished Article 1 of Constitution which stated governing role of Communist Party; former communist regime to be put on trial; to separate communist party structures from government; to pass a law on religious freedom etc.

At 16 of December in the town of Gotse Delchev (Western Rhodopes) was held a rally of Bulgarian Muslims in the region. The main demand was their Muslim names to be returned. The changed names were a symbol of all violated human rights. Media

presentation of this rally had activated the Muslims from other regions. At 23 December a meeting with the same demands of Pomaks was organized in the town of Madan (Middle Rhodopes). At 28 of December at the square in front of National Parliament has started an action of tacit presence of Bulgarian Muslims and Turks. The main request was their names to be returned. Roumen Vodenicharov was actively involved in support of demonstration and for a wile he was "the voice" of Muslims (i.e. Bulgarian Muslims). The citizens of the capital, even those who never had heard about assimilatory actions directed toward Muslims, were touched. Many of them were bringing hot tea and sandwiches and inviting at their homes people who were frozen by chilly weather.   At those times the future Bulgarian nationalists still did not show up.

Under the massive pressure at 29.12.1989 the Plenum of central Committee of Communist Party reached a decision "to be returned Muslim names and to surmount consequences from so called 'rebirth process'". The Plenum was urged to denounce all actions infringing citizen's rights for free choice of personal names and religion. The resolutions of the Plenum were followed by resolutions taken at General Council and Council of Ministers.

In support of those events at 4.01.1990 in the town of Kardzaly (Eastern Rhodopes) was organized a rally too. In the meeting were presented predominantly Turks from the region. In answer of former rulers propaganda accusations they shout slogans: "We do not want autonomy!", "Long live Bulgaria!", "Unity!". In the same day the first nationalistic groups formed in regions with ethnically and/or religiously mixed population reached the capital. They organized a meeting in front of the Parliament with demand to be kept the status quo.

From 7th to 11th January 1990 in the building of Parliament was organized a conference of Public Council on National Questions. Both sides – nationalists and their opponents had the right to detach a group of 30 representatives and a few experts. This was the first political presentation in public of former University lecturer sued in accusation for anti-governmental crimes, just released from prison Ahmed Dogan[8]. He announced establishment of organization of Bulgarian Turks which developed later in Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). After the debates "General declaration" was written and submitted. This Declaration was not passed nor signed by participants. Despite this fact the chair of the meeting, Stanko Todorov, Speaker of the Parliament, announced it to be approved. Main point in the Declaration is the demand for return of the Muslim's names not in the Court but via local administration and the appeal to be promoted National Program on National Question. At those days the politicians were using just the term "ethnic" hinting at the problems of Turks in Bulgaria. Bulgarian Muslims stayed in the shadow of most acute problem with Turks. Following months were marked by debates and slowly passing new laws concerning rights of Bulgarian citizens.

MRF – the main representative of Bulgarian Muslims

At 26.03.1990 in Sofia was held Founding Conference of MRF. In its Program documents is written that this Movement is independent public political organization of Bulgarian citizens which will contribute to unity of Bulgarian nation and to the complete respect of rights and freedom of all ethnic and cultural- religious groups with consideration to Constitution and Law. The main mission will be: to combat nationalism, chauvinism, revanchist actions, Islamic fundamentalism. MRF proclaimed that it is against the idea for autonomy of populated by Turks regions of the country. MRF was established as NGO because of juridical situation at the moment. Sofia City Court

rejected papers of MRF at 28 August. Its official legalization had happened at 16.10.1994 when Constitutional Court decided to register MRF as political party. Periodically different political opponents are razing the question about legitimacy of MRF which de jure is open for every Bulgarian citizen but de facto is ethnic based party defending the interests of Turks in Bulgaria.

All those details are necessary to describe the participation of Bulgarian Muslims in the initial process of democratization of the country. Surprisingly despite those people were the first to raise their voices, despite they were the first to organize rallies and first had stated their clearly formulated concrete demands which they defended by peaceful demonstrations in their regions and in the capital, still in the first months of 1990 they "dimmed", "disappeared" from political scene. The foundation of MRF seemed to fulfill their needs for guarantee that their rights will be respected. MRF is e de facto party representing an ethnic minority (Ivanov 1998, p. 7). After 1989 mainly the Turks are interested in political support to Bulgarian Muslims. Their political leadership is based on the common religion and the common experience to be victims of totalitarian regime. After 1989 in Bulgarian society the efforts were directed to diminish ethnic tension more than to establish real multicultural society. That is why smaller groups aiming to gain cultural recognition were not encouraged to develop political activities. MRF is an important factor in the development of political practices. It is obvious that MRF does not allow transfer of responsibilities and does not encouraged Bulgarian Muslims to participate independently in political life. Constantly changing tactics of MRF and coalitions with different political forces (at the moment MRF is part of Triple Coalition with BSP and NUSS) diminishes the trust among Pomak electorate and leads to some degree of alienation.

Since the very first day of its establishment MRF is searching for institutional and legislation frames to assure it's entering the government. In the general strategy of this party-movement the Islam is in subordinate position. But still Muslim origin of leaders provides direct access to the hearts of voters. MRF organizations were established in each and every village populated by Muslim groups. They are serving as supportive structures and control relatively underdeveloped NGO activities in those regions.

Bulgarians Muslims support MRF strongly especially in the Western Rhodopes. But their real access to power and control stays only at the local level. Leading positions are limited to the local level too. Despite the fact that in the Board of MRF one of the vice-chairs, Ayrush Hadji is a Pomak, at both first Parliaments after 1990 no Bulgarian Muslim was elected to be MP. At the elections 2001 one Bulgarian Muslim – Arso Manov entered the Parliament (Marushiakova, E. & Popov 2002). At the elections 2005 we can identify for sure two Bulgarians Muslims entering Parliament. To identify who from Bulgarian politicians belongs to Pomak group is difficult at the same degree as the identification of their groups is. One example presents the debate if the former minister of Agriculture, Mehmed Dikme is "pure Turk", "Pomak" or just he is an offspring of mixed marriage. His openly declared Turkish identity makes such a debates nonsense at the same degree as openly demonstrated Bulgarian identity of some politicians which Bulgarian ethnic origin is doubted.

At the end of 90ies in the public was promoted the idea that MRF is the only guarantee to protect "Bulgarian ethnic model". Scholars agree that there is not ethnic or religion based Bulgarian model because to have such a model means to have a system of relations, close connected to respective political decisions and practices, based on long-term planning in regard of group ethnic or religious specifics (Discussion of Ethno barometer).

During the fieldworks I had clearly registered the feelings of Bulgarian Muslims that they have been used by politicians: "*They do call us only to vote as they use to call the donkey at the weddings. The donkey thinks that will eat and drink at the party, but the only pleasure is to carry water and firewood*". Despite this the Pomaks go to vote actively at each and every election campaign since 1990.

Different groups – different strategies

The restoration of their freedom to practice and display their specific local culture gave rise to euphoric return to all forbidden for years customs and practices. During my fieldwork in Rhodopes and Teteven region 1990-1991 I had registered real boom of *sünet* (circumcisions) in each and every village inhabited by Bulgarian Muslims. The most prominent traditional experts in circumcisions, the men from Zhultusha, Ardino region (Eastern Rhodopes) were not able to fulfill all demands for those surgeries. Matured men and little boys were circumcised in the same time. People were in a hurry fearing that this very important marker of their Muslim identity could be forbidden and persecuted by authorities again[9]. Restored right to visit again and to take care for their mosques, holly places (*tekkes*, *türbes*[10], holly shrines and springs) to celebrate openly in public their fests and holydays, to be dressed in their traditional costumes, to perform traditional customs and to sing their songs with real names of the actors was keeping the euphoric degree very high. It seamed that all those changes were enough for small local Muslim communities. With some rare exceptions they refuse to stand with their own voice and recognizable face in political life.

The separated for centuries small local groups do not discover their unique common interest which to be asserted in public space. As well as they have not a specific political opponent. Those of them who prefer Turkish identity constantly vote for MRF candidates. Those who prefer Bulgarian identity mostly were voting for BSP candidates until the end of 90s. Later they more often support candidates from UDF (Union of Democratic Forces) or some of newly emerging "right" parties. A small specific group in the towns of Madan and Roudozem (Middle Rhodopes) is voting from the late 90s against each and every party which enters the power (Daynov 2002, p. 26). Eugenij Daynov states that in the Eastern Rhodopes, at the places where the electorate performs clear identity of "Bulgarians who confess Islam" the electoral behavior become clearly emancipated by group affiliation. In those cases the electoral motivation follows two lines – clan affiliation or personal political preferences. (Daynov 2002, p. 27).

A very important question concerns political use of Bulgarian Muslims identity in early 90s. In 1992 census 35 975 persons inhabiting a group of villages from the region of Yakoruda and Gotse Delchev (Western Rhodopes) declared themselves as ethnic Turks. In the region of Gotse Delchev there are three villages inhabited predominantly by Turks. But in the region of Yakoruda there are only Bulgarian Muslim inhabitants. The frantic arguments that had started first in media had moved to the Parliament. (see more at: Marushiakova, E. & Popov 2002). Eventually consensus was reached to be abrogated the indices concerning ethnic origin, mother tongue and religious affiliation in those regions. The scandal was related to the decision for mother tongue education at public schools if particular ethnic origin will be recognized officially. Certain political circles were afraid of "new Turkification of Bulgarian Muslims".

Next scandal related to so called "Turkification of Pomaks" in the village of Satovcha, Gotse Delchev region, is quite similar. The major of Satovcha – Yusuf Djudjo, elected by MRF was accused for administrative offence. His mistake was that he gave

instructions those who intend to return their Muslim names to do it without using prescribed by Bulgarian language standard suffixes –ov, -ev (i.e. – ova, -eva for F.). Par example: Djudjo instead of Djudj*ov*. The pretending to be patriotic political force party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) took the role of the main public prosecutor. After lasting media enormous scandal at April 1994 regional Court at Blagoevgrad sentenced Djudjo guilty for "falsification of personal documents". A lot of observers stated that this trial was prejudiced and not fair (Balgarski Helzinkski Comitet, 1995: 3). Soon later the son of Djudjo had finished one year course on English language for students from minority groups in American University of Blagoevgrad. He applied successfully for college   at the West Coast and later moved with all the family to the Los Angeles, USA. Even today the lieder of IMRO do not misses the opportunity to remind this scandalous case in pre-electoral times.

Both cases happening in the Western Rhodopes are a good illustration of constant attention paid by political forces in the center and their attempts to control every local initiative of Bulgarian Muslims who might be changing their status. Part of Pomaks was performing their feelings this way: during the Census of 1992 small group inhabiting villages in the Western Rhodopes has decided to declare their identity as "Eskimo". And it was written in the official documents because of their claims. On my question: "Why Eskimo?" they cheerily answered: "Why not? It was such a chilly weather!". For those youngsters the "Pomak complex" is a burden they refuse to carry anymore.

Those examples show that even when they dare to become autonomous political or just civil actor Bulgarians Muslims are not empowered enough. The only time they had had some sort of shaped own image in the public space was their participation in "Rodina" (Fatherland) movement at late 30ies. This movement, starting in the Middle Rhodopes as modernization and integration project turned to assimilatory government directed policies. This intervention had turned down all internal attempts to change the status of Pomaks. Still the ruling figures in this movement were Orthodox Christians from the region (Christov, Karamandjukov 1995).

Speaking in terms of cultural patterns as a whole the political presentation of Bulgarian Muslims is based on client-patron principle and had been managed by local notables and rich men (Bougarel), who negotiate with the ruling at the time political force. There is no available data for existing particular Pomak party until 90s. We have no reliable data for existing particular and independent Bulgarian Muslim's institutions (both – formal or informal). The lack of political activity is probably due to long lasting vision of the governing circles that this group is a part of bigger group of Muslims (Todorova 1997, p. 476). I agree with E. Daynov that we have to go further: for group identity and integrity is very important the lack of its own history; separate language; production of common ideology, of own media; lack of group specific crafts or labor market. This weakens them in situation when they suffer the pressures which exercise on them other groups with bigger self-confidence and stronger identity. Unlike other considerable groups in Bulgarian Muslims communities there are not wide public recognized persons who to be spokesmen at least of a part of Pomaks (Daynov 2002, p. 25-27).

It is widely known that the deep connection between nationality and religion on the Balkans is rooted in administrative system of Ottoman Empire (Milliet system), which guarantees separated administrations for each of religious groups (Karagiannis; Todorova 1997). The long lasting functioning of this system had drawn a dividing line between religious groups. The "Other" is the descendant of the other religious groups. The complex combination of religion and language – two markers which were significant in the times of establishment of modern Balkan nations, places the group of Bulgarian

Muslims in marginal position. (Karagiannis). In the same time very rare, only in the situation of crisis, the members of small local communities have a feeling that they are social marginal. My fieldwork notes prove the statements of E. Karagianis and D. Michail that the specific position of the large group had developed cultural mechanisms which support a very flexible, shifting identity of Bulgarian Muslims. Or to state this way – the group is capable to search and find more than one choice (Karagiannis; Michail 2003). This group ability named by Karagiannis *polytaxis*, gives one more answer why Bulgarian Muslims have not formed clearly shaped long lasting political representation in macro society.

Islam in Bulgaria has always been controlled by muftis ethnic Turks by origin. The only case when a Bulgarian Muslim was elected to be leader of large Muslim community was marked by intricate political games. Mustafa Hadji served as elected head of General Mufti (1997-2000). It was a time of continuous scandals (related to property, to schismatic confrontations, gay-scandal)[11]. This was not in favor to confirm a respectable position in larger society of Bulgarian Muslims.

 Starting from mid 90s students from different Muslim communities gained access to study in religious Universities in Arabian world (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt). There are not statistic data reliable on their number but field work data have shown that those students originate predominantly from villages populated by Bulgarian Muslims. In the start of Millennium some of them came back home and started to work in the mosques in their native places. Those high educated young men offer new way of life and a new level of Muslim identification. Ghodsee states that this new process divides Bulgarian Muslims and Turks. The new self-esteem creates new cultural niche (Ghodsee 2005). This new tendency does not show a need of political representation for now.

In the same time fieldwork data show that an increasing tension emerges between highly secularized during 20th century Muslims and those who support the new religious wave. The non-practicing Muslims call newly educated "fanatics" and are afraid that performance of new Arabian style (in architecture, dress-codes etc.) could provoke new assimilatory actions. In fact, the Law and politicians declare respect to religious freedom but after 11.09.2001 they are concerned in the questions of national security which excludes any radicalization of Islam. Thus both aims: to gain their own (Muslim) identity and in the same time to protect the communities in situation of latent Islamofobia become a source of tensions in local groups (Ghodsee). This is not a specific Bulgarian phenomenon. The Islam on the Balkans highly varied and functions in the regime of constant change. All over the Balkans the traditional syncretism of Islam changes due to influence of new for this region Muslim schools (Zhelyazkova at all 2005, pp. 72-73). But to turn back to our topic – we witness new division between Turks and Bulgarian Muslims. The spiritual leaders, the way of worshiping, dress-codes, everyday life practices even the holly shrines of both ethnic groups (Bulgarians and Turks) are getting more and more different.

At the other end of the scale is priest Boyan Saruev. He was highly educated army officer, Bulgarian Muslim by origin. At one point in his life he turned to the religion, converted to Orthodox Christianity and become one of most popular priests in Bulgaria. He declares that his mission is to baptize Bulgarian Muslims from Central and Eastern Rhodopes with the main goal "To bring them back in the Nation and to clear the Pomak complex in the future generations". It is not a topic of this research how and why father Saruev had gained political and financial support. What is necessary to be mentioned is that he is not the only Pomak to convert in Orthodox Christianity and he is not the only Orthodox priest in this situation. Nowadays there are not rare cases of Muslims

converting into Protestantism too (on Pomaks see: Troeva, Grigorov 2003; on Turks: Karamihova 2001).

Kamen Bourov, the exclusion

In December 1992[12] in the village of Zhaltusha, region Kardzhali (Eastern Rhodopes;1324 inhabitants at 13.09.2005), former major Kamen Bourov has founded a new Democtaric Labor Party (DLP[13]), widely known as "Pomak party". Its official registration is from April 1993. Bourov sais that the idea to establish a party was born in time when, as a major he had visited the USA. DLP was registered to run for Parliamentary elections 1994.

At the Parliamentary elections 18.12.1994 Democratic Labor Party appoints its candidates in 10 from 31 electoral regions. They are as follows: Kamen Burov – Kardzali and Haskovo; Nasko Persenski – Lovetch and Stara Zagora; Svetoslav Yavorov – Varna and Smolyan; Nedko Uzunov – Rousse and Silistra; Mitko Hristov – Blagoevgrad; Ismail Musa – Kardzhali; Kamen Hadjiev - Plovdiv. This electoral map traces partly the places where old and new Pomak enclaves exist. The results are more than modest. DLP does not gain even one percent of votes.

At the local elections 1995 Kamen Bourov was appointed by United Democratic Forces (UDF). Changing the political force he was almost to gain elections after a ballotage. The failure in the elections does not discourage the lieder. A year later media blame DPL that its activists "traverse Rhodopes in attempt to suggest to people that they are something different than Bulgarian nation and that they have to run for cultural autonomy" (Bakardjieva). Media blame USA as well because "they support creation of artificial minorities" (Marushiakova, E. & Popov 2002, Todorova 1997). The nationalistic activists blame the Open Society Foundation, Sofia as well as other NGO's that through support for Bourov they want to create separate Pomak ethnicity (Sega newspaper 2003).

The attempt of Bourov to confirm in public space separate, ethnic type Pomak identity faced strong resistance in the rest of groups in the macro society and in Bulgarian Muslims groups as well (Todorova 1997, p. 488). In an interview for national newspaper "24 Hours" (8.10.1998) Bourov underlines that the traditional festive system (customs and fests) of Bulgarian Christians and Muslims is very different and that the "Pomaks were followers of Islam before Ottoman invasion" (1396). In the prime time news "Around the world and at home" of Bulgarian National Television (5.05.1993) was mentioned that still being major of Zhaltusha, Kamen Bourov appealed to American ambassador Hugh Kenneth Hill the USA to acknowledge the existence of Pomak ethnos in Bulgaria, because the Pomaks are 400 000 but in the Censuses they enter paragraph "other" (Mitrinov 1999).

One of possible lines of further political development of Kamen Burov is to relate closely with Pomak activists from neighboring region of Greece. The successful political representation of Pomaks in Northern Greece is encouraging. Following interview is a good example of logic of his political quests:

> "In the same start we decided to defend interests of the people from mountain and semi-mountain regions. To put it with other words – from Rhodopean enclave. But there are living predominantly Pomak people. They were calling us from other regions. About 90 per cent from this population rested unemployed. The only working sector was GORUBSO[14], but it bankrupted too.

My visit to the USA was in course of International Visitors Program "Ethnic diversity in the USA". It was financed by US Agency for International Development. I saw there that the USA are a pot full of different ethnic groups, who differ not only by origin and skin color but by their religion too. And no body feels neglected because of others superiority. They had fond the correct formula. My origin is from this region. Before registering the Party I had feeling that I have been discriminated and wronged by people saying that I am a Pomak. When I witnessed how do they managed to be equal in a peaceful way I had initiated contacts with people from our ethnic group. We had long conversations and decided to openly identify ourselves in a peaceful manner of course.

We had turned to the history. They had changed our names 6-7 times. Politicians had always played dirty games with us. Today you are Ivan, tomorrow – Hasan etc. We firmly believe that this type of manipulations can be stopped only if at political, national level we will reach recognition as a specific ethnic group. And I think we had succeeded in this. In the Declaration supporting the Convention on minority issues are not mentioned specific minority groups. A man can choose to which group she belongs, not as at former times – the Government to determine to which group you have to be described.

Here, in the Rhodopes is the most powerful kernel. We have several groups consisted of local fellows to support us even financial. In Komotini they had organized "Pomak center". We have communication with its leader Hamid Yumer, by phone so far. I plan to visit him in Greece to have some debates on those questions. If I will face problems with my visa they will come here.

We have not any territorial claims nor do we desire autonomy. Moreover the climate in Bulgaria is different. As you see even the Turks do not claim separate territories. They have twelve elected representatives in the Parliament and Majors in thirty Districts. In my opinion Ahmed Dogan has the main role to be assured this peaceful coexistence, besides he is a subject of sharp criticism.

For1999 election for local authorities we negotiate with MRF and Euro Left Party".

<div align="right">(Stoynov 1999)</div>

At the local elections in Zhaltusha 2003 the candidate of MRF was elected with majority of votes (439). He was in competition with UDF (155) and NMSS (National Movement Simeon the Second) (82). Democratic Labor Party does not take part in the competition.

MP as representative of the party, not of the group

To complete this gross-tableau of absent presence of Pomaks in Bulgarian political environment we have briefly to mark the case Fidel Beev. He is Bulgarian Muslim from Middle Rhodopes who's names carry double message: the first name – Fidel undoubtedly is related to Fidel Castro Ruz one of the few still alive and in power dictators-communists still welcomed in certain circles in Bulgaria. The family name Beev came from the Turkish [Ottoman times] word "Bey" title for "chieftain" traditionally applied to the leaders of small tribal groups. By different party coalitions at the start of Millennium

Fidel Beev was elected major and for two mandates was acting as master proprietor of Velingrad – a prosperous health resort in the Middle Rhodopes. For the time he was in the power local and central media almost every week were occupied with scandals related to corruption and manipulations especially in times of elections. Despite numerous scandals he still is not accused anyway. What is important for this study is that the "Beev case" offers the other much more common variation of political representation of the Pomak communities. Without manifestation of his origin and without stressing on the fact that he is representative of local Bulgarian Muslim community he came in to the power due to existing local network. Rich of natural recourses Velingrad became object of economical interests at the national level. Despite the scandals related to high degree of corruption at 2005 Beev decided to run for Parliament. After long lasting negotiations with different Party leaders eventually he was elected by MRF quota. At theoretical level this is the most effective way one heterogeneous group to be represented in the power. But in this case as in the case of another Pomak by origin, member of the Parliament – Arif Agush[15], the interests of concrete electoral group is not a particular issue.

The short stories of Kamen Bourov, Fidel Beev and Arif Agush still are good examples to show the processes going in the communities of Bulgarian Muslims and into macro society. At this stage we can suppose that the necessity of political representation of the large group of Bulgarian Muslims, consisting of many sub-groups which do not share an established common interest will find its speakers and representatives in the circles of different political actors or will be held "under cover". If we take in account some processes going in contemporary Greece we can presume that after long-term emigration somewhere to the West a possible charismatic leaders could use one of the multiple Pomak identities to create new political movement or party (par example see the case of Hellenism in: Brunvasser 2005).

But there are too many other possibilities. One of them is possible straightening separate Pomak identity related to reestablished communications with relatives in Northern Greece and intensification of temporary labor migrations to Greece. Despite the huge ideological resource which can be used to strengthen Pomak identity (the mythology of "oldest local population", "Orpheus descendants" etc.) I believe that this will be productive again only at limited, local level most probably in elderly generations. Furthermore the long lasting educational policies of Greece implemented to Pomak minority there gives results. The teenager Pomaks in Northern Greece are fluent in Greek and Turkish and barely speak Bulgarian as a home language. The young people leaving at the both sides of the border have no common language anymore. The conditions and related strategies of success and comfortable life at the both sides of the border are different.

We have registered a tendency ongoing in the part of local Pomak elite in Bulgaria to establish new Muslim identity related to the world of Ummah. But still this process develops at the local level and rather creates new barriers between Pomak communities than to unite them. In the presence of this complex palette of developing processes supposes the large Pomak community in Bulgaria to continue its existing via multitude small communities anonymous to the great extend. I find that in this fragmentation and varying context we can find most of the answers of the question why Bulgarian Muslims are not clearly present as specific, particular group in contemporary Bulgarian political life.

Notes

[1] Official census of population 2001 shows as follows: 7 928 901 Christians and 966 978 Muslims; 6 655 210 Bulgarians, 746 664 Turks and 370 908 Gypsies. (http://www.nsi.bg/Census_e/Census_e.htm last visited at 05.09.2008).

[2] We can state for sure that urban Bulgarian Muslim population at 19th century inhabited only the town of Zlatograd, Middle Rhodopes, placed at the border with Greece.

[3] Together with other Bulgarian group at 19th century Gagauzi took part in mass migration to contemporary Moldova and Ukraine. Under different influences a part of their group developed strong Turkish identity. This well established and integrated group in Bulgaria prefers to develop Bulgarian identity.

[4] "Thrace" is a large geographic region split between modern Bulgaria and Greece. Rhodopes are in the kernel of this region.

[5] For years archaeologists, folklorists and para-historians are chasing for "The capital of Orpheus" in the Rhodopes. Media love to broadcast stories on this topic.

[6] The same phenomenon we can observe in each post-communist country. The political and social events after 1989 in former Soviet Block countries support this uncertainty. It is very indicative that no one from the great contemporary philosophers can state an exact term in what kind of societies we live for almost 19 years. All terms consist of attributes – post-communism; post-socialism; post-totalitarianism etc.

[7] Most official sources state that there were 300 000 refugees.

[8] Recent documents published in the process of Lustration 2008 have shown that he and the biggest part of political activists from his circle were deeply involved in the structures of communists Security Services…

[9] We had many records proving persecutions of families which had circumcised their sons at the period 1972-1989 as well as the surgeons.

[10] *Tekke* – monastery of Heterodox Muslim order, *Türbe* – the tomb of a saint-patron respected in Heterodox Islam.

[11] In the same times all traditional denominations in Bulgaria passed through similar confrontations. The period of so called "Transition" needs in more precise study at this topic too.

[12] Media use to point next 1993.

[13] On Bulgarian the abbreviation of MRF and DLP sound very similar. Probably it was not a catch for voters.

[14] GORUBSO - Mining Bulgarian-Soviet Union Company established at early 50s, successfully developing mining industry because of rich mineral sources in the Rhodopes.

[15] Arif Agush is one of numerous descendants of famous Bey Agush Aga (19th century) in Middle Rhodopes. Gossips say that Arif entered Parliament to ensure privatization of family heritage (land and forests inc.).

Bibliography

Bakardzieva, Zh. (1998) "Koy iska da sazdade pomashki ethos v Bulgaria?"[Who want s create a Pomak ethnos in Bulgaria", *Macedonia* newspaper, N 36, October 1998, p.7.

Brunvasser, M. (2005) "Letter from Greece: The Gods Return to Olympus". In: *Archeology*, Archeologycal Institute of America. Vol. 58, N 1. www.archaeology.org/0501/abstracts/letter.html

Büchenschütz, U. (2000). *Minderheiten Politik in Bulgarien. Die Politik der Bulgarischen Kommunistischen Partei gegenüber den Juden, Roma, Pomaken und Türken 1944 bis 1989.* Sofia: IMIR.

Bougarel, X. Islam and Politics in the Post-Communist Balkans http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/kokkalis/GSW1/GSW1/13%20Bougarel.pdf Last visited 16.07.2006.

Georgieva, Ts. & Zhelyazkova, A. (1994) L'identité en période de changement (Observations sur certaines tendances du monde mixte des Rhodopes), Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie, vol. XCVI, pp. 125-143.

Ghodsee, K. (2005) "Research report" http://www.irex.org/programs/iaro/research/05-06/Ghodsee.pdf. Last visited at 10.10.2007.

Gruev, M. (2003). *Mejdu petolachkata I polumesetsa. Bulgarite myusyulmani I politicheskiya rejim (1944-1959).* [Between the pentacle and the half moon. Bulgarian Muslims and the political regime (1944-1959)].Ed. Hawse "KOTA".

Daynov, E. (2002) "Za kakvi gi mislim? Obrazite na malcinstvenite I specifichnite obshtnosti v Bulgaria, razkriti v nauchni izsledvaniya". [How do we think about them? Images of minority and specific societies in Bulgaria according researches]. In: Their voices. The presence of minority and specific communities in Bulgarian media (the end of 20th – beginning of 21 century. Ed. CSP. Pp. 13-30.

Dimitrov, V. (2000) "In Search of Homogenous Nation: The Assimilation of Bulgaria's Turkish Minority, 1984-1985". http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/JEMIE01Dimitrov10-07-01.pdf. Last visited at 12.10.2006.

ETNO 1994, Breznitsa, Gotse Delchev Region, Archive CSP.

Ethnobarometer http://www.ethnobarometer.org/pagine/Bulgaria%20paper.pdf.

Ivanov, A. (1998) Minority Nationalism in the Balkans: The Bulgarian case. http://ime-bg.org/pdf_docs/papers/minority.pdf.

Karagiannis, E. An Introduction to the Pomak Issue in Bulgaria. http://www.ethno.unizh.ch/mitarbeiterinnen/Introduction_Pomak_Issue_Bulgaria.pdf.

Karamihova, M. (2000). "T.nar. 'vazroditelen protses': politika i rezultati." [On so called "rebirth process] In: *Za promenite ...* Sofia: CSP. Pp. 371-402.

Karamihova, M. (2001). Verwandtschaft und Zwangsassimilierung: eine türkische Familie nach der "nationalen Wiedergeburt". In: Kaser, Karl, ed. *Vom Nutzen der Verwandten. Soziale Netzwerke in Bulgarien. (19. Und 20. Jahrhundert).* Graz. Pp. 329-354.

Karamihova, M. (2008) "Dinamics of Religious Afiliation Dimentions of Bulgarian Muslims". Proceedings of international conference "South-East and central Europe 19th-20th centuries". Chepelare, Bulgaria, 22-23 August 2008. To be published.

Konstantinov, Yu. (1992) „An Account of Pomak Conversions in Bulgaria (1912-1990)", in: *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa*, hrsg. G. Seewan, , R. Oldenbourg Verlag, Südost Institut München [= *Untersuchungen zur Gegenwartskunde Südosteuropas*, Bd. 27], pp. 343-357.

Konstantinov, Yu. (1997) "Strategies for sustaining a vulnerable identity: The case of the Bulgarian Pomaks", In: *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, eds. H. Poulton & S. Taji-Farouki, Hurst and Co., London, pp. 33-53.

Limanoski, N. (1984) Macedonci Muslimani. [Macedonians Muslims]. Skopje.

Marushiakova, E. & Popov, V. (2002) The Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria http://www.emz-berlin.de/projekte/pj41_1.htm

Mitrinov, G. (1999) Koy e Kamen Bourov I za kakvo se bori? [Who is Kamen Bourov and what he is standing for?]. Macedonia newspaper, N 23, 9 June 1999 г

Michail, Domna. 2003. "Ot 'mestna' kam 'evropeiska' identichnost: promenyashtite se identichnosti na pomashkoto maltsinstvo v Gartsia." [From 'local' toward 'European' identity: shifting identities of Pomak minority in Greece] In: Karamihova, Margarita, ed. *Da zhiveesh tam, da se sanuvash tuk. Emigratsionni protsesi v nachaloto na XXI vek.* Sofia: IMIR. Pp. 248-266.

Neuburger, M. (1997) "Difference Unveiled: Bulgarian National Imperatives and the Re-Dressing of Muslim Women in the Communist Period: 1945-1989", *Nationalities Papers*, no. 1, pp. 169-181.

O'Learly, B. McGarry, J. (eds.) (1993) *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflict.* London, Routledge.

Balgarski Helzinkski Comitet, Sofia (1995) Pravata na choveka v Bulgaria prez 1994 g. Godishen doclad. [Human rights in Bulgaria 1994. Annual report].

SEGA newspaper (2003), 13 July 2003, p.14.

Stoynov, N. (1999) "Editorial". Maritsa dnes newspaper, брой 84 ,10.04.1999. p.7.

Stoyanov, V. (1998) *Turskoto naselenie v Bulgaria mejdu polyusite na ethnicheskata politika* [The Turkish population in Bulgaria between poles of ethnic policies], Sofia.

Todorova, M. (1997) "Identity (Trans)Formation Among Pomaks in Bulgaria", in: *Beyond Borders. Remaking Cultural Identities in the new East and Central Europe,* eds. L. Kürti & J. Langman, Vestview Press, Boulder, pp. 63-82.

Troeva, E. V. Grigorov (2003) "Gurbetchijstvoto v Rhodopite – minalo I nastoyshte" [Seasonal labor migrations in the Rhodopes – past and present]. In: Karamihova, Margarita, ed. *Da zhiveesh tam, da se sanuvash tuk. Emigratsionni protsesi v nachaloto na XXI vek.* Sofia: IMIR. Pp. 109-122.

Hristov, Hr. A. Karamandjukov (1995) *Drujba "Rodina" I vazrojdenskoto dvijenie v Rodopa (1937-1947).* Documenti [Association "Rodina" in the renaissance movement in the Rhodopes (1937-19947)] Sofia.

Zhelyazkova, A., V. Grigorov, D. Dimitrova. (2005) "Imigranti ot Blizkiya I Sredniya Iztok" [Immigrants from Near and Middle East]. In: *Imigraziyata v Bulgaria*, A. Krasteva ed., IMIR. 19-73.

The Role of Sound Reasoning in Hadith-Text Examination

Israr Ahmad Khan

Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies
International Islamic University
Malaysia

Abstract

There is no denying the fact that the compendia of Prophetic traditions (*Hadith*) comprise all categories of reports: highly authentic, authentic, deemed to be authentic, weak, and fabricated. Muslim scholars developed several criteria to authenticate *hadith*. But these criteria are generally to authenticate the chain of narrators through which *hadith* is reported and recorded. *Hadith* experts concluded that the authentication of the Chain ensures authenticity of the Text reported. That is why, almost all *hadith* authorities concentrate on the authentication of *hadith* by authenticating the Chain in the *hadith*-report. Very few scholars have paid attention to verify the Text of *hadith* independently. It is not always necessary that if the Chain seems to be authentic, the Text will also be authentic. In order to check the position of the Text of *hadith* there should certainly be some logically acceptable criteria. One such criterion to check the reliability of *hadith*-Text is human reason. The Qur'an has, a number of times, invited man to use his reason in determining the nature of the things he tackles or deals with. It is, then, quite logical to read, treat and deal with rationally what has been recorded by Muslim scholars as sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). This paper represents a humble attempt to apply the criterion "sound reasoning" to some selected *hadith* as recorded in al-Bukhari's work, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih* and Muslim's compilation of *hadith*, *Al-Sahih*. The selected traditions are twelve (12). An effort has been made to make a critical analysis of the reported version of *hadith*. The objective of this exercise is not to discredit the value of *hadith* in Islamic life. But the task carried out in the paper is to ascertain whether there are lacunae in the reported wordings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.).

Keywords

Sound reasoning, Autentication, Hadith, Prophetic traditions, Muslim scholars

Introduction

Hadith denotes sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). It constitutes a very significant position in Muslims' life. Many Muslim scholars embarked upon examination of Hadith with a view to ensuring its authenticity. This was in response to Hadith fabrication movement which was haphazardly carried out by different sections of Muslim society with varying interests. The most prominent Muslim scholars who rose to the occasion were Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.241 A.H.), Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari (d.256 A.H.), Muslim in al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri (d.261 A.H.) etc. These Hadith experts developed five criteria to authenticate Hadith: *ittisal al-sanad* (continuity of the chain of narrators), *al-'adalah* (integrity of character of the narrators), *al-zabt* (precision of retention), *'adm al-shudhudh* (non-aberrance), and *ghayr al-'illah* (non-deficiency). The first three criteria were exclusively to check the chain of narrators and the last two criteria were meant to examine both chain of narrators and text of report. It seems that Hadith authorities did apply these five criteria to scrutinize the position of the chain in a Hadith but could not do much to apply the last two criteria to the text of Hadith. It is due to this overemphasis on the authentication of the chain that the text of Hadith remained unattended to. One can see that many traditions recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim are highly authentic from the angle of the chain but their texts appear to be problematic in one way or the other. Some Muslim scholars such as Abu Hanifah (d.150 A.H.), Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d.204 A.H.), 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi (d.597 A.H.), Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Qayyim (d.751 A.H.) suggested that the text of Hadith should also be paid attention to. For that matter, they came up with several criteria to authenticate the text of Hadith: the Qur'an, highly authentic and well-known traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.), sound reasoning, established history, and moderation. Unfortunately, their suggestion was not given serious attention. Muslim scholars insist, to the extent of belief, on the sanctity of the chain of Hadith. To them, authentication of chain guarantees the veracity of text of Hadith. This approach of Muslim scholars does not appear reasonable. An honest scrutiny of Hadith text may reveal the hidden discrepancies in the reports recorded as authentic. This article represents a humble attempt to highlight the role of sound reasoning in Hadith-text examination. The traditions selected for the exercise are from al-Bukhari's and Muslim's works of Hadith.

Understanding Human Reason from Islamic Perspective

Reason plays a very important role in human life (2:170). It is this power that elevates man to the highest position on the earth (2:30-38). Its proper application helps man maintain his humanity (21:10). Its misuse, abuse or non-use snatches away his superiority over most of the other creatures (8:22). Total suspension of independent reasoning reduces him to the confines of animals (7:179). The Qur'an lay so much emphasis on the intellectual power of man that the true faith and good deeds seem to be impossible without the guidance of reason (67:10).

All the prophets of God invited their respective people to the divine message, appealing to their reason (2:44; 3:65; 7:169; 21:67). Most of the appreciable qualities of the followers of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) have been categorically mentioned. One of those highly desirable traits is that they do not fall upon the revelation deaf and dumb (25:73). Al-ZamakhsharÊ (d.538 A.H.), while giving an explanation of the verse (25:73), says that the believers keep their eyes and ears wide awake when listening to the revealed words[1] Keeping eyes and ears wide-awake denotes use of mental power so as to have a true understanding of the message concerned. When the *Qur'an* invites the people to make deliberation (*tadabbur*) over its *verses* ["Do they not make deliberation over the

Qur'an, or are there locks over their hearts? (47:24)], it actually asks them to use their minds to grasp the true purport of revelations. This *verse* (47:24) refers to the human heart (*qalb*) as the tool of learning, understanding, analyzing, criticizing, and deliberating over a matter. In other words, to get to the true message of Allah one has to use one's mind. If the intellectual power is a means of understanding the *Qur'an*, it should also be an apparatus to understand what is what in the Hadith literature.

Definition of Sound Reason

Use of intellectual power does not here mean mere application of mind free from all bounds and limits. Absolute freedom spoils the mind. The mind has limitations. It cannot go beyond certain points. If it crosses its limits, it loses its balance. The mind or reason, which may be deemed as a criterion to understand the nature of Hadith-texts, is required to work in its given limits. A prejudiced mind may not be accepted as a criterion for that purpose. In Islamic context, the mind should be governed by Islamic faith, knowledge, wisdom, and sincerity towards Allah and the last Prophet (s.a.w.). Someone with antagonistic approach towards the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* cannot be expected to do justice with his intellectual ability. That is why, the proposed criterion is not simply 'mind' but 'sound mind' or 'sound reason', which may be defined as a power of speculation governed by Islamic principles of God-consciousness (*al-taqwa*), justice (*al-'adl*), honesty (*al-amanah*), truthfulness (*al-sidq*), moderation (*al-wasat*), and sincerity (*al-ikhlas*).

Some examples are given here below, in which the sound reason will be used as a criterion to judge the nature of traditions concerned.

1-Breast-Feeding to Adult Man

Muslim and others (not al-Bukhari) have recorded on the authority of 'A'ishah a tradition:

> Salim mawla Abu Hudhayfah lived with Abu Hudhayfah and his family. One day, Sahlah bint Suhayl, wife of Abu Hudhayfah, came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and said: 'Salim has reached the age of puberty. He visits us. In his presence, I guess, there is a sign of disapproval in the Abu Hudhayfah's eyes'. Upon this the Prophet advised: 'breast-feed him so that you become prohibited (*haram*) for him, and disappears what is in the heart of Abu Hudhayfah. She, then, returned. As she herself informed, she breast-fed Salim and Abu Hudhayfah was no longer uncomfortable.[2]

Al-Nawawi, while commenting on this report, says that all the scholars from the generations of Sahabah, Tabi'un, and in the Muslim world have consensus that the age to establish foster relationship through breast-feeding is less than two years. He refers to three exceptions: 1) Abu Hanifah said: Two and half years, 2) Zufar said: Three years, and according to, 3) Malik ibn Anas: two years and a few days. As for the Hadith regarding Salim, al-Nawawi claims that it was an exceptional provision meant only for Salim.[3] The learned commentator of Muslim seems to have ignored the tradition in which 'A'ishah is reported to have advised Umm Salmah, another wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.) to breast feed her adult slave, Ayfa' on the ground that the Prophet (s.a.w.) had advised Sahlah to do the same with her freed slave.[4] If the case of Salim was a special case of breast-feeding, why did 'A'ishah advance it as a precedent to Umm Salamah? He prefers

the view of other wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.), who considered the case of Salim a special case. 'A'ishah's intelligence and knowledge make her superior to others in the Prophet's harem. However, the nature of breastfeeding to Salim appears to be a controversial matter.

Instead of insisting on one or the other ruling derived from the above tradition, it is to be checked whether the information available therein is rationally acceptable. The first question, which strikes the mind after going through the above tradition is: Did Sahlah bint Suhayl, the lady who is reported to have breastfed Salim, have milk in her breast at that particular time? If the answer is in the negative, there is no way to maintain the sanctity of the tradition. According to the history, there was no chance for her to have milk in her breast. With Abu ×udhayfah, she had only one child who was born during their stay in Abyssinia after migration in 5th year after prophethood. After this family returned to Makkah around a month later the same year, they remained therein until the Prophet's emigration to Madinah eight years later. The event of Sahlah's breastfeeding Salim, as reported in the tradition, took place in Madinah. It seems there was already a gap of around 8-10 years between the childbirth to Sahlah and her breastfeeding to SÉlim.[5] Normally, a woman's breast may continue secreting milk for around three years after the childbirth. It is, then, not possible that Sahlah had milk in her breast at the time when she is said to have breastfed Salim. Physiologically, a white substance secretion from a woman's dry breast is possible, if the nipple is sucked for several days in a regular manner. If it was the case, Salim had to suck Sahlah's breast for several days continuously to enable her breast secret a substance like milk, which may not be classified as milk. According to known ruling of scholars, it is breast-milk, which establishes the foster relationship (*riza'ah*), and not any other substance that may appear to be similar to milk.

In order to breastfeed, Sahlah had to uncover her breast. Uncovering breast is to uncover *'awrah*. Islam does not allow anyone to uncover *'awrah* to someone unrelated (*gayr muÍram*) (24:31; 33:59). All the scholars agree that woman's *'awrah* includes every part of the body from head to toe except the face, the hands up to the wrist, and the feet up to the ankles. They have some controversy over whether the face, the hands, and the feet of woman are also to be covered, but other than these organs there is no controversy over woman's *'awrah*. The *Qur'an* makes it compulsory for woman to cover their beautiful parts of the body including the breast. (24:31). Moreover, breastfeeding involves physical contact of two persons, the woman and the child. If Salim was breastfed, there must have taken place physical contact between Sahlah's breast and Salim's mouth and hands. This act has broken another ruling of Islam i.e. a woman and a man unrelated to each other cannot have physical contact except in certain exceptional circumstances such as medical check-up of a woman by a male physician. The Prophet (s.a.w.) never allowed any Muslim woman, unlike men, to make pledge by putting her hand on his hand.[6] At this juncture, al-Qazi Hasan (d.592 A.H.) suggests another possibility. He is of the view that Sahlah might have extracted her milk in a pot and given it to SÉlim to drink it so as not to uncover 'awrah and not to let SÉlim have a physical contact with her.[7] This is a far-fetched idea. It is to be born in mind that foster relation is established with breastfeeding directly.[8] It does not get established merely by drinking woman's milk from a place other than her breast.

Biologically, the woman's breasts are among the most sexually sensitive organs. An adult man's sucking of a woman's breast easily arouses carnal passion in both. Islam forbids men and women even from prolonging and deepening the gaze upon the opposite sex (24:29-30). It exhorts its adherents to keep away not only from adultery but also from

all those acts, which may lead to the final act of sex (17:32). The above tradition suggests an act against established Islamic norms.

Psychologically, one may not feel uncomfortable with his son's presence in front of his mother. Salim was an adopted son of Abu Hudhayfah. According to the age-old Arab tradition, the adopted son was considered the real son. People's attitude towards others is governed not only by hereditary traits of behavior but also by the cultural traits of behavior. Since Arabs looked at their adopted children just like their biological children, it is hard to imagine that Abu Hudhayfah looked suspiciously at his adopted son Salim when he saw him near Sahlah. The tradition in view has another obvious discrepancy. Abu Hudhayfah was sensitive to even Salim's presence in front of his wife. How did he, then, allow Sahlah to have physical contact with Salim through breastfeeding? A normal man can never tolerate his wife to be in such compromising situation with an adult man. Arabs were more sensitive to their honor. Wife represents husband's honor. These are the things, which create doubt about the authenticity of the above tradition.

2-Prophets' Own Self-Indictment on the Day of Judgment

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded a long tradition generally known as *Hadith al-Shafa'ah* (Tradition on Intercession) the gist of which is:

> On the Day of Judgment the entire mankind will be gathered together at one place. They will be in a state of deep sorrow and pain. They will decide to approach Adam for help. When they approach him and draw his attention to their plight, he will express his helplessness due to his sin of eating the fruit of the Prohibited tree. The people will, then, see Noah for help. He will also be unable to help them because of being empty-handed, as he had been granted a supplication, which he had used against his people. They will thereafter visit Abraham who will extend the excuse, referring to his three lies he had spoken. They will now meet Moses who will express his inability to help them due to his killing a person without reason. They will, then, go to Jesus who will send them to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). In the end they will reach the Prophet (s.a.w.) who will try to help them… .[9]

The core of this tradition is that only the last Prophet will be able to help the mankind in the form of his intercession to Allah on the Day of Judgment. It seems to be acceptable. But the way it has been described seems to be highly objectionable. Four prominent figures, Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses have been shown as sinful. It is due to their sins that they will not dare talk to Allah for the help of the people.

Adam will refer to his sin of eating the forbidden fruit. He should not refer to this error of his life in the paradise because he had repented and Allah had forgiven him. Repentance and forgiveness make the person concerned innocent. Adam knew very well about divine pardon for his sin. It does not suit a personality like Adam to mention what has been erased from his account.

Noah will mention his mistake of cursing his people. It is not a sin. He spent few years less than a thousand years in calling the people to the message of God, yet the people except small number of them refused to listen to him. This situation warranted that he pray to Allah to punish the culprits. He felt that if the rebels were allowed to continue living on the earth, the human life would sink into the morass of chaos. He did not actually pray against his people but prayed to Allah to help him establish peace and justice on the earth, the first step of which was the annihilation of the anti-social elements

from the society. What he did was just and right. It was not a sin. His prayer saved the humanity. He seems to be feeling guilty, as described in the above tradition, for his prayer. Noah was a prophet; he knew what was wrong and what was right. If he did not do anything wrong, how did he feel that he was guilty?

As for the self-indictment of Abraham, we have already seen that the information concerning Abraham's alleged lies may not be accepted as genuine. Allah has Himself has described him as "the man of truth" (ÎiddÊq-19: 41). It is, then, not imaginable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) used a humiliating and derogatory remark against Abraham.

Moses' mention of his sin (murder) before his apostleship does not seem to be justified. Moses had not killed the person concerned intentionally. What turned out to be an assassination was a mere accident. After he was appointed as a prophet, he was no longer to be blamed for killing. He prayed throughout his life for the sake of his people, his prayers were all granted. Why did he not remember his sin while praying to Allah? He will fear on the Day of Judgment to talk to Allah. It is strange. He was a chosen man on the earth. If Moses does what he is suggested to do in the above tradition, he will, then, demonstrate his ignorance of the nature of his relationship with Allah. And no prophet can ever be blamed for being ignorant of himself and Allah.

The above tradition does not refer to any sin of Jesus. Yet, he is unable to help the people. It is unbelievable. The main theme of the tradition is to prove inability of other prophets to help the people due to one or the other sin on their part. But Jesus who is shown innocent is also deprived of right to help.

Jesus, according to the tradition, will say to the people:

> Go to Muhammad because Allah has forgiven all his sins previous as well as future". It means Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) will be able to help the people only because Allah has forgiven him. Is it only the privilege of the last Prophet (s.a.w.) or an honor granted to all the prophets? Allah's forgiveness is conditioned with the true faith and sincere deeds; whoever fulfils the condition deserves His forgiveness (3:31). Does this general rule not apply to the Prophets who were protected throughout their life from committing sinful deeds? All the prophets carry the privilege of having been forgiven by Allah. If it is the case, it is wrong to make a claim that the last Prophet's privilege of intercession to Allah is due to him having been forgiven by Allah. The above tradition contradicts the Prophet's advice to his followers: "It is not appropriate for anyone to say that I (Muhammad) am better than Jonah son of Mathew.[10]

The tradition of intercession as mentioned above is a clear example of extolling the Prophet (s.a.w.) at the cost of the honor of other great figures in the list of Allah's prophets.

3-Moses' Running Nude in Public

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of Abu Hurayrah a tradition:

> Children of Israel used to bathe naked, exposing their genitals to one another. Since Moses used to take bath alone, they commented: 'By God, nothing prevents Moses to bathe with us except that he suffers from hydrocele'. One day, Moses went to take bath and the moment he placed his clothes on a rock, the rock flew with his clothes. Moses ran after it

> desperately trying to stop it until he reached the inhabited area where the people saw Moses' genital and said: Nothing is wrong with Moses. After this, the rock stopped and Moses took his clothes and started hitting the rock with it.[11]

This tradition seems to be putting the respectable position of a prophet at stake. Muslim has recorded this tradition also under the "Praise of Moses". Is it a good thing for Moses or a humiliation in public? Running naked in public is a highly shameful act. If Moses' clothes were taken away by the rock, it seems to be disgusting to imagine that Moses lost his sense of modesty and ran after the rock. The tradition first appreciates the modesty of Moses by referring to his abstinence from collective public bath system. The prophet, who was so modest that he preferred seclusion for bath, cannot be imagined to have lost his sense of modesty immediately.

The tradition seems to suggest that all this happened to clear Moses of the blame of being physically impaired. Since Moses did not care for what the people commented about him, Allah made him run naked so as to enable the people to see the genital of Moses. It is repulsive to imagine what is reported. Moses wanted to maintain his modesty and the nature planned to disrupt his natural urge. It may not be easily digested. Al-Nawawi suggests that the rock's flying with the Moses clothes was a miracle.[12] Miracles were given to prophets either to prove their authenticity as Allah's representatives or to help their followers to overcome some unusual problems. Moses was given many miracles, which fall either of these two categories. In order for miracle to happen, the need should be very pressing. Here in the case of Moses, as mentioned in the tradition in view, there is no pressing need for Moses to be given a miracle. The flying of the rock caused Moses to fall below normal standard of morality. It was a humiliation to Moses. Allah never lets his chosen servants to be humiliated. It is this problem because of which Ibn al-Jawzi refers to a probability of Moses' wearing an undergarment at the time of running after the rock.[13] It may be suggested here that the above tradition is not a story related by the Prophet (s.a.w.), but someone (Allah knows better who) from among the narrators picked up this story from Judeo-Christian sources and attributed it to the Prophet to assign sanctity to it.

4-The Prophet's Order to Kill the Innocent

Only Muslim has recorded on the authority of Anas ibn Malik a tradition:

> A man was accused of having an affair with the Prophet's slave-girl (Mariyah). The Prophet, then, ordered 'Ali to behead him. 'Ali went to him and found him in a pond, asked him to come out. When he came out, 'Ali found him without male genital. 'Ali did not carry out the execution, and informed the Prophet about it.[14]

The man who was accused was a eunuch gifted to the Prophet (s.a.w.) by Egyptian ruler Muqawqis. His name was Ma'bur. The Prophet's slave-girl, referred to in the above tradition was Mariyah who had also been sent to the Prophet (s.a.w.) as gift from the above Egyptian king.[15] The above narration raises many questions. Had 'Ali carried out the Prophet's command, the innocent Ma'bur would have been put to death for no fault of his. 'Ali refrained to kill the accused because he found him unable to do what he was accused of. It obviously leads to the conclusion that the Prophet (s.a.w.) passed a judgment against a person without completing the required process of calling the witnesses. The case, as reported in the tradition, was that of adultery for which there

should either be four witnesses or confession by the accused or any other certain evidence of sexual involvement. In the case of Ma'bur, there were neither four witnesses, nor self-confession, nor any other irrefutable evidence. Yet, the Prophet is reported to have issued the order of his execution. It is unimaginable that the Prophet (s.a.w.), who refrained from sentencing some woman accused of adultery mainly because there was no evidence against them[16], ordered a man to be killed only on the ground that he had been accused of adultery.

According to the history, Ma'bur was already a eunuch. He had been actually presented to the Prophet (s.a.w.) as an eunuch. It may not be tenable to claim that at the time of his arrival from Egypt none knew about his position as eunuch. One can easily recognize the eunuch because this category of men has certain apparent traits in their behavior. Ma'bur's weird behavior must have made the people know about his effeminacy. In that situation people's accusing him of something he was unable to do appears strange.

The question as to who accused the man having an affair with someone in the Prophet's family is of serious nature. It was not possible for Muslims to smear the Prophet's own household. They loved him very much. They respected him. One might here suggest that the accusation was made by hypocrites. But the time does not approve this speculation. Muqawqis had sent Mariyah, Ma'bur and others to the Prophet (s.a.w.) in the year 8 after hijrah.[17] During that period we do not find hypocrites in Islamic society of Madinah.

Another question which surfaces with the above story is whether the Prophet (s.a.w.) identified the accusers and subjected them to the stipulated punishment of slander (qadhaf) when it was proved that Ma'bur was innocent. We do not find any sign about this punishment. Islamic government had the responsibility to bring the culprit to justice. Non-availability of such information in the history denotes non-existence of such slanderers. And non-availability of slanderers signifies that the above story has been fabricated.

5-The Prophet's Wish to Burn the People Due to their not Joining the Salat

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of Abu Hurayrah a tradition:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) once found some people missing from some Salat (prayer) and said: I wish to ask someone to lead the prayer; I, then, proceed to those staying behind from the Salat, and order to set their houses on fire, with wood, so as to let them be burnt…[18]

This tradition conveys two messages. First, the Prophet (s.a.w.) was a harsh and hard-hearted man. Second, absenting from congregational prayers in the mosque is cognizable. The first message contrasts with the description of the Prophet (s.a.w.) in the Qur'an as well as highly authentic Ahadith. The Qur'an says:

> It was by Allah's grace that you deal gently with your followers: for if you had been harsh and hard hearted, they would indeed have broken away from you" (3:159). In a Hadith the Prophet (s.a.w.) describes his disposition and demeanor in these words: "I am Muhammad, Ahmad, the final Prophet, leader of the people on the Day of Judgment, an apostle of repentance, and an apostle of mercy.[19]

The Prophet (s.a.w.), who was very gentle in his dealings, kind hearted towards his people, and paragon of mercy for the mankind, may not be imagined to have wished to burn his followers alive.

Skipping Solat in mosque is not a desirable approach, but not an offence carrying death penalty by burning. In Islam no offence or crime, however serious it might be, carries the punishment of being burnt alive. It might be suggested here that the Prophet did not enforce this punishment on any one; he simply wanted to make the people realize the significance of prayer in congregation. It is true that the Prophet's intention was to send the message concerned home. Yet, it is not imaginable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) conveyed the message by frightening the people in this way. It was not possible for a man of mercy to even imagine to burn his own followers. According to all available accounts, the Prophet did not even reproach those who had failed to carry out their duty properly in the battle of Uhud, although due to their negligence the victory of Muslims turned into defeat.[20] Being negligent of military duty on the battlefront is more serious than skipping Solat in the mosque. The Prophet did not wish to punish the guilty in the battle of *Uhud*. Is it rational to think that the Prophet intended to kill those lagging behind others in prayers?

It is obvious from a report that the Prophet (s.a.w.) made this statement against some hypocrites who absented from prayers.[21] Even though it was directed against the hypocrites, it is not imaginable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said like that. The Prophet (s.a.w.), throughout his mission, never dealt harshly with the hypocrites. He always dealt with them gently. Dealing is not confined to only action and interaction; it includes comments and observation in words. If the Prophet (s.a.w.) had used harsh words, the people around him would certainly have broken away from him. How can one attribute these words of the above tradition to the Prophet (s.a.w.), when he had prevented his followers to use fire in torture. The Prophet said: "None can be punished with the fire except with the fire of the Lord".[22] It is clear from this tradition that the punishment of fire is not allowed; it is the prerogative of Allah alone. The Prophet (s.a.w.) may not have intended to punish certain people with fire, contradicting his own ruling.

6-Unrelated Woman's Delousing the Prophet's Head

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of Anas ibn Malik a tradition:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) used to frequently visit Umm Haram bint Milhan, the then wife of 'Ubadah ibn Samit. One day he visited her. She served him food, and then she started picking lice from his head. The Prophet (s.a.w.) fell asleep…[23]

Umm Haram was a Muslim lady of Madinah. She was a maternal aunt of Anas ibn Malik, the Prophet's personal assistant.[24] She hailed from the same tribe, al-Najjar as the Prophet's great grandmother, Salma bint 'Amr ibn Zayd ibn Labid.[25] There does not seem to be any blood or foster relation between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Umm Haram. How could, then, one imagine physical contact between the Prophet and Umm Haram? It is obvious that this tradition represents an attempt to create some problem concerning the Prophet's unblemished and spotless person.

Al-NawwÊ claims that Muslim scholars' have consensus over Umm Haram being *mahram* (unmarriageable person) for the Prophet (s.a.w). He also refers to disagreement among scholars over the nature of how she was *mahram*. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, he further argues, Umm Haram was maternal aunt of the Prophet (s.a.w.) through

suckling (*riza'ah*). He also quotes others anonymously as having said that Umm ×arÉm was maternal aunt of the Prophet's father or grandfather through suckling (*riza'ah*).[26] Ibn Hajar, commentator of al-Bukhari's Sahih, finds in the above tradition permission for unrelated woman's entertaining a male guest, and delousing his head. But this issue, he observes, has turned intricate in the eyes of a group of scholars. He also brings the view of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in these words:

> Umm Haram or her sister Umm Sulaym, I guess, suckled the Prophet (s.a.w.), hence one of them was the Prophet's foster mother and the other foster aunt. That is why the Prophet (s.a.w.) used to sleep beside Umm Haram and received from her the services that are allowed between a male *maÍram* and his female *maÍram* relatives.[27]

Yahya ibn Ibrahim ibn Muzayn (d.259 A.H.), a commentator of Al-Mu'atta' of Imam Malik, has tried to advance another argument to prove foster relationship between the Prophet and Umm Haram. He says that the Prophet's great grandmother SalmÉ and Umm ×arÉm were both from the same tribe, al-Najjar.[28] Ibn Wahb (d.197 A.H.) is reported to have made two observations on this matter. First, Umm Haram was a foster aunt of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Second, Umm Haram was foster aunt of the Prophet's father or his grandfather.[29] Ibn al-Jawzi (d. A.H.) refers to some tradition memorizers' view that Umm Sulaym was foster sister of the Prophet's mother.[30]

It is obvious that most of the scholars in their bid to maintain the validity of the above tradition have advanced the notion of foster relation between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Umm Haram. According to the known history, no woman from Madinah has ever been mentioned by historians as foster mother of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Umm Haram was from Madinah. Al-Dimyati (d.705 A.H.) emphatically denies any blood or foster relationship between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Umm Haram. He argues that the women who suckled the Prophet (s.a.w.), are known; Umm Haram's name is not among them. He further disproves the theory of foster relationship between the Prophet's grandfather and Umm Haram. He insists that there was no possibility of any link between Umm ×arÉm and Umm Salma, the Prophet's great grandmother, who was from Madinah, because the two came from two different families. He gives the genealogy of both: Salma bint 'Amr ibn Zayd ibn Labid ibn Kharrash ibn 'Amir ibn Ghanam ibn 'Uday ibn Najjar; Umm Haram bint Milhan ibn Khalid ibn Zayd ibn ibn Haram ibn Jundub ibn 'Amir ibn Ghanam ibn 'Uday ibn Najjar. Thus both are linked only four generations ago. If there was any foster relation between them, he maintains, it could not be considered as the basis of foster relation between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Umm Haram.[31]

As for Ibn al-Jawzi's suggestion that Umm Sulaym, sister of Umm Haram, was foster sister of the Prophet's mother, Aminah bint Wahb, It is a far-fetched idea. The idea of foster sisterhood between Umm Sulaym and Aminah indicates that both were of almost the same age. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) was born, his mother was 30 year old[32] hence Umm Sulaym was also of the same age. Thus, at the time of the Prophet's entry into Madinah Umm Sulaym was already 80-83. Historical calculation may not corroborate it. When the Prophet entered Madinah, Umm Sulaym devoted to the Prophet's service her son Anas ibn Malik who was, then, only 8-10 year old.[33] It means at the time of Anas' birth she was 71-73. It should be born in mind that Anas was the first and the only child through her first husband, Malik ibn Nazzar.[34] Biologically, the women at 71 are unable to conceive due to them being at the stage of menopause, which generally sets in at the age of 50. Apart from that, Umm Sulaym, after her Islam, married Abu Talhah and bore two children, Abu 'Umayr and 'Abd Allah.[35] Is it believable that at the time of her marriage with Abu Talhah she was 84 year old? History has it that Abu Talhah had been

very much impressed by her feature before he proposed to her.[36] Abu Talhah's proposal to her speaks about her age. He was hardly 25-30 year old.[37] At that time Umm Sulaym should not have been more than 25-30. In this case, she was 23-28 years junior to the Prophet (s.a.w.). It is, then, not possible for Umm Sualym to be foster sister of Aminah.

In the light of the above discussion, the theory of foster relation between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Umm Haram is untenable. It seems obvious that the scholars developed this idea on the basis of mere speculation. That is why some scholars like Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi (d.543 A.H.) and al-Dimyati (d.705 A.H.) have proposed the theory of the Prophet's exclusive privilege.[38] This proposal also strengthens the belief that there was no foster relationship between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Umm Haram. The proposal of the Prophet's exclusive right to have physical contact with Umm Haram also seems to be a mere speculation. Undoubtedly, the Prophet (s.a.w.) had several exclusive privileges granted to him by Allah such as marriage with any number of women. But there are unequivocal statements on his exclusive privileges either in the *Qur'an* or in the *Hadith*.[39] There is no reference in either of the two sources to his privilege of being deloused by an unrelated woman. In order to declare anything specific for the Prophet (s.a.w.), there should be strong evidences; mere speculation will not do.

The only solution to get out of all these controversies and maintain the Prophet's integrity is to consign the tradition in view to the trash bin. It is not imaginable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) had physical contact with an unrelated woman in the form of delousing. It was the Prophet (s.a.w.) himself who refused to shake hands with women while conducting their pledge of allegiance.[40] None could have ever raised any question if the Prophet had taken women's hands into his hands in a sacred act. Yet, he avoided it. If the above tradition is considered authentic, certain people may misuse it. The Prophet (s.a.w.) did not do or say any thing, which could mislead the people.

7-Encouraging Man to commit More and More Sins

Muslim and others (not al-Bukhari) have recorded on the authority of Abu Ayyub and Abu Hurayrah a tradition:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: By the One in whose hands is my soul, if you do not commit sins, Allah will destroy you and bring another people who will commit sins and ask Allah for His forgiveness, Allah will, then, forgive them.[41]

Man should be daring in committing sins. If he does not commit sins, he will have no chances to repent and ask Allah for his forgiveness. If a nation remains pious with minimum amount of errors, it may lose the chance of survival. These are the messages flowing freely from the above tradition. Can anyone imagine that the Prophet (s.a.w.) encouraged his followers to commit sins so as to be able to seek Allah's forgiveness? It is strange that al-Nawawi, commentator of Muslim's work, has not said anything on this matter. It seems he does not find any problem in this tradition.

The *Qur'an* reiterates that nations are destroyed because of their sins (6:6; 8:52, 54 etc). Allah has given glad tidings of blissful life in both the worlds only to those who do good deeds (2:25; 10:9; 16:97 etc). The *Qur'an* invites the mankind to develop exceptionally admirable qualities (25:62-74), which enable them to easily keep away from sinful thought and acts. Believers have been warned against falling victims to the tricks of Satan who always lead the man to the sin. It is true that the believers have been advised to always seek Allah's forgiveness for the errors they may be committing in their daily life, but it does no way be construed as an invitation and encouragement to commit

more and more sins. The life dominated by sins is a bane, not a boon. Psychologically, if a man keeps committing sins deliberately and keeps repenting, he may not be expected to live a sincerely pious life. Sins when accumulated may turn into chaos (*fasad*). Such a situation is highly condemned in the *Qur'an* (30:41-42).

The above tradition uses the word "*dhunub*" (sins). The practically known sins are of two kinds, major and minors. Under major sins fall, apart from *Shirk* (polytheism), illicit sex, unjust killing, theft, robbery, confiscation of someone's rights, misbehavior with parents, dishonesty in dealings etc. It seems the above tradition encourage to commit not only minor sins but also major sins. It is well known that major sins are cognizable and punishable.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) established a new society based on Islamic principles in Arabian Peninsula. It was an ideal society in terms of piety and high moral values. The picture of that society, as drawn in the history, is that of a society with minimum sins. Had the Prophet (s.a.w.) had really allowed his people to feel free in living their life, the Arabs would have never been required to severe their relationship with their past, and Arabian Peninsula would never have experienced peaceful life. The Prophet (s.a.w.) came to discourage the people to do anything wrong. The entire theory of Islam is based on "promotion of the good and eradication of the evil" (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahyu 'an al-munkar*). How could this theory be adjusted with the tradition quoted above? There is a total disharmony between the basic Islamic principles and the message in the above tradition.

3.8-'Umar's Friday Sermon and Ayat al-Rajm

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas the last Friday sermon of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and its background. Only al-Bukhari has quoted it in full detail. Below is his version of the story.

"According to 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, someone reported to 'Umar the caliph who was in Makkah for pilgrimage that a particular person observed: 'If 'Umar died, I would certainly pledge my allegiance to so-and-so (Talhah ibn 'Ubayd Allah), by God, election of Abu Bakr was but an expected lapse, which soon came to an end'. Upon this 'Umar got angry and said: 'I will surely organize a night gathering to caution the people of those who want to usurp their leadership'. 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, then, advised him not to do so because the pilgrimage season gathered people of all sorts including the mean and the ignorant who will dominate in the gathering you intend to address, and also because they will take your words but without understanding, and interpret them out of context. So, wait until you go back to Madinah, which is the place of *Hijrah* and *Sunnah*, you will be there with the scholars and the nobles so that when you talk to them, they will grasp your message and interpret correctly. 'Umar agreed to this idea, postponed his plan of addressing the people there, and decided to do it in the first gathering in Madinah. On the first Friday upon his return to Madinah, 'Umar delivered the sermon:

> I am going to say something, which I am obliged to say because I do not know whether my death is very close. So he who grasps my words and preserves them in his heart should spread them to as far as possible. He who finds himself unable to grasp them should not attribute any lie to me. Verily, Allah raised Muhammad (s.a.w.) with the truth, and revealed to him the Book. One of the revelations was Ayat al-Rajm (message concerning stoning to death), which we recited, grasped and memorized. The Prophet (s.a.w.) enforced the ruling of Rajm (stoning to death) and we

did the same after him. With the passage of long time, I am afraid, someone might say: 'By God, we do not find Ayat al-Rajm in the Book of Allah'. And they go astray due to abandonment of an obligation Allah had revealed. Remember! Stoning to death is the ruling in the Book of Allah for married men and women who commit adultery and it is established either through the prescribed evidence or through pregnancy or through confession. We also used to read in the Book of Allah—'Do not attribute your blood relationship to any other than your fathers; this is blasphemy on your part', or—'It is blasphemy to attribute your ancestory to any other than your fathers'. Remember! The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'Do not extol me as Jesus the son of Mary was extolled, say only that I am Allah's servant and His Messenger'. It has reached me that someone said: 'If 'Umar died, I will pledge allegiance to so-and-so'. Let not anyone be beguiled to say that the election of Abu Bakr was but a sudden lapse, which soon came to an end. Undoubtedly, it was like that but Allah removed with it the evil impact. There is none among you who could be considered on par with Abu Bakr. He, who pledges allegiance to someone without consultation with the people, risks himself as well as the person he elects to be killed. After the Prophet's death the word came to us that the Helpers (al-Ansar) remained behind and assembled altogether in the portico of Banu Sa'idah; and 'AlÊ, al-Zubayr and their confidants also remained away from us. The emigrants (al-Muhajirun), then, gathered around Abu Bakr. I said to Abu Bakr: 'let's go to our brethren from the Helpers'. We went to them. When we were close to them, we met two pious persons who informed us about the consensus over the selection of the leader. They asked us about our destination. When we told them that we wanted to see our brethren from the Helpers, the two advised: 'Do not go to them and decide about your matter on your own'. I said: 'By God, we shall certainly approach them'. When we reached the portico of Banu Sa'idah, we spotted a person covered sitting among them. I asked: 'Who is this?' They answered: 'This is Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah'. I, then, asked: 'What happened to him?' They said: 'He is indisposed'. No sooner we sat down than their orator stood and after the due praise of Allah said: 'We are the Helpers of Allah and the army of Islam. And, O emigrants! You are a small group; very few people from your tribe came forward. They want to uproot us from our foundation, and join us in the power'. When he stopped, I intended to speak—I had already prepared a wonderful speech with a view to delivering it before Abu Bakr from whom I was keeping away to some extent—Abu Bakr advised me to take it easy, and I did not want to make him angry. Abu Bakr was gentler and more sober-minded than I was. By God, his speech right from the beginning up to its end delighted me excellently. He spoke more beautifully than what I had prepared in my speech. He Spoke: 'Whatever good you have said about yourselves, you deserve that, but as for the authority, it is recognized only this particular group of the Quraysh. They are the noblest among Arabs from the angles of lineage and residence. I have approved for you one of these two men'. He, then, took my hand as well as that of Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah who was sitting among us. I did not like it. By God, I preferred to be executed without just reason to my leadership of the people among whom there is Abu Bakr. Someone from the Helpers, then, said: 'I propose that there

should be a leader from among us and a leader from among you'. Thereupon there erupted furor and noise. I isolated myself from the chaos and asked Abu Bakr to stretch his hand. He stretched it; I pledged my allegiance to him, so was done by the Emigrants, and the Helpers followed the suit. We, then, bounced upon Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah. Someone said: 'You killed Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah'. I retorted: 'Allah killed Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah'. In his Friday sermon 'Umar concluded: By God, we did not find anything more appropriate than the election of Abu Bakr. We were afraid that if we left the place without election of the leader and they elected someone from among themselves, we would have to willingly or unwillingly agree to it or in case of opposition there would be chaos. So, he who pledged allegiance to someone without consultation of Muslims will risk himself as well as the one with whom he pledged allegiance being killed.[42]

The above report is composed of several components: 1) the background of that particular Friday sermon of second caliph, 2) Introductory part of the sermon, 3) the event of Abu Bakr's election as the first caliph, 4) the event after the election, and 5) 'Umar's warning to the people. In order to understand the true nature of the above report, analysis of these five elements seems to be inevitable.

The Background

Someone made an observation that he would favor so-and-so after the death of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. It is also reported that he added in his observation his own understanding of how Abu Bakr was unexpectedly elected to the office of caliphate. This observation enraged the caliph and made him decide to speak to the people about the facts related to Abu Bakr's election. Apparently, the above observation of someone does not contain anything wrong. The right to elect a leader is vested in every individual's hands. If someone expressed his desire for a particular person, Talhah ibn 'Ubayd Allah as identified by some authorities, it was not illegal or undesirable; it was his democratic right to do so. There were certain other people like 'Ali and al-Zubayr who had initially disagreed to the election of Abu Bakr. Their dissent was never considered as harmful for the ummah. So, if 'Ali and al-Zubayr were not blameworthy, why was, then, the above anonymous person blamed for causing chaos. 'Umar's anger over his remark is somewhat perplexing. Undoubtedly, 'Umar was a hot-tempered person, but in Islam this disposition surfaced only on religiously serious matters. Had he been a man of loose temper, he would never have been a successful ruler in the history of Islam. It is hard to imagine that 'Umar got infuriated merely on the above reported observation. If he really got disturbed over an observation, it should have been something else other than what has been reported in the above report.

The Introductory Remarks

'Umar began his Friday sermon with an introduction in which he drew the attention of the audience to two abrogated verses of the *Qur'an* and a *Hadith*. As for the verses concerned, they are *Ayat al-Rajm* ("Old man and old woman, if they commit adultery, stone them both surely to death".), and *Ayat al-Raghb* ("Do not attribute your blood relationship to any other than your fathers; it is blasphemy on your part, if you do so".). The Hadith quoted by 'Umar in his introduction is: "Do not extol me as Jesus the son of Mary was extolled". One wonders as to what is the link between the main theme of the

sermon and these references. It is almost impossible to identify any connection between the two. Arabs were very eloquent in their speech; their hatred towards speaking something irrelevant to the occasion is well known in the history. 'Umar was a man of rhetoric and eloquence. It is unlikely for him to make a remark on a certain occasion, which is entirely irrelevant. Al-Muhallab (d.82 A.H.) has tried to show the link. He says that 'Umar quoted the abrogated verses and the *Hadith* with a view to stressing the point that none was empowered to arrive at a decision on a matter unstipulated in the Qur'an and Sunnah.[43] It seems to be a very vague suggestion. *Ayat al-Rajm* and *Ayat al-Raghb* have nothing to do with the observation someone made about the election of Abu Bakr. Had there been any abrogated verse concerning the first caliph election in the *Qur'an*, 'Umar's referring to other abrogated verses would have been quite relevant and meaningful.

Ayat al-Rajm, as referred to by 'Umar, is not mentioned in the report. If 'Umar read the other abrogated verse in full, he must have read it too. According to other sources, *Ayat al-Rajm* as quoted by 'Umar was:

> Old man and old woman, if they commit adultery, stone them both certainly to death" (*Al-Shaykh wa al-al-Shaykhah Idha Zaniya Farjumuhuma al-Battah*).[44]

The first question arising from this verse is: Is this a Qur'anic verse? Does it corroborate the exemplary eloquence of the *Qur'an*? Amin Ahsan Islahi, an expert in the *Qur'anic* rhetoric and eloquence, observes:

> If you ponder over this tradition, it seems from every angle a fabrication of a hypocrite. Its purpose is to cast doubt about the authenticity of the *Qur'an*, and create suspicion in the unsuspecting hearts that some verses have been excluded from the *Qur'an*. Consider, first of all, its language. Can anyone with a good taste accept it a *Qur'anic Ayah*? It is impossible for any with sound gusto to even attribute it to the Prophet (s.a.w.) let alone to consider it a *Qur'anic* verse. Where will you insert this jut patch in the velvet of the *Qur'an*? There is no link at all between the heavenly language as well as the most eloquent speech of the *Qur'an* and the above statement (*Ayat al-Rajm*).[45]

'Umar is shown to have used this verse to prove the punishment of stoning to death for the married adulterer. Do the words "old man and old woman" necessarily mean married man and woman? The *Qur'an* never uses a word to give a message that may not be available in it. To do so is against the concept of eloquence. Islahi views the report concerning *Ayat al-Rajm* as a frivolous one, and finds its attribution to 'Umar as an injustice to him.[46]

Moreover, 'Umar's statement—"with the passage of a long time, I am afraid, someone might say: by God, we do not find *Ayat al-Rajm* in the *Qur'an*, and go astray because of abandoning an obligation Allah revealed in the *Qur'an*. Stoning to death is a ruling in the Book of Allah for the married man and woman who commit adultery"— seems to be weird. Is stoning to death a *Qur'anic* obligation? *Qur'anic* obligation is only available therein. What is unavailable in the *Qur'an* cannot form an obligation. 'Umar must have been aware of the non-availability of *Ayat al-Rajm* in the *Qur'an*, yet he referred to it as a *Qur'anic* obligation. It is strange. It seems 'Umar wanted to remind the people of the significance of the punishment of stoning to death. For that matter, it was enough to say about the practice of the Prophet (s.a.w.). As a matter of fact, this punishment is the Prophet's *Sunnah* and not the revelation in the *Qur'an*. 'Ali ibn Abi

Talib, during his caliphate, ordered an adulterous woman to be flogged with a hundred lashes before stoning her to death. His observation on this judgment was:

> I flogged her with lashes in the light of the Book of Allah, and I stoned her to death in accordance with the practice of the Prophet (s.a.w.).[47]

Even 'Umar referred to stoning to death as the Prophet's *Sunnah* in the above sermon. Did it not suffice to say to the people who loved the Prophet (s.a.w.) very much that this or that particular ruling was important in the light of the Prophet's own practice?

The Event of Abu Bakr's Election

'Umar retold the story of Abu Bakr's election as the first caliph. On the whole, this story corroborates the history. But the minute detail of the event seems to be doubtful. *AnÎÉr* Muslims have been described therein as if they were greedy for the power and they did not want the *Muhajirun* to share the power with them on the ground that AnÎÉr were the real supporters of Islam, whereas the *Muhajirun* were inferior to them. This picture of *Ansar* contradicts the *Qur'anic* description. The Qur'an says:

> They (*Ansar*) love the *Muhajirun*, they harbor no grudge in their hearts for whatever the *Muhajirun* were given, and they give emigrants preference over themselves, even though poverty be their own lot.
>
> (59:9)

Historically, the Helpers sacrificed almost everything they had for the comfort of the Emigrants; they gave in their hereditary property share to Emigrants; they made their hearts wide open for whoever came to Madinah.[48] Is it, then, believable that same people turned overnight enemy of the Emigrants? It seems doubtful that 'Umar described Ansar in the way he is reported to have described in his sermon.

The Event after the Election of Abu Bakr

Immediately after Abu Bakr was elected by both the parties, the Emigrants and the Helpers, people particularly the Emigrants including 'Umar attacked Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah, the candidate for the leadership on behalf of the Helpers. This attack almost killed the victim. Here arises a question as to why he was beaten when the problem was already resolved amicably. There was nothing wrong on the part of Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah if he was fielded by his people as a potential leader of the community. According 'Umar, Sa'd was ill. Yet he was attacked. If he did anything wrong, he should have been left untouched until he was fully recovered from the physical problem. Had 'Umar and others who attacked Sa'd consulted the newly appointed caliph? If not, why? In the presence of the legal authority, none is authorized to take the law in their hands. If yes, it is unbelievable that Abu Bakr who was very gentle and kind hearted ordered to hit one of his own Muslim brethren. Did it not come to the mind of the attackers that it could cause further rift in the Muslim society? Such a rash step is possible only by the simpletons. The Emigrants and the Helpers were all highly intelligent Muslims. To ascribe such a disgusting act of physical torture to them is to deny their quality of benevolence, as described by the *Qur'an* itself:

> Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong and firm against the unbelievers, but compassionate among themselves.

'Umar's Warning to the People

Caliph 'Umar warned in the end that none should singly tackle the election of the caliph. But in his sermon he described how Abu Bakr had proposed two names, 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaydah for the leadership of the ummah. It was Abu Bakr's own suggestion. Did he consult other in this matter? Even 'Umar did the same when he proposed the name of Abu Bakr and pledged his allegiance to him. Had he consulted the ummah in advance? It seems he did it on his own. When he did it, others followed the suit. The person, with whose statement 'Umar got angry and delivered this sermon, had merely expressed his opinion on the next caliph. If the historical accounts are true, he had proposed the name of Talhah ibn 'Ubayd Allah who was one of the most trusted followers of the Prophet from the Quraysh. The person who mooted his name might have thought that Talhah would prove another successful leader of the ummah.

In the light of this analysis, it may be suggested that what is attributed to 'Umar in the form of his Friday sermon is a fabrication in a bid to smear, first of all, the image of 'Umar himself, blame the Helpers for causing rift in the ranks of the ummah, and create doubt in the minds that the *Qur'an* was vulnerable to changes, on the other. Thus, the report, which produces such a far-reaching negative impact, cannot be considered genuine, even though there is no problem in the chain of its reporters.

9-Prohibition on Certain Names for Slaves

Muslim and others (not al-Bukhari) have recorded on the authority of Samurah ibn Jundub a *Hadith*:

> Do not name your slaves Rabah, Yasar, Aflah, and Nafi'.[49]

Why did the Prophet (s.a.w.) prohibit Muslims from naming their slaves good names? This is the first question arising from this tradition. This Hadith suggests that the Prophet (s.a.w.) discriminated against the slaves. It goes against the general approach of the Prophet (s.a.w.) towards the slaves. He always exhorted his followers to treat their slaves gently and justly. He declared that the slaves were the brothers of their masters.[50] Naming the slaves with some good names is being nice to them. It increases them in honor. Muslim has quoted another report on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) intended to prohibit certain names such as Ya'la, Barakah, Aflah, Yasar, and Nafi', but he did not do it until he died. Then 'Umar intended to prohibit these names but abandoned the idea later on.[51]

This tradition is in total contrast with the above prohibition. Al-Nawawi suggests a way to compromise between the two. He says that the prohibition in Samurah's report denotes the Prophet's disapproval, whereas non-prohibition as reported by Jabir refers to non-declaration of those names as totally unlawful.[52] How could al-Nawawi justify this interpretation? Both the reports use the same word "*al-Nahy*" (prohibition). If the Prophet (s.a.w.) intended to make those name unlawful for slaves, he would use the most appropriate term "*Haram*" (unlawful). Moreover, the Prophet's (s.a.w.) exhortation on not doing something is equal to prohibition in the sense of *Haram* (unlawful).

Practice of the Prophet's followers right from the *Sahabah*'s generation favors the report of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah and negates what is reported on the authority of Samurah

ibn Jundub. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, a *Sahabi* had a slave by the name of Aflah whom he freed later on. He did not change his name. He is counted among honorable Tabi'un scholars.[53] There are many others whose names were Aflaĺ. They were initially slaves and were freed later on, such as Aflah ibn Humayd, and Aflah ibn Sa'id who were both from Madinah.[54] Rabah ibn Zayd was a slave before he was freed. He was a well-known and highly respected scholar of *Hadith*.[55] One of the slaves of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab was Yasar whom he freed later on and appointed him as his secretary of finance.[56] One of the Prophet's slaves was Yasar whom he freed later; he did not change his name.[57] Nafi' was the name of many slaves, such as Abu Salamah's and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar's. One of these two Nafi' is a great Mufassir (exeget of the Qur'an), Muhaddith (expert in Prophetic traditions) and Faqih (jurist) in the Islamic history.[58] Had the Prophet (s.a.w.) advised his people not to keep their slaves these names, there would not have been in the Islamic history these names available.

10-Intellectual and Religious Deficiency of Women

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abu Hurayrah a *Hadith*:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) addressed women: 'O women! Do charity work. I have been shown that most of the residents of the hell are women'. The women, then, asked as to why. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'You do too much cursing, and turn too often unfaithful to your family. I have not seen any intellectually and religiously deficient creature as harmful for men as you are'. The women asked: 'What is our intellectual and religious deficiency, O Prophet of Allah?' The Prophet (s.a.w.) asked: 'Is not the witnessing by a woman is considered half of that by a man?' The women answered in the affirmative. The Prophet, then, said: 'This is one of her intellectual deficiencies'. The Prophet proceeded asking: 'Do you not abstain from prayer and fasting during menstruation period?' When the women confirmed it, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: This is among her religious deficiencies.[59]

This tradition unequivocally declares women as deficient intellectually as well as religiously. As a corollary the men do not carry any intellectual and religious deficiencies. In order to be sure the above announcement is from the Prophet (s.a.w.) or not, a thorough analysis of the report is needed.

Normally, the answer to a question should be relevant to and in consonance with the issue raised. Here in the above report, the women asked the Prophet (s.a.w.) as to why they will form the majority of inmates in the hell. The Prophet (s.a.w.) referred to three things in his answer: 1) too much cursing, 2) too much infidelity, and 3) intellectual and religious deficiencies. As for the first two reasons, these are relevant to the issue. But the third reason does not seem to be so relevant. Because in the light of the Prophet's further clarification, intellectual deficiency, among other things, means inability of woman to stand as a full fledged witness in a case; and religious deficiency signifies woman's inability to perform obligatory prayer and fasting due to menstruation. It is Allah who determined woman's witnessing as half of man's. It is He who created menstruation system in the women for a particular purpose. How could, then, the natural and legal compulsions be the reasons of women to be thrown in the hell fire? Their intellectual and physical inabilities are not their own handiworks. Why should, then, the women be held responsible for something, which is beyond their control?

The Prophet (s.a.w.), as the report puts it, blamed women for playing tricks with men and dominating their mind and heart (*al-lubb*), thus misleading them. Is it possible for the less intelligent and the less capable to dominate the most intelligent and the most capable? If the women are intellectually deficient, how could they manage to play tricks with the men who possess intellectual perfection? Psychologically, the less intelligent is dominated by the most intelligent. If the women really dominate men and mislead them, the former should be as strong intellectually as the latter.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) advanced, as is claimed in the above tradition, two examples, one to explain intellectual deficiency and the other to prove religious deficiency. The example for intellectual deficiency is a woman's half eligibility as witness. Here it seems intellectual deficiency denotes lack of knowledge. Al-Nawawi mentions three imports of the intellect (*'aql*): 1) the knowledge, 2) information about the basic and necessary matters, and 3) power of discernment.[60] It means deficiency of mind is actually that of knowledge as well as that of discernment. It is, then, not necessary that only the women suffer from this deficiency; men may also be victim of this problem. Why should, then, the women alone be referred to as intellectually deficient? Men are also found lacking in knowledge and having less sagacity. There are also women in millions who are more sagacious, more knowledgeable, and more intelligent. Umm Salamah, one of the Prophet's wives, once advised the Prophet (s.a.w.) on what to do to overcome a certain particular problem. After the treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*, Muslims in general were very upset due to the treaty provisions being very humiliating for them. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked them to sacrifice the animal to mark the end of the sojourn for 'umrah, they did not rise to act accordingly, and demonstrated somewhat a silent protest against the apparently unjust treaty. Consequently, the Prophet (s.a.w.) felt uncomfortable with this approach of his followers, knowing not how to control the situation. Umm Salamah was with him during this journey. She advised him to sacrifice his animal first, assuring him that his action would make the Muslims believe that the Prophet's decision was unalterable, and they would, then, certainly follow the suit. The Prophet (s.a.w.) did exactly the same as advised by his wife, and the reaction of the Muslims was the same as anticipated by Umm Salamah.[61] Was Umm Salamah a woman suffering from intellectual deficiency? 'A'ishah, another wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.) is known in the history as the most intelligent woman who was consulted during her life-time by the most intelligent personalities like 'Umar ibn al-Khattab in matters of serious nature. In what category will she, then, be placed, in that of *Naqisat 'aql* (intellectually deficient) or that of *Kamilat 'aql* (intellectually perfect)?

The reference to women's half eligibility is based on a *Qur'anic* statement:

> And call upon two of your men to act as witnesses; and if two men are not available, then a man and two women from among such as are acceptable to you as witnesses, so that if one of them should make a mistake, the other could remind her.

> (2:282)

Does this *Ayah* really talk about women's intellectual deficiency? Muhammad Asad observes:

> The stipulation that two woman may be substituted for one male witness does not imply any reflection on women's moral or intellectual capabilities: it is obviously due to the fact that, as a rule, women are less familiar with business procedures than men and, therefore, more liable to commit mistakes in this respect.[62]

The above *Ayah* (2:282) itself spells out the reason for that. The two women as witnesses are supposed to help each other because of their unfamiliarity with the matters related to monetary transaction. It may be concluded here that if the reason of forgetfulness due to unfamiliarity with the matter does not exist, there may not be any need of calling two women to stand as witnesses, substituting a male witness. It should be born in mind that applicability of a ruling requires availability of the relevant situation. If a highly qualified woman particularly in the field of business management is available to act as witness, it seems unfair to still give her half credibility. But in a society where women are generally uneducated and confined to domestic matters, the provision of two women's witnessing may be justified.

The example of religious deficiency, as quoted by the Prophet (s.a.w.) in the above tradition, is women's inability to perform obligatory prayer and fasting during menstruation period. As has been observed earlier, menstruation is a natural phenomenon in women. Due to this problem, she is not allowed to carry out her religious duties. What is, then, wrong on the part of women? If they refrain from prayer and fasting, it is not because they do not want to do, but because they have been exhorted not to pray and fast. How could this, then, be a religious deficiency? The women do not pray because the prayer during menstruation is not binding on them according to the Islamic law. That is why they are not required to perform make-up prayers. They do not fast because it is forbidden for them during that particular period. But in the case of fasting they are required to do compensatory fasting later on. By doing compensatory fasting, she manages to redeem the loss. There is obviously no loss at all on the part of women. Not to pray is not a loss because the women are exonerated from the prayer for certain days. Not to fast is also not a loss because they are prohibited to do so for certain days, and they compensate the lost fasting by doing the same sometime later.

The term "*Naqisat 'aql wa din*" (intellectually and religiously deficient) is a derogatory remark. None would like to be called deficient or handicapped. To inform someone that he/she is intellectually and religiously deficient is tantamount to say that he/she is idiot. Islam does not allow its followers to use humiliating words for anyone. Islamic injunction on this matter is very clear:

> O you who believe! Let not any people scoff other people who may be better than they; neither let women scoff other women who may be better than they. And do not defame one another, nor call one another by offensive titles.

> (49:11)

It is not imaginable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) hurt the feelings of women by calling them "*Naqisat 'aql wa din*". His words and acts were the living interpretation of the *Qur'an*. If the *Qur'an* prohibits the believers to offend anyone by using such words as to hurt the others, the Prophet (s.a.w.) can be imagined to have been the first person to implement this divine decree in his practices. Moreover, he is reported to have expressly shared his feeling toward women in these words:

> The love for women has been deposited in my heart.[63]

Hence the one who had been kind hearted towards women might not have used the above offensive epithet for the women. Al-Bukhari has recorded 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas' observation on women in these words:

> Verily, the women constitute the majority of the best in the ummah.[64]

It seems Ibn 'Abbas developed this view about women on the basis of some utterances of the Prophet (s.a.w.). If it is so, the concept of women's intellectual and religious deficiency is questionable.

11-'A'ishah's Trickery on the Prophet (s.a.w.)

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded two traditions describing how 'A'ishah played trick to hurt the feelings of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Both the traditions are given here in the words of Muslim.

1-'Ó'ishah reports:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) used to stay with Zaynab bint Jahsh longer to drink honey there. I and Hafsah colluded together that to whoever of them came she would say: I sense from you smell of *Maghafir* (a particular flower which gives an unpleasant odor). Did you eat *Maghafir*? When the Prophet (s.a.w.) entered the apartment of one of them and she said as planned, the Prophet (s.a.w.) answered: 'No, but I drank honey with Zaynab bint Jahsh; I will, then, never ever again drink honey'. Then came down the revelation—"O Prophet! Why do you make unlawful what Allah has made lawful for you, seeking to please your wives? ..."(66:1-4).[65]

2-'A'ishah reports:

> The Prophet (s.a.w.) loved sweets and honey very much. As a routine the Prophet (s.a.w.) would visit his wives daily after 'Asr prayer one after another. One day when the Prophet (s.a.w.) visited Hafsah, he stayed with her longer than normal. I checked about the reason; I was told that some relative sent a leather container of honey to Hafsah, and the Prophet (s.a.w.) drank some honey from that gift. I, then, said: By God, I will certainly play a trick on him. I mentioned it to Sawdah and advised her to say to the Prophet (s.a.w.), when he drew close to her, whether he took *Maghafir*; when the Prophet (s.a.w.) denied, ask him about the reason of the smell; since the Prophet (s.a.w.) was very sensitive to any kind of foul smell, he would, then, say that Hafsah served him honey drink; you have to, then, say: It seems the bee of that honey derived honey element from a smelly plant (al-'urfuĬ). I will do the same to the Prophet (s.a.w.). I also advised Safiyyah to do the same. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) visited Sawdah, she was on the verge of disclosing the plan to the Prophet (s.a.w.) but when the Prophet (s.a.w.) drew close to her, she said as advised. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) visited me, I said the same as planned. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) visited Safiyyah, she did the same. In reaction to the same statement from us the Prophet, on his visit to Hafsah, refused to take honey there. Upon this Sawdah said that they deprived the Prophet (s.a.w.) of his favorite drink. I, therefore, warned her to keep silent.[66]

In these two reports, there are some apparent contradictions. First, in the first report, the wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.) with whom the Prophet (s.a.w.) drank honey was Zaynab bint Jahsh, whereas in the second one the wife was Hafsah. Second, in the first report the Prophet's (s.a.w.) wife with whom 'A'ishah colluded against the Prophet (s.a.w.) was Hafsah, whereas in the second one there is a reference to two wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.), Sawdah and Safiyyah with whom 'A'ishah made the plan. It is born in mind that the chains of narrators of both the reports are highly authentic. How to say and what in

this situation? If something is said, it will be considered an attack on al-Bukhari and Muslim who are believed to have recorded in their works only authentic traditions. At this juncture, silence on the part of scholars is an offence against the Prophet's sacred harem. It is obvious that both the reports cannot be correct. Only one the two should be correct. But how to identify the right one and on what ground seems to be very difficult task. Al-Nawawi has tried to resolve the problem. He first of all acknowledges the conflict between the reports and then comments that the first one is the correct tradition in comparison to the second one because of two reasons: (1) some scholars like al-Nasa'i consider the chain of narrators of this tradition stronger than that of the second tradition, and (2) this report informs about two wives' ('A'ishah and Hafsah), which is in agreement to the Qur'an (66:1-4) that refers to only two women anonymously.[67]

Al-Nawawi is not categorical in his statement about the second report. Why did he, then, not declare the second report of Muslim and al-Bukhari as unreliable? He did not do so because this decree would bring the authenticity of the two scholars' authentication of Hadith into question. It is painful to see that al-'AynÊ and Ibn ×ajr, the most respectable commentators of al-Bukhari's Sahih, did not touch on this apparent conflict at all. Why? Is it not to simply maintain the reliability of the methodology of Hadith examination developed by al-Bukhari and Muslim? Why did they forget that the truthfulness was the best policy in all situations whatsoever? This approach of al-Bukhari's commentators puts their own reliability at stake. What was wrong if they referred to the problem in one of the two reports as mentioned above just as al-Nawawi did in his comment on the reports recorded by Muslim?

There is another clear problem in the two reports. 'A'ishah vows to play a trick on the Prophet (s.a.w.). Can it really be imagined of the most beloved wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.)? The Prophet (s.a.w.) was loved and respected by all including his wives. Love and respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not allow anyone including his wives to even think to hurt the Prophet (s.a.w.) psychologically. Ibn Hajar and al-Nawawi do not say anything on this matter. Only Badr al-Din al-'Ayni takes note of this problem and observes that 'A'ishah was a still a minor girl who did not actually intend to hurt the Prophet (s.a.w.).[68] One may, to some extent, feel inclined to this suggestion, but the question as to why other wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.) agreed to collude with 'A'ishah against the Prophet (s.a.w.). Hafsah was a mature woman; she knew very well the negative repercussion of their plan. Why did she not prevent 'A'ishah from doing that? Did she not realize that the plan against the Prophet (s.a.w.) to hurt him was not a noble act?

Moreover, the two reports mention not only the plan to hurt the Prophet (s.a.w.) but also 'A'ishah's campaign to make other wives to speak lie to the Prophet (s.a.w.) about the smell of the honey the Prophet (s.a.w.) drank. Is it imaginable about 'A'ishah to speak a lie and advise others to do the same to the Prophet (s.a.w.)? Certainly, not, she did not speak lie because she was aware of the condemned position of speaking lies in Islam. If 'A'ishah was a minor, the other wives who were also involved in the plan to speak lies to the Prophet (s.a.w.) were not minors; they were mature physically and mentally. Why did they not understand that speaking lie to the Prophet (s.a.w.) was a moral offence? All these questions and possible observations have been ignored by Hadith commentators.

It seems easier to consign the two reports of al-Bukhari and Muslim to the trash bin than to think and believe that the Prophet's (s.a.w.) wives intended to hurt the Prophet (s.a.w.) by speaking lies. The position of the Prophet's (s.a.w.) is far greater than that of Hadith scholars. 'A'ishah, Hafsah and others as reported in the above two reports are the mothers of Muslims. It is incumbent upon all the believers to love the Prophet's (s.a.w.) wives and believe in the integrity of their character. But the Muslim scholars in general

and Hadith authorities in particular insist on the authenticity of the two reports merely because these have been recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim. They love these two scholars more than the Prophet's (s.a.w.) wives. They do not care if the traditions subvert the sanctity of 'A'ishah. The only thing which matters much to them is the sanctity of al-Bukhari and Muslim. This is not acceptable at any cost. This is not desirable from any angle. It is better to denounce the two reports as these are recorded in the sources.

The above two reports certainly smear the image of the Prophet's beloved wife, 'A'ishah. Amin Ahsan Islahi seems to disagree with this color of the report hence he puts the case of honey in a way that it does not adversely affect the Prophet's harem. He says:

> Once the Prophet (s.a.w.) took honey in the house of some of his wives. The honey caused a particular foul smell, which was disliked by some of his wives. Certain kinds of honey give foul smell. Even if there is no foul smell, some sensitive people particularly women do not like all kinds of smell. People differ in their taste and disposition. Some of the Prophet's wives did not like that particular honey, which gives the smell of *Maghafir*. When they expressed their aversion to that smell, the Prophet (s.a.w.) wh had a fine taste and was also very sensitive to the feelings of women, vowed never to take honey.[69]

It may be argued here that the Qur'anic statement—"If you turn in repentance to Allah, your hearts are so inclined; but if you back up each other against him (tazaharaa 'alayhi), truly Allah is his protector" (66:4)—corroborates the event as depicted in the above reports. Undoubtedly, the two wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.) did something wrong by backing each other against the wish of the Prophet (s.a.w.). But the offence indicated in the above Qur'anic statement is that one of the wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.) disclosed to another wife the secret the Prophet had shared with her and asked her not to divulge it to anyone else. The seriousness of the offence on the part of the two wives was that they did not realize the Prophet's (s.a.w.) command concerning the secret. The secret which the Prophet (s.a.w.) had shared with one his wives was that he had vowed not to drink honey anymore. While making this resolve he asked that particular wife not to divulge what he made up his mind for regarding abandoning the honey in future.

Hadith commentators quite often make a remark: "One or the other narrator got deluded" (wahima), when they find any problem in a report. It may be suggested here that one or the other reporter in the above chains of narrators made error in his report. It is very much possible. If some reporters could by mistake change the names of the Prophet's wives in their report, some other reporter might have presented the report, advertently or inadvertently, in his own color. The reporters did not certainly report the event exactly as described by 'A'ishah. Their wordings were not necessarily the wordings of 'A'ishah. While passing the report verbally to others, it was quite natural for the narrators to use different words. The above report seems to have become victim of reporters' non-precise presentation.

12-Burning the Ants' Nest

Muslim has recorded a tradition on the authority of Abu Hurayrah:

> One of the previous prophets took shelter under a tree, he was there bitten by an ant; he commanded his companions to move from there and burn the anthill in its entirety. Thereupon Allah asked him as to why he killed all the ants, whereas only one ant bit him.[70]

This tradition presents a case of rashness on the part of a prophet. The Qur'an depicts a very excellent image of Allah's prophets. They were all very sensible, patient, kind, generous, pious, brave, honest, truthful etc. Of course, the Qur'an does not mention all the prophets ever raised on the earth. But its axiomatic that the prophets who are mentioned in the Qur'an with their high qualities represent the institution of the prophethood itself. The prophets who remain anonymous to us must have been of the qualities as those mentioned in the Qur'an. It is not imaginable that a prophet got so much infuriated with an ant's biting him that he burned the whole lot of ants available there. This kind of insensible reaction is not expected even from ordinary humans. How can, then, a prophet commit such a stupid act?

Conclusion

Twelve traditions from al-Bukhari's and Muslim's works were selected and subjected to sound reasoning. The result is obvious. One may see that these traditions are authentic from the angle of chain of narrators. Yet, the texts of the traditions concerned are full of flaws and anomalies that can in no way be remedied. It does not, then, seem proper to insist on the authenticity of the above mentioned traditions. It is highly valuable method that both the chain and the text are checked to ensure the authenticity of the Hadith. Scholars have the sacred duty to check the authenticity of the reports in the Prophetic tradition by applying, among others, sound reasoning as a criterion.

Notes

[1] Al-Zamakhshari, Mahmud ibn 'Umar, Al-Kashshaf (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1995), vol. 3, p. 287.

[2] Muslim, *Sahih* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1997: with al-Nawawi's commentary), vol. 5, kitab al-Rià', Hadith no. 3585-3590.

[3] Al-Nawawi, Muhy al-Din Yahya ibn Sharf, *Sharh Sahih Muslim* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 5, pp. 273-274.

[4] Muslim, op. cit., vol. 5, kitab al-Rià', Hadith nos. 3588-3589.

[5] This is the summery developed on the basis of information available under the biographies of Abu ×udhayfah, his wife Sahlah bint Suhayl, Salim. See for the detail, Ibn al-AthÊr, Usud al-Ghabah (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 4, pp. 416-417 (for Abu ×udhayfah), vol. 5, pp. 316-317 (for Sahlah bint Suhayl), vol. 2, pp. 260-262 (for Salim).

[6] Muslim, op. cit., vol. 7, kitab al-Imarah, Hadith nos. 4811-4812.

[7] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 274.

[8] Muslim, op. cit., vol. 5, kitab al-Rià', Hadith nos. 3575-3581. In these traditions three different terms have been used to refer to foster relationship: 1) al-MaÎÎah, 2) al-Raz'ah, and 3) al-Imlajah. All these three words mean sucking milk directly from the breast.

[9] Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma'il, *Sahih* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1400 A.H.), vol. 2, kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya', Hadith no. 3340 & 3361; Muslim, op. cit., vol. 2, kitab al-Iman, Hadith nos. 474-481.

[10] Muslim, vol. 8, kitab al-Faza'il, Hadith nos. 6109-6110.

[11] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 1, kitÉb al-Ghusl, Hadith no. 278; Muslim, op. cit., vol. 2, kitab al-×ayz, Hadith no. 768.

[12] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 126.

13 Ibn Hajar,Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-'Asqalani, *Fatĺ al-Bari* (Maktaba Dar al-Salam, Riyadh, 2000), vol. 1, p. 501.

14 Muslim, op. cit., vol. 9, kitab al-Tawbah, Hadith no. 6954.

15 Ibn al-Athir, *Usud al-Ghabah.*, vol. 5, p. 394.

16 Muslim, op. cit., vol. 5, kitab al-Li'aan, Hadith nos. 3736-3748.

17 Ibn al-AthÊr, *Usud al-Ghabah*, vol. 5, p. 394.

18 Muslim, op. cit., vol. 3, kitab al-Masajid, Hadith nos. 1479-1483; Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 1, kitab al-Adhan, Hadith no. 644.

19 Muslim, op. cit., vol. 8, kitÉb al-Faza'il, Hadith no. 6061.

20 Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an (Dar al-Andalus, Gibraltar, 1980), p. 92.

21 Muslim. Op. cit., vol. 3, kitab al-Masajid, Hadith no. 1480.

22 Abu Da'ud, *Sunan* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1996), vol. 3, kitab al-Adab, Hadith no. 5268.

23 Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 2, kitab al-Jihad, Hadith nos. 2788-2789; Muslim, op. cit., vol. 7, kitab al-Imarah, Hadith no. 4911.

24 Ibn al-Athir, *Usud al-Ghabah*. vol. 5, p. 435.

25 Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1994), vol. 1, 453.

26 Al-Nawawi, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 59.

27 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 11, kitab al-Isti'dhan, p. 93.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1995), vol. 1, p. 134.

33 Ibid., p. 199.

34 Ibid., vol. 4, p. 494.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibn al-Athir, *Usud al-GhÉbah.*, vol. 5, p. 456.

37 Abu Ùalhah died in 51 A.H. at the age of 70. It means he was only 21 at the time of his marriage to Umm Sulaym. See for the detail: Ibn al-Athir, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 19-20.

38 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 11, kitab al-Isti'dhan, pp. 93-94.

39 The Qur'an, 33:50 declares that the only the Prophet (s.a.w.) was allowed to marry as many women as he wished; it was not allowed for his followers. There are several tradition making it clear that certain things were only for the Prophet (s.a.w.). For example, the Prophet's property was not for distribution among his legal heirs but it belonged to the entire ummah. See for this, Muslim, op. cit., vol. 6, kitab al-Jihad, Hadith no. 4552.

40 Muslim, op. cit., vol. 7, kitab al-Imarah , Hadith nos. 4811-4812.

41 Muslim, op. cit., vol. 9, kitab al-Tawbah, Hadith nos. 6898-6899.

42 Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 4, kitab al-Hudud, Hadith no. 6830.

43 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 12, kitab al-Hudud, p. 192.

[44] Malik ibn Anas, *Al-Mu'atta'* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1985) vol. 2, kitab al-Hudud, Hadith no. 10; Al-Nasa'i, Ahamd ibn Shu'ayb, *Al-Sunan al-Kubra* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1991) vol. 4, kitab al-Rajm, Hadith no. 7156.

[45] Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'an* (Taj Company, Delhi, 1997), vol. 5, pp. 366-367.

[46] Ibid., p. 367.

[47] Al-Darqutni, 'Ali ibn 'Umar, *Sunan* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1996), vol. 2, part 3, kitab al-Hudud, Hadith nos. 3202-3206.

[48] Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'AÐim* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 2000), vol. 4, pp. 329-330.

[49] Muslim, op. cit., vol. 7, kitab al-Adab, Hadith nos. 5564-5566.

[50] Ibid., vol. 6, kitab al-Ayman, Hadith no. 4289.

[51] Ibid., vol. 7, kitab al-Adab, Hadith no. 5568.

[52] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 344.

[53] Ibn Hajar, Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-'Asqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1996), vol. 1, pp.291-292.

[54] Ibid., 290-291.

[55] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 143.

[56] Ibid., vol. 6, p. 231.

[57] Ibid., p. 230.

[58] Ibid, vol. 5, p. 589.

[59] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol 1, kitab al-×ayz, Hadith no. 304; Muslim, op. cit., vol. 1, kitab al-Iman, Hadith no. 238.

[60] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., vol. 1, kitab al-Iman, p. 255.

[61] Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 1, p. 586.

[62] Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 63.

[63] Al-Nasa'i, op. cit., vol. 5, kitab 'Ashrat al-Nisa', Hadith no. 8888.

[64] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 3, kitab al-Nikah, Hadith no. 5069.

[65] Muslim, op. cit., kitab al-Talaq, Hadith no. 3663; al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 3, kitab al-Talaq, Hadith no. 5267.

[66] Muslim, op. cit., kitÉb al-Talaq, Hadith no. 3664; al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 3, kitab Tafsir al-Qur'an, Hadith no. 4912.

[67] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 317-318.

[68] Al-'Ayni, Bad r al-Din, *'Umdat al-Qari* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2001), vol. 19 , pp. 357-358.

[69] Islahi, op. cit., vol. 8, pp. 457-458.

[70] Muslim, *Sahih* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 2000), [only one volume], kitab al-Salam, Hadith no. 2241 (148-150).

Cultural Sufism
and its Relationship to '*Irfan*

Seyed Sadreddin Safavi

SOAS, University of London
UK

Abstract

This article examines the social manifestation of Sufism/'*Irfan* as a culture of resistance, and examines the essential position of '*Irfan* in the socio-political program of Islam for the establishment of a just society.

Keywords

Sufism, Just society, Islam, Culture, Resistance

Introduction

The essence of Islam is '*Irfan* or Sufism, which is the path of spiritual wayfaring towards Allah for the purpose of attaining union with Him, reaching perfection through annihilation (*Fana*) in the Divine attributes, acts and essence and attaining subsistence (*Baqa'*) in Allah[1]. '*Irfan* is deeply rooted in the Qur'an and the prophetic tradition[2].

Historical manifestation

The socio-cultural manifestation of Sufism occurred at the very beginning of Islamic history and is best portrayed in Prophet Muhammad, his successor Ali and the Ashab Al-Suffah, who were companions of the Prophet. They lived in the mosque of the Prophet in Medina and had no worldly possessions. In times of war, they fought in defence and preservation of Islam, and at other times they engaged in worship, dialogue with Allah and contemplation. The spiritual aspects of Islam were explained and presented by Imam Ali in his conduct, character and speech, some of which are mentioned in the *Nahjul Balaghah*, and his Sermon of *Muttaqin* is the manifesto of mystics. The *Zabur* of the *Ahlul Bayt*, which is the *SahifaSajjadiyah*[3] of Imam Zein al-'Abidin, isalso one of the most important representations ofthe essence of the Islamic tradition of spirituality, known as '*Irfan*.

The continuation of the manifestation of Sufism as a culture of criticism and resistance against oppression and thedistortion and abuse of Islam, and asthe institution for the teaching and propagation of the reality of Islam,occurredafter the martyrdom of

Imam Ali and the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty.This dynasty,which in essence moved away from Islam and established an immoral and unjust socio-political system, was in sharp contrast to the Islamic system and values, but in appearance wore the shroud of Islam in order to maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of the masses, and set the precedent that was followed by future dynasties which ruled Muslim communities. The social movement of *'Irfan* started to form as a means of protest, criticism and resistance against the abuse of religion by the government and the extreme distancing of the official institutions of power, which spoke of religion and taught a false image of Islam. This movement strove to spread and preserve the truth of Islam, which was ethics, spirituality, love of Allah and the people, justice, equality and the lack of attachment to the material world; this movement is best symbolised in the Hussaini revolution. On the one hand there was the caliph and the materialism and the distorted version of Islam that he represented, and on the other hand the Sufis with their ascetic behaviour; the mystics wore simple and cheap attire, ate very little, either did not have a house or lived in very cheap and simple houses, and continually opposed the established system and its false materialist and superficial version of Islam. This demonstrated the contrast between true Islam as represented by the Sufis who were part of the masses, and the Islam of the caliphate and government. Gradually, the Sufis became known and respected in society and ruled the people's hearts, while the caliph ruled their body. Perfect examples of such Sufi figures are Hassan Basri and Sufian Suri. As the Sufis criticised the dark conditions of the society and materialism's reign over it, which stood in sharp contrast to the ideals of Islam, and criticised the caliphs with their speech and conduct, the caliphs in turn, to confront the Sufis, employed a number of religious authorities who stressed on the appearance of the religion and justified the conduct of the government and the status-quo. Gradually, huge conflicts arose between the government, supported by the representatives of the literalists, which included some of the prominent theologians and jurists of the time, and the teachers of the Truth and the Sufis. This resulted in the martyrdom of some of the most important characters of Sufism, such as Manthural-Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudhat Hamadani.[4]

After the Mongol invasion, different resistance movements were formed under the leadership of Sufis. One of the most significant of these movements was the Hurufiyyah movement, led by Sheikh Fadhlullah Na'imi Astarahbadi and his student Imaduddin Nasimi, who was killed in a horrific manner by the Teimurids[5]. The most important social movement of Sufism was the Safavid movement under the leadership of Sheikh Safieddin Aradebili[6]. The Safavids, who were originally a Sufiorder engaged in the propagation of Islam and *'Irfan* after seeing the need for active resistance against the oppression of landowners against the poor, initiated military training for the Sufis in the *Khaniqah*so that they could defend the poor against the landowners. This movement grew in its strength and popular support to the extent that they were successful in establishing the Safavid dynasty, and is of particular importance for highlighting the social activism inherent to Sufism and the deep connection between Sufism, social resistance, politics and power.

The socio-cultural manifestation of Sufism has continued into the 20th and 21st century, an example of which is Sheikh Abdul Qader Jazaeri, the leader of the resistance of Algiers, who was a mystic and a great commentator of the *Futuhat* of Ibn'Arabi, in addition to Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, who was also a mystic.

Cultural Sufism is the organised movements of spiritual groups who have historically organised themselves in Sufi orders, *Khaniqahs*, *Zawiyyahs, Hussainiahs* and

Zurkhanahs, such as the Ni'matullahiyyah, Safiaviyyah, Khaksariyyah, Shazilliyyah and Dhahabiyyah Sufi orders.

These groups have a unique culture and code of etiquette based on Islamic spiritual teachings. Cultural Sufism is manifested in Islamic spiritual poetry and music, such as the *Mathnawi* of Rumi, the *Sama'* of the Mowlawiyyah mystics in Syria and Turkey, the great Islamic architecture and arts, particularly Islamic calligraphy, and the architecture and decoration of mosques and the emphasis of these groups on *i'tikafat* (spiritual retreat), *arba'in*, *dhikr* (invocation and remembrance of Allah) and contemplation. The socio-political aim of Sufism is the establishment of a just society through the propagation of Divine knowledge and wisdom, noble moral values and the movement of society on the path towards Allah.

The socio-political aim of Sufism in the contemporary world:

Today, a great spiritual void exists in human society, which has led to severe social problems such as the breakdown of the institution of family, the loss of morality and countless wars and acts of injustice and aggression on the global stage. The relationship between members of different communities and societies, between nations with their governments, and governments with each other i.e., international relations, is on the basis of power and not justice, and as such, there is constant conflict and a lack of durable and justpeace. This is a multi-factorial problem, which is referred to as the crisis of modernity[7]; some of the primary factors in this process are the alienation of the human being, the spiritual void in society, lack of dialogue and acceptance of difference, materialism and the severe corrosion of morality.

'Irfan or Sufism offers a solution to this problem. In the social sphere, *'Irfan* aims to raise and nourish a human being who has attained the majestic and beautiful attributes of Allah, and manifests her/his love and servitude for Allah through loving and serving the human society as a collective, regardless of religion, gender, race or nationality. A mystic is a human being who attains perfection through annihilation in the Divine attributes, acts and essence, and as such, portrays the Divine attributes, most importantly the attributes of mercy and compassion, justice and testifying to and preserving and upholding the Truth in her/his social behaviour[8]. Therefore, the project of *'Irfan* in the social sphere is the creation of a society based on the foundation of the Islamic social system which relies on the six principles of unity, justice, equality, dialogue, and enjoining good and forbidding evil. The individuals who form this society act with compassion and justice towards each other, share each other's responsibilities and burdens, use consultation as a means of making decisions, accept difference and engage in dialogue, and strive to eradicate poverty and ameliorate its conditions through charitable acts. Such a society is established through the creation of mystics who act as social reformers, teach the Divine knowledge (*ma'rifah*) and wisdom (*hikmah*) and guide society on the path of the Greater *Jihad*, which is the *jihad* against the whims and desires of the *nafs* (soul). This project is an organic and peaceful process which, instead of using force in order to silence difference and opposition, uses compassion, dialogue and maintains and preserves the necessity of the acceptance of difference.

Islam is misunderstood and distorted, not only in the west but also by many so-called "Islamic" groups and movements which abuse Islam and distort its teachings in order to obtain power or maintain it, and to justify their violent crimes and acts of injustice which are inherently against Islam. An evident example of this is what is referred to as "Islamic extremism", which in the name of Islam massacres innocent civilians who many a time

are Muslims, usurp the dignity and inherent rights of peoples such as their freedom of thought, speech and action, or establish governments which reign through the use of force and oppression.

The solution to this problem is not the de-politicisation of Islam as proposed in western academic and government circles, or the move towards neo-Sufism, which is devoid of the essence of Islam. Rather, we must return to true Islam and gain a synoptic understanding of it, which places equal emphasis on Islamic *Fiqh* or *Shari'ah* which is the outward aspect of Islam, Islamic philosophy, and Islamic mysticism or Sufism/*'Irfan* which is the essence and inner aspect of Islam. *'Irfan* plays the central role in the socio-political program of Islam, as it is through the training of mystics who are on the journey towards Allah and have shed their material desires and gained the Divine attributes, and as such, are not corrupted by material desires and power, that society can be reformed and justice established. Therefore, *'Irfan* is essential for politicians and all those involved in socio-political activities, be they academics or resistance fighters, for it ensures that they are not corrupted by power or abuse it and that they do not use oppression and injustice in order to maintain their power; for through spiritual training, as set out in *'Irfan,* they come to see their purpose as serving society and assisting in its growth and development, rather than ruling society and using different means of coercion and oppression in order to retain power.

One of the principles of *'Irfan* is "unity within diversity and diversity within unity" which, in the social sphere, means the acceptance of difference within society. The acceptance and treasuring of difference results in the initiation of the much needed process of dialogue, which is currently lacking in nearly every sphere of human society, particularly in its political sphere. The aim of Islamic movements working in multicultural and multi-faith societies such as Lebanon in the Middle East or western countries, cannot be the establishment of an Islamic government which imposes its laws on the society; rather, the aim should be accepting difference, re-introducing spirituality, improving the educational system and striving for the establishment of the aforementioned principles of unity, justice, equality, dialogue, and enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Notes

[1] For further reading on essence of Islam see: Nasr, Seyyed Hussain, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*, Harper One, 2007; Schuon, Frithjof, *Veil and Quintessence*, World Wisdom, 2007; Safavi, Seyed G, *Sufism ('Irfan)*, Philadelphia, 2009

[2] The verses of the holy Qur'an which deal with God, creation, Day of Resurrection and ethics, and form more than one third of the verses of the Qur'an, form the foundation of *'Irfan*. The supplications and prayers of the Imams such as Du'a Kumayl of Imam 'Ali, Du'a Arafah of Imam Hussain, *Munajat Sha'baniyah*, Du'a Sahar and Sahifa Sajjadiyyah, and the sermon of Muttaqin are examples of the tradition which act as the basis of *'Irfan*. The *Risalat al-Liqa Allah* and *al-Muraqibat* of Mirza Jawad Aqa Maleki Tabrizi is an example of *'Irfanic* books which deals with the practical aspect of *'Irfan*, with the purpose of attaining perfection and union with Allah, on the basis of the *Sunnah*.

[3] The best current translation of the Sahifa Sajjadiyyah to English is by William Chittick.

[4] See: Zarinkub, 'Abd al-Huusain, *Arzesh-e Mirath-e Sufiyyeh*, Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1356; Massignon, *Akhbar al-Hallaj*, Paris, 1957; Massignon, *The passion of Hallaj*, trans. H. Mason, Princeton University Press, 1982.

[5] For Hurufiyyah movement see: Shirazi, Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, *Tara'iq al-Haqaiq*, Tehran 1345

[6] For Sheikh Safieddin Ardibili see: Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, *Safwat al-Safa*, Tehran 1376; Muwahid, Samad, *Safieddin Ardibili*, Tehran 1381.

[7] For a critique of the crisis of modernity based on Sufism see: Guénon, René, *The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times*, 1945; Guénon, René, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, 1927; Nasr, Seyyed Hussain, *Islam and the plight of modern man*, 1988.

[8] The effectiveness of love, spirituality, dialogue and the acceptance of difference on the basis of Islamic mysticism has been masterfully portrayed by Rumi in his *Mathnawi* in the form of stories and teaching sections. Further, the presence or the absence of Sufism in a society has been analysed by 'Attar in his *Ilahi Namah*.

9

| Book Reviews

Zainah Anwar, ed., *Wanted—Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family,* **Kuala Lumpur: Musawah/Sisters in Islam, 2009. 261 Pages. ISBN: 978-983-2622-26-0**

Muslim family laws have for long been—and continue to be—a hugely controversial subject. Critics contend that these laws seriously militate against basic human rights, especially of women. On the other hand, conservative *ulema* and Islamist ideologues hail these laws as the epitome of divine justice and refuse to consider any changes therein.

This book—a collection by leading international Islamic scholars and women's rights activists—advocates a middle-of-the-road position. The contributors to the book claim that while Islam can be interpreted as upholding women's rights, dignity and equality, Muslim family laws, as they exist in most countries, simply do not. Hence, they argue, the need for urgent changes in these laws—in order not just to provide women the rights that these laws deny but also for these laws to conform to what they regard as the underlying spirit of Quranic teachings, particularly concerning justice and equality.

The papers included in this volume emerged from an international conference on Islam and Gender Justice recently held in 2006 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at the initiative of Sisters in Islam, a well-known Muslim women's group that has been in the forefront of articulating Muslim women's rights and equality within an Islamic framework. The conference led to the formation of a group which was named Musawah ('Equality' in Arabic). Its mandate is to coordinate international efforts to promote legal reforms in Muslim countries in family matters in consonance with what it believes to be the basic Islamic principles of justice, equality and dignity for all human beings, including Muslim women and people of other faiths.

The book, the first of a series of publications that Musawah plans to bring out, begins with a detailed statement of the organisation's basic principles and charter of demands. It sets out the claim that the Quran, if understood in an expansive, and what it regards as an 'authentic' manner, is not incompatible with contemporary international human rights standards. Hence, it demands, relations between Muslim women and men, in both the private and public spheres, must be governed by principles and practices that uphold equality, fairness and justice. All Muslims, including women, it stresses, have 'an equal right and duty to read the religious texts, engage in understanding God's message, and act for justice, equality and the betterment of humankind within their families, communities and countries.' In other words, it asserts, the study and interpretation of Islam cannot be considered the sole preserve of the male ulema or Islamic clerics.

The statement notes that many laws related to personal status and family codes in Muslim contexts are patently unjust to women. Human affairs, it stresses, constantly change and evolve, and so must laws and social practices that shape relations within the Muslim family. This is necessary, so it argues, in order that the laws reflect Islam's stress

on equality, justice, love, compassion and mutual respect between all human beings. Such legal reform, it contends, is by no means a new innovation, for changes in rules for the public interest (*maslahah*) have always been part of the Muslim legal tradition.

Seeking to preempt critics who might argue that reforms in Muslim family laws would be tantamount to interference in what they regard as the divinely-ordained *shariah*, the statement observes that family laws in today's Muslim countries and communities are actually 'based mainly on theories and concepts developed by classical jurists (*fuqaha*) in vastly different historical, social and economic contexts.' In interpreting the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the practice of the Prophet (Pbuh), the classical jurists were 'guided by the social and political realities of their age and a set of assumptions about law, society and gender that reflected the state of knowledge, normative values and patriarchal institutions of their time.'

The idea of gender equality had no place in, and little relevance to, the conceptions of justice of the classical *fuqaha*, the statement contends. This, it continues, was reflected in the fact that the concept of marriage upheld by the *fuqaha* was 'one of domination by the husband and submission by the wife.' But today, it remarks, social conditions have vastly changed and 'the world inhabited by the authors of classical jurisprudential texts (*fiqh*) ha[s] begun to disappear.' Yet, family laws that militate against equality and dignity for women continue to linger on despite the fact that they are now 'irrelevant to the needs, experiences and values of Muslims today.' Furthermore, these laws are also at the root of marital disharmony and the breakdown of the family.

The statement argues the need for a critical re-reading of these laws, not from a secular point of view, but, instead, through the prism of Qur'anic teachings, based on justice (*adl*), equality (*musawah*), equity (*insaf*), human dignity (*karamah*), love and compassion (*mawaddah wa rahmah*). These principles, it says, 'reflect universal norms' and are 'consistent with contemporary human rights standards.' Formulating new laws based on these principles would not, it argues, constitute a deviation from the *shariah*, the 'revealed way', contrary to what is often alleged. It would certainly be a departure from classical *fiqh*, though, but *fiqh*, it notes, is distinct from the *shariah*, being the result of human effort in seeking to interpret and draw rules from the *shariah*. Hence, being human and fallible, *fiqh*, unlike the shariah, is also changeable, through resort to *ijtihad* or independent reasoning. Hence, reforming existing gender-just laws that form a part of the corpus of *fiqh*, many of which are still enforced, is, the statement claims, fully in accordance with the aims of the *shariah* rather than constituting a violation of it, as might be alleged. The statement backs this assertion with this approproate quotation from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, the noted fourteenth century Islamic jurist:

'The fundamentals of the *shariah* are rooted in wisdom and promotion of the welfare of human beings in this life and the Hereafter. *Shariah* embraces justice, kindness, the common good and wisdom. Any rule that departs from justice to injustice, from kindness to harshness, from the common good to harm, or from rationality to absurdity cannot be part of *shariah*, even if it is arrived at through individual interpretation.'

The opening essay of the book, authored by the Malaysian scholar-activist Zainah Anwar, head of Sisters-in-Islam and convenor of Musawah, is a trenchant critique of patriarchy in the name of Islam and a passionate advocacy of gender equality as an Islamic mandate. The essay elaborates on the themes contained in the Musawah statement, and calls upon women's rights activists to seriously engage with the Islamic religious tradition instead of leaving it to die-hard clerics and misogynist Islamists to monopolise. Anwar makes it clear the Musawah seeks to raise the issue of equality for Muslim women within and through an Islamic paradigm. Rather than constituting a betrayal of Islam, as its detractors certainly would allege, demanding full legal equality

for Muslim women (and non-Muslims in Muslim countries) would, she insists, be entirely in accordance with the Quran's 'revolutionary' spirit and its stress on the fundamental equality and dignity of all human beings.

The second paper, by the noted Iranian scholar Ziba Mir-Hosseini, examines conceptions of gender in Islamic legal thought and the challenges they present to the construction of an egalitarian Muslim family law. She argues that 'there is neither a unitary nor a coherent concept of gender rights in Islamic legal thought.' Rather, there is a welter of conflicting concepts that reflect both Islam's 'ethical egalitarianism' and the patriarchal contexts in which classical *fiqh* emerged and developed. This she relates to the distinction—often ignored by Islamists and conservative *ulema*—between *shariah* and *fiqh*, the former being God-given and eternal, and the latter being a product of human reasoning and thus fallible and amenable to change. She insists that patriarchal *fiqh* does not represent the *shariah* and violates its stress on human equality and dignity. Hence, she insists, it is in urgent need of reform.

Mir-Hosseini's point is well-taken and fully in accordance with Islamic teachings. But where she is on less firm grounds is her claim that legal rulings (*ahkamat*) in the Quran that relate to transactional or contractual acts (*muamilat*) can be changed, in contrast to those rulings that relate to relations between the individual believer and God (*ibadat*). She contends that rules governing *muamilat*, which include those relating to women and gender relations, 'remain open to rational considerations and social forces' in order to adjust to changing social conditions. Controversially, she writes that it is indeed possible for *ijtihad* to extend to this realm as well, based on a re-reading of the scriptures. In making this claim, she does not engage with the *ulema*'s claim that *ijtihad* on matters that have clearly been specified in the divine texts (*nass*) is not permissible. This clearly limits her case for an Islamically-grounded argument for legal reforms.

Mir-Hosseini subjects the rules laid down by numerous classical *fuqaha* concerning marriage to a critical evaluation, judging them by the criterion of justice that she identifies as a key Quranic principle. Many of these rules, she argues, reflect deeply-rooted patriarchal prejudices. For instance, they define marriage basically as 'a contract of exchange […] whose main purpose is to make sexual relations between a man and woman licit.' In discussing marriage and its legal structure, some classical jurists, she notes, even used the analogy of the contract of sale, in which the wife sells a part of herself and the husband buys her sexual organ, owing to which the wife is needed to completely submit, as a slave would, to him. The notion of a husband's 'ownership' of his wife also defined how many classical jurists viewed divorce. Some of them drew an analogy between *talaq* and the manumission of a slave. In this regard, Mir-Hosseini quotes the noted Sunni scholar Imam Ghazali as writing, 'The man is the owner and he has, as it were, enslaved the woman through the dowry and […] she has no discernment in her affairs' This logic of 'ownership' of the woman, Mir-Hosseini submits, is a complete inversion of the Quranic insistence on equality.

When compared to the numerous reforms wrought by the Prophet in the conditions of women in his time, the *fiqh* tradition, Mir-Hosseini argues, reflects a process of the increasing marginalization and silencing of women. There are, she writes, '[m]any verses in the Qur'an condemn women's subjugation, affirm the principle of equality between genders and aim to reform existing practices in that direction. Yet […] subjugation is reproduced in *fiqh* […]'.

Numerous assumptions underlying *fiqh* rulings concerning women, Mir-Hosseini argues, do not have any basis whatsoever in the Quran. These include the claims, repeatedly stressed by numerous *fuqaha*, that women were allegedly created from and for men; that God allegedly made men superior to women; and that women were allegedly

defective in reason and faith. Notions such as these worked to remove women from public life and confine them to the seclusion of their homes—again a departure from the practice of the Prophet. Inspired by the Prophetic practice, Mir-Hosseini concludes, socially-engaged Islamic scholars, men and women, need to critically engage with the *fiqh* tradition and to formulate new laws that reflect the Quranic insistence on human equality for both men and women.

Unlike Catholicism, for instance, which has a Church hierarchy that lays down orthodox doctrine and laws, Islam allows for a diversity of views, or *ikhtilaf* as it is called in the terminology of the *fuqaha* or Islamic clerics. In his essay, Muhammad Khalid Masud, noted Pakistani Islamic scholar and, till recently, Chairman of his country's Islamic Ideology Council, points to the possibilities afforded by the doctrine of *ikhtilaf* as a means for articulating an alternate, gender-sensitive understanding of Islam and Islamic laws.

According to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, writes Masud, diversity among the Muslim people is a blessing (*ikhtilafu ummati rahma*). In line with this, the *fuqaha* not just tolerated, but also respected, differences in understanding and interpreting the Quran and in matters of *fiqh*, within certain broad boundaries laid down by the clear texts of the Quran and Hadith. This suggests, Masud opines, the need for *fiqh* to remain 'a continuous process that allows legal norms to remain relevant to social norms'. This would entail 'going behind the text to find universal legal principles that can accommodate social changes.' One of these 'universal principles' is gender justice, which, Masud notes, is not reflected in the corpus of classical *fiqh*, and which, he insists, is in urgent need of *ijtihad* in this respect.

Needless to say, what Masud here advocates is in sharp contrast to the stance of the conservative *ulema*, who stress the need for *taqlid*, or rigid adherence to the rules laid down by the classical *fuqaha* as a means to strictly limit *ikhtilaf*. Aware that his suggestion would leave him open to the charge of advocating changes in the *shariah*, Masud explains:

'We cannot appreciate the reforms introduced in the Quran and the *Sunnah* without relating them to the social context when they were introduced. The jurists also interpreted the *shariah* with reference to their social contexts. Today, when the social context has again changed, we need to reinterpret the *shariah* in these new social contexts.'

'*Islam Beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Quranic Analysis*' is the title of a provocative paper by the well-known American Islamic scholar Amina Wadud. Reiterating a point made by the other contributors to this volume, she stresses the distinction between *shariah* and *fiqh*, highlights numerous instances of patriarchal prejudice in the corpus of *fiqh* and pleads for reforms in the fiqh rules so as to make them consonant with what she argues is the insistence on the ontological equality of men and women as envisaged in the Islamic *shariah*. This would mean, she suggests, equal access to the public space and decision-making processes for both women and men, for both, she says, have the potential to fulfill their common human destiny as upholders of moral agency or *khilafah*, as potential *khilafa*s or trustees of God, entrusted with the task of fulfilling God's will on earth.

In this regard, Wadud persuasively argues that patriarchy or any other force that compels abject submission of one human being to another is akin to *shirk* or associating partners with God, the only sin that God would never forgive. 'The foundational idea of gender equality, she stresses, 'is derived from the Qur'anic worldview.' Hence, she insists, '[E]qual human rights for women have their confirmation in this Qur'anic worldview.'

Khaled Abou El Fadl's paper, titled '*Human Rights Commitment in Modern Islam*' critiques contemporary Islamist thought for its obvious indifference to basic human rights of women and non-Muslims, discusses major points of tension between the Islamic tradition and modern conceptions of human rights and explores the possibility of reconciliation between the two.

El Fadl rightly points out the failure of both the apologetic and what he calls the 'defiant' or 'exceptionalist' Islamic responses to modern or Western critiques of Islam, that took the form of assertions that Islam had itself invented modern human rights norms or else that its norms were, in fact, far superior to modern conceptions. These, however, he points out, failed to provide an adequate defence of human rights, primarily because, they sought to defend the inherited *fiqh* tradition, which he regards as indefensible. Rather than representing a serious commitment to human rights, these responses were meant simply to counter Western criticism, and, as El Fadl puts it, 'affirming self-worth, and attaining a measure of emotional empowerment'. This led, he says, to 'an artificial sense of confidence, and an intellectual lethargy that neither took the Islamic tradition nor the human rights tradition very seriously.' These responses were thus 'far more anti-Western than […] pro-Islamic.'

El Fadl stresses the need for a reconstruction of contemporary Islamic discourse, grounded in human-rights commitments and based on what he terms as 'a rethinking of the meaning and implications of divinity, and a reimagining of the nature of the relationship between God and creation.' Such a reconceptualisation should be based, he suggests, on the notion of God, not as a brutal and vengeful dictator, as Islamists conceive Him to be, but as the epitome of beauty, love, mercy, justice and goodness. This would be reflected in an understanding of the divine will being manifested in human acts based on these values. This would represent, El Fadl says, nothing less than a 'serious paradigm shift in Islamic thinking.'

Obviously, seen from this perspective, numerous rules contained in the corpus of traditional *fiqh* that relate to women and non-Muslims and that rob them of basic fundamental rights, would be regarded as negating God's will. This new paradigm could then possibly help usher in a reconciliation between Islamic discourse and contemporary human rights standards.

In her paper, Amira El-Azhary Sonbol traces the overlapping of *fiqh*-based laws, customary laws and colonial laws in shaping personal status codes in a range of Muslim countries and communities. Her basic point is that, contrary to what is commonly asserted, many of the personal laws today applied in Muslim contexts are not based simply on the Islamic *shariah*. As such, they should not be regarded as immutable and as beyond reform.

Pre-colonial *shariah* courts, Sombol writes, were considerably more flexible than their counterparts that developed in period of European colonial rule over most of the Muslim world and that have continued thereafter. Judges were not bound, unlike today, by codified rules, and had considerable discretion to make decisions, including resorting to customary laws (*urf* or *adat*) and other schools of *fiqh* and considering the specific conditions of specific cases to reduce hardship to litigants. This often worked to the advantage of women.

In several respects, Sombol claims, the Muslim personal laws that came to be constructed in the colonial period worked against the interests of women by doing away with the flexibility and maneuverability of the pre-colonial *shariah* courts and imposing a single, centralized code on the entire Muslim populace. This was exacerbated by the 'Victorian' patriarchal worldviews of the colonial administrators. In several Muslim countries under European rule, this was reflected in the new standardized marriage

contracts which defined the husband as the head of the family, and did not provide—in contrast to pre-colonial marriage contracts—for brides to specify conditions to the marriage in order to protect their rights.

Sombol perhaps risks making a untenably broad generalization when she argues that under the colonial state 'the very act of codification [of 'Islamic' family laws] entrenched discriminatory gender relations', but her point that, while these patriarchal laws could be found in the corpus of fiqh, they could, in the past, be contested on the basis of *maqasid-e shariah* ('aims of the *shariah*') or *maslahah* (public interest), principles familiar to scholars of *fiqh*, is well taken.

In other words, Sombol stresses, the codified Muslim Personal Laws that operate in many Muslim contexts today cannot be seen as identical to the *shariah*, contrary to what conservative *ulema* and others might believe. This recognition opens the way for reforms in these laws or their replacement by others that can better serve the core Quranic principles of justice (including gender justice) and public interest (*al-masalah al-mursalah*).

One of the most active groups at the international level today working for gender justice in Muslim contexts is the London-based Women Living Under Muslim Laws Network. In her piece, Cassandra Belchin, the coordinator of the Network, makes a broad survey of the strategies that have been used by women's groups in different countries to bring about legal reforms in Muslim personal laws to ensure justice and equality for Muslim women. Increasingly, she points out, secular feminist groups working with Muslim women are now joining hands with newly-emerging Muslim women's groups that articulate their demands for gender justice from within an Islamic framework and as precisely an Islamic mandate. The latter represents, she points out, an emerging generation of Muslim women confident in their ability to study, reflect on and contextually interpret the Islamic scriptural tradition on their own, challenging the monopoly over religious exegesis of the patriarchal male *ulema*. These women see themselves not as radical feminists, but, rather, as believing Muslims who are struggling to revive a long-lost tradition of women Islamic scholars that they trace back to the time of the Prophet and immediately after.

In articulating a gender-just vision of Islam and in critiquing the patriarchal prejudices of the *fiqh* tradition, these women seek to reclaim the right to *ijtihad*, and also resort to *takhayyur* and *talfiq,* selecting context-appropriate interpretations from across the various schools of law as a basis for positive family law reform, a practice frowned upon by many conservative *ulema* who insist on *taqlid* or the rigid following of just one school of *fiqh*.

Some of these efforts by these women scholar-activists have met with success in instituting legal reforms, as in Morocco and Iran, but, Balchin writes, in the face of the continuing influence of conservative *ulema* and the menacing clout of fiercely patriarchal Islamist groups, much more needs to be done.

The concluding essay of the book, by Kamala Chandrakirana, Chairperson of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women, provides a broad summary of the lived realities of Muslim women today, in the context of which, she argues, strategies for reform, including legal change, have to be considered. She argues that these realities 'compel us to acknowledge that gender equality and justice in the Muslim family have become undeniable necessities'.

Millions of Muslim women, Chandrakirana points out, now work out of their homes and in public spaces; educated Muslim women, although still a minority, are now increasingly vocal about their rights and unwilling to accept the subjugation to which the traditional *ulema* seek to confine them; many Muslim women are now the sole

breadwinners of their families; a large proportion of internally displaced people and refugees are Muslims, many of them women. These realities demand, Chandrakirana persuasively argues, that *fiqh*-based laws that continue to deny women physical mobility, higher education, employment opportunities, access to decision-making processes and institutions and equality within the family are no longer tenable. So, too, are laws that allow Muslim men unrestrained rights to enter into polygamous marriages and to divorce their wives at will.

Given the new realities of Muslim women's lives today, she warns, 'a stubbornly unchanged vision of Islam that regards women as inferior to men and therefore undeserving of a life of equal worth and dignity, could lead to the religion losing its relevance for men and women of the future.' Hence, she stresses the need for 'a new vision of Islam which affirms women's humanity and articulates itself in the form of gender-sensitive laws.'

Taken together, the essays contained in the book make a passionate and persuasive case for urgent reforms in existing Muslim personal status laws. The crucial point that the contributors make is that their advocacy for legal reforms is itself an Islamically-legitimate demand, rather than, as their traducers would allege, a deviation from or subversion of Islam. Turning the tables on their detractors, they go so far as to suggest that it is the patriarchal *fiqh*-based laws that militate against gender justice (which many conservative *ulema* and Islamists uphold as authentically 'Islamic') that actually represent a cruel betrayal of the basic principles of the Islamic faith and tradition.

Yoginder Sikand

Centre for Jawahalal Nehru Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia Institute
India

Angel Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, Santa Monica, Arlington, and Pittsburgh: the RAND Corporation, 2008. 155 Pages. ISBN: 978-083-3044-57-0

This monographical research sponsored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND, National Defense Research Institute, describes the politico-religious landscape in Turkey and the relationship between the state and religion, and it explores and evaluates how the balance between secular and religious forces has changed over the past decade, particularly since the Justice and development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AK Party)) came to power in 2002. The study also assesses the new challenges and opportunities for U.S. policy in the changed Turkish political environment and identifies specific actions that the United States may undertake to advance the U.S. interest in a stable, democratic, and friendly Turkey and, more broadly, in the worldwide dissemination of liberal and pluralistic interpretations of Islam. It is understood that RAND aims to understand Turkey's religio-political situation by this monograph, to improve some scenarios, and to benefit from its conclusions and implications for U.S. policy.

Chapter one of this report, namely introduction, examines the general condition of politics-religion relations in Turkey. In this chapter, the writers say that Turkey is a secular/laic state, but Turkey is also a country where religion is a deeply influential sociological factor. Also they shortly examines the process in which the AK Party was generated.

Chapter Two discusses Turkey's Islamic landscape, including the origins, development, and distinctive features of Islam in Turkey. The report, in this chapter, considers the characteristic structure of Turkey's Muslimness, the historical roots of the present Islamical structure and religion-state relations, the relationships between ethnicity and religion, religious groups and movements in Turkey, etc. The writers claim that the modern Turkish state institutions controls religion.

Chapter Tree explores the domestic and international factors that contributed to the development of political Islam in Turkey and, specifically, to the rise of the AK Party. This part of the report discusses the evolution of religious-right parties, and how the AK Party has succeed, and the difference of the AK Party from the other parties such as the National Salvation Party, the Welfare Party, the Virtue Party, the Felicity Party. According to this report, the founders of the AK Party, by contrast, were open to cooperation with the secular establishment. The AKP program emphasizes the party's loyalty to the fundamental values and constitution of the Turkish Republic. While the AK Party has Islamic roots—many of its leaders, including Erdoğan and Gül, came out of the *Milli Görüş* movement and had been members of the Welfare and Virtue parties—the AK Party defines itself not as an Islamic party but as a conservative democratic party similar to Christian democratic parties in Western Europe.

The title of *Chapter Four* is "The AKP in Power". In that part, the report examines the AK Party's record in power, its relationship with the military and with non-Muslim minorities, The Reconfiguration of Turkish Politics, whether The AK Party is a new synthesis or Islamism in disguise, green money, the headscarf controversy, the *Imam-Hatip* Schools controversy, the AKP and Kurds, and the AKP's uncertain future, etc.

Chapter Five examines the Erdoğan government's foreign policy. That part of the report the title of which is "The AKP's Foreign Policy" speaks of that the AK Party has maintained Turkey's Western orientation and has made strong ties to the West, particularly EU membership, an important pillar of its foreign policy in contrast to the National Salvation Party (MSP) and Welfare Party, and the AK Party has also sought to broaden and deepen Turkey's ties in other areas, particularly the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and the Balkans. Also in this chapter, the writers talk about Turkey's relations with the Greece, the USA, and Russia.

Finally, *Chapter Six* has a title "Future Prospects and Implications" and derives overall observations and conclusions and the implications of these developments for U.S. toward Turkey. In this context, this part of the report examines four possible alternative futures and scenarios for Turkey and their implications for U.S. policy. The first of this four scenarios is that The AKP Pursues a Moderate, EU-Oriented Path. Second one is "Creeping Islamization". In the view of the writers, this scenario is less likely, for several reasons. First, it would lead to greater political polarization and would likely provoke intervention by the military. Second, most Turks support a secular state and oppose a state based on the *shari'a*. Third, EU membership has been a core element of the AKP's foreign policy. While discontent with the EU has been increasing, EU membership is still supported by more than half of the Turkish population. Third scenario is "judicial closing of the AKP". According to the report, fourth one is military intervention.

This chapter includes another issue except these scenarios; it is implications of the events. In this context, to the report, the rise of the AK Party and the role of political Islam in Turkey have several broad implications for U.S. policy: The first relates to the nature of Islam in Turkey and its role in Turkish political life. A second conclusion relates to the sources of Turkey's transformation. Third, it is an oversimplification to see the current political tensions in Turkey as a struggle between "Islamists" and "secularists." Fourth, while the AK Party has Islamic roots, it enjoys broad-based political support that transcends religious, class, and regional differences. Sixth, Turkish policy toward the Middle East is likely to remain a sensitive issue in bilateral U.S.-Turkish relations. Also, this chapter examines Turkey's foreign policy and bilateral issues, and the Ak Party and the Kurdish Issue.

In sum, this report is very interesting study especially from the viewpoint of the approaches and efforts of U.S about Turkey, and the pragmatical relations of the aforementioned state with Turkey, and also tartışmalı değerlendirmeler bakımından.

Ejder Kumuş

Dokuz Eylül Üniversity
Turkey

Shireen Hunter, ed., *Reformist Voices of Islam—Mediating Islam and Modernity***, New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2009. 322 Pages. ISBN: 978-81-8274-3**

'Reformist Islam', today an oft-heard slogan, is notoriously difficult to define, for it can mean different things to different people. Recent years have witnessed the sudden burgeoning of volumes on the subject, but this book is not just a repetition of what has already been written before. Ambitiously global in its scope, it brings together writings by well-known Islamic scholars and activists, each of who provides a broad survey of 'reformist' Muslim voices in the part of the world that they are most familiar with— Shireen Hunter, editor of this book, on Iran, the noted Egyptian scholar Hasan Hanafi on North Africa, Riffat Hasan on South Asia, Martin van Bruinessen on Indonesia, Farish Noor on Malaysia, Recep Senturk on Turkey, Farhad Khosrokhavar on Europe, and Tamara Sonn on the United States.

These writers deal with a number of other contemporary Muslim scholars and scholar-activists, outlining their own and varied approaches to the question of reform in Islamic thought. These are simply too numerous to name, leave alone discuss, here, but they all share certain common methodologies and, to an extent, goals.

Firstly, these scholars all insist that what they are engaged in reforming is not Islam itself, but, rather, certain aspects of commonly-held human understandings of Islam. They see their task as seeking to revive what they regard as more authentic understandings on these issues. Secondly, they are profoundly dissatisfied with the approach of the traditionalist *ulema*, wedded to the doctrine of *taqlid* or imitation of jurisprudential *precedent*, of the *ulema* allied with state authorities (who generally do their bidding) and of radical Islamists. Thirdly, they all advocate *ijtihad* or creative reflection on the primary sources of the Islamic faith—the Quran and Hadith or Prophetic traditions, although they differ as to the extent they believe *ijtihad* is permissible and on the qualifications needed to engage in this exercise. Fourthly, they stress the crucial distinction—often ignored by many traditionalist *ulema* as well as doctrinaire Islamists— between the *shariah*, as the divine path, which they regard as God-given and, therefore, perfect, and *fiqh*, human efforts to understand the *shariah* and express it in the form of rules, which, being a human effort, is fallible. Unlike the *shariah*, which is eternal, *fiqh* can, and indeed, should, change in response to new conditions as well as the expanding body of human knowledge, they unanimously insist. Fifthly, many of them claim (an argument many other Muslims would differ with) that certain aspects of the Quran and the Hadith, mainly dealing with legal matters, are context-specific, and hence may not be applicable, at least in the same way, in today's vastly different context. These include, for instance, certain injunctions related to women and non-Muslims or to criminals. Sixthly, several of them argue for what could be called a 'values-based' reading of the Islamic scriptural tradition, stressing the relative importance of the spirit over the letter of these texts.

Using these methodological tools, these 'reformist' Muslim scholars revisit traditional Islamic as well as modern Islamist thought, dealing with a wide range of issues: women's rights and status, relations between Muslims and people of other faiths, *madrasa* education, international relations, economic and political institutions, secularism, democracy, citizenship in a modern state, war and peace, and so on. In the process, they articulate alternate Islamic understandings on these subjects that depart considerably from traditionalist as well as Islamist positions, and that appear much more socially-engaged and contextually-relevant.

For those eager to hear 'progressive' Muslim voices on a whole host of issues of contemporary import (and strategic interest), this thoroughly engaging and immaculately-researched book simply cannot afford to be missed.

Yoginder Sikand

Centre for Jawahalal Nehru Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia Institute
India