

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2, 2015

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC THOUGHTS



Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT)

International Journal of Islamic Thoughts

An Academic Research Journal

Volume 4 Number 2 2015

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ISSN 2306 -7012

International Journal of Islamic Thoughts (IJITs) is a respected, refereed academic journal published twice a year by the Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought. It covers articles, reviews and viewpoints on issues related to the Muslim world. The editors appreciate readers' comments to better serve the Muslim ummah. Kindly address all such communications to: The Editor, IJITs, rashidmoten@gmail.com or

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E-mail : ijit@iiitbd.org, Website : www.iiitbd.org/ijit, Price: BDT 200.00/USD 35

The journal is listed in Index Islamicus.

www.pathagar.com

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Editorial

Many in the West think that the violence and intolerance in the Muslim world are intrinsic to the religion. Terrorists, so it is argued, draw their inspiration from the Qur'an and from the sayings and doings of the Prophet (SAW). Such characterization of Islam and Muslims create concern among the concerned Muslims. Muslims, it has been pointed out umpteen times, practice a religion of peace. The Qur'an emphasizes the values of love, dignity and peace. The Qur'an repeatedly affirms the unity of humanity despite the prevalence of differences at various levels.

Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware (al-Qur'an, 49: 13).

And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters (al-Qur'an, 28: 77).

... help one another in furthering virtue and God-consciousness, and do not help one another in furthering evil and enmity; and remain conscious of God: for God is severe in retribution (al-Qur'an, 5: 2).

History is a witness to the fact that Islam abhorred intolerance and oppression. Muslims in the earlier centuries revived classical learning and contributed immensely to the development of science, law, and culture. They set a shining example of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony.

However, Islam in the West has been obscured by ignorance and prejudice. In short, Islam is a misunderstood religion there. This misconception of Islam has very old roots. The West has not forgotten the fact that Islam once occupied parts of Europe and that the Muslims successfully thwarted the dream of western Christendom imposing its will upon the Muslims with the Crusades. They also remember that Muslims were the first to assert their will against the colonial masters.

Indeed, some Muslims do resort to violence. To some, this is due to narrow orthodoxy. However, their violence is directed internally against the elite who man the administration of Muslim majority countries. They have been reacting to dictators who resort to repression, preclude the practice of participatory citizenship, embezzle funds and fail to eradicate poverty and social evils. Externally, and more importantly, the Muslims react against the West for supporting and funding Israel which has the status of the occupying power controlling Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Muslims also react to the American-led wars in the Middle East as in Iraq, its brutality as in Guantánamo, Abu Ghraib, its killing of civilians with drones and its oil-driven hypocrisy. To some, the major cause of the Western rage against Muslims is the fact that the Muslims occupy land rich in resources mainly oil. The west desires to control oil which is the one commodity that is essential to the Western industrial civilization.

Irrespective of reasons, Muslims in the West are discriminated against and misrepresented. Their noble Qur'an is vilified, their prophet is satirised and caricatured and their way of life is ridiculed. These gave rise to a tide of retaliatory measures. There is an urgent need to reduce the destabilizing tensions through the promotion of mutual respect and understanding and encouraging collaboration among the adherents of Islam and other faiths in the West. There is also a need for both the Muslim and Western societies to engage in internal debates about their respective identities and places in an increasingly interconnected world. The West needs to move beyond stereotypes and learn about Islam. Muslims need to engage in *ijtihad* and, rather than imitating the West, find ways and means to apply the Islamic ideals of social justice to the issues besetting the contemporary world.

The articles included in this issue of the journal are related to the relationship between Islam and the West. The first article by Moulay Abdessadek addresses the dichotomy of intellectual traditions in the West and the Arab world that perpetuates misunderstanding of each other. Moulay analyzes the critiques of an Arab scholar, Elmessiri, who has questioned the uncritical adoption of the Western and Zionist/Judaic discourses, narratives, terms, paradigms and interpretations of history and worldviews by the Arab intelligentsia. He has proposed an alternative paradigm of presenting the fact through more neutral terms and concepts applying the concept of *ijtihad*. The article also highlights the

fact that the Western perception, discourse and narrative of the non-West are also based on superiority complex and biasness which prevents the West from understating the non-West correctly. This fact is elaborated further by Ingrid Margarita in the second article which analyses the writings of Juan Vernet Ginés and claims and counterclaims on Spanish science. The author makes it clear through the analysis of non-Muslim Spanish scholarship on Arab/Islamic science and found that Arabic/Islamic contribution to Spanish science in the middle age was original and substantive, a fact that some Spanish intellectual traditions tend to deny. The article claims that the development of Spanish science was a product of inter-cultural exchange of ideas between East and West signifying the importance of moderate policies that were instrumental in promoting interreligious and intercultural exchanges between East and West that brought about the golden age of Andalusian science and made its impact on Christian Europe.

The fact that Islam is largely a misunderstood religion is not only true in the context of the West; it is true in the context of the Muslim world too. Islam is presented today as a religion equivalent to any other. This is due to fundamental misunderstanding of Islam which runs contrary to the meaning found in the Qur'an. This issue is clarified in the third article by Jahirul Haq through his analysis of a very fundamental Qur'anic term, *Deen*. The term offers a very wide perspective on existence, life, society and socio-political system. Unlike those who translate the term *deen* to mean "religion" which is extremely narrow, Jahirul Haq gives it a wider meaning presenting Islam as a complete and competing ideology and a system of life and society. Earlier scholars have explained the term in much more legalistic sense with spiritual overtones, Jahirul has attempted to go beyond and developed the term into a political-ideological system.

Understanding of Islam requires deeper understanding of the Qur'an in the first place which requires motivational psychology to understand the Qur'anic exegeses. Tareq M Zayed found personal motivation and interest to be positively related to domain specific reading of Qur'anic exegesis. This finding is substantiated through a questionnaire survey distributed to 65 Bangladeshi Muslims. The reader's intrinsic motivation is to know the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, while the extrinsic motivation is to relate the meaning of the verses with society and real life. Their interests in reading social exegeses indicate

that they are active readers. Therefore, their engagement is understood in terms of applying Qur'anic principles in real life. Exegeses' readers characterized their interest as being based on a desire to promote social development, social welfare, and social reconstruction. It makes sense to suggest that the exegeses be up-to-date enough to include the perspectives and findings of the modern scientific discoveries so as to make the Quar'an relevant to the modern time and society.

The short note section of the journal contains one article by Yahaya Musa which deals with Islamization of knowledge. There are many scholars who have proposed their model of Islamising knowledge. Yahaya concentrates on S. H. Nasr who sees Islamization of knowledge from the point of view of *scientia sacra*. Nasr is one of the neo-traditionalist who attempts to integrate the modern science within the frame work of the sacred and has succeeded in cultivating a group of scholars who follow his lead.

This cluster of articles in this issue presents a coherent perspective of what is Islam as a religion, what are its scientific and intellectual contributions and how it is relevant socially and politically to the world we live in. These articles make a modest contribution towards understanding Islam paving the way for a better relationship between Islam and the West.

Abdul Rashid Moten

Abdelwahab Elmessiri's theoretical abrogation and appropriation of Western and Zionist terminology

Moulay Abdessadek Ahl Ben Taleb*

Abstract: While Elmessiri's (the Egyptian scholar) means of expression is principally Arabic, his writings on modernism, Judaism, and Zionist thought could be considered as writing back to the centre of empire as far as the Jewish question in the West is concerned. Within this perspective, Elmessiri resolves to cater for the theoretical void that arises out of his partial dismissal of Western critical models after he underscores their problematic aspects. In view of that, the issue has grown in importance for him to erect a paradigm that best accounts for these concerns based on an Arab-Islamic worldview without entirely rejecting Western research tools and terminology. Although Elmessiri primarily puts Western thought and its categories at the vanguard of his *critique*, he devotes a considerable part of it to mainstream Arab thought as far as Jewish phenomena are concerned. His reproach points to Arab intellectuals' uncritical accumulation of information, facts, ideas, and statements made by the West regardless of their relevance, centrality, or explanatory ability as this essay endeavours to demonstrate. Actually, Elmessiri's proposed paradigm puts forward an alternative approach that goes beyond the passivity of mainstream Arab thought and the Western Eurocentric stance regarding these phenomena.

Keywords: Jewish studies, Arab-Islamic worldview, western modernity, El-Messiri.

Introduction

Abdelwahab el-Messiri (1938-2008), the famous Egyptian scholar, earned his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in 1969. He served as a professor in universities in Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. He is very well known as a thinker among scholars in the Middle East. El-Messiri focused his research on Jews,

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Zionism, secularism, modernism and literary theory and comparative literature. He is the author of many articles and books. His major contribution, however, is his eight-volume Encyclopaedia of "Jews, Judaism and Zionism," written in Arabic, which provides an in-depth analysis of Zionism, its Ideology and history.

Through his writings, Elmessiri endeavoured to demonstrate that the affiliation of the language of the former imperial powers with cultural and ideological forces does not reflect what the non-Western writers wish to say. One should guard against a deep-seated complicity on the level of terminology and concepts that stamped the accumulation of knowledge and shaped the cultural practices of thought in Western humanities. Within this perspective, Elmessiri expresses his deep doubts in regard to the premises of that biased ideological posture in Western academic disciplines while raising some controversial questions about its accuracy in an Arab academic context. Yet, he also dismisses Arab thought's approach to these phenomena that he qualifies as the sterile and the inadvertent site of complicity.

Demonstrably, though Elmessiri primarily puts Western thought and its categories at the vanguard of his *critique*, he devotes a considerable part of it to mainstream Arab thought. His approach points to its mindless accumulation of information, facts, ideas, and statements regardless of their relevance, centrality, or explanatory ability. According to Elmessiri, Arab intellectuals lost the ability to advance an identifiably idiosyncratic vision pertaining to the phenomena of Judaism and Zionist thought that goes beyond Western intellectual self-centrism. Elmessiri is convinced that all these approaches stifle any creativity and limit critical scrutiny as far as Jewish phenomena are concerned. Thus, Arab Humanities, in his view, have become passive, documentary, and recipient and, therefore, Arabs lost the mastery of reality because they do not own its tools. Ironically, Elmessiri demonstrates that Arab brainpower becomes ingrained in its auditory capacity espousing the latest findings with an utmost but ridiculous objectivity, without pertinent critical scrutiny or much questioning. Thence, "that who could not label things loses the ability to master reality and to deal with it proficiently" (2003a: 24). Having proven the inability of Arab thought to construct a comprehensive and authentic model on those issues, Elmessiri distances himself from any identification with its reductive and biased discourse on Jews and Judaism. This study surveys those Western discursive critical orientations that plagued Arab thought for decades and that Elmessiri qualifies as unproductive and

without any critical avail. The aim is to demonstrate their flaws and contradictions in tackling one of the most significant ordeals that weighed down the modern Arab world that is the question of Palestine. This study hints at Elmessiri's proposed alternative paradigm that would cater for the dismissal of both Arab and Western models pertaining to Jewish studies.

Elmessiri's critique of Arab discourses

Elmessiri declares his reservations with regard to all discourses that shape attitudes, behaviour, and power relations in approaching the intricate issues of Judaism and Zionist thought. He draws a line between the analytic-critical discourse that he adopts and a multitude of other discourses that seek either to denounce, stigmatize, or militantly flock sympathizers against Jews not only in Western but also in the mainstream Arab thought (2003a: 7). In fact, Elmessiri is aware that most discourses on Judaic phenomena are inherently practical and propagandist since they aim at practical objectives such as the mobilization of the masses or public opinion, and do not care much about the issue of critical interpretation of its subject matter. Actually, the pragmatic discourse covers a host of other discourses each with its own vision and objectives but also its defects that Elmessiri discusses in some depth.

One of these practical discourses is the conspiracy discourse/theory which seeks to mobilize the masses against Jews and their alleged ongoing plan to dominate the world. The vision that frames such discourse is reductionist for it confuses the Israelite, the Zionist, and the Jew as one entity by way of preconceived notions. Thus, Jews become antitheses to anything noble and good and are to hold responsible for all vice and malevolence facing humanity (2003a: 7). This discourse manifests itself plainly when such books of the magnitude of *The Tenach*, *The Talmud*, *The Zohar* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are cross-examined (2003a: 8). Usually such discourse accentuates scriptural literalism or textualism whereby either *The Old Testament* or other Judaic texts are reviewed to look for an authentic Jewish essence as if modern Jews are no different from their Hebrew ancestors (2003a: 15). It goes without saying that such rhetoric does not help much in understanding the Jewish personality for it ascribes supernatural powers to the Jew which impedes any true account of reality (2003a: 8-9).

Another discourse that Elmessiri interrogates is what he calls the pseudo-religious discourse which represents Jews as redoubtable enemies of God and prophets' killers and consequently war against them is eternal till the end of days. Elmessiri qualifies this discourse as "pseudo" because it defines Jewry on a racial foundation and not on the basis of religious dogma, yet it sets up that new identity on religious apologetics. One of Elmessiri's reproaches to this discourse is the universal perspective it assigns to the Israeli-Arab conflict as historically timeless (2003a: 9). Also, it postulates that the conflict is exclusively with Jews while in fact it was against all those who tried to lay a hand on Palestine during a long history of invasions chiefly by the Romans, Crusaders, and the British armies to cite just these. This discourse considers Jewish history as constant as is Jewish conflict with Arabs which is not the case. What Elmessiri reproaches the pseudo-religious discourse with is its use and abuse of Biblical preludes and moral apologetics that hide the true motives of the conflict (2003a: 10).

An additional manifestation of the practical discourse is pure propaganda that targets world public opinion. It tends to divulge the nature of Jews as aggressors; that Palestinian refugees are an affront to humanity; that Zionist settlers seized Palestinian land without any right; that Jews are racists, torturers of women and children and so on (2003a: 10). Elmessiri claims that this discourse is a vocal phenomenon that should learn to reconsider its tactics in order to be more credible. Any similar discourse which is not backed up by military power is ineffectual and therefore lacks any analytical and interpretive credibility (2003a:11).

One more identified discourse is the legal discourse that advances juridical arguments to back up Arab rights in Palestine. It accumulates resolutions of the United Nations, one after the other, in large volumes printed with great care and distributed to all countries and the concerned international organizations. There is no doubt that knowledge of the legal framework of the conflict is very important but quite different from the process of interpretation which involves a more complex intellectual effort. Such rhetoric does not explain much the causes, the structure, or even the methods of dissolution of the conflict. In truth, it has a role to play in refuting Zionist allegations but it remains a discourse that is not of great help in the critical understanding of the conflict (2003a: 11).

Elmessiri dismisses a myriad of other discourses, underscoring their failure to account for Judaic phenomena. One of these is the moral discourse that

articulates humanitarian and ethical concerns in its approach to the Judeo-Arab conflict. Elmessiri argues that morality discourse interrogates issues such as moderation, tolerance, fairness which are not good analytical or explanatory concepts. They are rather expressions of a mental, emotional and ethical site that goes beyond a true critical interpretation of a far more complex reality (2003a:12). A further instance is the pragmatic discourse whose point of departure is the acknowledgment of the *status quo* without much questioning. This is a discourse that pretends to be less idealistic and more reasonable especially when it admits that the Jewish state is there to stay while it is useless to deny its existence. Such discourse is based on the false premise that durable peace is better than successive defeats. Elmessiri totally rejects such posture arguing that the unfavourable balance of power on the side of Israel is not a reason for accepting that state of being. There is room for all forms of resistance to it which advocates of this discourse, intentionally or unintentionally, overlook. Based on the Arab delusional aspiration that one day Palestine will be back, Elmessiri identifies another discourse inured to of wishful thinking whose calling does not go beyond emotional provocation to stir the general public (2003a: 13).

In short, Elmessiri rejects these discourses in their totality simply because they give up critical analysis and interpretation for the sake of mobilization and mass provocation. It is true that mobilization is needed but only when it is preceded by a thorough understanding of the conflict based on facts and a clear vision away from the illusion of knowledge that such discourses propagate (2003a:14). By demonstrating the sterility of these biased discourses that still plague Arab thought, Elmessiri expresses his adamant rejection of their different critical orientations, while he comes up with his own vision in what he labels his epistemological paradigm.

Elmessiri's epistemological paradigm

In view of the above, Elmessiri stands as a proponent of a new discourse that critiques Western imperial, cultural, and epistemological legacy with view to advance his alternative vision in the form of an epistemological paradigm. He qualifies it as a comparatively more detached model by highlighting its theoretical fundamentals, the dimensions of its practical implementation, the comprehensiveness in its approach, as well as the perspectives for future research it promotes compared to other conventional paradigms. Elmessiri is fully aware that -

[e]very human behavior has cultural significance and represents some epistemological paradigm and perspective. A paradigm is a mental abstract picture, an imaginary construct, and a symbolic representation of reality that results from a process of deconstruction and reconstruction. The mind assembles some features from reality, rejecting some and keeping others, rearranging them in an order of priority to make them correspond to reality. According to the nature of the paradigm, it can exaggerate those elements which it deems essential and underplay all other elements (2006: 4).

Actually, in his article “Parables of Freedom and Necessity,” Elmessiri points out to the fact that any critical endeavour calls for a set of assumptions, norms, criteria, and biases in treating the factual (1996: 42). This entails that both the critical choice and the reading of any text involve some unambiguous elements of subjectivity which raises doubts about the validity of the whole enterprise. The term paradigm, which has originally been associated with the historian of science Thomas Kuhn, is appropriated by Elmessiri as an abstract mental construct that stands for the fundamental relationships that obtain in what Elmessiri considers to be reality. Comparing it to empirical reality, he deduces that they are not one and the same thing since the factual is far more complex than our mental conception of it. Yet reality outside a paradigm would look as mere fragments or meaningless autonomous icons or atoms projected on our consciousness. On this basis, Elmessiri recognizes the importance of paradigm –the site of objective and subjective magnetism– as the frame within which the comparatist observes and interacts with the text under investigation. Yet, nothing is taken for granted, for the relationships established are to be tested against that text. Once the critical reading that the proposed paradigm presents outperforms the latent paradigms operative in the text under study, only then the paradigm gains the stamp of adequacy and explanatory validity (1996: 43).

Elmessiri does not claim utter objectivity in his treatment of the factual. He is in no doubt that any critical investigation calls for some degree of bias too which could be conscious or unconscious. It is -

the totality of latent values underlying the paradigm, and the procedures and methodologies which guide researchers without their being necessarily aware of them. If they do become aware of them, they discover that such values are inextricably tied up with their research

methodologies and that it is extremely difficult to separate the one from the other (Elmessiri 2006: xii).

Recognizing the inevitability of bias, Elmessiri voices his leaning for the use of alternative terms such as “more explanatory and more interpretive” instead of the trendy mythicized objective/subjective polarity that any analytical model may pretend to claim or deny. The alternative that Elmessiri proposes goes beyond both objectivity in its detached accumulation of precise solid facts and subjectivity, immersed in self-imposed seclusion and not much concerned with reality. Elmessiri was looking for an analytical model with an overall vision of its subject matter; one that has room for creativity and the ability to generate categories emanating from its own conceptualization of the factual (2003a: 18). The researcher’s task operating within Elmessiri’s analytical interpretive model is to know how to discriminate what is fundamental from what is marginal and to observe phenomena not in their constancy but in their interplay as irregular elements operating within a whole (2003a: 19). Depending on these aspects we could qualify the model either as more explanatory and more interpretive or less so (2003a: 18).

Away from Arab discourses on Jews and Judaism that Elmessiri considers as counterproductive, he expresses his determination to settle the issue of terminology as a crucial building block in the edifice of historical truthfulness and intellectual detachment he proclaims. He is convinced that the fine-tuning of concepts and terminology is essential to produce a comprehensive reflection of truth through the control of the cognitive, analytical, and interpretive processes involved. The challenge is huge if we consider the authority that these concepts gained as conventionally fixed entities or end products of a civilizational residue epistemologically codified in the West (2003a: 23). Here, Elmessiri establishes the connection between biased Western categories and power relationships that shape Western epistemological views of the world. Thus, by considering those views as the only acceptable point of reference, the transcendence of truth is overthrown and epistemological hegemony dominates. For Elmessiri, the frame that generated this Western orientation *via* the process of what he calls the “imperialization of concepts” echoes historical and analytical models that materialized within the self-centered Western thought (2007: 7). Elmessiri sums up the whole point asserting that:

the terminology used in Western human sciences in general and that used to describe Judaic and Zionist phenomena in particular pose a real problematic for the researcher because of its affiliatory character. It has been minted very carefully in the West, in a way that echoes specific historical experiences, analytical models, and epistemological visions that reflect self-centered Western and Zionist perspectives. It encloses evangelical, imperialistic, and racial biases that we utterly reject. These preconceptions compel Western and Zionist scholars to stress some aspects of the phenomena under investigation and neglect others; assume the existence of unity where there is discord; fail to notice relationships between phenomena that we consider relevant; exhibit a deficiency (from our point of view) in the conception of what is specific and what is general; and marginalize what is fundamental and ascribe centrality to what is minor (2003a: 26).

It is noticeable that Elmessiri essentially declares his resolute rejection of such conventional analytic methods that he qualifies as biased, reductive, and self-centric. His quest is the edification of a more explanatory model that puts forward alternative ways of looking at Judaic phenomena far beyond Western narrow perspectives. But, before going through the vicissitudes of Elmessiri's Jewish functional groups paradigm, I will first review his critique of Western discourse of modernity in order to discern its biased categories, its theoretical contradictions, and negative repercussions on the fate of Europe's internal *other* that Jewish minorities stand for.

Since terminology is a significant constituent in Elmessiri's project, its primacy drives him to further dig in its multiple manifestations in Western discourse on Judaic issues. In practice, Elmessiri has undertaken the double burden of generating new terms that best describe basic phenomena or rename them and that of translating sometimes questioning the significance of terms with all their underlying philosophical and cognitive nuances or their cultural dimensions. Actually, in his work entitled *The Problem of Bias: An Epistemological Vision and an Invitation for Ijtihād* (2006), Elmessiri sets up a

new critical line that acknowledges the impossibility of complete certainty and calls for continuous *Ijtihād* instead.¹ Thus, his suggested alternative model:

operates within a flexible, open-ended paradigm whose aim is not to develop hard laws, final, objective answers, or simple algebraic formulas that explain it all (leading humankind to the end of history). It neither attempts to reach full objectivity and neutrality nor sinks into complete subjectivity. Objectivity means an object observed without an observing self. It presupposes a mind that is able to know everything and a simple reality that can be fully comprehended. By contrast, subjectivity means a subject that is completely absorbed in itself to the exclusion of external, "objective" reality. It presupposes a mind that cannot know reality and a reality that cannot be comprehended in any aspect. The concept of *Ijtihād* is thus being proposed as a middle point between the two impossible poles of complete objectivity and equally complete subjectivity. *Ijtihād* presupposes that the human mind cannot explain everything and that the attempt to reach complete knowledge is both diabolic and doomed to failure; it likewise implies the impossibility of full objectivity and neutrality or of arriving at general, all-encompassing laws, since the human mind is both limited and creative: limited in that it cannot explain everything, and creative in that it cannot slavishly reproduce everything (2006: 72).

It is quite obvious that Elmessiri questions the credibility of such myths as objectivity and subjectivity and substitutes them with the more rational concept of *Ijtihād* with view to the problematic accuracy of the first two and the resourcefulness of the latter. Since the model he puts forward is a conceptual construct, he proposes to put it to rigorous test to determine its analytical and systematic efficiency. And if it proves that it comprehensively accounts for

¹ *Ijtihād* is a jurisprudence concept taken from *Sharia* or Islamic law. Hadden and Shupe observe that "the call for historical interpretation of texts and adapting Islam to the new requirements of the modern age needed an institution for its fulfillment. It is the rational deduction of new decrees in accordance with the spirit of Islam and the precepts of reason. *Mujtahid* is the Muslim learned scholar who is supposed to be knowledgeable enough to engage in the act of *ijtihad*" (Jeffrey K. Hadden and Anson Shupe, eds., *Prophetic Religions and Politics: Religion and the Political Order*, vol. 1 (New York: Paragon House, 1984: 180). Usually *Ijtihād* is opposed to *taqlīd* which means copying the holy writ or obeying it without much questioning.

reality more than other models, only then can we say that it has the quality of being a more explanatory or more interpretive model (2002a: 218).

Another crucial theoretical dimension of Elmessiri's paradigm is what he calls the science of understanding bias. He admits that the researcher, in his intellectual venture, cannot avoid being eclectic and this uncovers some degree of alignment with or inclination towards a concept at the expense of another especially in the human sciences (2003a: 24). Elmessiri notices that:

each paradigm has an epistemological dimension. In other words, behind each paradigm – the process of inclusion, exclusion, reconstruction and exaggeration – there are intrinsic criteria, a set of beliefs, hypotheses, presuppositions, axioms and answers to the total and ultimate questions that make up its deeply-rooted fundamentals (2006: 4).

For Elmessiri, bias manifests itself in two ways: first, if the concept echoes the civilizational context that gives it meaning — worse if the concept is of a theological nature — and if it reflects the posture of its user (2003a: 25). The problematic lies in Western academic research orientations that discredit any other critical version based on different criteria other than its own. Within this perspective, Elmessiri questions the validity of Western research methodology, its tools, terminology, and conceptual principles in their attempt to impose themselves as the ultimate point of reference, while it is possible to come up with more independent and more neutral alternatives.

What Elmessiri rejects is not bias as an epistemological phenomenon but the fixity/liquidity of significance that marks out the relationship of the signified and signifier and presents it as the ultimate point of referentiality as conceived of in Western thought. Elmessiri even goes as far as to claim that bias and by extension biased language are inevitable and required in a growingly inhuman world where signifiers could not catch up with continuously changing signifieds; a world that lost the sense of communication and mutual understanding, idolizing “one humanity” instead of a “common humanity” (2006: 6). On balance, Elmessiri claims that bias in general is not a defect for it allows for individuality, uniqueness, and the possibility of freedom of choice as far as it does not promote falsehood (2006: 5-6). Demonstrably, Elmessiri advocates bias as a symptom of the human *donnée* but not bias in favour of falsehood especially when it seeks to laud the *Self* as possessing the ultimate truth while the other does not. Accordingly,

when people make themselves the only acceptable point of reference, the idea of the transcendental truth is dropped, and they cannot be judged from any point external to them. This form of bias is associated with bias for power, which means that when one is victorious, one enforces one's own will; if one is defeated, one becomes a pragmatist who accepts the rules of the victorious Other, without necessarily accepting the truthfulness of the other's statements or judgments. Power is the only arbiter, and therefore such defeated pragmatist impatiently awaits a change in the balance of power in his/ her favour. Therefore pragmatic accommodations, far from bringing about peace and harmony, result in endless conflicts (2006: 7).

Elmessiri's advocacy of a transcended truth that goes beyond a biased discourse of power, poses a real challenge to Western established concepts and notions. To illustrate, Elmessiri resorts to widely propagated examples that corroborate this Western tendency especially its Eurocentric views of history in such appellation like "the age of discovery" and the European "pioneering explorer." These two biased appellations turn parts of Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania into a condition of nonbeing until the coming of the white man with his civilizing mission to the less civilized natives (2003a: 26-7). On their coming, history was standstill and geography was borderless like nature that does not recognize limits (2002b: 103). It is only after the white man's foray that the history of those *terrae nullis* started to be recorded within human history by the will of that who owns tools of representation, linguistic competence, and the ability to speak. Emptying those lands of the category of the *other*, makes them possessions of the first who discover them while the other is rendered to an empty sign or a cipher (Greenblatt 1991: 60). It means that a people discovered a land and then Christened it as a "new world," for the land is not important in itself but the experience of the pioneering explorer which is so. In contrast, in the natives' point of view, there is no newness in that discovery since their history and civilization started long before the Western man set foot therein. This makes "the Age of Discovery" the age of Western colonialism that reached its apex with imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century (Elmessiri 2002a: 202).

Such imperialistic rhetoric is totally rejected by Elmessiri because it obscures historical truthfulness through the propagation of false statements as the one and only ultimate truth. He is sure that bias, as an aspect of the cultural

dimension of knowledge, is inevitable but by no means the ultimate point of reference; rather what is at stake are the moral values that have the priority over any form of difference or bias (2006: 7). Yet, Elmessiri is positive about a possible overcoming of bias and building a fair epistemological paradigm despite the limits of human language to articulate truthfulness and cultivate civilizational communication (2006: 6-7).

Overcoming western epistemological bias

On a theoretical basis, Elmessiri deems it absolutely necessary to develop an awareness of the inevitability of bias as a first step to surmount it. Within this perspective, facts are not accepted passively out of blind trust in absolutist objectivism (2006: b48). In contrast, Elmessiri attributes to the human mind qualities of creativity and resourcefulness in the reception of reality. More than that, he recognizes that no two individuals have the same perception of reality because other variables interfere mainly those of individual experiences, cultural heritage, historical memories, symbolic and semiotic systems, aesthetic and moral values, etc (2006: 49). In addition, Elmessiri points to the fact that bias could be better dealt with in a comprehensive way which is not the case in the practice of some Arab thinkers who adopt Western concepts resorting to slight modifications or embellishment to prove that the borrowed concepts have parallels in the target culture and to justify their adoption. The premises on which such practices are based give credit to the Western outlook as universal and ultimate denying other historical or cultural frameworks a place amongst the dominating cultural formations (2006: 50-1). These theoretical guidelines, if adopted as a general framework for generating new terms and concepts, would enrich the alternative epistemological project that Elmessiri tries to put at the forefront of a pluralist universal theory of knowledge.

Central to Elmessiri's appropriation/abrogation venture is what he refers to as "the missing term." He rejects the moment we resort to translating existing words while failing to notice that there are no signifiers for already existing but obscured signifieds. There are phenomena that have not been highlighted by sociologists and historians for a myriad of reasons. They were veiled out of fear of embarrassment; or because of an epistemological narrow-mindedness at a particular historical juncture; sometimes owing to prioritizing economic interests; or may be out of a humane deficiency to recognize the *other*. Elmessiri reproves the act of translating signifiers without being aware that we are translating a

consolidated and sealed epistemological paradigm, where everything is seen through biased signifiers while “the missing terms” are veiled and even if they are observed they are immediately marginalized, or considered as of little critical significance (2002a: 211). For instance, the epithet “the sick man of Europe” that refers to the weakening of the Ottoman Empire by the Imperialistic supremacies has been a controversial and a much disputed designation. This metaphor depicts an agonizing man that calls for pity in the eyes of Western powers failing to notice that this portrayal emanates from a biased perception of the imperial gusto for Europe’s peripheral territories that was going on. An issue that was not addressed in this process was the fact that the epithet hides another “insatiable white man of Europe” ready to annihilate whole populations to acquire more territories in the name of a contended civilizing mission. Elmessiri claims that the former appellation drew more attention than the latter because of a will from the part of the West to delineate the space where his signifiers play in accordance with his hegemonic historical vision (2003a: 25-6). Practically, to overcome bias as far as terminology and concepts are concerned, Elmessiri raises attention to some useful practices that would render his abrogation/appropriation of Western categories a productive enterprise.

First, instead of translating the signifier, why not critically scrutinize the signified in its original context with a view to work out all its denotations then generate another signifier from the Arab lexicon. The new generated term would reflect our own conceptualization of the phenomenon thrusting aside the *other’s* terms, his contentions and illusions, his narrow perspective, and his hegemonic undertaking to assign false significance to these terms (2002a: 212). By way of illustration, Elmessiri traces the etymology of the controversial term “anti-Semitism” back to its first coinage by Judeo-German journalist Wilhelm Marr in the nineteenth century. It was first used to highlight the alleged threat that Jews posed to Germany and German culture. Taken literally, anti-Semitism would refer not only to a multifaceted prejudice towards Jews alone but to other Semitic peoples of which Arabs are the biggest faction. According to Elmessiri, this would be a historically false thesis knowing that Arabs’ presence in Europe in the nineteenth century was negligible (2003b:109). If seen from a different angle, Elmessiri attributes the polemic over anti-Semitism to nineteenth century Western tendency to categorize people on linguistic bases mainly in the studies of Ernest Renan on Semitic philology then on the basis of the Aryan/Semite ethnic discrimination fashionable at that time. This Semitism controversy just shows how

vicious it is to implicate linguistic distinctiveness in the anthropological divisions of human categories. In view of the above, it is “generally accepted that the Semites are all those peoples whose speech is Semitic, but that anthropologically they belong to different and differing groups” as accurately defined by sociologist Verner Sombart (1913: 198). To overcome such biased epithet, Elmessiri proposes “anti-Judaism” as a more precise and more neutral substitute term that is free from any racial classification or racist connotations (2003b: 110). Yet, some Western studies may claim that anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism are two totally different concepts because the former refers to a prejudiced attitude towards Judaism as dogma, while the latter refers to animosity towards Jews as a race especially after their integration in European societies. Again, Elmessiri’s quest for precision and neutrality drives him to substitute the label “anti-semitism” by the designation anti-Judaism “on a doctrinal basis” and anti-Judaism “on a racial basis” as more explanatory and more interpretive alternatives (2003b: 111). This way, Elmessiri concludes, accuracy is accomplished without acquiescing to Western false and racist discourse on Jews and Judaism (2002a: 213).

To surmount the bias of Western terminology, Elmessiri, also advocates opting for more comprehensive terms than those proposed by Western terminology wherein the existing terms attest to a narrowness in their account of human phenomena. In consequence, the Western biased term loses its centrality compared to the comprehensiveness of the newly coined term. For instance, instead of talking about “democracy,” which is just one form of government and that could degenerate into pressure groups democracy more than one that depends on free election as is the case with the American model (1997b: 48), we could use an all-inclusive description: the ‘political systems where citizens participate in decision-making.’ According to this new definition, other forms could be added to it mainly those of say Islamic consultative assembly ‘*shura*’, or tribal elders’ congregations as is the case in most tribal-based political systems. Elmessiri argues that such endeavour is vital as it frees terminology from the grip of western monist exclusivism towards an all-inclusive universalized language (2002a: 215).

To further overcome such a tendency, Elmessiri also raises attention to some concepts of a religious, sectarian, or secular character that are used and abused of. Elmessiri argues that these terms underlie a biased doctrinal component to be marked off by way of inverted commas. In this way, the writer distances

himself from the term in question indicating that the concept behind it presupposes a questionable ideological stance that sacrifices neutral distancing in its critical approach to the phenomena (2002a: 215). By way of illustration, terms like, "Diaspora," "exile," "the promised land," or "land of the patriarchs" are better accounted for by adding the label from "a Judaic/Zionist perspective." Or else, terms in the vein of the second world war, the renaissance, the middle ages become "the Western second world war," "the Western renaissance," or "middle ages in the West" (2002a: 215-16).

In like manner, Elmessiri raises questions about the accuracy of accounting for reality by way of reductive and solid dualities that may be applicable in natural and physical sciences but not in a complex multifaceted human context. Elmessiri stresses the fact that a synthetic model may account for reality as a far more complex context by way of a number of overlapping categories that are not necessarily polarized. Elmessiri equates it to a spectrum where colours intermingle while they conserve each its independence and where there is no clear cut beginning or end and no absolute middle (2003a: 60). His adoption of what he refers to as intermediate concepts may prove more interpretive and more explanatory than the proposed dualsolid dichotomous terms. Accordingly, instead of polarized terms like modernization and the failure to modernize there is the intermediate term slow or stumbling modernization. Likewise, beside anti-Judaism or Judeophilia, there is outmaneuvering Jews or indifference towards them (2003a: 61). Doing it the way Elmessiri proposes would make any critical model effective in its account of reality unlike most western models that he qualifies as reductive.

Within this broader power bound Western civilizational context, Elmessiri brings the idea of biased terminology in handling Judaic concepts to more specification. Since the West is essentially self-centred, it generated and diffused terminology that reflects an Evangelical conceptualization of Judaic phenomena even after the secularization processes that it had gone through (2003a: 27). Zionism which germinated within a Western *milieu* adopted that legacy and added to it its own self-centric vision (2003a: 28). Within this perspective, Elmessiri talks about the normalization of terminology which is the process of altering an anomalous phenomenon in a way to make it look "normal," "natural," and "familiar" (2003a: 31). He notices that anomaly is an integral part of the basic structure of Judaic categories that were minted within the Western paradigm. The

propagation that it underwent ended up establishing it as a truth despite the false premises on which it was based. Elmessiri, for instance, cross-examines two different conceptualizations of the Zionist project. He notices that, on the one hand, those who are anti-Zionist tend to depict Jews as the root of all evil while, on the other hand, there are those who resort to collapse all specificities by looking at Israel as a democratic state, like any other, to be treated as such in a detached way. In the first case, oversimplification to the point of error results in the iconization of Jewry as instigators of a universal conspiracy to subjugate the world, while in the second, sweeping assumptions dominate the phenomenon and secures its normalization as such (2003a: 51). Such discourse counterfeits the indelible fact that despite its uniqueness, the Zionist project remains quintessentially a Western colonialist project despite all secular or theological apologetics.

Related to the normalization process of terminology is Elmessiri's epithets "Judaization" and "Ghetto-ization" of concepts and terms (2003a: 28-29). Elmessiri points to the fact that such practices of generating terminology accentuate the eccentricity of Judaic phenomena and assign them significance only within their own sacred historical context. In this way, Palestine becomes the holy land, the "Promised Land" or simply Israel and the Jewish settlers are Hebrews who left the land of the pharaohs in exodus to the land of Canaan. All this becomes the recurrent pattern that frames Jewish world experience time and again (2003a: 44). In like manner, these Biblical preludes are also current in Western colonial discourse. Within the framework of the colonial quest for more territories in Africa, Asia, or America, the white man usually refers to the appropriated land as Zion, while natives become Canaanites that should be exterminated altogether (2003a: 45).

It tends to be the case that the "Judaization" of concepts and terms results in their "Ghetto-ization" in the sense that they become self-referential terms that no other language could describe but Hebrew (2003a: 28). Elmessiri also notices that some of these terms undergo another process that he labels "iconization". Accordingly, this biased process turns the term into an icon whose symbolic representation imposes an aura of holiness on it to the extent that putting it through discussion, reviewing, or questioning becomes a blasphemy (2003a: 51). Also, some of these originally Hebrew terms and concepts are kept uncontaminated by translation but essentialized through transliteration. Therefore,

they conserve their peculiarity and independence within their own historical Judaic context. Ultimately, they are adopted without much questioning while they keep their Biblical referential authenticity observed (2003a: 30).

Conclusion

Elmessiri is an Arab literary critic who has questioned the uncritical adoption of the Western and Zionist/Judaic discourses, narratives, terms, paradigms and interpretations of history and worldviews by the Arab intelligentsia. He has proposed an alternative paradigm of presenting the fact through more neutral terms and concepts applying the concept of *ijtehad*. No doubt, Elmessiri's taxonomy bears out some novelty compared to other patterns of intellectualism as far as Judaic and Zionist phenomena in Western civilizational discourse are concerned. He invested a tremendous intellectual effort to edify his own epistemological paradigm that can be adopted as the discourse of the Arab-Islamic thought in any of its dialogues with its Western counterpart. His proposed paradigm for understanding Jews, Judaism, and Zionism falls within the emerging dissent critical scholarships that came out of the controversies of Western secularist modernist discourse as well as a correctional endeavor of Arabic thought's inadequacies. It is not a deconstructive critical stance *vis à vis* Jewish phenomena but it goes beyond all that to the reconstruction of an alternative model that treats these issues and comes up with a new terminology to explain them. Elmessiri's aim is to underscore the materialist, monist, and absolutist assumptions underlying the Western secularist modernist discourse, its theoretical contradictions, its biased categories, and most importantly the repercussions that it had on the experience of the millennial Jew in Europe and its Arab victims in the holy places. Within this perspective, Elmessiri stands as an advocate of a new discourse that believes in the plurality of voices hence his contribution to the universal epistemological edifice that would dethrone Western scholarly supremacy and intellectual authority especially in the area of Jewish studies.

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History of Arab-Muslim Science in Spanish scholarship: The balanced approach of Juan Vernet Ginés

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Abstract: The presence of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula and its contributions to the Spanish nation has given rise to the emergence of two schools of thought: one is highly ideological which denies the positive impact of Islam and the Arabs in Spain and the other emphasises the significant contributions of the Islamic polity, its cultural and scientific achievements and its influence on European thought. Juan Vernet belongs to the latter school of thought. Vernet wrote extensively on Islam in Spain and particularly on the history of the Arab-Muslim and Spanish science. He wrote on the history of the exact sciences in Muslim Spain, especially on the contribution of Muslim astronomers in the thirteenth century. Vernet argues that Islam is a foundational element in the Spanish history, culture and identity. This paper attempts to explore the moderate and balanced views of Juan Vernet on Islam, particularly with regard to the history of Arab-Muslim science in Spain, focusing on two of his works: "*Historia de la Ciencia Espanola*" (History of the Spanish Science) and "*Islam y Europa*" (Islam and Europe). One of Vernet's ideas is that of the centrality of the Arab-Muslim science in Spain, even during the last Muslim kingdom. He also emphasizes in his works the consistent scientific exchanges and the social cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims in philosophical and scientific matters. Vernet's ideas represent an example of a balanced approach to Islam, in the context of dominant Spanish views of Islam which emphasizes the political antagonisms among religious communities.

Keywords: Juan Vernet, Muslim Spain, Spanish science, school of Spanish Arabists, Islam & Europe.

Introduction

20th century Spanish scholarship on Islam in al-Andalus¹ and particularly the *Escuela de Estudios Árabes* (School of Arabic Studies) played a significant role in

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¹ The Islamic polity in the Iberian Peninsula from 711 to 1492. The fall of Granada in 1492 represents the end of the Islamic domination in Medieval Spain, however, the influences of the Arab-Muslim culture continued after the expulsion of the Spanish Muslims two centuries later.

promoting a better understanding of the Muslim contributions to the development of science in medieval Spain. This school of thought of Arabic Studies pointed out the importance of studying the Islamic presence in Spain from 711 to 1492 CE in the Iberian Peninsula as an intrinsic element of the Spanish's culture and its past. Particularly in the field of Arab-Muslim science, Islamic civilization made major contribution and left a profound impact in the field of Spanish Science and culture. Juan Vernet Ginés is considered one of the most prominent scholars belonging to the School of Spanish Arabists, of which he is the most authoritative figure with regard to the study of Arab Muslim Science in al-Andalus. He has written extensively producing 22 books and 325 articles on a wide variety of subjects including Arabic science, the impact of Islam on the West, cooperation between Arabic culture and European culture, and the like. Vernet argues that within three centuries the Arabs achieved the almost complete mastery of all the disciplines cultivated at that time. In response, the nationalist, racist and anti-Arab theorists in Spain attempted to explain the Arab rapid cultural splendour as the product of the linguistic Arabization of the Indo-Europeans, meaning the Arabized Christians rather than Muslims. In contrast, Vernet and the Spanish school of Arabic Studies showed that the Arabs with regard to scientific matters tended to recognize the values of diverse cultures. In fact, according to Vernet, this is one of the most prominent characteristic of the Arab-Muslim culture in Spain: the great capacity of assimilation of the knowledge from civilizations under their rule as well as the cultures with which they had direct or indirect interaction. These ideals of respect and acceptance of the plurality of cultures, religions and civilization was one of the central values of the Islamic civilization in al-Andalus and the main factor for its cultural and scientific splendour. Vernet and the Spanish School of Arabic Studies were committed to promote this Islamic principle within the framework of the contemporary Spanish nation. It is important to note that the scholarship produced by Spanish Arabists influenced positively the intellectual circles and modified the prevailing conceptions on Spanish history and culture. In fact, as James Monroe stressed, Spanish intellectuals who were not Arabists used the results of their colleagues' investigations to elaborate new theories, polemics and a great deal of scholarly activity about the Spanish past. The most important debate took place between two Spanish Scholars, Claudio Sanchez Albornoz and Américo Castro. For Sanchez Albornoz, the Arab influence made Spain deviate from its normal course as a European nation, creating economic stagnation and religious intolerance. In other words, for him, the Arab influence on Spain was a negative and unfortunate episode in the history of Spain. On the contrary, Américo Castro rejected many of the negative ideas; instead, he attributed a

decisive and positive role to the interaction between Jews, Christian and Muslims in Spain.

The first section of this study discusses the biography of Juan Vernet and his important works on History of Arab-Muslim science in particular and Islam in general. This sections highlights that Vernet is a member of a school of thought initiated by Codera, Ribera and Asin and continued by Garcia Gomez, Millas Vallicrosa and Vernet. The legacy of Vernet continues in the works of his most prominent follower Julio Samso. The second section presents Vernet's ideas on the development of Arab-Muslim science during the 11th century and its appreciation of knowledge regardless of his provenance, in other words, its appreciation for cultural diversity. The subsequent sections deals with the subject of the scientific transmission from the East to al-Andalus and to the West, the scientific splendour of al-Andalus in the 12th century and the decline of science in Al-Andalus according to Vernet' thought. The paper concludes with remarks on the relationship between moderate policies toward scientific enterprise and cultural flourishing.

Juan Vernet Ginés

Juan Vernet Ginés (1923-2011), the 20th century Spanish Arabist, dedicated his life to the study of the Islamic exact sciences in medieval Spain, especially in the field of Arab-Muslim and Spanish science. His works on medieval science covers astronomy, mathematics, nautical science, general history of science, history of medicine and geography, Spanish Science in the reign of Isabel II, etc. Vernet had also studied the Qur'an, the biography of prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Arabic literature. He was a prolific writer and his most important works include: *La Cultura Hispanoárabe en Oriente y Occidente* (The Hispano-Arab Culture in the East and the West), *Estudios Sobre la Historia de la Ciencia Medieval* (Studies on the History of Medieval Science), *Historia de la Ciencia Española* (History of the Spanish Science), *Contribución al Estudio de la labor Astronómica de Ibn al-Banna* (Contribution to the Study of the Astronomical Works of Ibn al-Banna), *Astrología y Astronomía en el Renacimiento: La Revolucion Copernicana* (Astrology and Astronomy in the Renaissance: the Copernican Revolution). The first two works are considered to be of seminal importance in the international and Spanish scholarly world. According to Monroe, among the group of Arabists working on scientific development in Barcelona, mention should be made of Juan Vernet, whose works have been praised by specialists in maritime cartography and astronomy (Monroe, 1970: 240).

Estudios sobre la Historia de la Ciencia Medieval (Studies on the History of Medieval Science) is a unique compilation of Vernet's Works. Published in 1975, it is divided in five parts: the first part contains 5 articles on the Qur'an, especially *moriscas* ("Moorish") versions written by peninsular Muslims and Muslim converts², which Vernet compared with the contemporary Spanish translations. In this regard, it is important to mention that Vernet considered that the versions of the Qur'an written by converts are intellectually superior (Mercedez, 1990: 577). The second part contains 3 articles on Arabic onomastics. The third part is on science, technology and medicine and contains 23 articles on Arabic science in general. This part is the most extensive and complete, and is the focus of present article. It also includes articles on alchemy, mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, geography, etc. The fourth part is on Arabic literature, one article explores the oriental influences and sources on the Spanish writer Lope de Vega and finally the last part contains 11 articles on history.

Juan Vernet Gines was a professor at the University of Barcelona and the first professor of Arabic at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. His direct master was Millas Vallicrosa³. Vernet also belongs to the group of Arabists formed under the leadership of Emilio Garcia Gomez⁴ who was the direct disciple of Miguel Asin Palacios⁵ and Julian Ribera⁶, who are considered the founders of

² *Moriscos* refers to Spanish Muslims forced to convert to Catholicism under the pressures or death sentence or expulsion under the Spanish Inquisition. Many of them continued to practice Islam clandestinely. That is why, Vernet was interested in translating their versions of the Qur'an.

³ Jose Maria Millas Vallicrosa was a member of the group of Orientalists who conducted research on the history of Arab science at the University of Barcelona. He is well known for his work on Hebraic and Arabic studies. His book *Estudios sobre Azarquiel* (Studies on Azarquiel) a Muslim astronomer whose work was decisive in the development of European astronomy. He was a disciple of Miguel Asin Palacios, the author of *Islam and the Divine Comedy*.

⁴ Emilio Garcia Gomez was a direct disciple of Julian Ribera and Miguel Asin Palacios. He continued the tradition of Arabic studies in the University of Madrid and later the University of Granada. His inspiration came directly from Asin Palacios during his classes of Arabic. He changed his studies for law and letter and became an Orientalist. Garcia Gomez is well known internationally for his studies on Hispano-Arabic, Andalusian and Arabic Literature. His impressive works on Muslim scholars, namely, Ibn Hazm, Ibn al-Khatib, Ibn Zamrak should be mentioned. He was the director of the prestigious journal *al-Andalus*, amongst the international collaborators were the Dutch Dozy and Levi Provençal. Garcia Gomez was particularly critical of Dozy. Vernet belong to the group of Arabists grouped around Garcia Gomez.

⁵ Miguel Asin Palacios was a disciple of Julian Ribera. He devoted his life to the investigations of Islamic spirituality and philosophical ideas in al-Andalus. The central focus of his studies

the school of thought of 1888 and successor to the father of Spanish Arabism, Codera.⁷

Vernet was an Arabist, unlike his master Millas Vallicrosa who was an orientalist and a medievalist who could work with Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Medieval Spanish and Catalan. One of his main concerns was the Qur'an which he translated twice into Spanish, in 1953 and 1963. His contemporary follower, Julio Samso⁸ wrote:

Vernet knew the Qur'an almost by heart. Many years ago, the Imam of the Islamic Centre in Barcelona, an extremely cultured Syrian gentleman who presented his PhD at the University of Barcelona, was the only student in Vernet's course on History of Arabic Astronomy and Samso. He said that he is afraid to say that the topic of the classes had nothing to do with astronomy, but became a discussion on different passages of the Qur'an (Samso, 2011: 146).

was occupied by two of the most important figures in Andalusian thought: Ibn Hazm and Ibn al-Arabi. He was a Spanish Catholic priest who recognized the Islamic-Arabic influence on European civilization; he is a controversial figure in the history of Spanish Arabism for entertaining a suggestion that the most eminent catholic poet of Medieval Europe, Dante Alighjeri used Islamic Arabic sources. In his book *Islam and the Divine Comedy* offers detail comparison and document arguments about the parallels between the nocturnal journey and ascension to Heaven by Prophet Muhammad and Dante's portrayal of the heaven and Hell.

⁶ Julian Ribera and Tarrago initiated in Spain a serious school of Arabic studies, which maintained a living traditions and perfect continuity. Prove of this are the works of Asin, Garcia Gomez, Millas Vallicrosa and Juan Vernet, among others. Ribera devoted his life to the study of how Europe had adapted important cultural institutions from the Arab Wold. With his works he extended the scope of Spanish Arabism into fields dealing with Arab culture in the Middle East.

⁷ Francisco Codera y Zaidin is considered the precursor of Spanish Arabic studies. With Codera Spanish Arabism won international fame and became respectable. Though profoundly Catholic, he had a deep admiration for Arabic culture, and was able to instill this feeling into his disciples: Ribera, Asin, etc. He was able to create a Spanish Arabism belonging to a well defined school with its own tradition, which made possible a vigorous tradition, the Arabist School of the Beni Codera.

⁸ Julio Samso is a professor in the Department of Arabic at the University Autonoma de Barcelona and the University of Barcelona. He has published widely on Andalusian science. He has, together with Professor Juan Vernet, organized two exhibitions: "*Astronomical Instruments in Medieval Spain and their Influence in Europe* (1985)" and "*The Scientific Legacy of Al-Andalus* (1992)."

Vernet was regarded as a crypto-Muslim.⁹ In this regard, he used to say he was a *hanif*, which, for him, meant a monotheist without ascription to any particular religion. During his last years of life, he spent his time reading Islamic journals which reproduced *fatwas* by Eastern Muslim muftis related to problems of everyday life and expressed his desire to translate the Qur'an for the third time using these materials as a commentary.

Arab-Muslim science in the 11th century and its appreciation of cultural diversity

Juan Vernet in his *Estudios sobre Historia de la Ciencia Medieval* (Studies on the History of the Medieval Science), defines the term "science" as the disciplines belonging to the exact sciences, natural sciences and technical sciences. In this book his focus is on the evolution of the scientific knowledge during the year 1091, the year the Almoravids (North African Berber Tribe) took over Seville and established their domination in al-Andalus. Vernet is interested in the polemical issues and specific debates with regard to this subject.

According to Vernet, the first issue with regard to Muslim Science, which he defines as scientific works exclusively written in Arabic, regardless of the race of the authors, is the celerity with which it reached its zenith. Initiated by the Arab expansion in the early 7th century, it may be said that three centuries later the Islamic civilization had reached its zenith. Also, it is necessary to consider that even though the first translations of scientific works were not undertaken until the mid to late 8th century, we can see that in the short period of one hundred and fifty to two hundred years the Arabs managed to transit from illiteracy to an almost full mastery of the cultivated disciplines at that time.

This fact is considered by Vernet as one of the controversial issues which generated a number of responses from the nationalistic and racist theorists who tried to explain this rapid splendour of the Islamic science as the product of the linguistic Arabization of the Indo-Europeans. Vernet opposed this argument, saying that the statics are not conclusive. This contemporary racist response to the Arab-Muslim scientific development in al-Andalus, he argues, was initiated in the Middle Ages by the non-Arabs, which at that time, according to Vernet, felt an

⁹ Word used in reference to Spanish Muslims or *Moriscos* during the Inquisition. Morisco's use of Aljamiado or secret script to produce books on Islamic subjects while in public professing the Catholic faith. Cripto-Muslims are the people who practiced cripto-Islam. In other words, the terms mean the secret adherence to Islam.

inferiority complex. On the contrary, the Arabs in the scientific matters and up to the 11th century tended to recognize the values of various diverse peoples. In this regard, Vernet mentions Ibn Said in his book on the History of Science (*Book of the Categories of Nations*) written in Toledo in the 11th century. Ibn Said says:

We have observed that the people with their multiple divisions and the diversity of faith can be classified into two categories. The first those who are interested in knowledge and the second those who are not interested. The first category comprises eight nations: Hindus, Persian, Caldee, Hebrew, Greek, Rum, Egyptians and Arabs. In the second category are the rest of nations which have not been mentioned. However, Ibn Said adds that there is an intermediate zone between these two categories occupied by the Chinese and Turks, the former excels in Arts and the latter in the techniques of war. With regard to the Celts, Berbers and others their lack of interest in knowledge is attributed to their tyranny, ignorance and enmity and violence (Vernet, 1979: 539).

In short, Vernet's argument is that one of the most notable characteristics of the Arab-Muslim culture is its great capacity of assimilation of the knowledge from the people under their rule as well as the people who had direct or indirect interaction. In addition, Arab culture showed enormous appreciation for the literary traditions of other people.

Vernet mentions as an example the interactions with Byzantium, Syrian, Indian, Chinese, etc. In this regard, Vernet describes the beginning of Arabic astronomy in Baghdad, when a learned Hindu name Manka visited the city and gave lectures to the astronomers of the Caliph al-Mansur. Biruni mentioned that Manka knew no Arabic and so the lectures were delivered through an interpreter. From Manka the Arabs learned of the work of the great Hindu astronomers Siddanta and Aryabhata, and from India they adopted the use of the astrolabe. Later the Caliph Ma'mun founded two observatories and had his astronomers measure the circumference of the earth, which measurements reached Columbus in a modified version (Monroe, 1970: 240-241).

Later in al-Andalus, Vernet mentions that the emir 'Abd al-Rahman I, a member of the Umayyad family (of Damascus), managed to reach Cordoba and thus saved his life. He declared himself to be independent of Baghdad and he introduced certain Eastern customs and tastes, but he continued to depend upon Christian professional advisers, except in matters connected with warfare and the Muslim religion: military and civil engineers might be charged with the task of excavating a mine, building a bridge or a water channel, or determining,

approximately, the direction of Mecca, so that the faithful might be able to turn their faces towards it at the time of prayer (Vernet, 2000: 937).

Similarly, Ibn Juljul mentions six doctors who were practising medicine during the reigns of the amirs Muhammad I, al-Mundhir and ‘Abd Allah. Five were Christians. One of them, Jawad, invented a medicine which must have been famous, for it was known as “the monk’s medicine.” Judging by the testimony of Ibn Juljul, who was writing in the second half of the 10th century, doctors at this time studied the aphorisms of Christian doctors which had been translated into Arabic. In the middle of the 10th century the situation began to change in favour of the Muslim doctors, but even so, when ‘Abd al-Rahman III fell ill with an inflammation of the ear, he was treated by Yahya b. Ishaq, the son of a Christian doctor (Vernet, 2000: 938).

Scientific transmission from the East to al-Andalus and the West

The first scientific and technical influences of Eastern origin were introduced into Muslim Spain in the middle of the 9th century. First thing to note is the arrival in Cordoba of the doctor al-Harrani, who soon became the chief physician to the amir ‘Abd al-Rahman II. Ibn Juljul mentions al-Harrani’s two nephews, Ahmad and ‘Umar b. Yunus al-Harrani, who studied in Baghdad between 941 and 962. As mentioned above, the spirit of moderation allowed Muslim scholars and rulers in al-Andalus to benefit from the Christian knowledge in medicine and other fields, with the exception of religion and war affairs, Christians enjoyed notable status as advisors and especially as physicians for the emirs.

One of the major ideas of Vernet in explaining the rapid scientific development of al-Andalus from the 11th century onwards was the moderate policies adopted to gather information and knowledge regardless of its provenance, for the purpose of enlightenment. This policy was especially prominent during the period of the Cordoban caliphate. According to him, the abandonment of the moderate policy for knowledge and learning is one of the main factors for the decline of al-Andalus.

In Spain, the ancient and unsatisfactory theories of popular pharmacology, of late Roman origin, were displaced by Eastern theories; these were likewise inspired by classical Greco-Roman and Indian texts, but they had passed through the filter of the East. The most interesting work which reached Cordoba was the *Materia Medica* by *Dioscorides*, translated into Arabic by Istifan b. Basil. In about the year 948, the Byzantine Emperor presented the caliph ‘Abd al-Rahman III

with a magnificent copy of *Dioscorides* in Greek. The readers - some of whom must have known colloquial Greek - could not understand the text. Since the Caliph did not have any Hellenists on hand, he urged the Emperor to send him a specialist who could teach Greek science to physicians. His petition was heeded, and it was thus that monk Nicholas arrived in Cordoba. This is of some importance, since henceforth scientific Greek became part of the legacy of a group of scholars, such as Hasday b. Shaprut, Ibn Juljul and Maslama of Madrid (Vernet, 2000: 939).

During the 11th century the transmission from the East to al-Andalus was a prominent trend and later on from al-Andalus to the West. Vernet gives the example of the use in the East of snow and ice. It is well known that Nicolas Monardes in his book of the Snow studied Avicenna's recipes which included this ingredient. Snow was considered a luxury product up to the 20th century, the usage of snow and ice for refreshment in summer, is recorded in the Arabic literature, as well as it is mentioned that the Banu Sassan used it for the preparation of drinks. For Vernet, the evidence shows that the transmission from the East to the "Islamic West" (al-Andalus) was constant and continuous especially during the 11th century. However, with respect to the transmission from al-Andalus to the East, this transmission could not be traced before the 10th century, considering that the Andalusian cultural development was initiated later with respect to the East.

However, Vernet indicates that one of the first contributions of al-Andalus to the Eastern science is the knowledge of certain types of luminescence of the sea. The anonymous author of the *Ahbar al-sin wa-l-Hind* tells us in the year 851: *and the sea when the waves curl seems to be blazing*, in other words the offshore waters become luminescent due to *Noctiluca miliaris* (mollusk). In contrast, the *Kitab 'aya' ib al-Hind* refers to another type of luminescence produced by the waves crashing against the coast, that is, to that produced by the mollusk *Pholas dactylus* whose habitat extends from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. In addition, the figure who in Philippine discloses the phenomenon of Indian seafarers happens to be a native of Cadiz (Spain), who had observed the same phenomenon in the Atlantic Ocean.

Likewise the process of the manufacture of glass, which was discovered by the Andalusian 'Abbas b. Firmas or the discovery of Azarquiel which is reported by Ibn al-Qifti (1248). Azarquiel invented the Azafea, an invention of small size, which contained all the things related to the science of the movement of the celestial spheres. In this regard, Vernet argues that the examples of the knowledge

about snow, ice, luminescence of the sea and movement of celestial spheres proves that the science in al-Andalus in the 11th century could be compared with the Eastern science in some fields. It is in the 12th century that the transmission of Islamic Western discoveries to the East was more frequent. That is why, Vernet quoted the 12th century Andalusí poet Ibn Quzman (1160) who says that his poetry (Zejel) was well known in Iraq, what a wonderful fact, poetry itself is not worth compared to the cultural exchanges between al-Andalus and the East (Vernet, 1979: 564).

A precursor to all those who have hitherto been mentioned was ‘Abbas b. Firnas (887). Not only was he a poet and an astrologer, but he attempted to fly by leaping from the Rusafa palace in Cordoba – a feat reminiscent of the latter attempts made in this direction by the English monk Aylmer of Malmesbury. Unfortunately, Ibn Firnas could not understand the role played by the tail when birds alight on the ground, and he injured himself. He modified and perfected the technique of cutting rock crystal (quartz); in one room of his house he built a kind of planetarium; and he invented the water clock capable of indicating the times of prayer, albeit without a high degree of accuracy. This machine (*minqana* in the Arabic text) may perhaps be regarded as the prototype of those machines that were invented in the 11th century (Vernet, 2000: 939).

The first signs of a native Andalusí art of medicine began to appear in about 964. ‘Arib b. Sa’id wrote a treatise on obstetrics and paediatrics, which contains some information of and astrological king, but which nonetheless offers evidence that a portion of Aristotle’s writings was already known in Cordoba. A more important author is Abu ‘l-Qasim al-Zahrawi (d.ca.1013). He wrote a medical encyclopaedia in which there were prominent sections devoted to surgery and pharmacology. Vernet stresses that we are equally indebted to these scholars for some of the first good clinical descriptions of leprosy and haemophilia; the introduction of cauterisation and numerous surgical instruments such as one frequently finds represented in the engravings of Renaissance doctors; and the stitching of wounds by means of ants (Vernet, 2000: 940).

How science was exported to Egypt from Muslim Spain? There was a Jew of Saragossa named Abu ‘l-Fadl b. Hasday. He wrote well in Arabic and already in about 1065, when he was still a young man, he was familiar with two books of Aristotle: the *Physic* and *On Heavens*. He converted to Islam and, some years later immigrated to Egypt. A person with the same name is cited in that country as a correspondent of Ibn Bajja (Avempace). He was a friend and disciple of Ibn Bajja.

Another example – and which is more significant- is that of Ibn Rushd and Maimonides. Both were born in Cordoba, the first in 1126, the second 1140. Ibn Rushd wrote his first commentary on Aristotle in 1159. At that time Maimonides was in Fez on his way to Cairo, where he reached in 1165. One may deduce from this that Maimonides had not read the works of his fellow-citizen Ibn Rushd while he was in the West. These reached him in the hands of learned merchants, such as the Jew Josef ben Yehuda ben Ishaq ben ‘Aqrun.

It would be very interesting to know whether, as is generally said, Ibn Rushd had no disciples in the Muslim world. Since his name was missing in almost all subsequent biographical dictionaries. This, however, is not surprising since the biographical dictionaries failed to mention the names of other important mathematicians, doctors and astronomers. Officially, Ibn Rushd only had two Arab disciples: his son Abu Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah (who was a physician to the Almohad sultan al-Nasir) and Ibn Tumlus of Azila. But if one accepts the definition of “disciple” given by the alchemist Abu ‘l-Qasim Maslama of Madrid in his *Rubat al-hakim* with reference to Jabir b. Hayyan, we might find another. Abu Maslama says that “one hundred and fifty years separate me from Jabir b. Hayyan, but, despite that, I regard myself a true disciple of his because of the great esteem in which I hold his work.” By this criterion, Ibn Rushd had a magnificent disciple in the figure of Ibn al-Khaldun. Al-Maqqari, who in this instance is faithfully copying Ibn al-Khatib’s *Ihata* informs us that Ibn Khaldun explained and summarised a large number of books by Ibn Rushd. Since Ibn Khaldun finished his *Muqaddima* three years after the assassination of Ibn Khatib, it would seem that he went on gathering together materials from Ibn Rushd, whom he cites ten times. Similarly, Ibn Rushd himself did not always agree with Aristotle. To conclude, Ibn Khaldun regarded himself as a disciple of Ibn Rushd full two hundred years after the latter’s death.

The scientific splendour of al-Andalus in the 12th century

Vernet emphasizes that within the Muslim world the cultural communication was exercised freely without obstacles and in all directions, with the exception of difficulties imposed by religious and political matters. It was the fall of Granada in the 15th century that facilitated the transformation of the Maghrib in a cultural province of the East, taking place until the 16th century. The Islamic West, al-Andalus, influenced the Eastern science from 11th to the 15th century. The existence of the Christian Western science at that time compared to the Andalusian and Eastern science was practically insignificant. It is important to mention that in

Vernet's thought there is a confrontation of two worldviews, that is the West and the East, the West refers to Christian culture and the East non-Christian cultures. Vernet is extremely interested in the scientific and cultural interactions between Christian Europe and Islam.

It is a little misleading to call this age as "Time of Bede". To be sure, Bede was a great personality, one who commands full respect and affection, but it is a lonely one; he represents the monastic learning of Christian Europe, but does not represent any original and progressive movement. However, Bede was the standard bearer of this time, because he was, all considered, the most prominent writer on scientific subjects. The time of Bede is one of intellectual stagnation. The relaxation which set in the second half of the seventh century continued until about the middle of the eighth century. From the middle of the eighth century until the twelfth century, Latin culture would be almost entirely overshadowed by Muslim culture (Vernet, 1979: 941).

The beginning of the political decline of a country often occurs before it has attained its cultural pinnacle. This is what happened in Muslim Spain: the political and military hegemony of the caliphs was succeeded by the impotence of the "petty kings." The Muslims of the Iberian Peninsula were now grouped within ten or twelve independent states. Unable to fend off the attacks of the Christians of the North, they purchased peace in exchange for the payment of an annual tribute. They were sometimes encouraged to offer their patronage to specialist in different branches of learning.

Vernet indicates that we are quite well informed about the development of science during this period thanks to the writings of the qadi of Toledo, sometimes called Ibn Sa'id (d. 1070), usually translated as the "Book of the Categories of Nations", but which is really a Universal History of the Sciences. There are obviously some inaccuracies, but, even in the state and condition in which it has survived, it constitutes a veritable archive of information, giving us the names of those young men who, at the time of the work's compilation, seemed to have the most promising future.

Traditionally it used to be thought (possibly through the influence of Dozy) that the landing of African Berber tribes on the Iberian Peninsula – the Almoravids and the Almohads – was the direct cause of the cultural decline of Muslim Spain from the apex attained during the Taifa period. This may be true with regard to literature, but it is obviously not true as regards the development of science. Whereas in the 11th century, the century of the Taifa kings, there were some outstanding astronomers, in the 12th and 13th centuries, when philosophers

such as Ibn Bajja (Avempace) and Ibn Rushd were prominent, scientists also played an important role, since the former did not merely cultivate philosophy in the sense in which that word is understood nowadays: at that time the term comprised everything which until the 18th century was known as natural philosophy, including those sciences – such as mathematics and astronomy – which had still not become separated from the Aristotelian concept of science (Vernet, 1979: 945).

It should be noted that it was during this century of philosophy (12th century) that Muslim Spain exported most of its ideas to the East (Egypt, Syria, Persia and China) and to Europe (France, Italy, Germany and England). These invisible exports, which had started unobtrusively at the end of the 10th century, now grew as a result of the scientific progress achieved in the Iberian Peninsula during the 11th century. The scholars who emigrated eastwards personally conveyed their knowledge to those parts, or else their works reached Cairo and Damascus in the hands of merchants, many of whom were Jewish. A contributory factor in this whole process was the expansion of maritime trade, which, by the 13th century, had reached all the coasts of the Mediterranean, leading to growing competition between the Italian city-states-Venice, Genoa, Pisa- and the chiefs “autonomous” ports –Barcelona and Marseilles (Vernet, 2000: 946).

The decline of science in al-Andalus

The last bastion of Islam in Spain, the Nasrid kingdom, attained its final moment of splendour in the 14th century during the reign of Muhammad V. From 1348 to 1351, it had to endure the scourge of plague, so well described by two polymath writers. Ibn Khatima and Ibn al-Khatib, who give information on how the epidemic spread from the East to the West. It is to this period that one must assign the start of the transition from clepsydras to mechanical clocks, which according to textual accounts, were operating up to the point in Granada, Fez, Tlemcen, etc. It is also certain that during this period scientific contacts with the Near East remained strong and there was still a keen interest in agriculture and medicine. Ibn Luyun (1282-1349), for example, wrote a didactic poem on agriculture. With regard to medicine, it is known that one doctor from al-Andalus emigrated to serve in Christian lands and that others, such as Muhammad b. Al-Shafra (d. 1360), had non-Muslim pupils in their classes (Vernet, 2000: 951).

Conclusion

Juan Vernet Gines had tried during his academic life to investigate in depth the history of Arabic and Spanish science. This subject is understood by him as a

transcendental issue in order to reconstruct Spanish's past and identity. Nationalistic and racist theorists had attempted to erase the history of Islam and the Arabs in Spain, as part of an artificial revivalism of the Catholic Church and nationalistic movements.

Vernet had proven that Arabic and Spanish science are interrelated and the importance of recognizing the contributions of Andalusī science and Islamic civilization to Spanish identity. Vernet as well as the School of Arabic Studies and its members were aware of the fundamentalist ideologies which promoted a confrontation between Spanish "true" identity and Islam as a negative presence in the Iberian Peninsula. Instead, through a balanced approach they tried to promote bridges between Islam and Spanish history, not as two entities in confrontation rather two worldviews with a shared past. Vernet and Spanish scholarship have the merit to familiarize the Spanish youth with the Andalusian culture, literature, history and society. With regard to the subject matter, the history of the Arabic and Spanish science, Vernet had argued that the root of their decline was the abandonment of the cultural policy of interreligious and intercultural cooperation in scientific matters.

This moderate policy according to Vernet brought about the golden age of Arabic science in al-Andalus, the Islamic civilization in the West, in the Iberian Peninsula, which extended, approximately from 711 to 1492, witnessed no scientific development in the field of the exact sciences until the reign of the *amir* 'Abd al-Rahman II (821 – 852), who, according to one Maghribi source, was the first to introduce astronomical tables in al-Andalus.

The middle of the 9th century saw the beginning of a period of Easternisation in Andalusī culture, favoured both by the common practice of the *rihla* to the East designed to complete the education of young men from any family which could afford it, and, also, by the cultural policy of the Umayyad *amirs*, who encouraged Eastern scholars to establish themselves in Cordoba and did their best to buy the new books published in the great capitals of the East. This period lasted at least until the fall of the Umayyad caliphate (1031), which entailed the loss of political unity, but was followed by a subsequent period of fifty years (1031 – 1086) which may be regarded as the Golden Age of the exact sciences and of all the other manifestations of Andalusī cultural life. Sovereigns of the "petty Kingdoms" encouraged the development of science, and one of them, Yusuf al-Mu'taman of Saragossa (1081-1085), was probably the most important mathematician in the history of al-Andalus. This fact highlighted by Vernet, indicates that political history, particularly the political disintegration in al-

Andalus, did not necessarily produced the collapse of the scientific traditions. Cultural history and political narratives tell different stories with regard to the interreligious and intercultural cooperation among the Andalusí communities.

On the other hand, this golden half-century also entailed a progressive slowing down in contacts with the East, which meant that the development of the exact sciences in al-Andalus from the middle of the 11th century on became somewhat original and independent of the East. This loss of contact with a cultural area which, especially from the 13th century onwards, was producing new ideas in the field of astronomy was also one of the main reasons for the decay of Andalusí science, the first symptoms of which appeared during the 12th century. In short, the history of the Andalusí science tell us that, moderate policies promoting interreligious and intercultural exchanges between East and West brought about the golden age of Andalusí science and its impact on Christian Europe.

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Deen in Islam: A conceptual analysis

Md. Jahirul Haq

Abstract: There are four terms, *Ilah*, *Rabb*, *Deen* and *Ibadah* which scholars consider to be fundamental concepts found in the Qur'an and the core point of Islamic *dawah*. Since these terms have enormous significance in the life of a believer, many scholars explain the meaning and significance of these foundational concepts with special focus on *Deen*. Analysing varying perspectives, this study found that the term *Deen* is undoubtedly one of the most significant terms found in the Quran and that this concept embodies within itself perspectives on existence, life, society and sociopolitical system. Such an understanding renders Islam much more than a religion. Islam emerges as a complete and competing ideology and a system of life and society. There is a need to eschew legalistic explanation of the concept as done by many scholars and go beyond and reconstruct the term and weave it into a political-ideological system. Thus, Islam emerges as a superior ideology towering over other "isms" and the resultant socio-political systems.

Keywords: Islam, *Deen*, Islam as ideology, Islamic system, 'ibadah.

Introduction

A thorough review of literature dealing with Qur'an and Qur'anic terms show four concepts in the Qur'an as of fundamental importance. These are *Ilah*, *Rabb*, *Deen* and *Ibadah* and these terms are central to all the teachings of the Qur'an and the core point of Islamic *da'wah*. Therefore, these terms have enormous significance in the life of a believer in Islam.

Though these terms are central to the Islamic belief system, their meanings have changed over time because of two factors. Firstly, the gradual decline of interest in the Arabic language; and secondly, the original meaning of these four terms had not been passed on to those people who were born and brought up in Islamic society. These reasons caused recent linguists and commentators to use the meaning of later generation instead of the original meaning in explaining these terms. Therefore, it is important to explain these four terms in a comprehensive way to describe the real purpose of the Qur'an and its lesson.

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Though all the terms are equally significant and are interconnected, the term *Deen* deserves special treatment. This article deals with the interpretation of only one of the four terms which is *Deen* (way of life). It is argued that this concept properly defined renders it equal to an ideology, a system of life and society.

Deen: Its Meaning and Scope

In order to offer a deep analysis of the term *Deen*, it is necessary to resort to a detailed linguistic analysis for substantiating each with revealed and other sources. *Maqayis al-Lughah* (ibn Zakariya (2001): 353) and *Lisan al-Arab* (al-Misri, n.d.: v. 13,167) suggests four meanings of the term *Deen*. The first meaning is subjugation or dominance, administrative or legislative authority, to put pressure to be obedient or using power to enslave or make one obedient. In Arabic, *dintuhum fa danu* means "I subjugated them so they obeyed me" also *dintuhu* means "I ruled or governed upon him." Thus, the word *dayyan* is used to indicate a person who dominates and rules over a state, nation or tribe. The second meaning is obedience and bondage, subordination and domination by someone and bearing humiliation under subjugation and power of others. As stated, *dintuhum fadanu* means "I subjugated them so they obeyed me." The obedient tribe is called *qawmun dayyinun*. Here *al-deen* does not mean religion but it means obedience. The third meaning is rules, regulations, ideology, doctrine, custom, tradition or religion. And finally the fourth meaning is reward, repayment, justice and accountability.

It may be noted that before Islam, the Arabs had different connotations in using this word and their use of it in its various derivatives revolved around one or all of the abovementioned connotations. However, these connotations were not clear enough to the Arabs and this word did not get a terminological position in any systematic and recognised school of thought. Rather the understanding of this word was vague and insubstantial. With the revelation of the Qur'an, the word received a more definite connotation. The Qur'anic use of the word has four components:

- a. Sovereignty and supreme authority.
- b. Obedience and submission to that authority.
- c. Intellectual and practical system formed under that authority.
- d. Repayment by that authority for loyalty in obedience or rebellion and transgression against it.

Even though the Qur'an uses the term connoting various meanings, the term is generally referred to mean a complete code of life.

Explaining the four components

The term *deen* in the first and second sense (i.e., Supreme authority and obedience) can be found in several places in the Qur'an, 40: 64-65; 39:11-12, 17; and 97: 5. The Qur'an uses the term *al-deen al-khalis* (39: 2-3), the phrase *lahu al-deen al-wasiba* (al-Qur'an,16: 52) and *deen Allah* (al-Qur'an, 3: 83).

The phrase *mukhlisan* or *mukhlisina lahu al-deen* suggests that the Arabic word *deen* contains several meanings such as (1) domination and sovereignty, ruler ship and political power and authority to enforce one's decision on others; (2) obedience, compliance with commands and servitude; and (3) the practice and the way that a man follows. According to these three meanings, *deen* in this verse means "the way of life and attitude which a man adopts after acknowledging the supremacy and accepting the obedience of another" and "to worship Allah making one's religion exclusively His" means that one should refrain from combining another's worship with the worship of Allah, but should worship Allah alone, should follow His Guidance alone, and should comply with His Commands and injunctions only.

In all these places, the word *al-deen* refers to Supreme Authority, acknowledgement of this authority, and as a result, being obedient to this authority. The implication of the phrase *mukhlisan* or *mukhlisina lahu al-deen* is that no one should regard anyone other than Allah (SWT) as having the ultimate authority, domain and ruler-ship over the universe and making one's obedience and submission exclusive for Allah (SWT) that there is no association of anyone else with Him in this respect.

In the third sense, i.e. intellectual and practical system formed under that authority, can be found in many places in the Qur'an as in *Surat al-Rum*:

To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him... He sets forth for you a parable from your ownelves, - Do you have partners among those whom your right hands possess to share as equals in the wealth We have bestowed on you? Whom you fear as you fear each other? ... Nay, but those who do wrong follow their own lusts without knowledge, ... So set you (O Muhammad) your face towards the *deen* of pure Islamic

Monotheism (*Hanifa*) Allah's *Fitrah*, with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in *Khalq-illah*, that is *al-Deen al-Qayyim*, but most of men know not (al-Qur'an, 30: 26, 28, 29, & 30).

The word "deen" in the verse does not allow to turn one's face to any other direction after he has adopted this way of life. He should think like a Muslim and his likes and dislikes should be of a Muslim. His values and standards should be the ones set by Islam and his character and conduct should bear the stamp of Islam, and the affairs of his individual and collective life should be ordered according to the way taught by Islam.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an (al-Qur'an, 24: 2), "The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, *fi deen Allah* (in a punishment prescribed by Allah)." In this verse, the first thing that deserves attention is that the criminal law is termed as *deen Allah*. It shows that *deen Allah* does not consist merely in the prayer, fasting, Hajj and *Zakah* dues, but the law of the land is also part of *deen Allah*. The establishment of the *deen* does not mean the establishment of obligatory prayers alone but also includes the establishment of the divine law and the system of law based on it. If these things are not established, the mere establishment of the system of prayers will be regarded as partial implementation of the Way. But when an unislamic system of law is adopted, it amounts to the total rejection of the divine way itself.

In another verse of the Qur'an (al-Qur'an, 12: 76) Allah (SWT) says: "Thus did We plan for Yusuf. He could not take his brother by the *deen* (law) of the king (as a slave)." This verse categorically refutes the misconception by declaring that the law of the land is as much a part of the *deen* of Allah as *Salah*, *Hajj*, *Sawm* and *Zakah*. Therefore, the demand of the acceptance of *al-deen* made in al-Qur'an, 3: 19 and 3: 85 that is, "Indeed, Islam alone is the right *deen*, in the sight of Allah" and "Whosoever will adopt any other *deen* than the way of Islam, it shall not be accepted," includes laws as well as *Salah* and other obligatory duties prescribed by Allah. Therefore, the exclusion of this part of *deen* from any system would incur the displeasure of Allah.

Further use of the word *deen* in this sense can be found in al-Qur'an, 10: 104-105; 12: 40; 9: 36; 6: 137, 42: 21 and 109: 6. In all these verses, the word *al-deen* has been used to mean the rules or regulations, *shari'ah*, or code of conduct, or that system of thought and action, which are followed by people. If the

supreme authority for the law or code, etc., is Allah Himself, then a person, without any doubt would follow Allah's *deen*. However, if this code is the commandment of a monarch, a priest, or a scholar, then the person is following their *deen*. In brief, whomsoever a person considers as the supreme authority and follows his prescribed law, the person would be considered as a follower of that authority's *deen*.

The word *deen* in the fourth sense, i.e. repayment by the Supreme Authority for loyalty in obedience or rebellion and transgression against it, can be found in the Qur'an. Allah says, "Verily, that which you are promised (i.e. Resurrection in the Hereafter and receiving the reward or punishment of good or bad deeds, etc.) is surely true. And verily, *al-deen* (Recompense) is sure to happen." (al-Qur'an, 51: 5-6). In another place, He says, "Have you seen him who denies *al-deen* (Recompense)? That is he who repulses the orphan (harshly), and urges not the feeding of *al-Miskin* (the poor)." (al-Qur'an, 107: 1-3). Likewise, in al-Qur'an, 82: 17-19, He says, "Again, what will make you know what *Yawm al-deen* is? The Day when no person shall have power (to do) anything for another, and the Decision, that Day, will be (wholly) with Allah." A reflection on these verses makes it very clear that in all three places the word *deen* has been used to mean accountability, judgement and repayment.

Deen: A comprehensive code

All the examples of *deen*, quoted from the Qur'an show the senses that had been used by the Arabs, more or less, in pre-Islamic era. The following discussion will show that the word *deen* means a comprehensive code of life. The code in which a person acknowledges the supreme authority of a being, gives his submission and obedience to that being, and shapes his conduct and behaviour according to the guideline prescribed by that authority. Therefore, he puts great hope to achieve honour, position and reward for his loyalty as well as fears disgrace and severe punishment that can cause by disobedience to that authority. The ultimate purpose of establishing *deen al-haq* would be Allah's pleasure only.

This comprehensive use of the word *deen* in the Qur'an can be found in many places, such as in al-Qur'an, 9: 29:

Fight against those who (1) believe not in Allah (as the Supreme Authority thus does not obey Him), (2) nor in the Last Day (the Day of accountability and repayment), (3) nor forbid that which has been

forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (the intellectual and practical system formed under that authority), (4) and those who acknowledge not *Deen al-Haq* (religion of truth) (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the *Jizyah* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

Deen al-Haq is a term given and explained by Allah (SWT) Himself. All four senses of the term have been clearly shown in brackets throughout the translation of the verse. In the first part of the verse Allah clarifies these four senses and concludes the verse by using the term *Deen al-Haq*.

This terminological sense of the word *deen* also can be found in the statement by Fir'awn (Pharaoh) as Allah (SWT) says: "Fir'awn said: 'Leave me to kill Musa, and let him call his Lord! I fear that he may change your *deen*, or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land!'" (al-Qur'an, 40: 26). In this verse, the meaning of the phrase *yubbaddila deenakum* should be properly understood on account of which Fir'awn wanted to put Prophet Musa (AS) to death. The word *deen* implies the system of government, and what Fir'awn meant to say was this: "I fear that he will change your king" (al-Alusi, 1997: v. 13, 94-95). In other words, the *deen* of the land was the religious, political, cultural and economic systems that were prevalent in Egypt on the basis of Fir'awn's and his family's sovereignty, and Fir'awn was afraid that Prophet Musa's message would change that very *deen*.

After reflecting upon the details of the discussion that is provided by the Qur'an about Prophet Musa and Fir'awn, it can be said that the word *deen* does not mean a religion only but it represents a state or a whole politico-social and cultural system. Fir'awn's concern was that if Prophet Musa (AS) succeeded in his *da'wah* then there would be a revolutionary change in the administrative system, together with all the laws, rules and customs. Therefore, a completely different new system could replace Fir'awn's prevailing system or there would be no system at all and the land would fall into anarchy (1971: 128).

Many examples of similar ideas to the word *deen* can be found in al-Qur'an such as 3: 19, 85; 9: 33; 8: 39 and 110:3. In all these places, the word *deen* refers to a complete way of life, which includes belief, ideology, moral principles and behaviour; in other word, all aspects of life.

The message of the two verses (3: 19 and 85) of *Surat al Imran* is that according to Allah (SWT), the right and proper way of life is the one which stands

upon obedience and bondage to Allah (SWT). Any other system prescribed by other authority and showing obedience to that authority has no value in Allah's scheme and so it is naturally rejected by Him. Man is Allah's creature, lives in His kingdom and Allah (SWT) is his Master and Sustainer; the position of humankind is no more than a subject at the sight of Allah (SWT). Therefore, man has no right to spend his life in obedience to someone's authority besides Allah's as it cannot be accepted by Allah (SWT). True religion requires total obedience and submission to Allah (SWT) and to carry His Commandments at all times and not simply praying five times a day. There is no room to judge the right and wrong based on one's own desire or suggestion given by intellects, forefathers, families and relations but to obey Allah (SWT) as prescribed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In addition to this, the pointed verse of *Surat al-Tawbah* says that Allah (SWT) has sent His Messenger with *Deen al-Haq* (religion of Truth), *al-Islam*, and the sole purpose of the Prophet's mission was to make this *Deen* prevail over all other ways of life

Similarly, the referred verse 39 of *Surat al-Anfal* is a command addressed to the believers of *Deen al-Haq* to fight against all non-believers until there would be no *fitnah*; in other words, there would be no system based upon rebellion against Allah's obedience and bondage, the result of which the entire humanity will accept *Deen al-Haq*. In brief, *Deen* is regarding Allah (SWT) as Lord, Master and Ruler; to obey and serve only Him; to be accountable to Him, to fear only His punishment and to wish His rewards. It also includes obedience to Allah's Messengers because the commandments of God have been given to human beings through His Books and His Messengers.

Finally, in *Surat al-Nasr* (110: 3) Allah (SWT) addressed His Prophet (SAW) after spending 23 years of continuous struggle. The Islamic Revolution had overcome all resistance in Arabia and Islam had established itself practically as a system of life which includes all aspects such as belief, ideology, morality, culture, economy, politics, etc. Therefore, delegation after delegation from all parts of Arabia arrived to pledge allegiance to it, which was the sole purpose of the Prophet's mission. After mentioning this fruit of his *da'wah*, Allah (SWT) reminded His Prophet (SAW) not to let any sentiments of vanity or pride arise in his mind and make him feel that he owed the success to himself. Your *Rabb*, Allah (SWT) is alone free of all sorts of lackings and shortcomings as He is perfect in every respect. Therefore, any credit for the success which crowned the Prophet's efforts was due rightfully to Allah (SWT) alone, thus the Prophet should

glorify Him and utter His praises and beg forgiveness for any possible shortcomings that might have occurred during his 23 years of service to his *Rabb*.

Critiques

As mentioned earlier, the original meaning of the term *Deen* has changed over time leading the contemporary linguists and commentators to use the meanings of later generations instead of the original meanings in explaining the Qur'anic words. Many scholars disagree with the meaning adopted in this study.

Referring to the view that people remained unaware of the original meaning of the term, Nadwi questioned whether the term has remained unknown to people for many centuries? Were they unaware of the real spirit of Islam? (Nadwi, 1980: 29). He also warned that this statement can cause those people who do not have proper knowledge to not have firm belief about the preservation of the Qur'an and yet the validity of the Muslim *Ummah* is based upon receiving and understanding while the excellence of the Qur'an is its explanation and clarification. This view seems to be not particularly dangerous, yet it has deep roots that can affect Islamic thoughts. It will cause people not only to be doubtful about the authenticity of the Book and scholars' understanding of this Book but also to be doubtful about the previous interpretations of this Book and to feel the necessity to interpret according to everybody's wish as done by *Batiniyyah*.

Furthermore, Nadwi said this is contrary to the fundamental characteristics of the Qur'an. The reality is that, this *Ummah* does not take their religious teachings from the Book only but has taken its meanings and explanations from early generations and have learnt its practice from them too (Nadwi, 1980) 34, 35-37). Similarly, it is contrary to one of the sayings of the Prophet (SAW) to the effect that "My *Ummah* will never agree upon an error." The view adopted in this study indicates that the *Ummah* has misunderstood these four terms for centuries (Nadwi, 1980: 42). In addition, it is inconceivable that these terms were unknown to the people especially to the people who came immediately after the era of the Prophet (SAW) in the time when the *Ummah* produced a huge number of great scholars in various fields.

There is a hadith (sayings) of the Prophet (SAW) that "There will always be a group amongst my *Ummah* that will be triumphant and Allah will cause them to triumph" (al-Bukhari, 2003: 1324), and also authentic history to that effect. Nadwi is of the opinion that there is continuous attempt to reform and revive

Islamic history; this reality also goes against the view proffered in this study (Nadwi, 1980: 60).

Ibn Taymiyyah opines that, only by being obedient or subjugated, which are the rights of *Ilah* and *Rabb*, does not fulfil the duty of *al-Ubudiyyah* in the real sense. In addition, there should be the ultimate love of an *Abd* towards his *Ma'bud*. *Ma'bud* deserves this love because of His attributes and virtue. He states in his book *al-Ubudiyyah*, “the worshipped that has been prescribed includes both subjugation and love; it contains utmost humiliation before Allah with utmost love towards Him” (ibn Taymiyyah, 1976: 44). To clarify this issue, Ibn Taymiyyah said:

Whoever humiliates himself for someone, although he hates him, in fact, or loves somebody without being subjugated to him, will not be considered as his *Abd*, such as a person loves his son or friend. Therefore one of these two conditions only is not enough to be a real *Abd*; to be a *Abd* in real sense, Allah should be the most beloved to him as well as His majesty should be above all (ibn Taymiyyah, 1976: 44).

In explaining the word *Ilah*, Ibn Taymiyyah said, “*Ilah* is one who is deified by the heart with absolute love and veneration, reverence and honour, fear and hope and so on” (ibn Taymiyyah, 1976: 4451). Ibn Taymiyyah claimed that the relation between *Abd* and *Ma'bud* is not just as ruler and subject; it is a comprehensive relation, which includes knowledge, repentance, love, devotion, remembrance, and so on. In contrast, a ruler deserves only submission and obedience. In this regard, he said:

Allah created whole creation to know and worship Him; to repentance toward him with love and devotion. His remembrance can give the satisfaction of heart; the coolness of eyes can be achieved through His vision in the Hereafter. There is nothing more desirable, which will be given in the Hereafter than his vision; likewise, nothing is greater, which is given in this World than *Iman* (ibn Taymiyyah, 2006: v.1, 185).

To the view that the meanings of *Deen* was clearly understood by the audiences during the revelation period, but was lost with the passing of time, al-Hudaybi (1987) said this view is contentious. Whatever meanings were known to

the people of *Jahiliyyah* and whatever is meant by these terms, the Qur'an explains them clearly in details. There is no possibility to be misunderstood or misguided even if one looks at the origin of these terms that was known during the pre-Islamic era. Muslims should not doubt the clarification given by the Qur'an and its perfection; it must be the standard to be followed whether pre-Islamic understanding goes in line with it or not. There is abundant evidence in the Qur'an, which explains these terms clearly. The first thing that can be found by a reader of the Qur'an is *Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim* which is a brief description of the holy word, Allah (SWT). Immediately after this brief definition a full *surah* (*Fatihah*) talks about Allah (SWT) that glory be to Him, all praises and thanks belong to Him and He is the *Rabb* of 'Alamin. In other words, He is the Supreme Authority over all of His creations, authority of the Day of Judgement also belongs to Him and only He is worshipped, no one else. His help is sought, He is the only One to depend on. The guidance is sought from Him.

Similarly, al-Hudaybi views that the explanation for the terms *ibadah* and *Deen* have also been discussed in the Qur'an in detail. When the Qur'an says, "*Maliki yawm al-deen,*" (al-Qur'an, 1: 4), there is no need to rely upon any evidence to prove that it indicates the Day of Judgement, when people will receive reward or punishment based on their deeds in this world. When the Qur'an says, "*Inna al-Deena inda Allahi al-Islam*" (al-Qur'an, 3: 19), everyone can understand that the word '*Deen*' refers to the comprehensive system brought by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The same meaning can be understood from the verses 12:40; 5:3 and 10:104-105. In these verses, the term *ibadah* refers to performing rituals in addition to being completely obedient or submissive (al-Hudaybi, 1987: 42).

Conclusion

The term *Deen* is undoubtedly one of the most significant terms in the Qur'an. It offers a very wide perspective on existence, life, society and sociopolitical system. Even though it is popularly translated as 'religion' its scope is in fact much greater than what the term religion can offer. The attempt made in this study to interpret the term in its wider meaning emanates from a bigger perspective of presenting Islam as a complete and competing ideology and a system of life and society. Earlier scholars have explained the term in much more legalistic sense with spiritual overtone, but this study has attempted to go beyond and develop the term into a political-ideological system. This is due to the definitive influence of the contemporary world where Islam has to confront not only other religions but also

numerous ideological challenges that offer alternative socio-political systems. Therefore, though the view adopted in this study, regarding the interpretation of the concept of *Deen* has been criticised by contemporary scholars, the significance of the attempt to reconstruct the meaning of the term lies in presenting Islam as an ideological equivalence and even more.

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Motivation and interest in reading Qur'anic exegesis: A sociological perspective

Tareq M Zayed*

Abstract: This paper explores how personal motivation and interest shapes domain specific reading of Qur'anic exegesis. It presents a conceptual model of engagement with reading Qur'anic exegesis. The findings show that readers' motivation together with their personal interests shape their reading pattern. Their intrinsic motivation is to know the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, while the extrinsic motivation is to relate the meaning of the verses with society and real life. Their interest in reading social exegeses indicate that they are active readers. Therefore, their engagement is understood in terms of applying Qur'anic principles in real life. Exegeses' readers characterized their interest as being based on a desire to promote social development, social welfare, and social reconstruction. The findings provide insights regarding maintaining a long-term engagement with Qur'anic exegesis and may prove useful for Qur'anic commentators and researchers.

Keywords: Qur'an, social exegesis, reading motivation, reading engagement, interest.

Introduction

The impact of personal motivation and interest in engaging in a systematic reading of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafseer* in Arabic) is yet to be researched. Generally, Qur'anic exegesis is read for some internal and external reasons. This results in a discriminate reading of Qur'anic exegesis that focuses on particular themes. Reading motivation, reading interest, and reading related engagement or activities are interrelated, with reading engagement being particularly dependant on reading motivation and interest. Reading motivation explains why a person reads, whereas reading interest explains what a person reads. Both motivation and interest contribute to shape a person's reading engagement i.e. activities related to a reading process, and the behaviours emanating from what a person reads.

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This research attempts at determining the reasons why some people in Bangladesh read Qur'anic exegesis while others do not. In addition, the research highlights if there is any expectancy gap between the available exegeses and readers' expectations. Reading is not a cognitive process requiring effort (Baker and Wigfield, 1999). Reading is the result of motivation and interest. While motivation is personal and goal based, interest is more situational and topical. Hence, motivation is sometimes a vertical cause i.e. achieving Allah (SWT)'s satisfaction through grasping the meaning of His words. It is also a horizontal cause i.e. willingness to implement the meaning in all spheres of human life.

Among the major reasons for reading Qur'anic exegesis by Muslims is that they are commanded to refer to the Qur'an in every step of life. They, therefore, read the Qur'anic exegesis as a divine source of guidance. This is why the readers try to relate the interpretation of verses to contemporary issues. Though there are many translated Qur'anic exegeses for Bengali speaking Muslims of Bangladesh, Muslims with low reading skills have little motivation to read, and hence often ask the Imams (prayer leaders) or scholars about the meaning of Qur'anic verses, injunctions, interpretation etc. In contrast, those who have degrees in Islamic studies from universities or madrasas (Islamic religious educational institutions) usually read the exegeses by themselves.

To date, the study of reading motivation has focused on children's motivation, engagement, and interest in different areas, mostly in classroom and literacy. Only a few researchers discussed the impact of motivation on adult reading engagement and their interests. Furthermore, Trend (2005) observed that the previous studies were largely restricted to mathematics, English/literacy (notably understanding texts), physical education, and science. Though it is not new to explore the motivation, reading preference, and acquaintance, it is very difficult to find a study which explores readers' motivation, engagement and interest regarding religious scriptures. Baring (2008) has attempted to examine Bible readers' attitudes in terms of their motivation, reading preference, and acquaintance. But no similar study is to be found with regard to reading the Qur'an, which makes this study imperative.

This study argues that personal reading motivation and interest of exegesis readers play a role in their reading engagement. As such, this research seeks to identify the underlying factors related to motivation and interest that influence reading. The research focuses on Bengali exegesis readers to determine the

motivating factors, interests, and if their reading of Qur'anic exegesis meets their initial expectations. This study hopes that the factors facilitating long-term reading engagement will be identified. It is assumed that the motivation of reading exegesis is contingent upon how the readers define an exegesis, how they think about the themes of the Qur'an, how they verify the reliability of an exegesis, and why they do and do not like certain exegesis.

Reading motivation, interest and engagement

Motivation is a multidimensional construct. Reading motivations include reading goals, values, beliefs, and attitudes toward reading. It can be measured and explained along with many other associated terms (Logan and Medford, 2011). Motivation may be intrinsic and extrinsic. Many studies have identified the interconnection among reading competence, readers' self-efficacy, reading comprehension skill, reading motivation, and learning outcomes etc. (McGeown et al., 2012; Logan and Medford, 2011; Mata, 2011; Taboada and Buehl, 2012; Tilley, 2009; Wigfield, 1997; Zhou and Salili, 2008). Many experimental or quasi-experimental studies have been conducted on children on reading motivation. For children, their reading motivation is more intrinsic while for adults it is found to be more extrinsic (Mata, 2011; McGeown et al., 2012; Ryan and Deci, 2000). A motivated person is likely to be engaged in a related task. Engaged readers have inherent motivational goals, which incorporate interest, desire and commitment to learn, understand, share, interpret, and enhance the subject matter and content. They also employ complex cognitive strategies to fulfil motivational goals (Guthrie et al., 1997).

Previous studies related to developmental and educational practices discussed intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation elaborately. Guthrie and Cox (2001) stated that intrinsic motivation is performing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. They then claimed that extrinsic motivation starts to be observed after early childhood as the freedom to be intrinsically motivated becomes increasingly curtailed by social demands and roles that require individuals to assume responsibility for non-intrinsically interesting tasks. For example, in schools intrinsic motivation becomes weaker with each advancing grade. Another study by Guthrie et al. (1997) supports the same finding that the decline in intrinsic motivation is accompanied by an increase in extrinsic motivation; because children's competence, beliefs, and expectancy for success decline across school years. With the increase of age, children begin to

find motivation for a separable outcome. Motivational factors help answers why people read when it is not required of them and how their reading choices affect their lives (Botzakis, 2009).

Like motivation, interest is another variable which fosters passion and attention for a specific subject. The issue of human interest has been widely discussed (Adjah, 2012; Fox et al., 2010; Fulmer and Frijters, 2011; Paige, 2011; Renninger and Hidi, 2011). The value of interest has been recognized by early scholars like Ebbinghaus (1885/1964) and James (1890) because interest has an effective role in people's attention, remembering power, learning, understanding, effort as well as personal involvement. These roles shape the type of learning and reading engagement. In order to find the root cause of interest, Hidi (2006) and Renninger and Hidi (2011) argued that every normal human being has a 'neurological predisposition' to acquire knowledge and information. At the same time, interest does not necessarily have only a 'biological' root as Schraw and Lehman (2001) and Trend (2005) have argued. Interest arises from the understanding of functions of reading (Chen, 2009). Individual interest emerges in the mind over months and years as a result of life experiences (Trend, 2005). But interest essentially links a person to the external world (Trend, 2005), which is visualized by the person himself. Overall, the existing literature suggests that there are several types of interest, like topic interest, situation interest, and individual interest to name a few.

However, according to the theory of motivation, the behaviour of an intrinsically motivated child is to engage in an activity (e.g. reading) because the child finds it inherently interesting or enjoyable. On the other hand, an extrinsically motivated child is likely to engage in the activity due to the possibility of receiving a separable outcome, such as a reward or better grade (Guthrie and Cox, 2001; McGeown et al., 2012). In this connection, Baker and Wigfield (1999) regard the social purposes of reading as extrinsic motivation. Decision making processes of individuals are complex. 'Social context' may affect their decisions and the outcomes of various reading practices (Smith, 1997). This is why the aim of this study is to examine the interest domains of exegesis readers in the context of engagement nature. Smith (1997), Guthrie and Greaney (1991) also suggested the idea of "social context" as a potential cause behind interest. Interest facilitates reading comprehension (Asher et al., 1978), which in turn increases the efficacy for internalization and self-actualization of personal

learning outcome. Reading interest and motivation for adults are contributed to by a lifelong activity rooted in past experience, level of education, and diverse knowledge (Adjah, 2012).

Qur'anic exegeses reading and readers: A model

Though there are a number of studies dealing with issues of Islamic education and Islamic studies, they do not pertain to those who read Islamic materials. For instance, the Qur'an emphasizes the act of reading by its very first revelation: "read in the name of your Lord." As learning and knowing are the purposes of reading, the Qur'an allows asking and enquiring from a reliable and knowledgeable person too. Present and early Islamic literature discusses the act of reading and rewards for readers, and not the readers' choice, interest, and motivation. The prophet of Islam (SAW) made the act of seeking knowledge obligatory for all Muslims. He promised many rewards for knowledge seekers. He declared the Qur'an as the ultimate source of knowledge for Muslims and motivated them to read the Qur'an saying that the reader deserves rewards from Allah (SWT). Motivated by these rewards, Muslims in the early Islamic era started to read, enquire, and disseminate Qur'anic verses, along with their interpretations, if necessary. Later, systematic interpretations of the Qur'an evolved in the early age of Islam, for example, "Tafseer al-Tabari."¹ However, vertical motivation (i.e. reading for divine reward) was considered the prime concern in Islam, and any horizontal motivation (i.e. reading for worldly success or cause) went largely ignored. According to Islam, everything deserves reward if it is done properly and for the sake of Allah (SWT). For example, once an individual reads the Qur'an with an intention to satisfy Allah (SWT) he will merit reward. The scope of being rewarded is very wide and comprehensive. Even if anybody reads the Qur'an for some worldly intention and with an intention of being rewarded, it will be accepted as valid worship. This has led us to investigate worldly causes and motivation for exegesis readers, as worldly motivation of reading exegesis does not necessarily deprive an individual from being rewarded.

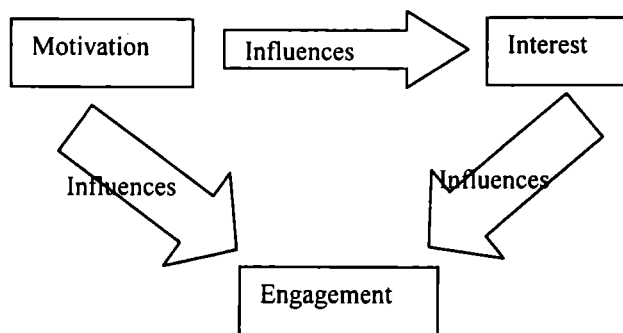
Although Muslims believe that the Qur'an is an infallible scripture, they do not read indiscriminately all exegeses. Instead, Muslims single out an exegesis

Original name of this exegesis is "Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān" but it is popularly known as "Tafseer al-Tabari" written by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923).

carefully from among many. While the Qur'an motivates man to act upon the injunctions commanded by Allah (SWT) (Saifuddeen, 2012), some Muslims do not read any exegesis. Perhaps this is due to a general lack of reading comprehension. This assumption is consistent with a recent study that concluded that reading comprehension and reading efficacy cause intrinsic reading motivation which in turn engages a reader in more reading (McGeown et al., 2012). It is also the case that one may be extrinsically motivated to read commentaries on the Qur'an in an attempt to comprehend it. As readers with different education and socioeconomic status may have different interests, responses from different educational levels should be considered. Less educated people who may simply ask the Imams, while people who are more educated, or are financially capable of buying Qur'anic commentaries, may be more interested in reading on their own and forming their own opinions.

The relationship that emerges from the above explanation is shown in figure 1.

Figure – 1: Relationship among exegesis readers' motivation, interest and engagement



This model helps to understand the motivation and interest of the group of readers selected for this study.

Method of data collection and analysis

This research employs qualitative methods. It analysed data using descriptive statistics, percentage, and cross-tabulation. It identified the themes that emerged from the survey responses to avoid the researcher's subjectivity. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire distributed through emails. The

sample population consists of Bangladeshi Muslims with knowledge of Qur'anic exegesis. Out of seventy-six respondents, 65 questionnaires were usable for this study.

Sample characteristics

The average age of the respondents is 40. Males numbered 59 and females, six. Thirty-four respondents studied in Madrasah and Islamic religious studies and 31 did not receive training in Qur'anic exegesis. Respondents rated their own Islamic knowledge voluntarily by a 10 point measurement scale which indicates that most of the respondents have moderate to advanced knowledge (elementary- n=11; moderate- n=28; advanced- n=26). Only six out of 76 respondents have had no exegesis in their collection, even though they responded based on their experience.

Analysis and discussion

Most of the respondents stated that they regularly read exegesis, while only a few responded negatively (n=6). The respondents were asked to inform why they read a particular exegesis. Answers revealed that a particular Qur'anic exegesis was selected considering easy comprehension, practical teaching, and clear reading. Based on this, the motives for reading are categorised into the following four themes:

1. Purpose of authentic learning

According to the respondents, they read their selected exegesis due to a number of authentic characteristics such as richness in translation, provided footnotes, mentioned the context of revelation, rational and realistic interpretation, authentic reference to the Prophetic interpretation and authenticity of the *hadith* it mentions, and offering a comprehensive explanation based on the prophetic understanding as well as the understanding of the companions. Readers chose such exegesis in order to learn the authentic and true meaning of the Qur'an.

2. Understanding the Qur'an in the present context

This theme indicates that the readers have an intention to understand the Qur'an with its contextual meaning. When respondents were asked to mention the motivation for which they read exegesis, they answered:

... it explained the Qur'an based on the modern context with a very clear language. ... it has blended the present issues with the past. ... it is more applicable to the current situation and modern times.

3. Practical usefulness

This motive emerged when the respondents reported that the reason for reading exegesis was:

...scientific and experimental discussions. ...it has scientific and logical explanations. ...it covers all aspects. ...it gives the best meanings that I can understand and use, it is very informative, it has explained the subject very briefly. ...it has discussed the issues and needs of human beings.

4. Spiritual and religious purpose

Respondents also reported that they like to read the exegesis due to religious inspiration and aspiration. They are spiritually motivated to perform their duties as Muslims.

Themes such as understanding the Qur'an in the present context and practical usefulness indicate the social context of reading exegesis. This finding is supported by past research that found that external motivation can make the readers active. In this research, 'social purpose' of reading is identified with a different indicators and connotation unlike Baker and Wigfield (1999). 'Social purpose' of reading is constructed by the above motivational themes as they mentioned words like applicability, duty and responsibility, current situation, modern time, human needs, and contemporary issues. This is extrinsic motivation that creates in the readers' minds a framework for social development. This gradually becomes their external locus of control. Readers have started to attribute their success with the environment they live in. Thus, reading engagement increases along with the interest. Therefore, in this research the way the respondents define exegesis, reading motivation, and aspects of exegesis is constant. This is indicative of the transformative and active reading of the readers that signifies willingness to change the society (Baring, 2008).

Personal reading interests of exegesis' readers

Muslims commonly distinguish one exegesis from the other based on their diverse interests. When readers are interested in the social situation, they become more

interested to know the Qur'anic guidance about social reformation. On the other hand, some readers are not interested in social reformation but are more interested to read the spiritual exegesis. As such, reading interest is transient (Ataya and Kulikowich, 2002).

Reading engagement of exegesis' readers

Reading engagement is observed and examined in terms of readers' activities related to the act of reading and reading materials. In this study, reading engagement has been examined by reading the title of exegeses the respondents keep and read. In addition, the respondents were asked to indicate the titles of exegeses, which they would recommend to others because Handelsman et al. (2005) mentioned that engagement is sometimes interpersonal.

Table 1
Available Exegeses to the Readers

Name of the exegesis	Author	Bengali Translated version
<i>Tafseer Ibn Katheer</i>	Abu Al-Fida, (1301-1373 CE)	Available
<i>Tafseer Fee Zilalil Qur'an</i>	Syed Muhammad Qutb (1906-1966 CE)	Available
<i>The Noble Qur'an</i>	Muhammad Muhsin Khan (1927 -) Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali (1893-1987 CE)	Unavailable
<i>Tafsir AlMunir</i>	Wahba Mustafa al-Zuhayli (born 1932)	Unavailable
<i>Mareful Qur'an</i>	Mufti Muhammad Shafi (1897-1976)	Available
<i>Tafhimul Qur'an</i>	Abul Ala Moududi (1903-1979)	Available
<i>Tafseer Ibn Abbas</i>	Abdullah bin Abbas (618-687CE)	Available
<i>Tafseeral Tabari</i>	Abu Jafar Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923CE)	Available
<i>Tafseer of Muhammad Assad</i>	Muhammad Asad (1900-1992)	Unavailable
<i>Tadubbar-i-Quraan</i>	Amin AhsanIslahi (1904-1997)	Available
<i>TafseerSa'di</i>	Abdar-Rahman IbnNasir as-Sa'di at-Tamimi (1889-1956)	Available
<i>Tafseer Shawkani</i>	Muhammad ash-Shawkani (1759-1834)	Unavailable
<i>Adwa al Bayan</i>	Shaykh Muhammad Amin Syinqithi	Unavailable

Name of the exegesis	Author	Bengali Translated version
<i>Tafseer Jalalain</i>	Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505)	Available
<i>Sofaatul Tafaseer</i>	Muhammad Ali Ash-Shabuni (Born 1928)	Unavailable
<i>Al-Khashaf</i>	Abu al-Qasim Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari (1075-1144)	Available
<i>Tafseer of Ali Ashraf Thanvi</i>	Ashraf'Ali Thanwi (1863 – 1943)	Available

When asked to write the recommended exegesis, they wrote: *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (n=25), *Tafheemul Qur'an* (n=20), and *Tafseer Fee Zilalil Qur'an* (n=9). This indicates that though there are many exegeses, *Tafseer Ibn Kasir* or *Tafheemul Qur'an* or *Tafseer Fee Zilalil Qur'an* seem to generate most interest. However, in scholarly literature, *Tafseer Ibn Kasir* is widely accepted as an authentic and reliable exegesis. Its origins rest in the early centuries of Islam. While *Tafheemul Qur'an* and *Tafseer Fee Zilalil Qur'an* are well-known for analysis on social and political issues. Both of these exegeses are from the modern period. In terms of reading preference, it was observed that the graduates of Islamic religious studies offered by Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia are more likely to choose those exegeses written in the early period of Islam and interpreted references from the traditions (*Sunnah*) of the Prophet (SAW). They usually avoid those exegeses written in recent centuries, especially those that employed logical interpretation of the verses. On the contrary, those who graduated from madrasah and modern educational institutions in Bangladesh read exegeses that interpret religious injunctions, social issues, and current issues.

Social development as a locus of control

Locus of control may influence reading interest. Locus of control is either internal or external. Those who believe they have control over society are likely to behave in a way that develops the society (Guthrie *et al.*, 2013). This study found that readers have external locus of control on social development and change, which has led them to engage in those exegeses focusing on social development.

Readers' Perception of Reliable Exegesis

Exegesis readers are very cautious about the reliability of newly published exegeses. They are likely to accept any exegesis written with a new approach once

it fulfils the criteria of authentic and reliable exegesis. Though there is a methodology of checking reliable exegesis, the respondents have mentioned that they follow their own ways to find the reliable exegesis. For example, 21 respondents reported that they used to check the name of the author first before they buy a new exegesis from the bookstore. Another 20 said that they used to read at least some parts of the exegesis before they buy it. Twelve respondents claimed that they rely on methodology of exegesis, while others ask knowledgeable and authoritative persons about the reliability of an exegesis. Very few read the introduction of exegesis before they decide to buy a new one. These responses are indicative that they are not biased to only their interests. In case of exegesis readers, their interest does not outweigh the reliability of exegesis.

The emergence of new Qur'anic exegesis

New exegesis may emerge because of an expectancy gap between the approach of existing exegeses and readers' interests. In this study, the opinions of respondents regarding what they believe to be missing from existing exegeses are compared. It is assumed that if an exegesis does not become outdated and if it is written for all reader groups, then there is less likelihood for a new exegesis to emerge. The rate of agreement with the opinions mentioned in Table 2 is consistent with the above assumption. For instance, 43 respondents believed that an exegesis is written forever and as such does not become outdated. At the same time, 49 respondents thought that past exegeses lacked their desired features. If an exegesis lacks the features sought by a certain reader group, it will no longer be appreciated by those readers meaning that the exegesis becomes outdated for those readers. Opinions two and four below are consistent in that those who consider an exegesis is for all readers do not think that any exegesis can be recommended to others.

Table 2: Opinions on Exegesis

	Opinion	Agree	Disagree
1	An exegesis has been written forever. It will never be outdated.	31	43
2	An exegesis is written for a specific "reader group"	15	59
3	Past exegeses lack my desired features	49	25
4	There are some exegeses which are not recommendable	17	58

Although 31 respondents agreed that an exegesis is written forever, 49 respondents agreed that there were some missing characteristics in past exegeses. In this regard, readers' opinions about the missing characteristics in the past exegeses mentioned by 21 respondents fall under the socio-development domain. The missing characteristics are:

Implementation exposure, discussion on the demerits of man-made 'isms' (ideologies) i.e. communism, fascism, western democracy, modern cultural challenges, practical applications of the unique directives of Islam, incorporation of modern scientific and social concepts, discussion on social problems those developed due to not following Islam, current scientific discoveries and current issues, issues that have to do with modern challenges, social, economic, political, and scientific issues, contemporary issues such as banking, finance, medicine, technology and innovations are not rigorously well-explained, the incorporation of dynamism and critical thinking skills, discussion on the upcoming issues, modernization, technology, sustainability, and wastage of resources.

These are their reading interests related to topics and situations, which indicates that readers prefer some exegeses over others. The study then evaluated the above missing characteristics in the past exegeses and compared them with the readers' desired characteristics (see paragraph below) which should have been included in modern exegeses. The interesting features as reported by the respondents have been classified into three groups: socio-developmental features, methodological features, and narrative features.

Socio-developmental features

Modern exegeses should address questions relevant to *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). For example, the meaning and the content of exegeses should be related to current practical issues such as financial matters, banking, family, and social problems. Even, future challenges along with potential solutions should be included in the exegeses. It will be interesting if current scientific discoveries are covered by the exegeses. Social, economic, and political issues should be there too. Moreover, discussion on modern thoughts and policies must be highlighted, focused in exegeses of the current century such as secularism, democracy, scientific issues, family system, economy, and modern political history.

Modernization, technology, sustainability, wastage of resources should also be explained.

Methodological features

Sound reflection of what the early scholars said should be included in the exegeses. The interpretation of the Qur'an must be suitable with current affairs. There should be reference to scholarly books, and bibliography to support the explanation. The exegeses should not be mere story and hearsay. Additional information and web links should be in the exegeses. For example, when the Qur'an talks about the creation of plants, in the footnotes there should be reference to some books about plants. When the Qur'an mentions historical events, the pictures relevant to those particular events should be given in the exegeses. A picture is very important to support the description.

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the interest of exegesis readers can cause a new exegesis to emerge. The interest may be hidden or well expressed. Renninger and Hidi (2011) argued that sometimes people read but do not know their interest. In this study, the respondents have willingly expressed interest. They also suggested to writers of future exegeses to include some specific dimensions.

Narrative features

According to the respondents, exegeses should awaken the Muslims and bring them back to the teachings of the Qur'an. For this, the central message of the exegeses should be clear in the light of present day problems faced by the Muslims. Furthermore, exegeses should clarify some Qur'anic terms that are complex according to Arabic grammar and language.

Conclusion

This study explored how personal motivation and interest of Qur'anic exegesis readers in Bangladesh shaped their domain specific reading. The research developed a conceptual model for long-term engagement with reading Qur'anic exegesis. The study found that reading interest was influenced by challenges of modernity (Khir, 2007) or a reader's perception of creativity and innovation (Al-karasneh and Saleh, 2010). Engaging in reading Qur'anic exegesis is the result of reading competence, reading goals, and interest. A competent reader reads

relatively difficult texts with understanding and with interest, focusing on the universal meaning of the text and not limiting himself to literal meanings only. At the same time, they are responsible and attentive to the details of the text's meaning (Fox et al., 2010). It is very close to active and transformative reading (Baring, 2008).

Renninger and Hidi (2011) found that a particular disciplinary content develops through the interaction of the person and his or her environment. It is also possible that the respondents in this study would have interacted with the literatures, thoughts on political aspects of Islam. So they responded accordingly. Similarly, according to Delibas (2009), Guven (2005), some people have conceptualized an "Islamic movement thought" and articulated it in different possible ways including revitalizing the educational elements of Islam. Thus in our study, issue of revitalizing becomes evident and urged by the exegesis readers.

Based on the above discussion, it is possible to conclude that the readers' level of satisfaction in reading exegeses must be fulfilled by writing a new type of exegesis addressing their concerns. Only then will the exegeses be relevant to the current time and demand. Modern exegetes should take the initiative to produce a new exegesis that will meet the expectations of readers. If they can write an exegesis covering the interests of readers, then it will ensure the readers' holistic learning (Hassan et al., 2010), because it has been understood from the responses that they mean by socio-developmental exegesis something comprehensive which promotes Islam holistically and presents Islam as a way of life. This type of exegesis can promote social research and social cohesion in the society via higher education institutions as outlined in the studies of Kraince (2008), and Yahyaei and Mahini (2012). This proposed social exegesis can include findings of the recent empirical research to explain the verses of the Qur'an. In order to make the exegesis relevant to the time and demands there must be a reciprocal relationship between the act of interpreting recent research findings in line with the Qur'an and vice versa.

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Research Note

Seyyed Hossein Nasr on Islamisation of knowledge

Yahaya Musa Yusuf*

Introduction

Islamization of knowledge is an intellectual and methodological enterprise and not an ideology, a discipline, or a sect. Islamization of knowledge is a methodology for dealing with knowledge and its sources. It is an attempt to fashion out an Islamic paradigm of knowledge based on the Islamic world view and its unique constitutive concepts and factors. This is because the knowledge as conceived in the West is value laden and has detached itself from *tawhid* (unity and sovereignty of Allah, SWT). The rationalistic thought in the West has reduced both the objective and subjective poles of knowledge to a single level devoid of the divine. These scholars deliberately distort Islam to suit their own ends and the loss of sacred has created a vacuum in human life.

Building from this point many scholars have devoted their time and energy in the discourse of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK). They view the modern Western knowledge from the point of view of Islam and attempt to Islamise it. Though, some scholars have criticised the idea of IOK arguing that all knowledge is Islamic, many Muslim scholars see it as a trust to revive the Islamic method of pursuing all kinds of knowledge (Suleiman, 1995). The concept of “Islamization of knowledge” involves multiple approaches to the various forms of modern-world thought in the context of the Islamic intellectual tradition, including metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and methodological premises regarding the modern issues of knowledge (Dzilo, 2012). These scholars use different approaches to Islamise the modern knowledge from different point of view. Among them is Seyyed Hussein Nasr whose idea on islamization of knowledge is the main thrust of this paper. He sees Islamization of knowledge from the point of

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view of *scientia sacra*. This is due to his orientation as a scientist. He rejects the argument that there is no such thing as the Islamic problem of science. He is against the idea of encouraging science devoid of the divine.

Nasr was born in Iran in 1933 where he received his early education. He studied physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), U.S., and later obtained his doctorate from Harvard University. His well-deserved reputation as a scholar and historian of Islamic science is derived from the large number of impressive books and articles. His brilliance and clarity of exposition and ability to communicate has made Nasr by far the most influential of Muslim philosophers who wrote on Islam and science. Currently, he is a professor of Islamic studies in George Washington University, USA. A quick look at Nasr's wide ranging works reveal that the question of science occupies central place in his thought. His writings, 50 books and about 300 articles, on religion and science made him famous in the world of history of science as a prolific writer and Gnostic thinker (Kalin2001).

Traditional spirituality

Nasr is one of the neo-traditionalist who attempts to integrate the modern science within the frame work of the sacred. He did not only use the Islamic tradition but also the tradition of other religions. In his *scientia-sacra*, perennial philosophy and the revival of spiritual tradition, he argues that though it is strange to talk of sacred at a time where anything that cannot be proven is rejected because nothing is absolute rather all things are relative. *Scientia-sacra* is the application of metaphysical principles to the macrocosm as well as the microcosm, the natural as well as the human world. It is a science that involves physical and metaphysical phenomena. This is necessary because the modern science has reduced knowledge to rationalistic thought (Irfan, 1995).

Islamic tradition is not the only concern of Nasr but he incorporates the traditions of other religions where the emphasis is through a review of the traditional world view as the central and perhaps the only viable solution to the problems of modern humanity because the loss of the sacred has created a gap in human life. Scholars have described this scenario as secularization that dehumanises humanity. The sacred is the knowledge of God which, Nasr argues, can only be understood through twin sources of metaphysical knowledge and certitude namely revelation and intellection. So traditional is the principal

milestone for spiritual authenticity and infinite source of grace. It is the whole structure of thought that articulate the concepts embodied in the world of myth and symbols (Nasr, 2010, Mirtaheri, 2012, Irfan, 1995).

The modern science and the problem of the Muslim world

Rationalistic thought in the West has reduced both the objective and subjective poles of knowledge to a single level. The loss of the sacred has created a vacuum in human lives particularly the Muslim world. Since the introduction of Western science into the heartland of the Islamic world in the 13th/19th century, the attitude of most of the modernists and other sectors of the educated Muslim intelligentsia which came to know something of this science was its wholesale and uncritical adoption. According to this view, modern science in the West is nothing other than the further expansion and growth of the science which Muslims had developed from the 2nd/8th to the 8th/14th centuries and which was transmitted to a large extent through Spain and Sicily to Europe. If this science had caused havoc from a religious and ethical point of view in the West, it is the fault of Christianity and not this science. If the Muslims take this science back into their own fold, they would be able to expand and develop it farther without any of the negative effects which the spread of a secular science and the Industrial Revolution have had upon the West socially, morally and spiritually (Nasr, 2010). Those modernistic thinking which claim that Islam is compatible with modern science - the science which Galileo and Newton are usually credited to having initiated - are flawed. The modernist must recognise that *ilm* refers to knowledge of God not knowledge of the profane. The modernist must recognise the fact that modern science is a cancer which is steadily eating away the fabric of the Islamic faith. This is because of their reliance on reason and observation as the arbiter of truth which is totally unacceptable Also Nasr argues that Afghani and his student Muhammad Abduh were interested in the western science but have very little knowledge of it and interested in Islamic revivalism in the Muslim world.

On the other end, the *ulama'* (religious scholars) of the *madrasah* (religious seminary) opposed both the modern science and the appealing made by the modernist of the impact of the modern science to the Muslim world. They rejected it outright to safeguard their faith. They refused to study it and their criticism is without any intellectual ground. The traditional class of Muslim scholars, therefore, preserved the faith against many of the onslaughts of Western thought, but was not able to provide a critical examination of modern science on

the basis of Islamic criteria. The abdication of the *ulama'* from this important task allowed the ever greater spread of Western science under the banner of a "religiously" coloured positivism into the Islamic world without an effective Islamic response. Islamisation would allow the Islamic world to digest this science and make it part of its own organism through assimilation as well as rejection rather than through the wholesale uncritical swallowing of Western science and technology (Nasr, 2010). This has made scholars like Seyyed Nasr to engage in the balance of the two views above and bring back the glory of Islamic science-*scientia-sacra* by sieving what is Islamic from the modern western science. These scholars mostly pursued their education in the western universities after having their traditional madrasa education. So they tried to bring about awareness and attempt to Islamize the western science.

Islamization of knowledge/ modern secular science

Nasr has focussed his ideas on the threats posed by the modern secular science to Islam. He boldly challenges the assumptions and the values of the modern science arguing that the problem of the modern science is that it relies solely on reason and observation as the arbiter of truth. The detachment of modern knowledge from its metaphysical principles in the sphere of Western culture is the key to Nasr's critical approach to the issue of knowledge (Nasr 1980). Nasr laments that the Western science poses a challenge of monumental dimensions to the Islamic worldview and what remains of the culture and civilization of Islam (Nasr, 2010). Muslim youths stop praying when they are taught in the Western schools that oxygen and carbon-de-oxide makes water not God. This has affected the youth and their ideologies. Thus, there is a need to Islamise. According to Nasr,

The Islamization of science cannot but be the integration based upon criticism, assimilation and rejection of various elements of the existing sciences into the Islamic intellectual universe and therefore another framework than the existing modern scientific paradigm, a framework in which *tawhīd* reigns supreme and where every atom of the universe is seen to be created for a purpose and in accordance with the wisdom and plan of the Creator (2010: 7).

The consequences of the secularism of modern science can only be stopped when this science is change into a body of knowledge in an intellectual universe where knowledge is never divorced from the sacred, where every form of

knowing participates to some degree in the sacred character of knowledge whose supreme form is the knowledge of Allah (SWT) based on *tawhidi* episteme. The essence of religious experience, according to Nasr, is *tawhid*, in the sense of transcendence. This is because the question of metaphysical knowledge is with Him the All Knowing. Allah (SWT) says: "And they ask you concerning the soul. Say: 'The soul is from the affairs of my Lord, and of knowledge you have but little'" (Qur'an, 17: 85).

Islamization of knowledge/science according to Nasr

To Islamize science/knowledge, firstly, there is a need to master the field from the Western perspective thoroughly so as to know the contradictory points as well as the consensual ones entrenched within the field. We should not only look at the applied science but also the philosophical suppositions. This is because there is nothing wrong with the science but its philosophical supposition. The person who will carry out this task must also master early Muslim Intellectual thought which accommodated alien sciences and knowledge during their time. According to Nasr, not only the intellectual requirements of the Islamizers matter, but also the spiritual, as they are required to hold a strong faith. Thus, it is essential for the people involved in this task to be intellectually and emotionally attached to the Islamic world view. In addition, Seyyed Nasr emphasizes the need for people involved to reach apex of these fields. They have to establish an authoritative voice before they embark on the criticism of the field and eventually transform them in accordance with the Islamic perspective. The Muslim world should produce scholars, men and women, who will know, as a whole all the branches of modern science, whether it be mathematics, astronomy and physics, or geology, chemistry, biology, botany, zoology, medicine, etc. as well as all the newly created fields which are related to these older disciplines.

Secondly, there must also be Muslim thinkers who will be able to master in depth the philosophy and methodologies of modern science by digging the roots, at once historical, philosophical and sociological, of modern science. Muslim scholars must verify the philosophy and epistemology upon which the science is built. Such scholars must be veritable Occidentalists who know the Western intellectual tradition deeply and who are able to understand the nature of modern science to the same extent as do the Western critics of this science with whose works Muslims thinkers must also become well acquainted. Such scholars must also be deeply steeped in the Islamic intellectual tradition and know Western

intellectual history as *Islamic* thinkers, not as second rate Western thinkers without their own distinct intellectual framework.

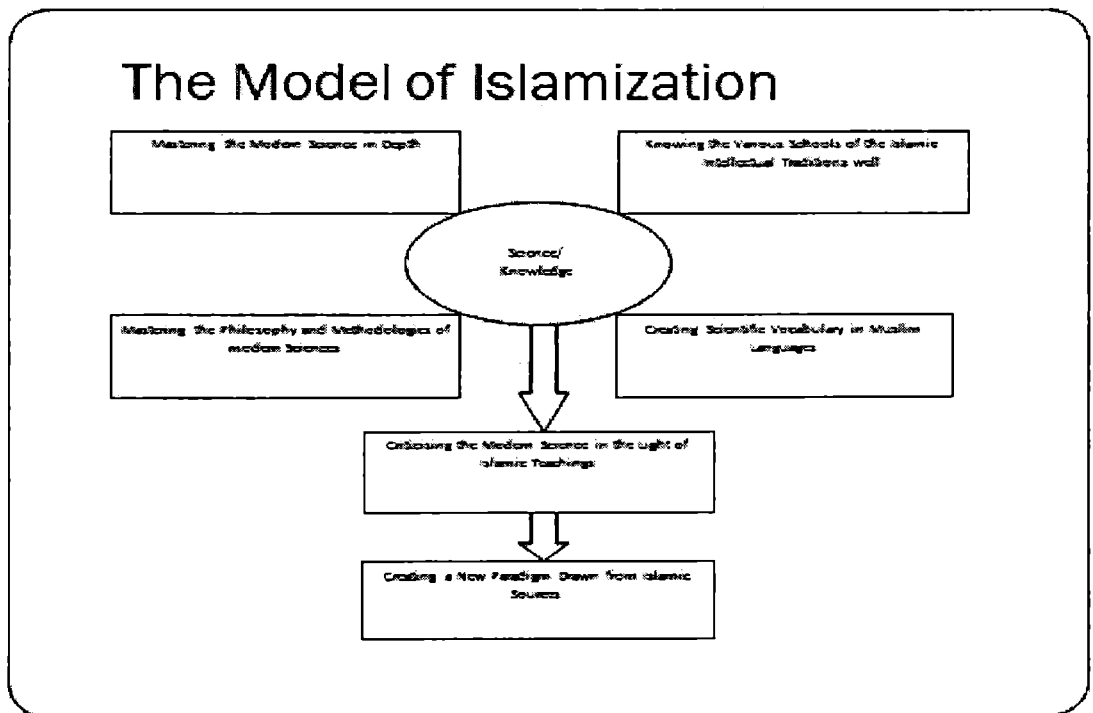
Thirdly, Muslim scholars must also be well-versed with Muslim intellectual tradition. It is pertinent to note that various schools of the Islamic intellectual tradition, developed over a long period of time, range from those of jurisprudence, philosophy and science rooted in the Qur'an. It was studied and developed in depth through many Muslim generations. Islamizers have to know them very well and master the methodologies used to be applied ever since. Without doing so, similar mistakes of nurturing Muslim scientists who are subservient to the Western modern science are bound to be repeated. It is important to dig out the Islamic concept of nature, mentioned and defined elaborately in the Qur'an, and the philosophy of science expanded by generations of traditional Muslims thinkers.

Fourthly, in any learning discourse, language plays a significant role in knowledge dissemination. One of the most successful revolutions is that of language. Is it done without any bloodshed and it is used as a vehicle for conveying the message of secularism. As a result of colonialism and imperialism, majority of the Muslim countries found themselves slave to the languages of the colonial masters. Foreign languages are used in schools and educational institutions vis-à-vis local languages which makes knowledge secularization easier and faster throughout the Muslim world. So, language needs to be Islamized. Islamization is not only confined to the content of the science and knowledge alone but also the language used for the dissemination and expression of the knowledge. Seyyed Nasr argues that the use of Islamic languages for the expression of scientific ideas is an important element in absorbing these sciences into the Islamic intellectual universe. If a truly Islamic science is to be created, therefore, not only is there a need for mastering the modern sciences and their philosophy and in resuscitating Islamic sciences and the philosophy of nature and epistemologies upon which they depend, but also in reappraising and benefitting to the extent possible from works produced in various Islamic languages during this transitional period of scientific activity in the Islamic world, stretching from the beginning of Muslim participation in the study and practice of modern science to the present day (Nasr, 2010).

The fifth step is the sieving stage. The Islamic world must use all its resources and energy at its disposal to know this science deep and wide and in its

relation to religion, philosophy and social forces, to criticize the premises and conclusions of this science in the light of the teachings of Islam. In so doing, the western knowledge would be put upon the Islamic framework for sifting out that which is alien to it.

Finally for Islamic scholars in the course of islamization process must create a new paradigm of knowledge from Islamic sources. This means to integrate all that is positive in the modern sciences into the Islamic worldview. The result would be a science which, while incorporating all the factual discoveries of modern science, would relate these facts to higher principles and would remain aware of the ultimate cause of all things which is God, a science which would affirm rather than neglect Unity or *tawhid* and the purposefulness of all creation for as the Qur'an asserts, "Thou hast not created this in vain" (Qur'an, 3:191). The steps outlined above are clearly delineated in Diagram 1.



Technology and environmental crisis

In the area of applied modern secular science which is emphasised in the Muslim world and their governments, Nasr has implored the epistemology of this technology and its effects on the Ummah and humanity in general. For him,

modern technology refers to technologies which have been developed during and after the Industrial Revolution mostly in the West and which have now spread all over the world. The destruction of environment by modern technology is seen as one of the most serious threats faced by humanity. This is because it has replaced traditional methods of making objects of daily use. This replacement has serious consequences for the spiritual health of humanity (Nasr, 2005). It changes the relationship of human beings and the means of creating things. What mind can think and create; now machines and thus reducing man to nothing. It takes away the creativity and spiritual content of work. First thing that need to be understood is that this technology is not neutral. Even the peaceful use of this technology, like automobile, is a major source of aggression against nature. Thus, the global warming is destroying many eco-systems and so many other things and that much destruction comes from the so-called peaceful use of the automobile.

Therefore, it is not simply a question of good use and bad use of technology. There is something more involved. Technology itself brings with it a certain technological culture which is against the soul of the human being as an immortal being, and is against the fabric of all traditional societies which are based on the spiritual relationship between the human being and the objects he or she creates, that are based on an art that is creative and reflects God's creativity, as the Supreme Artisan. God is called Al-Sani in the Qur'an; He is the Creator, the Artist, the Supreme Artisan, and He has given us the power of creativity which we share because we are His *khulafa*, vicegerents on earth (Iqbal, 2007). Now modern technology destroys that relationship. Whether the person driving a car uses it to go to the masjid to pray or to a night club for dancing and drinking, the destruction of the environment is there. Problems such as poverty, political oppression or dictatorships do not pose as great a danger as the problem of the destruction of the natural environment, because those things may gradually be solved, but environmental degradation caused by modern technology needs to be addressed fast or else nature will take a turn that cannot be imagined.

At the level of human being, what has to be done is to revive the sacred view of nature which is totally opposed to how modern technology views nature. What Muslims have to do, in fact, is not to employ every new foreign technology that comes along, but only use technologies which have less negative impact on the environment to avoid environmental crisis and limit the secular influence of the technology (Iqbal, 2007).

Criticisms against Seyyed Nasr

As every scholar of knowledge, Nasr has been subjected to severe criticisms for his works in the field of knowledge in general and Islamization of knowledge in particular. It is argued that the concept of sacred science offered by Nasr is not an Islamic science per se because he opens the door for various religions to enriching each other through contact with a living tradition. The perennial philosophy of Nasr is not Islamic because he borrows the idea from Western philosophers like Rene Guenon and Frithjof Schuon. Their works especially Schuon with his book, transcendent unity of religions is full of thought or ideas that have become the core inspiration for the propagation of religious pluralism discourse. According to Nasr, the difference between religions and faith are merely in the symbols and external qualities. The core of each religion is still one

Nasr is also criticised for his Sufi (mystic) affiliation. Nasr is taking the readers to a magical mystery tour. Inner world and the living world as argued by Nasr cannot be understood except by those Gnostic thinkers who believe in that. The problem with Nasr is that he overemphasizes the metaphysical aspect of Islamic science at the expense of its quantitative aspects.

Conclusion

The model of Islamization of science/knowledge provided by Seyyed Hossain Nasr presents some fundamental principles of Islamization. He did not only express the problem of Muslim Ummah but went further to give details on how to go about solving them. The six major steps in his model could be employed by those who are willing to engage in the task of Islamizing knowledge.

Distinctly, Seyyed Hossain Nasr diagnosed and expressed the problem of knowledge and modern science first before going further to propose his own model. He has examined the threat of environment caused by the modern science and technology to Muslim Ummah and their society. Although his ideas are criticised he was able to shed light to the Muslim thinkers on the dangers of the secular science and the need for sacred science. The effect of secularism can only be averted when knowledge is transmuted into a body of knowledge in an intellectual universe where knowledge is never divorced from the sacred.

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Book Reviews

Palestinian prisoners: A question of conscience. Edited By John Calhoun and Ranjan Solomon. Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 2015, Pp. 107, ISBN: 978-2-8254-1653-2.

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This resource book is published in conjunction with the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel (WWPPI), an initiative of the Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum of the World Council of Churches. It is based on the topic of Palestinian prisoners and the theme explored in the last year, “Let my people go.” The choice of the theme clearly underscores the crisis that affects several thousand Palestinians and their families.

The editors of this brief volume have treated their material in seven thematic chapters: Palestinian political Prisoners: An overview; Administrative Detention in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; Ailing Prisoners in Israeli Occupation Jails; Families and Family visits; Palestinian Children Detained in the Israeli Military Court System; Conscientious Objectors; and, Organizations Working with Prisoners and Human Rights. In their entirety, the chapters of this book describe the plight of more than 5000 Palestinian Prisoners – the conditions of their arrest, detention, and care – that continues to draw international attention and condemnation. This brief volume provides a responsible, factual overview of their situation and prospects. The legal frameworks of their arrest in the occupied territories, Gaza, and Israel itself, along with prison conditions and healthcare of prisoners and the detention of children are all detailed, supplemented by the specific stories of individual prisoners and their families. Also included are lists of other resources and organizations engaged by the issue and working for change.

Of immense importance is the analysis of the arbitrary detention of Palestinians, especially the use of “administrative detention”, by Israeli occupation forces, that has had a devastating effect on Palestinian society. Israel’s

use of mass detention and imprisonment of Palestinians, recall the editors, is a policy that aims to suppress any resistance to Israel's continued occupation and also to delay the development of Palestinian social and political institutions. Nearly every family in Palestine has been directly or indirectly affected by Israel's policy of arbitrary and illegal detention. This is an issue that speaks to people's hearts in Palestine. It is revealing to know that over the last 47 years, since the Israeli occupation in 1967, an estimated 750,000 Palestinians have been detained under Israeli military orders in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), which constitutes approximately 20 percent of the total Palestinian population in the OPT, and as much as 40 percent of the total male Palestinian population.

Palestinian prisoners are arrested on the basis of different legal systems, depending on their residence, whether in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip or Israel. Palestinians and Israelis living in the OPT live under separate and unequal legal regime, under which Palestinians are subjected to more severe detention and sentencing provisions than Jewish settlers and Israeli citizens, with little or no effective judicial oversight. As a result, the differences in law produce much higher sentences for Palestinians committing similar or lesser crimes than Israelis. On 21 January 2011, Israeli settler Nahum Kormon, who beat an 11-year-old Palestinian child, Helmi Shusha, to death, was sentenced to 6 months of community services. On the same day, Suad Ghazal, a 15-year-old Palestinian girl accused of attempting to stab an Israeli settler, was sentenced to 6.5 years in prison (p. 5).

In addition, Palestinian political prisoners, whether from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, or Israel, are defined as "security" prisoners by Israel. As a result they are subjected to harsher interrogation techniques and more severe detention conditions than their Israeli criminal counterparts. The forms of torture and ill treatment employed against Palestinian prisoners include beatings, tying prisoners in "stress positions", interrogation sessions that last up to 12 consecutive hours, depriving prisoners of sleep and other sensory deprivation, isolation and solitary confinement, and threats against the lives of their relatives. In a few cases detainees died while in custody as a result of torture. Confessions extracted through such practices are admissible in Israeli courts. Israel defends its practices as a legitimate way of combating terrorism faced by its citizens, but in reality these practices are in direct contravention of international law, including the United Nations Convention

against Torture (CAT), ratified by Israel on 3 October 1991. The prohibition is absolute and non-derogable, and allows for “no exceptional circumstances whatsoever”. Although the Israeli High Court of Justice banned the use of torture during interrogation in September 1999, the Court allowed what it called “moderate physical pressure” – widely deemed as torture – be used in situations where a detainee is considered a “ticking bomb.”

Israel also systematically discriminates between Jewish and Palestinian “security” prisoners by offering preferential treatment to the former. Ami Popper, a former Israeli army officer, was sentenced to seven life sentences for killing seven Palestinians in 1990; however, his sentence was commuted to 40 years in 1999. During his imprisonment, Popper, who is categorized as a “security” prisoner, has married and fathered three children (p. 15).

It is quite clear that Israel is using the mass detention and imprisonment of Palestinians as a policy. This policy has the dual objective of suppressing any resistance to Israel’s continued occupation and colonization, while at the same time preventing from any sort of normal Palestinian society from emerging. The core argument of the editors that recurs through their volume is that Israel’s arrest and detention of Palestinians in the OPT and within Israel proper is governed by a regime of laws and institutions almost completely separate from the one administering the arrest of Jewish Israelis. Because this system enables the large-scale arbitrary arrest of Palestinians while generally affording them lower protection and guarantees than Jewish Israelis, it shall be understood as a discriminating institutional tool of domination and oppression against them. This resource book provides readers with authoritative on-the-ground information and perspectives.

Reading Shakespeare from Islamic perspective. By Sadruddin Ahmed, Mohammad Kaosar Ahmed, Ali Azgor Talukdar, Kamiz Ahmed Alam and Muhammad Tafazzel Hossain. Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), 2014, Pp. 144, ISBN: 978-984-8471-22-7.

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Reading Shakespeare from Islamic Perspective provides a new dimension to the study of Shakespeare. The book is organized in five chapters with an Introduction. The authors have chosen four grand and widely studied tragedies: *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* and drawn analogy between the works of Shakespeare and the ideology of Islam. Unlike the earlier studies of tragedies from Marxist, humanist, feminist and modernist point of views, this book deals with Shakespeare from an Islamic point of view.

The introduction, prepared by Mohammad Kaosar Ahmed, provides the reason behind making the reading of Shakespeare from an Islamic point of view. It emphasizes the necessity of the teacher who being blessed with Islamic knowledge can show the students what Islam says about this and why they should follow the dictates of Islam. Quoting Professor Ali Ashraf, Kaosar states that a practicing Muslim teacher of literature who is aware of human limitations, evil temptations and human greatness can save students from falling prey to a seductive material literature. It provides a practical guideline to deal with Shakespeare from an Islamic perspective.

The first chapter, by Sadruddin Ahmed, analyses *King Lear* and presents the events of the tragedy alongside Islamic values that enables the readers to understand the points where Shakespeare coheres with Islam. The analysis of the relationships among Goneril, Regdelia and Lear and Gloucester, Edmund and Edgar from the Islamic point of view helps readers understand how the relationships in family ought to be maintained. The comments on the illicit triangular affair among Goneril, Edmund and Regan helps to form a clear idea about immorality according to Shakespearean and Islamic concepts which will certainly mould people to detest immoral relationship. There is room for further improvement of this chapter. The relationship among Lear, the Fool and Kent needs to be analyzed to stress the importance of brotherhood. Likewise, the character called the Fool should be highlighted to portray the Islamic value of promoting justice and standing against injustice. Similarly, the lessons from Shakespeare concerning god-like quality in human nature, making the right judgment, choosing a right life partner, and not losing hope in the midst of misfortune etc., could be highlighted.

Chapter two written by Mohammad Kaosar Ahmed presents an effective guideline to Muslim teachers to deal with *Macbeth* to save Muslim learners from the blind mimicry and intellectual slavery of European culture. The simultaneous

presentation of the story of Macbeth and that of Yusuf (Joseph) is brilliant in showing the picture of a mighty one being trapped by his greedy soul and the portrayal of a mere slave being guided by the beauty of soul. Where literature guides one to hate the former, the Qur'an inspires one to admire the later. The discussion on presence of evil in human mind, divine punishment, respite for the wrong doers, soothsaying, despair, unfaithful to the trust, temptation, man's inclination towards evil, murder, lying and repentance to be forgiven is scholarly enough to have a broad idea on what Shakespeare and Islam believe about them. The author may make a wide discussion on the relationship between husband and wife while commenting on the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. This chapter definitely helps the admirers of Shakespeare to explore the spiritual aspects in his dramas and let them march towards the elevation of soul.

Ali Azgor Talukder, in the third chapter, introduces Islamic Literary Theory (ILT) based upon the spirit of justice. The writer, first, offers an important discussion on the spirit, themes, attitudes and tendencies of Islam. It helps the reader have a clear idea about Islam. Next, it offers an interrelationship between the fundamental concepts of Islam and the principles of Islamic literary theory. Finally, the chapter makes the readers understand how to deal with Islamic literary theory while analyzing a literary text and thus, to fulfill the objective of ILT. It would be advisable to refer to the Qur'an, the Hadith and to several Islamic scholars while analyzing the concepts of Islam and that of ILT. The analysis of the themes of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* should also be analysed from an Islamic point of view.

Amiz Ahmed Alam proposed the idea of Islamic Literary Criticism (ILC) in the fourth chapter with a view to judge literature of any culture under the light of Islamic ideology in order to help people reach at the supreme state of human soul called Mutma'innah where it achieves full rest and satisfaction. The author has evaluated Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in the light of ILC. This chapter gives a quick summary of the existing literary theories and that of ILC which let the readers understand what makes ILC different from and superior over other theories. Like Talukder, he also sets the principles of ILC on the basis of the fundamental concepts of Islam. The search for the presence of a sense of sacrifice for others is to be included in the guideline. The tenets should be set in such a way that they will help a critic to identify if the text covers the fundamental aspects of Islam or ignore them

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with its widely known phrase "to be or not to be that is the question" is analyzed by Muhammad Tofazzel Hossain in the principles of ILC in the last chapter of this book. After a brief summary of the prevailing literary theories, this chapter presents a wide discussion on Islamic Literary Criticism which focuses on justice everywhere for a peaceful world. This chapter also helps the readers get information and idea about law and justice according to the Qur'an which makes them realize that Islam is very unyielding in the case of justice. The author provides a valuable explanation on the concept of good and evil in Islam. Hossain shows that evil is in *Hamlet*, and justice is violated in all spheres. The young prince takes the vow to avenge his father's murder and executes his plan and thus, contributes to establish justice. The discussion on the treatment of justice undoubtedly increases the reader's desire to have a complete study of *Hamlet* in the light of ILC.

All the chapters of *Reading Shakespeare from Islamic Perspective* actually act like pearls in a garland. They support one another to explain the demand behind analyzing Shakespeare in the light of Islamic perspective. They form a guideline for the admirers of Shakespeare especially, the Muslim teachers and the students and help them understand why they should not follow wholly King Lear and Prospero. This book will let the readers feel that though he is a non-Muslim, Shakespeare coheres with Islam while supporting good and demolishing evil. It is expected that this book from BIIT will be very well received at home and abroad.

Fundamentals of public administration. By Begum Rokshana Mili and Amir Mohammad Nasrullah. Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), 2014, Pp. 326, ISBN: 978-984-8471-20-3.

Reviewer: M. Shamsur Rahman, Founder Vice Chancellor, Jatiyo Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University at Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh. E-mail: ijit@iiitbd.org

Fundamentals of Public Administration, written by Begum Rokshana Mili and Amir Mohammad Nasrullah, is a valuable addition to the existing literature on Public Administration. There are plenty of textbooks on Public Administration in USA, India and other countries but these are meant for their respective audiences,

not Bangladeshi students and academics. Barring few exceptions including the book by AMM Shawkat Ali, a retired secretary of the government of Bangladesh, there are not many books to cater for the students studying six universities where public administration is taught as a discipline. This book should help ameliorate the problem of the serious dearth of English textbook on Public Administration.

This book is an abridged version of fundamental concepts of Public Administration. It discusses most of the terms and concepts albeit briefly. The book has abundance of quotations from the works produced by scholars from America and Europe. No elaborate attempt has been made to make the concepts clear and easily understandable by teachers to teach the students. Furthermore, the authors explain the concepts without citing examples from Bangladesh Administration. As a result, the students will have the problems of understanding and grasping. However, the book may be useful for the young teachers who will begin teaching as their career in Public Administration. Going through this book, they will quickly learn the concepts and terminologies and will consult other books as exhaustively referred to by the authors.

The book consumes a total of 308 pages in addition to references and the bibliography. The book is split into nine chapters. The bibliography is very exhaustive. A select bibliography would have been more helpful for the interested readers.

Chapter one contains definitional aspect of administration, goal and philosophy of administration. Here the authors could have stated the goal and objectives of Bangladesh administration as reflected in the constitution of Bangladesh for quick understanding of the students. In the same chapter under the heading 'Importance of Public Administration as a Specialized Subject' a small portion of discussion would have been included on 'Teaching and Research of Public Administration' in Bangladesh. Under the heading 'Approaches to Public Administration' two vitally important approaches have been left out from discussion and these are statistical and psychological approaches. Both are very important approaches. The former approach is widely used in all sectors of administration while the second approach relates to concepts like motivation, and leadership. Attitudinal or behavioral studies derive from social psychology. The fourth chapter on 'Governance' is well written. But 'Good Governance' is not the fundamental concept of public administration. It was developed in the 1980s and 1990s though its essence is old. It is as old as Kautillah's *Arthashastra*, Platonic

justice, Aristotatollian constitutionalism and social contract theories. The main idea of governance to me is “3 Es” referred by the authors in the book. Good governance is over used by all scholars. It is applicable in case of all sectors of administration. The concept may be likened to the proverbial “Potato” which can be used in all types of dishes. Public Administration also involves two core values like ‘Policy Planning’ and ‘Policy Implementation’ and Personnel Administration, which has not been taken up for discussion in the book. In chapter six, ‘the Dynamics of Organization’, concepts like ‘authority and power’, ‘centralization and decentralization, and coordination, deserve a little longer discussion with examples from Bangladesh administration. Similarly the discussion on planning, in chapter nine is unusually short. A variety of things come under planning such as centralized planning, decentralized planning, socialistic planning, capitalist planning, top down planning, bottom up planning, macro-micro-meso planning etc. need to be discussed in an integrated manner.

The authors have tried to explain many terms from an Islamic perspective which, however, is not reflected in the title of the book. If the authors sincerely desired to explain the concepts in administration in Islamic terms, which apparently the authors desired, then the book should be re-titled as ‘Fundamentals of Public Administration: an Islamic Perspective.’ Mere adding Islamic administration with Public Administrative concept is not desirable because there is a fundamental difference between the two. Public Administration is developed by the Western scholars with secular values, whereas Islam combines spiritual and material values with sovereignty lying exclusively with almighty Allah (SWT). It is hoped that the authors in future would write a book with a title like Islamic Administration: Major Concerns.

On the whole I find the book interesting, well written in plain language. I am sure this book will create an impact upon the students, the teachers and readers of general interest. My comment about the book is that the authors are the best judge of deciding as to what extent it will help the students since they meet and converse with the students in and outside the classes. I congratulate the authors for undertaking pains and patience to produce such a valuable work.

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In-text: Hasan (2014)

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The Qur'ān

In-text:

- (i) Direct quotation, write as 30:36
- (ii) Indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30: 36

Reference: The Glorious Qur'an. Translation and Commentary. By A. Yusuf Ali (1971').

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Ḥadīth

In text:

- (i) Al-Bukhārī, 88: 204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)
- (ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:

- (i) Al-Bukhārī, Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
- (ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

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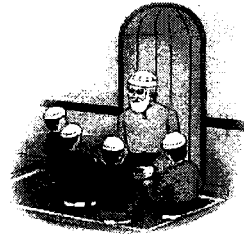
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